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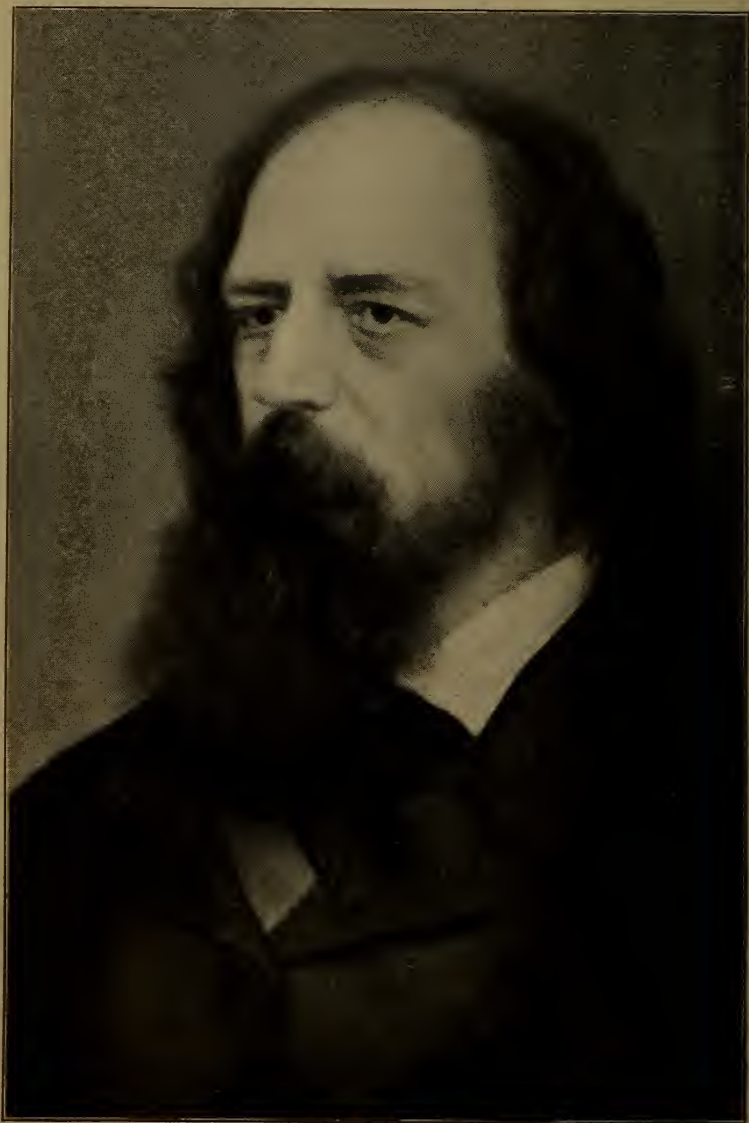
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LORD ALFRED TENNYSON.



THE
PRINCESS

MAUD
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
ALFRED LORD TENNYSON
POET LAUREATE

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W. B. CONKEY COMPANY
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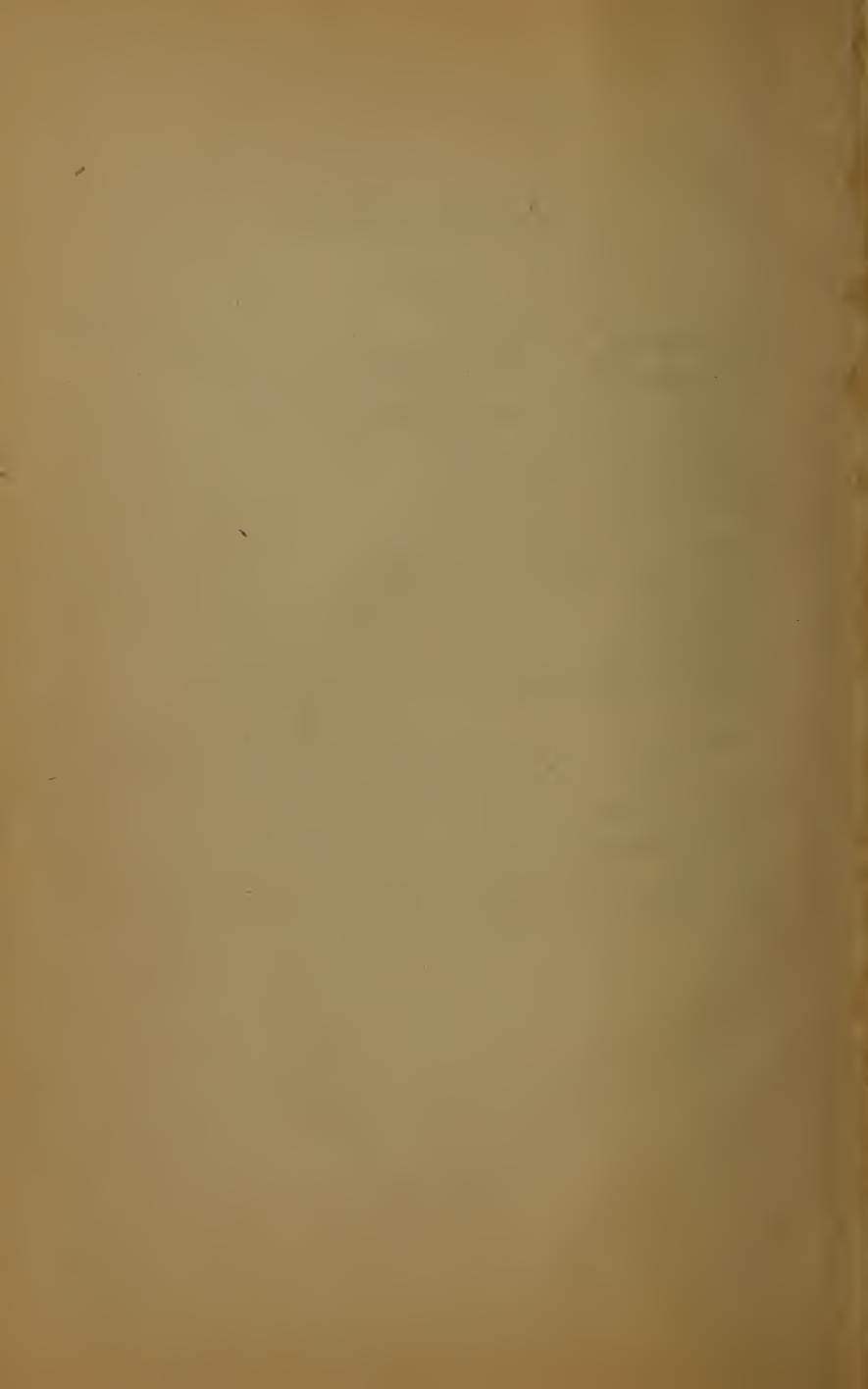
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THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY.

PROLOGUE.

Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,—the son
A Walter, too,—with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the
house,
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their
names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs

From the iles of palm; and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armor hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agin-
court:

And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him"—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with
knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the
gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her
walls.

"O miracle of women," said the book,
"O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's
death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—
Her stature, more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horse's heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the
wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the
rock,

And part were drown'd within the whirling
brook;
O miracle of noble womanhood!"

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle;
And, I all rapt in this, "Come out," he said,
"To the Abbey: there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park: strange was the sight to
me;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads:
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of
stone

And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing, now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp: and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon: Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields: and here were telescopes
For azure views; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter: round the
lake

A little clock-work steamer, paddling plied
And shook the lilies: perch'd about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam:
A petty railway ran; a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves

And dropt a fairy parachute and past:
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
 Between the mimic stations; so that sport
 Went hand in hand with Science: otherwhere
 Pure sport: a herd of boys with clamor bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket; babies roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass; and men and
 maids

Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
 And shadow, while the twanging violin
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to
 end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the
 time;

And long we gazed, but satiated at length
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-
 claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
 Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they
 gave

The park, the crowd, the house; but all
 within

The sward was trim as any garden lawn:
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
 From neighbor seats: and there was Ralph
 himself

A broken statue propt against the wall,
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
 Half child, half woman as she was, had wound

A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
 That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
 Glow like sunbeam; near his tomb a feast
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the guests,
 And there we join'd them: then the maiden
 Aunt

Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
 An universal culture for the crowd,
 And all things great; but we, unworthier, told
 Of college: he had climb'd across the spikes,
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
 And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs; and
 one

Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;
 And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
 The feudal warrior lady-clad; which brought
 My book to mind: and opening this I read
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
 With tilt and tourney; then the tale of her
 That drove her foes with slaughter from her
 walls,

And much I praised her nobleness, and
 "Where,"

Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
 Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia, "There are thousands
 now

Such women, but convention beats them down:

It is but bringing up; no more than that:
 You men have done it: how I hate you all!
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
 That love to keep us children! O I wish
 That I were some great princess, I would build
 Far off from men a college like a man's,
 And I would teach them all that men are
 taught;

We are twice as quick!" And here she shook
 aside

The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling, "Pretty were the sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and
 flaunt

With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I fear,
 If there were many Lilies in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:

"That's your light way; but I would make it
 death

For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she
 laugh'd;

A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
 And sweet as English air could make her, she:

But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
 And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
 And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
 All else was well, for she-society.

They boated and they cricketed; they talk'd
 At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
 They lost their weeks; they vex't the souls of
 deans;

They rode; they betted; made a hundred
 friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
 But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
 The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
 Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
 "We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us
 much.

I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did."

She held it out; and as a parrot turns
 Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
 And takes a lady's finger with all care,
 And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
 So he with Lilia's. Daintly she shriek'd
 And wrung it. "Doubt my word again!" he
 said.

"Come, listen! here is proof that you were
 miss'd:

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read;
 And there we took one tutor as to read:
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
 Were out of season: never man, I think,
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he:
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,

And our long walks were stript as bare as
 brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail; often, like as many girls—
 Sick for the holies and the yews of home—
 As many little trifling Lilies—play'd
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And what's my thought and when and where
 and how,
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that:
 A pleasant game, she thought: she liked it
 more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these—what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain
 Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips:
 And Walter nodded at me; "He began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind! what
 kind?"

Chimeras, crochets, Christmas solecisms,
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
 Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
 The tyrant! kill him in the summer too,"
 Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the maiden Aunt.
 "Why not a summer's as a winter's tale?
 A tale for summer as befits the time,
 And something it should be to suit the place,
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
 Hid in the ruins; till the maiden Aunt
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
 With color) turn'd to me with "As you will;
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,
 Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine," clamor'd he,
 "And make her some great Princess, six feet
 high,
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you
 The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"
 I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
 Heroic seems our Princess as required—
 But something made to suit with Time and
 place,
 A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
 A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
 For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them
 all—

This were a medley! We should have him
 back

Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it for us.
 No matter: we will say whatever comes.
 And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
 For time to come, some ballad or a song
 To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd: and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:
And here I give the story and the songs.

PART I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house.
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.

And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows
what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head
cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "cata-
lepsy."

My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,

So gracious was her tact and tenderness:
 But my good father thought a king a king;
 He cared not for the affection of the house;
 He held his scepter like a pedant's wand
 To lash offense, and with long arms and hands
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the
 mass
 For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
 While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
 To one, a neighboring Princess: she to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from time to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puissance;
 And still I wore her picture by my heart,
 And one dark tress; and all around them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about
 their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should
 wed,
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought
 back
 A present, a great labor of the loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;
 He said their was a compact; that was true:
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:

The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and
bursts

Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's
face

Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflam'd with wrath: he started on his feet,
Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and
rent

The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his
spleen,

Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. "My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable:
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian
said:

"I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence:
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land:

Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
 And Cyril whisper'd; "Take me with you too."
 Then laughing, "what, if these weird seizures
 come

Upon you in those lands, and no one near
 To point you out the shadow from the truth!
 Take me; I'll serve you better in a strait;
 I grate on rusty hinges here:" but "No!"
 Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not; we
 ourselves

Will crush her petty maiden fancies dead
 In iron gauntlets: break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about the
 town;

Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness
 out;

Laid it on the flowers, and watch'd it lying
 bathed

In the green gleam of dewy-tassel'd trees:
 What were those fancies? wherefore break her
 troth?

Proud look'd the lips: but while I meditated
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the
 shrieks

Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
 Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
 Cat-foot'd through the town and half in dread

To hear my father's clamor at our backs
With Ho! from some bay-window shake the
 night;
But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt
And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost
To a livelier land; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his
 voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king; three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. "You do us, Prince," he
 said
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
"All honor. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony—
I think the year in which our olives failed.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart: but there were widows
 here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
They fed their theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this; with this our banquets
 rang;

Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot
 To hear them: knowledge, so my daughter
 held,

Was all in all: they had but been, she thought,
 As children; they must lose the child, assume
 The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes
 About this losing of the child; and rhymes
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
 Beyond all reason: these the women sang;
 And they that know such things—I sought but
 peace;

No critic I—would call them masterpieces:
 They master'd me. At last she begg'd a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier; I said no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it; and there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and more
 We know not,—only this: they see no men,
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon
 her

As a kind of paragon; and I
 (Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
 Dispute betwixt myself and mine; but since
 (And I confess with right) you think me bound
 In some sort, I can give you letters to her;
 And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
 Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur

With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
 But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
 Went forth again with both my friends. We
 rode

Many a long league back to the North. At last
 From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
 We dropt with evening on a rustic town
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
 Close at the boundary of the liberties;
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
 To council, plied him with his richest wines,
 And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
 As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd
 Averring it was clear against all rules
 For any man to go: but as his brain
 Began to mellow, "If the king," he said,
 "Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
 The king would bear him out;" and at the
 last—

The summer of the vine in all his veins—
 "No doubt that we might make it worth his
 while.

She once had past that way; he heard her
 speak;

She scared him; life! he never saw the like;
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave:
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there;
 He always made a point to post with mares;
 His daughter and his housemaid were the
 boys:

The land, he understood, for miles about

Was till'd by women; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs'—

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in
act,

Remembering how we three presented Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.
We sent mine host to purchase female gear;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled: him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley: then we past an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow: further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house;
But scarce could hear each other speak for
noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers
falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and
Earth

With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel: her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche," she
said,

"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are
we."

One voice, we cried; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East;
"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your
own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd:

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the binding bandage from his eyes:
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years.
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

PART II.

At break of day the College Portress came:
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold; and now when these
were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited; out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of
flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her
throne

All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth: such eyes were in her
head,

And so much grace and power, breathing down
 From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and
 said:

“We give you welcome: not without redound
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,
 And that full voice which circles round the
 grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
 What! are the ladies of your land so tall?”

“We of the court,” said Cyril. “From the
 court.”

She answer'd, “then ye know the Prince?” and
 he:

“The climax of his age! as tho' there were
 One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
 He worships your ideal:” she replied:

“We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
 This barren verbiage, current among men,
 Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.

Your flight from out your bookless wilds would
 seem

As arguing of knowledge and of power;
 Your language proves you still the child.

Indeed,

We dream not of him: when we set our hand
 To this great work, we purposed with ourself
 Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
 Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
 The tricks, which make us toys of men, that
 so,

Some future time, if so indeed, you will,
 You may with those self-styled our lords ally
 Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with
 scale."

At those high words, we conscious of our-
 selves,

Perused the matting; then an officer
 Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
 Not for three years to correspond with home;
 Not for three years to cross the liberties;
 Not for three years to speak with any men;
 And many more, which hastily subscribed,
 We enter'd on the boards; and "Now," she
 cried,

"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look,
 our hall!

Our statues!—not of those that men desire,
 Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
 Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
 That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
 The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
 The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
 Convention, since to look on noble forms
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
 That which is higher. O lift your natures up:
 Embrace our aims: work out your freedom, girls,
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd:
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite

And slander, die. Better not be at all
 Than not be noble. Leave us: you may go:
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
 The fresh arrivals of the week before;
 For they press in from all the provinces,
 And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved
 Dismissal: back again we crost the court
 To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
 A patient range of pupils; she herself
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,
 Aglaia slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
 That whisper'd "Asses' ears," among the
 sedge,
 "My sister." "Comely, too, by all that's fair,"
 Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she began.

"This world was once a fluid haze of light,
 Till toward the center set the starry tides,
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
 The planets: then the monster, then the man;
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his
 mate;
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
 Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just; till warming with her
theme

She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry:
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry:
However then commenced the dawn: a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had
dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which
made

Woman and man. She had founded; they must
build.

Here might they learn whatever men were
taught:

Let them not fear: some said their heads were
less:

Some men's were small; not they the least of
men;

For often fineness compensated size:
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew

With using; thence the man's, if more was
more;

He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field: some ages had been lost;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man.
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulean; even so
With woman: and in arts of government
Elizabeth and others; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others; arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man:
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might
grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future; "everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life.
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind:
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more:
And everywhere the broad and bounteous
Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare
souls,

Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us: the rest Parted; and glowing full-faced welcome, she Began to address us, and was moving on In gratulation, till as when a boat Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried, "My brother!" "Well, my sister." "O," she said, "What do you here? and in this dress? and these?"

Why, who are these? a wolf within the fold! A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me! A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!" "No plot, no plot," he answer'd. "Wretched boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the gate, 'Let no man enter in on pain of death?' " "And if I had," he answer'd, "who could think The softer Adams of your Acadame, O sister Sirens tho' they be, were such As chanted on the blanching bones of men?" "But you will find it otherwise," she said. "You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow Binds me to speak, and O that iron will, That axelike edge unturnable, our Head, The Princess." "Well, then, Psyche, take my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange For warning: bury me beside the gate, And cut this epitaph above my bones: 'Here lies a brother by a sister slain,

All for the common good of womankind.' "

"Let me die, too," said Cyril, "having seen
And heard the Lady Psyche."

I struck in:

"Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth;
Receive it; and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida; here, for here she was,
And thus (what other way was left) I came."
"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country; none;
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may not breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
Who am not mine, say, live: the thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak; it falls."
"Yet pause," I said: "for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit: if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows? war;
Your own work marr'd: for this your Academe,
Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge
Of that," she said: "farewell, Sir—and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,
"The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)

As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
 And all else fled? we point to it, and we say,
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
 But branches current yet in kindred veins."

"Are you that Psyche," Florian added; "she
 With whom I sang about the morning hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
 And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
 My sickness down to happy dreams? are you
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
 You were that Psyche, but what are you
 now?"

"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
 I would be that for ever which I seem,
 Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
 And gleam your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,
 "Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
 "That on her bridal morn before she past
 From all her old companions, when the king
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
 That were there any of our people there
 In want or peril, there was one to hear
 And help them? look! for such are these and
 I."

"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to
 whom,
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?"

The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the
 blood

Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you
 wept.

O by the bright head of my little niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid,
 That ever crow'd for kisses."

 "Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not
 play

The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
 The secular emancipation turns
 Of half this world, be swerved from right to
 save

A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
 My conscience will not count me fleckless;
 yet—

Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise
 You perish) as you came, to slip away
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
 These women were too barbarous, would not
 learn;

They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised each; and she,
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
"I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I gave thee to death
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?"

With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the
hearth,

And far illusion, till the gracious dews
Began to listen and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
"I brought a message here from Lady
Blanche."

Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips apart,

And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
 As bottom agates seen to wave and float
 In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
 Then Lady Psyche, "Ah—Melissa—you!
 You heard us?" and Melissa, "O pardon me!
 I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
 But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
 Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
 To give three gallant gentlemen to death."

"I trust you," said the other, "for we two
 Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:
 But yet your mother's jealous temperament—
 Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or
 prove

The Danaid of a leaky vase, for fear
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
 My honor, these their lives." "Ah, fear me
 not,"

Replied Melissa; "no—I would not tell,
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard
 things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

"Be it so," the other, "that we still may lead
 The new light up, and culminate in peace,
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."

Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest man
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
 (Tho' Madam you should answer, we would ask)
 Less welcome find among us, if you came
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,

Myself for something more." He said not
 what,
 But "Thanks," she answer'd "Go: we have
 been too long
 Together: keep your hoods about the face;
 They do so that affect abstraction here.
 Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
 And held her round the knees against his waist,
 And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the
 child
 Push'd her flat hand against his face and
 laugh'd;
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd
 For half the day thro' stately theaters
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we
 heard
 The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
 The circle rounded under female hands
 With flawless demonstration: follow'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lifted out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
 Sparkle forever: then we dipt in all
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,
 The morals, something of the frame, the rock,

The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the
flower,

Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I
spoke:

“Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.”

“They hunt old trails,” said Cyril, “very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?”

“Ungracious!” answer’d Florian; “have you
learnt

No more from Psyche’s lecture, you that talk’d
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?”

“O trash,” he said, “but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.

A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter’d in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb’d lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro’ the stomacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer’s malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings, like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,

Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
 The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
 For dear are those three castles to my wants,
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
 And two dear things are one of double worth,
 And much I might have said, but that my

zone

Unmann'd me; then the Doctors! O to hear
 The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
 Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
 To break my chain, to shake my mane: but

thou,

Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows;
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and

loose

A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
 Where they like swallows coming out of time
 Will wonder why they came: but hark the
 bell

For dinner, let us go!"

And in we stream'd

Among the columns, pacing staid and still
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair
 In colors gayer than the morning mist,
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
 How might a man not wander from his wits
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine

own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
 The second-sight of some Astræan age,
 Sat compass'd with professors: they, the while,
 Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro:
 A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
 Of art and science: Lady Blanche alone
 Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
 With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
 Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
 In act of spring.

At last a solemn grace

Concluded, and we sought the gardens: there
 One walk'd reciting by herself, and one
 In this hand held a volume as to read,
 And smoothed a petted peacock down with
 that:

Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
 Or under arches of the marble bridge
 Hung, shadow'd from the heat: some hid and
 sought

In the orange thickets: others tost a ball
 Above the fountain-jets, and back again
 With laughter: others lay about the lawns,
 Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their
 May

Was passing: what was learning unto them?
 They wish'd to marry; they could rule a house;
 Men hated learned women: but we three
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often came
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
 That harm'd not: then day droopt; the chapel
 bells

Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt with
those

Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.



Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

PART III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There, while we stood beside the fount, and
watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble,
approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears;
"And fly," she cried, "O fly, while yet you
may!
My mother knows:" and when I ask'd her
"how,"
"My fault," she wept, "my fault! and yet not
mine;
Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side,
She says the Princess should have been the
Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
And so it was agreed when first they came;

But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used;
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass you:
 Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
 'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?

Girls?—more like men!' and at these words
 the snake,

My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:

'O marvelously modest maiden, you!

Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been
 men

You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
 For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I am
 shamed

That I must needs repeat for my excuse
 What looks so little graceful: 'men' (for still
 My mother went revolving on the word)

'And so they are,—very like men indeed—

And with that woman closeted for hours!

Then came these dreadful words out one by
 one,

'Why—these—are—men;' I shudder'd: 'and
 you know it.'

'O ask me nothing,' I said: 'And she knows
 too,

And she conceals it.' So my mother clutch'd
 The truth at once, but with no word from me;
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform
 The Princess: Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly:

But heal me with your pardon ere you go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?"
Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again: than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in
Heaven,"

He added, "lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.'
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough:" and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. "Tell us," Florian
ask'd,

"How grew this feud betwixt the right and
left."

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her:
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool;
And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her
up.

But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirmed your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:

She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how
pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring
pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the
crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than three score of
men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar; but—ah she—whene'er she moves
The Samian Here rises and she speaks.
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and
gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high

Above the empurpled champaign, drank the
gale

That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried;
"No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd, and, bidden, enter'd; found her
there

At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment: she demanded who we were,
And why we came? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example, pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True—we had limed
ourselves

With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might
harm

The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,'
she said,

'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'

I tried the mother's heart. Shame might be-
fall

Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew:
 Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'
 I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
 And she replied, her duty was to speak,
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.
 I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I knew
 No rock so hard but that a little wave
 May beat admission in a thousand years,
 I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you pause.
 I find you here but in the second place,
 Some say the third—the authentic foundress
 you.

I offer boldly: we will seat you highest:
 Wink at our advent: help my prince to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I promise you
 Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
 The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
 And your great name flow on with broadening
 time
 For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
 And told me she would answer us to-day,
 Meantime be mute: thus much, nor more I
 gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
 "That afternoon the Princess rode to take
 The dip of certain strata to the North.
 Would we go with her? we should find the land
 Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
 Out yonder:" then she pointed on to where
 A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
 Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to this, the day fled on thro' all
 Its range of duties to the appointed hour.

Then summon'd to the porch we went. She
stood

Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure
came

Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with
awe;

Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
shook

My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said:
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn;
Unwillingly we spake." "No—not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing
you say."

"Again?" she cried, "are you ambassadresses
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—could have
wish'd—

“Our king expects—was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to
death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.”

“Poor boy,” she said, “can he not read—no
books?

Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor deals in
that

Which men delight in, martial exercise?

To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,

Methinks he seems no better than a girl;

As girls were once, as we ourself have been:

We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with
them:

We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our meaning
here,

To lift the woman's fall'n divinity

Upon an even pedestal with man.”

She paused, and added with a haughtier
smile

“And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out
She kept her state, and left the drunken king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.”

“Alas your Highness breathes full East,” I
said,

“On that which leans to you. I know the
Prince,

I prize his truth: and then how vast a work
To assail this gray pre-eminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it? think;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing: might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great
deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?”

And she exclaim'd,

“Peace, you young savage of the Northern
wild!

What! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice?

You are bold indeed: we are not talk'd to thus:
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere! we like them
well:

But children die; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.

Children—that men may pluck them from our
hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves—

O—children—there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son
 And sees him err: nor would we work for fame;
 Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of
 Great

Who learns the one pousto whence after-hands
 May move the world, tho' she herself effect
 But little: wherefore up and act, nor shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had
 been,

In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
 Of giants living, each a thousand years,
 That we might see our own work out, and
 watch

The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
 If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
 Imaginations might at all be won.
 And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you;
 We are used to that: for women, up till this
 Cramp'd, under worse than South-sea-isle
 taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
 In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
 How much their welfare is a passion to us.
 If we could give them surer, quicker proof—
 Oh, if our end were less achievable
 By slow approaches, than by single act
 Of immolation, any phase of death,
 We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sister's liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black
blocks

A breath of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the color, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and
roar'd

Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I
ask'd,

"Which wrought us, as the workman and his
work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried,
"you love

The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all." "And yet," I
said

"Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstous males that carve the living
hound,

And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
O in the dark dissolving human heart,

And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter
 hangs:

Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
 Nor willing men should come among us, learnt
 For many weary moons before we came,
 This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your question now
 Which touches on the workman and his work
 Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so;
 For was, and is, and will be, are but is
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light: but we that are not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
 And live, perforce, from thought to thought,
 and make

One act a phantom of succession: thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow,
 Time;

But in the shadow will we work, and mould
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet," I said
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
 "To linger here with one that loved us."

"Yea,"

She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,

Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapor streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun:" then, turning to her maids,
"Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward;
Lay out the viands." At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna's triumph; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conqueror; woman-conquer'd
there

The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side; but we
Set forth to climb; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag: and then we turn'd, we
wound

About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony
names

Of shade and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and
all

The rosy heights came out above the lawns.



The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river:
Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

PART IV.

“There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,”
Said Ida; “let us down and rest;” and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where
 below
No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean’d on
 me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitation in the blood,
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter’d in,
There leaning deep in broider’d down we sank
Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow’d
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, “Let some one sing to us: light-
 lier move
The minutes fledged with music:” and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp and sang.

“Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

“Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

“Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

“Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.”

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom: but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, “If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with
wool

And so pace by: but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,
While down the streams that float us each and
all

To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,

Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
 Becomes a cloud: for all things serve their time
 Toward that great year of equal might and
 rights,

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
 Found golden: let the past be past; let be
 Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough kex break
 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split
 Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
 A trumpet in the distance pealing news
 Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
 Above the unrisen morrow:" then to me;
 "Know you no song of your own land," she
 said,

"Not such as moans about the retrospect,
 But deals with the other distance and the hues
 Of promise; not a death's-head at the wine."

Then I remember'd one myself had made,
 What time I watch'd the swallow winging south
 From mine own land, part made long since,
 and part
 Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
 As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

"O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

"O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
 And dark and true and tender is the North.

"O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

“O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown:
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“O tell her, brief is life, but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien
lips,
And knew not what they meant; for still my
voice
Rang false: but smiling, “Not for thee,” she
said,
“O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil: marsh-divers, rather,
maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass: and this
A mere love-poem! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight: they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are
men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,

Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and
 shook;

The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.

“Forbear,” the Princess cried; “Forbear,
 Sir,” I;

And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and
 love,

I smote him on the breast; he started up;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;

Melissa clamor'd, “Flee the death;” “To
 horse,”

Said Ida; “home! to horse!” and fled, as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk,

When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,

In the pavilion: there like parting hopes

I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,

Clang'd on the bridge; and then another
 shriek,

“The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the
 Head!”

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and
 roll'd

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to
 gloom:

There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd
 branch

Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,

No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her;
then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave
Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and
caught,
And grasping down the bows I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly
group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward
drew

My burthen from mine arms; they cried, "she
lives;"

They bore her back into the tent: but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friend's; but push'd alone on
foot

(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the
gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue
to hue,

Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

O lightest echo, then a loftier form
Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
Disturb'd me with the doubt, "if this were she,"
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,
"They seek us: out so late is out of rules.
Moreover, 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
How came you here?" I told him: "I," said
he,

"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, re-
turn'd.

Arriving all confused among the rest
With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last of all,
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent; closer prest, denied it not:
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied:
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with
her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent

For Psyche, but she was not there; she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face;
 And I slipt out: but whither will you now?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both are fled:
 What, if together? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more
 than I
 That struck him; this is proper to the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the
 clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to
 shame
 That which he says he loves: for Cyril, howe'er
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser
 lips
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
 These flashes on the surface are not he,
 He has a solid base of temperament:
 But as the waterlily starts and slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk
 near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying, "Names:"
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but I began
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
 And double in and out the boles, and race
 By all the fountains; fleet I was of foot;

Before me shower'd the rose in flakes; behind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
 And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
 High in the hall: above her droop'd a lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
 Prophet of storm: a handmaid on each side
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black
 hair
 Damp from the river; and close behind her
 stood
 Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than
 men,
 Huge women blowzed with health, and wind,
 and rain,
 And labor. Each was like a Druid rock;
 Or like a spire of land that stands apart
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with
 mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
 An advent to the throne: and there beside,
 Half naked as if caught at once from bed
 And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
 Her round white shoulder shaken with her
 sobs,

Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“It was not thus, O Princess, in old days:
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips:
I led you then to all the Castalies;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother: those were gracious
times.

Then came your new friend: you began to
change—

I saw it and grieved—to slacken and to cool;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze: this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve; and thus a noble
scheme

Grew up from seed we two long since had
sown;

In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun:
We took this palace; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd
mine.

What student came but that you planed her
path

To Lady Psyche, younger not so wise,

A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were
lean;

Yet I bore up in hope she would be known:
Then came these wolves: they knew her: they
endured,

Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear:
And me none told: not less to an eye like mine
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you: but I thought again: I fear'd
To meet a cold 'We thank you, we shall hear
of it

From Lady Psyche:' you had gone to her,
She told, perforce; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest
heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them
well,

Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for
it)

I came to tell you; found that you had gone,
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise: now, I
thought,

That surely she will speak; if not, then I:
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd what they
 were,
 According to the coarseness of their kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last (my work)
 And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
 I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and
 time,
 And talent, I—you know it—I will not boast:
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can
 tread."

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly,
 "Good:
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
 Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
 "The plan was mine. I built the nest," she
 said,
 "To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and stoop'd to
 updrag
 Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
 Half drooping from her, turn'd her face, and
 cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
A Niobe daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and
wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head
Took half amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful
bloom

As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the
rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her
breast,

Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read—two letters—one her
sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince
 your way
 We knew not your ungracious laws, which
 learnt,
 We, conscious of what temper you are built,
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
 Into his father's hands, who has this night,
 You lying close upon his territory,
 Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for his son.

The second was my father's running thus:
 "You have our son: touch not a hair of his
 head:
 Render him up unscathed: give him your
 hand:
 Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed we hear
 You hold the woman is the better man;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
 Would make all women kick against their
 Lords
 Thro' all the world, and which might well
 deserve
 That we this night should pluck your palace.
 down;
 And we will do it, unless you send us back
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'
 So far I read;*"

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

"O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a hope
 The child of regal compact, did I break
 Your precinct, not a scorner of your sex

But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be; hear me, for I bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
 Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell
 me of you;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to
 me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wildswan in among the stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-
 worm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you, had you
 been

Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the enthroned
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
 A man I came to see you: but, indeed,
 Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
 On you, their center: let me say but this,
 That many a famous man and woman, town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
 The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known,
 there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing; but in you I found
 My boyish dreams involved and dazzled down
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
 The seal does music; who desire you more
 Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to do,
 The breath of life; O more than poor men
 wealth,
 Than sick men health—yours, yours, not mine
 —but half
 Without you; with you, whole; and of those
 halves
 You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
 To follow up the worthiest till he die:
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and
 dash'd

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam:
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids
 Gather'd together: from the illumined hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike
 eyes,

And gold and golden heads; they to and fro
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red,
 some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
 Some crying there was an army in the land,
 And some that men were in the very walls,
 And some they cared not; till a clamor grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
 And worse-confounded: high above them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head; but rising
 up
 Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
 To the open window moved, remaining there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
 Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms
 and call'd
 Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

“What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your
 Head?
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks; I dare
 All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?
 Peace! there are those to avenge us and they
 come:
 If not,—myself were like enough, O girls,
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
 Die; yet I blame you not so much for fear;
 Six thousand years of fear have made you that
 From which I would redeem you: but for those



“She wept her eyes blind for such a one.”—Page 67.
The Princess,

That stir this hubbub—you and you—I know
Your faces there in the crowd—to-morrow
morn

We hold a great convention: then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to
live

No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of
Time,

Whose brains are in their hands and in their
heels,

But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the
crowd
Muttering, dissolved; then with a smile, that
look'd

A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince: you have our thanks for
all:

And you look well too in your woman's dress:
Well have you done and like a gentleman.

You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:
Better have died and spilt our bones in the
flood—

Then men had said—but now—What hinders
me

To take such bloody vengeance on you both?—
Yet since our father—Wasps in our good
hive,

You would-be quenchers of the light to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native bears—

O would I had his sceptre for one hour!

You that have dared to break our bound, and
gull'd

Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted
us—

I wed with thee! I bound by precontract

Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the
gold

That veins the world were pack'd to make your
crown,

And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us;

I trample on your offers and on you:

Begone: we will not look upon you more.

Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Than those eight mighty daughters of the
plough

Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd

Their motion: twice I sought to plead my
cause,

But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,

The weight of destiny: so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the
court,

And with grim laughter thrust us out at
gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound,
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd,
came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-
guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

This went by

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy;
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowing I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands:
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang: we thought her half possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;
 And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime—
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change
 The music—clapt her hands and cried for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end:
 And he that next inherited the tale
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,
 "Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I prove
 Your knight, and fight your battle, what for
 me?"

It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.
 She took it and she flung it. "Fight," she
 said,
 "And make us all we would be, great and
 good."

He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the Prince.

PART V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the
mound,

We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the pal-
ace," I.

"The second two: they wait," he said, "pass
on;

His Highness wakes:" and one, that clash'd in
arms,

By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.

Entering the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to
hear,

As in a popular grove when a light wind wakes
A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear; and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old
kings

Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glitter-
ing teeth,

The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and
 blew,
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded
 Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with
 tears,
 Panted from weary sides, "King, you are free!
 We did but keep you surety for our son,
 If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin, thou,
 That tends her bristled grunTERS in the
 sludge;"

For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with
 briers

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprincED from head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
 He has been among his shadows." "Satan
 take

The old women and their shadows! (thus the
 King

Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with
 men.

Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice
 From what was left of faded woman-slough
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
 A little shy at first, but by and by

We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
 Had come on Psyche weeping: "then we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off; we enter'd in, and there
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head
 to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay:
 And at her head a follower of the camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come," he whisper'd to her,
 "Lift up your head, sweet sister; lie not thus.
 What have you done but right? you could not
 slay
 Me, nor your prince; look up; be comforted;
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I:
 "Be comforted; have I not lost her too,
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm
 That none has else for me?" She heard. she
 moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice; and up she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and
 smooth

As those that mourn half shrouded over death
In deathless marble. "Her," she said, "my
friend—

Parted from her—betray'd her cause and
mine—

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye not your
faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none for me!"

To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your child!"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more!
For now will cruel Ida keep her back:

And either she will die from want of care,

Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say

The child is hers—for every little fault,

The child is hers; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother: O my flower!

Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life

With some cold reverence worse than were she
dead.

Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, sacred by the cry they made,

The horror of the shame among them all:

But I will go and sit beside the doors,

And make a wild petition night and day,

Until they hate to hear me like a wind

Wailing for ever, till they open to me,

And lay my little blossom at my feet,

My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child:

And I will take her up and go my way,

And satisfy my soul with kissing her:

Ah! what might that man not deserve of me
 Who gave me back my child?" "Be com-
 forted,"

Said Cyril, "you shall have it:" but again
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and
 so

Like tender things that being caught feign
 death,
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts
 With rumor of Prince Arac hard at hand.
 We left her by the woman, and without
 Found the gray kings at parle: and "Look
 you," cried

My father, "that our compact be fulfill'd:
 You have spoilt this child; she laughs at you
 and man:

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him:
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire;
 She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me:
 "We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
 With our strange girl: and yet they say that
 still

You love her. Give us, then, your mind at
 large:

How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,
 O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
 The smouldering homestead, and the house-
 hold flower

Torn from the lintel—all the common wrong—

A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
 Three times a monster: now she lightens scorn
 At him that mars her plan, but then would
 hate

(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
 And every face she look'd on justify it)
 The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.
 What were I nigher this altho' we dashed
 Your cities into shards with catapults,
 She would not love;—or brought her chain'd,
 a slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
 Not ever would she love; but brooding turn
 The book of scorn, till all my fitting chance
 Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
 And crush'd to death: and rather, Sire, than
 this

I would the old God of war himself were dead,
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
 Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake
 My father, "Tut, you know them not, the
 girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!
 Man is the hunter; woman is his game:
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.
 Wheedling and siding with them! Out! for
 shame!

Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous battle,
 comes

With the air of the trumpet round him, and
 leaps in

Among the women, snares them by the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with
 death

He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning, but this firebrand—gentleness
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it."

"Yea, but Sire," I cried,
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier?
 No:

What dares not Ida do that she should prize
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the
 death,

No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, king,
 True woman: but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need

More breadth of culture: is not Ida right?
 They worth it? truer to the law within?
 Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven? and she of whom you
 speak,

My mother, looks as whole as some serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods
 Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak the
 white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
 But whole and one: and take them all-in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point: not war:
 Lest I lose all."

 "Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"
 Said Gama. "We remember love ourself
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
 You talk almost like Ida: she can talk;
 And there is something in it as you say:
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
 I would he had our daughter: for the rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
 Fatherly fears—you used us courteously—
 We would do much to gratify your Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,

You did but come as goblins in the night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking
 maid,

Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
 And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice
 As ours with Ida: something may be done—
 I know not what—and ours shall see us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build
 some plan
 Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd
 White hands of farewell to my sire, who
 growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the
 lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
 In the old king's ears, who promised help, and
 oozed
 All o'er with hony'd answer as we rode
 And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
 Gather'd by night and peace, with each light
 air
 On our mail'd heads: but other thoughts than
 Peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled
squares,

And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the
flowers

With clamor: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the
drum

Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;

And in the blast and bray of the long horn

And serpent-throated bugle, undulated

The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced

Three captains out; nor ever had I seen

Such thews of men: the midmost and the
highest

Was Arac: all about his motion clung

The shadow of his sister, as the beam

Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them
glance

Like those three stars of the airy Giant's
zone,

That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;

And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,

And bickers into red and emerald, shone

Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they
came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard

War-music, felt the blind wild beast of force,

Whose home is in the sinews of man,

Stir in me as to strike: then took the king

His three broad sons; with now a wandering
hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all:

A common light of smiles at our disguise

Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
 Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
 And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
 But then this question of your troth remains:
 And there's a downright honest meaning in
 her;

She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
 She ask'd but space and fair play for her
 scheme;

She prest and prest it on me—I myself,
 What know I of these things? but, life and
 soul!

I thought her half right talking of her wrongs;
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
 I take her for the flower of womankind,
 And so I often told her, right or wrong,
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she
 loves,

And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,
 I stand upon her side: she made me swear it—
 'Sdeath—and with solemn rites by candle-
 light—

Swear by St. something—I forget her name—
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
 She was a princess too; and so I swore.

Come, this is all; she will not: waive your
 claim:

If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
 Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.”

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
 My precontract, and loth by brainless war
 To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside
 And fingering at the hair above his lip,
 To prick us on to combat "Like to like!
 The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
 A taunt that clinch'd his purpose like a blow!
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
 "Decide it here: why not? we are three to
 three."

Then spake the third, "But three to three?
 no more?

No more, and in our noble sister's cause?
 More, more, for honor: every captain waits
 Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each
 May breathe himself, and quick! by overthrow
 Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of
 air,

This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
 Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if ye will.

It needs must be for honor if at all:

Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,

And if we win, we fail: she would not keep
 Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we will send to
 her,"

Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should
 Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',
 And you shall have her answer by the word."

“Boys!” shriek’d the old king, but vainlier
than a hen

To her false daughters in the pool; for none
Regarded; neither seem’d there more to say:
Back rode we to my father’s camp, and
found

He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people’s life: three times he
went:

The first, he blew and blew, but none appear’d:
He batter’d at the doors; none came: the
next,

An awful voice within had warn’d him thence:
The third, and those eight daughters of the
plough

Came sallying thro’ the gates, and caught his
hair,

And so belabor’d him on rib and cheek
They made him wild: not less one glance he
caught

Thro’ open doors of Ida station’d there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho’ compass’d by two armies and the noise
Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,

When storm is on the heights, and right and
left

Suck’d from the dark heart of the long hills
roll

The torrents, dash’d to the vale: and yet her
will

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
 His iron palms together with a cry;
 Himself would tilt it out among the lads:
 But overborne by all his bearded lords
 With reasons drawn from age and state, per-
 force
 He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur:
 And many a bold knight started up in heat,
 And sware to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
 Flat to the garden-wall: and likewise here,
 Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
 A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
 And great bronze valves, emboss'd with
 Tomyris
 And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
 But now fast barr'd: so here upon the flat
 All that long morn the lists were hammer'd
 up,
 And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
 With message and defiance, went and came;
 Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
 But shaken here and there, and rolling words
 Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

“O brother, you have known the pangs we
 felt,
 What heats of indignation when we heard
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet;
 Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a
 scourge;

Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots; and of
those,—

Mothers,—that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and
swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion: and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men: the old leaven leaven'd
all:

Millions of throats would brawl for civil rights,
No woman named: therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them:
I stored it full of rich memorial:

I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey
And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our
peace,

Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not
what

Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond—the striplings!—for their
sport!—

I tamed my leopards: shall I not tame these?
Or you? or I? for since you think me touch'd
In honor—what, I would not aught of false—
Is not our cause pure? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight; you failing, I abide
What end soever: fail you will not. Still

Take not his life: he risk'd it for my own;
 His mother lives: yet whatso'er you do,
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike home.

O dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
 The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
 The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your statues
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd
 aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,
 And mould a generation strong to move
 With claim on claim from right to right, till she
 Whose name is yoked with children's, knows
 herself;

And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
 And, ever following those two crowned twins,
 Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery
 grain

Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
 Between the Northern and the Southern
 morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the
 rest.

"See that there be no traitors in your camp:
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-plague of
 men!

Almost our maids were better at their homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here: indeed I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother; which she left:
 She shall not have it back: the child shall grow

To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning: there the tender orphan hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from
 thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world: fare-
 well."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but she may
 sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho' your-
 self
 Bedazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the spindling
 king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the woman takes
 it up,
 And topples down the scales; but this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of all;
 Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
 Man for the sword and for the needle she:
 Man with the head and woman with the heart:
 Man to command and woman to obey;
 All else confusion. Look you! the gray mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell
 Mix with his hearth: but you—she's yet a
 colt—
 Take, break her: strongly groom'd and straitly
 curb'd
 She might not rank with those detestable

That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the
street.

They say she's comely; there's the fairer
chance:

I like her none the less for rating at her!
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child
Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon:
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his life:"
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win:"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end:
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should
fall;

And like a flash the weird affection came:
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream:
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and
plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land

Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again: at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I
dream'd

Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but kept their
seats:

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and
drew:

Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses.
Down

From these two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and every-
where

He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain,—brand, mace, and shaft,
and shield—

Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish lions? if this be so,
The mother makes us most—and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a saint's glory up in heaven: but she

No saint—inexorable—no tenderness—
 Too hard, too cruel: yet she sees me fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall! with that I drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my dream
 All that I would. But that large-moulded
 man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,
 Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering
 back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman
 came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign till it
 strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks,
 and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar that
 Earth
 Reels, and the herdsmen cry; for everything
 Gave way before him: only Florian, he
 That loved me closer than his own right eye,
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him down:
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet, tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
 And threw him: last I spurr'd; I felt my
 veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to
 hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we
 hung,

Till I struck out and shouted; the blade
glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me · darkness closed me; and I
fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead:
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face:
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

PART VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grow more tragic and more
strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my
cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and
ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovel'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came;
 The leaves were wet with women's tears: they heard
 A noise of songs they would not understand:
 They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
 And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they came,
 The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
 But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
 And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
 And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: they struck;
 With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
 There dwelt an iron nature in the grain:
 The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
 Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

“Our enemies have fall'n, but this shall grow
 A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
 Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power: and roll'd
 With music in the growing breeze of Time,
 The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
 Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
 Is violate, our laws broken: fear we not
 To break them more in their behoof, whose
 arms
 Champion'd our cause and won it with a day
 Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual feast,
 When dames and heroines of the golden year
 Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
 To rain an April of ovation round
 Their statues, borne aloft, the three: but come,
 We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
 Let them not lie in the tents with coarse man-
 kind,

Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that
there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her
arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves,
and led

A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed, on they
came,

Their feet in flowers, her loveliest: by them
went

The enamor'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering
fell,

And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open fields into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there
stay'd;

Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,—and
prest

Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said "You shall not lie in the tents but
here,

And nursed by those for whom you fought, and
 served
 With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whether moved by this, or was it
 chance,
 She past my way. Up started from my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
 Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
 The haggard father's face and reverend beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:
 "He saved my life: my brother slew him for
 it."

No more: at which the king in bitter scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
 And held them up: she saw them, and a day
 Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good Queen, her mother, shore the
 tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche:
 And then once more she look'd at my pale
 face:

Till understanding all the foolish work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind;
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast;
 She bowed, she set the child on the earth; she
 laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and presently

“O Sire,” she said, “he lives: he is not dead:
 O let me have him with my brethren here
 In our own palace: we will tend on him
 Like one of these; if so, by any means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
 Our progress falter to the woman’s goal.”

She said: but at the happy word “he lives”
 My father stoop’d, re-fathered o’er my wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen life,
 With brow to brow like night and evening
 mixt

Their dark and gray, with Psyche ever stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
 Half lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
 Lay like a new-fall’n meteor on the grass,
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
 Brook’d not, but clamoring out, “Mine—
 mine—not yours,

It is not yours, but mine: give me the child”
 Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:
 So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth’d,
 And turn’d each face her way: wan was her
 cheek

With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
 Red grief and mother’s hunger in her eye,
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
 The sacred mother’s bosom, panting, burst
 The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,
 Look’d up, and rising slowly from me, stood

Erect and silent, striking with her glance
 The mother, me, the child; but he that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
 Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it
 seem'd,

Or self involved; but when she learnt his face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him
 grew

Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

“O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
 That with your long locks play the Lion's
 mane!

But Love and Nature, these are two more ter-
 rible

And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.

What would you more? give her the child! re-
 main

Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware
 Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
 The common hate with the revolving wheel
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with
 fire,

And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,

Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
 Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
 Give me it: I will give it her."

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd
 Dry flame, she listening: after sank and sank
 And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
 Full on the child; she took it: "Pretty bud!
 Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of the woods!
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
 Of traitorous friend and broken system made
 No purple in the distance, mystery,
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell;
 These men are hard upon us as of old,
 We two must part: and yet how fain was I
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
 I might be something to thee, when I felt
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
 In the dead prime: but may thy mother prove
 As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
 And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish
 it

Gentle as freedom"—here she kiss'd it: then—
 "All good go with thee! take it, Sir," and so
 Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
 Who turn'd half round to Psyche as she sprang
 To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
 Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,

And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
 And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
 And hid her bosom with it; after that
 Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

“We two were friends: I go to mine own
 land
 For ever: find some other: as for me
 I scarce am fit for your great plans: yet speak
 to me,
 Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.”

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
 Then Arac. “Ida—'sdeath! you blame the
 man;
 You wrong yourselves—the woman is so hard
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
 I am your warrior: I and mine have fought
 Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she
 weeps:
 'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than
 see it.”

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

“I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
 And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
 Whence drew you this steel temper? not from
 me,
 Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
 She said you had a heart—I heard her say it—
 'Our Ida has a heart'—just ere she died—

'But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still,' and I—I sought for one—
 All people said she had authority—
 The Lady Blanche: much profit! Not one
 word;
 No! tho' your father sues; see how you stand
 Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights
 maim'd,
 I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
 For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
 Was it for this we gave our palace up,
 Where we withdrew from summer heats and
 state,
 And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
 And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
 Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
 Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
 When first she came, all flush'd you said to me
 Now had you got a friend of your own age,
 Now could you share your thought; now should
 men see
 Two women faster welded in one love
 Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with,
 she
 You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the
 tower,
 Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
 And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and
 now
 A word, but one, one little kindly word,
 Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
 You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
 You shame your mother's judgment, too. Not
 one?

You will not? well—no heart have you, or such
 As fancies like the vermin in a nut
 Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.”
 So said the small king moved beyond his
 wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
 By many a varying influence and so long.
 Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor
 wept:

Her head a little bent; and on her mouth
 A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
 In a still water: then brake out my sire,
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds. “O
 you,

Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
 And were half fool'd to let you tend our
 son,

Because he might have wish'd it—but we see
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
 And think that you might mix his draught
 with death,

When your skies change again: the rougher
 hand

Is safer: on to the tents: take up the Prince.”

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to
 attend

A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her
 broke

A genial warmth and light once more, and
 shone

Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

"Come hither. O Psyche," she cried out,
 "embrace me, come,
 Quick while I melt; make reconcilment sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour:
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so!
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid!
 I seem no more: I want forgiveness too;
 I should have had to do with none but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah, false but
 dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why?—why?—
 Yet see,
 Before these kings we embrace you yet once
 more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.
 And now, O sire,
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon
 him,
 Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
 Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall
 have
 Free adit; we will scatter all our maids
 Till happier times each to her proper hearth:
 What use to keep them here—now? grant my
 prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to the king:
 Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
 Which kills me with myself, and drags me
 down
 From my fixt height to mob me up with all,
 The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears
Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril said:
"Your brother, Lady,—Florian,—ask for him
Of your great head—for he is wounded too—
That you may tend upon him with the prince."

"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken: let him enter too."
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,
"I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
"Ay so?" said Blanche: "Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with
ease

The law your Highness did not make: 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out; but these men came to
woo
Your Highness—verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye:
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

"Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but
all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base

Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your
likes.

We brook no further insult but are gone.”

She turn'd; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation: but the Prince
Her brother came; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words: nor did mine
own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and
bare
Straight to the doors: to them the doors gave
way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels:
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and
there
Rested: but great the crush was, and each
base,
To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers: at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear: but in the center stood
The common men with rolling eyes; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and steel

That o'er the statues leant from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shuddering fled from room to room, and
died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance:
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness; left me in it;
And others elsewhere they laid; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was
changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die,
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live,
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd:
I strove against the stream and all in vain:
Let the great river take me to the main:
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

PART VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital;
At first with all confusion: and by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws:
A kindlier influence reign'd; and everywhere
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they
 talk'd,
They sang, they read: till she not fair began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame.
Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke: but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field: void was her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black
 cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendor from the sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn by tarn
 Expunge the world: so fared she gazing
 there;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain; till down she
 came,
 And found fair peace once more among the
 sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by morn
 the lark
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:
 And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the
 bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and
 Heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could reach
 me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in their
 sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with her oft,
 Melissa came; for Blanche had gone, but left
 Her child among us, willing she should keep
 Court-favor: here and there the small bright
 head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves

To wile the length from languorous hours, and
draw
The sting from pain; nor seem'd it strange
that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd that
hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper
down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had
sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good
name;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche: on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these: Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and
man;
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,

Nor did mine own now reconciled; nor yet
 Did those twin-brothers, risen again and whole;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat:
 Then came a change; for sometimes I would
 catch

Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
 "You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,
 And call her hard and cold which seem'd a
 truth:

And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
 And often she believed that I should die:
 Till out of long frustration of her care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
 And watches in the dead, the dark, when
 clocks

Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or
 call'd

On flying Time from all their silver tongues—
 And out of memories of her kindlier days,
 And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in heart—
 And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted
 cheek—

From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears

By some cold morning glacier; frail at first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to
 death
 For weakness: it was evening: silent light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein were
 wrought
 Two grand designs; for on one side arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they
 cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; behind,
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in Roman
 scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them paused
 Hortensia pleading: angry was her face.

I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
 They did but look like hollow shows; nor more
 Sweet Ida: palm to palm she sat: the dew
 Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
 And rounder seem'd: I moved: I sigh'd: a
 touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand:
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,

Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly:

“If you be, what I think you, some sweet
 dream,
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one
 sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd; she
 paused;
 She stoop'd; and out of languor leapt a cry;
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death;
 And I believed that in the living world
 My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
 Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
 Glowing all over noble shame; and all
 Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
 And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
 Than in her mould that other, when she came
 From barren deeps to conquer all with love;
 And down the streaming crystal dropt; and
 she
 Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
 Naked, a double light in air and wave,
 To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
 For worship without end; nor end of mine,
 Stateliest, for thee! but mute she glided forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land:
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on me.

Now lies the Earth all Danae to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read:

“Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,

Or red with spirited purple of the vats,
 Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
 With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
 Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
 Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
 That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
 To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:
 But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
 To find him in the valley; let the wild
 Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
 The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
 Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
 That like a broken purpose waste in air:
 So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
 Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
 Arise to thee; the children call, and I
 Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
 Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
 Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
 The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
 And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut eyes I lay
 Listening; then look'd. Pale was the perfect
 face:

The bosom with long sighs labor'd; and meek
 Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous
 eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand. She
 said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
 In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
 That all her labor was but as a block
 Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
 She still were loth to yield herself to one
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
 Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their cause from
her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than
power
In knowledge: something wild within her
breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to
week:
Much had she learnt in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
“Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.”

Her voice
Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultless Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.
“Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “nor
blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;
These were the rough ways of the world till
now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man

The shining steps of nature, shares with man
 His nights, his days, moves him to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
 How shall men grow? but work no more alone!
 Our place is much: as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aiding her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
 Within her—let her make herself her own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and be
 All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
 For woman is not undeveloped man,
 But diverse: could we make her as the man,
 Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is
 this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the
 world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other ev'n as those who love.
 Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:

Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste
and calm:

Then springs the crowning race-of humankind.
May these things be!"

Sighing she spoke "I fear
They will not."

"Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword
rest

Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full
stroke,
Life."

And again sighing she spoke: "A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you
this?"

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman: he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with
crime:

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,

Interpreter between the Gods and men,
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
 And girdled her with music. Happy he
 With such a mother! faith in womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things
 high
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."

"But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, "so all unlike—
 It seems you love to cheat yourself with words:
 This mother is your model. I have heard
 Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I
 seem
 A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince;
 You cannot love me."

"Nay but thee," I said
 "From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron moods
 That mask'd thee from men's reverence up,
 and forced
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro' thee,
 Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
 Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are
 dead,
 My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world;
Approach and fear not; breathe upon my
brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to come.
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive
me,

I waste my heart in signs: let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee:
come,

Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me."

CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
 The random scheme as wildly as it rose:
 The words are mostly mine; for when we
 ceased

There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
 "I wish she had not yielded!" then to me,
 "What, if you drest it up poetically!"

So pray'd the men, the women: I gave assent:
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style could
 suit?

The men required that I should give through-
 out

The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
 With which we banter'd little Lilia first:
 The women—and perhaps they felt their
 power,

For something in the ballads which they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close—
 They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess—why
 Not make her true-heroic—true sublime?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the close?
 Which yet with such a framework scarce could
 be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
And I, betwixt them both, to please them
both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute: the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her; and she sat, she pluck'd the
grass,
She flung it from her, thinking: last, she fixt,
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
"You—tell us what we are" who might have
told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of
books,
But that there rose a shout: the gates were
closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these: we climb'd
The slope to Vivian place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace;
Gray hills alone among their massive groves;
Trim hamlets; here and there a rustic tower
Half lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream; the
seas,
A red sail, or a white; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

"Look there, a garden!" said my college
 friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, "and there!
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled—
 Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves have
 made,
 Some patient force to change them when we
 will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the crowd—
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
 The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
 In mock heroics stranger than our own;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
 As some of theirs—God bless the narrow seas!
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "ourselves are
 full
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
 This fine old world of ours is but a child

Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that
guides.''

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of
those

That stood the nearest — now address'd to
speech—

Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery
swerve

From the elms, and shook the branches of the
deer

From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and
rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout
More joyful than the city roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great
Sirs

Give up their parks some dozen times a year

To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we
sat

But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls
whoop'd,

And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of
Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased
we went.

MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

I.

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little
wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with
blood-red heath,
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror
of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers
"Death."

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body
was found,
His who had given me life—O father! O God!
was it well?—
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dented
into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when
he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a
vast speculation had fail'd,

And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever
 wann'd with despair,
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken
 worldling wail'd,
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands
 drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair
 were stirr'd
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by
 a whisper'd fright,
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock
 on my heart as I heard
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the
 shuddering night.

V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are
 villains all.
 Not he: his honest fame should at least by me
 be maintained:
 But that old man, now lord of the broad estate
 and the Hall,
 Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left
 us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace?
 We have made them a curse,
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is
 not its own;
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it bet-
 ter or worse



“She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.”—Page 133.
The Princess.

Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on
his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works
of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a
tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and
that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing
the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the
print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither
hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face
as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows?
we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the
days gone by,
When the poor are hovel'd and hustled to-
gether, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not
all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company
forges the wine.

x.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

xi.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous center-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

xii.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

xiii.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,

And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the
three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would
leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his
cheating yardwand, home.—

XIV.

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in
his mood?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash my-
self down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made,
nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched
swindler's lie?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for me? there was love
in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false
haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought
he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he
used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of
the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever
come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the
nerves of pain,

Were it not wise if I fled from the place and
the pit and the fear?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall!—they are coming
back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of
a millionaire:
I have heard, I know not whence, of the sin-
gular beauty of Maud;
I play'd with the girl when a child; she prom-
ised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tum-
bles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing
joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my
father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-
faced darling of all,—

XIX.

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She
may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will
let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether
woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil
may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I
may find it at last!

It will never be broken by Maud, she has
neither savor nor salt,

But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when
her carriage past,

Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her;
where is the fault?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not
to be seen)

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it
had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's
defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe,
too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a
sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free, with the
least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cru-
elly meek,

Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly
was drown'd,

Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead
on the cheek,

Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a
gloom profound;

Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a
transient wrong

Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever
as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me
without a sound,

Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half
the night long

Growing and fading and growing, till I could
bear it no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my own dark
garden ground,

Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung
shipwrecking roar,

Now to the scream of a madden'd beach
dragg'd down by the wave,

Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer,
and found

The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in
his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded
lime

In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore
cannot I be

Like things of the season gay, like the bounti-
ful season bland,

When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of
a softer clime,

Half lost in the liquid azure bloom of a cres-
cent of sea,

The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of
the land?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how
quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip,
scandal, and spite:
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many
lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock,
glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass
like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my
leading star!

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the
wrinkled head of the race?
I met her to-day with her brother, but not to
her brother I bow'd:
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the
moor;
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her
beautiful face;
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in
being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am
nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to
slander and steal;

I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a
 stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its
 way:
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no
 preacher can heal;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow
 spear'd by the shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a
 world of plunder and prey.

v.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty
 fair in her flower;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an un-
 seen hand at a game
 That pushes us off from the board, and others
 ever succeed?
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here
 for an hour;
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin
 at a brother's shame;
 However we brave it out, we men are a little
 breed.

vi.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Mas-
 ter of Earth,
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river
 billowing ran,
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's
 crowning race.
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant
 ripe for his birth,

So many a million of ages have gone to the
making of man:
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not
too base?

VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory,
and vain,
An eye well-practiced in nature, a spirit
bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into
folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a tem-
perate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could
learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a
garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid
by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God
will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the
world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if
a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or
with knout?
I have not made the world, and He that made
it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet wood-
land ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace
be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the
hubbub of lies;
From the long-neck'd geese of the world that
are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether
he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a
cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel
madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the meas-
ureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all
unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image
in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander
about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the
lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green.
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot
die.

Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and
mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before

Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
 No sun, but a wannish glare
 In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
 And the budded peaks of the wood are bow'd
 Caught and cuff'd by the gale:
 I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd
 On the blossom'd gable-ends
 At the head of the village street,
 Whom but Maud should I meet?
 And she touch'd my hand with a smile so
 sweet,
 She made me divine amends
 For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
 Of glowing and growing light
 Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
 Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
 Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
 Till at last when the morning came
 In a cloud, it faded, and seems
 But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI.

What if tho' her eyes seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewel'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake

A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and belts for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half turned to stone.

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
 By that you swore to withstand?
 For what was it else within me wrought
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
 That made my tongue so stammer and trip
 When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
 Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
 And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child;
 She remembers it now we meet.
 Ah well, well, well, I may be beguiled
 By some coquettish deceit.
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,
 Then the world were not so bitter
 But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.

Did I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair?

II.

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me;

“Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.”

III.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Vizrers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
“Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.”

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and sigh'd
“No surely, now it cannot be pride.”

IX.

I was walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,
 The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor,
 And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land,
 Rapidly riding far away,
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride
 In a moment they were gone:
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 Then returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
 Was not one of the two at her side,
 This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's head?
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
 Master of half a servile shire,
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold

To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out?
 For one of the two that rode at her side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
 A bought commission, a waxen face
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
 And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
 A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
 At war with myself and a wretched race,
 Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county town,
 To preach our poor little army down,
 And play the game of the despot kings,
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice as well.
 This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton, and
 rings
 Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
 This huckster put down war! can he tell
 Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
 Put down the passions that make earth Hell!
 Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
 The bitter springs of anger and fear;
 Down too, down at your own fireside,
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
 For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again
 The chivalrous battle-song
 That she warbled alone in her joy!
 I might persuade myself then
 She would not do herself this great wrong,
 To take a wanton dissolute boy
 For a man and leader of men.

v.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
 Like some of the simple great ones gone
 For ever and ever by,
 One still strong man in a blatant land,
 Whatever they call him, what care I,
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,
 That the man I am may cease to be!

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I, who else, was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang
 Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
 In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
 She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
 But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride
 Who have won her favor!
O Maud were sure of Heaven
 If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went
 Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the meadows
 And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
 Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
 One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
 And little King Charley snarling,

Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vext with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gordonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:

Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
 For only once, in the village street,
 Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
 A gray old wolf and a lean.
 Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
 For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
 She might by a true descent be untrue;
 And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
 Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
 To the sweeter blood by the other side;
 Her mother has been a thing complete,
 However she came to be so allied.
 And fair without, faithful within,
 Maud to him is nothing akin;
 Some peculiar mystic grace
 Made her only the child of her mother,
 And heap'd the whole inherited sin
 On that huge scapegoat of the race,
 All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
 Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses
 And lilies fair on the lawn;
 There she walks in her state
 And tends upon bed and bower,
 And thither I climb'd at dawn
 And stood by her garden-gate;

A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to
glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down to
my side,
There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood;
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;

But I look'd, and round, all round the house I
 beheld
 The death-white curtain drawn;
 Felt a horror over me creep,
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
 Knew that the death-white curtain meant but
 sleep,
 Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool of the
 sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
 And I make myself such evil cheer,
 That if I be dear to some one else,
 Then some one else may have much to fear;
 But if I be dear to some one else,
 Then I should be to myself more dear.
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
 If I be dear,
 If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

I.

This lump of earth has left his estate
 The lighter by the loss of his weight;
 And so that he find what he went to seek,
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and drown
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
 He may stay for a year who has gone for a
 week:
 But this is the day when I must speak,

And I see my Oread coming down,
 O this is the day!
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way;
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
 And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
 To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
 And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,
 To know her beauty might half undo it.
 I know it the one bright thing to save
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to his fool lord,
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?
 Should I love her so well if she
 Had given her word to a thing so low?
 Shall I love her as well if she
 Can break her word were it even for me?
 I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
 For I must tell her before we part,
 I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it thro' the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I.

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
 There is none like her, none.
 And never yet so warmly ran my blood
 And sweetly, on and on
 Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
 Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

II.

None like her, none.
 Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering
 talk
 Seem'd her light foot along the garden walk,
 And shook my heart to think she comes once
 more;
 But even then I heard her close the door,
 The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is
 gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
 Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
 In the long breeze that streams to thy deli-
 cious East,
 Sighing for Lebanon,
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here increased,
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
 And looking to the South, and fed
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,
 And haunted by the starry head
 Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,

And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from whom
she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches
sway,
And yon fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-harden'd hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple
girl.

VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live,

Let no one ask how it came to pass;
 It seems that I am happy, that to me
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die; but live a life of truest breath,
 And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
 O, why should Love, like men in drinking-
 songs,
 Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
 Make answer, Maud my bliss,
 Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
 Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
 "The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
 With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself
 more dear."

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
 Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
 And hark the clock within, the silver knell
 Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
 And died to live, long as my pulses play;
 But now by this my love has closed her sight
 And given false death her hand, and stol'n
 away
 To dreamful wastes where footless fancies
 dwell
 Among the fragments of the golden day.
 May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
 Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
 My bride to be, my evermore delight,

My own heart's heart, my ownest own, fare-
well;

It is but for a little space I go:

And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell

Beat to the noiseless music of the night!

Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow

Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.

Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,

Beat with my heart more blest than heart can
tell,

Blest, but for some dark and undercurrent
woe

That seems to draw—but it shall not be so:

Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?

I have walk'd awake with Truth.

O when did a morning shine

So rich in atonement as this

For my dark-dawning youth,

Darken'd watching a mother decline

And that dead man at her heart and mine:

For who was left to watch her but I?

Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
 To gentle Maud in our walk
 (For often in lonely wanderings
 I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
 But I trust that I did not talk,
 Not touch on her father's sin:
 I am sure I did but speak
 Of my mother's faded cheek
 When it slowly grew so thin,
 That I felt she was slowly dying
 Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:
 For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
 Shaking her head at her son and sighing
 A world of trouble within!

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
 To speak of the mother she loved
 As one scarce less forlorn,
 Dying abroad and it seems apart
 From him who had ceased to share her heart,
 And ever mourning over the feud,
 The household Fury sprinkled with blood
 By which our houses are torn:
 How strange was what she said,
 When only Maud and the brother
 Hung over her dying bed—
 That Maud's dark father and mine
 Had bound us one to the other,
 Betrothed us over their wine,
 On the day when Maud was born;
 Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.
 Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

v.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
 To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
 That, if left uncanceled, had been so sweet:
 And none of us thought of a something be-
 yond,
 A desire that awoke in the heart of a child,
 As it were a duty done to the tomb,
 To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
 And I was cursing them and my doom,
 And letting a dangerous thought run wild
 While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
 Of foreign churches—I see her there,
 Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
 To be friends, to be reconciled!

vi.

But then what a flint is he!
 Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
 I find whenever she touch'd on me
 This brother had laugh'd her down,
 And at last, when each came home,
 He had darken'd into a frown,
 Chid her, and forbid her to speak
 To me, her friend of the years before;
 And this was what had redden'd her cheek
 When I bow'd to her on the moor.

vii.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
 To the faults of his heart and mind,

I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII.

Kind? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why let it be so:
For shall not Maud have her will?

IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours;
O then, what then shall I say?—
If ever I should forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

x.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dread body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry ;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

1.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy ;
The Sultan, as we name him,—
She did not wish to blame him—
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly :
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due ?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer ;

For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And I mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, oh then, come out to me
For a minute, but a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render

All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee
(If I read her sweet will right)
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be
Among the roses to-night."

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,

To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon;
 All night has the casement jessamine stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, "There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone?
 She is weary of dance and play."
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, "The brief night does
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose
 "For ever and ever, mine."

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my blood
 As the music clash'd in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall

From the lake to the meadow and on to the
 wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII.

From the meadow your walks have left so
 sweet
 That whenever a March wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernal dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X.

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.

She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate;
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
And the white rose weeps, "She is late;"
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthly bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

I.

“The fault was mine, the fault was mine”—
Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the
hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—

And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land—
What is it, that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of Hell and of Hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by:
Struck for himself an evil stroke:
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe;
For front to front in an hour we stood,

And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,
 And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christless
 code,
 That must have life for a blow.
 Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
 Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
 "The fault was mine," he whisper'd, "fly!"
 Then glided out of the joyous wood
 The ghastly Wraith of one that I know;
 And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
 A cry for a brother's blood:
 It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die,
 till I die.

II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
 What was it! a lying trick of the brain?
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,
 A shadow there at my feet,
 High over the shadowy land.
 It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle
 rain,
 When they should burst and drown with delug-
 ing storms
 The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
 The little hearts that knew not how to forgive:
 Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee
 just,
 Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous
 worms.
 That sting each other here in the dust;
 We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

II.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock

Of cataract seas that snap
 The three-decker's oaken spine
 Athwart the ledges of rock,
 Here on the Breton strand!

v.

Breton, not Briton; here
 Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
 Of ancient fable and fear—
 Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
 A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
 That never came from on high
 Nor ever arose from below,
 But only moves with the moving eye,
 Flying along the land and the main—
 Why should it look like Maud?
 Am I to be overawed
 By what I cannot but know
 Is a juggle born of the brain?

vi.

Back from the Breton coast,
 Sick in a nameless fear,
 Back to the dark sea-line
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
 An old song vexes my ear;
 But that of Lamech is mine.

vii.

For years, a measureless ill,
 For years, for ever, to part—
 But she, she would love me still;
 And as long, O God, as she
 Have a grain of love for me,

So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee:
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lip, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

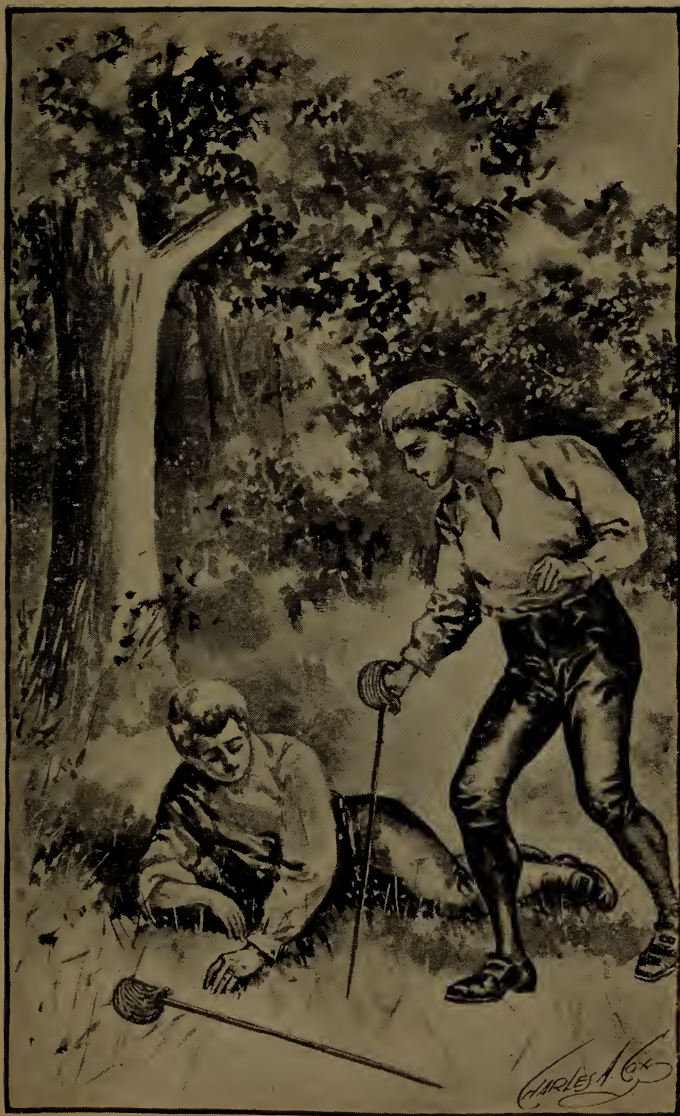
Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That will show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,



“I remember when he lay dying there.”—Page 189.
The Princess,

Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manoral hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say, "Forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest?"

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me:
Always, I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep.
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!

And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing
feet,

Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not
so;

To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that
are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read;
It is that which makes us loud in the world of
the dead;

There is none that does his work, not one;
 A touch of their office might have sufficed,
 But the churchmen fain would kill their
 church,
 As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
 No limit to his distress;
 And another, a lord of all things, praying
 To his own great self, as I guess;
 And another, a statesman there, betraying
 His party-secret, fool, to the press;
 And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
 The case of his patient—all for what?
 To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
 And wheedle a world that loves him not,
 For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!
 For the prophecy given of old
 And then not understood,
 Has come to pass as foretold;
 Not let any man think for the public good,
 But babble, merely for babble.
 For I never whisper'd a private affair
 Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
 No, not to myself in the closet alone,
 But I heard it shouted at once from the top of
 the house;
 Everything came to be known.
 Who told him we were there?

v.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
 From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he
 used to lie;
 He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown
 whelp to crack;
 Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and
 die.

vi.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
 And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
 I know not whether he came in the Hanover
 ship,
 But I know that he lies and listens mute
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes:
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes, poor
 souls!
 It is all used up for that.

vii.

Tell him now: she is standing here at my
 head;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind;
 He may take her now; for she never speaks
 her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not of us, as I divine;
 She comes from another stiller world of the
 dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes;
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but
 blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linkt a dead man there to a spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

IX.

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow—
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep
 enough?

Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb;
I will cry to the steps above my head,
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will
 come
To bury me, bury me. Deeper, ever so little
 deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and
fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little
thing;
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of
year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy
downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Chariot-
eer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band
of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the com-
ing wars—
“And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have
rest
Knowing I tarry for thee,” and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's
breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear
 delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes
 so fair,
 That had been in a weary world my one thing
 bright;
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my
 despair
 When I thought that a war would arise in de-
 fense of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or
 cease,
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient
 height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd in-
 crease,
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's
 throat
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind
 no more.

III.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle
 grew,
 "It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,"
 said I
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure
 and true),

"It is time, O passionate heart and morbid
 eye,
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
 And stood on a giant deck and mix'd my
 breath
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of
 death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of
 gold,
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs
 and shames
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
 And hail once more to the banner of battle
 unroll'd!
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many
 shall weep
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jar-
 ring claims,
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a
 giant liar;
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid
 names,
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
 For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over
 and done,
 And now by the side of the Black and the Bal-
 tic deep,

And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress,
flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of
fire.

v.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like
a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause,
we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the
better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at
the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with
my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom
assign'd.

ENOCH ARDEN.

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster; then a moulder'd church; and
 higher

A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows; and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, daily left
The little footprint daily washed away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.

Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week:
"This is my house and this my little wife."
"Mine too," said Philip; "turn and turn
about:"

When, if they quarreled, Enoch stronger-made
Was master: then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out, "I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming
seas:

And all men look'd upon him favorably:
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May,
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the
mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood;
There, while the rest were loud in merry-
making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past.
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the
bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honorable toil;
With children; first a daughter. In him woke,

With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
 To save all earnings to the uttermost,
 And give his child a better bringing-up
 Than his had been, or hers; a wish renew'd,
 When two years after came a boy to be
 The rosy idol of her solitudes,
 While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
 Or often journeying landward; for in truth
 Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
 In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales
 Not only to the market-cross were known,
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human
 change.

Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used
 Enoch at times to go by land or sea;
 And once when there, and clambering on a
 mast

In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:
 A limb was broken when they lifted him;
 And while he lay recovering there, his wife
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:
 Another hand crept too across his trade
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
 He seem'd as in a nightmare of the night,
 To see his children leading evermore

Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd
"Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the
place?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife—
When he was gone—the children—what to do?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;
To sell the boat—and yet he loved her well—
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse—
And yet to sell her—then with what she
brought

Buy goods and stores—set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed for their wives—
So might she keep the house while he was
gone.

Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
This voyage more than once? yea twice or
thrice—

As oft as needed—last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,

With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondled featherlike,
But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his
hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear

Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and
rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him: and then he said
“Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it.”
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle “and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay—for I love him all the better for it—
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home
again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.”

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing

On providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
 Heard and not heard ;as the village girl,
 Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
 Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
 Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: "O Enoch, you are
 wise;
 And yet for all your wisdom well know I
 That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well, then," said Enoch, "I shall look on
 yours,
 Annie, the ship I sail in passes here
 (He named the day), get you a seaman's glass,
 Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments
 came,
 "Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
 Look to the babes, and till I come again
 Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
 And fear no more for me; or if you fear
 Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.
 Is He not yonder in those uttermost
 Parts of the morning? if I flee to these
 Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,
 The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,
 Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
 And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;
 But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
 After a night of feverous wakefulness,
 When Annie would have raised him Enoch said

“Wake him not; let him sleep; how should
the child

Remember this?” and kiss’d him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby’s forehead clipt
A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept
Thro’ all his future; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day that Enoch mention’d,
came,

Borrow’d a glass, but all in vain: perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye:
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;
She saw him not: and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

E’en to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watched it, and departed weeping for
him;

Then, tho’ she mourn’d his absence as his
grave,

Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding “what would Enoch say?”
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold:
She fail’d and sadden’d knowing it; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
ain’d for her own a scanty sustenance,
nd lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and
 grew
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
 With all a mother's care: nevertheless,
 Whether her business often call'd her from it,
 Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
 Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
 What most it needed—howsoe'er it was,
 After a lingering,—ere she was aware,—
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
 Philip's true heart, which hungered for her
 peace
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
 "Surely," said Philip, "I may see her now,
 May be some little comfort;" therefore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little one,
 Cared not to look on any human face,
 But turned her own toward the wall and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said falteringly
 "Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd reply
 "Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
 As I am!" half abash'd him; yet unask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
 He set himself beside her, saying to her:

“I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband: I have ever said
You chose the best among us—a strong man:
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely? not to see the world—
For pleasure?—nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours: that was his
wish.

And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even in his grave,
If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now—
Have we not known each other all our lives?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me—if you will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favor that I came to ask.”

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd “I cannot look you in the face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks me
down;
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on me:
He will repay you: money can be repaid;
Not kindness such as yours.”

And Philip ask'd
 "Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,
 She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon
 him,
 And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
 Then calling down a blessing on his head
 Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
 And passed into the little garth beyond.
 So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
 And bought them needful books, and every-
 way,
 Like one who does his duty by his own,
 Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,
 Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
 He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
 And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
 Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
 The late and early roses from his wall,
 Or conies from the down, and now and then,
 With some pretext of fineness in the meal
 To save the offence of charitable, flour
 From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:
 Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
 Out of full heart and boundless gratitude
 Light on a broken word to thank him with.
 But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
 From distant corners of the street they ran
 To greet his hearty welcome heartily;

Lords of his house and of his mill were they;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where: and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children
long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,
And Annie would go with them; then they
begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying
to him
"Come with us, Father Philip," he denied;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest" she
said:
So Philip rested with her well-content;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultuously

Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or
broke

The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow: at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word,
"Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her
hands;

At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
"The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was
lost!

No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?" And Annie
said

"I thought not of it: but—I know not why—
Their voices makes me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
"Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well then—let me speak:
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:

I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you
know—

I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children: I do think
They love me as a father: I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours:
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know.”

Then answer'd Annie: tenderly she spoke:
“You have been as God's good angel in our
house.

God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?

“I am content,” he answer'd “to be loved”
A little after Enoch.” “O” she cried,
Scared as it were, “dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:
Surely I shall be wiser in a year:
O wait a little!” Philip sadly said
“Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.” “Nay,” she cried
“I am bound: you have my promise—in a year:

Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?"
 And Philip answer'd "I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
 Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
 Pass from the Danish barrow overhead;
 Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
 And sent his voice beneath him thro' the
 wood.

Up came the children laden with their spoil;
 Then all descended to the port, and there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand,
 Saying gently "Annie, when I spoke to you,
 That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
 I am always bound to you, but you are free."
 Then Annie weeping answer'd "I am bound."

She spoke; and in one moment as it were,
 While yet she went about her household ways,
 Even as she dwelt upon his latest words,
 That he had loved her longer than she knew,
 That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
 And there he stood once more before her face,
 Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?" she
 ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts," he said "be ripe again:
 Come out and see." But she—she put him
 off—

So much to look to—such a change—a month—
 Give her a month—she knew that she was
 bound—

A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,

“Take your own time, Annie, take your own time.”

And Annie could have wept for pity of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with
her.

Some that she but held off to draw him on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds,
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty:
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew
Careworn and wan; and all these things fell on
her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign “my Enoch is he gone?”
Then compass'd round by the blind wall of
night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
 Then desperately seized the holy Book,
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,
 "Under the palm-tree." That was nothing
 to her:

No meaning there: she closed the Book and
 slept:

When lo: her Enoch sitting on a height,
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:
 "He is gone," she thought, "he is happy, he is
 singing

Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
 Whereof the happy people strowing cried
 'Hosanna in the highest!' " Here she woke,
 Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him
 "There is no reason why we should not wed."
 "Then for God's sake," he answer'd, "both
 our sakes,
 So you will wed me, let be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the
 bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
 But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
 A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
 She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
 She knew not what, nor loved she to be left
 Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
 What ail'd her then, that ere she enter'd,
 often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
 Fearing to enter: Philip thought he knew:

Such doubts and fears were common to her
state,
Being with child: but when her child was
born,
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously sail'd
The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those
times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her
bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them and last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless
 heavens
Till hard upon the cry of "breakers" came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing
 roots;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm,
 a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than
 boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian-fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning
 "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
 And winding glades high up like ways to
 Heaven,

The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
 The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
 The luster of the long convolvuluses
 That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
 And glories of the broad belt of the world,
 All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
 He could not see, the kindly human face,
 Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl
 The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
 The moving whisper of huge trees that
 branch'd

And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
 As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
 Sat often in the seaward gazing gorge,
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
 No sail from day to day, but every day
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
 Among the palms and ferns and precipices;
 The blaze upon the waters to the east;
 The blaze upon his island overhead;
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;
 Then the great stars that globed themselves in
 Heaven,

The hollow-bellowing ocean, and again
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to
 watch,

So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
 A phantom made of many phantoms moved
 Before him haunting him, or he himself
 Moved haunting people, things and places,
 known
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line;
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the small
 house,
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,
 The peacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
 November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
 The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
 And the low moan of leaden-color'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
 Tho' faintly, merrily—far and far away—
 He heard the peeling of his parish bells;
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
 Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful
 isle
 Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart,
 Spoken with That, which being everywhere
 Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all
 alone,
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
 The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
 Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
 And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
 Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
 Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
 (She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,

Like the Good Fortune, from her destined
course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay;
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the
shores
With clamor. Downward from his mountain
gorge
Stept the long-hair'd long-bearded solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human, strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiot like it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making signs
They knew not what: and yet he led the way
To where the rivulet of sweet water ran;
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-bounden
tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them understand:
Whom, when their casks were fill'd they took
aboard;
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce credited at first but more and more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd to it:
And clothes they gave him and free passage
home;
But oft he work'd among the rest and shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could answer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.
And dull the voyage was with long delays,
The vessel scarce seaworthy; but eyermore

His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadow; morning-breathy
Of England, blown across her ghostly wall
And that same morning officers and men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:
Then moving up the coast they landed him,
Ev'n in that harbor whence he sailed before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one.
But homeward—home—what home? had he a
home?
His home, he walk'd. Bright was that after-
noon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in
gray;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly
stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home

Where Annie lived and loved him, and his
babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking, "dead or dead to
me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crost antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone; but he was
gone
Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house;
A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
The Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing—Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken—all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them in it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child: and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion: any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller: only when she closed
"Enoch, poor man, was cast way and lost,"

He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering, "cast away and lost;"
Again in deeper inward whispers, "lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again;
"If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy." So the thought
Haunted and harass'd him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below:
There did a thousand memories roll upon him
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,
Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward; but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and wall'd:
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if
 griefs
Like this have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone; so genial was the hearth:

And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd;
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he
smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things
heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and
fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot

And feeling all along the garden-wall,
 Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found
 Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
 As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
 Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his
 knees
 Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
 His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

“Too hard to bear! why did they take me
 thence?
 O God Almighty, blessed Savior, Thou
 That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
 Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.
 Help me not to break in upon her peace.
 My children too! must I not speak to these?
 They know me not. I should betray myself.
 Never: No father's kiss for me—the girl
 So like her mother, and the boy, my son.”

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a
 little,
 And he lay tranced; but when he rose and
 paced
 Back toward his solitary home again,
 All down the long and narrow street he went
 Beating it in upon his weary brain,
 As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
 “Not to tell her, never to let her know.”

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
 Prayer from a living source within the will,
 And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
 Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
 Kept him a living soul. "This miller's wife,"
 He said to Miriam, "that you spoke about,
 Has she no fear that her first husband lives?"
 "Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, "fear enow!
 If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
 Why, that would be her comfort;" and he
 thought

"After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
 I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
 Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
 Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
 At lading and unlading the tall barks,
 That brought the stinted commerce of those
 days:

Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
 Yet since he did but labor for himself,
 Work without hope, there was not life in it
 Whereby the man could live; and as the year
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
 Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
 But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
 See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
 The boat that bears the hope of life approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
 Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier
 hope

On Enoch thinking, "after I am gone,
 Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last."

He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said,
 "Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."

"Dead," clamor'd the good woman, "hear him
 talk!

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you
 round."

"Swear," added Enoch sternly, "on the book."
 And on the book, half frightened, Miriam swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
 "Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?"

"Know him?" she said, "I knew him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
 Slowly and sadly, Enoch answer'd her;

"His head is low, and no man cares for him.
 I think I have not three days more to live;

I am the man." At which the woman gave
 A half incredulous, half hysterical cry.

"You Arden, you! nay,—sure he was a foot
 Higher than you be." Enoch said again,

"My God has bow'd me down to what I am;
 My grief and solitude have broken me;

Nevertheless, know you that I am he

Who married—but that name has twice been
 changed—

I married her who married Philip Ray.
Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,
His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
And how he kept it. As the woman heard,
Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
To rush abroad all round the little haven,
Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,
Saying only, "See your bairns before you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung
A moment on her words, but then replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I die.
Sit down again; mark me and understand,
While I have power to speak. I charge you
now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving her
Save for the bar between us, loving her;
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.

And now there is but one of all my blood
 Who will embrace me in the world-to-be:
 This hair is his: she cut it off and gave it,
 And I have borne it with me all these years.
 And thought to bear it with me to my grave;
 But now my mind is changed, for I shall see
 him,

My babe in bliss: wherefore when I am gone,
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort her:
 It will moreover be a token to her,
 That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane
 Made such a voluble answer promising all,
 That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
 She promised.

Then the third night after this,
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,
 There came so loud a calling of the sea,
 That all the houses in the haven rang.
 He woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
 Crying with a loud voice "A sail! a sail!
 I am saved;" and so fell back and spoke no
 more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
 And when they buried him the little port
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

TO E. FITZGERALD.

Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange,
Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile;
Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand and knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew their diet spares
Whatever moved in that full sheet
Let down to Peter at his prayers;
Who live on milk and meal and grass;
And once for ten long weeks I tried
Your table of Pythagoras,
And seem'd at first "a thing enskied"
(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light
To float above the ways of men,
Then fell from that half-spiritual height
Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
One night when earth was winter-black,
And all the heavens flash'd in frost;
And on me, half-asleep, came back
That wholesome heat the blood had lost,
And set me climbing icy capes
And glaciers, over which there roll'd
To meet me long-armed vines with grapes

Of Eshcol hugeness; for the cold
Without, and warmth within me, wrought
To mould the dream; but none can say
That Lenten fare makes Lenten thought,
Who reads your golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well;
A planet equal to the sun
Which cast it, that large infidel
Your Omar; and your Omar drew
Full-handed plaudits from our best
In modern letters, and from two,
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,
Two voices heard on earth no more;
But we old friends are still alive,
And I am nearing seventy-four,
While you have touch'd at seventy-five,
And so I send a birthday line
Of greeting; and my son, who dipt
In some forgotten book of mine
With sallow scraps of manuscript,
And dating many a year ago,
Has hit on this, which you will take
My Fitz, and welcome, as I know
Less for its own than for the sake
Of one recalling gracious times,
When, in our younger London days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your praise.

TIRESIAS.

I wish I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made itself
Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek
The meanings ambush'd under all they saw,
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
What omens may foreshadow fate to man
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of human prayer,
Are slower to forgive than human kings.
The great God, Ares, burns in anger still
Against the guiltless heirs of him from Tyre,
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who found
Beside the springs of Dirce, smote, and still'd
Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,
The dragon, which our trembling fathers call'd
The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-white
As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn
For larger glimpses of that more than man
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and lays
the deep,
Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and
loves,
And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie
Subjected to the Heliconian ridge

Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont
 Was more to scale the highest of the heights
 With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak—the sister of the sun
 Would climb from out the dark, and linger
 there

To silver all the valleys with her shafts—
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead for heat;
 The noonday crag made the hand burn; and
 sick

For shadow—not one bush was near—I rose
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls
 Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
 In anger; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest
 Against the margin flowers; a dreadful light
 Came from her golden hair, her golden helm
 And all her golden armor on the grass,
 And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said
 "Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too
 much,

And speak the truth that no man may believe."

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives
 Behind this darkness, I behold her still,
 Beyond all work of those who carved the stone,
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,
 And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
 The power of prophesying—but to me

No power—so chain'd and coupl'd with the
curse

Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard
And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,
Shrine-shattering, earthquake, fire, flood,
thunder-bolt,

And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd—no power on Fate,
Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd
would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,
To cast wise words among the multitude
Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
Would each waste each, and bring on both the
yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb
The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one!

This power hath work'd no good to aught
that lives,
And these blind hands were useless in their
wars.

O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's
heart—

Could that stand forth, and like a statue,
rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise from all

Who past it, saying, "That was he!"

In vain!

Virtue must shape itself indeed, and those
Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
Within themselves, immersing, each, his urn
In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Menaceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear
Too plainly what full tides of onset sap
Our seven high gates, and what a weight of
war

Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,
Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfooted horse
That grind the glebe to powder! Stony
showers

Of that ear-stunning hail of Ares crash
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
Shock after shock, the song-built towers and
gates

Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering
War-thunder of iron rams; and from within
The city comes a murmur void of joy,
Lest she be taken captive—maidens, wives,
And mothers with their babblers of the dawn,
And oldest age in shadow from the night
Falling about their shrines before their Gods,
And wailing "Save us."

And they wail to thee!

These eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,
See this, that only in thy virtue lies
The saving of our Thebes; for, yesternight,
To me, the great God Ares, whose one bliss
Is war, and human sacrifice—himself
Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet tipt
With stormy light as on a mast at sea,

Stood out before a darkness, crying "Thebes,
Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I loathe
The seed of Cadmus—yet if one of these
By his own hand—if one of these——"

My son,
No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
And to conciliate, as their names who dare
For that sweet mother land which gave them
birth

Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
Graven on memorial columns, are a song
Heard in the future; few, but more than wall
And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they meet
And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end
Be to end well! and thou refusing this,
Unvenerable will thy memory be
While men shall move the lips: but if thou
dare—

Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus—then
No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious
doom,

Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy name
To every hoof that clangs it, and the springs
Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,
Heard from the roofs by night, will murmur
thee

To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro' thee
shall stand

Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave

Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing vines—
Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd
himself

At dead of night—thou knowest, and that
smooth rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings drawn
back,

Folded her lion paws, and look'd to Thebes.

There blanch the bones of whom she slew, and
these

Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast
found

A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
Dead in her rage: but thou art wise enough,
Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the curse
Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike
Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather—thou
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
Send no such light upon the ways of men
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there
Thou, that hast never known the embrace of
love,
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!
I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone!
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of old,

On whom about their ocean-islands flash
 The faces of the Gods—the wise man's word,
 Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
 There crown'd with worship—and these eyes
 will find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
 About the goal again, and hunters race
 The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
 In height and prowess more than human, strive
 Again for glory, while the golden lyre
 Is ever sounding in heroic ears
 Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
 Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
 Of these who mix all odor to the Gods
 On one far height in one far-shining fire.

“One height and one far-shining fire”

And while I fancied that my friend
 For this brief idyll would require
 A less diffuse and opulent end,
 And would defend his judgment well,
 If I should deem it over nice—
 The tolling of his funeral bell
 Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
 And mixt the dream of classic times,
 And all the phantoms of the dream,
 With present grief, and made the rhymes,
 That miss'd his living welcome, seem
 Like would-be guests an hour too late,
 Who down the highway moving on
 With easy laughter find the gate
 Is bolted, and the master gone.
 Gone into darkness, that full light
 Of friendship! past, in sleep, away

By night, into deeper night?
The deeper night? A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth—
If night, what barren toil to be!
What life, so maim'd by night, were worth
Our living out? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last; and laying flowers,
This wreath, above his honor'd head,
And praying that, when I from hence
Shall fade with him into the unknown,
My close of earth's experience
May prove as peaceful as his own.

THE WRECK.

I.

Hide me, Mother! my Fathers belong'd to the
church of old,
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the
ancient fold,
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the
Faith that saves,
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and
the roar of waves,
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a noble
name,
I am flung from the rushing tide of the world
as a waif of shame,
I am roused by the wail of a child, and awake
to a livid light,
And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted a
grave by night,
I would hide from the storm without, I would
flee from the storm within,
I would make my life one prayer for a soul
that died in his sin,
I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was the
deeper fall;
I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face, I
will tell you all.

II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a heedless
and innocent bride—

I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only
wounded his pride.

Spain in his blood and the Jew—dark-visaged
stately and tall—

A princelier-looking man never stept thro' a
Prince's hall.

And who, when his anger was kindled, would
venture to give him the nay?

A man men fear is a man to be loved by the
women they say.

And I would have loved him too, if the blos-
som can doat on the blight,

Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost
that sears it at night;

He would open the books that I prized, and
toss them away with a yawn,

Repelled by the magnet of Art to the which
my nature was drawn,

The word of the Poet by whom the deeps of
the world are stirr'd

The music that robes it in language beneath
and beyond the word!

My Shelley would fall from my hands when he
cast a contemptuous glance

From where he was poring over his Tables of
Trade and Finance;

My hands, when I heard him coming, would
drop from the chords or the keys,

But ever I fail'd to please him, however I
strove to please—

All day long far-off in the cloud of the city,
and there
Lost, head and heart, in the chances of divi-
dend, consol, and share—
And at home if I sought for a kindly caress,
being woman and weak,
His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow on
the cheek:
And so, when I bore him a girl, when I held it
aloft in my joy,
He look'd at it coldly, and said to me "Pity it
isn't a boy."
The one thing given me, to love and to live
for, glanced at in scorn!
The child that I felt I could die for—as if she
were basely born!
I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted
now in a tomb;
The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed
my heart to the gloom;
I threw myself all abroad—I would play my
part with the young
By the low foot-lights of the world—and I
caught the wreath that was flung.

III.

Mother, I have not—however their tongues
may have babbled of me—
Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but a
dwarf was he,
And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd at
him, first, askance
With pity—not he the knight for an amorous
girl's romance!

Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the
light of a dowerless smile,
Having lands at home and abroad in a rich
West-Indian isle;
But I came on him once at a ball, the heart of
a listening crowd—
Why, what a brow was there! he was seated—
speaking aloud
To women, the flower of the time, and men at
the helm of state—
Flowing with easy greatness and touching on
all things great,
Science, philosophy, song—till I felt myself
ready to weep
For I knew not what, when I heard that voice,
—as mellow and deep
As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd
from an organ,—roll
Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice was
the voice of the soul;
And the sun of the soul made day in the dark
of his wonderful eyes.
Here was the hand that would help me, would
heal me—the heart that was wise!
And he, poor man, when he learnt that I hated
the ring I wore,
He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me with
sorrow for evermore.

IV.

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse
had brought me the child.
The small sweet face was flush'd, but it coo'd
to the Mother and smiled.

“Anything ailing,” I ask’d her, “with baby?”
She shook her head,
And the Motherless Mother kiss’d it, and
turn’d in her haste and fled.

v.

Low warm winds had gently breathed us away
from the land—
Ten long sweet summer days upon deck, sit-
ting hand in hand—
When he clothed a naked mind with the wis-
dom and wealth of his own,
And I bow’d myself down as a slave to his
intellectual throne,
When he coin’d into English gold some treas-
ure of classical song,
When he flouted a statesman’s error, or flamed
at a public wrong,
When he rose as it were on the wings of an
eagle beyond me, and past
Over the range and the change of the world
from the first to the last,
When he spoke of his tropical home in the
canes by the purple tide,
And the high star-crowns of his palms on the
deep-wooded mountain-side,
And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to the
brink of his bay,
And trees like the towers of a minster, the
sons of a winterless day.
“Paradise there!” so he said, but I seem’d in
Paradise then
With the first great love I had felt for the first
and greatest of men,

Ten long days of summer and sin—if it must
 be so—
 But days of a larger light than I ever again
 shall know—
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to my
 latest breath;
 "No frost there," so he said, "as in truest
 Love no Death."

VI.

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble
 plaintively sweet
 Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell flutter-
 ing down at my feet;
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it,
 Stephen and I,
 But it died, and I thought of the child for a
 moment, I scarce know why.

VII.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many
 will say,
 My sin to my desolate little one found me at
 sea on a day,
 When her orphan wail came borne in the
 shriek of a growing wind,
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of Ocean
 and Heaven "Thou hast sinn'd."
 And down in the cabin were we, for the tower-
 ing crest of the tides
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a cataract
 off from her sides,
 And ever the great storm grew with a howl
 and a hoot of the blast

In the rigging, voices of hell—then came the
crash of the mast.

“The wages of sin is death,” and then I began
to weep,

“I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me into
the deep,

For ah God, what a heart was mine to forsake
her even for you.”

“Never the heart among women,” he said,
“more tender and true.”

“The heart! not a mother’s heart, when I left
my darling alone.”

“Comfort yourself, for the heart of the father
will care for his own.”

“The heart of the father will spurn her,” I
cried, “for the sin of the wife,

The cloud of the mother’s shame will enfold
her and darken her life.”

Then his pale face twitch’d: “O Stephen, I
love you, I love you, and yet”—

As I lean’d away from his arms—“would God,
we had never met!”

And he spoke not—only the storm; till after
a little, I yearn’d

For his voice again, and he call’d to me “Kiss
me!” and there—as I turn’d—

“The heart, the heart!” I kiss’d him, I clung
to the sinking form,

And the storm went roaring above us, and he
—was out of the storm.

VIII.

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger’d
under a thunderous shock,

That shook us asunder, as if she had struck
and crash'd on a rock ;
For a huge sea smote every soul from the
decks of the Falcon but one ;
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to
the helm had gone ;
And I fell—and the storm and the days went
by, but I knew no more—
Lost myself—lay like the dead by the dead on
the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the
loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand
giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood
still, and the skies were blue,
But the face I had known, O Mother, was not
the face that I knew.

IX.

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so
amazed me, that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling
myself over and die!
But one—he was waving a flag—the one man
left on the wreck—
“Woman”—he graspt at my arm—“stay there”
—I crouch'd on the deck—
“We are sinking, and yet there's hope: look
yonder,” he cried, “a sail”
In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate
tears, and the wail
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was
nearing us—then

All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the
child again.

X.

They lower'd me down the side, and there in
the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as we
glided away,
And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt under
the smiling main,
“Had I stay'd with him, I had now—with him
—been out of my pain.”

XI.

They took us aboard: the crew were gentle,
the captain kind:
But I was the lonely slave of an often-wander-
ing mind:
For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a
stormier wave,
“O Stephen,” I moan'd, “I am coming to thee
in thine Ocean-grave.”
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over
a peacefuller sea,
I found myself moaning again “O child, I am
coming to thee!”

XII.

The broad white brow of the Isle—that bay
with the color'd sand—
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew
to the land;
All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch
into spray

At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd—"my
 child"—for I still could pray—
 "May her life be as blissfully calm, be never
 gloom'd by the curse
 Of a sin, not hers!"

Was it well with the child?
 I wrote to the nurse
 Who had borne my flower on her hireling
 heart; and an answer came
 Not from the nurse—nor yet to the wife—to
 her maiden name!
 I shook as I open'd the letter—I knew that
 hand too well—
 And from it a scrap, clipt out of the "deaths"
 in a paper, fell.
 "Ten long sweet summer days" of fever, and
 want of care!
 And gone—that day of the storm—O Mother,
 she came to me there.

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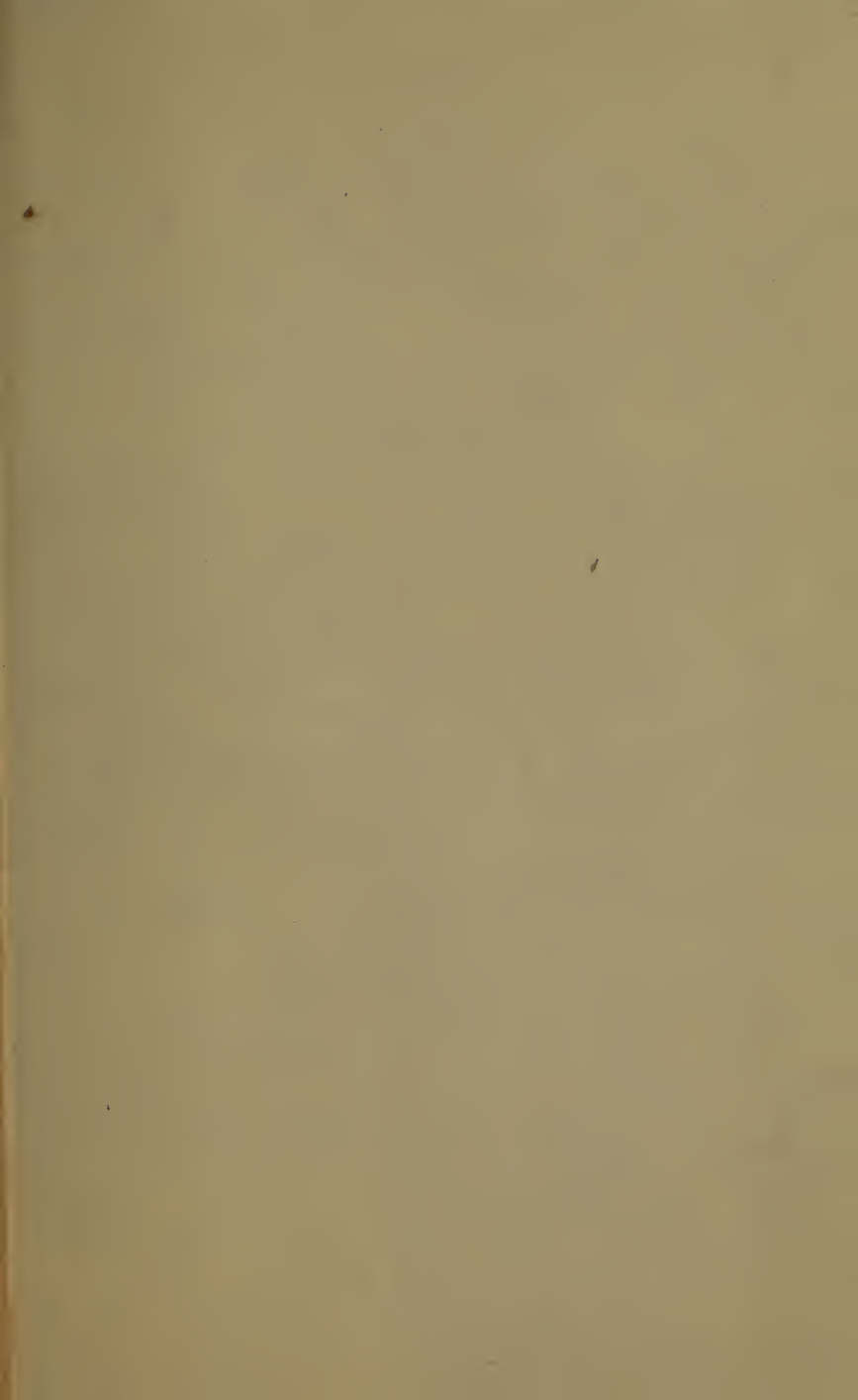
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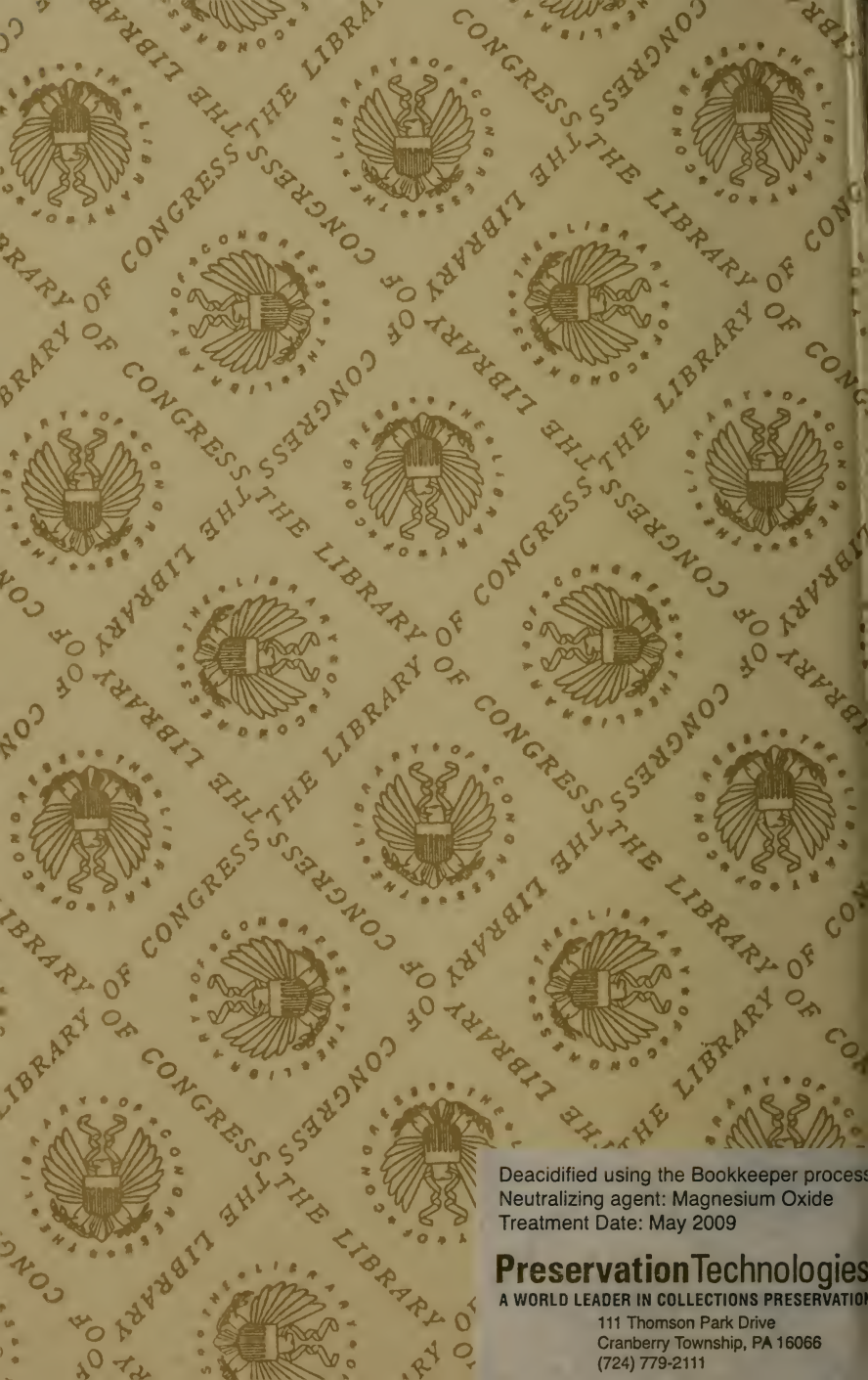
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