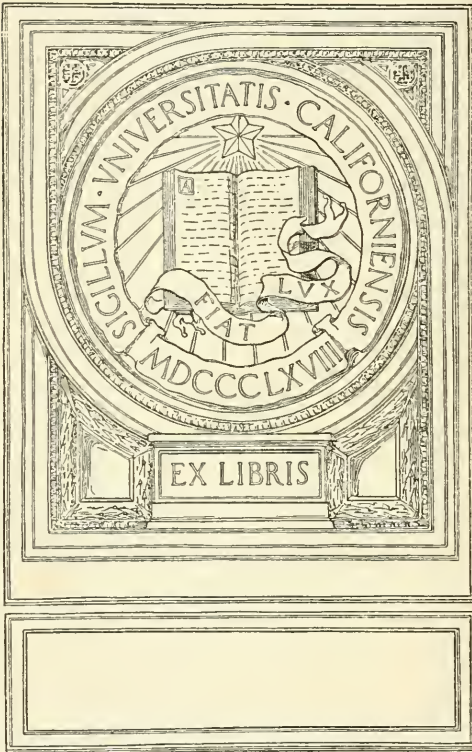




UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
AT LOS ANGELES



Maud P Hollis

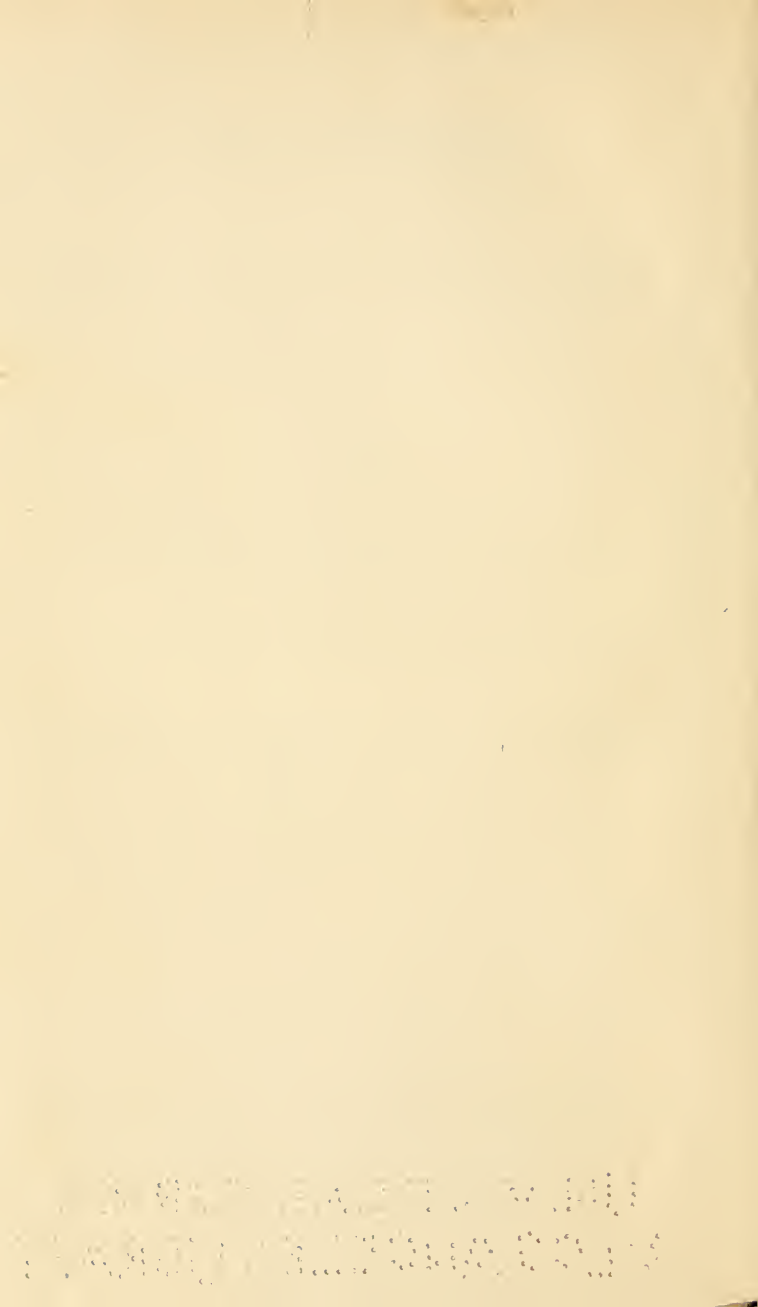


SELECTIONS  
FROM  
THE POETICAL WORKS

OF  
ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE

FROM THE LATEST ENGLISH EDITION  
OF HIS WORKS

NEW YORK  
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POEMS AND BALLADS.



TO  
MY FRIEND  
EDWARD BURNE JONES  
THESE POEMS  
ARE AFFECTIONATELY AND ADMIRINGLY  
DEDICATED.



LAUS VENERIS.

Lors dit en plourant ; Hélas trop malheureux homme et maudict pescheur, oncques ne verrai-je clémence et miséricorde de Dieu. Ores m'en irai-je d'icy et me cacherais dedans le mont Horsel, en requérant de faveur et d'amoureuse merci ma douce dame Vénus, car pour son amour serai-je bien à tout jamais damné en enfer. Voicy la fin de tous mes faicts d'armes et de toutes mes belles chansons. Hélas, trop belle estoit la face de ma dame et ses yeulx, et en mauvais jour je vis ces chouses-là. Lors s'en alla tout en gémissant et se retourna chez elle, et là vescu tristement en grand amour près de sa dame. Puis après advint que le pape vit un jour esclater sur son baston force belles fleurs rouges et blanches et maints boutons de feuilles, et ainsi vit-il reverdir toute l'escorce. Ce dont il eut grande crainte et moult s'en esmut, et grande pitié lui prit de ce chevalier qui s'en estoit départi sans espoir comme un homme misérable et damné. Doncques envoya force messaigers devers luy pour le ramener, disant qu'il aurait de Dieu grace et bonne absolution de son grand pesché d'amour. Mais oncques plus ne le virent ; car toujours demeura ce pauvre chevalier auprès de Vénus la haulte et forte déesse ès flancs de la montagne amoureuse.

*Livre des grandes merveilles d'amour, escript en latin  
et en françoys par Maistre Antoine Gaget. 1530.*



## LAUS VENERIS.

ASLEEP or waking is it ? for her neck,  
Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck  
Wherein the pained blood falters and goes out ;  
Soft, and stung softly—fairer for a fleck.

But though my lips shut sucking on the place,  
There is no vein at work upon her face ;  
Her eyelids are so peaceful, no doubt  
Deep sleep has warmed her blood through all its ways.

Lo, this is she that was the world's delight ;  
The old gray years were parcels of her might ;  
The strewings of the ways wherein she trod  
Were the twain seasons of the day and night.

Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs enticed  
All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ,  
Stained with blood fallen from the feet of God,  
The feet and hands whereat our souls were priced.

Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.  
But lo her wonderfully woven hair !  
And thou didst heal us with thy piteous kiss ;  
But see now, Lord ; her mouth is lovelier.

She is right fair ; what hath she done to thee ?  
Nay, fair Lord Christ, lift up thine eyes and see ;  
Had now thy mother such a lip—like this ?  
Thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to me.

Inside the Housel here the air is hot ;  
Right little peace one hath for it, God wot ;  
The scented dusted daylight burns the air,  
And my heart chokes me till I hear it not.

Behold, my Venus, my soul's body, lies  
 With my love laid upon her garment-wise,  
     Feeling my love in all her limbs and hair  
 And shed between her eyelids through her eyes.

She holds my heart in her sweet open hands  
 Hanging asleep ; hard by her head there stands,  
     Crowned with gilt thorns and clothed with flesh  
     like fire,  
 Love, wan as foam blown up the salt burnt sands—

Hot as the brackish waifs of yellow spume  
 That shift and steam—loose clots of arid fume  
     From the sea's panting mouth of dry desire ;  
 There stands he, like one laboring at a loom.

The warp holds fast across ; and every thread  
 That makes the woof up has dry specks of red ;  
     Always the shuttle cleaves clean through, and he  
 Weaves with the hair of many a ruined head.

Love is not glad nor sorry, as I deem ;  
 Laboring he dreams, and labors in the dream,  
     Till when the spool is finished, lo I see  
 His web, reeled off, curls and goes out like steam.

Night falls like fire ; the heavy lights run low,  
 And as they drop, my blood and body so  
     Shake as the flame shakes, full of days and hours  
 That sleep not neither weep they as they go.

Ah yet would God this flesh of mine might be  
 Where air might wash and long leaves cover me,  
     Where tides of grass break into foam of flowers,  
 Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea.

Ah yet would God that stems and roots were bred  
 Out of my weary body and my head,  
     That sleep were sealed upon me with a seal,  
 And I were as the least of all his dead.

Would God my blood were dew to feed the grass,  
 Mine ears made deaf and mine eyes blind as glass,  
     My body broken as a turning wheel,  
 And my mouth stricken ere it saith Alas !

Ah God, that love were as a flower or flame,  
That life were as the naming of a name,  
That death were not more pitiful than desire,  
That these things were not one thing and the same !

Behold now, surely somewhere there is death :  
For each man hath some space of years, he saith,  
A little space of time ere time expire,  
A little day, a little way of breath.

And lo, between the sundawn and the sun,  
His day's work and his night's work are undone ;  
And lo, between the nightfall and the light,  
He is not, and none knoweth of such an one.

Ah God, that I were as all souls that be,  
As any herb or leaf of any tree,  
As men that toil through hours of laboring night,  
As bones of men under the deep sharp sea.

Outside it must be winter among men ;  
For at the gold bars of the gates again  
I heard all night and all the hours of it,  
The wind's wet wings and fingers drip with rain.

Knights gather, riding sharp for cold ; I know  
The ways and woods are strangled with the snow ;  
And with short song the maidens spin and sit  
Until Christ's birthnight, lily-like, arow.

The scent and shadow shed about me make  
The very soul in all my senses ache ;  
The hot hard night is fed upon my breath,  
And sleep beholds me from afar awake.

Alas, but surely where the hills grow deep,  
Or where the wild ways of the sea are steep,  
Or in strange places somewhere there is death,  
And on death's face the scattered hair of sleep.

There lover-like with lips and limbs that meet  
They lie, they pluck sweet fruit of life and eat ;  
But me the hot and hungry days devour,  
And in my mouth no fruit of theirs is sweet.

No fruit of theirs, but fruit of my desire,  
 For her love's sake whose lips through mine respire ;  
 Her eyelids on her eyes like flower on flower,  
 Mine eyelids on mine eyes like fire on fire.

So lie we, not as sleep that lies by death,  
 With heavy kisses and with happy breath ;  
 Not as man lies by woman, when the bride  
 Laughs low for love's sake and the words he saith,

For she lies, laughing low with love ; she lies  
 And turns his kisses on her lips to sighs,  
 To sighing sound of lips unsatisfied,  
 And the sweet tears are tender with her eyes.

Ah, not as they, but as the souls that were  
 Slain in the old time, having found her fair ;  
 Who, sleeping with her lips upon their eyes,  
 Heard sudden serpents hiss across her hair.

Their blood runs round the roots of time like rain,  
 She casts them forth and gathers them again ;  
 With nerve and bone she weaves and multiplies  
 Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain.

Her little chambers drip with flower-like red,  
 Her girdles, and the chaplets of her head,  
 Her armlets and her anklets ; with her feet  
 She tramples all that winepress of the dead.

Her gateways smoke with fume of flowers and fires,  
 With loves burnt out and unassuaged desires ;  
 Between her lips the steam of them is sweet,  
 The languor in her ears of many lyres.

Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,  
 Her doors are made with music, and barred round  
 With sighing and with laughter and with tears,  
 With tears whereby strong souls of men are bound.

There is the knight Adonis that was slain ;  
 With flesh and blood she chains him for a chain ;  
 The body and the spirit in her ears  
 Cry, for her lips divide him vein by vein.

Yea, all she slayeth ; yea, every man save me ;  
 Me, love, thy lover that must cleave to thee  
 Till the ending of the days and ways of earth,  
 The shaking of the sources of the sea.

Me, most forsaken of all souls that fell ;  
 Me, satiated with things insatiable ;  
 Me, for whose sake the extreme hell makes mirth,  
 Yea, laughter kindles at the heart of hell.

Alas thy beauty ! for thy mouth's sweet sake  
 My soul is bitter to me, my limbs quake  
 As water, as the flesh of men that weep,  
 As their heart's vein whose heart goes nigh to break.

Ah God, that sleep with flower-sweet finger-tips  
 Would crush the fruit of death upon my lips ;  
 Ah God, that death would tread the grapes of  
 sleep  
 And wring their juice upon me as it drips.

There is no change of cheer for many days,  
 But change of chimes high up in the air, that sways  
 Rung by the running fingers of the wind ;  
 And singing sorrows heard on hidden ways.

Day smiteth day in twain, night sundereth night,  
 And on mine eyes the dark sits as the light ;  
 Yea, Lord, thou knowest I know not, having  
 sinned,  
 If heaven be clean or unclean in thy sight.

Yea, as if earth were sprinkled over me,  
 Such chafed harsh earth as chokes a sandy sea,  
 Each pore doth yearn, and the dried blood thereof  
 Gasps by sick fits, my heart swims heavily,

There is a feverish famine in my veins ;  
 Below her bosom, where a crushed grape stains  
 The white and blue, there my lips caught and  
 clove  
 An hour since, and what mark of me remains ?

I dare not always touch her, lest the kiss  
 Leave my lips charred. Yea, Lord, a little bliss,  
 Brief bitter bliss, one hath for a great sin ;  
 Nathless thou knowest how sweet a thing it is.

Sin, is it sin whereby men's souls are thrust  
 Into the pit ? yet had I a good trust  
 To save my soul before it slipped therein,  
 Trod under by the fire-shod feet of lust.

For if mine eyes fail and my soul takes breath,  
 I look between the iron sides of death  
 Into sad hell where all sweet love hath end,  
 All but the pain that never finisheth.

There are the naked faces of great kings,  
 The singing folk with all their lute-playings ;  
 There when one cometh he shall have to friend  
 The grave that covets and the worm that clings.

There sit the knights that were so great of hand,  
 The ladies that were queens of fair green land,  
 Grown gray and black now, brought unto the  
 dust,  
 Soiled, without raiment, clad about with sand.

There is one end for all of them ; they sit  
 Naked and sad, they drink the dregs of it,  
 Trodden as grapes in the wine-press of lust,  
 Trampled and trodden by the fiery feet.

I see the marvellous mouth whereby there fell  
 Cities and people whom the gods loved well,  
 Yet for her sake on them the fire gat hold,  
 And for their sakes on her the fire of hell.

And softer than the Egyptian lote-leaf is  
 The queen whose face was worth the world to kiss,  
 Wearing at breast a suckling snake of gold ;  
 And large pale lips of strong Semiramis.

Curled like a tiger's that curl back to feed ;  
 Red only where the last kiss made them bleed ;  
 Her hair most thick with many a carven gem,  
 Deep in the mane, great-chested, like a steed.

Yea, with red sin the faces of them shine ;  
 But in all these there was no sin like mine ;  
 No, not in all the strange great sins of them  
 That made the wine-press froth and foam with wine.

For I was of Christ's choosing, I God's knight,  
 No blinkard heathen stumbling for scant light ;  
 I can well see, for all the dusty days  
 Gone past, the clean great time of goodly fight. |

I smell the breathing battle sharp with blows,  
 With shriek of shafts and snapping short of bows ;  
 The fair pure sword smites out in subtle ways,  
 Sounds and long lights are shed between the rows

Of beautiful mailed men ; the edged light slips,  
 Most like a snake that takes short breath and dips  
 Sharp from the beautifully bending head,  
 With all its gracious body lithe as lips

That curl in touching you ; right in this wise  
 My sword doth, seeming fire in mine own eyes,  
 Leaving all colors in them brown and red  
 And flecked with death ; then the keen breaths like  
 sighs,

The caught-up choked dry laughters following them,  
 When all the fighting face is grown a flame  
 For pleasure, and the pulse that stuns the ears,  
 And the heart's gladness of the goodly game.

Let me think yet a little ; I do know  
 These things were sweet, but sweet such years ago,  
 Their savor is all turned now into tears ;  
 Yea, ten years since, where the blue ripples blow

The blue curled eddies of the blowing Rhine,  
 I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and vine  
 Touch my blood too, and sting me with delight  
 Through all this waste and weary body of mine

That never feels clear air ; right gladly then  
 I rode alone, a great way off my men,  
 And heard the chiming bridle smite and smite,  
 And gave each rhyme thereof some rhyme again,

Till my song shifted to that iron one ;  
 Seeing there rode up between me and the sun  
     Some certain of my foe's men, for his three  
 White wolves across their painted coats did run.

The first red-bearded, with square cheeks—alack,  
 I made my knave's blood turn his beard to black ;  
     The slaying of him was a joy to see :  
 Perchance too, when at night he came not back,

Some woman fell a-weeping, whom this thief  
 Would beat when he had drunken ; yet small grief  
     Hath any for the ridding of such knaves ;  
 Yea, if one wept, I doubt her teen was brief.

This bitter love is sorrow in all lands,  
 Draining of eyelids, wringing of drenched hands,  
     Sighing of hearts and filling up of graves ;  
 A sign across the head of the world he stands,

As one that hath a plague-mark on his brows ;  
 Dust and spilt blood do track him to his house  
     Down under earth ; sweet smells of lip and cheek,  
 Like a sweet snake's breath made more poisonous

With chewing of some perfumed deadly grass,  
 Are shed all round his passage if he pass,  
     And their quenched savor leaves the whole soul  
     weak

Sick with keen guessing whence the perfume was.

As one who hidden in deep sedge and reeds  
 Smells the rare scent made where a panther feeds,  
     And tracking ever slotwise the warm smell  
 Is snapped upon by the sweet mouth and bleeds

His head far down the hot sweet throat of her—  
 So one tracks love, whose breath is deadlier,  
     And lo, one springe and yon are fast in hell,  
 Fast as the gin's grip of a wayfarer.

I think now, as the heavy hours decease  
 One after one, and bitter thoughts increase  
     One upon one, of all sweet finished things ;  
 The breaking of the battle ; the long peace



Wherein we sat clothed softly, each man's hair  
Crowned with green leaves beneath white hoods of  
vair,

The sounds of sharp spears at great tourneyings,  
And noise of singing in the late sweet air.

I sang of love, too, knowing nought thereof ;  
"Sweeter," I said, "the little laugh of love  
Than tears out of the eyes of Magdalen,  
Or any fallen feather of the Dove.

"The broken little laugh that spoils a kiss,  
The ache of purple pulses, and the bliss  
Of blinded eyelids that expand again—  
Love draws them open with those lips of his,

"Lips that cling hard till the kissed face has grown  
Of one same fire and color with their own ;  
Then ere one sleep, appeased with sacrifice,  
Where his lips wounded, there his lips atone."

I sang these things long since and knew them not ;  
"Lo, here is love, or there is love, God wot,  
This man and that finds favor in his eyes,"  
I said, "but, I, what guerdon have I got ?

"The dust of praise that is blown everywhere  
In all men's faces with the common air ;  
The bay-leaf that wants chafing to be sweet  
Before they wind it in a singer's hair."

So that one dawn I rode forth sorrowing ;  
I had no hope but of some evil thing,  
And so rode slowly past the windy wheat,  
And past the vineyard and the water-spring,

Up to the Horsel. A great elder-tree  
Held back its heaps of flowers to let me see  
The ripe tall grass, and one that walked therein,  
Naked, with hair-shed over to the knee.

She walked between the blossom and the grass ;  
I knew the beauty of her, what she was,  
The beauty of her body and her sin,  
And in my flesh the sin of hers, alas !

Alas ! for sorrow is all the end of this.  
O sad kissed mouth, how sorrowful it is !

O breast whereat some suckling sorrow clings,  
Red with the bitter blossom of a kiss !

Ah, with blind lips I felt for you, and found  
About my neck your hands and hair enwound,  
The hands that stifle and the hair that stings,  
I felt them fasten sharply without sound.

Yea, for my sin I had great store of bliss  
Rise up, make answer for me, let thy kiss  
Seal my lips hard from speaking of my sin,  
Lest one go mad to hear how sweet it is.

Yet I waxed faint with fume of barren bowers,  
And murmuring of the heavy-headed hours ;  
And let the dove's beak fret and peck within  
My lips in vain, and Love shed fruitless flowers.

So that God looked upon me when your hands  
Were hot about me ; yea, God brake my bands  
To save my soul alive, and I came forth  
Like a man blind and naked in strange lands.

That hears men laugh and weep, and knows not  
whence  
Nor wherefore, but is broken in his sense ;  
Howbeit I met folk riding from the north  
Toward Rome, to purge them of their soul's offence,

And rode with them, and spake to none ; the day  
Stunned me like lights upon some wizard way,  
And ate like fire mine eyes and mine eyesight ;  
So rode I, hearing all these chant and pray,

And marvelled ; till before us rose and fell  
White cursed hills, like outer skirts of hell  
Seen where men's eyes look through the day to  
night,  
Like a jagged shell's lips, harsh, untunable,

Blown in between by devils' wrangling breath ;  
 Nathless we won well past that hell and death,  
 Down to the sweet land where all airs are good,  
 Even unto Rome where God's grace tarrieth.

Then came each man and worshipped at his knees  
 Who in the Lord God's likeness bears the keys  
 To bind or loose, and called on Christ's shed blood,  
 And so the sweet-souled father gave him ease.

But when I came I fell down at his feet,  
 Saying, " Father, though the Lord's blood be right  
 sweet,  
 The spot it takes not off the panther's skin,  
 Nor shall an Ethiop's stain be bleached with it.

" Lo, I have sinned and have spat out at God,  
 Wherefore his hand is heavier and his rod  
 More sharp because of mine exceeding sin,  
 And all his raiment redder than bright blood

" Before mine eyes ; yea, for my sake I wot  
 The heat of hell is waxen seven times hot  
 Through my great sin." Then spake he some  
 sweet word,  
 Give me cheer ; which thing availed me not ;

Yea, scarce I wist if such indeed were said ;  
 For when I ceased—lo, as one newly dead  
 Who hears a great cry out of hell, I heard  
 The crying of his voice across my head.

" Until this dry shred staff, that hath no whit  
 Of leaf nor bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,  
 Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,  
 For so long shalt thou be cast out from it."

Yea, what if dried-up stems wax red and green,  
 Shall that thing be which is not nor has been ?  
 Yea, what if sapless bark wax green and white,  
 Shall any good fruit grow upon my sin ?

Nay, though sweet fruit were plucked of a dry tree,  
 And though men drew sweet waters of the sea,  
     There should not grow sweet leaves on this dead  
     stem,  
 This waste wan body and shaken soul of me.

Yea, though God search it warily enough,  
 There is not one sound thing in all thereof ;  
     Though he search all my veins through, searching  
     them  
 He shall find nothing whole therein but love.

For I came home right heavy, with small cheer,  
 And lo my love, mine own soul's heart, more dear  
     Than mine own soul, more beautiful than God,  
 Who hath my being between the hands of her—

Fair still, but fair for no man saving me,  
 As when she came out of the naked sea  
     Making the foam as fire whereon she trod,  
 And as the inner flower of fire was she.

Yea, she laid hold upon me, and her mouth  
 Clove unto mine as soul to body doth,  
     And, laughing, made her lips luxurious ;  
 Her hair had smells of all the sunburnt south,

Strange spice and flower, strange savor of crushed  
 fruit,  
 And perfume the swart kings tread underfoot  
     For pleasure when their minds wax amorous,  
 Charred frankincense and grated sandal-root.

And I forgot fear and all weary things,  
 All ended prayers and perished thanksgivings,  
     Feeling her face with all her eager hair  
 Cleave to me, clinging as a fire that clings

To the body and to the raiment, burning them ;  
 As after death I know that such-like flame  
     Shall cleave to me forever ; yea, what care,  
 Albeit I burn then, having felt the same ?

Ah love, there is no better life than this ;  
 'To have known love, how bitter a thing it is,  
 And afterward be cast out of God's sight ;  
 Yea, these that know not, shall they have such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face  
 As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,  
 Remembering love and all the dead delight,  
 And all that time was sweet with for a space ?

For till the thunder in the trumpet be,  
 Soul may divide from body, but not we  
 One from another ; I hold thee with my hand,  
 I let mine eyes have all their will of thee,

I seal myself upon thee with my might,  
 Abiding alway out of all men's sight  
 Until God loosen over sea and land  
 The thunder of the trumpets of the night.

EXPLICIT LAUS VENERIS.

PHÆDRA.

HIPPOLYTUS ; PHÆDRA ; CHORUS OF TRÆZENIAN  
 WOMEN.

—  
 HIPPOLYTUS.

Lay not thine hand upon me ; let me go ;  
 Take off thine eyes that put the gods to shame.  
 What, wilt thou turn my loathing to thy death ?

PHÆDRA.

Nay, I will never loosen hold nor breath  
 'Till thou have slain me ; godlike for great brows  
 'Thou art, and thewed as gods are, with clear hair :  
 Draw now thy sword and smite me as thou art god,  
 For verily I am smitten of other gods,  
 Why not of thee ?

## CHORUS.

O queen, take heed of words,  
 Why wilt thou eat the husk of evil speech?  
 Wear wisdom for that veil about thy head  
 And goodness for the binding of thy brows.

## PHÆDRA.

Nay, but this god hath cause enow to smite:  
 If he will slay me, baring breast and throat,  
 I lean toward the stroke with silent mouth  
 And a great heart. Come, take thy sword and slay;  
 Let me not starve between desire and death,  
 But send me on my way with glad wet lips;  
 For in the vein-drawn ashen-colored palm  
 Death's hollow hand holds water of sweet draught  
 To dip and slake dried mouths at, as a deer  
 Specked red from thorns laps deep and loses pain.  
 Yea, if mine own blood ran upon my mouth,  
 I would drink that. Nay, but be swift with me;  
 Set thy sword here between the girdle and breast,  
 For I shall grow a poison if I live.  
 Are not my cheeks as grass, my body pale,  
 And my breath like a dying poisoned man's?  
 O whatsoever of godlike names thou be,  
 By thy chief name I charge thee, thou strong god,  
 And bid thee slay me. Strike, up to the gold,  
 Up to the hand-grip of the hilt; strike here;  
 For I am Cretan of my birth; strike now;  
 For I am 'Theseus' wife; stab up to the rims,  
 I am born daughter to Pasiphae.  
 See thou spare not for greatness of my blood,  
 Nor for the shining letters of my name:  
 Make thy sword sure inside thine hand and smite,  
 For the bright writing of my name is black,  
 And I am sick with hating the sweet sun.

## HIPPOLYTUS.

Let not this woman wail and cleave to me,  
 That am no part of the gods' wrath with her;  
 Loose ye her hands from me lest she take hurt.

## CHORUS.

Lady, this speech and majesty are twain ;  
Pure shame is of one counsel with the gods.

## HIPPOLYTUS.

Man is as beast when shame stands off from him.

## PHÆDRA.

Man, what have I to do with shame or thee ?  
I am not of one counsel with the gods.  
I am their kin, I have strange blood in me,  
I am not of their likeness nor of thine :  
My veins are mixed, and therefore am I mad,  
Yea, therefore chafe and turn on mine own flesh,  
Half a woman made with half a god.  
But thou wast hewn out of an iron womb  
And fed with molten mother-snow for milk.  
A sword was nurse of thine ; Hippolyta,  
That had the spear to father, and the axe  
To bridesman, and wet blood of sword-slain men  
For wedding-water out of a noble well,  
Even she did bear thee, thinking of a sword,  
And thou wast made a man mistakingly.  
Nay, for I love thee, I will have thy hands,  
Nay, for I will not loose thee, thou art sweet,  
Thou art my son, I am thy father's wife,  
I ache toward thee with a bridal blood,  
The pulse is heavy in all my married veins,  
My whole face beats, I will feed full of thee,  
My body is empty of ease, I will be fed,  
I am burnt to the bone with love, thou shalt not go,  
I am heartsick, and mine eyelids prick mine eyes,  
Thou shalt not sleep nor eat nor say a word  
Till thou hast slain me. I am not good to live.

## CHORUS.

This is an evil born with all its teeth,  
When love is cast out of the bound of love.

## HIPPOLYTUS.

There is no hate that is so hateworthy.

## PHÆDRA.

I pray thee turn that hate of thine my way,  
 I hate not it nor anything of thine.  
 Lo, maidens, how he burns about the brow,  
 And draws the chafing sword-strap down his hand.  
 What wilt thou do? wilt thou be worse than death?  
 Be but as sweet as is the bitterest,  
 'The most despiteous out of all the gods,  
 I am well pleased. Lo, do I crave so much?  
 I do but bid thee be unmerciful,  
 Even the one thing thou art. Pity me not:  
 'Thou wert not quick to pity. Think of me  
 As of a thing thy hounds are keen upon  
 In the wet woods between the windy ways,  
 And slay me for a spoil. This body of mine  
 Is worth a wild beast's fell or hide of hair,  
 And spotted deeper than a panther's grain.  
 I were but dead if thou wert pure indeed;  
 I pray thee by thy cold green holy crown  
 And by the fillet-leaves of Artemis.  
 Nay, but thou wilt not. Death is not like thee  
 Albeit men hold him worst of all the gods.  
 For of all gods Death only loves not gifts,\*  
 Nor with burnt-offering nor blood-sacrifice  
 Shalt thou do aught to get thee grace of him;  
 He will have naught of altar and altar-song,  
 And from him only of all the lords in heaven  
 Persuasion turns a sweet averted mouth.  
 But thou art worse: from thee with baffled breath  
 Back on my lips my prayer falls like a blow,  
 And beats upon them, dumb. What shall I say?  
 There is no word I can compel thee with  
 To do me good and slay me. But take heed;  
 I say, be wary; look between thy feet,  
 Lest a snare take them though the ground be good.

## HIPPOLYTUS.

Shame may do most where fear is found most weak  
 That which for shame's sake yet I have not done,

\*Æsch. Fr. Niobe:—

μόνος θεῶν γὰρ θάνατος οὐ δῶρων ἐρᾷ, κ. τ. λ.



Shall it be done for fears ? Take thine own way ;  
Better the foot slip than the whole soul swerve.

PHÆDRA.

The man is choice and exquisite of mouth ;  
Yet in the end a curse shall curdle it.

CHORUS.

He goes with cloak upgathered to the lip,  
Holding his eye as with some ill in sight.

PHÆDRA.

A bitter ill he hath i' the way thereof,  
And it shall burn the sight out as with fire.

CHORUS.

Speak no such word whereto mischance is kin.

PHÆDRA.

Out of my heart and by fate's leave I speak.

CHORUS.

Set not thy heart to follow after fate.

PHÆDRA.

O women, O sweet people of this land,  
O goodly city and pleasant ways thereof,  
And woods with pasturing grass and great well-heads,  
And hills with light and night between your leaves,  
And winds with sound and silence in your lips,  
And earth and water and all immortal things,  
I take you to my witness what I am.  
There is a god about me like as fire,  
Sprung whence, who knoweth, or who hath heart to  
say ?

A god more strong than whom slain beasts can soothe,  
Or honey, or any spilth of blood-like wine,  
Nor shall one please him with a whitened brow  
Nor wheat nor wool nor aught of plaited leaf,  
For like my mother am I stung and slain,

And round my cheeks have such red malady  
 And on my lips such fire and foam as hers.  
 This is that Atè out of Amathus  
 That breeds up death and gives it one for love.  
 She hath slain mercy, and for dead mercy's sake  
 (Being frightened with this sister that was slain)  
 Flees from before her fearful-footed shame,  
 And will not bear the bending of her brows  
 And long soft arrows flown from under them  
 As from bows bent. Desire flows out of her  
 As out of lips doth speech : and over her  
 Shines fire, and round her and beneath her fire.  
 She hath sown pain and plague in all our house,  
 Love loathed of love, and mates unmatchable,  
 Wild wedlock, and the lusts that bleat or low,  
 And marriage-fodder snuffed about of kine.  
 Lo how the heifer runs with leaping flank  
 Sleek under shaggy and speckled lies of hair,  
 And chews a horrible lip, and with harsh tongue  
 Laps alien froth and licks a loathlier mouth.  
 Alas, a foul first steam of trodden tares,  
 And fouler of these late grapes underfoot.  
 A bitter way of waves and clean-cut foam  
 Over the sad road of sonorous sea  
 The high gods gave king Theseus for no love,  
 Nay, but for love, yet to no loving end.  
 Alas the long thwarts and the fervent oars,  
 And blown hard sails that straightened the scant  
 rope !

There were no strong pools in the hollow sea  
 To drag at them and suck down side and beak,  
 No wind to catch them in the teeth and hair,  
 No shoal, no shallow among the roaring reefs,  
 No gulf whereout the straining tides throw spars,  
 No surf where white bones twist like whirled white  
 fire.

But like to death he came with death, and sought  
 And slew and spoiled and gat him that he would.  
 For death, for marriage, and for child-getting,  
 I set my curse against him as a sword ;  
 Yea, and the severed half thereof I leave  
 Pittheus, because he slew not (when that face  
 Was tender, and the life still soft in it)

The small swathed child, but bred him for my fate.  
 I would I had been the first that took her death  
 Out from between wet hoofs and reddened teeth,  
 Splashed horns, fierce fetlocks of the brother bull !  
 For now shall I take death a deadlier way,  
 Gathering it up between the feet of love  
 Or off the knees of murder reaching it.

## THE TRIUMPH OF TIME.

BEFORE our lives divide forever,  
 While time is with us and hands are free  
 (Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever  
 Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea),  
 I will say no word that a man might say  
 Whose whole life's love goes down in a day ;  
 For this could never have been ; and never,  
 Though the gods and the years relent, shall be.

Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour,  
 To think of things that are well outworn ?  
 Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower,  
 The dream foregone and the deed forborne ?  
 Though joy be done with and grief be vain,  
 Time shall not sever us wholly in twain ;  
 Earth is not spoilt for a single shower ;  
 But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn.

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,  
 Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.  
 The singing seasons divide and depart,  
 Winter and summer depart in twain.  
It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,  
 The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit ;  
 Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart,  
 With sullen savor of poisonous pain.

I have given no man of my fruit to eat ;  
 I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine.  
 Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,  
 This wild new growth of the corn and vine,

This wine and bread without lees or leaven,  
 We had grown as, gods as the gods in heaven,  
 Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,  
One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.

In the change of years, in the coil of things,  
 In the clamor and rumor of life to be,  
 We, drinking love at the furthest springs,  
 Covered with love as a covering tree,  
We had grown as gods, as the gods above,  
 Filled from the heart to the lips with love,  
 Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,  
 O love, my love, had you loved but me !

We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved  
 As the moon moves, loving the world ; and seen  
 Grief collapse as a thing disproved,  
 Death consume as a thing unclean.  
Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast  
 Soul to soul while the years fell past ;  
 Had you loved me once, as you have not loved ;  
 Had the chance been with us that has not been.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind,  
 Days that are over, dreams that are done.  
 Though we seek life through, we shall surely find  
 There is none of them clear to us now, not one.  
 But clear are these things ; the grass and the sand  
 Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,  
 With lips wide open and face burnt blind,  
 The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

The low downs lean to the sea ; the stream,  
 One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,  
 Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,  
 Works downward, sick of the sun and the rain ;  
 No wind is rough with the rank rare flowers ;  
 The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,  
 Shudders and shines as the gray winds gleam,  
 Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.

Mother of loves that are swift to fade,  
 Mother of mutable winds and hours.  
 A barren mother, a mother-maid,  
 Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers.

I would we twain were even as she,  
 Lost in the night and the light of the sea,  
 Where faint sounds falter and wan beams wade,  
 Break, and are broken, and shed into showers.

The loves and hours of the life of a man,  
 They are swift and sad, being born of the sea.  
 Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,  
 Born with a man's breath, mortal as he ;  
 Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,  
 Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon earth.

I lose what I long for, save what I can,  
 My love, my love, and no love for me !

It is not much that a man can save  
 On the sands of life, in the straits of time,  
 Who swims in sight of the great third wave  
 That never a swimmer shall cross or climb.  
 Some waif washed up with the strays and spars  
 That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the stars ;  
 Weed from the water, grass from a grave,  
 A broken blossom, a ruined rhyme.

There will no man do for your sake, I think,  
 What I would have done for the least word said.  
 I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,  
 Broken it up for your daily bread :  
 Body for body and blood for blood,  
 As the flow of the full sea risen to flood  
 That yearns and trembles before it sink,  
 I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,  
 And time at fullest and all his dower,  
 I had given you surely, and life to boot,  
 Were we once made one for a single hour.  
 But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,  
 Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart ;  
 And deep in one is the bitter root,  
 And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung  
 To my life if you bade me, played my part  
 As it pleased you—these were the thoughts that stung,  
 The dreams that smote with a keener dart

Than shafts of love or arrows of death ;  
 These were but as fire is, dust, or breath,  
 Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue  
 Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

I wish we were dead together to-day,  
 Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,  
 Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,  
 Out of the world's way, out of the light,  
 Out of the ages of worldly weather,  
 Forgotten of all men altogether,  
 As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,  
 Made one with death, filled full of the night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,  
 Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews  
 And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,  
 Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse ;  
 Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,  
 Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem  
 Alive as of old to the lips, and leap  
 Spirit to spirit as lovers use.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight ;  
 For what shall it profit when men are dead  
 To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's  
 might,  
 To have looked for day when the day was fled ?  
 Let come what will, there is one thing worth,  
 To have had fair love in the life upon earth :  
 To have held love safe till the day grew night,  
 While skies had color and lips were red.

Would I lose you now ? would I take you then,  
 If I lose you now that my heart has need ?  
 And come what may after death to men,  
 What thing worth this will the dead years breed ?  
 Lose life, lose all ; but at least I know,  
 O sweet life's love, having loved you so,  
 Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,  
 In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.

Yea, I know this well : were you once sealed mine,  
 Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,  
 Mixed into me as honey in wine,  
 Not time that sayeth and gainsayeth,  
 Nor all strong things had severed us then ;  
 Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,  
 Nor all things carthly, nor all divine,  
 Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.

I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew,  
 You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.  
 But none shall triumph a whole life through :  
 For death is one, and the fates are three.  
 At the door of life, by the gate of breath,  
 There are worse things waiting for men than death ;  
 Death could not sever my soul and you,  
 As these have severed your soul from me.

You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent  
 you,  
 Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer.  
 But will it not one day in heaven repent you ?  
 Will they solace you wholly, the days that were ?  
 Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,  
 Meet mine, and see where the great love is,  
 And tremble and turn and be changed ? Content  
 you ;  
 The gate is strait ; I shall not be there.

But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,  
 Had you seen good such a thing were done,  
 I too might have stood with the souls that stand  
 In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the  
 sun ;  
 But who now on earth need care how I live ?  
 Have the high gods anything left to give,  
 Save dust and laurels and gold and sand ?  
 Which gifts are goodly ; but I will none.

O all fair lovers about the world,  
 There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.  
 My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled  
 Round and round in a gulf of the sea ;

And still, through the sound and the straining stream,  
 Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,  
 The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,  
 And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

Free, without pity, withheld from woe,  
 Ignorant ; fair as the eyes are fair.  
 Would I have you change now, change at a blow,  
 Startled and stricken, awake and aware ?  
 Yea, if I could, would I have you see  
 My very love of you filling me,  
 And know my soul to the quick, as I know  
 The likeness and look of your throat and hair ?

I shall not change you. Nay, though I might,  
 Would I change my sweet one love with a word ?  
 I had rather your hair should change in a night,  
 Clear now as the plume of a black bright bird ;  
 Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn gray,  
 Die as a leaf that dies in a day.  
 I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,  
 Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,  
 Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.  
 I have woven a veil for the weeping face,  
 Whose lips have drunken the wine of tears ;  
 I have found a way for the failing feet,  
 A place for slumber and sorrow to meet ;  
 There is no rumor about the place,  
 Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

I have hidden my soul out of sight, and said  
 " Let none take pity upon thee, none  
 Comfort thy crying : for lo, thou art dead,  
 Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.  
 Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought  
 Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,  
 With soft spun verses and tears unshed,  
 And sweet light visions of things undone ?

" I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,  
 And gold, and beautiful burial things.  
 But thou, be at peace now, make no stir ;  
 Is not thy grave as a royal king's ?



Fret not thyself though the end were sore ;  
 Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.  
 Sleep ; what hast thou to do with her ?  
 The eyes that weep, with the mouth that sings ? ”

Where the dead red leaves of the years lie rotten,  
 The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown by,  
 The misconceived and the misbegotten,  
I would find a sin to do ere I die,  
Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,  
 That would set you higher in heaven, serve you  
 And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,  
 As a dead man out of mind, am I.

Your lithe hands draw me, your face burns through  
 me,  
 I am swift to follow you, keen to see ;  
 But love lacks might to redeem or undo me,  
 As I have been, I know I shall surely be ;  
 “ What should such fellows as I do ? ” Nay,  
 My part were worse if I chose to play ;  
 For the worst is this after all ; if they knew me,  
 Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

And I play not for pity of these ; but you,  
 If you saw with your soul what man am I,  
 You would praise me at least that my soul all through  
 Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie ;  
 The souls and lips that are bought and sold,  
 The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,  
 The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,  
 The little lovers that curse and cry.

There are fairer women, I hear ; that may be ;  
 But I, that I love you and find you fair,  
 Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,  
 Do the high gods know or the great gods care ?  
 Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,  
 Would the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,  
 That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,  
 Reverberate words and a foolish prayer ?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,  
 Mother and lover of men, the sea.  
 I will go down to her, I and none other,  
 Close with her, kiss her and mix her with me ;  
 Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast ;  
 O fair white mother, in days long past  
 Born without sister, born without brother,  
 Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,  
 Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,  
 Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,  
 Thy large embraces are keen like pain.  
 Save me and hide me with all thy waves,  
 Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,  
 Those pure cold populous graves of thine,  
 Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,  
 Change as the winds change, veer in the tide ;  
 My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,  
 I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside ;  
 Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,  
 Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,  
 As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips  
 With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,  
 Were it once cast off and unwound from me,  
 Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,  
 Alive and aware of thy ways and thee ;  
 Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,  
 Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,  
 A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,  
 A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,  
 Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say  
 Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again ;  
 Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.  
But death is the worst that comes of thee ;  
 Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,  
 But when hast thou fed on our hearts ? or when,  
 Having given us love, hast thou taken away ?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,  
 Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.  
 The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,  
 Shall they not vanish away and apart ?  
 But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth ;  
 Thou are strong for death and fruitful of birth ;  
 Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover ;  
 From the first thou wert ; in the end thou art.

And grief shall endure not forever, I know.  
 As things that are not shall these things be ;  
 We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,  
 And none be grievous as this to me.  
 We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,  
 The sound of time, the rhyme of the years ;  
 Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow  
 As tender things of a spring-tide sea.

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,  
 Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.  
 And all time past, was it all for this ?  
 Times unforgotten, and treasures of things ?  
 Swift years of liking and sweet long laughter,  
 That wist not well of the years thereafter  
 Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,  
 With lips that trembled and trailing wings ?

There lived a singer in France of old  
 By the tideless dolorous midland sea.  
 In a land of sand and ruin and gold  
 There shone one woman, and none but she.  
 And finding life for her love's sake fail,  
 Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,  
 Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,  
 And praised God, seeing ; and so died he.

Died, praising God for his gift and grace :  
 For she bowed down to him weeping, and said  
 " Live ; " and her tears were shed on his face  
 Or ever the life in his face was shed.  
 The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung  
 Once, and her close lips touched him and clung  
 Once, and grew one with his lips for a space ;  
 And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.

Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.  
Be well content as the years wear through

Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures ;  
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,  
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,  
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,  
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest, and be glad of the gods ; but I,

How shall I praise them, or how take rest ?  
There is not room under all the sky

For me that know not of worst or best,  
Dream or desire of the days before,  
Sweet things or bitterness, any more.  
Love will not come to me now though I die,  
As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses ;

I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong  
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,

As a wave of the sea turned back by song.  
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,  
Face to face with its own desire ;

A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes ;  
I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,

The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,  
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,

The music burning at heart like wine,  
An armed archangel whose hands raise up  
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup  
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder—

These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard

Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife ;  
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,

Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.  
Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep  
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,  
Now time has done with his one sweet word,  
The wine and leaven of lovely life.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,  
 Fill the days of my daily breath  
With fugitive things not good to treasure,  
Do as the world doth, say as it saith ;  
 But if we had loved each other—O sweet,  
 Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,  
 The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure  
 To feel you tread it to dust and death—

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given  
 All that life gives and the years let go,  
 The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,  
 The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?  
 Come life, come death, not a word be said ;  
 Should I lose you living, and vex you dead ?  
 I never shall tell you on earth ; and in heaven,  
 If I cry to you then, will you hear or know ?

## LES NOYADES.

WHATEVER a man of the sons of men  
 Shall say to his heart of the lords above,  
 They have shown man verily, once and again,  
 Marvellous mercies and infinite love.

In the wild fifth year of the change of things,  
 When France was glorious and blood-red, fair  
 With dust of battle and deaths of kings,  
 A queen of men, with helmeted hair ;

Carrier came down to the Loire and slew,  
 Till all the ways and the waves waxed red :  
 Bound and drowned, slaying two by two,  
 Maidens and young men, naked and wed.

They brought on a day to his judgment-place  
 One rough with labor and red with fight,  
 And a lady noble by name and face,  
 Faultless, a maiden, wonderful, white.

She knew not, being for shame's sake blind,  
 If his eyes were hot on her face hard by.  
 And the judge bade strip and ship them, and bind  
 Bosom to bosom, to drown and die.

The white girl winced and whitened ; but he  
 Caught fire, waxed bright as a great bright flame  
 Seen with thunder far out on the sea,  
 Laughed hard as the glad blood went and came.

Twice his lips quailed with delight, then said,  
 "I have but a word to you all, one word  
 Bear with me ; surely I am but dead ;"  
 And all they laughed and mocked him and heard.

"Judge, when they open the judgment-roll  
 I will stand upright before God and pray :  
 'Lord God, have mercy on one man's soul,  
 For his mercy was great upon earth, I say.

" 'Lord, if I loved thee—Lord, if I served—  
 If these who darkened thy fair Son's face  
 I fought with, sparing not one, nor swerved  
 A hand's-breadth, Lord, in the perilous place—

" 'I pray thee say to this man, O Lord,  
*Sit thou for him at my feet on a throne.*  
 I will face thy wrath, though it bite as a sword,  
 And my soul shall burn for his soul, and atone.

" 'For, Lord, thou knowest, O God most wise,  
 How gracious on earth were his deeds toward me.  
 Shall this be a small thing in thine eyes,  
 That is greater in mine than the whole great sea ?'

"I have loved this woman my whole life long,  
 And even for love's sake when have I said  
 'I love you ?' when have I done you wrong,  
 Living ? but now I shall have you dead.

"Yea, now, do I bid you love me, love ?  
 Love me or loathe, we are one not twain.  
 But God be praised in his heaven above  
 For this my pleasure and that my pain !

“ For never a man, being mean like me,  
 Shall die like me till the whole world dies.  
 I shall drown with her, laughing for love ; and she  
 Mix with me, touching me, lips and eyes.

“ Shall she not know me and see me all through,  
 Me, on whose heart as a worm she trod ?  
 You have given me, God requite it you,  
 What man yet never was given of God.”

O sweet one love, O my life's delight,  
 Dear, though the days have divided us,  
 Lost beyond hope, taken far out of sight,  
 Not twice in the world shall the gods do thus.

Had it been so hard for my love ? but I,  
 Though the gods gave all that a god can give,  
 I had chosen rather the gift to die,  
 Cease, and be glad above all that live.

For the Loire would have driven us down to the sea,  
 And the sea would have pitched us from shoal to  
 shoal ;  
 And I should have held you, and you held me,  
 As flesh holds flesh, and the soul the soul.

Could I change you, help you to love me, sweet,  
 Could I give you the love that would sweeten death,  
 We should yield, go down, locked hands and feet,  
 Die, drown together, and breath eatch breath ;

But you would have felt my soul in a kiss,  
 And known that once if I loved you well ;  
 And I would have given my soul for this  
 To burn forever in burning hell.

## A BALLAD OF LIFE.

I FOUND in dreams a place of wind and flowers,  
 Full of sweet trees and color of glad grass,  
 In midst whereof there was  
 A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours.

Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon,  
 Made my blood burn and swoon  
 Like a flame rained upon.  
 Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids blue,  
 And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all through  
 Seemed sad with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings,  
 Shaped heartwise, strung with subtle-colored hair  
 Of some dead lute player  
 That in dead years had done delicious things.  
 The seven strings were named accordingly ;  
 The first string charity,  
 The second tenderness,  
 The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and sin,  
 And loving kindness, that is pity's kin  
 And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each garmented  
 With gold and shod with gold upon the feet ;  
 And with plucked ears of wheat.  
 The first man's hair was wound upon his head :  
 His face was red, and his mouth curled and sad ;  
 All his gold garment had  
 Pale stains of dust and rust.  
 A riven hood was pulled across his eyes ;  
 The token of him being upon this wise  
 Made for a sign of Lust.

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy face  
 Colored like green wood when flame kindles it.  
 He hath such feeble feet  
 They may not well endure in any place.  
 His face was full of gray old miseries,  
 And all his blood's increase  
 Was even increase of pain.  
 The last was Fear, that is akin to Death ;  
 He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame saith  
 Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me ; This is marvellous,  
 Seeing the air's face is not so delicate  
 Nor the sun's grace so great,  
 If sin and she be kin or amorous.



And seeing where maidens served her on their knees

I bade one crave of these

To know the cause thereof.

Then Fear said : I am Pity that was dead.

And Shame said : I am Sorrow comforted.

And Lust said : I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing

And her sweet mouth a song in a strange tongue ;

And all the while she sung

There was no sound but long tears following

Long tears upon men's faces, waxen white

With extreme sad delight.

But those three following men

Became as men raised up among the dead ;

Great glad mouths open, and fair cheeks made red

With child's blood come again.

Then I said : Now assuredly I see

My lady is perfect, and transfigureth

All sin and sorrow and death,

Making them fair as her own eyelids be,

Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides ;

Or as her sweet white sides

And bosom carved to kiss.

Now therefore, if her pity further me,

Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be

As righteous as she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,

Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat

Where the least thornprick harms ;

And girdled in thy golden singing-coat,

Come thou before my lady and say this ;

Borgia, thy gold hair's color burns in me,

Thy mouth makes beat my blood in feverish  
rhymes ;

Therefore so many as these roses be,

Kiss me so many times.

Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,

That she will stoop herself none otherwise

Than a blown vine-branch doth,

And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes,

Ballad, and on thy mouth.

## A BALLAD OF DEATH.

KNEEL down, fair Love, and fill thyself with tears,  
 Girdle thyself with sighing for a girth  
 Upon the sides of mirth,  
 Cover thy lips and eyelids, let thine ears  
 Be filled with rumor of people sorrowing ;  
 Make thee soft raiment out of woven sighs  
 Upon the flesh to cleave,  
 Set pains therein and many a grievous thing,  
 And many sorrows after each his wise  
 For armlet and for gorget and for sleeve.

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,  
 Left hanged upon the trees that were therein ;  
 O Love and Time and Sin,  
 Three singing mouths that mourn now under breath,  
 Three lovers, each one evil spoken of ;  
 O smitten lips wherethrough this voice of mine  
 Came softer with her praise ;  
 Abide a little for our lady's love.  
 The kisses of her mouth were more than wine,  
 And more than peace the passage of her days.

O Love, thou knowest if she were good to see.  
 O Time, thou shalt not find in any land  
 Till, cast out of thine hand,  
 The sunlight and the moonlight fail from thee,  
 Another woman fashioned like as this.  
 O Sin, thou knowest that al' thy shame in her  
 Was made a goodly thing ;  
 Yea, she caught Shame and shamed him with her kiss,  
 With her fair kiss, and lips much lovelier  
 Than lips of amorous roses in late spring.

By night there stood over against my bed  
 Queen Venus with a hood striped gold and black,  
 Both sides drawn fully back  
 From brows wherein the sad blood failed of red,  
 And temples drained of purple and full of death.  
 Her curled hair had the wave of sea-water  
 And the sea's gold in it.

Her eyes were as a dove's that sickeneth.  
Strewn dust of gold she had shed over her,  
And pearl and purple and amber on her feet.

Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline  
Were painted all the secret ways of love  
And covered things thereof,  
That hold delight as grape-flowers hold their wine ;  
Red mouths of maidens and red feet of doves,  
And brides that kept within the bride-chamber  
Their garment of soft shame,  
And weeping faces of the wearied loves  
That swoon in sleep and awake wearier,  
With heat of lips and hair shed out like flame.

The tears that through her eyelids fell on me  
Made mine own bitter where they ran between  
As blood had fallen therein,  
She saying ; Arise, lift up thine eyes and see  
If any glad thing be or any good  
Now the best thing is taken forth of us ;  
Even she to whom all praise  
Was as one flower in a great multitude,  
One glorious flower of many and glorious,  
One day found gracious among many days :

Even she whose handmaiden was Love—to whom  
At kissing times across her stateliest bed  
Kings bowed themselves and shed  
Pale wine, and honey with the honeycomb,  
And spikenard-bruised for a burnt-offering ;  
Even she between whose lips the kiss became  
As fire and frankincense ;  
Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,  
Whose eyes were as the morning purged with flame,  
Whose eyelids as sweet savor issuing thence.

Then I beheld, and lo on the other side  
My lady's likeness crowned and robed and dead.  
Sweet still, but now not red,  
Was the shut mouth whereby men lived and died.  
And sweet, but emptied of the blood's blue shade,

The great curled eyelids that withheld her eyes,  
 And sweet, but like spoilt gold,  
 The weight of color in her tresses weighed.  
 And sweet, but as a vesture with new dyes,  
 The body that was clothed with love of old.

Ah ! that my tears filled all her woven hair  
 And all the hollow bosom of her gown—  
 Ah ! that my tears ran down  
 Even to the place where many kisses were,  
 Even where her parted breast-flowers have place,  
 Even where they are cloven apart—who knows not  
 this ?

Ah ! the flowers cleave apart  
 And their sweet fills the tender interspace ;  
 Ah ! the leaves grown thereof were things to kiss  
 Ere their fine gold was tarnished at the heart.

Ah ! in the days when God did good to me,  
 Each part about her was a righteous thing ;  
 Her mouth an almsgiving,  
 The glory of her garments charity,  
 The beauty of her bosom a good deed,  
 In the good days when God kept sight of us ;  
 Love lay upon her eyes,  
 And on that hair whereof the world takes heed :  
 And all her body was more virtuous  
 Than souls of women fashioned otherwise.

Now, ballad, gather poppies in thine hands  
 And sheaves of brier and many rusted sheaves  
 Rain-rotten in rank lands,  
 Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves  
 And grass that fades ere any of it be mown ;  
 And when thy bosom is filled full thereof  
 Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,  
 And say " My master that was thrall to Love  
 Is become thrall to Death."  
 Bow down before him, ballad, sigh and groan,  
 But make no sojourn in thy outgoing ;  
 For haply it may be  
 That when thy feet return at evening  
 Death shall come in with thee.

## A LEAVE-TAKING.

LET us go hence, my songs : she will not hear ;  
 Let us go hence together without fear.  
 Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,  
 And over all old things and all things dear.  
 She loves not you nor me as all we love her :  
 Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,  
 She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part : she will not know.  
 Let us go seaward as the great winds go,  
 Full of blown sand and foam. What help is there ?  
 There is no help, for all these things are so,  
 And all the world is bitter as a tear.  
 And how these things are, though ye strove to show,  
 She would not know.

Let us go home and hence : she will not weep.  
 We gave love many dreams and days to keep,  
 Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not  
 grow,  
 Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle, and  
 reap."  
 All is reaped now ; no grass is left to mow :  
 And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,  
 She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest : she will not love.  
 She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,  
 Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.  
 Come hence, let be, lie still ; it is enough.  
 Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep ;  
 And, though she saw all heaven in flower above,  
 She would not love.

Let us give up, go down : she will not care.  
 Though all the stars made gold of all the air,  
 And the sea moving saw before it move  
 One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair ;  
 Though all those waves went over us, and drove  
 Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair,—  
 She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence : she will not see.  
 Sing all once more together ; surely she,  
 She too, remembering days and words that were,  
 Will turn a little toward us, sighing ; but we,  
 We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not  
     been there.  
 Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,  
     She would not see.

## ITYLUS.

SWALLOW, my sister, O sister swallow,  
     How can thine heart be full of the spring ?  
     A thousand summers are over and dead.  
 What hast thou found in the spring to follow ?  
     What hast thou found in thine heart to sing ?  
     What wilt thou do when the summer is shed ?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,  
     Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,  
     The soft south whither thine heart is set ?  
 Shall not the grief of the old time follow ?  
     Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth ?  
     Hast thou forgotten ere I forget ?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,  
     Thy way is long to the sun and the south ;  
     But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,  
 Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,  
     From tawny body and sweet small mouth  
     Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,  
     O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,  
     All spring through till the spring be done,  
 Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,  
     Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,  
     Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft, light swallow,  
 Though all things feast in the spring's guest-  
 chamber,  
 How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet ?  
 For where thou fliest I shall not follow,  
 Till life forget, and death remember,  
 Till thou remember, and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,  
 I know not how thou hast heart to sing.  
 Hast thou the heart ? is it all past over ?  
 Thy lord the summer is good to follow,  
 And fair the feet of thy lover the spring ;  
 But what wilt thou say to the spring thy lover ?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,  
 My heart in me is a molten ember,  
 And over my head the waves have met.  
 But thou wouldst tarry, or I would follow,  
 Could I forget, or thou remember,  
 Couldst thou remember, and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,  
 The heart's division divideth us.  
 Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree ;  
 But mine goes forth, among sea-gulfs hollow,  
 To the place of the slaying of Itylus,  
 The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,  
 I pray thee sing not a little space.  
 Are not the roofs and the lintels wet ?  
 The woven web that was plain to follow,  
 The small slain body, the flower-like face,  
 Can I remember if thou forget ?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten !  
 The hands that cling and the feet that follow,  
 The voice of the child's blood crying yet,  
*Who hath remembered me ? Who hath forgotten ?*  
 Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,  
 But the world shall end when I forget.

## RONDEL.

THESE many years since we began to be,  
 What have the gods done with us ? what with me,  
 What with my love ? They have shown me fates and  
 fears,  
 Harsh springs, and fountains bitterer than the sea,  
 Grief a fixed star, and joy a vane that veers,  
 These many years.

With her, my love, with her have they done well ?  
 But who shall answer for her ? who shall tell  
 Sweet things or sad, such things as no man hears ?  
 May no tears fall, if no tears ever fell,  
 From eyes more dear to me than starriest spheres  
 These many years !

But if tears ever touched, for any grief,  
 Those eyelids folded like a white-rose leaf,  
 Deep double shells wherethrough the eye-flower peers,  
 Let them weep once more only, sweet and brief,  
 Brief tears and bright, for one who gave her tears  
 These many years.

## A LITANY.

## FIRST ANTIPHONE.

ALL the bright lights of heaven  
 I will make dark over thee ;  
 One night shall be as seven,  
 That its skirts may cover thee ;  
 I will send on thy strong men a sword,  
 On thy remnant a rod :  
 Yes shall know that I am the Lord,  
 Saith the Lord God.

## SECOND ANTIPHONE.

All the bright lights of heaven  
 Thou hast made dark over us ;  
 One night has been as seven,  
 That its skirt might cover us ;



Thou hast sent on our strong men a sword,  
 On our remnant a rod :  
 We know that thou art the Lord,  
 O Lord our God !

## THIRD ANTIPHONE.

As the tresses and wings of the wind  
 Are scattered and shaken,  
 I will scatter all them that have sinned :  
 There shall none be taken ;  
 As a sower that scattereth seed,  
 So will I scatter them ;  
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,  
 I will break and shatter them.

## FOURTH ANTIPHONE.

As the wings and the locks of the wind  
 Are scattered and shaken,  
 Thou hast scattered all them that have sinned :  
 There was no man taken ;  
 As a sower that scattereth seed,  
 So hast thou scattered us ;  
 As one breaketh and shattereth a reed,  
 Thou hast broken and shattered us.

## FIFTH ANTIPHONE.

From all thy lovers that love thee,  
 I God will sunder thee ;  
 I will make darkness above thee,  
 And thick darkness under thee ;  
 Before me goeth a light,  
 Behind me a sword :  
 Shall a remnant find grace in my sight ?  
 I am the Lord.

## SIXTH ANTIPHONE.

From all our lovers that love us,  
 Thou God didst sunder us ;  
 Thou madest darkness above us,  
 And thick darkness under us ;

Thou hast kindled thy wrath for a light,  
 And made ready thy sword :  
 Let a remnant find grace in thy sight,  
 We beseech thee, O Lord !

## SEVENTH ANTIPHONE.

Wilt thou bring fine gold for a payment  
 For sins on this wise ?  
 For the glittering of raiment,  
 And the shining of eyes,  
 For the painting of faces,  
 And the sundering of trust,  
 For the sins of thine high places  
 And delight of thy lust ?

For your high things ye shall have lowly,  
 Lamentation for song ;  
 For, behold, I God am holy,  
 I the Lord am strong.  
 Ye shall seek me, and shall not reach me  
 Till the wine-press be trod ;  
 In that hour ye shall turn, and beseech me,  
 Saith the Lord God.

## EIGHTH ANTIPHONE.

Not with fine gold for a payment,  
 But with coin of sighs,  
 But with rending of raiment,  
 And with weeping of eyes,  
 But with shame of stricken faces,  
 And with strewing of dust,  
 For the sin of stately places  
 And lordship of lust ;

With voices of men made lowly,  
 Made empty of song,  
 O Lord God most holy,  
 O God most strong,  
 We reach out hands to reach thee  
 Ere the wine-press be trod ;  
 We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee,  
 O Lord our God !

## NINTH ANTIPHONE.

In that hour thou shalt say to the night,  
 Come down and cover us ;  
 To the cloud on thy left and thy right,  
 Be thou spread over us.  
 A snare shall be as thy mother,  
 And a curse thy bride ;  
 Thou shalt put her away, and another  
 Shall lie by thy side.

Thou shalt neither rise up by day,  
 Nor lie down by night.  
 Would God it were dark ! thou shalt say ;  
 Would God it were light !  
 And the sight of thine eyes shall be made  
 As the burning of fire ;  
 And thy soul shall be sorely afraid  
 For thy soul's desire.

Ye whom your lords loved well,  
 Putting silver and gold on you,  
 The inevitable hell  
 Shall surely take hold on you ;  
 Your gold shall be for a token,  
 Your staff for a rod ;  
 With the breaking of bands ye are broken  
 Saith the Lord God.

## TENTH ANTIPHONE.

In our sorrow we said to the night,  
 Fall down and cover us ;  
 To the darkness at left and at right,  
 Be thou shed over us.  
 We had breaking of spirit to mother,  
 And cursing to bride ;  
 And one was slain, and another  
 Stood up at our side.

We could not arise by day,  
 Nor lie down by night ;  
 Thy sword was sharp in our way,  
 Thy word in our sight ;

The delight of our eyelids was made  
 As the burning of fire,  
 And our souls became sorely afraid  
 For our soul's desire.

We whom the world loved well,  
 Laying silver and gold on us,  
 The kingdom of death and of hell  
 Riseth up to take hold on us ;  
 Our gold is turned to a token,  
 Our staff to a rod :  
 Yet shalt thou bind them up that were broken,  
 O Lord our God !

## A LAMENTATION.

## I.

Who hath known the ways of time,  
 Or trodden behind his feet ?  
 There is no such man among men.  
 For chance overcomes him, or crime  
 Changes ; for all things sweet  
 In time wax bitter again.  
 Who shall give sorrow enough,  
 Or who the abundance of tears ?  
 Mine eyes are heavy with love,  
 And a sword gone through mine ears,  
 A sound like a sword and fire,  
 For pity, for great desire ;  
 Who shall insure me thereof,  
 Lest I die, being full of my fears ?

Who hath known the ways and the wrath,  
 The sleepless spirit, the root  
 And blossom of evil will,  
 The divine device of a god ?  
 Who shall behold it, or hath ?  
 The twice-tongued prophets are mute,  
 The many speakers are still ;  
 No foot has travelled or trod,

No hand has meted, his path.  
 Man's fate is a blood-red fruit,  
 And the mighty gods have their fill  
 And relax not the rein, or the rod.

Ye were mighty in heart from of old,  
 Ye slew with the spear, and are slain.  
 Keen after heat is the cold,  
 Sore after summer is rain,  
 And melteth man to the bone.  
 As water he weareth away,  
 As a flower, as an hour in a day,  
 Fallen from laughter to moan.  
 But my spirit is shaken with fear  
 Lest an evil thing begin,  
 New-born, a spear for a spear,  
 And one for another sin.  
 Or ever our tears began,  
 It was known from of old and said ;  
 One law for a living man,  
 And another law for the dead  
 For these are fearful and sad,  
 Vain, and things without breath ;  
 While he lives let a man be glad,  
 For none hath joy of his death.

## II.

Who hath known the pain, the old pain of earth,  
 Or all the travail of the sea,  
 The many ways and waves, the birth  
 Fruitless, the labor nothing worth ?  
 Who hath known, who knoweth, O gods ? not we.

There is none shall say he hath seen,  
 There is none he hath known.  
 Though he saith, Lo, a lord have I been,  
 I have reaped and sown ;  
 I have seen the desire of mine eyes,  
 The beginning of love,  
 The season of kisses and sighs,  
 And the end thereof.

I have known the ways of the sea,  
 All the perilous ways ;  
 Strange winds have spoken with me,  
 And the tongues of strange days.  
 I have hewn the pine for ships ;  
 Where steeds run arow,  
 I have seen from their bridled lips  
 Foam blown as the snow.  
 With snapping of chariot-poles  
 And with straining of oars  
 I have grazed in the race the goals,  
 In the storm the shores ;  
 As a greave is cleft with an arrow  
 At the joint of the knee,  
 I have cleft through the sea-straits narrow  
 To the heart of the sea.  
 When air was smitten in sunder,  
 I have watched on high  
 The ways of the stars and the thunder  
 In the night of the sky ;  
 Where the dark brings forth light as a flower,  
 As from lips that dissever ;  
 One abideth the space of an hour,  
 One endureth forever.  
 Lo, what hath he seen or known  
 Of the way and the wave  
 Unbeholden, unsailed-on, unsown,  
 From the breast to the grave ?

Or ever the stars were made, or skies,  
 Grief was born, and the kinless night,  
 Mother of gods without form or name.  
 And light is born out of heaven, and dies,  
 And one day knows not another's light ;  
 But night is one, and her shape the same.  
 But dumb the goddesses underground  
 Wait, and we hear not on earth if their feet  
 Rise, and the night wax loud with their wings ;  
 Dumb, without word or shadow of sound ;  
 And sift in scales, and winnow as wheat  
 Men's souls, and sorrow of manifold things.

## III.

Nor less of grief than ours  
 The gods wrought long ago  
 To bruise men one by one ;  
 But with the incessant hours  
 Fresh grief and greener woe  
 Spring, as the sudden sun  
 Year after year makes flowers ;  
 And these die down and grow,  
 And the next year lacks none.

As these men sleep, have slept  
 The old heroes in time fled,  
 No dream-divided sleep ;  
 And holier eyes have wept  
 Than ours, when on her dead  
 Gods have seen Thetis weep,  
 With heavenly hair far-swept  
 Back, heavenly hands out-spread  
 Round what she could not keep,

Could not one day withhold,  
 One night ; and like as these  
 White ashes of no weight,  
 Held not his urn the cold  
 Ashes of Heracles ?  
 For all things born, one gate  
 Opens,—no gate of gold ;  
 Opens ; and no man sees  
 Beyond the gods and fate.

## ANIMA ANCEPS.

TILL death have broken  
 Sweet life's love-token,  
 Till all be spoken  
 That shall be said,  
 What dost thou praying,  
 O soul, and playing  
 With song and saying,  
 Things flown and fled ?

For this we know not—  
 That fresh springs flow not  
 And fresh griefs grow not  
     When men are dead ;  
 When strange years cover  
 Lover and lover,  
 And joys are over,  
     And tears are shed.

If one day's sorrow  
 Mar the day's morrow ;  
 If man's life borrow,  
     And man's death pay ;  
 If souls once taken,  
 If lives once shaken,  
 Arise, awaken,  
     By night, by day,—  
 Why with strong crying  
 And years of sighing,  
 Living and dying,  
     Fast ye and pray ?  
 For all your weeping,  
 Waking and sleeping,  
 Death comes to reaping,  
     And takes away.  
 Though time rend after  
 Roof-tree from rafter,  
 A little laughter  
     Is much more worth  
 Than thus to measure  
 The hour, the treasure,  
 The pain, the pleasure,  
     The death, the birth ;  
 Grief, when days alter,  
 Like joy shall falter ;  
 Song-book and psalter,  
     Mourning and mirth.  
 Live like the swallow ;  
 Seek not to follow,  
 Where earth is hollow,  
     Under the earth.



## SONG BEFORE DEATH.

(FROM THE FRENCH.)

1795.

SWEET mother, in a minute's span  
 Death parts thee and my love of thee :  
 Sweet love, that yet art living man,  
 Come back, true love, to comfort me.  
 Back, ah, come back ! ah, wellaway !  
 But my love comes not any day.

As roses, when the warm West blows,  
 Break to full flower, and sweeten spring,  
 My soul would break to a glorious rose  
 In such wise at his whispering.  
 In vain I listen ; wellaway !  
 My love says nothing any day.

You that will weep for pity of love  
 On the low place where I am lain,  
 I pray you, having wept enough,  
 Tell him for whom I bore such pain  
 That he was yet, ah ! wellaway !  
 My true love to my dying day.

## ROCOCO.

TAKE hands, and part with laughter ;  
 Touch lips, and part with tears :  
 Once more and no more after,  
 Whatever comes with years.  
 We twain shall not re-measure  
 The ways that left us twain,  
 Nor crush the lees of pleasure  
 From sanguine grapes of pain.

We twain once well in sunder,  
 What will the mad gods do  
 For hate with me, I wonder,  
 Or what for love with you ?

Forget them till November,  
 And dream there's April yet ;  
 Forget that I remember,  
 And dream that I forget.

Time found our tired love sleeping,  
 And kissed away his breath ;  
 But what should we do weeping  
 Though light love sleep to death ?  
 We have drained his lips at leisure,  
 Till there's not left to drain  
 A single sob of pleasure,  
 A single pulse of pain.

Dream that the lips once breathless  
 Might quicken if they would ;  
 Say that the soul is deathless ;  
 Dream that the gods are good ;  
 Say March may wed September,  
 And time divorce regret :  
 But not that you remember,  
 And not that I forget.

We have heard from hidden places  
 What love scarce lives and hears ;  
 We have seen on fervent faces  
 The pallor of strange tears ;  
 We have trod the wine-vat's treasure,  
 Whence, ripe to steam and stain,  
 Foams round the feet of pleasure  
 The blood-red must of pain.

Remembrance may recover,  
 And time bring back to time  
 The name of your first lover,  
 The ring of my first rhyme ;  
 But rose-leaves of December  
 The frosts of June shall fret,  
 The day that you remember,  
 The day that I forget.

The snake that hides and hisses  
 In heaven, we twain have known  
 The grief of cruel kisses,  
 The joy whose mouth makes moan ;

The pulse's pause and measure,  
 Where in one furtive vein  
 Throbs through the heart of pleasure  
 The purpler blood of pain.

We have done with tears and treasons  
 And love for treason's sake ;  
 Room for the swift new seasons,  
 The years that burn and break.  
 Dismantle and dismember  
 Men's days and dreams, Juliette ;  
 For love may not remember,  
 But time will not forget.

Life treads down love in flying,  
 Time withers him at root ;  
 Bring all dead things and dying,  
 Reaped sheaf and ruined fruit,  
 Where, crushed by three days' pressure,  
 Our three days' love lies slain ;  
 And earlier leaf of pleasure,  
 And latter flower of pain.

Breathe close upon the ashes,  
 It may be flame will leap ;  
 Unclose the soft close lashes,  
 Lift up the lids, and weep.  
 Light love's extinguished ember,  
 Let one tear leave it wet,  
 For one that you remember,  
 And ten that you forget.

## A BALLAD OF BURDENS.

THE burden of fair women. Vain delight,  
 And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,  
 And sorrowful old age that comes by night  
 As a thief comes that has no heart by day,  
 And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them  
 gray,  
 And weariness that keeps awake for hire,  
 And grief that says what pleasure used to say :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,  
 A burden without fruit in childbearing ;  
 Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,  
 Threescore between the dawn and evening.  
 The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering  
 In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,  
 Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,  
 Cover thy head, and weep ; for verily  
 These market-men that buy thy white and brown  
 In the last days shall take no thought for thee ;  
 In the last days like earth thy face shall be,  
 Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,  
 Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear  
 Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed ;  
 And say at night, " Would God the day were here !"  
 And say at dawn, " Would God the day were  
 dead !"  
 With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,  
 And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,  
 Pain for thy girdle, and sorrow upon thine head :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see  
 Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green ;  
 And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,  
 And no more as the thing beforetime seen.  
 And thou shalt say of mercy, " It hath been ;"  
 And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,  
 And talking, tears shall take thy breath between :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day  
 Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell  
 Thy times and ways and words of love, and say  
 How one was dear, and one desirable,  
 And sweet was life to hear and sweet to smell ;

But now with lights reverse the old hours retire,  
 And the last hour is shod with fire from hell :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in spring,  
 White rain and wind among the tender trees ;  
 A summer of green sorrows gathering ;  
 Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,  
 With sad face set towards the year, that sees  
 The charred ash drop out of the dropping pyre,  
 And winter wan with many maladies ;  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight  
 And out of love, beyond the reach of hands,  
 Changed in the changing of the dark and light,  
 They walk and weep about the barren lands  
 Where no seed is, nor any garner stands,  
 Where in short breaths the doubtful days respire,  
 And time's turned glass lets through the sighing  
 sands :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life and lust  
 Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight ;  
 And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust,  
 And overhead strange weathers burn and bite ;  
 And where the red was, lo the bloodless white ;  
 And where truth was, the likeness of a liar ;  
 And where day was, the likeness of the night :  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

## L'ENVOY.

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quickeneth,  
 Heed well this rhyme before your pleasure tire ;  
 For life is sweet, but after life is death.  
 This is the end of every man's desire.

## BEFORE THE MIRROR.

(VERSES WRITTEN UNDER A PICTURE.)

(INSCRIBED TO J. A. WHISTLER.)

## I.

WHITE rose in red rose-garden  
 Is not so white ;  
 Snowdrops that plead for pardon  
 And pine for fright  
 Because the hard East blows  
 Over their maiden rows,  
 Grow not as this face grows from pale to bright.

Behind the veil, forbidden,  
 Shut up from sight,  
 Love, is there sorrow hidden,  
 Is there delight ?  
 Is joy thy dower or grief,  
 White rose of weary leaf,  
 Late rose whose life is brief, whose loves are light ?

Soft snows, that hard winds harden  
 Till each flake bite,  
 Fill all the flowerless garden  
 Whose flowers took flight  
 Long since when summer ceased,  
 And men rose up from feast,  
 And warm west wind grew east, and warm day  
 night.

## II.

“ Come snow, come wind or thunder  
 High up in air,  
 I watch my face, and wonder  
 At my bright hair ;  
 Naught else exalts or grieves  
 The rose at heart, that heaves  
 With love of her own leaves and lips that pair.

“She knows not loves that kissed her  
 She knows not where :  
 Art thou the ghost, my sister,  
 White sister there,  
 Am I the ghost, who knows ?  
 My hand, a fallen rose,  
 Lies snow-white on white snows, and takes no  
 care.

“I cannot see what pleasures  
 Or what pains were ;  
 What pale new loves and treasures  
 New years will bear ;  
 What beam will fall, what shower,  
 What grief or joy for dower :  
 But one thing knows the flower,—the flower is  
 fair.”

## III.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,  
 Since joys go by ;  
 Sad, but not bent with sadness,  
 Since sorrows die ;  
 Deep in the gleaming glass  
 She sees all past things pass,  
 And all sweet life that was lie down and lie.

There glowing ghosts of flowers  
 Draw down, draw nigh ;  
 And wings of swift spent hours  
 Take flight and fly ;  
 She sees by formless gleams,  
 She hears across cold streams,  
 Dead mouths of many dreams that sing and sigh.

Face fallen and white throat lifted,  
 With sleepless eye  
 She sees old loves that drifted,  
 She knew not why,—  
 Old loves and faded fears  
 Float down a stream that hears  
 The flowing of all men's tears beneath the sky.

## IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BACK to the flower-town, side by side,  
 The bright months bring,  
 New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,  
 Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,  
 Filled full of sun ;  
 All things come back to her, being free,—  
 All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot  
 Flowers that were dead  
 Live, and old suns revive ; but not  
 That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,  
 Far north, I hear  
 One face shall never turn to me  
 As once this year ;

Shall never smile and turn and rest  
 On mine as there,  
 Nor one most sacred hand be prest  
 Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,  
 Half run before ;  
 The youngest to the oldest singer  
 That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find  
 Till all grief end,  
 In holiest age our mightiest mind,  
 Father and friend.

But thou, if any thing endure,  
 If hope there be,  
 O spirit that man's life left pure,  
 Man's death set free,



Not with disdain of days that were  
 Look earthward now :  
 Let dreams revive the reverend hair,  
 The imperial brow ;

Come back in sleep, for in the life  
 Where thou art not  
 We find none like thee. Time and strife  
 And the world's lot

Move thee no more ; but love at least,  
 And reverent heart,  
 May move thee, royal and released,  
 Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust  
 Receive and keep,  
 Keep safe his dedicated dust,  
 His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,  
 Mix with thy name,  
 As morning-star with evening-star,  
 His faultless fame.

## A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER.

1852.

PUSH hard across the sand,  
 For the salt wind gathers breath ;  
 Shoulder and wrist and hand,  
 Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,  
 The foam-heads loosen and flee ;  
 It swells and welters and swings,  
 The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff  
 The long corn flickers and shakes ;  
 Push, for the wind holds stiff,  
 And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,  
 The quiver and beat of the sea !  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,  
 Out with her over the sand,  
 Let the kings keep the earth for their share !  
 We have done with the sharers of land.

They have tied the world in a tether,  
 They have bought over God with a fee ;  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,  
 The thief's mouth red from the feast,  
 The blood on the hands of the king,  
 And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,  
 Put a bit in the jaws of the sea ?  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind !  
 The old red shall be floated again  
 When the ranks that are thin shall be thinned,  
 When the names that were twenty are ten ;

When the devil's riddle is mastered,  
 And the galley-bench creaks with a Pope,  
 We shall see Buonaparte the bastard  
 Kick heels with his throat in a rope.

While the shepherd sets wolves on his sheep,  
 And the emperor halts his kine,  
 While Shame is a watchman asleep,  
 And Faith is a keeper of swine,—

Let the wind shake our flag like a feather,  
 Like the plumes of the foam of the sea !  
 While three men hold together,  
 The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,  
From Cayenne to the Austrian whips ;  
Forth, with the rain in our hair  
And the salt sweet foam in our lips ;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,  
In the blown wet face of the sea ;  
While three men hold together,  
The kingdoms are less by three.

## A SONG IN TIME OF REVOLUTION.

1860.

THE heart of the rulers is sick, and the high-priest  
covers his head,  
For this is the song of the quick that is heard in the  
ears of the dead.

The poor and the halt and the blind are keen and  
mighty and fleet :  
Like the noise of the blowing of wind is the sound  
of the noise of their feet.

The wind has the sound of a laugh in the clamor of  
days and of deeds :  
The priests are scattered like chaff, and the rulers  
broken like reeds.

The high-priest sick from qualms, with his raiment  
bloodily dashed ;  
The thief with branded palms, and the liar with  
cheeks abashed.

They are smitten, they tremble greatly, they are  
pained for their pleasant things :  
For the house of the priests made stately, and the  
might in the mouth of the kings.

They are grieved and greatly afraid ; they are taken,  
they shall not flee :  
For the heart of the nations is made as the strength  
of the springs of the sea.

They were fair in the grace of gold, they walked  
with delicate feet ;

They were clothed with the cunning of old, and the  
smell of their garments was sweet.

For the breaking of gold in their hair they halt as a  
man made lame :

They are utterly naked and bare ; their mouths are  
bitter with shame.

Wilt thou judge thy people now, O king that wast  
found most wise ?

Wilt thou lie any more, O thou whose mouth is emp-  
tied of lies ?

Shall God make a pact with thee, till his hook be  
found in thy sides ?

Wilt thou put back the time of the sea, or the place  
of the season of tides ?

Set a word in thy lips, to stand before God with a  
word in thy mouth :

That " the rain shall return in the land, and the  
tender dew after drouth."

But the arm of the elders is broken, their streng this  
unbound and undone :

They wait for a sign of a token ; they cry, and there  
cometh none.

Their moan is in every place, the cry of them filleth  
the land :

There is shame in the sight of their face, there is  
fear in the thews of their hand.

They are girdled about the reins with a curse for the  
girdle thereon :

For the noise of the rending of chains, the face of  
their color is gone.

For the sound of the shouting of men, they are  
grievously stricken at heart :

They are smitten asunder with pain, their bones are  
smitten apart.

There is none of them all that is whole ;  
    their lips gape open for breath :  
They are clothed with sickness of soul, and the shape  
    of the shadow of death.

The wind is thwart in their feet ; it is full of the  
    shouting of mirth ;  
As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so it shaketh the  
    ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen ; the iron has  
    opened its mouth ;  
The corn is red that was green ; it is bound for the  
    sheaves of the south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound of the  
    wind as a breath,  
In the ears of the souls that were dead, in the dust  
    of the deepness of death ;

Where the face of the moon is taken, the ways of the  
    stars undone,  
The light of the whole sky shaken, the light of the  
    face of the sun ;

Where the waters are emptied and broken, the waves  
    of the waters are stayed ;  
Where God has bound for a token the darkness that  
    maketh afraid ;

Where the sword was covered and hidden, and dust  
    had grown in its side,  
A word came forth that was bidden, the crying of  
    one that cried :

The sides of the two-edged sword shall be bare, and  
    its mouth shall be red,  
For the breath of the face of the Lord that is felt in  
    the bones of the dead.

## TO VICTOR HUGO.

IN the fair days when god  
 By man as godlike trod,  
 And each alike was Greek, alike was free,  
 God's lightning spared, they said,  
 Alone the happier head  
 Whose laurels screened it ; fruitless grace for thee  
 To whom the high gods gave of right  
 Their thunders and their laurels and their light.

Sunbeams and bays before  
 Our master's servants wore,  
 For these Apollo left in all men's lands ;  
 But far from these ere now,  
 And watched with jealous brow,  
 Lay the blind lightnings shut between God's hands,  
 And only loosed on slaves and kings  
 The terror of the tempest of their wings.

Born in these younger years  
 That shone with storms of spears,  
 And shook in the wind blown from a dead world's  
 pyre,  
 When by her back-blown hair  
 Napoleon caught the fair  
 And fierce Republic with her feet of fire,  
 And stayed with iron words and hands  
 Her flight, and freedom in a thousand lands :

Thou sawest the tides of things  
 Close over heads of kings,  
 And thine hand felt the thunder, and to thee  
 Laurels and lightnings were  
 As sunbeams and soft air  
 Mixed each in other, or as mist with sea  
 Mixed, or as memory with desire,  
 Or the lute's pulses with the louder lyre.

For thee man's spirit stood  
 Disrobed of flesh and blood,

And bare the heart of the most secret hours ;  
 And to thine hand more tame  
 Than birds in winter came  
 High hopes and unknown flying forms of powers,  
 And from thy table fed, and sang  
 Till with the tune men's ears took fire and rang.

Even all men's eyes and ears  
 With fiery sound and tears  
 Waxed hot, and cheeks caught flame and eyelids  
 light,  
 At those high songs of thine  
 That stung the sense like wine,  
 Or fell more soft than dew or snow by night,  
 Or wailed as in some flooded cave  
 Sobs the strong broken spirit of a wave.

But we, our master, we  
 Whose hearts, uplift to thee,  
 Ache with the pulse of thy remembered song,—  
 We ask not nor await  
 From the clinched hands of fate,  
 As thou, remission of the world's old wrong ;  
 Respite we ask not, no release :  
 Freedom a man may have, he shall not peace.

Though thy most fiery hope  
 Storm heaven, to set wide ope  
 The all-sought-for gate whence God or chance debars  
 All feet of men, all eyes—  
 The old night resumes her skies,  
 Her hollow hiding-place of clouds and stars,  
 Where naught save these is sure in sight,  
 And, paven with death, our days are roofed with  
 night.

One thing we can : to be  
 Awhile, as men may, free ;  
 But not by hope or pleasure the most stern  
 Goddess, most awful-eyed,  
 Sits, but on either side  
 Sits sorrow and the wrath of hearts that burn,  
 Sad faith that cannot hope or fear,  
 And memory gray with many a flowerless year.

Not that in stranger's wise  
 I lift not loving eyes  
 To the fair foster-mother France, that gave  
 Beyond the pale fleet foam  
 Help to my sires and home ;  
 Whose great sweet breast could shelter those and save  
 Whom from her nursing breasts and hands  
 Their land cast forth of old on gentler lands.

Not without thoughts that ache  
 For theirs and for thy sake,  
 I, born of exiles, hail thy banished head ;  
 I, whose young song took flight  
 Toward the great heat and light  
 On me a child from thy far splendor shed,  
 From thine high place of soul and song,  
 Which, fallen on eyes yet feeble, made them strong.

Ah ! not with lessening love  
 For memories born hereof,  
 I look to that sweet mother-land, and see  
 The old fields and fair full streams,  
 And skies, but fled like dreams  
 The feet of freedom and the thought of thee ;  
 And all between the skies and graves  
 The mirth of mockers and the shame of slaves.

She, killed with noisome air,  
 Even she ! and still so fair,  
 Who said, " Let there be freedom," and there was  
 Freedom ; and as a lance  
 The fiery eyes of France  
 Touched the world's sleep, and as a sleep made pass  
 Forth of men's heavier ears and eyes  
 Smitten with fire and thunder from new skies.

Are they men's friends indeed  
 Who watch them weep and bleed ?  
 Because thou hast loved us, shall the gods love thee ?  
 Thou, first of men and friend,  
 Seest thou, even thou, the end ?  
 Thou knowest what hath been, knowest thou what  
 shall be ?

Evils may pass and hopes endure ;  
 But fate is dim, and all the gods obscure.



O nursed in airs apart,  
 O poet highest of heart,  
 Hast thou seen time, who hast seen so many things ?  
 Are not the years more wise,  
 More sad than keenest eyes,  
 The years with soundless feet and sounding wings ?  
 Passing we hear them not, but past  
 The clamor of them thrills us, and their blast.

Thou art chief of us, and lord ;  
 Thy song is as a sword  
 Keen-edged and scented in the blade from flowers ;  
 Thou art lord and king ; but we  
 Lift younger eyes, and see  
 Less of high hope, less light on wandering hours ;  
 Hours that have borne men down so long,  
 Seen the right fail, and watched uplift the wrong.

But thine imperial soul,  
 As years and ruins roll  
 To the same end, and all things and all dreams  
 With the same wreck and roar  
 Drift on the dim same shore,  
 Still in the bitter foam and brackish streams  
 Tracks the fresh water-spring to be,  
 And sudden sweeter fountains in the sea.

As once the high god bound  
 With many a rivet round  
 Man's savior, and with iron nailed him through,  
 At the wild end of things,  
 Where even his own bird's wings  
 Flagged, whence the sea shone like a drop of dew,  
 From Caucasus beheld below  
 Past fathoms of unfathomable snow ;

So the strong God, the chance  
 Central of circumstance,  
 Still shows him exile who will not be slave ;  
 All thy great fame and thee  
 Girt by the dim strait sea  
 With multitudinous walls of wandering wave ;  
 Shows us our greatest from his throne  
 Fate-stricken, and rejected of his own.

Yea, he is strong, thou say'st,  
 A mystery many-faced,  
 The wild beasts know him, and the wild birds flee ;  
 The blind night sees him, death  
 Shrinks beaten at his breath,  
 And his right hand is heavy on the sea :  
 We know he hath made us, and is king ;  
 We know not if he care for any thing.

Thus much, no more, we know :  
 He bade what is, be so,  
 Bade light be, and bade night be, one by one ;  
 Bade hope and fear, bade ill  
 And good redeem and kill,  
 Till all men be aweary of the sun,  
 And this world burn in its own flame,  
 And bear no witness longer of his name.

Yet though all this be thus,  
 Be those men praised of us  
 Who have loved and wrought and sorrowed, and not  
 sinned  
 For fame or fear or gold,  
 Nor waxed for winter cold,  
 Nor changed for changes of the worldly wind ;  
 Praised above men of men be these,  
 Till this one world and work we know shall cease.

Yea, one thing more than this,  
 We know that one thing is,  
 The splendor of a spirit without blame,  
 That not the laboring years  
 Blind-born, nor any fears,  
 Nor men nor any gods can tire or tame ;  
 But purer power with fiery breath  
 Fills and exalts above the gulfs of death.

Praised above men be thou,  
 Whose laurel-laden brow,  
 Made for the morning, droops not in the night ;  
 Praised and beloved, that none  
 Of all thy great things done  
 Flies higher than thy most equal spirit's flight ;  
 Praised, that nor doubt nor hope could bend  
 Earth's loftiest head, found upright to the end.

## BEFORE DAWN.

SWEET life, if life were stronger,  
 Earth clear of years that wrong her,  
 Then two things might live longer,  
     Two sweeter things than they,—  
 Delight, the rootless flower,  
 And love, the bloomless bower ;  
 Delight that lives an hour,  
     And love that lives a day.

From evensong to daytime,  
 When April melts in Maytime,  
 Love lengthens out his playtime,  
     Love lessens breath by breath,  
 And kiss by kiss grows older  
 On listless throat or shoulder  
 Turned sideways now, turned colder  
     Than life that dreams of death.

This one thing once worth giving  
 Life gave, and seemed worth living ;  
 Sin sweet beyond forgiving  
     And brief beyond regret :  
 To laugh and love together,  
 And weave with foam and feather  
 And wind and words the tether  
     Our memories play with yet.

Ah ! one thing worth beginning,  
 One thread in life worth spinning,  
 Ah, sweet, one sin worth sinning  
     With all the whole soul's will ;  
 To lull you till one stilled you,  
 To kiss you till one killed you,  
 To feed you till one filled you,  
     Sweet lips, if love could fill ;

To hunt sweet Love, and lose him  
 Between white arms and bosom,  
 Between the bud and blossom,  
     Between your throat and chin ;

To say of shame—what is it ?  
 Of virtue—we can miss it ;  
 Of sin—we can but kiss it,  
 And it's no longer sin ;

To feel the strong soul, stricken  
 Through fleshly pulses, quicken  
 Beneath swift sighs that thicken,  
 Soft hands and lips that smite ;  
 Lips that no love can tire,  
 With hands that sting like fire,  
 Weaving the web Desire  
 To snare the bird Delight.

But love so lightly plighted,  
 Our love with torch unlighted,  
 Paused near us unaffrighted,  
 Who found and left him free :  
 None, seeing us cloven in sunder,  
 Will weep or laugh or wonder ;  
 Light love stands clear of thunder,  
 And safe from winds at sea.

As, when late larks give warning  
 Of dying lights and dawning,  
 Night murmurs to the morning,  
 “ Lie still, O love, lie still ; ”  
 And half her dark limbs cover  
 The white limbs of her lover,  
 With amorous plumes that hover  
 And fervent lips that chill ;

As scornful day represses  
 Night's void and vain caresses,  
 And from her cloudier tresses  
 Unwinds the gold of his,  
 With limbs from limbs dividing,  
 And breath by breath subsiding ;  
 For love has no abiding,  
 But dies before the kiss :

So hath it been, so be it ;  
 For who shall live and flee it ?  
 But look that no man see it  
     Or hear it unaware ;  
 Lest all who love and choose him  
 See Love, and so refuse him ;  
 For all who find him lose him,  
     But all have found him fair.

## THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE.

HERE, where the world is quiet,  
     Here, where all trouble seems  
 Dead winds' and spent waves' riot  
     In doubtful dreams of dreams ;  
 I watch the green field growing  
 For reaping folk and sowing,  
 For harvest time and mowing,  
     A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,  
     And men that laugh and weep,  
 Of what may come hereafter  
     For men that sow to reap :  
 I am weary of days and hours,  
 Blown buds of barren flowers,  
 Desires and dreams and powers,  
     And every thing but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,  
     And far from eye or ear  
 Wan waves and wet winds labor,  
     Weak ships and spirits steer ;  
 They drive adrift, and whither  
 They wot not who make thither ;  
 But no such winds blow hither,  
     And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,  
     No heather-flower or vine,  
 But bloomless buds of poppies,  
     Green grapes of Proserpine,

Pale beds of blowing rushes  
Where no leaf blooms or blushes  
Save this whereout she crushes  
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,  
In fruitless fields of corn,  
They bow themselves and slumber  
All night till light is born ;  
And like a soul belated,  
In hell and heaven unmated,  
By cloud and mist abated  
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,  
He too with death shall dwell,  
Nor wake with wings in heaven,  
Nor weep for pains in hell ;  
Though one were fair as roses,  
His beauty clouds and closes ;  
And well though love reposes,  
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal  
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands  
Who gathers all things mortal  
With cold immortal hands ;  
Her languid lips are sweeter  
Than love's who fears to greet her  
To men that mix and meet her  
For many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,  
She waits for all men born ;  
Forgets the earth her mother,  
The life of fruits and corn ;  
And spring and seed and swallow  
Take wing for her, and follow  
Where summer song rings hollow,  
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,  
The old loves with wearier wings ;  
And all dead years draw thither,  
And all disastrous things ;

Dead dreams of days forsaken,  
 Blind buds that snows have shaken,  
 Wild leaves that winds have taken,  
     Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,  
     And joy was never sure ;  
 To-day will die to-morrow ;  
     Time stoops to no man's lure ;  
 And love, grown faint and fretful,  
 With lips but half regretful  
 Sighs, and with eyes forgetful  
     Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,  
     From hope and fear set free,  
 We thank with brief thanksgiving  
     Whatever gods may be  
 That no life lives forever ;  
 That dead men rise up never ;  
 That even the weariest river  
     Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,  
     Nor any change of light ;  
 Nor sound of waters shaken,  
     Nor any sound or sight ;  
 Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,  
 Nor days nor things diurnal :  
 Only the sleep eternal  
     In an eternal night.

## LOVE AT SEA.

WE are in love's land to-day :  
     Where shall we go ?  
 Love, shall we start or stay,  
     Or sail or row ?  
 There's many a wind and way,  
 And never a May but May :  
 We are in love's hand to-day ;  
     Where shall we go ?

Our land-wind is the breath  
 Of sorrows kissed to death,  
 And joys that were ;  
 Our ballast is a rose ;  
 Our way lies where God knows,  
 And love knows where.  
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Our seamen are fledged Loves,  
 Our masts are bills of doves,  
 Our decks fine gold ;  
 Our ropes are dead maids' hair,  
 Our stores are love-shafts fair  
 And manifold.  
 We are in love's land to-day—

Where shall we land you, sweet ?  
 On fields of strange men's feet,  
 Or fields near home ?  
 Or where the fire-flowers blow,  
 Or where the flowers of snow,  
 Or flowers of foam ?  
 We are in love's hand to-day—

Land me, she says, where love  
 Shows but one shaft, one dove,  
 One heart, one hand.  
 —A shore like that, my dear,  
 Lies where no man will steer,  
 No maiden land.  
*Imitated from Théophile Gautier.*

## APRIL.

FROM THE FRENCH OF THE VIDAME DE CHARTRES. 12—?

WHEN the fields catch flower,  
 And the underwood is green,  
 And from bower unto bower  
 The songs of the birds begin,  
 I sing with sighing between.



When I laugh and sing,  
 I am heavy at heart for my sin ;  
 I am sad in the spring  
 For my love that I shall not win,  
 For a foolish thing.

This profit I have of my woe,  
 That I know, as I sing,  
 I know he will needs have it so  
 Who is master and king,  
 Who is lord of the spirit of spring.  
 I will serve her, and will not spare  
 Till her pity awake  
 Who is good, who is pure, who is fair,  
 Even her for whose sake  
 Love hath ta'en me and slain unaware.

O my lord, O Love,  
 I have laid my life at thy feet ;  
 Have thy will thereof,  
 Do as it please thee with it,  
 For what shall please thee is sweet.  
 I am come unto thee  
 To do thee service, O Love !  
 Yet cannot I see  
 Thou wilt take any pity thereof,  
 Any mercy on me.

But the grace I have long time sought  
 Comes never in sight,  
 If in her it abideth not,  
 Through thy mercy and might,  
 Whose heart is the world's delight.  
 Thou hast sworn without fail I shall die,  
 For my heart is set  
 On what hurts me, I wot not why,  
 But cannot forget  
 What I love, what I sing for and sigh.

She is worthy of praise ;  
 For this grief of her giving is worth  
 All the joy of my days  
 That lie between death's day and birth,  
 All the lordship of things upon earth.

Nay, what have I said ?  
 I would not be glad if I could :  
 My dream and my dread  
 Are of her, and for her sake I would  
 That my life were fled.

Lo, sweet, if I durst not pray to you,  
 Then were I dead ;  
 If I sang not a little to say to you,  
 (Could it be said)  
 O my love, how my heart would be fed ;  
 Ah, sweet who hast hold of my heart,  
 For thy love's sake I live ;  
 Do but tell me, ere either depart,  
 What a lover may give  
 For a woman so fair as thou art.

The lovers that disbelieve,  
 False rumors shall grieve  
 And evil-speaking shall part.

## BEFORE PARTING.

A MONTH or twain to live on honeycomb  
 Is pleasant ; but one tires of scented time,  
 Cold sweet recurrence of accepted rhyme,  
 And that strong purple under juice and foam  
 Where the wine's heart has burst ;  
 Nor feel the latter kisses like the first.

Once yet, this poor one time : I will not pray  
 Even to change the bitterness of it,  
 The bitter taste ensuing on the sweet,  
 To make your tears fall where your soft hair lay  
 All blurred and heavy in some perfumed wise  
 Over my face and eyes.

And yet who knows what end the scythèd wheat  
 Makes of its foolish poppies' mouths of red ?  
 These were not sown, these are not harvested,  
 They grow a month, and are cast under feet,  
 And none has care thereof,  
 As none has care of a divided love.

I know each shadow of your lips by rote,  
 Each change of love in eyelids and eyebrows ;  
 The fashion of fair temples tremulous  
 With tender blood, and color of your throat ;  
 I know not how love is gone out of this,  
 Seeing that all was his.

Love's likeness there endures upon all these ;  
 But out of these one shall not gather love.  
 Day hath not strength nor the night shade  
 enough  
 To make love whole, and fill his lips with ease,  
 As some bee-builded cell  
 Feels at filled lips the heavy honey swell.

I know not how this last month leaves your hair  
 Less full of purple color and hid spice,  
 And that luxurious trouble of closed eyes  
 Is mixed with meaner shadow and waste care ;  
 And love, kissed out by pleasure, seems not yet  
 Worth patience to regret.

## THE SUNDEW.

A LITTLE marsh-plant, yellow green,  
 And pricked at lip with tender red.  
 Tread close, and either way you tread  
 Some faint black water jets between  
 Lest you should bruise the curious head

A live thing may be ; who shall know ?  
 The summer knows and suffers it ;  
 For the cool moss is thick and sweet  
 Each side, and saves the blossom so  
 That it lives out the long June heat.

The deep scent of the heather burns  
 About it : breathless though it be,  
 Bow down and worship ; more than we  
 Is the least flower whose life returns,  
 Least weed renascent in the sea.

We are vexed and cumbered in earth's sight  
 With wants, with many memories :  
 These see their mother what she is,  
 Glad-growing, till August leave more bright  
 The apple-colored cranberries.

Wind blows and bleaches the strong grass,  
 Blown all one way to shelter it  
 From trample of strayed kine, with feet  
 Felt heavier than the moorhen was,  
 Strayed up past patches of wild wheat.

You call it sundew : how it grows,  
 If with its color it have breath,  
 If life taste sweet to it, if death  
 Pain its soft petal, no man knows :  
 Man has no sight or sense that saith.

My sundew, grown of gentle days,  
 In these green miles the spring begun  
 Thy growth ere April had half done  
 With the soft secret of her ways,  
 Or June made ready for the sun.

O red-lipped mouth of marsh-flower !  
 I have a secret halved with thee.  
 The name that is love's name to me  
 Thou knowest, and the face of her  
 Who is my festival to see.

The hard sun, as thy petals knew,  
 Colored the heavy moss-water :  
 Thou wert not worth green midsummer,  
 Nor fit to live to August blue,  
 O sundew, not remembering her.

#### AN INTERLUDE.

IN the greenest growth of the Maytime,  
 I rode where the woods were wet,  
 Between the dawn and the daytime :  
 The spring was glad that we met.

There was something the season wanted,  
Though the ways and the woods smelt sweet,—  
The breath at your lips that panted,  
The pulse of the grass at your feet.

You came, and the sun came after,  
And the green grew golden above ;  
And the flag-flowers lighten with laughter,  
And the meadow-sweet shook with love.

Your feet in the full-grown grasses  
Moved soft as a weak wind blows :  
You passed me as April passes,  
With face made out of a rose.

By the stream where the stems were slender,  
Your bright foot paused at the sedge :  
It might be to watch the tender  
Light leaves in the springtime hedge,

On boughs that the sweet month blanches  
With flowery frost of May ;  
It might be a bird in the branches ;  
It might be a thorn in the way.

I waited to watch you linger  
With foot drawn back from the dew,  
Till a sunbeam straight like a finger  
Struck sharp through the leaves at you.

And a bird overhead sang *Follow*,  
And a bird to the right sang *Here* ;  
And the arch of the leaves was hollow,  
And the meaning of May was clear.

I saw where the sun's hand pointed,  
I knew what the bird's note said :  
By the dawn and the dewfall anointed,  
You were queen by the gold on your head.

As the glimpse of a burnt-out ember  
Recalls a regret of the sun,  
I remember, forget, and remember  
What Love saw done and undone.

I remember the way we parted,  
 The day and the way we met :  
 You hoped we were both broken-hearted,  
 And knew we should both forget.

And May with her world in flower  
 Seemed still to murmur and smile  
 As you murmured and smiled for an hour :  
 I saw you turn at the stile.

A hand like a white wood-blossom  
 You lifted, and waved, and passed,  
 With head hung down to the bosom,  
 And pale, as it seemed, at last.

And the best and the worst of this is,  
 That neither is most to blame,  
 If you've forgotten my kisses,  
 And I've forgotten your name.

## HENDECASYLLABICS.

IN the month of the long decline of roses,  
 I, beholding the summer dead before me,  
 Set my face to the sea, and journeyed silent,  
 Gazing eagerly where above the sea mark  
 Flame as fierce as the fervid eyes of lions  
 Half divided the eyelids of the sunset ;  
 Till I heard as it were a noise of waters  
 Moving tremulous under feet of angels  
 Multitudinous, out of all the heavens ;  
 Knew the fluttering wind, the fluttered foliage,  
 Shaken fitfully, full of sound and shadow ;  
 And saw, trodden upon by noiseless angels,  
 Long mysterious reaches fed with moonlight,  
 Sweet sad straits in a soft subsiding channel,  
 Blown about by the lips of winds I knew not,  
 Winds not born in the north nor any quarter,  
 Winds, not warm with the south nor any sunshine ;  
 Heard between them a voice of exultation,

"Lo, the summer is dead, the sun is faded,  
 Even like as a leaf the year is withered,  
 All the fruits of the day from all her branches  
 Gathered, neither is any left to gather.  
 All the flowers are dead, the tender blossoms,  
 All are taken away ; the season wasted,  
 Like an ember among the fallen ashes.  
 Now with light of the winter days, with moonlight,  
 Light of snow, and the bitter light of hoar-frost,  
 We bring flowers that fade not after autumn,  
 Pale white chaplets and crowns of latter seasons,  
 Fair false leaves (but the summer leaves were falser),  
 Woven under the eyes of stars and planets  
 When low light was upon the windy reaches  
 Where the flower of foam was blown, a lily  
 Dropt among the sonorous fruitless furrows  
 And green fields of the sea that make no pasture :  
 Since the winter begins, the weeping winter,  
 All whose flowers are tears, and round his temples  
 Iron blossom of frost is bound forever."

## SAPPHICS.

ALL the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,  
 Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,  
 Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron  
 Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision  
 Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,  
 Softly touched mine eyelids and lips ; and I too,  
 Full of the vision,

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,  
 Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled  
 Shine as fire of sunset on western waters ;  
 Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew  
 her,  
 Looking, always, looking with neck reverted ;  
 Back to Lesbos, back to the hills where under  
 Shone Mitylene ;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her  
 Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,  
 As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing  
     Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful  
 Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her ;  
 While behind a clamor of singing women  
     Severed the twilight.

Ah the singing, ah the delight, the passion !  
 All the Loves wept, listening ; sick with anguish,  
 Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo ;  
     Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew  
     not.

Ah the tenth, the Lesbian ! the nine were silent,  
 None endured the sound of her song for weeping ;  
     Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns ; but about her forehead,  
 Round her woven tresses and ashen temples  
 White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,  
     Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown forever.  
 Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite  
 Paused, and almost wept ; such a song was that song,  
     Yea, by her name too

Called her, saying, " Turn to me, O my Sappho !"  
 Yet she turned her face from the Love's, she saw  
     not  
 Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,  
     Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,  
 Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite  
 Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,  
     Saw not her hands wrung ;



Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten  
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-  
strings,  
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand her chosen,  
Fairer than all men ;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,  
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,  
Full of music ; only beheld among them  
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,  
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,  
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,  
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered  
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom ;  
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces  
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent ;  
Yea, the gods waxed pale ; such a song was that  
song.  
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,  
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,  
Full of fruitless women and music only.  
Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,  
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the gray sea-side, unassuaged, unheard of,  
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,  
Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,  
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and sing-  
ing  
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,  
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,  
Hearing, to hear them,

## AT ELEUSIS.

MEN of Eleusis, ye that with long staves  
 Sit in the market-houses, and speak words  
 Made sweet with wisdom as the rare wine is  
 Thickened with honey ; and ye sons of these  
 Who in the glad thick streets go up and down  
 For pastime or grave traffic or mere chance ;  
 And all fair women having rings of gold  
 On hands or hair ; and chiefest over these  
 I name you, daughters of this man the king,  
 Who dipping deep smooth pitchers of pure brass  
 Under the bubbled wells, till each round lip  
 Stooped with loose gurgle of waters incoming,  
 Found me an old sick woman, lamed and lean,  
 Beside a growth of builded olive-boughs  
 Whence multiplied thick song of thick-plumed  
 throats—

Also wet tears filled up my hollow hands  
 By reason of my crying into them—  
 And pitied me ; for as cold water ran  
 And washed the pitchers full from lip to lip,  
 So washed both eyes full the strong salt of tears.  
 And ye put water to my mouth, made sweet  
 With brown hill-berries : so in time I spoke,  
 And gathered my loose knees from under me.  
 Moreover, in the broad, fair halls this month  
 Have I found space and bountiful abode  
 To please me. I Demeter speak of this,  
 Who am the mother and the mate of things :  
 For as ill men by drugs or singing words  
 Shut the doors inward of the narrow womb  
 Like a lock bolted with round iron through,  
 Thus I shut up the body and sweet mouth  
 Of all soft pasture and the tender land,  
 So that no seed can enter in by it,  
 Though one sow thickly, nor some grain get out  
 Past the hard clods men cleave and bite with steel  
 To widen the sealed lips of them for use.  
 None of you is there in the peopled street

But knows how all the dry-drawn furrows ache  
 With no green spot made count of in the black ;  
 How the wind finds no comfortable grass,  
 Nor is assuaged with bud nor breath of herbs ;  
 And in hot autumn, when ye house the stacks,  
 All fields are helpless in the sun, all trees  
 Stand as a man stripped out of all but skin.  
 Nevertheless, ye sick have help to get  
 By means and stablished ordinance of God ;  
 For God is wiser than a good man is.  
 But never shall new grass be sweet in earth  
 Till I get righted of my wound and wrong  
 By changing counsel of ill-minded Zeus.  
 For of all other gods is none save me  
 Clothed with like power to build and break the year.  
 I make the lesser green begin, when spring  
 Touches not earth but with one fearful foot ;  
 And as a careful gilder with grave art  
 Soberly colors and completes the face.  
 Mouth, chin, and all, of some sweet work in stone,  
 I carve the shapes of grass and tender corn,  
 And color the ripe edges and long spikes  
 With the red increase and the grace of gold.  
 No tradesman in soft wools is cunninger  
 To kill the secret of the fat white fleece  
 With stains of blue and purple wrought in it.  
 Three moons were made, and three moons burnt  
 away,  
 While I held journey hither out of Crete,  
 Comfortless, tended by grave Hecate,  
 Whom my wound stung with double iron point ;  
 For all my face was like a cloth wrung out  
 With close and weeping wrinkles, and both lids  
 Sodden with salt continuance of tears.  
 For Hades and the sidelong will of Zeus,  
 And that lame wisdom that has writen feet,  
 Cunning, begotten in the bed of Shame,  
 These three took evil will at me, and made  
 Such counsel, that when time got wing to fly  
 This Hades out of summer and low fields  
 Forced the bright body of Persephone :  
 Out of pure grass, where she lying down, red  
 flowers

Made their sharp little shadows on her sides,  
 Pale heat, pale color on pale maiden flesh,—  
 And chill water slid over her reddening feet,  
 Killing the throbs in their soft blood ; and birds,  
 Perched next her elbows, and pecking at her hair,  
 Stretched their necks more to see her than even to  
 sing.

A sharp thing is it I have need to say ;  
 For Hades holding both white wrists of hers  
 Unloosed the girdle, and with knot by knot  
 Bound her between his wheels upon the seat,  
 Bound her pure body, holiest yet and dear  
 To me and God as always, clothed about  
 With blossoms loosened, as her knees went down,  
 Let fall as she let go of this and this  
 By tens and twenties tumbled to her feet,  
 White waifs or purple of the pasturage.  
 Therefore with only going up and down  
 My feet were wasted, and the gracious air,  
 To me discomfortable and dun, became  
 As weak smoke blowing in the underworld.  
 And finding in the process of ill days  
 What part had Zeus herein, and how as mate  
 He coped with Hades, yokefellow in sin,  
 I set my lips against the meat of gods,  
 And drank not, neither ate or slept, in heaven.  
 Nor in the golden greeting of their mouths  
 Did ear take note of me, nor eye at all  
 Track my feet going in the ways of them.  
 Like a great fire on some strait slip of land  
 Between two washing inlets of wet sea  
 That burns the grass up to each lip of beach,  
 And strengthens, waxing in the growth of wind,  
 So burnt my soul in me at heaven and earth,  
 Each way a ruin and a hungry plague,  
 Visible evil ; nor could any night  
 Put cool between mine eyelids, nor the sun  
 With competence of gold fill out my want.  
 Yea, so my flame burnt up the grass and stones,  
 Shone to the salt-white edges of thin sea,  
 Distempered all the gracious work, and made  
 Sick change, unseasonable increase of days  
 And scant avail of seasons ; for by this

The fair gods faint in hollow heaven : there comes  
 No taste of burnings of the twofold fat  
 To leave their palates smooth, nor in their lips  
 Soft rings of smoke, and weak scent wandering ;  
 All cattle waste and rot, and their ill smell  
 Grows alway from the lank, unsavory flesh  
 That no man slays for offering ; the sea  
 And waters moved beneath the heath and corn  
 Preserve the people of fin-twinkling fish,  
 And river-flies feed thiek upon the smooth ;  
 But all earth over is no man or bird  
 (Except the sweet race of the kingfisher)  
 That lacks not, and is wearied with much loss.  
 Meantime, the purple inward of the house  
 Was softened with all grace of scent and sound  
 In ear and nostril perfecting my praise ;  
 Faint grape-flowers and cloven honey-cake  
 And the just grain with dues of the shed salt  
 Made me content : yet my hand loosened not  
 Its gripe upon your harvest all year long.  
 While I, thus woman-muffled in wan flesh  
 And waste externals of a perished face,  
 Preserved the levels of my wrath and love  
 Patiently ruled ; and with soft offices  
 Cooled the sharp noons, and busied the warm  
     nights  
 In care of this my choice, this child my choice,  
 Triptolemus, the king's selected son :  
 That this fair yearlong body, which hath grown  
 Strong with strange milk upon the mortal lip  
 And nerved with half a god, might so increase  
 Outside the bulk and the bare scope of man ;  
 And waxen over large to hold within  
 Base breath of yours, and this impoverished air,  
 I might exalt him past the flame of stars,  
 The limit and walled reach of the great world.  
 Therefore my breast made common to his mouth  
 Immortal savors, and the taste whereat  
 Twice their hard life strains out the colored veins,  
 And twice its brain confirms the narrow shell.  
 Also at night, unwinding cloth from cloth  
 As who unhusks an almond to the white,  
 And pastures curiously the purer taste,

I bared the gracious limbs and the soft feet,  
 Unswaddled the weak hands, and in mid-ash  
 Laid the sweet flesh of either feeble side,  
 More tender for impressure of some touch  
 Than wax to any pen ; and lit around  
 Fire, and made crawl the white, worm-shapen flame,  
 And leap in little angers spark by spark  
 At head at once, and feet ; and the faint hair  
 Hissed with rare sprinkles in the closer curl,  
 And like scaled oarage of a keen thin fish  
 In sea-water, so in pure fire his feet  
 Struck out, and the flame bit not in his flesh,  
 But like a kiss it curled his lip, and heat  
 Fluttered his eyelids ; so each night I blew  
 The hot ash red to purge him to full god.  
 Ill is it when fear hungers in the soul  
 For painful food, and chokes thereon, being fed ;  
 And ill slant eyes interpret the straight sun,  
 But in their scope its white is wried to black :  
 By the queen Metaneira mean I this ;  
 For with sick wrath upon her lips and heart,  
 Narrowing with fear the spleenful passages,  
 She thought to thread this web's fine ravel out,  
 Nor leave her shuttle split in combing it ;  
 Therefore she stole on us, and with hard sight  
 Peered, and stooped close ; then with pale, open  
     mouth  
 As the fire smote her in the eyes between  
 Cried, and the child's laugh sharply shortening  
 As fire doth under rain, fell off ; the flame  
 Writhed once all through and died, and in thick dark  
 Tears fell from mine on the child's weeping eyes,  
 Eyes dispossessed of strong inheritance  
 And mortal fallen anew. Who not the less  
 From bud of beard to pale-gray flower of hair  
 Shall wax vine-wise to a lordly vine, whose grapes  
 Bleed the red, heavy blood of swoln soft wine,  
 Subtle with sharp leaves' intricacy, until  
 Full of white years and blossom of hoary days  
 I take him perfected ; for whose one sake  
 I am thus gracious to the least who stands  
 Filleted with white wool and girt upon  
 As he whose prayer endures upon the lip

And falls not waste : wherefore let sacrifice  
 Burn and run red in all the wider ways  
 Seeing I have sworn by the pale temples' band  
 And popped hair of gold Persephone  
 Sad-tressed and pleached low down about her brows,  
 And by the sorrow in her lips, and death  
 Her dumb and mournful-mouthed minister,  
 My word for you is eased of its harsh weight  
 And doubled with soft promise ; and your king  
 Triptolemus, this Celeus dead and swathed  
 Purple and pale for golden burial,  
 Shall be your helper in my services.  
 Dividing earth and reaping fruits thereof  
 In fields where wait, well-girt, well-wreathen, all  
 The heavy-handed seasons all year through ;  
 Saving the choice of warm spear-headed grain,  
 And stooping sharp to the slant-sided share  
 All beasts that furrow the remeasured land  
 With their bowed necks of burden equable.

## AUGUST.

THERE were four apples on the bough,  
 Half gold, half red, that one might know  
 The blood was ripe inside the core ;  
 The color of the leaves was more  
 Like stems of yellow corn that grow  
 Through all the gold June meadow's floor.

The warm smell of the fruit was good  
 To feed on, and the split green wood,  
 With all its bearded lips and stains  
 Of mosses in the cloven veins,  
 Most pleasant, if one lay or stood  
 In sunshine or in happy rains.  
 There were four apples on the tree,  
 Red stained through gold, that all might see  
 The sun went warm from core to rind ;  
 The green leaves made the summer blind  
 In that soft place they kept for me  
 With golden apples shut behind.

The leaves caught gold across the sun,  
 And where the bluest air begun,  
 Thirsted for song to help the heat ;  
 As I to feel my lady's feet  
 Draw close before the day were done :  
 Both lips grew dry with dreams of it.

In the mute August afternoon  
 They trembled to some undertune  
 Of music in the silver air :  
 Great pleasure was it to be there  
 Till green turned duskier, and the moon  
 Colored the corn-sheaves like gold hair.

That August time it was delight  
 To watch the red moons wane to white  
 'Twixt gray seamed stems of apple-trees :  
 A sense of heavy harmonies  
 Grew on the growth of patient night,  
 More sweet than shapen music is.

But some three hours before the moon  
 The air, still eager from the noon,  
 Flagged after heat, not wholly dead ;  
 Against the stem I leant my head ;  
 The color soothed me like a tune,  
 Green leaves all round the gold and red.

I lay there till the warm smell grew  
 More sharp, when flecks of yellow dew  
 Between the round ripe leaves had blurred  
 The rind with stain and wet : I heard  
 A wind that blew and breathed and blew,  
 Too weak to alter its one word.

The wet leaves next the gentle fruit  
 Felt smoother, and the brown tree-root  
 Felt the mould warmer : I, too, felt  
 (As water feels the slow gold melt  
 Right through it when the day burns mute)  
 The peace of time wherein love dwelt.



There were four apples on the tree,  
 Gold stained on red, that all might see  
 The sweet blood filled them to the core :  
 The color of her hair is more  
 Like stems of fair faint gold, that be  
 Mown from the harvest's middle-floor.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.<sup>1</sup>

THREE damsels in the queen's chamber,  
 The queen's mouth was most fair :  
 She spake a word of God's mother  
 As the combs went in her hair.  
 Mary that is of might,  
 Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her,  
 A span's length off her head :  
 She sang this song of God's mother  
 And of her bearing-bed.  
 Mary most full of grace,  
 Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,  
 She looked against her side ;  
 And either way from the short silk band  
 Her girdle was all wried.  
 Mary that all good may,  
 Bring us to thy Son's way.

Mary had three women for her bed :  
 The twain were maidens clean ;  
 The first of them had white and red,  
 The third had riven green.  
 Mary that is so sweet,  
 Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair :  
 Two were gloved soft and shod ;

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by a drawing of Mr. D. G. Rossetti's.

The third had feet and fingers bare,  
She was the likest God.

Mary that wieldeth land,  
Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease :

The twain were good women ;  
The first two were the two Maries,  
The third was Magdalen.

Mary that perfect is,  
Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,  
To serve him well upon :

The first of them were Peter and Paul,  
The third of them was John.

Mary, God's handmaiden,  
Bring us to thy Son's ken.

“ If your child be none other man's,  
But if it be very mine,  
The bedstead shall be gold two spans,  
The bedfoot silver fine.”

Mary that made God mirth,  
Bring us to thy Son's birth.

“ If the child be some other man's,  
And if it be none of mine,  
The manger shall be straw two spans,  
Betwixen kine and kine.”

Mary that made sin cease,  
Bring us to thy Son's peace.

Christ was born upon this wise :

It fell on such a night,  
Neither with sounds of psalteries,  
Nor with fire for light.

Mary that is God's spouse,  
Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east  
With a great sound and sweet :  
Kings gave gold to make him feast,  
And myrrh for him to eat.

Mary, of thy sweet mood,  
Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,  
 One handmaid at his feet :  
 The twain of them were fair and red,  
 The third one was right sweet.  
 Mary that is most wise,  
 Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

## THE MASQUE OF QUEEN BERSABE.

## A MIRACLE-PLAY.

*King David.* Knights mine, all that be in hall,  
 I have a council to you all,  
 Because of this thing God lets fall  
 Among us for a sign.  
 For some days hence as I did eat  
 From kingly dishes my good meat,  
 There flew a bird between my feet  
 As red as any wine.  
 This bird had a long bill of red,  
 And a gold ring above his head ;  
 Long time he sat and nothing said,  
 Put softly down his neck, and fed  
 From the gilt patens fine :  
 And as I marvelled at the last,  
 He shut his two keen eyen fast,  
 And suddenly woxe big and brast  
 Ere one should tell to mine.

*Primus Miles.* Sir, note this that I will say :  
 That Lord who maketh corn with hay,  
 And morrows each of yesterday,  
 He hath you in his hand.

*Secundus Miles (Paganus quidam).* By Satan I  
 hold no such thing ;  
 For if wine swell within a king  
 Whose ears for drink are hot and ring,  
 The same shall dream of wine-bibbing  
 Whilst he can lie or stand.

*Queen Bersabe.* Peace now, lords, for Godis head.  
 Ye chirk as starlings that be fed,

And gape as fishes newly dead :  
The devil put your bones to bed,  
Lo, this is all to say.

*Secundus Miles.* By Mahound, lords, I have good  
will  
This devil's bird to wring and spill ;  
For now meseems our game goes ill,  
Ye have scant hearts to play.

*Tertius Miles.* Lo, sirs, this word is there said,  
That Urias the knight is dead  
Through some ill craft : by Poulis head,  
I doubt his blood hath made so red  
This bird that flew from the queen's bed  
Whereof ye have such fear.

*King David.* Yea, my good knave, and is it said  
That I can raise men from the dead ?  
By God I think to have his head  
Who saith words of my lady's bed  
For any thief to hear.  
*Et percutiat eum in capite.*

*Queen Bersabe.* I wis men shall spit at me,  
And say it were but right for thee  
That one should hang thee on a tree :  
Ho ! it were a fair thing to see  
The big stones bruise her false body ;  
Fie ! who shall see her dead ?

*King David.* I rede you have no fear of this,  
For as ye wot, the first good kiss  
I had must be the last of his ;  
Now are ye queen of mine, I wis,  
And lady of a house that is  
Full rich of meat and bread.

*Primus Miles.* I bid you make good cheer to be  
So fair a queen as all men see.  
And hold us for your lieges free :  
By Peter's soul that hath the key  
Ye have good hap of it.

*Secundus Miles.* I would that he were hanged  
and dead  
Who hath no joy to see your head  
With gold about it, barred on red :  
I hold him as a sow of lead  
That is so scant of wit.

*Tunc dicat NATHAN propheta.* O king ! I have a  
word to thee :  
The child that is in Bersabe  
Shall wither without light to see ;  
This word is come of God by me  
For sin that ye have done.  
Because herein ye did not right,  
To take the fair one lamb to smite  
That was of Urias the knight :  
Ye wist he had but one.  
Full many sheep I wot ye had,  
And many women, when ye bade  
To do your will and keep you glad ;  
And a good crown about your head  
With gold to show thereon.  
This Urias had one poor house,  
With low-barred latoun shot-windows,  
And scant of corn to fill a mouse ;  
And rusty basnets for his brows,  
To wear them to the bone.  
Yea, the roofs also, as men sain,  
Were thin to hold against the rain :  
Therefore what rushes were there lain  
Grew wet withouten foot of men ;  
The stancheons were all gone in twain  
As sick man's flesh is gone.  
Nathless he had great joy to see  
The long hair of this Bersabe  
Fall round her lap and round her knee  
Even to her small soft feet, that be  
Shod now with crimson royally,  
And covered with clean gold.  
Likewise great joy he had to kiss  
Her throat, where now the scarlet is  
Against her little chin, I wis,  
That then was but cold.

No scarlet then her kirtle had,  
 And little gold about it sprad ;  
 But her red mouth was always glad  
 To kiss, albeit the eyes were sad  
 With love they had to hold.

*Secundus Miles.* How ! old thief, thy wits are  
 lame ;

To clip such it is no shame ;  
 I rede you in the devil's name,  
 Ye come not here to make men game,  
 By Termagaunt that maketh grame,  
 I shall to-bete thine head.

*Hic Diabolus capiat eum.*

This knave hath sharp fingers, perfay ;  
 Mahound you thank and keep alway,  
 And give you good knees to pray ;  
 What man hath no lust to play,  
 The devil wring his ears, I say :  
 There is no more but wellaway,  
 For now am I dead.

*King David.* Certes his mouth is wried and black,  
 Full little pence be in his sack :  
 This devil hath him by the back,  
 It is no boot to lie.

*Nathan.* Sitteth now still, and learn of me  
 A little while, and ye shall see  
 The face of God's strength presently.  
 All queens made as this Bersabe,  
 All that were fair and foul ye be,  
 Come hither ; it am I.

*Et hic omnes cantabunt.*

*Herodias.* I am the queen Herodias.  
 This headband of my temples was  
 King Herod's gold band woven me ;  
 This broken dry staff in my hand  
 Was the queen's staff of a great land  
 Betwixen Perse and Samarie.  
 For that one dancing of my feet,  
 The fire is come in my green wheat,  
 From one sea to the other sea.

*Aholibah.* I am the queen Aholibah.  
 My lips kissed dumb the word of *Ah*  
 Sighed on strange lips grown sick thereby.  
 God wrought to me my royal bed :  
 The inner work thereof was red,  
 The outer work was ivory.  
 My mouth's heat was the heat of flame  
 For lust towards-the kings that came  
 With horsemen riding royally.

*Cleopatra.* I am the queen of Ethiope.  
 Love bade my kissing eyelids ope,  
 That men beholding might praise love ;  
 My hair was wonderful and curled ;  
 My lips held fast the mouth o' the world  
 To spoil the strength and speech thereof.  
 The latter triumph in my breath  
 Bowed down the beaten brows of death,  
 Ashamed they had not wrath enough.

*Abihail.* I am the-queen of Tyrians.  
 My hair was glorious for twelve spans,  
 That dried to loose dust afterward.  
 My stature was a strong man's length :  
 My neck was like a place of strength  
 Built with white walls, even and hard.  
 Like the first noise of rain leaves catch  
 One from another, snatch by snatch,  
 Is my praise, hissed against and marred.

*Azubah.* I am the queen of Amorites.  
 My face was like a place of lights  
 With multitudes at festival.  
 The glory of my gracious brows  
 Was like God's house made glorious  
 With colors upon either wall.  
 Between my brows and hair there was  
 A white space like a space of glass  
 With golden candles over all.

*Aholah.* I am the queen of Amalek.  
 There was no tender touch or fleck  
 To spoil my body or bared feet.

My words were soft like dulcimers,  
 And the first sweet of grape-flowers  
 Made each side of my bosom sweet.  
 My raiment was as tender fruit  
 Whose rind smells sweet of spice-tree root,  
 Bruised balm-blossom and budded wheat.

*Ahinoam.* I am the queen Ahinoam.  
 Like the throat of a soft slain lamb  
 Was my throat, softer veined than his ;  
 My lips were as two grapes the sun  
 Lays his whole weight of heat upon  
 Like a mouth heavy with a kiss :  
 My hair's pure purple a wrought fleece,  
 My temples therein as a piece  
 Of a pomegranate's cleaving is.

*Atarah.* I am the queen Sidonian.  
 My face made faint the face of man,  
 And strength was bound between my brows.  
 Spikenard was hidden in my ships,  
 Honey and wheat and myrrh in strips,  
 White wools that shine as color does,  
 Soft linen dyed upon the fold,  
 Split spice and cores of scented gold,  
 Cedar and broken calamus.

*Semiramis.* I am the queen Seniramis.  
 The whole world, and the sea that is  
 In fashion like a chrysopras,  
 The noise of all men laboring,  
 The priest's mouth tired through thanksgiving,  
 The sound of love in the blood's pause,  
 The strength of love in the blood's beat,  
 All these were cast beneath my feet,  
 And all found lesser than I was.

*Hesione.* I am the queen Hesione.  
 The seasons that increased in me  
 Made my face fairer than all men's.  
 I had the summer in my hair ;  
 And all the pale gold autumn air  
 Was as the habit of my sense.



My body was as fire that shone ;  
God's beauty that makes all things one  
Was one among my handmaidens.

*Chrysothemis.* I am the queen of Samothrace.  
God, making roses, made my face  
As a rose filled up full with red.  
My prows made sharp the straitened seas  
From Pontus to that Chersonese  
Whereon the ebb'd Asian stream is shed.  
My hair was a sweet scent that drips :  
Love's breath begun about my lips  
Kindle the lips of people dead.

*Thomyris.* I am the queen of Scythians.  
My strength was like no strength of man's,  
My face like day, my breast like spring.  
My fame was felt in the extreme land  
That hath sunshine on the one hand,  
And on the other star-shining.  
Yea, and the wind there fails of breath ;  
Yea, and there life is waste like death ;  
Yea, and there death is a glad thing.

*Harhas.* I am the queen of Anakim.  
In the spent years whose speech is dim,  
Whose raiment is the dust and death,  
My stately body without stain  
Shone as the shining race of rain  
Whose hair a great wind scattereth.  
Now hath God turned my lips to sighs,  
Plucked off mine eyelids from mine eyes,  
And sealed with seals my way of breath.

*Myrrha.* I am the queen Arabian.  
The tears wherewith mine eyelids ran  
Smell like my perfumed eyelids' smell.  
A harsh thirst made my soft mouth hard,  
That ached with kisses afterward ;  
My brain rang like a beaten bell.  
As tears on eyes, as fire on wood,  
Sin fed upon my breath and blood,  
Sin made my breasts subside and swell.

*Pasiphae.* I am the queen Pasiphae.  
 Not all the pure clean-colored sea  
 Could cleanse or cool my yearning veins ;  
 Nor any root nor herb that grew,  
 Flag-leaves that let green water through,  
 Nor washing of the dews and rains.  
 From shame's pressed core I wrung the sweet  
 Fruit's savor that was death to eat,  
 Whereof no seed but death remains.

*Sappho.* I am the queen of Lesbians.  
 My love, that had no part in man's,  
 Was sweeter than all shape of sweet.  
 The intolerable infinite desire  
 Made my face pale like faded fire  
 When the ashen pyre falls through with heat.  
 My blood was hot wan wine of love,  
 And my song's sound the sound thereof,  
 The sound of the delight of it.

*Messalina.* I am the queen of Italy.  
 These were the signs God set on me :  
 A barren beauty subtle and sleek,  
 Curled carven hair, and cheeks worn wan  
 With fierce false lips of many a man,  
 Large temples where the blood ran weak,  
 A mouth athirst and amorous,  
 And hungering as the grave's mouth does,  
 That, being an hungered, cannot speak.

*Amestris.* I am the queen of Persians.  
 My breasts were lordlier than bright swans,  
 My body as amber fair and thin.  
 Strange flesh was given my lips for bread,  
 With poisonous hours my days were fed,  
 And my feet shod with adder-skin.  
 In Shushan toward Ecbatane  
 I wrought my joys with tears and pain,  
 My loves with blood and bitter sin.

*Ephrath.* I am the queen of Rephaim.  
 God, that some while refraineth him,  
 Made in the end a spoil of me.

My rumor was upon the world  
 As strong sound of swoln water hurled  
 Through porches of the straining sea.  
 My hair was like the flag-flower,  
 And my breasts carven goodlier  
 Than beryl with chalcedony.

*Pasithea.* I am the queen of Cypriotes.  
 Mine oarsmen, laboring with brown throats,  
 Sang of me many a tender thing.  
 My maidens, girdled loose, and braced  
 With gold from bosom to white waist,  
 Praised me between their wool-combing.  
 All that praise Venus all night long  
 With lips like speech and lids like song  
 Praised me till song lost heart to sing.

*Alaciel.* I am the queen Alaciel.  
 My mouth was like that moist gold cell  
 Whereout the thickest honey drips.  
 Mine eyes were as a gray-green sea :  
 The amorous blood that smote on me  
 Smote to my feet and finger-tips.  
 My throat was whiter than the dove,  
 Mine eyelids as the seals of love,  
 And as the doors of love my lips.

*Erigone.* I am the queen Erigone.  
 The wild wine shed as blood on me  
 Made my face brighter than a bride's.  
 My large lips had the old thirst of earth,  
 Mine arms the might of the old sea's girth  
 Bound round the whole world's iron sides.  
 Within mine eyes and in mine ears  
 Were music and the wine of tears,  
 And light, and thunder of the tides.

*Et hic exeant, et dicat BERSABE regina.*  
 Alas ! God, for thy great pity  
 And for the might that is in thee,  
 Behold, I woful Bersabe

Cry out with stoopings of my knee,  
And thy wrath laid and bound on me

Till I may see thy love.

Behold, Lord, this child is grown  
Within me between bone and bone  
To make me mother of a son,  
Made of my body with strong moan :  
There shall not be another one  
That shall be made hereof.

*King David.* Lord God, alas ! what shall I sain ?

Lo, thou art as an hundred men  
Both to break and build again :  
The wild ways thou makest plain,  
Thine hands hold the hail and rain,  
And thy fingers both grape and grain ;  
Of their largess we be all well fain,

And of their great pity :

The sun thou madest of good gold,  
Of clean silver the moon cold,  
All the great stars thou hast told  
As thy cattle in thy fold

Every one by his name of old ;  
Wind and water thou hast in hold,

Both the land and the long sea ;  
Both the green sea and the land,  
Lord God, thou hast in hand,  
Both white water and gray sand ;  
Upon thy right or thy left hand  
There is no man that may stand :

Lord, thou rue on me.

O wise Lord, if thou be keen  
To note things amiss that been,  
I am not worth a shell of bean  
More than an old mare meagre and lean.  
For all my wrong-doing with my queen,  
It grew not out of heartès clean.

But it began of her body.

For it fell in the hot May,  
I stood within a paven way  
Built of fair bright stone, perfay,  
That is as fire of night and day,  
And lighteth all my house.

Therein be neither stones nor sticks,  
Neither red nor white bricks,  
But for cubits five or six  
There is most goodly sardonyx,  
And amber laid in rows.  
It goes round about my roofs,  
(If ye list ye shall have proofs)  
There is good space for horse and hoofs,  
Plain and nothing perilous.  
For the fair green weather's heat,  
And for the smell of leavès sweet,  
It is no marvel, well ye weet,  
A man to waxen amorous.  
This I say now by my case  
That spied forth of that royal place :  
There I saw in no great space  
Mine own sweet, both body and face,  
Under the fresh boughs,  
In a water that was there  
She wesshe her goodly body bare,  
And dried it with her owen hair :  
Both her arms and her knees fair,  
Both bosom and brows,  
Both shoulders and eke thighs,  
Tho she wesshe upon this wise ;  
Ever she sighed with little sighs,  
And ever she gave God thank.  
Yea, God wot I can well see yet  
Both her breast and her sides all wet,  
And her long hair withouten let  
Spread sideways like a drawing net ;  
Full dear bought and full far let  
Was that sweet thing there y-set ;  
It were a hard thing to forget  
How both lips and eyen met,  
Breast and breath sank.  
So goodly a sight as there she was,  
Lying looking on her glass  
By wan water in green grass,  
Yet saw never man.  
So soft and great she was and bright  
With all her body waxen white,  
I woxe nigh blind to see the light

Shed out of it to left and right :  
 This bitter sin from that sweet sight  
 Between us twain began.

*Nathan.* Now, sir, be merry anon,  
 For ye shall have a full wise son,  
 Goodly and great of flesh and bone :  
 There shall no king be such an one,  
 I swear by Godis rood.

Therefore, lord, be merry here,  
 And go to meat withouten fear,  
 And hear a mass with goodly cheer ;  
 For to all folk ye shall be dear,  
 And all folk of your blood.

*Et tunc dicant Laudamus.*

### ST. DOROTHY.

It hath been seen, and yet it shall be seen,  
 That out of tender mouths God's praise hath been  
 Made perfect, and with wood and simple string  
 He hath played music sweet as shawm-playing  
 To please himself with softness of all sound ;  
 And no small thing but hath been sometime found  
 Full sweet of use, and no such humbleness  
 But God hath bruised withal the sentences  
 And evidence of wise men witnessing ;  
 No leaf that is so soft a hidden thing  
 It never shall get sight of the great sun ;  
 The strength of ten has been the strength of one,  
 And lowliness has waxed imperious.

There was in Rome a man Theophilus,  
 Of right great blood and gracious ways, that had  
 All noble fashions to make people glad  
 And a soft life of pleasurable days.  
 He was a goodly man for one to praise,  
 Flawless and whole upward from foot to head ;  
 His arms were a red hawk that alway fed  
 On a small bird with feathers gnawed upon,  
 Beaten and plucked about the bosom-bone  
 Whereby a small round fleck like fire there was :

They called it in their tongue lampadias :  
 This was the banner of the lordly man.  
 In many straits of sea and reaches wan  
 Full of quick wind, and many a shaken firth,  
 It had seen fighting days of either earth,  
 Westward or east of waters Gaditane  
 (This was the place of sea-rocks under Spain  
 Called after the great praise of Hercules),  
 And north beyond the washing Pontic seas,  
 Tar windy Russian places fabulous,  
 And salt fierce tide of storm-swoln Bosphoras.

Now, as this lord came straying in Rome town,  
 He saw little lattice open down,  
 And after it a press of maiden's heads  
 That sat upon their cold small quiet beds  
 Talking, and played upon short-stringéd lutes ;  
 And other some ground perfume out of roots  
 Gathered by marvellous moons in Asia,  
 Saffron and aloes and wild cassia,  
 Colored all through and smelling of the sun ;  
 And over all these was a certain one  
 Clothed softly, with sweet herbs about her hair,  
 And bosom flowerful ; her face more fair  
 Than sudden-singing April in soft lands ;  
 Eyed like a gracious bird, and in both hands  
 She held a psalter painted green and red.

This Theophile laughed at the heart, and said,—  
 “ Now God so help me hither and St. Paul,  
 As by the new time of their festival  
 I have good will to take this maid to wife.”  
 And herewith fell to fancies of her life,  
 And soft half-thoughts that ended suddenly.  
 This is man's guise to please himself, when he  
 Shall not see one thing of his pleasant things,  
 Nor with outwatch of many travailings  
 Come to be eased of the least pain he hath  
 For all his love and all his foolish wrath,  
 And all the heavy manner of his mind.  
 Thus is he like a fisher fallen blind,  
 That casts his nets across the boat awry  
 To strike the sea, but lo ! he striketh dry,  
 And plucks them back all broken for his pain,  
 And bites his beard, and casts across again,

And reaching wrong slips over in the sea.  
 So hath this man a strangled neck for fee,  
 For all his cost he chuckles in his throat.  
 This Theophile that little hereof wote  
 Laid wait to hear of her what she might be :  
 Men told him she had name of Dorothy,  
 And was a lady of a worthy house.  
 Thereat this knight grew inly glorious  
 That he should have a love so fair of place.  
 She was a maiden of most quiet face,  
 Tender of speech, and had no hardihood,  
 But was nigh feeble of her fearful blood ;  
 Her mercy in her was so marvellous  
 From her least years, that seeing her schoolfellows  
 That read beside her stricken with a rod,  
 She would cry sore, and say some word to God  
 That he would ease her fellow of his pain.  
 There is no touch of sun or fallen rain  
 That ever fell on a more gracious thing.

In middle Rome there was in stone-working  
 The church of Vennus painted royally.  
 The chapels of it were some two or three,  
 In each of them her tabernacle was,  
 And a wide window of six feet in glass  
 Colored with all her works in red and gold.  
 The altars had bright cloths and cups to hold  
 The wine of Vennus for the services,  
 Made out of honey and crushed wood-berries  
 That shed sweet yellow through the thick wet red,  
 That on high days was borne upon the head  
 Of Vennus' priest, for any man to drink ;  
 So that in drinking he should fall to think  
 On some fair face, and in the thought thereof  
 Worship, and such should triumph in his love.  
 For this soft wine that did such grace and good  
 Was new trans-shaped and mixed with love's own  
     blood,  
 That in the fight in Trojan time was bled ;  
 For which came such a woe to Diomed  
 That he was stifled after in hard sea.  
 And some said that this wine-shedding should be  
 Made of the falling of Adonis' blood,  
 That curled upon the thorns and broken wood,



And round the gold silk shoes on Venus' feet :  
 The taste thereof was as hot honey sweet,  
 And in the mouth ran soft and riotous,  
 This was the holiness of Venus' house.

It was their worship, that in August days  
 Twelve maidens should go through those Roman  
     ways

Naked, and having gold across their brows,  
 And their hair twisted in short golden rows,  
 To minister to Venus in this wise ;  
 And twelve men chosen in their companies  
 To match these maidens by the altar-stair,  
 All in one habit, crowned upon the hair.  
 Among these men was chosen Theophile.

This knight went out, and prayed a little while,  
 Holding Queen Venus by her hands and knees :  
 I will give thee twelve royal images  
 Cut in glad gold, with marvels of wrought stone,  
 For thy sweet priests to lean and pray upon,  
 Jasper and hyacinth and ehrysopras,  
 And the strange Asian thalamite that was  
 Hidden twelve ages under heavy sea  
 Among the little sleepy pearls, to be  
 A shrine lit over with soft candle-flame  
 Burning all night red as hot brows of shame,  
 So thou wilt be my lady without sin.  
 Goddess that art all gold outside and in,  
 Help me to serve thee in thy holy way.  
 Thou knowest, Love, that in my bearing day  
 There shone a laughter in the singing stars  
 Round the gold-ceilèd bride-bed wherein Mars  
 Touched thee and had thee in your kissing wise.  
 Now, therefore, sweet, kiss thou my maiden's eyes  
 That they may open graciously towards me ;  
 And this new fashion of thy shrine shall be  
 As soft with gold as thine own happy head.

The goddess, that was painted with face red  
 Between two long green tumbled sides of sea,  
 Stopped her neck sideways, and spake pleasantly :  
 Thou shalt have grace as thou art thrall of mine.  
 And with this came a savor of shed wine,  
 And plucked-out petals from a rose's head :  
 And softly with slow laughs of lip she said,—

Thou shalt have favor all thy days of me.

Then came Theophilus to Dorothy,  
Saying : O sweet, if one should strive or speak  
Against God's ways, he gets a beaten cheek  
For all his wage and shame above all men.  
Therefore I have no will to turn again  
When God saith "go," lest a worse thing fall out.

Then she, misdoubting lest he went about  
To catch her wits, made answer somewhat thus :

I have no will, my lord Theophilus,  
To speak against this worthy word of yours ;  
Knowing how God's will in all speech endures,  
That save by grace there may no thing be said.

Then Theophile waxed light from foot to head,  
And softly fell upon this answering :

It is well seen you are a chosen thing  
To do God service in his gracious way.

I will that you make haste and holiday  
To go next year upon the Venus stair,  
Covered none else, but crowned upon your hair,  
And do the service that a maiden doth.

She said : But I that am Christ's maid were loath  
To do this thing that hath such bitter name.

Thereat his brows were beaten with sore shame,  
And he came off, and said no other word.

Then his eyes chanced upon his banner-bird,  
And he fell fingering at the staff of it,  
And laughed for wrath, and stared between his feet,  
And out of a chafed heart he spake as thus :

Lo how she japes at me Theophilus,  
Feigning herself a fool, and hard to love ;  
Yet in good time for all she boasteth of  
She shall be like a little beaten bird.

And while his mouth was open in that word,  
He came upon the house Janiculum,  
Where some went busily, and other some  
Talked in the gate called the gate glorious.

The emperor, which was one Gabalus,  
Sat over all and drank chill wine alone.

To whom is come Theophilus anon,  
And said as thus : *Beau sire, Dieu vous aide.*  
And afterward sat under him, and said  
All this thing through as ye have wholly heard.

This Gabalus laughed thickly in his beard.  
 Yea, this is righteousness and maiden rule.  
 Truly, he said, a maid is but a fool.  
 And japed at them as one full villanous,  
 In a lewd wise, this heathen Gabalus,  
 And sent his men to bind her as he bade.  
 Thus have they taken Dorothy the maid,  
 And haled her forth as men hale pick-purses :  
 A little need God knows they had of this,  
 To hale her by her maiden gentle hair.  
 Thus went she lowly, making a soft prayer,  
 As one who stays the sweet wine in his mouth,  
 Murmuring with eased lips, and is most loath  
 To have done wholly with the sweet of it :

Christ king, fair Christ, that knowest all men's wit  
 And all the feeble fashion of my ways,  
 O perfect God, that from all yesterdays  
 Abidest whole with morrows perfected,  
 I pray thee by thy mother's holy head,  
 Thou help me to do right, that I not slip :  
 I have no speech nor strength upon my lip,  
 Except thou help me, who art wise and sweet.  
 Do this, too, for those nails that clove thy feet,  
 Let me die maiden after many pains.  
 Though I be least among thy handmaidens,  
 Doubtless I shall take death more sweetly thus.

Now have they brought her to King Gabalus,  
 Who laughed in all his throat some breathing-whiles.  
 By God, he said, if one should leap two miles,  
 He were not pained about the sides so much.  
 This were a soft thing for a man to touch.  
 Shall one so chafe that hath such little bones ?  
 And shook his throat with thick and chuckled moans  
 For laughter that she had such holiness.  
 What aileth thee, wilt thou do services ?  
 It were good fare to fare as Venus doth.

Then said this lady with her maiden mouth,  
 Shamefaced, and something paler in the cheek :  
 Now, sir, albeit my wit and will to speak  
 Give me no grace in sight of worthy men,  
 For all my shame yet know I this again,  
 I may not speak, nor after down-lying  
 Rise up to take delight in lute-playing,

Nor sing nor sleep, nor sit and fold my hands,  
But my soul in some measure understands  
God's grace laid like a garment over me.  
For this fair God that out of strong, sharp sea  
Lifted the shapely and green-colored land,  
And hath the weight of heaven in his hand  
As one might hold a bird, and under him  
The heavy golden planets beam by beam  
Building the feasting-chambers of his house,  
And the large world he holdeth with his brows,  
And with the light of them astonisheth  
All place and time and face of life and death,  
And motion of the north wind and the south,  
And is the sound within his angel's mouth  
Of singing words and words of thanksgiving,  
And is the color of the latter spring  
And heat upon the summer and the sun,  
And is beginning of all things begun,  
And gathers in him all things to their end,  
And with the fingers of his hand doth bend  
The stretched-out sides of heaven like a sail,  
And with his breath he maketh the red pale,  
And fills with blood faint faces of men dead,  
And with the sound between his lips are fed  
Iron and fire and the white body of snow,  
And blossom of all trees in places low,  
And small bright herbs about the little hills,  
And fruit pricked softly with birds' tender bills,  
And flight of foam about green fields of sea,  
And fourfold strength of the great winds that be  
Moved always outward from beneath his feet,  
And growth of grass and growth of sheavèd wheat  
And all green flower of goodly-growing lands ;  
And all these things he gathers with his hands,  
And covers all their beauty with his wings :  
The same, even God that governs all these things,  
Hath set my feet to be upon his ways.  
Now, therefore, for no painfulness of days  
I shall put off this service bound on me.  
Also, fair sir, ye know this certainly,  
How God was in his flesh full chaste and meek,  
And gave his face to shame, and either cheek  
Gave up to smiting of men tyrannous.

And here with a great voice this Gabalus  
 Cried out and said : By God's blood and his bones,  
 This were good game betwixen night and nones  
 For one to sit and hearken to such saws :  
 I were as lief fall in some big beast's jaws  
 As hear these women's jaw-teeth chattering ;  
 By God a woman is the harder thing,  
 One may not put a hook into her mouth.  
 Now by St. Luke I am so sore adrouth  
 For all these saws, I must needs drink again ;  
 But I pray God deliver all us men  
 From all such noise of women and their heat.  
 That is a noble scripture, well I weet,  
 That likens women to an empty can ;  
 When God said that, he was a full wise man.  
 I trow no man may blame him as for that.

And herewithal he drank a draught, and spat,  
 And said : Now shall I make an end hereof.  
 Come near, all men, and hearken for God's love,  
 And ye shall hear a jest or twain, God wot.  
 And spake as thus with mouth full thick and hot :  
 But thou do this, thou shalt be shortly slain.  
 Lo, sir, she said, this death and all this pain  
 I take in penance of my bitter sins.  
 Yea, now, quoth Gabalus, this game begins.  
 Lo, without sin one shall not live a span.  
 Lo, this is she that would not look on man  
 Between her fingers folded in thwart wise.  
 See how her shame hath smitten in her eyes  
 That was so clean, she had not heard of shame.  
 Certes, he said, by Gabalus my name,  
 This two years back I was not so well pleased.  
 This were good mirth for sick men to be eased,  
 And rise up whole and laugh at hearing of.  
 I pray thee, show us something of thy love,  
 Since thou wast maid thy gown is waxen wide.  
 Yea, maid I am, she said, and somewhat sighed,  
 As one who thought upon the low fair house  
 Where she sat working, with soft bended brows  
 Watching her threads, among the school-maidens.  
 And she thought well, now God had brought her  
 thence,  
 She should not come to sew her gold again.

Then cried King Gabalus upon his men  
To have her forth, and draw her with steel gins.  
And as a man hag-ridden beats and grins,  
And bends his body sidelong in his bed,  
So wagged he with his body and knave's head,  
Gaping at her, and blowing with his breath.  
And in good time he gat an evil death  
Out of his lewdness with his cursèd wives :  
His bones were hewn asunder as with knives  
For his misliving, certes it is said.  
But all the evil wrought upon this maid,  
It were full hard for one to handle it.  
For her soft blood was shed upon her feet,  
And all her body's color bruised and faint.  
But she, as one abiding God's great saint,  
Spake not nor wept for all this travail hard.  
Wherefore the king commanded afterward  
To slay her presently in all men's sight.  
And it was now an hour upon the night,  
And winter-time, and a few stars began.  
The weather was yet feeble and all wan  
For beating of a weighty wind and snow.  
And she came walking in soft wise and slow,  
And many men with faces piteous.  
Then came this heavy cursing Gabalus,  
That swore full hard into his drunken beard ;  
And faintly after without any word  
Came Theophile some paces off the king.  
And in the middle of this wayfaring  
Full tenderly beholding her he said :

There is no word of comfort with men dead,  
Nor any face and color of things sweet ;  
But always with lean cheeks and lifted feet  
These dead men lie all aching to the blood  
With bitter cold, their brows withouten hood  
Beating for ehill, their bodies swathed full thin :  
Alas ! what hire shall any have herein  
To give his life and get such bitterness ?  
Also the soul going forth bodiless  
Is hurt with naked cold, and no man saith  
If there be house or covering for death  
To hide the soul that is discomforted.  
Then she beholding him a little said :

Alas ! fair lord, ye have no wit of this ;  
For on one side death is full poor of bliss,  
And, as ye say, full sharp of bone and lean ;  
But on the other side is good and green,  
And hath soft flower of tender-colored hair  
Grown on his head, and a red mouth as fair  
As may be kissed with lips ; thereto his face  
Is as God's face, and in a perfect place  
Full of all sun and color of straight boughs,  
And waterheads about a painted house  
That hath a mile of flowers either way  
Outward from it, and blossom-grass of May  
Thickening on many a side for length of heat,  
Hath God set death upon a noble seat  
Covered with green and flowered in the fold,  
In likeness of a great king grown full old  
And gentle with new temperance of blood ;  
And on his brows a purpled purple hood,  
They may not carry any golden thing ;  
And plays some tune with subtle fingering  
On a small cithern, full of tears and sleep,  
And heavy pleasure that is quick to weep,  
And sorrow with the honey in her mouth ;  
And for this might of music that he doth,  
Are all souls drawn toward him with great love,  
And weep for sweetness of the noise thereof,  
And bow to him with worship of their knees ;  
And all the field is thick with companies  
Of fair-clothed men that play on shawms and lutes,  
And gather honey of the yellow fruits  
Between the branches waxen soft and wide ;  
And all this peace endures in either side  
Of the green land, and God beholdeth all.  
And this is girdled with a round fair wall  
Made a red stone, and cool with heavy leaves  
Grown out against it, and green blossom cleaves  
To the green chinks, and lesser wall-weed sweet,  
Kissing the crannies that are split with heat,  
And branches where the summer draws to head.

And Theophile burnt in the cheek, and said :  
Yea, could one see it, this were marvellous.  
I pray you, at your coming to this house,  
Give me some leaf of all those tree-branches ;

Seeing how sharp and white our weather is,  
There is no green nor gracious red to see.

Yea, sir, she said, that shall I certainly.  
And from her long sweet throat without a fleck  
Undid the gold, and through her stretched-out neck  
The cold axe clove, and smote away her head :  
Out of her throat the tender blood full red  
Fell suddenly through all her long soft hair.  
And with good speed for hardness of the air  
Each man departed to his house again.

Lo ! as fair color in the face of men  
At seed-time of their blood, or in such wise  
As a thing seen increaseth in men's eyes,  
Caught first far off by sickly fits of sight,—  
So a word said, if one shall hear aright,  
Abides against the season of its growth.  
This Theophile went slowly, as one doth  
That is not sure for sickness of his feet ;  
And, counting the white stonework of the street,  
Tears fell out of his eyes for wrath and love,  
Making him weep more for the shame thereof  
Than for true pain : so went he half a mile.  
And women mocked him, saying : Theophile,  
Lo, she is dead ; what shall a woman have  
That loveth such an one ? so Christ me save,  
I were as lief to love a man new-hung.  
Surely this man has bitten on his tongue,  
This makes him sad and writhled in his face.

And when they came upon the paven place  
That was called sometime the place amorous,  
There came a child before Theophilus,  
Bearing a basket, and, suddenly :  
Fair sir, this is my mistress Dorothy  
That sends you gifts ; and with this he was gone.  
In all this earth there is not such an one  
For color and straight stature made so fair.  
The tender growing gold of his pure hair  
Was as wheat growing, and his mouth as flame.  
God called him Holy after his own name.  
With gold cloth like fire burning he was clad.  
But for the fair green basket that he had,  
It was filled up with heavy white and red ;  
Great roses stained still where the first rose bled,



Burning at heart for shame their heart withholds ;  
 And the sad color of strong marigolds  
 That have the sun to kiss their lips for love ;  
 The flower that Venus' hair is woven of,  
 The color of fair apples in the sun,  
 Late peaches gathered when the heat was done,  
 And the slain air got breath ; and after these  
 The fair faint-headed poppies drunk with ease,  
 And heaviness of hollow lilies red.

Then cried they all that saw these things, and said  
 It was God's doing, and was marvellous.  
 And in brief while this knight Theophilus  
 Is waxen full of faith, and witnesseth  
 Before the king, of God and love and death,  
 For which the king bade hang him presently.  
 A gallows of a goodly piece of tree  
 This Gabalus hath made to hang him on.  
 Forth of this world lo Theophile is gone  
 With a wried neck—God give us better fare  
 Than his that hath a twisted throat to wear !  
 But truly for his love God hath him brought  
 There where his heavy body grieves him nought,  
 Nor all the people plucking at his feet ;  
 But in his face his lady's face is sweet.  
 And through his lips her kissing lips are gone.  
 God send him peace, and joy of such an one !

This is the story of St. Dorothy.  
 I will you of your mercy pray for me  
 Because I wrote these sayings for your grace,  
 That I may one day see her in the face.

## THE TWO DREAMS.

(FROM BOCCACCIO.)

I WILL that if I say a heavy thing  
 Your tongues forgive me ; seeing ye know that  
     spring  
 Has flecks and fits of pain to keep her sweet,  
 And walks somewhile with winter-bitten feet.  
 Moreover it sounds often well to let  
 One string, when ye play music, keep at fret

The whole song through ; one petal that is dead  
 Confirms the roses, be they white or red ;  
 Dead sorrow is not sorrowful to hear  
 As the thick noise that breaks mid weeping were ;  
 The sick sound aching in a lifted throat  
 Turns to sharp silver of a perfect note ;  
 And though the rain falls often, and with rain  
 Late autumn falls on the old red leaves like pain,  
 I deem that God is not disquieted.

Also while men are fed with wine and bread,  
 They shall be fed with sorrow at his hand.

There grew a rose-garden in Florence land  
 More fair than many ; all red summers through  
 The leaves smelt sweet and sharp of rain, and blew  
 Sideways with tender wind ; and therein fell  
 Sweet sound wherewith the green waxed audible,  
 As a bird's will to sing disturbed his throat,  
 And set the sharp wings forward like a boat  
 Pushed through soft water, moving his brown side  
 Smooth-shapen as a maid's, and shook with pride  
 His deep warm bosom, till the heavy sun's  
 Set face of heat stopped all the songs at once.  
 The ways were clean to walk, and delicate ;  
 And when the windy white of March grew late,  
 Before the trees took heart to face the sun  
 With ravelled raiment of lean winter on,  
 The roots were thick and hot with hollow grass.

Some roods away a lordly house there was,  
 Cool with broad courts and latticed passage wet  
 From rush-flowers and lilies ripe to set,  
 Sown close among the strewings of the floor ;  
 And either wall of the slow corridor  
 Was dim with deep device of gracious things ;  
 Some angel's steady mouth and weight of wings  
 Shut to the side ; or Peter with straight stole  
 And beard cut black against the aureole  
 That spanned his head from nape to crown ; there  
 Mary's gold hair, thick to the girdle-tie  
 Wherein was bound a child with tender feet ;  
 Or the broad cross with blood nigh brown on it.

Within this house a righteous lord abode,  
 Ser Averardo ; patient of his mood,  
 And just of judgment ; and to child he had

A maid so sweet that her mere sight made glad  
 Men sorrowing, and unbound the brows of hate ;  
 And where she came, the lips that pain made strait  
 Waxed warm and wide, and from untender grew  
 Tender as those that sleep brings patience to.  
 Such long locks had she, that with knee to chin  
 She might have wrapped and warmed her feet  
 therein.

Right seldom fell her face on weeping wise ;  
 Gold hair she had, and golden-colored eyes,  
 Filled with clear light and fire and large repose  
 Like a fair hound's ; no man there is but knows  
 Her face was white, and thereto she was tall ;  
 In no wise lacked there any praise at all  
 To her most perfect and pure maiden-hood ;  
 No sin I think there was in all her blood.

She, where a gold grate shut the roses in,  
 Dwelt daily through deep summer weeks, through  
 green

Flushed hours of rain upon the leaves ; and there  
 Love made him room and space to worship her  
 With tender worship of bowed knees, and wrought  
 Such pleasure as the pained sense palates not  
 For weariness, but at one taste undoes  
 The heart of its strong sweet, is ravenous  
 Of all the hidden honey ; words and sense  
 Fail through the tune's imperious prevalence.

In a poor house this lover kept apart,  
 Long communing with patience next his heart  
 If love of his might move that face at all,  
 Tuned evenwise with colors musical ;  
 Then after length of days he said thus : " Love,  
 For love's own sake and for the love thereof,  
 Let no harsh words untune your gracious mood ;  
 For good it were, if any thing be good,  
 To comfort me in this pain's plague of mine ;  
 Seeing thus, how neither sleep nor bread nor wine  
 Seems pleasant to me, yea no thing that is  
 Seems pleasant to me ; only I know this,  
 Love's ways are sharp for palms of piteous feet  
 To travel, but the end of such is sweet :  
 Now do with me as seemeth you the best."  
 She mused a little, as one holds his guest

By the hand musing, with her face borne down :  
 Then said, " Yea, though such bitter seed be sown,  
 Have no more care of all that you have said ;  
 Since if there is no sleep will bind your head,  
 Lo, I am fain to help you certainly :  
 Christ knoweth, sir, if I would have you die ;  
 There is no pleasure when a man is dead."'  
 Thereat he kissed her hands and yellow head,  
 And clipped her fair long body many times :  
 I have no wit to shape in written rhymes  
 A scantled tithe of this great joy they had.

They were too near love's secret to be glad,  
 As whoso deems the core will surely melt  
 From the warm fruit his lips caress, hath felt  
 Some bitter kernel where the teeth shut hard ;  
 Or as sweet music sharpens afterward,  
 Being half disrelished both for sharp and sweet ;  
 As sea-water, having killed over-heat  
 In a man's body, chills it with faint ache ;  
 So their sense, burdened only for love's sake,  
 Failed for pure love ; yet so time served their wit,  
 They saved each day some gold reserves of it,  
 Being wiser in love's riddle than such be  
 Whom fragments feed with his chance charity.  
 All things felt sweet were felt sweet overmuch ;  
 The rose-thorn's prickle dangerous to touch,  
 And flecks of fire in the thin leaf-shadows ;  
 Too keen the breathèd honey of the rose,  
 Its red too harsh a weight on feasted eyes ;  
 They were so far gone in love's histories,  
 Beyond all shape and color and mere breath,  
 Where pleasure has for kinsfolk sleep and death,  
 And strength of soul and body waxen blind  
 For weariness, and flesh entailed with mind,  
 When the keen edge of sense foretasteth sin.

Even this green place the summer caught them in  
 Seemed half deflowered and sick with beaten leaves  
 In their strayed eyes ; these gold flower-fumèd eyes  
 Burnt out to make the sun's love-offering,  
 The midnight's prayer, the rose's thanksgiving,  
 The trees' weight burdening the strengthless air,  
 The shape of her stilled eyes, her colored hair,  
 Her body's balance from the moving feet,—

All this, found fair, lacked yet one grain of sweet  
 It had some warm weeks back : so perisheth  
 On May's new lip the tender April breath :  
 So those same walks the wind sowed lilies in  
 All April through, and all their latter kin  
 Of languid leaves whereon the autumn blows,—  
 The dead red raiment of the last year's rose,—  
 The last year's laurel, and the last year's love,  
 Fade, and grow things that death grows weary of.

What man will gather in red summer-time  
 The fruit of some obscure and hoary rhyme  
 Heard last midwinter, taste the heart in it,  
 Mould the smooth semitones afresh, refit  
 The fair limbs ruined, flush the dead blood through  
 With color, make all broken beauties new  
 For love's new lesson—shall not such find pain  
 When the marred music laboring in his brain  
 Frets him with sweet sharp fragments, and lets slip  
 One word that might leave satisfied his lip,—  
 One touch that might put fire in all the chords ?  
 This was her pain : to miss from all sweet words  
 Some taste of sound, diverse and delicate,—  
 Some speech the old love found out to compensate  
 For seasons of shut lips and drowsiness ;  
 Some grace, some word the old love found out to  
 bless

Passionless months and undelighted weeks.  
 The flowers had lost their summer-scented cheeks,  
 Their lips were no more sweet than daily breath :  
 The year was plagued with instances of death.

So fell it, these were sitting in cool grass  
 With leaves about, and many a bird there was  
 Where the green shadow thickest impleached  
 Soft fruit and writhen spray and blossom bleached  
 Dry in the sun or washed with rains to white :  
 Her girdle was pure silk, the bosom bright  
 With purple as purple water and gold wrought in.  
 One branch had touched with dusk her lips and chin,  
 Made violet of the throat, abashed with shade  
 The breast's bright plaited work : but nothing frayed  
 The sun's large kiss on the luxurious hair.  
 Her beauty was new color to the air,  
 And music to the silent many birds.

Love was an-hungred for some perfect words  
 To praise her with ; but only her low name  
 "Andrevuola" came thrice, and thrice put shame  
 In her clear cheek, so fruitful with new red  
 That for pure love straightway shame's self was dead.

Then with lids gathered as who late had wept,  
 She began saying, "I have so little slept,  
 My lids drowse now against the very sun ;  
 Yea, the brain aching with a dream begun  
 Beats like a fitful blood ; kiss but both brows,  
 And you shall pluck my thoughts grown dangerous  
 Almost away." He said thus, kissing them :  
 "O sole sweet thing that God is glad to name,  
 My one gold gift, if dreams be sharp and sore  
 Shall not the waking time increase much more  
 With taste and sound, sweet eyesight or sweet scent?  
 Has any heat too hard and insolent  
 Burnt bare the tender married leaves, undone  
 The maiden grass shut under from the sun ?  
 Where in this world is room enough for pain ?"

The feverish finger of love had touched again  
 Her lips with happier blood ; the pain lay meek  
 In her fair face, nor altered lip nor cheek  
 With pallor or with pulse ; but in her mouth  
 Love thirsted as a man wayfaring doth,  
 Making it humble as weak hunger is.  
 She lay close to him, bade do this and this,  
 Say that, sing thus : then almost weeping-ripe  
 Crouched, then laughed low. As one that fain would  
 wipe

The old record out of old things done and dead,  
 She rose, she heaved her hands up, and waxed red  
 For wilful heart and blanceless fear of blame ;  
 Saying, "Though my wits be weak, this is no shame  
 For a poor maid whom love so punisheth  
 With heats of hesitation and stopped breath  
 That with my dreams I live yet heavily  
 For pure sad heart and faith's humility.  
 Now be not wroth, and I will show you this.

"Methought our lips upon their second kiss  
 Met in this place, and a fair day we had,  
 And fair soft leaves that waxed and were not sad  
 With shaken rain, or bitten through with drouth ;

When I, beholding ever how your mouth  
Waited for mine, the throat being fallen back,  
Saw crawl thereout a live thing flaked with black  
Specks of brute slime and leper-colored scale,  
A devil's hide with foul flame-writhen grail  
Fashioned where hell's heat festers loathsomest ;  
And that brief speech may ease me of the rest,  
Thus were you slain and eaten of the thing.  
My waked eyes felt the new day shuddering  
On their low lids, felt the whole east so beat,  
Pant with close pulse of such a plague-struck heat,  
As if the palpitating dawn drew breath  
For horror, breathing between life and death,  
Till the sun sprang blood-bright and violent." So finishing, her soft strength wholly spent,  
She gazed each way, lest some brute-hoovèd thing,  
The timeless travail of hell's child-bearing,  
Should threat upon the sudden : whereat he,  
For relish of her tasted misery  
And tender little thornprick of her pain,  
Laughed with mere love. What lover among men  
But hath his sense fed sovereignly 'twixt whiles  
With tears and covered eyelids and siek smiles  
And soft disaster of a painèd face ?  
What pain established in so sweet a place,  
But the plucked leaf of it smells fragrantly ?  
What color burning man's wide-open eye  
But may be pleasurablely seen ? what sense  
Keeps in its hot sharp extreme violence  
No savor of sweet things ? The bereaved blood  
And emptied flesh in their most broken mood  
Fail not so wholly, famish not when thus  
Past honey keeps the starved lip covetous.  
Therefore this speech from a glad mouth began,  
Breathed in her tender hair and temples wan  
Like one prolonged kiss while the lips had breath :  
" Sleep, that abides in vassalage of death  
And in death's service wears out half his age,  
Hath his dreams full of deadly vassalage,  
Shadow and sound of things ungracious ;  
Fair shallow faces, hooded bloodless brows,  
And mouths past kissing ; yea, myself have had  
As harsh a dream as holds your eyelids sad.

"This dream I tell you came three nights ago :  
 In full mid sleep I took a whim to know  
 How sweet things might be ; so I turned and thought ;  
 But save my dream all sweet availed me not.  
 First came a smell of pounded spice and scent  
 Such as God ripens in some continent  
 Of utmost amber in the Syrian sea ;  
 And breaths as though some costly rose could be  
 Spoiled slowly, wasted by some bitter fire  
 To burn the sweet out leaf by leaf, and tire  
 The flower's poor heart with heat and waste, to make  
 Strong magic for some perfumed woman's sake.  
 Then a cool naked sense beneath my feet  
 Of bud and blossom ; and sound of veins that beat  
 As if a lute should play of its own heart  
 And fearfully, not smitten of either part ;  
 And all my blood it filled with sharp and sweet  
 As gold swoln grain fills out the huskèd wheat ;  
 So I rose naked from the bed, and stood  
 Counting the mobile measure in my blood  
 Some pleasant while, and and through each limb  
     there came  
 Swift little pleasures pungent as a flame,  
 Felt in the thrilling flesh and veins as much  
 As the outer curls that feel the comb's first touch  
 Thrill to the roots and shiver as from fire ;  
 And blind between my dreams and my desire  
 I seemed to stand, and held my spirit still  
 Lest this should cease. A child whose fingers spill  
 Honey from cells forgotten of the bee  
 Is less afraid to stir the hive and see  
 Some wasp's bright black inside, than I to feel  
 Some finger-touch disturb the flesh like steel.  
 I prayed thus : Let me catch a secret here  
 So sweet, it sharpens the sweet taste of fear,  
 And takes the mouth with edge of wine ; I would  
 Have here some color and smooth shape as good  
 As those in heaven whom the chief garden hides  
 With low grape-blossom veiling their white sides,  
 And lesser tendrils thot so blind and bind  
 Their eyes and feet, that if one come behind  
 To touch their hair they see not, neither fly ;  
 This would I see in heaven, and not die.



So praying, I had nigh cried out and knelt,  
So wholly my prayer filled me : till I felt  
In the dumb night's warm weight of glowing gloom  
Somewhat that altered all my sleeping-room,  
And made it like a green low place wherein  
Maids mix to bathe : one sets her small warm chin  
Against a ripple, that the angry pearl  
May flow like flame about her : the next curl  
Dips in some eddy colored of the sun  
To wash the dust well out : another one  
Holds a straight ankle in her hand and swings  
With lavish body sidelong, so that rings  
Of sweet fierce water, swollen and splendid, fail  
All round her fine and floated body pale,  
Swayed flower-fashion, and her balanced side  
Swerved edgeways lets the weight of water slide,  
As taken in some underflow of sea  
Swerves the banked gold of sea-flowers ; but she  
Pulls down some branch to keep her perfect head  
Clear of the river : even from wall to bed,  
I tell you, was my room transfigured so.  
Sweet, green and warm it was, nor could one know  
If there were walls or leaves, or if there was  
No bed's green curtain, but mere gentle grass.  
There were set also hard against the feet  
Gold plates with honey and green grapes to eat,  
With the cool water's noise to hear in rhymes :  
And a wind warmed me full of furze and limes  
And all hot sweets the heavy summer fills  
To the round brim of smooth cup-shapen hills.  
Next the grave walking of a woman's feet  
Made my veins hesitate, and gracious heat  
Made thick the lids and leaden on mine eyes :  
And I thought ever, surely it were wise  
Not yet to see her : this may last (who knows ?)  
Five minutes ; the poor rose is twice a rose  
Because it turns a face to her, the wind  
Sing that way ; hath this woman ever sinned,  
I wonder ? as a boy with apple-rind,  
I played with pleasures, made them to my mind,  
Changed each ere tasting. When she came indeed,  
First her hair touched me, then I grew to feed  
On the sense of her hand ; her mouth at last

Touched me between the cheek and lip, and past  
 Over my face with kisses here and there  
 Sown in and out across the eyes and hair.  
 Still I said nothing ; till she set her face  
 More close and harder on the kissing place,  
 And her mouth caught like a snake's mouth, and  
 stung

So faint and tenderly, the fang scarce clung  
 More than a bird's foot : yet a wound it grew,  
 A great one, let this red mark witness you  
 Under the left breast ; and the stroke thereof  
 So clove my sense that I woke out of love,  
 And knew not what this dream was, nor had wit ;  
 But now God knows if I have skill of it."

Hereat she laid one palm against her lips  
 To stop their trembling ; as when water slips  
 Out of a beak-mouthed vessel with faint noise,  
 And chuckles in the narrowed throat, and cloyes  
 The carven rims with murmuring, so came  
 Words in her lips with no word right of them,  
 A beaten speech thick and disconsolate,  
 Till his smile ceasing waxed compassionate  
 Of her sore fear that grew from anything,—  
 The sound of the strong summer thickening  
 In heated leaves of the smooth apple-trees :  
 The day's breath felt about the ash-branches,  
 And noises of the noon whose weight still grew  
 On the hot heavy-headed flowers, and drew  
 Their red mouths open till the rose-heart ached ;  
 For eastward all the crowding rose was slaked  
 And soothed with shade : but westward all its growth  
 Seemed to breathe hard with heat as a man doth  
 Who feels his temples newly feverous.

And even with such motion in her brows  
 As that man hath in whom sick days begin,  
 She turned her throat and spake, her voice being  
 thin

As a sick man's, sudden and tremulous ;  
 " Sweet, if this end be come indeed on us,  
 Let us love more ; " and held his mouth with hers.  
 As the first sound of flooded hill-waters  
 Is heard by people of the meadow-grass,  
 Or ever a wandering waif of ruin pass

With whirling stones and foam of the brown stream  
Flaked with fierce yellow : so beholding him  
She felt before tears came her eyelids wet,  
Saw the face deadly thin where life was yet,  
Heard his throat's harsh last moan before it clomb :  
And he, with close mouth passionate and dumb,  
Burned at her lips : so lay they without speech,  
Each grasping other, and the eyes of each  
Fed in the other's face : till suddenly  
He cried out with a little broken cry  
This word, " O help me, sweet, I am but dead !"  
And even so saying, the color of fair red  
Was gone out of his face, and his blood's beat  
Fell, and stark death made sharp his upward feet  
And pointed hands ; and without moan he died.  
Pain smote her sudden in the brows and side,  
Strained her lips open, and made burn her eyes :  
For the pure sharpness of her miseries  
She had no heart's pain, but mere body's wrack.  
But at the last her beaten blood drew back  
Slowly upon her face, and her stunned brows  
Suddenly grown aware and piteous  
Gathered themselves, her eyes shone, her hard breath  
Came as though one nigh dead came back from  
death ;  
Her lips throbbled, and life trembled through her  
hair.

And in brief while she thought to bury there  
The dead man, that her love might lie with him  
In a sweet bed under the rose-roots dim  
And soft earth round the branchèd apple-trees,  
Full of hushed heat and heavy with great ease,  
And no man entering divide him thence.  
Wherefore she bade one of her handmaidens  
To be her help to do upon this wise.  
And saying so the tears out of her eyes  
Fell without noise, and comforted her heart :  
Yea, her great pain eased of the sorest part  
Began to soften in her sense of it.  
There under all the little branches sweet  
The place was shapen of his burial :  
They shed thereon no thing funereal,  
But colored leaves of latter rose-blossom,

Stems of soft grass, some withered red and some  
Fair and flesh-blooded ; and spoil splendor  
Of marigold and great spent sunflower.

And afterwards she came back without word  
To her own house ; two days went, and the third  
Went, and she showed her father of this thing.  
And for great grief of her soul's travailing  
He gave consent she should endure in peace  
Till her life's end ; yea, till her time should cease,  
She should abide in fellowship of pain.  
And having lived a holy year or twain  
She died of pure waste heart and weariness.  
And for love's honor in her love's distress  
This word was written over her tomb's head :  
“ Here dead she lieth, for whose sake Love is dead.”

## AHOLIBAH.

In the beginning God made thee  
A woman well to look upon,  
Thy tender body as a tree  
Whereon cool wind hath always blown  
Till the clean branches be well grown.

There was none like thee in the land ;  
The girls that were thy bondwomen  
Did bind thee with a purple band  
Upon thy forehead, that all men  
Should know thee for God's handmaiden.

Strange raiment clad thee like a bride,  
With silk to wear on hands and feet,  
And plates of gold on either side :  
Wine made thee glad, and thou didst eat  
Honey, and choice of pleasant meat.

And fishers in the middle sea  
Did get thee sea-fish and sea-weeds  
In color like the robes on thee ;  
And curious work of plated reeds,  
And woods wherein live purple bleeds.

And round the edges of thy cup  
 Men wrought thee marvels out of gold,  
 Strong snakes with lean throats lifted up,  
 Large eyes whereon the brows had hold,  
 And scaly things their slime kept cold.

For thee they blew soft winds in flutes,  
 And ground sweet roots for cunning scent ;  
 Made slow because of many lutes,  
 The wind among thy chambers went  
 Wherein no light was violent.

God called thy name Aholibah,  
 His tabernacle being in thee,  
 A witness through waste Asia ;  
 Thou wert a tent sewn cunningly  
 With gold and colors of the sea.

God gave thee gracious ministers  
 And all their work who plait and weave :  
 The cunning of embroiderers  
 That sew the pillow to the sleeve,  
 And likeness of all things that live.

Thy garments upon thee were fair  
 With scarlet and with yellow thread ;  
 Also the weaving of thine hair  
 Was as fine gold upon thy head,  
 And thy silk shoes were sewn with red.

All sweet things he bade sift, and ground  
 As a man grindeth wheat in mills  
 With strong wheels always going round ;  
 He gave thee corn, and grass that fills  
 The cattle on a thousand hills.

The wine of many seasons fed  
 Thy mouth, and made it fair and clean ;  
 Sweet oil was poured out on thy head,  
 And ran down like cool rain between  
 The strait close locks it melted in.

The strong men and the captains knew  
 Thy chambers wrought and fashioned  
 With gold and covering of blue,  
 And the blue raiment of thine head  
 Who satest on a stately bed.

All these had on their garments wrought  
 The shape of beasts and creeping things.  
 The body that availeth not,  
 Flat backs of worms and veined wings,  
 And the lewd bulk that sleeps and stings.

Also the chosen of the years,  
 The multitude being at ease,  
 With sackbuts and with dulcimers  
 And noise of shawms and psalteries,  
 Made mirth within the ears of these.

But as a common woman doth,  
 Thou didst think evil and devise ;  
 The sweet smell of thy breast and mouth,  
 Thou madest as the harlot's wise,  
 And there was painting on thine eyes.

Yea, in the woven guest-chamber  
 And by the painted passages  
 Where the strange, gracious paintings were,  
 State upon state of companies,  
 There came on thee the lust of these.

Because of shapes on either wall  
 Sea-colored from some rare blue shell  
 At many a Tyrian interval,  
 Horsemen on horses, girdled well,  
 Delicate and desirable,—

Thou saidest : I am sick of love :  
 Stay with me flagons, comfort me  
 With apples, for my pain thereof,  
 Till my hands gather in his tree  
 That fruit wherein my lips would be.

Yea, saidest thou, I will go up  
 When there is no more shade than one  
 May cover with a hollow cup,  
 And make my bed against the sun  
 Till my blood's violence be done.

Thy mouth was leant upon the wall  
 Against the painted mouth, thy chin  
 Touched the hair's painted curve and fall ;  
 Thy deep throat, fallen lax and thin,  
 Worked as the blood's beat worked therein.

Therefore, O thou, Aholibah,  
 God is not glad because of thee ;  
 And thy fine gold shall pass away  
 Like those fair coins of ore that be  
 Washed over by the middle sea.

Then will one make thy body bare  
 To strip it of all gracious things,  
 And pluck the cover from thine hair,  
 And break the gift of many kings,  
 Thy wrist-rings and thine ankle-rings.

Likewise the man whose body joins  
 To thy smooth body, as was said,  
 Who hath a girdle on his loins,  
 And dyed attire upon his head,—  
 The same who, seeing, worshipped,

Because thy face was like the face  
 Of a clean maiden that smells sweet,  
 Because thy gait was as the pace  
 Of one that opens not her feet,  
 And is not heard within the street :

Even he, O thou, Aholibah,  
 Made separate from thy desire,  
 Shall cut thy nose and ears away,  
 And bruise thee for thy body's hire,  
 And burn the residue with fire.

Then shall the heathen people say,  
 The multitude being at ease ;  
 Lo, this is that Aholibah  
 Whose name was blown among strange seas,  
 Grown old with soft adulteries.

Also her bed was made of green,  
 Her windows beautiful for glass,  
 That she had made her bed between :  
 Yea, for pure lust her body was  
 Made like white summer-colored grass.

Her raiment was a strong man's spoil ;  
 Upon a table by a bed  
 She set mine incense and mine oil  
 To be the beauty of her head,  
 In chambers walled about with red.

Also between the walls she had  
 Fair faces of strong men portrayed ;  
 All girded round the loins, and clad  
 With several cloths of woven braid  
 And garments marvellously made.

Therefore the wrath of God shall be  
 Set as a watch upon her way ;  
 And whoso findeth by the sea  
 Blown dust of bones will hardly say  
 If this were that Aholibah.

## MADONNA MIA.

UNDER green apple-boughs  
 That never a storm will rouse,  
 My lady hath her house  
 Between two bowers ;  
 In either of the twain,  
 Red roses full of rain ;  
 She hath for bondwomen  
 All kind of flowers.



She hath no handmaid fair  
To draw her curled gold hair  
Through rings of gold that bear  
Her whole hair's weight ;  
She hath no maids to stand  
Gold-clothed on either hand :  
In all the great green land  
None is so great.

She hath no more to wear  
But one white hood of vair  
Drawn over eyes and hair,  
Wrought with strange gold,  
Made for some great queen's head,  
Some fair great queen since dead ;  
And one strait gown of red  
Against the cold.

Beneath her eyelids deep  
Love lying seems asleep,  
Love, swift to wake, to weep,  
To laugh, to gaze ;  
Her breasts are like white birds,  
And all her gracious words  
As water-grass to herds  
In the June-days.

To her all dews that fall  
And rains are musical ;  
Her flowers are fed from all,  
Her joy from these ;  
In the deep-feathered firs  
Their gift of joy is hers,  
In the least breath that stirs  
Across the trees.

She grows with greenest leaves,  
Ripens with reddest sheaves,  
Forgets, remembers, grieves,  
And is not sad ;  
The quiet lands and skies  
Leave light upon her eyes :  
None knows her, weak or wise,  
Or tired or glad.

## THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

None knows, none understands,  
 What flowers are like her hands ;  
 Though you should search all lands  
     Wherein time grows,  
 What snows are like her feet,  
 Though his eyes burn with heat  
 Through gazing on my sweet,  
     Yet no man knows.

Only this thing is said :  
 That white and gold and red,  
 God's three chief words, man's bread  
     And oil and wine,  
 Were given her for dowers,  
 And kingdom of all hours,  
 And grace of goodly flowers  
     And various vine.

This is my lady's praise :  
 God after many days  
 Wrought her in unknown ways,  
     In sunset lands.  
 This was my lady's birth :  
 God gave her might and mirth,  
 And laid his whole sweet earth  
     Between her hands.

Under deep apple-boughs  
 My lady hath her house ;  
 She wears upon her brows  
     The flower thereof ;  
 All saying but what God saith  
 To her is as vain breath ;  
 She is more strong than death,  
     Being strong as love.

## THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

WE were ten maidens in the green corn,  
 Small red leaves in the mill-water :  
 Fairer maidens never were born,  
     Apples of gold for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens by a well-head,  
Small white birds in the mill-water :  
Sweeter maidens never were wed,  
Rings of red for the king's daughter.

The first to spin, the second to sing,  
Seeds of wheat in the mill-water ;  
The third may was a goodly thing,  
White bread and brown for the king's daughter.

The fourth to sew, and the fifth to play,  
Fair green weed in the mill-water ;  
The sixth may was a goodly may,  
White wine and red for the king's daughter.

The seventh to woo, the eighth to wed,  
Fair thin reeds in the mill-water ;  
The ninth had gold work on her head,  
Honey in the comb for the king's daughter.

The ninth had gold work round her hair,  
Fallen flowers in the mill-water ;  
The tenth may was goodly and fair,  
Golden gloves for the king's daughter.

We were ten maidens in a field green,  
Fallen fruit in the mill-water :  
Fairer maidens never have been,  
Golden sleeves for the king's daughter.

By there comes the king's young son,  
A little wind in the mill-water ;  
" Out of ten maidens ye'll grant me one,"  
A crown of red for the king's daughter.

" Out of ten mays ye'll give me the best,"  
A little rain in the mill-water ;  
A bed of yellow straw for all the rest,  
A bed of gold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en out the goodliest,  
Rain that rains in the mill-water ;  
A comb of yellow shell for all the rest,  
A comb of gold for the king's daughter.

He's made her bed to the goodliest,  
 Wind and hail in the mill-water ;  
 A grass girdle for all the rest,  
 A girdle of arms for the king's daughter.

He's set his heart to the goodliest,  
 Snow that snows in the mill-water ;  
 Nine little kisses for all the rest,  
 An hundredfold for the king's daughter.

He's ta'en his leave at the goodliest,  
 Broken boats in the mill-water ;  
 Golden gifts for all the rest,  
 Sorrow of heart for the king's daughter.

“ Ye'll make a grave for my fair body,”  
 Running rain in the mill-water ;  
 “ And ye'll streek my brother at the side of me,”  
 The pains of hell for the king's daughter.

## MAY JANET.

(BRETON.)

“ STAND up, stand up, thou May Janet,  
 And go to the wars with me.”  
 He's drawn her by both hands,  
 With her face against the sea.

“ He that strews red shall gather white,  
 He that sows white reap red,  
 Before your face and my daughter's  
 Meet in a marriage-bed.

“ Gold coin shall grow in the yellow field,  
 Green corn in the green sea-water,  
 And red fruit grow of the rose's red,  
 Ere your fruit grow in her.”

“ But I shall have her by land,” he said,  
 “ Or I shall have her by sea,  
 Or I shall have her by strong treason  
 And no grace go with me.”

Her father's drawn her by both hands,  
 He's rent her gown from her,  
 He's ta'en the smock round her body,  
 Cast in the sea-water.

The captain's drawn her by both sides  
 Out of the fair green sea :  
 "Stand up, stand up, thou May Janet,  
 And come to the war with me."

The first town they came to,  
 There was a blue bride-chamber ;  
 He clothed her on with silk,  
 And belted her with amber.

The second town they came to,  
 The bridesmen feasted knee to knee ;  
 He clothed her on with silver,  
 A stately thing to see.

The third town they came to,  
 The bridesmaids all had gowns of gold ;  
 He clothed her on with purple,  
 A rich thing to behold.

The last town they came to,  
 He clothed her white and red,  
 With a green flag either side of her  
 And a gold flag overhead.

## THE BLOODY SON.

(FINNISH.)

"O WHERE have ye been the morn sae late,  
 My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
 O where have ye been the morn sae late ?  
 And I wot I hae but anither."  
 "By the water-gate, by the water-gate,  
 O dear mither."

“ And whatten kiu’ o’ wark had ye there to make,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

And whatten kin’ o’ wark had ye there to make ?  
And I wot I hae but anither.”

“ I watered my steeds with water frae the lake,  
O dear mither.”

“ Why is your coat sae fouled the day,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

Why is your coat sae fouled the day ?  
And I wot I hae but anither.”

“ The steeds were stamping sair by the weary  
banks of clay,  
O dear mither.”

“ And where gat ye thae sleeves of red,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

And where gat ye thae sleeves of red ?  
And I wot I hae but anither.”

“ I have slain my ae brither by the weary water-  
head,  
O dear mither.”

“ And where will ye gang to mak your mend,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

And where will ye gang to mak your mend ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ The warldis way, to the warldis end,  
O dear mither.”

And what will ye leave your father dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

And what will ye leave your father dear ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ The wood to fell and the logs to bear,  
For he’ll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither.”

“ And what will ye leave your mither dear,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?

And what will ye leave your mither dear ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ The wool to card and the wool to wear,  
For ye’ll never see my body mair,  
O dear mither.”

“ And what will ye leave for your wife to take,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave for your wife to take ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ A goodly gown and a fair new make,  
For she'll do nae mair for my body's sake,  
O dear mither.”

“ And what will ye leave your young son fair,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave your young son fair ?  
And I wot ye hae not anither.”

“ A twiggen school-rod for his body to bear,  
Though it garred him greet he'll get nae mair,  
O dear mither.”

“ And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And what will ye leave your little daughter sweet ?  
And I wot ye hae not anither.”

“ Wild mulberries for her mouth to eat,  
She'll get nae mair though it garred her greet,  
O dear mither.”

“ And when will ye come back frae roamin',  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
And when will ye come back frae roamin' ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ When the sunrise out of the north is comen,  
O dear mither.”

“ When shall the sunrise on the north side be,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
When shall the sunrise on the north side be ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ When chuckie-stanes shall swim in the sea,  
O dear mither.”

“ When shall stanes in the sea swim,  
My merry son, come tell me hither ?  
When shall stanes in the sea swim ?  
And I wot I hae not anither.”

“ When birdies' feathers are as lead therein,  
O dear mither.”

“When shall feathers be as lead,  
 My merry son, come tell me hither?  
 When shall feathers be as lead?  
 And I wot I hae not anither.”

“When God shall judge between the quick and dead,  
 O dear mither.”

### THE SEA-SWALLOWS.

THIS fell when Christmas lights were done,  
 Red rose leaves will never make wine;  
 But before the Easter lights begun;  
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.

Two lovers sat where the rowan blows,  
 And all the grass is heavy and fine,  
 By the gathering place of the sea-swallows  
 When the wind brings them over Tyne.

Blossom of broom will never make bread,  
 Red rose leaves will never make wine;  
 Between her brows she is grown red,  
 That was full white in the fields by Tyne.

“O what is this thing ye have on,  
 Show me now, sweet daughter of mine?”

“O father, this is my little son  
 That I found hid in the sides of Tyne.

“O what will you give my son to eat,  
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?”

“Fen-water and adder's meat,  
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.”

“Or what will yet get my son to wear,  
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?”

“A weed and a web of nettle's hair,  
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.”

“Or what will ye take to line his bed,  
 Red rose leaves will never make wine?”

“Two black stones at the kirk-wall's head,  
 The ways are sair fra' the Till to the Tyne.”



- “ Or what will ye give my son for land,  
Red rose leaves will never make wine ? ”
- “ Three girl’s paces of red sand,  
The ways are sair fra’ the ‘Till to the ‘Tyne.”
- “ Or what will ye give me for my son,  
Red rose leaves will never make wine ? ”
- “ Six times to kiss his young mouth on,  
The ways are sair fra’ the ‘Till to the ‘Tyne.
- “ But what have ye done with the bearing-bread,  
And what have ye made of the washing-wine ?  
Or where have ye made your bearing-bed,  
To bear a son in the sides of ‘Tyne ? ”
- “ The bearing-bread is soft and new,  
There is no soil in the straining wine ;  
The bed was made between green and blue,  
It stands full soft by the sides of ‘Tyne.
- “ The fair grass was my bearing-bread,  
The well-water my washing-wine ;  
The low leaves were my bearing-bed,  
And that was best in the sides of ‘Tyne.”
- “ O daughter, if ye have done this thing,  
I wot the greater grief is mine ;  
This was a bitter child-bearing,  
When ye were got by the sides of ‘Tyne.
- “ About the time of the sea-swallows  
That fly full thick by six and nine,  
Ye’ll have my body out of the house,  
To bury me by the sides of ‘Tyne.
- “ Set nine stones by the wall for twain,  
Red rose leaves will never make wine ;  
For the bed I take will measure ten,  
The ways are sair fra’ the ‘Till to the ‘Tyne.
- “ Tread twelve girl’s paces out for three,  
Red rose leaves will never make wine ;  
For the pit I made has taken me,  
The ways are sair fra’ the ‘Till to the ‘Tyne.”

## THE YEAR OF LOVE.

THERE were four loves that one by one,  
 Following the seasons and the sun,  
 Passed over without tears, and fell  
 Away without farewell.

The first was made of gold and tears,  
 The next of aspen-leaves and fears,  
 The third of rose-boughs and rose-roots,  
 The last love of strange fruits.

These were the four loves faded. Hold  
 Some minutes fast the time of gold  
 When our lips each way clung and clove  
 To a face full of love.

The tears inside our eyelids met,  
 Wrung forth with kissing, and wept wet  
 The faces cleaving each to each  
 Where the blood served for speech.

The second, with low patient brows  
 Bound under aspen-colored boughs  
 And eyes made strong and grave with sleep  
 And yet too weak to weep ;

The third, with eager mouth at ease  
 Fed from late autumn honey, lees  
 Of scarce gold left in latter cells  
 With scattered flower-smells,—

Hair sprinkled over with spoilt sweet  
 Of ruined roses, wrists and feet  
 Slight-swathed, as grassy girdled sheaves  
 Hold in stray poppy-leaves ;

The fourth, with lips whereon has bled  
 Some great pale fruit's slow color, shed  
 From the rank bitter husk whence drips  
 Faint blood between her lips,—

Made of the heat of whole great Junes  
 Burning the blue dark round their moons  
 (Each like a mown red marigold),  
 So hard the flame keeps hold,—

These are burnt thoroughly away.  
 Only the first holds out a day  
 Beyond these latter loves that were  
 Made of mere heat and air.

And now the time is winterly  
 The first love fades too : none will see,  
 When April warms the world anew,  
 The place wherein love grew.

## THE LAST ORACLE.

(A. D. 361.)

YEARS have risen and fallen in darkness or in twilight,

Ages waxed and waned that knew not thee nor thine,

White the world sought light by night and sought not thy light,

Since the sad last pilgrim left thy dark mid shrine.

Dark the shrine, and dumb the fount of song thence welling,

Save for words more sad than tears of blood, that said :

*Tell the king, on earth has fallen the glorious dwelling,*

*And the water-springs that spake are quenched and dead.*

*Not a cell is left the god, no roof, no cover ;*

*In his hand the prophet laurel flowers no more.*

And the great king's high sad heart, thy true last lover,

Felt thine answer pierce and cleave it to the core.

And he bowed down his hopeless head

In the drift of the wild world's tide,

And dying, *Thou hast conquered*, he said,

*Galilean* : he said it, and died.

And the world that was thine and was ours  
 When the Graces took hands with the Hours  
 Grew cold as a winter wave  
 In the wind from a wide-mouthed grave,  
 As a gulf wide open to swallow  
 The light that the world held dear.  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !

Age on age thy mouth was mute, thy face was hid-  
 den,  
 And the lips and eyes that loved thee blind  
 and dumb ;  
 Song forsook their tongues that held thy name  
 forbidden,  
 Light their eyes that saw the strange god's king-  
 dom come.  
 Fire for light and hell for heaven and psalms for  
 pæans  
 Filled the clearest eyes and lips most sweet of  
 song,  
 When for chant of Greeks the wail of Galilæans  
 Made the whole world moan with hymns of wrath  
 and wrong.  
 Yea, not yet we see thee, father, as they saw thee,  
 They that worshipped when the world was theirs  
 and thine,  
 They whose words had power by thine own power  
 to draw thee  
 Down from heaven till earth seemed more than  
 heaven divine.  
 For the shades are about us that hover  
 When darkness is half withdrawn,  
 And the skirts of the dead night cover  
 The face of the live new dawn.  
 For the past is not utterly past,  
 Though the word on its lips be the last,  
 And the time be gone by with its creed  
 When men were as beasts that bled,  
 As sheep or as swine that wallow,  
 In the shambles of faith and of fear.  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !

Yet it may be, lord and father, could we know it,

We that love thee for our darkness shall have  
light

More than ever prophet hailed of old, or poet

Standing crowned and robed and sovereign in thy  
sight.

To the likeness of one God their dreams enthralled  
thee,

Who was greater than all gods that waned and  
grew ;

Son of God the shining son of Time they called  
thee,

Who was older, O our father, than they knew.

For no thought of man made gods to love or honor

Ere the song within the silent soul began ;

Nor might earth in dream or deed take heaven upon  
her

Till the word was clothed with speech by lips  
of man.

And the word and the life was thou,

The spirit of man and the breath ;

And before thee the gods that bow

Take life at thine hands and death.

For these are as ghosts that wane,

That are gone in an age or twain ;

Harsh, merciful, passionate, pure,

They perish, but thou shalt endure ;

Be their life as the swan's or the swallow,

They pass as the flight of a year.

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,

Destroyer and healer, hear !

Thou the word, the light, the life, the breath, the  
glory,

Strong to help and heal, to lighten and to slay,

Thine is all the song of man, the world's whole  
story ;

Not of morning and of evening is thy day.

Old and younger gods are buried or begotten

From uprising to downsetting of thy sun,

Risen from eastward, fallen to westward and for-  
gotten,

And their springs are many, but their end is one.

Divers births of godheads find one death appointed,  
 As the soul whence each was born makes room for  
 each ;

God by god goes out, discrowned and disanointed,  
 But the soul stands fast that gave them shape and  
 speech.

Is the sun yet cast out of heaven ?

Is the song yet cast out of man ?

Life that had song for its leaven

To quicken the blood that ran

Through the veins of the songless years

More bitter and cold than tears ;

Heaven that had thee for its one

Light, life, word, witness, O sun,—

Are they soundless and sightless and hollow,

Without eye, without speech, without ear ?

O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,

Destroyer and healer, hear !

Time arose, and smote thee silent at his warning ;  
 Change and darkness fell on men that fell from  
 thee ;

Dark thou satest, veiled with light, behind the  
 morning,

Till the soul of man should lift up eyes and see.

Till the blind mute soul get speech again and eye-  
 sight,

Man may worship not the light of life within ;

In his sight the stars whose fires grow dark in thy  
 sight

Shine as sunbeams on the night of death and sin.

Time again is risen with mightier word of warning,

Change hath blown again a blast of louder breath ;

Clothed with clouds and stars and dreams that melt  
 in morning,

Lo, the gods that ruled by grace of sin and death !

They are conquered, they break, they are stricken,

Whose might made the whole world pale ;

They are dust that shall rise not or quicken

Though the world for their death's sake wail.

As a hound on a wild beast's trace,

So time has their godhead in chase ;

As wolves when the hunt makes head,  
 They are scattered, they fly, they are fled ;  
 They are fled beyond hail, beyond hollo,  
 And the cry of the chase, and the cheer.  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !

Day by day thy shadow shines in heaven beholden,  
 Even the sun, the shining shadow of thy face :  
 King, the ways of heaven before thy feet grow  
 golden ;  
 God, the soul of earth is kindled with thy grace.  
 In thy lips the speech of man whence gods were  
 fashioned,  
 In thy soul the thought that makes them and un-  
 makes ;  
 By thy light and heat incarnate and impassioned,  
 Soul to soul of man gives light for light, and  
 takes.  
 As they knew thy name of old time could we know it,  
 Healer called of sickness, slayer invoked of wrong,  
 Light of eyes that saw thy light, god, king, priest,  
 poet,  
 Song should bring thee back to heal us with thy  
 song.  
 For thy kingdom is past not away,  
 Nor thy power from the place thereof hurled :  
 Out of heaven they shall cast not the day,  
 They shall cast not out song from the world.  
 By the song and the light they give,  
 We know thy works that they live ;  
 With the gift thou hast given us of speech  
 We praise, we adore, we beseech,  
 We arise at thy bidding, and follow,  
 We cry to thee, answer, appear,  
 O father of all of us, Paian, Apollo,  
 Destroyer and healer, hear !

## IN THE BAY.

## I.

BEYOND the hollow sunset, ere a star  
 Take heart in heaven from eastward, while the  
     west,  
 Fulfilled of watery resonance and rest,  
 Is as a port with clouds for harbor-bar  
 To fold the fleet in of the winds from far  
 That stir no plume now of the bland sea's breast ;

## II.

Above the soft sweep of the breathless bay  
 South-westward, far past flight of night and day,  
 Lower than the sunken sunset sinks, and higher  
 Than dawn can freak the front of heaven with fire,—  
 My thought with eyes and wings made wide makes way  
 To find the place of souls that I desire.

## III.

If any place for any soul there be,  
 Disrobed and disentranced ; if the might,  
 The fire and force that filled with ardent light  
 The souls whose shadow if half the light we see,  
 Survive, and be suppressed not of the night,—  
 This hour should show what all day hid from me.

## IV.

Night knows not, neither is it shown to day,  
 By sunlight nor by starlight is it shown,  
 Nor to the full moon's eye nor footfall known,  
 Their world's untrodden and unkindled way ;  
 Nor is the breath nor music of it blown  
 With sounds of winter or with winds of May.

## V.

But here, where light and darkness reconciled  
 Hold earth between them as a weaning child  
 Between the balanced hands of death and birth,  
 Even as they held the new-born shape of earth



When first life trembled in her limbs and smiled,—  
Here hope might think to find what hope were worth.

## VI.

Past Hades, past Elysium, past the long,  
Slow, smooth, strong lapse of Lethe ; past the toil  
Wherein all souls are taken as a spoil,  
The Stygian web of waters,—if your song  
Be quenched not, O our brethren, but be strong  
As ere ye too shook off our temporal coil ;

## VII.

If yet these twain survive your worldly breath,  
Joy trampling sorrow, life devouring death,  
If perfect life possess your life all through,  
And like your words your souls be deathless too,  
To-night, of all whom night encompasseth,  
My soul would commune with one soul of you.

## VIII.

Above the sunset, might I see thine eyes  
That were above the sun-dawn in our skies,  
Son of the songs of morning,—thine that were  
First lights to lighten that rekindling air  
Wherethrough men saw the front of England rise,  
And heard thine loudest of the lyre-notes there,—

## IX.

If yet thy fire have not one spark the less,  
O Titan, born of her a Titaness,  
Across the sunrise and the sunset's mark  
Send of thy lyre one sound, thy fire one spark,  
To change this face of our unworthiness,  
Across this hour dividing light from dark ;

## X.

To change this face of our chill time, that hears  
No song like thine of all that crowd its ears,  
Of all its lights that lighten all day long  
Sees none like thy most fleet and fiery sphere's  
Out-lightening Sirius,—in its twilight throng,  
No thunder and no sunrise like thy song.

## XI.

Hath not the sea-wind swept the sea-line bare  
 To pave with stainless fire, through stainless air,  
 A passage for thine heavenlier feet to tread  
 Ungrieved of earthly floor-work ? hath it spread  
 No covering splendid as the sun-god's hair  
 To veil or to reveal thy lordlier head ?

## XII.

Hath not the sunset strewn across the sea  
 A way majestic enough for thee ?  
 What hour save this should be thine hour—and mine,  
 If thou have care of any less divine  
 Than thine own soul ; if thou take thought of me,  
 Marlowe, as all my soul takes thought of thine ?

## XIII.

Before the moon's face as before the sun,  
 The morning star and evening star are one  
 For all men's lands as England. Oh, if night  
 Hang hard upon us,—ere our day take flight,  
 Shed thou some comfort from thy day long done  
 On us pale children of the latter light !

## XIV.

For surely, brother and master, and lord and king,  
 Where'er thy footfall and thy face make spring  
 In all souls' eyes that meet thee wheresoe'er,  
 And have thy soul for sunshine and sweet air,—  
 Some late love of thine old live land should cling,  
 Some living love of England, round thee there.

## XV.

Here from her shore, across her sunniest sea,  
 My soul makes question of the sun for thee,  
 And waves and beams make answer. When thy feet  
 Made her ways flowerier and their flowers more sweet  
 With childlike passage of a god to be,  
 Like spray these waves cast off her foemen's fleet.

## XVI.

Like foam they flung it from her, and like weed  
Its wrecks were washed from scornful shoal to shoal,  
From rock to rock reverberate ; and the whole  
Sea laughed and lightened with a deathless deed  
That sowed our enemies in her field for seed,  
And made her shores fit harborage for thy soul.

## XVII.

Then in her green south fields, a poor man's child,  
Thou hadst thy short sweet fill of half-blown joy,  
That ripens all of us for time to cloy  
With full-blown pain and passion, ere the wild  
World caught thee by the fiery heart, and smiled  
To make so swift end of the godlike boy.

## XVIII.

For thou, if ever godlike foot there trod  
These fields of ours, wert surely like a god.  
Who knows what splendor of strange dreams was  
shed  
With sacred shadow and glimmer of gold and red  
From hallowed windows, over stone and sod,  
On thine unbowed bright, insubmissive head ?

## XIX.

The shadow stayed not, but the splendor stays,  
Our brother, till the last of English days.  
No day nor night on English earth shall be  
Forever, spring nor summer, Junes nor Mays,  
But somewhat as a sound or gleam of thee  
Shall come on us like morning from the sea.

## XX.

Like sunrise never wholly risen, nor yet  
Quenched ; or like sunset never wholly set,  
A light to lighten as from living eyes  
The cold, unlit, close lids of one that lies  
Dead, or a ray returned from death's far skies  
To fire us living lest our lives forget.

## XXI.

For in that heaven what light of lights may be,  
 What splendor of what stars, what spheres of flame  
 Sounding, that none may number nor may name,  
 We know not, even thy brethren ; yea, not we  
 Whose eyes desire the light that lightened thee,  
 Whose ways and thine are one way and the same.

## XXII.

But if the riddles that in sleep we read,  
 And trust them not, be flattering truth indeed,  
 As he that rose our mightiest called them,—he,  
 Much higher than thou as thou much higher than  
     we,—  
 There, might we say, all flower of all our seed,  
 All singing souls are as one sounding sea.

## XXIII.

All those that here were of thy kind and kin  
 Beside thee and below thee, full of love,  
 Full-souled for song,—and one alone above  
 Whose only light folds all your glories in—  
 With all birds' notes from nightingale to dove  
 Fill the world whither we too fain would win ;

## XXIV.

The world that sees in heaven the sovereign light  
 Of sunlike Shakespeare, and the fiery night  
 Whose stars were watched of Webster ; and beneath,  
 The twin-souled brethren of the single wreath,  
 Grown in king's gardens, plucked from pastoral  
     heath,  
 Wrought with all flowers for all men's heart's de-  
     light.

## XXV.

And that fixed fervor, iron-red like Mars,  
 In the mid moving tide of tenderer stars,  
 That burned on loves and deeds the darkest done,  
 Athwart the incestuous prisoner's bride-house bars ;  
 And thine, most highest of all their fires but one,  
 Our morning star, sole risen before the sun.

## XXVI.

And one light risen since theirs to run such race  
 Thou hast seen, O Phosphor, from thy pride of place.  
 Thou hast seen Shelley, him that was to thee  
 As light to fire or dawn to lightning ; me,—  
 Me likewise, O our brother, shalt thou see,  
 And I behold thee, face to glorious face ?

## XXVII.

You twain the same swift year of manhood swept  
 Down the steep darkness, and our father wept.  
 And from the gleam of Apollonian tears  
 A holier aureole rounds your memories, kept  
 Most fervent-fresh of all the singing spheres,  
 And April-colored through all months and years.

## XXVIII.

You twain, fate spared not half your fiery span ;  
 The longer date fulfils the lesser man.  
 Ye from beyond the dark dividing date  
 Stand smiling, crowned as gods, with foot on fate.  
 For stronger was your blessing than his ban,  
 And earliest whom he struck, he struck too late.

## XXIX.

Yet love and loathing, faith and unfaith yet  
 Bind less to greater souls in unison,  
 And one desire that makes three spirits as one  
 Takes great and small as in one spiritual net  
 Woven out of hope toward what shall yet be done  
 Ere hate or love remember or forget ;

## XXX.

Woven out of faith and hope and love too great  
 To bear the bonds of life and death and fate ;  
 Woven out of love and hope and faith too dear  
 To take the print of doubt and change and fear ;  
 And interwoven with lines of wrath and hate  
 Blood-red with soils of many a sanguine year.

## XXXI.

Who cannot hate, can love not : if he grieve,  
 His tears are barren as the unfruitful rain  
 That rears no harvest from the green sea's plain,  
 And as thorns crackling this man's laugh is vain.  
 Nor can belief touch, kindle, smite, relieve  
 His heart who has not heart to disbelieve.

## XXXII.

But you, most perfect in your hate and love,  
 Our great twin-spirited brethren ; you that stand  
 Head by head glittering, hand made fast in hand,  
 And underfoot the fang-drawn worm that strove  
 To wound you living ; from so far above,  
 Look love, not scorn, on ours that was your land.

## XXXIII.

For love we lack, and help and heat and light  
 To clothe us and to comfort us with might.  
 What help is ours to take or give? but ye—  
 Oh, more than sunrise to the blind cold sea,  
 That wailed aloud with all her waves all night,  
 Much more, being much more glorious, should you  
     be.

## XXXIV.

As fire to frost, as ease to toil, as dew  
 To flowerless fields, as sleep to slackening pain,  
 As hope to souls long weaned from hope again  
 Returning, or as blood revived anew  
 To dry-drawn limbs and every pulseless vein,—  
 Even so toward us should no man be but you.

## XXXV.

One rose before the sunrise was, and one  
 Before the sunset, lovelier than the sun.  
 And now the heaven is dark and bright and loud  
 With wind and starry drift and moon and cloud,  
 And night's cry rings in straining sheet and shroud :  
 What help is ours if hope like yours be none ?

## XXXVI.

O well-beloved, our brethren, if ye be,  
 Then are we not forsaken. This kind earth  
 Made fragrant once for all time with your birth,  
 And bright for all men with your love, and worth  
 The clasp and kiss and wedlock of the sea,  
 Were not your mother if not your brethren we.

## XXXVII.

Because the days were dark with gods and kings,  
 And in time's hand the old hours of time as rods,  
 When force and fear set hope and faith at odds,  
 Ye failed not, nor abased your plume-plucked wings ;  
 And we that front not more disastrous things,  
 How should we fail in face of kings and gods ?

## XXXVIII.

For now the deep dense plumes of night are thinned  
 Surely with winnowing of the glimmering wind  
 Whose feet are fledged with morning ; and the  
     breath  
 Begins in heaven that sings the dark to death.  
 And all the night wherein men groaned and sinned  
 Sickens at heart to hear what sundawn saith.

## XXXIX.

O first-born sons of hope and fairest ! ye  
 Whose prows first clove the thought-unsounded sea  
 Whence all the dark dead centuries rose to bar  
 The spirit of man lest truth should make him free,  
 The sunrise and the sunset, seeing one star,  
 Take heart as we to know you that ye are.

## XL.

Ye rise not, and ye set not : we that say  
 Ye rise and set like hopes that set and rise  
 Look yet but seaward from a land-locked bay ;  
 But where at last the sea's line is the sky's,  
 And truth and hope one sunlight in your eyes,  
 No sunrise and no sunset marks their day.

## A FORSAKEN GARDEN.

IN a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,  
 At the sea-down's edge between windward and  
 lee,  
 Walled round with rocks as an inland island,  
 The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.  
 A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses  
 The steep square slope of the blossomless bed  
 Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of  
 its roses  
 Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,  
 To the low last edge of the long lone land.  
 If a step should sound or a word be spoken,  
 Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand ?  
 So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,  
 Through branches and briers if a man make way,  
 He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless  
 Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled  
 That crawls by a track none turn to climb  
 To the strait waste place that the years have rifled  
 Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.  
 The thorns he spares when the rose is taken ;  
 The rocks are left when he wastes the plain ;  
 The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,  
 These remain.

Not a flower to be prest of the foot that falls not ;  
 As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry ;  
 From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale  
 calls not,  
 Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.  
 Over the meadows that blossom and wither,  
 Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song.  
 Only the sun and the rain come hither  
 All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels  
 One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.



Only the wind here hovers and revels

In a round where life seems barren as death.

Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,

Haply, of lovers none ever will know,

Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping

Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"

Did he whisper? "Look forth from the flowers  
to the sea ;

For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms  
wither,

And men that love lightly may die—But we ?"

And the same wind sang, and the same waves  
whitened,

And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,  
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had  
lightened,

Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went  
whither ?

And were one to the end—but what end who  
knows ?

(Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,)

As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.

Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love  
them ?

(What love was ever as deep as a grave ?)

They are loveless now as the grass above them

Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,

Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.

Not a breath of the time that has been hovers

In the air now soft with a summer to be.

Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons here-  
after

Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or  
weep,

When as they that are free now of weeping and  
laughter

We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever ;

Here change may come not till all change end.

From the graves they have made they shall rise up  
never,

Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.

Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground grow-  
ing,

While the sun and the rain live, these shall be ;

Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing,

Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,

Till the strength of the waves of the high tides hum-  
ble

The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,

Here now in his triumph where all things falter,

Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand  
spread,

As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,

Death lies dead.

## RELICS.

THIS flower that smells of honey and the sea, ..

White laurustine, seems in my hand to be

A white star made of memory long ago

Lit in the heaven of dear times dead to me.

A star out of the skies, love used to know

Here held in hand, a stray left yet to show

What flowers my heart was full of in the days

That are long since gone down dead memory's flow.

Dead memory that revives on doubtful ways,

Half hearkening what the buried season says,

Out of the world of the unapparent dead

Where the lost Aprils are, and the lost Mays.

Flower, once I knew thy star-white brethren bred

Nigh where the last of all the land made head

Against the sea, a keen-faced promontory,—

Flowers on salt wind and sprinkled sea dews fed,

Their hearts were glad of the free place's glory ;  
 The wind that sang them all his stormy story  
     Had talked all winter to the sleepless spray,  
 And as the sea's their hues were hard and hoary.

Like things born of the sea and the bright day,  
 They laughed out at the years that could not slay,  
     Live sons and joyous of unquiet hours,  
 And stronger than all storms that range for prey.

And in the close indomitable flowers  
 A keen-edged odor of the sun and showers  
     Was as the smell of the fresh honeycomb  
 Made sweet for months of none but paramours.

Out of the hard green wall of leaves that clomb,  
 They showed like windfalls of the snow-soft foam,  
     Or feathers from the weary south-wind's wing,  
 Fair as the spray that it came shoreward from.

And thou, as white, what word hast thou to bring ?  
 If my heart hearken, whereof wilt thou sing ?  
     For some sign surely thou, too, hast to bear,  
 Some word far south was taught thee of the spring.

White like a white rose, not like these that were  
 Taught of the wind's mouth and the winter air,  
     Poor tender thing of soft Italian bloom,  
 Where once thou grewest, what else for me grew  
     there ?

Born in what spring and on what city's tomb,  
 By whose hand wast thou reached, and plucked for  
     whom ?  
     There hangs about thee, could the soul's sense  
     tell,  
 An odor as of love and of love's doom.

Of days more sweet than thou was sweet to smell,  
 Of flower-soft thoughts that came to flower and fell,  
     Of loves that lived a lily's life and died,  
 Of dreams now dwelling where dead roses dwell.

O white birth of the golden mountain-side  
 That for the sun's love makes its bosom wide  
 At sunrise, and with all its woods and flowers  
 Takes in the morning to its heart of pride !

Thou hast a word of that one land of ours,  
 And of the fair town called of the fair towers,  
 A word for me of my San Gimignano,  
 A word of April's greenest-girdled hours ;

Of the breached walls whereon the wallflowers ran  
 Called of Saint Fina, breachless now of man,  
 Though time with soft feet break them stone by  
 stone,  
 Who breaks down hour by hour his own reign's span ;

Of the cliff overcome and overgrown  
 That all that flowerage clothed as flesh clothes bone,  
 That garment of acacias made for May,  
 Whereof here lies one witness overblown.

The fair brave trees with all their flowers at play,  
 How king-like they stood up into the day !  
 How sweet the day was with them, and the night !  
 Such words of message have dead flowers to say.

This that the winter and the wind made bright,  
 And this that lived upon Italian light,  
 Before I throw them and these words away,  
 Who knows but I what memories too take flight ?

## SESTIMA.

I saw my soul at rest upon a day  
 As a bird sleeping in the nest of night,  
 Among soft leaves that give the starlight way  
 To touch its wings but not its eyes with light ;  
 So that it knew as one in visions may,  
 And knew not as men waking, of delight.

This was the measure of my soul's delight ;  
 It had no power of joy to fly by day,

Nor part in the large lordship of the light ;  
 But in a secret, moon-beholden way  
 Had all its will of dreams and pleasant night,  
 And all the love and light that sleepers may.

But such life's triumph as men waking may  
 It might not have to feed its faint delight  
 Between the stars by night and sun by day,  
 Shut up with green leaves and a little light ;  
 Because its way was as a lost star's way,  
 A world's not wholly known of day or night.

All loves and dreams and sounds and gleams of night  
 Made it all music that such minstrels may,  
 And all they had they gave it of delight ;  
 But in the full face of the fire of day  
 What place shall be for any starry light,  
 What part of heaven in all the wide sun's way ?

Yet the soul woke not, sleeping by the way,  
 Watched as a nursling of the large-eyed night,  
 And sought no strength nor knowledge of the day,  
 Nor closer touch conclusive of delight,  
 Nor mightier joy nor truer than dreamers may,  
 Nor more of song than they, nor more of light.

For who sleeps once, and sees the secret light  
 Whereby sleep shows the soul a fairer way  
 Between the rise and rest of day and night,  
 Shall care no more to fare as all men may,  
 But he his place of pain or of delight,  
 There shall he dwell, beholding night as day.

Song, have thy day, and take thy fill of light  
 Before the night be fallen across thy way ;  
 Sing while he may, man hath no long delight.

## A WASTED VIGIL.

## I.

COULDEST thou not watch with me one hour ? Be-  
 hold,  
 Dawn skims the sea with flying feet of gold,  
 With sudden feet that graze the gradual sea :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## II.

What, not one hour ? For star by star the night  
 Falls, and her thousands world by world take flight ;  
 They die, and day survives, and what of thee ?  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## III.

Lo, far in heaven the web of night undone,  
 And on the sudden sea the gradual sun ;  
 Wave to wave answers, tree responds to tree :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## IV.

Sunbeam by sunbeam creeps from line to line,  
 Foam by foam quickens on the brightening brine ;  
 Sail by sail passes, flower by flower gets free :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## V.

Last year, a brief while since, an age ago,  
 A whole year past, with bud and bloom and snow,  
 O moon that wast in heaven, what friends were we !  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## VI.

Old moons, and last year's flowers, and last year's  
 snows,  
 Who now saith to thee, moon ? or who saith, rose ?  
 O dust and ashes, once found fair to see !  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## VII.

O dust and ashes, once thought sweet to smell !  
 With me it is not, is it with thee, well ?  
 O sea-drift blown from windward back to lee !  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## VIII.

The old year's dead hands are full of their dead  
 flowers,  
 The old days are full of dead old loves of ours,  
 Born as a rose, and briefer born than she :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## IX.

Could two days live again of that dead year,  
 One would say, seeking us and passing here,  
*Where is she ?* and one answering, *Where is he ?*  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## X.

Nay, those two lovers are not anywhere ;  
 If we were they, none knows us what we were,  
 Nor aught of all their barren grief and glee :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## XI.

Half false, half fair, all feeble, be my verse  
 Upon thee not for blessing nor for curse,  
 For some must stand, and some must fall or flee :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## XII.

As a new moon above spent stars thou wast ;  
 But stars endure after the moon is past,  
 Couldst thou not watch one hour, though I watch  
 three ?  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## XIII.

What of the night ? The night is full, the tide  
 Storms inland, the most ancient rocks divide ;  
 Yet some endure, and bow nor head nor knee :  
 Couldst thou not watch with me ?

## XIV.

Since thou art not as these are, go thy ways ;  
 Thou hast no part in all my nights and days.  
 Lie still, sleep on, be glad—as such things be :  
 Thou couldst not watch with me.

## THE COMPLAINT OF LISA.

(*Double Sestina*).

DECAMERON, X. 7.

THERE is no woman living that draws breath  
 So sad as I, though all things sadden her.  
 There is not one upon life's weariest way  
 Who is weary as I am weary of all but death.  
 Toward whom I look as looks the sunflower  
 All day with all his whole soul toward the sun ;  
 While in the sun's sight I make moan all day,  
 And all night on my sleepless maiden bed

Weep and call out on death, O Love, and thee,  
 That thou or he would take me to the dead.  
 And know not what thing evil I have done  
 That life should lay such heavy hand on me.  
 Alas ! Love, what is this thou wouldst with me ?  
 What honor shalt thou have to quench my breath,  
 Or what shall my heart broken profit thee ?  
 O Love, O great god Love, what have I done,  
 That thou shouldst hunger so after my death ?  
 My heart is harmless as my life's first day :  
 Seek out some false fair woman, and plague her  
 Till her tears even as my tears fill her bed :  
 I am the least flower in thy flowery way,  
 But till my time be come that I be dead,  
 Let me live out my flower-time in the sun,  
 Though my leaves shut before the sunflower.

O Love, Love, Love, the kingly sunflower !  
 Shall he the sun hath looked on look on me,  
 That live down here in shade, out of the sun,  
 Here living in the sorrow and shadow of death ?



Shall he that feeds his heart full of the day  
Care to give mine eyes light, or my lips breath ?  
Because she loves him, shall my lord love her  
Who is as a worm in my lord's kingly way ?  
I shall not see him or know him alive or dead ;  
But thou, I know thee, O Love, and pray to thee  
That in brief while my brief life-days be done,  
And the worm quickly make my marriage-bed.

For underground there is no sleepless bed.  
But here since I beheld my sunflower  
These eyes have slept not, seeing all night and day  
His sunlike eyes, and face fronting the sun.  
Wherefore, if anywhere be any death,  
I would fain find and fold him fast to me,  
That I may sleep with the world's eldest dead,  
With her that died seven centuries since, and her  
That went last night down the night-wandering way.  
For this is sleep indeed, when labor is done,  
Without love, without dreams, and without breath,  
And without thought, O name unnamed ! of thee.

Ah ! but, forgetting all things, shall I thee ?  
Wilt thou not be as now about my bed  
There underground as here before the sun ?  
Shall not thy vision vex me alive and dead,  
Thy moving vision without form or breath ?  
I read long since the bitter tale of her  
Who read the tale of Launcelot on a day,  
And died, and had no quiet after death,  
But was moved ever along a weary way,  
Lost with her love in the underworld ; ah me,  
O my king, O my lordly sunflower,  
Would God to me, too, such a thing were done !

But if such sweet and bitter things be done,  
Then, flying from life, I shall not fly from thee.  
For in that living world without a sun  
Thy vision will lay hold upon me dead,  
And meet and mock me, and mar my peace in death.  
Yet if being wroth, God had such pity on her,  
Who was a sinner and foolish in her day,

That even in hell they twain should breathe one  
breath,

Why should he not in some wise pity me ?

So if I sleep not in my soft strait bed,

I may look up and see my sunflower

As he the sun, in some divine strange way.

O poor my heart, well knowest thou in what way

This sore sweet evil unto us was done.

For on a holy and a heavy day

I was arisen out of my still small bed

To see the knights tilt, and one said to me

“The king ;” and seeing him, somewhat stopped  
my breath ;

And if the girl spake more, I heard not her,

For only I saw what I shall see when dead,

A kingly flower of knights, a sunflower,

That shone against the sunlight like the sun,

And like a fire, O heart, consuming thee,

The fire of love that lights the pyre of death.

Howbeit I shall not die an evil death

Who have loved in such a sad and sinless way,

That this my love, lord, was no shame to thee.

So when mine eyes are shut against the sun,

O my soul's sun, O the world's sunflower,

Thou nor no man will quite despise me dead.

And dying I pray with all my low last breath

That thy whole life may be as was that day,

That feast-day that made trothplight death and me,

Giving the world light of thy great deeds done ;

And that fair face brightening thy bridal bed,

That God be good as God hath been to her.

That all things goodly and glad remain with her,

All things that make glad life and goodly death ;

That as a bee sucks from a sunflower

Honey, when summer draws delighted breath,

Her soul may drink of thy soul in like way,

And love make life a fruitful marriage-bed

Where day may bring forth fruits of joy to day

And night to night till days and nights be dead.

And as she gives light of her love to thee,  
Give thou to her the old glory of days long done ;  
And either give some heat of light to me.  
To warm me where I sleep without the sun.

O sunflower made drunken with the sun,  
O knight whose lady's heart draws thine to her,  
Great king, glad lover, I have a word to thee.  
There is a weed lives out of the sun's way,  
Hid from the heat deep in the meadow's bed,  
That swoons and whitens at the wind's least breath,  
A flower star-shaped, that all a summer day  
Will gaze her soul out on the sunflower  
For very love till twilight finds her dead.  
But the great sunflower heeds not her poor death,  
Knows not when all her loving life is done ;  
And so much knows my lord the king of me.

Ay, all day long he has no eye for me ;  
With golden eye following the golden sun  
From rose-colored to purple-pillowed bed,  
From birthplace to the flame-lit place of death,  
From eastern end to western of his way,  
So mine eye follows thee, my sunflower,  
So the white star-flower turns and yearns to thee,  
The sick weak weed, not well alive or dead,  
Trode under foot if any pass by her,  
Pale, without color of summer or summer breath  
In the shrunk shuddering petals, that have done  
No work but love, and die before the day.

But thou, to-day, to-morrow, and every day,  
Be glad and great, O love whose love slays me.  
Thy fervent flower made fruitful from the sun  
Shall drop its golden seed in the world's way,  
That all men thereof nourished shall praise thee  
For grain and flower and fruit of works well done ;  
Till thy shed seed, O shining sunflower,  
Bring forth such growth of the world's garden-bed  
As like the sun shall outlive age and death.  
And yet I would thine heart had heed of her  
Who loves thee alive ; but not till she be dead.  
Come, Love, then, quickly, and take her utmost  
breath.

Song, speak for me who am dumb as are the dead ;  
 From my sad bed of tears I send forth thee,  
 To fly all day from sun's birth to sun's death  
 Down the sun's way after the flying sun,  
 For love of her that gave thee wings and breath  
 Ere day be done, to seek the sunflower.

FOR THE FEAST OF GIORDANO BRUNO,  
 PHILOSOPHER AND MARTYR.

I.

SON of the lightning and the light that glows  
 Beyond the lightning's or the morning's light,  
 Soul splendid with all-righteous love of right,  
 In whose keen fire all hopes and fears and woes  
 Were clean consumed, and from their ashes rose  
 'Transfigured, and intolerable to sight  
 Save of purged eyes whose lids had cast off night,  
 In love's and wisdom's likeness when they close,  
 Embracing, and between them truth stands fast,  
 Embraced of either ; thou whose feet were set  
 On English earth while this was England yet,  
 Our friend that art, our Sidney's friend that wast,  
 Heart hardier found and higher than all men's past,  
 Shall we not praise thee though thine own forget ?

II.

Lift up thy light on us and on thine own,  
 O soul whose spirit on earth was as a rod  
 To scourge off priests, a sword to pierce their God,  
 A staff for man's free thought to walk alone,  
 A lamp to lead him far from shrine and throne  
 On ways untrodden where his fathers trod  
 Ere earth's heart withered at a high priest's nod,  
 And all men's mouths that made not prayer made  
 moan.  
 From bonds and torments and the ravening flame,  
 Surely thy spirit of sense rose up to greet  
 Lucretius, where such only spirits meet,  
 And walk with him apart till Shelley came  
 To make the heaven of heavens more heavenly  
 sweet,  
 And mix with yours a third incorporate name.

## AVE ATQUE VALE.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE.

Nous devons pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs ;  
 Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,  
 Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres,  
 Son vent melancholique à l'entour de leurs marbres,  
 Certes, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

*Les Fleurs du Mai.*

## I.

SHALL I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,  
 Brother, on this that was the veil of thee ?  
 Or quiet sea-flower moulded by the sea,  
 Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,  
 Such as the summer-sleepy dryads weave,  
 Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve ?  
 Or wilt thou rather as on earth before,  
 Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat  
 And full of bitter summer, but more sweet  
 To thee than gleanings of a northern shore  
 Trod by no tropic feet ?

## II.

For always thee the fervid languid glories  
 Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies ;  
 Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs  
 Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,  
 The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave  
 That knows not where is that Leucadian grave  
 Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.  
 Ah ! salt and sterile as her kisses were,  
 The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear  
 Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,  
 Blind gods that cannot spare.

## III.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,  
 Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us :  
 Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,  
 Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other  
 Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime ;  
 The hidden harvest of luxurious time,

Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech ;  
 And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep  
 Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep ;  
 And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,  
 Seeing as men sow men reap.

## IV.

O sleepless heart and sombre soul unsleeping,  
 That were athirst for sleep and no more life  
 And no more love, for peace and no more strife !  
 Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping  
 Spirit and body and all the springs of song,  
 Is it well now where love can do no wrong,  
 Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang  
 Behind the unopening closure of her lips ?  
 Is it not well where soul from body slips,  
 And flesh from bone divides without a pang  
 As dew from flower-bell drips ?

## V.

It is enough : the end and the beginning  
 Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.  
 O hand unclasped of un beholden friend !  
 For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,  
 No triumph and no labor and no lust,  
 Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.  
 O quiet eyes wherein the light saith naught,  
 Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night  
 With obscure finger silences your sight,  
 Not in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,  
 Sleep, and have sleep for light.

## VI.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,  
 Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,  
 Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet  
 Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,  
 Such as thy vision here solicited,  
 Under the shadow of her fair vast head,  
 The deep division of prodigious breasts,  
 The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,  
 The weight of awful tresses that still keep  
 The savor and shade of old-world pine-forests  
 Where the wet hill-winds weep ?

## VII.

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision ?  
 O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what  
 bloom,  
 Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the  
 gloom ?  
 What of despair, of rapture, of derision,  
 What of life is there, what of ill or good ?  
 Are the fruits gray like dust, or bright like blood ?  
 Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,  
 The faint fields quicken any terrene root,  
 In low lands where the sun and moon are mute,  
 And all the stars keep silence ? Are there flowers  
 At all, or any fruit ?

## VIII.

Alas ! but though my flying song flies after,  
 O sweet strange elder singer, thy more fleet  
 Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet,  
 Some dim derision of mysterious laughter  
 From the blind tongueless warders of the dead,  
 Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's veiled head,  
 Some little sound of unregarded tears  
 Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,  
 And from pale mouths some cadence of dead  
 sighs,—  
 These, only these, the hearkening spirit hears,  
 Sees only such things rise.

## IX.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,  
 Far too far off for thought or any prayer.  
 What ails us with thee, who art wind and air ?  
 What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow ?  
 Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,  
 Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,  
 Our dreams pursue our dead, and do not find.  
 Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,  
 The low light fails us in elusive skies,  
 Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind  
 Are still the eluded eyes.

## X.

Not thee, oh ! never thee, in all time's changes,  
 Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,  
 The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll  
 I lay my hand on, and not death estranges  
 My spirit from communion of thy song ;  
 These memories and these melodies that throng  
 Veiled porches of a Muse funereal,—  
 These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold  
 As though a hand were in my hand to hold,  
 Or through mine ears a mourning musical  
 Of many mourners rolled.

## XI.

I among these, I also, in such station  
 As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,  
 And offering to the dead made, and their gods,  
 The old mourners had, standing to make libation,  
 I stand, and to the gods and to the dead  
 Do reverence without prayer or praise, and shed  
 Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,  
 And what of honey and spice my seed-lands bear,  
 And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,  
 And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb  
 A curl of severed hair.

## XII.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,  
 Not like the low-lying head of Him, the king,  
 The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,  
 Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken  
 There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear  
 Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear  
 Down the opening leaves of holy poets' pages.  
 Thee not Orestes, not Electra, mourns ;  
 But bending us-ward with memorial urns  
 The most high Muses that fulfil all ages  
 Weep, and our God's heart yearns,



## XIII.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often  
 Among us darkling here the lord of light  
 Makes manifest his music and his might  
 In hearts that open and in lips that soften  
 With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.  
 Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,  
 And nourished them indeed with bitter bread ;  
 Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,  
 The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame  
 Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed  
 Who feeds our hearts with fame.

## XIV.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunseting,  
 God of all suns and songs, he too bends down  
 To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,  
 And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.  
 Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,  
 Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,  
 Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,  
 And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs  
 Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,  
 And over thine irrevocable head  
 Sheds light from the under skies.

## XV.

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,  
 And stains with tears her changing bosom chill ;  
 That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,  
 That thing transformed which was the Cytherean,  
 With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine  
 Long since, and face no more called Erycine  
 A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.  
 Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell  
 Did she, a sad and second prey, compel  
 Into the footless places once more trod,  
 And shadows hot from hell.

## XVI.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,  
 No choral salutation lure to light  
 A spirit sick with perfume and sweet night  
 And love's tired eyes and hands and barren bosom.  
 There is no help for these things ; none to mend,  
 And none to mar ; not all our songs, O friend !  
 Will make death clear, or make life durable.  
 Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine  
 And with wild notes about this dust of thine  
 At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell,  
 And wreathe an unseen shrine.

## XVII.

Sleep ; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,  
 If sweet, give thanks ; thou hast no more to live ;  
 And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.  
 Out of the mystic and the mournful garden  
 Where all day through thine hands in barren braid  
 Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,  
 Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants gray,  
 Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-hearted,  
 Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that  
 started,  
 Shall death not bring us all as thee one day  
 Among the days departed ?

## XVIII.

For thee, oh, now a silent soul, my brother,  
 Take at my hands this garland, and farewell  
 Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,  
 And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,  
 With sadder than the Niobeian womb,  
 And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.  
 Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done :  
 There lies not any troublous thing before,  
 Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,  
 For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,  
 All waters as the shore.

## MEMORIAL VERSES

ON THE DEATH OF THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

DEATH, what hast thou to do with me? So saith  
 Love, with eyes set against the face of Death;  
 What have I done, O thou strong Death, to thee,  
 That mine own lips should wither from thy breath?

Though thou be blind as fire or as the sea,  
 Why should thy waves and storms make war on me?  
 Is it for hate thou hast to find me fair,  
 Or for desire to kiss, if it might be,—

My very mouth of song, and kill me there?  
 So with keen rains vexing his crownless hair,  
 With bright feet bruised from no delightful way,  
 Through darkness and the disenchanted air,—

Lost Love went weeping half a winter's day.  
 And the armed wind that smote him seemed to say,  
 How shall the dew live when the dawn is fled,  
 Or wherefore should the Mayflower outlast May?

Then Death took Love by the right hand, and said,  
 Smiling, Come now, and look upon thy dead.  
 But Love cast down the glories of his eyes,  
 And bowed down like a flower his flowerless head.

And Death spake, saying, What ails thee in such  
 wise,  
 Being god, to shut thy sight up from the skies?  
 If thou canst see not, hast thou ears to hear?  
 Or is thy soul too as a leaf that dies?

Even as he spake with fleshless lips of fear,  
 But soft as sleep sings in a tired man's ear,  
 Behold, the winter was not, and its might  
 Fell, and fruits broke forth of the barren year.

And upon earth was largess of great light,  
 And moving music winged for world-wide flight,  
 And shapes and sounds of gods beheld and heard,  
 And day's foot set upon the neck of night.

And with such song the hollow ways were stirred  
 As of a god's heart hidden in a bird,  
 Or as the whole soul of the sun in spring  
 Should find full utterance in one flower-soft word,—

And all the season should break forth and sing  
 From one flower's lips, in one rose triumphing ;  
 Such breath and light of song as of a flame  
 Made ears and spirits of them that heard it ring.

And Love beholding knew not for the same  
 The shape that led him, nor in face nor name ;  
 For he was bright, and great of thews, and fair,  
 And in Love's eyes he was not Death, but Fame.

Not that gray ghost whose life is empty and bare,  
 And his limbs moulded out of mortal air,  
 A cloud of change that shifts into a shower,  
 And dies, and leaves no light for time to wear ;

But a god clothed with his own joy and power,  
 A god re-risen out of his mortal hour  
 Immortal, king and lord of time and space,  
 With eyes that look on them as from a tower.

And where he stood the pale sepulchral place  
 Bloomed, as new life might in a bloodless face,  
 And where men sorrowing came to seek a tomb  
 With funeral flowers and tears for grief and grace,—

They saw with light as of a world in bloom  
 The portal of the House of Fame illumed  
 The ways of life wherein we toiling tread,  
 And watched the darkness as a brand consume.

And through the gates where rule the deathless dead  
 The sound of a new singer's soul was shed  
 That sang among his kinsfolk, and a beam  
 Shot from the star on a new ruler's head ;

A new star lightening the Lethean stream,  
 A new song mixed into the song supreme  
 Made of all souls of singers and their might,  
 That makes of life and time and death a dream :

Thy star, thy song, O soul that in our sight  
 Wast as a sun that made for man's delight  
 Flowers and all fruits in season, being so near  
 The sun-god's face, our god that gives us light.

To him, of all gods that we love or fear,  
 Thou among all men by thy name wast dear,—  
 Dear to the god that gives us spirit of song  
 To bind and burn all hearts of men that hear ;

The god that makes men's words too sweet and  
 strong  
 For life or time or death to do them wrong,  
 Who sealed with his thy spirit for a sign,  
 And filled it with his breath thy whole life long ;

Who made thy moist lips fiery with new wine  
 Pressed from the grapes of song the sovereign vine,  
 And with all love of all things loveliest  
 Gave thy soul power to make them more divine,—

That thou might'st breathe upon the breathless rest  
 Of marble, till the brows and lips and breast  
 Felt fall from off them as a cancelled curse  
 That speechless sleep wherewith they lived opprest ;

Who gave thee strength and heat of spirit to pierce  
 All clouds of form and color that disperse,  
 And leave the spirit of beauty to re-mould  
 In types of clean chryselephantine verse ;

Who gave thee words more golden than fine gold  
 To carve in shapes more glorious than of old,  
 And build thy songs up in the sight of time  
 As statues set in godhead manifold,—

In sight and scorn of temporal change and elime  
 That meet the sun re-risen with refluent rhyme—  
 As god to god might answer face to face—  
 From lips whereon the morning strikes sublime.

Dear to the god, our god who gave thee place  
Among the chosen of days, the royal race,

The lords of light, whose eyes of old and ears  
Saw even on earth and heard him for a space.

There are the souls of those once mortal years  
That wrought with fire of joy and light of tears,  
In words divine as deeds that grew thereof,  
Such music as he swoons with love who hears.

There are the lives that enlighten from above  
Our under lives, the spherul souls that move  
Through the ancient heaven of song-illuminated air,  
Whence we that hear them singing die with love.

There all the crowned Hellenic heads, and there  
The old gods who made men godlike as they were,  
The lyric lips wherefrom all songs take fire,  
Live eyes, and light of Apollonian hair.

There, round the sovereign passion of that lyre  
Which the stars hear, and tremble with desire,  
The ninefold light Picrian is made one  
That here we see divided, and aspire,—

Seeing, after this or that crown to be won ;  
But where they hear the singing of the sun,  
All form, all sound, all color, and all thought  
Are as one body and soul in unison.

There the song sung shines as a picture wrought,  
The painted mouths sing that on earth say naught,  
The carven limbs have sense of blood and growth,  
And large-eyed life that seeks nor lacks not aught.

There all the music of thy living mouth  
Lives, and all loves wrought of thine hand in youth,  
And bound about the breasts and brows with gold,  
And colored pale or dusk from north or south.

Fair living things made to thy will of old,  
Born of thy lips, no births of mortal mould,  
That in the world of song about thee wait  
Where thought and truth are one and manifold.

Within the graven lintels of the gate  
 That here divides our vision and our fate,  
 The dreams we walk in and the truths of sleep,  
 All sense and spirit have life inseparate.

There, what one thinks, is his to grasp and keep ;  
 There are no dreams, but very joys to reap ;  
 No foiled desires that die before delight,  
 No fears to see across our joys, and weep.

There hast thou all thy will of thought and sight,  
 All hope for harvest, and all heaven for flight ;  
 The sun rise of whose golden-mouthed glad head  
 The paler songless ghosts was heat and light.

Here, where the sunset of our year is red,  
 Men think of thee as of the summer dead,  
 Gone forth before the snows, before thy day,  
 With unshod feet, with brows unchapleted.

Couldst thou not wait till age had wound, they say,  
 Round those wreathed brows his soft white blossoms ?

Nay,

Why shouldst thou vex thy soul with this harsh  
 air,—  
 Thy bright-winged soul, once free to take its way ?

Nor for men's reverence hadst thou need to wear  
 The holy flowers of gray time-hallowed hair ;  
 Nor were it fit that aught of thee grew old,  
 Fair lover all thy days of all things fair.

And hear we not thy words of molten gold  
 Singing ? or is their light and heat a-cold

Whereat men warmed their spirits ? Nay, for all  
 These yet are with us, ours to hear and hold.

The lovely laughter, the clear tears, the call  
 Of love to love on ways where shadows fall,  
 Through doors of dim divisions and disguise,  
 And music made of doubts unmusical ;

The love that caught strange light from death's own  
 eyes,<sup>1</sup>  
 And filled death's lips with fiery words and sighs,  
 And half asleep let feed from veins of his  
 Her close red warm snake's mouth, Egyptian-wise :

And that great night of love more strange than  
 this,<sup>2</sup>  
 When she that made the whole world's bale and  
 bliss

Made king of the whole world's desire a slave,  
 And killed him in mid kingdom with a kiss ;

Veiled loves that shifted shapes and shafts, and  
 gave,<sup>3</sup>  
 Laughing, strange gifts to hands that durst not  
 crave,

Flowers doubled-blossomed, fruits of scent and  
 hue  
 Sweet as the bride-bed, stranger than the grave ;

All joys and wonders of old lives and new  
 That ever in love's shine or shadow grew,

And all the grief whereof he dreams and grieves,  
 And all sweet roots fed on his light and dew ;

All these through thee our spirit of sense perceives,  
 As threads in the unseen woof thy music weaves,

Birds caught and snared that fill our ears with  
 thee,  
 Bay-blossoms in thy wreath of brow-bound leaves.

Mixed with the masque of death's old comedy  
 Though thou too pass, have here our flowers, that we

For all the flowers thou gav'st upon thee shed,  
 And pass not crownless to Persephone.

Bine lotus-blooms and white and rosy-red  
 We wind with poppies for thy silent head,

And on this margin of the sundering sea  
 Leave thy sweet light to rise upon the dead.

<sup>1</sup> La Morte Amoureuse.

<sup>2</sup> Une Nuit Cléopâtre.

<sup>3</sup> Mademoiselle de Maupin.



## AGE AND SONG.

(TO BARRY CORNWALL.)

## I.

IN vain men tell us time can alter  
 Old loves, or make old memories falter ;  
     That with the old year the old year's life closes.  
 The old dew still falls on the old sweet flowers,  
 The old sun revives the new-fledged hours,  
     The old summer rears the new-born roses.

## II.

Much more a Muse that bears upon her  
 Raiment and wreath and flower of honor,  
     Gathered long since and long since woven,  
 Fades not or falls as fall the vernal  
 Blossoms that bear no fruit eternal,  
     By summer or winter charred or cloven.

## III.

No time casts down, no time upraises,  
 Such loves, such memories, and such praises,  
     As need no grace of sun or shower,  
 No saving screen from frost or thunder,  
 To tend and house around and under  
     The imperishable and fearless flower.

## IV.

Old thanks, old thoughts, old aspirations,  
 Outlive men's lives and lives of nations,  
     Dead, but for one thing which survives—  
 The inalienable and unpriced treasure,  
 The old joy of power, the old pride of pleasure,  
     That lives in light above men's lives.

## IN MEMORY OF BARRY CORNWALL.

(OCT. 4, 1874.)

## I.

IN the garden of death, where the singers whose  
 names are deathless  
 One with another make music unheard of men,  
 Where the dead sweet roses fade not of lips long  
 breathless,  
 And the fair eyes shine that shall weep not or  
 change again,  
 Who comes now crowned with the blossom of snow-  
 white years ?  
 What music is this that the world of the dead men  
 hears ?

## II.

Beloved of men, whose words on our lips were  
 honey,  
 Whose name in our ears and our fathers' ears was  
 sweet,  
 Like summer gone forth of the land his songs made  
 sunny,  
 To the beautiful veiled bright world where the glad  
 ghosts meet,  
 Child, father, bridegroom and bride, and anguish  
 and rest,  
 No soul shall pass of a singer than this more blest.

## III.

Blest for the years' sweet sake that were filled and  
 brightened,  
 As a forest with birds, with the fruit and the flower  
 of his song ;  
 For the souls' sake blest that heard, and their cares  
 were lightened,  
 For the heart's sake blest that have fostered his  
 name so long ;

By the living and dead lips blest that have loved his  
 name,  
 And clothed with their praise and crowned with  
 their love for fame.

## IV.

Ah, fair and fragrant his fame as flowers that close  
 not,  
 That shrink not by day for heat or for cold by  
 night,  
 As a thought in the heart shall increase when the  
 heart's self knows not,  
 Shall endure in our ears as a sound, in our eyes as  
 a light ;  
 Shall wax with the years that wane and the seasons'  
 chime,  
 As a white rose thornless that grows in the garden of  
 time.

## V.

The same year calls, and one goes hence with an-  
 other,  
 And men sit sad that were glad for their sweet  
 songs' sake ;  
 The same year beckons, and elder with younger  
 brother  
 Takes mutely the cup from his hand that we all  
 shall take.<sup>1</sup>  
 They pass ere the leaves be past or the snows be  
 come ;  
 And the birds are loud, but the lips that outsang  
 them dumb.

## VI.

Time takes them home that we loved, fair names  
 and famous,  
 To the soft long sleep, to the broad sweet bosom  
 of death ;  
 But the flower of their souls he shall take not away  
 to shame us,

<sup>1</sup> Sydney Dobell died Aug. 22, 1874.

Nor the lips lack song forever that now lack  
 breath.  
 For with us shall the music and perfume that die  
 not dwell,  
 Though the dead to our dead bid welcome, and we  
 farewell.

## EPICEDE.

(James Lorimer Graham died at Florence, April 30, 1876.)

LIFE may give for love to death  
 Little : what are life's gifts worth  
 To the dead wrapt round with earth ?  
 Yet from lips of living breath  
 Sighs or words we are fain to give,  
 All that yet, while yet we live,  
 Life may give for love to death.

Dead so long before his day,  
 Passed out of the Italian sun  
 To the dark where all is done  
 Fallen upon the verge of May ;  
 Here at life's and April's end  
 How should song salute my friend  
 Dead so long before his day ?

Not a kindlier life or sweeter,  
 Time, that lights and quenches men,  
 Now may quench or light again ;  
 Mingling with the mystic metre  
 Woven of all men's lives with his,  
 Not a clearer note than this,  
 Not a kindlier life or sweeter.

In this heavenliest part of earth  
 He that living loved the light,  
 Light and song, may rest aright,  
 One in death, if strange in birth,  
 With the deathless dead that make  
 Life the lovelier for their sake  
 In this heavenliest part of earth.

Light, and song, and sleep at last,—  
 Struggling hands and suppliant knees  
 Get no goodlier gift than these.  
 Song that holds remembrance fast,  
 Light that lightens death, attend  
 Round their graves who have to friend  
 Light, and song, and sleep at last.

## INFERIÆ.

SPRING, and the light and sound of things on earth  
 Re-quickening, all within our green sea's girth ;  
 A time of passage or a time of birth  
 Fourscore years since as this year, first and last.

The sun is all about the world we see,  
 The breath and strength of very spring ; and we  
 Live, love, and feed on our own hearts : but he  
 Whose heart fed mine has passed into the past.

Past, all things born with sense and blood and  
 breath ;  
 The flesh hears naught that now the spirit saith.  
 If death be like as birth, and birth as death,  
 The first was fair—more fair should be the last.

Fourscore years since, and come but one month  
 more,  
 The count were perfect of his mortal score  
 Whose sail went seaward yesterday from shore  
 To cross the last of many an unsailed sea.

Light, love, and labor up to life's last height,—  
 These three were stars unsetting in his sight,  
 Even as the sun is life and heat and light,  
 And sets not nor is dark when dark are we.

The life, the spirit, and the work were one  
 That here—ah ! who shall say, that here are done ?  
 Not I, that know not ; father, not thy son,  
 For all the darkness of the night and sea,

MARCH 5, 1877.

## A BIRTH-SONG.

(For Olivia Frances Madox Rossetti, born Sept. 20,  
1875.)

OUT of the dark sweet sleep  
 Where no dreams laugh or weep,  
     Borne through bright gates of birth  
 Into the dim sweet light  
 Where day still dreams of night  
     While heaven takes form on earth,  
 White rose of spirit and flesh, red lily of love,  
     What note of song have we  
     Fit for the birds and thee,  
 Fair nestling couched beneath the mother-dove ?

Nay, in some more divine  
 Small speechless song of thine  
     Some news too good for words,  
 Heart-hushed and smiling, we  
 Might hope to have of thee,  
     The youngest of God's birds,  
 If thy sweet sense might mix itself with ours,  
 If ours might understand  
 The language of thy land,  
 Ere thine become the tongue of mortal hours :

Ere thy lips learn too soon  
 Their soft first human tune,  
     Sweet, but less sweet than now,  
 And thy raised eyes to read  
 Glad and good things indeed,  
     But none so sweet as thou :  
 Ere thought lift up their flower-soft lids to see  
     What life and love on earth  
     Bring thee for gifts at birth,  
 But none so good as thine who hast given us thee :

Now, ere thy sense forget  
 The heaven that fills it yet,  
     Now, sleeping or awake,  
 If thou couldst tell, or we  
 Ask and be heard of thee,  
     For love's undying sake,

From thy dumb lips divine and bright mute speech  
 Such dews might touch our ear  
 That then would burn to hear  
 Too high a message now for man's to reach.

Ere the gold hair of corn  
 Had withered wast thou born,  
 To make the good time glad ;  
 The time that but last year  
 Fell colder than a tear  
 On hearts and hopes turned sad.  
 High hopes and hearts requickening in thy dawn,  
 Even theirs whose life-springs, child,  
 Filled thine with life and smiled,  
 But then wept blood for half their own with-  
 drawn.<sup>1</sup>

If death and birth be one,  
 And set with rise of sun,  
 And truth with dreams divine,  
 Some word might come with thee  
 From over the still sea  
 Deep hid in shade or shine,  
 Crossed by the crossing sails of death and birth,  
 Word of some sweet new thing  
 Fit for such lips to bring,  
 Some word of love, some afterthought of earth.

If love be strong as death,  
 By what so natural breath  
 As thine could this be said ?  
 By what so lovely way  
 Could love send word to say  
 He lives and is not dead ?  
 Such word alone were fit for only thee,  
 If his and thine have met  
 Where spirits rise and set,  
 His whom we see not, thine whom scarce we see :  
 His there new-born, as thou  
 New-born among us now ;  
 His, here so fruitful-souled,

<sup>1</sup> Oliver Madox Brown died Nov. 5, 1874, in his twentieth year.

Now veiled and silent here,  
 Now dumb as thou last year,  
 A ghost of one year old :  
 If lights that change their sphere in changing  
 meet,  
 Some ray might his not give  
 To thine who wast to live,  
 And make thy present with his past life sweet ?

Let dreams that laugh or weep,  
 All glad and sad dreams, sleep ;  
 Truth more than dreams is dear,  
 Let thoughts that change and fly,  
 Sweet thoughts and swift, go by ;  
 More than all thought is here.  
 More than all hope can forge, or memory feign,  
 The life that in our eyes,  
 Made out of love's life, lies,  
 And flower-like fed with love for sun and rain.

Twice royal in his root  
 The sweet small olive-shoot  
 Here set in sacred earth ;  
 Twice dowered with glorious grace  
 From either heaven-born race  
 First blended in its birth ;  
 Fair god or genius of so fair an hour,  
 For love of either name  
 Twice crowned, with love and fame,  
 Guard and be gracious to the fair-named flower.

Oct. 19, 1875.

## EX-VOTO.

WHEN their last hour shall rise  
 Pale on these mortal eyes,  
 Herself like one that dies,  
 And kiss me dying  
 The cold last kiss, and fold  
 Close round my limbs her cold  
 Soft shade as raiment rolled,  
 And leave them lying,—



If aught my soul would say  
 Might move to hear me pray  
 The birth-god of my day  
 That he might hearken,  
 This grace my heart should crave,—  
 To find no landward grave  
 That worldly springs make brave,  
     World's winters darken,—

Nor grow through gradual hours  
 The cold blind seed of flowers  
 Made by new beams and showers  
     From limbs that moulder,  
 Nor take my part with earth ;  
 But find for death's new birth  
 A bed of larger girth,  
     More chaste and colder.

Not earth's for spring and fall,  
 Not earth's at heart, not all  
 Earth's making, though men call  
     Earth only mother,  
 Not hers at heart she bare  
 Me, but thy child, O fair  
 Sea, and thy brother's care,  
     The wind thy brother.

Yours was I born, and ye,  
 The sea-wind and the sea,  
 Made all my soul in me  
     A song forever,  
 A harp to string and smite  
 For love's sake of the bright  
 Wind and the sea's delight,  
     To fail them never :

Not while on this side death  
 I hear what either saith,  
 And drink of either's breath  
     With heart's thanksgiving  
 That in my veins like wine  
 Some sharp salt blood of thine,  
 Some springtide pulse of brine,  
     Yet leaps up living.

When thy salt lips well-nigh  
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,  
Grudged I so much to die

    This death as others ?

Was it no ease to think  
The chalice from whose brink  
Fate gave me death to drink

    Was thine,—my mother's ?

Thee too, the all-fostering earth,  
Fair as thy fairest birth,  
More than thy worthiest worth,

    We call, we know thee,

More sweet and just and dread  
Than live men highest of head  
Or even thy holiest dead

    Laid low below thee.

The sunbeam on the sheaf,  
The dew-fall on the leaf,  
All joy, all grace, all grief,

    Are thine for giving :

Of thee our loves are born,  
Our lives and loves, that mourn  
And triumph ; tares with corn,

    Dead seed with living ;

All good and ill things done  
In eye-shot of the sun  
At last in thee made one

    Rest well contented ;

All words of all man's breath,  
And works he doth or saith,  
All wholly done to death,

    None long lamented.

A slave to sons of thee,  
Thou, seeming, yet art free ;  
But who shall make the sea

    Serve even in seeming ?

What plough shall bid it bear  
Seed to the sun and the air,  
Fruit for thy strong sons' fare,

    Fresh wine's foam streaming !

What old-world son of thine,  
 Made drunk with death as wine,  
 Hath drunk the bright sea's brine  
     With lips of laughter ?  
 Thy blood they drink ; but he  
 Who hath drunken of the sea  
 Once deeper than of thee  
     Shall drink not after.

Of thee thy sons of men  
 Drink deep, and thirst again,—  
 For wine in feasts, and then  
     In fields for slaughter ;  
 But thirst shall touch not him  
 Who hath felt with sense grown dim  
 Rise, covering lip and limb,  
     The wan sea's water.

All fire of thirst that aches  
 The salt sea cools and slakes  
 More than all springs or lakes,  
     Freshets or shallows ;  
 Wells where no beam can burn  
 Through frondage of the fern  
 That hides from hart and hern  
     The haunt it hallows.

Peace with all graves on earth  
 For death or sleep or birth  
 Be always, one in worth  
     One with another ;  
 But when my time shall be,  
 O mother, O my sea,  
 Alive or dead, take me,  
     Me too, my mother !

## PASTICHE.

Now the days are all gone over  
 Of our singing, love by lover,  
 Days of summer-colored seas  
 Blown adrift through beam and breeze.

Now the nights are all past over  
 Of our dreaming, dreams that hover  
 In a mist of fair false things,  
 Nights afloat on wide wan wings.

Now the loves with faith for mother,  
 Now the fears with hope for brother,  
 Scarce are with us as strange words,  
 Notes from songs of last year's birds.

Now all good that comes or goes is  
 As the smell of last year's roses,  
 As the radiance in our eyes  
 Shot from summer's ere he dies.

Now the morning faintlier risen  
 Seems no god come forth of prison,  
 But a bird of plume-plucked wing,  
 Pale with thought of evening.

Now hath hope, out-raced in running,  
 Given the torch up of his cunning,  
 And the palm he thought to wear,  
 Even to his own strong child,—despair.

## BEFORE SUNSET.

IN the lower lands of day  
 On the hither side of night,  
 There is nothing that will stay,  
 There are all things soft to sight ;  
 Lighted shade and shadowy light  
 In the wayside and the way,  
 Hours the sun has spared to smite,  
 Flowers the rain has left to play.

Shall these hours run down and say  
 No good thing of thee and me ?  
 Time that made us and will slay  
 Laughs at love in me and thee ;  
 But if here the flowers may see  
 One whole hour of amorous breath,  
 Time shall die, and love shall be  
 Lord as time was over death.

## SONG.

LOVE laid his sleepless head  
 On a thorny rosy bed ;  
 And his eyes with tears were red,  
 And pale his lips as the dead.

And fear and sorrow and scorn  
 Kept watch by his head forlorn,  
 Till the night was overworn,  
 And the world was merry with morn.

And Joy came up with the day,  
 And kissed Love's lips as he lay,  
 And the watchers ghostly and gray  
 Sped from his pillow away.

And his eyes as the dawn grew bright,  
 And his lips waxed ruddy as light :  
 Sorrow may reign for a night,  
 But day shall bring back delight.

## A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER.

## I.

O TENDER time that love thinks long to see,  
 Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall sows  
 Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows,  
 Be not too long irresolute to be !  
 O mother-month, where have they hidden thee ?  
 Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose,  
 I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands.  
 I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,  
 The purplest of the prime ;  
 I lean my soul down over them, with hands  
 Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers ;  
 I send my love back to the lovely time.

## II.

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head ?  
 Veiled with what visions while the gray world  
     grieves,  
 Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves,  
 With warm intangible green shadows spread  
 To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed ?  
 What sleep enchants thee ? what delight deceives ?  
 Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn  
     Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet  
     Its silver web unweave,  
 Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn  
     Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret  
     Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

## III.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,  
     Large nightfall, nor imperial penilune,  
     Nor strong sweet shape of the full-breasted noon ;  
 But where the silver sandalled shadows are,  
 Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,  
     Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon :  
 Hard overhead the half-lit crescent swims,  
     The tender-colored night draws hardly breath,  
     The light is listening ;  
 They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,  
     Virginal, born again of doubtful death,  
     Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.

## IV.

As sweet desire of day before the day,  
     As dreams of love before the true love born,  
     From the outer edge of winter overworn  
 The ghost arisen of May before the May  
 Takes through dim air her unawakened way,  
     The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn.  
 With little unblown breasts and child-eyed looks  
     Following, the very maid, the girl-child spring,  
     Lifts windward her bright brows,  
 Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks,  
     And kindles with her own mouth's coloring  
     The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

## V.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,  
 Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath  
 Shall put at last the deadly days to death,  
 And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee,  
 And seaward hollows where my feet would be  
 When heaven shall hear the word that April saith  
 To change the cold heart of the weary time,  
 To stir and soften all the time to tears,  
 Tears joyfuller than mirth ;  
 As even to May's clear height the young days climb  
 With feet not swifter than those fair first years  
 Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers on earth.

## VI.

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back  
 One good thing youth has given and borne away :  
 I crave not any comfort of the day  
 That is not, nor on time's re-trodden track  
 Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black  
 That long since left me on their mortal way ;  
 Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath  
 That comes with morning from the sun to be,  
 And sets light hope on fire ;  
 No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death,  
 No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green  
 tree,  
 No leaf once plucked, or once fulfilled desire.

## VII.

The morning song beneath the stars that fled  
 With twilight through the moonless mountain air,  
 While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair  
 Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head,  
 Rising ; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead,  
 The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were,—  
 These may'st thou not give back forever ; these.  
 As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,  
 Lie deeper than the sea ;  
 But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and hours of  
 ease,  
 And all its April to the world thou may'st  
 Give back, and half my April back to me.

## AT PARTING.

For a day and night Love sang to us, played with us,  
 Folded us round from the dark and the light ;  
 And our hearts were fulfilled of the music he made  
     with us,  
 Made with our hearts and our lips while he stayed  
     with us,  
 Stayed in mid passage his pinions from flight  
     For a day and a night.

From his foes that kept watch with his wings had he  
     hidden us,  
 Covered us close from the eyes that would smite,  
 From the feet that had tracked and the tongues that  
     had chidden us  
 Sheltering in shade of the myrtles forbidden us  
 Spirit and flesh growing one with delight  
     For a day and a night.

But his wings will not rest, and his feet will not  
     stay for us :  
 Morning is here in the joy of its might ;  
 With his breath has he sweetened a night and a day  
     for us :  
 Now let him pass, and the myrtles make way for us ;  
 Love can but last in us here at his height  
     For a day and a night.

## THE WHITE CZAR.

[In an English magazine of 1877, there appeared a version of some insolent lines addressed by "A Russian Poet to the Empress of India." To these the first of the two following sonnets was designed to serve by way of counterblast. The writer will scarcely be suspected of royalism or imperialism ; but it seemed to him that an insult levelled by Muscovite lips at the ruler of England might perhaps be less unfitly than unofficially resented by an Englishman who was also a republican.]

## I.

GEHAZI by the hue that chills thy cheek  
 And Pilate by the hue that sears thine hand  
 Whence all earth's waters cannot wash the brand  
 That signs thy soul a manslayer's though thou speak



All Christ, with lips most murderous and most meek—

Thou set thy foot where England's used to stand !

Thou reach thy rod forth over Indian land !

Slave of the slaves that call thee lord, and weak  
As their foul tongues who praise thee ! son of them  
Whose presence put the snows and stars to shame

In centuries dead and damned that reek below  
Curse-consecrated, crowned with crime and flame,  
To them that bare thee like them shalt thou go  
Forth of man's life,—a leper white as snow.

## II.

Call for clear water, wash thine hands, be clean,  
Cry, *What is truth?* O Pilate ! thou shalt know

Haply too soon, and gnash thy teeth for woe  
Ere the outer darkness take thee round unseen  
That hides the red ghosts of thy race obscene  
Bound nine times round with hell's most dolorous  
flow,

And in its pools thy crownless head lie low  
By his of Spain who dared an English queen  
With half a world to hearten him for fight,  
Till the wind gave his warriors and their might  
To shipwreck and the corpse-encumbered sea.  
But thou, take heed ere yet thy lips wax white,  
Lest as it was with Philip so it be,  
O white of name and red of hand, with thee !

## RIZPAH.

How many sons, how many generations,

For how long years hast thou bewept, and known

Nor end of torment nor surcease of moan,

Rachel or Rizpah, wofullest of nations,

Crowned with the crowning sign of desolations,

And couldst not even scare off with hand or groan

Those carrion birds devouring bone by bone

The children of thy thousand tribulations ?

Thou wast our warrior once ; thy sons long dead

Against a foe less foul than this made head,  
 Poland, in years that sound and shine afar ;  
 Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-blade's stead  
 The rotten corpse-light of the Russian star  
 That lights towards hell his bond-slaves and their  
 Czar.

### TO LOUIS KOSSUTH.

LIGHT of our fathers' eyes, and in our own  
 Star of the unsetting sunset ! for thy name,  
 That on the front of noon was as a flame  
 In the great year nigh thirty years ago  
 When all the heavens of Europe shook and shone  
 With stormy wind and lightning, keeps its fame  
 And bears its witness all day through the same.  
 Not for past days and great deeds past alone,  
 Kossuth, we praise thee as our Landor praised ;  
 But that now too we know thy voice upraised,—  
 Thy voice, the trumpet of the truth of God,  
 Thine hand, the thunder-bearer's, raised to smite  
 As with heaven's lightning for a sword and rod  
 Men's heads abased before the Muscovite.

### THE PILGRIMS.

Who is your lady of love, O ye that pass  
 Singing ? and is it for sorrow of that which was  
 That ye sing sadly, or dream of what shall be ?  
 For gladly at once and sadly it seems ye sing.  
 —Our lady of love by you is unbeholden ;  
 For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor lips, nor  
 golden  
 Treasure of hair, nor face nor form. But we  
 That love, we know her more fair than any thing.

—Is she a queen, having great gifts to give ?  
 —Yea, these : that whoso hath seen her shall not  
 live  
 Except he serve her sorrowing, with strange pain  
 Travail and bloodshedding and bitterer tears ;

And when she bids die he shall surely die.  
 And he shall leave all things under the sky,  
 And go forth naked under sun and rain,  
 And work and wait and watch out all his years.

—Hath she on earth no place of habitation ?  
 —Age to age calling, nation answering nation,  
 Cries out, Where is she ? and there is none to say ;  
 For if she be not in the spirit of men,  
 For if in the inward soul she hath no place,  
 In vain they cry unto her, seeking her face,  
 In vain their mouths make much of her ; for they  
 Cry with vain tongues, till the heart lives again.

—O ye that follow, and have ye no repentance ?  
 For on your brows is written a mortal sentence,  
 An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,  
 That in your lives ye shall not pause or rest,  
 Nor have the sure sweet common love, nor keep  
 Friends and safe days, nor joy of life nor sleep.  
 —These have we not, who have one thing, the  
 divine  
 Face and clear eyes of faith and fruitful breast.

—And ye shall die before your thrones be won.  
 —Yea, and the changed world and the liberal sun  
 Shall move and shine without us, and we lie  
 Dead ; but if she too move on earth, and live,  
 But if the old world with all the old irons rent  
 Laugh and give thanks, shall we be not content ?  
 Nay, we shall rather live, we shall not die,  
 Life being so little, and death so good to give.

—And these men shall forget you.—Yea, but we  
 Shall be a part of the earth and the ancient sea,  
 And heaven-high air august, and awful fire,  
 And all things good ; and no man's heart shall  
 beat  
 But somewhat in it of our blood once shed  
 Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us the dead  
 Blood of men slain and the old same life's desire  
 Plants in their fiery footprints our fresh feet.

—But ye that might be clothed with all things  
pleasant,

Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft present,

That clothe yourselves with the cold future air ;

When mother and father and tender sister and  
brother

And the old live love that was shall be as ye,

Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall be.

—She shall be yet who is more than all these were,

Than sister or wife or father unto us or mother.

—Is this worth life, is this, to win for wages ?

Lo, the dead mouths of the awful gray-grown ages,

The venerable, in the past that is their prison,

In the outer darkness, in the unopening grave,

Laugh, knowing how many as ye now say have said,

How many, and all are fallen, are fallen and dead :

Shall ye dead rise, and these dead have not risen ?

—Not we but she, who is tender, and swift to save.

—Are ye not weary and faint not by the way,

Seeing night by night devoured of day by day,

Seeing hour by hour consumed in sleepless fire ?

Sleepless ; and ye too, when shall ye too sleep ?

—We are weary in heart and head, in hands and feet,

And surely more than all things sleep were sweet,—

Than all things save the inexorable desire

Which whoso knoweth shall neither faint nor  
weep.

—Is this so sweet that one were fain to follow ?

Is this so sure where all men's hopes are hollow,

Even this your dream, that by much tribulation

Ye shall make whole flawed hearts, and bowed  
necks straight ?

—Nay, though our life were blind, our death were  
fruitless.

Not therefore were the whole world's high hope  
rootless ;

But man to man, nation would turn to nation,

And the old life live, and the old great world be  
great.

—Pass on, then, and pass by us, and let us be,  
 For what light think ye after life to see?  
 And if the world fare better will ye know?  
 And if man triumph who shall seek you and say?  
 —Enough of light is this for one life's span,  
 That all men born are mortal, but not man;  
 And we men bring death lives by night to sow,  
 That man may reap and eat and live by day.

## THE LITANY OF NATIONS.

## CHORUS.

IF with voice of words or prayers thy sons may reach  
 thee,  
 We thy latter sons, the men thine after-birth,  
 We the children of thy gray-grown age, O Earth,  
 O our mother everlasting, we beseech thee,  
 By the sealed and secret ages of thy life;  
 By the darkness wherein grew thy sacred forces;  
 By the songs of stars thy sisters in their courses;  
 By thine own song hoarse and hollow and shrill with  
 strife;  
 By thy voice distuned and marred of modulation;  
 By the discord of thy measure's march with theirs;  
 By the beauties of thy bosom, and the cares;  
 By thy glory of growth, and splendor of thy station;  
 By the shame of men thy children, and the pride;  
 By the pale-cheeked hope that sleeps and weeps and  
 passes,  
 As the gray dew from the morning mountain grasses;  
 By the white-lipped sightless memories that abide;  
 By the silence and the sound of many sorrows;  
 By the joys that leapt up living and fell dead;  
 By the veil that hides thy hands and breasts and  
 head,  
 Wrought of divers-colored days and nights and mor-  
 rows;  
 Isis, thou that knowest of God what worlds are  
 worth,

Thou the ghost of God, the mother uncreated,  
 Soul for whom the floating forceless ages waited  
 As our forceless fancies wait on thee, O Earth ;  
 Thou the body and soul, the father-god and mother,  
 If at all it move thee, knowing of all things done  
 Here where evil things and good things are not  
     one,  
 But their faces are as fire against each other ;  
 By thy morning and thine evening, night and day ;  
     By the first white light that stirs and strives and  
     hovers  
     As a bird above the brood her bosom covers,  
 By the sweet last star that takes the westward way ;  
 By the night whose feet are shod with snow or thun-  
     der,  
     Fledged with plumes of storm, or soundless as the  
     dew ;  
     By the vesture bound of many-folded blue  
 Round her breathless breasts, and all the woven  
     wonder ;  
 By the golden-growing eastern stream of sea ;  
     By the sounds of sunrise moving in the mountains ;  
     By the forces of the floods and unsealed fountains ;  
 Thou that badest man be born, bid man be free.

## GREECE.

I am she that made thee lovely with my beauty  
     From north to south :  
 Mine, the fairest lips, took first the fire of duty  
     From thine own mouth.  
 Mine, the fairest eyes, sought first thy laws, and  
     knew them  
     Truths undefiled ;  
 Mine, the fairest hands, took freedom first into  
     them,  
     A weanling child.  
 By my light, now he lies sleeping, seen above him  
     Where none sees other ;  
 By my dead that loved, and living men that love  
     him,—  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

## ITALY.

I am she that was the light of thee enkindled  
 When Greece grew dim ;  
 She whose life grew up with man's free life, and  
 dwindled  
 With wane of him ;  
 She that once by sword and once by word imperial  
 Struck bright thy gloom ;  
 And a third time, casting off these years funereal,  
 Shall burst thy tomb.  
 By that bond 'twixt thee and me whereat affrighted  
 Thy tyrants fear us ;  
 By that hope and this remembrance reunited,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !

## SPAIN.

I am she that set thy seal upon the nameless  
 West worlds of seas ;  
 And my sons as brides took unto them the tameless  
 Hesperides ;  
 Till my sins and sons through sinless lands dis-  
 persèd,  
 With red flame shod,  
 Made accurst the name of man, and thrice accursèd  
 The name of God.  
 Lest for those past fires the fires of my repentance  
 Hell's fume yet smother,  
 Now my blood would buy remission of my sen-  
 tence,—  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

## FRANCE.

I am she that was thy sign and standard-bearer,  
 Thy voice and cry ;  
 She that washed thee with her blood, and left thee  
 fairer,  
 The same was I.  
 Were not these the hands that raised thee fallen, and  
 fed thee,  
 These hands defiled ?

Was not I thy tongue that spake, thine eye that led  
 thee,—  
 Not I thy child ?  
 By the darkness on our dreams, and the dead errors  
 Of dead times near us ;  
 By the hopes that hang around thee, and the ter-  
 rors,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !

## RUSSIA.

I am she whose hands are strong, and her eyes  
 blinded,  
 And lips athirst,  
 Till upon the night of nations many-minded  
 One bright day burst ;  
 Till the myriad stars be molten into one light,  
 And that light thine ;  
 Till the soul of man be parcel of the sunlight,  
 And thine of mine.  
 By the snows that blanch not him, nor cleanse from  
 slaughter,  
 Who slays his brother ;  
 By the stains and by the chains on me thy daugh-  
 ter,—  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

## SWITZERLAND.

I am she that shows on mighty limbs and maiden  
 Nor chain nor stain ;  
 For what blood can touch these hands with gold un-  
 laden,  
 These feet what chain ?  
 By the surf of spears one shieldless bosom breasted,  
 And was my shield,  
 Till the plume-plucked Austrian vulture-heads twin-  
 crested  
 Twice drenched the field.  
 By the snows and souls untrampled and untroubled  
 That shine to cheer us,  
 Light of those to these responsive and redoubled,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !



## GERMANY.

I am she beside whose forest-hidden fountains  
 Slept freedom armed ;  
 By the magic born to music in my mountains,  
 Heart-chained and charmed.  
 By those days, the very dream whereof delivers  
 My soul from wrong ;  
 By the sounds that make of all my ringing rivers  
 None knows what song ;  
 By the many tribes and names of my division  
 One from another ;  
 By the single eye of sun-compelling vision,—  
 (*Cho.*) Hear us, O mother !

## ENGLAND.

I am she that was and was not of thy chosen,  
 Free, and not free ;  
 She that fed thy springs, till now her springs are  
 frozen ;  
 Yet I am she.  
 By the sea that clothed and sun that saw me splen-  
 did  
 And fame that crowned,  
 By the song-fires and the sword-fires mixed and  
 blended  
 That robed me round ;  
 By the star that Milton's soul for Shelley's lighted,  
 Whose rays insphere us ;  
 By the beacon-bright Republic far-off sighted,—  
 (*Cho.*) O mother, hear us !

## CHORUS.

Turn away from us the cross-blown blasts of error,  
 That drown each other ;  
 Turn away the fearful cry, the loud-tongued terror,  
 O Earth, O mother !  
 Turn away their eyes who track, their hearts who fol-  
 low,  
 The pathless past ;  
 Show the soul of man, as summer shows the swallow,  
 The way at last.

By the sloth of men that all too long endure men  
     On man to tread ;  
 By the cry of men, the bitter cry of poor men  
     That faint for bread ;  
 By the blood-sweat of the people in the garden  
     Inwalled of kings ;  
 By his passion interceding for their pardon  
     Who do these things ;  
 By the sightless souls and fleshless limbs that labor  
     For not their fruit ;  
 By the foodless mouth with foodless heart for neighbor,  
     That, mad, is mute ;  
 By the child that famine eats as worms the blossom—  
     Ah God, the child !—  
 By the milkless lips that strain the bloodless bosom  
     Till woe runs wild ;  
 By the pastures that give grass to feed the lamb in,  
     Where men lack meat ;  
 By the cities clad with gold and shame and famine ;  
     By field and street ;  
 By the people, by the poor man, by the master  
     That men call slave ;  
 By the cross-winds of defeat and of disaster,  
     By wreck, by wave ;  
 By the helm that keeps us still to sunwards driving,  
     Still eastward bound,  
 Till, as night-watch ends, day burn on eyes reviving,  
     And land be found :  
 We thy children, that arraign not nor impeach thee  
     Though no stars steer us,  
 By the waves that wash the morning we beseech thee,  
     O mother, hear us !

## CHRISTMAS ANTIPHONES.

## I.

## IN CHURCH.

THOU whose birth on earth  
     Angels sang to men,  
 While thy stars made mirth,  
 Saviour, at thy birth,  
     This day born again ;

As this night was bright  
With thy cradle-ray,  
Very light of light,  
Turn the wild world's night  
To thy perfect day.

God whose feet made sweet  
Those wild ways they trod,  
From thy fragrant feet  
Staining field and street  
With the blood of God ;

God whose breast is rest  
In the time of strife,  
In thy secret breast  
Sheltering souls opprest  
From the heat of life ;

God whose eyes are skies  
Love-lit as with spheres  
By the lights that rise  
To thy watching eyes,  
Orbèd lights of tears ;

God whose heart hath part  
In all grief that is,  
Was not man's the dart  
That went through thine heart,  
And the wound not his ?

Where the pale souls wail,  
Held in bonds of death,  
Where all spirits quail,  
Came thy Godhead pale  
Still from human breath,—

Pale from life and strife,  
Wan with manhood, came  
Forth of mortal life,  
Pierced as with a knife,  
Scarred as with a flame.

Thou the Word and Lord  
 In all time and space  
 Heard, beheld, adored,  
 With all ages poured  
 Forth before thy face,—

Lord, what worth in earth  
 Drew thee down to die ?  
 What therein was worth,  
 Lord, thy death and birth ?  
 What beneath thy sky ?

Light above all love  
 By thy love was lit,  
 And brought down the Dove  
 Feathered from above  
 With the wings of it.

From the height of night,  
 Was not thine the star  
 That led forth with might  
 By no worldly light  
 Wise men from afar ?

Yet the wise men's eyes  
 Saw thee not more clear  
 Than they saw thee rise  
 Who in shepherds' guise  
 Drew as poor men near.

Yet thy poor endure  
 And are with us yet ;  
 Be thy name a sure  
 Refuge for thy poor  
 Whom men's eyes forget.

Thou whose ways we praise,  
 Clear alike and dark,  
 Keep our works and ways  
 This and all thy days  
 Safe inside thine ark.

Who shall keep thy sheep,  
 Lord, and lose not one ?  
 Who save one shall keep,  
 Lest the shepherds sleep ?  
 Who beside the Son ?

From the grave-deep wave,  
 From the sword and flame,  
 Thou, even thou, shalt save  
 Souls of king and slave  
 Only by thy Name.

Light not born with morn  
 Or her fires above,  
 Jesus virgin-born,  
 Held of men in scorn,  
 Turn their scorn to love.

Thou whose face gives grace  
 As the sun's doth heat,  
 Let thy sun-bright face  
 Lighten time and space  
 Here beneath thy feet.

Bid our peace increase,  
 Thou that madest morn ;  
 Bid oppressions cease ;  
 Bid the night be peace ;  
 Bid the day be born.

## II.

### OUTSIDE CHURCH.

We whose days and ways  
 All the night makes dark,—  
 What day shall we praise  
 Of these weary days  
 That our life-drops mark ?

We whose mind is blind,  
 Fed with hope of naught ;  
 Wastes of worn mankind,  
 Without heart or mind,  
 Without meat or thought ;

We with strife of life  
Worn till all life cease,  
Want, a whetted knife,  
Sharpening strife on strife,  
How should we love peace ?

Ye whose meat is sweet  
And your wine-cup red,  
Us beneath your feet  
Hunger grinds as wheat,—  
Grinds to make you bread.

Ye whose night is bright  
With soft rest and heat,  
Clothed like day with light,  
Us the naked night  
Slays from street to street.

Hath your God no rod,  
That ye tread so light ?  
Man on us as God,  
God as man hath trod,—  
Trode us down with might.

We that one by one  
Bleed from either's rod,  
What for us hath done  
Man beneath the sun,  
What for us hath God ?

We whose blood is food  
Given your wealth to feed,  
From the Christless rood  
Red with no God's blood,  
But with man's indeed ;

How shall we that see  
Night-long overhead  
Life, the flowerless tree,  
Nailed whereon as we  
Were our fathers dead,—

We whose ear can hear,  
 Not whose tongue can name,  
 Famine, ignorance, fear,  
 Bleeding tear by tear  
 Year by year of shame,—

Till the dry life die  
 Out of bloodless breast,  
 Out of beamless eye,  
 Out of mouths that cry  
 Till death feed with rest,—

How shall we as ye,  
 Though ye bid us, pray ?  
 Though ye call, can we  
 Hear you call, or see,  
 Though ye show us day ?

We whose name is shame,  
 We whose souls walk bare,  
 Shall we call the same  
 God as ye by name,  
 Teach our lips your prayer ?—

God, forgive and give,  
 For His sake who died ?—  
 Nay, for ours who live,  
 How shall we forgive  
 Thee, then, on our side ?

We whose right to light  
 Heaven's high noon denies,  
 Whom the blind beams smite  
 That for you shine bright,  
 And but burn our eyes,—

With what dreams of beams  
 Shall we build up day,  
 At what sourceless streams  
 Seek to drink in dreams  
 Ere they pass away ?

In what street shall meet,  
 At what market-place,  
 Your feet and our feet,  
 With one goal to greet,  
 Having run one race ?

What one hope shall ope  
 For us all as one  
 One same horoscope,  
 Where the soul sees hope  
 That outburns the sun ?

At what shrine what wine,  
 At what board what bread,  
 Salt as blood or brine,  
 Shall we share in sign  
 How we poor were fed ?

In what hour what power  
 Shall we pray for morn,  
 If your perfect hour,  
 When all day bears flower,  
 Not for us is born ?

### III.

#### BEYOND CHURCH.

Ye that weep in sleep,  
 Souls and bodies bound,  
 Ye that all night keep  
 Watch for change, and weep  
 That no change is found ;

Ye that cry and die,  
 And the world goes on  
 Without ear or eye,  
 And the days go by  
 Till all days are gone :

Man shall do for you,  
 Men the sons of man,  
 What no god would do  
 That they sought unto  
 While the blind years ran.



Brotherhood of good,  
 Equal laws and rights,  
 Freedom, whose sweet food  
 Feeds the multitude  
 All their days and nights

With the bread full-fed  
 Of her body blest  
 And the soul's wine shed  
 From her table spread  
 Where the world is guest,—

Mingling me and thee,  
 When like light of eyes  
 Flashed through thee and me  
 Truth shall make us free,  
 Liberty make wise :

These are they whom day  
 Follows and gives light  
 Whence they see to slay  
 Night, and burn away  
 All the seed of night.

What of thine and mine,  
 What of want and wealth,  
 When one faith is wine  
 For my heart and thine,  
 And one draught is health ?

For no sect elect  
 Is the soul's wine poured,  
 And her table decked :  
 Whom should man reject  
 From man's common board ?

Gods refuse and choose,  
 Grudge and sell and spare :  
 None shall man refuse,  
 None of all men lose,  
 None leave out of care.

No man's might of sight  
 Knows that hour before ;  
 No man's hand hath might  
 To put back that light  
 For one hour the more.

Not though all men call,  
 Kneeling with void hands,  
 Shall they see light fall  
 Till it come for all  
 Tribes of men and lands.

No desire brings fire  
 Down from heaven by prayer,  
 Though man's vain desire  
 Hang faith's wind-struck lyre  
 Out in tuneless air.

One hath breath, and saith  
 What the tune shall be,—  
 Time, who puts his breath  
 Into life and death,  
 Into earth and sea.

To and fro years flow,  
 Fill their tides and ebb,  
 As his fingers go  
 Weaving to and fro  
 One unfinished web.

All the range of change  
 Hath its bounds therein,  
 All the lives that range  
 All the byways strange  
 Named of death or sin.

Star from far to star  
 Speaks, and white moons wake,  
 Watchful from afar  
 What the night's ways are  
 For the morning's sake.

Many names and flames  
 Pass and flash and fall,  
 Night-begotten names,  
 And the night reclaims,  
 As she bare them, all.

But the sun is one,  
 And the sun's name Right;  
 And when light is none  
 Saving of the sun,  
 All men shall have light.

All shall see and be  
 Parcel of the morn :  
 Ay, though blind were we,  
 None shall choose but see  
 When that day is born.

## MATER DOLOROSA.

Citoyen, lui dit Enjolras, ma mère c'est la République.—  
*Les Misérables.*

WHO is it that sits by the way, by the wild wayside,  
 In a rent stained raiment, the robe of a cast-off  
 bride,  
 In the dust, in the rainfall sitting, with soiled feet  
 bare,  
 With the night for a garment upon her, with torn wet  
 hair ?  
 She is fairer of face than the daughters of men, and  
 her eyes,  
 Worn through with her tears, are deep as the depth  
 of skies.

This is she for whose sake being fallen, for whose  
 abject sake,  
 Earth groans in the blackness of darkness, and men's  
 hearts break.  
 This is she for whose love, having seen her, the men  
 that were  
 Poured life out as water, and shed their souls upon  
 air,

This is she for whose glory their years were counted  
 as foam ;  
 Whose face was a light upon Greece, was a fire upon  
 Rome.

It is now not surely a vain thing, a foolish and vain,  
 To sit down by her, mourn to her, serve her, partake  
 in the pain ?  
 She is gray with the dust of time on his manifold  
 ways,  
 Where her faint feet stumble and falter through  
 yearlong days.  
 Shall she help us at all, O fools, give fruit or give  
 fame,  
 Who herself is a name despised, a rejected name ?

We have not served her for guerdon. If any do so,  
 That his mouth may be sweet with such honey, we  
 care not to know.  
 We have drunk from a wine-unsweetened, a perilous  
 cup,  
 A draught very bitter. The kings of the earth  
 stood up,  
 And the rulers took counsel together, to smite her  
 and slay ;  
 And the blood of her wounds is given us to drink  
 to-day.

Can these bones live ? or the leaves that are dead  
 leaves bud ?  
 Or the dead blood drawn from her veins be in your  
 veins blood ?  
 Will ye gather up water again that was drawn and  
 shed ?  
 In the blood is the life of the veins, and her veins  
 are dead.  
 For the lives that are over are over, and past things  
 past ;  
 She had her day, and it is not ; was first, and is last.

Is it nothing unto you, then, all ye that pass by,  
 If her breath be left in her lips, if she live now or die ?

Behold now O people, and say if she be not fair,  
 Whom your fathers followed to find her, with praise  
 and prayer,  
 And rejoiced, having found her, though roof they  
 had none, nor bread.  
 But ye care not : what is it to you if her day be  
 dead ?

It was well with our fathers ; their sound was in all  
 men's lands ;  
 There was fire in their hearts, and the hunger of  
 fight in their hands.  
 Naked and strong they went forth in her strength  
 like flame,  
 For her love's and her name's sake of old, her re-  
 publican name.  
 But their children, by kings made quiet, by priests  
 made wise,  
 Love better the heat of their hearths than the light  
 of her eyes.

Are they children of these thy children indeed, who  
 have sold,  
 O golden goddess, the light of thy face for gold ?  
 Are thy sons indeed of the sons of thy dayspring of  
 hope,  
 Whose lives are in fief of an emperor, whose souls  
 of a Pope ?  
 Hide then thine head, O belovèd ! thy time is done ;  
 Thy kingdom is broken in heaven, and blind thy sun.

What sleep is upon you, to dream she indeed shall  
 rise,  
 When the hopes are dead in her heart as the tears  
 in her eyes ?  
 If ye sing of her dead, will she stir ? if ye weep for  
 her, weep ?  
 Come away now, leave her : what hath she to do  
 but sleep ?  
 But ye that mourn are alive, and have years to be ;  
 And life is good, and the world is wiser than we.

Yea, wise is the world and mighty, with years to  
     give,  
 And years to promise ; but how long now shall it  
     live ?  
 And foolish and poor is faith, and her ways are bare,  
 Till she find the way of the sun, and the morning air.  
 In that hour shall this dead face shine as the face of  
     the sun,  
 And the soul of man and her soul and the world's  
     be one.

## MATER TRIUMPHALIS.

MOTHER of man's time-travelling generations,  
 Breath of his nostrils, heart-blood of his heart,  
 God above all gods, worshipped of all nations,  
 Light above light, law beyond law, thou art.

Thy face is as a sword, smiting in sunder  
 Shadows and chains, and dreams and iron things ;  
 The sea is dumb before thy face, the thunder  
 Silent, the skies are narrower than thy wings.

Angels and gods, spirit and sense, thou takest  
 In thy right hand as drops of dust or dew ;  
 The temples and the towers of time thou breakest,  
 His thoughts and words and works, to make them  
     new.

All we have wandered from thy ways, have hidden  
 Eyes from thy glory and ears from calls they  
     heard ;  
 Called of thy trumpets vainly, called and chidden,  
 Scourged of thy speech, and wounded of thy word.

We have known thee, and have not known thee ;  
     stood beside thee,  
 Felt thy lips breathe, set foot where thy feet trod,  
 Loved and renounced, and worshipped and denied  
     thee,  
 As though thou wert but as another god.

“ One hour for sleep,” we said, “ and yet one other ;  
 All day we served her, and who shall serve by  
 night ? ”

Not knowing of thee, thy face not knowing, O  
 mother,

O light wherethrough the darkness is as light.

Men that forsook thee hast thou not forsaken,  
 Races of men that knew not hast thou known ;  
 Nations that slept thou hast doubted not to waken,  
 Worshippers of strange gods to make thine own.

All old gray histories hiding thy clear features,  
 O secret spirit and sovereign, all men’s tales,  
 Creeds woven of men, thy children and thy creatures,  
 They have woven for vestures of thee and for veils.

Thine hands, without election or exemption,  
 Feed all men fainting from false peace or strife,  
 O thou, the resurrection and redemption,  
 The godhead and the manhood and the life.

Thy wings shadow the waters ; thine eyes lighten  
 The horror of the hollows of the night ;  
 The depths of the earth and the dark places brighten  
 Under thy feet, whiter than fire is white.

Death is subdued to thee, and hell’s bands broken ;  
 Where thou art only is heaven : who hears not  
 thee,

Time shall not hear him ; when men’s names are  
 spoken,

A nameless sign of death shall his name be.

Deathless shall be the death, the name be nameless ;  
 Sterile of stars his twilight time of breath ;  
 With fire of hell shall shame consume him shame-  
 less,

And dying, all the night darken his death.

The years are as thy garments, the world’s ages  
 As sandals bound and loosed from thy swift feet ;  
 Time serves before thee, as one that hath for wages  
 Praise or shame only, bitter words or sweet.

Thou sayest "Well done," and all a century kindles ;  
 Again, thou sayest, "Depart from sight of me,"  
 And all the light of face of all men dwindles,  
 And the age is as the broken glass of thee.

The night is as a seal set on men's faces,  
 On faces fallen of men that take no light,  
 Nor give light in the deeps of the dark places,  
 Blind things, incorporate with the body of night.

Their souls are serpents winter-bound and frozen,  
 Their shame is as a tame beast, at their feet  
 Couched ; their cold lips deride thee and thy chosen,  
 Their lying lips made gray with dust for meat.

Then when their time is full and days run over,  
 The splendor of thy sudden brow made bare  
 Darkens the morning ; thy bared hands uncover  
 The veils of light and night and the awful air.

And the world naked as a new-born maiden  
 Stands virginal and splendid as at birth,  
 With all thine heaven of all its light unladen,  
 Of all its love unburdened all thine earth.

For the utter earth and the utter air of heaven,  
 And the extreme depth is thine, and the extreme  
 height ;  
 Shadows of things and veils of ages riven  
 Are as men's kings unkingdomed in thy sight.

Through the iron years, the centuries brazen-gated,  
 By the ages' barred, impenetrable doors,  
 From the evening to the morning have we waited,  
 Should thy foot haply sound on the awful floors.

The floors untrodden of the sun's feet glimmer,  
 The star-nunstricken pavements of the night ;  
 Do the lights burn inside ? the lights wax dimmer  
 On festal faces withering out of sight.

The crowned heads lose the light on them ; it may be  
 Dawn is at hand to smite the loud feast dumb ;  
 To bind the torch-lit centuries till the day be,  
 The feasting kingdoms till thy kingdom come.



Shall it not come ? deny they or dissemble,  
 Is it not even as lightning from on high  
 Now ? and though many a soul close eyes, and  
 tremble,  
 How should they tremble at all who love thee 'ás I?

I am thine harp between thine hands, O mother !  
 All my strong chords are strained with love of thee.  
 We grapple in love and wrestle, as each with other  
 Wrestle the wind and the unreluctant sea.

I am no courtier of thee sober-suited,  
 Who loves a little for a little pay.  
 Me not thy winds and storms, nor thrones disrooted,  
 Nor molten crowns, nor thine own sins, dismay.

Sinned hast thou sometime, therefore art thou sin-  
 less ;  
 Stained hast thou been, who art therefore without  
 stain ;  
 Even as man's soul is kin to thee, but kinless  
 Thou, in whose womb Time sows the all-various  
 grain.

I do not bid thee spare me, O dreadful mother !  
 I pray thee that thou spare not, of thy grace.  
 How were it with me then, if ever another  
 Should come to stand before thee in this my place?

I am the trumpet at thy lips, thy clarion,  
 Full of thy cry, sonorous with thy breath ;  
 The graves of souls born worms, and creeds grown  
 carrion  
 Thy blast of judgment fills with fires of death.

Thou art the player whose organ-keys are thunders,  
 And I, beneath thy foot, the pedal prest ;  
 Thou art the ray whereat the rent night sunders,  
 And I the cloudlet borne upon thy breast.

I shall burn up before thee, pass and perish,  
 As haze in sunrise on the red sea-line ;  
 But thou from dawn to sunseting shalt cherish  
 The thoughts that led and souls that lighted mine.

Reared between night and noon and truth and error,  
 Each twilight-travelling bird that trills and screams  
 Sickens at midday, nor can face for terror  
 The imperious heaven's inevitable extremes.

I have no spirit of skill with equal fingers  
 At sign to sharpen or to slacken strings ;  
 I keep no time of song with gold-perched singers  
 And chirp of linnets on the wrists of kings.

I am thy storm-thrush of the days that darken,  
 Thy petrel in the foam that bears thy bark  
 To port through night and tempest : if thou hearken,  
 My voice is in thy heaven before the lark.

My song is in the mist that hides thy morning,  
 My cry is up before the day for thee ;  
 I have heard thee and beheld thee and give warning,  
 Before thy wheels divide the sky and sea.

Birds shall wake with thee voiced and feathered  
 fairer,  
 To see in summer what I see in spring :  
 I have eyes and heart to endure thee, O thunder-  
 bearer,  
 And they shall be who shall have tongues to sing.

I have love at least, and have not fear, and part not  
 From thine unnavigable and wingless way ;  
 Thou tarriest, and I have not said thou art not,  
 Nor all thy night long have denied thy day.

Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy pæan,  
 Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to vale,  
 With wind-notes as of eagles Æschylean,  
 And Sappho singing in the nightingale.

Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and daughters,  
 Of this night's songs thine ear shall keep but  
 one,—  
 That supreme song which shook the channelled  
 waters,  
 And called thee skyward as God calls the sun.

Come, though all heaven again be fire above thee ;  
 Though death before thee come to clear thy sky ;  
 Let us but see in his thy face who love thee ;  
 Yea, though thou slay us, arise, and let us die.

## SIENA.

INSIDE this northern summer's fold  
 The fields are full of naked gold,  
 Broadcast from heaven on lands it loves ;  
 The green veiled air is full of doves ;  
 Soft leaves that sift the sunbeams let  
 Light on the small warm grasses wet  
 Fall in short broken kisses sweet,  
 And break again like waves that beat  
     Round the sun's feet.

But I, for all this English mirth  
     Of golden-shod and dancing days,  
 And the old green-girt sweet-hearted earth,  
     Desire what here no spells can raise.  
 Far hence, with holier heavens above,  
 The lovely city of my love  
 Bathes deep in the sun-satiate air  
 That flows round no fair thing more fair,  
     Her beauty bare.

There the utter sky is holier, there  
 More pure the intense white height of air,  
 More clear men's eyes that mine would meet,  
 And the sweet springs of things more sweet.  
 There, for this one warm note of doves  
 A clamor of a thousand loves  
 Storms the night's ear, the day's assails,  
 From the tempestuous nightingales,  
     And fills, and fails.

O gracious city well-beloved !  
     Italian, and a maiden crowned,  
 Siena, my feet are no more moved  
     Toward thy strange-shapen mountain-bound ;

But my heart in me turns and moves,  
 O lady loveliest of my loves,  
 Toward thee, to lie before thy feet,  
 And gaze from thy fair fountain-seat  
     Up the sheer street ;

And the house midway hanging see  
 That saw Saint Catherine bodily,  
 Felt on its floors her sweet feet move,  
 And the live light of fiery love  
 Burn from her beautiful strange face,  
 As in the sanguine sacred place  
 Where in pure hands she took the head  
 Severed, and with pure lips still red  
     Kissed the lips dead.

For years through, sweetest of the saints,  
     In quiet without cease she wrought,  
 Till cries of men and fierce complaints  
     From outward moved her maiden thought ;  
 And prayers she heard and sighs toward France,—  
 “ God, send us back deliverance,  
 Send back thy servants, lest we die ! ”  
 With an exceeding bitter cry  
     They smote the sky.

Then in her sacred saving hands  
 She took the sorrows of the lands,  
 With maiden palms she lifted up  
 The sick time's blood-imbittered cup,  
 And in her virgin garment furled  
 The faint limbs of a wounded world.  
 Clothed with calm love and clear desire,  
 She went forth in her soul's attire,  
     A missive fire.

Across the might of men that strove  
     It shone, and over heads of kings ;  
 And molten in red flames of love  
     Were swords and many monstrous things ;  
 And shields were lowered, and snapt were spears,  
 And sweeter-tuned the clamorous years ;  
 And faith came back, and peace, that were  
 Fled ; for she bade, saying, “ Thou, God's heir,  
     Hast thou no care ? ”

“ Lo, men lay waste thine heritage  
Still, and much heathen people rage  
Against thee, and devise vain things.  
What comfort in the face of kings,  
What counsel is there ? Turn thine eyes  
And thine heart from them in like wise ;  
Turn thee unto thine holy place  
To help us that of God for grace  
Require thy face.

“ For who shall hear us if not thou  
In a strange land ? what doest thou there ?  
Thy sheep are spoiled, and the ploughers plough  
Upon us : why hast thou no care  
For all this, and beyond strange hills  
Liest unregardful what snow chills  
Thy foldless flock, or what rains beat ?  
Lo, in thine ears, before thy feet,  
Thy lost sheep bleat.

“ And strange men feed on faultless lives,  
And there is blood, and men put knives,  
Shepherd, unto the young lamb's throat ;  
And one hath eaten, and one smote,  
And one had hunger and is fed  
Full of the flesh of these, and red  
With blood of these as who drinks wine.  
And God knoweth, who hath sent thee a sign,  
If these were thine.”

But the Pope's heart within him burned,  
So that he rose up, seeing the sign  
And came among them ; but she turned  
Back to her daily way divine,  
And fed her faith with silent things,  
And lived her life with curbed white wings,  
And mixed herself with heaven, and died ;  
And now on the sheer city-side  
Smiles like a bride.

You see her in the fresh clear gloom,  
Where walls shut out the flame and bloom  
Of full-breathed summer, and the roof  
Keeps the keen ardent air aloof

And sweet weight of the violent sky :  
 There bodily beheld on high,  
 She seems as one hearing in tune  
 Heaven within heaven, at heaven's full noon,  
 In sacred swoon,—

A solemn swoon of sense that aches  
 With imminent blind heat of heaven,  
 While all the wide-eyed spirit wakes,  
 Vigilant of the supreme Seven,  
 Whose choral flames in God's sight move,  
 Made unendurable with love,  
 That without wind or blast of breath  
 Compels all things, through life and death,  
 Whither God saith.

There on the dim side-chapel wall  
 Thy mighty touch memorial,  
 Razzi, raised up, for ages dead,  
 And fixed for us her heavenly head ;  
 And, rent with plaited thorn and rod,  
 Bared the live likeness of her God  
 To men's eyes turning from strange lands,  
 Where, pale from thine immortal hands,  
 Christ wounded stands ;

And the blood blots his holy hair  
 And white brows over hungering eyes  
 That plead against us, and the fair  
 Mute lips forlorn of words or sighs  
 In the great torment that bends down  
 His bruised head with the bloomless crown,  
 White as the unfruitful thorn-flower,—  
 A God beheld in dreams that were  
 Beheld of her.

In vain on all these sins and years  
 Falls the sad blood, fall the slow tears,—  
 In vain poured forth as water-springs,  
 Priests, on your altars, and ye, kings,  
 About your seats of sanguine gold :  
 Still your God, spat upon and sold,  
 Bleeds at your hands ; but now is gone  
 All his flock from him saving one,—  
 Judas alone.

Surely your race it was that he,  
 O men signed backward with his name !  
 Beholding in Gethsemane,  
 Bled the red bitter sweat of shame,  
 Knowing how the word of Christian should  
 Mean to men evil and not good,  
 Seem to men shameful for your sake,  
 Whose lips, for all the prayers they make,  
 Man's blood must slake.

But blood nor tears ye love not, you  
 That my love leads my longing to,  
 Fair as the world's old faith of flowers,  
 O golden goddesses of ours !  
 From what Idalian rose-pleasance  
 Hath Aphrodite bidden glance  
 The lovelier lightnings of your feet ?  
 From what sweet Paphian sward or seat  
 Led you more sweet ?

O white three sisters, three as one,  
 With flower-like arms for flowery bands,  
 Your linked limbs glitter like the sun,  
 And times lies beaten at your hands.  
 Time and wild years and wars and men  
 Pass, and ye care not whence or when ;  
 With calm lips over-sweet for scorn,  
 Ye watch night pass, O children born  
 Of the old-world morn !

Ah ! in this strange and shrineless place,  
 What doth a goddess, what a Grace,  
 Where no Greek worships her shrined limbs  
 With wreaths and Cytherean hymns ?  
 Where no lute makes luxurious  
 The adoring airs in Amathus,  
 Till the maid, knowing her mother near,  
 Sobs with love, aching with sweet fear ?  
 What do ye here ?

For the outer land is sad, and wears  
 A raiment of a flaming fire ;  
 And the fierce fruitless mountain stairs  
 Climb, yet seem wroth and loath to aspire,—

Climb, and break, and are broken down,  
 And through their clefts and crests the town  
 Looks west, and sees the dead sun lie,  
 In sanguine death that stains the sky  
 With angry dye.

And from the war-worn wastes without  
 In twilight, in the time of doubt,  
 One sound comes of one whisper, where  
 Moved with low motions of slow air  
 The great trees nigh the castle swing  
 In the sad-colored evening :  
 “ *Ricorditi di me, che son  
 La Pia,*”—that small sweet word alone  
 Is not yet gone.

“ *Ricorditi di me,*”—the sound  
 Sole out of deep dumb days remote,  
 Across the fiery and fatal ground  
 Comes tender as a hurt bird’s note  
 To where, a ghost with empty hands,  
 A woe-worn ghost, her palace stands  
 In the mid city, where the strong  
 Bells turn the sunset air to song,  
 And the towers throng.

With other face, with speech the same,  
 A mightier maiden’s likeness came  
 Late among mourning men that slept,  
 A sacred ghost that went and wept,  
 White as the passion-wounded Lamb,  
 Saying, “ Ah, remember me, that am  
 Italia.” (From deep sea to sea  
 Earth heard, earth knew her, that this was she.)  
 “ *Ricorditi.*

“ Love made me of all things fairest thing,  
 And Hate unmade me ; this knows he  
 Who with God’s sacerdotal ring  
 Enrined mine hand, espousing me.”  
 Yea, in thy myriad-mooded woe,  
 Yea, Mother, hast thou not said so ?  
 Have not our hearts within us stirred,  
 O thou most holiest, at thy word ?  
 Have we not heard ?



As this dead tragic land that she  
 Found deadly, such was time to thee ;  
 Years passed thee withering in the red  
 Maremma,—years that deemed thee dead,  
 Ages that sorrowed or that scorned ;  
 And all this while, though all they mourned,  
 Thou sawest the end of things unclean,  
 And the unborn that should see thee a queen.  
 Have we not seen ?

The weary poet, thy sad son,  
 Upon thy soil, under thy skies,  
 Saw all Italian things save one,—  
 Italia : this thing missed his eyes ;  
 The old mother-might, the breast, the face,  
 That reared, that lit the Roman race,—  
 This not Leopardi saw ; but we,  
 What is it, Mother, that we see,—  
 What, if not thee ?

Look thou from Siena southward home,  
 Where the priest's pall hangs rent on Rome,  
 And through the red rent swaddling-bands  
 Toward thine she strains her laboring hands.  
 Look thou and listen, and let be  
 All the dead quick. all the bond free ;  
 In the blind eyes let there be sight ;  
 In the eighteen centuries of the night  
 Let there be light.

Bow down the beauty of thine head,  
 Sweet, and with lips of living breath  
 Kiss thy sons sleeping and thy dead,  
 That there be no more sleep or death.  
 Give us thy light, thy might, thy love,  
 Whom thy face seen afar above  
 Drew to thy feet : and when, being free,  
 Thou hast blest thy children born to thee,  
 Bless also me,—

Me, that when others played or slept,  
 Sat still under thy cross, and wept ;  
 Me, who so early and unaware  
 Felt fall on bent bared brows and hair

(Thin drops of the overflowing flood !)  
 The bitter blessing of thy blood,  
 The sacred shadow of thy pain,  
 Thine, the true maiden-mother, slain  
 And raised again ;

Me, consecrated, if I might,  
 To praise thee, or to love at least,  
 O mother of all men's dear delight,  
 Thou madest a choral-souled boy-priest,  
 Before my lips had leave to sing,  
 Or my hands hardly strength to cling  
 About the intolerable tree  
 Whereto they had nailed my heart and thee,  
 And said, " Let be."

For to thee too, the high Fates gave  
 Grace to be sacrificed and save,  
 That being arisen, in the equal sun,  
 God and the People should be one ;  
 By those red roads thy footprints trod,  
 Man more divine, more human God,  
 Saviour ; that where no light was known  
 But darkness, and a daytime flown,  
 Light should be shown.

Let there be light, O Italy !  
 For our feet falter in the night.  
 O lamp of living years to be,  
 O light of God, let there be light !  
 Fill with a love keener than flame  
 Men sealed in spirit with thy name,  
 The cities and the Roman skies,  
 Where men with other than man's eyes  
 Saw thy sun rise.

For theirs thou wast, and thine were they,  
 Whose names outshine thy very day :  
 For they are thine, and theirs thou art,  
 Whose blood beats living in man's heart,  
 Remembering ages fled and dead  
 Wherein for thy sake these men bled ;  
 They that saw 'Trebia, they that see  
 Mentana, they in years to be  
 That shall see thee.

For thine are all of us, and ours  
 Thou ; till the seasons bring to birth  
 A perfect people, and all the powers  
 Be with them that bear fruit on earth :  
 Till the inner heart of man be one  
 With freedom, and the sovereign sun ;  
 And Time, in likeness of a guide,  
 Lead the Republic as a bride  
 Up to God's side.

## COR CORDIUM.

O HEART of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,  
 Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom ;  
 O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom  
 The lyrist liberty made life a lyre ;  
 O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire  
 Dead Love, living and singing, eleft his tomb,  
 And with him risen and regent in death's room  
 All day thy choral pulses rang full choir ;  
 O hearts whose beating blood was running song,  
 O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,  
 Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,  
 True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake  
 strong,  
 Till very liberty make clean and fair  
 The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

## TIRESIAS.

## PART I.

It is an hour before the hour of dawn.  
 Set in mine hand my staff, and leave me here  
 Outside the hollow house that blind men fear,  
 More blind than I who live on life withdrawn,  
 And feel on eyes that see not but foresee  
 The shadow of death which clothes Antigone.

Here lay her living body that here lies  
 Dead, if man living know what thing is death,  
 If life be all made up of blood and breath,

And no sense be save as of ears and eyes.

But heart there is not, tongue there is not found,  
To think or sing what verge hath life or bound.

In the beginning when the powers that made  
The young child man a little loved him, seeing  
His joy of life and fair face of his being,  
And bland and laughing with the manchild played,  
As friends they saw on our divine one day,  
King Cadmus take to queen Harmonia.

The strength of soul that builds up as with hands,  
Walls spiritual and towers and towns of thought  
Which only fate, not force, can bring to naught,  
Took then to wife the light of all men's lands,  
War's child, and love's, most sweet and wise and  
strong.  
Order of things and rule and guiding song.

It was long since : yea, even the sun that saw  
Remembers hardly what was, nor how long ;  
And now the wise heart of the worldly song  
Is perished, and the holy hand of law  
Can set no tune on time, nor help again  
The power of thought to build up life for men.

Yea, surely are they now transformed or dead,  
And sleep below this world, where no sun warms,  
Or move about it now in formless forms  
Incognizable, and all their lordship fled ;  
And where they stood up singing, crawl and hiss  
With fangs that kill behind their lips that kiss.

Yet though her marriage-garment, seeming fair,  
Was dyed in sin and woven of jealousy  
To turn their seed to poison, time shall see  
The gods re-issue from them, and repair  
Their broken stamp of godhead, and again  
Thought and wise love sing words of law to men.

I, Tiresias the prophet, seeing in Thebes  
Much evil, and the misery of men's hands  
Who sow with fruitless wheat the stones and sands,

With fruitful thorns the fallows and warm glebes,  
 Bade their hands hold lest worse hap come to pass,  
 But which of you had heed of Tiresias ?

I am as Time's self in mine own wearied mind,  
 Whom the strong heavy-footed years have led  
 From night to night and dead men unto dead,  
 And from the blind hope to the memory blind ;  
 For each man's life is woven, as Time's life is,  
 Of blind young hopes and old blind memories.

I am a soul outside of death and birth.  
 I see before me and afterward I see,  
 O child, O corpse, the live dead face of thee,  
 Whose life and death are one thing upon earth  
 Where day kills night and night again kills day  
 And dies ; but where is that Harmonia ?

O all-beholden light not seen of me !  
 Air, and warm winds that under the sun's eye  
 Stretch your strong wings at morning ; and thou,  
 sky,  
 Whose hollow circle engirdling earth and sea  
 All night the set stars limit, and all day  
 The moving sun remeasures ; ye, I say,—

Ye heights of hills, and thou Dircean spring  
 Inviolable, and ye towers that saw cast down  
 Seven kings keen-sighted toward your seven-faced  
 town,  
 And quenched the red seed of one sightless king ;  
 And thou, for death less dreadful than for birth,  
 Whose wild leaves hide the horror of the earth,—

O mountain whereon gods made chase of kings,  
 Cithæon, thou that sawest on Pentheus dead  
 Fangs of a mother fasten, and wax red,  
 And satiate with a son thy swollen springs,  
 And heardst her cry fright all thine eyrics' nests  
 Who gave death suck at sanguine-suckling breasts ;

Yea, and a grief more grievous, without name,  
 A curse too grievous for the name of grief,  
 Thou sawest, and heardst the rumor scare belief  
 Even unto death and madness, when the flame  
 Was lit whose ashes dropped about the pyre  
 That of two brethren made one sundering fire ;

O bitter nurse, that on thine hard bare knees  
 Rear'dst for his fate the bloody-footed child  
 Whose hands should be more bloodily defiled  
 And the old blind feet walk wearier ways than these,  
 Whose seed, brought forth in darkness unto doom,  
 Should break as fire out of his mother's womb ;

I bear you witness as ye bear to me,  
 Time, day, night, sun, stars, life, death, air, sea,  
 earth,  
 And ye that round the human house of birth  
 Watch with veiled heads and weaponed hands, and  
 see  
 Good things and evil, strengthless yet and dumb,  
 Sit in the clouds with cloudlike hours to come ;

Ye forces without form and viewless powers  
 That have the keys of all our years in hold,  
 That prophesy too late with tongues of gold,  
 In a strange speech whose words are perished hours,  
 I witness to you what good things ye give  
 As ye to me what evil while I live.

What should I do to blame you, what to praise,  
 For floral hours and hours funereal ?  
 What should I do to curse or bless at all  
 For winter-woven or summer-colored days ?  
 Curse he that will, and bless you whoso can :  
 I have no common part in you with man.

I hear a springing water, whose quick sound  
 Makes softer the soft, sunless, patient air,  
 And the wind's hand is laid on my thin hair  
 Light as a lover's, and the grasses round  
 Have odors in them of green bloom and rain,  
 Sweet as the kiss wherewith sleep kisses pain.

I hear the low sound of the spring of time  
 Still beating as the low live throb of blood,  
 And where its waters gather head and flood  
 I hear change moving on them, and the chime  
 Across them of reverberate wings of hours  
 Sounding, and feel the future air of flowers.

The wind of change is soft as snow, and sweet  
 The sense thereof as roses in the sun,  
 The faint wind springing with the springs that  
 run,

The dim sweet smell of flowering hopes, and heat  
 Of unbeholden sunrise ; yet how long  
 I know not, till the morning put forth song.

I prophesy of life, who live with death ;  
 Of joy, being sad ; of sunlight, who am blind ;  
 Of man, whose ways are alien from mankind  
 And his lips are not parted with man's breath :  
 I am a word out of the speechless years,  
 The tongue of time, that no man sleeps who  
 hears.

I stand a shadow across the door of doom  
 Athwart the lintel of death's house, and wait ;  
 Nor quick nor dead, nor flexible by fate,  
 Nor quite of earth nor wholly of the tomb ;  
 A voice, a vision, light as fire or air,  
 Driven between days that shall be and that were.

I prophesy, with feet upon a grave,  
 Of death cast out, and life devouring death  
 As flame doth wood and stubble with a breath ;  
 Of freedom, though all manhood were one slave ;  
 Of truth, though all the world were liar ; of love,  
 That time nor hate can raze the witness of.

Life that was given for love's sake and his law's,  
 Their powers have no more power on : they divide  
 Spoils wrung from lust or wrath of man or pride,  
 And keen oblivion without pity or pause  
 Sets them on fire, and scatters them on air  
 Like ashes shaken from a suppliant's hair.

But life they lay no hand on ; life once given  
 No force of theirs hath competence to take ;  
 Life that was given for some divine thing's sake,  
 To mix the bitterness of earth with heaven,  
 Light with man's night, and music with his  
 breath,  
 Dies not, but makes its living food of death.

I have seen this, who live where men are not,  
 In the high starless air of fruitful night,  
 On that serenest and obscurest height  
 Where dead and unborn things are one in thought,  
 And whence the live unconquerable springs  
 Feed full of force the torrents of new things.

I have seen this, who saw long since, being man,  
 As now I know not if indeed I be,  
 The fair bare body of Wisdom, good to see  
 And evil, whence my light and night began ;  
 Light on the goal and darkness on the way,  
 Light all through night and darkness all through  
 day.

Mother, that by that Pegasean spring,  
 Didst fold round in thine arms thy blinded son,  
 Weeping, " O holiest, what thing hast thou done,  
 What, to my child ? woe's me that see the thing !  
 Is this thy love to me-ward, and hereof  
 Must I take sample how the gods can love ?

" O child, thou hast seen indeed, poor child of mine,  
 The breasts and flanks of Pallas bare in sight,  
 But never shalt see more the dear sun's light ;  
 O Helicon, how great a pay is thine  
 For some poor antelopes and wild-deer dead !  
 My child's eyes hast thou taken in their stead "—

Mother, thou knewest not what she had to give,  
 Thy goddess, though then angered, for mine eyes ;  
 Fame and foreknowledge, and to be most wise,  
 And centuries of high-thoughted life to live,  
 And in mine hand this guiding staff to be  
 As eyesight to the feet of men that see.



Perchance I shall not die at all, nor pass  
 The general door and lintel of men dead ,  
 Yet even the very tongue of wisdom said  
 What grace should come with death to Tiresias,  
 What special honor that god's hand accord  
 Who gathers all men's nations as their lord.

And sometimes when the secret eye of thought  
 Is changed with obscuration, and the sense  
 Aches with long pain of hollow prescience,  
 And fiery foresight with fore-suffering bought  
 Seems even to infect my spirit and consume,  
 Hunger and thirst come on me for the tomb.

I could be fain to drink my death, and sleep,  
 And no more wrapped about with bitter dreams  
 Talk with the stars and with the winds and  
 streams  
 And with the inevitable years, and weep ;  
 For how should he who communes with the years  
 Be sometime not a living spring of tears ?

O child, that guided of thine only will  
 Didst set thy maiden foot against the gate  
 To strike it open ere thine hour of fate,  
 Antigone, men say not thou didst ill,  
 For love's sake and the reverence of his awe  
 Divinely dying, slain by mortal law ;

For love is awful as immortal death.  
 And through thee surely hath thy brother won  
 Rest, out of sight of our world-weary sun,  
 And in the dead land where ye ghosts draw breath  
 A royal place and honor ; so wast thou  
 Happy, though earth have hold of thee too now.

So hast thou life and name inviolable,  
 And joy it may be, sacred and severe,  
 Joy secret-souled beyond all hope or fear,  
 A monumental joy wherein to dwell  
 Seclude and silent, a selected state,  
 Serene possession of thy proper fate.

Thou art not dead as these are dead who live  
 Full of blind years, a sorrow-shaken kind,  
 Nor as these are am I the prophet blind ;  
 They have not life that have not heart to give  
 Life, nor have eyesight who lack heart to see  
 When to be not is better than to be.

O ye whom time but bears with for a span,  
 How long will ye be blind and dead, how long  
 Make your own souls part of your own soul's  
 wrong ?

Son of the word of the most high gods, man,  
 Why wilt thou make thine hour of light and  
 breath  
 Emptier of all but shame than very death ?

Fool, wilt thou live forever ? though thou care  
 With all thine heart for life to keep it fast,  
 Shall not thine hand forego it at the last ?  
 Lo, thy sure hour shall take thee by the hair  
 Sleeping, or when thou knowest not, or wouldst  
 fly ;  
 And as men died much mightier, shalt thou die.

Yea, they are dead, men much more worth than  
 thou ;  
 The savor of heroic lives that were,  
 Is it not mixed into thy common air ?  
 The sense of them is shed about thee now :  
 Feel not thy brows a wind blowing from far ?  
 Aches not thy forehead with a future star ?

The light that thou may'st make out of thy name  
 Is in the wind of this same hour that drives,  
 Blown within reach but once of all men's lives ;  
 And he that puts forth hand upon the flame  
 Shall have it for a garland on his head  
 To sign him for a king among the dead.

But these men that the lessening years behold,  
 Who sit the most part without flame or crown,  
 And brawl and sleep, and wear their life-days  
 down

With joys and griefs ignobler than of old,  
 And care not if the better day shall be,—  
 Are these or art thou dead, Antigone ?

## PART II.

As when one wakes out of a waning dream,  
 And sees with instant eyes the naked thought  
 Whereof the vision as a web was wrought,  
 I saw beneath a heaven of cloud and gleam,  
 Ere yet the heart of the young sun waxed brave,  
 One like a prophet standing by a grave.

In the hoar heaven was hardly beam or breath,  
 And all the colored hills and fields were gray,  
 And the wind wandered seeking for the day,  
 And wailed as though he had found her done to  
 death,  
 And this gray hour had built to bury her  
 The hollow twilight for a sepulchre.

But in my soul I saw as in a glass  
 A pale and living body full of grace  
 There lying, and over it the prophet's face  
 Fixed ; and the face was not of Tiresias,  
 For such a starry fire was in his eyes  
 As though their light it was that made the skies.

Such eyes should God's have been when very love  
 Looked forth of them and set the sun aflame,  
 And such his lips that called the light by name  
 And bade the morning forth at sound thereof ;  
 His face was sad and masterful as fate,  
 And like a star's his look compassionate.

Like a star's gazed on of sad eyes so long  
 It seems to yearn with pity, and all its fire  
 As a man's heart to tremble with desire  
 And heave as though the light would bring forth  
 song ;  
 Yet from his face flashed lightning on the land,  
 And like the thunder-bearer's was his hand.

The steepness of strange stairs had tired his feet,  
And his lips yet seemed sick of that salt bread  
Wherewith the lips of banishment are fed ;  
But nothing was there in the world so sweet  
As the most bitter love, like God's own grace,  
Wherewith he gazed on that fair buried face.

Grief and glad pride and passion and sharp shame,  
Wrath and remembrance, faith and hope and  
hate,  
And pitiless pity of days degenerate,  
Where in his eyes as an incorporate flame  
That burned about her, and the heart thereof  
And central flower was very fire of love.

But all about her grave wherein she slept  
Were noises of the wild wind-footed years  
Whose footprints flying were full of blood and  
tears,  
Shrieks as of Mænads on their hills that leapt  
And yelled as beasts of ravin, and their meat  
Was the rent flesh of their own sons to eat.

And fiery shadows passing with strange cries,  
And sphinx-like shapes about the ruined lands,  
And the red reek of parricidal hands  
And intermixture of incestuous eyes,  
And light as of that self-divided flame  
Which made an end of the Cadmean name.

And I beheld again, and lo the grave,  
And the bright body laid therein as dead,  
And the same shadow across another head  
That bowed down silent on that sleeping slave  
Who was the lady of empire from her birth  
And light of all the kingdoms of the earth.

Within the compass of the watcher's hand  
All strengths of other men and divers powers  
Were held at ease and gathered up as flowers ;  
His heart was as the heart of his whole land,  
And at his feet as natural servants lay  
Twilight and dawn and night and laboring day.

He was most awful of the sons of God.

Even now men seeing seemed at his lips to see  
 The trumpet of the judgment that should be,  
 And in his right hand terror for a rod,  
 And in the breath that made the mountains bow  
 The horned fire of Moses on his brow.  
 The strong wind of the coming of the Lord  
 Had blown as flame upon him, and brought down  
 On his bare head from heaven fire for a crown,  
 And fire was girt upon him as a sword  
 To smite and lighten, and on what ways he trod  
 There fell from him the shadow of a god.

Pale, with the whole world's judgment in his eyes,  
 He stood and saw the grief and shame endure  
 That he, though highest of angels, might not cure,  
 And the same sins done under the same skies,  
 And the same slaves to the same tyrants thrown,  
 And fain he would have slept, and fain been  
 stone.

But with unslumbering eyes he watched the sleep  
 That sealed her sons whose eyes were suns of old ;  
 And the night shut and opened, and behold,  
 The same grave where those prophets came to weep,  
 But she that lay therein had moved and stirred,  
 And where those twain had watched her stood a  
 third.

The tripled rhyme that closed in Paradise  
 With Love's name sealing up its starry speech ;  
 The tripled might of hand that found in reach  
 All crowns beheld far off of all men's eyes,  
 Song, color, carven wonders of live stone,—  
 These were not, but the very soul alone.

The living spirit, the good gift of grace,  
 The faith which takes of its own blood to give  
 That the dead veins of buried hope may live,  
 Came on her sleeping, face to naked face,  
 And from a soul more sweet than all the south  
 Breathed love upon her sealed and breathless  
 mouth,

Between her lips the breath was blown as fire,  
 And through her flushed veins leapt the liquid  
 life,  
 And with sore passion and ambiguous strife  
 The new birth rent her and the new desire,  
 The will to live, the competence to be,  
 The sense to hearken, and the soul to see.

And the third prophet standing by her grave  
 Stretched forth his hand, and touched her ; and  
 her eyes  
 Opened as sudden suns in heaven might rise,  
 And her soul caught from his the faith to save ;  
 Faith above creeds, faith beyond records, born  
 Of the pure, naked, fruitful, awful morn.

For in the daybreak now that night was dead  
 The light, the shadow, the delight, the pain,  
 The purpose and the passion of those twain,  
 Seemed gathered on that third prophetic head ;  
 And all their crowns were as one crown, and one  
 His face with her face in the living sun.

For even with that communion of their eyes  
 His whole soul passed into her, and made her  
 strong ;  
 And all the sounds and shows of shame and wrong,  
 The hand that slays, the lip that mocks and lies,  
 Temples and thrones that yet men seem to see,—  
 Are these dead, or art thou dead, Italy ?

## AN APPEAL.

### I.

ART thou indeed among these,  
 Thou of the tyrannous crew,  
 The kingdoms fed upon blood,  
 O queen from of old of the seas,  
 England,—art thou of them too  
 That drink of the poisonous flood,  
 That hide under poisonous trees ?

## II.

Nay, thy name from of old,  
 Mother, was pure, or we dreamed ;  
 Purer we held thee than this,  
 Purer fain would we hold ;  
 So goodly a glory it seemed,  
 A fame so bounteous of bliss,  
 So more precious than gold.

## III.

A praise so sweet in our ears,  
 That thou in the tempest of things  
 As a rock for a refuge shouldst stand,  
 In the blood-red river of tears  
 Poured forth for the triumph of kings ;  
 A safeguard, a sheltering land,  
 In the thunder and torrent of years.

## IV.

Strangers came gladly to thee,  
 Exiles, chosen of men,  
 Safe for thy sake in thy shade,  
 Sat down at thy feet and were free.  
 So men spake of thee then :  
 Now shall their speaking be stayed ?  
 Ah, so let it not be !

## V.

Not for revenge or affright,  
 Pride, or a tyrannous lust,  
 Cast from thee the crown of thy praise.  
 Mercy was thine in thy might ;  
 Strong when thou wert, thou wert just ;  
 Now, in the wrong-doing days,  
 Cleave thou, thou at least, to the right.

## VI.

How should one charge thee, how sway,  
 Save by the memories that were ?  
 Not thy gold, nor the strength of thy ships,

Nor the might of thine armies at bay,  
 Made thee, mother, most fair :  
 But a word from republican lips  
 Said in thy name, in thy day.

## VII.

Hast thou said it, and hast thou forgot ?  
 Is thy praise in thine ears as a scoff ?  
 Blood of men guiltless was shed,  
 Children, and souls without spot,  
 Shed, but in places far off :  
*Let slaughter no more be*, said  
 Milton ; and slaughter was not.

## VIII.

Was it not said of thee too,  
 Now, but now, by thy foes,  
 By the slaves that had slain their France,  
 And thee would slay as they slew—  
 “ Down with her walls that enclose  
 Freemen that eye us askance,  
 Fugitives, men that are true ! ”

## IX.

This was thy praise or thy blame,  
 From bondsman or freeman,—to be  
 Pure from pollution of slaves,  
 Clean of their sins, and thy name  
 Bloodless, innocent, free :  
 Now if thou be not, thy waves  
 Wash not from off thee thy shame.

## X.

Freeman he is not, but slave,  
 Whoso in fear for the state  
 Cries for surety of blood,  
 Help of gibbet and grave ;  
 Neither is any land great  
 Whom, in her fear-stricken mood,  
 These things only can save.



## XI.

Lo ! how fair from afar,  
 Taintless of tyranny, stands  
 Thy mighty daughter, for years  
 Who trod the winepress of war,—  
 Shines with immaculate hands ;  
 Slays not a foe, neither fears ;  
 Stains not peace with a scar.

## XII.

Be not as tyrant or slave,  
 England ; be not as these,  
 Thou that wert other than they.  
 Stretch out thine hand, but to save ;  
 Put forth thy strength, and release :  
 Lest there arise, if thou slay,  
 Thy shame as a ghost from the grave.

Nov. 20, 1867.

## PERINDE AC CADAVER.

IN a vision Liberty stood  
 By the childless charm-stricken bed  
 Where, barren of glory and good,  
 Knowing naught if she would not or would,  
 England slept with her dead.

Her face that the foam had whitened,  
 Her hands that were strong to strive,  
 Her eyes whence battle had lightened,  
 Over all was a drawn shroud tightened  
 To bind her asleep and alive.

She turned and laughed in her dream,  
 With gray lips arid and cold :  
 She saw not the face as a beam  
 Burn on her, but only a gleam  
 Through her sleep as of new-stamped gold.

But the goddess, with terrible tears  
 In the light of her down-drawn eyes,  
 Spake fire in the dull sealed ears :  
 “Thou, sick with slumbers and fears,  
 Wilt thou sleep now indeed, or arise ?

“ With dreams, and with words, and with light  
 Memories and empty desires,  
 Thou hast wrapped thyself round all night :  
 Thou hast shut up thine heart from the right,  
 And warmed thee at burnt-out fires.

“ Yet once, if I smote at thy gate,  
 Thy sons would sleep not, but heard :  
 O thou that wast found so great,  
 Art thou smitten with folly or fate,  
 That thy sons have forgotten my word ?

“ O Cromwell’s mother, O breast  
 That suckled Milton ! thy name  
 That was beautiful then, that was blest,  
 Is it wholly discrowned and deprest,  
 Trodden under by sloth into shame ?

“ Why wilt thou hate me and die ?  
 For none can hate me and live.  
 What ill have I done to thee ? Why  
 Wilt thou turn from me fighting, and fly,  
 Who would follow thy feet and forgive ?

“ Thou hast seen me stricken, and said,  
 What is it to me ? I am strong :  
 Thou hast seen me bowed down on my dead,  
 And laughed, and lifted thine head,  
 And washed thine hands of my wrong.

“ Thou has put out the soul of thy sight :  
 Thou hast sought to my foemen as friend,  
 To my traitors that kiss me and smite,  
 To the kingdoms and empires of night  
 That begin with the darkness, and end.

“ Turn thee, awaken, arise,  
 With the light that is risen on the lands,  
 With the change of the fresh-colored skies :  
 Set thine eyes on mine eyes,  
 Lay thy hands in my hands.”

She moved and mourned as she heard,  
 Sighed, and shifted her place,  
 As the wells of her slumber were stirred  
 By the music and wind of the word,  
 Then turned, and covered her face.

“ Ah !” she said in her sleep,  
 “ Is my work not done with, and done ?  
 Is there corn for my sickle to reap ?  
 And strange is the pathway, and steep,  
 And sharp overhead is the sun.

“ I have done thee service enough,  
 Loved thee enough in my day :  
 Now nor hatred nor love  
 Nor hardly remembrance thereof  
 Lives in me to lighten my way.

“ And is it not well with us here ?  
 Is change as good as is rest ?  
 What hope should move me, or fear  
 That eye should open or ear,  
 Who have long since won what is best ?

“ Where among us are such things  
 As turn men's hearts into hell ?  
 Have we not queens without stings,  
 Scotched princes, and fangless kings ?  
 Yea,” she said, “ we are well.

“ We have filed the teeth of the snake  
 Monarchy ; how should it bite ?  
 Should the slippery slow thing wake,  
 It will not sting for my sake ;  
 Yea,” she said, “ I do right.”

So spake she, drunken with dreams,  
 Mad ; but again in her ears  
 A voice as of storm-swelled streams  
 Spake : “ No brave shame then redeems  
 Thy lusts of sloth and thy fears ?

“Thy poor lies slain of thine hands,  
 Their starved limbs rot in thy sight ;  
 As a shadow the ghost of thee stands  
 Among men living and lands,  
 And stirs not leftward or right.

“Freeman he is not, but slave,  
 Who stands not, out on my side ;  
 His own hand hollows his grave,  
 Nor strength is in me to save  
 Where strength is none to abide.

“Time shall tread on his name  
 That was written for honor of old.  
 Who hath taken in change for fame  
 Dust, and silver, and shame,  
 Ashes, and iron, and gold.”

### THE OBLATION.

Ask nothing more of me, sweet ;  
 All I can give you, I give.  
 Heart of my heart, were it more,  
 More would be laid at your feet ;  
 Love that should help you to live,  
 Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,  
 Once to have sense of you more,  
 Touch you and taste of you, sweet.  
 Think you and breathe you, and live,  
 Swept of your wings as they soar,  
 Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more  
 Give you but love of you, sweet :  
 He that hath more, let him give ;  
 He that hath wings, let him soar ;  
 Mine is the heart at your feet  
 Here, that must love you to live.

## A SONG OF ITALY.

UPON a windy night of stars that fell  
At the wind's spoken spell,  
Swept with sharp strokes of agonizing light  
From the clear gulf of night,  
Between the fixed and fallen glories one  
Against my vision shone,  
More fair and fearful and divine than they  
That measure night and day,  
And worthier worship ; and within mine eyes  
The formless folded skies  
Took shape and were unfolded like as flowers.  
And I beheld the hours  
As maidens, and the days as laboring men,  
And the soft nights again  
As wearied women to their own souls wed,  
And ages as the dead.  
And over these living, and them that died,  
From one to the other side  
A lordlier light than comes of earth or air  
Made the world's future fair.  
A woman like to love in face, but not  
A thing of transient lot ;  
And like to hope, but having hold on truth ;  
And like to joy or youth,  
Save that upon the rock her feet were set ;  
And like what men forget,  
Faith, innocence, high thought, laborious peace,—  
And yet like none of these,  
Being not as these are mortal, but with eyes  
That sounded the deep skies,  
And clove like wings or arrows their clear way  
Through night and dawn and day,—  
So fair a presence over star and sun  
Stood, making these as one.  
For in the shadow of her shape were all  
Darkened and held in thrall,  
So mightier rose she past them ; and I felt  
Whose form, whose likeness knelt .  
With covered hair and face, and clasped her knees ;  
And knew the first of these

Was Freedom, and the second Italy.

And what sad words said she  
 For mine own grief I knew not, nor had heart  
 Therewith to bear my part  
 And set my songs to sorrow ; nor to hear  
 How tear by sacred tear  
 Fell from her eyes as flowers or notes that fall  
 In some slain feaster's hall  
 Where in mid music and melodious breath  
 Men singing have seen death.  
 So fair, so lost, so sweet, she knelt ; or so  
 In our lost eyes below  
 Seemed to us sorrowing ; and her speech being said,  
 Fell, as one who falls dead.  
 And for a little she too wept, who stood  
 Above the dust and blood  
 And thrones and troubles of the world ; then  
 spake,  
 As who bids dead men wake :--

“ Because the years were heavy on thy head ;  
 Because dead things are dead ;  
 Because thy chosen on hillside, city and plain  
 Are shed as drops of rain ;  
 Because all earth was black, all heaven was blind,  
 And we cast out of mind ;  
 Because men wept, saying *Freedom*, knowing of  
 thee,  
 Child, that thou wast not free :  
 Because wherever blood was not shame was  
 Where thy pure foot did pass ;  
 Because on Promethean rocks distent  
 Thee fouler eagles rent ;  
 Because a serpent stains with slime and foam  
 This that is not thy Rome ;  
 Child of my womb, whose limbs were made in me,  
 Have I forgotten thee ?  
 In all thy dreams through all these years on wing,  
 Hast thou dreamed such a thing ?  
 The mortal mother-bird out-soars her nest,  
 The child outgrows the breast ;  
 But suns as stars shall fall from heaven and cease,  
 Ere we twain be as these :

Yea, utmost skies forget their utmost sun,  
Ere we twain be not one.  
My lesser jewels sewn on skirt and hem,  
I have no heed of them  
Obscured and flawed by sloth or craft or power ;  
But thou, that wast my flower,  
The blossom bound between my brows, and worn  
In sight of even and morn  
From the last ember of the flameless west  
To the dawn's baring breast—  
I were not Freedom if thou wert not free,  
Nor thou wert Italy.  
O mystic rose ingrained with blood, impearled  
With tears of all the world !  
The torpor of their blind brute-ridden trance  
Kills England and chills France ;  
And Spain sobs hard through strangling blood ; and  
snows  
Hide the huge eastern woes.  
But thou, twin-born with morning, nursed of noon,  
And blessed of star and moon !  
What shall avail to assail thee any more,  
From sacred shore to shore ?  
Have Time and Love not knelt down at thy feet,  
Thy sore, thy soiled, thy sweet.  
Fresh from the flints and mire of murderous ways  
And dust of travelling days ?  
Hath Time not kissed them, Love not washed them fair  
And wiped with tears and hair ?  
Though God forget thee, I will not forget ;  
Though heaven and earth be set  
Against thee, O unconquerable child,  
Abused, abased, reviled,  
Lift thou not less from no funereal bed  
Thine undishonored head ;  
Love thou not less, by lips of thine once prest,  
This my now barren breast ;  
Seek thou not less, being well assured thereof,  
O child, my latest love.  
For now the barren bosom shall bear fruit,  
Songs leap from lips long mute,  
And with my milk the mouths of nations fed  
Again be glad and red

That were worn white with hunger and sorrow and  
 thirst ;  
 And thou, most fair and first,  
 Thou whose warm hands and sweet live lips I feel  
 Upon me for a seal,  
 Thou whose least looks, whose smiles and little sighs,  
 Whose passionate pure eyes,  
 Whose dear fair limbs that neither bonds could  
 bruise  
 Nor hate of men misuse,  
 Whose flower-like breath and bosom, O my child,  
 O mine and undefiled,  
 Fill with such tears as burn like bitter wine  
 These mother's eyes of mine,  
 Thrill with huge passions and primeval pains  
 The fulness of my veins.  
 O sweetest head seen higher than any stands,  
 I touch thee with mine hands,  
 I lay my lips upon thee, O thou most sweet,  
 To lift thee on thy feet,  
 And with the fire of mine to fill thine eyes ;  
 I say unto thee, Arise."

She ceased, and heaven was full of flame and sound,  
 And earth's old limbs unbound  
 Shone and waxed warm with fiery dew and seed  
 Shed through her at this her need :  
 And highest in heaven, a mother and full of grace,  
 With no more covered face,  
 With no more lifted hands and bended knees,  
 Rose, as from sacred seas  
 Love, when old time was full of plenteous springs,  
 That fairest-born of things,  
 The land that holds the rest in tender thrall  
 For love's sake in them all,  
 That binds with words and holds with eyes and hands  
 All hearts in all men's lands.  
 So died the dream whence rose the live desire  
 That here takes form and fire,  
 A spirit from the splendid grave of sleep  
 Risen, that ye should not weep,—  
 Should not weep more nor ever, O ye that hear,  
 And ever have held her dear,



Seeing now indeed she weeps not who wept sore,  
And sleeps not any more.  
Hearken ye towards her, O people, exalt your eyes ;  
Is this a thing that dies ?

Italia ! by the passion of the pain  
That bent and rent thy chain ;  
Italia ! by the breaking of the bands,  
The shaking of the lands ;  
Beloved, O men's mother, O men's queen,  
Arise, appear, be seen !  
Arise, array thyself in manifold  
Queen's raiment of wrought gold ;  
With girdles of green freedom, and with red  
Roses, and white snow shed  
Above the flush and frondage of the hills  
That all thy deep dawn fills  
And all thy clear night veils and warms with wings  
Spread till the morning sings ;  
The rose of resurrection, and the bright  
Breast lavish of the light,  
The lady lily like the snowy sky  
Ere the stars wholly die ;  
As red as blood, and whiter than a wave,  
Flowers grown as from thy grave,  
From the green fruitful grass in May-time hot,  
Thy grave, where thou art not.  
Gather the grass and weave, in sacred sign  
Of the ancient earth divine,  
The holy heart of things, the seed of birth,  
The mystical warm earth.  
O thou her flower of flowers, with treble braid  
Be thy sweet head arrayed,  
In witness of her mighty motherhood  
Who bore thee and found thee good,  
Her fairest-born of children, on whose head  
Her green and white and red  
Are hope and light and life, inviolate  
Of any latter fate.  
Fly, O our flag, through deep Italian air,  
Above the flags that were,  
The dusty shreds of shameful battle-flags  
Trampled and rent in rags,

As withering woods in autumn's bitterest breath  
 Yellow, and black as death ;  
 Black as crushed worms that sicken in the sense,  
 And yellow as pestilence.  
 Fly, green as summer and red as dawn and white  
 As the live heart of light,  
 The blind bright womb of color unborn, that brings  
 Forth all fair forms of things,  
 As freedom all fair forms of nations dyed  
 In divers-colored pride.  
 Fly fleet as wind on every wind that blows  
 Between her seas and snows,  
 From Alpine white, from Tuscan green, and where  
 Vesuvius reddens air.  
 Fly ! and let all men see it, and all kings wail,  
 And priests wax faint and pale,  
 And the cold hordes that moan in misty places  
 And the funereal races  
 And the sick serfs of lands that wait and wane  
 See thee and hate thee in vain.  
 In the clear laughter of all winds and waves,  
 In the blown grass of graves,  
 In the long sound of fluctuant boughs of trees,  
 In the broad breath of seas,  
 Bid the sound of thy flying folds be heard ;  
 And as a spoken word  
 Full of that fair god and that merciless  
 Who rends the Pythoness,  
 So be the sound and so the fire that saith  
 She feels her ancient breath  
 And the old blood move in her immortal veins.

Strange travail and strong pains,  
 Our mother, hast thou borne these many years  
 While thy pure blood and tears  
 Mixed with the Tyrrhene and the Adrian sea.  
 Light things were said of thee,  
 As of one buried deep among the dead ;  
 Yea, she hath been, they said,  
 She was when time was younger, and is not ;  
 The very eerecloths rot  
 That flutter in the dusty wind of death,  
 Not moving with her breath ;

Far seasons and forgotten years enfold  
 Her dead corpse old and cold  
 With many windy winters and pale springs :  
 She is none of this world's things.  
 Though her dead head like a live garland wear  
 The golden-growing hair  
 That flows over her breast down to her feet,  
 Dead queens, whose life was sweet  
 In sight of all men living, have been found  
 So cold, so clad, so crowned,  
 With all things faded and with one thing fair,  
 Their old immortal hair,  
 When flesh and bone turned dust at touch of day :  
 And she is dead as they .

So men said sadly, mocking ; so the slave,  
 Whose life was his soul's grave ;  
 So, pale or red with change of fast and feast,  
 The sanguine-sandalled priest ;  
 So the Austrian, when his fortune came to flood,  
 And the warm wave was blood ;  
 With wings that widened and with beak that smote,  
 So shrieked through either throat  
 From the hot horror of its northern nest  
 That double-headed pest ;  
 So, triple-crowned with fear and fraud and shame,  
 He of whom treason came,  
 The herdsman of the Gadarean swine ;  
 So all his ravening kine,  
 Made fat with poisonous pasture : so not we,  
 Mother, beholding thee.  
 Make answer, O the crown of all our slain,  
 Ye that were one, being twain,  
 Twain brethren, twin-born to the second birth,  
 Chosen out of all our earth  
 To be the prophesying stars that say  
 How hard is night on day,  
 Stars in serene and sudden heaven re-risen  
 Before the sun break prison  
 And ere the moon be wasted ; fair first flowers  
 In that red wreath of ours  
 Woven with the lives of all whose lives were shed  
 To crown their mother's head

With leaves of civic cypress and thick yew,  
 Till the olive bind it too,  
 Olive and laurel and all loftier leaves  
 That victory wears or weaves  
 At her fair feet for her beloved brow ;  
 Hear, for she too hears now,  
 O Pisacane, from Calabrian sands ;  
 O all heroic hands  
 Close on the sword-hilt, hands of all her dead ;  
 O many a holy head,  
 Bowed for her sake even to her reddening dust ;  
 O chosen, O pure and just,  
 Who counted for a small thing life's estate,  
 And died, and made it great ;  
 Ye whose names mix with all her memories ; ye  
 Who rather chose to see  
 Death, than our more intolerable things ;  
 Thou whose name withers kings,  
 Agesilao ; thou too, O chiefiest thou,  
 The slayer of splendid brow,  
 Laid where the lying lips of fear deride  
 The foiled tyrannicide,  
 Foiled, fallen, slain, scorned, and happy ; being in  
 fame,  
 Felice, like thy name,  
 Not like thy fortune ; father of the fight,  
 Having in hand our light.  
 Ah, happy ! for that sudden-swerving hand  
 Flung light on all thy land,  
 Yea, lit blind France with compulsory ray,  
 Driven down a righteous way ;  
 Ah, happiest ! for from thee the wars began,  
 From thee the fresh springs ran ;  
 From thee the lady land that queens the earth  
 Got as she gave new birth.  
 O sweet mute mouths, O all fair dead of ours,  
 Fair in her eyes as flowers,  
 Fair without feature, vocal without voice,  
 Strong without strength, rejoice !  
 Hear it with ears that hear not, and on eyes  
 That see not let it rise,  
 Rise as a sundawn ; be it as dew that drips  
 On dumb and dusty lips ;

Eyes have ye not, and see it ; neither ears,  
 And there is none but hears.  
 This is the same for whom ye bled and wept ;  
 She was not dead, but slept.  
 This is that very Italy which was  
 And is and shall not pass.

But thou though all were not well done,  
 O chief,  
 Must thou take shame or grief ?  
 Because one man is not as thou or ten,  
 Must thou take shame for men ?  
 Because the supreme sunrise is not yet,  
 Is the young dew not wet ?  
 Will thou not yet abide a little while,  
 Soul without fear or guile,  
 Mazzini, O our prophet, O our priest,  
 A little while at least !  
 A little hour of doubt and of control,  
 Sustain thy sacred soul,  
 Withhold thine heart, our father, but an hour ;  
 Is it not here, the flower,  
 Is it not blown and fragrant from the root,  
 And shall not yet be the fruit ?  
 Thy children, even thy people thou hast made,  
 Thine, with thy words arrayed,  
 Clothed with thy thoughts and girt with thy desires,  
 Yearn up toward thee as fires.  
 Art thou not father, O father, of all these ?  
 From thine own Genoese  
 To where of nights the lower extreme lagune  
 Feels its Venetian moon,  
 Nor suckling's mouth nor mother's breast set free  
 But hath that grace through thee.  
 The milk of life on death's unnatural brink  
 Thou gavest them to drink,  
 The natural milk of freedom ; and again  
 They drank, and they were men.  
 The wine and honey of freedom and of faith  
 They drank, and cast off death.  
 Bear with them now ; thou art holier : yet endure,  
 Till they as thou be pure.

Their swords at least that stemmed half Austria's  
tide

Bade all its bulk divide ;  
Else, though fate bade them for a breath's space fall,  
She had not fallen at all.

Not by their hands they made time's promise true ;  
Not by their hands, but through.

Nor on Custoza ran their blood to waste,  
Nor fell their fame defaced

Whom stormiest Adria with tumultuous tides  
Whirls undersea and hides.

Not his, who from the sudden-settling deck  
Looked over death and wreck

To where the mother's bosom shone, who smiled  
As he, so dying, her child ;

For he smiled surely, dying, to mix his death  
With her memorial breath ;

Smiled, being most sure of her, that in no wise,  
Die whoso will, she dies :

And she smiled surely, fair and far above,  
Wept not, but smiled for love.

Thou too, O splendor of the sudden sword  
That drove the crews abhorred

From Naples and the siren-footed strand,  
Flash from thy master's hand,

Shine from the middle summer of the seas  
To the old Æolides,

Outshine their fiery fumes of burning night,  
Sword, with thy midday light ;

Flame as a beacon from the Tyrrhene foam  
To the rent heart of Rome,

From the island of her lover and thy lord,  
Her savior and her sword.

In the fierce year of failure and of fame,  
Art thou not yet the same

That wast as lightning swifter than all wings  
In the blind face of kings ?

When priests took counsel to devise despair,  
And princes to forswear,

She clasped thee, O her sword and flag-bearer  
And staff and shield to her,

O Garibaldi ! need was hers and grief,  
Of thee and of the chief,

And of another girt in arms to stand  
As good of hope and hand,  
As high of soul and happy, albeit indeed  
The heart should burn and bleed,  
So but the spirit shake not nor the breast  
Swerve, but abide its rest,  
As theirs did and as thine, though ruin clomb  
The highest wall of Rome,  
Though treason stained and spilt her lustral water,  
And slaves led slaves to slaughter,  
And priests, praying and slaying, watched them  
pass  
From a strange France, alas !  
That was not freedom ; yet when these were past  
Thy sword and thou stood fast,  
Till new men seeing thee where Sicilian waves  
Hear now no sound of slaves,  
And where thy sacred blood is fragrant still  
Upon the Bitter Hill,  
Seeing by that blood one country saved and stained,  
Less loved thee crowned than chained,  
And less now only than the chief : for he,  
Father of Italy,  
Upbore in holy hands the babe new-born  
Through loss and sorrow and scorn,  
Of no man led, of many men reviled ;  
Till, lo ! the new-born child  
Gone from between his hands, and in its place,  
Lo, the fair mother's face.  
Blessed is he of all men, being in one  
As father to her and son,  
Blessed of all men living, that he found  
Her weak limbs bared and bound,  
And in his arms and in his bosom bore,  
And as a garment wore  
Her weight of want, and as a royal dress  
Put on her weariness.  
As in faith's hoariest histories men read,  
The strong man bore at need  
Through roaring rapids when all heaven was wild  
The likeness of a child  
That still waxed greater and heavier as he trod,  
And altered, and was God.

Praise him, O winds that move the molten air,  
     O light of days that were,  
 And light of days that shall be ; land and sea,  
     And heaven and Italy :  
 Praise him, O storm and summer, shore and wave,  
     O skies and every grave ;  
 O weeping hopes, O memories beyond tears,  
     O many and murmuring years,  
 O sounds far off in time and visions far,  
     O sorrow with thy star,  
 And joy with all thy beacons ; ye that mourn,  
     And ye whose light is born ;  
 O fallen faces, and O souls arisen,  
     Praise him from tomb and prison,  
 Praise him from heaven and sunlight ; and ye floods,  
     And windy waves of woods ;  
 Ye valleys and wild vineyards, ye lit lakes  
     And happier hillside brakes,  
 Untrampled by the accursed feet that trod  
     Fields golden from their god,  
 Fields of their god forsaken, whereof none  
     Sees his face in the sun,  
 Hears his voice from the floweriest wildernesses ;  
     And, barren of his tresses,  
 Ye bays unplucked and laurels unintwined,  
     That no men break or bind,  
 And myrtles long forgetful of the sword,  
     And olives unadored,  
 Wisdom and love, white hands that save and slay,  
     Praise him ; and ye as they,  
 Praise him, O gracious might of dews and rains  
     That feed the purple plains,  
 O sacred sunbeams bright as bare steel drawn,  
     O cloud and fire and dawn ;  
 Red hills of flame, white Alps, green Apennines,  
     Banners of blowing pines,  
 Standards of stormy snows, flags of light leaves,  
     Three wherewith Freedom weaves  
 One ensign that once woven and once unfurled  
     Makes day of all a world,  
 Makes blind their eyes who knew not, and out-  
     braves  
     The waste of iron waves ;



Ye fields of yellow fulness, ye fresh fountains,  
 And mists of many mountains ;  
 Ye moons and seasons, and ye days and nights ;  
 Ye starry-headed heights,  
 And gorges melting sunward from the snow,  
 And all strong streams that flow,  
 Tender as tears, and fair as faith, and pure  
 As hearts made sad and sure  
 At once by many sufferings and one love ;  
 O mystic deathless dove  
 Held to the heart of earth and in her hands  
 Cherished, O lily of lands,  
 White rose of time, dear dream of praises past,—  
 For such as these thou wast,  
 That art as eagles setting to the sun,  
 As fawns that leap and run,  
 As a sword carven with keen floral gold,  
 Sword for an armed god's hold,  
 Flower for a crowned god's forehead,—O our land,  
 Reach forth thine holiest hand,  
 O mother of many sons and memories,  
 Stretch out thine hand to his  
 That raised and gave thee life to run and leap  
 When thou wast full of sleep,  
 That touched and stung thee with young blood and  
 breath  
 When thou wast hard on death.  
 Praise him, O all her cities and her crowns,  
 Her towers and thrones of towns ;  
 O noblest Brescia, scarred from foot to head  
 And breast-deep in the dead,  
 Praise him from all the glories of thy graves  
 That yellow Mela laves  
 With gentle and golden water, whose fair flood  
 Ran wider with thy blood :  
 Praise him, O born of that heroic breast,  
 O nursed thereat and blest,  
 Verona, fairer than thy mother fair,  
 But not more brave to bear :  
 Praise him, O Milan, whose imperial tread  
 Bruised once the German head ;  
 Whose might, by northern swords left desolate,  
 Set foot on fear and fate :

Praise him, O long mute mouth of melodies,  
Mantua, with louder keys,  
With mightier chords of music even than rolled  
From the large harps of old,  
When thy sweet singer of golden throat and  
tongue,  
Praising his tyrant, sung ;  
Though now thou sing not as of other days,  
Learn late a better praise.  
Not with the sick sweet lips of slaves that sing,  
Praise thou no priest or king,  
No brow-bound laurel of discolored leaf,  
But him, the crownless chief.  
Praise him, O star of sun-forgotten times,  
Among their creeds and crimes  
That wast a fire of witness in the night,  
Padua, the wise men's light :  
Praise him, O sacred Venice, and the sea  
That now exults through thee,  
Full of the mighty morning and the sun,  
Free of things dead and done ;  
Praise him from all the years of thy great grief,  
That shook thee like a leaf  
With winds and snows of torment, rain that fell  
Red as the rains of hell,  
Storms of black thunder and of yellow flame,  
And all ill things but shame ;  
Praise him with all thy holy heart and strength ;  
Through thy walls' breadth and length  
Praise him with all thy people, that their voice  
Bid the strong soul rejoice,  
The fair clear supreme spirit beyond stain,  
Pure as the depth of pain,  
High as the head of suffering, and secure  
As all things that endure.  
More than thy blind lord of an hundred years  
Whose name our memory hears,  
Home-bound from harbors of the Byzantine  
Made tributary of thine,  
Praise him who gave no gifts from over-sea,  
But gave thyself to thee.  
O mother Genoa, through all years that run,  
More than that other son,

Who first beyond the seals of sunset prest  
Even to the unfooted west,  
Whose black-blown flag scared from their sheltering  
seas

The unknown Atlantides,  
And as flame climbs through cloud and vapor clomb  
Through streams of storm and foam,  
Till half in sight they saw land heave and swim,—  
More than this man praise him.  
One found a world new-born from virgin sea ;  
And one found Italy.

O heavenliest Florence, from the mouths of flowers  
Fed by melodious hours,  
From each sweet mouth that kisses light and air,  
Thou whom thy fate made fair,  
As a bound vine or any flowering tree,  
Praise him who made thee free.  
For no grape-gatherers trampling out the wine  
Tread thee, the fairest vine ;  
For no man binds thee, no man bruises, none  
Does with thee as these have done.

From where spring hears loud through her long lit  
vales

Triumphant nightingales,  
In many a fold of fiery foliage hidden,  
Withheld as things forbidden,  
But clamorous with innumerable delight  
In May's red, green, and white,  
In the far-floated standard of the spring,  
That bids men also sing,

Our flower of flags, our witness that we are free,  
Our lamp for land and sea ;  
From where Majano feels through corn and vine,  
Spring move and melt as wine,  
And Fiesole's embracing arms enclose  
The immeasurable rose ;

From hillsides plumed with pine, and heights wind-  
worn

That feel the reflux morn,  
Or where the moon's face warm and passionate  
Burns, and men's hearts grow great,  
And the swoln eyelids labor with sweet tears,  
And in their burning ears

Sound throbs like flame, and in their eyes new  
     light  
 Kindles the trembling night ;  
 From faint illumined fields and starry valleys  
     Wherefrom the hill-wind sallies,  
 From Vallombrosa, from Valdarno raise  
     One Tuscan tune of praise.  
 O lordly city of the field of death,  
     Praise him with equal breath,  
 From sleeping streets and gardens, and the stream  
     That threads them as a dream  
 Threads without light the unravelled ways of sleep  
     With eyes that smile or weep ;  
 From the sweet sombre beauty of wave and wall  
     That fades and does not fall ;  
 From colored domes and cloisters fair with fame,  
     Praise thou and thine his name.  
 Thou too, O little laurelled town of towers,  
     Clothed with the flame of flowers,  
 From windy ramparts girdled with young gold,  
     From thy sweet hillside fold  
 Of wallflowers and the acacia's belted bloom  
     And every blowing plume,  
 Halls that saw Dante speaking, chapels fair  
     As the outer hills and air,  
 Praise him who feeds the fire that Dante fed,  
     Our highest heroic head,  
 Whose eyes behold through floated cloud and flame  
     The maiden face of fame  
 Like April's in Valdelsa ; fair as flowers,  
     And patient as the hours ;  
 Sad with slow sense of time, and bright with faith  
     That levels life and death ;  
 The final fame, that with a foot sublime  
     Treads down reluctant time ;  
 The fame that waits and watches and is wise,  
     A virgin with chaste eyes,  
 A goddess who takes hands with great men's grief ;  
     Praise her, and him, our chief.  
 Praise him, O Siena, and thou her deep green spring,  
     O Fonte Branda, sing :  
 Shout from the red clefts of thy fiery crags,  
     Shake out thy flying flags

In the long wind that streams from hill to hill ;  
 Bid thy full music fill  
 The desolate red waste of sunset air  
 And fields the old time saw fair,  
 But now the hours ring void through ruined lands,  
 Wild work of mortal hands ;  
 Yet through thy dead Maremma let his name  
 Take flight and pass in flame,  
 And the red ruin of disastrous hours  
 Shall quicken into flowers.  
 Praise him, O fiery child of sun and sea,  
 Naples, who bade thee be ;  
 For till he sent the swords that scourge and save,  
 Thou wast not, but thy grave.  
 But more than all these praise him and give thanks,  
 Thou, from thy Tiber's banks,  
 From all thine hills and from thy supreme dome,—  
 Praise him, O risen Rome !  
 Let all thy children cities at thy knee  
 Lift up their voice with thee,  
 Saying, “ For thy love's sake and our perished grief  
 We laud thee, O our chief ! ”  
 Saying, “ For thine hand and help when hope was  
 dead  
 We thank thee, O our head ! ”  
 Saying, “ For thy voice and face within our sight  
 We bless thee, O our light ;  
 For waters cleansing us from days defiled  
 We praise thee, O our child ! ”

So with an hundred cities' mouths in one  
 Praising thy supreme son,  
 Son of thy sorrow, O mother, O maid and mother,  
 Our queen, who serve none other,  
 Our lady of pity and mercy, and full of grace,  
 Turn otherwhere thy face,  
 Turn for a little and look what things are these  
 Now fallen before thy knees ;  
 Turn upon them thine eyes who hated thee,  
 Behold what things they be,  
 Italia : these are stubble that were steel,  
 Dust, or a turning wheel ;

As leaves, as snow, as sand, that were so strong ;  
 And howl, for all their song,  
 And wail, for all their wisdom ; they that were  
 So great, they are all stript bare ;  
 They are all made empty of beauty, and all abhorred ;  
 They are shivered, and their sword ;  
 They are slain who slew, they are heartless who were  
 wise ;

Yea, turn on these thine eyes,  
 O thou, soliciting with soul sublime  
 The obscure soul of time,  
 Thou, with the wounds thy holy body bears  
 From broken swords of theirs,  
 Thou, with the sweet swoln eyelids that have bled  
 Tears for thy thousands dead,  
 And upon these, whose swords drank up like dew  
 The sons of thine they slew,  
 These, whose each gun blasted with murdering mouth  
 Live flowers of thy fair south,  
 These, whose least evil told in alien ears  
 Turned men's whole blood to tears,  
 These, whose least sin remembered for pure shame  
 Turned all those tears to flame,  
 Even upon these, when breaks the extreme blow  
 And all the world cries woe,  
 When heaven reluctant rains long-suffering fire  
 On these and their desire,  
 When his wind shakes them and his waters whelm  
 Who rent thy robe and realm,  
 When they that poured thy dear blood forth as wine  
 Pour forth their own for thine,  
 On these, on these have mercy ; not in hate,  
 But full of sacred fate,  
 Strong from the shrine and splendid from the god,  
 Smite, with no second rod.  
 Because they spared not, do thou rather spare :  
 Be not one thing they were.  
 Let not one tongue of theirs who hate thee say  
 That thou wast even as they.  
 Because their hands were bloody, be thine white ;  
 Show light where they shed night :  
 Because they are foul, be thou the rather pure ;  
 Because they are feeble, endure ;

Because they had no pity, have thou pity.

And thou, O supreme city,  
 O priestless Rome that shalt be, take in trust  
 Their names, their deeds, their dust,  
 Who held life less than thou wert ; be the least  
 To thee indeed a priest,  
 Priest and burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice  
 Given without prayer or price,  
 A holier immolation than men wist,  
 A costlier eucharist,  
 A sacrament more saving ; bend thine head  
 Above these many dead  
 Once, and salute with thine eternal eyes  
 Their lowest head that lies.  
 Speak from thy lips of immemorial speech  
 If but one word for each.  
 Kiss but one kiss on each thy dead son's mouth  
 Fallen dumb or north or south ;  
 And laying but once thine hand on brow and breast,  
 Bless them, through whom thou art blest.  
 And saying in ears of these thy dead " Well done,"  
 Shall they not hear, " O son ?"  
 And bowing thy face to theirs made pale for thee,  
 Shall the shut eyes not see ?  
 Yea, through the hollow-hearted world of death,  
 As light, as blood, as breath,  
 Shall there not flash and flow the fiery sense,  
 The pulse of prescience ?  
 Shall not these know as in times overpast  
 Thee loftiest to the last ?  
 For times and wars shall change, kingdoms and creeds,  
 And dreams of men, and deeds ;  
 Earth shall grow gray with all her golden things,  
 Pale peoples and hoar kings ;  
 But though her thrones and towers of nations fall,  
 Death has no part in all ;  
 In the air, nor in the imperishable sea,  
 Nor heaven, nor truth, nor thee.  
 Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie,  
 But live thou though they die ;  
 Let their flags fade as flowers that storm can mar,  
 But thine be like a star ;

Let England's, if it float not for men free,  
     Fall, and forget the sea ;  
 Let France's, if it shadow a hateful head,  
     Drop as a leaf drops dead ;  
 Thine let what storm soever smite the rest  
     Smite as it seems him best ;  
 Thine let the wind that can, by sea or land,  
     Wrest from thy banner-hand.  
 Die they in whom dies freedom, die and cease,  
     Though the world weep for these ;  
 Live thou, and love and lift when these lie dead  
     The green and white and red.

O our Republic that shalt bind in bands  
     The kingdomless far lands,  
 And link the chainless ages ; thou that wast  
     With England ere she past  
 Among the faded nations, and shalt be  
     Again, when sea to sea  
 Calls through the wind and light of morning time,  
     And throneless clime to clime  
 Makes antiphonal answer ; thou that art  
     Where one man's perfect heart  
 Burns, one man's brow is brightened for thy sake,  
     Thine, strong to make or break ;  
 O fair Republic hallowing with stretched hands  
     The limitless free lands,  
 When all men's heads for love, not fear, bow down  
     To thy sole royal crown,  
 As thou to freedom ; when man's life smells sweet,  
     And at thy bright swift feet  
 A bloodless and a bondless world is laid ;  
     Then, when thy men are made,  
 Let these indeed as we in dreams behold  
     One chosen of all thy fold,  
 One of all fair things fairest, one exalt  
     Above all fear or fault,  
 One unforgetful of unhappier men  
     And us who loved her then ;  
 With eyes that outlook suns and dream on graves ;  
     With voice like quiring waves ;  
 With heart the holier for their memories' sake  
     Who slept that she might wake ;



With breast the sweeter for that sweet blood lost,  
 And all the milkless cost ;  
 Lady of earth, whose large equality  
 Bends but to her and thee ;  
 Equal with heaven, and infinite of years,  
 And splendid from quenched tears ;  
 Strong with old strength of great things fallen and  
 fled,  
 Diviner for her dead ;  
 Chaste of all stains and perfect from all scars,  
 Above all storms and stars,  
 All winds that blow through time, all waves that  
 foam,—  
 Our Capitolian Rome.

### THALASSIUS.

UPON the flowery forefront of the year,  
 One wandering by the gray-green April sea  
 Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand,  
 Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewellery  
 Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer  
 Along the foam-flowered strand,  
 Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land  
 Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,  
 A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that gleamed  
 To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,  
 Too sure of either love for either's fear,  
 Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed  
 Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but fair  
 As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,  
 That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea  
 The last time ere that year,  
 Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë  
 Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright sphere  
 Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence  
 trod  
 The live sun's very god,  
 Across the foam-bright water-ways that are  
 As heavenlier heavens, with star for answering star ;

And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth  
 Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,  
 And heard above afar  
 A noise of songs and wind-enamored wings,  
 And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,  
 And round the resonant radiance of his car  
 Where depth is one with height,  
 Light heard as music, music seen as light ;  
 And with that second moondawn of the spring's  
 That fosters the first rose,  
 A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows  
 Was born out of the world of sunless things  
 That round the round earth flows and ebbs and  
 flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea,  
 And took to foster like a graft of earth,  
 Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest  
 birth,  
 Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free ;  
 A warrior gray with glories more than years,  
 Though more of years than change the quick to  
 dead  
 Had rained their light and darkness on his head ;  
 A singer that in time's and memory's ears  
 Should leave such words to sing as all his peers  
 Might praise with hallowing heat of rapturous tears,  
 Till all the days of human flight were fled.  
 And at his knees his fosterling was fed,  
 Not with man's wine and bread,  
 Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and fears,  
 But food of deep memorial days long sped ;  
 For bread with wisdom, and with song for wine,  
 Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.  
 And from his grave glad lips the boy would gather  
 Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than gold,  
 More sweet than bees make of the breathing heather,  
 That he, as glad and bold,  
 Might drink as they, and keep his spirit from cold.  
 And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair  
 As his own father's risen on the eastern air,  
 And that less white brow-binding bay-leaf bloom,  
 More than all flowers his father's eyes relume ;

And those high songs he heard,  
 More than all notes of any landward bird,  
 More than all sounds less free  
 Than the wind's quiring to the choral sea.

High things the high song taught him : how the  
 breath,  
 Too frail for life, may be more strong than death ;  
 And this poor flash of sense in life, that gleams  
 As a ghost's glory in dreams,  
 More stabile than the world's own heart's root  
 seems,  
 By that strong faith of lordliest love, which gives  
 To death's own sightless-seeming eyes a light  
 Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier might,  
 That shines or strikes from any man that lives ;  
 How he that loves life overmuch shall die  
 The dog's death, utterly ;  
 And he that much less loves it than he hates  
 All wroug-doing that is done,  
 Anywhere always underneath the sun,  
 Shall live a mightier life than time's or fate's.  
 One fairer thing he showed him, and in might  
 More strong than day and night,  
 Whose strengths build up time's towering period ;  
 Yea, one thing stronger and more high than God,  
 Which, if man had not, then should God not be :  
 And that was Liberty.  
 And gladly should man die to gain, he said,  
 Freedom ; and gladlier, having lost, lie dead.  
 For man's earth was not, nor the sweet sea-waves  
 His, nor his own land, nor its very graves,  
 Except they bred not, bore not, hid not slaves :  
 But all of all that is,  
 Were one man free in body and soul, were his.

And the song softened, even as heaven by night  
 Softens, from sunnier down to starrier light,  
 And with its moon-bright breath  
 Blessed life for death's sake, and for life's sake  
 death ;  
 Till as the moon's own beam and breath confuse,  
 In one clear hueless haze of glimmering hues,

The sea's line, and the land's line, and the sky's,  
 And light for love of darkness almost dies,  
 As darkness only lives for light's dear love,  
 Whose hands the robe of night is woven of :  
 So in that heaven of wondrous words were life  
 And death brought out of strife ;  
 Yea, by that strong spell of serene increase,  
 Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind at morn  
 Flashes, and even with lightning of the wind  
 Night's thick-spun web is thinned,  
 And all its weft unwoven and overworn  
 Shrinks, as might love from scorn.  
 And as when wind and light, on water and land,  
 Leap as twin gods from heavenward hand in hand,  
 And with the sound and splendor of their leap  
 Strike darkness dead, and daunt the spirit of sleep,  
 And burn it up with fire ;  
 So with the light that lightened from the lyre,  
 Was all the bright heat in the child's heart stirred,  
 And blown with blasts of music into flame,  
 Till even his sense became  
 Fire, as the sense that fires the singing bird,  
 Whose song calls night by name.  
 And in the soul within the sense began  
 The manlike passion of a godlike man,  
 And in the sense within the soul again  
 Thoughts that made men of gods, and gods of men.

For love the high song taught him,—love that  
 turns  
 God's heart toward man as man's to Godward ; love  
 That life and death and life are fashioned of,  
 From the first breath that burns  
 Half-kindled on the flower-like yeanling's lip  
 So light and faint that life seems like to slip,  
 To that yet weaklier drawn  
 When sunset dies of night's devouring dawn ;  
 But the man dying not wholly as all men dies  
 If aught be left of his in live men's eyes  
 Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise ;

If aught of deed or word  
 Be seen for all time, or of all time heard.  
 Love, that though body and soul were overthrown,  
 Should live for love's sake of itself alone,  
 Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and  
     dead,  
 Not wholly annihilated.  
 Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that the pyre  
 Drops, and forgets the thing was once afire,  
 And gave its heart to feed the pile's full flame  
 Till its own heart its own heat overcame,  
 Outlives its own life, though by scarce a span,  
 As such men dying outlive themselves in man,  
 Outlive themselves forever ; if the heat  
 Outburn the heart that kindled it, the sweet  
 Outlast the flower whose soul it was, and flit  
 Forth of the body of it  
 Into some new shape of a strange perfume  
 More potent than its light live spirit of bloom,—  
 How shall not something of that soul re-live,  
 That only soul that had such gifts to give  
 As lighten something even of all men's doom,  
 Even from the laboring womb,  
 Even to the seal set on the unopening tomb ?  
 And these the loving light of song and love  
 Shall wrap and lap round, and impend above,  
 Imperishable ; and all springs born illumine  
 Their sleep with brighter thoughts than wake the  
     dove  
 To music, when the hillside winds resume  
 The marriage-song of heather-flower and broom  
 And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him,—hate of all  
 That brings or holds in thrall  
 Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God began,  
 The holy body and sacred soul of man.  
 And wheresoever a curse was, or a chain,  
 A throne for torment or a crown for bane  
 Rose, moulded out of poor men's molten pain,  
 There, said he, should man's heaviest hate be set  
 Inexorably, to faint not or forget

Till the last warmth bled forth of the last vein  
 In flesh that none should call a king's again,  
 Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that plague-strike  
     air  
 Leave the last bone of all the carrion bare.

And hope the high song taught him,—hope  
     whose eyes  
 Can sound the seas unsoundable, the skies  
 Inaccessible of eyesight ; that can see  
 What earth beholds not, hear what wind and sea  
 Hear not, and speak what all these crying in one  
 Can speak not to the sun.  
 For in her sovereign eyelight all things are  
 Clear as the closest seen and kindlier star  
 That marries morn and even and winter and spring  
 With one love's golden ring.  
 For she can see the days of man, the birth  
 Of good, and death of evil things on earth  
 Inevitable and infinite, and sure  
 As present pain is, or herself is pure.  
 Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all things  
 That lighten from before Time's thunderous wings  
 Through the awful circle of wheelwinged periods,  
 The tempest of the twilight of all gods ;  
 And, higher than all the circling course they ran,  
 The sundawn of the spirit that was man.

And fear the song, too, taught him,—fear to be  
 Worthless the dear love of the wind and sea  
 That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew reared  
 In rocks of man's foot feared,  
 Where naught of wingless life may sing or shine.  
 Fear to wax worthless of that heaven he had  
 When all the life in all his limbs was glad,  
 And all the drops in all his veins were wine,  
 And all the pulses music ; when his heart,  
 Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea bear part  
 In one live song's reiteration, and they bore :  
 Fear to go crownless of the flower he wore  
 When the winds loved him, and the waters knew  
 The blithest life that clove their blithe life through

With living limbs exultant, or held strife  
 More amorous than all dalliance aye anew  
 With the bright breath and strength of their large  
     life,  
 With all strong wrath of all sheer winds that blew,  
 All glories of all storms of the air that fell  
 Prone, ineluctable,  
 With roar from heaven of revel, and with hue  
 As of a heaven turned hell.  
 For when the red blast of their breath had made  
 All heaven aflush with light more dire than shade,  
 He felt it in his blood and eyes and hair  
 Burn as if all the fires of the earth and air  
 Had laid strong hold upon his flesh, and stung  
 The soul behind it as with serpent's tongue,  
 Forked like the loveliest lightnings : nor could bear  
 But hardly, half distraught with strong delight,  
 The joy that like a garment wrapped him round,  
 And lapped him over and under  
 With raiment of great light,  
 And rapture of great sound  
 At every loud leap earthward of the thunder  
 From heaven's most furthest bound :  
 So seemed all heaven in hearing and in sight,  
 Alive and mad with glory and angry joy,  
 That something of its marvellous mirth and might  
 Moved even to madness, fledged as even for flight,  
 The blood and spirit of one but mortal boy.

So, clothed with love, and fear that love makes  
     great,  
 And armed with hope and hate,  
 He set first foot upon the spring-flowered ways  
 That all feet pass and praise.  
 And one dim dawn between the winter and spring,  
 In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven and earth  
 To pnt back April that had borne his birth  
 From sunward on her sunniest showerstruck wing,  
 With tears and laughter for the dewdropt thing,  
 Slight as indeed a dewdrop, by the sea  
 One met him lovelier than all men may be,  
 God-featured, with god's eyes ; and in their might  
 Somewhat that drew men's own to mar their sight,

Even of all eyes drawn toward him ; and his mouth  
 Was as the very rose of all men's youth,  
 One rose of all the rose-beds in the world :  
 But round his brows the curls were snakes that  
     curled,  
 And like his tongue a serpent's ; and his voice  
 Speaks death, and bids rejoice.  
 Yet then he spake no word, seeming as dumb,  
 A dumb thing mild and hurtless ; nor at first  
 From his bowed eyes seemed any light to come,  
 Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to thirst :  
 But as one blind and mute in mild, sweet wise,  
 Pleading for pity of piteous lips and eyes,  
 He strayed with faint, bare, lily-lovely feet,  
 Helpless, and flower-like sweet :  
 Nor might man see, not having word hereof,  
 That this of all gods was the great god Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a little child  
 That well-nigh wept for wonder that it smiled,  
 And was so feeble and fearful, with soft speech  
 The youth bespake him softly ; but there fell  
 From the sweet lips no sweet word audible  
 That ear or thought might reach ;  
 No sound to make the dim cold silence glad,  
 No breath to thaw the hard harsh air with heat ;  
 Only the saddest smile of all things sweet,  
 Only the sweetest smile of all things sad.

And so they went together one green way  
 Till April dying made free the world for May ;  
 And on his guide suddenly Love's face turned,  
 And in his blind eyes burned  
 Hard light and heat of laughter ; and like flame  
 That opens in a mountain's ravening mouth  
 To blar and sear the sunlight from the south,  
 His mute mouth opened, and his first word came :  
 " Knowest thou me now by name ?"  
 And all his stature waxed immeasurable,  
 As of one shadowing heaven and lightening hell ;  
 And statelier stood he than a tower that stands  
 And darkens with its darkness far-off sands



Whereon the sky leans red ;  
 And with a voice that stilled the winds he said,—  
 “ I am he that was thy lord before thy birth,  
 I am he that is thy lord till thou turn earth :  
 I make the night more dark, and all the morrow  
 Dark as the night whose darkness was my breath :  
 O fool, my name is Sorrow :  
 Thou fool, my name is Death.”

And he that heard spake not, and looked right on  
 Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night, toward many a wearier  
 day,  
 His spirit bore his body down its way.  
 Through many a day, toward many a wearier night,  
 His soul sustained his sorrows in her sight.  
 And earth was bitter, and heaven, and even the sea,  
 Sorrowful even as he.  
 And the wind helped not, and the sun was dumb ;  
 And with too long strong stress of grief to be,  
 His heart grew scar and numb.

And one bright eve ere summer in autumn sank,  
 At star-dawn standing on a gray sea-bank  
 He felt the wind fitfully shift and heave  
 As toward a stormier eve ;  
 And all the wan wide sea shuddered ; and earth  
 Shook underfoot, as toward some timeless birth,  
 Intolerable and inevitable ; and all  
 Heaven, darkling, trembled like a stricken thrall ;  
 And far out of the quivering east, and far  
 From past the moonrise and its guiding star,  
 Began a noise of tempest, and a light  
 That was not of the lightning ; and a sound  
 Rang with it round and round,  
 That was not of the thunder ; and a flight  
 As of blown clouds by night,  
 That was not of them ; and with songs and cries  
 That sang and shrieked their soul out at the skies,  
 A shapeless earthly storm of shapes began  
 From all ways round to move in on the man,

Clamorous against him silent ; and their feet  
 Where as the winds are fleet,  
 And their shrill songs were as wild birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth was wronged,  
 And all the host of all men driven afoam  
 By the red hand of Rome,  
 Round some fierce amphitheatre over-thronged  
 With fair clear faces full of bloodier lust  
 Than swells and stings the tiger when his mood  
 Is fieriest after blood,  
 And drunk with trampling of the murderous must  
 That soaks and stains the tortuous close-coiled wood  
 Made monstrous with its myriad-mustering brood,  
 Face by fair face panted and gleamed and pressed,  
 And breast by passionate breast  
 Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as they quaffed  
 The red ripe full fume of the deep live draught,  
 The sharp quick reek of keen fresh bloodshed, blown  
 Through the dense deep drift up to the emperor's  
     throne  
 From the under steaming sands,  
 With clamor of all-applausive throats and hands,  
 Mingling in mirthful time  
 With shrill, blithe mockeries of the lithe-limbed  
     mime ;  
 So from somewhence far forth of the un beholden,  
 Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,  
 Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and  
     golden,  
 With sound of chiming waves that drown the  
     thunder,  
 Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,  
 Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,  
 Terrible ; firs bowed down as briers or palms  
 Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze  
 Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and storms of  
     psalms ;  
 Red hands rent up the roots of old-world trees,  
 Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas  
 Made mad the moonless and infuriate air  
 That, ravening, revelled in the riotous hair  
 And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him ; and his heart,  
 As out of sleep suddenly struck a-start,  
 Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs, and grief  
 Was as a last year's leaf  
 Blown dead far down the wind's way ; and he set  
 His pale mouth to the brightest mouth it met  
 That laughed for love against his lips, and bade  
 Follow ; and in following, all his blood grew glad  
 And as again a seabird's ; for the wind  
 Took him to bathe him deep round breast and brow ;  
 Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and thinned,  
 But as the brightest bay-flower blown on bough,  
 Set springing toward it singing : and they rode  
 By many a vine-leafed, many a rose-hung road,  
 Exalt with exaltation ; many a night  
 Set all its stars upon them as for spies  
 On many a moon-bewildering mountain height  
 Where he rode only by the fierier light  
 Of his dread lady's hot, sweet hungering eyes.  
 For the moon wandered witless of her way,  
 Spell-stricken by strong magic in such wise  
 As wizards use to set the stars astray.  
 And in his ears the music that makes mad  
 Beat always ; and what way the music bade,  
 That alway rode he ; nor was any sleep  
 His, nor from height nor deep.  
 But heaven was as red iron, slumberless,  
 And had no heart to bless ;  
 And earth lay sear and darkling as distraught,  
 And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn and even,  
 His mother, passing forth of her fair heaven,  
 With goodlier gifts and all save gods can give  
 From earth or from the heaven where sea-things  
     live,  
 With shine of sea-flowers through the bay-leaf braid  
 Woven for a crown her foam-white hands had made  
 To crown him with land's laurel and sea dew,  
 Sought the sea-bird that was her boy : but he  
 Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,  
 Riding the red ways of the revel through  
 Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's crownless crew.

Till on some winter's dawn of some dim year  
 He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip  
 Slide, and the green rein slip,  
 And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave ear  
 If sound from landward hailed him, dire or dear ;  
 And passing forth of all those fair fierce ranks  
 Back to the gray sea-banks,  
 Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the steep,  
 Fell after many sleepless dreams on sleep.

And in his sleep the dun green light was shed  
 Heavily round his head  
 That through the vale of sea falls fathom-deep,  
 Blurred like a lamp's that when the night drops  
 dead  
 Dies ; and his eyes gat grace of sleep to see  
 The deep divine dark day-shine of the sea,  
 Dense water-walls and clear dusk water-ways,  
 Broad-based, or branching as a sea-flower sprays  
 That side or this dividing ; and anew  
 The glory of all her glories that he knew.  
 And in sharp rapture of recovering tears  
 He woke on fire with yearnings of old years,  
 Pure as one purged of pain that passion bore,  
 Ill child of bitter mother ; for his own  
 Looked laughing toward him from her mid-sea  
 throne,  
 Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same joy began,  
 Of child that made him man,  
 And, turned again from all hearts else on quest,  
 He communed with his own heart, and had rest.  
 And like the sea-winds upon loud waters ran  
 His days and dreams together, till the joy  
 Burned in him of the boy ;  
 Till the earth's great comfort and the sweet sea's  
 breath  
 Breathed and blew life in where was heartless  
 death,—  
 Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days, where strife  
 Of thought and flesh made mock of death and life.

And grace returned upon him of his birth  
 Where heaven was mixed with heavenlike sea and  
     earth ;  
 And song short forth strong wings that took the sun  
 From inward, fledged with might of sorrow and  
     mirth,  
 And father's fire made mortal in his son.  
 Nor was not spirit of strength in blast and breeze  
 To exalt again the sun's child and the sea's ;  
 For, as wild mares in Thessaly grow great  
 With child of ravishing winds, that violate  
 Their leaping length of limb with manes like fire,  
 And eyes outburning heaven's  
 With fires more violent than the lightning levin's,  
 And breath drained out and desperate of desire,  
 Even so the spirit in him, when winds grew strong,  
 Grew great with child of song.  
 Nor less than when his veins first leapt for joy  
 To draw delight in such as burns a boy,  
 Now, too, the soul of all his senses felt  
 The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses dealt  
 Through nerve and jubilant vein  
 As from the love and largess of old time ;  
 And with his heart again  
 The tidal throb of all the tides keep rhyme,  
 And charm him from his own soul's separate sense  
 With infinite and invasive influence,  
 That made strength sweet in him, and sweetness  
     strong,  
 Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day, when brighter sea-wind blew,  
 And louder sea-shine lightened, for the waves  
 Were full of godhead and the light that saves,  
 His father's and their spirit had pierced him  
     through,  
 He felt strange breath and light all round him shed  
 That bowed him down with rapture : and he knew  
 His father's hand, hallowing his humbled head,  
 And the old great voice of the old good time, that  
     said :

" Child of my sunlight, and the sea, from birth  
 A fosterling and fugitive on earth ;

Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or fire,  
 A man-child with an ungrown god's desire ;  
 Because thou hast loved not mortal more than me,  
 Thy father, and thy mother-hearted sea ;  
 Because thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold  
 Life and life's love for song, God's living gold ;  
 Because thou hast given thy flower and fire of youth  
 To feed men's hearts with visions truer than truth ;  
 Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering  
 eyes

The light that makes me music of the skies ;  
 Because thou hast heard, with world-unwearied ears,  
 The music that puts light into the spheres,—  
 Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth  
 The sound of song that mingles north and south,  
 The song of all the winds that sing of me,  
 And in thy soul the sense of all the sea."

## HERSE.

WHEN grace is given us ever to behold  
 A child some sweet months old,  
 Love, laying across our lips his finger, saith,  
 Smiling, with bated breath,  
 Hush ! for the holiest thing that lives is here,  
 And heaven's own heart how near !  
 How dare we, that may gaze not on the sun,  
 Gaze on this verier one ?  
 Heart, hold thy peace ; eyes, be cast down for  
 shame ;  
 Lips, breathe not yet its name.  
 In heaven they know what name to call it : we,  
 How should we know ? For, see !  
 The adorable sweet living marvellous  
 Strange light that lightens us  
 Who gaze, desertless of such glorious grace,  
 Full in a babe's warm face !  
 All roses that the morning rears are naught,  
 All stars not worth a thought,  
 Set this one star against them, or suppose  
 As rival this one rose.

What price could pay with earth's whole weight of  
gold

One least flushed roseleaf's fold  
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that shine  
From each warm curve and line,  
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to re-illumine  
The dappled rose-red bloom  
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet,  
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,  
That on the roses of the dawn have trod  
As they came down from God,  
And keep the flush and color that the sky  
Takes when the sun comes nigh,  
And keep the likeness of the smile their grace  
Evoked on God's own face  
When, seeing this work of his most heavenly mood,  
He saw that it was good ?  
For all its warm sweet body seems one smile,  
And mere men's love too vile  
To meet it, or with eyes that worship dims  
Read o'er the little limbs,  
Read all the book of all their beauties o'er,  
Rejoice, revere, adore,  
Bow down and worship each delight in turn,  
Laugh, wonder, yield, and yearn.  
But when our trembling kisses dare, yet dread,  
Even to draw nigh its head,  
And touch, and scarce with touch or breath sur-  
prise  
Its mild miraculous eyes  
Out of their viewless vision — O, what then,  
What may be said of men ?  
What speech may name a new-born child ? what  
word  
Earth ever spake or heard ?  
The best men's tongue that ever glory knew  
Called that a drop of dew  
Which from the breathing creature's kindly womb  
Came forth in blameless bloom.  
We have no word, as had those men most high,  
To call a baby by.  
Rose, ruby, lily, pearl of stormless seas —  
A better word than these,

A better sign it was than flower or gem

That love revealed to them :

They knew that whence comes light or quickening  
flame,

Thence only this thing came,

And only might be likened of our love

To somewhat born above,

Not even to sweetest things dropped else on earth,

Only to dew's own birth.

Nor doubt we but their sense was heavenly true,

Babe, when we gaze on you,

A dew-drop out of heaven, whose colors are

More bright than sun or star,

As now, ere watching love dare fear or hope,

Lips, hands, and eyelids ope,

And all your life is mixed with earthly leaven.

O child, what news from heaven ?

### EIGHT YEARS OLD.

#### I.

SUN, when the faltering snow-cloud fears,

Rise, let the time of year be May,

Speak now the word that April hears,

Let March have all his royal way ;

Bid all spring raise in winter's ears

All tunes her children hear or play,

Because the crown of eight glad years

On one bright head is set to-day.

#### II.

What matters cloud or sun to-day

To him who wears the wreath of years

So many, and all like flowers at play

With wind and sunshine, while his ears

Hear only song on every way ?

More sweet than spring triumphant hears

Ring through the revel-rout of May

Are these, the notes that winter fears.

#### III.

Strong-hearted winter knows and fears

The music made of love at play,



Or haply loves the tune he hears  
 From hearts fulfilled with flowering May,  
 Whose molten music thaws his ears  
 Late frozen, deaf but yesterday  
 To sounds of dying and dawning years,  
 Now quickened on his deathward way.

## IV.

For deathward now lies winter's way  
 Down the green vestibule of years  
 That each year brightens day by day  
 With flower and shower till hope scarce fears,  
 And fear grows wholly hope of May.  
 But we—the music in our ears  
 Made of love's pulses as they play,  
 The heart alone that makes it hears.

## V.

The heart it is that plays and hears  
 High salutation of to-day.  
 Tongue falters, hand shrinks back, song fears  
 Its own unworthiness to play  
 Fit music for those eight sweet years,  
 Or sing their blithe accomplished way.  
 No song quite worth a young child's ears  
 Broke ever even from birds in May.

## VI.

There beats not in the heart of May,  
 When summer hopes and springtide fears,  
 There falls not from the height of day,  
 When sunlight speaks and silence hears,  
 So sweet a psalm as children play  
 And sing, each hour of all their years,  
 Each moment of their lovely way,  
 And know not how it thrills our ears.

## VII.

Ah! child, what are we, that our ears  
 Should hear you singing on your way,  
 Should have this happiness? The years  
 Whose hurrying wings about us play

Are not like yours, whose flower-time fears  
 Naught worse than sunlit showers in May,  
 Being sinless as the spring, that hears  
 Her own heart praise her every day.

## VIII.

Yet we, too, triumph in the day  
 That bare, to entrance our eyes and ears,  
 To lighten daylight, and to play  
 Such notes as darkness knows and fears,  
 The child whose face illumines our way,  
 Whose voice lifts up the heart that hears,  
 Whose hand is as the hand of May  
 To bring us flowers from eight full years.

FEB. 4, 1882.

## “NON DOLET.”

It does not hurt. She looked along the knife  
 Smiling, and watched the thick drops mix and run  
 Down the sheer blade : not that which had been done  
 Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman wife,  
 But that which was to do yet ere the strife  
 Could end for each forever, and the sun :  
 Nor was the palm yet nor was peace yet won  
 While pain had power upon her husband's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more  
 Than bride to bridegroom : how shalt thou not  
 take  
 The gift love's blood has reddened for thy sake ?  
 Was not thy life-blood given for us before ?  
 And if love's heart-blood can avail thy need,  
 And thou not die, how should it hurt indeed ?

LINES ON THE DEATH OF EDWARD JOHN  
 TRELAWNY.

LAST high star of the years whose thunder  
 Still men's listening remembrance hears,  
 Last light left of our fathers' years,  
 Watched with honor and hailed with wonder,  
 Thee too, then, have the years borne under,  
 Thou too, then, hast regained thy peers.

Wings that warred with the winds of morning,  
Storm-winds rocking the red great dawn,  
Close at last, and a film is drawn  
Over the eyes of the storm-bird, scorning  
Now no longer the loud wind's warning,  
Waves that threaten or waves that fawn.

Peers were none of thee left us living,  
Peers of theirs we shall see no more,  
Eight years over the full fourscore  
Knew thee : now shalt thou sleep, forgiving  
All griefs past of the wild world's giving,  
Moored at last on the stormless shore.

World-wide liberty's lifelong lover,  
Lover no less of the strength of song,  
Sea-king, swordsman, hater of wrong,  
Over thy dust that the dust shall cover  
Comes my song as a bird to hover,  
Borne of its will as of wings along.

Cherished of thee were this brief song's brothers  
Now that follows them, cherishing thee.  
Over the tides and the tideless sea,  
Soft as a smile of the earth our mother's,  
Flies it faster than all those others,  
First of the troop at thy tomb to be.

Memories of Greece, and the mountain's hollow.  
Guarded alone of thy loyal sword,  
Hold thy name for our hearts in ward :  
Yet more fain are our hearts to follow  
One way now with the southward swallow  
Back to the grave of the man their lord.

Heart of hearts, art thou moved not, hearing  
Surely, if hearts of the dead may hear,  
Whose true heart it is now draws near ?  
Surely the sense of it thrills thee, cheering  
Darkness and death with the news now nearing,—  
Shelley, Trelawny rejoins thee here.

## OFF SHORE.

WHEN the might of the summer  
 Is most on the sea ;  
 When the days overcome her  
 With joy but to be,  
 With rapture of royal enchantment, and sorcery that  
 sets her not free,—

But for hours upon hours  
 As a thrall she remains  
 Spell-bound as with flowers,  
 And content in their chains,  
 And her loud steeds fret not, and lift not a lock of  
 their deep white manes ;

Then only, far under  
 In the depths of her hold,  
 Some gleam of its wonder  
 Man's eye may behold,  
 Its wild weed forests of crimson and russet and olive  
 and gold.

Still deeper and dimmer  
 And goodlier they glow  
 For the eyes of the swimmer  
 Who scans them below  
 As he crosses the zone of their flowerage that knows  
 not of sunshine and snow.

Soft blossomless frondage  
 And foliage that gleams  
 As to prisoners in bondage  
 The light of their dreams,  
 The desire of a dawn un beholden, with hope on the  
 wings of its beams.

Not as prisoners entombed,  
 Waxen haggard and wizen,  
 But consoled and illumed  
 In the depths of their prison  
 With delight of the light everlasting, and vision of  
 dawn on them risen,—

From the banks and the beds  
 Of the waters divine,  
 They lift up their heads,  
 And the flowers of them shine  
 Through the splendor of darkness that clothes them,  
 of water that glimmers like wine.

Bright bank over bank  
 Making glorious the gloom,  
 Soft rank upon rank,  
 Strange bloom after bloom,  
 They kindle the liquid low twilight, the dusk of the  
 dim sea's womb.

Through the subtile and tangible  
 Gloom without form,  
 Their branches, infrangible  
 Even of storm,  
 Spread softer their sprays than the shoots of the  
 woodland when April is warm.

As the flight of the thunder, full  
 Charged with its word,  
 Dividing the wonderful  
 Depths like a bird,  
 Speaks wrath and delight to the heart of the night  
 that exults to have heard,—

So swiftly, though soundless  
 In silence's ear,  
 Light, winged from the boundless  
 Blue depths full of cheer,  
 Speaks joy to the heart of the waters that part not  
 before him, but hear.

Light perfect and visible,  
 Godhead of God,  
 God indivisible,  
 Lifts but his rod,  
 And the shadows are scattered in sunder, and dark-  
 ness is light at his nod.

At the touch of his wand,  
 At the nod of his head  
 From the spaces beyond  
 Where the dawn hath her bed;  
 Earth, water, and air are transfigured, and rise as  
 one risen from the dead.

He puts forth his hand,  
 And the mountains are thrilled  
 To the heart, as they stand  
 In his presence, fulfilled  
 With his glory that utters his grace upon earth, and  
 her sorrows are stilled.

The moan of her travail  
 That groans for the light  
 Till dayspring unravel  
 The web of the night,  
 At the sound of the strings of the music of morning,  
 falls dumb with delight.

He gives forth his word,  
 And the word that he saith,  
 Ere well it be heard,  
 Strikes darkness to death ;  
 For the thought of his heart is the sunrise, and dawn  
 as the sound of his breath.

And the strength of its pulses,  
 That passion makes proud,  
 Confounds and convulses  
 The depths of the cloud  
 Of the darkness that heaven was ingirt with, divided  
 and rent as a shroud,—

As the veil of the shrine  
 Of the temple of old,  
 When darkness divine  
 Over noonday was rolled ;  
 So the heart of the night by the pulse of the light is  
 convulsed and controlled.

And the sea's heart, groaning  
 For glories withdrawn,

And the waves' mouths, moaning  
 All night for the dawn,  
 Are uplift as the hearts and the mouths of the singers  
 on lea-side and lawn.

And the sound of the quiring  
 Of all these as one,  
 Desired and desiring  
 Till dawn's will be done,  
 Fills full with delight of them heaven till it burns as  
 the heart of the sun ;

Till the waves, too, inherit,  
 And waters take part  
 In the sense of the spirit  
 That breathes from his heart,  
 And are kindled with music, as fire when the lips of  
 the morning part,—

With music unheard  
 In the light of her lips,  
 In the life-giving word  
 Of the dewfall that drips  
 On the grasses of earth, and the wind that enkindles  
 the wings of the ships.

White glories of wings  
 As of seafaring birds,  
 That flock from the springs  
 Of the sunrise in herds,  
 With the wind for a herdsman, and hasten or halt at  
 the change of his words ;

As the watchwords change,  
 When the wind's note shifts,  
 And the skies grow strange,  
 And the white squall drifts  
 Up sharp from the sea-line, vexing the sea till the  
 low cloud lifts.

At the charge of his word  
 Bidding pause, bidding haste,

When the ranks are stirred  
And the lines displaced,  
They scatter as wild swans, parting adrift on the wan  
green waste.

At the hush of his word,  
In a pause of his breath  
When the waters have heard  
His will that he saith,  
They stand as a flock penned close in its fold for  
division of death.

As a flock by division  
Of death to be thinned,  
As the shades in a vision  
Of spirits that sinned ;  
So glimmer their shrouds and their sheetings as  
clouds on the stream of the wind.

But the sun stands fast,  
And the sea burns bright,  
And the flight of them past  
Is no more than the flight  
Of the snow-soft swarm of serene wings poised and  
afloat in the light.

Like flowers upon flowers,  
In a festival way,  
When hours after hours  
Shed grace on the day,  
White blossom-like butterflies hover and gleam  
through the snows of the spray.

Like snow-colored petals  
Of blossoms that flee  
From storm that unsettles  
The flowers as the tree.  
They flutter, a legion of flowers on the wing, through  
the field of the sea.

Through the furrowless field  
Where the foam-blossoms blow,



And the secrets are sealed  
 Of their harvest below,  
 They float in the path of the sunbeams, as flakes or  
 as blossoms of snow.

Till the sea's ways darken,  
 And the god, withdrawn,  
 Give ear not, or hearken  
 If prayer on him fawn,  
 And the sun's self seem but a shadow, the noon as a  
 ghost of the dawn.

No shadow, but rather,  
 God, father of song,  
 Show grace to me, Father  
 God, loved of me long,  
 That I lose not the light of thy face, that my trust  
 in thee work me not wrong,—

While yet I make forward  
 With face toward thee,  
 Not turned yet in shoreward,  
 Be thine upon me ;  
 Be thy light on my forehead, or ever I turn it again  
 from the sea.

As a kiss on my brow  
 Be the light of thy grace,  
 Be thy glance on me now  
 From the pride of thy place :  
 As the sign of a sire to a son, be the light on my face  
 of thy face.

Thou wast father of olden  
 Times hailed and adored.  
 And the sense of thy golden  
 Great harp's monochord  
 Was the joy in the soul of the singers that hailed thee  
 for master and lord.

Fair father of all  
 In thy ways that have trod,  
 That have risen at thy call,

That have thrilled at thy nod,  
 Arise, shine, lighten upon me, O sun ! that we see to  
 be God.

As my soul has been dutiful  
 Only to thee,  
 O God ! most beautiful,  
 Lighten thou me,  
 As I swim through the dim long rollers, with eyelids  
 uplift from the sea.

Be praised and adored of us,  
 All in accord,  
 Father and lord of us  
 Always adored,  
 The slayer, and the stayer, and the harper, the light  
 of us all, and our lord.

At the sound of thy lyre,  
 At the touch of thy rod,  
 Air quickens to fire  
 By the foot of thee trod,  
 The savior, and healer, and singer, the living and  
 visible God.

The years are before thee  
 As shadows of thee,  
 As men that adore thee,  
 As cloudlets that flee :  
 But thou art the God, and thy kingdom is heaven,  
 and thy shrine is the sea.

### EVENING ON THE BROADS.

OVER two shadowless waters, adrift as a pinnace in  
 peril,  
 Hangs as in heavy suspense, charged with irreso-  
 lute light,  
 Softly the soul of the sunset upholden awhile on the  
 sterile  
 Waves and wastes of the land, half repossessed by  
 the night.

Inland glimmer the shallows asleep, and afar in the  
 breathless  
 Twilight : yonder the depths darken afar and  
 asleep.  
 Slowly the semblance of death out of heaven de-  
 scends on the deathless  
 Waters : hardly the light lives on the face of the  
 deep,—  
 Hardly, but here for a while. All over the gray soft  
 shallow  
 Hover the colors and clouds of the twilight, void  
 of a star.  
 As a bird unfledged is the broad-winged night, whose  
 winglets are callow  
 Yet, but soon with their plumes will she cover her  
 brood from afar,—  
 Cover the brood of her worlds that cumber the skies  
 with their blossom,  
 Thick as the darkness of leaf-shadowed spring is  
 encumbered with flowers.  
 World upon world is enwound in the bountiful girth  
 of her bosom,  
 Warm and lustrous with life lovely to look on as ours.  
 Still is the sunset adrift as a spirit in doubt that dis-  
 sembles  
 Still with itself, being sick of division, and  
 dimmed by dismay—  
 Nay, not so ; but with love and delight beyond pas-  
 sion it trembles,  
 Fearful and fain of the night, lovely with love of  
 the day :  
 Fain and fearful of rest that is like unto death, and  
 begotten  
 Out of the womb of the tomb, born of the seed of  
 the grave :  
 Lovely with shadows of loves that are only not  
 wholly forgotten,  
 Only not wholly suppressed by the dark, as a wreck  
 by the wave.  
 Still there linger the loves of the morning and noon,  
 in a vision  
 Blindly beheld, but in vain ; ghosts that are tired,  
 and would rest.

But the glories beloved of the night rise all too dense  
     for division,  
     Deep in the depth of her breast sheltered as doves  
     in a nest.  
 Fainter the beams of the loves of the daylight season  
     enkindled  
     Wane, and the memories of hours that were fair  
     with the love of them fade ;  
 Loftier, aloft of the lights of the sunset stricken and  
     dwindled,  
 Gather the signs of the love at the heart of the night  
     new-made.  
 New-made night, new-born of the sunset, immeasur-  
     able, endless,  
     Opens the secret of love hid from of old in her  
     heart,—  
 In the deep sweet heart full-charged with faultless  
     love of the friendless  
     Spirits of men that are eased when the wheels of  
     the sun depart.  
 Still is the sunset afloat as a ship on the waters up-  
     holden  
     Full-sailed, wide-winged, poised softly forever  
     a-sway—  
 Nay, not so, but at least for a little, a while at the  
     golden  
     Limit of arching air fain for an hour to delay.  
 Here on the bar of the sand-bank, steep yet aslope to  
     the gleaming  
     Waste of the water without, waste of the water  
     within,  
 Lights overhead and lights underneath seen doubt-  
     fully dreaming  
     Whether the day be done, whether the night may  
     begin.  
 Far and afar and farther again, they falter and hover,  
     Warm on the water, and deep in the sky, and pale  
     on the cloud :  
 Colder again, and slowly remoter, afraid to recover  
     Breath, yet fain to revive, as it seems, from the  
     skirt of the shroud.  
 Faintly the heart-beats shorten and pause of the light  
     in the westward

Heaven, as eastward quicken the paces of star  
upon star  
Hurried and eager of life as a child that strains to  
the breast-ward  
Eagerly, yearning forth of the deeps where the  
ways of them are,  
Glad of the glory of the gift of their life and the  
wealth of its wonder,  
Fain of the night, and the sea, and the sweet wan  
face of the earth.  
Over them air grows deeper, intense with delight in  
them : under  
Things are thrilled in their sleep, as with sense of  
a sure new birth.  
But here by the sand-bank watching, with eyes on  
the sea-line, stranger  
Grows to me also the weight of the sea-ridge gazed  
on of me,  
Heavily heaped up, changefully changeless, void  
though of danger,  
Void not of menace, but full of the might of the  
dense dull sea.  
Like as the wave is before me, behind is the bank  
deep-drifted ;  
Yellow and thick as the bank is behind me, in  
front is the wave.  
As the wall of a prison imprisoning the mere, is the  
girth of it lifted ;  
But the rampire of water in front is erect as the  
wall of a grave.  
And the crests of it crumble and topple and change,  
but the wall is not broken :  
Standing still dry-shod, I see it as higher than my  
head,  
Moving inland alway again, reared up as in token  
Still of impending wrath still in the foam of it  
shed.  
And even in the pauses between them, dividing the  
rollers in sunder,  
High overhead seems ever the sea-line fixed as a  
mark ;  
And the shore where I stand, as a valley beholden  
of hills whence thunder

Cloud and torrent and storm, darkening the depths  
of the dark.

Up to the sea, not upon it or over it, upward from  
under

Seems he to gaze, whose eyes yearn after it here  
from the shore ;

A wall of turbid water, a-slope to the wide sky's  
wonder

Of color and cloud, it climbs, or spreads as a slanted  
floor.

And the large lights change on the face of the mere,  
like things that were living,

Winged and wonderful, beams like as birds are  
that pass and are free ;

But the light is dense as darkness, a gift withheld  
in the giving,

That lies as dead on the fierce dull face of the land-  
ward sea.

Stained and stifled and soiled, made earthlier than  
earth is and duller,

Grimly she puts back light as rejected, a thing  
put away :

No transparent rapture, a molten music of color ;

No translucent love taken and given of the  
day.

Fettered and marred and begrimed, is the light's live  
self on her falling,

As the light of a man's life lighted the fume of a  
dungeon mars :

Only she knows of the wind, when her wrath gives  
ear to him calling ;

The delight of the light she knows not, nor an-  
swers the sun or the stars.

Love she hath none to return for the luminous love  
of their giving :

None to reflect from the bitter and shallow response  
of her heart.

Yearly she feeds on her dead, yet herself seems dead  
and not living,

Or confused as a soul heavy-laden with trouble that  
will not depart.

In the sound of her speech to the darkness the moan  
of her evil remorse is,

Haply, for strong ships gnawed by the dog-toothed  
 sea-bank's fang,  
 And trampled to death by the rage of the feet of her  
 foam-lipped horses,  
 Whose manes are yellow as plague, and as ensigns  
 of pestilence hang,  
 That wave in the foul faint air of the breath of a  
 death-stricken city ;  
 So menacing heaves she the manes of her rollers  
 knotted with sand,  
 Discolored, opaque, suspended in sign as of strength  
 without pity,  
 That shake with flameless thunder the low long  
 length of the strand.  
 Here, far off in the farther extreme of the shore as  
 it lengthens  
 Northward, lonely for miles, ere ever a village be-  
 gin,  
 On the lapsing land that recedes as the growth of  
 the strong sea strengthens  
 Shoreward, thrusting farther and further its out-  
 works in,  
 Here in Shakespeare's vision, a flower of her kin for-  
 saken,  
 Lay in her golden raiment alone on the wild wave's  
 edge,  
 Surely by no shore else, but here on the bank storm-  
 shaken,  
 Perdita, bright as a dewdrop engilt of the sun on  
 the sedge.  
 Here on a shore unbeheld of his eyes, in a dream, he  
 beheld her  
 Outcast, fair as a fairy, the child of a far-off king ;  
 And over the babe-flower gently the head of a pas-  
 toral elder  
 Bowed, compassionate, hoar as the hawthorn-blos-  
 som in spring,  
 And kind as harvest in autumn : a shelter of shade  
 on the lonely  
 Shelterless unknown shore, scourged of implacable  
 waves :  
 Here, where the wind walks royal, alone in his king-  
 dom, and only

Sounds to the sedges a wail as of triumph that  
conquers and craves.

All these waters and wastes are his empire of old,  
and awaken

From barren and stagnant slumber at only the  
sound of his breath :

Yet the hunger is eased not that aches in his heart,  
nor the goal overtaken

That his wide wings yearn for, and labor as hearts  
that yearn after death.

All the solitude sighs and expects with a blind ex-  
pectation

Somewhat unknown of its own sad heart, grown  
heart-sick of strife :

Till sometime its wild heart maddens, and moans,  
and the vast ululation

Takes wing with the clouds on the waters, and  
wails to be quit of its life.

For the spirit and soul of the waste is the wind, and  
his wings with their waving

Darken and lighten the darkness and light of it  
thickened or thinned,

But the heart that impels them is even as a con-  
queror's insatiable craving

That victory can fill not, as power cannot satiate  
the want of the wind.

All these moorlands and marshes are full of his might,  
and oppose not

Aught of defence nor of barrier, of forest or pre-  
cipice piled ;

But the will of the wind works ever as his that de-  
sires what he knows not,

And the wail of his want unfulfilled is as one  
making moan for her child.

And the cry of his triumph is even as the crying of  
hunger that maddens

The heart of a strong man, aching in vain as the  
wind's heart aches ;

And the sadness itself of the land for its infinite  
solitude saddens

More for the sound than the silence athirst for the  
sound that slakes.



And the sunset at last, and the twilight are dead ;  
 and the darkness is breathless  
 With fear of the wind's breath rising that seems  
 and seems not to sleep ;  
 But a sense of the sound of it alway, a spirit unsleep-  
 ing and deathless,  
 Ghost or god, evermore moves on the face of the  
 deep.

## THE EMPEROR'S PROGRESS.

### A STUDY IN THREE STAGES.

(On the Busts of Nero in the Uffizj.)

CHILD of brighter than the morning's birth,  
 And lovelier than all smiles that may be smiled  
 Save only of little children undefiled,  
 Sweet, perfect, witless of their own dear worth,  
 Live rose of love, mute melody of mirth,  
 Glad as a bird is when the woods are mild,  
 Adorable as is nothing save a child,  
 Hails with wide eyes and lips his life on earth,  
 His lovely life with all its heaven to be.  
 And whoso reads the name inscribed, or hears,  
 Feels his own heart a frozen well of tears,  
 Child, for deep dread and fearful pity of thee  
 Whom God would not let rather die than see  
 The incumbent horror of impending years.

## II.

Man, that wast godlike being a child, and now,  
 No less than kinglike, art no more in sooth  
 For all thy grace and lordliness of youth,  
 The crown that bids men's branded foreheads bow,  
 Much more has branded and bowed down thy brow,  
 And gnawn upon it as with fire or tooth  
 Of steel or snake so sorely, that the truth  
 Seems here to bear false witness. Is it thou,  
 Child ? and is all the summer of all thy spring  
 This ? are the smiles that drew men's kisses down  
 All faded and transfigured to the frown

That grieves thy face ? Art thou this weary thing ?

Then is no slave's load heavier than a crown,  
And such a thrall no bondman as a king.

### III.

Misery beyond all men's most miserable,  
Absolute, whole, defiant of defence,  
Inevitable, inexplicable, intense,  
More vast than heaven is high, more deep than hell,  
Past cure or charm of solace or of spell,  
Possesses and pervades the spirit and sense  
Whereto the expanse of the earth pays tribute ;  
whence  
Breeds evil only, and broods on fumes that swell  
Rank from the blood of brother and mother and wife.  
" Misery of miseries, all is misery," saith  
The heavy fair-faced hateful head, at strife  
With its own lusts that burn with feverous breath,  
Lips which the loathsome bitterness of life  
Leaves fearful of the bitterness of death.

### SIX YEARS OLD.

To H. W. M.

BETWEEN the springs of six and seven,  
'Two fresh years' fountains, clear  
Of all but golden sand for leaven,  
Child, midway passing here,  
As earth for love's sake dares bless heaven,  
So dare I bless you, dear.

Between two bright well-heads, that brighten  
With every breath that blows  
Too loud to lull, too low to frighten,  
But fain to rock, the rose,  
Your feet stand fast, your lit smiles lighten,  
That might rear flowers from snows.

You came when winds unleashed were snarling  
Behind the frost-bound hours,

A snow-bird sturdier than the starling,  
 A storm-bird fledged for showers,  
 That spring might smile to find you, darling,  
 First-born of all the flowers.

Could love make worthy things of worthless,  
 My song were worth an ear :  
 Its note should make the days most mirthless  
 The merriest of the year,  
 And wake to birth all buds yet birthless,  
 To keep your birthday, dear.

But where your birthday brightens heaven  
 No need has earth, God knows,  
 Of light or warmth to melt or leaven  
 The frost or fog that glows  
 With sevenfold heavenly lights of seven  
 Sweet springs that cleave the snows.

Could love make worthy music of you,  
 And match my Master's powers,  
 Had even my love less heart to love you,  
 A better song were ours ;  
 With all the rhymes like stars above you,  
 And all the words like flowers.

SEPT. 30, 1880.

## A PARTING SONG.

(To a friend leaving England for a year's residence  
 in Australia.)

THESE winds and suns of spring,  
 That warm with breath and wing  
 The trembling sleep of earth, till half awake  
 She laughs and blushes ere her slumber break,  
 For all good gifts they bring  
 Require one better thing,  
 For all the loans of joy they lend us, borrow  
 One sharper dole of sorrow,  
 To sunder soon by half a world of sea  
 Her son from England, and my friend from me.

Nor hope nor love nor fear  
 May speed or stay one year,  
 Nor song nor prayer may bid, as mine would fain.  
 The seasons perish and be born again,  
 Restoring all we lend,  
 Reluctant, of a friend,—  
 The voice, the hand, the presence, and the sight,  
 That lend their life and light  
 To present gladness and heart-strengthening cheer,  
 Now lent again for one reluctant year.

So much we lend indeed,  
 Perforce, by force of need,  
 So much we must ; even these things and no more,  
 The far sea sundering and the sundered shore  
 A world apart from ours,  
 So much the imperious hours ;  
 Exact, and spare not ; but no more than these  
 All earth and all her seas  
 From thought and faith of trust and truth can bor-  
 row,  
 Not memory from desire, nor hope from sorrow.

Through bright and dark and bright  
 Returns of day and night  
 I bid the swift year speed, and change and give  
 His breath of life to make the next year live  
 With sunnier suns for us,  
 A life more prosperous,  
 And laugh with flowers more fragrant, that shall see  
 A merrier March for me,  
 A rosier-girdled race of night with day,  
 A goodlier April, and a tenderer May.

For him the inverted year  
 Shall mark our seasons here  
 With alien alternation, and revive  
 This withered winter, slaying the spring alive  
 With darts more sharply drawn  
 As nearer draws the dawn,  
 In heaven transfigured over earth transformed,  
 And with our winters warmed

And wasted with our summers, till the beams  
Rise on his face that rose on Dante's dreams.

Till fourfold morning rise  
Of star-shine on his eyes,  
Dawn of the spheres that brand steep heaven across  
At height of night with semblance of a cross  
Whose grace and ghostly glory  
Poured heaven on purgatory,  
Seeing with their flamelets risen all heaven grow  
glad  
For love thereof it had  
And lovely joy of loving ; so may these  
Make bright with welcome now their southern seas.

O happy stars, whose mirth  
The saddest soul on earth  
That ever soared and sang, found strong to bless,  
Lightening his life's harsh load of heaviness  
With comfort sown like seed  
In dreams though not in deed,  
On sprinkled wastes of darkling thought divine !  
Let all your lights now shine  
With all as glorious gladness on his eyes.  
For whom indeed, and not in dream, they rise.

As those great twins of air  
Hailed once with old-world prayer  
Of all folk alway faring forth by sea,  
So now may these for grace and guidance be,  
To guard his sail, and bring  
Again to brighten spring  
The face we look for, and the hand we lack  
Still, till they light him back,  
As welcome as to first discovering eyes  
Their light rose ever, soon on his to rise.

As parting now he goes  
From snow-time back to snows,  
So back to spring from summer may next year  
Restore him, and our hearts receive him here,—  
The best good gift that spring  
Had ever grace to bring

At fortune's happiest hour of star-blest birth,  
 Back to love's home-bright earth,  
 'To eyes with eyes that commune, hand with hand,  
 And the old warm bosom of all our mother-land.

Earth and sea-wind and sea  
 And stars and sunlight be  
 Alike all prosperous for him, and all hours  
 Have all one heart, and all that heart as ours.  
 All things as good as strange,  
 Crown all the seasons' change  
 With changing flower and compensating fruit  
 From one year's ripening root ;  
 Till next year bring us, roused at spring's recall,  
 A heartier flower and goodlier fruit than all.

MARCH 26, 1880.

## BY THE NORTH SEA.

### I.

#### 1.

A LAND that is lonelier than ruin ;  
 A sea that is stranger than death ;  
 Far fields that a rose never blew in,  
 Wan waste where the winds lack breath ;  
 Waste endless and boundless, and flowerless  
 But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as free ;  
 Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless  
 To strive with the sea.

#### 2.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,  
 Far flutters the weft of the grass  
 Spun dense over desolate hollows,  
 More pale than the clouds as they pass ;  
 Thick woven as the web of a witch is  
 Round the heart of a thrall that hath sinned,  
 Whose youth and the wrecks of its riches  
 Are waifs on the wind.

## 3.

The pastures are herdless and sheepless,  
 No pasture or shelter for herds :  
 The wind is relentless and sleepless,  
 And restless and songless the birds ;  
 Their cries from afar fall breathless,  
 Their wings are as lightnings that flee ;  
 For the land has two lords that are deathless,—  
 Death's self, and the sea.

## 4.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,  
 Hold converse of desolate speech ;  
 And her waters are haggard and yellow  
 And crass with the scurf of the beach ;  
 And his garments are gray as the hoary  
 Wan sky where the day lies dim ;  
 And his power is to her, and his glory,  
 As hers unto him.

## 5.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,  
 In her glory he glows and is glad :  
 In her darkness the sound of his voice is,  
 With his breath she dilates, and is mad :  
 "If thou slay me, O death, and outlive me,  
 Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of thee."  
 "Shall I give thee not back if thou give me,  
 O sister, O sea ?"

## 6.

And year upon year dawns living,  
 And age upon age drops dead :  
 And his hand is not weary of giving,  
 And the thirst of her heart is not fed :  
 And the hunger that moans in her passion.  
 And the rage in her hunger that roars,  
 As a wolf's that the winter lay<sup>s</sup> la<sup>h</sup> on.  
 Still calls and implores.

## 7.

Her walls have no granite for gins,  
 No fortalice fronting her stands ;

But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murder  
 Are less than the banks of her sands :  
 These number their slain by the thousand ;  
 For the ship hath no surety to be,  
 When the bank is abreast of her bows, and  
 Aflush with the sea.

## 8.

No surety to stand, and no shelter  
 To dawn out of darkness but one,  
 Out of waters that hurtle and welter,  
 No succor to dawn with the sun  
 But a rest from the wind as it passes,  
 Where, hardly redeemed from the waves,  
 Lie thick as the blades of the grasses  
 The dead in their graves.

## 9.

A multitude noteless of numbers,  
 As wild weeds cast on an heap,  
 And sounder than sleep are their slumbers,  
 And softer than song is their sleep ;  
 And sweeter than all things, and stranger  
 The sense, if perchance it may be,  
 That the wind is divested of danger,  
 And scatheless the sea ;

## 10.

That the roar of the banks they breasted  
 Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,  
 And the strength of his wings that invested  
 The wind, as the strength of a bird's :  
 As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's  
 That cry to him back if he cries,  
 As over the graves and their hollows  
 Days darken and rise.

## II.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened  
 And clean of the sins that they sinned,



With a lovelier than man's life guerdoned,  
 And delight as a waves in the wind,  
 And delight as the wind's in the billow,  
 Birds pass, and deride with their glee  
 The flesh that has dust for its pillows  
 As wrecks have the sea.

## 12.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,  
 Wings flash through the dusk like beams ;  
 As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,  
 The bird in the graveyard gleams ;  
 As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens  
 When the clarions of sunrise are heard,  
 The graves that the bird's note brightens  
 Grow bright for the bird.

## 13.

As the waves of the numberless waters  
 That the wind cannot number who guides,  
 Are the sons of the shore and the daughters  
 Here lulled by the chime of the tides ;  
 And here in the press of them standing  
 We know not if these or if we  
 Live truest,—or anchored to landing,  
 Or drifted to sea.

## 14.

In the valley he named of decision,  
 No denser were multitudes met  
 When the soul of the seer in her vision  
 Saw nations for doom of them set ;  
 Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendor  
 Of judgment, the sword and the rod :  
 But the doom here of death is more tender,  
 And gentler the god.

## 15.

And gentler the wind from the dreary  
 Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,

Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,  
 From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped ;  
 And sweeter than all that we call so  
 The seal of their slumber shall be  
 Till the graves that embosom them also  
 Be sapped of the sea.

## II.

## 1.

For the heart of the waters is cruel,  
 And the kisses are dire of their lips,  
 And their waves are as fire is to fuel  
 To the strength of the seafaring ships,  
 Though the sea's eye gleam as a jewel  
 To the sun's eye back as he dips.

## 2.

Though the sun's eye flash to the sea's  
 Live light of delight and of laughter,  
 And her lips breathe back to the breeze  
 The kiss that the wind's lips waft her  
 From the sun that subsides, and sees  
 No gleam of the storm's dawn after.

## 3.

And the wastes of the wild sea-marches  
 Where the borderers are matched in their might—  
 Bleak fens that the sun's weight parches,  
 Dense waves that reject his light—  
 Change under the change-colored arches  
 Of changeless morning and night.

## 4.

The waves are as ranks enrolled  
 Too close for the storm to sever :  
 The fens lie naked and cold,  
 But their heart fails utterly never :  
 The lists are set from of old,  
 And the warfare endureth forever.

## III.

## 1.

Miles and miles and miles of desolation !  
 Leagues on leagues on leagues without a change !  
 Sign or token of some eldest nation  
 Here would make the strange land not so strange.  
 Time-forgotten, yea since time's creation,  
 Seem these borders where the seabirds range.

## 2.

Slowly, gladly, full of peace and wonder  
 Grows his heart who journeys here alone .  
 Earth and all its thoughts of earth sink under  
 Deep as deep in water sinks a stone ;  
 Hardly knows it if the rollers thunder,  
 Hardly whence the lonely wind is blown.

## 3.

Tall the plumage of the rush-flower tosses ;  
 Sharp and soft in many a curve and line,  
 Glean and glow the sea-colored marsh-mosses,  
 Salt and splendid from the circling brine ;  
 Streak on streak of glimmering sea-shine crosses  
 All the land sea-saturate as with wine.

## 4.

Far, and far between, in divers orders,  
 Clear gray steeples cleave the low gray sky ;  
 Fast and firm as time-unshaken warders,  
 Hearts made sure by faith, by hope made high.  
 These alone in all the wild sea-borders  
 Fear no blast of days and nights that die.

## 5.

All the land is like as one man's face is,  
 Pale and troubled still with change of cares.  
 Doubt and death pervade her clouded spaces ;  
 Strength and length of life and peace are theirs,—  
 Theirs alone amid these weary places,  
 Seeing not how the wild world frets and fares.

## 6.

Firm and fast where all is cloud that changes,  
 Cloud-clogged sunlight, cloud by sunlight thinned,  
 Stern and sweet, above the sand-hill ranges.  
 Watch the towers and tombs of men that sinned  
 Once, now calm as earth, whose only change is  
 Wind, and light, and wind, and cloud, and wind.

## 7.

Out and in and out the sharp straits wander,  
 In and out and in the wild way strives,  
 Starred and paved and lined with flowers that  
 squander  
 Gold as golden as the gold of hives,  
 Salt and moist and multiform ; but yonder,  
 See, what sign of life or death survives ?

## 8.

Seen then only when the songs of olden  
 Harps were young, whose echoes yet endure,  
 Hymned of Homer when his years were golden,  
 Known of only when the world was pure,  
 Here is Hades, manifest, beholden,  
 Surely, surely here, if aught be sure !

## 9.

Where the border-line was crossed, that, sundering  
 Death from life, keeps weariness from rest,  
 None can tell, who fares here forward wondering ;  
 None may doubt but here might end his quest.  
 Here life's lightning joys and woes once thunder-  
 ing  
 Sea-like round him cease like storm suppressed.

## 10.

Here the wise wave-wandering steadfast-hearted  
 Guest of many a lord, of many a land,  
 Saw the shape or shade of years departed,  
 Saw the semblance risen and hard at hand,  
 Saw the mother long from love's reach parted,  
 Anticleia, like a statue stand.

## II.

Statue ? nay, nor tissued image woven  
 Fair on hangings in his father's hall ;  
 Nay, too fast her faith of heart was proven,  
 Far too firm her loveliest love of all ;  
 Love wherethrough the loving heart was cloven,  
 Love that hears not when the loud Fates call.

## 12.

Love that lives and stands up re-created  
 Then when life has ebbed and anguish fled ;  
 Love more strong than death or all things fated,  
 Child's and mother's, lit by love and led ;  
 Love that found what life so long awaited  
 Here, when life came down among the dead.

## 13.

Here, where never came alive another,  
 Came her son across the Sundering tide  
 Crossed before by many a warrior brother  
 Once that warred on Ilion at his side ;  
 Here spread forth vain hands to clasp the mother  
 Dead, that sorrowing for his love's sake died.

## 14.

Parted, though by narrowest of divisions,  
 Clasp he might not, only might implore,  
 Sundered yet by bitterest of derisions,  
 Son, and mother from the son she bore—  
 Here ? But all dispeopled here of visions  
 Lies, forlorn of shadows even, the shore.

## 15.

All too sweet such men's Hellenic speech is,  
 All too fain they lived of light to see,  
 Once to see the darkness of these beaches,  
 Once to sing this Hades found of me,  
 Ghostless, all its gulfs and creeks and reaches,  
 Sky, and shore, and cloud, and waste, and sea.

## IV.

## 1.

But aloft and afront of me faring  
 Far forward as folk in a dream  
 That strive, between doubting and daring,  
 Right on till the goal for them gleam,  
 Full forth till their goal on them lighten,  
 The harbor where fain they would be,  
 What headlands there darken and brighten ?  
 What change in the sea ?

## 2.

What houses and woodlands that nestle  
 Safe inland to lee of the hill  
 As it slopes from the headlands that wrestle  
 And succumb to the strong sea's will ?  
 Truce is not, nor respite, nor pity ;  
 For the battle is waged not of hands,  
 Where over the grave of a city  
 The ghost of it stands.

## 3.

Where the wings of the sea-wind slacken,  
 Green lawns to the landward thrive,  
 Fields brighten and pine-woods blacken,  
 And the heat in their heart is alive ;  
 They blossom and warble and murmur,  
 For the sense of their spirit is free :  
 But harder to shoreward and firmer  
 The grasp of the sea.

## 4.

Like ashes the low cliffs crumble,  
 The banks drop down into dust,  
 The heights of the hills are made humble,  
 As a reed's is the strength of their trust ;  
 As a city's that armies environ,  
 The strength of their stay is of sand :  
 But the grasp of the sea is as iron,  
 Laid hard on the land.

## 5.

A land that is thirstier than ruin ;  
 A sea that is hungrier than death ;  
 Heaped hills that a tree never grew in ;  
 Wide sands where the wave draws breath ;  
 All solace is here for the spirit  
 That ever forever may be  
 For the soul of thy son to inherit,  
 My mother, my sea.

## 6.

O delight of the headlands and beaches !  
 O desire of the wind on the wold,  
 More glad than a man's when it reaches  
 That end which it sought from of old,  
 And the palm of possession is dreary  
 To the sense that in search of it sinned ;  
 But nor satisfied ever nor weary  
 Is ever the wind.

## 7.

The delight that he takes but in living  
 Is more than of all things that live ;  
 For the world that has all things for giving  
 Has nothing so goodly to give :  
 But more than delight his desire is,  
 For the goal where his pinions would be  
 Is immortal as air or as fire is,  
 Immense as the sea.

## 8.

Though hence come the moan that he borrows  
 From darkness and depths of the night,  
 Though hence be the spring of his sorrows,  
 Hence too is the joy of his might,—  
 The delight that his doom is forever  
 To seek, and desire, and rejoice,  
 And the sense that eternity never  
 Shall silence his voice ;

## 9.

That satiety never may stifle,  
 Nor weariness ever estrange,  
 Nor time be so strong as to rifle,  
 Nor change be so great as to change  
 His gift that renews in the giving,  
 The joy that exalts him to be  
 Alone of all elements living  
 The lord of the sea.

## 10.

What is fire, that its flame should consume her ?  
 More fierce than all fires are her waves.  
 What is earth, that its gulfs should entomb her ?  
 More deep are her own than their graves.  
 Life shrinks from his pinions that cover  
 The darkness by thunders bedinned ;  
 But she knows him, her lord and her lover,  
 The godhead of wind.

## 11.

For a season his wings are about her,  
 His breath on her lips for a space ;  
 Such rapture he wins not without her  
 In the width of his world-wide race.  
 Though the forests bow down, and the mountains  
 Wax dark, and the tribes of them flee,  
 His delight is more deep in the fountains  
 And springs of the sea.

## 12.

There are those too of mortals that love him,  
 There are souls that desire and require,  
 Be the glories of midnight above him,  
 Or beneath him the daysprings of fire ;  
 And their hearts are as harps that approve him  
 And praise him as chords of a lyre  
 That were fain with their music to move him  
 To meet their desire.



## 13.

To descend through the darkness to grace them,  
 Till darkness were lovelier than light :  
 To encompass and grasp and embrace them,  
 Till their weakness were one with his might ;  
 With the strength of his wings to caress them,  
 With the blast of his breath to set free ;  
 With the mouths of his thunders to bless them  
 For sons of the sea.

## 14.

For these have the toil and the guerdon  
 That the wind has eternally : these  
 Have part in the boon and the burden  
 Of the sleepless, unsatisfied breeze,  
 That finds not, but seeking rejoices  
 That possession can work him no wrong ;  
 And the voice at the heart of their voice is  
 The sense of his song.

## 15.

For the wind's is their doom and their blessing ;  
 To desire, and have always above  
 A possession beyond their possessing,  
 A love beyond reach of their love.  
 Green earth has her sons and her daughters,  
 And these have their guerdons ; but we  
 Are the wind's, and the sun's, and the water's,  
 Elect of the sea.

## V.

## I.

For the sea too seeks and rejoices,  
 Gains and loses and gains,  
 And the joy of her heart's own choice is  
 As ours, and as ours are her pains :  
 As the thoughts of our hearts are her voices,  
 And as hers is the pulse of our veins.

## 2.

Her fields that know not of dearth,  
 Nor lie for their fruit's sake fallow,  
 Laugh large in the depths of their mirth ;  
 But inshore here in the shallow,  
 Embroiled with encumbrance of earth,  
 Their skirts are turbid and yellow.

## 3.

The grime of her greed is upon her,  
 The sign of her deed is her soil ;  
 As the earth's is her own dishonor,  
 And corruption the crown of her toil :  
 She hath spoiled and devoured, and her honor  
 Is this, to be shamed by her spoil.

## 4.

But afar where pollution is none,  
 Nor ensign of strife nor endeavor,  
 Where her heart and the sun's are one,  
 And the soil of her sin comes never,  
 She is pure as the wind and the sun,  
 And her sweetness endureth forever.

## VI.

## 1.

DEATH, and change, and darkness everlasting,  
 Deaf, that hears not what the daystar saith,  
 Blind, past all remembrance and forecasting,  
 Dead, past memory that it once drew breath ;  
 These, above the washing tides and wasting,  
 Reign, and rule this land of utter death.

## 2.

Change of change, darkness of darkness, hidden,  
 Very death of very death, begun  
 When none knows.—the knowledge is forbidden—  
 Self-begotten, self-proceeding, one,  
 Born, not made—abhorred, unchained, unhidden,  
 Night stands here defiant of the sun.

## 3.

Change of change, and death of death begotten,  
 Darkness born of darkness, one and three,  
 Ghostly godhead of a world forgotten,  
 Crowned with heaven, enthroned on land and sea,  
 Here, where earth with dead men's bones is rotten,  
 God of Time, thy likeness worships thee.

## 4.

Lo, thy likeness of thy desolation,  
 Shape and figure of thy might. O Lord,  
 Formless form, incarnate miscreation,  
 Served of all things living and abhorred ;  
 Earth herself is here thine incarnation,  
 Time, of all things born on earth adored.

## 5.

All that worship thee are fearful of thee ;  
 No man may not worship thee for fear :  
 Prayers nor curses prove not nor disprove thee,  
 Move nor change thee with our changē of cheer :  
 All at last, though all abhorred thee, love thee,  
 God, the sceptre of whose throne is here.

## 6.

Here thy throne and sceptre of thy station,  
 Here the palace paven for thy feet ;  
 Here thy sign from nation unto nation  
 Passed as watchword for thy guards to greet,  
 Guards that go before thine exaltation,  
 Ages, clothed with bitter years and sweet.

## 7.

Here, where sharp the sea-bird shrills his ditty,  
 Flickering flame-wise through the clear live calm,  
 Rose triumphal, crowning all a city,  
 Roofs exalted once with prayer and psalm,  
 Built of holy hands for holy pity,  
 Frank and fruitful as a sheltering palm,

## 8.

Church and hospice wrought in faultless fashion,  
 Hall and chancel bounteous and sublime,  
 Wide and sweet and glorious as compassion,  
 Filled and thrilled with force of choral chime,  
 Filled with spirit of prayer and thrilled with passion,  
 Hailed a god more merciful than Time.

## 9.

Ah! less mighty, less than Time prevailing,  
 Shrunk, expelled, made nothing at his nod,  
 Less than clouds across the sea-line sailing,  
 Lies he, stricken by his master's rod.  
 "Where is man?" the cloister murmurs wailing;  
 Back the mute shrine thunders—"Where is God?"

## 10.

Here is all the end of all his glory,—  
 Dust, and grass, and barren silent stones.  
 Dead, like him, one hollow tower and hoary  
 Naked in the sea-wind stands and moans,  
 Filled and thrilled with its perpetual story:  
 Here, where earth is dense with dead men's bones.

## 11.

Low and loud and long, a voice forever,  
 Sounds the wind's clear story like a song.  
 Tomb from tomb the waves devouring sever,  
 Dust from dust as years relapse along;  
 Graves where men made sure to rest, and never  
 Lie dismantled by the seasons' wrong.

## 12.

Now displaced, devoured and desecrated,  
 Now by Time's hands darkly disinterred,  
 These poor dead that sleeping here awaited  
 Long the archangel's re-creating word,  
 Closed about with roofs and walls high-gated  
 Till the blast of judgment should be heard.

## 13.

Naked, shamed, cast out of consecration,  
 Corpse and coffin, yea, the very graves,  
 Scoffed at, scattered, shaken from their station,  
 Spurned and scourged of wind and sea like slaves,  
 Desolate beyond man's desolation,  
 Shrink and sink into the waste of waves.

## 14.

Tombs, with bare white piteous bones protruded,  
 Shroudless, down the loose collapsing banks,  
 Crumble, from their constant place detruded,  
 That the sea devours and gives not thanks.  
 Graves where hope and prayer and sorrow brooded  
 Gape and slide and perish, ranks on ranks.

## 15.

Rows on rows, and line by line they crumbled,  
 They that thought for all time through to be.  
 Scarce a stone whereon a child might stumble,  
 Breaks the grim field paced alone of me.  
 Earth, and man, and all their gods wax humble,  
 Here, where Time brings pasture to the sea.

## VII.

## 1.

But afar on the headland exalted,  
 But beyond in the curl of the bay,  
 From the depth of his dome deep-vaulted,  
 Our father is lord of the day.  
 Our father and lord that we follow,  
 For deathless and ageless is he ;  
 And his robe is the whole sky's hollow,  
 His sandal the sea.

## 2.

Where the horn of the headland is sharper,  
 And her green floor glitters with fire,

The sea has the sun for a harper,  
 The sun has the sea for a lyre.  
 The waves are a pavement of amber,  
 By the feet of the sea-winds trod,  
 To receive in a god's presence-chamber  
 Our father, the god.

## 3.

Time, haggard and changeful and hoary,  
 Is master and god of the land :  
 But the air is fulfilled of the glory  
 That is shed from our lord's right hand.  
 O father of all of us ever,  
 All glory be only to thee  
 From heaven, that is void of thee never,  
 And earth, and the sea.

## 4.

O Sun ! whereof all is beholden,  
 Behold now the shadow of this death,  
 This place of the sepulchres, olden  
 And emptied and vain as a breath,  
 The bloom of the bountiful heather  
 Laughs broadly beyond in thy light,  
 As dawn, with her glories to gather,  
 At darkness and night.

## 5.

Though the gods of the night lie rotten,  
 And their honor be taken away,  
 And the noise of their names forgotten,  
 Thou, Lord, art god of the day.  
 Thou art father, and saviour, and spirit,  
 O Sun, of the soul that is free,  
 And hath grace of thy grace to inherit  
 Thine earth and thy sea.

## 6.

The hills and the sands and the beaches,  
 The waters adrift and afar,  
 The banks and the creeks and the reaches,  
 How glad of thee all these are !

The flowers, overflowing, overcrowded,  
 Are drunk with the mad wind's mirth :  
 The delight of thy coming unclouded  
 Makes music of earth.

## 7.

I, last least voice of her voices,  
 Give thanks that were mute in me long  
 To the soul in my soul that rejoices  
 For the song that is over my song.  
 Time gives what he gains for the giving,  
 Or takes for his tribute of me ;  
 My dreams to the wind ever-living,  
 My song to the sea.

## ANACTORIA.

My life is bitter with thy love ; thine eyes  
 Blind me, thy tresses burn me, thy sharp sighs  
 Divide my flesh and spirit with soft sound,  
 And my blood strengthens, and my veins abound.  
 I pray thee sigh not, speak not, draw not breath ;  
 Let life burn down, and dream it is not death.  
 I would the sea had hidden us, the fire  
 (Wilt thou fear that, and fear not my desire ?)  
 Severed the bones that bleach, the flesh that cleaves,  
 And let our sifted ashes drop like leaves.  
 I feel thy blood against my blood : my pain  
 Pains thee, and lips bruise lips, and vein stings vein.  
 Let fruit be crushed on fruit, let flower on flower,  
 Breast kindle breast, and either burn one hour.  
 Why wilt thou follow lesser loves ? are thine  
 Too weak to bear these hands and lips of mine ?  
 I charge thee for my life's sake, O too sweet  
 To crush love with thy cruel faultless feet,  
 I charge thee keep thy lips from hers or his,  
 Sweetest, till theirs be sweeter than my kiss :  
 Lest I too lure, a swallow for a dove,  
 Erotion or Erinna to my love.  
 I would my love could kill thee ; I am satiated  
 With seeing thee live, and fain would have thee dead.

I would earth had thy body as fruit to eat,  
 And no mouth but some serpent's found thee sweet.  
 I would find grievous ways to have thee slain,  
 Intense device, and superflux of pain :  
 Vex thee with amorous agonies, and shake  
 Life at thy lips, and leave it there to ache ;  
 Strain out thy soul with pangs too soft to kill,  
 Intolerable interludes, and infinite ill ;  
 Relapse and relutation of the breath,  
 Dumb tunes and shuddering semitones of death.  
 I am weary of all thy words and soft strange ways,  
 Of all love's fiery nights and all his days,  
 And all the broken kisses salt as brine  
 That shuddering lips make moist with waterish wine,  
 And eyes the bluer for all those hidden hours  
 That pleasure fills with tears and feeds from flowers,  
 Fierce at the heart with fire that half comes through,  
 But all the flower-like white stained round with blue ;  
 The fervent underlid, and that above  
 Lifted with laughter or abashed with love ;  
 Thine amorous girdle, full of thee and fair,  
 And leavings of the lilies in thine hair.  
 Yea, all sweet words of thine and all thy ways,  
 And all the fruit of nights and flower of days,  
 And stinging lips wherein the hot sweet brine  
 That love was born of burns and foams like wine,  
 And eyes insatiable of amorous hours,  
 Fervent as fire and delicate as flowers,  
 Colored like night at heart, but cloven through  
 Like night with flame, dyed round like night with  
     blue,  
 Clothed with deep eyelids under and above—  
 Yea, all thy beauty sickens me with love ;  
 Thy girdle empty of thee and now not fair,  
 And ruinous lilies in thy languid hair.  
 Ah, take no thought for Love's sake ; shall this be,  
 And she who loves thy lover not love thee ?  
 Sweet soul, sweet mouth of all that laughs and lives,  
 Mine is she, very mine ; and she forgives.  
 For I beheld in sleep the light that is  
 In her high place in Paphos, heard the kiss  
 Of body and soul that mix with eager tears  
 And laughter stinging through the eyes and ears ;



Saw Love, as burning flame from crown to feet,  
 Imperishable, upon her storied seat ;  
 Clear eyelids lifted toward the north and south,  
 A mind of many colors, and a mouth  
 Of many tunes and kisses ; and she bowed,  
 With all her subtle face laughing aloud,  
 Bowed down upon me, saying, " Who doth thee  
                   wrong,

Sappho ? " but thou—thy body is the song,  
 Thy mouth the music ; thou art more than I,  
 Though my voice die not till the whole world die ;  
 Though men that hear it madden ; though love weep,  
 Though nature change, though shame be charmed to  
                   sleep.

Ah, wilt thou slay me lest I kiss thee dead ?  
 Yet the queen laughed from her sweet heart and said :  
 " Even she that flies shall follow for thy sake,  
 And she shall give thee gifts that would not take,  
 Shall kiss that would not kiss thee " (yea, kiss me)  
 " When thou wouldst not "—when I would not kiss  
                   thee !

Ah, more to me than all men as thou art,  
 Shall not my songs assuage her at the heart ?  
 Ah, sweet to me as life seems sweet to death,  
 Why should her wrath fill thee with fearful breath ?  
 Nay, sweet, for is she God alone ? hath she  
 Made earth and all the centuries of the sea,  
 Taught the sun ways to travel, woven most fine  
 The moonbeams, shed the starbeams forth as wine,  
 Bound with her myrtles, beaten with her rods,  
 'The young men and the maidens and the gods ?  
 Have we not lips to love with, eyes for tears,  
 And summer and flower of women and of years ?  
 Stars for the foot of morning, and for noon  
 Sunlight, and exaltation of the moon ;  
 Waters that answer waters, fields that wear  
 Lilies, and languor of the Lesbian air ?  
 Beyond those flying feet of fluttered doves,  
 Are there not other gods for other loves ?  
 Yea, though she scourge thee, sweetest, for my  
                   sake,  
 Blossom not thorns, and flowers not blood should  
                   break.

Ah that my lips were tuneless lips, but pressed  
 To the bruised blossom of thy scourged white breast ;  
 Ah that my mouth for Muses' milk were fed  
 On the sweet blood thy sweet small wounds had bled !  
 That with my tongue I felt them, and could taste  
 The faint flakes from thy bosom to the waist !  
 That I could drink thy veins as wine, and eat  
 Thy breasts like honey ! that from face to feet  
 Thy body were abolished and consumed,  
 And in my flesh thy very flesh entombed !  
 Ah, ah, thy beauty ! like a beast it bites,  
 Stings like an adder, like an arrow smites.  
 Ah sweet, and sweet again, and seven times sweet,  
 The paces and the pauses of thy feet !  
 Ah sweeter than all sleep or summer air  
 The fallen fillets fragrant from thine hair !  
 Yea, though their alien kisses do me wrong,  
 Sweeter thy lips than mine with all their song ;  
 Thy shoulders whiter than a fleece of white,  
 And flower-sweet fingers, good to bruise or bite  
 As honeycomb of the inmost honey-cells,  
 With almond-shaped and roseleaf-colored shells,  
 And blood like purple blossom at the tips  
 Quivering ; and pain made perfect in thy lips  
 For my sake when I hurt thee ; O that I  
 Durst crush thee out of life with love, and die,  
 Die of thy pain and my delight, and be  
 Mixed with thy blood and molten into thee !  
 Would I not plague thee dying overmuch ?  
 Would I not hurt thee perfectly ? not touch  
 Thy pores of sense with torture, and make bright  
 Thine eyes with bloodlike tears and grievous light  
 Strike pang from pang as note is struck from note.  
 Catch the sob's middle music in thy throat,  
 Take thy limbs living, and new-mould with these  
 A lyre of many faultless agonies ?  
 Feed thee with fever and famine and fine drouth,  
 With perfect pangs convulse thy perfect mouth,  
 Make thy life shudder in thee and burn afresh,  
 And wring thy very spirit through the flesh ?  
 Cruel ? but love makes all that love him well  
 As wise as heaven and crueller than hell.  
 Me hath love made more bitter toward thee

Than death toward man ; but were I made as he  
Who hath made all things to break them one by one.  
If my feet trod upon the stars and sun  
And souls of men as his have always trod,  
God knows I might be crueller than God.  
For who shall change with prayers or thanksgivings  
The mystery of the cruelty of things ?  
Or say what God above all gods and years,  
With offering and blood-sacrifice of tears,  
With lamentation from strange lands, from graves  
Where the snake pastures, from scarred mouth of slaves  
From prison, and from plunging prows of ships  
Through flamelike foam of the sea's closing lips—  
With thwartings of strange signs, and wind-blown hair  
Of comets, desolating the dim air,  
When darkness is made fast with seals and bars,  
And fierce reluctance of disastrous stars,  
Eclipse, and sound of shaken hills, and wings  
Darkening, and blind inexpiable things—  
With sorrow of laboring moons, and altering light  
And travail of the planets of the night,  
And weeping of the weary Pleiads seven,  
Feeds the mute melancholy lust of heaven ?  
Is not this incense bitterness, his meat  
Murder ? his hidden face and iron feet  
Hath not man known, and felt them on their way  
Threaten and trample all things and every day ?  
Hath he not sent us hunger ? who hath cursed  
Spirit and flesh with longing ? filled with thirst  
Their lips who cried unto him ? who bade exceed  
The fervid will, fall short the feeble deed,  
Bade sink the spirit and the flesh aspire,  
Pain animate the dust of dead desire,  
And life yield up her flower to violent fate ?  
Him would I reach, him smite, him desecrate,  
Pierce the cold lips of God with human breath,  
And mix his immortality with death.  
Why hath he made us ? what had all we done  
That we should live and loathe the sterile sun,  
And with the moon wax paler as she wanes,  
And pulse by pulse feel time grow through our veins ?  
Thee too the years shall cover ; thou shalt be  
As the rose born of one same blood with thee,

As a song sung, as a word said, and fall  
Flower-wise, and be not any more at all,  
Nor any memory of thee anywhere ;  
For never Muse has bound above thine hair  
The high Pierian flowers whose graft outgrows  
All summer kinship of the mortal rose  
And color of deciduous days, nor shed  
Reflex and flush of heaven about thine head,  
Nor reddened brows made pale by floral grief  
With splendid shadow from that lordlier leaf.  
Yea, thou shalt be forgotten like spilt wine,  
Except these kisses of my lips on thine  
Brand them with immortality ; but me—  
Men shall not see bright fire nor hear the sea,  
Nor mix their hearts with music, nor behold  
Cast forth of heaven with feet of awful gold  
And plumeless wings that make the bright air blind,  
Lightning, with thunder for a hound behind  
Hunting through fields unfurrowed and unsown—  
But in the light and laughter, in the moan  
And music, and in grasp of lip and hand  
And shudder of water that makes felt on land  
The immeasurable tremor of all the sea,  
Memories shall mix and metaphors of me.  
Like me shall be the shuddering calm of night,  
When all the winds of the world for pure delight  
Close lips that quiver and fold up wings that ache ;  
When nightingales are louder for love's sake,  
And leaves tremble like lute-strings or like fire ;  
Like me the one star swooning with desire  
Even at the cold lips of the sleepless moon,  
As I at thine ; like me the waste white noon,  
Burnt through with barren sunlight ; and like me  
The land-stream and the tide-stream in the sea.  
I am sick with time as these ebb and flow,  
And by the yearning in my veins I know  
The yearning sound of waters ; and mine eyes  
Burn as that beamless fire which fills the skies  
With troubled stars and travailing things of flame ;  
And in my heart the grief consuming them  
Labors, and in my veins the thirst of these,  
And all the summer travail of the trees  
And all the winter sickness ; and the earth,

Filled full with deadly works of death and birth,  
 Sore spent with hungry lusts of birth and death,  
 Has pain like mine in her divided breath;  
 Her spring of leaves is barren, and her fruit  
 Ashes ; her boughs are burdened, and her root  
 Fibrous and gnarled with poison ; underneath  
 Serpents have gnawn it through with tortuous teeth  
 Made sharp upon the bones of all the dead,  
 And wild birds rend her branches overhead.  
 These, woven as raiment for his word and thought,  
 These hath God made, and me as these, and wrought  
 Song, and hath lit it at my lips ; and me  
 Earth shall not gather though she feed on thee.  
 As a shed tear shalt thou be shed ; but I—  
 Lo, earth may labor, men live long and die,  
 Years change and stars, and the high God devise  
 New things, and old things wane before his eyes  
 Who wields and wrecks them, being more strong than  
 they—

But, having made me, me he shall not slay.  
 Nor slay nor satiate, like those herds of his  
 Who laugh and live a little, and their kiss  
 Contents them, and their loves are swift and sweet,  
 And sure death grasps and gains them with slow feet,  
 Love they or hate they, strive or bow their knees—  
 And all these end ; he hath his will of these.  
 Yea, but albeit he slay me, hating me—  
 Albeit he hide me in the deep dear sea  
 And cover me with cool wan foam, and ease  
 This soul of mine as any soul of these,  
 And give me water and great sweet waves, and make  
 The very sea's name lordlier for my sake,  
 The whole sea sweeter—albeit I die indeed  
 And hide myself and sleep and no man heed.  
 Of me the high God hath not all his will.  
 Blossom of branches, and on each high hill  
 Clear air and wind, and under in clamorous vales  
 Fierce noises of the fiery nightingales,  
 Buds burning in the sudden spring like fire,  
 The wan washed sand and the waves 'vain desire,  
 Sails seen like blown white flowers at sea, and words  
 That bring tears swiftest, and long notes of birds  
 Violently singing till the whole world sings—

I Sappho shall be one with all these things,  
 With all high things forever ; and my face  
 Seen once, my songs once heard in a strange place,  
 Cleave to men's lives, and waste the days thereof  
 With gladness and much sadness and long love.  
 Yea, they shall say, earth's womb has borne in vain  
 New things, and never this best thing again ;  
 Borne days and men, borne fruits and wars and wine,  
 Seasons and songs, but no song more like mine.  
 And they shall know me as ye who have known me  
 here,

Last year when I loved Atthis, and this year  
 When I love thee ; and they shall praise me, and say  
 " She hath all time as all we have our day,  
 Shall she not live and have her will "—even I ?  
 Yea, though thou diest, I say I shall not die.  
 For these shall give me of their souls, shall give  
 Life, and the days and loves wherewith I live,  
 Shall quicken me with loving, fill with breath,  
 Save me and serve me, strive for me with death.  
 Alas, that neither moon nor snow nor dew  
 Nor all cold things can purge me wholly through,  
 Assuage me nor allay me nor appease,  
 Till supreme sleep shall bring me bloodless ease ;  
 Till time wax faint in all his periods ;  
 Till fate undo the bondage of the gods,  
 And lay, to slake and satiate me all through,  
 Lotus and Lethe on my lips like dew,  
 And shed around and over and under me  
 Thick darkness and the insuperable sea.

## HYMN TO PROSERPINE.

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF THE CHRISTIAN  
 FAITH.)

*Vicisti, Galilæe.*

I HAVE lived long enough, having seen one thing, that  
 love hath an end ;  
 Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and  
 befriend.  
 Thou art more than the day or the morrow, the  
 seasons that laugh or that weep ;

For these give joy and sorrow ; but thou, Proserpina,  
sleep.  
Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet the feet of  
the dove ;  
But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of the grapes  
or love.  
Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harpstring of  
gold,  
A bitter God to follow, a beautiful God to behold ?  
I am sick of singing : the bays burn deep and chafe:  
I am fain  
To rest a little from praise and grievous pleasure and  
pain.  
For the Gods we know not of, who give us our daily  
breath,  
We know they are cruel as love or life, and lovely as  
death.  
O Gods dethroned and deceased, cast forth, wiped  
out in a day !  
From your wrath is the world released, redeemed  
from your chains, men say.  
New Gods are crowned in the city ; their flowers have  
broken your rods ;  
They are merciful, clothed with pity, the young  
compassionate Gods.  
But for me their new device is barren, the days are  
bare ;  
Things long past over suffice, and men forgotten  
that were.  
Time and the Gods are at strife ; ye dwell in the  
midst thereof,  
Draining a little life from the barren breasts of  
love.  
I say to you, cease, take rest ; yea, I say to you all  
be at peace,  
Till the bitter milk of her breast and the barren  
bosom shall cease.  
Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean ? but these thou shalt  
not take,  
The laurel, the palms and the pæan, the breast of the  
nymphs in the brake ;  
Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with  
tenderer breath ;

And all the wings of the Loves, and all the joy before death ;

All the feet of the hours that sound as a single lyre,  
Dropped and deep in the flowers, with strings that  
flicker like fire,

More than these wilt thou give, things fairer than all  
these things ?

Nay, for a little we live, and life hath mutable  
wings.

A little while and we die ; shall life not thrive as it  
may ?

For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his  
day.

And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough  
of his tears :

Why should he labor, and bring fresh grief to blacken  
his years ?

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean ; the world has  
grown gray from thy breath ;

We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the  
fulness of death.

Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a  
day ;

But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives  
not May.

Sleep, shall we sleep after all ? for the world is not  
sweet in the end ;

For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin  
and rend.

Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that  
abides ;

But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with  
the foam of the tides.

O lips that the live blood faints in; the leavings of  
rack and rods !

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted  
Gods !

Though all men abase them before you in spirits, and  
all knees bend,

I kneel not neither adore you, but standing, look to  
the end.

All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits and sorrows  
are cast



Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to  
the surf of the past :  
Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the  
remote sea gates,  
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and deep  
death waits :  
Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad about with  
the seas as with wings,  
And impelled of invisible tides, fulfilled of unspeakable  
things,  
White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and  
serpentine-curved,  
Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the  
wave of the world,  
The depths stand naked in sunder behind it, the storms  
flee away ;  
In the hollow before it the thunder is taken and snared  
as a prey ;  
In its sides is the north-wind bound ; and its salt is of  
all men's tears ;  
With light of ruin, and sound of changes, and pulse  
of years :  
With travail of day after day, and with trouble of  
hour upon hour ;  
And bitter as blood is the spray ; and the crests are  
as fangs that devour :  
And its vapor and storm of its steam as the sighing  
of spirits to be ;  
And its noise as the noise in a dream ; and its depth  
as the roots of the sea :  
And the height of its head as the height of the ut-  
most stars of the air :  
And the ends of the earth at the might thereof trem-  
ble, and time is made bare.  
Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will ye chasten  
the high sea with rods ?  
Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is  
older than all ye Gods ?  
All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass  
and be past ;  
Ye are Gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves  
be upon you at last.

In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in  
the changes of things,  
Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world  
shall forget you for kings.  
Though the feet of thine high priests tread where  
thy lords and our forefathers trod,  
Though these that were Gods are dead, and thou be-  
ing dead art a God,  
Though before thee the throned Cytherean be fallen,  
and hidden her head,  
Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy dead shall  
go down to the dead.  
Of the maiden thy mother men sing as a goddess  
with grace clad around ;  
Thou art throned where another was king ; where  
another was queen she is crowned.  
Yea, once we had sight of another : but now she is  
queen, say these.  
Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom  
of flowering seas,  
Clothed round with the world's desire as with rai-  
ment, and fair as the foam,  
And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess, and  
mother of Rome.  
For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sor-  
row ; but ours,  
Her deep hair heavily laden with odor, and color of  
flowers,  
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendor,  
a flame,  
Bent down into us that besought her, and earth grew  
sweet with her name.  
For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and  
rejected ; but she  
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial,  
her foot on the sea.  
And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and  
the viewless ways,  
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue  
stream of the bays.  
Ye are fallen, our lords, by what token ? we wist that  
ye should not fall.

Ye were all so fair that are broken ; and one more fair  
 than ye all.  
 But I turn to her still, having seen she shall surely  
 abide in the end ;  
 Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and  
 befriend.  
 O daughter of earth, of my mother, her crown and  
 blossom of birth,  
 I am also, I also thy brother ; I go as I came unto earth.  
 In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in  
 heaven, the night where thou art,  
 Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep  
 overflows from the heart,  
 Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world,  
 and the red rose is white,  
 And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fume of  
 the flowers of the night,  
 And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow  
 of Gods from afar  
 Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the deep dim  
 soul of a star,  
 In the sweet low light of thy face, under heavens  
 untrod by the sun,  
 Let my soul with their souls find place, and forget  
 what is done and undone.  
 Thou art more than the Gods who number the days  
 of our temporal breath ;  
 For these give labor and slumber ; but thou, Proser-  
 pina, death.  
 Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a season in  
 silence. I know  
 I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep ;  
 even so.  
 For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze  
 for a span ;  
 A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is  
 man.\*  
 So long I endure, no longer ; and laugh not again,  
 neither weep.  
 For there is no God found stronger than death ; and  
 death is a sleep.

\* ψυχάρμιον εἰ βαστάζον νεκρὸν. EPICTETUS.

## ILICET.

THERE is an end of joy and sorrow ;  
 Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,  
     But never a time to laugh or weep.  
 The end is come of pleasant places,  
 The end of tender words and faces,  
     The end of all, the popped sleep.

No place for sound within their hearing,  
 No room to hope, no time for fearing,  
     No lips to laugh, no lids for tears.  
 The old years have run out all their measure ;  
 No chance of pain, no chance of pleasure,  
     No fragment of the broken years.

Outside of all the worlds and ages,  
 There where the fool is as the sage is,  
     There where the slayer is clean of blood,  
 No end, no passage, no beginning,  
 There where the sinner leaves off sinning,  
     There where the good man is not good.

There is not one thing with another,  
 But Evil saith to Good : My brother,  
     My brother, I am one with thee :  
 They shall not strive nor cry forever :  
 No man shall choose between them : never  
     Shall this thing end and that thing be.

Wind wherein seas and stars are shaken  
 Shall shake them, and they shall not waken :  
     None that has lain down shall arise ;  
 The stones are sealed across their places ;  
 One shadow is shed on all their faces,  
     One blindness cast on all their eyes.

Sleep, is it sleep perchance that covers  
 Each face, as each face were his lover's ?  
     Farewell ; as men that sleep fare well.

The grave's mouth laughs unto derision,  
 Desire and dread and dream and vision,  
 Delight of heaven and sorrow of hell.

No soul shall tell nor lip shall number  
 The names and tribes of you that slumber ;  
 No memory, no memorial.  
 "Thou knowest"—who shall say thou knowest  
 There is none highest and none lowest :  
 An end, an end, an end of all.

Good night, good sleep, good rest from sorrow,  
 To these that shall not have good morrow ;  
 The gods be gentle to all these.  
 Nay, if death be not, how shall they be ?  
 Nay, is there help in heaven ? it may be  
 All things and lords of things shall cease.

The stooped urn, filling, dips and flashes ;  
 The bronzed brims are deep in ashes ;  
 The pale old lips of death are fed.  
 Shall this dust gather flesh hereafter ?  
 Shall one shed tears or fall to laughter,  
 At sight of all these poor old dead ?

•  
 Nay, as thou wilt ; these know not of it ;  
 Thine eye's strong weeping shall not profit,  
 Thy laughter shall not give thee ease ;  
 Cry aloud, spare not, cease not crying,  
 Sigh, till thou cleave thy sides with sighing,  
 Thou shalt not raise up one of these.

Burnt spices flash, and burnt wine hisses,  
 The breathing flame's mouth curls and kisses  
 The small dried rows of frankincense ;  
 All round the sad red blossoms smoulder,  
 Flowers colored like the fire, but colder,  
 In sign of sweet things taken hence ;

Yea, for their sake and in death's favor  
 Things of sweet shape and of sweet savor  
 We yield them, spice and flower and wine ;

Yea, costlier things than wine or spices,  
Whereof none knoweth how great the price is,  
And fruit that comes not of the vine.

From boy's pierced throat and girl's pierced bosom  
Drips, reddening round the blood-red blossom,  
The slow delicious bright soft blood,  
Bathing the spices and the pyre,  
Bathing the flowers and fallen fire,  
Bathing the blossom by the bud.

Roses whose lips the flame has deadened  
Drink till the lapping leaves are reddened  
And warm wet inner petals weep ;  
The flower whereof sick sleep gets leisure,  
Barren of balm and purple pleasure,  
Fumes with no native steam of sleep.

Why will ye weep ? what do ye weeping ?  
For waking folk and people sleeping,  
And sands that fill and sands that fall,  
The days rose-red, the popped hours,  
Blood, wine, and spice and fire and flowers,  
There is one end of one and all.

Shall such an one lend love or borrow ?  
Shall these be sorry for thy sorrow ?  
Shall these give thanks for words or breath ?  
There hate is as their loving-kindness ;  
The frontlet of their brows is blindness,  
The armlet of their arms is death.

Lo, for no noise or light of thunder  
Shall these grave-clothes be rent in sunder,  
He that hath taken, shall he give ?  
He hath rent them : shall he bind together ?  
He hath bound them : shall he break the tether ?  
He hath slain them : shall he bid them live ?

A little sorrow, a little pleasure,  
Fate metes us from the dusty measure  
That holds the date of all of us ;

We are born with travail and strong crying,  
 And from the birthday to the dying  
 The likeness of our life is thus.

One girds himself to serve another,  
 Whose father was the dust, whose mother  
 The little dead red worm therein ;  
 They find no fruit of things they cherish ;  
 The goodness of a man shall perish,  
 It shall be one thing with his sin.

In deep wet ways by gray old gardens  
 Fed with sharp spring the sweet fruit hardens ;  
 They know not what fruits wane or grow ;  
 Red summer burns to the utmost ember ;  
 They know not, neither can remember,  
 The old years and flowers they used to know.

Ah, for their sakes, so trapped and taken,  
 For theirs, forgotten and forsaken,  
 Watch, sleep not, gird thyself with prayer.  
 Nay, where the heart of wrath is broken,  
 Where long love ends as a thing spoken,  
 How shall thy crying enter there ?

Though the iron sides of the old world falter  
 The likeness of them shall not alter  
 For all the rumor of periods,  
 The stars and seasons that come after,  
 The tears of latter men, the laughter  
 Of the old unalterable gods.

Far up above the years and nations,  
 The high gods, clothed and crowned with patience,  
 Endure through days of death-like date ;  
 They bear the witness of things hidden ;  
 Before their eyes all life stands chidden,  
 As they before the eyes of Fate.

Not for their love shall Fate retire,  
 Nor they relent for our desire,  
 Nor the graves open for their call.

The end is more than joy and anguish,  
 Than lives that laugh and lives that languish,  
 The popped sleep, the end of all.

## HERMAPHRODITUS.

## I.

Lift up thy lips, turn round, look back for love,  
 Blind love that comes by night and casts out rest ;  
 Of all things tired thy lips look weariest,  
 Save the long smile that they are wearied of.  
 Ah sweet, albeit no love be sweet enough,  
 Choose of two loves and cleave unto the best ;  
 Two loves at either blossom of thy breast  
 Strive until one be under and one above.  
 Their breath is fire upon the amorous air,  
 Fire in thine eyes and where thy lips suspire :  
 And whosoever hath seen thee, being so fair,  
 Two things turn all his life and blood to fire ;  
 A strong desire begot on great despair,  
 A great despair cast out by strong desire.

## II.

Where between sleep and life some brief space is,  
 With love like gold bound round about the head,  
 Sex to sweet sex with lips and limbs is wed,  
 Turning the fruitful feud of hers and his  
 To the waste wedlock of a sterile kiss ;  
 Yet from them something like as fire is shed  
 That shall not be assuaged till death be dead,  
 Though neither life nor sleep can find out this.  
 Love made himself of flesh that perisheth  
 A pleasure-house for all the loves his kin ;  
 But on the one side sat a man like death,  
 And on the other a woman sat like sin.  
 So with veiled eyes and sobs between his breath  
 Love turned himself and would not enter in.

## III.

Love, is it love or sleep or shadow or light  
 That lies between thine eyelids and thine eyes ?  
 Like a flower laid upon a flower it lies,



Or like the night's dew laid upon the night,  
 Love stands upon thy left hand and thy right,  
     Yet by no sunset and by no moonrise  
     Shall make thee man and ease a woman's sighs,  
 Or make thee woman for a man's delight.  
 To what strange end hath some strange god made fair  
     The double blossom of two fruitless flowers ?  
 Hid love in all the folds of all thy hair,  
     Fed thee on summers, watered thee with showers,  
 Given all the gold that all the seasons wear  
     To thee that art a thing of barren hours ?

## IV.

Yea, love, I see ; it is not love but fear.  
     Nay, sweet, it is not fear but love, I know ;  
     Or wherefore should thy body's blossom blow  
 So sweetly, or thine eyelids leave so clear  
 Thy gracious eyes that never made a tear—  
     Though for their love our tears like blood should  
     flow,  
     Though love and life and death should come and go,  
 So dreadful, so desirable, so dear ?  
 Yea, sweet, I know ; I saw in what swift wise  
     Beneath the woman's and the water's kiss  
     Thy moist limbs melted into Salmacis,  
 And the large light turned tender in thine eyes,  
 And all thy boy's breath softened into sighs ;  
     But Love being blind, how should he know of this ?

*Au Muste du Louvre, Mars, 1863.*

## FRAGOLETTA.

O LOVE ! what shall be said of thee ?  
 The son of grief begot by joy ?  
 Being sightless, wilt thou see ?  
 Being sexless, wilt thou be  
 Maiden or boy ?

I dreamed of strange lips yesterday  
 And cheeks wherein the ambiguous blood  
 Was like a rose's—yea,

A rose's when it lay  
Within the bud.

What fields have bred thee, or what groves  
Concealed thee, O mysterious flower,  
O double rose of Love's,  
With leaves that lure the doves  
From bud to bower ?

I dare not kiss it, lest my lip  
Press harder than an indrawn breath,  
And all the sweet life slip  
Forth, and the sweet leaves drip,  
Bloodlike, in death.

O sole desire of my delight !  
O sole delight of my desire !  
Mine eyelids and eyesight  
Feed on thee day and night  
Like lips of fire.

Lean back thy throat of carven pearl,  
Let thy mouth murmur like the dove's ;  
Say, Venus hath no girl,  
No front of female curl,  
Among her Loves.

Thy sweet low bosom, thy close hair,  
Thy strait soft flanks and slenderer feet,  
Thy virginal strange air,  
Are these not over fair  
For Love to greet ?

How should he greet thee ? what new name,  
Fit to move all men's hearts, could move  
Thee, deaf to love or shame,  
Love's sister, by the same  
Mother as Love ?

Ah sweet, the maiden's mouth is cold,  
Her breast-blossoms are simply red,  
Her hair mere brown or gold,  
Fold over simple fold  
Binding her head.

Thy mouth is made of fire and wine,  
 Thy barren bosom takes my kiss  
 And turns my soul to thine  
 And turns thy lip to mine,  
 And mine it is.

Thou hast a serpent in thine hair,  
 In all the curls that close and cling ;  
 And ah, thy breast-flower !  
 Ah love, thy mouth too fair  
 To kiss and sing !

Cleave to me, love me, kiss mine eyes,  
 Sate thy lips with loving me ;  
 Nay, for thou shalt not rise ;  
 Lie still as Love that dies  
 For love of thee.

Mine arms are close about thine head,  
 My lips are fervent on thy face,  
 And where my kiss hath fed  
 Thy flower-like blood leaps red  
 To the kissed place.

O bitterness of things too sweet  
 O broken singing of the dove !  
 Love's wings are over fleet,  
 And like the panther's feet  
 The feet of Love.

## IN THE ORCHARD.

(PROVENÇAL BURDEN.)

LEAVE go my hands, let me catch breath and see ;  
 Let the dew-fall drench either side of me ;  
 Clear apple-leaves are soft upon that moon  
 Seen sidelong like a blossom in the tree ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

The grass is thick and cool, it lets us lie.  
 Kissed upon either cheek and either eye,  
 I turn to thee as some green afternoon

Turns toward sunset, and is loath to die ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Lie closer, lean your face upon my side,  
 Feel where the dew fell that has hardly dried,  
 Hear how the blood beats that went nigh to swoon ;  
 The pleasure lives there when the sense has died ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

O my fair lord, I charge you leave me this :  
 Is it not sweeter than a foolish kiss ?  
 Nay take it then, my flower, my first in June,  
 My rose, so like a tender mouth it is :  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Love, till dawn sunder night from day with fire,  
 Dividing my delight and my desire,  
 The crescent life and love the plenilune,  
 Love me though dusk begin and dark retire ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, my heart fails, my blood draws back ; I know,  
 When life runs over, life is near to go ;  
 And with the slain of love love's ways are strewn,  
 And with their blood, if love will have it so ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Ah, do thy will now ; slay me if thou wilt ;  
 There is no building now the walls are built,  
 No quarrying now the corner-stone is hewn,  
 No drinking now the vine's whole blood is spilt ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, slay me now ; nay, for I will be slain ;  
 Pluck thy red pleasure from the teeth of pain,  
 Break down thy vine ere yet grape-gatherers prune,  
 Slay me ere day can slay desire again ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Yea, with thy sweet lips, thy sweet sword ; yea,  
 Take life and all, for I will die, I say ;  
 Love, I gave love, is life a better boon ?  
 For sweet night's sake I will not live till day ;  
 Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

Nay, I will sleep then only ; nay, but go.  
 Ah sweet, too sweet to me, my sweet, I know  
     Love, sleep, and death go to the sweet same tune ;  
 Hold my hair fast, and kiss me through it so,  
     Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon.

## A MATCH.

If love were what the rose is,  
     And I were like the leaf,  
 Our lives would grow together  
 In sad or singing weather,  
 Blown fields or flowerful closes,  
     Green pleasure or gray grief ;  
 If love were what the rose is,  
     And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,  
     And love were like the tune,  
 With double sound and single  
 Delight our lips would mingle,  
 With kisses glad as birds are  
     That get sweet rain at noon ;  
 If I were what the words are  
     And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,  
     And I your love were death,  
 We'd shine and snow together  
 Ere March made sweet the weather  
 With daffodil and starling  
     And hours of fruitful breath ;  
 If you were life, my darling,  
     And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,  
     And I were page to joy,  
 We'd play for lives and seasons  
 With loving looks and treasons  
 And tears of night and morrow  
     And laughs of maid and boy ;  
 If you were thrall to sorrow,  
     And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,  
 And I were lord in May,  
 We'd throw with leaves for hours  
 And draw for days with flowers,  
 Till day like night were shady.  
 And night were bright like day ;  
 If you were April's lady,  
 And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,  
 And I were king of pain,  
 We'd hunt down love together,  
 Pluck out his flying feather,  
 And teach his feet a measure,  
 And find his mouth a rein ;  
 If you were queen of pleasure,  
 And I were king of pain.

## FAUSTINE.

*Ave Faustina Imperatrix, morituri te salutant.*

LEAN back, and get some minutes' peace ;  
 Let your head lean  
 Back to the shoulder with its fleece  
 Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,  
 Weighed over clean  
 With state of splendid hair that droops  
 Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts  
 That crown you queen ;  
 A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts  
 Each week, Faustine.

Bright heavy brows well gathered up :  
 White gloss and sheen ;  
 Carved lips that make my lips a cup  
 To drink, Faustine.

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,  
Being mixed therein  
Since first the devil threw dice with God  
For you, Faustine.

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,  
Stood blind between ;  
God said "let him that wins her take  
And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt :  
Long since, I ween,  
God's part in you was battered out ;  
Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,  
Rang cracked and thin,  
Like a man's laughter heard in hell  
Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,  
Dead sorrow's kin ;  
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die  
That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,  
One hard to wean ;  
But God, who lost you, left you fair,  
We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman  
For her soul's screen—  
The sort of beauty that's called human  
In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good  
Or chaste of mien ;  
And that you would not if you could,  
We know, Faustine.

Even he who cast seven devils out  
Of Magdalene  
Could hardly do as much, I doubt,  
For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God ?  
Or did God mean  
To scourge with scorpions for a rod  
Our sins, Faustine ?

I know what queen at first you were,  
As though I had seen  
Red gold and black imperious hair  
Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus  
Spared flesh and skin,  
You come back face to face with us  
The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,  
Where death must win ;  
As though the slain man's blood and breath  
Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net ;  
Lithe limbs and lean  
From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat  
To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust  
Blown off the scene ;  
Blood could not ease the bitter lust  
That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,  
Where blood sank in ;  
The circus splashed and seethed and shrieked  
All round Faustine.

But these are gone now : years entomb  
The dust and din ;  
Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume  
That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then ? and now  
Is life worth sin ?  
Where are the imperial years ? and how  
Are you, Faustine ?



Your soul forgot her joys, forgot  
Her times of teen ;  
Yea, this life likewise will you not  
Forget, Faustine ?

For in the time we know not of  
Did fate begin  
Weaving the web of days that wove  
Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all  
Were smooth to spin ;  
They wove you like a Bacchanal,  
The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you  
Wild grapes to glean ;  
Your flower-like lips were dashed with dew  
From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched to hold  
The vine's wet green,  
Long ere they coined in Roman gold  
Your face, Faustine.

Then after change of soaring feather  
And winnowing fin,  
You woke in weeks of feverish weather,  
A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,  
Whose fierce serene  
Red pulseless planet never yearned  
In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew  
Through Mitylene  
Shook the fierce quivering blood in you  
By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless love that makes  
Hell's iron gin  
Shut on you like a trap that breaks  
The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,  
 What ghosts unclean  
 Swarmed round the straitened barren bed  
 That hid Faustine ?

What sterile growths of sexless root  
 Or epicene ?  
 What flower of kisses without fruit  
 Of love, Faustine ?

What adders came to shed their coats ?  
 What coiled obscene  
 Small serpents with soft stretching throats  
 Caressed Faustine ?

But the time came of famished hours,  
 Maimed loves and mean,  
 This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,  
 To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,  
 A love-machine  
 With clockwork joints of supple gold  
 No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one God,  
 The Lampsacene,  
 Who metes the gardens with his rod ;  
 Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love  
 (Such things have been,  
 Things your fair face knows nothing of,  
 It seems, Faustine) ;

That clear hair heavily bound back,  
 The lights wherein  
 Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black :  
 Your throat, Faustine,

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face  
 And hard bright chin  
 And shameful scornful lips that grace  
 Their shame, Faustine,

Curled lips, long since half kissed away,  
 Still sweet and keen ;  
 You'd give him—poison shall we say ?  
 Or what, Faustine ?

## A CAMEO.

There was a graven image of Desire  
 Painted with red blood on a ground of gold  
 Passing between the young men and the old,  
 And by him Pain, whose body shone like fire,  
 And Pleasure with gaunt hands that grasped their  
 hire.

Of his left wrist, with fingers clenched and cold,  
 The insatiable Satiety kept hold,

Walking with feet unshod that plashed the mire.  
 The senses and the sorrows and the sins,  
 And the strange loves that suck the breasts of  
 Hate  
 Till lips and teeth bite in their sharp indenture,  
 Followed like beasts with flap of wings and fins.  
 Death stood aloof behind a gaping grate,  
 Upon whose lock was written *Peradventure*.

## STAGE LOVE.

WHEN the game began between them for a jest,  
 He played king and she played queen to match the  
 best ;  
 Laughter soft as tears, and tears that turned to laugh-  
 ter,  
 These were things she sought for years and sorrowed  
 after.

Pleasure with dry lips, and pain that walks by night ;  
 All the sting and all the stain of long delight ;  
 These were things she knew not of, that knew not of  
 her,  
 When she played at half a love with half a lover.

Time was chorus, gave them cues to laugh or cry ;  
 They would kill, befool, amuse him, let him die ;  
 Set him webs to weave to-day and break to-morrow,  
 Till he died for good in play, and rose in sorrow.

What the years mean ; how time dies and is not slain ;  
 How love grows and laughs and cries and wanes again ;  
 These were things she came to know, and take their  
     measure,  
 When the play was played out so for one man's  
     pleasure.

### THE LEPER.

NOTHING is better, I well think,  
     Than love ; the hidden well-water  
 Is not so delicate to drink :  
     This was well seen of me and her.

I served her in a royal house ;  
     I served her wine and curious meat  
 For will to kiss between her brows  
     I had no heart to sleep or eat.

Mere scorn God knows she had of me ;  
     A poor scribe, nowise great or fair,  
 Who plucked his clerk's hood back to see  
     Her curled-up lips and amorous hair.

I vex my head with thinking this.  
     Yea, though God always hated me,  
 And hates me now that I can kiss  
     Her eyes, plait up her hair to see

How she then wore it on the brows,  
     Yet am I glad to have her dead  
 Here in this wretched wattled house  
     Where I can kiss her eyes and head.

Nothing is better, I well know,  
     Than love ; no amber in cold sea  
 Or gathered berries under snow :  
     That is well seen of her and me.

Three thoughts I make my pleasure of :  
 First I take heart and think of this :  
 That knight's gold hair she chose to love,  
 His mouth she had such will to kiss.

Then I remember that sundawn  
 I brought him by a privy way  
 Out at her lattice, and thereon  
 What gracious words she found to say.

(Cold rushes for such little feet—  
 Both feet could lie into my hand.  
 A marvel was it of my sweet  
 Her upright body could so stand.)

“Sweet friend, God give you thank and grace  
 Now am I clean and whole of shame,  
 Nor shall men burn me in the face  
 For my sweet fault that scandals them.”

I tell you over word by word.  
 She, sitting edgewise on her bed,  
 Holding her feet, said thus. The third,  
 A sweeter thing than these, I said.

God, that makes time and ruins it,  
 And alters not, abiding God,  
 Changed with disease her body sweet,  
 The body of love wherein she abode.

Love is more sweet and comelier  
 Than a dove's throat strained out to sing.  
 All they spat out and cursed at her  
 And cast her forth for a base thing.

They cursed her, seeing how God had wrought  
 This curse to plague her, a curse of his.  
 Fools were they surely, seeing not  
 How sweeter than all sweet she is.

He that had held her by the hair,  
 With kissing lips blinding her eyes,  
 Felt her bright bosom, strained and bare,  
 Sigh under him, with short mad cries

Out of her throat and sobbing mouth  
 And body broken up with love,  
 With sweet hot tears his lips were loath  
 Her own should taste the savor of,

Yea, he inside whose grasp all night  
 Her fervent body leapt or lay,  
 Stained with sharp kisses red and white,  
 Found her a plague to spurn away.

I hid her in this wattled house,  
 I served her water and poor bread.  
 For joy to kiss between her brows  
 Time upon time I was nigh dead.

Bread failed ; we got but well-water  
 And gathered grass with dropping seed.  
 I had such joy of kissing her,  
 I had small care to sleep or feed.

Sometimes when service made me glad  
 The sharp tears leapt between my lids,  
 Falling on her, such joy I had  
 To do the service God forbids.

“ I pray you let me be at peace,  
 Get hence, make room for me to die.”  
 She said that : her poor lip would cease,  
 Put up to mine, and turn to cry.

I said, “ Bethink yourself how love  
 Fared in us twain, what either did ;  
 Shall I unclothe my soul thereof ?  
 That I should do this, God forbid.”

Yea, though God hateth us, he knows  
 That hardly in a little thing  
 Love faileth of the work it does  
 Till it grow ripe for gathering.

Six months, and now my sweet is dead  
 A trouble takes me ; I know not  
 If all were done well, all well said,  
 No word or tender deed forgot.

Too sweet, for the least part in her,  
 To have shed life out by fragments ; yet,  
 Could the close mouth catch breath and stir,  
 I might see something I forget.

Six months, and I sit still and hold  
 In two cold palms her cold two feet.  
 Her hair, half gray half ruined gold,  
 Thrills me and burns me in kissing it.

Love bites and stings me through, to see  
 Her keen face made of sunken bones.  
 Her worn-off eyelids madden me,  
 That were shot through with purple once.

She said, " Be good with me ; I grow  
 So tired for shame's sake, I shall die  
 If you say nothing : " even so.  
 And she is dead now, and shame put by.

Yea, and the scorn she had of me  
 In the old time, doubtless vexed her then.  
 I never should have kissed her. See  
 What fools God's anger makes of men !

She might have loved me a little too,  
 Had I been humbler for her sake.  
 But that new shame could make love new  
 She saw not—yet her shame did make.

I took too much upon my love,  
 Having for such mean service done  
 Her beauty and all the ways thereof,  
 Her face and all the sweet thereon.

Yea, all this while I tended her,  
 I know the old love held fast his part :  
 I know the old scorn waxed heavier,  
 Mixed with sad wonder, in her heart.

It may be all my love went wrong—  
 A scribe's work writ awry and blurred,  
 Scrawled after the blind evensong—  
 Spoilt music with no perfect word.

But surely I would fain have done  
 All things the best I could. Perchance  
 Because I failed, came short of one,  
 She kept at heart that other man's.

I am grown blind with all these things :  
 It may be now she hath in sight  
 Some better knowledge ; still there clings  
 The old question. Will not God do right ?

## DOLORES.

(NOTRE-DAME DES SEPT DOULEURS.)

COLD eyelids that hide like a jewel,  
 Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour ;  
 The heavy white limbs, and the cruel  
 Red mouth like a venomous flower ;  
 When these are gone by with their glories,  
 What shall rest of thee then, what remain,  
 O mystic and sombre Dolores,  
 Our Lady of Pain ?

Seven sorrows the priests give their Virgin ;  
 But thy sins, which are seventy times seven,  
 Seven ages would fail thee to purge in,  
 And then they would haunt thee in heaven :  
 Fierce midnights and famishing morrows,  
 And the loves that complete and control  
 All the joys of the flesh, all the sorrows  
 That wear out the soul.

O garment not golden but gilded ;  
 O garden where all men may dwell,  
 O tower not of ivory, but builded  
 By hands that reach heaven from hell ;  
 O mystical rose of the mire,  
 O house not of gold but of gain,  
 O house of unquenchable fire,  
 Our Lady of Pain !

(O lips full of lust and of laughter,  
 Curled snakes that are fed from my breast,



Bite hard, lest remembrance come after  
 And press with new lips where you pressed.  
 For my heart too springs up at the pressure,  
 Mine eyelids too moisten and burn ;  
 Ah, feed me and fill me with pleasure,  
 Ere pain come in turn.)

In yesterday's reach and to-morrow's,  
 Out of sight though they lie of to-day,  
 There have been and there yet shall be sorrows,  
 That smite not and bite not in play.  
 The life and the love thou despisest,  
 These hurt us indeed and in vain,  
 O wise among women, and wisest,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who gave thee thy wisdom ? what stories  
 That stung thee, what visions that smote ?  
 Wert thou pure and a maiden, Dolores,  
 When desire took thee first by the throat ?  
 What bud was the shell of a blossom  
 That all men may smell to and pluck ?  
 What milk fed thee first at what bosom ?  
 What sins gave thee suck ?

We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,  
 Thou art noble and nude and antique ;  
 Libitina thy mother, Priapus  
 Thy father, a Tuscan and Greek.  
 We play with light loves in the portal,  
 And wince and relent and refrain ;  
 Loves die, and we know thee immortal,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Fruits fail and love dies and time ranges ;  
 Thou art fed with perpetual breath,  
 And alive after infinite changes,  
 And fresh from the kisses of death ;  
 Of languors rekindled and rallied,  
 Of barren delights and unclean,  
 Things monstrous and fruitless, a pallid  
 And poisonous queen.

Could you hurt me, sweet lips, though I hurt you ?

Men touch them, and change in a trice  
The lilies and langnors of virtue  
For the raptures and roses of vice ;  
Those lie where thy foot on the floor is,  
These crown and caress thee and chain,  
O splendid and sterile Dolores,  
Our Lady of Pain.

There are sins it may be to discover,  
There are deeds it may be to delight.  
What new work wilt thou find for thy lover,  
What new passions for daytime or night ?  
What spells that they know not a word of  
Whose lives are as leaves overblown ?  
What tortures undreamt of, unheard of,  
Unwritten, unknown ?

Ah beautiful passionate body  
That never has ached with a heart !  
On thy mouth though the kisses are bloody,  
Though they sting till it shudder and smart,  
More kind than the love we adore is,  
They hurt not the heart or the brain,  
O bitter and tender Dolores,  
Our Lady of Pain.

As our kisses relax and redouble,  
From the lips and the foam and the fangs  
Shall no new sin be born for men's trouble,  
No dream of impossible pangs ?  
With the sweet of the sins of old ages  
Wilt thou satiate thy soul as of yore ?  
Too sweet is the rind, say the sages,  
Too bitter the core.

Hast thou told all thy secrets the last time,  
And bared all thy beauties to one ?  
Ah, where shall we go then for pastime,  
If the worst that can be has been done ?  
But sweet as the rind was the core is ;  
We are fain of thee still, we are fain,  
O sanguine and subtle Dolores,  
Our Lady of Pain.

By the hunger of change and emotion,  
 By the thirst of unbearable things,  
 By despair, the twin-born of devotion,  
 By the pleasure that winces and stings,  
 The delight that consumes the desire,  
 The desire that outruns the delight,  
 By the cruelty deaf as a fire  
 And blind as the night,

By the ravenous teeth that have smitten  
 Through the kisses that blossom and bud,  
 By the lips intertwined and bitten  
 Till the foam has a savor of blood,  
 By the pulse as it rises and falters,  
 By the hands as they slacken and strain,  
 I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Wilt thou smile as a woman disdain  
 The light fire in the veins of a boy?  
 But he comes to thee sad, without feigning,  
 Who has wearied of sorrow and joy;  
 Less careful of labor and glory  
 Than the elders whose hair has uncurled;  
 And young, but with fancies as hoary  
 And gray as the world.

I have passed from the outermost portal  
 To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;  
 What care though the service be mortal?  
 O our Lady of Torture, what care?  
 All thine the last wine that I pour is,  
 The last in the chalice we drain,  
 O fierce and luxurious Dolores,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

All thine the new wine of desire,  
 The fruit of four lips as they clung  
 Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,  
 The foam of a serpentine tongue,  
 The froth of the serpents of pleasure,  
 More salt than the foam of the sea,  
 Now felt as a flame, now at leisure  
 As wine shed for me.

Ah thy people, thy children, thy chosen,  
 Marked cross from the womb and perverse !  
 They have found out the secret to cozen  
 The gods that constrain us and curse ;  
 They alone, they are wise, and none other ;  
 Give me place, even me, in their train,  
 O my sister, my spouse, and my mother,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

For the crown of our life as it closes  
 Is darkness, the fruit thereof dust ;  
 No thorns go as deep as a rose's,  
 And love is more cruel than lust.  
 Time turns the old days to derision,  
 Our loves into corpses or wives ;  
 And marriage and death and division  
 Make barren our lives.

And pale from the past we draw nigh thee,  
 And satiate with comfortless hours ;  
 And we know thee, how all men belie thee,  
 And we gather the fruit of thy flowers ;  
 The passion that slays and recovers,  
 The pangs and the kisses that rain  
 On the lips and the limbs of thy lovers,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

The desire of thy furious embraces  
 Is more than the wisdom of years,  
 On the blossom though blood lie in traces,  
 Though the foliage be sodden with tears.  
 For the lords in whose keeping the door is  
 That opens on all who draw breath  
 Gave the cypress to love, my Dolores,  
 The myrtle to death.

And they laughed, changing hands in the measure,  
 And they mixed and made peace after strife ;  
 Pain melted in tears, and was pleasure ;  
 Death tingled with blood, and was life.  
 Like lovers they melted and tingled,  
 In the dusk of thine innermost fane ;  
 In the darkness they murmured and mingled,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

In a twilight where virtues are vices,  
 In thy chapels, unknown of the sun,  
 To a tune that enthralls and entices,  
 They were wed, and the twain were as one.  
 For the tune from thine altar hath sounded  
 Since God bade the world's work begin,  
 And the fume of thine incense abounded,  
 To sweeten the sin.

Love listens, and paler than ashes,  
 Through his curls as the crown on them slips,  
 Lifts languid wet eyelids and lashes,  
 And laughs with insatiable lips.  
 Thou shalt hush him with heavy caresses,  
 With music that scares the profane ;  
 Thou shalt darken his eyes with thy tresses,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Thou shalt blind his bright eyes though he wrestle,  
 Thou shalt chain his light limbs though he strive ;  
 In his lips all thy serpents shall nestle,  
 In his hands all thy cruelties thrive.  
 In the daytime thy voice shall go through him,  
 In his dreams he shall feel thee and ache ;  
 Thou shalt kindle by night and subdue him  
 Asleep and awake.

Thou shalt touch and make redder his roses  
 With juice not of fruit nor of bud ;  
 When the sense in the spirit reposes,  
 Thou shalt quicken the soul through the blood.  
 Thine, thine the one grace we implore is,  
 Who would live and not languish or feign,  
 O sleepless and deadly Dolores,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Dost thou dream, in a respite of slumber,  
 In a lull of the fires of thy life,  
 Of the days without name, without number,  
 When thy will stung the world into strife ;  
 When, a goddess, the pulse of thy passion  
 Smote kings as they revelled in Rome ;  
 And they hailed thee re-risen, O Thalassian,  
 Foam-white, from the foam ?

When thy lips had such lovers to flatter ;  
 When the city lay red from thy rods  
 And thine hands were as arrows to scatter  
 The children of change and their gods ;  
 When the blood of thy foemen made fervent  
 A sand never moist from the main,  
 As one smote them, their lord and thy servant,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

On sands by the storm never shaken,  
 Nor wet from the washing of tides ;  
 Nor by foam of the waves overtaken,  
 Nor winds that the thunder bestrides ;  
 But red from the print of thy paces,  
 Made smooth for the world and its lords,  
 Ringed round with a flame of fair faces,  
 And splendid with swords.

There the gladiator, pale for thy pleasure,  
 Drew bitter and perilous breath ;  
 There torments laid hold on the treasure  
 Of limbs too delicious for death ;  
 When thy gardens were lit with live torches ;  
 When the world was a steed for thy rein ;  
 When the nations lay prone in thy porches,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

When, with flame all around him aspirant,  
 Stood flushed, as a harp-player stands,  
 The implacable beautiful tyrant,  
 Rose-crowned, having death in his hands ;  
 And a sound as the sound of loud water  
 Smote far through the flight of the fires,  
 And mixed with the lightning of slaughter  
 A thunder of lyres.

Dost thou dream of what was and no more is,  
 The old kingdoms of earth and the kings ?  
 Dost thou hunger for these things, Dolores,  
 For these, in a world of new things ?  
 But thy bosom no fasts could emaciate,  
 No hunger compel to complain  
 Those lips that no bloodshed could satiate,  
 Our Lady of Pain,

As of old when the world's heart was lighter,  
 Through thy garments the grace of thee glows,  
 The white wealth of the body made whiter  
 By the blushes of amorous blows,  
 And seamed with sharp lips and fierce fingers,  
 And branded by kisses that bruise ;  
 When all shall be gone that now lingers,  
 Ah, what shall we lose ?

Thou wert fair in the fearless old fashion,  
 And thy limbs are as melodies yet,  
 And move to the music of passion  
 With lithe and lascivious regret.  
 What ailed us, O gods, to desert you  
 For creeds that refuse and restrain ?  
 Come down and redeem us from virtue,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

All shrines that were Vestal are flameless ;  
 But the flame has not fallen from this ;  
 Though obscure be the god, and though nameless  
 The eyes and the hair that we kiss ;  
 Low fires that love sits by and forges  
 Fresh heads for his arrows and thine ;  
 Hair loosened and soiled in mid orgies  
 With kisses and wine.

Thy skin changes country and color,  
 And shrivels or swells to a snake's.  
 Let it brighten and bloat and grow duller,  
 We know it, the flames and the flakes,  
 Red brands on it smitten and bitten,  
 Round skies where a star is a stain,  
 And the leaves with thy litanies written,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

On thy bosom though many a kiss be,  
 There are none such as knew it of old.  
 Was it Aleiphron once or Arisbe,  
 Male ringlets or feminine gold  
 That thy lips met with under the statue,  
 Whence a look shot out sharp after thieves  
 From the eyes of the garden-god at you  
 Across the fig-leaves ?

Then still, through dry seasons and moister,  
 One god had a wreath to his shrine ;  
 Then love was the pearl of his oyster,\*  
 And Venus rose red out of wine.  
 We have all done amiss, choosing rather  
 Such loves as the wise gods disdain ;  
 Intercede for us thou with thy father,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

In spring he had crowns of his garden  
 Red corn in the heat of the year,  
 Then hoary green olives that harden  
 When the grape-blossom freezes with fear,  
 And milk-budded myrtles with Venus  
 And vine-leaves with Bacchus he trod ;  
 And ye said, " We have seen, he hath seen us,  
 A visible God."

What broke off the garlands that girt you ?  
 What Sundered you spirit and clay ?  
 Weak sins yet alive are as virtue  
 To the strength of the sins of that day.  
 For dried is the blood of thy lover,  
 Ipsithilla, contracted the vein ;  
 Cry aloud, " Will he rise and recover,  
 Our Lady of Pain ? "

Cry aloud ; for the old world is broken ;  
 Cry out ; for the Phrygian is priest,  
 And rears not the bountiful token  
 And spreads not the fatherly feast.  
 From the midmost of Ida, from shady  
 Recesses that murmur at morn,  
 They have brought and baptized her, Our Lady.  
 A goddess new-born.

And the chaplets of old are above us,  
 And the oyster-bed teems out of reach ;  
 Old poets outsing and outlove us,  
 And Catullus makes mouths at our speech.

\* " Nam te præcipuè in suis urbibus colit ora  
 Hellespontia, cæteris ostreosior oris."



Who shall kiss, in thy father's own city,  
 With such lips as he sang with, again ?  
 Intercede for us all of thy pity,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Out of Dindymus heavily laden  
 Her lions draw bound and unfed  
 A mother, a mortal, a maiden,  
 A queen over death and the dead.  
 She is cold, and her habit is lowly,  
 Her temple of branches and sods ;  
 Most fruitful and virginal, holy,  
 A mother of gods.

She hath wasted with fire thine high places,  
 She hath hidden and marred and made sad  
 The fair limbs of the Loves, the fair faces  
 Of gods that were goodly and glad.  
 She slays, and her hands are not bloody ;  
 She moves as a moon in the wane,  
 White-robed, and thy raiment is ruddy,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

They shall pass and their places be taken,  
 The gods and the priests that are pure.  
 They shall pass, and shalt thou not be shaken ?  
 They shall perish, and shalt thou endure ?  
 Death laughs, breathing close and relentless  
 In the nostrils and eyelids of lust,  
 With a pinch in his fingers of scentless  
 And delicate dust.

But the worm shall revive thee with kisses,  
 Thou shalt change and transmute as a god,  
 As the rod to a serpent that hisses,  
 As the serpent again to a rod.  
 Thy life shall not cease though thou doff it ;  
 Thou shalt live until evil be slain,  
 And good shall die first, said thy prophet,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Did he lie ? did he laugh ? does he know it,  
 Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,

Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet,  
 Sin's child by incestuous Death?  
 Did he find out in fire at his waking,  
 Or discern as his eyelids lost light,  
 When the bands of the body were breaking  
 And all came in sight?

Who has known all the evil before us,  
 Or the tyrannous secrets of time?  
 Though we match not the dead men that bore us,  
 At a song, at a kiss, at a crime—  
 Though the heathen outface and outlive us,  
 And our lives and our longings are twain—  
 Ah, forgive us our virtues, forgive us,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

Who are we that embalm and embrace thee  
 With spices and savors of song?  
 What is time, that his children should face thee?  
 What am I, that my lips do thee wrong?  
 I could hurt thee—but pain would delight thee;  
 Or caress thee—but love would repel;  
 And the lovers whose lips would excite thee  
 Are serpents in hell.

Who now shall content thee as they did,  
 Thy lovers, when temples were built  
 And the hair of the sacrifice braided  
 And the blood of the sacrifice spilt,  
 In Lampsacus fervent with faces,  
 In Aphaca red from thy reign,  
 Who embraced thee with awful embraces,  
 Our Lady of Pain?

Where are they, Cotytto, or Venus,  
 Astarte or Ashtaroth, where?  
 Do their hands as we touch come between us?  
 Is the breath of them hot in thy hair?  
 From their lips have thy lips taken fever,  
 With the blood of their bodies grown red?  
 Hast thou left upon earth a believer  
 If these men are dead?

They were purple of raiment and golden,  
 Filled full of thee, fiery with wine,  
 Thy lovers, in haunts un beholden,  
 In marvellous chambers of thine.  
 They are fled, and their footprints escape us,  
 Who appraise thee, adore, and abstain,  
 O daughter of Death and Priapus,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

What ails us to fear overmeasure,  
 To praise thee with timorous breath,  
 O mistress and mother of pleasure,  
 The one thing as certain as death?  
 We shall change as the things that we cherish,  
 Shall fade as they faded before,  
 As foam upon water shall perish,  
 As sand upon shore.

We shall know what the darkness discovers,  
 If the grave-pit be shallow or deep;  
 And our fathers of old, and our lovers,  
 We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.  
 We shall see whether hell be not heaven,  
 Find out whether tares be not grain.  
 And the joys of thee seventy times seven,  
 Our Lady of Pain.

## HESPERIA.

Out of the golden remote wild west where the sea  
 without shore is,  
 Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with the ful-  
 ness of joy,  
 As a wind sets in with the autumn that blows from  
 the region of stories,  
 Blows with a perfume of songs and of memories  
 beloved from a boy,  
 Blows from the capes of the past oversea to the bays  
 of the present,  
 Filled as with shadow of sound with the pulse of  
 invisible feet,

Far out to the shallows and straits of the future, by  
rough ways or pleasant,  
Is it thither the wind's wings beat? is it hither to  
me, O my sweet?  
For thee, in the stream of the deep tide-wind blowing  
in with the water,  
Thee I behold as a bird borne in with the wind  
from the west,  
Straight from the sunset, across white waves whence  
rose as a daughter  
Venus thy mother, in years when the world was  
a water at rest.  
Out of the distance of dreams, as a dream that abides  
after slumber,  
Strayed from the fugitive flock of the night, when  
the moon overhead  
Wanes in the wan waste heights of the heaven, and  
stars without number  
Die without sound, and are spent like lamps that  
are burnt by the dead,  
Comes back to me, stays by me, lulls me with touch  
of forgotten caresses,  
One warm dream clad about with a fire as of life  
that endures;  
The delight of thy face, and the sound of thy feet,  
and the wind of thy tresses,  
And all of a man that regrets, and all of a maid  
that allures.  
But thy bosom is warm for my face and profound as  
a manifold flower,  
Thy silence as music, thy voice as an odor that  
fades in a flame;  
Not a dream, not a dream is the kiss of thy mouth,  
and the bountiful hour  
That makes me forget what was sin, and would  
make me forget were it shame.  
Thine eyes that are quiet, thine hands that are tender,  
thy lips that are loving,  
Comfort and cool me as dew in the dawn of a moon  
like a dream;  
And my heart yearns baffled and blind, moved vainly  
toward thee, and moving

As the refluent seaweed moves in the languid exuberant stream,  
Fair as a rose is on earth, as a rose under water in prison,  
That stretches and swings to the slow passionate pulse of the sea,  
Closed up from the air and the sun, but alive, as a ghost rearisen,  
Pale as the love that revives as a ghost rearisen in me.  
From the bountiful infinite west, from the happy memorial places  
Full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of the dead,  
Where the fortunate islands are lit with the light of ineffable faces,  
And the sound of a sea without wind is about them, and sunset is red,  
Come back to redeem and release me from love that recalls and represses,  
That cleaves to my flesh as a flame, till the serpent has eaten his fill ;  
From the bitter delights of the dark, and the feverish, the furtive caresses  
That murder the youth in a man or ever his heart have its will.  
Thy lips cannot laugh and thine eyes cannot weep ;  
thou art pale as a rose is,  
Paler and sweeter than leaves that cover the blush of the bud ;  
And the heart of the flower is compassion, and pity the core it encloses,  
Pity, not love, that is born of the breath and decays with the blood.  
As the cross that a wild nun clasps till the edge of it bruises her bosom,  
So love wounds as we grasp it, and blackens and burns as a flame ;  
I have loved overmuch in my life ; when the live bud bursts with the blossom,  
Bitter as ashes or tears is the fruit, and the wine thereof shame.

As a heart that its anguish divides is the green bud  
 cloven asunder ;  
 As the blood of a man self-slain is the flush of the  
 leaves that allure ;  
 And the perfume as poison and wine to the brain, a  
 delight and a wonder ;  
 And the thorns are too sharp for a boy, too slight  
 for a man, to endure.  
 Too soon did I love it, and lost love's rose ; and I  
 cared not for glory's :  
 Only the blossoms of sleep and of pleasure were  
 mixed in my hair.  
 Was it myrtle or poppy thy garland was woven with,  
 O my Dolores ?  
 Was it pallor of slumber, or blush as of blood, that  
 I found in thee fair ?  
 For desire is a respite from love, and the flesh not  
 the heart is her fuel ;  
 She was sweet to me once, who am fled and escaped  
 from the rage of her reign ;  
 Who behold as of old time at hand as I turn, with  
 her mouth growing cruel,  
 And flushed as with wine with the blood of her  
 lovers, Our Lady of Pain.  
 Low down where the thicket is thicker with thorns  
 than with leaves in the summer,  
 In the brake is a gleaming of eyes and a hissing of  
 tongues that I knew ;  
 And the lithe long throats of her snakes reach round  
 her, their mouths overcome her,  
 And her lips grow cool with their foam, made moist  
 as a desert with dew.  
 With the thirst and the hunger of lust though her  
 beautiful lips be so bitter,  
 With the cold foul foam of the snakes they soften  
 and redden and smile ;  
 And her fierce mouth sweetens, her eyes wax wide  
 and her eyelashes glitter,  
 And she laughs with a savor of blood in her face,  
 and a savor of guile.  
 She laughs, and her hands reach hither, her hair  
 blows hither and hisses,

As a low-lit flame in a wind, back-blown till it shudder and leap ;  
Let her lips not again lay hold on my soul, nor her poisonous kisses,  
To consume it alive and divide from thy bosom,  
Our Lady of Sleep.  
Ah daughter of sunset and slumber, if now it return into prison,  
Who shall redeem it anew ? but we, if thou wilt, let us fly ;  
Let us take to us, now that the white skies thrill with a moon unarisen,  
Swift horses of fear or of love, take flight and depart and not die.  
They are swifter than dreams, they are stronger than death; there is none that hath ridden,  
None that shall ride in the dim strange ways of his life as we ride ;  
By the meadows of memory, the highlands of hope, and the shore that is hidden,  
Where life breaks loud and unseen, a sonorous invisible tide ,  
By the sands where sorrow has trodden, the salt pools bitter and sterile,  
By the thundering reef and the low sea-wall and the channel of years,  
Our wild steeds press on the night, strain hard through pleasure and peril,  
Labor and listen and pant not or pause for the peril that nears ;  
And the sound of them trampling the way cleaves night as an arrow asunder,  
And slow by the sand-hill and swift by the down with its glimpses of grass,  
Sudden and steady the music, as eight hoofs trample and thunder,  
Rings in the ear of the low blind wind of the night as we pass ;  
Shrill shrieks in our faces the blind bland air that was mute as a maiden,  
Stung into storm by the speed of our passage, and deaf where we past ;

And our spirits too burn as we bound, thine only but  
 mine heavy-laden,  
 As we burn with the fire of our flight ; ah, love,  
 shall we win at the last ?

## FÉLISE.

*Mais où sont les neiges d'autan ?*

WHAT shall be said between us here  
 Among the downs, between the trees,  
 In fields that knew our feet last year,  
 In sight of quiet sands and seas,  
 This year, Félice ?

Who knows what word were best to say ?  
 For last year's leaves lie dead and red  
 On this sweet day, in this green May,  
 And barren corn makes bitter bread.  
 What shall be said ?

Here as last year the fields begin,  
 A fire of flowers and glowing grass ;  
 The old fields we laughed and lingered in,  
 Seeing each our souls in last year's glass,  
 Félice, alas !

Shall we not laugh, shall we not weep,  
 Not we, though this be as it is ?  
 For love awake or love asleep  
 Ends in a laugh, a dream, a kiss,  
 A song like this.

I that have slept awake, and you  
 Sleep, who last year were well awake.  
 Though love do all that love can do,  
 My heart will never ache or break  
 For your heart's sake.

The great sea, faultless as a flower,  
 Throbs, trembling under beam and breeze,  
 And laughs with love of the amorous hour.  
 I found you fairer once, Félice,  
 Than flowers or seas.



We played at bondsman and at queen ;  
 But as the days change men change too ;  
 I find the gray sea's notes of green,  
 The green sea's fervent flakes of blue,  
 More fair than you.

Your beauty is not over fair  
 Now in mine eyes, who am grown up wise.  
 The smell of flowers in all your hair  
 Allures not now ; no sigh replies  
 If your heart sighs.

But you sigh seldom, you sleep sound,  
 You find love's new name good enough.  
 Less sweet I find it than I found  
 The sweetest name that ever love  
 Grew weary of.

My snake with bright bland eyes, my snake  
 Grown tame and glad to be caressed,  
 With lips athirst for mine to slake  
 Their tender fever ! who had guessed  
 You loved me best ?

I had died for this last year, to know  
 You loved me. Who shall turn on fate ?  
 I care not if love come or go  
 Now, though your love seek mine for mate.  
 It is too late.

The dust of many strange desires  
 Lies deep between us ; in our eyes  
 Dread smoke of perishable fires  
 Flickers, a fume in air and skies,  
 A steam of sighs.

You loved me and you loved me not ;  
 A little, much, and overmuch.  
 Will you forget as I forget ?  
 Let all dead things lie dead ; none such  
 Are soft to touch.

I love you and I do not love,  
 Too much, a little, not at all ;

Too much, and never yet enough.  
 Birds quick to fledge and fly at call  
 Are quick to fall.

And these love longer now than men,  
 And larger loves than ours are these.  
 No diver brings up love again  
 Dropped once, my beautiful Félise,  
 In such cold seas.

Gone deeper than all plummet's sound,  
 Where in the dim green dayless day  
 The life of such dead things lies bound  
 As the sea feeds on, wreck and stray  
 And castaway.

Can I forget? Yea, that can I,  
 And that can all men; so will you,  
 Alive, or later, when you die.  
 Ah, but the love you plead was true?  
 Was mine not too?

I loved you for that name of yours  
 Long ere we met, and long enough.  
 Now that one thing of all endures—  
 The sweetest name that ever love  
 Waxed weary of.

Like colors in the sea, like flowers,  
 Like a cat's splendid circle eyes  
 That wax and wane with love for hours,  
 Green as green flame, blue-gray like skies,  
 And soft like sighs—

And all these only like your name,  
 And your name full of all of these  
 I say it, and it sounds the same—  
 Save that I say it now at ease,  
 Your name, Félise.

I said "She must be swift and white,  
 And subtly warm, and half perverse,  
 And sweet like sharp soft fruit to bite,

And like a snake's love lithe and fierce."  
Men have guessed worse.

What was the song I made of you  
Here where the grass forgets our feet  
As afternoon forgets the dew ?  
( Ah that such sweet things should be fleet,  
Such fleet things sweet !

As afternoon forgets the dew,  
As time in time forgets all men,  
As our old place forgets us two,  
Who might have turned to one thing then,  
But not again.

O lips that mine have grown into  
Like April's kissing May,  
O fervent eyelids letting through  
Those eyes the greenest of things blue,  
The bluest of things gray,

If you were I and I were you,  
How could I love you, say ?  
How could the roseleaf love the rue,  
The day love nightfall and her dew,  
Though night may love the day ?

You loved it may be more than I ;  
We know not ; love is hard to seize,  
And all things are not good to try ;  
And lifelong loves the worst of these  
For us, Félise.

Ah, take the season and have done,  
Love well the hour and let it go :  
Two souls may sleep and wake up one,  
Or dream they wake and find it so,  
And then—you know.

Kiss me once hard as though a flame  
Lay on my lips and made them fire ;  
The same lips now, and not the same ;  
( What breath shall fill and re-inspire  
A dead desire ?

The old song sounds hollower in mine ear  
 Than thin keen sounds of dead men's speech—  
 A noise one hears and would not hear ;  
 Too strong to die, too weak to reach  
 From wave to beach.

We stand on either side the sea,  
 Stretch hands, blow kisses, laugh and lean  
 I toward you, you toward me ;  
 But what hears either save the keen  
 Gray sea between ?

A year divides us, love from love,  
 Though you love now, though I loved then.  
 The gulf is strait, but deep enough ;  
 Who shall recross, who among men  
 Shall cross again ?

Love was a jest last year, you said,  
 And what lives surely, surely dies.  
 Even so ; but now that love is dead,  
 Shall love rekindle from wet eyes,  
 From subtle sighs ?

For many loves are good to see,  
 Mutable loves, and loves perverse  
 But there is nothing, nor shall be,  
 So sweet, so wicked, but my verse  
 Can dream of worse.

For we that sing and you that love  
 Know that which man may, only we.  
 The rest live under us ; above,  
 Live the great gods in heaven, and see  
 What thing shall be.

So this thing is and must be so ;  
 For man dies, and love also dies.  
 Though yet love's ghost moves to and fro  
 The sea-green mirrors of your eyes,  
 And laughs, and lies.

Eyes colored like a water-flower,  
 And deeper than the green sea's glass ;

Eyes that remember one sweet hour—  
 In vain we swore it should not pass ;  
 In vain, alas !

Ah my Félise, if love or sin,  
 If shame or fear could hold it fast,  
 Should we not hold it ? Love wears thin,  
 And they laugh well who laugh the last.  
 Is it not past ?

The gods, the gods are stronger ; time  
 Falls down before them, all men's knees  
 Bow, all men's prayers and sorrows climb  
 Like incense towards them ; yea, for these  
 Are gods, Félise.

Immortal are they, clothed with powers,  
 Not to be comforted at all ;  
 Lords over all the fruitless hours ;  
 Too great to appease, too high to appal,  
 Too far to call.

For none shall move the most high gods,  
 Who are most sad, being cruel ; none  
 Shall break or take away the rods  
 Wherewith they scourge us, not as one  
 That smites a son.

By many a name of many a creed  
 We have called upon them, since the sands  
 Fell through time's hour-glass first, a seed  
 Of life ; and out of many lands  
 Have we stretched hands.

When have they heard us ? who hath known  
 Their faces, climbed unto their feet,  
 Felt them and found them ? Laugh or groan,  
 Doth heaven remurmur and repeat  
 Sad sounds or sweet ?

Do the stars answer ? in the night  
 Have ye found comfort ? or by day  
 Have ye seen gods ? What hope, what light,

Falls from the farthest starriest way  
On you that pray ?

Are the skies wet because we weep,  
Or fair because of any mirth ?  
Cry out ; they are gods ; perchance they sleep ;  
Cry ; thou shalt know what prayers are worth,  
Thou dust and earth.

O earth, thou art fair ; O dust, thou art great ;  
O laughing lips and lips that mourn,  
Pray, till ye feel the exceeding weight  
Of God's intolerable scorn,  
Not to be borne.

Behold, there is no grief like this ;  
The barren blossom of thy prayer,  
Thou shalt find out how sweet it is.  
O fools and blind, what seek ye there,  
High up in the air ?

Ye must have gods, the friends of men,  
Merciful gods, compassionate,  
And these shall answer you again.  
Will ye beat always at the gate,  
Ye fools of fate ?

Ye fools and blind ; for this is sure,  
That all ye shall not live, but die.  
Lo, what thing have ye found endure ?  
Or what thing have ye found on high  
Past the blind sky ?

The ghosts of words and dusty dreams,  
Old memories, faiths infirm and dead.  
Ye fools ; for which among you deems  
His prayer can alter green to red  
Or stones to bread ?

Why should ye bear with hopes and fears  
Till all these things be drawn in one,  
The sound of iron-footed years,  
And all the oppression that is done  
Under the sun ?

Ye might end surely, surely pass  
 Out of the multitude of things,  
 Under the dust, beneath the grass,  
 Deep in dim death, where no thought stings,  
 No record clings.

No memory more of love or hate,  
 No trouble, nothing that aspires,  
 No sleepless labor thwarting fate,  
 And thwarted ; where no travail tires,  
 Where no faith fires.

All passes, naught that has been is,  
 Things good and evil have one end.  
 Can anything be otherwise  
 Though all men swear all things would mend  
 With God to friend ?

Can ye beat off one wave with prayer,  
 Can ye move mountains ? bid the flower  
 Take flight and turn to a bird in the air ?  
 Can ye hold fast for shine or shower  
 One wingless hour ?

Ah sweet, and we too, can we bring  
 One sigh back, bid one smile revive ?  
 Can God restore one ruined thing,  
 Or he who slays our souls alive  
 Make dead things thrive ?

Two gifts perforce he has given us yet,  
 Though sad things stay and glad things fly ;  
 Two gifts he has given us, to forget  
 All glad and sad things that go by,  
 And then to die.

We know not whether death be good,  
 But life at least it will not be :  
 Men will stand saddening as we stood,  
 Watch the same fields and skies as we  
 And the same sea.

Let this be said between us here,  
 One love grows green when one turns gray ;

This year knows nothing of last year ;  
 To-morrow has no more to say  
 To yesterday.

Live and let live, as I will do,  
 Love and let love, and so will I.  
 But, sweet, for me no more with you :  
 Not while I live, not though I die.  
 Good-night, good-by.

## ON THE VERGE.

HERE begins the sea that ends not till the world's end.  
 Where we stand,  
 Could we know the next high sea-mark set beyond  
 these waves that gleam,  
 We should know what never man hath known, nor eye  
 of man hath scanned.  
 Nought beyond these coiling clouds that melt like  
 fume of shrines that steam  
 Breaks or stays the strength of waters till they pass our  
 bounds of dream.  
 Where the waste Land's End leans westward, all the  
 seas it watches roll  
 Find their border fixed beyond them, end a world-wide  
 shore's control :  
 These whereby we stand no shore beyond us limits :  
 these are free.  
 Gazing hence, we see the water that grows iron round  
 the Pole,  
 From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all  
 the sea.  
 Sail on sail along the sea-line fades and flashes ; here  
 on land  
 Flash and fade the wheeling wings on wings of mews  
 that plunge and scream.  
 Hour on hour along the line of life and time's evasive  
 strand  
 Shines and darkens, wanes and waxes, slays and dies :  
 and scarce they seem  
 More than motes that thronged and trembled in the  
 brief noon's breath and beam.



Some with crying and wailing, some with notes like  
 sound of bells that toll,  
 Some with sighing and laughing, some with words  
 that blessed and made us whole,  
 Passed, and left us, and we know not what they were,  
 nor what were we.  
 Would we know, being mortal? Never breath of  
 answering whisper stole  
 From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all  
 the sea.

Shadows, would we question darkness? Ere our eyes  
 and brows be fanned  
 Round with airs of twilight, washed with dews from  
 sleep's eternal stream,  
 Would we know sleep's guarded secret? Ere the fire  
 consume the brand,  
 Would it know if yet its ashes may requicken? yet we  
 deem  
 Surely man may know, or ever night unyoke her starry  
 team,  
 What the dawn shall be, or if the dawn shall be not:  
 yea, the scroll  
 Would we read of sleep's dark scripture, pledge of  
 peace or doom of dole.  
 Ah, but here man's heart leaps, yearning toward the  
 gloom with venturous glee,  
 Though his pilot eye behold nor bay nor harbor, rock  
 nor shoal,  
 From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in  
 all the sea.

Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life  
 have death for goal?  
 Day nor night can tell us, nor may seas declare nor  
 skies unroll  
 What has been from everlasting, or if aught shall  
 always be.  
 Silence answering only strikes response reverberate on  
 the soul  
 From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all  
 the sea.

## THE SUNBOWS.

SPRAY of song that springs in April, light of love  
     that laughs through May,  
 Live and die and live for ever : nought of all things  
     far less fair  
 Keeps a surer life than these that seem to pass like  
     fire away.  
 In the souls they live which are but all the brighter  
     that they were ;  
 In the hearts that kindle, thinking what delight of old  
     was there.  
 Wind that shapes and lifts and shifts them bids  
     perpetual memory play  
 Over dreams and in and out of deeds and thoughts  
     which seem to wear  
 Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
     springing flames of spray.

Dawn is wild upon the waters where we drink of  
     dawn to-day :  
 Wide, from wave to wave rekindling is rebound  
     through radiant air,  
 Flash the fires unwoven and woven again of wind  
     that works in play,  
 Working wonders more than heart may note or sight  
     may wellnigh dare,  
 Wefts of rarer light than colors rain from heaven,  
     though this be rare.  
 Arch on arch unbuilt in building, reared and ruined  
     ray by ray,  
 Breaks and brightens, laughs and lessens, even till  
     eyes may hardly bear  
 Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
     springing flames of spray.

Year on year sheds light and music rolled and flashed  
     from bay to bay  
 Round the summer capes of time and winter head-  
     lands keen and bare

Whence the soul keeps watch, and bids her vassal  
 memory watch and pray,  
 If perchance the dawn may quicken, or perchance  
 the midnight spare.  
 Silence quells not music, darkness takes not sunlight  
 in her snare ;  
 Shall not joys endure that perish ? Yea, saith dawn,  
 though night say nay :  
 Life on life goes out, but very life enkindles every-  
 where  
 Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
 springing flames of spray.

Friend, were life no more than this is, well would  
 yet the living fare.  
 All aflower and all afire and all flung heavenward,  
 who shall say  
 Such a flash of life were worthless ? This is worth  
 a world of care—  
 Light that leaps and runs and revels through the  
 springing flames of spray.

## IN THE WATER.

THE sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the  
 joy of her waking is rolled  
 From afar to the star that recedes, from anear to the  
 wastes of the wild wide shore.  
 Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward : if  
 dawn in her east be a cold,  
 From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle  
 the life that it kindled before,  
 Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her  
 kisses to bless as of yore ?  
 For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause in  
 the sky, neither fettered nor free,  
 Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter :  
 and fain would the twain of us be  
 Where lightly the waves yearn forward from under  
 the curve of the deep dawn's dome,

And, full of the morning and fired with the pride of  
 the glory thereof and the glee,  
 Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
 beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Life holds not an hour that is better to live in : the  
 past is a tale that is told,  
 The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep,  
 with a blessing in store.  
 As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of  
 limbs that the waters enfold  
 Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though  
 the burden it quits were sore,  
 Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are  
 absorbed in the life they adore—  
 In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the  
 forehead, and bends not the knee—  
 In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the  
 laws that atone and agree,  
 In the measureless music of things, in the fervor of  
 forces that rest or that roam,  
 That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and  
 as you after me  
 Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
 beseeches, athirst for the foam.

For, albeit he were less than the least of them, haply  
 the heart of a man may be bold  
 To rejoice in the word of the sea as a mother's that  
 saith to the son she bore,  
 Child, was not the life in thee mine, and my spirit  
 the breath in thy lips from of old ?  
 Have I let not thy weakness exult in my strength,  
 and thy foolishness learn of my love ?  
 Have I helped not or healed not thine anguish, or  
 made not the might of thy gladness more ?  
 And surely his heart should answer, The light of the  
 love of my life is in thee.  
 She is fairer than earth, and the sun is not fairer,  
 the wind is not blither than she :  
 From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her  
 bays that I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,

Till now that the twain of us here, in desire of the  
 dawn and in thrust of the sea,  
 Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids  
 and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Friend, earth is a harbor of refuge for winter, a  
 covert whereunder to flee  
 When day is the vassal of night, and the strength of  
 the host of her mightier than he ;  
 But here is the presence adored of me, here my desire  
 is at rest and at home.  
 There are cliffs to be climbed upon land, there are  
 ways to be trodden and ridden : but we  
 Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and  
 beseeches, athirst for the foam.

### THE CAVES OF SARK.

*(The island was visited by Victor Hugo during the first years of his  
 exile.)*

FROM the roots of the rocks underlying the gulfs  
 that engird it around  
 Was the isle not enkindled with light of him landing,  
 or thrilled not with sound ?  
 Yea, surely the sea like a harper laid hand on the  
 shore as a lyre,  
 As the lyre in his own for a birthright of old that  
 was given of his sire,  
 And the hand of the child was put forth on the  
 chords yet alive and aflame  
 From the hand of the God that had wrought in  
 heaven ; and the hand was the same.  
 And the tongue of the child spake, singing ; and  
 never a note that he sang,  
 But the strings made answer unstricken, as though  
 for the God they rang.  
 And the eyes of the child shone, lightening ; and  
 touched as by life at his nod,  
 They shuddered with music, and quickened as though  
 from the glance of the God.  
 So trembled the heart of the hills and the rocks to  
 receive him, and yearned

With desirous delight of his presence and love that  
    beholding him burned.  
Yea, down through the mighty twin hollows where  
    never the sunlight shall be,  
Deep sunk under imminent earth, and subdued to  
    the stress of the sea,  
That feel when the dim week changes by change of  
    their tides in the dark,  
As the wave sinks under within them, reluctant,  
    removed from its mark,  
Even therein the terror of twilight in bloom with  
    its blossoms ablush,  
Did a sense of him touch not the gleam of their  
    flowers with a fierier flush ?  
Though the sun they behold not for ever, yet knew  
    they not over them One  
Whose soul was the soul of the morning, whose song  
    was the song of the sun ?  
But the secrets inviolate of sunlight in hollows un-  
    trodden of day,  
Shall he dream what are these who beholds not ? or  
    he that hath seen, shall he say ?  
For the path is for passage of sea-mews ; and he that  
    hath glided and leapt  
Over sea-grass and sea-rock, alighting as one from a  
    citadel crept  
That his foemen beleaguer, descending by darkness  
    and stealth, at the last  
Peers under, and all is as hollow to hellward, agape  
    and aghast.  
But afloat and afar in the darkness a tremulous color  
    subsides  
From the crimson high crest of the purple-peaked  
    roof to the soft-colored sides  
That brighten as ever they widen till downward the  
    level is won  
Of the soundless and colorless water that knows not  
    the sense of the sun :  
From the crown of the culminant arch to the floor  
    of the lakelet abloom,  
One infinite blossom of blossoms innumerable aflush  
    through the gloom.

All under the deeps of the darkness are glimmering ;  
all over impends  
An immeasurable infinite flower of the dark that  
dilates and descends,  
That exults and expands in its breathless and blind  
efflorescence of heart  
As it broadens and bows to the waveward, and  
breathes not, and hearkens apart.  
As a beaker inverse at a feast on Olympus, exhausted  
of wine,  
But inlaid as with rose from the lips of Dione that  
left it divine ;  
From the lips everliving of laughter and love ever-  
lasting, that leave  
In the cleft of his heart who shall kiss them a snake  
to corrode it and cleave.  
So glimmers the gloom into glory, the glory recoils  
into gloom,  
That the eye of the sun could not kindle, the lip  
not of Love could relume.  
So darkens reverted the cup that the kiss of her  
mouth set on fire.  
So blackens a brand in his eyeshot as moulder awhile  
from the pyre.  
For the beam from beneath and without it refrangent  
again from the wave  
Strikes up through the portal a ghostly reverse on  
the dome of the cave,  
On the depth of the dome ever darkling and dim to  
the crown of its arc :  
That the sun-colored tapestry, sunless forever, may  
soften the dark.  
But within through the side-seen archway aglim-  
mer again from the right  
Is the seal of the sea's tide set on the mouth of the  
mystery of night.  
And the seal on the seventh day breaks but a little,  
that man by its mean  
May behold what the sun hath not looked on, the  
stars of the night hath not seen.

## IN GUERNSEY.

TO THEODORE WATTS.

## I.

THE heavenly bay, ringed round with cliffs and moors,  
 Storm-stained ravines, and crags that lawns inlay,  
 Soothes as with love the rocks whose guard secures  
 The heavenly bay.

O friend, shall time take ever this away,  
 This blessing given of beauty that endures,  
 This glory shown us, not to pass but stay ?

Though sight be changed for memory, love ensures  
 What memory, ehanged by love to sight, would say—  
 The word that seals forever mine and yours  
 The heavenly bay.

## II.

My mother sea, my fostress, what new strand,  
 What new delight of waters, may this be,  
 The fairest found since time's first breezes fanned  
 My mother sea ?

Once more I give me body and soul to thee,  
 Who hast my soul forever : cliff and sand  
 Recede, and heart to heart once more are we.

My heart springs first and plunges, ere my hand  
 Strike out from shore : more close it brings to me,  
 More near and dear than seems my fatherland,  
 My mother sea.

## III.

Across and along, as the bay's breadth opens, and  
 o'er us  
 Wild autumn exults in the wind, swift rapture and  
 strong



Impels us and broader the wide waves brighten be-  
fore us  
Across and along.

The whole world's heart is uplifted, and knows not  
wrong ;  
The whole world's life is a chant to the sea-tide's  
chorus ;  
Are we not as waves of the water, as notes of the  
song ?

Like children unworn of the passions and toils that  
wore us,  
We breast for a season the breadth of the seas that  
throng,  
Rejoicing as they, to be borne as of old they bore us  
Across and along.

## IV.

On Dante's track by some funereal spell  
Drawn down through desperate ways that lead not  
back  
We seem to move, bound forth past flood and fell  
On Dante's track.

The gray path ends : the gaunt rocks gape : the black  
Deep hollow tortuous night, a soundless shell,  
Glares darkness : are the fires of old grown slack ?

Nay, then, what flames are these that leap and swell  
As 'twere to show, where earth's foundations crack,  
The secrets of the sepulchres of hell  
On Dante's track ?

## V.

By mere men's hands the flame was lit, we know,  
From heaps of dry waste whin and casual brands :  
Yet, knowing, we scarce believe it kindled so  
By mere men's hands.

Above, around, high-vaulted hell expands,  
Steep, dense, a labyrinth walled and roofed with woe,  
Whose mysteries even itself not understands.

The scorn in Farinata's eyes aglow  
 Seems visible in this flame : there Geryon stands :  
 No stage of earth's is here, set forth to show  
 By mere men's hands.

## VI.

Night, in utmost noon forlorn and strong, with heart  
 athirst and fasting,  
 Hungers here, barred up forever, whence as one whom  
 dreams affright  
 Day recoils before the low-browed lintel threatening  
 doom and casting  
 Night.

All the reefs and islands, all the lawns and highlands,  
 clothed with light,  
 Laugh for love's sake in their sleep outside : but here  
 the night speaks, blasting  
 Day with silent speech and scorn of all things known  
 from depth to height.

Lower than dive the thoughts of spirit-stricken fear in  
 souls forecasting  
 Hell, the deep void seems to yawn beyond fear's reach,  
 and higher than sight  
 Rise the walls and roofs that compass it about with  
 everlasting  
 Night.

## VII.

The house accurst, with cursing sealed and signed,  
 Heeds not what storms about it burn and burst :  
 No fear more fearful than its own may find  
 The house accurst.

Barren as crime, anhungered and athirst,  
 Blank miles of moor sweep inland, sere and blind,  
 Where summer's best rebukes not winter's worst.

The low bleak tower with nought save waste behind  
 Stares down the abyss whereon chance reared and  
 nurst,  
 This type and likeness of the accurst man's mind,  
 The house accurst.

## VIII.

Beloved and blest, lit warm with love and fame,  
 The house that had the light of the earth for guest  
 Hears for his name's sake all men hail its name  
 Beloved and blest.

This eyrie was the homeless eagle's nest  
 When storm laid waste his eyrie : hence he came  
 Again, when storm smote sore his mother's breast.

Bow down men bade us, or be clothed with blame  
 And mocked for madness : worst, they sware, was  
 best :  
 But grief shone here, while joy was one with shame,  
 Beloved and blest.

## A DIALOGUE.

## I.

DEATH, if thou wilt, fain would I plead with thee :  
 Canst thou not spare, of all our hopes have built,  
 One shelter where our spirits fain would be,  
 Death, if thou wilt ?

No dome with suns and dews impearled and gilt,  
 Imperial : but some roof of wildwood tree,  
 Too mean for sceptre's heft or swordblade's hilt.

Some low sweet roof where love might live, set free  
 From change and fear and dreams of grief or guilt ;  
 Canst thou not leave life even thus much to see,  
 Death, if thou wilt ?

## II.

Man, what art thou to speak and plead with me ?  
 What knowest thou of my workings, where and how  
 What things I fashion ? Nay, behold and see,  
 Man, what art thou ?

Thy fruits of life, and blossoms of thy bough,  
 What are they but my seedlings ? Earth and sea  
 Bear nought but when I breathe on it must bow.

Bow thou too down before me : though thou be  
 Great, all the pride shall fade from off thy brow,  
 When Time and strong Oblivion ask of thee,  
 Man, what art thou ?

## III.

Death, if thou be or be not, as was said,  
 Immortal ; if thou make us nought, or we  
 Survive ; thy power is made but of our dread,  
 Death, if thou be.

Thy might is made out of our fear of thee :  
 Who fears thee not, hath plucked from off thine head  
 The crown of cloud that darkens earth and sea.

Earth, sea, and sky, as rain or vapor shed,  
 Shall vanish ; all the shows of them shall flee ;  
 Then shall we know full surely, quick or dead,  
 Death, if thou be.

## HERTHA.

I AM that which began ;  
 Out of me the years roll ;  
 Out of me God and man ;  
 I am equal and whole ;  
 God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily ;  
 I am the soul.

Before ever land was,  
 Before ever the sea,  
 Or soft hair of the grass,  
 Or fair limbs of the tree,  
 Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches, I was,  
 and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources  
 First drifted and swam ;  
 Out of me are the forces  
 That save it or damn ;  
 Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast and bird :  
 before God was, I am.

Beside or above me  
 Nought is there to go ;  
 Love or unlove me,  
 Unknow me or know,  
 I am that which unloves me and loves ; I am stricken,  
 and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed  
 And the arrows that miss,  
 I the mouth that is kissed  
 And the breath in the kiss,  
 The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul  
 and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses  
 My spirit elate ;  
 That which caresses  
 With hands uncreate  
 My limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the  
 measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,  
 Looking Godward, to cry  
 " I am I, thou art thou,  
 I am low, thou art high " ?  
 I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him ; find  
 thou but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,  
 The plough-cloven clod  
 And the ploughshare drawn thorough,  
 The germ and the sod,  
 The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower, the  
 dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,  
 Child, underground ?  
 Fire that impassioned thee, .  
 Iron that bound,  
 Dim changes of water, what thing of all these hast  
 thou known of or found ?

Canst thou say in thine heart  
 Thou hast seen with thine eyes  
 With what cunning of art  
 Thou wast wrought in what wise,  
 By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen, and  
 shown on my breast to the skies ?

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,  
 Knowledge of me ?  
 Has the wilderness told it thee ?  
 Hast thou learnt of the sea ?  
 Hast thou communed in spirit with night ? have  
 the winds taken counsel with thee ?

Have I set such a star  
 To show light on thy brow  
 That thou sawest from afar  
 What I show to thee now ?  
 Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun and the  
 mountains and thou ?

What is here, dost thou know it ?  
 What was, hast thou known ?  
 Prophet nor poet  
 Nor tripod nor throne  
 Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but only thy  
 mother alone.

Mother, not maker,  
 Born, and not made ;  
 Though her children forsake her,  
 Allured or afraid,  
 Praying prayers to the God of their fashion, she stirs  
 not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,  
 And a crown is of night ;  
 But this thing is God,  
 To be man with thy might,  
 To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and  
 live out thy life as the light,

I am in thee to save thee,  
 As my soul in thee saith ;  
 Give thou as I gave thee,  
 Thy life-blood and breath,  
 Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of thy  
 thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving  
 As mine were to thee ;  
 The free life of thy living,  
 Be the gift of it free ;  
 Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt  
 thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,  
 Souls overcast,  
 Were the lights ye see vanish meant  
 Always to last,  
 Ye would know not the sun overshadowing the shadows  
 and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod  
 The dim paths of the night  
 Set the shadow called God  
 In your skies to give light ;  
 But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadow-  
 less soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted  
 That swells to the sky  
 With frondage red-fruited,  
 The life-tree am I ;  
 In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves : ye  
 shall live and not die.

But the Gods of your fashion  
 That take and that give,  
 In their pity and passion  
 That scourge and forgive,  
 They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls  
 off ; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches  
 The wounds in my bark ;  
 Stars caught in my branches  
 Make day of the dark,  
 And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise shall  
 tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under  
 The live roots of the tree,  
 In my darkness the thunder  
 Makes utterance of me ;  
 In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear  
 the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,  
 As his feathers are spread  
 And his feet set to climb  
 Through the boughs overhead,  
 And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and  
 branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages  
 Blow through me and cease,  
 The war-wind that rages,  
 The spring-wind of peace,  
 Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one  
 of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,  
 All shadows and lights  
 On the world's mountain-ranges  
 And stream-riven heights,  
 Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of  
 storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights ;

All forms of all faces,  
 All works of all hands  
 In unsearchable places  
 Of time-stricken lands.  
 All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins,  
 drop through me as sands,



Though sore be my burden  
 And more than ye know,  
 And my growth have no guerdon  
 But only to grow,  
 Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or  
 deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,  
 As I too in these ;  
 Such fire is at heart in me,  
 Such sap is this tree's,  
 Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinite  
 lands and of seas.

In the spring-colored hours  
 When my mind was as May's  
 There brake forth of me flowers  
 By centuries of days,  
 Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot out  
 from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing  
 And smell of their shoots  
 Were as warmth and sweet singing  
 And strength to my roots ;  
 And the lives of my children made perfect with  
 freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be ;  
 I have need not of prayer ;  
 I have need of you free  
 As your mouths of mine air ;  
 That my heart may be greater within me, beholding  
 the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is  
 Of faiths ye espouse ;  
 In me only the root is  
 That blooms in your boughs ;  
 Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him  
 with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening  
 Abysses adored,  
 With dayspring and lightning  
 For lamp and for sword,  
 God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with  
 the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful  
 Toward Gods not of me,  
 Was not I enough beautiful?  
 Was it hard to be free?  
 For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you;  
 look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,  
 With miracles shod,  
 With the fires of his thunders  
 For raiment and rod,  
 God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white  
 with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,  
 His anguish is here;  
 And his spirits gaze dumb on him,  
 Grown gray from his fear;  
 And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last  
 of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,  
 Truth slays and forgives;  
 But to you, as time takes him,  
 This new thing it gives,  
 Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon  
 freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,  
 Truth only is whole,  
 And the love of his giving  
 Man's polestar and pole;  
 Man, pulse of my centre, and fruit of my body, and  
 seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom ;  
 One beam of mine eye ;  
 One topmost blossom  
 That scales the sky ;  
 Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of  
 me, man that is I.

## IN SAN LORENZO.

Is thine hour come to wake, O slumbering Night ?  
 Hath not the Dawn a message in thine ear ?  
 Though thou be stone and sleep, yet shalt thou  
 hear  
 When the word falls from heaven—Let there be  
 light.  
 Thou knowest we would not do thee the despite  
 To wake thee while the old sorrow and shame were  
 near ;  
 We spake not loud for thy sake, and for fear  
 Lest thou shouldst lose the rest that was thy right,  
 The blessing given thee that was thine alone,  
 The happiness to sleep and to be stone :  
 Nay, we kept silence of thee for thy sake  
 Albeit we knew thee alive, and left with thee  
 The great good gift to feel not nor to see ;  
 But will not yet thine Angel bid thee wake ?

## A YEAR'S BURDEN.

1870.

*αἶλινον σίλινον εἶπε, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω.*

FIRE and wild light of hope and doubt and fear,  
 Wind of swift change, and clouds and hours that  
 veer  
 As the storm shifts of the tempestuous year ;  
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.  
 Hope sits yet hiding her war-wearied eyes,  
 Doubt sets her forehead earthward and denies,  
 But fear brought hand to hand with danger dies,  
 Dies and is burnt up in the fire of fight.

Hearts bruised with loss and eaten through with  
 shame  
 Turn at the time's touch to devouring flame ;  
 Grief stands as one that knows not her own name,  
 Nor if the star she sees bring day or night.

No song breaks with it on the violent air,  
 But shrieks of shame, defeat, and brute despair ;  
 Yet something at the star's heart far up there  
 Burns as a beacon in our shipwrecked sight.

O strange fierce light of presage, unknown star,  
 Whose tongue shall tell us what thy secrets are  
 What message trembles in thee from so far ?  
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

From shores laid waste across an iron sea  
 Where the waifs drift of hopes that were to be,  
 Across the red rolled foam we look for thee,  
 Across the fire we look up for the light.

From days laid waste across disastrous years,  
 From hopes cut down across a world of fears,  
 We gaze with eyes too passionate for tears,  
 Where faith abides though hope be put to flight.

Old hope is dead, the gray-haired hope grown blind  
 That talked with us of old things out of mind,  
 Dreams, deeds and men the world has left behind ;  
 Yet, though hope die, faith lives in hope's despite.

Ay, with hearts fixed on death and hopeless hands  
 We stand about our banner while it stands  
 Above but one field of the ruined lands ;  
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

Though France were given for prey to bird and  
 beast,  
 Though Rome were rent in twain of king and priest,  
 The soul of man, the soul is safe at least  
 That gives death life and dead men hands to smite.

Are ye so strong, O kings, O strong men ? Nay,  
 Waste all ye will and gather all ye may,  
 Yet one thing is there that ye shall not slay,  
 Even thought, that fire nor iron can affright.

The woundless and invisible thought that goes  
 Free throughout time as north or south wind blows,  
 Far throughout space as east or west sea flows,  
 And all dark things before it are made bright.

Thy thought, thy word, O soul republican,  
 O spirit of life, O God whose name is man :  
 What sea of sorrows but thy sight shall span ?  
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

With all its coils crushed, all its rings uncurled,  
 The one most poisonous worm that soiled the world  
 It wrenched from off the throat of man, and hurled  
 Into deep hell from empire's helpless height.

Time takes no more infection of it now ;  
 Like a dead snake divided of the plough,  
 The rotten thing lies cut in twain ; but thou,  
 Thy fires shall heal us of the serpent's bite.

Ay, with red cautery and a burning brand  
 Purge thou the leprous leaven of the land ;  
 Take to thee fire, and iron in thine hand,  
 Till blood and tears have washed the soiled limbs  
 white.

We have sinned against thee in dreams and wicked  
 sleep ;  
 Smite, we will shrink not ; strike, we will not weep ;  
 Let the heart feel thee ; let thy wound go deep ;  
 Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

Wound us with love, pierce us with longing, make  
 Our souls thy sacrifices ; turn and take  
 Our hearts for our sin-offerings lest they break,  
 And mould them with thine hands and give them  
 night.

Then, when the cup of ills is drained indeed,  
 Will we come to thee with our wounds that bleed,  
 With famished mouths and hearts that thou shalt  
     feed,  
 And see thee worshipped as the world's delight.

There shall be no more wars nor kingdoms won,  
 But in thy sight whose eyes are as the sun  
 All names shall be one name, all nations one,  
     All souls of men in man's one soul unite.

O sea whereon men labor, O great sea  
 That heaven seems one with, shall these things not  
     be ?  
 O earth, our earth, shall time not make us free ?  
     Cry wellaway, but well befall the right.

## TO AURELIO SAFFI.

### I.

YEAR after year has fallen on sleep, till change  
 Hath seen the fourth part of a century fade,  
 Since you, a guest to whom the vales were strange  
     Where Isis whispers to the murmuring shade  
     Above her face by winds and willows made,  
 And I, elate at heart with reverence, met.  
 Change must give place to death ere I forget  
 The pride that change of years has quenched not  
     yet.

### II.

Pride from profoundest humbleness of heart  
 Born, self-uplift at once and self-subdued,  
 Glowed, seeing his face whose hand had borne such  
     part  
 In so sublime and strange vicissitude  
 As then filled all faint hearts with hope renewed  
 To think upon, and triumph ; though the time  
 Were dense and foul with darkness cast from crime  
 Across the heights that hope was fain to climb.

## III.

Hope that had risen, a sun to match the sun  
 That fills and feeds all Italy with light,  
 Had set, and left the crowning work undone  
 That raised up Rome out of the shadow of night :  
 Yet so to have won the worst, to have fought the  
 fight,  
 Seemed, as above the grave of hope cast down  
 Stood faith, and smiled against the whole world's  
 frown,  
 A conquest lordlier than the conqueror's crown.

## IV.

To have won the worst that chance could give, and  
 worn  
 The wreath of adverse fortune as a sign  
 More bright than binds the brows of victory,  
 borne  
 Higher than all trophies borne of tyrants shine—  
 What lordlier gift than this, what more divine,  
 Can earth or heaven make manifest, and bid  
 Men's hearts bow down and honor? Fate lies hid,  
 But not the work that true men dared and did.

## V.

The years have given and taken away since then  
 More than was then foreseen of hope or fear.  
 Fallen are the towers of empire : all the men  
 Whose names made faint the heart of the earth to  
 hear  
 Are broken as the trust they held so dear  
 Who put their trusts in princes : and the sun  
 Sees Italy, as he in heaven is, one ;  
 But sees not him who spake, and this was done.

## VI.

Not by the wise man's wit, the strong man's hand,  
 By swordsman's or by statesman's craft or might,  
 Sprang life again where life had left the land,  
 And light where hope nor memory nor saw light :  
 Not first nor most by grace of these was night

Cast out, and darkness driven before the day  
 Far as a battle-broken host's array  
 Flies, and no force that fain would stay it can stay.

## VII.

One spirit alone, one soul more strong than fate,  
 One heart whose heat was as the sundown's fire,  
 Fed first with flame as heaven's immaculate  
 Faith, worn and wan and desperate of desire :  
 And men that felt that sacred breath suspire  
 Felt by mere speech and presence fugitive  
 The holy spirit of man made perfect give  
 Breath to the lips of death, that death might live.

## VIII.

Not all as yet is yours, nor all is ours,  
 That shall, if righteousness and reason be,  
 Fulfil the trust of time with happier hours  
 And set their sons who fought for freedom free ;  
 Even theirs whose faith sees, as they may not see,  
 Your land and ours wax lovelier in the light  
 Republican, whereby the thrones most bright  
 Look hoar and wan as eve or black as night,

## IX.

Our words and works, our thoughts and songs turn  
 thither,  
 Toward one great end, as waves that press and  
 roll.  
 Though waves be spent and ebb like hopes that  
 wither,  
 These shall subside not ere they find the goal.  
 We know it, who yet with unforgetful soul  
 See shine and smile, where none may smite or strive,  
 Above us, higher than clouds and winds can drive,  
 The soul beloved beyond all souls alive.



## A SUNSET.

NOVEMBER 25, 1885.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

## I.

IT was the dawn of winter : sword in sheath,  
 Change, veiled and mild, came down the gradual  
     air  
 With cold slow smiles that hid the doom beneath.  
 Five days to die in yet were autumn's, ere  
 The last leaf withered from his flowerless wreath.  
 South, east, and north, our skies were all blown  
     bare,  
 But westward over glimmering holt and heath  
 Cloud, wind, and light had made a heaven more  
     fair  
     Than ever dream or truth  
     Showed earth in time's keen youth  
 When men with angels communed unaware.  
     Above the sun's head, now  
     Veiled even to the ardent brow,  
 Rose two sheer wings of Sundering cloud, that  
     were  
     As a bird's poised for vehement flight,  
 Full-fledged with plumes of tawny fire and hoar gray  
     light.

## II.

As midnight black, as twilight brown, they spread,  
 But feathered thick with flame that streaked and  
     lined  
 Their living darkness. ominous else of dread,  
 From south to northmost verge of heaven inclined  
 Most like some giant angel's, whose bent head  
 Bowed earthward, as with message for mankind  
 Of doom or benediction to be shed  
 From passage of his presence. Far behind,  
     Even while they seemed to close,  
     Stoop, and take flight, arose

Above them, higher than heavenliest thought may  
 find  
 In light or night supreme  
 Of vision or of dream,  
 Immeasurable of men's eyes or mounting mind,  
 Heaven, manifest in manifold  
 Light of pure pallid amber, cheered with fire of gold.

## III.

And where the fine gold faded all the sky  
 Shone green as the outer sea when April glows,  
 Inlaid with flakes and feathers fledged to fly  
 Of cloud suspense in rapture and repose,  
 With large live petals, broad as love bids lie  
 Full open when the sun salutes the rose,  
 And small rent sprays wherewith the heavens most  
 high  
 Were strewn as autumn strews the garden-close  
 With ruinous roseleaves whirled  
 About their wan chill world,  
 Through wind-worn bowers that now no music  
 knows,  
 Spoil of the dim dusk year  
 Whose utter night is near,  
 And near the flower of dawn beyond it blows ;  
 Till east and west were fire and light,  
 As though the dawn to come had flushed the coming  
 night.

## IV.

The highways paced of men that toil or play,  
 The byways known of none but lonely feet,  
 Were paven of purple woven of night and day  
 With hands that met as hands of friends might  
 meet--  
 As though night's were not lifted up to slay  
 And day's had waxed not weaker. Peace more  
 sweet  
 Than music, light more soft than shadow, lay  
 On downs and moorlands wan with day's defeat,  
 That watched afar above  
 Life's very rose of love

Let all its lustrous leaves fall, fade, and fleet,  
 And fill all heaven and earth  
 Full as with fires of birth

Whence time should feed his years with light and  
 heat :

Nay, not life's, but a flower more strong  
 Than life or time or death, love's very rose of song.

## v.

Song visible, whence all men's eyes were lit  
 With love and loving wonder : song that glowed  
 Through cloud and change on souls that knew not it  
 And hearts that wist not whence their comfort  
 flowed,

Whence fear was lightened of her fever-fit,  
 Whence anguish of her life-compelling load.

Yea, no man's head whereon the fire alit,  
 Of all that passed along that sunset road

Westward, no brow so drear,

No eye so dull of cheer,

No face so mean whereon that light abode,

But as with alien pride

Strange godhead glorified

Each feature flushed from heaven with fire that  
 showed

The likeness of its own life wrought  
 By strong transfiguration as of living thought.

## VI.

Nor only clouds of the everlasting sky,

Nor only men that paced that sunward way  
 To the utter bourne of evening, passed not by

Unblest or unillumined : none might say,  
 Of all things visible in the wide world's eye,

That all too low for all that grace it lay :

The lowliest lakelets of the moorland nigh,

The narrowest pools where shallowest wavelets play,

Were filled from heaven above

With light like fire of love,

With flames and colours like a dawn in May,

As hearts that lowlier live

With light of thoughts that give

Light from the depth of souls more deep than they  
 Through song's or story's kindling scroll,  
 The splendor of the shadow that reveals the soul.

## VII.

For, when such light is in the world, we share,  
 All of us, all the rays thereof that shine :  
 Its presence is alive in the unseen air,  
 Its fire within our veins as quickening wine ;  
 A spirit is shed on all men everywhere,  
 Known or not known of all men for divine.  
 Yea, as the sun makes heaven, that light makes fair  
 All souls of ours, all lesser souls than thine,  
     Priest, prophet, seer and sage,  
     Lord of a subject age  
 That bears thy seal upon it for a sign ;  
     Whose name shall be thy name,  
     Whose light thy light of fame,  
 The light of love that makes thy soul a shrine ;  
     Whose record through all years to be  
 Shall bear this witness written—that its womb bare  
     thee.

## VIII.

O mystery, whence to one man's hand was given  
 Power upon all things of the spirit, and might  
 Whereby the veil of all the years was riven  
 And naked stood the secret soul of night !  
 O marvel, hailed of eyes whence cloud is driven,  
 That shows at last wrong reconciled with right  
 By death divine of evil and sin forgiven !  
 O light of song, whose fire is perfect light !  
     No speech, no voice, no thought,  
     No love, avails us aught  
 For service of thanksgiving in his sight  
     Who hath given us all for ever  
     Such gifts that man gave never  
 So many and great since first Time's wings took  
     flight.  
 Man may not praise a spirit above  
 Man's : life and death shall praise him : we can only  
     love,

## IX.

Life, everlasting while the worlds endure,  
 Death, self-abased before a power more high,  
 Shall bear one witness, and their word stand sure,  
 That not till time be dead shall this man die.  
 Love, like a bird, comes loyal to his lure ;  
 Fame flies before him, wingless else to fly.  
 A child's heart toward his kind is not more pure,  
 An eagle's toward the sun no lordlier eye.  
     Awe sweet as love and proud  
     As fame, though hushed and bowed,  
 Yearns toward him silent as his face goes by :  
     All crowns before his crown  
     Triumphantly bow down,  
 For pride that one more great than all draws nigh :  
     All souls applaud, all hearts acclaim,  
 One heart benign, one soul supreme, one conquering  
     ame.

## CHILDREN.

OF such is the kingdom of heaven.  
     No glory that ever was shed  
 From the crowning star of the seven  
     That crown the north world's head,

No word that ever was spoken  
     Of human or godlike tongue,  
 Gave ever such godlike token  
     Since human harps were strung.

No sign that ever was given  
     To faithful or faithless eyes  
 Showed ever beyond clouds riven  
     So clear a Paradise.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven  
     And blood have defiled each creed :  
 If of such be the kingdom of heaven,  
     It must be heaven indeed.

## A CHILD'S LAUGHTER.

ALL the bells of heaven may ring,  
 All the birds of heaven may sing,  
 All the wells on earth may spring,  
 All the winds on earth may bring  
     All sweet sounds together ;  
 Sweeter far than all things heard,  
 Hand of harper, tone of bird,  
 Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,  
 Welling water's winsome word,  
     Wind in warm wan weather,

One thing yet there is, that none  
 Hearing ere its chime be done  
 Knows not well the sweetest one  
 Heard of man beneath the sun,  
     Hoped in heaven hereafter ;  
 Soft and strong and loud and light,  
 Very sound of very light  
 Heard from morning's rosiest height,  
 When the soul of all delight  
     Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled  
 Never forth such notes, nor told  
 Hours so blithe in tones so bold,  
 As the radiant mouth of gold  
     Here that rings forth heaven.  
 If the golden-crested wren  
 Were a nightingale—why, then,  
 Something seen and heard of men  
 Might be half as sweet as when  
     Laughs a child of seven.

## A CHILD'S SLEEP.

As light on a lake's face moving  
     Between a cloud and a cloud  
 Till night reclaim it, reproving  
     The heart that exults too loud,

The heart that watching rejoices  
 When soft it swims into sight  
 Applauded of all the voices  
 And stars of the windy night,

So brief and unsure, but sweeter  
 Than ever a moondawn smiled,  
 Moves, measured of no tune's metre,  
 The song in the soul of a child ;

The song that the sweet soul singing  
 Half listens, and hardly hears,  
 Though sweeter than joy-bells ringing  
 And brighter than joy's own tears ;

The song that remembrance of pleasure  
 Begins, and forgetfulness ends  
 With a soft swift change in the measure  
 That rings in remembrance of friends.

As the moon on the lake's face flashes,  
 So haply may gleam at whites  
 A dream through the dear deep lashes  
 Whereunder a child's eye smiles,

And the least of us all that love him  
 May take for a moment part  
 With angels around and above him,  
 And I find place in his heart.

### A SONG OF WELCOME.

IF the wind and the sunlight of April and August  
 had mingled the past and hereafter  
 In a single adorable season whose life were a rapture  
 of love and of laughter,  
 And the blithest of singers were back with a song ;  
 if again from his tomb as from prison,  
 If again from the night or the twilight of ages Aristophanes  
 had arisen,  
 With the gold-feathered wings of a bird that were  
 also a god upon earth at his shoulders,

And the gold-flowing laugh of the manhood of old at  
his lips, for a joy to beholders,  
He alone unrebuked of presumption were able to set  
to some adequate measure  
The delight of our eyes in the dawn that restores  
them the sun of their sense and the pleasure.  
For the days of the darkness of spirit are over for all  
of us here, and the season  
When desire was a longing, and absence a thorn, and  
rejoicing a word without reason.  
For the roof overhead of the pines is astir with de-  
light as of jubilant voices,  
And the floor underfoot of the bracken and heather  
alive as a heart that rejoices.  
For the house that was childless awhile, and the light  
of it darkened, the pulse of it dwindled,  
Rings radiant again with a child's bright feet, with  
the light of his face is rekindled.  
And the ways of the meadows that knew him, the  
sweep of the down that the sky's belt closes,  
Grow gladder at heart than the soft wind made them  
whose feet were but fragrant with roses,  
Though the fall of the year be upon us, who trusted  
in June and by June were defrauded,  
And the summer that brought us not back the desire  
of our eyes be gone hence unapplauded.  
For July came joyless among us, and August went  
out from us arid and sterile,  
And the hope of our hearts, as it seemed, was no more  
than a flower that the seasons imperil,  
And the joy of our hearts, as it seemed, than a thought  
which regret had not heart to remember,  
'Till four dark months overpast were atoned for, and  
summer began in September.  
Hark, April again as a bird in the house with a child's  
voice hither and thither :  
See, May in the garden again with a child's face cheer-  
ing the woods ere they wither.  
June laughs in the light of his eyes, and July on the  
sunbright cheeks of him slumbers,  
And August glows in a smile more sweet than the  
cadence of gold-mouthed numbers.



In the morning the sight of him brightens the sun,  
 and the noon with delight in him flushes,  
 And the silence of nightfall is music about him as soft  
 as the sleep that it lushes.  
 We awake with a sense of a sunrise that is not a gift  
 of the sundawn's giving,  
 And a voice that salutes us is sweeter than all sounds  
 else in the world of the living,  
 And a presence that warms us is brighter than all in  
 the world of our visions beholden,  
 Though the dreams of our sleep were as those that the  
 light of a world without grief makes golden.  
 For the best that the best of us ever devised as a like-  
 ness of heaven and its glory,  
 What was it of old, or what is it and will be forever,  
 in song or in story,  
 Or in shape or in color of carven or painted resem-  
 blance, adored of all ages,  
 But a vision recorded of children alive in the pictures  
 of old or the pages?  
 Where children are not, heaven is not, and heaven if  
 they come not again shall be never:  
 But the face and the voice of a child are assurance of  
 heaven and its promise forever.

## SONNETS.

## TO WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.

THE larks are loud above our leagues of whin,  
 Now the sun's perfume fills their glorious gold  
 With odor like the color: all the wold  
 Is only light and song and wind wherein  
 These twain are blent in one with shining din.  
 And now your gift, a giver's kingly-souled,  
 Dear old fast friend whose honors grow not old,  
 Bids memory's note as loud and sweet begin.  
 Though all but we from life be now gone forth  
 Of that bright household in our joyous north  
 Where I, scarce clear of boyhood just at end,  
 First met your hand; yet under life's clear dome

Now seventy strenuous years have crowned my friend,  
 Shines no less bright his full-sheaved harvest home.  
 APRIL 20, 1882.

## ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT.

Two souls diverse out of our human sight  
 Pass, followed one with love and each with wonder :  
 The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,  
 Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might  
 Of darkness and magnificence of night ;  
 And one whose eye could smite the night in sun-  
 der,  
 Searching if light or no light were thereunder,  
 And found in love of loving-kindness light.  
 Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire  
 Still following Righteousness with deep desire  
 Shone sole and stern before her and above  
 Sure stars and sole to steer by ; but more sweet  
 Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet,—  
 The light of little children, and their love.

### AFTER LOOKING INTO CARLYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

#### I.

THREE men lived yet when this dead man was young,  
 Whose names and words endure forever : one  
 Whose eyes grew dim with straining toward the  
 sun,  
 And his wings weakened, and his angel's tongue  
 Lost half the sweetest song was ever sung,  
 But like the strain half uttered, earth hears none,  
 Nor shall man hear till all men's songs are done ;  
 One whose clear spirit like an eagle hung  
 Between the mountains hallowed by his love  
 And the sky stainless as his soul above ;  
 And one, the sweetest heart that ever spake  
 The brightest words wherein sweet wisdom smiled.  
 These deathless names by this dead snake defiled  
 Bid memory spit upon him for their sake.

## II.

Sweet heart, forgive me for thine own sweet sake,  
 Whose kind blithe soul such seas of sorrow swam,  
 And for my love's sake, powerless as I am  
 For love to praise thee, or like thee to make  
 Music of mirth where hearts less pure would break,  
 Less pure than thine, our life-unspotted Lamb.  
 Things hatefullest thou hadst not heart to damn,  
 Nor wouldst have set thine heel on this dead snake.  
 Let worms consume its memory with its tongue,  
 The fang that stabbed fair Truth, the lip that stung  
 Men's memories uncorroded with its breath.  
 Forgive me, that with bitter words like his  
 I mix the gentlest English name that is,  
 The tenderest held of all that know not death.

## A LAST LOOK.

SICK of self-love, Malvolio, like an owl  
 That hoots the sun re-risen where starlight sank,  
 With German garters crossed athwart thy frank  
 Stout Scottish legs, men watched thee snarl and  
 scowl,  
 And boys responsive with reverberate howl  
 Shrilled, hearing how to thee the springtime stank,  
 And as thine own soul all the world smelt rank,  
 And as thine own thoughts Liberty seemed foul.  
 Now, for all ill thoughts nursed and ill words given  
 Not all condemned, not utterly forgiven,  
 Son of the storm and darkness, pass in peace.  
 Peace upon earth thou knewest not; now, being dead,  
 Rest, with nor curse nor blessing on thine head,  
 Where high-strung hate and strenuous envy cease.

## DICKENS.

CHIEF in thy generation born of men  
 Whom English praise acclaimed as English-born,  
 With eyes that matched the world wide eyes of  
 morn  
 For gleam of tears or laughter, tenderest then  
 When thoughts of children warmed their light, or  
 when

Reverence of age with love and labor worn,  
 Or godlike pity fired with godlike scorn,  
 Shot through them flame that winged thy swift live  
 pen :  
 Where stars and suns that we behold not burn,  
 Higher even than here, though highest was here  
 thy place,  
 Love sees thy spirit laugh and speak and shine  
 With Shakespeare, and the soft bright soul of Sterne,  
 And Fielding's kindest might, and Goldsmith's  
 grace ;  
 Scarce one more loved or worthier love than thine.

## ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF DRAMATIC POETS.

### I.

IF all the flowers of all the fields on earth  
 By wonder-working summer were made one,  
 Its fragrance were not sweeter in the sun,  
 Its treasure-house of leaves were not more worth  
 Than those wherefrom thy light of musing mirth  
 Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pen would run  
 Breathed life, and all its breath was benison.  
 Beloved beyond all names of English birth,  
 More dear than mightier memories ! gentlest name  
 That ever clothed itself with flower sweet fame,  
 Or linked itself with loftiest names of old  
 By right and might of loving ; I, that am  
 Less than the least of those within thy fold,  
 Give only thanks for them to thee, Charles Lamb.

### II.

So many a year had borne its own bright bees  
 And slain them since thy honey-bees were hived,  
 John Day, in cells of flower-sweet verse contrived  
 So well with craft of moulding melodies,  
 Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields at ease  
 Thought not to hear the sound on earth revived  
 Of summer music from the spring derived

When thy song sucked the flower of flowering trees.  
But thine was not the chance of every day :

Time, after many a darkling hour, grew sunny,  
And light between the clouds ere sunset swam,  
Laughing, and kissed their darkness all away,  
When, touched and tasted and approved, thy  
honey  
Took subtler sweetness from the lips of Lamb.

## CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

CROWNED, girdled, garbed, and shod with light and  
fire,

Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star !  
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,  
Most far off in the absym of time, thy lyre  
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire  
Where all ye sang together, all that are,  
And all the starry songs behind thy ear  
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim thee sire.

“ If all the pens that ever poets held  
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,”  
And as with rush of hurtling chariots  
The flight of all their spirits were impelled  
Toward one great end, thy glory—Nay, not then,  
Not yet mightst thou be praised enough of men.

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Not if men's tongue and angels' all in one  
Spake, might the word be said that might speak  
Thee.  
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields, mountains,  
yea, the sea,  
What power is in them all to praise the sun ?  
His praise is this,—he can be praised of none.  
Man, woman, child, praise God for him ; but he  
Exults not to be worshipped, but to be.  
He is ; and, being, beholds his work well done.  
All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength, all mirth,  
Are his : without him, day were night on earth.

Time knows not his from time's own period.  
 All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes, all lyres,  
 Fall dumb before him ere one string suspires.  
 All stars are angels ; but the sun is God.

## BEN JONSON.

BROAD-BASED, broad-fronted, bounteous, multi-  
 form,

With many a valley impleached with ivy and vine,  
 Wherein the springs of all the streams run wine,  
 And many a crag full-faced against the storm,  
 The mountain where thy Muse's feet made warm  
 Those lawns that revelled with her dance divine,  
 Shines yet with fire as it was wont to shine  
 From tossing torches round the dance a-swarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray grave heights,  
 High-thoughted seers with heaven's heart-kindling  
 lights

Hold converse : and the herd of meaner things  
 Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft  
 When wrath on thy broad brows has risen, and  
 laughed,  
 Darkening thy soul with shadow of thunderous  
 wings.

## BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

AN hour ere sudden sunset fired the west,  
 Arose two stars upon the pale deep east.  
 The hall of heaven was clear for night's high  
 feast,

Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest.  
 Love leapt up from his mother's burning breast  
 To see those warm twin lights, as day decreased,  
 Wax wider, till, when all the sun had ceased,  
 As suns they shone from evening's kindled crest.  
 Across them and between, a quickening fire,  
 Flamed Venns, laughing with appeased desire.

Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the gleam of tears,  
 Filled half the hollow shell 'twixt heaven and earth

With sound like moonlight, mingling moan and  
 mirth,  
 Which rings and glitters down the darkling years.

## PHILIP MASSINGER.

CLOUDS here and there arisen an hour past noon  
 Checkered our English heaven with lengthening  
 bars  
 And shadow and sound of wheel-winged thunder-  
 cars  
 Assembling strength to put forth tempest soon,  
 When the clear still warm concord of thy tune  
 Rose under skies unscared by reddening Mars,  
 Yet, like a sound of silver speech of stars,  
 With full mild flame as of the mellow moon.  
 Grave and great-hearted Massinger, thy face  
 High melancholy lights with loftier grace  
 Than gilds the brows of revel : sad and wise,  
 The spirit of thought that moved thy deeper song,  
 Sorrow serene in soft calm scorn of wrong,  
 Speaks patience yet from thy majestic eyes.

## JOHN FORD.

HEW hard the marble from the mountain's heart  
 Where hardest night holds fast in iron gloom  
 Gems brighter than an April dawn in bloom,  
 That his Memnonian likeness thence may start  
 Revealed, whose hand with high funereal art  
 Carved night, and chiselled shadow : be the tomb  
 That speaks him famous graven with signs of  
 doom,  
 Intrenched inevitably in lines athwart,  
 As on some thunder-blasted Titan's brow  
 His record of rebellion. Not the day  
 Shall strike forth music from so stern a chord,  
 Touching this marble : darkness, none knows how,  
 And stars impenetrable of midnight, may.  
 So looms the likeness of thy soul, John Ford.

## JOHN WEBSTER.

THUNDER : the flesh quails, and the soul bows down.

Night : east, west, south, and northward, very  
night.

Star upon struggling star strives into sight,  
Star after shuddering star the deep storms drown.

The very throne of night, her very crown,  
A man lays hand on, and usurps her right.

Song from the highest of heaven's imperious height  
Shoots, as a fire to smite some towering town.

Rage, anguish, harrowing fear, heart-crazing crime,  
Make monstrous all the murderous face of Time

Shown in the spherul orbit of a glass  
Revolving. Earth cries out from all her graves.

Frail, on frail rafts, across wide-wallowing waves,  
Shapes here and there of child and mother pass.

## THOMAS DECKER.

OUT of the depths of darkling life, where sin

Laughs piteously that sorrow should not know  
Her own ill name, nor woe be counted woe ;

Where hate and craft and lust make drearier din  
Than sounds through dreams that grief holds revel  
in,—

What charm of joy-bells ringing, streams that flow,  
Wind that blow healing in each note they blow,  
Is this that the outer darkness hears begin ?

O sweetest heart of all thy time save one,

Star seen for love's sake nearest to the sun,

Hung lamplike o'er a dense and doleful city,  
Not Shakespeare's very spirit, howe'er more great,  
Than thine toward man was more compassionate,

Nor gave Christ praise from lips more sweet with  
pity.



## THOMAS MIDDLETON.

A WILD moon riding high from cloud to cloud,  
 That sees and sees not, glimmering far beneath,  
 Hell's children revel along the shuddering heath  
 With dirge-like mirth and raiment like a shroud ;  
 A worse fair face than witchcraft's, passion-proud,  
 With brows blood-flecked behind their bridal  
 wreath,  
 And lips that bade the assassin's sword find sheath  
 Deep in the heart whereto love's heart was vowed ;  
 A game of close contentious crafts and creeds  
 Played till white England bring black Spain to  
 shame ;  
 A son's bright sword and brighter soul, whose deeds  
 High conscience lights for mother's love and fame ;  
 Pure gypsy flowers, and poisonous courtly weeds :  
 Such tokens and such trophies crown thy name.

## THOMAS HEYWOOD.

TOM, if they loved thee best who called thee Tom,  
 What else may all men call thee, seeing thus bright  
 Even yet the laughing and the weeping light  
 That still thy kind old eyes are kindled from ?  
 Small care was thine to assail and overcome  
 Time and his child Oblivion : yet of right  
 Thy name has part with names of lordlier might  
 For English love and homely sense of home,  
 Whose fragrance keeps thy small sweet bay-leaf  
 young,  
 And gives it place aloft among thy peers,  
 Whence many a wreath once higher strong Time  
 has hurled ;  
 And this thy praise is sweet on Shakespeare's  
 tongue,—  
 “ O good old man ! how well in thee appears  
 The constant service of the antique world ! ”

## JOHN MARSTON.

THE bitterness of death and bitterer scorn  
 Breathes from the broad-leafed aloe-plant whence  
 thou  
 Wast fain to gather for thy bended brow  
 A chaplet by no gentler forehead worn.  
 Grief deep as hell, wrath hardly to be borne,  
 Ploughed up thy soul till round the furrowing  
 plough  
 The strange black soil foamed, as a black-beaked  
 prow  
 Bids night-black waves foam where its track has  
 torn.  
 Too faint the phrase for thee that only saith  
 Scorn bitterer than the bitterness of death  
 Pervades the sullen splendor of thy soul,  
 Where hate and pain make war on force and fraud,  
 And all the strengths of tyrants ; whence unflawed  
 It keeps this noble heart of hatred whole.

## GEORGE CHAPMAN.

HIGH priest of Homer, not elect in vain,  
 Deep trumpets blow before thee, shawms behind  
 Mix music with the rolling wheels that wind  
 Slow through the laboring triumph of thy train :  
 Fierce history, molten in thy forging brain,  
 Takes form and fire and fashion from thy mind,  
 Tormented and transmuted out of kind :  
 But howsoe'er thou shift thy strenuous strain,  
 Like Tailor<sup>1</sup> smooth, like Fisher<sup>2</sup> swollen, and now  
 Grim Yarrington<sup>3</sup> scarce bloodier marked than  
 thou,  
 Then bluff as Mayne's<sup>4</sup> or broad-mouthed Barry's<sup>6</sup>  
 glee,

<sup>1</sup> Author of *The Hog hath lost his Pearl*.

<sup>2</sup> Author of *Fuimus Troes, or the True Trojans*.

<sup>3</sup> Author of *Two Tragedies in One*.

<sup>4</sup> Author of *The City Match*.

<sup>5</sup> Author of *Ram-Alley, or Merry Tricks*.

Proud still with hoar predominance of brow  
 And beard like foam swept off the broad blown  
   sea,  
 Where'er thou go, men's reverence goes with thee.

## JOHN DAY.

DAY was a full-blown flower in heaven, alive  
 With murmuring joy of bees and birds a-swarm,  
 When in the skies of song yet flushed and warm  
 With music where all passion seems to strive  
 For utterance, all things bright and fierce to drive  
 Struggling along the splendor of the storm,  
 Day for an hour put off his fiery form,  
 And golden murmurs from a golden hive  
 Across the strong bright summer wind were heard,  
 And laughter soft as smiles from girls at play,  
 And loud from lips of boys brow-bound with May.  
 Our mightiest age let fall its gentlest word,  
 When Song, in semblance of a sweet small bird,  
 Lit fluttering on the light swift hand of Day.

## JAMES SHIRLEY.

THE dusk of day's decline was hard on dark  
 When evening trembled round thy glowworm lamp  
 That shone across her shades and dewy damp,  
 A small clear beacon whose benignant spark  
 Was gracious yet for loiterers' eyes to mark,  
 Though changed the watchword of our English  
   camp  
 Since the outposts rang round Marlowe's lion  
   ramp,  
 When thy steed's pace went ambling round Hyde  
   Park.

And in the thickening twilight under thee  
 Walks Davenant, pensive in the paths where he,  
 The blithest throat that ever carolled love  
 In music made of morning's merriest heart,

Glad Suckling, stumbled from his seat above,  
And reeled on slippery roads of alien art.

### THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN.

SONS born of many a loyal Muse to Ben,  
All true-begotten, warm with wine or ale,  
Bright from the broad light of his presence, hail !  
Prince Randolph, highest his throne of all his men,  
Being highest in spirit and heart who hailed him  
then

King, nor might other spread so blithe a sail :  
Cartwright, a soul pent in with narrower pale,  
Praised of thy sire for manful might of pen :  
Marmion, whose verse keeps always keen and fine  
The perfume of their Apollonian wine,

Who shared with that stout sire of all and thee  
The exuberant chalice of his echoing shrine :  
Is not your praise writ broad in gold which he  
Inscribed, that all who praise his name should see ?

### ANONYMOUS PLAYS : " ARDEN OF FEVER- SHAM."

MOTHER whose womb brought forth our man of men,  
Mother of Shakespeare, whom all time acclaims  
Queen therefore, sovereign queen of English  
dames,

Throned higher than sat thy sonless empress then,  
Was it thy son's young passion-guided pen  
Which drew, reflected from encircling flames,  
A figure marked by the earlier of thy names  
Wife, and from all her wedded kinswomen  
Marked by the sign of murderess ? Pale and great,  
Great in her grief and sin, but in her death  
And anguish of her penitential breath  
Greater than all her sin or sin-born fate,  
She stands, the holocaust of dark desire,  
Clothed round with song forever as with fire.

## ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

YE too, dim watchfires of some darkling hour,  
 Whose fame forlorn time saves not nor proclaims  
 Forever, but forgetfulness defames,  
 And darkness and the shadow of death devour,  
 Lift up ye too your light, put forth your power,  
 Let the far twilight feel your soft small flames,  
 And smile, albeit night name not even their names,  
 Ghost by ghost passing, flower blown down on  
 flower ;  
 That sweet-tongued shadow, like a star's that passed  
 Singing, and light was from its darkness cast  
 To paint the face of Painting fair with praise :<sup>1</sup>  
 And that wherein forefigured smiles the pure  
 Fraternal face of Wordsworth's Elidure  
 Between two child-faced masks of merrier days.<sup>2</sup>

## ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

MORE yet and more, and yet we mark not all :  
 The Warning fain to bid fair women heed  
 Its hard brief note of deadly doom and deed ;<sup>3</sup>  
 The verse that strewed too thick with flowers the  
 hall  
 Whence Nero watched his fiery festival ;<sup>4</sup>  
 That iron page whercin men's eyes who read  
 See, bruised and marred between two babes that  
 bleed,  
 A mad red-handed husband's martyr fall ;<sup>5</sup>  
 The scene which crossed and streaked with mirth  
 the strife  
 Of Henry with his sons and witchlike wife ;<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doctor Dodypol.<sup>2</sup> Nobody and Somebody.<sup>3</sup> A Warning for fair Women<sup>4</sup> The Tragedy of Nero.<sup>5</sup> A Yorkshire Tragedy<sup>6</sup> Look about you.

And that sweet pageant of the kindly fiend,  
 Who, seeing three friends in spirit and heart made  
 one,  
 Crowned with good hap the true-love wiles he  
 screened  
 In the pleached lanes of pleasant Edmonton.<sup>1</sup>

## THE MANY.

## I.

GREENE, garlanded with February's few flowers,  
 Ere March came in with Marlowe's rapturous  
 rage ;  
 Peele, from whose hand the sweet white locks of  
 age  
 Took the mild chaplet woven of honored hours ;  
 Nash, laughing hard ; Lodge, flushed from lyric  
 bowers ;  
 And Lilly, a goldfinch in a twisted cage,  
 Fed by some gay great lady's pettish page  
 Till short sweet songs gush clear like short spring  
 showers ;  
 Kid, whose grim sport still gambolled over graves ;  
 And Chettle, in whose fresh funereal verse  
 Weeps Marian yet on Robin's wild-wood hearse ;  
 Cooke, whose light boat of song one soft breath  
 saves,  
 Sighed from a maiden's amorous mouth averse :  
 Live likewise ye : Time takes not you for slaves.

## THE MANY.

## II.

HAUGHTON, whose mirth gave woman all her will ;  
 Field, bright and loud with laughing flower and  
 bird,  
 And keen alternate notes of laud and gird ;  
 Barnes, darkening once with Borgia's deeds the quill  
 Which turned the passion of Parthenophil ;

<sup>1</sup> The Merry Devil of Edmonton.

Blithe burly Porter, broad and bold of word ;  
 Wilkins, a voice with strenuous pity stirred :  
 Turk Mason ; Brewer, whose tongue drops honey  
 still ;  
 Rough Rowley, handling song with Esau's hand ;  
 Light Nabbes ; lean Sharpham, rank and raw by  
 turns,  
 But fragrant with a forethought once of Burns ;  
 Soft Davenport, sad-robed, but blithe and bland ;  
 Brome, gypsy-led across the woodland ferns :  
 Praise be with all, and place among our band.

## EPILOGUE.

OUR mother, which wast twice, as history saith,  
 Found first among the nations : once, when she  
 Who bore thine ensign saw the God in thee  
 Smite Spain, and bring forth Shakespeare ; once,  
 when death  
 Shrank, and Rome's bloodhounds cowered, at Mil-  
 ton's breath :  
 More than thy place, then first among the free ;  
 More than that sovereign lordship of the sea  
 Bequeathed to Cromwell from Elizabeth ;  
 More than thy fiery guiding-star, which Drake  
 Hailed, and the deep saw lit again for Blake ;  
 More than all deeds wrought of thy strong right  
 hand,—  
 This praise keeps most thy fame's memorial strong,  
 That thou wast head of all these streams of song,  
 And time bows down to thee as Shakespeare's land.

THE END.











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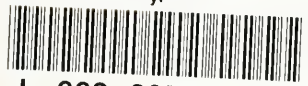
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