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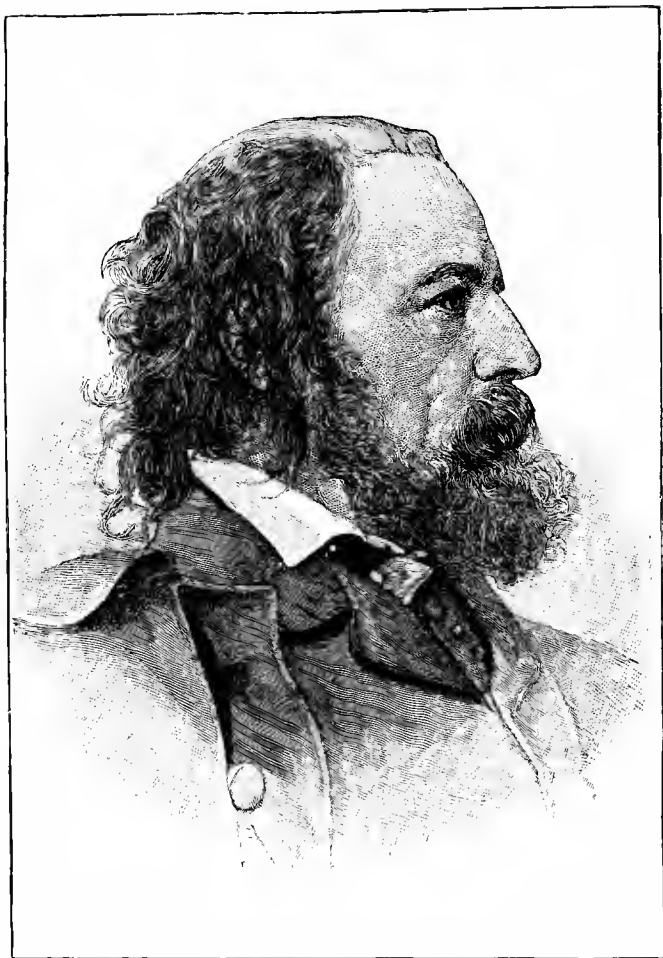
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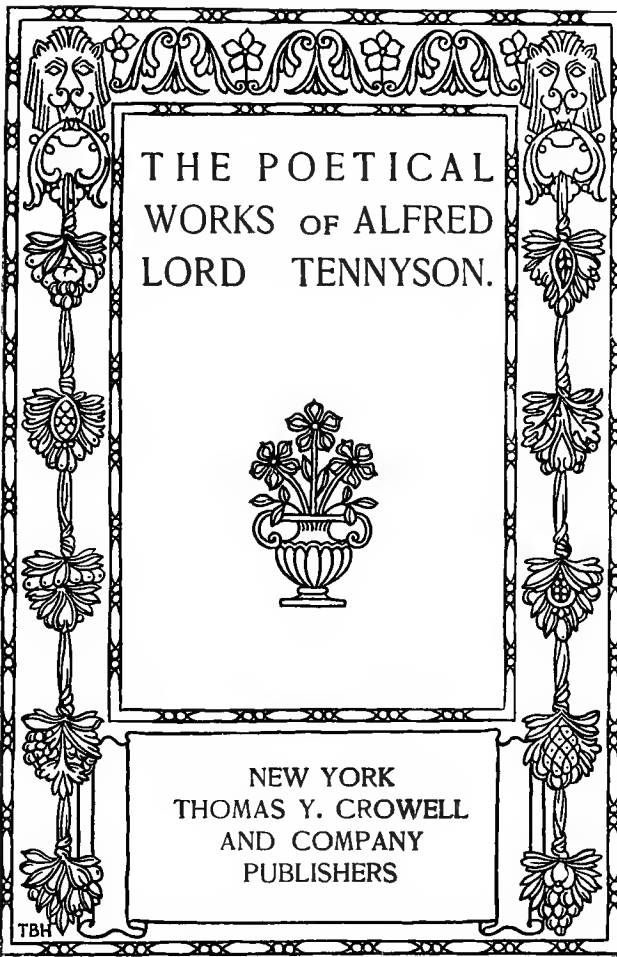
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THE POETICAL  
WORKS OF ALFRED  
LORD TENNYSON.



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THE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

*POET LAUREATE*

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

BY

EUGENE PARSONS

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# INTRODUCTION.

## LIFE OF TENNYSON.

ALFRED TENNYSON was born Aug. 6, 1809, in Somersby, a wooded hamlet in Lincolnshire, England. "The native village of Tennyson," says Howitt, who visited the place not long after the Tennysons left it, "is not situated in the fens, but in a pretty pastoral district of softly sloping hills and large ash-trees. It is not based on bogs, but on a clean sandstone. There is a little glen in the neighborhood, called by the old monkish name of Holywell."

Here he was brought up amid the lovely idyllic scenes which he made famous in the "Ode to Memory" and other poems. The picturesque "Glen," with its tangled underwood and purling brook, was a favorite haunt of the poet in childhood. On one of the stones in this ravine he inscribed the words, BYRON IS DEAD, ere he was fifteen.

Alfred was the fourth son of the Rev. George Clayton Tennyson, LL.D., rector of Somersby (1807-1831), also rector of Benniworth and Bag Enderby, and vicar of Grimsby (1815). Dr. Tennyson was the eldest son of George Tennyson (1750-1835), who belonged to the Lincolnshire gentry as the owner of Bayons Manor and Usselby Hall. He was graduated at St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1801, and received the degree of M.A. in 1805. The poet's father (1778-1831) was a man of superior abilities and varied attainments, who tried his hand with fair success at architecture, painting, music, and poetry.

Mrs. Tennyson (1781-1865) was a pious woman of many admirable qualities, and characterized by an especially sensitive nature. From his sweet, gentle mother the poet inherited his refined, shrinking nature. She was the daughter of Stephen Fytche (1734-1799), vicar of Louth (1764) and rector of Withcall (1780), a small village between Horncastle and Louth.

Dr. Tennyson married (Aug. 6, 1806) Elizabeth Fytche; and their first child, George, died in infancy. He moved to Somersby in 1808, and the rectory in this quiet village was their home for many years. According to the parish registers, the Tennyson family consisted of eleven children: Frederick (1807), Charles (1808-1879), Alfred (1809-1892), Mary (1810-1884), Emilia (1811-1889), Edward (1813-1890), Arthur (1814), Septimus (1815-1866), Matilda (1816), Cecilia (1817), Horatio (1819). They formed a joyous, lively household, amusements being agreeably mingled with their daily tasks. They were all handsome and gifted, with marked personal traits and imaginative temperaments. They were very fond of reading and story-telling. At least four of the boys — Frederick, Charles, Alfred, and Edward — were addicted to verse-writing.

The scholarly rector carefully attended to the education and training of his children. He turned his talents and accomplishments to good account in stimulating their mental growth. Alfred was a pupil of Louth Grammar School four

years (1810-1820). During this time he presumably learned something, although no flattering reports of his progress have come down to us. Then private teachers were employed by Dr. Tennyson to instruct his boys; but he took upon himself for the most part the burden of fitting them for college. One incident connected with the poet's intellectual life at home is worth repeating. It has been said that his father required him to memorize the odes of Horace, and to recite them morning by morning until the four books were gone through. Perhaps this practice aided him in cultivating a delicate sense for metrical music, in which he certainly surpassed Horace.

Only a moderate amount of study being imposed by his father, Alfred was out-of-doors much of the time, rambling through the pastures and wolds about Somersby and Bag Enderby. The two brothers, Charles and Alfred, were greatly attached to each other, and frequently were together in their walks. They were both large and strong for their age. Charles was a popular boy in Somersby on account of his frank, genial disposition. This cannot be said of the reticent Alfred, who was solitary, not caring to mingle with other lads in their sports. He was shy and reserved, moody and absent-minded, exhibiting when a boy the same habits and peculiarities which characterized him as a man.

From his twelfth to his sixteenth year Alfred was apparently idle a great part of the time, yet he was unconsciously preparing for his life-work as a poet. He was gathering material and storing up impressions that were afterward utilized. It was with him a formative period. The hours he spent strolling in lanes and woods were not wasted. The quiet, meditative boy lived in a realm of the imagination, and his thoughts and fancies took shape in crude poems.

This period of day-dreaming was followed by one of intellectual activity. His literary career began in his youth, his boyish rhymes and those of his elder brother Charles being collected into the thin volume, "Poems by Two Brothers," published in 1827. The pieces by Alfred were written when he was only sixteen or seventeen. They show that these were busy years. The Tennyson youths not only scribbled a great deal of verse, they ranged far and wide in the fields of ancient and modern literature. Their father had a fine library, and they appreciated its treasures: In the footnotes and mottoes of their poems were many curious bits of information, and quotations from the classics. In some of them are echoes from Byron, who exercised a magical spell over Alfred in his teens.

The Tennyson children were fortunate in having cultured parents. They were favored in another respect. Dr. Tennyson was comfortably well off for a country clergyman. His means, which he shrewdly husbanded, enabled the family to spend the summers at Mablethorpe and Skagness, on the eastern coast of England. Thus Alfred's passion for the sea was developed early in life. It is said that in his boyhood he occasionally tramped the whole distance (a dozen miles or more) from Somersby to the coast.

For some years it was the rector's custom to occupy a dwelling in Louth part of the school year. In this way the seclusion and monotony of Somersby life were broken. The young Tennysons saw considerable of Lincolnshire. They occasionally visited the old manor-house of Bayons, and were often welcomed in the home of their aunt, Miss Fytche, in Westgate Place. Charles and Alfred were at times the guests of their great-uncle, the Rev. Samuel Turner, of Caistor, who, dying about 1834, left his property and Grasby living to Charles. The two young poets took the money given them for their first book by Messrs. Jackson, and spent it "in a tour through Lincolnshire, inspecting the different churches, for which the county is so justly famous."

Such were the surroundings and experiences of Tennyson's childhood and youth; they influenced his whole life, and inevitably entered into his poetry of later years. He illustrates the truth that a poet is largely what his environment makes him.

In October, 1828, he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, leaving in 1831 without a degree. In his boyhood Alfred manifested unmistakable indications of genius; and during his university career he was generally looked upon as a superior mortal, of whom great things were expected by his teachers and fellow-collegians. Dr. Whewell, his tutor, treated him with unusual respect. It was thought to be no slight honor for a young man of twenty to win the chancellor's gold medal for the prize poem "Timbuctoo," and the volume of his poems published in 1830 gave him a sort of celebrity beyond his set of college acquaintances.

While at Cambridge, Tennyson formed friendships which lasted till death ended them one by one. It was indeed a company of choice spirits with whom he had the good fortune to be associated. Among them were Milnes, Kemble, Trench, Alford, Brookfield, Spedding, and others. Besides these, he numbered among the friends of his early manhood, Fitzgerald, Kinglake, Thackeray, Maurice, Gladstone, Carlyle, Rogers, Forster, the Lushingtons, and other famous scholars and men of letters. In their companionship he found the stimulus necessary for the development of his poetical faculty. They all regarded him with feelings of warmest admiration. The young singer had at least a few appreciative readers during the ten or twelve years of obscurity when the public cared little for his writings. By their words of commendation he was encouraged to pursue the bard's divine calling, to which he was led by an overmastering instinct.

Much as Tennyson owed to these men, he owed most to one whose name is forever associated with his own, Arthur Henry Hallam, a son of the historian. Soon after coming to Cambridge he met Hallam, a young man of extraordinary promise, who became the dearest of his friends—more to him than a brother. They were inseparable in their walks and studies. They shared each other's ambitions and enthusiasms. In the summer of 1830 the two comrades travelled through the French Pyrenees. Their intimate fellowship was strengthened by Arthur's love for the poet's younger sister, Emilia. It was apparently his strongest earthly attachment; and the beautiful record of their "fair companionship" is found in the lyrics of "In Memoriam," written to perpetuate the memory of the lost Hallam, whose life went suddenly out in Vienna, Sept. 15, 1833.

This remarkable elegy remains, and is likely to remain through all time, a nobler monument than could be wrought out of bronze or marble. Equally enduring is the melodious wail, "Break, break, break," one of the sweetest dirges in all literature, written shortly after Hallam's death.

The noted actress, Fanny Kemble, knew Tennyson in the prime of manhood, and in her journal (June 16, 1832) tells what manner of man he was:—

"Alfred Tennyson dined with us. I am always a little disappointed with the exterior of our poet when I look at him, in spite of his eyes, which are very fine; but his head and face, striking and dignified as they are, are almost too ponderous and massive for beauty in so young a man; and every now and then there is a slightly sarcastic expression about his mouth that almost frightens me, in spite of his shy manner and habitual silence."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Records of a Girlhood," pp. 519-520.

After leaving college, Tennyson resided chiefly with his widowed mother at Somersby, then at High Beech (1837-1840), Tunbridge Wells and Boxley (1840-1844), and Cheltenham (1844-1850). He was often in London and elsewhere visiting friends. Fitzgerald speaks of his staying with Tennyson at the Cumberland home of James Spedding in 1835. Here Alfred would spend hour after hour reading aloud "Morte d'Arthur," and other unpublished poems, which his scholarly friend criticised. In 1838 he was a welcome member of the Anonymous Club in London, and had rooms in that city at various times during the next ten years.

It was his habit to make long journeys through the country on foot, studying the landscapes of England and Wales, and pondering many a lay unsung. He also made occasional trips to Ireland and the Continent. "From 1842," says Howitt, "he became pre-eminent among English poets;" and he was thenceforth often to be found in the society of prominent literary people. The Carlyles were much attached to him. In a letter written in 1843, Mrs. Carlyle calls him "a very handsome man, and a noble-hearted one, with something of the gypsy in his appearance, which for me is perfectly charming." In 1845 he was granted a pension of £200, and in 1850 he was appointed poet-laureate to succeed Wordsworth; in 1855 he received the honorary degree of D.C.L. from Oxford.

Tennyson married (June 13, 1850) at Shiplake, Oxfordshire, Emily Sarah Sellwood, whom he had known and loved for many years. Carlyle, not long afterward, came across the laureate "with his new wife," of whom he pleasantly writes: "Mrs. Tennyson lights up bright glittering blue eyes when you speak to her; has wit; has sense; and were it not that she seems so very delicate in health, I should augur really well of Tennyson's adventure." She was the eldest daughter of Henry Sellwood, of Peasmore in Berkshire, afterward a solicitor of Horncastle, Lincolnshire; her mother was a sister of Sir John Franklin, and her youngest sister the wife of Charles Tennyson Turner.

A lady of high intelligence and gracious manner, she was in every way fitted to be the companion of her poet husband, who lovingly bore testimony to her loyalty and worth. Exalted as was his ideal of woman as a wife and mother, she seems to have met his exacting requirements almost perfectly. Though a woman of more than ordinary education and talent, she never sought public recognition. A considerable number of the poet's songs she set to music. Content with the round of duties in a domestic sphere, she lived for husband and children. Their wedded life was exceptionally harmonious and happy. Their union was blessed with two sons, — Hallam, born Aug. 11, 1852, and Lionel, born March 16, 1854. Bayard Taylor thought the Tennyson household a "delightful family circle." "His wife," he wrote in 1857, "is one of the best women I ever met with; and his two little boys, Hallam and Lionel, are real cherubs of children."

Many years later Professor Palgrave paid Lady Tennyson a well-deserved tribute in the graceful Dedication of "Lyrical Poems by Lord Tennyson" (1885), characterizing her as "the counsellor to whom he has never looked in vain for aid and comfort, — the wife whose perfect love has blessed him through these many years with large and faithful sympathy."<sup>1</sup>

Three years they lived in Chapel House, Twickenham. In 1853 the laureate bought the Farringford domain (now over four hundred acres), near Freshwater,

<sup>1</sup> Lady Tennyson died at Aldworth, Aug. 10, 1866, aged eighty-three. During the last years of her life, notwithstanding ill-health, she materially aided her son Hallam in preparing the biography of his father.

in the Isle of Wight. In the lines, "To the Rev. F. D. Maurice," dated January, 1854, the poet describes his pleasant life in this delightful retreat. In 1867 he purchased the Greenhill estate, in the northern part of Sussex. Here he built a Gothic mansion, which is an ideal residence for a poet. This house, named Aldworth, was finished and first occupied in 1869. Situated far up on Blackdown Heath, it overlooks a lovely valley, and commands a view of one of the finest landscapes in England. Aldworth was his summer home for more than twenty years. Here he found the peace and seclusion that he coveted, — at least part of the time, — spending his days removed from the bustle and rush and unrest of the outside world.

It should not be supposed from this that Tennyson's life at Farringford was passed in monastic isolation. However sequestered Aldworth was from the abodes of men, the poet's mansion near Freshwater was not a hermitage. Thither in the golden years of his long career, in the fifties and sixties and seventies, came men eminent in all the walks of life, — preachers, statesmen, artists, and authors. His brothers and sisters, especially Horatio and Matilda, were with him a great deal of the time. Occasional visits from his young nephews and nieces, and afterward the presence of grandchildren, gladdened the days of the aged singer. For many years Mrs. Julia Margaret Cameron (who achieved fame by her marvellously successful photographs) and her husband were near neighbors of Tennyson's, their cottage, Dimbola, being not far from Farringford. The Camerons and the Tennysons lived in closest intimacy, visiting each other's homes almost daily. Other dear friends on the Isle of Wight were the Prinseps, Mr. W. G. Ward, Sir John Simeon, and Mrs. Hughes, mother of Tom Hughes.

Tennyson's life was never that of a recluse long at a time. He saw much of the world. His solitude was broken by occasional trips abroad, and by frequent tours through the counties of England and Wales. During his entire career, after leaving Cambridge in 1831, it may be said that he inevitably gravitated to London to stay a few weeks or months, and refresh himself with boon companions. No attempt is made here to trace all the wanderings of this much-travelled man. The letters of Edward Fitzgerald afford some clues to Tennyson's whereabouts during his early manhood, when his movements were not so closely watched and recorded in the newspapers. "I have just come from Leamington," he writes (June 7, 1840); "while there I met Alfred by chance; we made two or three pleasant excursions together; to Stratford-upon-Avon and Kenilworth, etc."

In October, 1841, he writes: "As to Alfred, I have heard nothing of him since May, except that some one saw him going on a packet which he believed was going to Rotterdam."

In 1851 the poet and his wife visited Italy, and vivid memories of their travels are recalled in "The Daisy," written in Edinburgh two years later; this poem was suggested by the finding of a daisy in a book, the flower having been plucked on the Splügen, and placed by Mrs. Tennyson between the leaves of a little volume as a memento of their Italian journey. Scotland and the neighboring isles seem to have exercised a strange power over the laureate; for he was often attracted to the Highlands, Valentia, and Ireland. He travelled in Portugal in 1859 with his friend Palgrave. He revisited the Pyrenees in 1861, this time with Arthur Hugh Clough, and again in 1876. In 1865 he was at Weimar and Dresden; in 1869 through France and Switzerland with Frederick Locker. He went to Norway in 1872, where he had journeyed before, led thither by reading Bayard Taylor's "Northern Travel." He was in Italy in 1879, and in Lombardy in 1882.

In 1883 Tennyson voyaged with Mr. Gladstone to Copenhagen, meeting at King Christian's court the Princess of Wales and the sovereigns of Greece and Russia. He visited the Channel Islands in 1887, and "in the spring of 1891 he was cruising in the Mediterranean." Only a few months before his death he was in Jersey, Guernsey, and London; and the venerable minstrel was preparing to return to Farringford for the winter when the final summons came in October, 1892. So the spirit of roving clung to him even to the end of his earthly pilgrimage.

In 1865 Tennyson declined a baronetcy offered by the queen as a reward for his loyal devotion to the crown, and again in 1868, when tendered by Disraeli. In the latter part of 1883 he accepted a peerage at Gladstone's earnest solicitation. He was created a peer of the realm Jan. 24, 1884, with the new title, Baron of Aldworth, Sussex, and of Freshwater, Isle of Wight. He took his seat in the House of Lords March 11, 1884.

Baron Tennyson had a splendid lineage, three lines of noble and royal families being mingled in his descent. The poet himself writes: "Through my great-grandmother [Elizabeth Clayton], and through Jane Pitt, a still remoter grandmother, I am doubly descended from Plantagenets (Lionel, Duke of Clarence, and John of Lancaster), and this through branches of the Barons d'Eyncourt."

The pedigree of his grandfather, George Tennyson, is traced back to "the middle-class line of the Tennysons," and through Elizabeth Clayton ten generations back to Edmund, Duke of Somerset, and farther back to Edward III. The laureate's grandfather was a well-known lawyer and wealthy landowner of Lincolnshire, who "sat more than once in Parliament, representing Bletchingly;" his second son, Charles Tennyson-d'Eyncourt, who succeeded him as the possessor of the family estate of Bayons Manor, was a noted public man, having represented Lambeth and other boroughs in Parliament from 1818 to 1852. At the death of George Tennyson (July 4, 1835), the valuable Clayton property near Great Grimsby was left to the rector's family, and it is still (1896) in the hands of Frederick Tennyson, the poet's elder brother.

The poet's last years were saddened by the bereavement of many old friends and relatives. He suffered a severe blow in the death of his second son Lionel, while on the homeward voyage from India. He mourns his loss in the touching stanzas, "To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava." The Hon. Lionel Tennyson, for several years connected with the India office, was attacked by jungle fever while on a visit to India, and died on board the *Chusan*, near Aden, April 20, 1886, at the age of thirty-two.

Honors were showered plentifully on Lord Tennyson in his last years, but he was not spoiled by vanity. He was the recipient of many congratulations on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Aug. 6, 1889. His was the fruitful old age that crowns a well-ordered career. His powers of body and mind were well preserved to the end, owing to his wonderful constitution and his quiet way of living. He read Shakespeare during his final illness, and continued to compose even on his death-bed, dictating "The Silent Voices" sung at his funeral. In the tranquil evening of a well-spent life he peacefully passed away Oct. 6, 1892, receiving burial (Oct. 12) in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.



## THE POETRY OF TENNYSON.

TENNYSON is pre-eminently a lyric poet. His lyrical efforts embrace an extensive range of subjects and a wide variety of metres. Not having naturally the rhythmical facility of Byron or Shelley, he conquered the technical difficulties of the minstrel's art by painstaking study and labor. In this field he became a master. But, not realizing his limitations, or not content with the renown of being a great lyrist, he ambitiously essayed to enter fields where supremacy was for him impossible. In the epic and the drama he achieved only partial success. It is, therefore, as a lyric poet that Tennyson is chiefly known and will be remembered. Such incomparable lyrics as "Break, break, break," "The splendor falls," and "Crossing the Bar," prove him to be a singer by right divine — one whose fame is immortal.

In some of his blank-verse idylls he was scarcely less happy. Noteworthy among these are his studies and imitations of the antique, — "Ænone," "The Lotus-Eaters," "Ulysses," "Tithonus," "Lucretius," "Tiresias," "Demeter," and "The Death of Ænone," — which, it is safe to say, are not generally popular, however much they may be admired by persons of scholarly and critical tastes. "In Memoriam" and "Maud" are merely collections of lyrics. Tennyson's dramas are often lyrical in spirit if not in form; they are distinctly undramatic. Except a few magnificent passages of blank verse, the lyrics are the best things in them. The songs in "The Princess," and the little melodies scattered through the "Idylls of the King," will be prized in future ages when the main portions of these works may have lost their interest for the average reader. These lyrics have been set to music, and sung in many a household where his longer poems are unread. The scenes and characters described in them have been depicted by painters. Thus the sister arts have conspired to popularize them, and impress them on the memory.

Tennyson's lyrical successes are numerous, the list including most of his shorter poems. An array of versatile, superior productions! They make up a considerable body of poetry, much greater in bulk than the quantity of enduring verse produced by Herrick, Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Cowper, Burns, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Scott, Keats, Campbell, Browning, Bryant, Poe, Lowell, or Whittier.

Tennyson's first book — "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical" (1830) — was made up largely of metrical diversions, yet it contained a few pieces that are imperishable. They show plainly that when a young man he was as much addicted to word-music and word-color as he was in later years. The author of "Mariana" and "The Dirge" was a poetic artist of more than ordinary equipment.

His second book of "Poems," published late in 1832, included some of his loveliest lyrics, — "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Palace of Art," "The Lotus-Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," etc., — having the richness of melody and the indescribable witchery of style which constitute Tennyson's charm.

In the two volumes of "Poems" appearing in 1842 were gathered the finest things in the two earlier books, but changed and polished until well-nigh perfect, together with a number of new works — "Morte d'Arthur," "The Talking Oak," "Ulysses," "Locksley Hall," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "The Two Voices," "St. Agnes," "Sir Galahad," "Godiva," "Break, break, break," etc. — that are justly regarded among the choicest treasures of British lyrical and

idyllic poetry. These poems, new and old, exhibited not only a complete mastery of rhetorical effects and a rare æsthetic susceptibility, but a rich vein of sense and spirituality. Here were exquisite diction, harmonious versification, a command of the technical resources of the poetic art, and unrivalled ability in word-painting. The writer was a close observer of nature as well as a diligent student of books.

More than Virgil, he was a "landscape-lover," who with pictorial fidelity and vividness, though not with photographic accuracy, sketched the places he visited. Hamerton rightly called him the "prince of poet landscapists." But the domain of beauty was too narrow for him. Beyond any mere æsthetic influence that he exerted, Tennyson was a power for good, his refined verse being the graceful vehicle of ethical instruction and religious uplift. Like Wordsworth, he was a poet with a mission. His countrymen found his teaching helpful, stimulating, liberalizing.

Admirable as is "The Princess" (1847) in some respects, it falls somewhat below the level reached in his lyrics and idylls. The poem as a whole is disappointing, being richer in form than in substance. It has been concisely and accurately described as a "splendid failure." The plot is the work of a literary artist, rather than the heaven-born inspiration of genius. As an incursion into the realm of the romantic and the fantastic, the story is pleasing enough with its airy fancies and delightful reveries, but it is too unreal and wildly improbable to be impressive. It does not bear the test of rereading. One becomes at last cloyed with its gorgeous style, overloaded as it is with glittering conceits and ornate commonplaces. However, the closing paragraphs, which deal with the woman question so sensibly and felicitously, compensate for some shortcomings of the poem.

In producing the beautiful elegy known as "In Memoriam," Tennyson conferred immortality upon his lost friend and gained it for himself. This monumental work, which appeared anonymously in 1850, had been in process of growth during the seventeen years after the death of Arthur Henry Hallam in 1833. This tribute of love to the memory of the dearest of his companions occupies a unique place in literature. It is not only the most original of Tennyson's sustained writings — it is his best reflective poem and favorite work. Into it he poured the consecrated fragrance of his genius. It grew out of the author's manifold experiences, not only as a mourner, but as a thinker. He owed nothing material to Petrarch, as has been claimed, or to the sonnets of Shakespeare. The work is English and modern. It is emphatically Tennysonian. "In Memoriam" may be classed with the few really great poems of the nineteenth century. It is a masterpiece, worthy of a place among the classics of our English tongue. Perhaps no other poem of our age has been so influential. Perhaps no other literary production of the nineteenth century has elicited such high praise from eminent critics, and received during the writer's lifetime such loving, sympathetic study from cultivated readers.

"Maud," like "In Memoriam," is a poem with a history. It had its beginning in the stanzas, "O, that 'twere possible," contributed to *The Tribute* in 1837. This was the germ of "Maud." According to Mrs. Ritchie, we owe the expanded poem to the suggestion of Mr. John Simeon, one of the laureate's most intimate friends and neighbors in the Isle of Wight. "Sir John said that it seemed to him as if something were wanting to explain the story of this poem, and so by degrees it all grew." When published in 1855, it was greeted with a storm of criticism and derision, being everywhere misjudged and underrated. Its

purpose was misconceived on account of the Jingo sentiments and hysterical ravings put into the mouth of the hero (who was not Tennyson in disguise, but a fictitious character). This poem, always a favorite with the author, won its way at last to a generous appreciation of its abundant merits.

The threads woven into the fabric of "Maud" are a commercial swindle, suicide, love-making, murder, insanity, and an unrighteous war. Says a critic in the *North British Review*: "The poem is a lyric monologue, consisting of eulogistic invective, gradually mastered by love, then anger, despair, madness, and patriotic enthusiasm."

Out of these melodramatic elements a great work could hardly be expected to come forth. Something is wanting in the leading figure, whose morbid soliloquizing betrays a weak character. Notwithstanding the terribly serious and tragic circumstances of his history, the hero does not always keep from making a laughing-stock of himself. While not an unqualified success, a work containing one of the sweetest love-lyrics in any language, "Come into the garden," certainly is not to be pronounced a failure. This exquisite song "at once struck the fancy of musicians, and seemed spontaneously to clothe itself in melody." There are other strains in "Maud" which rank among the lyrical triumphs with which Alfred Tennyson enriched English literature.

Of all his extended efforts, "Enoch Arden" (1864) has been read most widely. Its popularity is partly accounted for by the peculiar incident of a long-absent husband returning home to find his wife married to another man. The story of Enoch Arden passes current where the name of Arthur Hallam is unheard. It has been twice dramatized. Judging from the large number of translations and illustrated editions of this poem, it is by far the best known of the laureate's writings in foreign lands, having been translated into Danish, German, Dutch, French, Bohemian, Italian, Hungarian, and Spanish. School editions, with notes, have been extensively circulated in France and Germany.

As a literary production, "Enoch Arden" is a poem after the manner of Tennyson's English idylls, only the narrative is more elaborate. In this field he achieved eminent success, because he was at home in pastoral subjects, and made the most of his material. The tale is said to be literally true, at least in its principal details, having been related to the poet by Thomas Woolner, the sculptor; a similar narrative forms the groundwork of a short poem by Miss Procter, published in her "Legends and Lyrics" about 1860. The style is not so severe and bare as Wordsworth's, yet it exhibits a noble simplicity, varied with flashes of imaginative splendor. While the picture of the fisher village is idealized, it is wonderfully sympathetic and faithful. The poet invests the lives of humble folk with dignity and "with glory not their own." In dwelling on affecting scenes with a tender pathos that but few story-tellers have equalled, he shows his skill as an artist in relieving the sombre sadness of the tale with glimpses of domestic felicity. As a whole, "Enoch Arden" is not an intellectual performance of a high order. Nevertheless, it is a poem that the world could ill afford to lose.

The first instalment of "Idylls of the King" was given to the world in 1859, although six copies of the first two in cruder form were privately printed in 1857 with the title "Enid and Nimue." Four more Arthurian romances were added in 1869, two in 1872, and one in 1885. In early life Tennyson had been attracted by the Arthur legends, and had worked several isolated episodes or pictures into the lyrics, — "The Lady of Shalott" (1832), "Sir Galahad" (1842), "Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere" (1842), — and the blank-verse fragment

entitled "Morte d'Arthur" (1842), afterward incorporated into "The Passing of Arthur." These were preludes of the fuller strain. He had then projected a national epic in twelve books on King Arthur, but abandoned the idea for a while. In "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere," he versified disconnected incidents from the "Mabinogion" and the "Morte Darthur" of Thomas Malory. Their appearance in 1859 can be described as a literary sensation. Their success, it would seem, impelled him to carry out his old plan (perhaps altered somewhat) of an *Arthuriad*.

Seeing unused possibilities for new poems in the Middle Age romances and chronicles treating of pre-historic Britain, he from time to time added other tales, making the series named the Round Table, with introductory and closing poems, a complete cycle. The Dedication appeared in 1862, and the epilogue in 1873.

The Arthurian idylls occupied the poet's attention during many years. From the pains bestowed upon them and their elaborate design, it is evident that he intended them to be a monumental work. Such they cannot be, owing to their unevenness of merit and their want of coherent structure. They have been termed an epic. When arranged in their true order, they supply a tolerably clear account of a succession of events more or less connected. They trace the rise and fall of the Round Table. There is material enough for an epic in the deeds of King Arthur and his knights, but Tennyson's mind was not cast in the heroic mould requisite to sing of battles. A minstrel must live among heroes and be a man of action in order to compose a popular epic. To write an *Arthuriad* in this age would be a colossal undertaking, quite beyond the powers of any modern poet. These romantic stories are idyllic, not epic, in tone and manner. At times there is something of the Homeric spirit in Tennyson's lines, but it is not sustained.

In "Idylls of the King," Tennyson borrowed a great deal from mediæval romance, yet he added something of his own. His elegant panel-paintings of the feudal world are not true to life. There is less in them of historic fact than of imaginative enchantment. They are full of incongruities. Much in them seems unreal and antiquated, along with much that is addressed to the reader of to-day. These mixed elements are the sources of strength and weakness. The main interest of the idylls lies not in the historical fidelity of the pictures of legendary Britain, for they portray the English aristocracy of the nineteenth century; it is rather in the melodious cadences of the verse, in the artistic beauty of the word-painting, and in the spiritual teaching which permeates and transfigures them.

Without the lessons drawn from the storied pages of chivalry, a poetical paraphrase of the Arthur legend would not have much permanent value. To glorify a past with which our own age is not in sympathy were hardly worth while.

Late in life Tennyson entered the difficult field of historical drama, becoming a rival of Shakespeare himself. "The historic trilogy," as Dr. van Dyke calls "Harold" (1876), "Becket" (1884), and "Queen Mary" (1875), perhaps affords a better example of the right employment of poetic genius than do the Arthurian romaunts. They are valuable studies of three momentous periods of English history. Mr. Arthur Waugh calls "Harold" "a great drama," the theme being "full of tragic pathos and dramatic situation." It must be confessed, however, that "Harold" is weighted down with a great deal of heavy poetry. "Becket" and "Queen Mary" are both noble poems. They are destined to become classics. "Queen Mary" will rank not far below the productions of the best of the Elizabethan dramatists. "Becket" is Tennyson's

dramatic masterpiece. It surpasses all his other extended works in strength and passion. This splendid tragedy deserves a wider recognition, not only from lovers of Tennyson, but from all admirers of virile and sonorous blank verse.

The three shorter plays or dramatic sketches, "The Cup" (1884), "The Falcon" (1884), and "The Promise of May" (1886), are comparative failures; the playwright's instinct is absent, although here and there are gleams of poetic fire. The charming idyllic comedy of "The Foresters" (1892) derives its interest from the historic and romantic features of the story rather than from the poet's handling of the materials. It was a worthy endeavor on the part of the venerable singer to retell the old tale or tradition of Robin Hood and Maid Marian. As was to be expected, he improved the occasion to introduce several dainty lyrics, wherein was displayed the master's old-time power of exquisite versifying. But there is a poverty of stirring incidents, of moral and intellectual conflicts, which make up the warp and woof of great dramas.

Tennyson's dramas are not adapted to the stage of to-day, being deficient in the theatrical effects which tell with an audience. He lacked a knowledge of stage requirements and scenic accessories. Experience as an actor or manager, or even as a theatre-goer, would have been of advantage to him here. Notwithstanding Mr. Frederick Archer's favorable opinion of "Harold," no player has yet tried the *rôle* of the last Saxon king. Brilliant costumes and spectacular splendors might make this play endurable on the stage, but its presentation would be a doubtful experiment.

"Queen Mary" is a drama to be read, not acted. Its action drags, and its numerous speeches are not such as rouse listeners to the pitch of enthusiasm. Mr. Irving and Miss Bateman essayed its production at the Lyceum Theatre in 1876 with indifferent success. Without its enchanting stage-pictures, "The Foresters" would sorely try the patience of an average audience. The author's attempts to relieve the tediousness with humor do not wholly fail; nevertheless, not one of the characters bubbles over with mirthful sallies. The interchange of conversation is not enlivened, as it is in Shakespeare, by sparkling wit and repartee. To the superb mounting of this drama by Mr. Augustin Daly and the fascinating personality of Miss Ada Rehan, was due in large measure whatever of success was achieved by "The Foresters." "Becket" alone redeems Tennyson's reputation as a dramatist. As presented by Henry Irving and Ellen Terry in 1893, it proved to be an exceptionally strong performance. Allowing all the credit justly belonging to this honored actor for adapting it to the stage, it still remains true that the laureate is entitled to the chief glory for this important addition to England's dramatic literature. His other plays failed on the boards; they lack spirited dialogue and exciting action.

What of the minor poems, — the lyrics, idylls, and ballads written during the last four decades of Tennyson's literary career? To some it seemed that these poems compare unfavorably with the songs of his early manhood. So thought Edward Fitzgerald, recalling the rapturous sensations which those poems when first written produced on himself and other enthusiastic admirers of England's rising poet. But readers of a later generation, who have never enjoyed the privilege of personal intercourse with the bard, are able to appreciate the work of his later, as well as that of his earlier, years.

Passing by the two memorable patriotic lyrics, "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," and "The Charge of the Light Brigade," also the personal poems (which include some of his sincerest, manliest utterances), we find among the things printed between 1850 and 1870 such jewels as "The Brook,"

"Aylmer's Field," "The Voyage," "The Grandmother," "Northern Farmer," "The Victim," "Wages," "The Higher Pantheism," and "Flower in the crannied wall." As if to prove that his fertility in the province of the lyric was not exhausted, the laureate, though past sixty, made fresh incursions into fields of poetry long familiar to him. The last two decades of his life were exceptionally productive of short poems, which are stamped with dignity of thought, felicitous expression, and musical versification. The list of his notable successes would comprehend nearly all the contents of "Ballads, and Other Poems," published in 1880, — a book which Theodore Watts characterized as "the most richly various volume of English verse that has appeared in his own century." But the volumes "Tiresias, and Other Poems" (1885), and "Demeter, and Other Poems" (1889), were scarcely less rich in lays comparable with the finest efforts of his earlier days. Such poems as "The Ancient Sage," "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," "To Virgil," "Freedom," "Vastness," "Happy," "The Progress of Spring," "Merlin and The Gleam," "Far-far-away," "Crossing the Bar," "The Silent Voices," and many more in the books of his last years, would be sufficient of themselves to give their author a firm footing on Parnassus.

Tennyson is not a world-poet. He is, assuredly, not to be classed with the few chosen spirits who reared majestic edifices of thought like the "Iliad," the "Divina Commedia," "Paradise Lost," and "Faust." His appeal is more or less insular. Much of his verse has but little bearing on humanity at large. It is national rather than universal. Tennyson's poetry is distinctively English, as the Bard of Abbotsford is Scottish. The local element is prominent in most of his writings. The lovely setting and coloring of "In Memoriam" cannot be appreciated by those who have never gazed upon the scenery of England. "The Princess," "Maud," and the dramas are manifestly not for mankind; and this is true of the "Idylls of the King." Their author's audience must always be composed chiefly of English-speaking peoples.

In spite of the provincialisms and local allusions of Burns, he has a large following of ardent lovers. Robert is the poet of man, and his bays are ever green. He found his inspiration, not in books, but in nature and the heart. There is the same vein of human interest in Homer, whose growing fame is accounted for by the vitality of the Greek factor in our civilization. In his poems are the seeds of Hellenic culture. The heart of Greece is so accurately and completely mirrored in Homer, that he has become an inseparable and undying part of her legacy to the world.

Arthur and Lancelot have not acquired such universal currency as have Achilles and Ulysses. They belong rather with the Roderick Dhus of the Highlands, with the Siegfrieds and other heroes of epic times in Germany and Norseland. Tennyson's Lancelot is something more than a name, but the mythic monarch of Camelot is a shadowy abstraction. The Canterbury Pilgrims are more familiar figures than the Knights of the Round Table. The former are charged with life and dramatic power; the latter are a set of bloodless apparitions, that suffer in comparison with the mailed warriors of Scott's romances.

Horace reflects not only fleeting phases of Roman manners, but in a large degree universal experience. Tennyson is in some respects the British Horace, and his fame is as imperishable as is that of the Augustan lyrist. He has not so closely identified himself with the nation's life as did Shakespeare and Milton; he does not loom up so large as a historical personage, and it may be doubted whether he will ever become so intimately associated with English thought and



character. Granting that Tennyson is the best exponent of the Victorian era, is he a great representative poet, like Lucretius, Dante, or Chaucer? Does he not interpret some of the temporary phases of his generation, rather than the life and spirit of the nineteenth century? And may not the representative element in his verse be of secondary moment and ephemeral? The poems which are perennially fresh, like "The Miller's Daughter," and "Rizpah," are so because they appeal to the heart and intellect of all times. Upon these and such as these, Tennyson's following and reputation must ultimately rest, not upon such fugitive pieces as "Hands all Round" and "Riflemen form."

Tennyson's charm is as subtle and potent as is that of the courtly, polished Horace; but his charm consists largely of verbal felicities that are untranslatable. According to Dryden, if Shakespeare's "embroideries were burned down, there would be silver at the bottom of the melting-pot." Tennyson's songs do not translate so well as Uhland's. If turned into prose, their charm vanishes. He is great in small things, not in grand ideas. Nature did not endow him with the pure, fresh, joyous imagination of Homer, — the calm, brooding, radiant atmosphere through which the old bard saw so clearly and buoyantly. His pages fairly bristle with subtleties in thought and expression, with fantastic novelties and meretricious ornaments, which lose half of their effect and beauty when transferred into a foreign language. His "distilled thoughts in distilled words," as Matthew Arnold calls them, must be read in English.

Much of Tennyson's verse is open to criticism, being cold and labored, also lacking in sustained force and elevation. A vast deal that he wrote can be described as polished mediocrity. With all their rich music and color, most of his shorter pieces have not the majesty which the highest imagination alone can confer. All of his longer productions show the varying character of his work, by turns superb and weak. His mannerisms are carried to excess. His felicities are often such as only the cultivated reader can appreciate. Ordinary people would enjoy less of refinement and more of vigor.

Tennyson is not, then, one of the mighty cosmopolitan forces of literature. Not one of those who suffered for poetry's sake, whose words are graven into the heart of civilized humanity. He sang so sweetly, and did so much to brighten and to dignify the life of mortals, that his name must needs long remain a household word wherever the Saxon tongue is heard. Much of his brilliant metrical foliage will wither "with the process of the suns." Nevertheless, his fame is enduring. He is more than a skilful versifier or literary artist, whose mellifluous lines and clear-cut, pithy phrases will continue to be quoted in after ages. Alfred Tennyson's poetical performances won for him the lasting distinction of being a genuine bard, one whose seat is far up among the throned sovereigns of British song.

EUGENE PARSONS.

Aug. 10, 1896.



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## TO THE QUEEN.



*Revered, beloved— O you that hold  
A nobler office upon earth  
Than arms, or power of brains, or birth  
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria,— since your Royal grace  
To one of less desert allows  
This laurel greener from the brows  
Of him that utter'd nothing base;*

*And should your greatness, and the care  
That yokes with empire, yield you time  
To make demand of modern rhyme  
If aught of ancient worth be there;*

*Then— while a sweeter music wakes,  
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,  
Where all about your palace-walls  
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes—*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;  
For tho' the faults were thick as dust*

*In vacant chambers, I could trust  
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood  
As noble till the latest day!  
May children of our children say,  
"She wrought her people lasting good;*

*"Her court was pure; her life serene;  
God gave her peace; her land reposed:  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen;*

*"And statesmen at her council met  
Who knew the seasons when to take  
Occasion by the hand, and make  
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*"By shaping some august decree,  
Which kept her throne unshaken still,  
Broad-based upon her people's will,  
And compass'd by the inviolate sea."*

**March, 1851.**

# JUVENILIA.



## CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth  
The breezes pause and die,  
Letting the rose-leaves fall:  
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,  
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,  
With an ancient melody  
Of an inward agony,  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh  
Athwart the thicket lone:  
At noon the wild bee hummeth  
About the moss'd headstone;  
At midnight the moon cometh  
And looketh down alone.  
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,  
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,  
The callow throistle lispeth,  
The slumbrons wave outwelleth,  
The babbling runnel crispeth,  
The hollow grot replieth  
Where Claribel low-lieth.

## NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be aweary of  
flowing  
Under my eye?  
When will the wind be aweary of  
blowing  
Over the sky?

When will the clouds be aweary of  
fleeting?  
When will the heart be awcary of  
beating?  
And nature die?  
Never, oh! never, nothing will die;  
The stream flows,  
The wind blows,  
The cloud fleets,  
The heart beats,  
Nothing will die.

Nothing will die;  
All things will change  
Thro' eternity.  
'Tis the world's winter;  
Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago;  
Earth is dry to the centre,  
But spring, a new comer,  
A spring rich and strange,  
Shall make the winds blow  
Round and round,  
Thro' and thro',  
Here and there,  
Till the air  
And the ground  
Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made;  
It will change, but it will not fade  
So let the wind range;  
For even and morn  
Ever will be  
Thro' eternity.  
Nothing was born;  
Nothing will die;  
All things will change.

## ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its  
 flowing  
 Under my eye;  
 Warmly and broadly the south winds  
 are blowing  
 Over the sky.  
 One after another the white clouds are  
 fleeting;  
 Every heart this May morning in joy-  
 ance is beating  
 Full merrily;  
 Yet all things must die.  
 The stream will cease to flow;  
 The wind will cease to blow;  
 The clouds will cease to fleet;  
 The heart will cease to beat;  
 For all things must die.  
 All things must die.  
 Spring will come never more.  
 Oh! vanity!  
 Death waits at the door.  
 See! our friends are all forsaking  
 The wine and the merrymaking.  
 We are call'd — we must go.  
 Laid low, very low,  
 In the dark we must lie.  
 The merry glees are still;  
 The voice of the bird  
 Shall no more be heard,  
 Nor the wind on the hill.  
 Oh! misery!  
 Hark! death is calling  
 While I speak to ye,  
 The jaw is falling,  
 The red cheek paling,  
 The strong limbs failing;  
 Ice with the warm blood mixing;  
 The eyeballs fixing.  
 Nine times goes the passing bell:  
 Ye merry souls, farewell.  
 The old earth  
 Had a birth,  
 As all men know,  
 Long ago.  
 And the old earth must die.  
 So let the warm winds range,  
 And the blue wave beat the shore;  
 For even and morn  
 Ye will never see  
 Thro' eternity.

All things were born.  
 Ye will come never more,  
 For all things must die.

## LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming  
 the broad valley dimm'd in the  
 gloaming:  
 Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only  
 the far river shines.  
 Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and  
 bowers of rose-blowing bushes,  
 Down by the poplar tall rivulets bab-  
 ble and fall.  
 Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the  
 grasshopper carolleth clearly;  
 Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly  
 the owl halloos;  
 Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in her  
 first sleep earth breathes stilly:  
 Over the pools in the burn water-gnats  
 murmur and mourn.  
 Sadly the far kine loweth: the glim-  
 mering water out-floweth:  
 Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope  
 to the dark hyaline.  
 Low-throned Hesper is stayed between  
 the two peaks; but the Naiad  
 Throbbing in mild unrest holds him  
 beneath in her breast.  
 The ancient poetess singeth, that Hes-  
 perus all things bringeth,  
 Smoothing the wearied mind: bring  
 me my love, Rosalind.  
 Thou comest morning or even; she  
 cometh not morning or even.  
 False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is  
 my sweet Rosalind?

## SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O God! my God! have mercy now.  
 I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou  
 Didst die for me, for such as me,  
 Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,  
 And that my sin was as a thorn

Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,  
Wounding Thy soul.—That even now,  
In this extremest misery  
Of ignorance, I should require  
A sign! and if a bolt of fire  
Would rive the slumbrous summer  
noon

While I do pray to Thee alone,  
Think my belief would stronger grow:  
Is not my human pride brought low?  
The boastings of my spirit still?

The joy I had in my freewill  
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like  
grown?

And what is left to me, but Thou  
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;  
Christians with happy countenances—  
And children all seem full of Thee!  
And women smile with saint-like  
glances

Like Thine own mother's when she  
bow'd

Above Thee, on that happy morn  
When angels spake to men aloud,  
And Thou and peace to earth were  
born,

Goodwill to me as well as all—  
I one of them: my brothers they:  
Brothers in Christ—a world of peace  
And confidence, day after day;  
And trust and hope till things should  
cease,

And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!  
To hold a common scorn of death!  
And at a burial to hear  
The creaking cords which wound and  
eat

Into my human heart, whene'er  
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not  
fear,  
With hopeful grief, were passing  
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be  
The trustful infant on the knee!  
Who lets his rosy fingers play  
About his mother's neck, and knows  
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.  
They comfort him by night and day;  
They light his little life away;

He hath no thought of coming woes;  
He hath no care of life or death;  
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,  
Because the Spirit of happiness  
And perfect rest so inward is;  
And loveth so his innocent heart,  
Her temple and her place of birth,  
Where she would ever wish to dwell,  
Life of the fountain there, beneath  
Its salient springs, and far apart,  
Hating to wander out on earth,  
Or breathe into the hollow air,  
Whose chillness would make visible  
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,  
Which mixing with the infant's blood,  
Fulfils him with beatitude.  
Oh! sure it is a special care  
Of God, to fortify from doubt,  
To arm in proof, and guard about  
With triple-mailed trust, and clear  
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were  
As thine, my mother, when with brows  
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld  
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,  
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—  
For me unworthy!—and beheld  
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew  
The beauty and repose of faith,  
And the clear spirit shining thro'.  
Oh! wherefore do we grow awry  
From roots which strike so deep? why  
dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I  
Bow myself down, where thou hast  
knelt,

To the earth—until the ice would  
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?  
What Devil had the heart to scathe  
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush  
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave  
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?  
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I  
So little love for thee? But why  
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why  
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save  
But will not? Great in faith, and  
strong

Against the grief of circumstance  
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if  
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive  
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,  
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance  
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low  
Unto the death, not sunk! I know  
At matins and at evensong,  
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,  
In deep and daily prayers would'st  
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.  
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold  
At heart, thou wouldest murmur  
still—

“Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,  
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.”

Would'st tell me I must brook the rod  
And chastisement of human pride;  
That pride, the sin of devils, stood  
Betwixt me and the light of God!  
That hitherto I had defied  
And had rejected God — that grace  
Would drop from his o'er-brimming  
love,

As manna on my wilderness,  
If I would pray — that God would  
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and  
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,  
Would issue tears of penitence  
Which would keep green hope's life.  
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place  
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,  
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet  
Anchor thy frailty there, where man  
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea  
At midnight, when the crisp slope  
waves

After a tempest, rib and fret  
The broad-imbas'd beach, why he  
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?  
Wherefore his ridges are not curls  
And ripples of an inland mere?  
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can  
Draw down into his vexed pools  
All that blue heaven which hues and  
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,  
Too shaken: my own weakness fools  
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,  
Moved from beneath with doubt and  
fear.

“Yet,” said I in my morn of youth,  
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,  
When I went forth in quest of truth,  
“It is man's privilege to doubt,  
If so be that from doubt at length,  
Truth may stand forth unmoved of  
change,

An image with profulgent brows,  
And perfect limbs, as from the storm  
Of running fires and fluid range  
Of lawless airs, at last stood out  
This excellence and solid form  
Of constant beauty. For the Ox  
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills  
The horned valleys all about,  
And hollows of the fringed hills  
In summer heats, with placid lows  
Unfearing, till his own blood flows  
About his hoof. And in the flocks  
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,  
And raceth freely with his fere,  
And answers to his mother's calls  
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,  
Of which he wots not, run short pains  
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from  
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls  
A shadow; and his native slope,  
Where he was wont to leap and climb,  
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,  
And something in the darkness draws  
His forehead earthward, and he dies.  
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope  
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,  
Living, but that he shall live on?  
Shall we not look into the laws  
Of life and death, and things that  
seem,

And things that be, and analyze  
Our double nature, and compare  
All creeds till we have found the one,  
If one there be?” Ay me! I fear  
All may not doubt, but everywhere  
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,  
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove  
Shadow me over, and my sins



Be unremember'd, and Thy love  
 Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet  
 Somewhat before the heavy clod  
 Weighs on me, and the busy fret  
 Of that sharp-headed worm begins  
 In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!  
 O spirit and heart made desolate!  
 O damned vacillating state!

---

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper  
 deep;

Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,  
 His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded  
 sleep

The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sun-  
 lights flee

About his shadowy sides: above him  
 swell

Huge sponges of millennial growth  
 and height;

And far away into the sickly light,  
 From many a wondrous grot and  
 secret cell

Unnumber'd and enormous polypi  
 Winnow with giant arms the slumber-  
 ing green.

There hath he lain for ages and will lie  
 Battening upon huge seaworms in his  
 sleep,

Until the latter fire shall heat the  
 deep;

Then once by man and angels to be  
 seen,

In roaring he shall rise and on the  
 surface die.

---

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,  
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,  
 Breathed low around the rolling earth  
 With mellow preludes, "We are  
 free."

The streams through many a liliated row  
 Down-carolling to the crisped sea,  
 Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow  
 Attuned the blossoms, "We are  
 free."

LILIAN.

I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,  
 Flitting, fairy Lilian,  
 When I ask her if she love me,  
 Clasps her tiny hands above me,  
 Laughing all she can;  
 She'll not tell me if she love me,  
 Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks  
 Pleasance in love-sighs,  
 She, looking thro' and thro' me  
 Thoroughly to undo me,  
 Smiling, never speaks:  
 So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,  
 From beneath her gathered wimple  
 Glancing with black-beaded eyes,  
 Till the lightning laughs dimple  
 The baby-roses in her cheeks;  
 Then away she flies.

III.

Prithee weep, May Lilian!  
 Gayety without eclipse  
 Wearieth me, May Lilian:  
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth  
 When from crimson-threaded lips  
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth:  
 Prithee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,  
 If prayers will not hush thee,  
 Airy Lilian,  
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,  
 Fairy Lilian.

---

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,  
 but fed  
 With the clear-pointed flame or  
 chastity,  
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended  
 by  
 Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-  
 lucent fane

Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,  
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;  
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign  
 The summer calm of golden charity,  
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,  
 Revered Isabel, the crown and head,  
 The stately flower of female fortitude,  
 Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

## II.

The intuitive decision of a bright  
 And thorough-edged intellect to part  
 Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;  
 The laws of marriage character'd  
 in gold  
 Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;  
 A love still burning upward, giving  
 light  
 To read those laws ; an accent very  
 low  
 In blandishment, but a most silver flow  
 Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,  
 Right to the heart and brain, tho'  
 undescried,  
 Winning its way with extreme  
 gentleness  
 Thro' all the outworks of suspicious  
 pride ;  
 A courage to endure and to obey ;  
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,  
 Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,  
 The queen of marriage, a most perfect  
 wife.

## III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;  
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy  
 one,  
 Till in its onward current it absorbs  
 With swifter movement and in  
 purer light  
 The vexed eddies of its wayward  
 brother :  
 A leaning and upbearing parasite,

Clothing the stem, which else had  
 fallen quite  
 With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs  
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on  
 each other —  
 Shadow forth thee : — the world  
 hath not another  
 (Tho' all her fairest forms are types,  
 of thee,  
 And thou of God in thy great charity)  
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

## MARIANA.

“Mariana in the moated grange.”  
*Measure for Measure.*

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots  
 Were thickly crusted, one and all :  
 The rusted nails fell from the knots  
 That held the pear to the gable-  
 wall.  
 The broken sheds look'd sad and  
 strange :  
 Unlifted was the clinking latch ;  
 Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
 Upon the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, “My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !”

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;  
 Her tears fell ere the dews were  
 dried ;  
 She could not look on the sweet heaven,  
 Either at morn or eventide.  
 After the flitting of the bats,  
 When thickest dark did trance the  
 sky,  
 She drew her casement-curtain by,  
 And glanced athwart the glooming flats.  
 She only said, “The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not,” she said ;  
 She said, “I am aweary, aweary,  
 I would that I were dead !”

Upon the middle of the night,  
 Waking she heard the night-fowl  
 crow :  
 The cock sung out an hour ere light :  
 From the dark fen the oxen's low

Came to her : without hope of change,  
 In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,  
 Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed  
 morn

About the lonely moated grange.  
 She only said, "The day is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am weary, weary,  
 I would that I were dead !"

About a stone-cast from the wall  
 A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
 And o'er it many, round and small,  
 The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.  
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
 All silver-green with gnarled bark :  
 For leagues no other tree did mark  
 The level waste, the rounding gray.  
 She only said, "My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am weary, weary,  
 I would that I were dead !"

And ever when the moon was low,  
 And the shrill winds were up and  
 away,  
 In the white curtain, to and fro,  
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.  
 But when the moon was very low,  
 And wild winds bound within their  
 cell,  
 The shadow of the poplar fell  
 Upon her bed, across her brow.  
 She only said, "The night is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am weary, weary,  
 I would that I were dead !"

All day within the dreamy house,  
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd ;  
 The blue fly sung in the pane ; the  
 mouse  
 Behind the mouldering wainscot  
 shriek'd,  
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.  
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,  
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,  
 Old voices called her from without.  
 She only said, "My life is dreary,  
 He cometh not," she said ;  
 She said, "I am weary, weary,  
 I would that I were dead !"

The sparrows chirrup on the roof,  
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound  
 Which to the wooing wind aloof  
 The poplar made, did all confound  
 Her sense ; but most she loathed the  
 hour  
 When the thick-moated sunbeam lay  
 Athwart the chambers, and the day  
 Was sloping toward his western bower.  
 Then, said she, "I am very dreary,  
 He will not come," she said ;  
 She wept, "I am weary, weary,  
 Oh, God, that I were dead !"

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,  
 The house thro' all the level shades.  
 Close-latticed to the brooding hines,  
 And silent in its dusty vines :  
 A faint-blue ridge upon the right,  
 An empty river-bed before,  
 And shallows on a distant shore,  
 In glaring sand and inlets bright.  
 But "Ave Mary," made she moan,  
 And "Ave Mary," night and  
 morn,  
 And "Ah," she sang, "to be all  
 alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,  
 From brow and bosom slowly down  
 Thro' rosy taper fingers drew  
 Her streaming curls of deepest  
 brown  
 To left and right, and made appear  
 Still-lighted in a secret shrine,  
 Her melancholy eyes divine,  
 The home of woe without a tear.  
 And "Ave Mary," was her moan,  
 "Madonna, sad is night and  
 morn,"  
 And "Ah," she sang, "to be all  
 alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past  
 Into deep orange o'er the sea,

Low on her knees herself she cast,  
 Before Our Lady murmur'd she;  
 Complaining, "Mother, give me grace  
 To help me of my weary load,"  
 And on the liquid mirror glow'd  
 The clear perfection of her face.

"Is this the form," she made her  
 moan,

"That won his praises night  
 and morn?"

And "Ah," she said, "but I wake  
 alone,

I sleep forgotten, I wake for-  
 lorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would  
 bleat,

Nor any cloud would cross the vault,  
 But day increased from heat to heat,  
 On stony drought and steaming sweat;

Till now at noon she slept again,  
 And seem'd knee-deep in mountain  
 grass,

And heard her native breezes pass,  
 And runlets babbling down the glen.

She breathed in sleep a lower  
 moan,

And murmuring, as at night and  
 morn,

She thought, "My spirit is here  
 alone,

Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream:

She felt he was and was not there.

She woke: the babble of the stream  
 Fell, and, without, the steady glare

Shrank one sick willow sear and small.  
 The river-bed was dusty-white;

And all the furnace of the light

Struck up against the blinding wall.

She whisper'd, with a stifled moan  
 More inward than at night or  
 morn,

"Sweet Mother, let me not here  
 alone

Live forgotten, and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew

Old letters, breathing of her worth,  
 For "Love," they said, "must needs  
 be true,

To what is loveliest upon earth."  
 An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look at her with slight, and say  
 "But now thy beauty flows away,  
 So be alone forevermore."

"O cruel heart," she changed her  
 tone,

"And cruel love, whose end is  
 scorn,

Is this the end to be left alone,  
 To live forgotten, and die for-  
 lorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day

An image seem'd to pass the door,  
 To look into her eyes and say,

"But thou shalt be alone no more."

And flaming downward over all

From heat to heat the day decreased,  
 And slowly rounded to the east

The one black shadow from the wall.

"The day to night," she made her  
 moan,

"The day to night, the night to  
 morn,

And day and night I am left alone  
 To live forgotten, and love for-  
 lorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,

There came a sound as of the sea;  
 Backward the lattice-blind she flung,  
 And lean'd upon the balcony.

There all in spaces rosy-bright  
 Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,  
 And deepening thro' the silent  
 spheres

Heaven over Heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her moan,  
 "The night comes on that knows

not morn,

When I shall cease to be all alone,  
 To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

TO —.

1.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful  
 scorn,

Edged with sharp laughter, cuts  
 atwain

The knots that tangle human  
 creeds,  
 The wounding cords that bind and  
 strain  
 The heart until it bleeds,  
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn  
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine :  
 If aught of prophecy be mine,  
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

## II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;  
 Falsehood shall bare her plaited  
 brow :  
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not  
 now  
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.  
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant  
 swords  
 Can do away that ancient lie ;  
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,  
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning  
 words.

## III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,  
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost  
 need,  
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,  
 Until she be an athlete bold,  
 And weary with a finger's touch  
 Those writhed limbs of lightning  
 speed ;  
 Like that strange angel which of old,  
 Until the breaking of the light,  
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,  
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong  
 night,  
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still  
 In the dim tract of Penuel.

## MADELINE.

## I.

THOU are not steep'd in golden lan-  
 guors,  
 No tranced summer calm is thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thro' light and shadow thou dost  
 range,  
 Sudden glances, sweet and strange,  
 Delicious spites and darling angers,  
 And airy forms of flitting change.

## II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore.  
 Revelings deep and clear are thine  
 Of wealthy smiles : but who may know  
 Whether smile or frown be fleeter ?  
 Whether smile or frown be sweeter,  
 Who may know ?  
 Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow  
 Light-gloomng over eyes divine,  
 Like little clouds sun-fringed, are  
 thine,  
 Ever varying Madeline.  
 Thy smile and frown are not aloof  
 From one another,  
 Each to each is dearest brother ;  
 Hues of the silken sheeny woof  
 Momently shot into each other.  
 All the mystery is thine ;  
 Smiling, frowning, evermore,  
 Thou art perfect in love-lore,  
 Ever varying Madeline.

## III.

A subtle, sudden flame,  
 By veering passion fann'd,  
 About thee breaks and dances :  
 When I would kiss thy hand,  
 The flush of anger'd shame  
 O'erflows thy calmer glances,  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown :  
 But when I turn away,  
 Thou, willing me to stay,  
 Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;  
 But, looking fixedly the while,  
 All my bounding heart entanglest  
 In a golden-netted smile ;  
 Then in madness and in bliss,  
 If my lips should dare to kiss  
 Thy taper fingers amorously,  
 Again thou blushest angerly ;  
 And o'er black brows drops down  
 A sudden-curved frown.

## SONG : THE OWL.

## I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come  
 And dew is cold upon the ground,  
 And the far-off stream is dumb.

And the whirring sail goes round,  
 And the whirring sail goes round;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

11.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,  
 And rarely smells the new-mown  
 hay,  
 And the cock hath sung beneath the  
 thatch  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay,  
 Twice or thrice his roundelay;  
 Alone and warming his five wits,  
 The white owl in the belfry sits.

---

### SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

1.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,  
 Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,  
 Which upon the dark afloat,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 So took echo with delight,  
 That her voice untuneful grown,  
 Wears all day a fainter tone.

11.

I would mock thy chant anew;  
 But I cannot mimic it;  
 Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,  
 With a lengthen'd loud halloo,  
 Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-  
 o-o.

---

### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn  
 blew free

In the silken sail of infancy,  
 The tide of time flow'd back with me,  
 The forward-flowing tide of time;  
 And many a sheeny summer-morn,  
 Adown the Tigris I was borne,  
 By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,  
 High-walled gardens green and old;  
 True Mussulman was I and sworn,

For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'  
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove  
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and  
 clove

The citron-shadows in the blue:  
 By garden porches on the brim,  
 The costly doors flung open wide,  
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim.  
 And broider'd sofas on each side:  
 In sooth it was a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans  
 guard

The outlet, did I turn away  
 The boat-head down a broad canal  
 From the main river sluiced, where all  
 The sloping of the moon-lit sward  
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay  
 Of braided blooms unmown, which  
 crept

Adown to where the water slept.  
 A goodly place, a goodly time,  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won  
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on  
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,  
 Until another night in night  
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,  
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,  
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they  
 clomb

Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the  
 dome  
 Of hollow boughs.— A goodly time.  
 For it was in the golden prime  
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal  
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.  
 From the green rivage many a fall  
 Of diamond rillets musical,  
 Thro' little crystal arches low  
 Down from the central fountain's flow  
 Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake  
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn  
A walk with vary-color'd shells  
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side  
All round about the fragrant marge  
From fluted vase, and brazen urn  
In order, eastern flowers large,  
Some dropping low their crimson bells  
Half-closed, and others studded wide  
With disks and tiars, fed the time  
With odor in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove  
In closest coverture upsprung,  
The living airs of middle night  
Died round the bulbul as he sung;  
Not he: but something which possess'd  
The darkness of the world, delight,  
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,  
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepres'd,  
Apart from place, withholding time,  
But flattering the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots  
Slumber'd: the solemn palms were  
ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind:  
A sudden splendor from behind  
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-  
green,

And, flowing rapidly between  
Their interspaces, counterchanged  
The level lake with diamond-plots  
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,  
For it was in the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,  
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,  
Grew darker from that under-flame.  
So, leaping lightly from the boat,  
With silver anchor left afloat,  
In marvel whence that glory came  
Upon me, as in sleep I sank  
In cool soft turf upon the bank,  
Entranced with that place and time,  
So worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn--  
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,  
And many a shadow-checker'd lawn  
Full of the city's stilly sound,  
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing  
round

The stately cedar, tamarisks,  
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,  
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks  
Graven with emblems of the time,  
In honor of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed visions unawares  
From the long alley's latticed shade  
Emerged, I came upon the great  
Pavilion of the Caliphat.  
Right to the carven cedarn doors,  
Flung inward over spangled floors,  
Broad-based flights of marble stairs  
Ran up with golden balustrade,  
After the fashion of the time,  
And humor of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight  
As with the quintessence of flame,  
A million tapers flaring bright  
From twisted silvers look'd to shame  
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd  
Upon the mooned domes aloof  
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd  
Hundreds of crescents on the roof  
Of night new-risen, that marvellous  
time  
To celebrate the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly  
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,  
Serene with argent-lidded eyes  
Amorous, and lashes like to rays  
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl  
Tressed with redolent ebony,  
In many a dark delicious curl,  
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;  
The sweetest lady of the time,  
Well worthy of the golden prime  
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,  
Pure silver, underpropt a rich  
Throne of the massive ore, from which

Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,  
Engarlanded and diaper'd  
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of  
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd  
With merriment of kingly pride,  
Sole star of all that place and time,  
I saw him — in his golden prime,  
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,  
From the fountains of the past,  
To glorify the present; oh, haste,  
Visit my low desire!  
Strengthen me, enlighten me!  
I faint in this obscurity,  
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,  
Flinging the gloom of yesternight  
On the white day; but robed in soft-  
en'd light  
Of orient state.  
Whilom thou camest with the morn-  
ing mist,  
Even as a maid, whose stately brow  
The dew-impearled winds of dawn  
have kiss'd.  
When, she, as thou,  
Stays on her floating locks the lovely  
freight  
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest  
shoots  
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of  
fruits,  
Which in wintertide shall star  
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilom thou camest with the morn-  
ing mist,  
And with the evening cloud,  
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my  
open breast  
(Those peerless flowers which in the  
rudest wind

Never grow sear,  
When rooted in the garden of the  
mind,  
Because they are the earliest of the  
year).

Nor was the night thy shroud.  
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken  
rest  
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant  
Hope.

The eddying of her garments caught  
from thee  
The light of thy great presence; and  
the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,  
Tho' deep not fathomless,  
Was cloven with the million stars  
which tremble  
O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-  
fancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-  
tress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth  
could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and  
beautiful:

Sure she was nigher to heaven's  
spheres,

Listening the lordly music flowing  
from

The illimitable years.

O strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,

Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,  
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad  
eyes!

Thou comest not with showers of  
flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,

Divinest Memory!

Thou wert not nursed by the water-  
fall

Which ever sounds and shines

A pillar of white light upon the wall  
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the  
gray hill-side,

The seven elms, the poplars four

That stand beside my father's door.



And chiefly from the brook that loves  
 To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed  
 sand,  
 Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,  
 Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,  
 In every elbow and turn,  
 The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-  
 land,  
 O! hither lead thy feet!  
 Four round mine ears the livelong  
 bleat  
 Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wat-  
 tled folds,  
 Upon the ridged wolds,  
 When the first matin-song hath  
 waken'd loud  
 Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,  
 What time the amber morn  
 Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung  
 cloud.

## v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye  
 To the young spirit present  
 When first she is wed;  
 And like a bride of old  
 In triumph led,  
 With music and sweet showers  
 Of festal flowers,  
 Unto the dwelling she must sway.  
 Well hast thou done, great artist  
 Memory,  
 In setting round thy first experiment  
 With royal frame-work of wrought  
 gold;  
 Needs must thou dearly love thy first  
 essay,  
 And foremost in thy various gallery  
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight  
 falls  
 Upon the storied walls;  
 For the discovery  
 And newness of thine art so pleased  
 thee,  
 That all which thou hast drawn of  
 fairest  
 Or boldest since, but lightly weighs  
 With thee unto the love thou bearest  
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-  
 like,  
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze  
 On the prime labor of thine early days:

No matter what the sketch might be;  
 Whether the high field on the bush-  
 less Pike,  
 Or even a sand-built ridge  
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,  
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,  
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see  
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste  
 enormous marsh,  
 Where from the frequent bridge,  
 Like emblems of infinity,  
 The trenched waters run from sky to  
 sky;  
 Or a garden bower'd close  
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,  
 Long alleys falling down to twilight  
 grots,  
 Or opening upon level plots  
 Of crowned lilies, standing near  
 Purple-spiked lavender:  
 Whither in after life retired  
 From brawling storms,  
 From weary wind,  
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,  
 We may hold converse with all  
 forms  
 Of the many-sided mind,  
 And those whom passion hath not  
 blinded,  
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.  
 My friend, with you to live alone,  
 Were how much better than to own  
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!  
 O strengthen me, enlighten me!  
 I faint in this obscurity,  
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

## SONG.

## I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours  
 Dwelling amid these yellowing  
 bowers:  
 To himself he talks;  
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,  
 At his work you may hear him sob and  
 sigh  
 In the walks;  
 Earthward he boweth the heavy  
 stalks

Of the mouldering flowers :

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so  
chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,  
As a sick man's room when he taketh  
repose

An hour before death;

My very heart faints and my whole  
soul grieves

At the moist rich smell of the rotting  
leaves,

And the breath

Of the fading edges of box  
beneath,

And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so  
chilly;

Heavily hangs the hollyhock,  
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily

A CHARACTER.

With a half-glance upon the sky  
At night he said, "The wanderings  
Of this most intricate Universe  
Teach me the nothingness of things."  
Yet could not all creation pierce  
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty; that the dull  
Saw no divinity in grass,  
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air;  
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,  
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his  
hair,  
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods  
More purely, when they wish to charm  
Pallas and Juno sitting by:  
And with a sweeping of the arm,  
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,  
Devolved his rounded periods

Most delicately hour by hour  
He canvass'd human mysteries,  
And trod on silk, as if the winds  
Blew his own praises in his eyes,  
And stood aloof from other minds  
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,  
Himself unto himself he sold:  
Upon himself himself did feed:  
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,  
And other than his form of creed,  
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

The poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above;  
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the  
scorn of scorn,  
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro'  
good and ill,  
He saw thro' his own soul,  
The marvel of the everlasting will  
An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he  
threaded  
The secretest walks of fame:  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts  
were headed  
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-  
ver tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which  
bore  
Them earthward till they lit;  
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field  
flower,  
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing  
forth anew  
Where'er they fell, behold,

Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew  
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling

Thy winged shafts of truth,  
To throng with stately blooms the  
breathing spring  
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs  
with beams,

Tho' one did fling the fire.  
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many  
dreams  
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,  
the world

Like one great garden show'd,  
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark  
upcurl'd,  
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august  
sunrise

Her beautiful bold brow,  
When rites and forms before his burn-  
ing eyes  
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden  
robes

Sunn'd by those orient skies;  
But round about the circles of the  
globes  
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced  
in flame

WISDOM, a name to shake  
All evil dreams of power—a sacred  
name.

And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they  
ran,

And as the lightning to the thun-  
der

Which follows it, riving the spirit of  
man,  
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.

No sword

Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with

his word

She shook the world.

## THE POET'S MIND.

### I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind

With thy shallow wit:

Vex not thou the poet's mind;

For thou canst not fathom it.

Clear and bright it should be ever,

Flowing like a crystal river;

Bright as light, and clear as wind.

### II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear;

All the place is holy ground;

Hollow smile and frozen sneer

Come not here.

Holy water will I pour

Into every spicy flower

Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it  
around.

The flowers would faint at your cruel  
cheer.

In your eye there is death,

There is frost in your breath

Which would blight the plants.

Where you stand you cannot hear

From the groves within

The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry  
bird chants.

It would fall to the ground if you came  
in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder;

All day and all night it is ever drawn  
From the brain of the purple moun-  
tain

Which stands in the distance yon-  
der:

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,  
And the mountain draws it from

Heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;  
 And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and  
 full,  
 You never would hear it ; your ears  
 are so dull ;  
 So keep where you are : you are foul  
 with sin ;  
 It would shrink to the earth if you  
 came in.

---

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Slow sail'd the weary mariners and  
 saw,  
 Betwixt the green brink and the run-  
 ning foam,  
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms  
 prest  
 To little harps of gold ; and while they  
 mused  
 Whispering to each other half in fear,  
 Shrill music reach'd them on the mid-  
 dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither  
 away ? fly no more.

Whither away from the high green  
 field, and the happy blossoming  
 shore ?

Day and night to the billow the foun-  
 tain calls :

Down shower the gambolling water-  
 falls

From wandering over the lea :  
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells  
 They freshen the silvery-crimson  
 shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-  
 hill swells

High over the full-toned sea :  
 O hither, come hither and furl your  
 sails,

Come hither to me and to me :  
 Hither, come hither and frolic and  
 play ;

Here it is only the mew that wails ;  
 We will sing to you all the day :  
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,  
 For here are the blissful downs and  
 dales,

And merrily, merrily carol the gales,

And the spangle dances in bight and  
 bay,  
 And the rainbow forms and flies on  
 the land  
 Over the islands free ;  
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of  
 the sand ;  
 Hither, come hither and see ;  
 And the rainbow hangs on the poisoning  
 wave,  
 And sweet is the color of cove and  
 cave,

And sweet shall your welcome be :  
 O hither, come hither, and be our  
 lords,

For merry brides are we :  
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak  
 sweet words :

O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :  
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten  
 When the sharp clear twang of the  
 golden chords

Runs up the ridged sea.  
 Who can light on as happy a shore  
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?  
 Whither away ? listen and stay :  
 mariner, mariner, fly no more.

---

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away  
 Side by side,  
 Leaving door and windows wide,  
 Careless tenants they !

II.

All within is dark as night :  
 In the windows is no light ;  
 And no murmur at the door,  
 So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close.  
 Or thro' the windows we shall see  
 The nakedness and vacancy  
 Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away : no more of mirth  
 Is here or merry-making sound.

The house was builded of the earth,  
And shall fall again to ground.

## v.

Come away: for Life and Thought  
Here no longer dwell;  
But in a city glorious —  
A great and distant city — have bought  
A mansion incorruptible.  
Would they could have staid with us!

## THE DYING SWAN.

## I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,  
Wide, wild, and open to the air,  
Which had built up everywhere  
An under-roof of doleful gray.  
With an inner voice the river ran,  
Adown it floated a dying swan,  
And loudly did lament.  
It was the middle of the day.  
Ever the weary wind went on,  
And took the reed-tops as it went.

## II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,  
And white against the cold-white sky,  
Shone out their crowning snows.  
One willow over the river wept,  
And shook the wave as the wind did  
sigh;  
Above in the wind was the swallow,  
Chasing itself at its own wild will,  
And far thro' the marish green  
and still  
The tangled water-courses slept,  
Shot over with purple, and green, and  
yellow.

## III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the  
soul  
Of that waste place with joy  
Hidden in sorrow: at first to the ear  
The warble was low, and full and  
clear;  
And floating about the under-sky,  
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach  
stole

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear;  
But anon her awful jubitant voice,  
With a music strange and manifold,  
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold;  
As when a mighty people rejoice  
With shawms, and with cymbals, and  
harps of gold,  
And the tumult of their acclaim is  
roll'd  
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,  
To the shepherd who watcheth the  
evening star.  
And the creeping mosses and clamber-  
ing weeds,  
And the willow-branches hoar and  
dank,  
And the wavy swell of the souging  
reeds,  
And the wave-worn horns of the echo-  
ing bank,  
And the silvery marish-flowers that  
throng  
The desolate creeks and pools among,  
Were flooded over with eddying song.

## A DIRGE.

## I.

Now is done thy long day's work;  
Fold thy palms across thy breast,  
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.  
Let them rave.  
Shadows of the silver birk  
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;  
Nothing but the small cold worm  
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.  
Let them rave.  
Light and shadow ever wander  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed;  
Chanteth not the brooding bee  
Sweeter tones than calumny?  
Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head  
From the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee;  
The woodbine and eglatere  
Drip sweetér dews than traitor's tear.  
Let them rave.  
Rain makes music in the tree  
O'er the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,  
Bramble roses, faint and pale,  
And long purples of the dale.  
Let them rave.  
These in every shower creep  
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine;  
The frail bluebell peereth over  
Rare broidry of the purple clover.  
Let them rave.  
Kings have no such couch as thine,  
As the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## VII.

Wild words wander here and there:  
God's great gift of speech abused  
Makes thy memory confused:  
But let them rave.  
The balm-cricket carols clear  
In the green that folds thy grave.  
Let them rave.

## LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was  
gathering light  
Love paced the thymy plots of Para-  
dise,  
And all about him roll'd his lustrous  
eyes;  
When, turning round a cassia, full in  
view,  
Death, walking all alone beneath a  
yew,

And talking to himself, first met his  
sight:  
"You must be gone," said Death,  
"these walks are mine."  
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans  
for flight;  
Yet ere he parted said, "This hour is  
thine:  
Thou art the shadow of life, and as  
the tree  
Stands in the sun and shadows all  
beneath,  
So in the light of great eternity  
Life eminent creates the shade of  
death;  
The shadow passeth when the tree  
shall fall,  
But I shall reign forever over all."

## THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,  
Oriana.  
There is no rest for me below,  
Oriana.  
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd  
with snow,  
And loud the Norland whirlwinds  
blow,  
Oriana,  
Alone I wander to and fro,  
Oriana.  
Ere the light on dark was growing,  
Oriana,  
At midnight the cock was crowing,  
Oriana:  
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,  
We heard the steeds to battlé going,  
Oriana;  
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,  
Oriana.  
In the yew-wood black as night,  
Oriana,  
Ere I rode into the fight,  
Oriana,  
While blissful tears blinded my sight  
By star-shine and by moonlight,  
Oriana,  
I to thee my troth did plight,  
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,  
Oriana :

She watch'd my crest among them all,  
Oriana :

She saw me fight, she heard me call,  
When forth there stept a foeman tall,  
Oriana,

Atween me and the castle wall,  
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,  
Oriana :

The false, false arrow went aside,  
Oriana :

The damned arrow glanced aside,  
And pierced thy heart, my love, my  
bride,

Oriana !

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,  
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,  
Oriana.

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,  
Oriana.

Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,  
The battle deepen'd in its place,  
Oriana ;

But I was down upon my face,  
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I  
lay,

Oriana !

How could I rise and come away,  
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day ?

They should have stabb'd me where I  
lay,

Oriana —

They should have trod me into clay,  
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,  
Oriana !

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,  
Oriana !

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,  
And then the tears run down my cheek,  
Oriana :

What wantest thou ? whom dost thou  
seek,  
Oriana ?

I cry aloud : none hear my cries,  
Oriana.

Thou comest atween me and the skies,  
Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise  
Up from my heart unto my eyes,  
Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies,  
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !  
Oriana !

O happy thou that liest low,  
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow  
Beside me in my utter woe,  
Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,  
Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the  
sea,

Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,  
Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,  
I dare not die and come to thee,  
Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,  
Oriana.

---

### CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbor villages  
Playing mad pranks along the heathy-  
leas ;

Two strangers meeting at a festival ;  
Two lovers whispering by an orchard  
wall ;

Two lives bound fast in one with  
golden ease ;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray  
church-tower,

Wash'd with still rains and daisy blos-  
somed ;

Two children in one hamlet born and  
bred ;

So runs the round of life from hour  
to hour.

## THE MERMAN.

## I.

Who would be  
A merman bold,  
Sitting alone,  
Singing alone  
Under the sea,  
With a crown of gold,  
On a throne ?

## II.

I would be a merman bold,  
I would sit and sing the whole of the  
day ;  
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice  
of power ;  
But at night I would roam abroad and  
play  
With the mermaids in and out of the  
rocks,  
Dressing their hair with the white sea-  
flower ;  
And holding them back by their flow-  
ing locks  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd  
me  
Laughingly, laughingly ;  
And then we would wander away, away  
To the pale-green sea-groves straight  
and high,  
Chasing each other merrily.

## III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;  
But the wave would make music above  
us afar—  
Low thunder and light in the magic  
night—  
Neither moon nor star.  
We would call aloud in the dreamy  
dells,  
Call to each other and whoop and cry  
All night, merrily, merrily ;  
They would pelt me with starry span-  
gles and shells,  
Laughing and clapping their hands  
between,  
All night, merrily, merrily ;  
But I would throw to them back in  
mine

Turkis and agate and almondine :  
Then leaping out upon them unseen  
I would kiss them often under the sea,  
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me  
Laughingly, laughingly.  
Oh ! what a happy life were mine  
Under the hollow-hung ocean green !  
Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;  
We would live merrily, merrily.

## THE MERMAID.

## I.

Who would be  
A mermaid fair,  
Singing alone,  
Combing her hair  
Under the sea,  
In a golden curl  
With a comb of pearl,  
On a throne ?

## II.

I would be a mermaid fair ;  
I would sing to myself the whole of  
the day ;  
With a comb of pearl I would comb  
my hair ;  
And still as I comb'd I would sing and  
say,  
" Who is it loves me ? who loves not  
me ? "  
I would comb my hair till my ringlets  
would fall  
Low adown, low adown,  
From under my starry sea-hud crown  
Low adown and around,  
And I should look like a fountain of  
gold  
Springing alone  
With a shrill inner sound,  
Over the throne  
In the midst of the hall ;  
Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
From his coiled sleeps in the central  
deeps  
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
Round the hall where I sate, and look  
in at the gate  
With his large calm eyes for the love  
of me.



And all the mermen under the sea  
 Would feel their immortality  
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.

## III.

But at night I would wander away,  
 away,  
 I would fling on each side my low-  
 flowing locks,  
 And lightly vault from the throne and  
 play  
 With the mermen in and out of the  
 rocks;  
 We would run to and fro, and hide  
 and seek,  
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crim-  
 son shells,  
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the  
 sea.  
 But if any came near I would call, and  
 shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I  
 would leap  
 From the diamond-ledges that jut  
 from the dells;  
 For I would not be kiss'd by all who  
 would list,  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the  
 sea;  
 They would sue me, and woo me, and  
 flatter me,  
 In the purple twilights under the  
 sea;  
 But the king of them all would carry  
 me,  
 Woo me, and win me, and marry  
 me,  
 In the branching jaspers under the  
 sea;  
 Then all the dry pied things that be  
 In the hueless mosses under the sea  
 Would curl round my silver feet  
 silently,  
 All looking up for the love of me.  
 And if I should carol aloud, from aloft  
 All things that are forked, and horned,  
 and soft  
 Would lean out from the hollow sphere  
 of the sea,  
 All looking down for the love of  
 me.

## ADELINE.

## I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,  
 Faintly smiling Adeline,  
 Scarce of earth nor all divine,  
 Nor unhappy, nor at rest,  
 But beyond expression fair  
 With thy floating flaxen hair;  
 Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes  
 Take the heart from out my  
 breast.  
 Wherefore those dim looks of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

## II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,  
 Like a lily which the sun  
 Looks thro' in his sad decline,  
 And a rose-bush leans upon,  
 Thou that faintly smilest still,  
 As a Naiad in a well,  
 Looking at the set of day,  
 Or a phantom two hours old  
 Of a maiden past away,  
 Ere the placid lips be cold?  
 Wherefore those faint smiles of  
 thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline?

## III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?  
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline?  
 For sure thou art not all alone.  
 Do beating hearts of salient  
 springs  
 Keep measure with thine own?  
 Hast thou heard the butterflies  
 What they say betwixt their  
 wings?  
 Or in stillest evenings  
 With what voice the violet woos  
 To his heart the silver dews?  
 Or when little airs arise,  
 How the merry bluebell rings  
 To the mosses underneath?  
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath  
 Of the lilies at sunrise?  
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,  
 Shadowy, dreamy Adeline?

## IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,  
 Some spirit of a crimson rose  
 In love with thee forgets to close  
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs  
 All night long on darkness blind.  
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou  
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,  
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,  
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

## V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind  
 When thou gazest at the skies ?  
 Doth the low-tongued Orient  
 Wander from the side of the  
 morn,  
 Dripping with Sabæan spice  
 On thy pillow, lowly bent  
 With melodious airs lovelorn,  
 Breathing Light against thy face,  
 While his locks a-drooping twined  
 Round thy neck in subtle ring  
 Make a carcanet of rays,  
 And ye talk together still,  
 In the language wherewith Spring  
 Letters cowslips on the hill ?  
 Hence that look and smile of thine,  
 Spiritual Adeline.

## MARGARET.

## I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,  
 O rare pale Margaret,  
 What lit your eyes with tearful power,  
 Like moonlight on a falling shower ?  
 Who lent you, love, your mortal dower  
 Of pensive thought and aspect  
 pale,  
 Your melancholy sweet and frail  
 As perfume of the cuckoo-flower ?  
 From the westward-winding flood,  
 From the evening-lighted wood,  
 From all things outward you have  
 won  
 A tearful grace, as tho' you stood  
 Between the rainbow and the sun.  
 The very smile before you speak,  
 That dimples your transparent  
 cheek,

Encircles all the heart, and feedeth  
 The senses with a still delight  
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,  
 Like the tender amber round,  
 Which the moon about her spread-  
 eth,  
 Moving thro' a fleecy night.

## II.

You love, remaining peacefully,  
 To hear the murmur of the strife,  
 But enter not the toil of life.  
 Your spirit is the calmed sea,  
 Laid by the tumult of the fight.  
 You are the evening star, always  
 Remaining betwixt dark and  
 bright :  
 Lull'd echoes of laborious day  
 Come to you, gleams of mellow  
 light  
 Float by you on the verge of  
 night.

## III.

What can it matter, Margaret,  
 What songs below the waning  
 stars  
 The lion-heart, Plantagenet,  
 Sang looking thro' his prison  
 bars ?  
 Exquisite Margaret, who can  
 tell  
 The last wild thought of Chatelet,  
 Just ere the falling axe did part  
 The burning brain from the true  
 heart,  
 Even in her sight he loved so  
 well ?

## IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made  
 And gave you on your natal day.  
 Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,  
 Keeps real sorrow far away.  
 You move not in such solitudes,  
 You are not less divine,  
 But more human in your moods,  
 Than your twin-sister, Adeline.  
 Your hair is darker, and your eyes  
 Touch'd with a somewhat darker  
 hue,  
 And less aerially blue,

But ever-trembling thro' the dew  
Of dainty-woful sympathies.

v.

O sweet pale Margaret,  
O rare pale Margaret,  
Come down, come down, and hear me  
speak :

Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :  
The sun is just about to set,  
The arching limes are tall and shady,  
And faint, rainy lights are seen,  
Moving in the leavy beech.  
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,  
Where all day long you sit  
between

Joy and woe, and whisper each.  
Or only look across the lawn,  
Look out below your bower-eaves,  
Look down, and let your blue eyes  
dawn

Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

## ROSALIND.

i.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,  
Whose free delight, from any height  
of rapid flight,  
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,  
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,  
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon  
whither,  
Careless both of wind and weather,  
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,  
Up or down the streaming wind ?

ii.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd  
strains,  
The shadow rushing up the sea,  
The lightning flash atween the rains,  
The sunlight driving down the lea,  
The leaping stream, the very wind,  
That will not stay, upon his way,  
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,  
Is not so clear and bold and free  
As you, my falcon Rosalind.  
You care not for another's pains,

Because you are the soul of joy,  
Bright metal all without alloy.  
Life shoots and glances thro' your  
vcins,

And flashes off a thousand ways,  
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.  
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,  
Keen with triumph, watching still  
To pierce me thro' with pointed light:  
But oftentimes they flash and glitter  
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,  
And your words are seeming-bitter,  
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter  
From excess of swift delight.

iii.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,  
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :  
Too long you keep the upper skies ;  
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;  
But we must hood your random eyes,  
That care not whom they kill,  
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue  
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,  
Some red heath-flower in the dew,  
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind  
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,  
Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,  
And clip your wings, and make you  
love :

When we have lured you from above,  
And that delight of frolic flight, by  
day or night,  
From North to South,  
We'll bind you fast in silken cords  
And kiss away the bitter words  
From off your rosy mouth.

## ELEÄNORE.

i.

Thy dark eyes open'd not,  
Nor first reveal'd themselves to  
English air,  
For there is nothing here,  
Which, from the outward to the inward  
brought,  
Moulded thy baby thought.  
Far off from human neighborhood,  
Thou wert born, on a summer  
morn,

A mile beneath the cedar-wood.  
 Thy bounteous forehead was not  
 fann'd  
 With breezes from our oaken  
 glades,  
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious  
 land  
 Of lavish lights, and floating  
 shades:  
 And flattering thy childish thought  
 The oriental fairy brought,  
 At the moment of thy birth,  
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,  
 And the hearts of purple hills,  
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny  
 shore,  
 The choicest wealth of all the  
 earth,  
 Jewel or sheil, or starry ore,  
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

## II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,  
 Thro' half-open lattices  
 Coming in the scented breeze,  
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,  
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-  
 dens cull'd —  
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,  
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding  
 down,  
 With the hum of swarming bees  
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

## III.

Who may minister to thee?  
 Summer herself should minister  
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded  
 On golden salvers, or it may be,  
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower  
 Grape-thicken'd from the light, and  
 blinded  
 With many a deep-hued bell-like  
 flower  
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air  
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,  
 And the crag that fronts the Even,  
 All along the shadowing shore,  
 Crimsons over an inland mere,  
 Eleänore!

## IV.

How many full-sail'd verse express,  
 How many measured words adore  
 The full-flowing harmony  
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,  
 Eleänore?  
 The luxuriant symmetry  
 Of thy floating gracefulness,  
 Eleänore?  
 Every turn and glance of thine,  
 Every lineament divine,  
 Eleänore,  
 And the steady sunset glow,  
 That stays upon thee? For in thee  
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;  
 Like two streams of incense free  
 From one censer in one shrine,  
 Thought and motion mingle,  
 Mingle ever. Motions flow  
 To one another, even as tho'  
 They were modulated so  
 To an unheard melody,  
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep  
 Of richest pauses, evermore  
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;  
 Who may express thee, Eleänore?

## V.

I stand before thee, Eleänore;  
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,  
 Daily and hourly, more and more.  
 I muse, as in a trance, the while  
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,  
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.  
 I muse, as in a trance, whene'er  
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes  
 Float on to me. I would I were  
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,  
 To stand apart, and to adore,  
 Gazing on thee forevermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore!

## VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity  
 Gazing, I seem to see  
 Thought folded over thought, smiling  
 asleep,  
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep  
 In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd  
 quite,

I cannot veil, or droop my sight,  
 But am as nothing in its light :  
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,  
 Ev'n while we gaze on it,  
 Should slowly round his orb, and  
 slowly grow  
 To a full face, there like a sun remain  
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,  
 And draw itself to what it was  
 before ;  
 So full, so deep, so slow,  
 Thought seems to come and go  
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

## VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,  
 Roof'd the world with doubt and  
 fear,  
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,  
 Grow golden all about the sky ;  
 In thee all passion becomes passion-  
 less,  
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,  
 Losing his fire and active might  
 In a silent meditation,  
 Falling into a still delight,  
 And luxury of contemplation :  
 As waves that up a quiet cove  
 Rolling slide, and lying still  
 Shadow forth the banks at will :  
 Or sometimes they swell and move,  
 Pressing up against the land,  
 With motions of the outer sea :  
 And the self-same influence  
 Controlleth all the soul and sense  
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.  
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,  
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,  
 Droops both his wings, regarding  
 thee,  
 And so would languish evermore,  
 Serene, imperial Eleänore.

## VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses  
 unconfined,  
 While the amorous, odorous wind  
 Breathes low between the sunset  
 and the moon ;  
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,  
 On silken cushions half reclined :

I watch thy grace ; and in its  
 place  
 My heart a charm'd slumber  
 keeps,  
 While I muse upon thy face ;  
 And a languid fire creeps  
 Thro' my veins to all my frame,  
 Dissolvingly and slowly : soon  
 From thy rose-red lips my name  
 Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,  
 With dinning sound my ears are  
 rife,  
 My tremulous tongue faltereth,  
 I lose my color, I lose my breath,  
 I drink the cup of a costly death,  
 Brimm'd with delirious draughts of  
 warmest life.  
 I die with my delight, before  
 I hear what I would hear from  
 thee ;  
 Yet tell my name again to me,  
 I *would* be dying evermore,  
 So dying ever, Eleänore.

## I.

My life is full of weary days,  
 But good things have not kept aloof,  
 Nor wander'd into other ways :  
 I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,  
 Nor golden largess of thy praise.  
 And now shake hands across the brink  
 Of that deep grave to which I go :  
 Shake hands once more : I cannot sink  
 So far — far down, but I shall know  
 Thy voice, and answer from below.

## II.

When in the darkness over me  
 The four-handed mole shall scrape,  
 Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,  
 Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful  
 crape,  
 But pledge me in the flowing grape.  
 And when the sappy field and wood  
 Grow green beneath the showery  
 gray,  
 And rugged barks begin to hud

And thro' damp holts new-flush'd  
with may,  
Ringing sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,  
And on my clay her darnel grow ;  
Come only, when the days are still,  
And at my headstone whisper low,  
And tell me if the woodhines blow.

## EARLY SONNETS.

I.

TO —.

As when with downcast eyes we muse  
and brood,

And ebb into a former life, or seem  
To lapse far back in some confused  
dream

To states of mystical similitude ;

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his  
chair,

Ever the wonder waxeth more and  
more,

So that we say, " All this hath been  
before,

All this hath been, I know not when  
or where."

So, friend, when first I look'd upon  
your face,

Our thought gave answer each to each,  
so true—

Opposed mirrors each reflecting each—  
That tho' I knew not in what time or

place,  
Methought that I had often met with

you,  
And either lived in either's heart and

speech.

II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou  
wilt be

A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest  
To scare church-harpies from the  
master's feast ;

Our dusted velvets have much need  
of thee :

Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old  
saws,

Distill'd from some worm-canker'd  
homily ;

But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy  
To embattail and to wall about thy  
cause

With iron-worded proof, hating to hark  
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-  
drone

Half God's good sabbath, while the  
worn-out clerk

Brow-beats his desk below. Thou  
from a throne

Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the  
dark

Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and  
mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full  
and free,

Like some broad river rushing down  
alone,

With the self-same impulse wherewith  
he was thrown

From his loud fount upon the echoing  
lea :—

Which with increasing might doth for-  
ward flee

By town, and tower, and hill, and cape,  
and isle,

And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many

a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its

sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by

degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;

Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of  
Florida

Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mex-  
ico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right  
arm debased

The throne of Persia, when her Satrap  
bled

At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled  
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits,

disgraced

Forever — thee (thy pathway sand-  
erased)  
Gliding with equal crowns two ser-  
pents led  
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-  
fed  
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.  
There in a silent shade of laurel brown  
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine  
Shelter'd his unapproach'd mysteries:  
High things were spoken there, un-  
handed down;  
Only they saw thee from the secret  
shrine  
Returning with hot cheek and kindled  
eyes.

v.

## BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn  
hearts of oak,  
Madman! — to chain with chains, and  
bind with bands  
That island queen who sways the floods  
and lands,  
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight  
woke,  
When from her wooden walls, — lit by  
sure hands, —  
With thunders, and with lightnings,  
and with smoke, —  
Peal after peal, the British battle  
broke,  
Lulling the brine against the Coptic  
sands.  
We taught him lowlier moods, when  
Elsinore  
Heard the war moan along the distant  
sea,  
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with  
sudden fires  
Flamed over: at Trafalgar yet once  
more  
We taught him: late he learned  
humility  
Perforce, like those whom Gideon  
school'd with briers.

VI.

## POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden  
down,

And trampled under by the last and  
least  
Of men? The heart of Poland hath  
not ceased  
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth  
drown  
The fields, and out of every smoulder-  
ing town  
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-  
creased,  
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the  
East  
Transgress his ample bound to some  
new crown: —  
Cries to Thee, "Lord, how long shall  
these things be?  
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite  
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and  
Good,  
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn  
in three;  
Us, who stand now, when we should  
aid the right —  
A matter to be wept with tears of  
blood!

VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender  
hand,  
And singing airy trifles this or that,  
Light Hope at Beauty's call would  
perch and stand,  
And run thro' every change of sharp  
and flat;  
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,  
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy  
hand,  
And chased away the still-recurring  
gnat,  
And woke her with a lay from fairy  
land.  
But now they live with Beauty less  
and less,  
For Hope is other Hope and wanders  
far,  
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious  
creeds;  
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,  
Poor Fancy sadder than a single  
star,  
That sets at twilight in a land of  
reeds.

## VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!  
 A nobler yearning never broke her  
 rest  
 Than but to dance and sing, be gayly  
 drest,  
 And win all eyes with all accomplish-  
 ment:  
 Yet in the whirling dances as we went,  
 My fancy made me for a moment blest  
 'To find my heart so near the beauteous  
 breast  
 That once had power to rob it of con-  
 tent.  
 A moment came the tenderness of  
 tears,  
 The phantom of a wish that once could  
 move,  
 A ghost of passion that no smiles re-  
 store —  
 For ah! the slight coquette, she can-  
 not love,  
 And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand  
 years,  
 She still would take the praise, and  
 care no more.

## IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take  
 the cast  
 Of those dead lineaments that near  
 thee lie?  
 O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the  
 past,  
 In painting some dead friend from  
 memory?  
 Weep on: beyond his object Love can  
 last:  
 His object lives: more cause to weep  
 have I:  
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing  
 fast,  
 No tears of love, but tears that Love  
 can die.  
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,  
 Nor care to sit beside her where she  
 sits —  
 Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,  
 But breathe it into earth and close it  
 up

With secret death forever, in the pits  
 Which some green Christmas crams  
 with weary bones.

## X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,  
 What is there in the great sphere of  
 the earth,  
 And range of evil between death and  
 birth,  
 That I should fear, — if I were loved  
 by thee?  
 All the inner, all the outer world of  
 pain  
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave,  
 if thou wert mine,  
 As I have heard that, somewhere in  
 the main,  
 Fresh-water springs come up through  
 bitter brine.  
 'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-  
 hand with thee,  
 To wait for death — mute — careless  
 of all ills,  
 Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge  
 Of some new deluge from a thousand  
 hills  
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into  
 the gorge  
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

## XI.

## THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot  
 was tied,  
 Thine eyes so wept that they could  
 hardly see;  
 Thy sister smiled and said, "No tears  
 for me!  
 A happy bridesmaid makes a happy  
 bride."  
 And then, the couple standing side by  
 side,  
 Love lighted down between them full  
 of glee,  
 And over his left shoulder laugh'd at  
 thee,  
 "O happy bridesmaid, make a happy  
 bride."  
 And all at once a pleasant truth I  
 learn'd,



For while the tender service made thee weep,  
 I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,  
 And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,  
 And thought, "My life is sick of single sleep:  
 O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride!"

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

## PART I.

ON either side of the river lie  
 Long fields of barley and of rye,  
 That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
 And thro' the field the road runs by  
 To many-tower'd Camelot;  
 And up and down the people go,  
 Gazing where the lilies blow  
 Round an island there below  
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,  
 Little breezes dusk and shiver  
 Thro' the wave that runs forever  
 By the island in the river  
 Flowing down to Camelot.  
 Four gray walls, and four gray towers,  
 Overlook a space of flowers,  
 And the silent isle embowers  
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,  
 Slide the heavy barges trail'd.  
 By slow horses; and unhail'd  
 The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd  
 Skimming down to Camelot:  
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?  
 Or at the casement seen her stand?  
 Or is she known in all the land,  
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early  
 In among the bearded barley,  
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly  
 From the river winding clearly,  
 Down to tower'd Camelot:  
 And by the moon the reaper weary,

Piling sheaves in uplands airy,  
 Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy  
 Lady of Shalott."

## PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day  
 A magic web with colours gay.  
 She has heard a whisper say,  
 A curse is on her if she stay  
 To look down to Camelot.  
 She knows not what the curse may be,  
 And so she weaveth steadily,  
 And little other care hath she,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear  
 That hangs before her all the year,  
 Shadows of the world appear.  
 There she sees the highway near  
 Winding down to Camelot:  
 There the river eddy whirls,  
 And there the surly village-churls,  
 And the red cloaks of market girls,  
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,  
 An abbot on an ambling pad,  
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,  
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,  
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;  
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue  
 The knights come riding two and two,  
 She hath no loyal knight and true,  
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights  
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,  
 For often thro' the silent nights  
 A funeral, with plumes and lights  
 And music, went to Camelot:  
 Or when the moon was overhead,  
 Came two young lovers lately wed;  
 "I am half sick of shadows," said  
 The Lady of Shalott.

## PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,  
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,  
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,  
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves  
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.

A red-cross knight forever kneel'd  
To a lady in his shield,  
That sparkled on the yellow field,  
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,  
Like to some branch of stars we see  
Hung in the golden Galaxy.  
The bridle bells rang merrily  
As he rode down to Camelot:  
And from his blazon'd baldric slung  
A mighty silver bugle hung,  
And as he rode his armor rung,  
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather  
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-  
leather,

The helmet and the helmet-feather  
Burn'd like one burning flame together,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
As often thro' the purple night,  
Below the starry clusters bright,  
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,  
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight  
glow'd;  
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse  
trode;  
From underneath his helmet flow'd  
His coal-black curls as on he rode,  
As he rode down to Camelot.  
From the bank and from the river  
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,  
"Tirra lirra," by the river  
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,  
She made three paces thro' the room,  
She saw the water-lily bloom,  
She saw the helmet and the plume,  
She look'd down to Camelot.  
Out flew the web and floated wide;  
The mirror crack'd from side to side;  
"The curse is come upon me," cried  
The Lady of Shalott.

## PART IV.

In the stormy east-wind straining,  
The pale yellow woods were waning,

The broad stream in his banks com-  
plaining,  
Heavily the low sky raining,  
Over tower'd Camelot;  
Down she came and found a boat  
Beneath a willow left afloat,  
And round about the prow she wrote  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse  
Like some bold seer in a trance,  
Seeing all his own mischance —  
With a glassy countenance  
Did she look to Camelot.  
And at the closing of the day  
She loos'd the chain, and down she lay;  
The broad stream bore her far away,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white,  
That loosely flew to left and right —  
The leaves upon her falling light —  
Thro' the noises of the night  
She floated down to Camelot:  
And as the boat-head wound along  
The willowy hills and fields among,  
They heard her singing her last song,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,  
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,  
Till her blood was frozen slowly,  
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,  
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.  
For ere she reach'd upon the tide  
The first house by the water-side,  
Singing in her song she died,  
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower' and balcony,  
By garden-wall and gallery,  
A gleaming shape she floated by,  
Dead-pale between the houses high,  
Silent into Camelot.  
Out upon the wharfs they came,  
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,  
And round the prow they read her  
name,  
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?  
And in the lighted palace near

Died the sound of royal cheer ;  
 And they cross'd themselves for fear,  
 All the knights at Camelot :  
 But Lancelot mused a little space ;  
 He said, " She has a lovely face ;  
 God in his mercy lend her grace,  
 The Lady of Shalott."

### THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL small voice spake unto me,  
 " Thou art so full of misery,  
 Were it not better not to be ? "

Then to the still small voice I said ;  
 " Let me not cast in endless shade  
 What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply ;  
 " To-day I saw the dragon-fly  
 Come from the wells where he did lie.

" An inner impulse rent the veil  
 Of his old husk : from head to tail  
 Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

" He dried his wings : like gauze they  
 grew ;  
 Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew  
 A living flash of light he flew."

I said, " When first the world began,  
 Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,  
 And in the sixth she moulded man.

" She gave him mind, the lordliest  
 Proportion, and, above the rest,  
 Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;  
 " Self-blinded are you by your pride :  
 Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

" This truth within thy mind rehearse,  
 That in a boundless universe  
 Is boundless better, boundless worse.

" Think you this mould of hopes and  
 fears  
 Could find no statelier than his peers  
 In yonder hundred million spheres ? "

It spake, moreover, in my mind :  
 " Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,  
 Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :  
 " No compound of this earthly ball  
 Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;  
 " Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,  
 Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

" Or will one beam be less intense,  
 When thy peculiar difference  
 Is cancell'd in the world of sense ? "

I would have said, " Thou canst not  
 know,"  
 But my full heart, that work'd below,  
 Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :  
 " Thou art so steep'd in misery,  
 Surely 'twere better not to be.

" Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,  
 Nor any train of reason keep :  
 Thou canst not think, but thou wilt  
 weep."

I said, " The years with change ad-  
 vance :  
 If I make dark my countenance,  
 I shut my life from happier chance.

" Some turn this sickness yet might  
 take,  
 Ev'n yet." But he : " What drug can  
 make  
 A wither'd palsy cease to shake ? "

I wept, " Tho' I should die, I know  
 That all about the thorn will blow  
 In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

" And men, thro' novel spheres of  
 thought  
 Still moving after truth long sought,  
 Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some  
time,  
Sooner or later, will gray prime  
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

"Not less swift souls that yearn for  
light,  
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,  
Would sweep the tracts of day and  
night.

"Not less the bee would range her cells,  
The furzy prickle fire the dells,  
The foxglove cluster dappled bells."

I said that "all the years invent;  
Each month is various to present  
The world with some development.

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,  
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower  
How grows the day of human power?"

"The highest-mounted mind," he said,  
"Still sees the sacred morning spread  
The silent summit overhead.

"Will thirty seasons render plain  
Those lonely lights that still remain,  
Just breaking over land and main?"

"Or make that morn, from his cold  
crown  
And crystal silence creeping down,  
Flood with full daylight glebe and  
town?"

"Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let  
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set  
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not yet.

"Thou hast not gain'd a real height,  
Nor art thou nearer to the light,  
Because the scale is infinite.

"'Twere better not to breathe or speak,  
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,  
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find  
Asks what thou lackest, thought re-  
sign'd,  
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,  
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,  
Doing dishonor to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,  
"To breathe and loathe, to live and  
sigh,  
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will  
Still heaping on the fear of ill  
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so  
bound  
To men, that how thy name may sound  
Will vex thee lying underground?"

"The memory of the wither'd leaf  
In endless time is scarce more brief  
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

"Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust;  
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,  
Hears little of the false or just."

"Hard task, to pluck resolve," I cried,  
"From emptiness and the waste wide  
Of that abyss, or scornful pride!"

"Nay — rather yet that I could raise  
One hope that warm'd me in the days  
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

"When, wide in soul and bold of  
tongue,  
Among the tents I paused and sung,  
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

"I sung the joyful Pæan clear,  
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear  
The brand, the buckler, and the spear—

"Waiting to strive a happy strife,  
To war with falsehood to the knife,  
And not to lose the good of life —

"Some hidden principle to move,  
To put together, part and prove,  
And mete the bounds of hate and  
love —

"As far as might be, to carve out  
Free space for every human doubt,  
That the whole mind might orb  
about —

"To search through all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law :

"At least, not rotting like a weed,  
But, having sown some generous seed,  
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

"To pass when Life her light with-  
draws,  
Not void of righteous self-applause,  
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

"In some good cause, not in mine own  
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,  
And like a warrior overthrown ;

"Whose eyes are dim with glorious  
tears,  
When soil'd with noble dust, he hears  
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

"Then dying of a mortal stroke,  
What time the foeman's line is broke,  
And all the war is rolled in smoke."

"Yea!" said the voice, "thy dream  
was good,  
While thou abodest in the bud.  
It was the stirring of the blood.

"If Nature put not forth her power  
About the opening of the flower,  
Who is it that could live an hour ?

"Then comes the check, the change,  
the fall,  
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.  
There is one remedy for all.

"Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,  
Link'd month to month with such a  
chain  
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

"Thou hadst not between death and  
birth  
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.  
So were thy labor little-worth.

"That men with knowledge merely  
play'd,  
I told thee — hardly nigher made,  
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade ;

"Much less this dreamer, deaf and  
blind,  
Named man, may hope some truth to  
find,  
That bears relation to the mind.

"For every worm beneath the moon  
Draws different threads, and late and  
soon  
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

"Cry, faint not: either Truth is born  
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,  
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb: the summits  
slope  
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,  
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to  
cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,  
As over rainy mist inclines  
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,  
I shall not fail to find her now.  
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,  
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou  
dost strike,  
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more  
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,  
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and  
brawl!  
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl?  
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,  
"Wilt thou make every thing a lie,  
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,  
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,  
A dust of systems and of creeds.

"I cannot hide that some have striven,  
Achieving calm, to whom was given  
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

'Who, rowing hard against the stream,  
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,  
And did not dream it was a dream ;

"But heard, by secret transport led,  
Ev'n in the charnels of the dead,  
The murmur of the fountain-head —

"Which did accomplish their desire,  
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,  
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

"He heeded not reviling tones,  
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,  
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised  
with stones :

"But looking upward, full of grace,  
He pray'd, and from a happy place  
God's glory smote him on the face."

The sullen answer slid betwixt :  
"Not that the grounds of hope were  
fix'd,  
The elements were kindlier mix'd."

I said, "I toil beneath the curse,  
But, knowing not the universe,  
I fear to slide from had to worse.

"And that, in seeking to undo,  
One riddle, and to find the true,  
I knit a hundred others new :

"Or that this anguish fleeting hence,  
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,  
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

"For I go, weak from suffering here :  
Naked I go, and void of cheer :  
What is it that I may not fear ?"

"Consider well," the voice replied,  
"His face, that two hours since hath  
died ;  
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

"Will he obey when one commands ?  
Or answer should one press his hands ?  
He answers not, nor understands.

"His palms are folded on his breast :  
There is no other thing express'd  
But long disquiet merged in rest.

"His lips are very mild and meek :  
Tho' one should smite him on the  
cheek,  
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

"His little daughter, whose sweet face  
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,  
Becomes dishonor to her race —

"His sons grow up that bear his name,  
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—  
But he is chill to praise or blame.

"He will not hear the north-wind rave,  
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave  
From winter rains that beat his grave.

"High up the vapors fold and swim :  
About him broods the twilight dim :  
The place he knew forgetteth him."

"If all be dark, vague voice," I said,  
"These things are wrapt in doubt and  
dread,  
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

"The sap dries up : the plant declines.  
A deeper tale my heart divines.  
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

"I found him when my years were few ;  
A shadow on the graves I knew,  
And darkness in the village yew.

"From grave to grave the shadow  
crept :  
In her still place the morning wept :  
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

"The simple senses crown'd his head:  
'Omega! thou art Lord,' they said,  
'We find no motion in the dead.'

"Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,  
Should that plain fact, as taught by  
these,  
Not make him sure that he shall cease?"

"Who forged that other influence,  
That heat of inward evidence,  
By which he doubts against the sense?"

"He owns the fatal gift of eyes,  
That read his spirit blindly wise,  
Not simple as a thing that dies.

"Herc sits he shaping wings to fly:  
His heart forebodes a mystery:  
He names the name Eternity.

"That type of Perfect in his mind  
In Nature can he nowhere find.  
He sows himself on every wind.

"He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,  
And thro' thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.

"The end and the beginning vex  
His reason: many things perplex,  
With motions, checks, and counter-  
checks.

"He knows a baseness in his blood  
At such strange war with something  
good,  
He may not do the thing he would.

"Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,  
Vast images in glimmering dawn,  
Half shown, are broken and with-  
drawn.

"Ah! sure within him and without,  
Could his dark wisdom find it out,  
There must be answer to his doubt.

"But thou canst answer not again.  
With thine own weapon art thou slain,  
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

"The doubt would rest, I dare not  
solve.  
In the same circle we revolve.  
Assurance only breeds resolve."

As when a billow, blown against,  
Falls back, the voice with which  
fenced  
A little ceased, but recommenced.

"Where wert thou when thy father  
play'd  
In his free field, and pastime made,  
A merry boy in sun and shade?"

"A merry boy they call'd him then,  
He sat upon the knees of men  
In days that never come again.

"Before the little ducts began  
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran  
Their course, till thou wert also man:

"Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,  
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,  
Whose troubles number with his days:

"A life of nothings, nothing-worth,  
From that first nothing ere his birth  
To that last nothing under earth!"

"These words," I said, "are like the  
rest;  
No certain clearness, but at best  
A vague suspicion of the breast:

"But if I grant, thou mightst defend  
The thesis which thy words intend—  
That to begin implies to end;

"Yet how should I for certain hold  
Because my memory is so cold,  
That I first was in human mould?"

"I cannot make this matter plain,  
But I would shoot, how'er in vain,  
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,  
Which only to one engine bound  
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,  
Some draught of Lethe might await  
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men  
Forget the dream that happens then,  
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such  
As one before, remember much,  
For those two likes might meet and  
touch.

"But if I lapsed from nobler place,  
Some legend of a fallen race  
Alone might hint of my disgrace;

"Some vague emotion of delight  
In gazing up an Alpine height,  
Some yearning toward the lamps of  
night;

"Or if thro' lower lives I came —  
Tho' all experience past became  
Consolidate in mind and frame —

"I might forget my weaker lot;  
For is not our first year forgot?  
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was  
blind,  
From cells of madness unconfined,  
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,  
As naked essence, must I be  
Incompetent of memory:

"For memory dealing but with time,  
And he with matter, could she climb  
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is or seems,  
That touches me with mystic gleams,  
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

"Of something felt, like something  
here;  
Of something done, I know not where;  
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk,"  
said he,  
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee  
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy  
mark,  
Who sought'st to wreck thy mortal  
ark,  
By making all the horizon dark.

"Why not set forth, if I should do  
This rashness, that which might ensue  
With this old soul in organs new?

"Whatever crazy sorrow saith,  
No life that breathes with human  
breath  
Has ever truly long'd for death.

"'Tis life, whereof our nerves are  
seant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;  
More life, and fuller, that I want."

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.  
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,  
"Behold, it is the Sabbath morn."

And I arose, and I released  
The casement, and the light increased  
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,  
When meres begin to uncongeal,  
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God's house the people prest:  
Passing the place where each must rest,  
Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,  
With measured footfall firm and mild,  
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood  
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,  
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,  
The little maiden walk'd demure,  
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.



These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on:  
I spoke, but answer came there none:  
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,  
A little whisper silver-clear,  
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighborhood,  
A notice faintly understood,  
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,  
A hint, a whisper breathing low,  
"I may not speak of, what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes  
No certain air, but overtakes  
Far thought with music that it makes:

Such seem'd the whisper at my side:  
"What is it thou knowest, sweet  
voice?" I cried.  
"A hidden hope," the voice replied:

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour  
From out my sullen heart a power  
Broke, like the rainbow from the  
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,  
That every cloud, that spreads above  
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,  
And Nature's living motion lent  
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,  
The slow result of winter showers:  
You scarce could see the grass for  
flowers.

I wonder'd while I paced along:  
The woods were fill'd so full with song,  
There seem'd no room for sense of  
wrong;

And all so variously wrought,  
I marvell'd how the mind was brought  
To anchor by one gloomy thought;

And wherefore rather I made choice  
To commune with that barren voice,  
Than him that said, "Rejoice! Re-  
joice!"

### THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,  
His double chin, his portly size,  
And who that knew him could forget  
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?  
The slow wise smile that, round about  
His dusty forehead dryly curl'd,  
Seem'd half-within and half-without,  
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,  
Three fingers round the old silver  
cup—  
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet  
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up  
With summer lightnings of a soul  
So full of summer warmth, so glad,  
So healthy, sound, and clear and  
whole,  
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass: give me one kiss:  
My own sweet Alice, we must die.  
There's somewhat in this world amiss  
Shall be unriddled by and by.  
There's somewhat flows to us in life,  
But more is taken quite away.  
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,  
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth?  
I least should breathe a thought of  
pain.  
Would God renew me from my birth  
I'd almost live my life again.  
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,  
And once again to woo thee mine—  
It seems in after-dinner talk  
Across the walnuts and the wine—

To be the long and listless boy

Late-left an orphan of the squire,  
Where this old mansion mounted high  
Looks down upon the village spire:  
For even here, where I and you  
Have lived and loved alone so long,  
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'  
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove

In firry woodlands making moan;  
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,  
I had no motion of my own.  
For scarce my life with fancy play'd  
Before I dream'd that pleasant  
dream —  
Still hither thither idly sway'd  
Like those long mosses in the  
stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear

The milldam rushing down with  
noise,  
And see the minnows everywhere  
In crystal eddies glance and poise,  
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung  
Below the range of stepping-stones,  
Or those three chestnuts near, that  
hung  
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,

When after roving in the woods  
('Twas April then), I came and sat  
Below the chestnuts, when their  
buds

Were glistening to the breezy blue;

And on the slope, an absent fool,  
I cast me down, nor thought of you,  
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,

An echo from a measured strain,  
Beat time to nothing in my head  
From some odd corner of the brain.  
It haunted me, the morning long,  
With weary sameness in the rhymes,  
The phantom of a silent song,  
That went and came a thousand  
times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood

I watch'd the little circles die;  
They past into the level flood,  
And there a vision caught my eye;  
The reflex of a beauteous form,  
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,  
As when a sunbeam wavers warm  
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,

That morning, on the casement-edge  
A long green box of mignonette,  
And you were leaning from the  
ledge:  
And when I raised my eyes, above  
They met with two so full and  
bright—  
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,  
That these have never lost their  
light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear

That I should die an early death:  
For love possess'd the atmosphere,  
And fill'd the breast with purer  
breath.

My mother thought, What ails the  
boy?

For I was alter'd, and began  
To move about the house with joy,  
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam

Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,  
The sleepy pool above the dam,  
The pool beneath it never still,  
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,  
The dark round of the dripping  
wheel,  
The very air about the door  
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,

When April nights began to blow,  
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,  
I saw the village lights below.  
I knew your taper far away,  
And full at heart of trembling hope,  
From off the wold I came, and lay  
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill;

And "by that lamp," I thought,  
"she sits!"

The white chalk-quarry from the hill  
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.  
"O that I were beside her now!

O will she answer if I call?

O would she give me vow for vow,  
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?"

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin:

And, in the pauses of the wind,

Sometimes I heard you sing within;

Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.

At last you rose and moved the light,

And the long shadow of the chair

Flitted across into the night,

And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,

The lanes, you know, were white  
with may,

Your ripe lips moved not, but your  
cheek

Flush'd like the coming of the day;

And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,

You would, and would not, little  
one!

Although I pleaded tenderly,

And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought

To yield consent to my desire:

She wish'd me happy, but she thought

I might have look'd a little higher;

And I was young — too young to wed:

"Yet must I love her for your sake;

Go fetch your Alice here," she said:

Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:

But, Alice, you were ill at ease;

This dress and that by turns you tried,

Too fearful that you should not  
please.

I loved you better for your fears,

I knew you could not look but well;

And dew, that would have fall'n in

tears,

I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,

The doubt my mother would not  
see;

She spoke at large of many things,

And at the last she spoke of me;

And turning look'd upon your face,

As near this door you sat apart,

And rose, and, with a silent grace

Approaching, press'd you heart to  
heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song

I gave you, Alice, on the day

When, arm in arm, we went along,

A pensive pair, and you were gay

With bridal flowers — that I may seem,

As in the nights of old, to lie

Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,

While those full chestnuts whisper  
by.

It is the miller's daughter

And she is grown so dear, so dear,

That I would be the jewel

That trembles in her ear:

For hid in ringlets day and night,

I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle

About her dainty dainty waist,

And her heart would beat against me,

In sorrow and in rest:

And I should know if it beat right,

I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,

And all day long to fall and rise

Upon her balmy bosom,

With her laughter or her sighs,

And I would lie so light, so light,

I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —

True love interprets — right alone.

His light upon the letter dwells,

For all the spirit is his own.

So, if I waste words now, in truth

You must blame Love. His early

rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,

And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,

Like mine own life to me thou art,

Where Past and Present, wound in

one,

Do make a garland for the heart :  
So sing that other song I made,  
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,  
The day, when in the chestnut shade  
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that bath us in the net  
Can he pass, and we forget?  
Many suns arise and set.  
Many a chance the years beget.  
Love the gift is Love the debt.

Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.  
Love is made a vague regret.  
Eyes with idle tears are wet.  
Idle habit links us yet.  
What is love? for we forget:  
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True  
wife,

Round my true heart thine arms in-  
twine

My other dearer life in life,  
Look thro' my very soul with thine!  
Untouch'd with any shade of years,  
May those kind eyes forever dwell!  
They have not shed a many tears,  
Dear eyes, since first I knew them  
well.

Yet tears they shed: they had their  
part

Of sorrow: for when time was ripe,  
The still affection of the heart  
Became an outward breathing type,  
That into stillness past again,  
And left a want unknown before;  
Although the loss has brought us pain,  
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,  
The woven arms, seem but to be  
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,  
The comfort, I have found in thee:  
But that God bless thee, dear—who  
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—  
With blessings beyond hope or  
thought,  
With blessings which no words can  
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,  
To yon old mill across the wolds;

For look, the sunset, south and north,  
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,  
And fires your narrow casement glass,  
Touching the sullen pool below:  
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass  
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

### FATIMA.

O Love, Love, Love! O withering  
might!

O sun, that from thy noonday height  
Shudderest when I strain my sight,  
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,  
Lo, falling from my constant mind,  
Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and  
blind,  
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours  
Below the city's eastern towers:  
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers.  
I roll'd among the tender flowers:  
I crush'd them on my breast, my  
mouth;  
I look'd athwart the burning drouth  
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his  
name,

From my swift blood that went and  
came

A thousand little shafts of flame  
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.  
O Love, O fire! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul  
thro'  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know  
He cometh quickly: from below  
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,  
blow

Before him, striking on my brow.  
In my dry brain my spirit soon,  
Down-deepening from swoon to  
swoon,  
Faints like a dazzled morning moon

The wind sounds like a silver wire,  
And from beyond the noon a fire

Is pour'd upca the hills, and nigher  
The skies stoop down in their desire ;  
And, isled in sudden seas of light,  
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce  
delight,  
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,  
All naked in a sultry sky,  
'Droops blinded with his shining eye :  
I will possess him or will die.  
I will grow round him in his place,  
Grow, live, die looking on his face,  
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ÆNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier  
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.  
The swimming vapor slopes athwart  
the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from  
pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either  
hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-  
way down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below  
them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the  
clov'n ravine  
In cataract after cataract to the sea.  
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus  
Stands up and takes the morning: but  
in front  
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal  
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,  
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon  
Mournful Ænone, wandering forlorn  
Of Paris, once her playmate on the  
hills.  
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round  
her neck  
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in  
rest.  
She, leaning on a fragment twined  
with vine,  
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-  
shade  
Sloped downward to her seat from the  
upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
For now the noonday quiet holds the  
hill :  
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :  
The lizard, with his shadow on the  
stone,  
Rests like a shadow, and the winds  
are dead.  
The purple flower droops: the golden-  
bee  
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.  
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of  
love,  
My heart is breaking, and my eyes  
are dim,  
And I am all aware of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills,  
O Caves  
That house the cold crown'd snake! O  
mountain brooks,  
I am the daughter of a River God,  
Hear me, for I will speak, and build  
up all  
My sorrow with my song, as yonder  
walls  
Rose slowly to a music slowly  
breathed,  
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it  
may be  
That, while I speak of it, a little while  
My heart may wander from its deeper  
woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd  
Ida,  
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
I waited underneath the dawning hills,  
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-  
dark,  
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain  
pine :  
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,  
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,  
white-hooved,  
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the  
cleft:

Far up the solitary morning smote  
The streaks of virgin snow. With  
down-dropt eyes

I sat alone: white-breasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leop-  
ard skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but his  
sunny hair

Cluster'd about his temples like a  
God's:

And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-  
bow brightens

When the wind blows the foam, and  
all my heart

Went forth to embrace him coming  
ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
He smiled, and opening out his milk-  
white palm

Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian  
gold,

That smelt ambrosially, and while I  
look'd

And listen'd, the full-flowing river of  
speech

Came down upon my heart.

"My own CEnone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind  
ingrav'n

"For the most fair," would seem to  
award it thine,

As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt  
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
Of movement, and the charm of mar-  
ried brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,  
And added 'This was cast upon the  
board,

When all the full-faced presence of  
the Gods

Ranged in the halls of Peleus; where-  
upon

Rose feud, with question unto whom  
'twere due:

But light-foot Iris brought it yester-  
eve,  
Delivering, that to me, by common  
voice

Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,  
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each  
This meed of fairest. Thou, within  
the cave

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest  
pine,

Mayst well behold them unbeheld,  
unheard

Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of  
Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die  
It was the deep midnight: one silvery  
cloud

Had lost his way between the piney  
sides

Of this long glen. Then to the bower  
they came,

Naked they came to that smooth-  
swarded bower,

And at their feet the crocus brake like  
fire,

Violet, amaranthus, and asphodel,  
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,

And overhead the wandering ivy and  
vine,

This way and that, in many a wild  
festoon

Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled  
boughs

With bunch and berry and flower thro'  
and thro'.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,  
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,  
and lean'd

Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant  
dew.

Then first I heard the voice of her, to  
whom

Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that  
grows

Larger and clearer, with one mind the  
Gods

Rise up for reverence. She to Paris  
made

Proffer of royal power, ample rule  
 Unquestion'd overflowing revenue  
 Wherewith to embellish state, 'from  
 many a vale  
 And river-sunder'd champaign clothed  
 with corn,  
 Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.  
 Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax  
 and toll,  
 From many an inland town and haven  
 large,  
 Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing  
 citadel  
 In glassy bays among her tallest  
 towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 Still she spake on and still she spake  
 of power,  
 'Which in all action is the end of all;  
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-  
 bred  
 And throned of wisdom—from all  
 neighbor crowns  
 Alliance and Allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such  
 boon from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to  
 thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-  
 born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing  
 men in power  
 Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 She ceased, and Paris held the costly  
 fruit  
 Out at arm's-length, so much the  
 thought of power  
 Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where  
 she stood  
 Somewhat apart, her clear and bared  
 limbs  
 O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed  
 spear  
 Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,  
 The while, above, her full and earnest  
 eye

Over her snow-cold breast and angry  
 cheek  
 Kept watch, waiting decision, made  
 reply.

(" ' Self-reverence, self-knowledge,  
 self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sover-  
 eign power.  
 Yet not for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncall'd for) but to live  
 by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear;  
 And, because right is right, to follow  
 right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of conse-  
 quence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 Again she said: 'I woo thee not with  
 gifts.  
 Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
 To fairer. Judge thou me by what I  
 am,  
 So shalt thou find me fairest.  
 Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of  
 fair,  
 Unbiass'd by self-profit, oh! rest thee  
 sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave  
 to thee,  
 So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a  
 God's,  
 To push thee forward thro' a life of  
 shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance  
 grow  
 Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown  
 will,  
 Circl'd thro' all experiences, pure law,  
 Commensure perfect freedom.'  
 "Here she ceas'd,  
 And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O  
 Paris,  
 Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me  
 not,  
 Or hearing would not hear me, woe is  
 me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,  
 Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,  
 Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in  
     Paphian wells,  
 With rosy slender fingers backward  
     drew  
 From her warm brows and bosom her  
     deep hair  
 Ambrosial, golden round her lucid  
     throat  
 And shoulder: from the violets her  
     light foot  
 Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded  
     form  
 Between the shadows of the vine-  
     bunches  
 Floated the glowing sunlights, as she  
     moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 She with a subtle smile in her mild  
     eyes,  
 The herald of her triumph, drawing  
     nigh  
 Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise  
     thee  
 The fairest and most loving wife in  
     Greece,'  
 She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my  
     sight for fear:  
 But when I look'd, Paris had raised  
     his arm,  
 And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,  
 As she withdrew into the golden cloud,  
 And I was left alone within the bower;  
 And from that time to this I am alene,  
 And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.  
 Fairest— why fairest wife? am I not  
     fair?  
 My love hath told me so a thousand  
     times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton  
     pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with play-  
     ful tail  
 Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most  
     loving is she?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that  
     my arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot  
     lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-  
     falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn  
     rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 They came, they cut away my tallest  
     pines,  
 My tall dark pines, that plumed the  
     craggy ledge  
 High over the blue gorge, and all  
     between  
 The snowy peak and snow-white cata-  
     ract  
 Foster'd the callow eaglet— from be-  
     neath  
 Whose thick mysterious boughs in the  
     dark morn  
 The panther's roar came muffled, while  
     I sat  
 Low in the valley. Never, never more  
 Shall lone CEnone see the morning  
     mist  
 Sweep thro' them; never see them  
     overlaid  
 With narrow moon-lit slips of silver  
     cloud,  
 Between the loud stream and the trem-  
     bling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd  
     folds,  
 Among the fragments tumbled from  
     the glens,  
 Or the dry thickets, I could meet with  
     her  
 The Abominable, that uninvited came  
 Into the fair Pelicæan banquet-hall,  
 And cast the golden fruit upon the  
     board,  
 And bred this change; that I might  
     speak my mind,  
 And tell her to her face how much I  
     hate  
 Her presence, hated both of Gods and  
     men.



"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hath he notsworn his love a thousand  
 times,  
 In this green valley, under this green  
 hill,  
 Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this  
 stone?  
 Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with  
 tears?  
 O happy tears, and how unlike to  
 these!  
 O happy Heaven, how canst thou see  
 my face?  
 O happy earth, how canst thou bear  
 my weight?  
 O death, death, death, thou ever-float-  
 ing cloud,  
 There are enough unhappy on this  
 earth,  
 Pass by the happy souls, that love to  
 live:  
 I pray thee, pass before my light of  
 life,  
 And shadow all my soul that I may  
 die.  
 Thou weighest heavy on the heart  
 within,  
 Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me  
 die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more  
 and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue. as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the  
 inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose. as a  
 mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her  
 child  
 Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder  
 comes  
 Across me: never child be born of me,  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's  
 eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,  
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come  
 to me

Walking the cold and starless road of  
 Death  
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love  
 With the Greek woman. I will rise  
 and go  
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars  
 come forth  
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she,  
 says  
 A fire dances before her, and a sound,  
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.  
 What this may be I know not, but I  
 know  
 That, whereso'er I am by night and  
 day,  
 All earth and air seem only burning  
 fire."

### THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race:  
 She was the fairest in the face:  
 The wind is blowing in turret and  
 tree.  
 They were together, and she fell;  
 Therefore revenge became me well.  
 O the Earl was fair to see!

She died: she went to burning flame:  
 She mix'd her ancient blood with  
 shame.  
 The wind is howling in turret and  
 tree.  
 Whole weeks and months, and early  
 and late,  
 To win his love I lay in wait:  
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;  
 I won his love, I brought him home.  
 The wind is roaring in turret and  
 tree.  
 And after supper, on a bed,  
 Upon my lap he laid his head:  
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest:  
 His ruddy cheek upon my breast.  
 The wind is raging in turret and tree  
 I hated him with the hate of hell.  
 But I loved his beauty passing well.  
 O the Earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night :

I made my dagger sharp and bright.

The wind is raving in turret and tree.

As half-asleep his breath he drew,

Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.

O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,

He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and

tree.

I wrapt his body in the sheet,

And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,

(For you will understand it) of a soul,

A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,

A spacious garden full of flowering

weeds,

A glorious Devil, large in heart and

brain,

That did love Beauty only, (Beauty

seen

In all varieties of mould and mind)

And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if

Good,

Good only for its beauty, seeing not

That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge,

are three sisters

That dote upon each other, friends to

man,

Living together under the same roof,

And never can be sunder'd without

tears.

And he that shuts Love out, in turn

shall be

Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-

old lie

Howling in outer darkness. Not for

this

Was common clay ta'en from the com-

mon earth

Moulded by God, and temper'd with

the tears

Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

## THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-  
house,

Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.

I said, "O Soul, make merry and  
carouse,

Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as bur-  
nish'd brass

I chose. The ranged ramparts  
bright

From level meadow-bases of deep grass

Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or  
shelf

The rock rose clear, or winding stair.

My soul would live alone unto herself  
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and  
round," I said,

"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,

Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stead-  
fast shade

Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer  
readily:

"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide

In this great mansion that is built for  
me,

So royal-rich and wide."

\* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \*

Four courts I made, East, West and  
South and North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom  
The golden gorge of dragons spouted

forth

A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there  
ran a row

Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty  
woods,

Echoing all night to that sonorous  
flow

Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery  
That lent broad verge to distant  
lands,

Far as the wild swan wings, to where  
the sky  
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in  
one swell

Across the mountain stream'd below  
In misty folds, that floating as they  
fell  
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue  
seem'd

To hang on tiptoe, tossing up  
A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd  
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall  
gaze upon

My palace with unblinded eyes,  
While this great bow will waver in the  
sun,  
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never  
fail'd,

And, while day sank or mounted  
higher,  
The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,  
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd  
and traced,

Would seem slow-flaming crimson  
fires

From shadow'd grotts of arches inter-  
laced,

And tipt with frost-like spires.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,

That over-vaulted grateful gloom,  
Thro' which the livelong day my soul  
did pass,  
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the  
palace stood,

All various, each a perfect whole

From living Nature, fit for every mood  
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green  
and blue,

Showing a gaudy summer-morn,  
Where with puff'd cheek the belted  
hunter blew  
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract  
of sand,

And some one pacing there alone,  
Who paced forever in a glimmering  
land,  
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry  
waves.

You seem'd to hear them climb and  
fall

And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-  
ing caves,  
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow  
By herds upon an endless plain,

The ragged rims of thunder brooding  
low,  
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry  
toil.

In front they bound the sheaves.  
Behind

Were realms of upland, prodigal in  
oil,

And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with  
stones and slags,

Beyond, a line of heights, and higher  
All barr'd with long white cloud the  
scornful crags,  
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray  
twilight pour'd

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,  
Softer than sleep — all things in order  
stored,

A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape  
fair,

As fit for every mood of mind,  
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,  
was there

Not less than truth design'd.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,  
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm.  
Beneath branch-work of costly sardo-  
nyx  
Sat smiling, habe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,  
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair  
Wound with white roses, slept St.  
Cecily;  
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise  
A group of Houris bow'd to see  
The dying Islamite, with hands and  
eyes  
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded  
son  
In some fair space of sloping greens  
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,  
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,  
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw  
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian  
king to hear  
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,  
And many a tract of palm and rice,  
The throne of Indian Cama slowly  
sail'd  
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew un-  
clasp'd,  
From off her shoulder backward  
borne:  
From one hand droop'd a crocus: one  
hand grasp'd  
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy  
thigh  
Half-buried in the Eagle's down  
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky  
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone: but every legend fair  
Which the supreme Caucasian mind  
Carved out of Nature for itself, was  
there,  
Not less than life, design'd.

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Then in the towers I placed great bells  
that swung,  
Moved of themselves, with silver  
sound;  
And with choice paintings of wise men  
I hung  
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph  
strong,  
Beside him Shakespeare bland and  
mild;  
And there the world-worn Dante  
grasp'd his song,  
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the  
rest;  
A million wrinkles carved his skin;  
A hundred winters snow'd upon his  
breast,  
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-  
set  
Many an arch high up did lift,  
And angels rising and descending met  
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd  
With cycles of the human tale  
Of this wide world, the times of every  
land  
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden  
slow,  
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads  
and stings;

- Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro  
The heads and crowns of kings ;
- Here rose, an athlete, strong to break  
or bind  
All force in bonds that might endure,  
And here once more like some sick  
man declined,  
And trusted any cure.
- But over these she trod: and those  
great bells  
Began to chime. She took her  
throne:  
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,  
To sing her songs alone.
- And thro' the topmost Oriels' colored  
flame  
Two godlike faces gazed below;  
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,  
The first of those who know.
- And all those names, that in their  
motion were  
Full-welling fountain-heads of  
change,  
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair  
In diverse raiment strange:
- Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,  
emerald, blue,  
Flush'd in her temples, and her eyes.  
And from her lips, as morn from  
Memnon, drew  
Rivers of melodies.
- No nightingale delighteth to prolong  
Her low preamble all alone,  
More than my soul to hear her echo'd  
song  
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;
- Singing and murmuring in her feastful  
mirth,  
Joying to feel herself alive,  
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible  
earth,  
Lord of the senses five;
- Communing with herself: "All these  
are mine,  
And let the world have peace or  
wars,  
'Tis one to me." She — when young  
night divine  
Crown'd dying day with stars,  
Making sweet close of his delicious  
toils —  
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,  
And pure quintessences of precious  
oils  
In hollow'd moons of gems,  
To mimic heaven; and clapt her  
hands and cried,  
"I marvel if my still delight  
In this great house so royal-rich, and  
wide,  
Be flatter'd to the height.
- "O all things fair to sate my various  
eyes!  
O shapes and hues that please me  
well!  
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,  
My Gods, with whom I dwell!
- "O God-like isolation which art mine,  
I can but count thee perfect gain,  
What time I watch the darkening  
droves of swine  
That range on yonder plain.
- "In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient  
skin,  
They graze and wallow, breed and  
sleep;  
And oft some brainless devil enters in,  
And drives them to the deep."
- Then of the moral instinct would she  
prate  
And of the rising from the dead,  
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd  
Fate;  
And at the last she said:
- "I take possession of man's mind and  
deed.  
I care not what the sects may brawl.

I sit as God holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all."

\* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \*

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth  
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,  
Yet not the less held she her solemn  
mirth,  
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd: so  
three years

She prosper'd: on the fourth she  
fell,

Like Herod, when the shout was in  
his ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she  
turn'd her sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,  
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided  
quite

The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-  
tude

Fell on her, from which mood was  
born

Scorn of herself; again, from out that  
mood

Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of  
strength," she said,

"My spacious mansion built for me,  
Whereof the strong foundation-stones  
were laid

Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood  
Uncertain shapes; and unawares

On white-eyed phantasms weeping  
tears of blood,

And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of  
flame,

And, with dim fretted foreheads all,  
On corpses three-months-old at noon  
she came,  
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without  
light

Or power of movement, seem'd my  
soul,

'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars  
of sand,

Left on the shore; that hears all  
night

The plunging seas draw backward  
from the land

Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry  
dance

Join'd not, but stood, and standing  
saw

The hollow orb of moving Circum-  
stance

Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had  
curl'd.

"No voice," she shriek'd in that  
lone hall,

"No voice breaks thro' the stillness  
of this world:

One deep, deep silence all!"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's  
mouldering sod,

Inwraught tenfold in slothful shame,  
Lay there exiled from eternal God,

Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,  
And nothing saw, for her despair,

But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,  
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with  
fears,

And ever worse with growing time,

And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,  
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt  
round  
With blackness as a solid wall,  
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully  
sound  
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walk-  
ing slow,  
In doubt and great perplexity,  
A little before moon-rise hears the low  
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a  
sound  
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep  
cry  
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,  
"I have found  
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, "I am on fire within.  
There comes no murmur of reply.  
What is it that will take away my sin,  
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly fin-  
ished,  
She threw her royal robes away.  
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she  
said,  
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers,  
that are  
So lightly beautifully built :  
Perchance I may return with others  
there  
When I have purged my guilt."

#### LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Of me you shall not win renown :  
You thought to break a country heart  
For pastime, ere you went to town.  
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled  
I saw the snare, and I retired :  
The daughter of a hundred Earls,  
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
I know you proud to bear your  
name,  
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,  
Too proud to care from whence I  
came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake  
A heart that dotes on truer charms.  
A simple maiden in her flower  
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
Some meeker pupil you must find,  
For were you queen of all that is,  
I could not stoop to such a mind.  
You sought to prove how I could love ;  
And my disdain is my reply.  
The lion on your old stone gates  
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
You put strange memories in my  
head.  
Not thrice your branching limes have  
blown  
Since I beheld young Laurence  
dead.

Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :  
A great enchantress you may be ;  
But there was that across his throat  
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
When thus he met his mother's  
view,  
She had the passions of her kind,  
She spake some certain truths of  
you.  
Indeed I heard one bitter word  
That scarce is fit for you to hear :  
Her manners had not that repose  
Which stamps the caste of Vere de  
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,  
There stands a spectre in your hall :  
The guilt of blood is at your door :  
You changed a wholesome heart to  
gall.  
You held your course without remorse,  
To make him trust his modest  
worth,

And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,  
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,  
From your blue heavens above us bent

The gardener Adam and his wife  
Smile at the claims of long descent.  
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,  
'Tis only noble to be good.

Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,  
You pine among your halls and towers :

The languid light of your proud eyes  
Is wearied of the rolling hours.

In glowing health, with boundless wealth,

But sickening of a vague disease,  
You know so ill to deal with time,  
You needs must play such pranks  
as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,  
If time be heavy on your hands,  
Are there no beggars at your gate,  
Nor any poor about your lands?  
Oh! teach the orphan-boy to read,  
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,  
Pray Heaven for a human heart,  
And let the foolish yeoman go.

### THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear ;  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year ;  
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest merriest day ;  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none so bright as mine ;  
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caroline :  
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they say,  
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never wake,  
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to break :  
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and garlands gay,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I see,  
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-tree ?  
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him yesterday,  
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in white,  
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of light.  
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they say,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never be :  
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is that to me ?  
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,  
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made the Queen ;



For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from far away,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its wavy bowers,  
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;  
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in swamps and hollows gray,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the meadow-grass,  
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten as they pass;  
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the livelong day,  
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and still,  
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the hill,  
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance and play,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad New-year:  
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merriest day,  
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be Queen o' the May.

#### NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early, mother dear,  
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.  
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,  
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind  
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my peace of mind;  
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall never see  
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a merry day;  
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me Queen of May;  
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel copse,  
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills: the frost is on the pane:  
I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again:  
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out on high:  
I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-tree,  
And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,  
And the swallow 'ill come back again with summer o'er the wave,  
But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of mine,  
In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,

Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the hill,  
When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the waning light  
You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at night;  
When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow cool  
On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bulrush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the hawthorn shade,  
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am lowly laid.  
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you when you pass,  
With your feet above my head in the long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive me now;  
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere I go;  
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be wild,  
You should not fret for me, mother, you have another child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;  
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face;  
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,  
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have said good-night forevermore,  
And you see me carried out from the threshold of the door;  
Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be growing green:  
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor:  
Let her take 'em: they are hers: I shall never garden more:  
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush that I set  
About the parlor-window and the box of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother: call me before the day is born.  
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn;  
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year,  
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother dear.

#### CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am;  
And in the fields all round I hear the bleating of the lamb.  
How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the year!  
To die before the snowdrop came, and now the violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the skies,  
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that cannot rise,  
And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers that blow,  
And sweeter far is death than life to me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the blessed sun,  
And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will be done!

But still I think it can't be long before I find release ;  
And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver hair !  
And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet me there !  
O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver head !  
A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all the sin.  
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One will let me in :  
Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that could be,  
For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-watch beat,  
There came a sweeter token when the night and morning meet :  
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand in mine,  
And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels call ;  
It was when the moon was setting, and the dark was over all ;  
The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to roll,  
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here ;  
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I felt resign'd,  
And up the valley came a swell of music on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed,  
And then did something speak to me — I know not what was said ;  
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all my mind,  
And up the valley came again the music on the wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, " It's not for them : it's mine."  
And if it come three times, I thought, I take it for a sign.  
And once again it came, and close beside the window-bars,  
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I know  
The blessed music went that way my soul will have to go.  
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.  
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and tell him not to fret ;  
There's many a worthier than I, would make him happy yet.  
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been his wife ;  
But all these things have ceased to be, with my desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens are in a glow ;  
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I know.  
And there I move no longer now, and there his light may shine —  
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this day is done  
 The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond the sun —  
 Forever and forever with those just souls and true —  
 And what is life, that we should moan ? why make we such ado ?

Forever and forever, all in a blessed home —  
 And there to wait a little while till you and Effie come —  
 To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your breast —  
 And the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

### THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed  
 toward the land,  
 “This mounting wave will roll us  
 shoreward soon.”  
 In the afternoon they came unto a  
 land  
 In which it seemed always afternoon.  
 All round the coast the languid air did  
 swoon,  
 Breathing like one that hath a weary  
 dream.  
 Full-faced above the valley stood the  
 moon ;  
 And like a downward smoke, the slen-  
 der stream  
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and  
 fall did seem.  
 A land of streams ! some, like a down-  
 ward smoke,  
 Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,  
 did go ;  
 And some thro’ wavering lights and  
 shadows broke,  
 Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam  
 below.  
 They saw the gleaming river seaward  
 flow  
 From the inner land : far off, three  
 mountain-tops,  
 Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,  
 Stood sunset-flush’d ; and, dew’d with  
 showery drops,  
 Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the  
 woven copse.  
 The charmed sunset linger’d low  
 adown  
 In the red West : thro’ mountain clefts  
 the dale

Was seen far inland, and the yellow  
 down  
 Border’d with palm, and many a wind-  
 ing vale  
 And meadow, set with slender galin-  
 gale ;  
 A land where all things always seem’d  
 the same !  
 And round about the keel with faces  
 pale,  
 Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,  
 The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-  
 eaters came.  
 Branches they bore of that enchanted  
 stem,  
 Laden with flower and fruit, whereof  
 they gave  
 To each, but whoso did receive of  
 them,  
 And taste, to him the gushing of the  
 wave  
 Far far away did seem to mourn and  
 rave  
 On alien shores ; and if his fellow  
 spake,  
 His voice was thin, as voices from the  
 grave ;  
 And deep-asleep he seem’d, yet all  
 awake,  
 And music in his ears his beating heart  
 did make.  
 They sat them down upon the yellow  
 sand,  
 Between the sun and moon upon the  
 shore ;  
 And sweet it was to dream of Father-  
 land,  
 Of child and wife, and slave ; but  
 evermore

Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the  
 oar,  
 Weary the wandering fields of barren  
 foam.  
 Then some one said, "We will return  
 no more;"  
 And all at once they sang, "Our island  
 home  
 Is far beyond the wave; we will no  
 longer roam."

## CHORIC SONG.

## I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer  
 falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the  
 grass,  
 Or night-dews on still waters between  
 walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming  
 pass;  
 Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,  
 Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down  
 from the blissful skies.  
 Here are cool mosses deep,  
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved  
 flowers weep,  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy  
 hangs in sleep.

## II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-  
 ness,  
 And utterly consumed with sharp dis-  
 tress,  
 While all things else have rest from  
 weariness?  
 All things have rest: why should we  
 toil alone,  
 We only toil, who are the first of  
 things,  
 And make perpetual moan,  
 Still from one sorrow to another  
 thrown:  
 Nor ever fold our wings,  
 And cease from wanderings,  
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy  
 balm;

Nor hearken what the inner spirit  
 sings,  
 "There is no joy but calm!"  
 Why should we only toil, the roof and  
 crown of things?

## III.

Lo! in the middle of the wood,  
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the  
 bud  
 With winds upon the branch, and  
 there  
 Grows green and broad, and takes no  
 care,  
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon  
 Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow  
 Falls, and floats adown the air.  
 Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,  
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-  
 mellow,  
 Drops in a silent autumn night.  
 All its allotted length of days,  
 The flower ripens in its place,  
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath  
 no toil,  
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

## IV.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,  
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.  
 Death is the end of life; ah, why  
 Should life all labor be?  
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward  
 fast,  
 And in a little while our lips are dumb.  
 Let us alone. What is it that will last?  
 All things are taken from us, and be-  
 come  
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful  
 Past.  
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we  
 have  
 To war with evil? Is there any peace  
 In ever climbing up the climbing  
 wave?  
 All things have rest, and ripen toward  
 the grave  
 In silence; ripen, fall and cease:  
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,  
 or dreamful ease.

## v.

How sweet it were, hearing the down-  
ward stream,  
With half-shut eyes ever to seem  
Falling asleep in a half-dream!  
To dream and dream, like yonder  
amber light,  
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush  
on the height;  
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;  
Eating the Lotos day by day,  
To watch the crisping ripples on the  
beach,  
And tender curving lines of creamy  
spray;  
To lend our hearts and spirit wholly  
To the influence of mild-minded mel-  
ancholy;  
To muse and brood and live again in  
memory,  
With those old faces of our infancy  
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,  
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in  
an urn of brass!

## vi.

Dear is the memory of our wedded  
lives,  
And dear the last embraces of our  
wives  
And their warm tears: but all hath  
suffer'd change:  
For surely now our household hearths  
are cold:  
Our sons inherit us: our looks are  
strange:  
And we should come like ghosts to  
trouble joy.  
Or else the island princes over-bold  
Have eat our substance, and the min-  
strel sings,  
Before them of the ten years' war in  
Troy,  
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten  
things.  
Is there confusion in the little isle?  
Let what is broken so remain.  
The Gods are hard to reconcile:  
'Tis hard to settle order once again.  
There is confusion worse than death,

Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,  
Long labor unto aged breath,  
Sore task to hearts worn out by many  
wars  
And eyes grown dim with gazing on  
the pilot-stars.

## vii.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and  
moly,  
Sweet (while warm airs lull us,  
blowing lowly)  
With half-dropt eyelid still,  
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,  
To watch the long bright river draw-  
ing slowly  
His waters from the purple hill—  
To hear the dewy echoes calling  
From cave to cave thro' the thick-  
twined vine—  
To watch the emerald-color'd water  
falling  
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath  
divine!  
Only to hear and see the far-off spar-  
kling brine,  
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out  
beneath the pine.

## viii.

The Lotos blooms below the barren  
peak:  
The Lotos blows by every-winding  
creek:  
All day the wind breathes low with  
mellower tone:  
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone  
Round and round the spicy downs the  
yellow Lotos-dust is blown.  
We have had enough of action, and  
of motion we,  
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,  
when the surge was seething  
free,  
Where the wallowing monster spouted  
his foam-fountains in the sea.  
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with  
an equal mind,  
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and  
lie reclined

On the hills like Gods together, care-  
less of mankind.  
For they lie beside their nectar, and  
the bolts are hurl'd  
Far below them in the valleys, and  
the clouds are lightly curl'd  
Round their golden houses, girdled  
with the gleaming world:  
Where they smile in secret, looking  
over wasted lands,  
Blight and famine, plague and earth-  
quake, roaring deeps and fiery  
sands,  
Clanging fights, and flaming towns,  
and sinking ships, and praying  
hands.  
But they smile, they find a music cen-  
tered in a doleful song  
Steaming up, a lamentation and an  
ancient tale of wrong,  
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the  
words are strong;  
Chanted from an ill-used race of men  
that cleave the soil,  
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest  
with enduring toil,  
Storing yearly little dues of wheat,  
and wine and oil;  
Till they perish and they suffer—  
some, 'tis whisper'd—down in  
hell  
Suffer endless anguish, others in  
Elysian valleys dwell,  
Resting weary limbs at last on beds  
of asphodel.  
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet  
than toil, the shore  
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean,  
wind and wave and oar;  
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will  
not wander more.

—

### A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their  
shade,  
"The Legend of Good Women," long  
ago  
Sung by the morning-star of song,  
who made  
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose  
sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that  
fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still.  
And, for a while, the knowledge of  
his art  
Held me above the subject, as  
strong gales  
Hold swollen clouds from raining,  
tho' my heart,  
Brimful of those wild tales,  
Charged both mine eyes with tears.  
In every land  
I saw, wherever light illumineth,  
Beauty and anguish walking hand in  
hand  
The downward slope to death.  
Those far-renowned brides of ancient  
song  
Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-  
ing stars,  
And I heard sounds of insult, shame,  
and wrong,  
And trumpets blown for wars;  
And clattering flints batter'd with  
clanging hoofs;  
And I saw crowds in column'd  
sanctuaries;  
And forms that pass'd at windows  
and on roofs  
Of marble palaces;  
Corpses across the threshold; heroes  
tall  
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet  
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;  
Lances in ambush set;  
And high shrine-doors burst thro' with  
heated blasts  
That run before the fluttering  
tongues of fire;  
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails  
and masts,  
And ever climbing higher

Squadrons and squares of men in  
brazen plates,  
Scaffolds, still sheets of water,  
divers woes,

Ranges of glimmering vaults with  
iron grates,  
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,  
when to land  
Bluster the winds and tides the  
self-same way,

Crisp foam-flakes scud along the  
level sand,  
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in  
pain,  
Resolved on noble things, and  
strove to speak,

As when a great thought strikes along  
the brain,  
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew  
down

A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,  
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd  
town;

And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-  
lapsing thought

Stream'd onward, lost their edges,  
and did creep

Roll'd on each other, rounded,  
smooth'd, and brought  
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wan-  
der'd far

In an old wood: fresh-wash'd in  
coolest dew

The maiden splendors of the morning  
star

Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop  
and lean

Upon the dusky brushwood under-  
neath

Their broad curved branches, fledged  
with clearest green,  
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her  
journey done,

And with dead lips smiled at the  
twilight plain,

Half-fall'n across the threshold of  
the sun,

Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb  
dead air,

Not any song of bird or sound of  
rill;

Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre  
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of  
jasmine turn'd

Their humid arms festooning tree  
to tree,

And at the root thro' lush green  
grasses burn'd

The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,  
I knew

The tearful glimmer of the languid  
dawn

On those long, rank, dark wood-walks  
drench'd in dew,

Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the  
green,

Pour'd back into my empty soul  
and frame

The times when I remember to have  
been

Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-  
tone

Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-  
blissful clime,

"Pass freely thro': the wood is all  
thine own,

Until the end of time."



At length I saw a lady within call,  
 Still than chisell'd marble, stand-  
 ing there ;  
 A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,  
 And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with  
 surprise  
 Froze my swift speech : she turning  
 on my face  
 The star-like sorrows of immortal  
 eyes,  
 Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not  
 my name :  
 No one can be more wise than  
 destiny.  
 Many drew swords and died.  
 Where'er I came  
 I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair  
 field  
 Myself for such a face had boldly  
 died,"  
 I answer'd free ; and turning I ap-  
 peal'd  
 To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks  
 averse,  
 To her full height her stately stat-  
 ure draws ;  
 "My youth," she said "was blasted  
 with a curse :  
 This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad  
 place,  
 Which men call'd Aulis in those  
 iron years :  
 My father held his hand upon his face ;  
 I, blinded with my tears,  
 "Still strove to speak : my voice was  
 thick with sighs  
 As in a dream. Dimly I could  
 descry  
 The stern black-bearded kings with  
 wolfish eyes,  
 Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay  
 afloat ;  
 The crowds, the temples, waver'd,  
 and the shore ;  
 The bright death quiver'd at the vic-  
 tim's throat ;  
 Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward'  
 brow :  
 "I would the white cold heavy-  
 plunging foam,  
 Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me  
 deep below,  
 Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the  
 silence drear,  
 As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping  
 sea :  
 Sudden I heard a voice that cried,  
 "Come here,  
 That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery  
 rise,  
 One sitting on a crimson scarf un-  
 roll'd ;  
 A queen, with swarthy cheeks and  
 bold black eyes,  
 Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,  
 began :  
 "I govern'd men by change, and  
 so I sway'd  
 All moods. 'Tis long since I have  
 seen a man.  
 Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the  
 blood  
 According to my humor ebb and  
 flow.  
 I have no men to govern in this wood :  
 That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could  
 not bend  
 One will ; nor tame and tutor with  
 mine eye

- That dull cold-blooded Cæsar.  
Prythee, friend,  
Where is Mark Antony?
- "The man, my lover, with whom I  
rode sublime  
On Fortune's neck: we sat as God  
by God:  
The Nilus would have risen before his  
time  
And flooded at our nod.
- "We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,  
and lit  
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus.  
O my life  
In Egypt! O the dalliance and the wit,  
The flattery and the strife,
- "And the wild kiss, when fresh from  
war's alarms,  
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,  
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my  
arms,  
Contented there to die!
- "And there he died: and when I heard  
my name  
Sigh'd forth with life I would not  
brook my fear  
Of the other: with a worm I balk'd  
his fame.  
What else was left? look here!"
- (With that she tore her robe apart,  
and half  
The polish'd argent of her breast to  
sight  
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with  
a laugh,  
Showing the aspick's bite.)
- "I died a Queen. The Roman soldier  
found  
Me lying dead, my crown about my  
brows,  
A name forever!—lying robed and  
crown'd,  
Worthy a Roman sponse."
- Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest  
range  
Struck by all passion, did fall down  
and glance  
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all  
change  
Of liveliest utterance.
- When she made pause I knew not for  
delight:  
Because with sudden motion from  
the ground  
She rais'd her piercing orbs, and fill'd  
with light  
The interval of sound.
- Still with their fires Love tipt his keen-  
est darts;  
As once they drew into two burning  
rings  
All beams of Love, melting the mighty  
hearts  
Of captains and of kings.
- Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I  
heard  
A noise of some one coming thro'  
the lawn,  
And singing clearer than the crested  
bird  
That claps his wings at dawn.
- "The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel  
From craggy hollows pouring, late  
and soon,  
Sound all night long, in falling thro'  
the dell,  
Far-heard beneath the moon.
- "The balmy moon of blessed Israel  
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with  
beams divine:  
All night the splinter'd crags that wall  
the dell  
With spires of silver shine."
- As one that museth where broad sun-  
shine laves  
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'  
the door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd  
and tied

To where he stands,—so stood I,  
when that flow

Of music left the lips of her that died  
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite;  
A maiden pure; as when she went  
along

From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-  
come light,  
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads  
the count of crimes

With that wild oath." She render'd  
answer high:

"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand  
times

I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant,  
whose root

Creeps to the garden water-pipes  
beneath

Feeding the flower; but ere my flower  
to fruit

Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father — these  
did move

Me from my bliss of life, that Nature  
gave,

Lower'd softly with a threefold cord  
of love

Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, 'No fair  
Hebrew boy

Shall smile away my maiden blame  
among

The Hebrew mothers' — emptied of  
all joy,

Leaving the dance and song,

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,  
Leaving the promise of my bridal  
bower,

The valleys of grape-loaded vines that  
glow

Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us.  
Anon

We heard the lion roaring from his  
den;

We saw the large white stars rise one  
by one,

Or, from the darken'd glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying  
flame,

And thunder on the everlasting hills.

I heard Him, for He spake, and grief  
became

A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was roll'd into  
the sky,

Strength came to me that equal'd  
my desire.

How beautiful a thing it was to die

For God and for my sire!

"It comforts me in this one thought  
to dwell,

That I subdu'd me to my father's  
will;

Because the kiss he gave me, ere I  
fell,

Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race  
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from  
Aroer

On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her  
face

Glow'd as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips: she left me where  
I stood:

"Glory to God," she sang, and past  
afar,

Thridding the sombre boskage of the  
wood,

Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,

As one that from a casement leans  
his head,

When midnight bells cease ringing  
suddenly,

And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of  
care,  
Murmur'd beside me: "Turn and  
look on me:

I am that Rosamond, whom men call  
fair,  
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden  
coarse and poor!  
O me, that I should ever see the  
light!

Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor  
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope  
and trust:

To whom the Egyptian: "O, you  
tamely died!  
You should have clung to Fulvia's  
waist, and thrust  
The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white  
dawn's creeping beams,  
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the  
mystery

Of folded sleep. The captain of my  
dreams  
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of  
the dark,

Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her  
last trance  
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan  
of Arc,  
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can van-  
quish Death,

Who kneeling, with one arm about  
her king,  
Drew forth the poison with her balmy  
breath,  
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labors longer from the  
deep

Gold-mines of thought to lift the  
hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I from  
sleep  
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With  
what dull pain

Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to  
strike  
Into that wondrous track of dreams  
again!

But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath  
been blest,

Desiring what is mingled with past  
years,  
In yearnings that can never be exprest  
By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with  
choicest art,

Failing to give the bitter of the  
sweet,  
Wither beneath the palate, and the  
heart  
Faints, faded by its heat.

#### THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something  
well:

While all the neighbors shoot thee  
round,  
I keep smooth plats of fruitful  
ground,  
Where thou may'st warble, eat and  
dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all  
Are thine; the range of lawn and  
park:

The unnetted black-hearts ripen  
dark,  
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,  
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,  
With that gold dagger of thy bill  
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,  
Cold February loved, is dry:

Plenty corrupts the melody  
That made thee famous once, when  
young :

And in the sultry garden-squares,  
Now thy flute notes are changed to  
coarse,  
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse  
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing  
While yon sun prospers in the blue,  
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are  
new,  
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

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### THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,  
And the winter winds are wearily  
sighing :

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,  
And tread softly and speak low,  
For the old year lies a-dying.  
Old year, you must not die ;  
You came to us so readily,  
You lived with us so steadily,  
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :  
He will not see the dawn of day.  
He hath no other life above.  
He gave me a friend, and a true true-  
love,

And the New-year will take 'em away.  
Old year, you must not go ;  
So long as you have been with us  
Such joy as you have seen with us,  
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;  
A jollier year we shall not see.  
But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,  
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,  
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;  
We did so laugh and cry with you,  
I've half a mind to die with you,  
Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,  
But all his merry quips are o'er.  
To see him die, across the waste  
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,  
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.  
The night is starry and cold, my  
friend,  
And the New-year blithe and bold  
my friend,  
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow  
I heard just now the crowing cock.  
The shadows flicker to and fro :  
The cricket chirps : the light burns  
low :

'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.  
Shake hands, before you die  
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :  
What is it we can do for you ?  
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.  
Alack ! our friend is gone.  
Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :  
Step from the corpse, and let him in  
That standeth there alone,  
And waiteth at the door.  
There's a new foot on the floor,  
my friend,  
And a new face at the door, my  
friend,  
A new face at the door.

---

### TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain,  
blows  
More softly round the open wold,  
And gently comes the world to those  
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,  
Or else I had not dared to flow  
In these words toward you, and invade  
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on  
most,  
Those in whose laps our limbs  
are nursed,

Fall into shadow, soonest lost :  
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love  
He lends us ; but, when love is  
grown

To ripeness, that on which it throve  
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !  
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;  
Once thro' mine own doors Death did  
pass ;  
One went, who never hath re-  
turn'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me  
Once more. Two years his chair  
is seen

Empty before us. That was he  
Without whose life I had not  
been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star  
Rose with you thro' a little arc  
Of heaven, nor having wander'd far  
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust  
I honor and his living worth :  
A man more pure and hold and just  
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,  
Since that dear soul hath fall'n  
asleep.

Great Nature is more wise than I :  
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,  
Drawn from the spirit thro' the  
brain,

I will not even preach to you,  
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward  
pain.”

Let Grief be her own mistress still.  
She loveth her own anguish deep  
More than much pleasure. Let her  
will  
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, “ God's ordinance  
Of Death is blown in every wind” ;

For that is not a common chance  
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone  
In all our hearts, as mournful light  
That broods above the fallen sun,  
And dwells in heaven half the  
night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near  
Cast down her eyes, and in her  
throat  
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear  
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,  
How *should* I soothe you anyway,  
Who miss the brother of your youth ?  
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :  
Both are my friends, and my true  
breast

Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be  
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would  
make  
Grief more. 'Twere better I  
should cease

Although myself could almost take  
The place of him that sleeps in  
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :  
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,  
While the stars burn, the moons in-  
crease,  
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.  
Nothing comes to thee new or  
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;  
Lie still, dry dust, secure of  
change.

#### ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,  
Imitates God, and turns her face  
To every land beneath the skies,

Counts nothing that she meets with  
base,  
But lives and loves in every place ;

## II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,  
And makes the purple lilac ripe,  
Steps from her airy hill, and greens  
The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,  
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

## III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,  
Saying, " Beat quicker, for the time  
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways  
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime  
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

## IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,  
Going before to some far shrine,  
Teach that sick heart the stronger  
choice,  
Till all thy life one way incline  
With one wide Will that closes thine.

## V.

And when the zoning eve has died  
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,  
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and  
bride,  
From out the borders of the morn,  
With that fair child betwixt them  
born.

## VI.

And when no mortal motion jars  
The blackness round the tombing  
sod,  
Thro' silence and the trembling stars  
Comes Faith from tracts no feet  
have trod,  
And Virtue, like a household god

## VII.

Promising empire ; such as those  
Once heard at dead of night to greet  
Troy's wandering prince, so that he  
rose

With sacrifice, while all the fleet  
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,  
Within this region I subsist,  
Whose spirits falter in the mist,  
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,  
That sober-suited Freedom chose.  
The land, where girt with friends  
or foes

A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,  
A land of just and old renown,  
Where Freedom slowly broadens  
down

From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,  
But by degrees to fulness wrought,  
The strength of some diffusive  
thought

Hath time and space to work and  
spread.

Should banded unions persecute  
Opinion, and induce a time  
When single thought is civil  
crime,  
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land  
to land  
The name of Britain trebly great—  
Tho' every channel of the State  
Should fill and choke with golden  
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,  
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,  
And I will see before I die  
The palms and temples of the South.

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,  
The thunders breaking at her feet  
Above her shook the starry lights :  
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,  
 Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,  
 But fragments of her mighty voice  
 Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and  
 field  
 To mingle with the human race,  
 And part by part to men reveal'd  
 The fulness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,  
 From her isle-altar gazing down :  
 Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,  
 And, King-like, wears the crown ;

Her open eyes desire the truth.  
 The wisdom of a thousand years  
 Is in them. May perpetual youth  
 Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and  
 shine,  
 Make bright our days and light  
 our dreams,  
 Turning to scorn with lips divine  
 The falsehood of extremes !

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-  
 brought  
 From out the storied Past, and  
 used

Within the Present, but transfused  
 Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,  
 Love, that endures not sordid ends,  
 For English natures, freemen,  
 friends,

Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,  
 Nor feed with crude imaginings  
 The herd, wild hearts and feeble  
 wings

That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might  
 Weakness, neither hide the ray

From those, not blind, who wait for  
 day,  
 Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the  
 winds ;  
 But let her herald, Reverence, fly  
 Before her to whatever sky  
 Bear seed of men and growth of  
 minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the  
 years :  
 Cut Prejudice against the grain :  
 But gentle words are always gain :  
 Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place, or touch  
 Of pension, neither count on praise :  
 It grows to guerdon after-days :  
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;  
 Nor master'd by some modern term ;  
 Not swift nor slow to change, but  
 firm :  
 And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall  
 With Life, that, working strongly,  
 binds —  
 Set in all lights by many minds,  
 To close the interest of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,  
 And moist and dry, devising long,  
 Thro' many agents making strong,  
 Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control  
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.  
 We all are changed by still degrees,  
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be  
 free  
 To ingroove itself with that which  
 flies,

And work, a joint of state, that plies  
 Its office, moved with sympathy.



A saying, hard to shape in act;  
 For all the past of Time reveals  
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,  
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife  
 A motion toiling in the gloom—  
 The Spirit of the years to come  
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits  
 Completion in a painful school;  
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,  
 New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,  
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark;  
 And round them sea and air are dark  
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,  
 Is bodied forth the second whole.  
 Regard gradation, lest the soul  
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,  
 And heap their ashes on the head;  
 To shame the boast so often made,  
 That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star  
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,  
 To follow flying steps of Truth  
 Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,  
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,  
 And this be true, till Time shall close,  
 That Principles are rain'd in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease  
 To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,  
 But with his hand against the hilt,  
 Would pace the troubled land, like  
 Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,  
 Would serve his kind in deed and  
 word,

Certain, if knowledge bring the  
 sword,  
 That knowledge takes the sword  
 away —

Would love the gleams of good that  
 broke  
 From either side, nor veil his eyes:  
 And if some dreadful need should  
 rise  
 Would strike, and firmly, and one  
 stroke:

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,  
 As we hear blossom of the dead;  
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor  
 wed  
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

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ENGLAND AND AMERICA  
 IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man  
 To rule by land and sea,  
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,  
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine  
 Who wrench'd their rights from  
 thee!

What wonder, if in noble heat  
 Those men thine arms withstood,  
 Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,  
 And in thy spirit with thee fought —  
 Who sprang from English blood!

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,  
 Lift up thy rocky face.  
 And shatter, when the storms are  
 black,  
 In many a streaming torrent back,  
 The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law  
 The growing world assume,  
 Thy work is thine — The single note  
 From that deep chord which Hampden  
 smote  
 Will vibrate to the doom.

## THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,  
Her rags scarce held together ;  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd rhyme and reason,  
"Here, take the goose, and keep you  
warm,  
It is a stormy season."

She caught the white goose by the leg,  
A goose — 'twas no great matter.  
The goose let fall a golden egg  
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the  
pelf,  
And ran to tell her neighbors ;  
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,  
And rested from her labors.

And feeding high, and living soft,  
Grew plump and able-bodied ;  
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,  
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,  
She felt her heart grow prouder :  
But ah ! the more the white goose laid  
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it clucked there ;  
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :  
She shifted in her elbow-chair,  
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

"A quinsy choke thy cursed note!"  
Then wax'd her anger stronger.  
"Go, take the goose, and wring her  
throat,  
I will not bear it longer."

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the  
cat ;  
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.  
The goose flew this way and flew that,  
And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor  
They flounder'd all together,  
There strode a stranger to the door,  
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,  
He utter'd words of scorning ;  
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,  
It is a stormy morning."

The wild wind rang from park and  
plain,  
And round the attics rumbled,  
Till all the tables danced again,  
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,  
The blast was hard and harder.  
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,  
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :

And while on all sides breaking loose  
Her household fled the danger,  
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,  
And God forget the stranger!"

## ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS.



### THE EPIC.

AT Francis Allen's on the Christmas-  
eve, —  
The game of forfeits done — the girls  
all kiss'd  
Beneath the sacred bush and past  
away —  
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard  
Hall,  
The host, and I sat round the wassail-  
bowl,  
Then half-way ebb'd: and there we  
held a talk,  
Now all the old honor had from  
Christmas gone,  
Or gone, or dwindled down to some  
odd games  
In some odd nooks like this; till I,  
tired out  
With cutting eights that day upon the  
pond,  
Where, three times slipping from the  
outer edge,  
I bump'd the ice into three several  
stars,  
Fell in a doze; and half awake I  
heard  
The parson taking wide and wider  
sweeps,  
Now harping on the church-commis-  
sioners,  
Now hawking at Geology and schism;  
Until I woke, and found him settled  
down  
Upon the general decay of faith  
Right thro' the world, "at home was  
little left,

And none abroad: there was no  
anchor, none,  
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapt  
his hand  
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold  
by him."  
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the  
wassail-bowl."  
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your  
gift that way  
At college: but another which you  
had,  
I mean of verse (for so we held it  
then),  
What came of that?" "You know,"  
said Frank, "he burnt  
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve  
books" —  
And then to me demanding why?  
"Oh, sir,  
He thought that nothing new was said,  
or else  
Something so said 'twas nothing —  
that a truth  
Looks freshest in the fashion of the  
day:  
God knows: he has a mint of reasons:  
ask.  
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay,  
nay," said Hall,  
"Why take the style of those heroic  
times?  
For nature brings not back the Mas-  
todon,  
Nor we those times; and why should  
any man  
Remodel models? these twelve books  
of mine

Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-  
worth,  
Mere chaff and draff, much better  
burnt." "But I,"  
Said Francis, "pick'd the eleventh  
from this hearth  
And have it: keep a thing, its use  
will come.  
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."  
He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a  
horse  
That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd  
my ears;  
For I remember'd Everard's college  
fame  
When we were Freshmen: then at my  
request  
He brought it; and the poet little  
urged,  
But with some prelude of disparage-  
ment,  
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes  
and aes,  
Deep-cheated music, and to this result.

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MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle  
roll'd  
Among the mountains by the winter  
sea;  
Until King Arthur's table, man by  
man,  
Had fallen in Lyonness about their  
Lord,  
King Arthur: then, because his wound  
was deep,  
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,  
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his  
knights,  
And bore him to a chapel nigh the  
field,  
A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren  
laud.  
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was  
full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:  
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all

The goodliest fellowship of famous  
knights  
Whereof this world holds record.  
Such a sleep  
They sleep—the men I loved. I  
think that we  
Shall nevermore, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knightly  
deeds,  
Walking about the gardens and the  
halls  
Of Camelot, as in the days that were  
I perish by this people which I  
made,—  
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again  
To rule once more — but let what will  
be, be,  
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till  
morn.  
Thou therefore take my brand Ex-  
calibur,  
Which was my pride: for thou re-  
memberest how  
In those old days, one summer noon,  
an arm  
Rose up from out the bosom of the  
lake,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,  
Holding the sword — and how I row'd  
across  
And took it, and have worn it like a  
king:  
And, wheresoever I am sung or  
told  
In aftertime, this also shall be known:  
But now delay not: take Excalibur,  
And fling him far into the middle  
mere:  
Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
bring me word."  
To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere:  
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave  
thee thus,  
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the  
helm.  
A little thing may harm a wounded  
man.  
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,

Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine  
he stept

And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of an-  
cient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-  
wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down

By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed  
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the lake.  
There drew he forth the brand

Excalibur,  
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter

moon,  
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against  
the hilt:

For all the haft twinkled with dia-  
mond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-  
work

Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long  
That both his eyes were dazzled, as

he stood,  
This way and that dividing the swift

mind,  
In act to throw: but at the last it

seem'd  
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd

There in the many-knotted water-flags,  
That whistled stiff and dry about the

marge.  
So strode he hack slow to the wounded

King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere:

"Hast thou perform'd my mission  
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what  
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir  
Bedivere:

"I heard the ripple washing in the  
reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the  
crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale:

"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and  
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as be-  
seem'd

Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight:  
For surer sign had follow'd, either

hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.

This is a shameful thing for men to  
lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go  
again

As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing

I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring  
me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside  
the mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the  
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,  
he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud,  
"And if indeed I cast the brand

away,  
Surely a precious thing, one worthy

note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the

earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes

of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this

were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to  
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey them, if a king

demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself!

The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty

breath  
And rumors of a doubt? but were  
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of  
mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,  
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excali-  
bur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in  
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'

So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honor and much fame  
were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the  
wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing  
heavily:

"What is it thou hast seen? or what  
hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir  
Bedivere:

"I heard the water lapping on the  
crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the  
reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur,  
much in wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is  
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his  
eye

That bow'd the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my  
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the  
precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.  
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get  
thee hence.

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,

I will arise and slay thee with my  
hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and  
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.  
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of  
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern  
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of win-  
ter shock

By night, with noises of the northern  
sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur:  
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an  
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and  
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in  
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the  
King.

Then spake King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,  
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir  
Bedivere:

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest  
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never  
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I  
die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal  
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,  
wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an  
arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,  
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him  
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:  
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.  
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,  
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear  
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,  
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,  
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes  
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found not words,  
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,  
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,  
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,  
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed  
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,  
Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
"Quick, quick!  
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."  
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,  
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,  
Larger than human on the frozen hills.  
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry  
Before. His own thought drove him, like a goad.  
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves

And barren chasms, and all to left and right  
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based  
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang  
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,  
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,  
Beneath them; and descending they were ware  
That all the decks were dense with stately forms  
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these  
Three Queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose  
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,

And, as it were one voice an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills  
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,  
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"  
And to the barge they came. There those three Queens  
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.  
But she, that rose the tallest of them all  
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,  
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,  
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,  
And dropping bitter tears against his brow  
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white  
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the  
springing east;  
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops  
Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
curls—  
That made his forehead like a rising  
sun  
High from the daïs-throne—were  
parch'd with dust;  
Or, clogged into points and hanging  
loose,  
Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.  
So like a shatter'd column lay the  
King;  
Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
ment,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.  
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere,  
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall  
I go?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and  
my eyes?  
For now I see the true old times are  
dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.  
Such times have been not since the  
light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.  
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is  
dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty  
world;  
And I, the last, go forth companion-  
less,  
And the days darken round me, and  
the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds."  
And slowly answered Arthur from  
the barge:  
\* The old order changeth, yielding  
place to new,

And God fulfils Himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt  
the world.  
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in  
me?  
I have lived my life, and that which I  
have done  
May He within Himself make pure!  
but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face  
again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are  
wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Where-  
fore, let thy voice  
Rise like a fountain for me night and  
day.  
For what are men better than sheep  
or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the  
brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands  
of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who  
call them friend?  
For so the whole round earth is every  
way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet  
of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long  
way  
With these thou seest— if indeed I  
go—  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt)  
To the island-valley of Avilion;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any  
snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it  
lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with  
orchard-lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with  
summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound."  
So said he, and the barge with oar  
and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her  
death,



Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the  
hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died  
away.

HERE ended Hall, and our last light,  
that long  
Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,  
flared and fell:  
At which the Parson, sent to sleep  
with sound,  
And waked with silence, grunted  
"Good!" but we  
Sat rapt: it was the tone with which  
he read—  
Perhaps some modern touches here  
and there  
Redeem'd it from the charge of noth-  
ingness—  
Or else we loved the man, and prized  
his work;  
I know not: but we sitting, as I said,  
The cock crew loud; as at that time  
of year  
The lusty bird takes every hour for  
dawn:  
Then Francis, muttering, like a man  
ill-used,  
"There now—that's nothing!" drew  
a little back,  
And drove his heel into the smoul-  
der'd log,  
That sent a blast of sparkles up the  
flue:  
And so to bed; where yet in sleep I  
seem'd  
To sail with Arthur under looming  
shores,  
Point after point; till on to dawn,  
when dreams  
Begin to feel the truth and stir of  
day,  
To me, methought, who waited with a  
crowd,  
There came a bark that, blowing for-  
ward, bore

King Arthur, like a modern gentle-  
man  
Of stateliest port; and all the people  
cried,  
"Arthur is come again: he cannot  
die."  
Then those that stood upon the hills  
behind  
Repeated—"Come again, and thrice  
as fair;"  
And, further inland, voices echoed—  
"Come  
With all good things, and war shall  
be no more."  
At this a hundred bells began to peal.  
That with the sound I woke, and heard  
indeed  
The clear church-bells ring in the  
Christmas-morn.

### THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER;

OR, THE PICTURES.

THIS morning is the morning of the  
day,  
When I and Eustace from the city  
went  
To see the Gardener's Daughter; I  
and he,  
Brothers in Art; a friendship so com-  
plete  
Portion'd in halves between us, that  
we grew  
The fable of the city where we dwelt.  
My Eustace might have sat for  
Hercules;  
So muscular he spread, so broad of  
breast.  
He, by some law that holds in love,  
and draws  
The greater to the lesser, long desired  
A certain miracle of symmetry,  
A miniature of loveliness, all grace  
Summ'd up and closed in little;—  
Juliet, she  
So light of foot, so light of spirit—  
oh, she  
To me myself, for some three careless  
moons,  
The summer pilot of an empty heart

Unto the shores of nothing! Know  
 you not  
 Such touches are but embassies of  
 love,  
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he  
 found  
 Empire for life? but Eustace painted  
 her,  
 And said to me, she sitting with us  
 then,  
 "When will *you* paint like this?" and  
 I replied,  
 (My words were half in earnest, half  
 in jest,)  
 "'Tis not your work, but Love's.  
 Love, unperceived,  
 A more ideal Artist he than all,  
 Came, drew your pencil from you,  
 made those eyes  
 Darker than darkest pansies, and that  
 hair  
 More black than a hinds in the front  
 of March."  
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, "Go  
 and see  
 The Gardener's daughter: trust me,  
 after that,  
 You scarce can fail to match his mas-  
 terpiece."  
 And up we rose, and on the spur we  
 went.  
 Not wholly in the busy world, nor  
 quite  
 Beyond it, blooms the garden that I  
 love.  
 News from the humming city comes  
 to it  
 In sound of funeral or of marriage  
 bells;  
 And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,  
 you hear  
 The windy clanging of the minster  
 clock;  
 Although between it and the garden  
 lies  
 A league of grass, wash'd by a slow  
 broad stream,  
 That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the  
 oar,  
 Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,  
 Barge-laden, to three arches of a  
 bridge

Crown'd with the minster-towers.  
 The fields between  
 Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-  
 udder'd kine,  
 And all about the large lime feathers  
 low,  
 The lime a summer home of murmur-  
 ous wings.  
 In that still place she, boarded in  
 herself,  
 Grew, seldom seen; not less among us  
 lived  
 Her fame from lip to lip. Who had  
 not heard  
 Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?  
 Where was he,  
 So blunt in memory, so old at heart,  
 At such a distance from his youth in  
 grief,  
 That, having seen, forgot? The com-  
 mon mouth,  
 So gross to express delight, in praise  
 of her  
 Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,  
 And Beauty such a mistress of the  
 world.  
 And if I said that Fancy, led by  
 Love,  
 Would play with flying forms and  
 images,  
 Yet this is also true, that, long before  
 I look'd upon her, when I heard her  
 name  
 My heart was like a prophet to my  
 heart,  
 And told me I should love. A crowd  
 of hopes,  
 That sought to sow themselves like  
 winged seeds,  
 Born out of everything I heard and  
 saw,  
 Flutter'd about my senses and my soul;  
 And vague desires, like fitful blasts of  
 balm  
 To one that travels quickly, made the  
 air  
 Of Life delicious, and all kinds of  
 thought,  
 That verged upon them, sweeter than  
 the dream  
 Dream'd by a happy man, when the  
 dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory folds

For ever in itself the day we went To see her. All the land in flowery squares,

Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,

Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud

Drew downward: but all else of heaven was pure

Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,

And May with me from head to heel. And now,

As tho' 'twere yesterday, as tho' it were

The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,

(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor field,

And lowing to his fellows. From the woods

Came voices of the well-contented doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,

But shook his song together as he near'd

His happy home, the ground. To left and right,

The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;

The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;

The redcap whistled; and the nightingale

Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said to me,

"Hear how the bushes echo! by my life,

These birds have joyful thoughts. Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song? Or have they any sense of why they sing?"

And would they praise the heavens for what they have?"

And I made answer, "Were there nothing else

For which to praise the heavens but only love,

That only love were cause enough for praise."

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read my thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the North;

Down which a well-worn pathway courted us

To one green wicket in a privet hedge; This, yielding, gave into a grassy walk

Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool. The garden stretches southward. In the midst

A cedar spread his dark-green layers of shade.

The garden-glasses shone, and momentarily

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver lights.

"Eustace," I said, "this wonder keeps the house."

He nodded, but a moment afterwards He cried, "Look! look!" Before he ceased I turn'd,

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her there.

For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,

And blown across the walk. One arm aloft —

Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape —

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood,

A single stream of all her soft brown  
 hair  
 Pour'd on one side : the shadow of the  
 flowers  
 Stole all the golden gloss, and, wav-  
 ering  
 Lovingly lower, trembled on her  
 waist —  
 Ah, happy shade — and still went  
 wavering down,  
 But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might  
 have danced  
 The greensward into greener circles,  
 dipt,  
 And mix'd with shadows of the com-  
 mon ground !  
 But the full day dwelt on her brows,  
 and sunn'd  
 Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe  
 bloom,  
 And doubled his own warmth against  
 her lips,  
 And on the bounteous wave of such a  
 breast  
 As never pencil drew. Half light,  
 half shade,  
 She stood, a sight to make an old  
 man young.  
 So rapt, we near'd the house ; but  
 she, a Rose  
 In roses, mingled with her fragrant  
 toil,  
 Nor heard us come, nor from her tend-  
 ance turn'd  
 Into the world without ; till close at  
 hand,  
 And almost ere I knew mine own in-  
 tent,  
 This murmur broke the stillness of  
 that air  
 Which brooded round about her :  
 " Ah, one rose,  
 One rose, but one, by those fair fingers  
 cull'd,  
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd  
 on lips  
 Less exquisite than thine."  
 She look'd : but all  
 Suffused with blushes — neither self-  
 possess'd  
 Nor startled, but betwixt this mood  
 and that,

Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,  
 And dropt the branch she held, and  
 turning, wound  
 Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd  
 her lips  
 For some sweet answer, tho' no answer  
 came,  
 Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,  
 And moved away, and left me, statue-  
 like,  
 In act to render thanks.  
 I, that whole day,  
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd  
 there  
 Till every daisy slept, and Love's  
 white star  
 Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in  
 the dusk.  
 So home we went, and all the live-  
 long way  
 With solemn gibe did Eustace banter  
 me.  
 " Now," said he, " will you climb the  
 top of Art.  
 You cannot fail but work in hues to  
 dim  
 The Titianic Flora. Will you match  
 My Juliet? you, not you, — the Mas-  
 ter, Love,  
 A more ideal Artist he than all."  
 So home I went, but could not sleep  
 for joy,  
 Reading her perfect features in the  
 gloom,  
 Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and  
 o'er,  
 And shaping faithful record of the  
 glance  
 That graced the giving — such a noise  
 of life  
 Swarm'd in the golden present, such  
 a voice  
 Call'd to me from the years to come,  
 and such  
 A length of bright horizon rimm'd the  
 dark.  
 And all that night I heard the watch-  
 man peal  
 The sliding season : all that night I  
 heard  
 The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy  
 hours.

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all good,  
 O'er the mute city stole with folded wings,  
 Distilling odors on me as they went  
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.  
 Love at first sight, first-born, and heir to all,  
 Made this night thns. Henceforward  
 squall nor storm  
 Could keep me from that Eden where she dwelt.  
 Light pretexs drew me; sometimes a Dutch love  
 For tulips; then for roses, moss or musk,  
 To grace my city rooms; or fruits and cream  
 Served in the weeping elm; and more and more  
 A word could bring the color to my cheek;  
 A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;  
 Love trebled life within me, and with each  
 The year increased.  
 The daughters of the year,  
 One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd;  
 Each garlanded with her peculiar flower  
 Danced into light, and died into the shade;  
 And each in passing touch'd with some new grace  
 Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,  
 Like one that never can be wholly known,  
 Her beauty grew; till Autumn brought an hour  
 For Eustace, when I heard his deep "I will,"  
 Breathed, like the covenant of a God, to hold  
 From thence thro' all the worlds: but I rose up  
 Full of his bliss, and following her dark eyes  
 Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd

The wicket-gate, and found her standing there.  
 There sat we down upon a garden mound,  
 Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third,  
 Between us, in the circle of his arms  
 Enwound us both; and over many a range  
 Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers,  
 Across a hazy glimmer of the west,  
 Reveal'd their shining windows: from them clash'd  
 The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd,  
 We spoke of other things; we coursed about  
 The subject most at heart, more near and near,  
 Like doves about a dovecote, wheeling round  
 The central wish, until we settled there.  
 Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her,  
 Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own,  
 Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear,  
 Requiring at her hand the greatest gift,  
 A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved;  
 And in that time and place she answer'd me,  
 And in the compass of three little words,  
 More musical than ever came in one,  
 The silver fragments of a broken voice,  
 Made me most happy, faltering, "I am thine."  
 Shall I cease here? Is this enough to say  
 That my desire, like all strongest hopes,  
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,  
 Merged in completion? Would you learn at full  
 How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades  
 Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed

I had not staid so long to tell you all,  
 But while I mused came Memory with  
 sad eyes,  
 Holding the folded annals of my  
 youth;  
 And while I mused, Love with knit  
 brows went by,  
 And with a flying finger swept my lips,  
 And spake, "Be wise: not easily for-  
 given  
 Are those, who setting wide the doors  
 that bar  
 The secret bridal chambers of the  
 heart,  
 Let in the day." Here, then, my words  
 have end.

Yet might I tell of meetings, of fare-  
 wells —  
 Of that which came between, more  
 sweet than each,  
 In whispers, like the whispers of the  
 leaves  
 That tremble round a nightingale —  
 in sighs  
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for ut-  
 terance,  
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might  
 I not tell  
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges  
 given,  
 And vows, where there was never need  
 of vows,  
 And kisses, where the heart on one  
 wild leap  
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as  
 above  
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces  
 pale  
 Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with fleet-  
 ing stars;  
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-  
 lit,  
 Spread the light haze along the river-  
 shores,  
 And in the hollows; or as once we met  
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering  
 rain  
 Night slid down one long stream of  
 sighing wind,  
 And in her bosom bore the baby, Sleep.  
 But this whole hour your eyes have  
 been intent

On that veil'd picture — veil'd, for  
 what it holds  
 May not be dwelt on by the common  
 day.  
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise  
 thy soul;  
 Make thine heart ready with thine  
 eyes: the time  
 Is come to raise the veil.

Behold her there,  
 As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,  
 My first, last love; the idol of my  
 youth,  
 The darling of my manhood, and, alas!  
 Now the most blessed memory of mine  
 age.

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DORA.

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode  
 William and Dora. William was his  
 son,  
 And she his niece. He often look'd  
 at them,  
 And often thought, "I'll make them  
 man and wife."  
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,  
 And yearn'd towards William; but the  
 youth, because  
 He had been always with her in the  
 house,  
 Thought not of Dora.  
 Then there came a day  
 When Allan call'd his son, and said,  
 "My son:  
 I married late, but I would wish to see  
 My grandchild on my knees before I  
 die:  
 And I have set my heart upon a match.  
 Now therefore look to Dora; she is  
 well  
 To look to; thrifty too beyond her age  
 She is my brother's daughter: he and I  
 Had once hard words, and parted, and  
 he died  
 In foreign lands; but for his sake I  
 bred  
 His daughter Dora: take her for your  
 wife;  
 For I have wish'd this marriage, night  
 and day,

For many years." But William answer'd short;  
 "I cannot marry Dora; by my life, I will not marry Dora." Then the old man  
 Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:  
 "You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!  
 But in my time a father's word was law,  
 And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;  
 Consider, William: take a month to think,  
 And let me have an answer to my wish;  
 Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,  
 And never more darken my doors again."  
 But William answer'd madly; bit his lips,  
 And broke away. The more he look'd at her  
 The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;  
 But Dora bore them meekly. Then before  
 The month was out he left his father's house,  
 And hired himself to work within the fields;  
 And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed  
 A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.  
 Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan call'd  
 His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;  
 But if you speak with him that was my son,  
 Or change a word with her he calls his wife,  
 My home is none of yours. My will is law."  
 And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,  
 "It cannot be: my uncle's mind will change!"  
 And days went on, and there was born a boy

To William; then distresses came on him;  
 And day by day he pass'd his father's gate,  
 Heart-broken, and his father help'd him not.  
 But Dora stored what little she could save,  
 And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know  
 Who sent it; till at last a fever seized  
 On William, and in harvest time he died.  
 Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat  
 And look'd with tears upon her boy, and thought  
 Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:  
 "I have obey'd my uncle until now, and I have sinn'd, for it was all thro' me  
 This evil came on William at the first. But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,  
 And for your sake, the woman that he chose,  
 And for this orphan, I am come to you:  
 You know there has not been for these five years  
 So full a harvest: let me take the boy,  
 And I will set him in my uncle's eye  
 Among the wheat; that when his heart is glad  
 Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."  
 And Dora took the child, and went her way  
 Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound  
 That was unsown, where many poppies grew.  
 Far off the farmer came into the field  
 And spied her not; for none of all his men  
 Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;  
 And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
 But when the morrow came, she rose and took  
 The child once more, and sat upon the mound;  
 And made a little wreath of all the flowers  
 That grew about, and tied it round his hat  
 To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.  
 Then when the farmer pass'd into the field  
 He spied her, and he left his men at work,  
 And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?  
 Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"  
 So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,  
 And answer'd softly, "This is William's child!"  
 "And did I not," said Allan, "did I not  
 Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:  
 "Do with me as you will, but take the child,  
 And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"  
 And Allan said, "I see it is a trick  
 Got up betwixt you and the woman there.  
 I must be taught my duty, and by you!  
 You knew my word was law, and yet you dared  
 To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy;  
 But go you hence, and never see me more."  
 So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud  
 And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell  
 At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,  
 And the boy's cry came to her from the field,  
 More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,  
 And all the things that had been. She bow'd down  
 And wept in secret; and the reapers reap'd,  
 And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.  
 Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood  
 Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy  
 Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise  
 To God, that help'd her in her widowhood.  
 And Dora said, "My uncle took the boy;  
 But, Mary, let me live and work with you:  
 He says that he will never see me more."  
 Then answer'd Mary, "This shall never be,  
 That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself:  
 And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,  
 For he will teach him hardness, and to slight  
 His mother; therefore thou and I will go,  
 And I will have my boy, and bring him home;  
 And I will beg of him to take thee back:  
 But if he will not take thee back again,  
 Then thou and I will live within one house,  
 And work for William's child, until he grows  
 Of age to help us."  
 So the women kiss'd  
 Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.  
 The door was off the latch: they peep'd, and saw  
 The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,  
 Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,



And clapt him on the hands and on  
the cheeks,  
Like one that loved him: and the lad  
stretch'd out  
And babbled for the golden seal, that  
hung  
From Allan's watch, and sparkled by  
the fire.  
Then they came in: but when the boy  
beheld  
His mother, he cried out to come to her:  
And Allan set him down, and Mary  
said:  
"O Father! — if you let me call  
you so —  
I never came a-begging for myself,  
Or William, or this child; but now I  
come  
For Dora: take her back; she loves  
you well.  
O Sir, when William died, he died at  
peace  
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he  
said,  
He could not ever rue his marrying  
me —  
I had been a patient wife: but, Sir,  
he said  
That he was wrong to cross his father  
thus:  
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may  
he never know  
The troubles I have gone thro'!'  
Then he turn'd  
His face and pass'd — unhappy that I  
am!  
But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for  
you  
Will make him hard, and he will learn  
to slight  
His father's memory; and take Dora  
back,  
And let all this be as it was before."  
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face  
By Mary. There was silence in the  
room;  
And all at once the old man burst in  
sobs: —  
"I have been to blame — to blame.  
I have killed my son.  
I have kill'd him — but I loved him  
— my dear son.

May God forgive me! — I have been  
to blame.  
Kiss me, my children."  
Then they clung about  
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him  
many times.  
And all the man was broken with re-  
morse;  
And all his love came back a hundred-  
fold;  
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er  
William's child  
Thinking of William.  
So those four abode  
Within one house together; and as  
years  
Went forward, Mary took another  
mate;  
But Dora lived unmarried till her  
death.

## AUDLEY COURT.

"THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd,  
and not a room  
For love or money. Let us picnic  
there  
At Audley Court."  
I spoke, while Audley feast  
Humm'd like a hive all round the  
narrow quay,  
To Francis, with a basket on his arm,  
To Francis just alighted from the boat,  
And breathing of the sea. "With all  
my heart,"  
Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd  
thro' the swarm,  
And rounded by the stillness of the  
beach  
To where the bay runs up its latest  
horn.  
We left the dying ebb that faintly  
lipp'd  
The flat red granite; so by many a  
sweep  
Of meadow smooth from aftermath  
we reach'd  
The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd  
thro' all  
The pillar'd dusk of sounding syc-  
mores,

And cross'd the garden to the garden's lodge,  
 With all its casements bedded, and its walls  
 And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid  
 A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound,  
 'Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,  
 Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks  
 Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,

A flask of cider from his father's vats,  
 Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over; who was dead,  
 Who married, who was like to be, and how

The races went, and who would rent the hall:

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,

The four-field system, and the price of grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,

And came again together on the king  
 With heated faces; till he laugh'd aloud;

And, while the blackbird on the pippin hung

To hear him, clapt his hand in mine and sang—

“Oh! who would fight and march and counter-march,  
 Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field,  
 And shovell'd up into some bloody trench

Where no one knows? but let me live my life.

“Oh! who would cast and balance at a desk,  
 Perch'd like a crow upon a three-legg'd stool,  
 Till all his juice is dried, and all his joints  
 Are full of chalk? but let me live my life.

“Who'd serve the state? for if I carved my name  
 Upon the cliffs that guard my native land,

I might as well have traced it in the sands;  
 The sea wastes all: but let me live my life.

“Oh! who would love? I woo'd a woman once,  
 But she was sharper than an eastern wind,  
 And all my heart turn'd from her, as a thorn  
 Turns from the sea; but let me live my life.”

He sang his song, and I replied with mine:  
 I found it in a volume, all of songs,  
 Knock'd down to me, when old Sir Robert's pride,

His books—the more the pity, so I said—

Came to the hammer here in March—and this—

I set the words, and added names I knew.

“Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and dream of me:

Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,  
 And sleeping, haply dream her arm is mine.

“Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,  
 For thou art fairer than all else that is.

“Sleep, breathing health and peace upon her breast:

Sleep, breathing love and trust against her lip:

I go to-night: I come to-morrow morn.

“I go, but I return: I would I were  
 The pilot of the darkness and the dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream  
of me."

So sang we each to either, Francis  
Hale,

The farmer's son, who lived across the  
bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-  
withal,

And in the fallow leisure of my life  
A rolling stone of here and every-  
where,

Did what I would; but ere the night  
we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon,  
that, just

In crescent, dimly rain'd about the  
leaf

Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd  
The limit of the hills; and as we sank  
From rock to rock upon the glooming  
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us:  
lower down

The bay was oily calm; the harbor  
buoy,

Sole star of phosphorescence in the  
calm,

With one green sparkle ever and anon  
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at  
heart.

— —

### WALKING TO THE MAIL.

*John.* I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh  
the meadows look

Above the river, and, but a month ago,  
The whole hill-side was redder than a  
fox.

Is your plantation where this byway  
joins

The turnpike?

*James.* Yes.

*John.* And when does this come by?

*James.* The mail? At one o'clock.

*John.* What is it now?

*James.* A quarter to.

*John.* Whose house is that I see?  
No, not the County Member's with  
the vane:

Up higher with the yew-tree by it,  
and half

A score of gables.

*James.* That? Sir Edward Head's:  
But he's abroad: the place is to be  
sold.

*John.* Oh, his. He was not broken.

*James.* No, sir, he,  
Vex'd with a morbid devil in his  
blood

That veil'd the world with jaundice,  
hid his face

From all men, and commercing with  
himself,

He lost the sense that handles daily  
life —

That keeps us all in order more or  
less —

And sick of home went overseas for  
change.

*John.* And whither?

*James.* Nay, who knows? he's here  
and there.

But let him go; his devil goes with  
him,

As well as with his tenant, Jocky  
Dawes.

*John.* What's that?

*James.* You saw the man — on Mon-  
day, was it? —

There by the humpback'd willow;  
half stands up

And bristles; half has fall'n and  
made a bridge;

And there he caught the younker  
tickling trout —

Caught *in flagrante* — what's the Latin  
word? —

*Delicto*: but his house, for so they  
say,

Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that  
shook

The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt  
at doors,

And rummaged like a rat: no servant  
stay'd:

The farmer vext packs up his beds  
and chairs,

And all his household stuff; and with  
his boy

Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the  
tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails  
him, "What!

You're flitting!" "Yes, we're flitting," says the ghost  
(For they had pack'd the thing among the beds,)

"Oh well," says he, "you flitting with us too—

Jack, turn the horses' heads and home again."

*John.* He left his wife behind; for so I heard.

*James.* He left her, yes. I met my lady once:

A woman like a butt, and harsh as crabs.

*John.* Oh yet but I remember, ten years back—

'Tis now at least ten years—and then she was—

You could not light upon a sweeter thing:

A body slight and round, and like a pear

In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot

Lessening in perfect cadence, and a skin

As clean and white as privet when it flowers.

*James.* Ay, ay, the blossom fades, and they that loved

At first like dove and dove were cat and dog.

She was the daughter of a cottager, Out of her sphere. What betwixt shame and pride,

New things and old, himself and her, she sour'd

To what she is: a nature never kind!

Like men, like manners: like breeds like, they say:

Kind nature is the best: those manners next

That fit us like a nature second-hand; Which are indeed the manners of the great.

*John.* But I had heard it was this bill that past,

And fear of change at home, that drove him hence.

*James.* That was the last drop in the cup of gall.

I once was near him, when his bailiff brought

A Chartist pike. You should have seen him wince

As from a venomous thing: he thought himself

A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a cry

Should break his sleep by night, and his nice eyes

Should see the raw mechanic's bloody thumbs

Sweat on his blazon'd chairs, but, sir, you know

That these two parties still divide the world—

Of those that want, and those that have: and still

The same old sore breaks out from age to age

With much the same result. Now I myself,

A Tory to the quick, was as a hoy Destructive, when I had not what I would.

I was at school—a college in the South:

There lived a flayflint near; we stolc his fruit,

His hens, his eggs; but there was law for us;

We paid in person. He had a sow, sir. She,

With meditative grunts of much content,

Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun and mud.

By night we dragg'd her to the college tower

From her warm bed, and up the cork-screw stair

With hand and rope we haled the groaning sow,

And on the leads we kept her till she pigg'd.

Large range of prospect had the mother sow,

And but for daily loss of one she loved

As one by one we took them—but for this—

As never sow was higher in this world—

Might have been happy : but what lot  
is pure ?

We took them all, till she was left  
alone

Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,  
And so return'd unfarrow'd to her  
sty.

*John.* They found you out ?

*James.* Not they.

*John.* Well — after all —

What know we of the secret of a  
man ?

His nerves were wrong. What ails  
us, who are sound,  
That we should mimic this raw fool  
the world,

Which charts us all in its coarse  
blacks or whites,

As ruthless as a baby with a worm,  
As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows  
To Pity — more from ignorance than  
will.

But put your best foot forward, or  
I fear

That we shall miss the mail : and here  
it comes

With five at top : as quaint a four-in-  
hand

As you shall see — three pyebalds and  
a roan.

### EDWIN MORRIS;

#### OR, THE LAKE.

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the lake,  
My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters  
of a year,

My one Oasis in the dust and drouth  
Of city life ! I was a sketcher then :  
See here, my doing : curves of moun-  
tain, bridge,

Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built  
When men knew how to build, upon a  
rock

With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock :  
And here, new-comers in an ancient  
hold,

New-comers from the Mersey, million-  
aires,

Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chim-  
nied bulk

Of mellow brickwork on an isle of  
bowers.

O me, my pleasant rambles by the  
lake

With Edwin Morris and with Edward  
Bull

The curate ; he was fatter than his  
cure.

But Edwin Morris, he that knew the  
names,

Long learned names of agaric, moss  
and fern,

Who forged a thousand theories of the  
rocks,

Who taught me how to skate, to row,  
to swim,

Who read me rhymes elaborately good,  
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for  
he seem'd

All-perfect, finish'd to the finger nail.

And once I ask'd him of his early  
life,

And his first passion ; and he answer'd  
me ;

And well his words became him : was  
he not

A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence  
Stored from all flowers ? Poet-like he  
spoke.

“ My love for Nature is as old as I ;  
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to  
that,

And three rich sennights more, my love  
for her.

My love for Nature and my love for  
her,

Of different ages, like twin-sisters  
grew,

Twin-sisters differently beautiful.

To some full music rose and sank the  
sun,

And some full music seem'd to move  
and change

With all the varied changes of the  
dark,

And either twilight and the day be-  
tween ;

For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again

Revolving toward fulfilment, made it  
sweet  
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to  
breathe."

Or this or something like to this he  
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward  
Bull,

"I take it, God made the woman for  
the man,  
And for the good and increase of the  
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,  
To have a dame indoors, that trims us  
up,

And keeps us tight; but these unreal  
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and  
indeed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of  
solid stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the  
man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world."

"Parson," said I, "you pitch the pipe  
too low:

But I have sudden touches, and can  
run

My faith beyond my practice into his:  
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,  
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,  
I scarce have other music: yet say on,  
What should one give to light on such  
a dream?"

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

"Give?  
Give all thou art," he answer'd, and a  
light

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy  
cheek;

"I would have hid her needle in my  
heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch  
No deeper than the skin: my ears  
could hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark  
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went  
and came;

Her voice fled always thro' the summer  
land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy  
days!

The flower of each, those moments  
when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no  
more."

Were not his words delicious, I a  
beast

To take them as I did? but something  
jarr'd;

Whether he spoke too largely; that  
there seem'd

A touch of something false, some self  
conceit,

Or over-smoothness: howsoe'er it was,  
He scarcely hit my humor, and I said:

"Friend Edwin, do not think your-  
self alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to  
me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,  
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right  
and left?

But you can talk: yours is a kindly  
vein:

I have, I think, — Heaven knows — as  
much within;

Have, or should have, but for a  
thought or two,

That like a purple beech among the  
greens

Looks out of place: 'tis from no want  
in her:

It is my shyness, or my self-distrust,  
Or something of a wayward modern  
mind

Dissecting passion. Time will set me  
right."

So spoke I knowing not the things  
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward  
Bull:

"God made the woman for the use of  
man,

And for the good and increase of the  
world"

And I and Edwin laughed; and now  
 we paused  
 About the windings of the marge to  
 hear  
 The soft wind blowing over meadowy  
 holms  
 And alders, garden-isles; and now we  
 left  
 The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran  
 By ripply shallows of the lispig lake,  
 Delighted with the freshness and the  
 sound.

But, when the bracken rusted on  
 their crags,  
 My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by  
 him  
 That was a God, and is a lawyer's clerk,  
 The rentroll Cupid of our rainy isles.  
 'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no  
 more:  
 She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous*  
*suit*;  
 The close, "Your Letty, only yours";  
 and this  
 Thrice underscored. The friendly  
 mist of morn  
 Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran  
 My craft aground, and heard with  
 beating heart  
 The Sweet-Gale rustle round the shelv-  
 ing keel;  
 And out I stept, and up I crept: she  
 moved,  
 Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering  
 flowers:  
 Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;  
 and she,  
 She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore  
 faith, I breathed  
 In some new planet: a silent cousin  
 stole  
 Upon us and departed: "Leave," she  
 cried,  
 "O leave me!" "Never, dearest,  
 never: here  
 I brave the worst:" and while we  
 stood like fools  
 Embracing, all at once a score of pugs  
 And poodles yell'd within, and out  
 they came  
 Trustees and Aunts and Uncles.

"What, with him!  
 Go" (shrill'd the cotton-spinning  
 chorus); "him!"  
 I choked. Again they shriek'd the  
 burthen — "Him!"  
 Again with hands of wild rejection  
 "Go! —  
 Girl, get you in!"<sup>#</sup> She went — and in  
 one month  
 They wedded her to sixty thousand  
 pounds,  
 To lands in Kent and messuages in  
 York,  
 And slight Sir Robert with his watery  
 smile  
 And educated whisker. But for me,  
 They set an ancient creditor to  
 work:  
 It seems I broke a close with force  
 and arms:  
 There came a mystic token from the  
 king  
 To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!  
 I read, and fled by night, and flying  
 turn'd:  
 Her taper glimmer'd in the lake be-  
 low:  
 I turn'd once more, close-button'd to  
 the storm;  
 So left the place, left Edwin, nor have  
 seen  
 Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared  
 to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps: yet  
 long ago  
 I have pardon'd little Letty; not in-  
 deed,  
 It may be, for her own dear sake but  
 this,  
 She seems a part of those fresh days  
 to me;  
 For in the dust and drouth of Lon-  
 don life  
 She moves among my visions of the  
 lake,  
 While the prime swallow dips his  
 wing, or then  
 While the gold-lily blows, and over-  
 head  
 The light cloud smoulders on the  
 summer crag.

## ST. SIMEON STYLITES.

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,  
From scalp to sole one slough and  
crust of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven,  
scarce meet

For troops of devils, mad with blas-  
phemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I  
hold

Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn  
and sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with  
storms of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my  
sin.

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty  
God,

This not be all in vain, that thrice ten  
years,

Thrice multiplied by superhuman  
pangs,

In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and  
cold,

In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous  
throes and cramps,

A sign betwixt the meadow and the  
cloud,

Patient on this tall pillar I have borne  
Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,  
and sleet, and snow;

And I had hoped that ere this period  
closed

Thou wouldst have caught me up into  
thy rest,

Denying not these weather-beaten  
limbs

The meed of saints, the white robe  
and the palm.

O take the meaning, Lord: I do not  
breathe,

Not whisper, any murmur of com-  
plaint.

'Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,  
were still

Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to  
bear,

Than were those lead-like tons of sin,  
that crush'd

My spirit flat before thee.

O Lord, Lord,

Thou knowest I bore this better at  
the first,

For I was strong and hale of body  
then;

And tho' my teeth, which now are  
dropt away,

Would chatter with the cold, and all  
my beard

Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the  
moon,

I drown'd the whoopings of the owl  
with sound

Of pious hymns and psalms, and  
sometimes saw

An angel stand and watch me, as I  
sang.

Now am I feeble grown; my end  
draws nigh;

I hope my end draws nigh: half deaf  
I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people  
hum

About the column's base, and almost  
blind,

And scarce can recognize the fields I  
know;

And both my thighs are rotted with  
the dew;

Yet cease I not to clamor and to  
cry,

While my stiff spine can hold my  
weary head,

Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from  
the stone,

Have mercy, mercy: take away my  
sin.

O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my  
soul,

Who may be saved? who is it may be  
saved?

Who may be made a saint, if I fail  
here?

Show me the man hath suffer'd more  
than I.

For did not all thy martyrs die one  
death?

For either they were stoned, or cruci-  
fied,

Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or  
sawn

In twain beneath the ribs; but I die  
here



To-day and whole years long, a life  
 or death.  
 Bear witness, if I could have found a  
 way  
 (And heedfully I sifted all my  
 thought)  
 More slowly-painful to subdue this  
 home  
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and  
 hate,  
 I had not stinted practice, O my God.  
 For not alone this pillar-punish-  
 ment,  
 Not this alone I bore: but while I  
 lived  
 In the white convent down the valley  
 there,  
 For many weeks about my loins I wore  
 The robe that haled the buckets from  
 the well,  
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the  
 noose;  
 And spake not of it to a single soul,  
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,  
 Betray'd my secret penance, so that  
 all  
 My brethren marvell'd greatly. More  
 than this  
 I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest  
 all.  
 Three winters, that my soul might  
 grow to thee,  
 I lived up there on yonder mountain  
 side.  
 My right leg chain'd into the crag, I  
 lay  
 Pent in a roofless close of ragged  
 stones;  
 Inswathed sometimes in wandering  
 mist, and twice  
 Black'd with thy branding thunder,  
 and sometimes  
 Sucking the damps for drink, and  
 eating not,  
 Except the spare chance-gift of those  
 that came  
 To touch my body and be heal'd, and  
 live:  
 And they say then that I work'd mir-  
 acles,  
 Whereof my fame is loud amongst  
 mankind,

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.  
 Thou, O God,  
 Knowest alone whether this was or no.  
 Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin.  
 Then, that I might be more alone  
 with thee,  
 Three years I lived upon a pillar,  
 high  
 Six cubits, and three years on one of  
 twelve;  
 And twice three years I crouch'd on  
 one that rose  
 Twenty by measure; last of all, I  
 grew  
 Twice ten long weary weary years to  
 this,  
 That numbers forty cubits from the  
 soil.  
 I think that I have borne as much  
 as this —  
 Or else I dream — and for so long a  
 time,  
 If I may measure time by yon slow  
 light,  
 And this high dial, which my sorrow  
 crowns —  
 So much — even so.  
 And yet I know not well,  
 For that the evil ones come here, and  
 say,  
 "Fall down, O Simeon: that hast  
 suffer'd long  
 For ages and for ages!" then they  
 prate  
 Of penances I cannot have gone thro',  
 Perplexing me with lies; and oft I  
 fall,  
 Maybe for months, in such blind  
 lethargies  
 That Heaven, and Earth, and Time  
 are chocked.  
 But yet  
 Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and  
 all the saints  
 Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men  
 on earth  
 House in the shade of comfortable  
 roofs,  
 Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-  
 some food,  
 And wear warm clothes, and even  
 beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of  
 the light,  
 Bow down one thousand and two hundred times,  
 To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the  
 saints;  
 Or in the night, after a little sleep,  
 I wake: the chill stars sparkle; I am  
 wet  
 With drenching dews, or stiff with  
 crackling frost.  
 I wear an undress'd goatskin on my  
 back;  
 A grazing iron collar grinds my  
 neck;  
 And in my weak, lean arms I lift the  
 cross,  
 And strive and wrestle with thee till  
 I die:  
 O mercy, mercy! wash away my sin.  
 O Lord, thou knowest what a man  
 I am;  
 A sinful man, conceived and born in  
 sin:  
 'Tis their own doing; this is none of  
 mine;  
 Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for  
 this,  
 That here come those that worship  
 me? Ha! ha!  
 They think that I am somewhat.  
 What am I?  
 The silly people take me for a saint,  
 And bring me offerings of fruit and  
 flowers:  
 And I, in truth (thou wilt bear witness  
 here)  
 Have all in all endured as much, and  
 more  
 Than many just and holy men, whose  
 names  
 Are register'd and calendar'd for  
 saints.  
 Good people, you do ill to kneel to  
 me.  
 What is it I can have done to merit  
 this?  
 I am a sinner viler than you all.  
 It may be I have wrought some mira-  
 cles,  
 And cured some halt and maim'd; but  
 what of that?

It may be, no one, even among the  
 saints,  
 May match his pains with mine; but  
 what of that?  
 Yet do not rise; for you may look on  
 me,  
 And in your looking you may kneel  
 to God.  
 Speak! is there any of you halt or  
 maim'd?  
 I think you know I have some power  
 with Heaven  
 From my long penance: let him speak  
 his wish.  
 Yes, I can heal him. Power goes  
 forth from me.  
 They say that they are heal'd. Ah,  
 hark! they shout  
 "St. Simeon Stylites." Why, if so,  
 God reaps a harvest in me. O my soul,  
 God reaps a harvest in thee. If this be,  
 Can I work miracles and not be saved?  
 This is not told of any. They were  
 saints.  
 It cannot be but that I shall be saved;  
 Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,  
 "Behold a saint!"  
 And lower voices saint me from above.  
 Courage, St. Simeon! This dull chry-  
 salis  
 Cracks into shining wings, and hope  
 ere death  
 Spreads more and more and more, that  
 God hath now  
 Sponged and made blank of crimeful  
 record all  
 My mortal archives.  
 O my sons, my sons,  
 I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname  
 Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,  
 The watcher on the column till the end;  
 I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine  
 bakes;  
 I, whose bald brows in silent hours  
 become  
 Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now  
 From my high nest of penance here  
 proclaim  
 That Pontius and Iscariot by my side  
 Show'd like fair seraphs. On the coals  
 I lay,  
 A vessel full of sin: all hell beneath

Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd  
 my sleeve,  
 Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.  
 I smote them with the cross; they  
 swarm'd again.  
 In bed like monstrous apes they  
 crush'd my chest:  
 They flapp'd my light out as I read: I  
 saw  
 Their faces grow between me and my  
 book;  
 With colt-like whinny and with hog-  
 gish whine  
 They burst my prayer. Yet this way  
 was left,  
 And by this way I 'scaped them.  
 Mortify  
 Your flesh, like me, with scourges  
 and with thorns;  
 Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it  
 may be, fast  
 Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,  
 with slow steps,  
 With slow, faint steps, and much  
 exceeding pain,  
 Have scrambled past those pits of fire,  
 that still  
 Sing in mine ears. But yield not me  
 the praise:  
 God only through his bounty hath  
 thought fit,  
 Among the powers and princes of this  
 world,  
 To make me an example to mankind,  
 Which few can reach to. Yet I do  
 not say  
 But that a time may come — yea, even  
 now,  
 Now, now, his footsteps smite the  
 threshold stairs  
 Of life — I say, that time is at the doors  
 When you may worship me without  
 reproach;  
 For I will leave my relics in your land,  
 And you may carve a shrine about  
 my dust,  
 And burn a fragrant lamp before my  
 bones,  
 When I am gather'd to the glorious  
 saints.  
 While I spake then, a sting of  
 shrewdest pain

Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-  
 like change,  
 In passing, with a grosser film made  
 thick  
 These heavy, horny eye's. The end!  
 the end!  
 Surely the end! What's here? a  
 shape, a shade,  
 A flash of light. Is that the angel  
 there  
 That holds a crown? Come, blessed  
 brother, come.  
 I know thy glittering face. I waited  
 long;  
 My brows are ready. What! deny it  
 now?  
 Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I  
 clutch it. Christ!  
 'Tis gone: 'tis here again; the crown!  
 the crown!  
 So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,  
 And from it melt the dews of Paradise,  
 Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm,  
 and frankincense.  
 Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints:  
 I trust  
 That I am whole, and clean, and meet  
 for Heaven.  
 Speak, if there be a priest, a man  
 of God,  
 Among you there, and let him pres-  
 ently  
 Approach, and lean a ladder on the  
 shaft,  
 And climbing up into my airy home,  
 Deliver me the blessed sacrament;  
 For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,  
 I prophesy that I shall die to-night,  
 A quarter before twelve.  
 But thou, O Lord,  
 Aid all this foolish people; let them  
 take  
 Example, pattern: lead them to thy  
 light.

---

 THE TALKING OAK.

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;  
 Once more before my face  
 I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,  
 That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,  
 Beneath its drift of smoke;  
 And ah! with what delighted eyes  
 I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,  
 Ere that, which in me burn'd,  
 The love, that makes me thrice a man,  
 Could hope itself return'd;

To yonder oak within the field  
 I spoke without restraint,  
 And with a larger faith appeal'd  
 Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,  
 And told him of my choice,  
 Until he plagiarized a heart,  
 And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heaven  
 None else could understand;  
 I found him garrulously given,  
 A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply  
 Is many a weary hour;  
 'Twere well to question him, and try  
 If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,  
 Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,  
 Whose topmost branches can discern  
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,  
 If ever maid or spouse,  
 As fair as my Olivia, came  
 To rest beneath thy boughs. —

"O Walter, I have shelter'd here  
 Whatever maiden grace  
 The good old Summers, year by year  
 Made ripe in Sumner-chace:

"Old Summers, when the monk was fat,  
 And, issuing shorn and sleek,  
 Would twist his girdle tight, and pat  
 The girls upon the cheek,

"Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,  
 And number'd bead, and shrift,

Bluff Harry broke into the spence  
 And turn'd the cows adrift:

"And I have seen some score of those  
 Fresh faces, that would thrive  
 When his man-minded offset rose  
 To chase the deer at five;

"And all that from the town would  
 stroll,  
 Till that wild wind made work  
 In which the gloomy brewer's soul  
 Went by me, like a stork:

"The slight she-slips of loyal blood,  
 And others, passing praise,  
 Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud  
 For puritanic stays:

"And I have shadow'd many a group  
 Of beauties, that were born  
 In teacup-times of hood and hoop,  
 Or while the patch was worn;

"And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,  
 About me leap'd and laugh'd  
 The modish Cupid of the day,  
 And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

"I swear (and else may insects prick  
 Each leaf into a gall)  
 This girl, for whom your heart is sick,  
 Is three times worth them all;

"For those and theirs, by Nature's law,  
 Have faded long ago;  
 But in these latter springs I saw  
 Your own Olivia blow,

"From when she gamboll'd on the  
 greens  
 A baby-germ, to when  
 The maiden blossoms of her teens  
 Could number five from ten.

"I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,  
 (And hear me with thine ears,  
 That, tho' I circle in the grain  
 Five hundred rings of years —

"Yet, since I first could cast a shade,  
 Did never creature pass

So slightly, musically made,  
So light upon the grass :

“ For as to fairies, that will flit  
To make the greensward fresh,  
I hold them exquisitely knit,  
But far too spare of flesh.”

Oh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,  
And overlook the chace;  
And from thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,  
That oft has heard my vows,  
Declare when last Olivia came  
To sport beneath thy boughs.

“ O yesterday, you know, the fair  
Was holden at the town;  
Her father left his good arm-chair,  
And rode his hunter down.

“ And with him Albert came on his.  
I look'd at him with joy:  
As cowslip unto oxlip is,  
So seems she to the boy.

“ An hour had past — and, sitting  
straight  
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,  
Her mother trundled to the gate  
Behind the dappled grays.

“ But as for her, she stay'd at home,  
And on the roof she went,  
And down the way you use to come,  
She look'd with discontent.

“ She left the novel half-uncut  
Upon the rosewood shelf;  
She left the new piano shut:  
She could not please herself.

“ Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,  
And livelier than a lark  
She sent her voice thro' all the holt  
Before her, and the park.

“ A light wind chased her on the wing,  
And in the chase grew wild,  
As close as might be would he cling  
About the darling child:

“ But light as any wind that blows  
So fleetly did she stir,  
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and  
rose,  
And turn'd to look at her.

“ And here she came, and round me  
play'd,  
And sang to me the whole  
Of those three stanzas that you mark'd  
About my 'giant bole;'

“ And in a fit of frolic mirth  
She strove to span my waist:  
Alas, I was so broad of girth,  
I could not be embraced.

“ I wish'd myself the fair young beech  
That here beside me stands,  
That round me, clasping each in each,  
She might have lock'd her hands.

“ Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as  
sweet  
As woodbine's fragile hold,  
Or when I feel about my feet  
The berried briony fold.”

O muffle round thy knees with fern,  
And shadow Sumner-chace!  
Long may thy topmost branch discern  
The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name  
I carved with many vows  
When last with throbbing heart I came  
To rest beneath thy boughs?

“ O yes, she wander'd round and round  
These knotted knees of mine,  
And found, and kiss'd the name she  
found,  
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

“ A teardrop trembled from its source,  
And down my surface crept.  
My sense of touch is something coarse,  
But I believe she wept.

“ Then flush'd her cheek with rosy  
light,  
She glanced across the plain:

But not a creature was in sight:  
She kiss'd me once again.

"Her kisses were so close and kind,  
That, trust me on my word,  
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,  
But yet my sap was stirr'd:

"And even into my inmost ring  
A pleasure I discern'd,  
Like those blind motions of the Spring,  
That show the year is turn'd.

"Thrice-happy he that may caress  
The ringlet's waving balm —  
The cushions of whose touch may  
press  
The maiden's tender palm.

"I, rooted here among the groves,  
But languidly adjust  
My vapid vegetable loves  
With anthers and with dust:

"For ah! my friend, the days were  
brief  
Whereof the poets talk,  
When that, which breathes within the  
leaf,  
Could slip its bark and walk.

"But could I, as in times foregone,  
From spray, and branch, and stem,  
Have suck'd and gather'd into one  
The life that spreads in them,

"She had not found me so remiss;  
But lightly issuing thro',  
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,  
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,  
And overlook the lea,  
Pursue thy loves among the bowers  
But leave thou mine to me.

O flourish, hidden deep in fern,  
Old oak, I love thee well;  
A thousand thanks for what I learn  
And what remains to tell.

"Tis little more: the day was warm;  
At last, tired out with play,  
She sank her head upon her arm  
And at my feet she lay.

"Her eyelids dropp'd their silken  
eaves.  
I breathed upon her eyes  
Thro' all the summer of my leaves  
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

"I took the swarming sound of life —  
The music from the town —  
The murmurs of the drum and fife  
And lull'd them in my own.

"Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,  
To light her shaded eye;  
A second flutter'd round her lip  
Like a golden butterfly;

"A third would glimmer on her neck  
To make the necklace shine;  
Another slid, a sunny fleck,  
From head to ankle fine,

"Then close and dark my arms I  
spread,  
And shadow'd all her rest —  
Dropt dews upon her golden head,  
An acorn in her breast.

"But in a pet she started up,  
And pluck'd it out, and drew  
My little oakling from the cup,  
And flung him in the dew.

"And yet it was a graceful gift —  
I felt a pang within  
As when I see the woodman lift  
His axe to slay my kin.

"I shook him down because he was  
The finest on the tree.  
He lies beside thee on the grass.  
O kiss him once for me.

"O kiss him twice and thrice for me.  
That have no lips to kiss,  
For never yet was oak on lea  
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,  
 Look further thro' the chace,  
 Spread upward till thy boughs discern  
 The front of Summer-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,  
 That but a moment lay  
 Where fairer fruit of Love may rest  
 Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,  
 The warmth it thence shall win  
 To ripen life may magnetize  
 The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,  
 Or lapse from hand to hand,  
 Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet  
 Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,  
 Nor wielded axe disjoint,  
 That art the fairest-spoken tree  
 From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top  
 All throats that gurgle sweet!  
 All starry culmination drop  
 Balm-dews to bathe thy feet!

All grass of silky feather grow —  
 And while he sinks or swells  
 The full south-breeze around thee  
 blow  
 The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,  
 That under deeply strikes!  
 The northern morning o'er thee shoot,  
 High up, in silver spikes!

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,  
 But, rolling as in sleep,  
 Low thunders bring the mellow rain,  
 That makes thee broad and deep!

And hear me swear a solemn oath,  
 That only by thy side  
 Will I to Olive plight my troth,  
 And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may  
 fall,  
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear  
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball  
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,  
 And praise thee more in both  
 Than bard has honor'd beech or lime  
 Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,  
 And mystic sentence spoke;  
 And more than England honors that,  
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode  
 Till all the paths were dim,  
 And far below the Roundhead rode,  
 And humm'd a surly hymn.

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LOVE AND DUTY.

Of love that never found his earthly  
 close,  
 What sequel? Streaming eyes and  
 breaking hearts?  
 Or all the same as if he had not been?  
 Not so. Shall Error in the round  
 of time  
 Still father Truth? O shall the brag-  
 gart shout  
 For some blind glimpse of freedom  
 work itself  
 Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to  
 law  
 System and empire? Sin itself be  
 found  
 The cloudy porch oft opening on the  
 Sun?  
 And only he, this wonder, dead, be-  
 come  
 Mere highway dust? or year by year  
 alone  
 Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,  
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of  
 himself?  
 If this were thus, if this, indeed,  
 were all,  
 Better the narrow brain, the stony  
 heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-  
less days,  
The long mechanic pacings to and fro,  
The set gray life, and apathetic end.  
But am I not the nobler thro' thy  
love ?  
O three times less unworthy ! likewise  
thou  
Art more thro' Love, and greater than  
thy years  
The Sun will run his orbit, and the  
Moon  
Her circle. Wait, and Love himself  
will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge  
changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large  
in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some per-  
fect end.  
Will some one say, Then why not ill  
for good ?  
Why took ye not your pastime ? To  
that man  
My work shall answer, since I knew  
the right  
And did it; for a man is not as God,  
But then most Godlike being most a  
man.  
— So let me think 'tis well for thee  
and me —  
Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine  
Whose foresight preaches peace, my  
heart so slow  
To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd to  
me,  
When eyes, love-languid thro' half  
tears would dwell  
One earnest, earnest moment upon  
mine,  
Then not to dare to see ! when thy low  
voice,  
Faltering, would break its syllables, to  
keep  
My own full-tuned, — hold passion in  
a leash,  
And not leap forth and fall about thy  
neck,  
And on thy bosom (deep desired  
relief !)  
Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that  
weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses and my soul !  
For Love himself took part against  
himself  
To warn us off, and Duty loved of  
Love —  
O this world's curse, — beloved but  
hated — came  
Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace  
and mine,  
And crying, "Who is this ? behold  
thy bride,"  
She push'd me from thee.  
If the sense is hard  
To alien ears, I did not speak to these —  
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me :  
Hard is my doom and thine : thou  
knewest it all.  
Could Love part thus ? was it not  
well to speak,  
To have spoken once ? It could not  
but be well.  
The slow sweet hours that bring us all  
things good,  
The slow sad hours that bring us all  
things ill,  
And all good things from evil, brought  
the night  
In which we sat together and alone,  
And to the want, that hollow'd all the  
heart,  
Gave utterance by the yearning of an  
eye,  
That burn'd upon its object thro' such  
tears  
As flow but once a life.  
The trance gave way  
To those caresses, when a hundred  
times  
In that last kiss, which never was the  
last,  
Farewell, like endless welcome, lived  
and died.  
Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and  
the words  
That make a man feel strong in speak-  
ing truth ;  
Till now the dark was worn, and over-  
head  
The lights of sunset and of sunrise  
mix'd  
In that brief night ; the summer night,  
that paused



Among her stars to hear us; stars  
that hung

Love-charm'd to listen: all the wheels  
of Time

Spun round in station, but the end  
had come.

O then like those, who clench their  
nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,  
There — closing like 'an individual  
life —

In one blind cry of passion and of  
pain,

Like bitter accusation ev'n to death,  
Caught up the whole of love and  
utter'd it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live — yet live —

Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-  
ing all

Life needs for life is possible to  
will —

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be  
tended by

My blessing! Should my Shadow  
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it  
thou

For calmer hours to Memory's dark-  
est hold,

If not to be forgotten — not at  
once —

Not all forgotten. Should it cross  
thy dreams,

O might it come like one that looks  
content,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the  
truth,

And point thee forward to a distant  
light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from thy  
heart

And leave thee freer, till thou wake  
refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp  
hath grown

Full quire, and morning driv'n her  
plow of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded  
rack,

Beyond the fair green field and east-  
ern sea.

## THE GOLDEN YEAR.

WELL, you shall have that song which  
Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales:  
Old James was with me: we that day  
had been

Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-  
ard there,

And found him in Llanberis: then we  
cross

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half  
way up

The counter side; and that same song  
of his

He told me; for I banter'd him, and  
swore

They said he lived shut up within  
himself,

A tongue-tied Poet in the feverous  
days,

That, setting the *how much* before the  
*how*,

Cry, like the daughters of the horse-  
leech, "Give,

Cram us with all," but count not me  
the herd!

To which "They call me what they  
will," he said:

"But I was born too late: the fair new  
forms,

That float about the threshold of an  
age,

Like truths of Science waiting to be  
caught —

Catch me who can, and make the  
catcher crown'd —

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.  
But if you care indeed to listen,

hear

These measured words, my work of  
yesternorn.

"We sleep and wake and sleep, but  
all things move;

The Sun flies forward to his brother  
Sun;

The dark Earth follows wheel'd in her  
ellipse;

And human things returning on them-  
selves

Move onward, leading up the golden  
year.

"Ah, tho' the times, when some new  
thought can bud,  
Are but as poets' seasons when they  
flower,  
Yet seas, that daily gain upon the  
shore,  
Have ebb and flow conditioning their  
march,  
And slow and sure comes up the  
golden year.

"When wealth no more shall rest  
in mounded heaps.  
But smit with freer light shall slowly  
melt  
In many streams to fatten lower lands,  
And light shall spread, and man be  
liker man  
Thro' all the season of the golden  
year.

"Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens  
be wrens?  
If all the world were falcons, what of  
that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less,  
But he not less the eagle. Happy days  
Roll onward, leading up the golden  
year.

"Fly, happy happy sails, and bear  
the Press;  
Fly happy with the mission of the  
Cross;  
Knit land to land, and blowing haven-  
ward  
With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear  
of toll,  
Enrich the markets of the golden year.

"But we grow old. Ah! when shall  
all men's good  
Be each man's rule, and universal  
Peace  
Lie like a shaft of light across the land,  
And like a lane of beams athwart the  
sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden  
year?"

Thus far he flow'd, and ended;  
whereupon

"Ah, folly!" in mimic cadence an-  
swer'd James —

"Ah, folly! for it lies so far away,  
Not in our time, nor in our children's  
time,

'Tis like the second world to us that  
live;

'Twere all as one to fix our hopes on  
Heaven

As on this vision of the golden year."  
With that he struck his staff against  
the rocks

And broke it, — James, — you know  
him, — old, but full

Of force and cholera, and firm upon his  
feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter  
woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis:  
Then added, all in heat:

"What stuff is this!  
Old writers push'd the happy season  
back, —

The more fools they, — we forward:  
dreamers both:

You most, that in an age, when every  
hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the  
death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seeds-  
man, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not  
plunge

His hand into the bag: but well I  
know

That unto him who works, and feels  
he work,

This same grand year is ever at the  
doors."

He spoke; and, high above, I heard  
them blast

The steep slate-quarry, and the great  
echo flap

And buffet round the hills, from bluff  
to bluff.

### ULYSSES.

It little profits that an idle king,  
By this still hearth, among these bar-  
ren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and  
dole

Unequal laws unto a savage race,  
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and

know not me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink  
 Life to the lees : all times I have en-  
 joy'd  
 Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both  
 with those  
 That loved me, and alone ; on shore,  
 and when  
 Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades  
 Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;  
 For always roaming with a hungry  
 heart  
 Much have I seen and known ; cities  
 of men  
 And manners, climates, councils, gov-  
 ernments,  
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them  
 all ;  
 And drunk delight of battle with my  
 peers,  
 Far on the ringing plains of windy  
 Troy.  
 I am a part of all that I have met ;  
 Yet all experience is an arch where-  
 thro'  
 Gleams that untravell'd world, whose  
 margin fades  
 For ever and for ever when I move.  
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in  
 use !  
 As tho' to breathe were life. Life  
 piled on life  
 Were all too little, and of one to me  
 Little remains : but every hour is saved  
 From that eternal silence, something  
 more,  
 A bringer of new things ; and vile it  
 were  
 For some three suns to store and hoard  
 myself,  
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire  
 To follow knowledge like a sinking  
 star,  
 Beyond the utmost bound of human  
 thought.  
 This is my son, mine own Telema-  
 chus,  
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the  
 isle —  
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil  
 This labor, by slow prudence to make  
 mild

A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees  
 Subdue them to the useful and the  
 good.  
 Most blameless is he, centred in the  
 sphere  
 Of common duties, decent not to fail  
 In offices of tenderness, and pay  
 Meet adoration to my household gods,  
 When I am gone. He works his work,  
 I mine.  
 There lies the port ; the vessel puffs  
 her sail :  
 There gloom the dark broad seas. My  
 mariners,  
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,  
 and thought with me —  
 That ever with a frolic welcome took  
 The thunder and the sunshine, and  
 opposed  
 Free hearts, free foreheads — you and  
 I are old ;  
 Old age hath yet his honor and his toil ;  
 Death closes all : but something ere  
 the end,  
 Some work of noble note, may yet be  
 done,  
 Not unbecoming men that strove with  
 Gods.  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the  
 rocks :  
 The long day wanes : the slow moon  
 climbs : the deep  
 Moans round with many voices.  
 Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 Push off, and sitting well in order  
 smite  
 The sounding furrows ; for my pur-  
 pose holds  
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the  
 baths  
 Of all the western stars, until I die. /  
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us  
 down :  
 It may be we shall touch the Happy  
 Isles,  
 And see the great Achilles, whom we  
 knew.  
 Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and  
 tho'  
 We are not now that strength which  
 in old days

Moved earth and heaven ; that which  
 we are, we are ;  
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but  
 strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to  
 yield.

## TITHONUS.

THE woods decay, the woods decay  
 and fall,  
 The vapors weep their burthen to the  
 ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies  
 beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the  
 swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes : I wither slowly in thine  
 arms,  
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a  
 dream  
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,  
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls  
 of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a  
 man —  
 So glorious in his beauty and thy  
 choice,  
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he  
 seem'd  
 To his great heart none other than a  
 God !  
 I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality."  
 Then didst thou grant mine asking  
 with a smile,  
 Like wealthy men who care not how  
 they give.  
 But thy strong Hours indignant  
 work'd their wills,  
 And beat me down and marr'd and  
 wasted me,  
 And tho' they could not end me, left  
 me maim'd  
 To dwell in presence of immortal  
 youth,  
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
 And all I was, in ashes. Can thy  
 love,

Thy beauty, make amends, tho' ever  
 now,  
 Close over us, the silver star, thy  
 guide,  
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that  
 fill with tears  
 To hear me ? Let me go : take back  
 thy gift :  
 Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
 Where all should pause, as is most  
 meet for all ?

A soft air fans the cloud apart ;  
 there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where  
 I was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glim-  
 mer steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy  
 shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart re-  
 new'd.  
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the  
 gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close  
 to mine,  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the  
 wild team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy  
 yoke, arise,  
 And shake the darkness from their  
 loosen'd manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of  
 fire.

Lo ! ever thus thou growest beauti-  
 ful  
 In silence, then before thine answer  
 given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my  
 cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with  
 thy tears,  
 And make me tremble lest a saying  
 learnt,  
 In days far-off, on that dark earth, be  
 true ?  
 "The Gods themselves cannot recall  
 their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another  
 heart  
 In days far-off, and with what other  
 eyes  
 I used to watch—if I be he that  
 watch'd—  
 The lucid outline forming round thee;  
 saw  
 The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
 Changed with thy mystic change, and  
 felt my blood  
 Glow with the glow that slowly crim-  
 son'd all  
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I  
 lay,  
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing  
 dewy-warm  
 With kisses balmer than half-open-  
 ing buds  
 Of April, and could hear the lips that  
 kiss'd  
 Whispering I knew not what of wild  
 and sweet,  
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo  
 sing,  
 While Ilion like a mist rose into  
 towers.

Yet hold me not for e'er in thine  
 East:  
 How can my nature longer mix with  
 thine?  
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,  
 cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my  
 wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds,  
 when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about  
 the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power  
 to die,  
 And grassy barrows of the happier  
 dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the  
 ground;  
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my  
 grave:  
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by  
 morn;  
 I earth in earth forget these empty  
 courts,  
 And thee returning, on thy silver  
 wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL.

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn:  
 Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,  
 Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,  
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,  
 Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,  
 Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime  
 With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;  
 When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed.

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see ;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be. —

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast ;  
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest ;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove ;  
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young ;  
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, " I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong " ;  
Saying, " Dost thou love me, cousin ? " weeping, " I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his glowing hands ;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might ;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,  
And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,  
And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted ! O my Amy, mine no more !  
O the dreary, dreary moorland ! O the barren, barren shore !

Falsar than all fancy fathoms, falsar than all songs have sung,  
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue !

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having known me — to decline  
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine !

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,  
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they are glazed with wine.  
Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought :  
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —  
Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee with my hand !

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,  
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth !  
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth !

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule !  
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool !

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster ! — Hadst thou less unworthy  
proved —  
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit ?  
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come  
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort ? in division of the records of the mind ?  
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak and move :  
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore ?  
No — she never loved me truly : love is love for evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils ! this is truth the poet sings,  
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,  
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,  
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,  
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whisper'd by the phantom years,  
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.  
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender voice will cry.  
'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down : my latest rival brings thee rest.  
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.  
Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides the feelings — she herself was not  
exempt —  
Truly, she herself had suffer'd" — Perish in thy self-contempt !

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy ! wherefore should I care ?  
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these ?  
Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets overflow.  
I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,  
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,  
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier page.  
Hide me from thy deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age !

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,  
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,  
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,  
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn ;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,  
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men :



Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new :  
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do:

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,  
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew  
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,  
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro' the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were fur'd  
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me left me dry,  
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye ;

Eye. to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint :  
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point :

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping nigher,  
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,  
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,  
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,  
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,  
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moulder'd string ?  
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—  
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, match'd with mine,  
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat  
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starr'd;—  
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,  
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, me<sup>l</sup>ow moons and happy skies,  
Breathths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,  
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —  
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,  
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing  
space;  
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and they shall run,  
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,  
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,  
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,  
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains:

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime?  
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,  
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon.

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:  
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as when life begun :  
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.  
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!  
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath andholt,  
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with ram or hail, or fire or snow ;  
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

## GODIVA.

*I waited for the train at Coventry ;  
I hung with grooms and porters on the  
bridge,  
To watch the three tall spires ; and there  
I shaped*

*The city's ancient legend into this : —*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,  
New men, that in the flying of a wheel  
Cry down the past, not only we, that  
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the  
people well,

And loathed to see them over-tax'd ;  
but she

Did more, and underwent, and over-  
came,

The woman of a thousand summers  
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who  
ruled

In Coventry : for when he laid a tax  
Upon his town, and all the mothers  
brought

Their children, clamoring, "If we pay,  
we starve!"

She sought her lord, and found him,  
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,  
His beard a foot before him, and his  
hair

A yard behind. She told him of their  
tears,

And pray'd him, "If they pay this tax,  
they starve."

Whereat he stared, replying, half-  
amazed,

"You would not let your little finger  
ache

For such as *these*?"—"But I would  
die," said she.

He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by  
Paul :

Then fillip'd at the diamond in her  
ear ;

"Oh ay, ay, ay, you talk!"—"Alas!"  
she said,

"But prove me what it is I would not  
do."

And from a heart as rough as Esau's  
hand,

He answer'd, "Ride you naked thro'  
the town,

And I repeal it"; and nodding, as in  
scorn,

He parted, with great strides among  
his dogs.

So left alone, the passions of her  
mind,

As winds from all the compass shift  
and blow,

Made war upon each other for an hour,  
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,

And bade him cry, with sound of  
trumpet, all

The hard condition ; but that she  
would loose

The people : therefore, as they loved  
her well,  
From then till noon no foot should  
pace the street,  
No eye look down, she passing; but  
that all  
Should keep within, door shut, and  
window barr'd.

Then fled she to her inmost bower,  
and there  
Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her  
belt,  
The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a  
breath  
She linger'd, looking like a summer  
moon  
Half-dipt in cloud: anon she shook  
her head,  
And shower'd the rippled ringlets to  
her knee;  
Unclad herself in haste; adown the  
stair  
Stole on; and, like a creeping sun-  
beam, slid  
From pillar unto pillar, until she  
reach'd  
The gateway; there she found her  
palfrey trapt  
In purple blazon'd with armorial  
gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with  
chastity :  
The deep air listen'd round her as she  
rode,  
And all the low wind hardly breathed  
for fear.  
The little wide-mouth'd heads upon  
the spout  
Had cunning eyes to see : the barking  
cur  
Made her cheek flame: her palfrey's  
footfall shot  
Like horrors thro' her pulses: the  
blind walls  
Werc full of chinks and holes; and  
overhead  
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared :  
but she  
Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she  
saw  
The white-flower'd elder-thicket from  
the field

Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the  
wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with  
chastity :  
And one low churl, compact of thank-  
less earth,  
The fatal byword of all years to come.  
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,  
Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had  
their will,  
Were shrivell'd into darkness in his  
head,  
And dropt before him. So the Powers,  
who wait  
On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-  
used;  
And she, that knew not, pass'd: and  
all at once,  
With twelve great shocks of sound,  
the shameless noon  
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a  
hundred towers,  
One after one: but even then she  
gain'd  
Her bower; whence reissuing, robed  
and crown'd,  
To meet her lord, she took the tax  
away  
And built herself an everlasting name.

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## THE DAY-DREAM.

### PROLOGUE.

O LADY FLORA, let me speak :  
A pleasant hour has passed away  
While, dreaming on your damask  
cheek,  
The dewy sister-eyelids lay.  
As by the lattice you reclined,  
I went thro' many wayward moods  
To see you dreaming — and, behind,  
A summer crisp with shining woods.  
And I too dream'd, until at last  
Across my fancy, brooding warm,  
The reflex of a legend past,  
And loosely settled into form.  
And would you have the thought I  
had,  
And see the vision that I saw,  
Then take the broidery-frame, and add  
A crimson to the quaint Macaw,

And I will tell it. Turn your face,  
 Nor look with that too-earnest  
 eye —  
 The rhymes are dazzled from their  
 place,  
 And order'd words asunder fly.

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### THE SLEEPING PALACE.

## I.

THE varying year with blade and sheaf  
 Clothes and reclothes the happy  
 plains,  
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,  
 Here stays the blood along the veins.  
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,  
 Faint murmurs from the meadows  
 come,  
 Like hints and echoes of the world  
 To spirits folded in the womb.

## II.

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns  
 On every slanting terrace-lawn.  
 The fountain to his place returns  
 Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.  
 Here droops the banner on the tower,  
 On the hall-hearths the festal fires,  
 The peacock in his laurel bower,  
 The parrot in his gilded wires.

## III.

Roof-haunting martins warm their  
 eggs:  
 In these, in those the life is stay'd.  
 The mantles from the golden pegs  
 Droop sleepily: no sound is made,  
 Not even of a gnat that sings.  
 More like a picture seemeth all  
 Than those old portraits of old kings,  
 That watch the sleepers from the  
 wall.

## IV.

Here sits the Butler with a flask  
 Between his knees, half-drain'd; and  
 there  
 The wrinkled steward at his task,  
 The maid-of-honor blooming fair;  
 The page has caught her hand in his:  
 Her lips are sever'd as to speak:

His own are pouted to a kiss:  
 The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

## V.

Till all the hundred summers pass,  
 The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,  
 Make prisms in every carven glass,  
 And beaker brimm'd with noble  
 wine.  
 Each baron at the banquet sleeps,  
 Grave faces gather'd in a ring.  
 His state the king reposing keeps.  
 He must have been a jovial king.

## VI.

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows  
 At distance like a little wood;  
 Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,  
 And grapes with bunches red as  
 blood;  
 All creeping plants, a wall of green  
 Close-matted, burr and brake and  
 brier,  
 And glimpsing over these, just seen,  
 High up, the topmost palace spire.

## VII.

When will the hundred summers die,  
 And thought and time be born again,  
 And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,  
 Bring truth that sways the soul of  
 men?  
 Here all things in their place remain,  
 As all were order'd, ages since.  
 Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and  
 Pain,  
 And bring the fated fairy Prince.

---

### THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

## I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,  
 She lying on her couch alone,  
 Across the purple coverlet,  
 The maiden's jet-black hair has  
 grown,  
 On either side her tranced form  
 Forth streaming from a braid of  
 pearl:  
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,  
 And moves not on the rounded curl.

## II.

The silk star-broider'd coverlid  
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould  
 Languidly ever; and, amid  
 Her full black ringlets downward  
 roll'd,  
 Glows forth each softly-shadow'd arm  
 With bracelets of the diamond  
 bright:  
 Her constant beauty doth inform  
 Stillness with love, and day with  
 light.

## III.

She sleeps: her breathings are not  
 heard  
 In palace chambers far apart.  
 The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd  
 That lie upon her charmed heart.  
 She sleeps: on either hand upswells  
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly  
 prest:  
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells  
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

## THE ARRIVAL.

## I.

ALL precious things, discover'd late,  
 To those that seek them issue forth;  
 For love in sequel works with fate,  
 And draws the veil from hidden  
 worth.  
 He travels far from other skies —  
 His mantle glitters on the rocks —  
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,  
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

## II.

The bodies and the bones of those  
 That strove in other days to pass,  
 Are wither'd in the thorny close,  
 Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.  
 He gazes on the silent dead:  
 "They perish'd in their daring  
 deeds."  
 This proverb flashes thro' his head,  
 "The many fail: the one succeeds."

## III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he  
 seeks:  
 He breaks the hedge: he enters  
 there:  
 The color flies into his cheeks:  
 He trusts to light on something fair;  
 For all his life the charm did talk  
 About his path, and hover near  
 With words of promise in his walk,  
 And whisper'd voices at his ear.

## IV.

More close and close his footsteps  
 wind:  
 The Magic Music in his heart  
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find  
 The quiet chamber far apart.  
 The spirit flutters like a lark,  
 He stoops -- to kiss her -- on his  
 knee.  
 "Love, if thy tresses be so dark,  
 How dark those hidden eyes must  
 be!"

## THE REVIVAL.

## I.

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was snapt.  
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,  
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,  
 And barking dogs, and crowing  
 cocks;  
 A fuller light illumined all,  
 A breeze thro' all the garden swept,  
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,  
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

## II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,  
 The butler drank, the steward  
 scrawl'd,  
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,  
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock  
 squall'd,  
 The maid and page renew'd their strife,  
 The palace bang'd, and buzz'd and  
 clackt,  
 And all the long-pent stream of life  
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

## III.

And last with these the king awoke,  
And in his chair himself uprear'd,  
And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and  
spoke,

"By holy rood, a royal beard!  
How say you? we have slept, my lords.  
My beard has grown into my lap."  
The barons swore, with many words,  
'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

## IV.

"Pardy," return'd the king, "but still  
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.  
My lord, and shall we pass the bill  
I mention'd half an hour ago?"  
The chancellor, sedate and vain,  
In courteous words return'd reply:  
But dallied with his golden chain,  
And, smiling, put the question by.

## THE DEPARTURE.

## I.

AND on her lover's arm she leant,  
And round her waist she felt it fold,  
And far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old:  
Across the hills, and far away  
Beyond this utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess follow'd him.

## II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,  
O love, for such another kiss;"  
"O wake for ever, love," she hears,  
"O love, 'twas such as this and this."  
And o'er them many a sliding star,  
And many a merry wind was borne,  
And, stream'd thro' many a golden bar,  
The twilight melted into morn.

## III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep!"  
"O happy sleep, that lightly fled!"  
"O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!"  
"O love, thy kiss would wake the  
dead!"  
And o'er them many a flowing range

Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,  
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,  
The twilight died into the dark.

## IV.

"A hundred summers! can it be?  
And whither goest thou, tell me  
where?"  
"O seek my father's court with me,  
For there are greater wonders  
there."  
And o'er the hills, and far away  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
Beyond the night, across the day,  
Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

## MORAL.

## I.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And if you find no moral there,  
Go, look in any glass and say,  
What moral is in being fair.  
Oh, to what uses shall we put  
The wildweed flower that simply  
blows?  
And is there any moral shut  
Within the bosom of the rose?

## II.

But any man that walks the mead,  
In bud or blade, or bloom, may find,  
According as his humors lead,  
A meaning suited to his mind.  
And liberal applications lie  
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;  
So 'twere to cramp its use, if I  
Should hook it to some useful end.

## L'ENVOI.

## I.

You shake your head. A random  
string  
Your finer female sense offends.  
Well — were it not a pleasant thing  
To fall asleep with all one's friends;  
To pass with all our social ties  
To silence from the paths of men;  
And every hundred years to rise

And learn the world, and sleep  
again;  
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,  
And wake on science grown to more,  
On secrets of the brain, the stars,  
As wild as aught of fairy lore;  
And all that else the years will show,  
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,  
The vast Republics that may grow,  
The Federations and the Powers;  
Titanic forces taking birth  
In divers seasons, divers climes;  
For we are Ancients of the earth,  
And in the morning of the times.

## II.

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep  
Thro' sunny decades new and strange,  
Or gay quinqueniads would we reap  
The flower and quintessence of  
change.

## III.

Ah, yet would I — and would I might!  
So much your eyes my fancy take —  
Be still the first to leap to light  
That I might kiss those eyes awake!  
For, am I right, or am I wrong,  
To choose your own you did not  
care;  
You'd have *my* moral from the song,  
And I will take my pleasure there:  
And, am I right or am I wrong,  
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',  
To search a meaning for the song,  
Perforce will still revert to you;  
Nor finds a closer truth than this  
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,  
And evermore a costly kiss  
The prelude to some brighter world.

## IV.

For since the time when Adam first  
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,  
And every bird of Eden burst  
In carol, every bud to flower,  
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd  
hopes,  
What lips, like thine, so sweetly  
join'd?  
Where on the double rosebud droops  
The fulness of the pensive mind;

Which all too dearly self-involved,  
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me;  
A sleep by kisses undissolved,  
That lets thee neither hear nor see:  
But break it. In the name of wife,  
And in the rights that name may  
give,  
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,  
And that for which I care to live.

## EPILOGUE.

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,  
And, if you find a meaning there,  
O whisper to your glass, and say,  
"What wonder, if he thinks me  
fair?"  
What wonder I was all unwise,  
To shape the song for your delight  
Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise  
That float thro' Heaven, and cannot  
light?  
Or old-world trains, upheld at court  
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue —  
But take it — earnest wed with sport,  
And either sacred unto you.

## AMPHION.

My father left a park to me,  
But it is wild and barren,  
A garden too with scarce a tree,  
And waster than a warren:  
Yet say the neighbors when they call,  
It is not bad but good land,  
And in it is the germ of all  
That grows within the woodland.

O had I lived when song was great  
In days of old Amphion,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
Nor cared for seed or scion!  
And had I lived when song was great,  
And legs of trees were limber,  
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,  
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,  
Such happy intonation,  
Wherever he sat down and sung  
He left a small plantation;



Wherever in a lonely grove  
He set up his forlorn pipes,  
The gouty oak began to move,  
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,  
And, as tradition teaches,  
Young ashes pirouetted down  
Coquetting with young beeches ;  
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath  
Ran forward to his rhyming,  
And from the valleys underneath  
Came little cosses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent  
The woodbine wreaths that bind her,  
And down the middle, buzz ! she went  
With all her bees behind her :  
The poplars, in long order due,  
With cypress promenaded,  
The shock-head willows two and two  
By rivers galloped.

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,  
Came yews, a dismal coterie ;  
Each pluck'd his one foot from the  
grave,  
Poussetting with a sloe-tree :  
Old elms came breaking from the vine,  
The vine stream'd out to follow,  
And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine  
From many a cloudy hollow.

And wasn't it a sight to see,  
When, ere his song was ended,  
Like some great landslip, tree by tree,  
The country-side descended ;  
And shepherds from the mountain-  
eaves  
Look'd down, half-pleas'd, half-  
frighten'd,  
As dash'd about the drunken leaves  
The random sunshine lighten'd !

Oh, nature first was fresh to men,  
And wanton without measure ;  
So youthful and so flexible then,  
You moved her at your pleasure.  
Twang out, my fiddle ! shake the  
twigs !

And make her dance attendance ;  
Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,  
And scirrhous roots and tendons.

'Tis vain ! in such a brassy age  
I could not move a thistle ;  
The very sparrows in the hedge  
Scarce answer to my whistle ;  
Or at the most, when three-parts-sick  
With strumming and with scraping,  
A jackass heehaws from the rick,  
The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear ? a sound  
Like sleepy counsel pleading ;  
O Lord ! — 'tis in my neighbor's ground,  
The modern Muses reading.  
They read Botanic Treatises,  
And Works on Gardening thro'  
there,  
And Methods of transplanting trees  
To look as if they grew there.

The wither'd Misses ! how they prose  
O'er books of travell'd seamen,  
And show you slips of all that grows  
From England to Van Diemen.  
They read in arbors clipt and cut,  
And alleys, faded places,  
By squares of tropic summer shut  
And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,  
Are neither green nor sappy ;  
Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,  
The spindlings look unhappy.  
Better to me the meanest weed  
That blows upon its mountain,  
The vilest herb that runs to seed  
Beside its native fountain.

And I must work thro' months of toil  
And years of cultivation,  
Upon my proper patch of soil  
To grow my own plantation.  
I'll take the showers as they fall,  
I will not vex my bosom :  
Enough if at the end of all  
A little garden blossom

## ST. AGNES' EVE.

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows  
 Are sparkling to the moon:  
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes:  
 May my soul follow soon!  
 The shadows of the convent-towers  
 Slant down the snowy sward,  
 Still creeping with the creeping hours  
 That lead me to my Lord:  
 Make Thon my spirit pure and clear  
 As are the frosty skies,  
 Or this first snowdrop of the year  
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and  
 dark,  
 To yonder shining ground;  
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,  
 To yonder argent round;  
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,  
 My spirit before Thee;  
 So in mine earthly house I am,  
 To that I hope to be.  
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,  
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,  
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,  
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;  
 The flashes come and go;  
 All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
 And strows her lights below,  
 And deepens on and up! the gates  
 Roll back, and far within  
 For me the Heavenly Bridegroom  
 waits,  
 To make me pure of sin.  
 The sabbaths of Eternity,  
 One sabbath deep and wide —  
 A light upon the shining sea —  
 The Bridegroom with his bride!

## SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of  
 men,  
 My tough lance thrusteth sure,  
 My strength is as the strength of ten,  
 Because my heart is pure.  
 The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,  
 The hard brands shiver on the steel,

The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and  
 fly,  
 The horse and rider reel:  
 They reel, they roll in clanging lists,  
 And when the tide of combat stands,  
 Perfume and flowers fall in showers,  
 That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend  
 On whom their favors fall!  
 For them I battle till the end,  
 To save from shame and thrall:  
 But all my heart is drawn above,  
 My knees are bow'd in crypt and  
 shrine:  
 I never felt the kiss of love,  
 Nor maiden's hand in mine.  
 More bounteous aspects on me beam,  
 Me mightier transports move and  
 thrill;  
 So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer  
 A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,  
 A light before me swims,  
 Between dark stems the forest glows,  
 I hear a noise of hymns:  
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
 I hear a voice but none are there;  
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
 The tapers burning fair.  
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
 And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres  
 I find a magic bark;  
 I leap on board: no helmsman steers:  
 I float till all is dark.  
 A gentle sound, an awful light!  
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:  
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
 On sleeping wings they sail.  
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!  
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,  
 As down dark tides the glory slides,  
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne  
 Thro' dreaming towns I go,

The cock crows ere the Christmas  
morn,

The streets are dumb with snow.  
The tempest crackles on the leads,  
And, ringing, springs from brand  
and mail ;

But o'er the dark a glory spreads,  
And gilds the driving hail.  
I leave the plain, I climb the height ;  
No branchy thicket shelter yields ;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given  
Such hope, I know not fear ;  
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven  
That often meet me here.  
I muse on joy that will not cease,  
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,  
Pure lilies of eternal peace,  
Whose odors haunt my dreams ;  
And, stricken by an angel's hand,  
This mortal armor that I wear,  
This weight and size, this heart and  
eyes,  
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And thro' the mountain-walls  
A rolling organ-harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.  
Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear :  
" O just and faithful knight of God !  
Ride on ! the prize is near."  
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;  
By bridge and ford, by park and  
pale,  
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,  
Until I find the holy Grail.

---

EDWARD GRAY.

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder  
town

Met me walking on yonder way,  
" And have you lost your heart ? "  
she said ;

" And are you married yet, Edward  
Gray ? "

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
" Sweet Emma Moreland, love no  
more  
Can touch the heart of Edward  
Gray.

" Ellen Adair she loved me well,  
Against her father's and mother's  
will :  
To-day I sat for an hour and wept,  
By Ellen's grave, on the windy hill.

" Shy she was, and I thought her cold ;  
Thought her proud, and fled over  
the sea ;  
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,  
When Ellen Adair was dying for  
me.

" Cruel, cruel the words I said !  
Cruelly came they back to-day :  
' You're too slight and fickle,' I said,  
' To trouble the heart of Edward  
Gray.'

" There I put my face in the grass —  
Whisper'd, ' Listen to my despair :  
I repent me of all I did :  
Speak a little, Ellen Adair !'

" Then I took a pencil, and wrote  
On the mossy stone, as I lay,  
' Here lies the body of Ellen Adair ;  
And here the heart of Edward  
Gray !'

" Love may come, and love may go,  
And fly, like a bird, from tree to  
tree ;  
But I will love no more, no more,  
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

" Bitterly wept I over the stone :  
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :  
There lies the body of Ellen Adair !  
And there the heart of Edward  
Gray !"

WILL WATERPROOF'S  
LYRICAL MONOLOGUE.

MADE AT THE COCK.

O PLUM head-waiter at The Cock,  
To which I most resort,  
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock.  
Go fetch a pint of port:  
But let it not be such as that  
You set before chance-comers,  
But such whose father-grape grew fat  
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,  
But may she still be kind,  
And whisper lovely words, and use  
Her influence on the mind,  
To make me write my random rhymes,  
Ere they be half-forgotten;  
Nor add and alter, many times,  
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips  
Her laurel in the wine,  
And lays it thrice upon my lips,  
These favor'd lips of mine;  
Until the charm have power to make  
New lifeblood warm the bosom,  
And barren commonplaces break  
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;  
Her gradual fingers steal  
And touch upon the master-chord  
Of all I felt and feel.  
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,  
And phantom hopes assemble;  
And that child's heart within the man's  
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,  
By many pleasant ways,  
Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days:  
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;  
The gas-light wavers dimmer;  
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,  
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,  
Unboding critic-pen,  
Or that eternal want of pence,

Which vexes public men,  
Who hold their hands to all, and cry  
For that which all deny them —  
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,  
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,  
Tho' fortune clip my wings,  
I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
Half-views of men and things.  
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
There must be stormy weather;  
But for some true result of good  
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
If old things, there are new;  
Ten thousand broken lights and  
shapes,  
Yet glimpses of the true.  
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
As on this whirligig of Time  
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;  
With fair horizons bound:  
This whole wide earth of light and  
shade  
Comes out a perfect round.  
High over roaring Temple-bar,  
And set in Heaven's third story,  
I look at all things as they are,  
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest  
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,  
The pint, you brought me, was the best  
That ever came from pipe.  
But tho' the port surpasses praise,  
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.  
Is there some magic in the place?  
Or do my peptics differ?

For since I came to live and learn,  
No pint of white or red  
Had ever half the power to turn  
This wheel within my head,  
Which bears a season'd brain about,  
Unsubject to confusion,  
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,  
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,  
 With many kinsmen gay,  
 Where long and largely we carouse  
 As who shall say me nay :  
 Each month, a birth-day coming on,  
 We drink defying trouble,  
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,  
 And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,  
 Had relish fiery-new,  
 Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,  
 As old as Waterloo ;  
 Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,  
 In musty bins and chambers,  
 Had cast upon its crusty side  
 The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !  
 She answer'd to my call,  
 She changes with that mood or this,  
 Is all-in-all to all :  
 She lit the spark within my throat,  
 To make my blood run quicker,  
 Used all her fiery will, and smote  
 Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about  
 The waiter's hands, that reach  
 To each his perfect pint of stout,  
 His proper chop to each.  
 He looks not like the common breed  
 That with the napkin dally ;  
 I think he came like Ganymede,  
 From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg  
 Than modern poultry drop,  
 Stept forward on a firmer leg,  
 And cramm'd a plumper crop ;  
 Upon an ampler dunghill trod,  
 Crow'd lustier late and early,  
 Sipt wine from silver, praising God,  
 And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,  
 Till in a court he saw  
 A something-pottle-bodied boy  
 That knuckled at the taw :  
 He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and  
 good,

Flew over roof and casement :  
 His brothers of the weather stood  
 Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,  
 And follow'd with acclaims,  
 A sign to many a staring shire  
 Came crowing over Thames.  
 Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,  
 Till, where the street grows straiter,  
 One fix'd for ever at the door,  
 And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?  
 How out of place she makes  
 The violet of a legend blow  
 Among the chops and steaks !  
 'Tis but a steward of the can,  
 One shade more plump than com-  
 mon ;  
 As just and mere a serving-man  
 As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me  
 down  
 Into the common day ?  
 Is it the weight of that half-crown,  
 Which I shall have to pay ?  
 For, something duller than at first,  
 Nor wholly comfortable,  
 I sit, my empty glass reversed,  
 And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,  
 I take myself to task ;  
 Lest of the fulness of my life  
 I leave an empty flask :  
 For I had hope, by something rare  
 To prove myself a poet :  
 But, while I plan and plan, my hair  
 Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,  
 Till they be gather'd up ;  
 The truth, that flies the flowing can,  
 Will haunt the vacant cup :  
 And others' follies teach us not,  
 Nor much their wisdom teaches ;  
 And most, of sterling worth, is wha'  
 Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone!  
 We know not what we know.  
 But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone;  
 'Tis gone, and let it go.  
 'Tis gone: a thousand such have slept  
 Away from my embraces,  
 And fall'n into the dusty crypt  
 Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou! thy betters went  
 Long since, and came no more;  
 With peals of genial clamor sent  
 From many a tavern-door,  
 With twisted quirks and happy hits,  
 From misty men of letters;  
 The tavern-hours of mighty wits —  
 Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and  
 looks

Had yet their native glow:  
 Nor yet the fear of little books  
 Had made him talk for show;  
 But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,  
 He flash'd his random speeches,  
 Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd  
 His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,  
 Like all good things on earth!  
 For should I prize thee, couldst thou  
 last,  
 At half thy real worth?  
 I hold it good, good things should  
 pass:  
 With time I will not quarrel:  
 It is but yonder empty glass  
 That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,  
 To which I most resort,  
 I too must part: I hold thee dear  
 For this good pint of port.  
 For this, thou shalt from all things  
 suck  
 Marrow of mirth and laughter;  
 And wheresoe'er thou move, good luck  
 Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,  
 The sphere thy fate allots:  
 Thy latter days increased with pence

Go down among the pots:  
 Thou battenest by the greasy gleam  
 In haunts of hungry sinners,  
 Old boxes, larded with the steam  
 Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our  
 skins,  
 Would quarrel with our lot;  
 Thy care is, under polish'd tins,  
 To serve the hot-and-hot;  
 To come and go, and come again,  
 Returning like the pewit,  
 And watch'd by silent gentlemen,  
 That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost bead  
 The thick-set hazel dies;  
 Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread  
 The corners of thine eyes:  
 Live long, nor feel in head or chest  
 Our changeful equinoxes,  
 Till mellow Death, like some late  
 guest,  
 Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt  
 cease  
 To pace the gritted floor,  
 And, laying down an unctuous lease  
 Of life, shalt earn no more;  
 No carved cross-bones, the types of  
 Death,  
 Shall show thee past to Heaven:  
 But carved cross-pipes, and, under-  
 neath,  
 A pint-pot neatly graven.

#### LADY CLARE.

It was the time when lilies blow,  
 And clouds are highest up in air,  
 Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe }  
 To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn:  
 Lovers long-betroth'd were they:  
 They too will wed the morrow morn:  
 God's blessing on the day!

"He does not love me for my birth,  
Nor for my lands so broad and fair;  
He loves me for my own true worth,  
And that is well," said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,  
Said, "Who was this that went from  
thee?"

"It was my cousin," said Lady Clare,  
"To-morrow he weds with me."

"O God be thank'd!" said Alice the  
nurse,

"That all comes round so just and  
fair:  
Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,  
And you are *not* the Lady Clare."

"Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,  
my nurse?"

Said Lady Clare, "that ye speak so  
wild?"

"As God's above," said Alice the  
nurse,

"I speak the truth. you are my  
child.

"The old Earl's daughter died at my  
breast;

I speak the truth, as I live by bread!  
I buried her like my own sweet child,  
And put my child in her stead."

"Falsely, falsely have ye done,  
O mother," she said, "if this be true,  
To keep the best man under the sun  
So many years from his due."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the  
nurse,

"But keep the secret for your life,  
And all you have will be Lord  
Ronald's,  
When you are man and wife."

"If I'm a beggar born," she said,  
"I will speak out, for I dare not lie.  
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,  
And fling the diamond necklace by."

"Nay now, my child," said Alice the  
nurse,

"But keep the secret all ye can."  
She said, "Not so: but I will know  
If there be any faith in man."

"Nay now, what faith?" said Alice  
the nurse,

"The man will cleave unto his  
right."

"And he shall have it," the lady  
replied,

"Tho' I should die to-night."

"Yet give one kiss to your mother  
dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee."

"O mother, mother, mother," she said,  
"So strange it seems to me.

"Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,  
My mother dear, if this be so,  
And lay your hand upon my head,  
And bless me, mother, ere I go."

She clad herself in a russet gown,  
She was no longer Lady Clare:  
She went by dale, and she went by  
down,  
With a single rose in her air.

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had  
brought

Leapt up from where she lay,  
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,  
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his  
tower:

"O Lady Clare, you shame your  
worth!

Why come you drest like a village  
maid,

That are the flower of the earth?"

"If I come drest like a village maid,  
I am but as my fortunes are:

I am a beggar born," she said,  
"And not the Lady Clare."

"Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
 "For I am yours in word and in deed.

Play me no tricks," said Lord Ronald,  
 "Your riddle is hard to read."

O and proudly stood she up!  
 Her heart within her did not fail:  
 She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,  
 And told him all her nurse's tale.

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn:  
 He turn'd and kiss'd her where she stood:

"If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, "the next in blood —

"If you are not the heiress born,  
 And I," said he, "the lawful heir,  
 We two will wed to-morrow morn,  
 And you shall still be Lady Clare."

### THE CAPTAIN.

#### A LEGEND OF THE NAVY.

HE that only rules by terror  
 Doeth grievous wrong.  
 Deep as Hell I count his error.  
 Let him hear my song.  
 Brave the Captain was: the seamen  
 Made a gallant crew,  
 Gallant sons of English freemen,  
 Sailors bold and true.  
 But they hated his oppression,  
 Stern he was and rash;  
 So for every light transgression  
 Doom'd them to the lash.  
 Day by day more harsh and cruel  
 Seem'd the Captain's mood.  
 Secret wrath like smother'd fuel  
 Burnt in each man's blood.  
 Yet he hoped to purchase glory,  
 Hoped to make the name  
 Of his vessel great in story,  
 Wheresoe'er he came.  
 So they past by capes and islands,  
 Many a harbor-mouth,  
 Sailing under palmy highlands  
 Far within the South.  
 On a day when they were going

O'er the lone expanse,  
 In the north, her canvas flowing,  
 Rose a ship of France.  
 Then the Captain's color heighten'd,  
 Joyful came his speech:  
 But a cloudy gladness lighten'd  
 In the eyes of each.  
 "Chase," he said: the ship flew for  
 ward,  
 And the wind did blow;  
 Stately, lightly, went she Norward,  
 Till she near'd the foe.  
 Then they look'd at him they hated,  
 Had what they desired:  
 Mute with folded arms they waited —  
 Not a gun was fired.  
 But they heard the foeman's thunder  
 Roaring out their doom;  
 All the air was torn in sunder,  
 Crashing went the boom,  
 Spars were splinter'd, decks were shat-  
 ter'd,  
 Bullets fell like rain;  
 Over mast and deck were scatter'd  
 Blood and brains of men.  
 Spars were splinter'd; decks were  
 broken:  
 Every mother's son —  
 Down they dropt — no word was  
 spoken —  
 Each beside his gun.  
 On the decks as they were lying,  
 Were their faces grim.  
 In their blood, as they lay dying,  
 Did they smile on him.  
 Those, in whom he had reliance  
 For his noble name,  
 With one smile of still defiance  
 Sold him unto shame.  
 Shame and wrath his heart con-  
 founded,  
 Pale he turn'd and red,  
 Till himself was deadly wounded  
 Falling on the dead.  
 Dismal error! fearful slaughter!  
 Years have wander'd by,  
 Side by side beneath the water  
 Crew and Captain lie;  
 There the sunlit ocean tosses  
 O'er them mouldering,  
 And the lonely seabird crosses  
 With one waft of the wing.



## THE LORD OF BURLEIGH.

In her ear he whispers gayly,  
 "If my heart by signs can tell,  
 Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,  
 And I think thou lov'st me well."  
 She replies, in accents fainter,  
 "There is none I love like thee."  
 He is but a landscape-painter,  
 And a village maiden she.  
 He to lips, that fondly falter,  
 Presses his without reproof:  
 Leads her to the village altar,  
 And they leave her father's roof.  
 "I can make no marriage present:  
 Little can I give my wife.  
 Love will make our cottage pleasant,  
 And I love thee more than life."  
 They by parks and lodges going  
 See the lordly castles stand:  
 Summer woods, about them blowing,  
 Made a murmur in the land.  
 From deep thought himself he rouses,  
 Says to her that loves him well,  
 "Let us see these handsome houses  
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell."  
 So she goes by him attended,  
 Hears him lovingly converse,  
 Sees whatever fair and splendid  
 Lay betwixt his home and hers;  
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,  
 Parks and order'd gardens great,  
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,  
 Built for pleasure and for state.  
 All he shows her makes him dearer:  
 Evermore she seems to gaze  
 On that cottage growing nearer,  
 Where they twain will spend their  
 days.  
 O but she will love him truly!  
 He shall have a cheerful home;  
 She will order all things duly,  
 When beneath his roof they come.  
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,  
 Till a gateway she discerns  
 With armorial bearings stately,  
 And beneath the gate she turns;  
 Sees a mansion more majestic  
 Than all those she saw before:  
 Many a gallant gay domestic  
 Bows before him at the door.  
 And they speak in gentle murmur,  
 When they answer to his call,

While he treads with footsteps firmer  
 Leading on from hall to hall.  
 And, while now she wonders blindly,  
 Nor the meaning can divine,  
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,  
 "All of this is mine and thine."  
 Here he lives in state and bounty,  
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free,  
 Not a lord in all the county  
 Is so great a lord as he.  
 All at once the color flushes  
 Her sweet face from brow to chin:  
 As it were with shame she blushes,  
 And her spirit changed within.  
 Then her countenance all over  
 Pale again as death did prove:  
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,  
 And he cheer'd her soul with love.  
 So she strove against her weakness,  
 Tho' at times her spirit sank:  
 Shaped her heart with woman's meek-  
 ness  
 To all duties of her rank:  
 And a gentle consort made he,  
 And her gentle mind was such  
 That she grew a noble lady,  
 And the people loved her much.  
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,  
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,  
 With the burthen of an honor  
 Unto which she was not born.  
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,  
 And she murmur'd, "Oh, that he  
 Were once more that landscape-  
 painter,  
 Which did win my heart from me!"  
 So she droop'd and droop'd before him,  
 Fading slowly from his side:  
 Three fair children first she bore him,  
 Then before her time she died.  
 Weeping, weeping late and early,  
 Walking up and pacing down,  
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,  
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.  
 And he came to look upon her,  
 And he look'd at her and said,  
 "Bring the dress and put it on her,  
 That she wore when she was wed."  
 Then her people, softly treading,  
 Bore to earth her body, drest  
 In the dress that she was wed in,  
 That her spirit might have rest.

## THE VOYAGE.

## I.

We left behind the painted buoy  
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;  
And madly danced our hearts with joy,  
As fast we fled to the South:  
How fresh was every sight and sound  
On open main or winding shore!  
We knew the merry world was round,  
And we might sail for evermore.

## II.

Warm broke the breeze against the  
brow,  
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail:  
The Lady's-head upon the prow  
Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd  
the gale.  
The broad seas swell'd to meet the  
keel,  
And swept behind; so quick the run,  
We felt the good ship shake and reel,  
We seem'd to sail into the Sun!

## III.

How oft we saw the Sun retire,  
And burn the threshold of the night,  
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,  
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!  
How oft the purple-skirted robe  
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,  
As thro' the slumber of the globe  
Again we dash'd into the dawn!

## IV.

New stars all night above the brim  
Of waters lighten'd into view;  
They climb'd as quickly, for the rim  
Changed every moment as we flew.  
Far ran the naked moon across  
The houseless ocean's heaving field,  
Or flying shone, the silver boss  
Of her own halo's dusky shield;

## V.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,  
High towns on hills were dimly seen,  
We past long lines of Northern capes  
And dewy Northern meadows green.  
We came to warmer waves, and deep

Across the boundless east we drove,  
Where those long swells of breaker  
sweep  
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

## VI.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,  
Gloom'd the low coast and quivering  
brine  
With ashy rains, that spreading made  
Fantastic plume or sable pine;  
By sands and steaming flats, and floods  
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,  
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods  
Glow'd for a moment as we past.

## VII.

O hundred shores of happy climes,  
How swiftly stream'd ye by the  
bark!  
At times the whole sea burn'd, at times  
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;  
At times a carven craft would shoot  
From havens hid in fairy bowers,  
With naked limbs and flowers and  
fruit,  
But we nor paused for fruit nor  
flowers.

## VIII.

For one fair Vision ever fled  
Down the waste waters day and  
night,  
And still we follow'd where she led,  
In hope to gain upon her flight.  
Her face was evermore unseen,  
And fixt upon the far sea-line;  
But each man murmur'd, "O my  
Queen,  
I follow till I make thee mine."

## IX.

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd  
Like Fancy made of golden air,  
Now nearer to the prow she seem'd  
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge  
fair,  
Now high on waves that idly burst  
Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd  
the sea,  
And now, the bloodless point reversed,  
She bore the blade of Liberty.

## X.

And only one among us — him

We pleased not — he was seldom pleased :

He saw not far : his eyes were dim :

But ours he swore were all diseased.

“A ship of fools,” he shriek’d in spite,

“A ship of fools,” he sneer’d and wept.

And overboard one stormy night

He cast his body, and on we swept.

## XI.

And never sail of ours was furl’d,

Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;

We lov’d the glories of the world,

But laws of nature were our scorn.

For blasts would rise and rave and cease,

But whence were those that drove the sail

Across the whirlwind’s heart of peace,

And to and thro’ the counter gale ?

## XII.

Again to colder climes we came,

For still we follow’d where she led :

Now mate is blind and captain lame,

And half the crew are sick or dead,

But, blind or lame or sick or sound,

We follow that which flies before :

We know the merry world is round,

And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND  
QUEEN GUINEVERE.

## A FRAGMENT.

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,  
With tears and smiles from heaven  
again

The maiden Spring upon the plain  
Came in a sun-lit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere

Blue isles of heaven laugh’d between,

And far, in forest-deeps unseen,

The topmost elm-tree gather’d green

From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :  
Sometimes the throstle whistled  
strong :

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel’d  
along,

Hush’d all the groves from fear of  
wrong :

By grassy capes with fuller sound  
In curves the yellowing river ran,  
And drooping chestnut-buds began  
To spread into the perfect fan,  
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,  
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere  
Rode thro’ the coverts of the deer,  
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem’d a part of joyous  
Spring :

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,  
Buckled with golden clasps before ;  
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore  
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,  
Now by some tinkling rivulet,  
In mosses mixt with violet

Her cream-white mule his pastern set ;  
And fleeter now she skimm’d the  
plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs  
By night to eery warblings,  
When all the glimmering moorland  
rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro’ sun and shade,  
The happy winds upon her play’d,  
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :  
She look’d so lovely, as she sway’d

The rein with dainty finger-tips,  
A man had given all other bliss,  
And all his wordly worth for this,  
To waste his whole heart in one kiss  
Upon her perfect lips.

## A FAREWELL.

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,  
Thy tribute wave deliver :  
No more by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,  
A rivulet then a river:  
No where by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,  
And here thine aspen shiver;  
And here by thee will hum the bee,  
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,  
A thousand moons will quiver;  
But not by thee my steps shall be,  
For ever and for ever.

---

### THE BEGGAR MAID.

HER arms across her breast she laid;  
She was more fair than words can  
say:

Bare-footed came the beggar maid  
Before the king Cophetua.  
In robe and crown the king stepped down,  
To meet and greet her on her way;  
"It is no wonder," said the lords,  
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,  
She in her poor attire was seen:  
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,  
One her dark hair and lovesome  
mien.

So sweet a face, such angel grace,  
In all that land had never been:  
Cophetua sware a royal oath:  
"This beggar maid shall be my  
queen!"

---

### THE EAGLE.

#### FRAGMENT.

HE clasps the crag with crooked  
hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands,  
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

MOVE eastward, happy earth, and leave  
Yon orange sunset waning slow:  
From fringes of the faded eve,  
O, happy planet, eastward go;  
Till over thy dark shoulder glow  
Thy silver sister-world, and rise  
To glass herself in dewy eyes  
That watch me from the glen below.

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly borne,  
Dip forward under starry light,  
And move me to my marriage-morn,  
And round again to happy night.

---

COME not, when I am dead,  
To drop thy foolish tears upon my  
grave,  
To trample round my fallen head,  
And vex the unhappy dust thou  
wouldst not save.  
There let the wind sweep and the  
plover cry;  
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy  
crime  
I care no longer, being all unblest:  
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick  
of Time,  
And I desire to rest.  
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me  
where I lie:  
Go by, go by.

---

### THE LETTERS.

#### I.

STILL on the tower stood the vane,  
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant  
air,  
I peer'd athwart the chancel pane  
And saw the altar cold and bare.  
A clog of lead was round my feet,  
A band of pain across my brow;  
"Cold altar, Heaven and earth shall  
meet  
Before you hear my marriage vow."

#### II.

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song  
That mock'd the wholesome human  
heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,  
 We met, but only meant to part.  
 Full cold my greeting was and dry ;  
 She faintly smiled, she hardly  
 moved ;  
 I saw with half-unconscious eye  
 She wore the colors I approved.

## III.

She took the little ivory chest,  
 With half a sigh she turn'd the key,  
 Then raised her head with lips com-  
 prest,  
 And gave my letters back to me.  
 And gave the trinkets and the rings,  
 My gifts, when gifts of mine could  
 please ;  
 As looks a father on the things  
 Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

## IV.

She told me all her friends had said ;  
 I raged against the public liar ;  
 She talk'd as if her love were dead,  
 But in my words were seeds of fire.  
 "No more of love ; your sex is known :  
 I never will be twice deceived.  
 Henceforth I trust the man alone,  
 The woman cannot be believed.

## V.

"Thro' slander, meanest spawn of  
 Hell —  
 And women's slander is the worst,  
 And you, whom once I lov'd so well,  
 Thro' you, my life will be accurst."  
 I spoke with heart, and heat and force,  
 I shook her breast with vague  
 alarms —  
 Like torrents from a mountain source  
 We rush'd into each other's arms.

## VI.

We parted : sweetly gleam'd the stars,  
 And sweet the vapor-braided blue,  
 Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,  
 As homeward by the church I drew.  
 The very graves appear'd to smile,  
 So fresh they rose in shadow'd  
 swells ;  
 "Dark porch," I said, "and silent  
 aisle,  
 There comes a sound of marriage  
 bells.

## THE VISION OF SIN.

## I.

I HAD a vision when the night was late :  
 A youth came riding toward a palace-  
 gate.  
 He rode a horse with wings, that would  
 have flown,  
 But that his heavy rider kept him  
 down.  
 And from the palace came a child of  
 sin,  
 And took him by the curls, and led  
 him in,  
 Where sat a company with heated  
 eyes,  
 Expecting when a fountain should  
 arise :  
 A sleepy light upon their brows and  
 lips —  
 As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,  
 Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles  
 and capes —  
 Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid  
 shapes,  
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,  
 and piles of grapes.

## II.

Then methought I heard a mellow  
 sound,  
 Gathering up from all the lower  
 ground ;  
 Narrowing in to where they sat assem-  
 bled  
 Low voluptuous music winding trem-  
 bled,  
 Wov'n in circles : they that heard it  
 sigh'd,  
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,  
 Swung themselves, and in low tones  
 replied ;  
 Till the fountain spouted, showering  
 wide  
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail ;  
 Then the music touch'd the gates and  
 died,  
 Rose again from where it seem'd to  
 fail,  
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing  
 gale ;

Till thronging in and in, to where they  
waited,

As 'twere a hundred-throated nightin-  
gale,

The strong tempestuous treble throb'd  
and palpitated;

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid  
mazes,

Flung the torrent rainbow round:  
Then they started from their places,  
Moved with violence, changed in hue,

Caught each other with wild grimaces,  
Half-invisible to the view,

Wheeling with precipitate paces

To the melody, till they flew,

Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,

Twisted hard in fierce embraces,

Like to Furies, like to Graces,

Dash'd together in blinding dew:

Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,

The nerve-dissolving melody

Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III.

And then I look'd up toward a moun-  
tain-tract,

That girt the region with high cliff and  
lawn:

I saw that every morning, far with-  
drawn

Beyond the darkness and the cataract,  
God made Himself an awful rose of  
dawn,

Unheeded: and detaching, fold by fold,  
From those still heights, and, slowly  
drawing near,

A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,  
Came floating on for many a month  
and year,

Unheeded: and I thought I would  
have spoken,

And warn'd that madman ere it grew  
too late:

But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine  
was broken,

When that cold vapor touch'd the  
palace gate,

And link'd again. I saw within my  
head

A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean  
as death,

Who slowly rode across a wither'd  
heath,

And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV.

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!  
Here is custom come your way;  
Take my brute, and lead him in,  
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast!  
See that sheets are on my bed;  
What! the flower of life is past:  
It is long before you wed.

"Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,  
At the Dragon on the heath!  
Let us have a quiet hour,  
Let us lob-and-nob with Death.

"I am old, but let me drink;  
Bring me spices, bring me wine;  
I remember, when I think,  
That my youth was half divine.

"Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,  
When a blanket wraps the day,  
When the rotten woodland drips,  
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,  
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee:  
What care I for any name?  
What for order or degree?

"Let me screw thee up a peg:  
Let me loose thy tongue with wine:  
Callest thou that thing a leg?  
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

"Thou shalt not be saved by works:  
Thou hast been a sinner too:  
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,  
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Have a rouse before the morn:  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

"We are men of ruin'd blood;  
Therefore comes it we are wise.  
Fish are we that love the mud,  
Rising to no fancy-flies.

"Name and fame! to fly sublime  
Thro' the courts, the camps, the  
schools,

Is to be the ball of Time,  
Banded by the hands of fools.

"Friendship! — to be two in one —  
Let the canting liar pack!  
Well I know, when I am gone,  
How she mouths behind my back.

"Virtue! — to be good and just —  
Every heart, when sifted well,  
Is a clot of warmer dust,  
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

"O! we two as well can look  
Whited thought and cleanly life  
As the priest, above his book  
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

"Fill the cup, and fill the can:  
Have a rouse before the morn:  
Every moment dies a man,  
Every moment one is born.

"Drink, and let the parties rave:  
They are fill'd with idle spleen;  
Rising, falling, like a wave,  
For they know not what they mean

"He that roars for liberty  
Faster binds a tyrant's power;  
And the tyrant's cruel glee  
Forces on the freer hour.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

"Greet her with applausive breath,  
Freedom, gayly doth she tread;  
In her right a civic wreath,  
In her left a human head.

"No, I love not what is new;  
She is of an ancient house:

And I think we know the hue  
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes  
Where the bloody conduit runs,  
Then her sweetest meal she makes  
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool —  
Visions of a perfect State:  
Drink we, last, the public fool,  
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,  
Till thy drooping courage rise,  
And the glow-worm of the grave  
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;  
Set thy hoary fancies free;  
What is loathsome to the young  
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,  
When thy nerves could understand  
What there is in loving tears,  
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me talcs of thy first love —  
April hopes, the fools of chance;  
Till the graves begin to move,  
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can, and fill the cup:  
All the windy ways of men  
Are but dust that rises up,  
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their mouldy dens  
The chap-fallen circle spreads:  
Welcome, fellow-citizens,  
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

"You are bones, and what of that!  
Every face, however full,  
Padded round with flesh and fat,  
Is but modell'd on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex!  
Tread a measure on the stones,  
Madam — if I know your sex,  
From the fashion of your bones

"No, I cannot praise the fire  
In your eye — nor yet your lip :  
All the more do I admire  
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness — the ground-  
plan —  
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor  
framed;  
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,  
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,  
While we keep a little breath!  
Drink to heavy Ignorance!  
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,  
And the longer night is near :  
What! I am not all as wrong  
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,  
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;  
Unto me my maudlin gall  
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup and fill the can :  
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!  
Dregs of life, and lees of man:  
Yet we will not die forlorn."

## v.

The voice grew faint: there came a  
further change:  
Once more uprosethemystic mountain-  
range:  
Below were men and horses pierced  
with worms,  
And slowly quickening into lower  
forms;  
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum  
of dross,  
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd  
with moss.  
Then some one spake: "Behold! it  
was a crime  
Of sense avenged by sense that wore  
with time."  
Another said: "The crime of sense  
became

The crime of malice, and is equal  
blame."

And one: "He had not wholly  
quench'd his power;  
A little grain of conscience made him  
sour."

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
Cry to the summit, "Is there any  
hope?"

To which an answer peal'd from that  
high land,

But in a tongue no man could under-  
stand;

And on the glimmering limit far with-  
drawn

God made Himself an awful rose<sup>o</sup> of  
dawn.

TO —,

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS.

"Cursed be he that moves my bones."  
*Shakespeare's Epitaph.*

You might have won the Poet's name,  
If such be worth the winning now,  
And gain'd a laurel for your brow  
Of sounder leaf than I can claim;

But you have made the wiser choice,  
A life that moves to gracious ends  
Thro' troops of unrecording friends,  
A deedful life, a silent voice:

And you have miss'd the irreverent  
doom

Of those that wear the Poet's crown:  
Hereafter, neither knave nor clown  
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.

For now the Poet cannot die,  
Nor leave his music as of old,  
But round him ere he scarce be cold  
Begins the scandal and the cry:

"Proclaim the faults he would not  
show:

Break lock and seal: betray the  
trust:

Keep nothing sacred: tis but just  
The many-headed beast should know."



Ah shameless! for he did but sing  
 A song that pleased us from its  
 worth;  
 No public life was his on earth,  
 No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best:  
 His worst he kept, his best he gave.  
 My Shakespeare's curse on clown  
 and knave  
 Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to be  
 The little life of bank and brier,  
 The bird that pipes his lone desire  
 And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud  
 And drops at Glory's temple-gates,  
 For whom the carrion vulture waits  
 To tear his heart before the crowd!

---

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN  
 GREECE.

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls  
 Of water, sheets of summer glass,  
 The long divine Peneian pass,  
 The vast Akrokeranian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,  
 With such a pencil, such a pen,  
 You shadow forth to distant men,  
 I read and felt that I was there:

And trust me while I turn'd the page,  
 And track'd you still on classic  
 ground,  
 I grew in gladness till I found  
 My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd  
 And glisten'd — here and there alone  
 The broad-limb'd Gods at random  
 thrown  
 By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom  
 Of cavern pillars; on the swell  
 The silver lily heaved and fell;  
 And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea  
 By dancing rivulets fed his flocks  
 To him who sat upon the rocks,  
 And fluted to the morning sea.

---

BREAK, break, break,  
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!  
 And I would that my tongue could  
 utter  
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,  
 That he shouts with his sister at  
 play!  
 O well for the sailor lad,  
 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on  
 To their haven under the hill;  
 But O for the touch of a vanish'd  
 hand,  
 And the sound of a voice that is  
 still!

Break, break, break,  
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!  
 But the tender grace of a day that is  
 dead  
 Will never come back to me.

---

THE POET'S SONG.

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,  
 He pass'd by the town and out of  
 the street,  
 A light wind blew from the gates of  
 the sun,  
 And waves of shadow went over the  
 wheat,  
 And he sat him down in a lonely place,

And chanted a melody loud and  
sweet,  
That made the wild-swan pause in her  
cloud,  
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the  
bee,

The snake slipt under a spray,  
The wild hawk stood with the down  
on his beak,

And stared, with his foot on the  
prey,

And the nightingale thought, "I have  
sung many songs,

But never a one so gay,  
For he sings of what the world will be  
When the years have died away."

### THE BROOK.

HERE, by this brook, we parted; I to  
the East

And he for Italy — too late — too late :  
One whom the strong sons of the  
world despise;

For lucky rhymes to him were scrip  
and share,

And mellow metres more than cent  
for cent;

Nor could he understand how money  
breeds,

Thought it a dead thing; yet himself  
could make

The thing that is not as the thing  
that is.

O had he lived! In our schoolbooks  
we say,

Of those that held their heads above  
the crowd,

They flourish'd then or then; but life  
in him

Could scarce be said to flourish, only  
touch'd

On such a time as goes before the leaf,  
When all the wood stands in a mist  
of green,

And nothing perfect: yet the brook  
he loved,

For which, in branding summers of  
Bengal,

Or ev'n the sweet half-English Neil  
gherry air

I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,  
Prattling the primrose fancies of the  
boy,

To me that loved him; for "O brook,"  
he says,

"O babbling brook," says Edmund in  
his rhyme,

"Whence come you?" and the brook,  
why not? replies.

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally,  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hilla I hurry down,  
Or alip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorps, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

"Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite  
worn out,

Travelling to Naples. There is Darn-  
ley bridge,

It has more ivy; there the river; and  
there

Stands Philip's farm where brook and  
river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

"But Philip chatter'd more than  
brook or bird;

Old Philip; all about the fields you  
caught

His weary daylong chirping, like the  
dry

High-elbow'd grigs that leap in sum-  
mer grass.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

“O darling Katie Willows, his one  
child!

A maiden of our century, yet most  
meek;

A daughter of our meadows, yet not  
coarse;

Straight, but as lissome as a hazel  
wand;

Her eyes a bashful azure, and her hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit  
within.

“Sweet Katie, once I did her a good  
turn,

Her and her far-off cousin and be-  
trothed,

James Willows, of one name and  
heart with her.

For here I came, twenty years back —  
the week

Before I parted with poor Edmund;  
crost

By that old bridge which, half in  
ruins then,

Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the  
gleam

Beyond it, where the waters marry —  
crost,

Whistling a random bar of Bonny  
Doon,

And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.  
The gate,

Half-parted from a weak and scolding  
hinge,

Stuck; and he clamor'd from a case-  
ment, ‘Run’

To Katie somewhere in the walks  
below,

‘Run, Katie!’ Katie never ran: she  
moved

To meet me, winding under woodhine  
bowers,

A little flutter'd, with her eyelids  
down,

Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a  
boon.

“What was it? less of sentiment  
than sense

Had Katie; not illiterate; nor of those  
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive

tears,  
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-  
thropies,

Divorce the Feeling from her mate  
the Deed.

“She told me. She and James had  
quarrell'd. Why?

What cause of quarrel? None, she  
said, no cause;

James had no cause: but when I prest  
the cause,

I learnt that James had flickering  
jealousies

Which anger'd her. Who anger'd  
James? I said.

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once  
from mine,

And sketching with her slender pointed  
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram  
On garden gravel, let my query pass

Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I  
ask'd

If James were coming. ‘Coming  
every day,’

She answer'd, ‘ever longing to explain.  
But evermore her father came across.

With some long-winded tale, and broke  
him short;

And James departed vext with him  
and her.’

How could I help her? ‘Would I —  
was it wrong?’

(Claspt hands and that petitionary  
grace

Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere  
she spoke)

'O would I take her father for one  
hour,  
For one half-hour, and let him talk to  
me!  
And even while she spoke, I saw where  
James  
Made toward us, like a wader in the  
surf,  
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in  
meadow-sweet.

"O Katie, what I suffer'd for your  
sake!

For in I went, and call'd old Philip out  
To show the farm: full willingly he  
rose:

He led me thro' the short sweet-  
smelling lanes

Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he  
went.

He praised his land, his horses, his  
machines;

He praised his ploughs, his cows, his  
hogs, his dogs;

He praised his hens, his geese, his  
guinea-hens;

His pigeons, who in session on their  
roofs

Approved him, bowing at their own  
deserts:

Then from the plaintive mother's teat  
he took

Her blind and shuddering puppies,  
naming each,

And naming those, his friends, for  
whom they were:

Then crost the common into Darnley  
chase

To show Sir Arthur's deer. In copse  
and fern

Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.  
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,  
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and  
said:

'That was the four-year-old I sold the  
Squire.'

And there he told a long long-winded  
tale

Of how the Squire had seen the colt  
at grass,

And how it was the thing his daughter  
wish'd,

And how he sent the bailiff to the  
farm

To learn the price, and what the price  
he ask'd,

And how the bailiff swore that he was  
mad,

But he stood firm; and so the matter  
hung;

He gave them line: and five days after  
that

He met the bailiff at the Golden Fleece,  
Who then and there had offer'd some-  
thing more,

But he stood firm; and so the matter  
hung;

He knew the man; the colt would fetch  
its price;

He gave them line: and how by chance  
at last

(It might be May or April, he forgot,  
The last of April or the first of May)

He found the bailiff riding by the  
farm,

And, talking from the point, he drew  
him in,

And there he mellow'd all his heart  
with ale,

Until they closed a bargain, hand in  
hand.

"Then, while I breathed in sight of  
haven, he,

Poor fellow, could he help it? recom-  
menced,

And ran thro' all the coltish chronicle,  
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy,

Tallyho,

Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the  
Jilt,

Arhaces, and Phenomenon, and the  
rest,

Till, not to die a listener, I arose,  
And with me Philip, talking still; and  
so

We turn'd our foreheads from the fall-  
ing sun,

And following our own shadows thrice  
as long

As when they follow'd us from Philip's  
door,

Arrived, and found the sun of sweet  
content

Re-risen in Katie's eyes, and all things  
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

Yes, men may come and go; and these  
are gone,  
All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-  
mund, sleeps,  
Not by the well-known stream and  
rustic spire,  
But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome  
Of Brunelleschi; sleeps in peace: and  
he,  
Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of  
words  
Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb:  
I scraped the lichen from it: Katie  
walks  
By the long wash of Australasian seas  
Far off, and holds her head to other  
stars,  
And breathes in converse seasons. All  
are gone."

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a  
stile  
In the long hedge, and rolling in his  
mind  
Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er  
the brook  
A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,  
Mused, and was mute. On a sudden  
a low breath  
Of tender air made tremble in the  
hedge

The fragile hindweed-bells and briony  
rings;

And he look'd up. There stood a  
maiden near,

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he  
stared

On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair  
In gloss and hue the chestnut, when  
the shell

Divides threefold to show the fruit  
within:

Then, wondering, ask'd her "Are you  
from the farm?"

"Yes," answer'd she. "Pray stay a  
little: pardon me;

What do they call you?" "Katie."  
"That were strange.

What surname?" "Willows." "No!"  
"That is my name."

"Indeed!" and here he look'd so self-  
perplexed,

That Katie laugh'd, and laughing  
blush'd, till he

Laugh'd also, but as one before he  
wakes,

Who feels a glimmering strangeness  
in his dream.

Then looking at her; "Too happy,  
fresh and fair,

Too fresh and fair in our sad world's  
best bloom,

To be the ghost of one who bore your  
name

About these meadows, twenty years  
ago."

"Have you not heard?" said Katie,  
"we came back.

We bought the farm we tenanted be-  
fore.

Am I so like her? so they said on  
board.

Sir, if you knew her in her English  
days,

My mother, as it seems you did, the  
days

That most she loves to talk of, come  
with me.

My brother James is in the harvest-  
field:

But she — you will be welcome — O,  
come in!"

## AYLMER'S FIELD.

1793.

Dust are our frames ; and, gilded dust,  
 our pride  
 Looks only for a moment whole and  
 sound ;  
 Like that long-buried body of the king,  
 Found lying with his urns and orna-  
 ments,  
 Which at a touch of light, an air of  
 heaven,  
 Slipt into ashes, and was found no  
 more.

Here is a story which in rougher  
 shape  
 Came from a grizzled cripple, whom  
 I saw  
 Sunning himself in a waste field  
 alone —  
 Old, and a mine of memories — who  
 had served,  
 Long since, a bygone Rector of the  
 place,  
 And been himself a part of what he  
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that al-  
 mighty man,  
 The county God — in whose capacious  
 hall,  
 Hung with a hundred shields, the  
 family tree  
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate  
 king —  
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd  
 the spire,  
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his  
 entry-gates  
 And swang besides on many a windy  
 sign —  
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal  
 head  
 Saw from his windows nothing save  
 his own —  
 What lovelier of his own had he than  
 her,  
 His only child, his Edith, whom he  
 loved  
 As heiress and not heir regretfully ?  
 But " he that marries her marries her  
 name "

This fiat somewhat soothed himself  
 and wife,  
 His wife a faded beauty of the  
 Baths,  
 Insipid as the Queen upon a card ;  
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly  
 more .  
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled  
 corn,  
 Little about it stirring save a brook !  
 A sleepy land, where under the same  
 wheel  
 The same old rut would deepen year  
 by year ;  
 Where almost all the village had one  
 name ;  
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at  
 the Hall  
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory  
 Thrice over ; so that Rectory and  
 Hall,  
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,  
 Were open to each other ; tho' to  
 dream  
 That Love could bind them closer well  
 had made  
 The hoar hair of the Baronet bristle  
 up  
 With horror, worse than had he heard  
 his priest  
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of  
 men  
 Daughters of God ; so sleepy was the  
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd  
 it so,  
 Somewhere beneath his own low range  
 of roofs,  
 Have also set his many-shielded tree ?  
 There was an Aylmer-Averill mar-  
 riage once.  
 When the red rose was redder than  
 itself,  
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-  
 caster's,  
 With wounded peace which each had  
 prick'd to death.  
 " Not proven " Averill said, or laugh-  
 ingly

"Some other race of Averills"—prov'n  
 or no,  
 What cared he? what, if other or the  
 same?  
 He lean'd not on his fathers but him-  
 self.  
 But Leolin, his brother, living oft  
 With Averill, and a year or two before  
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away  
 By one low voice to one dear neigh-  
 borhood,  
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,  
 claim  
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood  
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing  
 him.

Sanguine he was: a but less vivid hue  
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-  
 bloom  
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,  
 that still  
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,  
 beam'd,  
 Beneath a manelike mass of rolling  
 gold,  
 Their best and brightest, when they  
 dwelt on hers,  
 Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect  
 else,  
 But subject to the season or the mood,  
 Shone like a mystic star between the  
 less  
 And greater glory varying to and fro,  
 We know not wherefore; bounteously  
 made,  
 And yet so finely, that a troublous  
 touch  
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in  
 a day,  
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.  
 And these had been together from the  
 first.  
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years  
 after, hers:  
 So much the boy foreran: but when  
 his date  
 Doubled her own, for want of play-  
 mates, he  
 (Since Averill was a decade and a half  
 His elder, and their parents under-  
 ground)

Had tost his ball and flown his kite,  
 and roll'd  
 His hopp to pleasure Edith, with her  
 dipt  
 Against the rush of the air in the  
 prone swing,  
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-  
 ranged  
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept  
 it green  
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,  
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the  
 grass,  
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,  
 The petty marestail forest, fairy  
 pines,  
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew  
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows  
 aim'd  
 All at one mark, all hitting: make-  
 believes  
 For Edith and himself: or else he  
 forged,  
 But that was later, boyish histories  
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,  
 wreck,  
 Flights, terrors, sudden resenes, and  
 true love  
 Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and  
 faint,  
 But where a passion yet unborn per-  
 haps  
 Lay hidden as the music of the moon  
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the nightin-  
 gale.  
 And thus together, save for college-  
 times  
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair  
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,  
 Or Heaven in lavish bounty moulded,  
 grew.  
 And more and more, the maiden  
 woman-grown,  
 He wasted hours with Averill; there,  
 when first  
 The tented winter-field was broken up  
 Into that phalanx of the summer  
 spears  
 That soon should wear the garland;  
 there again  
 When burr and bine were gather'd;  
 lastly there

At Christmas; ever welcome at the  
Hall,  
On whose dull sameness his full tide  
of youth  
Broke with a phosphorescence charm-  
ing even  
My lady; and the Baronet yet had  
laid  
No bar between them: dull and self-  
involved,  
Tall and erect, but bending from his  
height  
With half-allowing smiles for all the  
world,  
And mighty courteous in the main —  
his pride  
Lay deeper than to wear it as his  
ring —  
He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,  
Would care no more for Leolin's walk-  
ing with her  
Than for his old Newfoundland's, when  
they ran  
To loose him at the stables, for he  
rose  
Two footed at the limit of his chain,  
Roaring to make a third: and how  
should Love,  
Whom the cross-lightnings of four  
chance-met eyes  
Flash into fiery life from nothing,  
follow  
Such dear familiarities of dawn?  
Seldom, but when he does, Master of  
all.

So these young hearts not knowing  
that they loved,  
Not she at least, nor conscious of a  
bar  
Between them, nor by plight or broken  
ring  
Sound, but an immemorial intimacy,  
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied  
By Averill: his, a brother's love, that  
hung  
With wings of brooding shelter o'er  
her peace,  
Might have been other, save for  
Leolin's —  
Who knows? but so they wander'd,  
hour by hour

Gather'd the blossom that rebloom'd,  
and drank  
The magic cup that filled itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to her-  
self.  
For out beyond her lodges, where the  
brook  
Vocal, with here and there a silence,  
ran  
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers'  
homes,  
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low  
knolls  
That dimpling died into each other,  
huts  
At random scatter'd, each a nest in  
bloom.  
Her art, her hand, her counsel all had  
wrought  
About them: here was one that, sum-  
mer-blanch'd,  
Was parcel-bearded with the trav-  
eller's joy  
In Autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here  
The warm-blue breathings of a hidden  
hearth  
Broke from a bower of vine and  
honeysuckle:  
One look'd all rosetree, and another  
wore  
A close-set robe of jasmine sown  
with stars:  
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers  
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,  
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's  
heavens,  
A lily-avenue climbing to the doors;  
One, almost to the martin-haunted  
eaves  
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;  
Each, its own charm; and Edith's  
everywhere;  
And Edith ever visitant with him,  
He but less loved than Edith, of her  
poor:  
For she — so lowly-lovely and so  
loving,  
Queenly responsive when the loyal  
hand  
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she  
past,



Not sowing hedgerow texts and passing by,  
 Nor dealing goodly counsel from a height  
 That makes the lowest hate it, but a voice  
 Of comfort and an open hand of help,  
 A splendid presence flattering the poor roofs  
 Revered as theirs, but kindlier than themselves  
 To ailing wife or wailing infancy  
 Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored ;  
 He, loved for her and for himself.  
 A grasp  
 Having the warmth and muscle of the heart,  
 A childly way with children, and a laugh  
 Ringing like proven golden coinage true,  
 Were no false passport to that easy realm,  
 Where once with Leolin at her side the girl,  
 Nursing a child, and turning to the warmth  
 The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,  
 Heard the good mother softly whisper " Bless,  
 God bless 'em: marriages are made in Heaven."

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it to her.  
 My lady's Indian kinsman unannounced  
 With half a score of swarthy faces came.  
 His own, tho' keen and bold and soldierly,  
 Sear'd by the close ecliptic, was not fair ;  
 Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled the hour,  
 Tho' seeming boastful: so when first he dash'd  
 Into the chronicle of a deedful day,  
 Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile  
 Of patron " Good! my lady's kinsman! good!"

My lady with her fingers interlock'd,  
 And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,  
 Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear  
 To listen: unawares they fitted off,  
 Busying themselves about the flowerage  
 That stood from out a stiff brocade in which,  
 The meteor of a splendid season, she,  
 Once with this kinsman, ah so long ago,  
 Stept thro' the stately minuet of those days:  
 But Edith's eager fancy hurried with him  
 Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of his life:  
 Till Leolin ever watchful of her eye,  
 Hated him with a momentary hate.  
 Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was he:  
 I know not, for he spoke not, only  
 shower'd  
 His oriental gifts on everyone  
 And most on Edith: like a storm he came,  
 And shook the house, and like a storm he went.

Among the gifts he left her (possibly  
 He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to return  
 When others had been tested) there was one,  
 A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels  
 on it  
 Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd  
 itself  
 Fine as ice-ferns on January panes  
 Made by a breath. I know not  
 whence at first,  
 Nor of what race, the work; but as he  
 told  
 The story, storming a hill-fort of  
 thieves  
 He got it; for their captain after fight,  
 His comrades having fought their  
 last below,  
 Was climbing up the valley; at whom  
 he shot:  
 Down from the beetling crag to which  
 he clung  
 Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,

This dagger with him, which when  
now admired  
By Edith whom his pleasure was to  
please,  
At once the costly Sahib yielded to  
her.

And Leolin, coming after he was  
gone,  
Tost over all her presents petulantly:  
And when she show'd the wealthy  
scabbard, saying  
"Look what a lovely piece of work-  
manship!"  
Slight was his answer "Well — I care  
not for it":  
Then playing with the blade he  
prick'd his hand,  
"A gracious gift to give a lady, this!"  
"But would it be more gracious"  
ask'd the girl  
"Were I to give this gift of his to one  
That is no lady?" "Gracious? No"  
said he.  
"Me? — but I cared not for it. O  
pardon me,  
I seem to be ungraciousness itself."  
"Take it" she added sweetly, "tho'  
his gift;  
For I am more ungracious ev'n than  
you,  
I care not for it either"; and he said  
"Why then I love it": but Sir Aylmer  
past,  
And neither loved nor liked the thing  
he heard.

The next day came a neighbor.  
Blues and reds  
They talk'd of: blues were sure of it,  
he thought:  
Then of the latest fox — where started  
— kill'd  
In such a bottom: "Peter had the  
brush,  
My Peter, first": and did Sir Aylmer  
know  
That great pock-pitten fellow had  
been caught?  
Then made his pleasure echo, hand to  
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance  
of it  
Between his palms a moment up and  
down —  
"The birds were warm, the birds were  
warm upon him;  
We have him now": and had Sir  
Aylmer heard —  
Nay, but he must — the land was  
ringing of it —  
This blacksmith border-marriage —  
one they knew —  
Raw from the nursery — who could  
trust a child?  
That cursed France with her egalities!  
And did Sir Aylmer (deferentially  
With nearing chair and lower'd ac-  
cent) think —  
For people talk'd — that it was wholly  
wise  
To let that handsome fellow Averill  
walk  
So freely with his daughter? people  
talk'd —  
The boy might get a notion into  
him;  
The girl might be entangled ere she  
knew.  
Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening  
spoke:  
"The girl and boy, Sir, know their  
differences!"  
"Good," said his friend, "but watch!"  
and he, "Enough,  
More than enough, Sir! I can guard  
my own."  
They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer  
watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the  
house  
Had fallen first, was Edith that same  
night;  
Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a  
rough piece  
Of early rigid color, under which  
Withdrawing by the counter door to  
that  
Which Leolin open'd, she cast back  
upon him  
A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,  
as one

Caught in a burst of unexpected  
 storm,  
 And pelted with outrageous epi-  
 thets,  
 Turning beheld the Powers of the  
 House  
 On either side the hearth, indignant;  
 her,  
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather-  
 fan,  
 Him, glaring, by his own stale devil  
 spurr'd,  
 And, like a beast hard-riden, breath-  
 ing hard.  
 "Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,  
 Presumptuous! trusted as he was with  
 her,  
 The sole succeder, to their wealth,  
 their lands,  
 The last remaining pillar of their  
 house,  
 The one transmitter of their ancient  
 name,  
 Their child." "Our child!" "Our  
 heiress!" "Ours!" for still,  
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,  
 came  
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said,  
 "Boy, mark me! for your fortunes  
 are to make.  
 I swear you shall not make them out  
 of mine.  
 Now inasmuch as you have practised  
 on her,  
 Perplext her, made her half forget  
 herself,  
 Swerve from her duty to herself and  
 us —  
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impos-  
 sible,  
 Far as we track ourselves — I say  
 that this —  
 Else I withdraw favor and counte-  
 nance  
 From you and yours for ever — shall  
 you do.  
 Sir, when you see her — but you shall  
 not see her —  
 No, you shall write, and not to her,  
 but me:  
 And you shall say that having spoken  
 with me,

And after look'd into yourself, you  
 find  
 That you meant nothing — as indeed  
 you know  
 That you meant nothing. Such a  
 match as this!  
 Impossible, prodigious!" These were  
 words,  
 As meted by his measure of himself,  
 Arguing boundless forbearance: after  
 which,  
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer,  
 "I  
 So foul a traitor to myself and her,  
 Never oh never," for about as long  
 As the wind-hover hangs in balance,  
 paused  
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm  
 within,  
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and  
 crying  
 "Boy, should I find you by my doors  
 again,  
 My men shall lash you from them like  
 a dog;  
 Hence!" with a sudden execration  
 drove  
 The footstool from before him, and  
 arose;  
 So, stammering "scoundrel" out of  
 teeth that ground  
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin  
 still  
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old  
 man  
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel  
 stood  
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary  
 face  
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,  
 but now,  
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd  
 moon,  
 Vext with unworthy madness, and  
 deform'd.  
  
 Slowly and conscions of the rageful  
 eye  
 That watch'd him, till he heard the  
 ponderous door  
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'  
 the land,

Went Leolin; then, his passions all  
 in flood  
 And masters of his motion, furiously  
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his  
 brother's ran,  
 And foam'd away his heart at Aver-  
 ill's ear:  
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,  
 amazed:  
 The man was his, had been his fath-  
 er's, friend:  
 He must have seen, himself had seen  
 it long;  
 He must have known, himself had  
 known: besides,  
 He never yet had set his daughter  
 forth  
 Here in the woman-markets of the  
 west,  
 Where our Caucasians let themselves  
 be sold.  
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd  
 Leolin to him.  
 "Brother, for I have loved you more  
 as son  
 Than brother, let me tell you: I my-  
 self—  
 What is their pretty saying? jilted,  
 is it?  
 Jilted I was: I say it for your peace.  
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the  
 shame  
 The woman should have borne, humili-  
 ated,  
 I lived for years a stunted sunless life;  
 Till after our good parents past away  
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again  
 to grow.  
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you:  
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold  
 Loves you: I know her: the worst  
 thought she has  
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand:  
 She must prove true: for, brother,  
 where two fight  
 The strongest wins, and truth and love  
 are strength,  
 And you are happy: let her parents  
 be."

But Leolin cried out the more upon  
 them—

Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,  
 wealth,  
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth  
 enough was theirs  
 For twenty matches. Were he lord  
 of this,  
 Why twenty boys and girls should  
 marry on it,  
 And forty blest ones bless him, and  
 himself  
 Be wealthy still, ay wealthier. He  
 believed  
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-  
 mon made  
 The harlot of the cities: nature crost  
 Was mother of the foul adulteries  
 That saturate soul with body. Name,  
 too! name,  
 Their ancient name! they *might* be  
 proud; its worth  
 Was being Edith's. Ah how pale she  
 had look'd  
 Darling, to-night! they must have  
 rated her  
 Beyond all tolerance. These old  
 pheasant-lords,  
 These partridge-breeders of a thou-  
 sand years,  
 Who had mildew'd in their thousands,  
 doing nothing  
 Since Egbert—why, the greater their  
 disgrace!  
 Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in  
 that!  
 Not *keep* it noble, make it nobler?  
 fools,  
 With such a vantage-ground for noble-  
 ness!  
 He had known a man, a quintessence  
 of man,  
 The life of all—who madly loved—  
 and he,  
 Thwarted by one of these old father-  
 fools,  
 Had rioted his life out, and made an  
 end.  
 He would not do it! her sweet face  
 and faith  
 Held him from that: but he had pow-  
 ers, he knew it.  
 Back would he to his studies, make a  
 name,

Name, fortune too: the world should  
ring of him  
To shame these mouldy Aylmers in  
their graves:  
Chancellor, or what is greatest would  
he be —  
"O brother, I am grieved to learn  
your grief —  
Give me my fling, and let me say my  
say."

At which, like one that sees his own  
excess,  
And easily forgives it as his own,  
He laugh'd; and then was mute; but  
presently  
Wept like a storm: and honest Averill  
seeing  
How low his brother's mood had fallen,  
fetch'd  
His richest beeswing from a binn re-  
served  
For banquets, praised the waning red,  
and told  
The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came  
of age —  
Then drank and past it; till at length  
the two,  
Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,  
agreed  
That much allowance must be made  
for men.  
After an angry dream this kindlier  
glow  
Faded with morning, but his purpose  
held.

Yet once by night again the lovers  
met,  
A perilous meeting under the tall pines  
That darken'd all the northward of  
her Hall.  
Him, to her meek and modest bosom  
prest  
In agony, she promised that no force,  
Persuasion, no, nor death could alter  
her:  
He, passionately hopefuller, would go,  
Labor for his own Edith, and return  
In such a sunlight of prosperity  
He should not be rejected. "Write to  
me!"

They loved me, and because I love  
their child  
They hate me: there is war between  
us, dear,  
Which breaks all bonds but ours; we  
must remain  
Sacred to one another." So they  
talk'd,  
Poor children, for their comfort: the  
wind blew;  
The rain of heaven, and their own  
bitter tears,  
Tears, and the careless rain of heaven,  
mixt  
Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each  
other  
In darkness, and above them roar'd  
the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task our-  
selves  
To learn a language known but smat-  
teringly  
In phrases here and there at random,  
toil'd  
Mastering the lawless science of our  
law,  
That codeless myriad of precedent,  
That wilderness of single instances,  
Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune  
led,  
May beat a pathway out to wealth and  
fame.  
The jests, that flash'd about the plead-  
er's room,  
Lightning of the hour, the pun, the  
scurrilous tale, —  
Old scandals buried now seven decades  
deep  
In other scandals that have lived and  
died,  
And left the living scandal that shall  
die —  
Were dead to him already; bent as he  
was  
To make disproof of scorn, and strong  
in hopes,  
And prodigal of all brain-labor he,  
Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-  
cise,  
Except when for a breathing-while at  
eve,

Some niggard fraction of an hour, he  
 ran  
 Beside the river-bank : and then indeed  
 Harder the times were, and the hands  
 of power  
 Were bloodier, and the according  
 hearts of men  
 Seem'd harder too ; but the soft river-  
 breeze,  
 Which fann'd the gardens of that rival  
 rose  
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering  
 His former talks with Edith, on him  
 breathed  
 Far purelier in his rushings to and fro,  
 After his books, to flush his blood with  
 air,  
 Then to his books again. My lady's  
 cousin,  
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-  
 noon,  
 Drove in upon the student once or  
 twice,  
 Ran a Malayan amuck against the  
 times,  
 Had golden hopes for France and all  
 mankind,  
 Answer'd all queries touching those at  
 home  
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy  
 smile,  
 And fain had haled him out into the  
 world,  
 And air'd him there : his nearer friend  
 would say  
 "Screw not the chord too sharply lest  
 it snap."  
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger  
 forth  
 From where his worldless heart had  
 kept it warm,  
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.  
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of  
 him  
 'Approvingly, and prophesied his rise :  
 For heart, I think, help'd head : her  
 letters too,  
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully  
 Like broken music, written as she  
 found  
 Or made occasion, being strictly  
 watch'd,

Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till  
 he saw  
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon  
 him.

But they that cast her spirit into  
 flesh,  
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued  
 themselves  
 To sell her, those good parents, for her  
 good.  
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or  
 wealth  
 Might lie within their compass, him  
 they lured  
 Into their net made pleasant by the  
 baits  
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to woo.  
 So month by month the noise about  
 their doors,  
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-  
 quets, made  
 The nightly wirer of their innocent  
 hare  
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.  
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wrath, return'd  
 Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit  
 So often, that the folly taking wings  
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the  
 wind  
 With rumor, and became in other fields  
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,  
 And laughter to their lords : but those  
 at home,  
 As hunters round a hunted creature  
 draw,  
 The cordon close and closer toward  
 the death,  
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings  
 in ;  
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,  
 Then closed her access to the wealthier  
 farms,  
 Last from her own home-circle of the  
 poor  
 They barr'd her : yet she bore it : yet  
 her cheek  
 Kept color : wondrous ! but, O mystery !  
 What amulet drew her down to that  
 old oak,  
 So old, that twenty years before, a  
 part

Falling had let appear the brand of  
 John —  
 Once grovelike, each huge arm a tree,  
 but now  
 The broken base of a black tower, a  
 cave  
 Of touchwood, with a single flourishing  
 spray.  
 There the manorial lord too curiously  
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-  
 dust  
 Found for himself a bitter treasure-  
 trove;  
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and  
 read  
 Writhing a letter from his child, for  
 which  
 Came at the moment Leolin's emissary,  
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to  
 fly,  
 But scared with threats of jail and  
 halter gave  
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish  
 wits  
 The letter which he brought, and swore  
 besides  
 To play their go-between as heretofore  
 Nor let them know themselves be-  
 tray'd; and then,  
 Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,  
 went  
 Hating his own lean heart and miser-  
 able.

Thenceforward oft from out a despot  
 dream  
 The father panting woke, and oft, as  
 dawn  
 Aroused the black republic on his elms,  
 Sweeping the frothfly from the fescue  
 brush'd  
 Thro' the dim meadow toward his  
 treasure-trove,  
 Seized it, took home, and to my lady,  
 — who made  
 A downward crescent of her minion  
 mouth,  
 Listless in all despondence, — read;  
 and tore,  
 As if the living passion symbol'd there  
 Were living nerves to feel the rent;  
 and burnt,

Now chafing at his own great self  
 defied,  
 Now striking on huge stumbling-blocks  
 of scorn  
 In babyisms, and dear diminutives  
 Scatter'd all over the vocabulary  
 Of such a love as like a chidden child,  
 After much wailing, hush'd itself at  
 last  
 Hopeless of answer: then tho' Averill  
 wrote  
 And bade him with good heart sustain  
 himself —  
 All would be well — the lover heeded  
 not,  
 But passionately restless came and  
 went,  
 And rustling once at night about the  
 place,  
 There by a keeper shot at, slightly  
 hurt,  
 Raging return'd: nor was it well for her  
 Kept to the garden now, and grove of  
 pines,  
 Watch'd even there; and one was set  
 to watch  
 The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd  
 them all,  
 Yet bitterer from his readings: once  
 indeed,  
 Warm'd with his wines, or taking pride  
 in her,  
 She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her  
 tenderly  
 Not knowing what possess'd him:  
 that one kiss  
 Was Leolin's one strong rival upon  
 earth;  
 Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,  
 Seem'd hope's returning rose: and  
 then ensued  
 A Martin's summer of his faded love,  
 Or ordeal by kindness; after this  
 He seldom crost his child without a  
 sneer;  
 The mother flow'd in shallower acrimo-  
 nies:  
 Never one kindly smile, one kindly  
 word:  
 So that the gentle creature shut from  
 all  
 Her charitable use, and face to face

With twenty months of silence, slowly  
 lost  
 Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on  
 life.  
 Last, some low fever ranging round  
 to spy  
 The weakness of a people or a house,  
 Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,  
 or men,  
 Or almost all that is, hurting the  
 hurt —  
 Save Christ as we believe him — found  
 the girl  
 And flung her down upon a couch of  
 fire,  
 Where careless of the household faces  
 near,  
 And crying upon the name of Leolin,  
 She, and with her the race of Aylmer,  
 past.

Star to star vibrates light: may  
 soul to soul  
 Strike thro' a finer element of her  
 own?  
 So, — from afar, — touch as at once?  
 or why  
 That night, that moment, when she  
 named his name,  
 Did the keen shriek "Yes love, yes,  
 Edith, yes,"  
 Shriek, till the comrade of his cham-  
 bers woke,  
 And came upon him half-arisen from  
 sleep,  
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and  
 trembling,  
 His hair as it were crackling into  
 flames,  
 His body half flung forward in pursuit,  
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp  
 a flyer:  
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made  
 the cry;  
 And being much befool'd and idioted  
 By the rough amity of the other, sank  
 As into sleep again. The second day,  
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,  
 A breaker of the bitter news from  
 home,  
 Found a dead man, a letter edged with  
 death

Beside him, and the dagger which him-  
 self  
 Gave Edith, reddened with no bandit's  
 blood:  
 "From Edith" was engraven on the  
 blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon  
 his death.  
 And when he came again, his flock  
 believed —  
 Beholding how the years which are  
 not Time's  
 Had blasted him — that mazy thou-  
 sand days  
 Were clipt by horror from his term  
 of life.  
 Yet the sad mother, for the second  
 death  
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness  
 of the first,  
 And being used to find her pastor  
 texts,  
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying  
 him  
 To speak before the people of her  
 child,  
 And fixt the Sabbath. Darkly that  
 day rose:  
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded  
 woods  
 Was all the life of it; for hard on  
 these,  
 A breathless burthen of low-folded  
 heavens  
 Stifed and chill'd at once; but every  
 roof  
 Sent out a listener: many too had  
 known  
 Edith among the hamlets round, and  
 since  
 The parents' harshness and the hap-  
 less loves  
 And double death were widely mur-  
 mur'd, left  
 Their own gray tower, or plain-faced  
 tabernacle,  
 To hear him; all in mourning these,  
 and those  
 With blots of it about them, ribbon,  
 glove



Or kerchief; while the church, — one  
 night, except  
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the  
 lancets, — made  
 Still paler the pale head of him, who  
 tower'd  
 Above them, with his hopes in either  
 grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd  
 Averill,  
 His face magnetic to the hand from  
 which  
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd  
 thro'  
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the  
 verse "Behold,  
 Your house is left unto yon desolate!"  
 But lapsed into so long a pause  
 again  
 As half amazed half frightened all his  
 flock:  
 Then from his height and loneliness  
 of grief  
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his  
 angry heart  
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became  
 one sea,  
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the  
 proud,  
 And all but those who knew the liv-  
 ing God —  
 Eight that were left to make a purer  
 world —  
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,  
 thunder, wrought  
 Such waste and havoc as the idola-  
 tries,  
 Which from the low light of mortality  
 Shot up their shadows to the Heaven  
 of Heavens,  
 And worshipt their own darkness as  
 the Highest?  
 "Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy  
 brute Baäl,  
 And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,  
 For with thy worst self hast thou  
 clothed thy God.  
 Then came a Lord in no wise like to  
 Baäl.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely  
 now  
 The wilderness shall blossom as the  
 rose.  
 Crown thyself, worm, and worship  
 thine own lusts! —  
 No coarse and blockish God of acreage  
 Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel  
 to —  
 Thy God is far diffused in noble groves  
 And princely halls, and farms, and  
 flowing lawns,  
 And heaps of living gold that daily  
 grow,  
 And title-scrolls and gorgeous heral-  
 dries.  
 In such a shape dost thou behold thy  
 God.  
 Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*;  
 for thine  
 Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair  
 Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while  
 The deathless ruler of thy dying house  
 Is wounded to the death that cannot  
 die;  
 And tho' thou numberest with the  
 followers  
 Of One who cried, 'Leave all and fol-  
 low me.'  
 Thee therefore with His light about  
 thy feet,  
 Thee with His message ringing in thine  
 ears,  
 Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord  
 from Heaven,  
 Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,  
 Wonderful, Prince of peace, the  
 Mighty God,  
 Count the more base idolater of the  
 two;  
 Crueller: as not passing thro' the fire  
 Bodies, but souls — thy children's —  
 thro' the smoke.  
 The blight of low desires — darkening  
 thine own  
 To thine own likeness; or if one of  
 these,  
 Thy better born unhappily from thee,  
 Should, as by miracle, grow straight  
 and fair —  
 Friends, I was bid to speak of such a  
 one

By those who most have cause to sorrow for her —  
 Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well,  
 Fairer than Ruth among the fields of corn,  
 Fair as the angel that said 'Hail!' she seem'd,  
 Who entering fill'd the house with sudden light.  
 For so mine own was brighten'd: where indeed  
 The roof so lowly but that beam of Heaven  
 Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway? whose the babe  
 Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,  
 Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child of shame  
 The common care whom no one cared for, leapt  
 To greet her, wasting his forgotten heart,  
 As with the mother he had never known,  
 In gambols; for her fresh and innocent eyes  
 Had such a star of morning in their blue,  
 That all neglected places of the field  
 Broke into nature's music when they saw her.  
 Low was her voice, but won mysterious way  
 Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder one  
 Was all but silence — free of alms her hand —  
 The hand that robed your cottage-walls with flowers  
 Has often toil'd to clothe your little ones;  
 How often placed upon the sick man's brow  
 Cool'd it, or laid his feverous pillow smooth!  
 Had you one sorrow and she shared it not?  
 One burthen and she would not lighten it?  
 One spiritual doubt she did not soothe?  
 Or when some heat of difference sparkled out,

How sweetly would she glide between your wraths,  
 And steal you from each other! for she walk'd  
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord of love,  
 Who still'd the rolling wave of Galilee!  
 And one — of him I was not bid to speak —  
 Was always with her, whom you also knew.  
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy love.  
 And these had been together from the first;  
 They might have been together till the last.  
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when sorely tried,  
 May wreck itself without the pilot's guilt,  
 Without the captain's knowledge: hope with me.  
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence with shame?  
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of these  
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow's walls,  
 'My house is left unto me desolate.'

While thus he spoke, his hearers wept; but some,  
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns than those  
 That knit themselves for summer shadow, scowl'd  
 At their great lord. He, when it seem'd he saw  
 No pale sheet-lightnings from afar, but fork'd  
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his head,  
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, soldier-like,  
 Erect: but when the preacher's cadence flow'd  
 Softening thro' all the gentle attributes  
 Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd his face,

Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron  
 mouth;  
 And "O pray God that he hold up"  
 she thought  
 "Or surely I shall shamo myself and  
 him."  
 "Nor yours tho blame—for who  
 beside your hearths  
 Can take her place—if echoing me  
 you cry  
 'Our house is left unto us desolate' ?  
 But thou, O thou that killest, hadst  
 thou known,  
 O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-  
 stood  
 The things belongug to thy peace  
 and ours!  
 Is there no prophet but the voice that  
 calls  
 Doom upon kings, or in the waste  
 'Repent' ?  
 Is not our own child on the narrow  
 way,  
 Who down to those that saunter in  
 the broad  
 Cries 'Come up hither,' as a prophet  
 to us ?  
 Is there no stoning save with flint  
 and rock ?  
 Yes, as the dead we weep for testify—  
 No desolation but by sword and fire ?  
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and  
 myself  
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my  
 loss.  
 Give me your prayers, for he is past  
 your prayers,  
 Not past the living fount of pity in  
 Heaven.  
 But I that thought myself long-suffer-  
 ing, meek,  
 Exceeding 'poor in spirit'—how the  
 words  
 Have twisted back upon themselves,  
 and mean  
 Vileness, we are grown so proud— I  
 wish'd my voice  
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of God  
 To blow these sacrifices thro' the  
 world—  
 Sent like the twelve-divided concubine

To inflame the tribes: but there—  
 out yonder—earth  
 Lighteous from her own central Holl  
 —O there  
 The red fruit of an old idolatry—  
 The heads of chiefs and princes fall  
 so fast,  
 They cling together in the ghastly  
 sack—  
 The land all shambles—naked mar-  
 riages  
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-mur-  
 der'd France,  
 By shores that darken with the gath-  
 ering wolf,  
 Ruus in a river of blood to the sick sea.  
 Is this a time to madden madness then ?  
 Was this a time for these to flaunt  
 their pride ?  
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as  
 dense as those  
 Which hid the Holiest from the peo-  
 ple's eyes  
 Ere the great death, shroud this great  
 sin from all !  
 Doubtless our narrow world must  
 canvass it :  
 O rather pray for those and pity them,  
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-  
 plish'd, bring  
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to  
 the grave—  
 Who broke the bond which they  
 desired to break,  
 Which else had link'd their race with  
 times to come—  
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her  
 purity,  
 Grossly contriving their dear daugh-  
 ter's good—  
 Poor souls, and knew not what they  
 did, but sat  
 Ignorant, devising their own daugh-  
 ter's death !  
 May not that earthly chastisement  
 suffice ?  
 Have not our love and reverence left  
 them bare ?  
 Will not another take their heritage ?  
 Will there be children's laughter in  
 their hall  
 For ever and for ever, or one stone

Left on another, or is it a light thing  
That I, their guest, their host, their  
ancient friend,  
I made by these the last of all my  
race,  
Must cry to these the last of theirs, as  
cried  
Christ ere His agony to those that  
swore  
Not by the temple but the gold, and  
made  
Their own traditions God, and slew  
the Lord,  
And left their memories a world's  
curse — 'Behold,  
Your house is left unto you deso-  
late'?"

Ended he had not, but she brook'd  
no more:  
Long since her heart had beat remorse-  
lessly,  
Her cramp'd-up sorrow pain'd her, and  
a sense  
Of meanness in her unresisting life.  
Then their eyes vex't her; for on en-  
tering  
He had cast the curtains of their seat  
aside —  
Black velvet of the costliest — she  
herself  
Had seen to that: fain had she closed  
them now,  
Yet dared not stir to do it, only near'd  
Her husband inch by inch, but when  
she laid,  
Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he  
veil'd  
His face with the other, and at once,  
as falls  
A creeper when the prop is broken,  
fell  
The woman shrieking at his feet, and  
swoon'd.  
Then her own people bore along the  
nave  
Her pendant hands, and narrow mea-  
gre face  
Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty  
years:  
And her the Lord of all the landscape  
round

Ev'n to its last horizon, and of all  
Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd  
out  
Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle  
Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded  
ways  
Stumbling across the market to his  
death,  
Unpitied; for he groped as blind, and  
seem'd  
Always about to fall, grasping the  
pews  
And oaken finials till he touch'd the  
door;  
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot  
stood,  
Strode from the porch, tall and erect  
again.

But nevermore did either pass the  
gate  
Save under pall with bearers. In one  
month,  
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier  
hours,  
The childless mother went to seek her  
child;  
And when he felt the silence of his  
house  
About him, and the change and not  
the change,  
And those fixt eyes o' painted ances-  
tors  
Staring for ever from their gilded  
walls  
On him their last descendant, his own  
head  
Began to droop, to fall; the man be-  
came  
Imbecile; his one word was "deso-  
late";  
Dead for two years before his death  
was he;  
But when the second Christmas came,  
escaped  
His keepers, and the silence which he  
felt,  
To find a deeper in the narrow  
gloom  
By wife and child; nor wanted at his  
end  
The dark retinue reverencing death

At golden thresholds ; nor from tender hearts,  
 And those who sorrow'd o'er a vanish'd race,  
 Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.  
 Then the great Hall was wholly broken down,  
 And the broad woodland parcell'd into farms ;  
 And where the two contrived their daughter's good,  
 Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has made his run,  
 The hedgehog underneath the plantain hoes,  
 The rabbit fondles his own harmless face,  
 The slow-worm creeps, and the thin weasel there  
 Follows the mouse, and all is open field.

## SEA DREAMS.

A CITY clerk, but gently born and bred ;  
 His wife, an unknown artist's orphan child —  
 One babe was theirs, a Margaret, three years old :  
 They, thinking that her clear gemmander eye  
 Droopt in the giant-factoried city-gloom,  
 Came, with a month's leave given them, to the sea :  
 For which his gains were dock'd, however small :  
 Small were his gains, and hard his work ; besides,  
 Their slender household fortunes (for the man  
 Had risk'd his little) like the little thrift,  
 Trembled in perilous places o'er a deep :  
 And oft, when sitting all alone, his face  
 Would darken, as he cursed his credulousness,  
 And that one unctuous mouth which lured him, rogue,

To buy strange shares in some Peruvian mine.  
 Now seaward-bound for health they gain'd a coast,  
 All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning cave,  
 At close of day ; slept, woke, and went the next,  
 The Sabbath, pious variers from the church,  
 To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,  
 Not preaching simple Christ to simple men,  
 Announced the coming doom, and fulminated  
 Against the scarlet woman and her creed ;  
 For sideways up he swung his arms, and shriek'd  
 " Thus, thus with violence," ev'n as if he held  
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and himself  
 Were that great Angel ; " Thus with violence  
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea ;  
 Then comes the close." The gentle-hearted wife  
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world ;  
 He at his own : but when the wordy storm  
 Had ended, forth they came and paced the shore,  
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing caves,  
 Drank the large air, and saw, but scarce believed  
 (The sootflake of so many a summer still  
 Clung to their fancies) that they saw, the sea.  
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now on cliff,  
 Lingering about the thymy promontories,  
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the west,  
 And rosed in the east : then homeward and to bed :  
 Where she, who kept a tender Christian hope,  
 Haunting a holy text, and still to that

Returning, as the bird returns, at  
 night,  
 "Let not the sun go down upon your  
 wrath,"  
 Said, "Love, forgive him:" but he  
 did not speak;  
 And silenced by that silence lay the  
 wife,  
 Remembering her dear Lord who died  
 for all,  
 And musing on the little lives of men,  
 And how they mar this little by their  
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a  
 full tide  
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the  
 foremost rocks  
 Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild  
 sea-smoke,  
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,  
 and fell

In vast sea-cataracts — ever and anon  
 Dead claps of thunder from within  
 the cliffs  
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this  
 the babe,  
 Their Margaret cradled near them,  
 wail'd and woke  
 The mother, and the father suddenly  
 cried,  
 "A wreck, a wreck!" then turn'd, and  
 groaning said,

"Forgive! How many will say, 'for-  
 give,' and find  
 A sort of absolution in the sound  
 To hate a little longer! No; the sin  
 That neither God nor man can well  
 forgive,  
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.  
 Is it so true that second thoughts are  
 best?  
 Not first, and third, which are a riper  
 first?  
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late  
 for use.  
 Ah love, there surely lives in man and  
 beast  
 Something divine to warn them of  
 their foes:

And such a sense, when first I fronted  
 him,  
 Said, 'Trust him not;' but after,  
 when I came  
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him  
 less;  
 Fought with what seem'd my own  
 uncharity;  
 Sat at his table; drank his costly wines;  
 Made more and more allowance for  
 his talk;  
 Went further, fool! and trusted him  
 with all,  
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen  
 years  
 Of dust and deskwork: there is no  
 such mine,  
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing  
 gold,  
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the  
 sea roars  
 Ruin: a fearful night!"

"Not fearful; fair,"  
 Said the good wife, "if every star in  
 heaven  
 Can make it fair: you do but hear  
 the tide.  
 Had you ill dreams?"

"O yes," he said, "I dream'd  
 Of such a tide swelling toward the land,  
 And I from out the boundless outer  
 deep  
 Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd  
 one  
 Of those dark caves that run beneath  
 the cliffs.  
 I thought the motion of the boundless  
 deep  
 Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved  
 upon it  
 In darkness: then I saw one lovely star  
 Larger and larger. 'What a world,'  
 I thought,  
 'To live in!' but in moving on I found  
 Only the landward exit of the cave,  
 Bright with the sun upon the stream  
 beyond:  
 And near the light a giant woman sat,  
 All over earthy, like a piece of earth,  
 A pickaxe in her hand: then out I slipt

Into a land all sun and blossom, trees  
As high as heaven, and every bird  
that sings:  
And here the night-light flickering in  
my eyes  
Awoke me."

"That was then your dream," she  
said,  
"Not sad, but sweet."

"So sweet, I lay," said he,  
"And mused upon it, drifting up the  
stream

In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced  
The broken vision; for I dream'd that  
still

The motion of the great deep bore  
me on,

And that the woman walk'd upon  
the brink;

I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd  
her of it:

'It came,' she said, 'by working in  
the mines:'

O then to ask her of my sharcs, I  
thought;

And ask'd; but not a word; she shook  
her head.

And then the motion of the current  
ceased,

And there was rolling thunder; and  
we reach'd

A mountain, like a wall of burs and  
thorns;

But she with her strong feet up the  
hill

Trod out a path: I follow'd; and at  
top

She pointed seaward: there a fleet of  
glass,

That seem'd a fleet of jewels under me,  
Sailing along before a gloomy cloud  
That not one moment ceased to thun-  
der, past

In sunshine: right across its track  
there lay,

Down in the water, a long reef of gold,  
Or what seem'd gold: and I was glad  
at first

To think that in our often-ransack'd  
world

Still so much gold was left; and then  
I fear'd

Lest the gay navy there should splin-  
ter on it,

And fearing waved my arm to warn  
them off;

An idle signal, for the brittle fleet  
(I thought I could have died to save  
it) near'd,

Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and  
vanish'd, and I woke,

I heard the clash so clearly. Now I  
see

My dream was Life; the woman hon-  
est Work;

And my poor venture but a fleet of  
glass

Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold."

"Nay," said the kindly wife to com-  
fort him,

"You raised your arm, you tumbled  
down and broke

The glass with little Margaret's medi-  
cine in it;

And, breaking that, you made and  
broke your dream:

A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks."

"No trifle," groan'd the husband;  
"yesterday

I met him suddenly in the street, and  
ask'd

That which I ask'd the woman in my  
dream.

Like her, he shook his head. 'Show  
me the books!'

He dodged me with a long and loose  
account.

'The books, the books!' but he, he  
could not wait,

Bound on a matter he of life and  
death:

When the great Books (see Daniel  
seven and ten)

Were open'd, I should find he meant  
me well;

And then began to bloat himself, and  
ooze

All over with the fat affectionate smile  
That makes the widow lean. 'My  
dearest friend,

Have faith, have faith! We live by  
 faith,' said he;  
 'And all things work together for the  
 good  
 Of those' — it makes me sick to quote  
 him — last  
 Gript my hand hard, and with God-  
 bless-you went.  
 I stood like one that had received a  
 blow:  
 I found a hard friend in his loose ac-  
 counts,  
 A loose one in the hard grip of his  
 hand,  
 A curse in his God-bless-you: then my  
 eyes  
 Pursued him down the street, and far  
 away,  
 Among the honest shoulders of the  
 crowd,  
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,  
 And scoundrel in the supple-sliding  
 knee."

"Was he so bound, poor soul?"  
 said the good wife;

"So are we all: but do not call him,  
 love,

Before you prove him, rogue, and  
 proved, forgive.

His gain is loss; for he that wrongs  
 his friend

Wrongs himself more, and ever bears  
 about

A silent court of justice in his breast,  
 Himself the judge and jury, and him-  
 self

The prisoner at the bar, ever con-  
 demn'd:

And that drags down his life: then  
 comes what comes

Hereafter: and he meant, he said he  
 meant,

Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,  
 you well."

"With all his conscience and one  
 eye askew' —

Love, let me quote these lines, that  
 you may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,

Too often, in that silent court of  
 yours —

'With all his conscience and one eye  
 askew,

So false, he partly took himself for  
 true;

Whose pious talk, when most his  
 heart was dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round  
 his eye;

Who, never naming God except for  
 gain,

So never took that useful name in  
 vain,

Made Him his catspaw and the Cross  
 his tool,

And Christ the bait to trap his dupe  
 and fool;

Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace  
 he forged,

And snake-like slimed his victim ere  
 he gorged;

And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the  
 rest

Arising, did his holy oily best,  
 Dropping the too rough H in Hell

and Heaven,

To spread the Word by which him-  
 self had thriven.'

How like you this old satire?"

"Nay," she said,

"I loathe it: he had never kindly  
 heart,

Nor ever cared to better his own kind,  
 Who first wrote satire, with no pity

in it.

But will you hear *my* dream, for I  
 had one

That altogether went to music? Still  
 It awed me."

Then she told it, having dream'd  
 Of that same coast.

— But round the North, a light,  
 A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor

lay,

And ever in it a low musical note  
 Swell'd up and died; and, as it  
 swell'd, a ridge



Of breaker issued from the belt, and still  
 Grew with the growing note, and when the note  
 Had reach'd a thunderous fullness, on those cliffs  
 Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that  
 Living within the belt) whereby she saw  
 That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,  
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,  
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,  
 One after one: and then the great ridge drew,  
 Lessening to the lessening music, back,  
 And past into the belt and swell'd again  
 Slowly to music: ever when it broke  
 The statues, king or saint, or founder fell;  
 Then from the gaps and chasms of ruin left  
 Came men and women in dark clusters round,  
 Some crying, "Set them up! they shall not fall!"  
 And others, "Let them lie, for they have fall'n."  
 And still they strove and wrangled: and she grieved  
 In her strange dream, she knew not why, to find  
 Their wildest wailings never out of tune  
 With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks  
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave  
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd  
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes  
 Glaring, with passionate looks, and swept away  
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,  
 To the waste deeps together.

"Then I fixt  
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,  
 Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars,—  
 The Virgin Mother standing with her child  
 High up on one of those dark minster-fronts—  
 Till she began to totter, and the child  
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry  
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,  
 And my dream awed me:—well—but what are dreams?  
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,  
 And mine but from the crying of a child."

"Child? No!" said he, "but this tide's roar, and his,  
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom,  
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms  
 (Altho' I grant but little music there)  
 Went both to make your dream: but if there were  
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,  
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,  
 Why, that would make our passions far too like  
 The discords dear to the musician.  
 No—  
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven:  
 True Devils with no ear, they howl in tune  
 With nothing but the Devil!"

"True' indeed!  
 One out of our town, but later by an hour  
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;  
 While you were running down the sands, and made  
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbe-low flap,  
 Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news

Why were you silent when I spoke  
to-night?  
I had set my heart on your forgiving  
him  
Before you knew. We *must* forgive  
the dead."

"Dead! who is dead?"

"The man your eye pursued.  
A little after you had parted with  
him,  
He suddenly dropt dead of heart-  
disease."

"Dead? he? of heart-disease? what  
heart had he  
To die of? dead?"

"Ah, dearest, if there be  
A devil in man, there is an angel too,  
And if he did that wrong you charge  
him with,  
His angel broke his heart. But your  
rough voice  
(You spoke so loud) has roused the  
child again.  
Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not  
sleep  
Without her 'little birdie'? well then,  
sleep,  
And I will sing you, 'birdie.'"

Saying this,  
The woman half turn'd round from  
him she loved,  
Left him one hand, and reaching  
thro' the night  
Her other, found (for it was close  
beside)  
And half-embraced the basket cradle-  
head  
With one soft arm, which, like the  
pliant bough  
That moving moves the nest and  
nestling, sway'd  
The cradle, while she sang this baby  
song.

What does little birdie say  
In her nest at peep of day?  
Let me fly, says little birdie,

Mother, let me fly away.  
Birdie, rest a little longer,  
Till the little wings are stronger.  
So she rests a little longer,  
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,  
In her bed at peep of day?  
Baby says, like little birdie,  
Let me rise and fly away.  
Baby, sleep a little longer,  
Till the little limbs are stronger.  
If she sleeps a little longer,  
Baby too shall fly away.

"She sleeps: let us too, let all evil,  
sleep.  
He also sleeps — another sleep than  
ours.  
He can do no more wrong: forgive  
him, dear,  
And I shall sleep the sounder!"

Then the man,  
"His deeds yet live, the worst is yet  
to come.  
Yet let your sleep for this one night  
be sound:  
I do forgive him!"

"Thanks, my love," she said,  
"Your own will be the sweeter," and  
they slept.

### LUCRETIUS.

LUCILLA, wedded to Lucretius, found  
Her master cold; for when the morn-  
ing flush  
Of passion and the first embrace had  
died  
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none  
the less,  
Yet often when the woman heard his  
foot  
Return from pacings in the field, and  
ran  
To greet him with a kiss, the master  
took  
Small notice, or austerely, for — his  
mir<sup>d</sup>

Half buried in some weightier argu-  
 ment,  
 Or fancy, borne perhaps upon the rise  
 And long roll of the Hexameter — he  
 past  
 To turn and ponder those three hun-  
 dred scrolls  
 Left by the Teacher, whom he held  
 divine.  
 She brook'd it not; but wrathful, pet-  
 ulant,  
 Dreaming some rival, sought and  
 found a witch  
 Who brew'd the philtre which had  
 power, they said,  
 To lead an errant passion home again.  
 And this, at times, she mingled with  
 his drink,  
 And this destroy'd him; for the wicked  
 broth  
 Confused the chemic labor of the  
 blood,  
 And tickling the brute brain within  
 the man's  
 Made havoc among those tender cells,  
 and check'd  
 His power to shape: he loathed him-  
 self; and once  
 After a tempest woke upon a morn  
 That mock'd him with returning calm,  
 and cried:

" Storm in the night! for thrice I  
 heard the rain  
 Rushing; and once the flash of a  
 thunderbolt—  
 Methought I never saw so fierce a  
 fork—  
 Struck out the streaming mountain-  
 side, and show'd  
 A riotous confluence of watercourses  
 Blanching and billowing in a hollow  
 of it,  
 Where all but yester-eve was dusty-  
 dry.

" Storm, and what dreams, ye holy  
 Gods, what dreams!  
 For thrice I waken'd after dreams.  
 Perchance  
 We do but recollect the dreams that  
 come

Just ere the waking: terrible! for it  
 seem'd  
 A void was made in Nature; all her  
 bonds  
 Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-  
 streams  
 And torrents of her myriad universe,  
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,  
 Fly on to clash together again, and  
 make  
 Another and another frame of things  
 For ever: that was mine, my dream, I  
 knew it—  
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog  
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot  
 plies  
 His function of the woodland: but the  
 next!  
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla  
 shed  
 Came driving rainlike down again on  
 earth,  
 And where it dash'd the reddening  
 meadow, sprang  
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean  
 teeth,  
 For these I thought my dream would  
 show to me,  
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,  
 Hired animalisms, vile as those that  
 made  
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies  
 worse  
 Than aught they fable of the quiet  
 Gods.  
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and  
 round me drove  
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again  
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and  
 saw—  
 Was it the first beam of my latest  
 day?

" Then, then, from utter gloom stood  
 out the breasts,  
 The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly  
 a sword  
 Now over and now under, now direct,  
 Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down  
 shamed  
 At all that beauty; and as I stared, a  
 fire,

The fire that left a roofless Iliion,  
Shot out of them, and scorcht'd me  
that I woke.

“Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,  
thine,  
Because I would not one of thine own  
doves,  
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee?  
thine,  
Forgetful how my rich proœmion  
makes  
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,  
In lays that will outlast thy Deity?”

“Deity? nay, thy worshippers. My  
tongue  
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of  
these  
Angers thee most, or angers thee at  
all?  
Not if thou be'st of those who, far  
aloof  
From envy, hate and pity, and spite  
and scorn,  
Live the great life which all our great-  
est fain  
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

“Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like  
ourselves  
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I  
cry to thee  
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender  
arms  
Round him, and keep him from the  
lust of blood  
That makes a steaming slaughter-  
house of Rome.

“Ay, but I meant not thee; I meant  
not her,  
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to  
see  
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,  
and tempt  
The Trojan, while his neat-herds were  
abroad;  
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter  
wept  
Her Deity false in human-amorous  
tears;

Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter  
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,  
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called  
Calliope to grace his golden verse —  
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take  
That popular name of thine to shadow  
forth  
The all-generating powers and genial  
heat  
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the  
thick blood  
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs  
are glad  
Nosing the mother's udder, and the  
bird  
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze  
of flowers:  
Which things appear the work of  
mighty Gods.

“The Gods! and if I go, my work is  
left  
Unfinish'd — if I go. The Gods, who  
haunt  
The lucid interspace of world and  
world,  
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves  
a wind,  
Nor ever falls the least white star of  
snow,  
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,  
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to  
mar  
Their sacred everlasting calm! and  
such,  
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,  
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may  
gain  
Letting his own life go. The Gods,  
the Gods!  
If all be atoms, how then should the  
Gods  
Being atomic not be dissoluble,  
Not follow the great law? My master-  
held  
That Gods there are, for all men so  
believe.  
I prest my footsteps into his, and  
meant  
Surely to lead my Memmius in a train  
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof  
That Gods there are, and deathless.

Meant? I meant?  
 I have forgotten what I meant: my  
 mind  
 Stumbles, and all my faculties are  
 lamed.

“Look where another of our Gods,  
 the Sun,  
 Apollo, Delius, or of older use  
 All-seeing Hyperion — what you  
 will —  
 Has mounted yonder; since he never  
 sware,  
 Except his wrath were wreak'd on  
 wretched man,  
 That he would only shine among the  
 dead  
 Hereafter; tales! for never yet on  
 earth  
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-  
 ing ox  
 Moan round the spit — nor knows he  
 what he sees;  
 King of the East altho' he seem, and  
 girt  
 With song and flame and fragrance,  
 slowly lifts  
 His golden feet on those empurpled  
 stairs  
 That climb into the windy halls of  
 heaven:  
 And here he glances on an eye new-  
 born,  
 And gets for greeting but a wail of  
 pain;  
 And here he stays upon a freezing  
 orb  
 That fain would gaze upon him to the  
 last;  
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n  
 And closed by those who mourn a  
 friend in vain,  
 Not thankful that his troubles are no  
 more.  
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face  
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can  
 tell  
 Whether I mean this day to end my-  
 self,  
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,  
 That men like soldiers may not quit  
 the post

Allotted by the Gods: but he that  
 holds  
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need  
 he care  
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge  
 at once,  
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight,  
 and sink  
 Past earthquake — ay, and gout and  
 stone, that break  
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-  
 in-life,  
 And wretched age — and worst disease  
 of all,  
 These prodigies of myriad naked-  
 nesses,  
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-  
 able,  
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
 Not welcome, harpies miring every  
 dish,  
 The phantom husks of something  
 foully done,  
 And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-  
 verse,  
 And blasting the long quiet of my  
 breast  
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

“How should the mind, except it  
 loved them, clasp  
 These idols to herself? or do they fly  
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like  
 the flakes  
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-  
 force  
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an  
 hour  
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and  
 bear  
 The keepers down, and throng, their  
 rags and they  
 The basest, far into that council-hall  
 Where sit the best and stateliest of  
 the land?

“Can I not fling this horror off me  
 again,  
 Seeing with how great ease Nature  
 can smile,  
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of  
 storm,

At random ravage? and how easily  
 The mountain there has cast his  
 cloudy slough,  
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air,  
 A mountain o'er a mountain,—ay,  
 and **within**  
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of  
 men?

“But who was he, that in the gar-  
 den snared  
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale  
 To laugh at—more to laugh at in  
 myself—  
 Nor look! what is it? there? yon  
 arbutus  
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath  
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the  
 tops quivering—  
 The mountain quickens into Nymph  
 and Faun;  
 And here an Oread—how the sun  
 delights  
 To glance and shift about her slippery  
 sides,  
 And rosy knees and supple rounded-  
 ness,  
 And budded bosom-peaks— who this  
 way runs  
 Before the rest— A satyr, a satyr, see,  
 Follows; but him I proved impossible;  
 Twy-natured is no nature: yet he  
 draws  
 Nearer and nearer, and I scan him  
 now  
 Beastlier than any phantom of his  
 kind  
 That ever butted his rough brother-  
 brute  
 For lust or lusty blood or provender:  
 I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him; and  
 she  
 Loathes him as well; such a precipi-  
 tate heel,  
 Fledged as it were with Mercury's  
 ankle-wing,  
 Whirls her to me: but will she fling  
 herself,  
 Shameless upon me? Catch her,  
 goat-foot: nay,  
 Hide, hide them, million-myrtled  
 wilderness.

And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide!  
 do I wish—  
 What?— that the bush were leafless?  
 or to whelm  
 All of them in one massacre? O ye  
 Gods,  
 I know you careless, yet, behold, to  
 you  
 From childly wont and ancient use I  
 call—  
 I thought I lived securely as your-  
 selves—  
 No lewdness, narrowing envy, monkey-  
 spite,  
 No madness of ambition, avarice,  
 none:  
 No larger feast than under plane cr  
 pine  
 With neighbors laid along the grass,  
 to take  
 Only such cups as left us friendly-  
 warm,  
 Affirming each his own philosophy—  
 Nothing to mar the sober majesties  
 Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.  
 But now it seems some unseen mon-  
 ster lays  
 His vast and filthy hands upon my  
 will,  
 Wrenching it backward into his; and  
 spoils  
 My bliss in being; and it was not  
 great;  
 For save when shutting reasons up in  
 rhythm,  
 Or Heliconian honey in living words,  
 To make a truth less harsh, I often  
 grew  
 Tired of so much within our little life,  
 Or of so little in our little life—  
 Poor little life that toddles half an  
 hour  
 Crown'd with a flower or two, and  
 there an end—  
 And since the nobler pleasure seems  
 to fade,  
 Why should I, beastlike as I find my-  
 self,  
 Not manlike end myself?— our privi-  
 lege—  
 What beast has heart to do it? And  
 what man,

What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus ?  
 Not I; not he, who bears one name with her  
 Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,  
 When, brooking not the Tarquin in her veins,  
 She made her blood in sight of Col-latine  
 And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,  
 Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.  
 And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks  
 As I am breaking now !

“ And therefore now

Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,  
 Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart  
 Those blind beginnings that have made me man,  
 Dash them anew together at her will  
 Thro' all her cycles — into man once more,  
 Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :  
 But till this cosmic order everywhere  
 Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day  
 Cracks all to pieces, — and that hour perhaps  
 Is not so far when momentary man  
 Shall seem no more a something to himself,  
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,  
 And even his bones long laid within the grave,  
 The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,  
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,  
 Into the unseen for ever, — till that hour,  
 My golden work in which I told a truth  
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,  
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,  
 and plucks

The mortal soul from out immortal hell,  
 Shall stand : ay, surely : then it fails at last  
 And perishes as I must ; for O Thou, Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,  
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,  
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art  
 Without one pleasure and without one pain,  
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine  
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus  
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not  
 How roughly men may woo thee so they win —  
 Thus — thus : the soul flies out and dies in the air.”

With that he drove the knife into his side :  
 She heard him raging, heard him fall ;  
 ran in,  
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself  
 As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd  
 That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,  
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd, “ Care not thou !  
 Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee well !”

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

PUBLISHED IN 1852.

1.

BURY the Great Duke  
 With an empire's lamentation,  
 Let us bury the Great Duke  
 To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,  
 Mourning when their leaders fall,  
 Warriors carry the warrior's pall,  
 And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall

## II.

Where shall we lay the man whom  
we deplore?  
Here, in streaming London's central  
roar.

Let the sound of those he wrought for,  
And the feet of those he fought for,  
Echo round his bones for evermore.

## III.

Lead out the pageant: sad and slow,  
As fits an universal woe,  
Let the long long procession go,  
And let the sorrowing crowd about it  
grow,  
And let the mournful martial music  
blow;  
The last great Englishman is low.

## IV.

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,  
Remembering all his greatness in the  
Past.  
No more in soldier fashion will he  
greet  
With lifted hand the gazer in the  
street.  
O friends, our chief state-oracle is  
mute:  
Mourn for the man of long-enduring  
blood,  
The statesman-warrior, moderate, res-  
olute,  
Whole in himself, a common good.  
Mourn for the man of amplest influ-  
ence,  
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,  
Our greatest yet with least pretence,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common-sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime.  
O good gray head which all men knew,  
O, voice from which their omens all  
men drew,  
O iron nerve to true occasion true,  
O fall'n at length that tower of  
strength  
Which stood four-square to all the  
winds that blew!

Such was he whom we deplore.  
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.  
The great World-victor's victor will  
be seen no more.

## V.

All is over and done:  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
England, for thy son.  
Let the bell be toll'd.  
Render thanks to the Giver,  
And render him to the mould.  
Under the cross of gold  
That shines over city and river,  
There he shall rest for ever  
Among the wise and the bold.  
Let the bell be toll'd:  
And a reverent people behold  
The towering car, the sable steeds:  
Bright let it be with its blazon'd  
deeds,  
Dark in its funeral fold.  
Let the bell be toll'd:  
And a deeper knell in the heart be  
knoll'd;  
And the sound of the sorrowing an-  
them roll'd  
Thro' the dome of the golden cross;  
And the volleying cannon thunder his  
loss;  
He knew their voices of old.  
For many a time in many a clime  
His captain's-ear has heard them  
boom  
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom:  
When he with those deep voices  
wrought,  
Guarding realms and kings from  
shame;  
With those deep voices our dead cap-  
tain taught  
The tyrant, and asserts his claim  
In that dread sound to the great name,  
Which he has worn so pure of blame,  
In praise and in dispraise the same,  
A man of well-attemper'd frame.  
O civic muse, to such a name,  
To such a name for ages long,  
To such a name,  
Preserve a broad approach of fame,  
And ever-echoing avenues of song.



VI.

Who is he that cometh, like an hon-  
or'd guest,  
With banner and with music, with  
soldier and with priest,  
With a nation weeping, and breaking  
on my rest?

Mighty Seaman, this is he  
Was great by land as thou by sea.  
Thine island loves thee well, thou  
famous man,  
The greatest sailor since our world  
began.

Now, to the roll of muffled drums,  
To thee the greatest soldier comes;  
For this is he

Was great by land as thou by sea;  
His foes were thine; he kept us free;  
O give him welcome, this is he  
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,  
And worthy to be laid by thee;  
For this is England's greatest son,  
He that gain'd a hundred fights,  
Nor ever lost an English gun:

This is he that far away  
Against the myriads of Assaye  
Clash'd with his fiery few and won;  
And underneath another sun,  
Warring on a later day,  
Round affrighted Lisbon drew  
The treble works, the vast designs  
Of his labor'd rampart-lines,  
Where he greatly stood at bay,  
Whence he issued forth anew,  
And ever great and greater grew,  
Beating from the wasted vines  
Back to France her banded swarms,  
Back to France with countless blows,  
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew  
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,  
Follow'd up in valley and glen  
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,  
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,  
And England pouring on her foes.  
Such a war had such a close.

Again their ravening eagle rose  
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-  
ing wings,  
And barking for the thrones of kings;  
Till one that sought but Duty's iron  
crown

On that loud Sabbath shook the  
spoil down;

A day of onsets of despair!  
Dash'd on every rocky square  
Their surging charges foam'd them-  
selves away;

Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;  
Thro' the long-tormented air  
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,  
And down we swept and charged and  
overthrew.

So great a soldier taught us there,  
What long-enduring hearts could do  
In that world earthquake, Waterloo!  
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,  
And pure as he from taint of craven  
guile,

O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,  
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,  
If aught of things that here befall  
Touch a spirit among things divine,  
If love of country move thee there at  
all,

Be glad, because his bones are laid by  
thine!

And thro' the centuries let a people's  
voice

In full acclaim,  
A people's voice,  
The proof and echo of all human  
fame,

A people's voice, when they rejoice  
At civic revel and pomp and game,  
Attest their great commander's claim  
With honor, honor, honor, honor to  
him,

Eternal honor to his name.

VII.

A people's voice! we are a people yet.  
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams  
forget,

Confused by brainless mobs and law-  
less Powers;  
Thank Him who isled us here, and  
roughly set

His Briton in blown seas and storming  
showers,

We have a voice, with which to pay  
the debt

Of boundless love and reverence and  
regret

To those great men who fought, and  
 kept it ours.  
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute  
 control;  
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,  
 the soul  
 Of Europe, keep our noble England  
 whole,  
 And save the one true seed of free-  
 dom sown  
 Betwixt a people and their ancient  
 throne,  
 That sober freedom out of which  
 there springs  
 Our loyal passion for our temperate  
 kings;  
 For, saving that, ye help to save man-  
 kind  
 Till public wrong be crumbled into  
 dust,  
 And drill the raw world for the march  
 of mind,  
 Till crowds at length be sane and  
 crowns be just.  
 But wink no more in slothful over-  
 trust.  
 Remember him who led your hosts;  
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.  
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward  
 wall;  
 His voice is silent in your council-hall  
 For ever; and whatever tempests lour  
 For ever silent; even if they broke  
 In thunder, silent; yet remember all  
 He spoke among you, and the Man  
 who spoke;  
 Who never sold the truth to serve the  
 hour,  
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for  
 power;  
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor  
 flow  
 Thro' either babbling world of high  
 and low;  
 Whose life was work, whose language  
 rife  
 With rugged maxims hewn from life;  
 Who never spoke against a foe;  
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one  
 rebuke  
 All great self-seekers trampling on  
 the right:

Truth-teller was our England's Alfred  
 named;  
 Truth-lover was our English Duke;  
 Whatever record leap to light  
 He never shall be shamed.

## VIII.

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars  
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,  
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,  
 He, on whom from both her open  
 hands  
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,  
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her  
 horn.  
 Yea, let all good things await  
 Him who cares not to be great,  
 But as he saves or serves the state.  
 Not once or twice in our rough island-  
 story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory:  
 He that walks it, only thirsting  
 For the right, and learns to deaden  
 Love of self, before his journey closes,  
 He shall find the stubborn thistle  
 bursting  
 Into glossy purples, which outredde  
 All voluptuous garden-roses.  
 Not once or twice in our fair island-  
 story,  
 The path of duty was the way to glory:  
 He, that ever following her commands,  
 On with toil of heart and knees and  
 hands,  
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light  
 has won  
 His path upward, and prevail'd,  
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty  
 scaled  
 Are close upon the shining table-  
 lands  
 To which our God Himself is moon  
 and sun.  
 Such was he: his work is done.  
 But while the races of mankind en-  
 dure,  
 Let his great example stand  
 Colossal, seen of every land,  
 And keep the soldier firm, the states-  
 man pure:  
 Till in all lands and thro' all human  
 story

The path of duty be the way to glory :  
 And let the land whose hearts he  
 saved from sbame  
 For many and many an age proclaim  
 At civic revel and pomp and game,  
 And when the long-illumined cities  
 flame,  
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,  
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to  
 him,  
 Eternal honor to his name.

## IX.

Peace, his triumph will be sung  
 By some yet unmoulded tongue  
 Far on in summers that we shall not  
 see :  
 Peace, it is a day of pain  
 For one about whose patriarchal knee  
 Late the little children clung :  
 O peace, it is a day of pain  
 For one, upon whose hand and heart  
 and brain  
 Once the weight and fate of Europe  
 hung.  
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !  
 More than is of man's degree  
 Must be with us, watching here  
 At this, our great solemnity.  
 Whom we see not we revere ;  
 We revere, and we refrain  
 From talk of battles loud and vain,  
 And brawling memories all too free  
 For such a wise humility  
 As befits a solemn fane :  
 We revere, and while we hear  
 The tides of Music's golden sea  
 Setting toward eternity,  
 Uplifted high in heart and hope are  
 we,  
 Until we doubt not that for one so  
 true  
 There must be other nobler work to  
 do  
 Than when he fought at Waterloo,  
 And Victor he must ever be.  
 For tho' the Giant Ages heave the  
 hill  
 And break the shore, and evermore  
 Make and break, and work their will ;  
 Tho' world on world in myriad myriads  
 roll

Round us, each with different powers,  
 And other forms of life than ours,  
 What know we greater than the soul ?  
 On God and Godlike men we build our  
 trust.  
 Hush, the Dead March wails in the  
 people's ears :  
 The dark crowd moves, and there are  
 sobs and tears :  
 The black earth yawns : the mortal  
 disappears ;  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;  
 He is gone who seem'd so great. —  
 Gone ; but nothing can bereave him  
 Of the force he made his own  
 Being here, and we believe him  
 Something far advanced in State,  
 And that he wears a truer crown  
 Than any wreath that man can weave  
 him.  
 Speak no more of his renown,  
 Lay your earthly fancies down,  
 And in the vast cathedral leave him.  
 God accept him, Christ receive him.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY,  
1852.

My Lords, we heard you speak : you  
 told us all  
 That England's honest censure went  
 too far ;  
 That our free press should cease to  
 brawl,  
 Not sting the fiery Frenchman into  
 war.  
 It was our ancient privilege, my Lords,  
 To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,  
 into words.  
 We love not this French God, the  
 child of Hell,  
 Wild War, who breaks the converse  
 of the wise ;  
 But though we love kind Peace so  
 well,  
 We dare not ev'n by silence sanction  
 lies.  
 It might be safe our censures to with-  
 draw ;  
 And yet, my Lords, not well : there is  
 a higher le<sup>ss</sup>.

As long as we remain, we must speak  
free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us  
break;

No little German state are we,  
But the one voice in Europe: we  
*must* speak;

That if to-night our greatness were  
struck dead,

There might be left some record of  
the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be  
bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant  
o'er.

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd  
On her and us and ours for evermore.

What! have we fought for Freedom  
from our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a  
public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never  
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we  
wring our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,  
We flung the burden of the second  
James.

I say, we *never* feared! and as for these,  
We broke them on the land, we drove  
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the  
people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons'  
breed —

Were those your sires who fought at  
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-  
mede?

O fall'n nobility, that, overawed,  
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of  
this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here  
were sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble  
hosts —

If easy patrons of their kin

Have left the last free race with  
naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they  
had to guard:

For us, we will not spare the tyrant  
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester  
may bawl,

What England was, shall her true  
sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,  
But some love England and her  
honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall  
stand,

And hold against the world this honor  
of the land.

#### THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

##### I.

HALF a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,  
All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.  
"Forward, the Light Brigade!  
Charge for the guns," he said:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

##### II.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"

Was there a man dismay'd?

Not tho' the soldier knew  
Some one had blunder'd:

Theirs not to make reply,  
Theirs not to reason why,  
Theirs but to do and die:  
Into the valley of Death  
Rode the six hundred.

##### III.

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volley'd and thunder'd;

Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,  
 Into the mouth of Hell  
 Rode the six hundred.

IV.

Flash'd all their sabres bare,  
 Flash'd as they turn'd in air  
 Sabring the gunners there,  
 Charging an army, while  
 All the world wonder'd :  
 Plunged in the battery-smoke  
 Right thro' the line they broke;  
 Cossack and Russian  
 Reel'd from the sabre-stroke  
 Shatter'd and sunder'd.  
 Then they rode back, but not,  
 Not the six hundred.

V.

Cannon to right of them,  
 Cannon to left of them,  
 Cannon behind them  
 Volley'd and thunder'd ;  
 Storm'd at with shot and shell,  
 While horse and hero fell,  
 They that had fought so well  
 Came thro' the jaws of Death,  
 Back from the mouth of Hell,  
 All that was left of them,  
 Left of six hundred.

VI.

When can their glory fade ?  
 O the wild charge they made !  
 All the world wonder'd.  
 Honor the charge they made !  
 Honor the Light Brigade,  
 Noble six hundred !

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING  
 OF THE INTERNATIONAL  
 EXHIBITION.

I.

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and  
 sweet,  
 In this wide hall with earth's inven-  
 tion stored,  
 And praise the invisible universal  
 Lord,

Who lets once more in peace the na-  
 tions meet,  
 Where Science, Art, and Labor  
 have outpour'd  
 Their myriad horns of plenty at our  
 feet.

II.

O silent father of our Kings to be  
 Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubilee,  
 For this, for all, we weep our thanks  
 to thee !

III.

The world-compelling plan was  
 thine, —  
 And, lo ! the long laborious miles  
 Of Palace ; lo ! the giant aisles,  
 Rich in model and design ;  
 Harvest-tool and husbandry,  
 Loom and wheel and enginery,  
 Secrets of the sullen mine,  
 Steel and gold, and corn and wine,  
 Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,  
 Sunny tokens of the Line,  
 Polar marvels, and a feast  
 Of wonder, out of West and East,  
 And shapes and hues of Art divine !  
 All of beauty, all of use,  
 That one fair planet can produce,  
 Brought from under every star,  
 Blown from over every main,  
 And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,  
 The works of peace with works of  
 war.

IV.

Is the goal so far away ?  
 Far, how far no tongue can say,  
 Let us dream our dream to-day.

V.

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who  
 reign,  
 From growing commerce loose her  
 latest chain,  
 And let the fair white-wing'd peace-  
 maker fly  
 To happy havens under all the sky,  
 And mix the seasons and the golden  
 hours ;  
 Till each man find his own in all  
 men's good,

And all men work in noble brother-  
hood,  
Breaking their mailed fleets and  
armed towers,  
And ruling by obeying Nature's  
powers,  
And gathering all the fruits of earth  
and crown'd with all her flow-  
ers.

### A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA.

MARCH 7, 1863.

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the  
sea, Alexandra!  
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,  
But all of us Danes in our welcome  
of thee, Alexandra!  
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of  
fleet!  
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the  
street!  
Welcome her, all things youthful and  
sweet,  
Scatter the blossom under her feet!  
Break, happy land, into earlier flow-  
ers!  
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded  
bowers!  
Blazon your mottoes of blessing and  
prayer!  
Welcome her, welcome her, all that is  
ours!  
Warble, O hagle, and trumpet, blare!  
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and  
towers!  
Flames, on the windy headland flare!  
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!  
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March  
air!  
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!  
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and  
higher  
Melt into stars for the land's desire!  
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,  
Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the  
strand,  
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the  
land,  
And welcome her, welcome the land's  
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as  
fair,  
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
Bride of the heir of the kings of the  
sea—  
O joy to the people and joy to the  
throne,  
Come to us, love us and make us your  
own:  
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,  
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,  
We are each all Dane in our welcome  
of thee, Alexandra!

### A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS MARIE ALEX- ANDROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.

MARCH 7, 1874.

#### I.

THE Son of him with whom we strove  
for power—  
Whose will is lord thro' all his  
world-domain—  
Who made the serf a man, and burst  
his chain—  
Has given our Prince his own imperial  
Flower,  
Alexandrovna.  
And welcome, Russian flower, a  
people's pride,  
To Britain, when her flowers begin  
to blow!  
From love to love, from home to  
home you go,  
From mother unto mother, stately  
bride,  
Marie Alexandrovna!

#### II.

The golden news along the steppes is  
blown,  
And at thy name the Tartar tents  
are stirr'd;  
Elburz and all the Caucasus have  
heard;  
And all the sultry palms of India  
known,  
Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea  
 On capes of Afric as on cliffs of  
 Kent,  
 The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-  
 nent,  
 And loyal pines of Canada murmur  
 thee,  
 Marie Alexandrovna!

## III.

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty  
 life! —  
 Yet Harold's England fell to Nor-  
 man swords;  
 Yet thine own land has bow'd to  
 Tartar hordes  
 Since English Harold gave its throne  
 a wife,  
 Alexandrovna!  
 For thrones and peoples are as waifs  
 that swing,  
 And float or fall, in endless ebb and  
 flow;  
 But who love best have best the  
 grace to know  
 That Love by right divine is deathless  
 king,  
 Marie Alexandrovna!

## IV.

And Love has led thee to the stranger  
 land,

Where men are bold and strongly  
 say their say; —  
 See, empire upon empire smiles to-  
 day,  
 As thou with thy young lover hand in  
 hand,  
 Alexandrovna!  
 So now thy fuller life is in the west,  
 Whose hand at home was gracious  
 to thy poor:  
 Thy name was blest within the nar-  
 row door;  
 Here also, Marie, shall thy name be  
 blest,  
 Marie Alexandrovna!

## V.

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame  
 again?  
 Or at thy coming, Princess, every-  
 where,  
 The blue heaven break, and some  
 diviner air  
 Breathe thro' the world and change  
 the hearts of men,  
 Alexandrovna!  
 But hearts that change not, love that  
 cannot cease,  
 And peace be yours, the peace of  
 soul in soul!  
 And howsoever this wild world may  
 roll,  
 Between your people's truth and man-  
 ful peace,  
 Alfred — Alexandrovna!

## THE GRANDMOTHER.

## I.

And Willy, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne?  
 Ruddy and white, and strong on his legs, he looks like a man  
 And Willy's wife has written: she never was over-wise,  
 Never the wife for Willy: he wouldn't take my advice.

## II.

For, Annie, you see, her father was not the man to save,  
 Hadn't a head to manage, and drank himself into his grave.  
 Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was against it for one.  
 Eh! — but he wouldn't hear me — and Willy, you say, is gone.

## III.

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the flower of the flock;  
 Never a man could fling him: for Willy stood like a rock.  
 "Here's a leg for a babe of a week!" says doctor; and he would be bound,  
 There was not his like that year in twenty parishes round.

## IV.

Strong of his hands, and strong on his legs, but still of his tongue!  
 I ought to have gone before him: I wonder he went so young.  
 I cannot cry for him, Annie: I have not long to stay;  
 Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for he lived far away.

## V.

Why do you look at me, Annie? you think I am hard and cold;  
 But all my children have gone before me, I am so old:  
 I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I weep for the rest;  
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## VI.

For I remember a quarrel I had with your father, my dear,  
 All for a slanderous story, that cost me many a tear.  
 I mean your grandfather, Annie: it cost me a world of woe,  
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## VII.

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to the place, and I knew right well  
 That Jenny had tript in her time: I knew, but I would not tell.  
 And she to be coming and slandering me, the base little liar!  
 But the tongue is a fire as you know, my dear, the tongue is a fire.

## VIII.

And the parson made it his text that week, and he said likewise,  
 That a lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies,  
 That a lie which is all a lie may be met and fought with outright,  
 But a lie which is part a truth is a harder matter to fight.

## IX.

And Willy had not been down to the farm for a week and a day;  
 And all things look'd half-dead, tho' it was the middle of May.  
 Jenny, to slander me, who knew what Jenny had been!  
 But soiling another, Annie, will never make one's self clean.

## X.

And I cried myself well-nigh blind, and all of an evening late  
 I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate.  
 The moon like a rick on fire was rising over the dale,  
 And whit, whit, whit, in the bush beside me chirrup the nightingale.



## XI.

All of a sudden he stopt: there past by the gate of the farm,  
 Willy, — he didn't see me, — and Jenny hung on his arm.  
 Out into the road I started, and spoke I scarce knew how;  
 Ah, there's no fool like the old one — it makes me angry now.

## XII.

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd the thing that he meant;  
 Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking curtesy and went.  
 And I said, "Let us part: in a hundred years it'll all be the same,  
 You cannot love me at all, if you love not my good name."

## XIII.

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all wet, in the sweet moonshine:  
 "Sweetheart, I love you so well that your good name is mine.  
 And what do I care for Jane, let her speak of you well or ill;  
 But marry me out of hand: we two shall be happy still."

## XIV.

"Marry you, Willy!" said I, "but I needs must speak my mind,  
 And I fear you'll listen to tales, be jealous and hard and unkind."  
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his arms, and answer'd, "No, love, no;"  
 Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago.

## XV.

So Willy and I were wedded: I wore a lilac gown;  
 And the ringers rang with a will, and he gave the ringers a crown.  
 But the first that ever I bare was dead before he was born,  
 Shadow and shine is life, little Annie, flower and thorn.

## XVI.

That was the first time, too, that ever I thought of death.  
 There lay the sweet little body that never had drawn a breath.  
 I had not wept, little Anne, not since I had been a wife;  
 But I wept like a child that day, for the babe had fought for his life.

## XVII.

His dear little face was troubled, as if with anger or pain:  
 I look'd at the still little body — his trouble had all been in vain.  
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see him another morn:  
 But I wept like a child for the child that was dead before he was born.

## XVIII.

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for he seldom said me nay:  
 Kind, like a man, was he; like a man, too, would have his way.  
 Never jealous — not he: we had many a happy year;  
 And he died, and I could not weep — my own time seem'd so near.

## XIX.

But I wish'd it had been God's will that I, too, then could have died:  
 I began to be tired a little, and fain had slept at his side.  
 And that was ten years back, or more, if I don't forget:  
 But as to the children, Annie, they're all about me yet.

## XX.

Pattering over the boards, my Annie who left me at two,  
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie, an Annie like you:  
 Pattering over the boards, she comes and goes at her will,  
 While Harry is in the five-acre and Charlie ploughing the hill.

## XXI.

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them too — they sing to their team:  
 Often they come to the door in a pleasant kind of a dream.  
 They come and sit by my chair, they hover about my bed —  
 I am not always certain if they be alive or dead.

## XXII.

And yet I know for a truth, there's none of them left alive;  
 For Harry went at sixty, your father at sixty-five:  
 And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh threescore and ten;  
 I knew them all as babies, and now they're elderly men.

## XXIII.

For mine is a time of peace, it is not often I grieve;  
 I am oftener sitting at home in my father's farm at eve:  
 And the neighbors come and laugh and gossip, and so do I;  
 I find myself often laughing at things that have long gone by.

## XXIV.

To be sure the preacher says, our sins should make us sad:  
 But mine is a time of peace, and there is Grace to be had;  
 And God, not man, is the Judge of us all when life shall cease  
 And in this Book, little Annie, the message is one of Peace.

## XXV.

And age is a time of peace, so it be free from pain,  
 And happy has been my life; but I would not live it again.  
 I seem to be tired a little, that's all, and long for rest;  
 Only at your age, Annie, I could have wept with the best.

## XXVI.

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my eldest-born, my flower;  
 But how can I weep for Willy, he has but gone for an hour, —  
 Gone for a minute, my son, from this room into the next;  
 I, too, shall go in a minute. What time have I to be vex't ?

## XXVII.

And Willy's wife has written, she never was over-wise.  
 Get me my glasses, Annie : thank God that I keep my eyes.  
 There is but a trifle left you, when I shall have past away.  
 But stay with the old woman now : you cannot have long to stay.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## OLD STYLE.

## I.

WHEER 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän ?  
 Noorse ? thoort nowt o' a noorse : whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän :  
 Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle : but I beänt a fool :  
 Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gooïn' to breäk my rule.

## II.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true :  
 Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.  
 I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere,  
 An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

## III.

Parson's a beän loikewise, an' a sittin' ere o' my bed.  
 "The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," a said,  
 An' a tow'd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond ;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

## IV.

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.  
 But a cast oop, thot a did, 'boot Bessy Marris's barne.  
 Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,  
 An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

## V.

An' I hallus coom'd to's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,  
 An' 'eerd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock<sup>1</sup> ower my 'eäd,  
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,  
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coom'd awaäy.

## VI.

Bessy Marris's barne ! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.  
 Mowt a bean, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.  
 'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tba mun understand ;  
 I done moy duty boy 'um as I 'a done boy the lond.

<sup>1</sup> Cockchafer.

## VII.

But Parson a cooms an' a goos, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä  
 "The amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.  
 I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summum said it in 'aäste:  
 But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste

## VIII.

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass <sup>2</sup> naw, naw, tha was not born then;  
 Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eerd 'um mysen;  
 Moäst loike a butter-bump,<sup>1</sup> fur I 'eerd 'um aboot an' aboot,  
 But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um oot.

## IX.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce  
 Doon i' the world 'enemies <sup>2</sup> afor I coom'd to the plaäce.  
 Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.  
 Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my aäle.

## X.

Dubbut loook at the waäste: theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;  
 Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' loook at it now —  
 Warnt worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer's lots o' feeäd,  
 Fourscoor yows upon it an' some on it doon i' seeäd.

## XI.

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,  
 Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,  
 If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let me aloän,  
 Meä, wi' haäte oonderd haäcre o' Squire's an' lond o' my oän.

## XII.

Do godamoighty know what a's doing a-taäkin' o' meä?  
 I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;  
 An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear a' dear!  
 And I 'a managed for Squire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

## XIII.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant nor a 'aäpoth o' sense,  
 Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver mended a fence:  
 But godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now  
 Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

## XIV.

Loook 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,  
 Says to thessén naw doubt "what a man a beä sewer-loy!"  
 Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire sin fust a coom'd to the 'All;  
 I done moy duty by Squire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

<sup>1</sup> Bittern.<sup>2</sup> Anemones.

## XV.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,  
 For whoā's to howd the lond ater meā thot muddles ma quoit;  
 Sartin-sewer I beā, thot a weānt niver give it to Joānes,  
 Naw, nor a moānt to Robins — a niver rembles the stoāns.

## XVI

But summnn 'ull come ater meā mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steām  
 Huzzin' an' maāzin' the blessed feālds wi' the Divil's oān teām.  
 Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,  
 But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeār to see it.

## XVII.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aāle ?  
 Doctor's a 'toāttler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taāle ;  
 I weānt breāk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy ;  
 Git ma my aāle I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

## NORTHERN FARMER.

## NEW STYLE.

## I.

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaāy ?  
 Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'em saāy.  
 Proputty, proputty, propntty — Sam, thou's an ass for thy paaāins :  
 Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braāins.

## II.

Woā — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse —  
 Dosn't thon know that a man mun be eāther a man or a mouse ?  
 Time to think on it then ; for thou'll be twenty to weeāk.<sup>1</sup>  
 Proputty, proputty — woā then woā — let ma 'ear mysén speāk.

## III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beān a-talkin' o' thee ;  
 Thou's beān talkin' to muther, an' she beān a tel'in' it me.  
 Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo' parson's lass —  
 Noā — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we hoāth on us thinks tha an ass.

## IV.

Seeā'd her todaāy goā by — Saāint's daāy — they was ringin' the bells.  
 She's a beauty thou thinks — an' soā is scoors o' gells,  
 Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty ? — the flower as blaws.  
 But propntty, proputty sticks, an' propntty, propntty graws.

<sup>1</sup> This week.

## V.

Do'ant be stunt:<sup>1</sup> taäke time: I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.  
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?  
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as tow'd ma this:  
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

## VI.

An' I went wheer munny war: an' thy muther coom to 'and,  
Wi' lots o' munny laaäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.  
Maäkybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv it a thowt —  
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

## VII.

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deääd,  
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle<sup>2</sup> her breääd:  
Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git naw 'igher;  
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coom'd to the shire.

## VIII.

An thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,  
Stook to his taaäl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.  
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shove,  
Woorse nor a far-welter'd<sup>3</sup> yowe: fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

## IX.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,  
Maakin' 'em goä together as they've good right to do.  
Could'n I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaäid by?  
Naäy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

## X.

Ay an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,  
Cooms of a gentleman burn: an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.  
Woä then, propuppy, wiltha? — an ass as near as mays nowt<sup>4</sup> —  
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as fell as owt.<sup>5</sup>

## XI.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eääd, lad, out o' the fence!  
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?  
Propuppy, propuppy's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest  
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

## XII.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.  
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

<sup>1</sup> Obatinats.<sup>2</sup> Earn.<sup>3</sup> Or fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying on its back in the furrow.<sup>4</sup> Makes nothing.<sup>5</sup> The flies are as fierce as anything.

## XIII.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beün a laäzy lot,  
 Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.  
 Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leastways 'is munny was 'id.  
 But 'e tued an' moil'd 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did.

## XIV.

Look thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill  
 Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;  
 An' I'll run oop to the brig, au' that thou'll live to see;  
 And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

## XV.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I means to stick;  
 But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leave the land to Dick. —  
 Coom oop, proputtu, proputtu — that's what I 'ears 'im saäy —  
 Proputtu, proputtu, proputtu — canter an' canter awaäy

## THE DAISY.

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH.

O LOVE, what hours were thine and  
 mine,

In lands of palm and southern pine;  
 In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,  
 Of olive, aloc, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbìa show'd  
 In ruin, by the mountain road;  
 How like a gem, beneath, the city  
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell  
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell  
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,  
 That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew  
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
 Where, here and there, on sandy  
 beaches  
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,  
 Yet present in his natal grove,  
 Now watching high on mountain  
 cornice,  
 And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;  
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,  
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,  
 And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,  
 Not the clipt palm of which they boast;  
 But distant color, happy hamlet,  
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen  
 A light amid its olives green;  
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;  
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed  
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;  
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten  
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,  
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,  
 A princely people's awful princes,  
 The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,  
 In those long galleries, were ours;  
 What drives about the fresh Cascinè,  
 Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,  
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,  
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,  
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain  
Remember what a plague of rain ;  
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma ;  
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles,  
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;  
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,  
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,  
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,  
The height, the space, the gloom,  
The glory !  
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;  
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.  
I stood among the silent statues,  
And stuned pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,  
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there  
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-  
leys  
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last  
To Como ; shower and storm and blast  
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,  
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,  
And in my head, for half the day,  
The rich Virgilian rustic measure  
Of Lari Maxume, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,  
As on The Lariano crept  
To that fair port below the castle  
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake  
A cypress in the moonlight shake,  
The moonlight touching o'er a  
terrace  
One tall Agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,  
And up the snowy Splugen drew,  
But ere we reach'd the highest  
summit  
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,  
And now it tells of Italy.  
O love, we two shall go no longer  
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold  
Whose crying is a cry for gold :  
Yet here to-night in this dark city,  
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,  
This nursling of another sky  
Still in the little book you lent me,  
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,  
The gloom that saddens Heaven and  
Earth,  
The bitter east, the misty summer  
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,  
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,  
Perchance, to dream you still be-  
side me,  
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.  
JANUARY, 1854.

COME, when no graver cares employ,  
Godfather, come and see your boy :  
Your presence will be sun in winter,  
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,  
Who give the Fiend himself his due,  
Should eighty-thousand college-  
councils  
Thunder " Anathema," friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite  
At you, so careful of the right,  
Yet one lay-hearth would give you  
welcome  
(Take it and come) to the Isle of  
Wight ;



Where, far from noise and smoke of town,

I watch the twilight falling brown  
All round a careless-order'd garden  
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,  
But honest talk and wholesome wine,  
And only hear the magpie gossip  
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep  
Some ship of battle slowly creep,  
And on thro' zones of light and shadow  
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin  
Which made a selfish war begin ;  
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;  
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod  
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;  
Till you should turn to dearer matters,  
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,  
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;  
How gain in life, as life advances,  
Valor and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come : the lawn as yet  
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;  
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,  
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,  
For those are few we hold as dear ;  
Nor pay but one, but come for many,  
Many and many a happy year.

## WILL.

## I.

O WELL for him whose will is strong !  
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;  
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :

For him nor moves the loud world's random mock,  
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,

Who seems a promontory of rock,  
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,  
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,  
Tempest-buffeted ; citadel-crown'd.

## II.

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,

Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,  
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,

Or seeming-genial venial fault,  
Recurring and suggesting still !  
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,

Toiling in immeasurable sand,  
And o'er a weary sultry land,  
Far beneath a blazing vault,  
Sown in a wrinkle in the monstrous hill,

The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF  
CAUTERETZ.

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,

Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,

All along the valley, where thy waters flow,

I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.

All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,

The two and thirty years were a mist  
 that rolls away ;  
 For all along the valley, down thy  
 rocky bed,  
 Thy living voice to me was as the  
 voice of the dead,  
 And all along the valley, by rock and  
 cave and tree,  
 The voice of the dead was a living  
 voice to me.

---

IN THE GARDEN AT  
 SWAINSTON.

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,  
 Within was weeping for thee :  
 Shadows of three dead men  
 Walk'd in the walks with me,  
 Shadows of three dead men and  
 thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :  
 The Master was far away :  
 Nightingales warbled and sang  
 Of a passion that lasts but a day ;  
 Still in the house in his coffin the  
 Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known  
 In courtesy like to thee :  
 Two dead men have I loved  
 With a love that ever will be :  
 Three dead men have I loved, and  
 thou art last of the three.

---

THE FLOWER.

ONCE in a golden hour  
 I cast to earth a seed.  
 Up there came a flower,  
 The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went  
 Thro' my garden-bower,  
 And muttering discontent  
 Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall  
 It wore a crown of light,  
 But thieves from o'er the wall  
 Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide  
 By every town and tower,  
 Till all the people cried,  
 "Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable :  
 He that runs may read.  
 Most can raise the flowers now,  
 For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,  
 And some are poor indeed.  
 And now again the people  
 Call it but a weed.

---

REQUIESCAT.

FAIR is her cottage in its place,  
 Where yon broad water sweetly,  
 slowly glides.  
 It sees itself from thatch to base  
 Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah how soon to  
 die !  
 Her quiet dream of life this hour  
 may cease.  
 Her peaceful being slowly passes by  
 To some more perfect peace.

---

THE SAILOR BOY.

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,  
 Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,  
 And reach'd the ship and caught the  
 rope,  
 And whistled to the morning star.

And while he whistled long and loud  
 He heard a fierce mermaid cry,  
 "O boy, tho' thou art young and  
 proud,  
 I see the place where thou wilt lie.

"The sands and yeasty surges mix  
 In caves about the dreary bay,  
 And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,  
 And in thy heart the scrawl shall  
 play."

"Fool," he answer'd, "death is sure  
To those that stay and those that  
    roam,  
But I will nevermore endure  
To sit with empty hands at home.

"My mother clings about my neck,  
My sisters crying, 'Stay for shame;'  
My father raves of death and wreck,  
They are all to blame, they are all  
to blame.

"God help me! save I take my part  
Of danger on the roaring sea,  
A devil rises in my heart,  
Far worse than any death to me."

---

### THE ISLET.

"WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we  
    go,  
For a score of sweet little summers or  
so?"

The sweet little wife of the singer said,  
On the day that follow'd the day she  
    was wed,

"Whither, O whither, love, shall we  
    go?"

And the singer shaking his curly head  
Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys  
There at his right with a sudden crash,  
Singing, "And shall it be over the seas  
With a crew that is neither rude nor  
    rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,  
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd,  
With a satin sail of a ruby glow,  
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I  
    know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;  
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,  
Cataract brooks to the ocean run,  
Fairly-delicate palaces shine  
Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,  
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd  
With many a rivulet high against the  
    Sun

The facets of the glorious mountain  
    flash  
Above the valleys of palm and pine."

"Thither, O thither, love, let us go."

"No, no, no!  
For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,  
There is but one bird with a musical  
    throat,  
And his compass is but of a single  
    note,  
That it makes one weary to hear."

"Mock me not! mock me not! love,  
    let us go."

"No, love, no.  
For the bud ever breaks into bloom  
    on the tree,  
And a storm never wakes on the lonely  
    sea,  
And a worm is there in the lonely  
    wood,  
That pierces the liver and blackens  
    the blood;  
And makes it a sorrow to be."

---

### CHILD-SONGS.

#### I.

#### THE CITY CHILD.

DAINTY little maiden, whither would  
    you wander?

Whither from this pretty home, the  
    home where mother dwells?

"Far and far away," said the dainty  
    little maiden,

"All among the gardens, auriculas,  
    anemones,  
Roses and lilies and Canterbury-  
    bells."

Dainty little maiden, whither would  
    you wander?

Whither from this pretty house,  
    this city-house of ours?

"Far and far away," said the dainty  
    little maiden,

"All among the meadows, the clover  
    and the clematis,  
Daisies and kingcups and honey-  
    suckle-flowers."

## II.

## MINNIE AND WINNIE.

MINNIE and Winnie  
Slept in a shell.  
Sleep, little ladies!  
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,  
Silver without;  
Sounds of the great sea  
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies!  
Wake not soon!  
Echo on echo  
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars  
Peep'd into the shell.  
"What are they dreaming of?  
Who can tell?"

Started a green linnet  
Out of the croft;  
Wake, little ladies,  
The sun is aloft!

## THE SPITEFUL LETTER.

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,  
And with it a spiteful letter.  
My name in song has done him much  
wrong,  
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,  
If men neglect your pages?  
I think not much of yours or of mine,  
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of  
the times!  
Are mine for the moment stronger?  
Yet hate me not, but abide your lot,  
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as  
brief;  
What room is left for a hater?

Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener  
leaf,  
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is that your cry?  
And men will live to see it.  
Well — if it be so — so it is, you know;  
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,  
But this is the time of hollies.  
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,  
How I hate the spites and the  
follies!

## LITERARY SQUABBLES.

AN God! the petty fools of rhyme  
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars  
Before the stony face of Time,  
And look'd at by the silent stars:

Who hate each other for a song,  
And do their little best to bite  
And pinch their brethren in the throng,  
And scratch the very dead for spite:

And strain to make an inch of room  
For their sweet selves, and cannot  
hear  
The sullen Lethe rolling doom  
On them and theirs and all things  
here:

When one small touch of Charity  
Could lift them nearer God-like state  
Than if the crowned Orb should cry  
Like those who cried Diana great:

And I too, talk, and lose the touch  
I talk of. Surely, after all,  
The noblest answer unto such  
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

## THE VICTIM.

## I.

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,  
A famine after laid them low,  
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,

For on them brake the sudden foe ;  
So thick they died the people cried,  
"The Gods are moved against the  
land."

The Priest in horror about his altar  
To Thor and Odin lifted a hand :

"Help us from famine  
And plague and strife !  
What would you have of us ?  
Human life ?

Were it our nearest,  
Were it our dearest,  
(Answer, O answer)  
We give you his life."

## II.

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,  
And cattle died, and deer in wood,  
And bird in air, and fishes turn'd  
And whiten'd all the rolling flood ;  
And dead men lay all over the way,  
Or down in a furrow scathed with  
flame :

And ever and aye the Priesthood  
moan'd,

Till at last it seem'd that an answer  
came.

"The King is happy  
In child and wife ;  
Take you his dearest,  
Give us a life."

## III.

The Priest went out by heath and hill ;  
The King was hunting in the wild ;

They found the mother sitting still ;  
She cast her arms about the child.

The child was only eight summers old,  
His beauty still with his years in-  
creased,

His face was ruddy, his hair was gold,  
He seem'd a victim due to the priest.

The Priest beheld him,  
And cried with joy,  
"The Gods have answer'd :  
We give them the boy."

## IV.

The King return'd from out the wild,  
He bore but little game in hand ;

The mother said, "They have taken  
the child

To spill his blood and heal the  
land :

The land is sick, the people diseased,  
And blight and famine on all the  
lea :

The holy Gods, they must be appeased,  
So I pray you tell the truth to me.

They have taken our son,  
They will have his life.

Is he your dearest ?  
Or I, the wife ? "

## V.

The King bent low, with hand on  
brow,

He stay'd his arms upon his knee :  
"O wife, what use to answer now ?

For now the Priest has judged for  
me."

The King was shaken with holy  
fear ;

"The Gods," he said, "would have  
chosen well ;

Yet both are near, and both are dear,  
And which the dearest I cannot tell !"

But the Priest was happy,  
His victim won :

"We have his dearest,  
His only son !"

## VI.

The rites prepared, the victim bared,  
The knife uprising toward the  
blow

To the altar-stone she sprang alone,  
"Me, not my darling, no !"

He caught her away with a sudden  
cry ;

Suddenly from him brake his wife,  
And shrieking "I am his dearest, I—  
I am his dearest ! " rush'd on the  
knife.

And the Priest was happy,  
"O, Father Odin,

We give you a life.  
Which was his nearest ?  
Who was his dearest ?

The Gods have answer'd ;  
We give them the wife !"

## WAGES.

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,  
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea —  
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong —  
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no lover of glory she:  
 Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the wages of Virtue be dust,  
 Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?  
 She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,  
 To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky:  
 Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM.

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains —  
 Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?  
 Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
 Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;  
 For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom  
 Making Him broken gleams, and a stifed splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet —  
 Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
 For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;  
 For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;  
 But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not He?

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK.

## I.

THE voice and the Peak  
 Far over summit and lawn,  
 The lone glow and long roar  
 Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
 of dawn!

## II.

All night have I heard the voice  
 Rave over the rocky bar,  
 But thou wert silent in heaven,  
 Above thee glided the star.

## III.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,  
That standest high above all?  
"I am the voice of the Peak,  
I roar and rave for I fall.

## IV.

"A thousand voices go  
To North, South, East, and West;  
They leave the heights and are  
troubled,  
And moan and sink to their rest.

## V.

"The fields are fair beside them,  
The chestnut towers in his bloom;  
But they — they feel the desire of the  
deep —  
Fall, and follow their doom.

## VI.

"The deep has power on the height,  
And the height has power on the  
deep;  
They are raised for ever and ever,  
And sink again into sleep."

## VII.

Not raised for ever and ever,  
But when their cycle is o'er,  
The valley, the voice, the peak, the  
star  
Pass, and are found no more.

## VIII.

The Peak is high and flush'd  
At his highest with sunrise fire;  
The Peak is high, and the stars are  
high,  
And the thought of a man is higher.

## IX.

A deep below the deep,  
And a height beyond the height!  
Our hearing is not hearing,  
And our seeing is not sight.

## X.

The voice and the Peak  
Far into heaven withdrawn,  
The lone glow and long roar  
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones  
of dawn!

FLOWER in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my  
hand,  
Little flower — but if I could under-  
stand  
What you are, root and all, and all in  
all,  
I should know what God and man is.

## A DEDICATION.

DEAR, near and true — no truer Time  
himself  
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever-  
more  
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of  
life  
Shoots to the fall — take this and pray  
that he  
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet  
faith in him,  
May trust himself; and after praise  
and scorn,  
As one who feels the immeasurable  
world,  
Attain the wise indifference of the  
wise;  
And after Autumn past — if left to  
pass  
His autumn into seeming-leafless  
days —  
Draw toward the long frost and long-  
est night,  
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the  
fruit  
Which in our winter woodland looks  
a flower.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

## EXPERIMENTS.

## BOÄDICEA.

WHILE about the shore of Mona those Néronian legionaries  
 Burnt and broke the grove and altar of the Druid and Druidess,  
 Far in the East Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Mad and maddening all that heard her in her fierce volubility,  
 Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters o'er a wild confederacy.

“They that scorn the tribes and call us Britain's barbarous populaces,  
 Did they hear me, would they listen, did they pity me supplicating ?  
 Shall I heed them in their anguish ? shall I brook to be supplicated ?  
 Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !  
 Must their ever-ravening eagle's beak and talon annihilate us ?  
 Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave it gorily quivering ?  
 Bark an answer, Britain's raven ! bark and blacken innumerable,  
 Blacken round the Roman carrion, make the carcase a skeleton,  
 Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin, from the wilderness, wallow in it,  
 Till the face of Bel be brighten'd, Taranis be propitiated.  
 Lo their colony half-defended ! low their colony, Cámulodúne !  
 There the horde of Roman robbers mock at a barbarous adversary.  
 There the hive of Roman liars worship a gluttonous emperor-idiot.  
 Such is Rome, and this her deity : hear it, Spirit of Cássivélaun !

“Hear it, Gods ! the Gods have heard it, O Icenian, O Coritanian !  
 Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd, Catiuechlanian, Trinobant.  
 These have told us all their anger in miraculous utterances,  
 Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a murmur heard aërially,  
 Phantom sound of blows descending, moan of an enemy massacred,  
 Phantom wail of women and children, multitudinous agonies.  
 Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling phantom bodies of horses and men ;  
 Then a phantom colony smoulder'd on the reflux estuary ;  
 Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly giddily tottering —  
 There was one who watch'd and told me — down their statue of Victory fell.  
 Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo the colony Cámulodúne,  
 Shall we teach it a Roman lesson ? shall we care to be pitiful ?  
 Shall we deal with it as an infant ? shall we dandle it amorously ?

“Hear Icenian, Catiuechlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant !  
 While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly meditating,  
 There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical ceremony,  
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible prophetesses,  
 ‘Fear not, isle of blowing woodland, isle of silvery parapets !  
 Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee, tho' the gathering enemy narrow thee,  
 Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle, thou shalt be the mighty one yet !



Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine the deeds to be celebrated,  
 Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light and shadow illimitable,  
 Thine the lands of lasting summer, many-blossoming Paradises,  
 Thine the North and thine the South and thine the battle-thunder of God.  
 So they chanted: how shall Britain light upon auguries happier?  
 So they chanted in the darkness, and there cometh a victory now.

“Hear Icenian, Caticuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trinobant!  
 Me the wife of rich Prasútagus, me the lover of liberty,  
 Me they seized and me they tortured, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine of ruffian violators!  
 See they sit, they hide their faces, miserable in ignominy!  
 Wherefore in me burns an anger, not by blood to be satiated.  
 Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the colony Cámulodúne!  
 There they ruled, and thence they wasted all the flourishing territory,  
 Thither at their will they haled the yellow-ringed Britones—  
 Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe, unexhausted, inexorable.  
 Shout Icenian, Caticuchlanian, shout Coritanian, Trinobant,  
 Till the victim hear within and yearn to hurry precipitously  
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind, like the smoke in a hurricane whirl'd.  
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the city of Cúnobelíne!  
 There they drank in cups of emerald, there at tables of ebony lay,  
 Rolling on their purple couches in their tender effeminacy.  
 There they dwelt and there they rioted; there—there—they dwell no more.  
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces, break the works of the statuary,  
 Take the hoary Roman head and shatter it, hold it abominable,  
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his lust and voluptuousness,  
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me they lash'd and humiliated,  
 Chop the breasts from off the mother, dash the brains of the little one out,  
 Up my Britons, on my chariot, on my chargers, trample them under us.”

So the Queen Boädicéa, standing loftily charioted,  
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and rolling glances lioness-like,  
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daughters in her fierce volubility.  
 Till her people all around the royal chariot agitated,  
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writhing barbarous lineaments,  
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands, when they shiver in January,  
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers boom and blanch on the precipices,  
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter tear an oak on a promontory.  
 So the silent colony hearing her tumultuous adversaries  
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat with rapid unanimous hand,  
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all her pitiless avarice,  
 Till she felt the heart within her fall and flutter tremulously,  
 Then her pulses at the clamoring of her enemy fainted away.  
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyranny tyranny buds.  
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter, multitudinous agonies.  
 Perish'd many a maid and matron, many a valorous legionary,  
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, London, Verulam, Cámulodúne.

## IN QUANTITY.

## ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

*Hexameters and Pentameters.*

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer !  
 No — but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.  
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England ?  
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon ?  
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,  
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

## MILTON.

*Alcaics.*

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,  
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,  
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,  
 Milton, a name to resound for ages ;  
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,  
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,  
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean  
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset —  
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,  
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,  
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches  
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,  
 Where some refulgent sunset of India  
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,  
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods  
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

*Hendecasyllabics.*

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,  
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,  
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem  
 All composed in a metre of Catullus  
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,  
 Like the skater on ice that hardly  
 bears him,  
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,

Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.  
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble  
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,  
 They should speak to me not without a welcome,  
 All that chorus of indolent reviewers.  
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,  
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.  
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me  
 Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers,  
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —  
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —  
 As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost  
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like  
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

—  
 SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake ; the Trojans roar'd  
 applause ;  
 Then loosed their sweating horses  
 from the yoke,  
 And each beside his chariot bound his  
 own ;  
 And oxen from the city, and goodly  
 sheep

<p>In haste they drove, and honey-hearted wine And bread from out the houses brought, and heap'd Their firewood, and the winds from off the plain Roll'd the rich vapor far into the heaven. And these all night upon the bridge<sup>1</sup> of war Sat glorying; many a fire before them blazed: As when in heaven the stars about the moon Look beautiful, when all the winds are laid, And every height comes out, and jut- ting peak</p>	<p>And valley, and the immeasurable heavens Break open to their highest, and all the stars Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his heart: So many a fire between the ships and stream Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of Troy, A thousand on the plain; and close by each Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire; And eating hoary grain and pulse the steeds, Fixt by their cars, waited the golden dawn. <i>Iliad</i> viii. 542-561.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Or ridge.

## THE WINDOW;

### OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as "Orpheus with his lute," and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

## THE WINDOW.

### ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly!  
Yonder it brightens and darkens down  
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's  
eye!

Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her  
window pane,

When the winds are up in the  
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,  
And winds and lights and shadows  
that cannot be still,

All running on one way to the home  
of my love,

You are all running on, and I stand  
on the slope of the hill,

And the winds are up in the morn-  
ing!

Follow, follow the chase!  
And my thoughts are as quick and as  
quick, ever on, on, on.

O lights, are you flying over her  
sweet little face?

And my heart is there before you are  
come, and gone,

When the winds are up in the  
morning!

Follow them down the slope!  
And I follow them down to the window-  
pane of my dear,

And it brightens and darkens and  
brightens like my hope,

And it darkens and brightens and  
darkens like my fear,

And the winds are up in the  
morning.

## AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Clasp her window, trail and twine!  
Rose, rose and elematis,  
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,  
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower  
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,  
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,  
Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?  
Rose, rose and clematis,  
Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,  
Kiss, kiss — and out of her bower  
All of flowers, a flower, a flower,  
Dropt, a flower.

## GONE.

Gone!  
Gone, till the end of the year,  
Gone, and the light gone with her, and  
left me in shadow here!  
Gone — fitted away,  
Taken the stars from the night and  
the sun from the day!  
Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a  
storm in the air!  
Flown to the east or the west, fitted  
I know not where!  
Down in the south is a flash and a  
groan: she is there! she is  
there!

## WINTER.

The frost is here,  
And fuel is dear,  
And woods are sear,  
And fires burn clear,  
And frost is here  
And has bitten the heel of the going  
year.

Bite, frost, bite!  
You roll up away from the light  
The blue wood-louse, and the plump  
dormouse,  
And the bees are still'd, and the flies  
are kill'd,  
And you bite far into the heart of the  
house,  
But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!  
The woods are all the searer,  
The fuel is all the dearer,  
The fires are all the clearer,  
My spring is all the nearer,  
You have bitten into the heart of the  
earth,  
But not into mine.

## SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song  
Flying here and there,  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
And you with gold for hair!  
Birds' song and birds' love,  
Passing with the weather,  
Men's song and men's love,  
To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,  
And women's love and men's!  
And you my wren with a crown of  
gold,  
You my queen of the wrens!  
You the queen of the wrens —  
We'll be birds of a feather,  
I'll be King of the Queen of the  
wrens,  
And all in a nest together.

## THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,  
Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?  
Fine little hands, fine little feet —  
Dewy blue eye.

Shall I write to her? shall I go?  
Ask her to marry me by and by?  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?  
Ay or no, from shy of the shy?  
Go, little letter, apace, apace,  
Fly;

Fly to the light in the valley below —  
Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:  
Somebody said that she'd say no;  
Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

## NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and  
the rain!

Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
And never a glimpse of her window  
pane!

And I may die but the grass will  
grow,  
And the grass will grow when I am  
gone,  
And the wet west wind and the world  
will go on.

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,  
No is trouble and cloud and storm,  
Ay is life for a hundred years,  
No will push me down to the worm,  
And when I am there and dead and  
gone,  
The wet west wind and the world will  
go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and  
the wet!

Wet west wind how you blow, you  
blow!

And never a line from my lady yet!  
Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?  
Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,  
The wet west wind and the world may  
go on.

## NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,  
Take my love, for love will come,  
Love will come but once a life.  
Winds are loud and winds will pass!  
Spring is here with leaf and grass:  
Take my love and be my wife.  
After-loves of maids and men  
Are but dainties drest again:  
Love me now, you'll love me then:  
Love can love but once a life.

## THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,  
Claspt on her seal, my sweet!  
Must I take you and break you,  
Two little hands that meet?  
I must take you, and break you,  
And loving hands must part—  
Take, take—break, break—  
Break—you may break my heart.  
Faint heart never won—  
Break, break, and all's done.

## AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,  
Be merry on earth as you never  
were merry before,  
Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far  
away,  
And merry for ever and ever, and  
one day more.

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
Look, look, how he flits,  
The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,  
from out of the pine!  
Look how they tumble the blossom,  
the mad little tits!  
"Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!" was ever a  
May so fine?

Why?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.  
O merry the linnet and dove,  
And swallow and sparrow and  
throstle, and have your desire!  
O merry my heart, you have gotten  
the wings of love,  
And fit like the king of the wrens  
with a crown of fire.

Why?

For its ay ay, ay ay.

## WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,  
Time slips away.  
Sun sets, moon sets,  
Love, fix a day.

"A year hence, a year hence."  
"We shall both be gray."  
"A month hence, a month hence."  
"Far, far away."

"A week hence, a week hence."  
"Ah, the long delay."  
"Wait a little, wait a little,  
You shall fix a day."

"To-morrow, love, to-morrow,  
And that's an age away."  
Blaze upon her window, sun,  
And honor all the day.

## MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,  
 You send a flash to the sun.  
 Here is the golden close of love,  
 All my wooing is done.  
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,  
 Woods where we hid from the wet,  
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,  
 Meadows in which we met!

Light, so low in the vale  
 You flash and lighten afar,  
 For this is the golden morning of love,

And you are his morning star.  
 Flash, I am coming, I come,  
 By meadow and stile and wood,  
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,  
 Into my heart and my blood!

Heart, are you great enough  
 For a love that never tires?  
 O heart, are you great enough for love?  
 I have heard of thorns and briers.  
 Over the thorns and briers,  
 Over the meadows and stiles,  
 Over the world to the end of it  
 Flash for a million miles.



## IDYLS OF THE KING.

### DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory — since he held  
them dear,  
Perchance as finding there uncon-  
sciously  
Some image of himself — I dedicate,  
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —  
These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me  
Scarce other than my king's ideal  
knight,  
" Who revered his conscience as  
his king;  
Whose glory was, redressing human  
wrong;  
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd  
to it;  
Who loved one only and who clave to  
her —"  
Her — over all whose realms to their  
last isle,  
Commingled with the gloom of im-  
minent war,  
The shadow of His loss drew like  
eclipse,  
Darkening the world. We have lost  
him: he is gone:  
We know him now: all narrow jeal-  
ousies  
Are silent; and we see him as he  
moved,  
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,  
wise,  
With what sublime repression of him-  
self,  
And in what limits, and how tenderly;

Not swaying to this faction or to that;  
Not making his high place the lawless  
perch  
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-  
ground  
For pleasure, but thro' all this tract  
of years  
Wearing the white flower of a blame-  
less life,  
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,  
In that fierce light which beats upon  
a throne,  
And blackens every blot: for where  
is he,  
Who dares foreshadow for an only son  
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than  
his?  
Or how should England dreaming of  
his sons  
Hope more for these than some in-  
heritance  
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,  
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,  
Laborious for her people and her  
poor —  
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler  
day —  
Far-sighted summoner of War and  
Waste  
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of  
peace —  
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious  
gleam  
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,  
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince  
indeed,  
Beyond all titles, and a household  
name,

Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the  
Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but  
still endure;  
Break not, for thou art Royal, but  
endure,  
Remembering all the beauty of that  
star  
Which shone so close beside Thee that  
ye made  
One light together, but has past and  
leaves  
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,  
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow  
Thee,  
The love of all Thy sons encompass  
Thee,  
The love of all Thy daughters cherish  
Thee,  
The love of all Thy people comfort  
Thee,  
Till God's love set Thee at his side  
again!

#### THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,  
Had one fair daughter, and none other  
child;  
And she was fairest of all flesh on  
earth,  
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur  
came  
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging  
war  
Each upon other, wasted all the land;  
And still from time to time the  
heathen host  
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what  
was left.  
And so there grew great tracts of wil-  
derness,  
Wherein the beast was ever more and  
more,  
But man was less and less, till Arthur  
came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought  
and died,  
And after him King Uther fought and  
died,  
But either fail'd to make the kingdom  
one.  
And after these King Arthur for a  
space,  
And thro' the puissance of his Table  
Round,  
Drew all their petty principedoms under  
him,  
Their king and head, and made a realm,  
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard  
was waste,  
Thick with wet woods, and many a  
beast therein,  
And none or few to scare or chase the  
beast;  
So that wild dog, and wolf and boar  
and bear  
Came night and day, and rooted in  
the fields,  
And wallow'd in the gardens of the  
King.  
And ever and anon the wolf would  
steal  
The children and devour, but now and  
then,  
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her  
fierce teat  
To human sucklings; and the children,  
housed  
In her foul den, there at their meat  
would growl,  
And mock their foster-mother on four  
feet,  
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to  
wolf-like men,  
Worse than the wolves. And King  
Leodogran  
Groan'd for the Roman legions here  
again,  
And Caesar's eagle: then his brother  
king,  
Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen  
horde,  
Reddening the sun with smoke and  
earth with blood,



And on the spike that split the  
mother's heart  
Spitting the child, brake on him, till,  
amazed,  
He knew not whither he should turn  
for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly  
crown'd,  
'Tho' not without an uproar made by  
those  
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son"  
— the King  
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help  
us thou!  
For here between the man and beast  
we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed  
of arms,  
But heard the call, and came: and  
Guinevere  
Stood by the castle walls to watch him  
pass;  
But since he neither wore on helm or  
shield  
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,  
But rode a simple knight among his  
knights,  
And many of these in richer arms  
than he,  
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she  
saw,  
One among many, tho' his face was  
bare.  
But Arthur, looking downward as he  
past,  
Felt the light of her eyes into his life  
Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and  
pitch'd  
His tents beside the forest. Then he  
drave  
The heathen; after, slew the beast,  
and fell'd  
The forest, letting in the sun, and  
made  
Broad pathways for the hunter and  
the knight  
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,  
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the  
hearts

Of those great Lords and Barons of  
his realm  
Flash'd forth and into war: for most  
of these,  
Colleagu'ing with a score of petty  
kings,  
Made head against him, crying, "Who  
is he  
That he should rule us? who hath  
proven him  
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at  
him,  
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs  
nor voice,  
Are like to those of Uther whom we  
knew.  
This is the son of Gorlois, not the  
King;  
This is the son of Anton, not the  
King."

And Arthur, passing thence to  
battle, felt  
Travail, and throes and agonies of the  
life,  
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;  
And thinking as he rode, "Her father  
said  
That there between the man and beast  
they die.  
Shall I not lift her from this land of  
beasts  
Up to my throne, and side by side  
with me?  
What happiness to reign a lonely  
king,  
Vext — O ye stars that shudder over  
me,  
O earth that soundest hollow under  
me,  
Vext with waste dreams? for saying  
I be join'd  
To her that is the fairest under heaven,  
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,  
And cannot will my will, nor work my  
work  
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own  
realm  
Victor and lord. But were I join'd  
with her,  
Then might we live together as one  
life,

And reigning with one will in every-  
thing  
Have power in this dark land to  
lighten it,  
And power on this dead world to  
make it live."

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells  
the tale —  
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle  
bright  
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the  
world  
Was all so clear about him, that he  
saw  
The smallest rock far on the faintest  
hill,  
And even in high day the morning  
star.  
So when the King had set his banner  
broad,  
At once from either side, with trumpet-  
blast,  
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto  
blood,  
The long-lanced battle let their horses  
run.  
And now the Barons and the kings  
prevail'd,  
And now the King, as here and there  
that war  
Went swaying; but the Powers who  
walk the world  
Made lightnings and great thunders  
over him,  
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by  
main might,  
And mightier of his hands with every  
blow,  
And leading all his knighthood threw  
the kings  
Carados, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,  
Claudias, and Clariance of Northum-  
berland,  
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,  
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,  
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a  
voice  
As dreadful as the shout of one who  
sees  
To one who sins, and deems himself  
alone

And all the world asleep, they swerved  
and brake  
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the  
brands  
That hack'd among the flyers, "Ho!  
they yield!"  
So like a painted battle the war stood  
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,  
And in the heart of Arthur joy was  
lord.  
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom  
he loved  
And honor'd most. "Thou dost not  
doubt me King,  
So well thine arm hath wrought for  
me to-day."  
"Sir and my liege," he cried, "the  
fire of God  
Descends upon thee in the battle-field:  
I know thee for my King!" Whereat  
the two,  
For each had warded either in the  
fight,  
Swore on the field of death a deathless  
love.  
And Arthur said, "Man's word is God  
in man:  
Let chance what will, I trust thee to  
the death."

Then quickly from the foughten  
field he sent  
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,  
His new-made knights, to King Leo-  
dogran,  
Saying, "If I in aught have served  
thee well,  
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to  
wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran  
in heart  
Debating — "How should I that am a  
king,  
However much he help me at my  
need,  
Give my one daughter saving to a  
king,  
And a king's son?" — lifted his voice,  
and call'd  
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to  
whom

He trusted all things, and of him  
 required  
 His counsel : " Knowest thou aught of  
 Arthur's birth ? "

Then spake the hoary chamberlain  
 and said,  
 " Sir King, there be but two old men  
 that know :  
 And each is twice as old as I ; and one  
 Is Merlin, the wise man that ever  
 served  
 King Uther thro' his magic art ; and  
 one  
 Is Merlin's master ( so they call him )  
 Bleys,  
 Who taught him magic ; but the  
 scholar ran  
 Before the master, and so far, that  
 Bleys  
 Laid magic by, and sat him down, and  
 wrote  
 All things and whatsoever Merlin did  
 In one great aunal-book, where after  
 years  
 Will learn the secret of our Arthur's  
 birth. "

To whom the King Leodogran  
 replied,  
 " O friend, had I been holpen half as  
 well  
 By this King Arthur as by thee to-  
 day,  
 Then beast and man had had their  
 share of me :  
 But summon here before us yet once  
 more  
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere. "

Then, when they came before him,  
 the King said,  
 " I have seen the cuckoo chased by  
 lesser fowl,  
 And reason in the chase : but where-  
 fore now  
 Do these your lords stir up the heat  
 of war,  
 Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,  
 Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye your-  
 selves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's  
 son ? "

And Ulfius and Brastius answer'd,  
 " Ay. "  
 Then Bedivere, the first of all his  
 knights  
 Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,  
 spake —  
 For bold in heart and act and word  
 was he,  
 Whenever slander breathed against  
 the King —

" Sir, there be many rumors on this  
 head :  
 For there be those who hate him in  
 their hearts,  
 Call him baseborn, and since his ways  
 are sweet,  
 And theirs are bestial, hold him less  
 than man :  
 And there be those who deem him  
 more than man,  
 And dream he dropt from heaven : but  
 my belief  
 In all this matter — so ye care to  
 learn —  
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's  
 time  
 The prince and warrior Gorlois, he  
 that held  
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,  
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,  
 Ygerne :  
 And daughters had she borne him, —  
 one whereof,  
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,  
 Bellicent,  
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved  
 To Arthur, — but a son she had not  
 borne.  
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love :  
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorlois,  
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his  
 love,  
 That Gorlois and King Uther went to  
 war :  
 And overthrown was Gorlois and slain.  
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat  
 besieged

Ygerne within Tintagil, where her  
men,  
Seeing the mighty swarm about their  
walls,  
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd  
in,  
And there was none to call to but him-  
self.  
So, compass'd by the power of the  
King,  
Enforced she was to wed him in her  
tears,  
And with a shameful swiftness: after-  
ward,  
Not many moons, King Uther died  
himself,  
Moaning and wailing for an heir to  
rule  
After him, lest the realm should go to  
wrack.  
And that same night, the night of the  
new year,  
By reason of the bitterness and grief  
That vext his mother, all before his  
time  
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as  
born  
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate  
To Merlin, to be holden far apart  
Until his hour should come; because  
the lords  
Of that fierce day were as the lords of  
this,  
Wild beasts, and surely would have  
torn the child  
Piecemeal among them, had they  
known; for each  
But sought to rule for his own self  
and hand,  
And many hated Uther for the sake  
Of Gorlois. Wherefore Merlin took  
the child,  
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old  
knight  
And ancient friend of Uther; and his  
wife  
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd  
him with her own;  
And no man knew. And ever since  
the lords  
Have foughten like wild beasts among  
themselves,

So that the realm has gone to wrack:  
but now,  
This year, when Merlin (for his hour  
had come)  
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in  
the hall,  
Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir,  
your king,'  
A hundred voices cried, 'Away with  
him!  
No king of ours! a son of Gorlois  
he,  
Or else the child of Anton, and no  
king,  
Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro'  
his craft,  
And while the people clamor'd for a  
king,  
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the  
great lords  
Banded, and so brake out in open  
war."

Then while the King debated with  
himself  
If Arthur were the child of shameful-  
ness,  
Or born the son of Gorlois, after  
death,  
Or Uther's son, and born before his  
time,  
Or whether there were truth in any-  
thing  
Said by these three, there came to  
Cameliard,  
With Gawain and young Modred, her  
two sons,  
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,  
Bellicent;  
Whom as he could, not as he would,  
the King  
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at  
meat,

"A doubtful throne is ice on sum-  
mer seas.  
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor  
his men  
Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye  
this king —  
So many those that hate him, and so  
strong,

So few his knights, however brave  
they be —  
Hath body enow to hold his foemen  
down ? ”

“ O King,” she cried, “ and I will  
tell thee : few,  
Few, but all brave, all of one mind  
with him ;  
For I was near him when the savage  
yells  
Of Uther’s peerage died, and Arthur  
sat  
Crown’d on the daïs, and his warriors  
cried,  
‘ Be thou the king, and we will work  
thy will  
Who love thee.’ Then the King in  
low deep tones,  
And simple words of great authority,  
Bound them by so strait vows to his  
own self,  
That when they rose, knighted from  
kneeling, some  
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,  
Some flush’d, and others dazed, as one  
who wakes  
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

“ But when he spake and cheer’d  
his Table Round  
With large divine and comfortable  
words  
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I  
beheld  
From eye to eye thro’ all their Order  
flash  
A momentary likeness of the King :  
And ere it left their faces, thro’ the  
cross  
And those around it and the Crucified,  
Down from the casement over Arthur,  
smote  
; Flame-color, vert and azure, in three  
rays,  
One falling upon each of three fair  
queens,  
Who stood in silence near his throne,  
the friends  
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with  
bright

Sweet faces, who will help him at his  
need.

“ And there I saw mage Merlin,  
whose vast wit  
And hundred winters are but as the  
hands  
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

“ And near him stood the Lady of  
the Lake,  
Who knows a subtler magic than his  
own —  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful.  
She gave the King his huge cross-  
hilted sword,  
Whereby to drive the heathen out : a  
mist  
Of incense curl’d about her, and her  
face  
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster  
gloom ;  
But there was heard among the holy  
hymns  
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells  
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever  
storms  
May shake the world, and when the  
surface rolls,  
Hath power to walk the waters like  
our Lord.

“ There likewise I beheld Excalibur  
Before him at his crowning borne, the  
sword  
That rose from out the bosom of the  
lake,  
And Arthur row’d across and took it  
— rich  
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,  
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade  
so bright  
That men are blinded by it — on one  
side,  
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this  
world,  
‘ Take me,’ but turn the blade and ye  
shall see,  
And written in the speech ye speak  
yourself,

'Cast me away!' And sad was  
 Arthur's face  
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd  
 him,  
 'Take thou and strike! the time to  
 cast away  
 Is yet far-off.' So this great brand  
 the king  
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen  
 down."

Thereat Leodogram rejoiced, but  
 thought  
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and  
 ask'd,  
 Fixing full eyes of question on her  
 face,  
 "The swallow and the swift are near  
 akin,  
 But thou art closer to this noble prince,  
 Being his own dear sister;" and she  
 said,  
 "Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am  
 I;"  
 "And therefore Arthur's sister?"  
 ask'd the King.  
 She answer'd, "These besecret things,"  
 and sign'd  
 To those two sons to pass and let  
 them be.  
 And Gawain went, and breaking into  
 song  
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying  
 hair  
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he  
 saw:  
 But Modred laid his ear beside the  
 doors,  
 And there half-heard; the same that  
 afterward  
 Struck for the throne, and striking  
 found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer,  
 "What know I?  
 For dark my mother was in eyes and  
 hair,  
 And dark in hair and eyes am I; and  
 dark  
 Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther  
 too,

Wellnigh to blackness; but this King  
 is fair  
 Beyond the race of Britons and of men.  
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear  
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,  
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,  
 'O that ye had some brother, pretty  
 one,  
 To guard thee on the rough ways of  
 the world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye  
 such a cry?  
 But when did Arthur chance upon  
 thee first?"

"O King!" she cried, "and I will  
 tell thee true:  
 He found me first when yet a little  
 maid:  
 Beaten I had been for a little fault  
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I  
 ran  
 And flung myself down on a bank of  
 heath,  
 And hated this fair world and all  
 therein,  
 And wept, and wish'd that I were  
 dead; and he—  
 I know not whether of himself he  
 came,  
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,  
 can walk  
 Unseen at pleasure— he was at my  
 side  
 And spake sweet words, and comforted  
 my heart,  
 And dried my tears, being a child with  
 me.  
 And many a time he came, and ever-  
 more  
 As I grew greater grew with me; and  
 sad  
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him  
 was I,  
 Stern too at times, and then I loved  
 him not,  
 But sweet again, and then I loved him  
 well.  
 And now of late I see him less and  
 less.

But those first days had golden hours—  
for me,  
For then I surely thought he would  
be king.

“But let me tell thee now another  
tale :

For Bleys, our Merlin’s master, as  
they say,

Died but of late, and sent his cry to  
me,

To hear him speak before he left his  
life.

Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay  
the mage ;

And when I enter’d told me that him-  
self

And Merlin ever served about the  
King,

Uther, before he died ; and on the  
night

When Uther in Tintagil past away  
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the  
two

Left the still King, and passing forth  
to breathe,

Then from the castle gateway by the  
chasm

Descending thro’ the dismal night —  
a night

In which the bounds of heaven and  
earth were lost —

Beheld, so high upon the dreary  
deeps

It seem’d in heaven, a ship, the shape  
thereof

A dragon wing’d, and all from stem  
to stern

Bright with a shining people on the  
decks,

And gone as soon as seen. And then  
the two

Dropt to the cove, and watch’d the  
great sea fall,

Wave after wave, each mightier than  
the last,

Till last, a ninth one, gathering half  
the deep

And full of voices, slowly rose and  
plunged

Roaring, and all the wave was in a  
flame :

And down the wave and in the flame  
was borne

A naked babe, and rode to Merlin’s  
feet,

Who stoopt and caught the babe, and  
cried ‘The King !

Here is an heir for Uther !’ And the  
fringe

Of that great breaker, sweeping up  
the strand,

Lash’d at the wizard as he spake the  
word,

And all at once all round him rose in  
fire,

So that the child and he were clothed  
in fire.

And presently thereafter follow’d  
calm,

Free sky and stars : ‘And this same  
child,’ he said,

‘Is he who reigns ; nor could I part  
in peace

Till this were told.’ And saying this  
the seer

Went thro’ the strait and dreadful  
pass of death,

Not ever to be question’d any more  
Save on the further side ; but when I

met  
Merlin, and ask’d him if these things  
were truth —

The shining dragon and the naked  
child

Descending in the glory of the seas —  
He laugh’d as is his wont, and an-  
swer’d me

In riddling triplets of old time, and  
said :

“ ‘Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow  
in the sky !

A young man will be wiser by and by ;  
An old man’s wit may wander ere he

die.

Rain, rain, and sun ! a rainbow on  
the lea !

And truth is this to me, and that to  
thee ;

And truth or clothed or naked let it  
be.

Rain, sun, and rain ! and the free  
blossom blows :

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he  
 who knows?  
 From the great deep to the great deep  
 he goes."

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me;  
 but thou  
 Fear not to give this King thine only  
 child,  
 Guinevere: so great bards of him will  
 sing  
 Hereafter; and dark sayings from of  
 old  
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds  
 of men,  
 And echo'd by old folk beside their  
 fires  
 For comfort after their wage-work is  
 done,  
 Speak of the King; and Merlin in our  
 time  
 Hath spoken also, not in jest, and  
 sworn  
 Tho' men may wound him that he will  
 not die,  
 But pass, again to come; and then or  
 now  
 Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,  
 Till these and all men hail him for  
 their king."

She spake and King Leodogran  
 rejoiced,  
 But musing "Shall I answer yea or  
 nay?"  
 Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and  
 slept, and saw,  
 Dreaming, a slope of land that ever  
 grew,  
 Field after field, up to a height, the  
 peak  
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom  
 king,  
 Now looming, and now lost; and on  
 the slope  
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd  
 was driven,  
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from  
 roof and rick,  
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling  
 wind,

Stream'd to the peak, and mingled  
 with the haze  
 And made it thicker; while the phan-  
 tom king  
 Sent out at times a voice; and here  
 or there  
 Stood one who pointed toward the  
 voice, the rest  
 Slew on and burnt, crying, "No king  
 of ours,  
 No son of Uther, and no king of ours;"  
 Till with a wink his dream was  
 changed, the haze  
 Descended, and the solid earth be-  
 came  
 As nothing, but the King stood out  
 in heaven,  
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and  
 sent  
 Ulfus, and Brastias and Bedivere,  
 Back to the court of Arthur answer-  
 ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior  
 whom he loved  
 And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to  
 ride forth  
 And bring the Queen; — and watch'd  
 him from the gates:  
 And Lancelot past away among the  
 flowers,  
 (For then was latter April) and  
 return'd  
 Among the flowers, in May, with  
 Guinevere.  
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high  
 saint,  
 Chief of the church in Britain, and  
 before  
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the  
 King  
 That morn was married, while in stain-  
 less white,  
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,  
 And glorying in their vows and him,  
 his knights  
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his  
 joy.  
 Far shone the fields of May thro'  
 open door,  
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with  
 May,



The Sun of May descended on their King,  
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,  
 Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns  
 A voice as of the waters, while the two  
 Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love:  
 And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.  
 Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"  
 To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,  
 "King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"  
 And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,  
 "Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world  
 Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,  
 And all this Order of thy Table Round  
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine  
 Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,  
 In scornful stillness gazing as they past;  
 Then while they paced a city all on fire  
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,  
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King:—

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;  
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!  
 Blow thro' the living world—'Let the King reign.'

"Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's realm?  
 Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard  
 That God hath told the King a secret word.

Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.  
 Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!  
 Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,  
 The King is King, and ever wills the highest.  
 Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!  
 Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!  
 Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King  
 In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.  
 Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign."

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.  
 There at the banquet those great Lords from Rome,  
 The slowly-fading mistress of the world,  
 Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of yore.  
 But Arthur spake, "Behold, for these have sworn  
 To wage my wars, and worship me their King;  
 The old order changeth, yielding place to new;

And we that fight for our fair father  
 Christ,  
 Seeing that ye be grown too weak and  
 old  
 To drive the heathen from your  
 Roman wall,  
 No tribute will we pay": so those  
 great lords  
 Drew back in wrath, and Arthur  
 strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for  
 a space  
 Were all one will, and thro' that  
 strength the King  
 Drew in the petty principdoms under  
 him,  
 Fought, and in twelve great battles  
 overcame  
 The heathen hordes, and made a realm  
 and reign'd.

## THE ROUND TABLE.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.  
 GERAINT AND ENID.  
 MERLIN AND VIVIEN.  
 LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

THE HOLY GRAIL.  
 PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.  
 THE LAST TOURNAMENT.  
 GUINEVERE.

### GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,  
 And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful  
 spring  
 Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted  
 Pine  
 Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd  
 away.  
 "How he went down," said Gareth,  
 "as a false knight  
 Or evil king before my lance if lance  
 Were mine to use — O senseless cata-  
 ract,  
 Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —  
 And yet thou art but swollen with  
 cold snows  
 And mine is living blood: thou dost  
 His will,  
 The Maker's, and not knowest, and I  
 that know,  
 Have strength and wit, in my good  
 mother's hall  
 Linger with vacillating obedience,  
 Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and  
 whistled to —  
 Since the good mother holds me still  
 a child!  
 Good mother is bad mother unto me!  
 A worse were better; yet no worse  
 would I.

Heaven yield her for it, but in me put  
 force  
 To weary her ears with one continuous  
 prayer,  
 Until she let me fly discharg'd to  
 sweep  
 In ever-highering eagle-circles up  
 To the great Sun of Glory, and thence  
 swoop  
 Down upon all things base, and dash  
 them dead,  
 A knight of Arthur, working out his  
 will,  
 To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,  
 when he came  
 With Modred hither in the summer-  
 time,  
 Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven  
 knight.  
 Modred for want of worthier was the  
 judge.  
 Then I so shook him in the saddle, he  
 said,  
 'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,'  
 said so — he —  
 Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was  
 mute,  
 For he is always sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering  
 round her chair

Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still  
the child,  
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?"  
She laugh'd,  
"Thou art but a wild-goose to ques-  
tion it."  
"Then, mother, an ye love the child,"  
he said,  
"Being a goose and rather tame than  
wild,  
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my  
well-beloved,  
An 'twere but of goose and golden  
eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-  
ling eyes,  
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg  
of mine  
Was finer gold than any goose can  
lay;  
For this an Eagle, a royal Eagle, laid  
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a  
palm  
As glitters gilded in thy Book of  
Hours.  
And there was ever haunting round  
the palm  
A lusty youth, but poor, who often  
saw  
The splendor sparkling from aloft,  
and thought  
'An I could climb and lay my hand  
upon it,  
Then were I wealthier than a leash of  
kings,'  
But ever when he reach'd a hand to  
climb,  
One, that had loved him from his  
childhood, caught  
And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou  
break thy neck,  
I charge thee by my love,' and so the  
boy,  
Sweet mother, neither clomb, nor  
brake his neck,  
But brake his very heart in pining  
for it,  
And past away."

To whom the mother said,  
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd him-  
self and climb'd,

And handed down the golden treasure  
to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kind-  
ling eyes,  
"Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why  
he, or she,  
Or whoso'er it was, or half the world  
Had ventured — had the thing I spake  
of been  
Mere gold — but this was all of that  
true steel,  
Whereof they forged the brand Ex-  
calibur,  
And lightnings play'd about it in the  
storm,  
And all the little fowl were flurried  
at it,  
And there were cries and clashings in  
the nest,  
That sent him from his senses: let me  
go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself  
and said,  
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneli-  
ness?  
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the  
hearth  
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd  
out!  
For ever since when traitor to the  
King  
He fought against him in the Barons'  
war,  
And Arthur gave him back his terri-  
tory,  
His age hath slowly droopt, and now  
lies there  
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburia-  
ble,  
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor  
speaks, nor knows.  
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's  
hall,  
Albeit neither loved with that full  
love  
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a  
love:  
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm  
the bird,  
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts  
the wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor  
 pang  
 Of wench'd or broken limb — an often  
 chance  
 In those brain-stunning shocks, and  
 tourney-falls,  
 Frights to my heart; but stay: follow  
 the deer  
 By these tall firs and our fast-falling  
 burns;  
 So make thy manhood mightier day  
 by day;  
 Sweet is the chase: and I will seek  
 thee out  
 Some comfortable bride and fair, to  
 grace  
 Thy climbing life, and cherish my  
 prone year,  
 Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness  
 I know not thee, myself, nor any-  
 thing.  
 Stay, my best son! ye are yet more  
 boy than man."

Then Gareth, "An ye hold me yet  
 for child,  
 Hear yet once more the story of the  
 child.  
 For, mother, there was once a King,  
 like ours.  
 The prince his heir, when tall and  
 marriageable,  
 Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the  
 King  
 Set two before him. One was fair,  
 strong, arm'd —  
 But to be won by force — and many  
 men  
 Desired her; one, good lack, no man  
 desired.  
 And these were the conditions of the  
 King:  
 That save he won the first by force,  
 he needs  
 Must wed that other, whom no man  
 desired,  
 A red-faced bride who knew herself  
 so vile,  
 That evermore she long'd to hide her-  
 self,  
 Nor fronted man or woman, eye to  
 eye —

Yea — some she cleaved to, but they  
 died of her.  
 And one — they call'd her Fame; and  
 one, — O Mother,  
 How can ye keep me tether'd to you  
 — Shame!  
 Man am I grown, a man's work must  
 I do.  
 Follow the deer? follow the Christ,  
 the King,  
 Live pure, speak true, right wrong,  
 follow the King —  
 Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said,  
 "Sweet son, for there be many who  
 deem him not,  
 Or will not deem him, wholly proven  
 King —  
 Albeit in mine own heart I knew him  
 King,  
 When I was frequent with him in my  
 youth,  
 And heard him Kingly speak, and  
 doubted him  
 No more than he, himself; but felt  
 him mine,  
 Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou  
 leave  
 Thine easeful biding here, and risk  
 thine all,  
 Life, limbs, for one that is not proven  
 King?  
 Stay, till the cloud that settles round  
 his birth  
 Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet  
 son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly, "Not  
 an hour,  
 So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'  
 fire,  
 Mother, to gain it — your full leave to  
 go.  
 Not proven, who swept the dust of  
 ruin'd Rome  
 From off the threshold of the realm,  
 and crush'd  
 The Idolaters, and made the people  
 free?  
 Who should be King save him who  
 makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had  
sought in vain  
To break him from the intent to which  
he grew,  
Found her son's will unwaveringly  
one,  
She answer'd craftily, "Will ye walk  
thro' fire?  
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed  
the smoke.  
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one  
proof,  
Before thou ask the King to make thee  
knight,  
Of thine obedience and thy love to  
me,  
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried,  
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.  
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me  
to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother look-  
ing at him,  
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to  
Arthur's hall,  
And hire thyself to serve for meats  
and drinks  
Among the scullions and the kitchen-  
knaves,  
And those that hand the dish across  
the bar.  
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any-  
one.  
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth  
and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when  
her son  
Beheld his only way to glory lead  
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vas-  
salage,  
Her own true Gareth was too princely-  
proud  
To pass thereby; so should he rest  
with her,  
Closed in her castle from the sound of  
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then  
replied,

"The thrall in person may be free in  
soul,  
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son  
am I,  
And since thou art my mother, must  
obey.  
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;  
For hence will I, disguised, and hire  
myself  
To serve with scullions and with  
kitchen-knives;  
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the  
King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The  
mother's eye  
Full of the wistful fear that he would  
go,  
And turning toward him wheresoe'er  
he turn'd,  
Perplex'd his outward purpose, till an  
hour,  
When waken'd by the wind which with  
full voice  
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on  
to dawn,  
He rose, and out of slumber calling  
two  
That still had tended on him from his  
hirth,  
Before the wakeful mother heard him,  
went.

The three were clad like tillers of  
the soil.  
Southward they set their faces. The  
birds made  
Melody on branch, and melody in mid  
air.  
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd  
into green,  
And the live green had kindled into  
flowers,  
For it was past the time of Easterday.

So, when their feet were planted on  
the plain  
That broaden'd toward the base of  
Camelot,  
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn  
Rolling her smoke about the Royal  
mount,

That rose between the forest and the field.  
 At times the summit of the high city flash'd ;  
 At times the spires and turrets half-way down  
 Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone  
 Only, that open'd on the field below :  
 Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,  
 One crying, "Let us go no further, lord.  
 Here is a city of Enchanters, built By fairy kings." The second echo'd him,  
 "Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home  
 To Northward, that, this King is not the King,  
 But only changeling out of Fairy-land,  
 Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery  
 And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,  
 "Lord, there is no such city anywhere,  
 But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them  
 With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow  
 In his own blood, his pryncedom, youth .and hopes,  
 To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea ;  
 So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.  
 And there was no gate like it under heaven.  
 For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined  
 And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,  
 The Lady of the Lake stood : all her dress  
 Wept from her sides as water flowing away ;  
 But like the cross her great and godly arms

Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld :  
 And drops of water fell from either hand ;  
 And down from one a sword was hung, from one  
 A censer, either worn with wind and storm ;  
 And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish ;  
 And in the space to left of her, and right,  
 Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,  
 New things and old co-twisted, as if Time  
 Were nothing, so inveterately, that men  
 Were giddy gazing there; and over all  
 High on the top were those three Queens, the friends  
 Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space  
 Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd  
 The dragon-boughts and elvish embleming  
 Began to move, seethe, twine and curl : they call'd  
 To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes  
 So long, that ev'n to him they seem'd to move.  
 Out of the city a blast of music peal'd  
 Back from the gate started the three, to whom  
 From out thereunder came an ancient man,  
 Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons ?"

Then Gareth, "We be tillers of the soil,  
 Who leaving share in furrow come to see

The glories of our King: but these,  
 my men,  
 (Your city moved so weirdly in the  
 mist)  
 Doubt if the King be King at all, or  
 come  
 From Fairyland; and whether this  
 be built  
 By magic, and by fairy Kings and  
 Queens;  
 Or whether there be any city at all,  
 Or all a vision: and this music now  
 Hath scared them both, but tell thou  
 these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer  
 playing on him  
 And saying, "Son, I have seen the  
 good ship sail  
 Keel upward and mast downward in  
 the heavens,  
 And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:  
 And here is truth; but an it please  
 thee not,  
 Take thou the truth as thou hast told  
 it me.  
 For truly as thou sayest, a Fairy King  
 And Fairy Queens have built the city,  
 son;  
 They came from out a sacred mountain-  
 cleft  
 Toward the sunrise, each with harp  
 in hand,  
 And built it to the music of their harps.  
 And as thou sayest it is enchanted,  
 son,  
 For there is nothing in it as it seems  
 Saving the King; tho' some there be  
 that hold  
 The King a shadow, and the city real:  
 Yet take thou heed of him, for, so  
 thou pass  
 Beneath this archway, then wilt thou  
 become  
 A thrall to his enchantments, for the  
 King  
 Will bind thee by such vows, as is a  
 shame  
 A man should not be bound by, yet  
 the which  
 No man can keep; but, so thou dread  
 to swear,

Pass not beneath this gateway, but  
 abide  
 Without, among the cattle of the field.  
 For an ye heard a music, like enow  
 They are building still, seeing the city  
 is built  
 To music, therefore never built at all,  
 And therefore built for ever.

Gareth spake

Anger'd, "Old Master, reverence thine  
 own beard  
 That looks as white as utter truth,  
 and seems  
 Wellnigh as long as thou art statured  
 tall!  
 Why mockest thou the stranger that  
 hath been  
 To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied,

"Know ye not then the Riddling of  
 the Bards?  
 'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,  
 Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'?  
 I mock thee not but as thou mockest  
 me,  
 And all that see thee, for thou art not  
 who  
 Thou seemest, but I know thee who  
 thou art.  
 And now thou goest up to mock the  
 King,  
 Who cannot brook the shadow of any  
 lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending  
 here  
 Turn'd to the right, and past along  
 the plain;  
 Whom Gareth looking after said, "My  
 men,  
 Our one white lie sits like a little ghost  
 Here on the threshold of our enter-  
 prise.  
 Let love be blamed for it, nor she, nor  
 I:  
 Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer

He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd  
 with his twain

Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces  
 And stately, rich in emblem and the  
 work  
 Of ancient kings who did their days in  
 stone;  
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at  
 Arthur's court,  
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and  
 everywhere  
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening  
 peak  
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire  
 to heaven.  
 And ever and anon a knight would pass  
 Outward, or inward to the hall: his  
 arms  
 Clash'd; and the sound was good to  
 Gareth's ear.  
 And out of bower and casement shyly  
 glanced  
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars  
 of love;  
 And all about a healthful people stept  
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending  
 heard  
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-  
 held  
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted  
 hall  
 The splendor of the presence of the  
 King  
 Throned, and delivering doom — and  
 look'd no more —  
 But felt his young heart hammering  
 in his ears,  
 And thought, "For this half-shadow  
 of a lie  
 The truthful King will doom me when  
 I speak."  
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find  
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one  
 Nor other, but in all the listening eyes  
 Of those tall knights, that ranged  
 about the throne,  
 Clear honor shining like the dewy star  
 Of dawn, and faith in their great King,  
 with pure  
 Affection, and the light of victory,  
 And glory gain'd, and evermore to  
 gain.

Then came a widow crying to the  
 King,  
 "A boon, Sir King! Thy father,  
 Uther, reft  
 From my dead lord a field with vio-  
 lence:  
 For howso'er at first he proffer'd gold,  
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our  
 eyes,  
 We yielded not; and then he reft us  
 of it  
 Perforce, and left us neither gold nor  
 field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye?  
 gold or field?"  
 To whom the woman weeping, "Nay,  
 my lord,  
 The field was pleasant in my hus-  
 band's eye."

And Arthur, "Have thy pleasant  
 field again,  
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use  
 thereof,  
 According to the years. No boon is  
 here,  
 But justice, so thy say be proven  
 true.  
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his  
 father did  
 Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,  
 Came yet another widow crying to  
 him,  
 "A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,  
 King, am I.  
 With thine own hand thou slewest my  
 dear lord,  
 A knight of Uther in the Barons' war,  
 When Lot and many another rose and  
 fought  
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely  
 born.  
 I held with these, and loathe to ask  
 thee aught.  
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my  
 son  
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved  
 him dead;  
 And standeth seized of that inheritance



Which thou that slewest the sire hast  
left the son.  
So tho' I scarce can ask it thee for  
hate,  
Grant me some knight to do the battle  
for me,  
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for  
my son."

Then strode a good knight forward,  
crying to him,  
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kins-  
man, I.  
Give me to right her wrong, and slay  
the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
and cried,  
"A boon, Sir King! ev'n that thou  
grant her none,  
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in  
full hall —  
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve  
and gag."

But Arthur, "We sit King, to help  
the wrong'd  
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves  
her lord.  
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves  
and hates!  
The kings of old had doom'd thee to  
the flames,  
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged  
thee dead,  
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get  
thee hence —  
Lest that rough humor of the kings of  
old  
Return upon me! Thou that art her  
kin,  
Go likewise; lay him low and slay  
him not,  
But bring him here, that I may judge  
the right,  
According to the justice of the King:  
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless  
King  
Who lived and died for men, the man  
shal die."

Then came in hall the messenger of  
Mark,

A name of evil savor in the land,  
The Cornish king. In either hand he  
bore  
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as  
shines  
A field of charlock in the sudden sun  
Between two showers, a cloth of palest  
gold,  
Which down he laid before the throne,  
and knelt,  
Delivering, that his lord, the vassal  
king,  
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;  
For having heard that Arthur of his  
grace  
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram,  
knight,  
And, for himself was of the greater  
state,  
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord  
Would yield him this large honor all  
the more;  
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth  
of gold,  
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth,  
to rend  
In pieces, and so cast it on the  
hearth.  
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. "The  
goodly knight!  
What! shall the shield of Mark stand  
among these?"  
For, midway down the side of that long  
hall  
A stately pile, — whereof along the  
front,  
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and  
some blank,  
There ran a treble range of stony  
shields, —  
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the  
hearth.  
And under every shield a knight was  
named:  
For this was Arthur's custom in his  
hall;  
When some good knight had done one  
noble deed,  
His arms were carven only; but if  
twain

His arms were blazon'd also; but if  
 none  
 The shield was blank and bare without  
 a sign  
 Saving the name beneath; and Gareth  
 saw  
 The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and  
 bright,  
 And Modred's blank as death; and  
 Arthur cried  
 To rend the cloth and cast it on the  
 hearth.

“More like are we to reave him of  
 his crown  
 Than make him knight because men  
 call him king.  
 The kings we found, ye know we  
 stay'd their hands  
 From war among themselves, but left  
 them kings;  
 Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,  
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,  
 them we enroll'd  
 Among us, and they sit within our  
 hall.  
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great  
 name of king,  
 As Mark would sully the low state of  
 churl:  
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of  
 gold,  
 Return, and meet, and hold him from  
 our eyes,  
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of  
 lead,  
 Silenced for ever—craven—a man  
 of plots,  
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside  
 ambushings—  
 No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal  
 Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied—  
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the  
 hand be seen!”

And many another suppliant crying  
 came  
 With noise of ravage wrought by  
 beast and man,

And evermore a knight would ride  
 away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands  
 heavily  
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,  
 his men,  
 Approach'd between them toward the  
 King, and ask'd,  
 “A boon, Sir King (his voice was all  
 ashamed),  
 For see ye not how weak and hunger-  
 worn  
 I seem—leaning on these? grant me  
 to serve  
 For meat and drink among thy  
 kitchen-knaves  
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek  
 my name.  
 Hereafter I will fight.”

To him the King,  
 “A goodly youth and worth a good-  
 lier boon!  
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then  
 must Kay,  
 The master of the meats and drinks,  
 be thine.”

He rose and past; then Kay, a man  
 of mien  
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels  
 itself  
 Root-bitten by white lichen,

“Lo ye now!  
 This fellow hath broken from some  
 Abbey, where,  
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis  
 enow,  
 However that might chance! but an  
 he work,  
 Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,  
 And sleeker shall he shine than any  
 hog.”

Then Lancelot standing near, “Sir  
 Seneschal,  
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,  
 and all the hounds;  
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost  
 not know:

Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair  
and fine,  
High nose, a nostril large and fine,  
and hands  
Large, fair and fine!—some young  
lad's mystery—  
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,  
the boy  
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all  
grace,  
Lest he should come to shame thy  
judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou  
of mystery?  
Think ye this fellow will poison the  
King's dish?  
Nay, for he spake too fool-like:  
mystery!  
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had  
ask'd  
For horse and armor: fair and fine,  
forsooth!  
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see  
thou to it  
That thine own fineness, Lancelot,  
some fine day  
Undo thee not—and leave my man  
to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent  
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;  
Ate with young lads his portion by  
the door,  
And couch'd at night with grimy  
kitchen-knaves.  
And Lancelot ever spake him pleas-  
antly,  
But Kay the seneschal who loved him  
not  
Would hustle and harry him, and  
labor him  
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,  
and set  
To turn the broach, draw water, or  
hew wood,  
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd  
himself  
With all obedience to the King, and  
wrought  
All kind of service with a noble  
ease

That graced the lowliest act in doing  
it.  
And when the thralls had talk among  
themselves,  
And one would praise the love that  
linkt the King  
And Lancelot—how the King had  
saved his life  
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the  
King's—  
For Lancelot was the first in Tourna-  
ment,  
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-  
field—  
Gareth was glad. Or if some other  
told,  
How once the wandering forester at  
dawn,  
Far over the blue tarns and hazy  
seas,  
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the  
King,  
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet  
spake,  
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,  
He passes and is heal'd and cannot  
die"—  
Gareth was glad. But if their talk  
were foul,  
Then would he whistle rapid as any  
lark,  
Or carol some old roundelay, and so  
loud  
That first they mock'd, but, after,  
reverenced him.  
Or Gareth telling some prodigious tale  
Of knights, who sliced a red life-bub-  
bling way  
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,  
held  
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good  
mates  
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,  
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,  
would come  
Blustering upon them, like a sudden  
wind  
Among dead leaves, and drive them  
all apart.  
Or when the thralls had sport among  
themselves,  
So there were any trial of mastery,

He, by two yards in casting bar or  
stone  
Was counted best; and if there  
chanced a joust,  
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to  
go,  
Would hurry thither, and when he  
saw the knights  
Clash like the coming and retiring  
wave,  
And the spear spring, and good horse  
reel, the boy  
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among  
the thralls;  
But in the weeks that follow'd, the  
good Queen,  
Repentant of the word she made him  
swear,  
And saddening in her childless castle,  
sent,  
Between the in-crescent and de-cres-  
cent moon,  
Arms for her son, and loosed him from  
his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire  
of Lot  
With whom he used to play at tourney  
once,  
When both were children, and in  
lonely haunts  
Would scratch a ragged oval on the  
sand,  
And each at either dash from either  
end—  
Shame never made girl redder than  
Gareth joy.  
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the  
smoke, at once  
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's  
knee—  
These news be mine, none other's—  
nay, the King's—  
Descend into the city:" whereon he  
sought  
The King alone, and found, and told  
him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Ga-  
wain in a tilt

For pastime; yea, he said it: joust  
can I.  
Make me thy knight—in secret! let  
my name  
Be hid'n, and give me the first quest,  
I spring  
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye  
Fell on, and check'd, and made him  
flush, and bow  
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd  
him,  
"Son, the good mother let me know  
thee here,  
And sent her wish that I would yield  
thee thine.  
Make thee my knight? my knights  
are sworn to vows  
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,  
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,  
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from  
his knees,  
"My King, for hardihood I can prom-  
ise thee.  
For uttermost obedience make de-  
mand  
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,  
No mellow master of the meats and  
drinks!  
And as for love, God wot, I love not  
yet,  
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King—  
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea,  
but he,  
Our noblest brother, and our truest  
man,  
And one with me in all, he needs  
must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let  
Lancelot know,  
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King—  
"But wherefore would ye men should  
wonder at you?"

Nay, rather for the sake of me, their  
King,  
And the deed's sake my knighthood  
do the deed,  
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd,  
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking  
of it?

Let be my name until I make my  
name!

My deeds will speak: it is but for a  
day."

So with a kindly hand on Gareth's  
arm

Smiled the great King, and half-  
unwillingly

Loving his lusty youthhood yielded  
to him.

Then, after summoning Lancelot  
privily,

"I have given him the first quest: he  
is not proven.

Look therefore when he calls for this  
in hall,

Thou get to horse and follow him far  
away.

Cover the lions on thy shield, and see  
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en  
nor slain."

Then that same day there past into  
the hall

A damsel of high lineage, and a brow  
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-  
blossom,

Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender  
nose

Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower;  
She into hall past with her page and  
cried,

"O King, for thou hast driven the  
foe without,

See to the foe within! bridge, ford,  
beset

By bandits, everyone that owns a  
tower

The Lord for half a league. Why sit  
ye there?

Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were  
king,

Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as  
free

From cursed bloodshed, as thine altar-  
cloth

From that best blood it is a sin to  
spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I  
nor mine

Rest: so my knighthood keep the  
vows they swore,

The wastest moorland of our realm  
shall be

Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.  
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said—

"Lynette my name; noble; my need,  
a knight

To combat for my sister, Lyonors,  
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,

And comely, yea, and comelier than  
myself.

She lives in Castle Perilous: a river  
Runs in three loops about her living-  
place;

And o'er it are three passings, and  
three knights

Defend the passings, brethren, and a  
fourth

And of that four the mightiest, holds  
her stay'd

In her own castle, and so besieges her  
To break her will, and make her wed  
with him:

And but delays his purport till thou  
send

To do the battle with him, thy chief  
man

Sir Lancelot whom he trusts to over-  
throw,

Then wed, with glory: but she will  
not wed

Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.  
Now therefore have I come for  
Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth  
ask'd,

"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to  
crush

All wrongers of the Realm. But say,  
these four,  
Who be they? What the fashion of  
the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir  
King,  
The fashion of that old knight-  
errantry  
Who ride abroad and do but what  
they will;  
Courteous or bestial from the moment,  
such  
As have nor law nor king; and three  
of these  
Proud in their fantasy call themselves  
the Day,  
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and  
Evening-Star,  
Being strong fools; and never a whit  
more wise  
The fourth who alway rideth arm'd  
in black,  
A huge man-beast of houndless sav-  
agery.  
He names himself the Night, and  
oftener Death,  
And wears a helmet mounted with a  
skull,  
And bears a skeleton figured on his  
arms,  
To show that who may slay or scape  
the three  
Slain by himself shall enter endless  
night.  
And all these four be fools, but mighty  
men,  
And therefore am I come for Lance-  
lot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where  
he rose,  
A head with kindling eyes above the  
throng,  
"A boon, Sir King — this quest!"  
then — for he mark'd  
Kay near him groaning like a wounded  
bull —  
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-  
knave am I,  
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks  
am I.

And I can topple over a hundred such.  
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glanc-  
ing at him,  
Brought down a momentary brow.  
"Rough, sudden,  
And pardonable, worthy to be knight—  
Go, therefore," and all hearers were  
amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame,  
pride, wrath  
Slew the May-white: she lifted either  
arm,  
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy  
chief knight,  
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-  
knave."  
Then ere a man in hall could stay her,  
turn'd,  
Fled down the lane of access to the  
King,  
Took horse, descended the slope street,  
and past  
The weird white gate, and paused with-  
out, beside  
The field of tourney, murmuring  
"kitchen-knave."

Now two great entries open'd from  
the hall,  
At one end one, that gave upon a  
range  
Of level pavement where the King  
would pace  
At sunrise, gazing over plain and  
wood;  
And down from this a lordly stairway  
sloped  
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of  
towers;  
And out by this main doorway past  
the King.  
But one was counter to the hearth,  
and rose  
High that the highest-crested helm  
could ride  
Therethro' nor graze: and by this entry  
fled  
The damsel in her wrath, and on to  
this  
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without  
the door

King Arthur's gift, the worth of half  
 a town,  
 A warhorse of the best, and near it  
 stood  
 The two that out of north had fol-  
 low'd him:  
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque;  
 that held  
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir  
 Gareth loosed  
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone  
 to heel,  
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it  
 down,  
 And from it like a fuel-smother'd fire,  
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and  
 flash'd as those  
 Dull-coated things, that making slide  
 apart  
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath  
 there burns  
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and  
 fly.  
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in  
 arms.  
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took  
 the shield  
 And mounted horse and graspt a  
 spear, of grain  
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,  
 and tipt  
 With trenchant steel, around him  
 slowly prest  
 The people, while from out of kitchen  
 came  
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who  
 had work'd  
 Lustier than any, and whom they could  
 but love,  
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps  
 and cried,  
 "God bless the King, and all his  
 fellowship!"  
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth  
 rode  
 Down the slope street, and past with-  
 out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the  
 cur  
 Pluckt from the cur he fights with,  
 ere his cause

Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being  
 named,  
 His owner, but remembers all, and  
 growls  
 Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the  
 door  
 Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he  
 used  
 To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest  
 With horse and arms—the King hath  
 past his time—  
 My scullion knave! Thralls to your  
 work again,  
 For an your fire be low ye kindle  
 mine!  
 Will there be dawn in West and eve  
 in East?  
 Begone!—my knave!—belike and  
 like enow  
 Some old head-blow not heeded in his  
 youth  
 So shook his wits they wander in his  
 prime—  
 Crazed! how the villain lifted up his  
 voice,  
 Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-  
 knave.  
 Tut: he was tame and meek enow with  
 me,  
 Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's  
 noticing.  
 Well—I will after my loud knave,  
 and learn  
 Whether he know me for his master  
 yet.  
 Out of the smoke he came, and so my  
 lance  
 Hold, by God's grace, he shall into  
 the mire—  
 Thence, if the King awaken from his  
 craze,  
 Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said,  
 "Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against  
 the King,  
 For that did never he whereon ye rail,  
 But ever meekly served the King in  
 thee?  
 Abide: take counsel; for this lad is  
 great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance  
and sword."

"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are  
overfine

To mar stout knaves with foolish  
courtesies:"

Then mounted, on thro' silent faces  
rode

Down the slope city, and out beyond  
the gate.

But by the field of tourney linger-  
ing yet

Mutter'd the damsel, "Wherefore did  
the King

Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot  
lackt, at least

He might have yielded to me one of  
those

Who tilt for lady's love and glory  
here,

Rather than — O sweet heaven! O  
fie upon him —

His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew  
(And there were none but few goodlier  
than he)

Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest  
is mine.

Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as  
one

That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the  
holt,

And deems it carrion of some wood-  
land thing,

Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender  
nose

With petulant thumb and finger,  
shrilling, "Hence!

Avoid, thou smelllest all of kitchen-  
grease.

And look who comes behind," for  
there was Kay.

"Knowest thou not me? thy master?  
I am Kay.

We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,  
"Master no more! too well I know  
thee, ay —

The most ungentle knight in Arthur's  
hall."

"Have at thee then," said Kay: they  
shock'd, and Kay

Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried  
again,

"Lead, and I follow," and fast away  
she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to  
fly

Behind her, and the heart of her good  
horse

Was nigh to burst with violence of the  
beat,

Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken  
spoke.

"What doest thou, scullion, in my  
fellowship?

Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught  
the more

Or love thee better, that by some  
device

Full cowardly, or by mere unhappi-  
ness,

Thou hast overthrown and slain thy  
master — thou! —

Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon!  
— to me

Thou smelllest all of kitchen as be-  
fore."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd  
gently, "say

Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye  
say,

I leave not till I finish this fair quest,  
Or die therefore."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?  
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he  
talks!

The listening rogue hath caught the  
manner of it.

But, knave, anon thou shalt be met  
with, knave,

And then by such a one that thou for  
all

The kitchen brewis that was ever supt  
Shalt not once dare to look him in the  
face."



"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile  
That madden'd her, and away she  
flash'd again  
Down the long avenues of a boundless  
wood,  
And Gareth following was again be-  
knaved.

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd  
the only way  
Where Arthur's men are set along the  
wood ;  
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as  
leaves :  
If both be slain, I am rid of thee ; but  
yet,  
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit  
of thine ?  
Fight, an thou canst : I have miss'd  
the only way."

So till the dusk that follow'd even-  
song  
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled ;  
Then after one long slope was  
mounted, saw,  
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thou-  
sand pines  
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink  
To westward — in the deeps whereof  
a mere,  
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-  
owl,  
Under the half-dead sunset glared ;  
and shouts  
Ascended, and there brake a serving-  
man  
Flying from out the black wood, and  
crying,  
"They have bound my lord to cast  
him in the mere."  
Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right  
the wrong'd,  
But straitlier bound am I to bide with  
thee."  
And when the damsel spake contempt-  
uously,  
"Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried  
again,  
"Follow, I lead!" so down among the  
pines

He plunged ; and there, blackshadow'd  
nigh the mere,  
And mid-thigh-deep in hnlruses and  
reed,  
Saw six tall men haling a seventh  
along,  
A stone about his neck to drown him  
in it.  
Three with good blows he quieted, but  
three  
Fled thro' the pines ; and Gareth loosed  
the stone  
From off his neck, then in the mere  
beside  
Tumbled it ; oilily bubbled up the  
mere.  
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on  
free feet  
Set him, a stalwart Baron, Arthur's  
friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these  
caitiff rogues  
Had wreak'd themselves on me ; good  
cause is theirs  
To hate me, for my wont hath ever  
been  
To catch my thief, and then like ver-  
min here  
Drown him, and with a stone about  
his neck ;  
And under this wan water many of  
them  
Lie rotting, but at night let go the  
stone,  
And rise, and flickering in a grimly  
light  
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye  
have saved a life  
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of  
this wood.  
And fain would I reward thee worship-  
fully.  
What guerdon will ye ? "

Gareth sharply spake,  
"None! for the deed's sake have I  
done the deed,  
In uttermost obedience to the King.  
But wilt thou yield this damsel har-  
borage ? "

Whereat the Baron saying, "I well believe  
 You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh  
 Broke from Lynette, "Ay, truly of a truth,  
 And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—  
 But deem not I accept thee aught the more,  
 Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit  
 Down on a rout of craven foresters.  
 A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.  
 Nay—for thou smell'st of the kitchen still.  
 But an this lord will yield us harbor-age,  
 Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,  
 All in a full-fair manor and a rich,  
 His towers where that day a feast had been  
 Held in high wall, and many a viand left,  
 And many a costly cate, received the three.  
 And there they placed a peacock in his pride  
 Before the damsel, and the Baron set  
 Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,  
 Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.  
 Hear me—this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,  
 And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot  
 To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night—  
 The last a monster unsubduable  
 Of any save of him for whom I call'd—  
 Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,  
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'  
 Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,  
 'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him—  
 Him—here—a villain fitter to stick swine  
 Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,  
 Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord  
 Now look'd at one and now at other, left  
 The damsel by the peacock in his pride,  
 And, seating Gareth at another board,  
 Sat down beside him, atc and then began.

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,  
 Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,  
 And whether she be mad, or else the King,  
 Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,  
 I ask not: but thou strik'st a strong strok,  
 For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,  
 And savor of my life; and therefore now,  
 For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh  
 Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back  
 To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.  
 Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,  
 The savor of my life."

And Gareth said,  
 "Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,  
 Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose  
 life he saved  
 Had, some brief space, convey'd them  
 on their way  
 And left them with God-speed, Sir  
 Gareth spake,  
 "Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she  
 replied,

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an  
 hour.  
 Lion and stoat have isled together,  
 knave,  
 In time of flood. Nay, furthermore,  
 methinks  
 Some ruth is mine for thee. Back  
 wilt thou, fool?  
 For hard by here is one will overthrow  
 And slay thee: then will I to court  
 again,  
 And shame the King for only yield-  
 ing me  
 My champion from the ashes of his  
 hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd cour-  
 teously,  
 "Say thou thy say, and I will do my  
 deed.  
 Allow me for mine hour, and thou  
 wilt find  
 My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay  
 Among the ashes and wedded the  
 King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those  
 long loops  
 Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd,  
 they came.  
 Rough-thicketed were the banks and  
 steep; the stream  
 Full, narrow; this a bridge of single  
 arc  
 Took at a leap; and on the further  
 side  
 Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold  
 In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily  
 in hue,  
 Save that the dome was purple, and  
 above,  
 Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.

And therefore the lawless warrior  
 paced  
 Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is  
 this he,  
 The champion thou hast brought from  
 Arthur's hall?  
 For whom we let thee pass." "Nay,  
 nay," she said,  
 "Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter  
 scorn  
 Of thee and thy much folly hath sent  
 thee here  
 His kitchen-knave: and look thou to  
 thyself:  
 See that he fall not on thee suddenly,  
 And slay thee unarm'd: he is not  
 knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of  
 the Dawn,  
 And servants of the Morning-Star,  
 approach,  
 Arm me," from out the silken curtain-  
 folds  
 Bare-footed and bare-headed three  
 fair girls  
 In gilt and rosy raiment came: their  
 feet  
 In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the  
 hair  
 All over glanced with dewdrop or with  
 gem  
 Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.  
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and  
 gave a shield  
 Blue also, and thereon the morning  
 star.  
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the  
 knight,  
 Who stood a moment ere his horse  
 was brought,  
 Glorying; and in the stream beneath  
 him, shone  
 Immingled with Heaven's azure wav-  
 eringly,  
 The gay pavilion and the naked  
 feet,  
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the  
 star.

Then she that watch'd him,  
 "Wherefore stare ye so?"

Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is  
time:  
Flee down the valley before he get to  
horse.  
Who will cry shame? Thou art not  
knight but knave."

Said Gareth, "Damsel, whether  
knave or knight,  
Far liefer had I fight a score of times  
Than hear thee so missay me and re-  
vile.  
Fair words were best for him who  
fights for thee;  
But truly foul are better, for they  
send  
That strength of anger thro' mine  
arms, I know  
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore  
The star, being mounted, cried from  
o'er the bridge,  
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn  
of me!  
Such fight not I, but answer scorn  
with scorn.  
For this were shame to do him further  
wrong  
Than set him on his feet, and take his  
horse  
And arms, and so return him to the  
King.  
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,  
knave.  
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave  
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest.  
I spring from loftier lineage than  
thine own."  
He spake, and all at fiery speed the  
two  
Shock'd on the central bridge, and  
either spear  
Bent but not brake, and either knight  
at once,  
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a cata-  
pult  
Beyond his horse's crupper and the  
bridge,

Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and  
drew,  
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his  
brand  
He drave his enemy backward down  
the bridge,  
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken,  
kitchen-knave!"  
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but  
one stroke  
Laid him that clove it grovelling on  
the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my  
life: I yield."  
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it  
of me  
Good—I accord it easily as a grace."  
She reddening, "Insolent scullion: I  
of thee?  
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!"  
"Then shall he die." And Gareth  
there unlaced:  
His helmet as to slay him, but she  
shriek'd,  
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to  
slay  
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel,  
thy charge  
Is an abounding pleasure to me.  
Knight,  
Thy life is thine at her command.  
Arise  
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall,  
and say  
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee.  
See thou crave  
His pardon for thy breaking of his  
laws.  
Myself, when I return, will plead for  
thee.  
Thy shield is mine—farewell; and,  
damsel, thou,  
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled.  
Then when he came upon her, spake,  
"Methought,  
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking  
on the bridge  
The savor of thy kitchen came upon  
me

A little faintlier: but the wind hath  
changed;

I scent it twenty-fold." And then she  
sang,

"O morning star' (not that tall felon  
there

Whom thou by sorcery or unhappiness  
Or some device, hast foully over-  
thrown),

'O morning star that smilest in the  
blue,

O star, my morning dream hath  
proven true,

Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath  
smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel,  
and away,  
For hard by here is one that guards a  
ford—

The second brother in their fool's  
parable—

Will pay thee all thy wages, and to  
boot.

Care not for shame: thou art not  
knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd,  
laughingly,

"Parables? Hear a parable of the  
knave.

When I was kitchen-knave among the  
rest

Fierce was the hearth, and one of my  
co-mates

Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast  
his coat,

'Guard it,' and there was none to  
meddle with it.

And such a coat art thou, and thee  
the King

Gave me to guard, and such a dog  
am I,

To worry, and not to flee—and—  
knight or knave—

The knave that doth thee service as  
full knight

Is all as good, meseems, as any knight  
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!

Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a  
knight,

Being but knave, I hate thee all the  
more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship  
me the more,  
That, being but knave, I throw thine  
enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt  
meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second  
river-loop,

Huge on a huge red horse, and all in  
mail

Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-  
day Sun

Beyond a raging shallow. As if the  
flower,

That blows a globe of after arrowlets,  
Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd

the fierce shield,  
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying  
blots

Before them when he turn'd from  
watching him.

He from beyond the roaring shallow  
roar'd,

"What doest thou, brother, in my  
marches here?"

And she athwart the shallow shrill'd  
again,

"Here is a kitchen-knave from  
Arthur's hall

Hath overthrown thy brother, and  
hath his arms."

"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and vizoring  
up a red

And cipher face of rounded foolish-  
ness,

Push'd horse across the foamings of  
the ford,

Whom Gareth met midstream: no  
room was there

For lance or tourney-skill: four  
strokes they struck

With sword, and these were mighty;  
the new knight

Had fear he might be shamed; but as  
the Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike  
the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the  
stream, the stream  
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd  
away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart  
the ford ;  
So drew him home ; but he that fought  
no more,  
As being all hone-batter'd on the rock,  
Yielded ; and Gareth sent him to the  
King.

"Myself when I return will plead for  
thee."

"Lead, and I follow." Quietly she  
led.

"Hath not the good wind, damsel,  
changed again ?"

"Nay, not a point : nor art thou victor  
here.

There lies a ridge of slate across the  
ford ;

His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for  
I saw it.

"O Sun' (not this strong fool  
whom thou, Sir Knave,  
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappi-  
ness),

'O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or  
pain,

O moon, that layest all to sleep again,  
Shine sweetly : twice my love hath  
smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of lovesong  
or of love ?

Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly  
born,

Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,  
perchance, —

"O dewy flowers that open to the  
sun,

O dewy flowers that close when day is  
done,

Blow sweetly : twice my love hath  
smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers,  
except, belike,

To garnish meats with ? hath not our  
good King

Who lent me thee, the flower of  
kitchendom,

A foolish love for flowers ? what stick  
ye round

The pasty ? wherewithal deck the  
boar's head ?

Flowers ? nay, the boar hath rose-  
maries and bay.

"O birds, that warble to the morn-  
ing sky,

O birds that warble as the day goes  
by,

Sing sweetly : twice my love hath  
smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark,  
mavis, merle,

Linnet ? what dream ye when they  
utter forth

May-music growing with the growing  
light,

Their sweet sun-worship ? these be for  
the snare

(So runs thy fancy) these be for the  
spit,

Larding and basting. See thou have  
not now

Larded thy last, except thou turn and  
fly.

There stands the third fool of their  
allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble  
bow,

All in a rose-red from the west, and  
all

Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the  
broad

Deep-dimpled current underneath, the  
knight,

That named himself the Star of  
Evening, stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the  
madman there

Naked in open dayshine ?" "Nay,"  
she cried,

"Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd  
skins

That fit him like his own; and so ye  
 cleave  
 His armor off him, these will turn the  
 blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er  
 the bridge,  
 "O brother-star, why shine ye here so  
 low?  
 Thy ward is higher up: but have ye  
 slain  
 The damsel's champion?" and the  
 damsel cried,

"No star of thine, but shot from  
 Arthur's heaven  
 With all disaster unto thine and thee!  
 For both thy younger brethren have  
 gone down  
 Before this youth; and so wilt thou,  
 Sir Star;  
 Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,  
 Old, with the might and breath of  
 twenty boys."  
 Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in  
 brag!  
 But that same strength which threw  
 the Morning Star  
 Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew  
 A hard and deadly note upon the horn.  
 "Approach and arm me!" With slow  
 steps from out  
 An old storm-beaten, russet, many-  
 stain'd  
 Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel  
 came,  
 And arm'd him in old arms, and  
 brought a helm  
 With but a drying evergreen for crest,  
 And gave a shield whereon the Star of  
 Even  
 Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his  
 emblem, shone.  
 But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-  
 bow,  
 They madly hurl'd together on the  
 bridge;

And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,  
 drew,  
 There met him drawn, and overthrew  
 him again,  
 But up like fire he started: and as  
 oft  
 As Gareth brought him grovelling on  
 his knees,  
 So many a time he vaulted up again;  
 Till Gareth panted hard, and his great  
 heart,  
 Foredooming all his trouble was in  
 vain,  
 Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as  
 one  
 That all in later, sadder age begins  
 To war against ill uses of a life,  
 But these from all his life arise, and  
 cry,  
 "Thou hast made us lords, and canst  
 not put us down!"  
 He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to  
 strike  
 Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the  
 while,  
 "Well done, knave-knight, well  
 stricken, O good knight-  
 knave —  
 O knave, as noble as any of all the  
 knights —  
 Shame me not, shame me not. I have  
 prophesied —  
 Strike, thou art worthy of the Table  
 Round —  
 His arms are old, he trusts the hard-  
 en'd skin —  
 Strike — strike — the wind will never  
 change again."  
 And Gareth hearing ever stronger  
 smote,  
 And hew'd great pieces of his armor  
 off him,  
 But lash'd in vain against the harden'd  
 skin,  
 And could not wholly bring him  
 under, more  
 Than loud Southwesterns, rolling  
 ridge on ridge,  
 The buoy that rides at sea, and dips  
 and springs  
 For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's  
 brand

Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.  
 "I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,  
 And, all unknighthlike, writhed his wiry arms  
 Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,  
 Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost  
 Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge  
 Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,  
 "Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said,  
 "I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;  
 Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,  
 O rainbow with three colors after rain,  
 Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me."

"Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,  
 But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —  
 Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,  
 Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King  
 Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,  
 For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,  
 And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal  
 As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,  
 Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art.

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,  
 Saving that you mistrusted our good King

Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one  
 Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;  
 Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold  
 He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet  
 To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets  
 His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat  
 At any gentle damsel's waywardness. Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:  
 And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks  
 There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,  
 Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour  
 When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,  
 Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams  
 Of goodly supper in the distant pool,  
 Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,  
 And told him of a cavern hard at hand,  
 Where bread and baken meats and good red wine  
 Of Southland, which the Lady Lynors  
 Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein  
 Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse  
 Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.  
 "Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,  
 Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock  
 The war of Time against the soul of man.  
 And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory



From these damp walls, and taken  
but the form.  
Know ye not these?" and Gareth  
lookt and read —  
In letters like to those the vexillary  
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-  
ing Gelt —  
"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES" —  
"HESPERUS" —  
"Nox" — "MORS," beneath five fig-  
ures, armed men,  
Slab after slab, their faces forward  
all,  
And running down the Soul, a Shape  
that fled  
With broken wings, torn raiment and  
loose hair,  
For help and shelter to the hermit's  
cave.  
"Follow the faces, and we find it.  
Look,  
Who comes behind?"

For one — delay'd at first  
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay  
To Camelot, then by what thereafter  
chanced,  
The damsel's headlong error thro' the  
wood —  
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-  
loops —  
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly  
drew  
Behind the twain, and when he saw  
the star  
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to  
him, cried,  
"Stay, felon-knight, I avenge me for  
my friend."  
And Gareth crying prick'd against the  
cry;  
But when they closed — in a moment  
— at one touch  
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of  
the world —  
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,  
That when he found the grass within  
his hands  
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon  
Lynette:  
Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and  
overthrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-  
knave,  
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your  
boast in vain?"  
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the  
son  
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bel-  
licent,  
And victor of the bridges and the ford,  
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown  
by whom  
I know not, all thro' mere unhappi-  
ness —  
Device and sorcery and unhappi-  
ness —  
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And  
Lancelot answer'd, "Prince,  
O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappi-  
ness  
Of one who came to help thee, not to  
harm,  
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee  
whole,  
As on the day when Arthur knighted  
him."

Then Gareth, "Thou — Lancelot!  
— thine the hand  
That threw me? An some chance to  
mar the boast  
Thy brethren of thee make — which  
could not chance —  
Had sent thee down before a lesser  
spear,  
Shamed had I been, and sad — O  
Lancelot — thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant,  
"Lancelot,  
Why came ye not, when call'd? and  
wherefore now  
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my  
knave,  
Who being still rebuked, would answer  
still  
Courteous as any knight — hut now,  
if knight,  
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd  
and trick'd,  
And only wondering wherefore play'd  
upon:

And doubtful whether I and mine be  
scorn'd.  
Where should be truth if not in  
Arthur's hall,  
In Arthur's presence? Knight,  
knave, prince and fool,  
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said,  
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight  
art thou  
To the King's best wish. O damsel,  
be you wise  
To call him shamed, who is but over-  
thrown?  
Thrown have I been, nor once, but  
many a time.  
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the  
last,  
And overthrower from being over-  
thrown.  
With sword we have not striven; and  
thy good horse  
And thou are weary; yet not less I  
felt  
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance  
of thine.  
Well hast thou done; for all the  
stream is freed,  
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on  
his foes,  
And when reviled, hast answer'd  
graciously,  
And makest merry when overthrown.  
Prince, Knight,  
Hail, Knight and Prince, and of our  
Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette  
he told  
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she  
said,  
"Ay well — ay well — for worse than  
being fool'd  
Of others, is to fool one's self. A  
cave,  
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats  
and drinks  
And forage for the horse, and flint for  
fire.

But all about it flies a honeysuckle.  
Seek, till we find." And when they  
sought and found,  
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his  
life  
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden  
gazed.  
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause  
to sleep hast thou.  
Wake lusty! seem I not as tender to  
him  
As any mother? Ay, but such a one  
As all day long hath rated at her  
child,  
And vext his day, but blesses him  
asleep —  
Good lord, how sweetly smells the  
honeysuckle  
In the hush'd night, as if the world  
were one  
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-  
ness!  
O Lancelot, Lancelot" — and she  
clapt her hands —  
"Full merry am I to find my goodly  
knave  
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn  
have I,  
Else yon black felon had not let me  
pass,  
To bring thee back to do the battle  
with him.  
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee  
first;  
Who doubts thee victor? so will my  
knight-knave  
Miss the full flower of this accom-  
plishment."

Said Lancelot, "Peradventure he,  
you name,  
May know my shield. Let Gareth,  
an he will,  
Change his for mine, and take my  
charger, fresh,  
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as  
well  
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-  
like," she said,  
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as  
in all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely  
 clutch'd the shield;  
 "Ramp ye lance-splintering lions, on  
 whom all spears  
 Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to  
 roar!  
 Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your  
 lord! —  
 Care not, good beasts, so well I care  
 for you.  
 O noble Lancelot, from my hold on  
 these  
 Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that  
 will not shame  
 Even the shadow of Lancelot under  
 shield.  
 Hence: let us go."

Silent the silent field  
 They traversed. Arthur's harp tho'  
 summer-wan,  
 In counter motion to the clouds,  
 allured  
 The glance of Gareth dreaming on  
 his liege.  
 A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the  
 foe falls!"  
 An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor  
 pealing there!"  
 Suddenly she that rode upon his left  
 Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent  
 him, crying,  
 "Yield, yield him this again: 'tis he  
 must fight:  
 I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-  
 terday  
 Reviled thee, and hath wrought on  
 Lancelot now  
 To lend thee horse and shield: won-  
 ders ye have done;  
 Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow  
 In having flung the three: I see thee  
 maim'd,  
 Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling  
 the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me  
 all ye know.  
 You cannot scare me; nor rough face,  
 or voice,  
 Brute bulk of limb, or boundless  
 savagery  
 Appal me from the quest."

"Nay, Prince," she cried,  
 "God wot, I never look'd upon the  
 face,  
 Seeing he never rides abroad by  
 day;  
 But watch'd him have I like a phan-  
 tom pass  
 Chilling the night: nor have I heard  
 the voice.  
 Always he made his mouthpiece of a  
 page  
 Who came and went, and still re-  
 ported him  
 As closing in himself the strength of  
 ten,  
 And when his anger tare him, mas-  
 sacring  
 Man, woman, lad and girl — yea, the  
 soft babe!  
 Some hold that he hath swallow'd  
 infant flesh,  
 Monster! O Prince, I went for Lance-  
 lot first,  
 The quest is Lancelot's: give him  
 back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight  
 for this,  
 Belike he wins it as the better man:  
 Thus — and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged  
 All the devisings of their chivalry  
 When one might meet a mightier than  
 himself;  
 How best to manage horse, lance,  
 sword and shield,  
 And so fill up the gap where force  
 might fail  
 With skill and fineness. Instant were  
 his words.

Then Gareth, "Here be rules. I  
 know but one —  
 To dash against mine enemy and to  
 win.  
 Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the  
 joust,  
 And seen thy way." "Heaven help  
 thee," sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud  
 that grew  
 To thunder-gloom palling all stars,  
 they rode  
 In converse till she made her palfrey  
 halt,  
 Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,  
 "There."  
 And all the three were silent seeing,  
 pitch'd  
 Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,  
 A huge pavilion like a mountain peak  
 Sunder the glooming crimson on the  
 marge,  
 Black, with black banner, and a long  
 black horn  
 Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth  
 graspt,  
 And so, before the two could hinder  
 him,  
 Bent all his heart and breath thro' all  
 the horn.  
 Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled;  
 anon  
 Came lights and lights, and once again  
 he blew;  
 Whereon were hollow tramlings up  
 and down  
 And muffled voices heard, and shadows  
 past;  
 Till high above him, circled with her  
 maids,  
 The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,  
 Beautiful among lights, and waving to  
 him  
 White hands, and courtesy; but when  
 the Prince  
 Three times had blown — after long  
 hush — at last —  
 The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,  
 Thro' those black foldings, that which  
 housed therein.  
 High on a nightblack horse, in night-  
 black arms,  
 With white breast-bone, and barren  
 ribs of Death,  
 And crown'd with fleshless laughter —  
 some ten steps —  
 In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn  
 -- advanced  
 The monster, and then paused, and  
 spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indig-  
 nantly,  
 "Fool, for thou hast, men say, the  
 strength of ten,  
 Canst thou not trust the limbs thy  
 God hath given,  
 But must, to make the terror of thee  
 more,  
 Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries  
 Of that which Life hath done with,  
 and the elod,  
 Less dull than thou, will hide with  
 mantling flowers  
 As if for pity?" But he spake no  
 word;  
 Which set the horror higher: a maiden  
 swoon'd;  
 The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands  
 and wept,  
 As doom'd to be the bride of Night  
 and Death;  
 Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his  
 helm;  
 And ev'n Sir Lancelot thro' his warm  
 blood felt  
 Ice strike, and all that mark'd him  
 were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger  
 fiercely neigh'd,  
 And Death's dark war-horse bounded  
 forward with him.  
 Then those that did not blink the  
 terror, saw  
 That Death was cast to ground, and  
 slowly rose.  
 But with one stroke Sir Gareth split  
 the skull.  
 Half fell to right and half to left and  
 lay.  
 Then with a stronger buffet he clove  
 the helm  
 As throughly as the skull; and out  
 from this  
 Issued the bright face of a blooming  
 boy  
 Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying,  
 "Knight,  
 Slay me not: my three brethren bade  
 me do it,  
 To make a horror all about the  
 house,

And stay the world from Lady Lyonors.  
 They never dream'd the passes would be past."  
 Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one  
 Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,  
 What madness made thee challenge the chief knight  
 Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.  
 They hate the King, and Lancelot, the King's friend,  
 They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,  
 They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;  
 And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance  
 And revel and song, made merry over Death,  
 As being after all their foolish fears  
 And horrors only proven a blooming boy.  
 So large mirth lived and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times  
 Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,  
 But he, that told it later, says Lynette.

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## GERAINT AND ENID.

### I.

THE brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,  
 A tributary prince of Devon, one  
 Of that great Order of the Table Round,  
 Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,  
 And loved her, as he loved the light of Heaven.  
 And as the light of Heaven varies, now  
 At sunrise, now at sunset, now by night  
 With moon and trembling stars, so loved Geraint

To make her beauty vary day by day,  
 In crimsons and in purples and in gems.  
 And Enid, but to please her husband's eye,  
 Who first had found and loved her in a state  
 Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him  
 In some fresh splendor; and the Queen herself,  
 Grateful to Prince Geraint for service done,  
 Loved her, and often with her own white hands  
 Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveliest,  
 Next after her own self, in all the court.  
 And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
 Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
 And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
 And seeing them so tender and so close,  
 Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
 But when a rumor rose about the Queen,  
 Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
 Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
 The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
 Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell  
 A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
 Thro' that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
 Had suffer'd, or should suffer any taint  
 In nature: wherefore going to the King,  
 He made this pretext, that his prince-dom lay  
 Close on the borders of a territory,  
 Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff knights,  
 Assassins, and all flyers from the hand  
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes a law:

And therefore, till the King himself  
 should please  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all  
 his realm,  
 He craved a fair permission to depart,  
 And there defend his marches; and  
 the King  
 Mused for a little on his plea, but, last,  
 Allowing it, the Prince and Enid rode,  
 And fifty knights rode with them, to  
 the shores  
 Of Severn, and they past to their own  
 land;  
 Where, thinking, that if ever yet was  
 wife  
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to me,  
 He compass'd her with sweet observ-  
 ances  
 And worship, never leaving her, and  
 grew  
 Forgetful of his promise to the King,  
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,  
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,  
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,  
 Forgetful of his principedom and its  
 cares.  
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to  
 her.  
 And by and by the people, when they  
 met  
 In twos and threes, or fuller com-  
 panies,  
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of  
 him  
 As of a prince whose manhood was all  
 gone,  
 And molten down in mere uxorious-  
 ness.  
 And this she gather'd from the peo-  
 ple's eyes:  
 This too the women who attired her  
 head,  
 To please her, dwelling on his bound-  
 less love,  
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the  
 more:  
 And day by day she thought to tell  
 Geraint,  
 But could not out of bashful delicacy;  
 While he that watch'd her sadden, was  
 the more  
 Suspicious that her nature had a taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer  
 morn  
 (They sleeping each by either) the  
 new sun  
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of  
 the room,  
 And heated the strong warrior in his  
 dreams;  
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet  
 aside,  
 And bared the knotted column of his  
 throat,  
 The massive square of his heroic  
 breast,  
 And arms on which the standing  
 muscle sloped,  
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little  
 stone,  
 Running too vehemently to break  
 upon it.  
 And Enid woke and sat beside the  
 couch,  
 Admiring him, and thought within  
 herself,  
 Was ever man so grandly made as  
 he?  
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's  
 talk  
 And accusation of uxoriousness  
 Across her mind, and bowing over  
 him,  
 Low to her own heart piteously she  
 said:  
 "O noble breast and all-puissant  
 arms,  
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that  
 men  
 Reproach you, saying all your force  
 is gone?  
 I *am* the cause, because I dare not  
 speak  
 And tell him what I think and what  
 they say.  
 And yet I hate that he should linger  
 here;  
 I cannot love my lord and not his  
 name.  
 Far liefer had I gird his harness on  
 him,  
 And ride with him to battle and stand  
 by,

And watch his mightful hand striking  
 great blows  
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the  
 world.  
 Far better were I laid in the dark  
 earth,  
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,  
 Not to be folded more in these dear  
 arms,  
 And darken'd from the high light in  
 his eyes,  
 Than that my lord thro' me should  
 suffer shame.  
 Am I so hold, and could I so stand  
 by,  
 And see my dear lord wounded in the  
 strife,  
 Or maybe pierced to death before  
 mine eyes,  
 And yet not dare to tell him what I  
 think,  
 And how men slur him, saying all his  
 force  
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?  
 O me, I fear that I am no true wife."

Half inwardly, half audibly she  
 spoke,  
 And the strong passion in her made  
 her weep  
 True tears upon his broad and naked  
 breast,  
 And these awoke him, and by great  
 mischance  
 He heard but fragments of her later  
 words,  
 And that she fear'd she was not a true  
 wife.  
 And then he thought, "In spite of all  
 my care,  
 For all my pains, poor man, for all  
 my pains,  
 She is not faithful to me, and I see her  
 Weeping for some gay knight in  
 Arthur's hall."  
 Then tho' he loved and revered  
 her too much  
 To dream she could be guilty of foul  
 act,  
 Right thro' his manful breast darted  
 the pang

That makes a man, in the sweet face  
 of her  
 Whom he loves most, lonely and mis-  
 erable.  
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out  
 of bed,  
 And shook his drowsy squire awake  
 and cried,  
 "My charger and her palfrey;" then  
 to her,  
 "I will ride forth into the wilderness;  
 For tho' it seems my spurs are yet to  
 win,  
 I have not fall'n so low as some would  
 wish.  
 And thou, put on thy worst and mean-  
 est dress  
 And ride with me." And Enid ask'd,  
 amazed,  
 "If Enid errs, let Enid learn her  
 fault."  
 But he, "I charge thee, ask not, but  
 obey."  
 Then she bethought her of a faded  
 silk,  
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,  
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,  
 Wherein she kept them folded rever-  
 ently  
 With sprigs of summer laid between  
 the folds,  
 She took them, and array'd herself  
 therein,  
 Remembering when first he came on  
 her  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
 her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the  
 dress,  
 And all his journey to her, as himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the  
 court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide  
 before  
 Held court at old Caerleon upon Usk.  
 There on a day, he sitting high in  
 hall,  
 Before him came a forester of Dean,  
 Wet from the woods, with notice of a  
 hart

Taller than all his fellows, milky-white,  
 First seen that day: these things he told the King.  
 Then the good King gave order to let blow  
 His horns for hunting on the morrow morn.  
 And when the Queen petition'd for his leave  
 To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.  
 So with the morning all the court were gone.  
 But Guinevere lay late into the morn,  
 Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming of her love  
 For Lancelot, and forgetful of the hunt;  
 But rose at last, a single maiden with her,  
 Took horse, and forded Usk, and gain'd the wood;  
 There, on a little knoll beside it, stay'd  
 Waiting to hear the hounds; but heard instead  
 A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince Geraint,  
 Late also, wearing neither hunting-dress  
 Nor weapon, save a golden-hilted brand,  
 Came quickly flashing thro' the shallow ford  
 Behind them, and so gallop'd up the knoll.  
 A purple scarf, at either end whereof  
 There swung an apple of the purest gold,  
 Sway'd round about him, as he gallop'd up  
 To join them, glancing like a dragon-fly  
 'In summer suit and silks of holiday.  
 Low bow'd the tributary Prince, and she,  
 Sweetly and stately, and with all grace  
 Of womanhood and queenhood, answer'd him:  
 "Late, late, Sir Prince," she said,  
 "later than we!"

"Yea, noble Queen," he answer'd,  
 "and so late  
 That I but come like you to see the hunt,  
 Not join it." "Therefore wait with me," she said;  
 "For on this little knoll, if anywhere,  
 There is good chance that we shall hear the hounds:  
 Here often they break covert at our feet."

And while they listen'd for the distant hunt,  
 And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,  
 King Arthur's hound of deepest mouth, there rode  
 Full slowly by a knight, lady, and dwarf;  
 Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and the knight  
 Had vizzor up, and show'd a youthful face,  
 Imperious, and of haughtiest lineaments.  
 And Guinevere, not mindful of his face  
 In the King's hall, desired his name, and sent  
 Her maiden to demand it of the dwarf;  
 Who being vicious, old and irritable,  
 And doubling all his master's vice of pride,  
 Made answer sharply that she should not know.  
 "Then will I ask it of himself," she said.  
 "Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not," cried the dwarf;  
 "Thou art not worthy ev'n to speak of him;"  
 And when she put her horse toward the knight,  
 Struck at her with his whip, and she return'd  
 Indignant to the Queen; whereat Geraint  
 Exclaiming, "Surely I will learn the name,"  
 Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd it of him,



Who answer'd as before; and when  
 the Prince  
 Had put his horse in motion toward  
 the knight,  
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut  
 his cheek.  
 The Prince's blood spirted upon the  
 scarf,  
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive  
 hand  
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish him:  
 But he, from his exceeding manful-  
 ness  
 And pure nobility of temperament,  
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,  
 refrain'd  
 From ev'n a word, and so returning  
 said:

"I will avenge this insult, noble  
 Queen,  
 Done in your maiden's person to your-  
 self:  
 And I will track this vermin to their  
 earths:  
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not doubt  
 To find, at some place I shall come at,  
 arms  
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being  
 found,  
 Then will I fight him, and will break  
 his pride,  
 And on the third day will again be  
 here,  
 So that I be not fall'n in fight. Fare-  
 well."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answer'd  
 the stately Queen.  
 "Be prosperous in this journey, as in  
 all;  
 And may you light on all things that  
 you love,  
 And live to wed with her whom first  
 you love:  
 But ere you wed with any, bring your  
 bride,  
 And I, were she the daughter of a  
 king,  
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the  
 hedge,  
 Will clothe her for her bridals like  
 the sun."

And Prince Geraint, now thinking  
 that he heard  
 The noble hart at bay, now the far  
 horn,  
 A little vext at losing of the hunt,  
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,  
 By ups and downs, thro' many a grassy  
 glade  
 And valley, with fixt eye following  
 the three.  
 At last they issued from the world of  
 wood,  
 And climb'd upon a fair and even  
 ridge,  
 And show'd themselves against the  
 sky, and sank.  
 And thither came Geraint, and under-  
 neath  
 Beheld the long street of a little town  
 In a long valley, on one side  
 whereof,  
 White from the mason's hand, a for-  
 tress rose;  
 And on one side a castle in decay,  
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry  
 ravine:  
 And out of town and valley came a  
 noise  
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed  
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks  
 At distance, ere they settle for the  
 night.

And onward to the fortress rode the  
 three,  
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the  
 walls.  
 "So," thought Geraint, "I have  
 track'd him to his earth."  
 And down the long street riding  
 wearily,  
 Found every hostel full, and every-  
 where  
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the  
 hot hiss  
 And bustling whistle of the youth  
 who scour'd  
 His master's armor; and of such a  
 one  
 He ask'd, "What means the tumult  
 in the town?"

Who told him, scouring still, "The  
sparrow-hawk!"  
Then riding close behind an ancient  
churl,  
Who, snitten by the dusty sloping  
beam,  
Went sweating underneath a sack of  
corn,  
Ask'd yet once more what meant the  
hubhub here?  
Who answer'd gruffly, "Ugh! the  
sparrow-hawk."  
Then riding further past an armorer's,  
Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd  
above his work,  
Sat riveting a helmet on his knee,  
He put the self-same query, but the  
man  
Not turning round, nor looking at  
him, said:  
"Friend, he that labors for the spar-  
row-hawk  
Has little time for idle questioners."  
Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden  
spleen:  
"A thousand pips eat up your spar-  
row-hawk!  
Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings  
peck him dead!  
Ye think the rustic cackle of your  
bourg  
The murmur of the world! What is  
it to me?  
O wretched set of sparrows, one and  
all,  
Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-  
hawks!  
Speak, if ye be not like the rest,  
hawk-mad,  
Where can I get me harborage for  
the night?  
And arms, arms, arms to fight my  
enemy? Speak!"  
Whereat the armorer turning all  
amazed  
And seeing one so gay in purple silks,  
Came forward with the helmet yet in  
hand  
And answer'd, "Pardon me, O stran-  
ger knight;  
We hold a tourney here to-morrow  
morn,

And there is scanty time for half the  
work.  
Arms? truth! I know not: all are  
wanted here.  
Harborage? truth, good truth, I know  
not, save,  
It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the  
bridge  
Yonder." He spoke and fell to work  
again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleen-  
ful yet,  
Across the bridge that spann'd the  
dry ravine.  
There musing sat the hoary-headed  
Earl,  
(His dress a suit of fray'd magnifi-  
cence,  
Once fit for feasts of ceremony) and  
said:  
"Whither, fair son?" to whom Ger-  
aint replied,  
"O friend, I seek a harborage for the  
night."  
Then Yniol, "Enter therefore and  
partake  
The slender entertainment of a house  
Once rich, now poor, but ever open-  
door'd."  
"Thanks, venerable friend," replied  
Geraint;  
"So that you do not serve me spar-  
row-hawks  
For supper, I will enter, I will eat  
With all the passion of a twelve  
hours' fast."  
Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-  
headed Earl,  
And answer'd, "Graver cause than  
yours is mine  
To curse this hedgerow thief, the  
sparrow-hawk:  
But in, go in; for save yourself de-  
sire it,  
We will not touch upon him ev'n in  
jest."  
Then rode Geraint into the castle  
court,  
His charger trampling many a prickly  
star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken  
stones.  
He look'd and saw that all was  
ruinous.  
Here stood a shatter'd archway  
plumed with fern;  
And here had fall'n a great part of  
a tower,  
Whole, like a crag that tumbles from  
the cliff,  
And like a crag was gay with wilding  
flowers :  
And high above a piece of turret stair,  
Worn by the feet that now were  
silent, wound  
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-  
stems  
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-  
fibred arms,  
And suck'd the joining of the stones,  
and look'd  
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a  
grove.

And while he waited in the castle  
court,  
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter,  
rang  
Clear thro' the open casement of the  
hall,  
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a  
bird,  
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,  
Moves him to think what kind of bird  
it is  
That sings so delicately clear, and  
make  
Conjecture of the plumage and the  
form ;  
So the sweet voice of Enid moved  
Geraint ;  
And made him like a man abroad at  
morn  
When first the liquid note beloved of  
men  
Comes flying over many a windy wave  
To Britain, and in April suddenly  
Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with  
green and red,  
And he suspends his converse with a  
friend,  
Or it may be the labor of his hands,

To think or say, "There is the night-  
ingale";  
So fared it with Geraint, who thought  
and said,  
"Here, by God's grace, is the one  
voice for me."

It chanced the song that Enid sang  
was one  
Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid  
sang :

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel  
and lower the proud ;  
Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine,  
storm, and clond ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love  
nor hate.

"Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel  
with smile or frown ;  
With that wild wheel we go not up or  
down ;  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great.

"Smile and we smile, the lords of  
many lands ;  
Frown and we smile, the lords of our  
own hands ;  
For man is man and master of his  
fate.

"Turn, turn thy wheel above the  
staring crowd ;  
Thy wheel and thou are shadows in  
the cloud ;  
Thy wheel and thee we neither love  
nor hate."

"Hark, by the bird's song ye may  
learn the nest,"  
Said Yniol ; "enter quickly." Enter-  
ing then,  
Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen  
stones,  
The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd  
hall,  
He found an ancient dame in dim  
brocade ;  
And near her, like a blossom vermeil-  
white,

That lightly breaks a faded flower-  
sheath,  
Moved the fair Enid, all in faded  
silk,  
Her daughter. In a moment thought  
Geraint,  
"Here by God's rood is the one maid  
for me."  
But none spake word except the hoary  
Earl:  
"Enid, the good knight's horse stands  
in the court;  
Take him to stall, and give him corn,  
and then  
Go to the town and buy us flesh and  
wine;  
And we will make us merry as we  
may.  
Our hoard is little, but our hearts are  
great."

He spake: the Prince, as Enid past  
him, fain  
To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol  
caught  
His purple scarf, and held, and said,  
"Forbear!  
Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O  
my son,  
Endures not that her guest should  
serve himself."  
And reverencing the custom of the  
house  
Geraint, from utter courtesy, forbore.

So Enid took his charger to the  
stall;  
And after went her way across the  
bridge,  
And reach'd the town, and while the  
Prince and Earl  
Yet spoke together, came again with  
one,  
A youth, that following with a costrel  
bore  
The means of goodly welcome, flesh  
and wine.  
And Enid brought sweet cakes to  
make them cheer,  
And in her veil unfolded, manchet  
bread.

And then, because their hall must also  
serve  
For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and  
spread the board,  
And stood behind, and waited on the  
three.  
And seeing her so sweet and service-  
able,  
Geraint had longing in him evermore  
To stoop and kiss the tender little  
thumb,  
That crost the trencher as she laid it  
down:  
But after all had eaten, then Geraint,  
For now the wine made summer in his  
veins,  
Let his eye rove in following, or rest  
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,  
Now here, now there, about the dusky  
hall;  
Then suddenly address the hoary  
Earl:

"Fair Host and Earl, I pray your  
courtesy;  
This sparrow-hawk, what is he? tell  
me of him.  
His name? but no, good faith, I will  
not have it:  
For if he be the knight whom late I  
saw  
Ride into that new fortress by your  
town,  
White from the mason's hand, then  
have I sworn  
From his own lips to have it—I am  
Geraint  
Of Devon—for this morning when the  
Queen  
Sent her own maiden to demand the  
name,  
His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen  
thing,  
Struck at her with his whip, and she  
return'd  
Indignant to the Queen; and then I  
swore  
That I would track this caitiff to his  
hold,  
And fight and break his pride, and  
have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought  
to find  
Arms in your town, where all the men  
are mad;  
They take the rustic murmur of their  
bourg  
For the great wave that cchoes round  
the world;  
They would not hear me speak: but  
if ye know  
Where I can light on arms, or if your-  
self  
Should have them, tell me, seeing I  
have sworn  
That I will break his pride and learn  
his name,  
Avenging this great insult done the  
Queen."

Then cried Earl Yniol, "Art thou  
he indeed,  
Geraint, a name far-sounded among  
men  
For noble deeds? and truly I, when  
first  
I saw you moving by me on the  
bridge,  
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by  
your state  
And presence might have guess'd you  
one of those  
That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.  
Nor speak I now from foolish flat-  
tery;  
For this dear child hath often heard  
me praise  
Your feats of arms, and often when I  
paused  
Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to  
hear;  
So grateful is the noise of noble deeds  
To noble hearts who see but acts of  
wrong:  
O never yet had woman such a pair  
Of suitors as this maiden; first Lim-  
ours,  
A creature wholly given to brawls and  
wine,  
Drunk even when he woo'd; and he  
dead  
I know not, but he passed to the wild  
land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-  
hawk,  
My curse, my nephew — I will not let  
his name  
Slip from my lips if I can help it —  
he,  
When I that knew him fierce and tur-  
bulent  
Refused her to him, then his pride  
awoke;  
And since the proud man often is the  
mean,  
He sow'd a slander in the common ear,  
Affirming that his father left him  
gold,  
And in my charge, which was not ren-  
der'd to him;  
Bribed with large promises the men  
who served  
About my person, the more easily  
Because my means were somewhat  
broken into  
Thro' open doors and hospitality;  
Raised my own town against me in  
the night  
Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my  
house;  
From mine own earldom foully ousted  
me;  
Built that new fort to overawe my  
friends,  
For truly there are those who love me  
yet;  
And keeps me in this ruinous castle  
here,  
Where doubtless he would put me  
soon to death,  
But that his pride too much despises  
me:  
And I myself sometimes despise my-  
self;  
For I have let men be, and have their  
way;  
Am much too gentle, have not used  
my power:  
Nor know I whether I be very base  
Or very manful, whether very wise  
Or very foolish; only this I know,  
That whatsoever evil happen to me,  
I seem to suffer nothing heart or  
limb,  
But can endure it all most patiently."

“Well said, true heart,” replied  
Geraint, “but arms,  
That if the sparrow-hawk, this  
nephew, fight  
In next day’s journey I may break  
his pride.”

And Yniol answer’d, “Arms, indeed,  
but old  
And rusty, old and rusty, Prince  
Geraint,  
Are mine, and therefore at thine ask-  
ing, thine.  
But in this tournament can no man  
tilt,  
Except the lady he loves best be  
there.  
Two forks are fixt into the meadow  
ground,  
And over these is placed a silver  
wand,  
And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,  
The prize of beauty for the fairest  
there.  
And this, what knight soever be in  
field  
Lays claim to for the lady at his  
side,  
And tilts with my good nephew there-  
upon,  
Who being apt at arms and big of  
bone  
Has ever won it for the lady with  
him,  
And toppling over all antagonism  
Has earn’d himself the name of spar-  
row-hawk.  
But thou, that hast no lady, canst not  
fight.”

To whom Geraint with eyes all  
bright replied,  
Leaning a little toward him, “Thy  
leave!  
Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,  
For this dear child, because I never  
saw,  
Tho’ having seen all beauties of our  
time,  
Nor can see elsewhere, anything so  
fair.  
And if I fall her name will yet remain

Untarnish’d as before; but if I live,  
So aid me Heaven when at mine ut-  
termost,  
As I will make her truly my true  
wife.”

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol’s  
heart  
Danced in his bosom, seeing better  
days.  
And looking round he saw not Enid  
there,  
(Who hearing her own name had  
stol’n away)  
But that old dame, to whom full ten-  
derly  
And fondling all her hand in his he  
said,  
“Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,  
And best by her that bore her under-  
stood.  
Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to  
rest  
Tell her, and prove her heart toward  
the Prince.”

So spake the kindly-hearted Earl,  
and she  
With frequent smile and nod depart-  
ing found,  
Half disarray’d as to her rest, the girl;  
Whom first she kiss’d on either cheek,  
and then  
On either shining shoulder laid a hand,  
And kept her off and gazed upon her  
face,  
And told her all their converse in the  
hall,  
Proving her heart: but never light and  
shade  
Coursed one another more on open  
ground  
Beneath a troubled heaven, than red  
and pale  
Across the face of Enid bearing her;  
While slowly falling as a scale that  
falls,  
When weight is added only grain by  
grain,  
Sank her sweet head upon her gentle  
breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a  
word,  
Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of  
it;  
So moving without answer to her rest  
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to  
draw  
The quiet night into her blood, but  
lay  
Contemplating her own unworthiness;  
And when the pale and bloodless east  
began  
To quicken to the sun, arose, and  
raised  
Her mother too, and hand in hand  
they moved  
Down to the meadow where the jousts  
were held,  
And waited there for Yniol and  
Geraint.

And thither came the twain, and  
when Geraint  
Beheld her first in field, awaiting him,  
He felt, were she the prize of bodily  
force,  
Himself beyond the rest pushing could  
move  
The chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted  
arms  
Were on his princely person, but thro'  
these  
Princelike his bearing shone; and  
errant knights  
And ladies came, and by and by the  
town  
Flow'd in, and settling circled all the  
lists.  
And there they fixt the forks into the  
ground,  
And over these they placed the silver  
wand,  
And over that the golden sparrow-  
hawk.  
Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet  
blown,  
Spake to the lady with him and pro-  
claim'd,  
"Advance and take as fairest of the  
fair,  
For I these two years past have won  
it for thee,

The prize of beauty." Loudly spake  
the Prince,  
"Forbear: there is a worthier," and  
the knight  
With some surprise and thrice as much  
disdain  
Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all  
his face  
Glow'd like the heart of a great fire  
at Ynle,  
So burnt he was with passion, crying  
out,  
"Do battle for it then," no more; and  
thrice  
They clash'd together, and thrice they  
brake their spears.  
Then each, dishorsed and drawing,  
lash'd at each  
So often and with such blows, that all  
the crowd  
Wonder'd, and now and then from  
distant walls  
There came a clapping as of phantom  
hands.  
So twice they fought, and twice they  
breathed, and still  
The dew of their great labor, and the  
blood  
Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd  
their force.  
But either's force was match'd till  
Yniol's cry,  
"Remember that great insult done the  
Queen,"  
Increased Geraint's, who heaved his  
blade aloft,  
And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit  
the bone,  
And fell'd him, and set foot upon his  
breast,  
And said, "Thy name?" To whom  
the fallen man  
Made answer, groaning, "Edyrn, son  
of Nudd!"  
Ashamed am I that I should tell it  
thee.  
My pride is broken: men have seen  
my fall."  
"Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd," replied  
Geraint,  
"These two things shalt thou do, or  
else thou diest.

First, thou thyself, with damsel and  
 with dwarf,  
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court, and coming  
 there,  
 Crave pardon for that insult done the  
 Queen,  
 And shalt abide her judgment on it;  
 next,  
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to  
 thy kin.  
 These two things shalt thou do, or  
 thou shalt die."  
 And Edyrn answer'd, "These things  
 will I do,  
 For I have never yet been overthrown,  
 And thou hast overthrown me, and my  
 pride  
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my  
 fall!"  
 And rising up, he rode to Arthur's  
 court,  
 And there the Queen forgave him  
 easily.  
 And being young, he changed and  
 came to loathe  
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-  
 self  
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell  
 at last  
 In the great battle fighting for the  
 King.

But when the third day from the  
 hunting-morn  
 Made a low splendor in the world, and  
 wings  
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she  
 lay  
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow  
 light,  
 Among the dancing shadows of the  
 birds,  
 Woke and bethought her of her  
 promise given  
 No later than last eve to Prince  
 Geraint —  
 So bent he seem'd on going the third  
 day,  
 He would not leave her, till her prom-  
 ise given —  
 To ride with him this morning to the  
 court,

And there be made known to the  
 stately Queen,  
 And there be wedded with all cere-  
 mony.  
 At this she cast her eyes upon her  
 dress,  
 And thought it never yet had look'd  
 so mean.  
 For as a leaf in mid-November is  
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd  
 The dress that now she look'd on to  
 the dress  
 She look'd on ere the coming of  
 Geraint.  
 And still she look'd, and still the  
 terror grew  
 Of that strange bright and dreadful  
 thing, a court,  
 All staring at her in her faded silk :  
 And softly to her own sweet heart she  
 said :

"This noble prince who won our  
 earldom back,  
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,  
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall dis-  
 credit him !  
 Would he could tarry with us here  
 awhile,  
 But being so beholden to the Prince,  
 It were but little grace in any of us,  
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third  
 day,  
 To seek a second favor at his hands.  
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,  
 Myself would work eye dim, and finger  
 lame,  
 Far liefer than so much discredit him."

And Enid fell in longing for a dress  
 All branch'd and flower'd with gold,  
 a costly gift  
 Of her good mother, given her on the  
 night  
 Before her birth day, three sad years  
 ago,  
 That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd  
 their house,  
 And scatter'd all they had to all the  
 winds :  
 For while the mother show'd it, and  
 the two



Were turning and admiring it, the  
 work  
 To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry  
 That Edyrn's men were on them, and  
 they fled  
 With little save the jewels they had  
 on,  
 Which being sold and sold had bought  
 them bread :  
 And Edyrn's men had caught them in  
 their flight,  
 And placed them in this ruin ; and  
 she wish'd  
 The Prince had found her in her  
 ancient home ;  
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,  
 And roam the goodly places that she  
 knew ;  
 And last bethought her how she used  
 to watch,  
 Near that old home, a pool of golden  
 carp ;  
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and  
 lustreless  
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the  
 pool ;  
 And half asleep she made comparison  
 Of that and these to her own faded self  
 And the gay court, and fell asleep  
 again ;  
 And dreamt herself was such a faded  
 form  
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the  
 pool ;  
 But this was in the garden of a king ;  
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool, she  
 knew  
 That all was bright ; that all about  
 were birds  
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;  
 That all the turf was rich in plots that  
 look'd  
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;  
 And lords and ladies of the high court  
 went  
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;  
 And children of the King in cloth of  
 gold  
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd down  
 the walks ;  
 And while she thought " They will  
 not see me," came

A stately queen whose name was  
 Guinevere,  
 And all the children in their cloth of  
 gold  
 Ran to her, crying, " If we have fish  
 at all  
 Let them be gold ; and charge the  
 gardeners now  
 To pick the faded creature from the  
 pool,  
 And cast it on the mixen that it die."  
 And therewithal one came and seized  
 on her,  
 And Enid started waking, with her  
 heart  
 All overshadow'd by the foolish  
 dream,  
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping  
 her  
 To get her well awake ; and in her  
 hand  
 A suit of bright apparel, which she  
 laid  
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exult-  
 ingly :

" See here, my child, how fresh the  
 colors look,  
 How fast they hold like colors of a  
 shell  
 That keeps the wear and polish of the  
 wave.  
 Why not ? It never yet was worn, I  
 trow :  
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye  
 know it."

And Enid look'd, but all confused  
 at first,  
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish  
 dream :  
 Then suddenly she knew it and re-  
 joiced,  
 And answer'd, " Yea, I know it ; your  
 good gift,  
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;  
 Your own good gift ! " " Yea, surely,"  
 said the dame,  
 " And gladly given again this happy  
 morn.  
 For when the jousts were ended yes-  
 terday,

Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-  
 where  
 He found the sack and plunder of our  
 house  
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the  
 town;  
 And gave command that all which  
 once was ours  
 Should now be ours again : and yester-  
 eve,  
 While ye were talking sweetly with  
 your Prince,  
 Came one with this and laid it in my  
 hand,  
 For love or fear, or seeking favor of  
 us,  
 Because we have our earldom back  
 again.  
 And yester-eve I would not tell you  
 of it,  
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at  
 morn.  
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?  
 For I myself unwillingly have worn  
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have  
 yours,  
 And howsoever patient, Yniol his.  
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly  
 house,  
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous  
 fare,  
 And page, and maid, and squire, and  
 seneschal,  
 And pastime both of hawk and hound,  
 and all  
 That appertains to noble maintenance.  
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly  
 house;  
 But since our fortune swerved from  
 sun to shade,  
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel  
 need  
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has  
 come;  
 So clothe yourself in this, that better  
 fits  
 Our mended fortunes and a Prince's  
 bride:  
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest  
 fair,  
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest  
 fair,

Let never maiden think, however fair,  
 She is not fairer in new clothes than  
 old.  
 And should some great court-lady  
 say, the Prince  
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the  
 hedge,  
 And like a madman brought her  
 to the court,  
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse,  
 might shame the Prince  
 To whom we are beholden; but I  
 know,  
 When my dear child is set forth at  
 her best,  
 That neither court nor country, tho'  
 they sought  
 Thro' all the provinces like those of  
 old  
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has  
 her match."

Here ceased the kindly mother out  
 of breath;  
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she  
 lay;  
 Then, as the white and glittering star  
 of morn  
 Parts from a bank of snow, and by  
 and by  
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden  
 rose,  
 And left her maiden couch, and robed  
 herself,  
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand  
 and eye,  
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous  
 gown;  
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,  
 and said,  
 She never yet had seen her half so  
 fair;  
 And call'd her like that maiden in the  
 tale,  
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out  
 of flowers,  
 And sweeter than the bride of Cas-  
 sive-laun,  
 Flur, for whose love the Roman  
 Cæsar first  
 Invaded Britain, "But we beat him  
 back,

As this great Prince invaded us, and  
we,  
Not beat him back, but welcomed him  
with joy.  
And I can scarcely ride with you to  
court,  
For old am I, and rough the ways and  
wild ;  
But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall  
dream  
I see my princess as I see her now,  
Clothed with my gift, and gay among  
the gay."

But while the women thus rejoiced,  
Geraint  
Woke where he slept in the high hall,  
and call'd  
For Enid, and when Yniol made report  
Of that good mother making Enid  
gay  
In such apparel as might well beseem  
His princess, or indeed the stately  
Queen,  
He answer'd: "Earl, entreat her by  
my love,  
Albeit I give no reason but my wish,  
That she ride with me in her faded  
silk."  
Yniol with that hard message went ;  
it fell  
Like flaws in summer laying lusty  
corn :  
For Enid, all abash'd she knew not  
why,  
Dared not to glance at her good  
mother's face,  
But silently, in all obedience,  
Her mother silent too, nor helping her,  
Laid from her limbs the costly-broid-  
er'd gift,  
And robed them in her ancient suit  
again,  
And so descended. Never man re-  
joiced  
More than Geraint to greet her thus  
attired ;  
And glancing all at once as keenly at  
her  
As careful robins eye the delver's toil,  
Made her cheek burn and either eye-  
lid fall,

But rested with her sweet face satis-  
fied ;  
Then seeing cloud upon the mother's  
brow,  
Her by both hands he caught, and  
sweetly said,

"O my new mother, be not wroth  
or grieved  
At thy new son, for my petition to  
her.  
When late I left Caerleon, our great  
Queen,  
In words whose echo lasts, they were  
so sweet,  
Made promise, that whatever bride I  
brought,  
Herself would clothe her like the sun  
in Heaven.  
Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd  
hall,  
Beholding one so bright in dark estate,  
I vow'd that could I gain her, our fair  
Queen,  
No hand but hers, should make your  
Enid burst  
Sunlike from cloud — and likewise  
thought perhaps,  
That service done so graciously would  
bind  
The two together; fain I would the  
two  
Should love each other: how can  
Enid find  
A nobler friend? Another thought  
was mine ;  
I came among you here so suddenly,  
That tho' her gentle presence at the  
lists  
Might well have served for proof that  
I was loved,  
I doubted whether daughter's tender-  
ness,  
Or easy nature, might not let itself  
Be moulded by your wishes for her  
weal ;  
Or whether some false sense in her  
own self  
Of my contrasting brightness, over-  
bore  
Her fancy dwelling in this dusky  
hall ;

And such a sense might make her  
 long for court  
 And all its perilous glories: and I  
 thought,  
 That could I somehow prove such  
 force in her  
 Link'd with such love for me, that at  
 a word  
 (No reason given her) she could cast  
 aside  
 A splendor dear to women, new to  
 her,  
 And therefore dearer; or if not so  
 new,  
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the  
 power  
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt  
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and  
 flows,  
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I  
 do rest,  
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,  
 That never shadow of mistrust can  
 cross  
 Between us. Grant me pardon for  
 my thoughts:  
 And for my strange petition I will  
 make  
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,  
 When your fair child shall wear your  
 costly gift  
 Beside your own warm hearth, with,  
 on her knees,  
 Who knows? another gift of the high  
 God,  
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to  
 lisp you thanks."

He spoke: the mother smiled, but  
 half in tears,  
 Then brought a mantle down and  
 wrapt her in it,  
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and they  
 rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere  
 had climb'd  
 The giant tower, from whose high  
 crest, they say,  
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,  
 And white sails flying on the yellow  
 sea:

But not to goodly hill or yellow sea  
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the  
 vale of Usk,  
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them  
 come;  
 And then descending met them at the  
 gates,  
 Embraced her with all welcome as a  
 friend,  
 And did her honor as the Prince's  
 bride,  
 And clothed her for her bridals like  
 the sun;  
 And all that week was old Caerleon  
 gay,  
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high  
 saint,  
 They twain were wedded with all  
 ceremony.

And this was on the last year's  
 Whitsuntide.  
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,  
 Remembering how first he came on  
 her,  
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved  
 her in it,  
 And all her foolish fears about the  
 dress,  
 And all his journey toward her, as  
 himself  
 Had told her, and their coming to the  
 court.

And now this morning when he said  
 to her,  
 "Put on your worst and meanest  
 dress," she found  
 And took it, and array'd herself  
 therein.

## II.

O purblind race of miserable men,  
 How many among us at this very hour  
 Do forge a life-long trouble for our-  
 selves,  
 By taking true for false, or false for  
 true;  
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this  
 world

Groping, how many, until we pass and reach  
That other, where we see as we are seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issuing forth  
That morning, when they both had got to horse,  
Perhaps because he loved her passionately,  
And felt that tempest brooding round his heart,  
Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce  
Upon a head so dear in thunder, said: "Not at my side. I charge thee ride before,  
Ever a good way on before; and this I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,  
Whatever happens, not to speak to me,  
No, not a word!" and Enid was aghast;  
And forth they rode, but scarce three paces on,  
When crying out, "Effeminate as I am,  
I will not fight my way with gilded arms,  
All shall be iron;" he loosed a mighty purse,  
Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward the squire.  
So the last sight that Enid had of home  
Was all the marble threshold flashing, strown  
With gold and scatter'd coinage, and the squire  
Chafing his shoulder: then he cried again,  
"To the wilds!" and Enid leading down the tracks  
Thro' which he bade her lead him on, they past  
The marches, and by bandit-haunted holds,  
Gray swamps and pools, waste places of the hern,  
And wildernesses, perilous paths, they rode:

Round was their pace at first, but slacken'd soon:  
A stranger meeting them had surely thought  
They rode so slowly and they look'd so pale,  
That each had suffer'd some exceeding wrong.  
For he was ever saying to himself, "O I that wasted time to tend upon her,  
To compass her with sweet observances,  
To dress her beautifully and keep her true" —  
And there he broke the sentence in his heart  
Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue  
May break it, when his passion masters him.  
And she was ever praying the sweet heavens  
To save her dear lord whole from any wound.  
And ever in her mind she cast about  
For that unnoticed failing in herself,  
Which made him look so cloudy and so cold;  
Till the great plover's human whistle amazed  
Her heart, and glancing round the waste she fear'd  
In every wavering brake an ambuscade.  
Then thought again, "If there be such in me,  
I might amend it by the grace of Heaven,  
If he would only speak and tell me of it."

But when the fourth part of the day was gone,  
Then Enid was aware of three tall knights  
On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a rock  
In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs all;  
And heard one crying to his fellow,  
"Look.

Here comes a laggard hanging down  
his head,  
Who seems no bolder than a beaten  
hound;  
Come, we will slay him and will have  
his horse  
And armor, and his damsel shall be  
ours."

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,  
and said:  
"I will go back a little to my lord,  
And I will tell him all their caitiff  
talk;  
For, be he wroth even to slaying me,  
Far liefer by his dear hand had I die,  
Than that my lord should suffer loss  
or shame."

Then she went back some paces of  
return,  
Met his full frown timidly firm, and  
said;  
"My lord, I saw three bandits by the  
rock  
Waiting to fall on you, and heard  
them boast  
That they would slay you, and possess  
your horse  
And armor, and your damsel should  
be theirs."

He made a wrathful answer: "Did  
I wish  
Your warning or your silence? one  
command  
I laid upon you, not to speak to me,  
And thus ye keep it! Well then, look  
— for now,  
Whether ye wish me victory or defeat,  
Long for my life, or hunger for my  
death,  
Yourself shall see my vigor is not  
lost."

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-  
ful,  
And down upon him bare the bandit  
three.  
And at the midmost charging, Prince  
Geraint

Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his  
breast  
And out beyond; and then against his  
brace  
Of comrades, each of whom had  
broken on him  
A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,  
Swung from his brand a windy buffet,  
out  
Once, twice, to right, to left, and  
stunn'd the twain  
Or slew them, and dismounting like a  
man  
That skins the wild beast after slaying  
him,  
Strip'd from the three dead wolves of  
woman born  
The three gay suits of armor which  
they wore,  
And let the bodies lie, but bound the  
suits  
Of armor on their horses, each on each,  
And tied the bridle-reins of all the  
three  
Together, and said to her, "Drive  
them on  
Before you;" and she drove them  
thro' the waste.

He follow'd nearer: ruth began to  
work  
Against his anger in him, while he  
watch'd  
The being he loved best in all the  
world,  
With difficulty in mild obedience  
Driving them on: he fain had spoken  
to her,  
And loosed in words of sudden fire the  
wrath  
And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him  
all within;  
But evermore it seem'd an easier thing  
At once without remorse to strike her  
dead,  
Than to cry "Halt," and to her own  
bright face  
Accuse her of the least immodesty:  
And thus tongue-tied, it made him  
wroth the more  
That she *could* speak whom his own  
ear had heard

Call herself false : and suffering thus  
 he made  
 Minutes an age : but in scarce longer  
 time  
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,  
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,  
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, be-  
 hold  
 In the first shallow shade of a deep  
 wood,  
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted  
 oaks,  
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly  
 arm'd,  
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than  
 her lord,  
 And shook her pulses, crying, " Look,  
 a prize !  
 Three horses and three goodly suits  
 of arms,  
 And all in charge of whom ? a girl :  
 set on."  
 " Nay," said the second, " yonder  
 comes a knight."  
 The third, " A craven ; how he hangs  
 his head."  
 The giant answer'd merrily, " Yea, but  
 one ?  
 Wait here, and when he passes fall  
 upon him."

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and  
 said,  
 " I will abide the coming of my lord,  
 And I will tell him all their villany.  
 My lord is weary with the fight before,  
 And they will fall upon him unawares.  
 I needs must disobey him for his  
 good ;  
 How should I dare obey him to his  
 harm ?  
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill  
 me for it,  
 I save a life dearer to me than mine."

And she abode his coming, and said  
 to him  
 With timid firmness, " Have I leave  
 to speak ?"  
 He said, " Ye take it, speaking," and  
 she spoke.

" There lurk three villains yonder  
 in the wood,  
 And each of them is wholly arm'd,  
 and one  
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and they  
 say  
 That they will fall upon you while ye  
 pass."

To which he flung a wrathful an-  
 swer back :  
 " And if there were an hundred in the  
 wood,  
 And every man were larger-limb'd  
 than I,  
 And all at once should sally out upon  
 me,  
 I swear it would not ruffle me so much  
 As yon that not obey me. Stand  
 aside,  
 And if I fall, cleave to the better  
 man."

And Enid stood aside to wait the  
 event,  
 Not dare to watch the combat, only  
 breathe  
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a  
 breath.  
 And he, she dreaded most, bare down  
 upon him.  
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ; but  
 Geraint's,  
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,  
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corse-  
 let home,  
 And then brake short, and down his  
 enemy roll'd,  
 And there lay still ; as he that tells  
 the tale  
 Saw once a great piece of a promon-  
 tory,  
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide  
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls  
 to the beach,  
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling  
 grew :  
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven  
 pair  
 Of comrades making slower at the  
 Prince,

When now they saw their bulwark  
 fallen, stood;  
 On whom the victor, to confound them  
 more,  
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry; for  
 as one,  
 That listens near a torrent mountain-  
 brook,  
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract  
 hears  
 The drumming thunder of the huger  
 fall  
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to  
 hear  
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by  
 it,  
 And foemen scared, like that false  
 pair who turn'd  
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death  
 Themselves had wrought on many an  
 innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,  
 pick'd the lance  
 That pleased him best, and drew from  
 those dead wolves  
 Their three gay suits of armor, each  
 from each,  
 And bound them on their horses, each  
 on each,  
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the  
 three  
 Together, and said to her, "Drive  
 them on  
 Before you," and she drove them thro'  
 the wood.

He follow'd nearer still: the pain  
 she had  
 To keep them in the wild ways of the  
 wood,  
 Two sets of three laden with jingling  
 arms,  
 Together, served a little to disedge  
 The sharpness of that pain about her  
 heart:  
 And they themselves, like creatures  
 gently born  
 But into bad hands fall'n, and now so  
 long  
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light  
 ears, and felt

Her low firm voice and tender govern-  
 ment.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood  
 they past,  
 And issuing under open heavens be-  
 held  
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,  
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike,  
 chased  
 In the brown wild, and mowers mow-  
 ing in it:  
 And down a rocky pathway from the  
 place  
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that  
 in his hand  
 Bare victual for the mowers: and  
 Geraint  
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale:  
 Then, moving downward to the  
 meadow ground,  
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came  
 by him, said,  
 "Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so  
 faint."  
 "Yea, willingly," replied the youth;  
 "and thou,  
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is  
 coarse,  
 And only meet for mowers;" then set  
 down  
 His basket, and dismounting on the  
 sward  
 They let the horses graze, and ate  
 themselves.  
 And Enid took a little delicately,  
 Less having stomach for it than desire  
 To close with her lord's pleasure; but  
 Geraint  
 Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,  
 And when he found all empty, was  
 amazed;  
 And, "Boy," said he, "I have eaten  
 all, but take  
 A horse and arms for guerdon; choose  
 the best."  
 He, reddening in extremity of delight,  
 "My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold."  
 "Ye will be all the wealthier," cried  
 the Prince.  
 "I take it as free gift, then," said the  
 boy,



"Not guerdon; for myself can easily,  
While your good damsel rests, return,  
and fetch

Fresh victual for these mowers of our  
Earl;

For these are his, and all the field is  
his,

• And I myself am his; and I will tell  
him

How great a man thou art: he loves  
to know

When men of mark are in his terri-  
tory:

And he will have thee to his palace  
here,

And serve thee costlier than with  
mowers' fare."

Then said Geraint, "I wish no better  
fare:

I never ate with angrier appetite  
Than when I left your mowers dinner-  
less.

And into no Earl's palace will I go.  
I know, God knows, too much of  
palaces!

And if he want me, let him come to  
me.

But hire us some fair chamber for the  
night,

And stalling for the horses, and re-  
turn

With victual for these men, and let  
us know."

"Yea, my kind lord," said the glad  
youth, and went,

Held his head high, and thought him-  
self a knight,

And up the rocky pathway disap-  
pear'd,

Leading the horse, and they were left  
alone.

But when the Prince had brought  
his errant eyes

Home from the rock, sideways he let  
them glance

At Enid, where she droopt: his own  
false doom,

That shadow of mistrust should never  
cross

Betwixt them, came upon him, and he  
sigh'd;

Then with another humorous ruth re-  
mark'd

The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,  
And watch'd the sun blaze on the

turning scythe,  
And after nodded sleepily in the  
heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd  
hall,

And all the windy clamor of the daws  
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the

grass  
There growing longest by the mead-  
ow's edge,

And into many a listless annulet,  
Now over, now beneath her marriage

ring,  
Wove and unwove it, till the boy re-  
turn'd

And told them of a chamber, and they  
went;

Where, after saying to her, "If ye  
will,

Call for the woman of the house," to  
which

She answer'd, "Thanks, my lord;"  
the two remain'd

Apart by all the chamber's width, and  
mute

As creatures voiceless thro' the fault  
of birth,

Or two wild men supporters of a  
shield,

Painted, who stare at open space, nor  
glance

The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along  
the street,

And heel against the pavement echo-  
ing, burst

Their drowse; and either started while  
the door,

Push'd from without, drave backward  
to the wall,

And midmost of a rout of roisterers,  
Femininely fair and dissolately pale,

Her suitor in old years before Geraint,  
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,

Limours.

He moving up with pliant courtliness,  
 Greeted Geraint full face, but stealthily,  
 In the mid-warmth of welcome and graspt hand,  
 Found Enid with the corner of his eye,  
 And knew her sitting sad and solitary.  
 Then cried Geraint for wine and goodly cheer  
 To feed the sudden guest, and sumptuously  
 According to his fashion, hade the host  
 Call in what men soever were his friends,  
 And feast with these in honor of their Earl;  
 "And care not for the cost; the cost is mine."

And wine and food were brought, and Earl Limours  
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and told  
 Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,  
 And made it of two colors; for his talk,  
 When wine and free companions kindled him,  
 Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem  
 Of fifty facets; thus he moved the Prince  
 To laughter and his comrades to applause.  
 Then, when the Prince was merry, ask'd Limours,  
 "Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak  
 To your good damsel there who sits apart,  
 And seems so lonely?" "My free leave," he said;  
 "Get her to speak: she doth not speak to me."  
 Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,  
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,

Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,  
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

"Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,  
 Enid, my early and my only love,  
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me wild —

What chance is this? how is it I see you here?

Ye are in my power at last, are in my power.

Yet fear me not: I call mine own self wild,

But keep a touch of sweet civility  
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.

I thought, but that your father came between,

In former days you saw me favorably.  
 And if it were so do not keep it back:  
 Make me a little happier: let me know it:

Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?

Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,  
 Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,  
 You come with no attendance, page or maid,

To serve you — doth he love you as of old?

For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know  
 Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,

They would not make them laughable in all eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks

Your story, that this man loves you, no more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now:  
 A common chance — right well I know it — pall'd —

For I know men: nor will ye win him back,

For the man's love once gone never returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old ;  
With more exceeding passion than of  
old :

Good, speak the word : my followers  
ring him round :

He sits unarm'd ; I hold a finger up ;  
They understand : nay ; I do not mean  
blood :

Nor need ye look so scared at what I  
say :

My malice is no deeper than a moat,  
No stronger than a wall : there is the  
keep ;

He shall not cross us more ; speak but  
the word :

Or speak it not ; but then by Him that  
made me

The one true lover whom you ever  
own'd,

I will make use of all the power I have.  
O pardon me ! the madness of that  
hour,

When first I parted from thee, moves  
me yet."

At this the tender sound of his own  
voice

And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it  
Made his eye moist ; but Enid fear'd  
his eyes,

Moist as they were, wine-heated from  
the feast ;

And answer'd with such craft as  
women use,

Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a  
chance

That breaks upon them perilously,  
and said :

"Earl, if you love me as in former  
years,

And do not practise on me, come with  
morn,

And snatch me from him as by  
violence ;

Leave me to-night : I am weary to the  
death."

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-  
dish'd plume

Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-  
amorous Earl,

And the stout Prince bade him a loud  
good-night.

He moving homeward babbled to his  
men,

How Enid never loved a man but him,  
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her  
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince  
Geraint,

Debating his command of silence  
given,

And that she now perforce must vio-  
late it,

Held commune with herself, and while  
she held

He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart  
To wake him, but hung o'er him,  
wholly pleased

To find him yet unwounded after fight,  
And hear him breathing low and  
equally.

Anon she rose, and stepping lightly,  
heap'd

The pieces of his armor in one place,  
All to be there against a sudden need ;  
Then dozed awhile herself, but over-  
toil'd

By that day's grief and travel, ever-  
more

Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,  
and then

Went slipping down horrible precipices,

And strongly striking out her limbs  
awoke ;

Then thought she heard the wild Earl  
at the door,

With all his rout of random followers,  
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-  
moning her ;

Which was the red cock shouting to  
the light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy  
world,

And glimmer'd on his armor in the  
room.

And once again she rose to look at it,  
But touch'd it unawares : jangling,  
the casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at  
her.

Then breaking his command of silence  
 given,  
 She told him all that Earl Limours  
 had said,  
 Except the passage that he loved her  
 not;  
 Nor left untold the craft herself had  
 used;  
 But ended with apology so sweet,  
 Low-spoken, and of so few words, and  
 seem'd  
 So justified by that necessity,  
 That tho' he thought "was it for him  
 she wept  
 In Devon?" he but gave a wrathful  
 groan,  
 Saying, "Your sweet faces make good  
 fellows fools  
 And traitors. Call the host and bid  
 him bring  
 Charger and palfrey." So she glided  
 out  
 Among the heavy breathings of the  
 house,  
 And like a household Spirit at the  
 walls  
 Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and  
 return'd:  
 Then tending her rough lord, tho' all  
 unask'd,  
 In silence, did him service as a squire;  
 Till issuing arm'd he found the host  
 and cried,  
 "Thy reckoning, friend?" and ere he  
 learnt it, "Take  
 Five horses and their armors"; and  
 the host  
 Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,  
 "My lord, I scarce have spent the  
 worth of one!"  
 "Ye will be all the wealthier," said  
 the Prince,  
 And then to Enid, "Forward! and  
 to-day  
 I charge you, Enid, more especially,  
 What thing soever ye may hear, or see,  
 Or fancy (tho' I count it of small use  
 To charge you) that ye speak not but  
 obey."

And Enid answer'd, "Yea, my lord,  
 I know

Your wish, and would obey; but rid-  
 ing first,  
 I hear the violent threats you do not  
 hear,  
 I see the danger which you cannot see:  
 Then not to give you warning, that  
 seems hard;  
 Almost beyond me: yet I would  
 obey."

"Yea so," said he, "do it: be not  
 too wise;  
 Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,  
 Not all mismated with a yawning  
 clown,  
 But one with arms to guard his head  
 and yours,  
 With eyes to find you out however  
 far,  
 And ears to hear you even in his  
 dreams."

With that he turn'd and look'd as  
 keenly at her  
 As careful robins eye the delver's  
 toil;  
 And that within her, which a wanton  
 fool,  
 Or hasty judger would have call'd her  
 guilt,  
 Made her cheek burn and either eye-  
 lid fall.  
 And Geraint look'd and was not satis-  
 fied.

Then forward by a way which,  
 beaten broad,  
 Led from the territory of false  
 Limours  
 To the waste earldom of another earl,  
 Doorm, whom his shaking vassals  
 call'd the Bull,  
 Went Enid with her sullen follower  
 on.  
 Once she look'd back, and when she  
 saw him ride  
 More near by many a rood than yes-  
 termorn,  
 It wellnigh made her cheerful; till  
 Geraint  
 Waving an angry hand as who should  
 say

"Yewatch me," sadden'd all her heart  
 again.  
 But while the sun yet beat a dewy  
 blade,  
 The sound of many a heavily-gallop-  
 ing hoof  
 Smote on her ear, and turning round  
 she saw  
 Dust, and the points of lances bicker  
 in it.  
 Then not to disobey her lord's behest,  
 And yet to give him warning, for he  
 rode  
 As if he heard not, moving back she  
 held  
 Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.  
 At which the warrior in his obstinacy,  
 Because she kept the letter of his  
 word,  
 Was in a manner pleased, and turning,  
 stood.  
 And in the moment after, wild  
 Limours,  
 Borne on a black horse, like a thun-  
 der-cloud  
 Whose skirts are loosen'd by the  
 breaking storm,  
 Half ridden off with by the thing be  
 rode,  
 And all in passion uttering a dry  
 shriek,  
 Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with  
 him, and bore  
 Down by the length of lance and arm  
 beyond  
 The crupper, and so left him stunn'd  
 or dead,  
 And overthrew the next that follow'd  
 him,  
 And blindly rush'd on all the rout  
 behind.  
 But at the flash and motion of the  
 man  
 They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a  
 shoal  
 Of darting fish, that on a summer  
 morn  
 Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot  
 Come slipping o'er their shadows on  
 the sand,  
 But if a man who stands upon the  
 brink

But lift a shining hand against the  
 sun,  
 There is not left the twinkle of a fin  
 Betwixt the cressy islets white in  
 flower;  
 So, scared but at the motion of the  
 man,  
 Fled all the boon companions of the  
 Earl,  
 And left him lying in the public way;  
 So vanish friendships only made in  
 wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled  
 Geraint,  
 Who saw the chargers of the two that  
 fell  
 Start from their fallen lords, and  
 wildly fly,  
 Mixt with the flyers. "Horse and  
 man," he said,  
 "All of one mind and all right-honest  
 friends!  
 Not a hoof left: and I methinks till  
 now  
 Was honest — paid with horses and  
 with arms;  
 I cannot steal or plunder, no nor beg:  
 And so what say ye, shall we strip  
 him there  
 Your lover? has your palfrey heart  
 enough  
 To bear his armor? shall we fast, or  
 dine?  
 No? — then do thou, being right hon-  
 est, pray  
 That we may meet the horsemen of  
 Earl Doorm,  
 I too would still be honest." Thus  
 he said:  
 And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,  
 And answering not a word, she led the  
 way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful  
 loss  
 Falls in a far land and he knows it  
 not,  
 But coming back he learns it, and the  
 loss  
 So pains him that he sickens nigh to  
 death;

So fared it with Geraint, who being  
 prick'd  
 In combat with the follower of  
 Limours,  
 Bled underneath his armor secretly,  
 And so rode on, nor told his gentle  
 wife  
 What ail'd him, hardly knowing it  
 himself,  
 Till his eye darken'd and his helmet  
 wagg'd ;  
 And at a sudden swerving of the road,  
 Tho' happily down on a bank of grass,  
 The Prince, without a word, from his  
 horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his  
 fall,  
 Suddenly came, and at his side all  
 pale  
 Dismounting, loosed the fastenings of  
 his arms,  
 Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue  
 eye  
 Moistened, till she had lighted on his  
 wound,  
 And tearing off her veil of faded silk  
 Had bared her forehead to the blister-  
 ing sun,  
 And swathed the hurt that drain'd her  
 dear lord's life.  
 Then after all was done that hand  
 could do,  
 She rested, and her desolation came  
 Upon her, and she wept beside the  
 way.

And many past, but none regarded  
 her,  
 For in that realm of lawless turbu-  
 lence,  
 A woman weeping for her murder'd  
 mate  
 Was cared as much for as a summer  
 shower :  
 One took him for a victim of Earl  
 Doorm,  
 Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on  
 him :  
 Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,  
 Rode on a mission to the bandit Earl ;

Half whistling and half singing a  
 coarse song,  
 He drove the dust against her veiless  
 eyes :  
 Another, flying from the wrath of  
 Doorm  
 Before an ever-fancied arrow, made  
 The long way smoke beneath him in  
 his fear ;  
 At which her palfrey whinnying lifted  
 heel  
 And scour'd into the coppices and was  
 lost,  
 While the great charger stood, grieved  
 like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge  
 Earl Doorm,  
 Broad-faced with under-fringe of rus-  
 set beard,  
 Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of  
 prey,  
 Came riding with a hundred lances  
 up ;  
 But ere he came, like one that hails a  
 ship,  
 Cried out with a big voice, " What, is  
 he dead ? "  
 " No, no, not dead ! " she answer'd in  
 all haste.  
 " Would some of your kind people  
 take him up,  
 And bear him hence out of this cruel  
 sun ?  
 Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not  
 dead."

Then said Earl Doorm : " Well, if  
 he be not dead,  
 Why wail ye for him thus ? ye seem a  
 child.  
 And be he dead, I count you for a  
 fool ;  
 Your wailing will not quicken him :  
 dead or not,  
 Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.  
 Yet, since the face *is* comely — some  
 of you,  
 Here, take him up, and bear him to  
 our hall :  
 An if he live, we will have him of our  
 band ;

And if he die, why earth has earth  
 enough  
 To hide him. See ye take the charger  
 too,  
 A noble one."

He spake, and past away,  
 But left two brawny spearmen, who  
 advanced,  
 Each growling like a dog, when his  
 good bone  
 Seems to be pluck'd at by the village  
 boys  
 Who love to vex him eating, and he  
 fears  
 To lose his bone, and lays his foot  
 upon it,  
 Gnawing and growling: so the ruffians  
 growl'd,  
 Fearing to lose, and all for a dead  
 man,  
 Their chance of booty from the morn-  
 ing's raid,  
 Yet raised and laid him on a litter-  
 bier,  
 Such as they brought upon their forays  
 out  
 For those that might be wounded; laid  
 him on it  
 All in the hollow of his shield, and  
 took  
 And bore him to the naked hall of  
 Doorm,  
 (His gentle charger following him  
 unled)  
 And cast him and the bier in which  
 he lay  
 Down on an oaken settle in the  
 hall,  
 And then departed, hot in haste to  
 join  
 Their luckier mates, but growling as  
 before,  
 And cursing their lost time, and the  
 dead man,  
 And their own Earl, and their own  
 souls, and her.  
 They might as well have blest her:  
 she was deaf  
 To blessing or to cursing save from  
 one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her  
 lord,  
 There in the naked hall, propping his  
 head,  
 And chafing his pale hands, and call-  
 ing to him.  
 Till at the last he waken'd from his  
 swoon,  
 And found his own dear bride prop-  
 ping his head,  
 And chafing his faint hands, and  
 calling to him;  
 And felt the warm tears falling on his  
 face;  
 And said to his own heart, "She weeps  
 for me":  
 And yet lay still, and feign'd himself  
 as dead,  
 That he might prove her to the utter-  
 most,  
 And say to his own heart, "She weeps  
 for me."

But in the falling afternoon return'd  
 The huge Earl Doorm with plunder  
 to the hall.  
 His lusty spearmen follow'd him with  
 noise:  
 Each hurling down a heap of things  
 that rang  
 Against the pavement, cast his lance  
 aside,  
 And doff'd his helm: and then there  
 flutter'd in,  
 Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated  
 eyes,  
 A tribe of women, dress'd in many  
 hues,  
 And mingled with the spearmen: and  
 Earl Doorm  
 Struck with a knife's haft hard  
 against the board,  
 And call'd for flesh and wine to feed  
 his spears.  
 And men brought in whole hogs and  
 quarter beeves,  
 And all the hall was dim with steam  
 of flesh:  
 And none spake word, but all sat  
 down at once,  
 And ate with tumult in the naked  
 hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear  
them feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,  
To shun the wild ways of the lawless  
tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all  
he would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and  
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it.  
Then he remember'd her, and how she  
wept;

And out of her there came a power  
upon him;

And rising on the sudden he said,  
"Eat!

I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see  
you weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had  
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would  
weep for me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew  
breath

Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some color in your  
cheek,

There is not one among my gentle-  
women

Were fit to wear your slipper for a  
glove.

But listen to me, and by me be  
ruled,

And I will do the thing I have not  
done,

For ye shall share my earldom with  
me, girl,

And we will live like two birds in one  
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all  
fields,

For I compel all creatures to my will."

He spoke: the brawny spearman  
let his cheek

Bulge with the unswallow'd piece, and  
turning stared;

While some, whose souls the old ser-  
pent long had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the  
wither'd leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at  
other's ear

What shall not be recorded — women  
they,

Women, or what had been those  
gracious things,

But now desired the humbling of their  
best,

Yea, would have help'd him to it: and  
all at once

They hated her, who took no thought,  
of them,

But answer'd in low voice, her meek  
head yet

Drooping, "I pray you of your cour-  
tesy,

He being as he is, to let me be."

She spake so low he hardly heard  
her speak,

But like a mighty patron, satisfied  
With what himself had done so gra-  
ciously,

Assumed that she had thank'd him,  
adding, "Yea,

Eat and be glad, for I account you  
mine."

She answer'd meekly, "How should  
I be glad

Henceforth in all the world at any-  
thing,

Until my lord arise and look upon  
me?"

Here the huge Earl cried out upon  
her talk,

As all but empty heart and weariness  
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized  
on her,

And bare her by main violence to the  
board,

And thrust the dish before her, cry-  
ing, "Eat."

"No, no," said Enid, vext, "I will  
not eat

Till yonder man upon the bier arise,  
And eat with me." "Drink, then,"  
he answer'd. "Here!"

(And fill'd a horn with wine and held  
it to her.)



“Lo! I, myself, when flush’d with  
fight, or hot,  
God’s curse, with anger — often I  
myself,  
Before I well have drunken, scarce  
can eat:  
Drink therefore and the wine will  
change your will.”

“Not so,” she cried, “By Heaven, I  
will not drink  
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do  
it,  
And drink with me; and if he rise no  
more,  
I will not look at wine until I die.”

At this he turn’d all red and paced  
his hall,  
Now gnaw’d his under, now his upper  
lip,  
And coming up close to her, said at  
last:  
“Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtes-  
ies,  
Take warning: yonder man is surely  
dead;  
And I compel all creatures to my  
will.  
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore  
wait for one,  
Who put your beauty to this flout and  
scorn  
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am  
I,  
Beholding how ye butt against my  
wish,  
That I forbear you thus: cross me  
no more.  
At least put off to please me this poor  
gown,  
This silken rag, this beggar-woman’s  
weed:  
I love that beauty should go beauti-  
fully:  
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,  
How gay, how suited to the house of  
one  
Who loves that beauty should go  
beautifully?  
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this:  
obey.”

He spoke, and one among his gen-  
tle women  
Display’d a splendid silk of foreign  
loom,  
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely  
blue  
Play’d into green, and thicker down  
the front  
With jewels than the sward with  
drops of dew,  
When all night long a cloud clings  
to the hill,  
And with the dawn ascending lets the  
day  
Strike where it clung: so thickly  
shone the gems.

But Enid answer’d, harder to be  
moved  
Thau hardest tyrants in their day of  
power,  
With life-long injuries burning un-  
avenged,  
And now their hour has come; and  
Enid said:

“In this poor gown my dear lord  
found me first,  
And loved me serving in my father’s  
hall:  
In this poor gowu I rode with him to  
court,  
And there the Queen array’d me like  
the sun:  
In this poor gown he bade me clothe  
myself,  
When now we rode upon this fatal  
quest  
Of honor, where no honor can be  
gain’d:  
And this poor gown I will not cast  
aside  
Until himself arise a living man,  
And bid me cast it. I have griefs  
enough:  
Pray you be gentle, pray you let me  
be:  
I never loved, can never love but him:  
Yea, God, I pray you of your gentle-  
ness,  
He being as he is, to let me be.”

Then strode the brute Earl up and  
down his hall,  
And took his russet beard between his  
teeth ;  
Last, coming up quite close, and in his  
mood  
Crying, "I count it of no more avail,  
Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with  
you ;  
Take my salute," unknighly with flat  
hand,  
However lightly, smote her on the  
cheek.

Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,  
And since she thought, "He had not  
dared to do it,  
Except he surely knew my lord was  
dead,"  
Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter  
cry,  
As of a wild thing taken in the trap,  
Which sees the trapper coming thro'  
the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at  
his sword,  
(It lay beside him in the hollow  
shield),  
Made but a single bound, and with a  
sweep of it  
Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like  
a ball  
The russet-bearded head roll'd on the  
floor.  
So died Earl Doorm by him he counted  
dead.  
And all the men and women in the  
hall  
Rose when they saw the dead man  
rise, and fled  
Yelling as from a spectre, and the two  
Were left alone together, and he said :

"Enid, I have used you worse than  
that dead man ;  
Done you more wrong : we-both have  
undergone  
That trouble which has left me thrice  
your own :  
Henceforward I will rather die than  
doubt.

And here I lay this penance on my-  
self,  
Not, tho' mine own ears heard you  
yesternorn —  
You thought me sleeping, but I heard  
you say,  
I heard you say, that you were no true  
wife :  
I swear I will not ask your meaning  
in it :  
I do believe yourself against yourself,  
And will henceforward rather die than  
doubt."

And Enid could not say one tender  
word,  
She felt so blunt and stupid at the  
heart :  
She only pray'd him, "Fly, they will  
return  
And slay you ; fly, your charger is  
without,  
My palfrey lost." "Then, Enid, shall  
you ride  
Behind me." "Yea," said Enid, "let  
us go."  
And moving out they found the stately  
horse,  
Who now no more a vassal to the  
thief,  
But free to stretch his limbs in lawful  
fight,  
Neigh'd with all gladness as they  
came, and stoop'd  
With a low whinny toward the pair :  
and she  
Kiss'd the white star upon his noble  
front,  
Glad also ; then Geraint upon the  
horse  
Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on  
his foot  
She set her own and climb'd ; he turn'd  
his face  
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast  
her arms  
About him, and at once they rode  
away.

And never yet, since high in Para-  
dise  
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,

Came purer pleasure unto mortal kind  
 Than lived thro' her, who in that per-  
 ilous hour  
 Put hand to hand beneath her hus-  
 band's heart,  
 And felt him hers again: she did not  
 weep,  
 But o'er her meek eyes came a happy  
 mist  
 Like that which kept the heart of  
 Eden green  
 Before the useful trouble of the rain:  
 Yet not so misty were her meek blue  
 eyes  
 As not to see before them on the path,  
 Right in the gateway of the bandit  
 hold,  
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid  
 his lance  
 In rest, and made as if to fall upon  
 him.  
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of  
 blood,  
 She, with her mind all full of what  
 had chanced,  
 Shriek'd to the stranger "Slay not a  
 dead man!"  
 "The voice of Enid," said the knight;  
 but she,  
 Beholding it was Edyrn son of Nudd,  
 Was moved so much the more, and  
 shriek'd again,  
 "O cousin, slay not him who gave you  
 life."  
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward  
 spake:  
 "My lord Geraint, I greet you with  
 all love;  
 I took you for a bandit knight of  
 Doorm;  
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon  
 him,  
 Who love you, Prince, with something  
 of the love  
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that  
 chastens us.  
 For once, when I was up so high in  
 pride  
 That I was half-way down the slope  
 to Hell,  
 By overthrowing me you threw me  
 higher.

Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table  
 Round,  
 And since I knew this Earl, when I  
 myself  
 Was half a handit in my lawless hour,  
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to  
 Doorm  
 (The King is close behind me) bidding  
 him  
 Disband himself, and scatter all his  
 powers,  
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the  
 King."

"He hears the judgment of the King  
 of kings,"  
 Cried the wan Prince; "and lo, the  
 powers of Doorm  
 Are scatter'd," and he pointed to the  
 field,  
 Where, huddled here and there on  
 mound and knoll,  
 Were men and women staring and  
 aghast,  
 While some yet fled; and then he  
 plainlier told  
 How the huge Earl lay slain within  
 his hall.  
 But when the knight besought him,  
 "Follow me,  
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's  
 own ear  
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely  
 have endured  
 Strange chances here alone;" that  
 other flush'd,  
 And hung his head, and halted in  
 reply,  
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless  
 King,  
 And after madness acted question  
 ask'd:  
 Till Edyrn crying, "If ye will not go  
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to  
 you."  
 "Enough," he said, "I follow," and  
 they went.  
 But Enid in their going had two fears,  
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the  
 field,  
 And one from Edyrn. Every now  
 and then,

When Edyrn rein'd his charger at  
her side,  
She shrank a little. In a hollow land,  
From which old fires have broken,  
men may fear  
Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,  
said :

“Fair and dear cousin, you that  
most had cause  
To fear me, fear no longer, I am  
changed.  
Yourself were first the blameless  
cause to make  
My nature's prideful sparkle in the  
blood  
Break into furious flame; being re-  
pulsed  
By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and  
wrought  
Until I overturn'd him; then set up  
(With one main purpose ever at my  
heart)  
My haughty jousts, and took a para-  
mour;  
Did her mock-honor as the fairest  
fair,  
And, toppling over all antagonism,  
So wax'd in pride, that I believed  
myself  
Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh  
mad:  
And, but for my main purpose in  
these jousts,  
I should have slain your father, seized  
yourself.  
I lived in hope that sometime you  
would come  
To these my lists with him whom best  
you loved;  
And there, poor cousin, with your  
meek blue eyes,  
The truest eyes that ever answer'd  
Heaven,  
Behold me overturn and trample on  
him.  
Then, had you cried, or knelt, or  
pray'd to me,  
I should not less have kill'd him.  
And you came,—  
But once you came,— and with your  
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved (I speak as  
one  
Speaks of a service done him) over-  
throw  
My proud self, and my purpose three  
years old,  
And set his foot upon me, and give  
me life.  
There was I broken down; there was  
I saved:  
Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating  
the life  
He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.  
And all the penance the Queen laid  
upon me  
Was but to rest awhile within her  
court;  
Where first as sullen as a beast new-  
caged,  
And waiting to be treated like a  
wolf,  
Because I knew my deeds were known,  
I found,  
Instead of scornful pity or pure scorn,  
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,  
Manners so kind, yet stately, such a  
grace  
Of tenderest courtesy, that I began  
To glance behind me at my former  
life,  
And find that it had been the wolf's  
indeed:  
And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high  
saint,  
Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,  
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle-  
ness,  
Which, when it weds with manhood,  
makes a man.  
And you were often there about the  
Queen,  
But saw me not, or mark'd not if you  
saw;  
Nor did I care or dare to speak with  
you,  
But kept myself aloof till I was  
changed;  
And fear not, cousin; I am changed  
indeed.”

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,  
Like simple noble natures, credulous

Of what they long for, good in friend  
 or foe,  
 There most in those who most have  
 done them ill.  
 And when they reach'd the camp the  
 King himself  
 Advanced to greet them, and behold-  
 ing her  
 Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a  
 word,  
 But went apart with Edyrn, whom he  
 held  
 In converse for a little, and return'd,  
 And, gravely smiling, lifte<sup>d</sup> her from  
 horse,  
 And kiss'd her with all pureness,  
 brother-like,  
 And show'd an empty tent allotted  
 her,  
 And glancing for a minute, till he saw  
 her  
 Pass into it, turn'd to the Prince, and  
 said:

“Prince, when of late ye pray'd me  
 for my leave  
 To move to your own land, and there  
 defend  
 Your marches, I was prick'd with  
 some reproof,  
 As one that let foul wrong stagnate  
 and be,  
 By having look'd too much thro' alien  
 eyes,  
 And wrought too long with delegated  
 hands,  
 Not used mine own: but now behold  
 me come  
 To cleanse this common sewer of all  
 my realm,  
 With Edyrn and with others: have  
 ye look'd  
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly  
 changed?  
 This work of his is great and wonder-  
 ful.  
 His very face with change of heart is  
 changed,  
 The world will not believe a man  
 repents:  
 And this wise world of ours is mainly  
 right.

Full seldom doth a man repent, or use  
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious  
 quitch  
 Of blood and custom wholly out of  
 him,  
 And make all clean, and plant himself  
 afresh.  
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his  
 heart  
 As I will weed this land before I go.  
 I, therefore, made him of our Table  
 Round,  
 Not rashly, but have proved him  
 everyway  
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,  
 Sanest and most obedient: and indeed  
 This work of Edyrn wrought upon  
 himself  
 After a life of violence, seems to me  
 A thousand-fold more great and won-  
 derful  
 Than if some knight of mine, risking  
 his life,  
 My subject with my subjects under  
 him,  
 Should make an onslaught single on  
 a realm  
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by  
 one,  
 And were himself nigh wounded to  
 the death.”

So spake the King; low bow'd the  
 Prince, and felt  
 His work was neither great nor won-  
 derful,  
 And past to Enid's tent; and thither  
 came  
 The King's own leech to look into his  
 hurt;  
 And Enid tended on him there; and  
 there  
 Her constant motion round him, and  
 the breath  
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over  
 him,  
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his  
 blood  
 With deeper and with ever deeper  
 love,  
 As the south-west that blowing Bell  
 lake

Fills all the sacred Dee. So past the days.

But while Geraint lay healing of his hurt,  
The blameless King went forth and cast his eyes  
On each of all whom Uther left in charge  
Long since, to guard the justice of the King:  
He look'd and found them wanting; and as now  
Men weed the white horse on the Berkshire hills  
To keep him bright and clean as heretofore,  
He rooted out the slothful officer  
Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd at wrong,  
And in their chairs set up a stronger race  
With hearts and hands, and sent a thousand men  
To till the wastes, and moving everywhere  
Clear'd the dark places and let in the law,  
And broke the bandit holds and cleansed the land.

Then, when Geraint was whole again, they past  
With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.  
There the great Queen once more embraced her friend,  
And clothed her in apparel like the day.  
And tho' Geraint could never take again  
That comfort from their converse which he took  
Before the Queen's fair name was breathed upon,  
He rested well content that all was well.  
Thence after tarrying for a space they rode,  
And fifty knights rode with them to the shores  
Of Severn, and they past to their own land.

And there he kept the justice of the King  
So vigorously yet mildly, that all hearts  
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper died:  
And being ever foremost in the chase,  
And victor at the tilt and tournament,  
They call'd him the great Prince and man of men.  
But Enid, whom the ladies loved to call  
Enid the Fair, a grateful people named  
Enid the Good; and in their halls arose  
The cry of children, Enids and Geraints  
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her more,  
But rested in her fealty, till he crown'd  
A happy life with a fair death, and fell  
Against the heathen of the Northern Sea  
In battle, fighting for the blameless King.

#### MERLIN AND VIVIEN.

A STORM was coming, but the winds were still,  
And in the wild woods of Broceliande,  
Before an oak, so hollow, huge and old  
It look'd a tower of ruin'd masonwork,  
At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

Whence came she? One that bare in bitter grudge  
The scorn of Arthur and his Table, Mark  
The Cornish King, had heard a wandering voice,  
A minstrel of Caerleon by strong storm  
Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say  
That out of naked knightlike purity  
Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried girl

But the great Queen herself, fought  
 in her name,  
 Sware by her — vows like theirs, that  
 high in heaven  
 Love most, but neither marry, nor are  
 given  
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's re-  
 port.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien  
 sweetly said  
 (She sat beside the banquet nearest  
 Mark),  
 "And is the fair example follow'd,  
 Sir,  
 In Arthur's household?" — answer'd  
 innocently :

"Ay, by some few — ay, truly —  
 youths that hold  
 It more beseems the perfect virgin  
 knight  
 To worship woman as true wife be-  
 yond  
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden  
 girl.  
 They place their pride in Lancelot and  
 the Queen.  
 So passionate for an utter purity  
 Beyond the limit of their bond, are  
 these,  
 For Arthur bound them not to single-  
 ness.  
 Brave hearts and clean! and yet —  
 God guide them — young."

Then Mark was half in heart to  
 hurl his cup  
 Straight at the speaker, but forbore:  
 he rose  
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-  
 ing him,  
 Turn'd to her: "Here are snakes  
 within the grass;  
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye  
 fear  
 The monkish manhood, and the mask  
 of pure  
 Worn by this court, can stir them till  
 they sting."

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-  
 fully,  
 "Why fear? because that foster'd at  
 thy court  
 I savor of thy — virtues? fear them?  
 no.  
 As Love, if Love be perfect, casts out  
 fear,  
 So Hate, if Hate be perfect, casts out  
 fear.  
 My father died in battle against the  
 King,  
 My mother on his corpse in open field;  
 She bore me there, for born from  
 death was I  
 Among the dead and sown upon the  
 wind —  
 And then on thee! and shown the  
 truth betimes,  
 That old true filth, and bottom of the  
 well,  
 Where Truth is hidden. Gracious  
 lessons thine  
 And maxims of the mud! 'This  
 Arthur pure!  
 Great Nature thro' the flesh herself  
 hath made  
 Gives him the lie! There is no being  
 pure,  
 My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the  
 same?' —  
 If I were Arthur, I would have thy  
 blood.  
 Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring  
 thee back,  
 When I have ferreted out their bur-  
 rowings,  
 The hearts of all this Order in mine  
 hand —  
 Ay — so that fate and craft and folly  
 close,  
 Perchance, one curl of Arthur's  
 golden beard.  
 To me this narrow grizzled fork of  
 thine  
 Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved  
 thee first,  
 That warps the wit."

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark,  
 But Vivien into Camelot stealing,  
 lodged

Low in the city, and on a festal day  
 When Guinevere was crossing the  
 great hall  
 Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,  
 and wail'd.

“Why kneel ye there? What evil  
 have ye wrought?  
 Rise!” and the damsel bidden rise  
 arose  
 And stood with folded hands and  
 downward eyes  
 Of glancing corner, and all meekly  
 said,  
 “None wrought, but suffer'd much,  
 an orphan maid!  
 My father died in battle for thy King,  
 My mother on his corpse—in open  
 field,  
 The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-  
 esse —  
 Poor wretch — no friend! — and now  
 by Mark the King  
 For that small charm of feature mine,  
 pursued —  
 If any such be mine — I fly to thee.  
 Save, save me thou — Woman of  
 women — thine  
 The wreath of beauty, thine the crown  
 of power,  
 Be thine the balm of pity, O Heaven's  
 own white  
 Earth-angel, stainless bride of stain-  
 less King —  
 Help, for he follows! take me to thy-  
 self!  
 O yield me shelter for mine innocence  
 Among thy maidens!”

Here her slow sweet eyes  
 Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,  
 rose  
 Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen  
 who stood  
 All glittering like May sunshine on  
 May leaves  
 In green and gold, and plumed with  
 green replied,  
 “Peace, child! of overpraise and over-  
 blame  
 We choose the last. Our noble  
 Arthur, him

Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear  
 and know.  
 Nay — we believe all evil of thy  
 Mark —  
 Well, we shall test thee farther; but  
 this hour  
 We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.  
 He hath given us a fair falcon which  
 he train'd;  
 We go to prove it. Bide ye here the  
 while.”

She past; and Vivien murmur'd  
 after “Go!  
 I bide the while.” Then thro' the  
 portal-arch  
 Peering askance, and muttering  
 broken-wise,  
 As one that labors with an evil dream,  
 Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to  
 horse.

“Is that the Lancelot? goodly —  
 ay, but gaunt:  
 Courteous — amends for gauntness —  
 takes her hand —  
 That glance of theirs, but for the  
 street, had been  
 A clinging kiss — how hand lingers  
 in hand!  
 Let go at last! — they ride away —  
 to hawk  
 For waterfowl. Royaller game is  
 mine.  
 For such a supersensual sensual bond  
 As that gray cricket chirpt of at our  
 hearth —  
 Touch flax with flame — a glance will  
 serve — the liars!  
 Ah little rat that borest in the dyke  
 Thy hole by night to let the boundless  
 deep  
 Down upon far-off cities while they  
 dance —  
 Or dream — of thee they dream'd not  
 — nor of me  
 These — ay, but each of either: ride,  
 and dream  
 The mortal dream that never yet was  
 mine —  
 Ride, ride and dream until ye wake —  
 to me!



Then, narrow court and lubber King,  
farewell!  
For Lancelot will be gracious to the  
rat,  
And our wise Queen, if knowing that  
I know,  
Will hate, loathe, fear — but honor  
me the more."

Yet while they rode together down  
the plain,  
Their talk was all of training, terms  
of art,  
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.  
"She is too noble" he said "to check  
at pies,  
Nor will she rake: there is no base-  
ness in her."  
Here when the Queen demanded as by  
chance  
"Know ye the stranger woman?"  
"Let her be,"  
Said Lancelot and unhooded casting  
off  
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;  
her bells,  
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they  
lifted up  
Their eager faces, wondering at the  
strength,  
Boldness and royal knighthood of the  
bird  
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.  
Many a time  
As once — of old — among the flowers  
— they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the  
Queen  
Among her damsels broidering sat,  
heard, watch'd  
And whisper'd: thro' the peaceful  
court she crept  
And whisper'd: then as Arthur in the  
highest  
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the  
lowest,  
Arriving at a time of golden rest,  
And sowing one ill hint from ear to  
ear,  
While all the heathen lay at Arthur's  
feet,

And no quest came, but all was joust  
and play,  
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and  
let her be.

Thereafter as an enemy that has left  
Death in the living waters, and with-  
drawn,  
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's  
court.

She hated all the knights, and heard  
in thought  
Their lavish comment when her name  
was named.  
For once, when Arthur walking all  
alone,  
Vext at a rumor issued from herself  
Of some corruption crept among his  
knights,  
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted  
fair,  
Would fain have wrought upon his  
cloudy mood  
With reverent eyes mock-loyal,  
shaken voice,  
And flutter'd adoration, and at last  
With dark sweet hints of some who  
prized him more  
Than who should prize him most; at  
which the King  
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone  
by:  
But one had watch'd, and had not held  
his peace:  
It made the laughter of an afternoon  
That Vivien should attempt the  
blameless King.  
And after that, she set herself to gain  
Him, the most famous man of all  
those times,  
Merlin, who knew the range of all  
their arts,  
Had built the King his havens, ships,  
and halls,  
Was also Bard, and knew the starry  
heavens;  
The people call'd him Wizard; whom  
at first  
She play'd about with slight and  
sprightly talk,

And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd  
 points  
 Of slander, glancing here and grazing  
 there;  
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,  
 the Seer  
 Would watch her at her petulance,  
 and play,  
 Ev'n when they seem'd unloveable,  
 and laugh  
 As those that watch a kitten; thus he  
 grew  
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,  
 and she,  
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-  
 dain'd,  
 Began to break her sports with graver  
 fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when  
 they met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old  
 man,  
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and at  
 times  
 Would flatter his own wish in age for  
 love,  
 And half believe her true: for thus at  
 times  
 He waver'd; but that other clung to  
 him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons  
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-  
 choly;  
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,  
 and he found  
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
 World-war of dying flesh against the  
 life,  
 Death in all life and lying in all love,  
 The meanest having power upon the  
 highest,  
 And the high purpose broken by the  
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd  
 the beach;  
 There found a little boat, and stept  
 into it;

And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd  
 her not.  
 She took the helm and he the sail;  
 the boat  
 Drave with a sudden wind across the  
 deeps,  
 And touching Breton sands, they dis-  
 embark'd.  
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the  
 way,  
 Ev'n to the wild woods of Broceliande.  
 For Merlin once had told her of a  
 charm,  
 The which if any wrought on anyone  
 With woven paces and with waving  
 arms,  
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd  
 to lie  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
 tower,  
 From which was no escape for ever-  
 more;  
 And none could find that man for  
 evermore,  
 Nor could he see but him who wrought  
 the charm  
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead  
 And lost to life and use and name  
 and fame.  
 And Vivien ever sought to work the  
 charm  
 Upon the great Enchanter of the  
 Time,  
 As fancying that her glory would be  
 great  
 According to his greatness whom she  
 quench'd.

There lay she all her length and  
 kiss'd his feet,  
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.  
 A twist of gold was round her hair; a  
 robe  
 Of samite without price, that more  
 exprest  
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome  
 limbs,  
 In color like the satin-shining palm  
 On shallows in the windy gleams of  
 March:  
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,  
 "Trample me,

Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'  
 the world,  
 And I will pay you worship; tread  
 me down  
 And I will kiss you for it;" he was  
 mute:  
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his  
 brain,  
 As on a dull day in an Ocean cave  
 The blind wave feeling round his long  
 sea-hall  
 In silence: wherefore, when she lifted  
 up  
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and  
 said,  
 "O Merlin, do ye love me?" and  
 again,  
 "O Merlin, do ye love me?" and once  
 more,  
 "Great Master, do ye love me?" he  
 was mute.  
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his  
 heel,  
 Writhed toward him, slided up his  
 knee and sat,  
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow  
 feet  
 Together, curved an arm about his  
 neck,  
 Clung like a snake; and letting her  
 left hand  
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a  
 leaf,  
 Made with her right a comb of pearl  
 to part  
 The lists of such a beard as youth gone  
 out  
 Had left in ashes: then he spoke and  
 said,  
 Not looking at her, "Who are wise in  
 love  
 Love most, say least," and Vivien  
 answer'd quick,  
 "I saw the little elf-god eyeless once  
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot:  
 But neither eyes nor tongue—O  
 stupid child!  
 Yet you are wise who say it; let me  
 think  
 Silence is wisdom: I am silent then,  
 And ask no kiss;" then adding all at  
 once,

"And lo, I clothe myself with wis-  
 dom," drew  
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his  
 beard  
 Across her neck and bosom to her  
 knee,  
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly  
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's  
 web,  
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild  
 wood  
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd  
 herself,  
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star  
 Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly  
 smiled:  
 "To what request for what strange  
 boon," he said,  
 "Are these your pretty tricks and  
 fooleries,  
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my  
 thanks,  
 For these have broken up my melan-  
 choly."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily,  
 "What, O my Master, have ye found  
 your voice?  
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks  
 at last!  
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,  
 Except indeed to drink: no cup had  
 we:  
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the  
 spring  
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from  
 the cleft,  
 And made a pretty cup of both my  
 hands  
 And offer'd you it kneeling: then you  
 drank  
 And knew no more, nor gave me one  
 poor word;  
 O no more thanks than might a goat  
 have given  
 With no more sign of reverence than  
 a beard.  
 And when we halted at that other  
 well,  
 And I was faint to swooning, and you  
 lay

Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of  
 those  
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did  
 you know  
 That Vivien bathed your feet before  
 her own?  
 And yet no thanks: and all thro' this  
 wild wood  
 And all this morning when I fondled  
 you:  
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not  
 so strange—  
 How had I wrong'd you? surely ye  
 are wise,  
 But such a silence is more wise than  
 kind."

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers  
 and said:  
 "O did ye never lie upon the shore,  
 And watch the curl'd white of the  
 coming wave  
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it  
 breaks?  
 Ev'n such a wave, but not so pleasur-  
 able,  
 Dark in the glass of some presageful  
 mood,  
 Had I for three days seen, ready to  
 fall.  
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's  
 court  
 To break the mood. You follow'd me  
 unask'd;  
 And when I look'd, and saw you fol-  
 lowing still,  
 My mind involv'd yourself the nearest  
 thing  
 In that mind-mist: for shall I tell you  
 truth?  
 You seem'd that wave about to break  
 upon me  
 And sweep me from my hold upon the  
 world,  
 My use and name and fame. Your  
 pardon, child.  
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all  
 again.  
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe  
 you thrice,  
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,  
 next

For thanks it seems till now neglected,  
 last  
 For these your dainty gambols:  
 wherefore ask;  
 And take this boon so strange and not  
 so strange."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-  
 fully:  
 "O not so strange as my long asking  
 it,  
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are  
 strange,  
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood  
 of yours.  
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly  
 mine;  
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did  
 me wrong.  
 The people call you prophet: let it  
 be:  
 But not of those that can expound  
 themselves.  
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will  
 call  
 That three-days-long presageful gloom  
 of yours  
 No presage, but the same mistrustful  
 mood  
 That makes you seem less noble than  
 yourself,  
 Whenever I have ask'd this very  
 boon,  
 Now ask'd again: for see you not,  
 dear love,  
 That such a mood as that, which  
 lately gloom'd  
 Your fancy when ye saw me follow-  
 ing you,  
 Must make me fear still more you are  
 not mine,  
 Must make me yearn still more to  
 prove you mine,  
 And make me wish still more to learn  
 this charm  
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it  
 me.  
 The charm so taught will charm us  
 both to rest.  
 For, grant me some slight power upon  
 your fate,

I, feeling that you felt me worthy  
 trust,  
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing  
 you mine.  
 And therefore be as great as ye are  
 named,  
 Not muffled round with selfish reticence.

How hard you look and how deny-  
 ingly!

O, if you think this wickedness in me,  
 That I should prove it on you un-  
 awares,

That makes me passing wrathful; then  
 our bond

Had best be loosed for ever: but  
 think or not,

By Heaven that hears I tell you the  
 clean truth,

As clean as blood of babes, as white  
 as milk;

O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,  
 If these unwitty wandering wits of  
 mine,

Ev'n in the jumbled rubbish of a  
 dream,

Have tript on such conjectural treach-  
 ery—

May this hard earth cleave to the  
 Nadir hell

Down, down, and close again, and nip  
 me flat,

If I be such a traitress. Yield my  
 boon,

Till which I scarce can yield you all  
 I am;

And grant my re-reiterated wish,  
 The great proof of your love: because

I think,  
 However wise, ye hardly know me

yet."

And Merlin loosed his hand from  
 hers and said,

"I never was less wise, however wise,  
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of  
 trust,

Than when I told you first of such a  
 charm.

Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,  
 Too much I trusted when I told you  
 that,

And stirr'd this vice in you which  
 ruin'd man

Thro' woman the first hour; for  
 howsoe'er

In children a great curiousness be  
 well,

Who have to learn themselves and all  
 the world,

In you, that are no child, for still I  
 find

Your face is practised when I spell  
 the lines,

I call it, — well, I will not call it vice:  
 But since you name yourself the

summer fly,

I well could wish a cobweb for the  
 gnat,

That settles, beaten back, and beaten  
 back

Settles, till one could yield for wear-  
 ness:

But since I will not yield to give you  
 power

Upon my life and use and name and  
 fame,

Why will ye never ask some other  
 boon?

Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too  
 much."

And Vivien, like the tenderest-  
 hearted maid

That ever bided tryst at village stile,  
 Made answer, either eyelid wet with

tears:

"Nay, Master, be not wrathful with  
 your maid;

Caress her: let her feel herself for-  
 given

Who feels no heart to ask another  
 boon.

I think ye hardly know the tender  
 rhyme

Of 'trust me not at all or all in all.'  
 I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it

once,  
 And it shall answer for me. Listen

to it.

'In Love, if Love be Love, if Love  
 be ours.

Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers :  
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

' It is the little rift within the lute,  
 That by and by will make the music mute,  
 And ever widening slowly silence all.

' The little rift within the lover's lute  
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,  
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

' It is not worth the keeping : let it go :  
 But shall it ? answer, darling, answer, no.  
 And trust me not at all or all in all.'

O Master, do ye love my tender rhyme ? "

And Merlin look'd and half believed her true,  
 So tender was her voice, so fair her face,  
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind her tears  
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a shower :  
 And yet he answer'd half indignantly :

" Far other was the song that once I heard  
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where we sit :  
 For here we met, some ten or twelve of us,  
 To chase a creature that was current then  
 In these wild woods, the hart with golden horns.  
 It was the time when first the question rose  
 About the founding of a Table Round,  
 That was to be, for love of God and men  
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the world.

And each incited each to noble deeds,  
 And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,  
 We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,  
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,  
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down  
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,  
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,  
 And should have done it ; but the beauteous beast  
 Scared by the noise upstarted at our feet,  
 And like a silver shadow slipt away  
 Thro' the dim land ; and all day long we rode  
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,  
 That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,  
 And chased the flashes of his golden horns  
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well  
 That laughs at iron — as our warriors did —  
 Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry,  
 ' Laugh, little well ! ' but touch it with a sword,  
 It buzzes fiercely round the point ; and there  
 We lost him : such a noble song was that.  
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,  
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,  
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay  
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame."

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully :  
 " O mine have ebb'd away for evermore,  
 And all thro' following you to this wild wood,

Because I saw you sad, to comfort  
you.

Lo now, what hearts have men! they  
never mount

As high as woman in her selfless  
mood.

And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn  
my song,

Take one verse more — the lady  
speaks it — this :

“My name, once mine, now thine,  
is closelier mine,

For fame, could fame be mine, that  
fame were thine,

And shame, could shame be thine,  
that shame were mine.

So trust me not at all or all in all.’

“Says she not well? and there is  
more — this rhyme

Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the  
Queen,

That burst in dancing, and the pearls  
were spilt ;

Some lost, some stolen, some as relics  
kept.

But nevertheless the same two sister  
pearls

Ran down the silken thread to kiss  
each other

On her white neck — so is it with this  
rhyme :

It lives dispersedly in many hands,  
And every minstrel sings it differ-  
ently ;

Yet is there one true line, the pearl of  
pearls :

‘Man dreams of Fame while woman  
wakes to love.’

Yea! Love, tho’ Love were of the  
grossest, carves

A portion from the solid present, eats  
And uses, careless of the rest; but

Fame,  
The Fame that follows death is noth-  
ing to us ;

And what is Fame in life but half-  
disfame,

And counterchanged with darkness?  
ye yourself

Know well that Envy calls you Devil’s  
son,

And since ye seem the Master of all  
Art,

They fain would make you Master of  
all vice.”

And Merlin lock’d his hand in hers  
and said,

“I once was looking for a magic weed,  
And found a fair young squire who

sat alone,  
Had carved himself a knightly shield

of wood,  
And then was painting on it fancied

arms,  
Azure, an Eagle rising or, the Sun

In dexter chief; the scroll ‘I follow  
fame.’

And speaking not, but leaning over  
him,

I took his brush and blotted out the  
bird,

And made a Gardener putting in  
graff,

With this for motto, ‘Rather use than  
fame.’

You should have seen him blush; but  
afterwards

He made a stalwart knight. O Vivien,  
For you, methinks you think you love

me well ;  
For me, I love you somewhat; rest :

and Love  
Should have some rest and pleasure

in himself,  
Not ever be too curious for a boon,

Too purient for a proof against the  
grain

Of him ye say ye love: but Fame with  
men,

Being but ampler means to serve  
mankind,

Should have small rest or pleasure in  
herself,

But work as vassal to the larger love,  
That dwarfs the petty love of one to

one.  
Use gave me Fame at first, and Fame

again  
Increasing gave me use. Lo, there  
my boon!

What other ? for men sought to prove  
     me vile,  
 Because I fain had given them greater  
     wits :  
 And then did Envy call me Devil's  
     son :  
 The sick weak beast seeking to help  
     herself  
 By striking at her better miss'd, and  
     brought  
 Her own claw back, and wounded her  
     own heart.  
 Sweet were the days when I was all  
     unknown,  
 But when my name was lifted up, the  
     storm  
 Brake on the mountain and I cared  
     not for it.  
 Right well know I that Fame is half-  
     disfame,  
 Yet needs must work my work. That  
     other fame,  
 To one at least, who hath not children,  
     vague,  
 The cackle of the unborn about the  
     grave,  
 I cared not for it : a single misty star,  
 Which is the second in a line of stars  
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of  
     three,  
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt  
 Of some vast charm concluded in that  
     star  
 To make fame nothing. Wherefore,  
     if I fear,  
 Giving you power upon me thro' this  
     charm,  
 That you might play me falsely, hav-  
     ing power,  
 However well ye think ye love me now  
 (As sons of kings loving in pupilage  
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they  
     came to power)  
 I rather dread the loss of use than  
     fame ;  
 If you — and not so much from  
     wickedness,  
 As some wild turn of anger, or a mood  
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be,  
 To keep me all to your own self, — or  
     else  
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —

Should try this charm on whom ye say  
 ye love."

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in  
     wrath :  
 "Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted.  
     Good !  
 Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it  
     out ;  
 And being found take heed of Vivien.  
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I  
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger  
     born  
 Of your misfaith ; and your fine  
     epithet  
 Is accurate too, for this full love of  
     mine  
 Without the full heart back may  
     merit well  
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used  
     as I,  
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.  
 And as to woman's jealousy, O why  
     not ?  
 O to what end, except a jealous one,  
 And one to make me jealous if I love,  
 Was this fair charm invented by your-  
     self ?  
 I well believe that all about this world  
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and  
     there,  
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow  
     tower  
 From which is no escape for ever-  
     more."

Then the great Master merrily an-  
     swer'd her :  
 "Full many a love in loving youth  
     was mine ;  
 I needed then no charm to keep them  
     mine  
 But youth and love ; and that full  
     heart of yours  
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure  
     you mine ;  
 So live uncharm'd. For those who  
     wrought it first,  
 The wrist is parted from the hand  
     that waved,  
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-  
     bones



Who paced it, ages back : but will ye  
hear  
The legend as in guerdon for your  
rhyme ?

“There lived a king in the most  
Eastern East,  
Less old than I, yet older, for my  
blood  
Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.  
A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,  
Whose bark had plunder'd twenty  
nameless isles ;  
And passing one, at the high peep of  
dawn,  
He saw two cities in a thousand boats  
All fighting for a woman on the sea.  
And pushing his black craft among  
them all,  
He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought  
her off,  
With loss of half his people arrow-  
slain ;  
A maid so smooth, so white, so won-  
derful,  
They said a light came from her when  
she moved :  
And since the pirate would not yield  
her up,  
The King impaled him for his piracy ;  
Then made her Queen : but those isle-  
nurtured eyes  
Waged such unwilling tho' successful  
war  
On all the youth, they sicken'd ; coun-  
cils thinn'd,  
And armies waned, for magnet-like  
she drew  
The rustiest iron of old fighters'  
hearts ;  
And beasts themselves would worship ;  
camels knelt  
Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain  
back  
That carry kings in castles, bow'd  
black knees  
Of homage, ringing with their serpent  
hands,  
To make her smile, her golden ankle-  
bells.  
What wonder, being jealous, that he  
sent

His horns of proclamation out thro'  
all  
The hundred under-kingdoms that he  
sway'd  
To find a wizard who might teach the  
King  
Some charm, which being wrought  
upon the Queen  
Might keep her all his own : to such a  
one  
He promised more than ever king has  
given,  
A league of mountain full of golden  
mines,  
A province with a hundred miles of  
coast,  
A palace and a princess, all for  
him :  
But on all those who tried and fail'd,  
the King  
Pronounced a dismal sentence, mean-  
ing by it  
To keep the list low and pretenders  
back,  
Or like a king, not to be trifled with—  
Their heads should moulder on the  
city gates.  
And many tried and fail'd, because  
the charm  
Of nature in her overbore their own :  
And many a wizard brow bleach'd on  
the walls :  
And many weeks a troop of carrion  
crows  
Hung like a cloud above the gateway  
towers.”

And Vivien breaking in upon him,  
said :  
“I sit and gather honey ; yet, me-  
thinks,  
Thy tongue has tript a little : ask thy-  
self.  
The lady never made *unwilling* war  
With those fine eyes : she had her  
pleasure in it,  
And made her good man jealous with  
good cause.  
And lived there neither dame nor  
damsel then  
Wroth at a lover's loss ? were all as  
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their Queen was fair ?

Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,  
Or pinch a murderous dust into her drink,

Or make her paler with a poison'd rose ?

Well, those were not our days : but did they find

'A wizard ? Tell me, was he like to thee ?"

She ceased, and made her lithe arm round his neck

Tighten, and then drew back, and let her eyes

Speak for her, glowing on him, like a bride's

On her new lord, her own, the first of men.

He answer'd laughing, "Nay, not like to me.

At last they found — his foragers for charms —

A little glassy-headed hairless man,  
Who lived alone in a great wild on grass ;

Read but one book, and ever reading grew

So grated down and filed away with thought,

So lean his eyes were monstrous ; while the skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs and spine.

And since he kept his mind on one sole aim,

Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor tasted flesh,

Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the wall

That sunders ghosts and shadow-casting men

Became a crystal, and he saw them thro' it,

And heard their voices talk behind the wall,

And learnt their elemental secrets, powers

And forces ; often o'er the sun's bright eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,  
And lash'd it at the base with slanting storm ;

Or in the noon of mist and driving rain,

When the lake whiten'd and the pine-wood roar'd,

And the cairn'd mountain was a shadow, sunn'd

The world to peace again : here was the man.

And so by force they dragg'd him to the King.

And then he taught the King to charm the Queen

In such-wise, that no man could see her more,

Nor saw she save the King, who wrought the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as dead,

And lost all use of life : but when the King

Made proffer of the league of golden mines,

The province with a hundred miles of coast,

The palace and the princess, that old man

Went back to his old wild, and lived on grass,

And vanish'd, and his book came down to me."

And Vivien answer'd smiling saucily :

"Ye have the book : the charm is written in it :

Good : take my counsel : let me know it at once :

For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,

With each chest lock'd and padlock'd thirty-fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a mound

As after furions battle turfs the slain

On some wild down above the windy deep,

I yet should strike upon a sudden means

To dig, pick, open, find and read the charm:

Then, if I tried it, who should blame me then?"

And smiling as a master smiles at one  
That is not of his school, nor any school  
But that where blind and naked Ignorance  
Delivers brawling judgments, unashamed,  
On all things all day long, he answer'd her:

"Thou read the book, my pretty Vivien!  
O ay, it is but twenty pages long,  
But every page having an ample marge,  
And every marge enclosing in the midst  
A square of text that looks a little blot,  
The text no larger than the limbs of fleas;  
And every square of text an awful charm,  
Writ in a language that has long gone by.  
So long, that mountains have arisen since  
With cities on their flanks — thou read the book!  
And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd  
With comment, densest condensation, hard  
To mind and eye; but the long sleepless nights  
Of my long life have made it easy to me.  
And none can read the text, not even I;  
And none can read the comment but myself;  
And in the comment did I find the charm.  
O, the results are simple; a mere child  
Might use it to the harm of any one,

And never could undo it: ask no more:

For tho' you should not prove it upon me,  
But keep that oath ye sware, ye might, perchance,  
Assay it on some one of the Table Round,  
And all because ye dream they babble of you."

And Vivien, frowning in true anger, said:  
"What dare the full-fed liars say of me?  
*They* ride abroad redressing human wrongs!  
They sit with knife in meat and wine in horn!  
*They* bound to holy vows of chastity!  
Were I not woman, I could tell a tale  
But you are man, you well can understand  
The shame that cannot be explain'd for shame.  
Not one of all the drove should touch me: swine!"

Then answer'd Merlin careless of her words:  
"You breathe but accusation vast and vague,  
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless.  
If ye know,  
Set up the charge ye know, to stand or fall!"

And Vivien answer'd frowning wrathfully:  
"O ay, what say ye to Sir Valence, him  
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife  
And two fair babes, and went to distant lands;  
Was one year gone, and on returning found  
Not two but three? there lay the reckling, one  
But one hour old! What said the happy sire?"

A seven-months' babe had been a truer gift.  
Those twelve sweet moons confused his fatherhood."

Then answer'd Merlin, "Nay, I know the tale.  
Sir Valence wedded with an outland dame :  
Some cause had kept him sunder'd from his wife :  
One child they had : it lived with her : she died :  
His kinsman travelling on his own affair  
Was charged by Valence to bring home the child.  
He brought, not found it therefore : take the truth."

"O ay," said Vivien, "overtrue a tale.  
What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,  
That ardent man ? 'to pluck the flower in season,'  
So says the song, 'I trow it is no treason.'  
O Master, shall we call him overquick  
To crop his own sweet rose before the hour ?"

And Merlin answer'd, "Overquick art thou  
To catch a loathly plume fall'n from the wing  
Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey  
Is man's good name : he never wrong'd his bride.  
I know the tale. An angry gust of wind  
Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd  
And many-corridor'd complexities  
Of Arthur's palace : then he found a door,  
And darkling felt the sculptured ornament  
That wreathen round it made it seem his own ;

And wearied out made for the couch and slept,  
A stainless man beside a stainless maid ;  
And either slept, nor knew of other there ;  
Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose  
In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,  
Blushing upon them blushing, and at once  
He rose without a word and parted from her :  
But when the thing was blazed about the court,  
The brute world howling forced them into bonds,  
And as it chanced they are happy, being pure."

"O ay," said Vivien, "that were likely too.  
What say ye then to fair Sir Percival  
And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,  
The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,  
Or some black wether of St. Satan's fold.  
What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,  
Among the knightly brasses of the graves,  
And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead !"

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge,  
"A sober man is Percivale and pure ;  
But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,  
Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard ;  
Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught  
And meant to stamp him with her master's mark ;  
And that he sinn'd is not believable ;  
For, look upon his face ! — but if he sinn'd,

The sin that practice burns into the  
 blood,  
 And not the one dark hour which  
 brings remorse,  
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we  
 be:  
 Or else were he, the holy king, whose  
 hymns  
 Are chanted in the minster, worse  
 than all.  
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have  
 ye more?"

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet  
 in wrath:  
 "O ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot,  
 friend  
 Traitor or true? that commerce with  
 the Queen,  
 I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,  
 Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye  
 know it?"

To which he answer'd sadly, "Yea,  
 I know it.  
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at  
 first,  
 To fetch her, and she watch'd him  
 from her walls.  
 A rumor runs, she took him for the  
 King,  
 So fixt her fancy on him: let them be.  
 But have ye no one word of loyal  
 praise  
 For Arthur, blameless King and stain-  
 less man?"

She answer'd with a low and chuck-  
 ling laugh:  
 "Man! is he man at all, who knows  
 and winks?  
 Sees what his fair bride is and does,  
 and winks?  
 By which the good King means to  
 blind himself,  
 And blinds himself and all the Table  
 Round  
 To all the foulness that they work.  
 Myself  
 Could call him (were it not for  
 womanhood)

The pretty, popular name such man-  
 hood earns,  
 Could call him the main cause of all  
 their crime;  
 Yea, were he not crown'd King,  
 coward, and fool."

Then Merlin to his own heart,  
 loathing, said:  
 "O true and tender! O my liege and  
 King!  
 O selfless man and stainless gentle-  
 man,  
 Who wouldst against thine own eye-  
 witness fain  
 Have all men true and leal, all women  
 pure;  
 How, in the mouths of base inter-  
 preters,  
 From over-fineness not intelligible  
 To things with every sense as false  
 and foul  
 As the poach'd filth that floods the  
 middle street,  
 Is thy white blamelessness accounted  
 blame!"

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-  
 borne  
 By instance, recommenced, and let  
 her tongue  
 Rage like a fire among the noblest  
 names,  
 Polluting, and imputing her whole  
 self,  
 Defaming and defacing, till she left  
 Not even Lancelot brave, nor Galahad  
 clean.

Her words had issue other than she  
 will'd.  
 He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,  
 and made  
 A snowy penthouse for his hollow  
 eyes,  
 And mutter'd in himself, "Tell *her* the  
 charm!  
 So, if she had it, would she rail on me  
 To snare the next, and if she have it  
 not  
 So will she rail. What did the war-  
 ton say?"

'Not mount as high;' we scarce can  
 sink as low:  
 For men at most differ as Heaven and  
 earth,  
 But women, worst and best, as Heaven  
 and Hell.  
 I know the Table Round, my friends  
 of old;  
 All brave, and many generous, and  
 some chaste.  
 She cloaks the scar of some repulse  
 with lies;  
 I well believe she tempted them and  
 fail'd,  
 Being so bitter: for fine plots may  
 fail,  
 Tho' harlots paint their talk as well  
 as face  
 With colors of the heart that are not  
 theirs.  
 I will not let her know: nine tithes of  
 times  
 Face-flatterer and backbiter are the  
 same.  
 And they, sweet soul, that most im-  
 pute a crime  
 Are pronest to it, and impute them-  
 selves,  
 Wanting the mental range; or low  
 desire  
 Not to feel lowest makes them level  
 all;  
 Yea, they would pare the mountain  
 to the plain,  
 To leave an equal baseness; and in  
 this  
 Are harlots like the crowd, that if  
 they find  
 Some stain or blemish in a name of  
 note,  
 Not grieving that their greatest are so  
 small,  
 Inflate themselves with some insane  
 delight,  
 And judge all nature from her feet of  
 clay,  
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and  
 see  
 Her godlike head crown'd with spir-  
 itual fire,  
 And touching other worlds. I am  
 weary of her."

He spoke in words part heard, in  
 whispers part,  
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell  
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat  
 and chin.  
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of  
 his mood,  
 And hearing "harlot" mutter'd twice  
 or thrice,  
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and  
 stood  
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome  
 sight,  
 How from the rosy lips of life and  
 love,  
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of  
 death!  
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths  
 of anger puff'd  
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-  
 clenched  
 Went faltering sideways downward to  
 her belt,  
 And feeling; had she found a dagger  
 there  
 (For in a wink the false love turns  
 to hate)  
 She would have stabb'd him; but she  
 found it not:  
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she  
 took  
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,  
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.  
 Then her false voice made way, broken  
 with sobs:  
  
 "O crnelier than was ever told in  
 tale,  
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd  
 love!  
 O cruel, there was nothing wild or  
 strange,  
 Or seeming shameful—for what  
 shame in love,  
 So love be true, and not as yours is—  
 nothing  
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his  
 trust  
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—  
 all her crime,  
 All—all—the wish to prove him  
 wholly hers."

She mused a little, and then clapt  
 her hands  
 Together with a wailing shriek, and  
 said:  
 "Stabb'd through the heart's affec-  
 tions to the heart!  
 Seethed like the kid in its own mother's  
 milk!  
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life  
 of blows!  
 I thought that he was gentle, being  
 great:  
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!  
 I should have found in him a greater  
 heart.  
 O, I, that flattering my true passion,  
 saw  
 The knights, the court, the King, dark  
 in your light,  
 Who loved to make men darker than  
 they are,  
 Because of that high pleasure which  
 I had  
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal  
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and  
 henceforth  
 The course of life that seem'd so  
 flowery to me  
 With you for guide and master, only  
 you,  
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken  
 short,  
 And ending in a ruin — nothing left,  
 But into some low cave to crawl, and  
 there,  
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life  
 away,  
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness."

She paused, she turn'd away, she  
 hung her head,  
 The snake of gold slid from her hair,  
 the braid  
 Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept  
 afresh,  
 And the dark wood grew darker  
 toward the storm  
 In silence, while his anger slowly died  
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go  
 For ease of heart, and half believed  
 her true:  
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,

"Come from the storm," and having  
 no reply,  
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder, and  
 the face  
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or  
 shame;  
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-  
 touching terms,  
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in  
 vain.  
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by  
 him,  
 And as the cageling newly flown re-  
 turns,  
 The seeming-injured, simple-hearted  
 thing  
 Came to her old perch back, and set-  
 tled there.  
 There while she sat, half-falling from  
 his knees,  
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he  
 saw  
 The slow tear creep from her closed  
 eye-lid yet,  
 About her, more in kindness than in  
 love,  
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding  
 arm.  
 But she dislink'd herself at once and  
 rose,  
 Her arms upon her breast across, and  
 stood,  
 A virtuous gentlewoman dceply  
 wrong'd,  
 Upright and flush'd before him: then  
 she said:

"There must be now no passages of  
 love  
 Betwixt us twain henceforward ever-  
 more;  
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,  
 What should be granted which your  
 own gross heart  
 Would reckon worth the taking? I  
 will go.  
 In truth, but one thing now — better  
 have died  
 Thrice than have ask'd it once — could  
 make me stay —  
 That proof of trust — so often ask'd  
 in vain!

How justly, after that vile term of  
yours,  
I find with grief! I might believe you  
then,  
Who knows? once more. Lo! what  
was once to me  
Mere matter of the fancy, now hath  
grown  
The vast necessity of heart and life.  
Farewell; think gently of me, for I  
fear  
My fate or folly, passing gayer youth  
For one so old, must be to love thee  
still.  
But ere I leave thee let me swear once  
more  
That if I schemed against thy peace  
in this,  
May yon just heaven, that darkens  
o'er me, send  
One flash, that, missing all things else,  
may make  
My scheming brain a cinder, if I  
lie."

Scarce had she ceased, when out of  
heaven a bolt  
(For now the storm was close above  
them) struck,  
Furrowing a giant oak, and javelining  
With darted spikes and splinters of  
the wood  
The dark earth round. He raised his  
eyes and saw  
The tree that shone white-listed thro'  
the gloom.  
But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard  
her oath,  
And dazzled by the livid-flickering  
fork,  
And deafen'd with the stammering  
cracks and claps  
That follow'd, flying back and crying  
out,  
"O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,  
save,  
Yet save me!" clung to him and  
hugg'd him close;  
And call'd him dear protector in her  
fright,  
Nor yet forgot her practice in her  
fright,

But wrought upon his mood and  
hugg'd him close.  
The pale blood of the wizard at her  
touch  
Took gayer colors, like an opal  
warm'd.  
She blamed herself for telling hearsay  
tales:  
She shook from fear, and for her fault  
she wept  
Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and  
liege,  
Her seer, her bard, her silver star of  
eve,  
Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-  
ate love  
Of her whole life; and ever overhead  
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten  
branch  
Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain  
Above them; and in change of glare  
and gloom  
Her eyes and neck glittering went and  
came;  
Till now the storm, its burst of passion  
spent,  
Moaning and calling out of other  
lands,  
Had left the ravaged woodland yet  
once more  
To peace; and what should not have  
been had been,  
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,  
Had yielded, told her all the charm,  
and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth  
the charm  
Of woven paces and of waving hands,  
And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,  
And lost to life and use and name and  
fame.

Then crying "I have made his glory  
mine,"  
And shrieking out "O fool!" the har-  
lot leapt  
Adown the forest, and the thicket  
closed  
Behind her, and the forest echo'd  
"fool."



## LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the loveable,  
 Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,  
 High in her chamber up a tower to  
 the east  
 Guarded the sacred shield of Lance-  
 lot;  
 Which first she placed where morn-  
 ing's earliest ray  
 Might strike it, and awake her with  
 the gleam;  
 Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd  
 for it  
 A case of silk, and braided thereupon  
 All the devices blazon'd on the shield  
 In their own tinct, and added, of her  
 wit,  
 A border fantasy of branch and flower,  
 And yellow-throated nestling in the  
 nest.  
 Nor rested thus content, but day by  
 day,  
 Leaving her household and good  
 father, climb'd  
 That eastern tower, and entering  
 barr'd her door,  
 Stript off the case, and read the naked  
 shield,  
 Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his  
 arms,  
 Now made a pretty history to herself  
 Of every dint a sword had beaten in  
 it,  
 And every scratch a lance had made  
 upon it,  
 Conjecturing when and where: this  
 cut is fresh;  
 That ten years back; this dealt him  
 at Caerlyle;  
 That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:  
 And ah God's mercy, what a stroke  
 was there!  
 And here a thrust that might have  
 kill'd, but God  
 Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his  
 enemy down,  
 And saved him: so she lived in fan-  
 tasy.

How came the lily maid by that  
 good shield

Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n  
 his name?  
 He left it with her, when he rode to  
 tilt  
 For the great diamond in the diamond  
 jousts,  
 Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by  
 that name  
 Had named them, since a diamond  
 was the prize.  
  
 For Arthur, long before they  
 crown'd him King,  
 Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-  
 nesse,  
 Had found a glen, gray boulder and  
 black tarn.  
 A horror lived about the tarn, and  
 clave  
 Like its own mists to all the mountain  
 side:  
 For here two brothers, one a king,  
 had met  
 And fought together; but their names  
 were lost;  
 And each had slain his brother at a  
 blow;  
 And down they fell and made the glen  
 abhorr'd:  
 And there they lay till all their bones  
 were bleach'd,  
 And lichen'd into color with the crags:  
 And he, that once was king, had on a  
 crown  
 Of diamonds, one in front, and four  
 aside.  
 And Arthur came, and laboring up the  
 pass,  
 All in a misty moonshine, unawares  
 Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,  
 and the skull  
 Brake from the nape, and from the  
 skull the crown  
 Roll'd into light, and turning on its  
 rims  
 Fled like a glittering rivulet to the  
 tarn:  
 And down the shingly scaur he  
 plunged, and caught,  
 And set it on his head, and in his heart  
 Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise  
 shalt be King."

Thereafter, when a King, he had the  
 gems  
 Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd  
 them to his knights,  
 Saying "These jewels, whereupon I  
 chanced  
 Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the  
 King's —  
 For public use: henceforward let  
 there be,  
 Once every year, a joust for one of  
 these:  
 For so by nine years' proof we needs  
 must learn  
 Which is our mightiest, and ourselves  
 shall grow  
 In use of arms and manhood, till we  
 drive  
 The heathen, who, some say, shall rule  
 the land  
 Hereafter, which God hinder." Thus  
 he spoke:  
 And eight years past, eight jousts had  
 been, and still  
 Had Lancelot won the diamond of the  
 year,  
 With purpose to present them to the  
 Queen,  
 When all were won; but meaning all  
 at once  
 To snare her royal fancy with a boon  
 Worth half her realm, had never  
 spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and  
 the last  
 And largest, Arthur, holding then his  
 court  
 Hard on the river nigh the place which  
 now  
 Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a  
 joust  
 At Camelot, and when the time drew  
 nigh  
 Spake (for she had been sick) to  
 Guinevere,  
 "Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-  
 not move  
 To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord,"  
 she said, "ye know it."  
 "Then will ye miss," he answer'd,  
 "the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the  
 lists,  
 A sight ye love to look on." And the  
 Queen  
 Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt lan-  
 guidly  
 On Lancelot, where he stood beside  
 the King.  
 He thinking that he read her meaning  
 there,  
 "Stay with me, I am sick; my love is  
 more  
 Than many diamonds," yielded; and  
 a heart  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the  
 Queen  
 (However much he yearn'd to make  
 complete  
 The tale of diamonds for his destined  
 boon)  
 Urged him to speak against the truth,  
 and say,  
 "Sir King, mine ancient wound is  
 hardly whole,  
 And lets me from the saddle;" and  
 the King  
 Glanced first at him, then her, and  
 went his way.  
 No sooner gone than suddenly she  
 began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,  
 much to blame!  
 Why go ye not to these fair jousts?  
 the knights  
 Are half of them our enemies, and the  
 crowd  
 Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless  
 ones, who take  
 Their pastime now the trustful King  
 is gone!'"  
 Then Lancelot vexed at having lied in  
 vain:  
 "Are ye so wise? ye were not once  
 so wise,  
 My Queen, that summer, when ye  
 loved me first.  
 Then of the crowd ye took no more  
 account  
 Than of the myriad cricket of the  
 mead,

When its own voice clings to each  
blade of grass,  
And every voice is nothing. As to  
knights,  
Them surely can I silence with all  
ease.  
But now my loyal worship is allow'd  
Of all men: many a bard, without  
offence,  
Has link'd our names together in his  
lay,  
Lancelot, the flower of bravery,  
Guinevere,  
The pearl of beauty: and our knights  
at feast  
Have pledged us in this union, while  
the King  
Would listen smiling. How then? is  
there more?  
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would  
yourself,  
Now weary of my service and devoir,  
Henceforth be truer to your faultless  
lord?"

She broke into a little scornful  
laugh:  
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-  
less King,  
That passionate perfection, my good  
lord—  
But who can gaze upon the Sun in  
heaven?  
He never spake word of reproach to  
me,  
He never had a glimpse of mine un-  
truth,  
He cares not for me: only here to-day  
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his  
eyes:  
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd  
with him—else  
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,  
And swearing men to vows impossible,  
To make them like himself: but,  
friend, to me  
He is all fault who hath no fault at  
all:  
For who loves me must have a touch  
of earth;  
The low sun makes the color: I am  
yours,

Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by  
the bond.  
And therefore hear my words: go to  
the jousts:  
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break  
our dream  
When sweetest; and the vermin  
voices here  
May-buzz so loud—we scorn them,  
but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief  
of knights:  
"And with what face, after my pre-  
text made,  
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot,  
I  
Before a King who honors his own  
work,  
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,  
"A moral child without the craft to  
rule,  
Else had he not lost me: but listen to  
me,  
If I must find you wit: we hear it  
said  
That men go down before your spear  
at a touch,  
But knowing you are Lancelot; your  
great name,  
This conquers: hide it therefore; go  
unknown:  
Win! by this kiss you will: and our  
true King  
Will then allow your pretext, O my  
knight,  
As all for glory; for to speak him  
true,  
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er  
he seem,  
No keener hunter after glory breathes.  
He loves it in his knights more than  
himself:  
They prove to him his work: win and  
return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to  
horse,  
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be  
known.

He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,  
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,  
 And there among the solitary downs,  
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;  
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,  
 That all in loops and links among the dales  
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw  
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.  
 Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.  
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,  
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.  
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;  
 And issuing found the lord of Astolat  
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,  
 Moving to meet him in the castle court;  
 And close behind them stept the lily maid  
 Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house  
 There was not: some light jest among them rose  
 With laughter dying down as the great knight  
 Approach'd them: then the Lord of Astolat:  
 "Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name  
 Livest between the lips? for by thy state  
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,  
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.  
 Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,  
 Known as they arc, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:

"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,  
 What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.  
 But since I go to joust as one unknown  
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not,  
 Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —  
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,  
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat,  
 "Here is Torre's:  
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre.  
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.  
 His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,  
 "Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."  
 Here laugh'd the father saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,  
 Is that an answer for a noble knight? Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,  
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,  
 Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,  
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,  
 To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay good father, shame me not  
 Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,  
 "For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:  
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:  
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt  
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,  
 And that it was too slippery to be held,

And slipt and fell into some pool or  
stream,  
The castle-well, belike; and then I  
said  
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and  
won it  
(But all was jest and joke among our-  
selves)  
Then must she keep it safelier. All  
was jest.  
But, father, give me leave, an if he  
will,  
To ride to Camelot with this noble  
knight:  
Win shall I not, but do my best to  
win:  
Young as I am, yet would I do my  
best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd  
Lancelot,  
Smiling a moment, "with your fellow-  
ship  
O'er these waste downs whereon I  
lost myself,  
Then were I glad of you as guide and  
friend:  
And you shall win this diamond, —  
as I hear  
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye  
may,  
And yield it to this maiden, if ye  
will."  
"A fair large diamond," added plain  
Sir Torre,  
"Such be for queens, and not for sim-  
ple maids."  
Then she, who held her eyes upon the  
ground,  
Elaine, and heard her name so tost  
about,  
Flush'd slightly at the slight dispar-  
agement  
Before the stranger knight, who, look-  
ing at her,  
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus  
return'd:  
"If what is fair be but for what is  
fair,  
And only queens are to be counted so,  
Rash were my judgment then, who  
deem this maid

Might wear as fair a jewel as is on  
earth,  
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid  
Elaine,  
Won by the mellow voice before she  
look'd,  
Lifted her eyes, and read his linea-  
ments.  
The great and guilty love he bare the  
Queen,  
In battle with the love he bare his  
lord,  
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it  
ere his time.  
Another sinning on such heights with  
one,  
The flower of all the west and all the  
world,  
Had been the sleeker for it: but in  
him  
His mood was often like a fiend, and  
rose  
And drove him into wastes and soli-  
tudes  
For agony, who was yet a living soul.  
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the good-  
liest man  
That ever among ladies ate in hall,  
And noblest, when she lifted up her  
eyes.  
However marr'd, of more than twice  
her years,  
Seam'd with an ancient swordcut on  
the cheek,  
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up  
her eyes  
And loved him, with that love which  
was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling  
of the court,  
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude  
hall  
Stept with all grace, and not with half  
disdain  
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,  
But kindly man moving among his  
kind:  
Whom they with meats and vintage  
of their best

And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.  
 And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,  
 And ever well and readily answer'd he:  
 But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,  
 Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,  
 Heard from the Baron that, ten years before,  
 The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.  
 "He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design  
 Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;  
 But I, my sons, and little daughter fled  
 From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods  
 By the great river in a boatman's hut.  
 Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke  
 The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt  
 By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth  
 Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.  
 O tell us—for we live apart—you know  
 Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke  
 And answer'd him at full, as having been  
 With Arthur in the fight which all day long  
 Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;  
 And in the four loud battles by the shore  
 Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war  
 That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts  
 Of Celidon the forest; and again

By castle Gurnion, where the glorious King  
 Had on his cnirass worn our Lady's Head,  
 Carved of one emerald center'd in a sun  
 Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;  
 And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,  
 When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse  
 Set every gilded parapet shuddering;  
 And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,  
 And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,  
 Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount  
 Of Badon I myself beheld the King  
 Charge at the head of all his Table Round,  
 And all his legions crying Christ and him,  
 And break them; and I saw him, after, stand  
 High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume  
 Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,  
 And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,  
 'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,  
 However mild he seems at home, nor cares  
 For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts—  
 For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs  
 Saying, his knights are better men than he—  
 Yet in this heathen war the fire of God  
 Fills him: I never saw his like: there lives  
 No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,  
 Low to her own heart said the lily maid,  
 "Save your great self, fair lord;"  
 and when he fell

From talk of war to traits of pleas-  
 antry —  
 Being mirthful he, but in a stately  
 kind —  
 She still took note that when the  
 living smile  
 Died from his lips, across him came  
 a cloud  
 Of melancholy severe, from which  
 again,  
 Whenever in her hovering to and  
 fro  
 The lily maid had striven to make him  
 cheer,  
 There brake a sudden-beaming ten-  
 derness  
 Of manners and of nature: and she  
 thought  
 That all was nature, all, perchance,  
 for her.  
 And all night long his face before her  
 lived,  
 As when a painter, poring on a face,  
 Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the  
 man  
 Behind it, and so paints him that his  
 face,  
 The shape and color of a mind and  
 life,  
 Lives for his children, ever at its best  
 And fullest; so the face before her  
 lived,  
 Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,  
 full  
 Of noble things, and held her from  
 her sleep.  
 Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the  
 thought  
 She needs must bid farewell to sweet  
 Lavaine.  
 First as in fear, step after step, she  
 stole  
 Down the long tower-stairs, hesitat-  
 ing:  
 Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in  
 the court,  
 "This shield, my friend, where is it?"  
 and Lavaine  
 Past inward, as she came from out  
 the tower.  
 There to his proud horse Lancelot  
 turn'd, and smooth'd

The glossy shoulder, humming to  
 himself.  
 Half-envious of the flattering hand,  
 she drew  
 Nearer and stood. He look'd, and  
 more amazed  
 Than if seven men had set upon him,  
 saw  
 The maiden standing in the dewy  
 light.  
 He had not dream'd she was so beau-  
 tiful.  
 Then came on him a sort of sacred  
 fear,  
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she  
 stood  
 Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.  
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire,  
 That he should wear her favor at the  
 tilt.  
 She braved a riotous heart in asking  
 for it.  
 "Fair lord, whose name I know not —  
 noble it is,  
 I well believe, the noblest — will you  
 wear  
 My favor at this tourney?" "Nay,"  
 said he,  
 "Fair lady, since I never yet have  
 worn  
 Favor of any lady in the lists.  
 Such is my wont, as those, who know  
 me, know."  
 "Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in  
 wearing mine  
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble  
 lord,  
 That those who know should know  
 you." And he turn'd  
 Her counsel up and down within his  
 mind,  
 And found it true, and answer'd  
 "True, my child.  
 Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to  
 me:  
 What is it?" and she told him "A red  
 sleeve  
 Broider'd with pearls," and brought  
 it: then he bound  
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile  
 Saying, "I never yet have done so  
 much

For any maiden living," and the blood  
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with  
delight;

But left her all the paler, when  
Lavaine

Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd  
shield,

His brother's; which he gave to  
Lancelot,

Who parted with his own to fair  
Elaine:

"Do me this grace, my child, to have  
my shield

In keeping till I come." "A grace to  
me,"

She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am  
your squire!"

Whereat Lavaine said, laughing,  
"Lily maid,

For fear our people call you lily maid  
In earnest, let me bring your color  
back;

Once, twice, and thrice: now get you  
hence to bed:"

So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his  
own hand,

And thus they moved away: she  
stay'd a minute,

Then made a sudden step to the gate,  
and there —

Her bright hair blown about the  
serious face

Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's  
kiss —

Paused by the gateway, standing near  
the shield

In silence, while she watch'd their  
arms far-off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the  
downs.

Then to her tower she climb'd, and  
took the shield,

There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions  
past away

Far o'er the long backs of the bushless  
downs,

To where Sir Lancelot knew there  
lived a knight

Not far from Camelot, now for forty  
years

A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and  
pray'd,

And ever laboring had scoop'd him-  
self

In the white rock a chapel and a hall  
On massive columns, like a shorecliff

cave,  
And cells and chambers: all were fair  
and dry;

The green light from the meadows  
underneath

Struck up and lived along the milky  
roofs;

And in the meadows tremulous aspen-  
trees

And poplars made a noise of falling  
showers.

And thither wending there that night  
they bode.

But when the next day broke from  
underground,

And shot red fire and shadows thro'  
the cave,

They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and  
rode away:

Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but  
bold my name

Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the  
Lake."

Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant re-  
verence,

Dearer to true young hearts than their  
own praise,

But left him leave to stammer, "Is it  
indeed?"

And after muttering "The great  
Lancelot,"

At last he got his breath and answer'd,  
"One,

One have I seen — that other, our  
liege lord,

The dread Pendragon, Britain's King  
of kings,

Of whom the people talk mysteriously,  
He will be there — then were I stricken

blind

That minute, I might say that I had  
seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they  
reach'd the lists



By Camelot in the meadow, let his  
 eyes  
 Run thro' the peopled gallery which  
 half round  
 Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the  
 grass,  
 Until they found the clear-faced King,  
 who sat  
 Robed in red samite, easily to be  
 known,  
 Since to his crown the golden dragon  
 clung,  
 And down his robe the dragon writhed  
 in gold,  
 And from the carven-work behind  
 him crept  
 Two dragons gilded, sloping down to  
 make  
 Arms for his chair, while all the rest  
 of them  
 Thro' knots and loops and folds innu-  
 merable  
 Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they  
 found  
 The new design wherein they lost  
 themselves,  
 Yet with all ease, so tender was the  
 work:  
 And, in the costly canopy o'er him  
 set,  
 Blazed the last diamond of the name-  
 less king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young  
 Lavaine and said,  
 "Me you call great: mine is the  
 firmer seat,  
 The truer lance: but there is many a  
 youth  
 Now crescent, who will come to all I  
 am  
 ; And overcome it; and in me there  
 dwells  
 No greatness, save it be some far-off  
 touch  
 Of greatness to know well I am not  
 great:  
 There is the man." And Lavaine  
 gaped upon him  
 As on a thing miraculous, and anon  
 The trumpets blew; and then did  
 either side,

"They that assail'd, and they that held  
 the lists,  
 Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly  
 move,  
 Meet in the midst, and there so  
 furiously  
 Shock, that a man far-off might well  
 perceive,  
 If any man that day were left afield,  
 The hard earth shake, and a low thun-  
 der of arms.  
 And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw  
 Which were the weaker; then he  
 hurl'd into it  
 Against the stronger: little need to  
 speak  
 Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke,  
 earl,  
 Count, baron — whom he smote, he  
 overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's  
 kith and kin,  
 Ranged with the Table Round that  
 held the lists,  
 Strong men, and wrathful that a  
 stranger knight  
 Should do and almost overdo the  
 deeds  
 Of Lancelot; and one said to the  
 other, "Lo!  
 What is he? I do not mean the force  
 alone —  
 The grace and versatility of the man!  
 Is it not Lancelot?" "When has  
 Lancelot worn  
 Favor of any lady in the lists?  
 Not such his wont, as we, that know  
 him, know."  
 "How then? who then?" a fury  
 seized them all,  
 A fiery family passion for the name  
 Of Lancelot, and a glory one with  
 theirs.  
 They couch'd their spears and prick'd  
 their steeds, and thus,  
 Their plumes driv'n backward by the  
 wind they made  
 In moving, all together down upon  
 him  
 Bare, as a wild wave in the wide  
 North-sea,

Green-glimmering toward the summit,  
 bears, with all  
 Its stormy crests that smoke against  
 the skies,  
 Down on a bark, and overbears the  
 bark,  
 And him that helms it, so they over-  
 bore  
 Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a  
 spear  
 Down-glancing lamed the charger, and  
 a spear  
 Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and  
 the head  
 Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt,  
 and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-  
 shipfully ;  
 He bore a knight of old repute to the  
 earth,  
 And brought his horse to Lancelot  
 where he lay.  
 He up the side, sweating with agony,  
 got,  
 But thought to do while he might yet  
 endure,  
 And being lustily holpen by the rest,  
 His party, — tho' it seem'd half-  
 miracle  
 To those he fought with, — drave his  
 kith and kin,  
 And all the Table Round that held  
 the lists,  
 Back to the barrier; then the trum-  
 pets blew  
 Proclaiming his the prize, who wore  
 the sleeve  
 Of scarlet, and the pearls; and all the  
 knights,  
 His party, cried "Advance and take  
 thy prize  
 The diamond;" but he answer'd,  
 "Diamond me  
 No diamonds! for God's love, a little  
 air!  
 Prize me no prizes, for my prize is  
 death!  
 Hence will I, and I charge you, follow  
 me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly  
 from the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar  
 grove.  
 There from his charger down he slid,  
 and sat,  
 Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the  
 lance-head:"  
 "Ah my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said  
 Lavaine,  
 "I dread me, if I draw it, you will  
 die."  
 But he, "I die already with it: draw —  
 Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and Sir  
 Lancelot gave  
 A marvellous great shriek and ghastly  
 groan,  
 And half his blood burst forth, and  
 down he sank  
 For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd  
 away.  
 Then came the hermit out and bare  
 him in,  
 There stanch'd his wound; and there,  
 in daily doubt  
 Whether to live or die, for many a  
 week  
 Hid from the wide world's rumor by  
 the grove  
 Of poplars with their noise of falling  
 showers,  
 And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he  
 lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled  
 the lists,  
 His party, knights of utmost North  
 and West,  
 Lords of waste marches, kings of des-  
 olate isles,  
 Came round their great Pendragon,  
 saying to him,  
 "Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we  
 won the day,  
 Hath gone sore wounded, and hath  
 left his prize  
 Untaken, crying that his prize is  
 death."  
 "Heaven hinder," said the King, "that  
 such an one,  
 So great a knight as we have seen  
 to-day —  
 He seem'd to me another Lancelot —

Yea, twenty times I thought him  
 Lancelot—  
 He must not pass uncared for.  
 Wherefore, rise,  
 O Gawain, and ride forth and find the  
 knight.  
 Wounded and wearied needs must he  
 be near.  
 I charge you that you get at once to  
 horse.  
 And, knights and kings, there breathes  
 not one of you  
 Will deem this prize of ours is rashly  
 given:  
 His prowess was too wondrous. We  
 will do him  
 No customary honor: since the knight  
 Came not to us, of us to claim the  
 prize,  
 Ourselves will send it after. Rise and  
 take  
 This diamond, and deliver it, and  
 return,  
 And bring us where he is, and how he  
 fares,  
 And cease not from your quest until  
 ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower  
 above,  
 To which it made a restless heart, he  
 took,  
 And gave, the diamond: then from  
 where he sat  
 At Arthur's right, with smiling face  
 arose,  
 With smiling face and frowning heart,  
 a Prince  
 In the mid might and flourish of his  
 May,  
 Gawain, surnamed The Courteous,  
 fair and strong,  
 And after Lancelot, Tristram, and  
 Geraint  
 And Gareth, a good knight, but  
 therewithal  
 Sir Modred's brother, and the child  
 of Lot,  
 Nor often loyal to his word, and  
 now  
 Wroth that the King's command to  
 sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made  
 him leave  
 The banquet, and concourse of knights  
 and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and  
 went;  
 While Arthur to the banquet, dark in  
 mood,  
 Past, thinking "Is it Lancelot who  
 hath come  
 Despite the wound he spake of, all for  
 gain  
 Of glory, and hath added wound to  
 wound,  
 And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd  
 the King,  
 And, after two days' trarriance there,  
 return'd.  
 Then when he saw the Queen, em-  
 bracing ask'd,  
 "Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay,  
 lord," she said.  
 "And where is Lancelot?" Then the  
 Queen amazed,  
 "Was he not with you? won he not  
 your prize?"  
 "Nay, but one like him." "Why that  
 like was he."  
 And when the King demanded how  
 she knew,  
 Said, "Lord, no sooner had ye parted  
 from us,  
 Than Lancelot told me of a common  
 talk  
 That men went down before his spear  
 at a touch,  
 But knowing he was Lancelot; his  
 great name  
 Conquer'd; and therefore would he  
 hide his name  
 From all men, ev'n the King, and to  
 this end  
 Had made the pretext of a hindering  
 wound,  
 That he might joust unknown of all,  
 and learn  
 If his old prowess were in aught  
 decay'd;  
 And added, 'Our true Arthur, when  
 he learns,

Will well allow my pretext, as for gain  
Of purer glory."

Then replied the King :  
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it  
been,  
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,  
'To have trusted me as he hath trusted  
thee.  
Surely his King and most familiar  
friend  
Might well have kept his secret. True,  
indeed,  
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,  
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot  
Must needs have moved my laughter :  
now remains  
But little cause for laughter : his own  
kin —  
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love  
him, this! —  
His kith and kin, not knowing, set  
upon him ;  
So that he went sore wounded from  
the field :  
Yet good news too : for goodly hopes  
are mine  
That Lancelot is no more a lonely  
heart.  
He wore, against his wont, upon his  
helm  
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with  
great pearls,  
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,  
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying  
that, she choked,  
And sharply turn'd about to hide her  
face,  
Past to her chamber, and there flung  
herself  
Down on the great King's couch, and  
writhed upon it,  
And clench'd her fingers till they bit  
the palm,  
And shriek'd out "Traitor" to the  
unhearing wall,  
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose  
again,  
And moved about her palace, proud  
and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region  
round  
Rode with his diamond, wearied of  
the quest,  
Touch'd at all points, except the pop-  
lar grove,  
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat.  
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms  
the maid  
Glanced at, and cried, "What news  
from Camelot, lord ?  
What of the knight with the red  
sleeve ?" "He won."  
"I knew it," she said. "But parted  
from the jousts  
Hurt in the side," whereat she caught  
her breath ;  
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp  
lance go ;  
Thereon she smote her hand : wellnigh  
she swoon'd :  
And, while he gazed wonderingly at  
her, came  
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom  
the Prince  
Reported who he was, and on what  
quest  
Sent, that he bore the prize and could  
not find  
The victor, but had ridd'n a random  
round  
To seek him, and had wearied of the  
search.  
To whom the Lord of Astolat, "Bide  
with us,  
And ride no more at random, noble  
Prince !  
Here was the knight, and here he left  
a shield ;  
This will he send or come for : fur-  
thermore  
Our son is with him ; we shall hear  
anon,  
Needs must we hear." To this the  
courteous Prince  
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,  
Courtesy with a touch of traitor  
in it,  
And stay'd ; and cast his eyes on fair  
Elaine :  
Where could be found face daintier ?  
then her shape

From forehead down to foot, perfect  
 — again  
 From foot to forehead exquisitely  
 turn'd :  
 " Well — if I bide, lo ! this wild flower  
 for me !"  
 And oft they met among the garden  
 yews,  
 And there he set himself to play upon  
 her  
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a  
 height  
 Above her, graces of the court, and  
 songs,  
 Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden  
 eloquence  
 And amorous adulation, till the  
 maid  
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him,  
 " Prince,  
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,  
 Why ask you not to see the shield he  
 left,  
 Whence you might learn his name ?  
 Why slight your King,  
 And lose the quest he sent you on,  
 and prove  
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,  
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at,  
 and went  
 To all the winds ?" " Nay, by mine  
 head," said he,  
 " I lose it, as we lose the lark in  
 heaven,  
 O damsel, in the light of your blue  
 eyes ;  
 But an ye will it let me see the  
 shield."  
 And when the shield was brought, and  
 Gawain saw  
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd  
 with gold,  
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh,  
 and mock'd :  
 " Right was the King ! our Lancelot !  
 that true man !"  
 " And right was I," she answer'd  
 merrily, " I,  
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest  
 knight of all."  
 " And if I dream'd," said Gawain,  
 " that you love

This greatest knight, your pardon ! lo,  
 ye know it !  
 Speak therefore : shall I waste myself  
 in vain ?"  
 Full simple was her answer, " What  
 know I ?  
 My brethren have been all my fellow-  
 ship ;  
 And I, when often they have talk'd  
 of love,  
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for  
 they talk'd,  
 Meseem'd, of what they knew not ; so  
 myself —  
 I know not if I know what true love is,  
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,  
 I know there is none other I can  
 love."  
 " Yea, by God's death," said he, " ye  
 love him well,  
 But would not, knew ye what all  
 others know,  
 And whom he loves." " So be it,"  
 cried Elaine,  
 And lifted her fair face and moved  
 away :  
 But he pursued her, calling, " Stay a  
 little !  
 One golden minute's grace ! he wore  
 your sleeve :  
 Would he break faith with one I may  
 not name ?  
 Must our true man change like a leaf  
 at last ?  
 Nay — like enow : why then, far be it  
 from me  
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his  
 loves !  
 And, damsel, for I deem you know  
 full well  
 Where your great knight is hidden,  
 let me leave  
 My quest with you ; the diamond also ;  
 here !  
 For if you love, it will be sweet to  
 give it ;  
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have  
 it  
 From your own hand ; and whether  
 he love or not,  
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you  
 well

A thousand times!—a thousand times  
farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we  
two

May meet at court hereafter: there,  
I think,

So ye will learn the courtesies of the  
court,

We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,  
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which  
he gave,

The diamond, and all wearied of the  
quest

Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he  
went,

A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there  
told the King

What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot  
is the knight."

And added, "Sire, my liege, so much  
I learnt;

But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all  
round

The region: but I lighted on the maid  
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him;

and to her,  
Deeming our courtesy is the truest  
law,

I gave the diamond: she will render it;  
For by mine head she knows his hid-  
ing-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,  
and replied,

"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no  
more

On quest of mine, seeing that ye for-  
get

Obedience is the courtesy due to  
kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but  
all in awe,

For twenty strokes of the blood, with-  
out a word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him;  
Then shook his hair, strode off, and  
buzz'd abroad

About the maid of Astolat, and her  
love.

All ears were prick'd at once, all  
tongues were loosed:

"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance-  
lot,

Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Asto-  
lat."

Some read the King's face, some the  
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be,  
but most

Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old  
dame

Came suddenly on the Queen with the  
sharp news.

She, that had heard the noise of it  
before,

But sorrowing Lancelot should have  
stoop'd so low,

Marr'd her friend's aim with pale  
tranquillity.

So ran the tale like fire about the  
court,

Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' won-  
der flared:

Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice  
or thrice

Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the  
Queen,

And pledging Lancelot and the lily  
maid

Smiled at each other, while the Queen,  
who sat

With lips severely placid, felt the  
knot

Climb in her throat, and with her feet  
unseen

Crush'd the wild passion out against  
the floor

Beneath the banquet, where the meats  
became

As wormwood, and she hated all who  
pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,  
Her guiltless rival, she that ever

kept

The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her  
heart,

Crept to her father, while he mused  
alone,

Sat on his knee, stroked his gray  
face and said,

"Father, you call me wilful, and the  
 fault  
 Is yours who let me have my will, and  
 now,  
 Sweet father, will you let me lose my  
 wits?"  
 "Nay," said he, "surely." "Where-  
 fore, let me hence,"  
 She answer'd, "and find out our dear  
 Lavaine."  
 "Ye will not lose your wits for dear  
 Lavaine:  
 Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must  
 hear anon  
 Of him, and of that other." "Ay,"  
 she said,  
 "And of that other, for I needs must  
 hence  
 And find that other, wheresoe'er he  
 be,  
 And with mine own hand give his dia-  
 mond to him,  
 Lest I be found as faithless in the  
 quest  
 As yon proud Prince who left the  
 quest to me.  
 Sweet father, I behold him in my  
 dreams  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-  
 self,  
 Death-pale, for lack of gentle  
 maiden's aid.  
 The gentler-born the maiden, the  
 more bound,  
 My father, to be sweet and service-  
 able  
 To noble knights in sickness, as ye  
 know  
 When these have worn their tokens:  
 let me hence  
 I pray you." Then her father nod-  
 ding said,  
 "Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well,  
 my child,  
 Right fain were I to learn this knight  
 were whole,  
 Being our greatest: yea, and you  
 must give it—  
 And sure I think this fruit is hung  
 too high  
 For any mouth to gape for save a  
 queen's—

Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you  
 gone,  
 Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt  
 away,  
 And while she made her ready for  
 her ride,  
 Her father's latest word humm'd in  
 her ear,  
 "Being so very wilful you must go,"  
 And changed itself and echo'd in her  
 heart,  
 "Being so very wilful you must die."  
 But she was happy enough and shook  
 it off,  
 As we shake off the bee that buzzes  
 at us;  
 And in her heart she answer'd it an-  
 said,  
 "What matter, so I help him back to  
 life?"  
 Then far away with good Sir Torre  
 for guide  
 Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-  
 less downs  
 To Camelot, and before the city-gates  
 Came on her brother with a happy  
 face  
 Making a roan horse caper and curvet  
 For pleasure all about a field of  
 flowers:  
 Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she  
 cried, "Lavaine,  
 How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?"  
 He amazed,  
 "Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir  
 Lancelot!  
 How know ye my lord's name is Lan-  
 celot?"  
 But when the maid had told him all  
 her tale,  
 Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his  
 moods  
 Left them, and under the strange-  
 statued gate,  
 Where Arthur's wars were render'd  
 mystically,  
 Past up the still rich city to his  
 kin,  
 His own far blood, which dwelt at  
 Camelot;

And her, Lavaine across the poplar  
 grove  
 Led to the caves: there first she saw  
 the casque  
 Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet  
 sleeve,  
 Tho' carved and cut, and half the  
 pearls away,  
 Stream'd from it still; and in her  
 heart she laugh'd,  
 Because he had not loosed it from his  
 helm,  
 But meant once more perchance to  
 tourney in it.  
 And when they gain'd the cell wherein  
 he slept,  
 His battle-writhen arms and mighty  
 hands  
 Lay naked on the wolfskin, and a  
 dream  
 Of dragging down his enemy made  
 them move.  
 Then she that saw him lying unsleek,  
 unshorn,  
 Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-  
 self,  
 Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.  
 The sound not wonted in a place so  
 still  
 Woke the sick knight, and while he  
 roll'd his eyes  
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to  
 him, saying,  
 "Your prize the diamond sent you by  
 the King:"  
 His eyes glisten'd: she fancied "Is it  
 for me?"  
 And when the maid had told him all  
 the tale  
 Of King and Prince, the diamond sent,  
 the quest  
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she  
 knelt  
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,  
 And laid the diamond in his open  
 hand.  
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the  
 child  
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd  
 her face.  
 At once she slipt like water to the  
 floor.

"Alas," he said, "your ride hath  
 wearied you.  
 Rest must you have." "No rest for  
 me," she said;  
 "Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at  
 rest."  
 What might she mean by that? his  
 large black eyes,  
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt  
 upon her,  
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed  
 itself  
 In the heart's colors on her simple  
 face;  
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplexed  
 in mind,  
 And being weak in body said no more;  
 But did not love the color; woman's  
 love,  
 Save one, he not regarded, and so  
 turn'd  
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he  
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'  
 the fields,  
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculp-  
 tured gates  
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;  
 There bode the night: but woke with  
 dawn, and past  
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the  
 the fields,  
 Thence to the cave: so day by day  
 she past  
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro  
 Gliding, and every day she tended  
 him,  
 And likewise many a night: and  
 Lancelot  
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a  
 little hurt  
 Whereof he should be quickly whole.  
 at times  
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,  
 seem  
 Uncourteous, even he: but the meek  
 maid  
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to  
 him  
 Meeker than any child to a rough  
 nurse,



Milder than any mother to a sick child,  
 And never woman yet, since man's  
 first fall,  
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep  
 love  
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in  
 all  
 The simples and the science of that  
 time,  
 Told him that her fine care had saved  
 his life.  
 And the sick man forgot her simple  
 blush,  
 Would call her friend and sister,  
 sweet Elaine,  
 Would listen for her coming and  
 regret  
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,  
 And loved her with all love except  
 the love  
 Of man and woman when they love  
 their best,  
 Closest and sweetest, and had died the  
 death  
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.  
 And peradventure had he seen her  
 first  
 She might have made this and that  
 other world  
 Another world for the sick man; but  
 now  
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd  
 him,  
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,  
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely  
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sick-  
 ness made  
 Full many a holy vow and pure re-  
 solve.  
 These, as but born of sickness, could  
 not live:  
 For when the blood ran lustier in him  
 again,  
 Full often the bright image of one  
 face,  
 Making a treacherous quiet in his  
 heart,  
 Dispersed his resolution like a  
 cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly  
 grace  
 Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he  
 answer'd not,  
 Or short and coldly, and she knew  
 right well  
 What the rough sickness meant, but  
 what this meant  
 She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd  
 her sight,  
 And drave her ere her time across the  
 fields  
 Far into the rich city, where alone  
 She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it  
 cannot be.  
 He will not love me: how then? must  
 I die?"  
 Then as a little helpless innocent bird,  
 That has but one plain passage of few  
 notes,  
 Will sing the simple passage o'er and  
 o'er  
 For all an April morning, till the ear  
 Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid  
 Went half the night repeating, "Must  
 I die?"  
 And now to right she turn'd, and now  
 to left,  
 And found no ease in turning or in  
 rest;  
 And "Him or death," she mutter'd,  
 "death or him,"  
 Again and like a burthen, "Him or  
 death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt  
 was whole,  
 To Astolat returning rode the three.  
 There morn by morn, arraying her  
 sweet self  
 In that wherein she deem'd she look'd  
 her best,  
 She came before Sir Lancelot, for she  
 thought  
 "If I be loved, these are my festal  
 robes,  
 If not, the victim's flowers before he  
 fall."  
 And Lancelot ever prest upon the  
 maid  
 That she should ask some goodly gift  
 of him

For her own self or hers ; " and do not  
shun  
To speak the wish most near to your  
true heart ;  
Such service have ye done me, that I  
make  
My will of yours, and Prince and Lord  
am I  
In mine own land, and what I will I  
can."  
"Then like a ghost she lifted up her  
face,  
But like a ghost without the power to  
speak.  
And Lancelot saw that she withheld  
her wish,  
And bode among them yet a little  
space  
Till he should learn it ; and one morn  
it chanced  
He found her in among the garden  
yews,  
And said, "Delay no longer, speak  
your wish,  
Seeing I go to-day" : then out she  
brake :  
"Going ? and we shall never see you  
more.  
And I must die for want of one bold  
word."  
"Speak : that I live to hear," he said,  
"is yours."  
Then suddenly and passionately she  
spoke :  
"I have gone mad. I love you : let  
me die."  
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot,  
"what is this ?"  
And innocently extending her white  
arms,  
"Your love," she said, "your love—  
to be your wife."  
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen  
to wed,  
I had been wedded earlier, sweet  
Elaine:  
But now there never will be wife of  
mine."  
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be  
wife,  
But to be with you still, to see your  
face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro'  
the world."  
And Lancelot answer'd, "Nay, the  
world, the world,  
All ear and eye, with such a stupid  
heart  
To interpret ear and eye, and such a  
tongue  
To blare its own interpretation — nay,  
Full ill then should I quit your  
brother's love,  
And your good father's kindness."  
And she said,  
"Not to be with you, not to see your  
face—  
Alas for me then, my good days are  
done."  
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten  
times nay !  
This is not love : but love's first flash  
in youth,  
Most common : yea, I know it of mine  
own self :  
And you yourself will smile at your  
own self  
Hereafter, when you yield your flower  
of life  
To one more fitly yours, not thrice  
your age :  
And then will I, for true you are and  
sweet  
Beyond mine old belief in woman-  
hood,  
More specially should your good  
knight be poor,  
Endow you with broad land and ter-  
ritory  
Even to the half my realm beyond  
the seas,  
So that would make you happy :  
furthermore,  
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my  
blood,  
In all your quarrels will I be your  
knight.  
This will I do, dear damsel, for your  
sake,  
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke  
She neither blush'd nor shook, but  
deathly-pale

Stood grasping what was nearest, then  
replied :  
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so  
fell,  
And thus they bore her swooning to  
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those  
black walls of yew  
Their talk had pierced, her father :  
"Ay, a flash,  
I fear me, that will strike my hlossom  
dead.  
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-  
lot.  
I pray you, use some rough dis-  
courtesy  
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,  
"That were against me: what I can  
I will;"  
And there that day remain'd, and  
toward even  
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose  
the maid,  
Strippt off the case, and gave the naked  
shield;  
Then, when she heard his horse upon  
the stones,  
Unclasping flung the casement back,  
and look'd  
Down on his helm, from which her  
sleeve had gone.  
And Lancelot knew the little clinking  
sound;  
And she by tact of love was well aware  
That Lancelot knew that she was look-  
ing at him.  
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved  
his hand,  
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.  
This was the one discourtesy that he  
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden  
sat:  
His very shield was gone; only the  
case,  
Her own poor work, her empty lahor,  
left.

But still she heard him, still his picture  
form'd  
And grew between her and the pic-  
tured wall.  
Then came her father, saying in low  
tones,  
"Have comfort," whom she greeted  
quietly.  
Then came her brethren saying,  
"Peace to thee,  
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with  
all calm.  
But when they left her to herself  
again,  
Death, like a friend's voice from a dis-  
tant field  
Approaching thro' the darkness,  
call'd; the owls  
Wailing had power upon her, and she  
mixt  
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted  
glooms  
Of evening, and the moanings of the  
wind.

And in those days she made a little  
song,  
And call'd her song "The Song of  
Love and Death,"  
And sang it: sweetly could she make  
and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in  
vain, in vain;  
And sweet is death who puts an end  
to pain:  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter  
death must be:  
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death  
to me.  
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me  
die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made  
to fade away,  
Sweet death, that seems to make us  
loveless clay,  
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that  
could be;  
It needs must follow death, who calls  
for me;  
Call and I follow, I follow! let me  
die."

High with the last line scaled her  
voice, and this,  
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind  
That shook the tower, the brothers  
heard, and thought  
With shuddering, "Hark the Phant-  
tom of the house  
That ever shrieks before a death,"  
and call'd  
The father, and all three in hurry and  
fear  
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light  
of dawn  
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let  
me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we  
know,  
Repeating, till the word we know so  
well  
Becomes a wonder, and we know not  
why,  
So dwelt the father on her face, and  
thought  
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden  
fell,  
Then gave a languid hand to each,  
and lay,  
Speaking a still good-morrow with her  
eyes.  
At last she said, "Sweet brothers, yes-  
ter-night  
I seem'd a curious little maid again,  
As happy as when we dwelt among  
the woods,  
And when ye used to take me with  
the flood  
Up the great river in the boatman's  
boat.  
Only ye would not pass beyond the  
cape  
That has the poplar on it: there ye  
fixt  
Your limit, oft returning with the  
tide,

And yet I cried because ye would not  
pass  
Beyond it, and far up the shining  
flood  
Until we found the palace of the  
King.  
And yet ye would not: but this night  
I dream'd  
That I was all alone upon the flood,  
And then I said, 'Now shall I have  
my will:'  
And there I woke, but still the wish  
remain'd.  
So let me hence that I may pass at  
last  
Beyond the poplar and far up the  
flood,  
Until I find the palace of the King.  
There will I enter in among them all,  
And no man there will dare to mock  
at me;  
But there the fine Gawain will wonder  
at me,  
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse  
at me;  
Gawain, who bade a thousand fare-  
wells to me,  
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade  
me one:  
And there the King will know me and  
my love,  
And there the Queen herself will pity  
me,  
And all the gentle court will welcome  
me,  
And after my long voyage I shall  
rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my  
child, ye seem  
Light-headed, for what force is yours  
to go  
So far, being sick? and wherefore  
would ye look  
On this proud fellow again, who  
scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to  
heave and move,  
And bluster into stormy sobs and  
say,

"I never loved him: an I meet with him,  
I care not howsoever great he be,  
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.  
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,  
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply,  
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,  
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault  
Not to love me, than it is mine to love  
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd,  
echoing "highest?"  
(He meant to break the passion in her) "nay,  
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;  
But this I know, for all the people know it,  
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:  
And she returns his love in open shame;  
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat;  
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I  
For anger: these are slanders: never yet  
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.  
He makes no friend who never made a foe.  
But now it is my glory to have loved  
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,  
My father, howso'er I seem to you,  
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best  
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:

Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,  
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;  
For if I could believe the things you say  
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,  
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man  
Hither, and let me shrive me clean,  
and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,  
She with a face, bright as for sin forgiven,  
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised  
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd  
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?"  
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,  
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,  
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote  
The letter she devised; which being writ  
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,  
Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet  
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,  
My latest: lay the letter in my hand  
A little ere I die, and close the hand  
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.  
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,  
Then take the little bed on which I died  
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's  
For richness, and me also like the Queen  
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.

And let there be prepared a chariot-bier  
 To take me to the river, and a barge-  
 Be ready on the river, clothed in black.  
 I go in state to court, to meet the  
 Queen.  
 There surely I shall speak for mine  
 own self,  
 And none of you can speak for me  
 so well.  
 And therefore let our dumb old man  
 alone  
 Go with me, he can steer and row,  
 and he  
 Will guide me to that palace, to the  
 doors."

She ceased: her father promised;  
 whereupon  
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd  
 her death  
 Was rather in the fantasy than the  
 blood.  
 But ten slow mornings past, and on  
 the eleventh  
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,  
 And closed the hand upon it, and she  
 died.  
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from  
 underground,  
 Then, those two brethren slowly with  
 bent brows  
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier  
 Past like a shadow thro' the field,  
 that shone  
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon  
 the barge,  
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,  
 lay.  
 There sat the lifelong creature of the  
 house,  
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,  
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his  
 face.  
 So those two brethren from the chariot  
 took  
 And on the black decks laid her in  
 her bed,  
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung

The silken case with braided blazon  
 ings,  
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying  
 to her  
 "Sister, farewell for ever," and again  
 "Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in  
 tears.  
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and  
 the dead,  
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with  
 the flood—  
 In her right hand the lily, in her left  
 The letter—all her bright hair stream-  
 ing down—  
 And all the coverlid was cloth of gold  
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself  
 in white  
 All but her face, and that clear-fea-  
 tured face  
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as  
 dead,  
 But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she  
 smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace  
 craved  
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last  
 The price of half a realm, his costly  
 gift,  
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise  
 and blow,  
 With deaths of others, and almost his  
 own,  
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds:  
 for he saw  
 One of her house, and sent him to the  
 Queen  
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen  
 agreed  
 With such and so unmoved a majesty  
 She might have seem'd her statue, but  
 that he,  
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd  
 her feet  
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong  
 eye  
 The shadow of some piece of pointed  
 lace,  
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the  
 walls,  
 And parted, laughing in his courtly  
 heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,  
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward  
 the stream,  
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling  
 utter'd, "Queen,  
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my  
 joy,  
 Take, what I had not won except for  
 you,  
 These jewels, and make me happy,  
 making them  
 An armlet for the roundest arm on  
 earth,  
 Or necklace for a neck to which the  
 swan's  
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these  
 are words:  
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I  
 sin  
 In speaking, yet O grant my worship  
 of it  
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such  
 sin in words  
 Perchance, we both can pardon: but,  
 my Queen,  
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your  
 court.  
 Our bond, as not the bond of man and  
 wife,  
 Should have in it an absoluter trust  
 To make up that defect: let rumors  
 be:  
 When did not rumors fly? these, as I  
 trust  
 That you trust me in your own noble-  
 ness,  
 I may not well believe that you be-  
 lieve."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd  
 away, the Queen  
 Brake from the vast oriel-embowering  
 vine  
 Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast  
 them off,  
 Till all the place whereon she stood  
 was green;  
 Then, when he ceased, in one cold  
 passive hand  
 Received at once and laid aside the  
 gems  
 There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be, I am quicker of belief  
 Than you believe me, Lancelot of the  
 Lake.  
 Our bond is not the bond of man and  
 wife.  
 This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,  
 It can be broken easier. I for you  
 This many a year have done despite  
 and wrong  
 To one whom ever in my heart of  
 hearts  
 I did acknowledge nobler. What are  
 these?  
 Diamonds for me! they had been  
 thrice their worth  
 Being your gift, had you not lost your  
 own.  
 To loyal hearts the value of all  
 gifts  
 Must vary as the giver's. Not for  
 me!  
 For her! for your new fancy. Only  
 this  
 Grant me, I pray you: have your joys  
 apart.  
 I doubt not that however changed,  
 you keep  
 So much of what is graceful: and  
 myself  
 Would shun to break those bounds of  
 courtesy  
 In which as Arthur's Queen I move  
 and rule:  
 So cannot speak my mind. An end  
 to this!  
 A strange one! yet I take it with  
 Amen.  
 So pray you, add my diamonds to her  
 pearls;  
 Deck her with these; tell her, she  
 shines me down:  
 An armlet for an arm to which the  
 Queen's  
 Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck  
 O as much fairer — as a faith once fair  
 Was richer than these diamonds —  
 hers not mine —  
 Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-  
 self,  
 Or hers or mine, mine now to work  
 my will —  
 She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,  
 And, thro' the casement standing wide  
 for heat,  
 Flung them, and down they flash'd,  
 and smote the stream.  
 Then from the smitten surface flash'd,  
 as it were,  
 Diamonds to meet them, and they past  
 away.  
 Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half  
 disdain  
 At love, life, all things, on the window  
 ledge,  
 Close underneath his eyes, and right  
 across  
 Where these had fallen, slowly past  
 the barge  
 Whereon the lily maid of Astolat  
 Lay smiling, like a star in blackest  
 night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,  
 burst away  
 To weep and wail in secret; and the  
 barge,  
 On to the palace-doorway sliding,  
 paused.  
 There two stood arm'd, and kept the  
 door; to whom,  
 All up the marble stair, tier over  
 tier,  
 Were added mouths that gaped, and  
 eyes that ask'd  
 "What is it?" but that oarsman's  
 haggard face,  
 As hard and still as is the face that  
 men  
 Shape to their fancy's eye from broken  
 rocks  
 On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and  
 they said,  
 "He is enchanted, cannot speak —  
 and she,  
 Look how she sleeps — the Fairy  
 Queen, so fair!  
 Yea, but how pale! what are they?  
 flesh and blood?  
 Or come to take the King to Fairy-  
 land?  
 For some do hold our Arthur cannot  
 die,  
 But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the  
 King, the King  
 Came girt with knights: then turn'd  
 the tongueless man  
 From the half-face to the full eye,  
 and rose  
 And pointed to the damsel, and the  
 doors.  
 So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale  
 And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the  
 maid;  
 And reverently they bore her into  
 hall.  
 Then came the fine Gawain and won-  
 der'd at her,  
 And Lancelot later came and mused  
 at her,  
 And last the Queen herself, and pitied  
 her:  
 But Arthur spied the letter in her  
 hand,  
 Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;  
 this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of  
 the Lake,  
 I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,  
 Come, for you left me taking no fare-  
 well,  
 Hither, to take my last farewell of  
 you.  
 I loved you, and my love had no  
 return,  
 And therefore my true love has been  
 my death.  
 And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,  
 And to all other ladies, I make moan.  
 Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.  
 Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lan-  
 celot,  
 As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;  
 And ever in the reading, lords and  
 dames  
 Wept, looking often from his face who  
 read  
 To hers which lay so silent, and at  
 times,  
 So touch'd were they, half-thinking  
 that her lips,



Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:

"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,

Know that for this most gentle maiden's death

Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,

But loved me with a love beyond all love

In women, whomsoever I have known. Yet to be loved makes not to love again;

Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave

No cause, not willingly, for such a love:

To this I call my friends in testimony, Her brethren, and her father, who himself

Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,

To break her passion, some discourtesy Against my nature: what I could, I did.

I left her and I bade her no farewell; Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,

I might have put my wits to some rough use,

And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen (Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)

"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,

Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."

He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,

He adding,

"Queen, she would not be content Save that I wedded her, which could not be.

Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd.

It could not be. I told her that her love

Was but the flash of youth, would darken down

To rise hereafter in a stiller flame

Toward one more worthy of her — than would I,

More specially were he, she wedded, poor,

Estate them with large land and territory

In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,

To keep them in all joyance: more than this

I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,

It will be to thy worship, as my knight,

And mine, as head of all our Table Round,

To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm

Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went

The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,

And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see,

The maiden buried, not as one unknown,

Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,

And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.

And when the knights had laid her comely head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,

Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon, And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet

Be carven, and her lily in her hand.

And let the story of her dolorous  
 voyage  
 For all true hearts be blazon'd on her  
 tomb  
 In letters gold and azure!" which was  
 wrought  
 Thereafter; but when now the lords  
 and dames  
 And people, from the high door  
 streaming, brake  
 Disorderly, as homeward each, the  
 Queen,  
 Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he  
 moved apart,  
 Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,  
 "Lancelot,  
 Forgive me; mine was jealousy in  
 love."  
 He answer'd with his eyes upon the  
 ground,  
 "That is love's curse; pass on, my  
 Queen, forgiven."  
 But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy  
 brows,  
 Approach'd him, and with full affec-  
 tion said,

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in  
 whom I have  
 Most joy and most affianced, for I  
 know  
 What thou hast been in battle by my  
 side,  
 And many a time have watch'd thee  
 at the tilt  
 Strike down the lusty and long prac-  
 tised knight,  
 And let the younger and unskill'd  
 go by  
 To win his honor and to make his  
 name,  
 And loved thy courtesies and thee, a  
 man  
 Made to be loved; but now I would  
 to God,  
 Seeing the homeless trouble in thine  
 eyes,  
 Thou couldst have loved this maiden,  
 shaped, it seems,  
 By God for thee alone, and from her  
 face,

If one may judge the living by the  
 dead,  
 Delicately pure and marvellously fair,  
 Who might have brought thee, now a  
 lonely man  
 Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons  
 Born to the glory of thy name and  
 fame,  
 My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of  
 the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot, "Fair she  
 was, my King,  
 Pure, as you ever wish your knights  
 to be.  
 To doubt her fairness were to want an  
 eye,  
 To doubt her pureness were to want a  
 heart —  
 Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love  
 Could bind him, but free love will not  
 be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest,"  
 said the King.  
 "Let love be free; free love is for  
 the best:  
 And, after heaven, on our dull side of  
 death,  
 What should be best, if not so pure a  
 love  
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet  
 thee  
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I  
 think,  
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I  
 know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but  
 he went,  
 And at the inrunning of a little brook,  
 Sat by the river in a cove, and  
 watch'd  
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his  
 eyes  
 And saw the barge that brought her  
 moving down,  
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and  
 said  
 Low in himself, "Ah simple heart and  
 sweet,

Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a  
love  
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray  
for thy soul?  
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now  
at last —  
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in  
love?'  
Not rather dead love's harsh heir,  
jealous pride?  
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of  
love,  
May not your crescent fear for name  
and fame  
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that  
wanes?  
Why did the King dwell on my name  
to me?  
Mine own name shames me, seeming  
a reproach,  
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake  
Caught from his mother's arms —  
the wondrous one  
Who passes thro' the vision of the  
night —  
She chanted snatches of mysterious  
hymns  
Heard on the winding waters, eve and  
morn  
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair,  
my child,  
As a king's son,' and often in her arms  
She bare me, pacing on the dusky  
mere.  
Would she had drown'd me in it,  
where'er it be!  
For what am I? what profits me my  
name  
Of greatest knight? I fought for it,  
and have it:  
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it,  
pain;  
Now grown a part of me: but what  
use in it?  
To make men worse by making my  
sin known?  
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming  
great?  
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a  
man  
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs  
must break

These bonds that so defame me: not  
without  
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it?  
nay,  
Who knows? but if I would not, then  
may God,  
I pray him, send a sudden Angel down  
To seize me by the hair and bear me  
far,  
And fling me deep in that forgotten  
mere,  
Among the tumbled fragments of the  
hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorse-  
ful pain,  
Not knowing he should die a holy  
man.

#### THE HOLY GRAIL.

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of  
prowess done  
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,  
Whom Arthur and his knighthood  
call'd The Pure,  
Had pass'd into the silent life of  
prayer,  
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving  
for the cowl  
The helmet in an abbey far away  
From Camelot, there, and not long  
after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among  
the rest,  
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond  
the rest,  
And honor'd him, and wrought into  
his heart  
A way by love that waken'd love  
within,  
To answer that which came: and as  
they sat  
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-  
ing half  
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn  
That puff'd the swaying branches into  
smoke  
Above them, ere the summer when  
he died,

The monk Ambrosius question'd  
Percivale :

“O brother, I have seen this yew-  
tree smoke,  
Spring after spring, for half a hun-  
dred years :  
For never have I known the world  
without,  
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale : but  
thee,  
When first thou camest — such a  
courtesy  
Spake thro' the limbs and in the  
voice —  
I knew  
For one of those who eat in Arthur's  
hall ;  
For good ye are and bad, and like to  
coins,  
Some true, some light, but every one  
of you  
Stamp'd with the image of the King ;  
and now  
Tell me, what drove thee from the  
Table Round,  
My brother ? was it earthly passion  
crost ? ”

“Nay,” said the knight ; “for no  
such passion mine  
But the sweet vision of the Holy  
Grail  
Drove me from all vainglories, rival-  
ries,  
And earthly heats that spring and  
sparkle out  
Among us in the jousts, while women  
watch  
Who wins, who falls ; and waste the  
spiritual strength  
Within us, better offer'd up to  
Heaven.”

To whom the monk : “The Holy  
Grail ! — I trust  
We are green in Heaven's eyes ; but  
here too much  
We moulder — as to things without I  
mean —  
Yet one of your own knights, a guest  
of ours,

Told us of this in our refectory,  
But spake with such a sadness and so  
low  
We heard not half of what he said.  
What is it ?  
The phantom of a cup that comes  
and goes ? ”

“Nay, monk ! what phantom ? ”  
answer'd Percivale.  
“The cup, the cup itself, from which  
our Lord  
Drank at the last sad supper with his  
own.  
This, from the blessed land of Aro-  
mat —  
After the day of darkness, when the  
dead  
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the  
good saint  
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying  
brought  
To Glastoabury, where the winter  
thorn  
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of  
our Lord.  
And there awhile it bode ; and if a  
man  
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd  
at once,  
By faith, of all his ills. But then the  
times  
Grew to such evil that the holy cup  
Was caught away to Heaven, and  
disappear'd.”

To whom the monk : “From our  
old books I know  
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-  
bury,  
And there the heathen Prince, Arvi-  
ragus,  
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to  
build ;  
And there he built with wattles from  
the marsh  
A little lonely church in days of yore,  
For so they say, these books of ours,  
but seem  
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.  
But who first saw the holy thing to-  
day ? ”

"A woman," answer'd Percivale,  
 "a nun,  
 And one no further off in blood from  
 me  
 Than sister; and if ever holy maid  
 With knees of adoration wore the  
 stone,  
 A holy maid; tho' never maiden  
 glow'd,  
 But that was in her earlier maiden-  
 hood,  
 With such a fervent flame of human  
 love,  
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced  
 and shot  
 Only to holy things; to prayer and  
 praise  
 She gave herself, to fast and alms.  
 And yet,  
 Nun as she was, the scandal of the  
 Court,  
 Sin against Arthur and the Table  
 Round,  
 And the strange sound of an adulter-  
 ous race,  
 Across the iron grating of her cell  
 Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all  
 the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins,  
 or what  
 Her all but utter whiteness held for  
 sin,  
 A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,  
 Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,  
 A legend handed down thro' five or six,  
 And each of these a hundred winters  
 old,  
 From our Lord's time. And when  
 King Arthur made  
 His Table Round, and all men's hearts  
 became  
 Clean for a season, surely he had  
 thought  
 That now the Holy Grail would come  
 again;  
 But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it  
 would come,  
 And heal the world of all their wicked-  
 ness!  
 'O Father!' ask'd the maiden, 'might  
 it come

To me by prayer and fasting "' Nay,'  
 said he,  
 'I know not, for thy heart is pure as  
 snow.'  
 And so she pray'd and fasted, till the  
 sun  
 Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her,  
 and I thought  
 She might have risen and floated when  
 I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak  
 with me.  
 And when she came to speak, behold  
 her eyes  
 Beyond my knowing of them, beauti-  
 ful,  
 Beyond all knowing of them, won-  
 derful,  
 Beautiful in the light of holiness.  
 And 'O my brother Percivale,' she  
 said,  
 'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy  
 Grail:  
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard  
 a sound  
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills  
 Blown, and I thought, "It is not  
 Arthur's use  
 To hunt by moonlight;" and the slen-  
 der sound  
 As from a distance beyond distance  
 grew  
 Coming upon me — O never harp nor  
 horn,  
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or  
 touch with hand,  
 Was like that music as it came; and  
 then  
 Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and  
 silver beam,  
 And down the long beam stole the  
 Holy Grail,  
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if  
 alive,  
 Till all the white walls of my cell were  
 dyed  
 With rosy colors leaping on the wall;  
 And then the music faded, and the  
 Grail  
 Past, and the beam decay'd, and from  
 the walls

The rosy quiverings died into the night.

So now the Holy Thing is here again  
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,  
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,  
That so perchance the vision may be seen  
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd.'

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this  
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd  
Always, and many among us many a week  
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,  
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved  
Among us in white armor, Galahad.  
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'  
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none,  
In so young youth, was ever made a knight  
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard  
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;  
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd  
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some  
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some said  
Begotten by enchantment—chatterers they,  
Life birds of passage piping up and down,  
That gape for flies—we know not whence they come;  
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away  
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair  
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;  
And out of this she plaited broad and long  
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread  
And crimson in the belt a strange device,  
A crimson grail within a silver beam;  
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,  
Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,  
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,  
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.  
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,  
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king  
Far in the spiritual city:' and as she spake  
She sent her deathless passion in her eyes  
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind  
On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle: O brother,  
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,  
Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,  
And carven with strange figures; and in and out  
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll  
Of letters in a tongue no man could read.  
And Merlin call'd it 'The Siege perilous.'  
Perilous for good and ill; 'for there,' he said,  
'No man could sit but he should lose himself.'  
And once by misadventure Merlin sat  
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,  
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!'

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,  
While the great banquet lay along the hall,  
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we heard  
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,  
And rending, and a blast, and overhead  
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.  
And in the blast there smote along the hall  
A beam of light seven times more clear than day:  
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail  
All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,  
And none might see who bare it, and it past.  
But every knight beheld his fellow's face  
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,  
And staring each at other like dumb men  
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I,  
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride  
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,  
Until I found and saw it, as the nun  
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,  
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,  
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,  
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,

"What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale, "the King,  
Was not in hall: for early that same day,  
Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit hold,  
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall  
Crying on help: for all her shining hair  
Was smear'd with earth, and either milky arm  
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore  
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn  
In tempest: so the King arose and went  
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees  
That made such honey in his realm.  
Howbeit  
Some little of this marvel he too saw,  
Returning o'er the plain that then began  
To darken under Camelot; whence the King  
Look'd up, calling aloud, 'Lo, there! the roofs  
Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-smoke!  
Pray Heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt.'  
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,  
As having there so oft with all his knights  
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty hall,  
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!  
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,  
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,  
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,

By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,  
 Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.  
 And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt  
 With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall:  
 And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,  
 And in the second men are slaying beasts,  
 And on the third are warriors, perfect men,  
 And on the fourth are men with growing wings,  
 And over all one statue in the mould  
 Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,  
 And peak'd wings pointed to the Northern Star.  
 And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown  
 And both the wings are made of gold, and flame  
 At sunrise till the people in far fields,  
 Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,  
 Behold it, crying, 'We have still a King.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall within,  
 Broader and higher than any in all the lands!  
 Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,  
 And all the light that falls upon the board  
 Streams thro' the twelve great battles of our King.  
 Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,  
 Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,  
 Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.  
 And also one to the west, and counter to it,  
 And blank: and who shall blazon it? when and how? —

O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,  
 The brand Excalibur will be cast away.

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,  
 In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,  
 Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapt  
 In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.  
 And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw  
 The golden dragon sparkling over all:  
 And many of those who burnt the hold, their arms  
 Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed with smoke, and sear'd,  
 Follow'd, and in among bright faces, ours,  
 Full of the vision, prest: and then the King  
 Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale,'  
 (Because the hall was all in tumult — some  
 Vowing, and some protesting), 'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,  
 My sister's vision, and the rest, his face  
 Darken'd, as I have seen it more than once,  
 When some brave deed seem'd to be done in vain,  
 Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,  
 'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'  
 Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,  
 My King, thou wouldst have sworn.'  
 'Yea, yea,' said he,  
 'Art thou so hold and hast not seen the Grail?'

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,



But since I did not see the Holy  
Thing,  
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he ask'd us, knight by  
knight, if any  
Had seen it, all their answers were as  
one:

'Nay, lord, and therefore have we  
sworn our vows.'

"'Lo now,' said Arthur, 'have ye  
seen a cloud?  
What go ye into the wilderness to  
see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and  
in a voice  
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,  
call'd,  
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy  
Grail,  
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —  
"O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow  
me."'

"'Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the  
King, 'for such  
As thou art is the vision, not for  
these.

Thy holy nun and thou have seen a  
sign —

Holier is none, my Percivale, than  
she —

A sign to maim this Order which I  
made.

But ye, that follow but the leader's  
bell'

(Brother, the King was hard upon his  
knights)

'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,  
And one hath sung and all the dumb  
will sing.

Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-  
borne

Five knights at once, and every  
younger knight,

Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,  
Till overborne by one, he learns — and  
ye,

What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor  
Percivales?

(For thus it pleased the King to range  
me close

After Sir Galahad); 'nay,' said he,  
'but men

With strength and will to right the  
wrong'd, of power

To lay the sudden heads of violence  
flat,

Knights that in twelve great battles  
splash'd and dyed

The strong White Horse in his own  
heathen blood —

But one hath seen, and all the blind  
will see.

Go, since your vows are sacred, being  
made:

Yet — for ye know the cries of all my  
realm

Pass thro' this hall — how often, O my  
knights,

Your places being vacant at my  
side,

This chance of noble deeds will come  
and go

Unchallenged, while ye follow wan-  
dering fires

Lost in the quagmire! Many of you,  
yea most,

Return no more: ye think I show my-  
self

Too dark a prophet: come now, let  
us meet

The morrow morn once more in one  
full field

Of gracious pastime, that once more  
the King,

Before ye leave him for this Quest,  
may count

The yet-unbroken strength of all his  
knights,

Rejoicing in that Order which he  
made.'

"So when the sun broke next from  
under ground,

All the great table of our Arthur  
closed

And clash'd in such a tourney and so  
full,

So many lances broken — never yet  
Had Camelot seen the like, since  
Arthur came;

And I myself and Galahad, for a  
strength  
Was in us from the vision, overthrew  
So many knights that all the people  
cried,  
And almost burst the barriers in their  
heat,  
Shouting, 'Sir Galahad and Sir Per-  
civale!'

"But when the next day brake  
from under ground —  
O brother, had you known our Came-  
lot,  
Built by old kings, age after age, so  
old  
The King himself had fears that it  
would fall,  
So strange, and rich, and dim; for  
where the roofs  
Totter'd toward each other in the  
sky,  
Met foreheads all along the street of  
those  
Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and  
where the long  
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd the  
necks  
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,  
Thicker than drops from thunder,  
showers of flowers  
Fell as we past; and men and boys  
astride  
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,  
At all the corners, named us each by  
name,  
Calling 'God speed!' but in the ways  
below  
The knights and ladies wept, and rich  
and poor  
Wept, and the King himself could  
hardly speak  
For grief, and all in middle street the  
Queen,  
Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and  
shriek'd aloud,  
'This madness has come on us for our  
sins.'  
So to the Gate of the three Queens we  
came,  
Where Arthur's wars are render'd  
mystically,

And thence departed every one his  
way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and  
thought  
Of all my late-shown prowess in the  
lists,  
How my strong lance had beaten down  
the knights,  
So many and famous names; and  
never yet  
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor  
earth so green,  
For all my blood danced in me, and I  
knew  
That I should light upon the Holy  
Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of  
our King,  
That most of us would follow wander-  
ing fires,  
Came like a driving gloom across my  
mind.  
Then every evil word I had spoken  
once,  
And every evil thought I had thought  
of old,  
And every evil deed I ever did,  
Awoke and cried, 'This Quest is not  
for thee.'  
And lifting up mine eyes, I found my-  
self  
Alone, and in a land of sand and  
thorns,  
And I was thirsty even unto death;  
And I, too, cried, 'This Quest is not  
for thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought  
my thirst  
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and  
then a brook,  
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-  
ing white  
Play'd ever back upon the sloping  
wave,  
And took both ear and eye; and o'er  
the brook  
Were apple-trees, and apples by the  
brook

Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'

I said, 'I am not worthy of the Quest;'  
But even while I drank the brook, and ate

The goodly apples, all these things at once

Fell into dust, and I was left alone,  
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a door

Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,

And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,

And all her bearing gracious; and she rose

Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,

'Rest here;' but when I touch'd her, lo! she, too,

Fell into dust and nothing, and the house

Became no better than a broken shed.  
And in it a dead babe; and also this  
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.

Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,

And where it smote the plowshare in the field,

The plowman left his plowing, and fell down

Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,

The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down

Before it, and I knew not why, but thought

'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.

Then was I ware of one that on me moved

In golden armor with a crown of gold  
About a casque all jewels; and his horse

In golden armor jewell'd everywhere:

And on the splendor came, flashing me blind;

And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,

Being so huge. But when I thought he meant

To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,

Open'd his arms to embrace me as he came,

And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,

Fell into dust, and I was left alone  
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty hill,

And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires

Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.

And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these

Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!

Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'

And glad was I and clomb, but found at top

No man, nor any voice. And thence I past

Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw  
That man had once dwelt there; but

there I found  
Only one man of an exceeding age.

'Where is that goodly company,' said I,  
'That so cried out upon me?' and he

had  
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet

gasp'd,  
'Whence and what art thou?' and even as he spoke

Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I  
Was left alone once more, and cried

in grief,  
'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself

And touch it, it will crumble into dust.'

"And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,

Low as the hill was high, and where  
the vale  
Was lowest, found a chapel, and  
thereby  
A holy hermit in a hermitage,  
To whom I told my phantoms, and he  
said :

“O son, thou hast not true humility,  
The highest virtue, mother of them all;  
For when the Lord of all things made  
Himself  
Naked of glory for His mortal change,  
“Take thou my robe,” she said, “for  
all is thine,”  
And all her form shone forth with  
sudden light  
So that the angels were amazed, and  
she  
Follow’d Him down, and like a flying  
star  
Led on the gray-hair’d wisdom of the  
east;  
But her thou hast not known: for  
what is this  
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and  
thy sins?  
Thou hast not lost thyself to save  
thyself  
As Galahad.’ When the hermit made  
an end,  
In silver armor suddenly Galahad  
shone  
Before us, and against the chapel door  
Laid lance, and enter’d, and we knelt  
in prayer.  
And there the hermit slaked my burn-  
ing thirst,  
And at the sacrificing of the mass I saw  
The holy elements alone; but he,  
‘Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw  
the Grail,  
The Holy Grail, descend upon the  
shrine:  
I saw the fiery face as of a child  
That smote itself into the bread, and  
went;  
And hither am I come; and never yet  
Hath what thy sister taught me first  
to see,  
This Holy Thing, fail’d from my side,  
nor come

Cover’d, but moving with me night  
and day,  
Fainter by day, but always in the night  
Blood-red, and sliding down the black-  
en’d marsh  
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain  
top  
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere  
below  
Blood-red. And in the strength of  
this I rode,  
Shattering all evil customs every-  
where,  
And past thro’ Pagan realms, and  
made them mine,  
And clash’d with Pagan hordes, and  
bore them down,  
And broke thro’ all, and in the strength  
of this  
Come victor. But my time is hard at  
hand,  
And hence I go; and one will crown  
me king  
Far in the spiritual city; and come  
thou, too,  
For thou shalt see the vision when I  
go.’

“While thus he spake, his eye,  
dwelling on mine,  
Drew me, with power upon me, till I  
grew  
One with him, to believe as he be-  
lieved.  
Then, when the day began to wane,  
we went.

“There rose a hill that none but  
man could climb,  
Scarr’d with a hundred wintry water-  
courses —  
Storm at the top, and when we gain’d  
it, storm  
Round us and death; for every mo-  
ment glanced  
His silver arms and gloom’d: so quick  
and thick  
The lightnings here and there to left  
and right  
Struck, till the dry old trunks about  
us, dead,

Yea, rotten with a hundred years of  
 death,  
 Sprang into fire: and at the base we  
 found  
 On either hand, as far as eye could see,  
 A great black swamp and of an evil  
 smell,  
 Part black, part whiten'd with the  
 bones of men,  
 Not to be crost, save that some ancient  
 king  
 Had built a way, where, link'd with  
 many a bridge,  
 A thousand piers ran into the great  
 Sea.  
 And Galahad fled along them bridge  
 by bridge,  
 And every bridge as quickly as he  
 crost  
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I  
 yearn'd  
 To follow; and thrice above him all  
 the heavens  
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such  
 as seem'd  
 Shoutings of all the sons of God: and  
 first  
 At once I saw him far on the great  
 Sea,  
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel  
 hung  
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous  
 cloud.  
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the  
 boat,  
 If boat it were — I saw not whence it  
 came.  
 And when the heavens open'd and  
 blazed again  
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —  
 And had he set the sail, or had the  
 boat  
 Become a living creature clad with  
 wings?  
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel  
 hung  
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,  
 For now I knew the veil had been  
 withdrawn.  
 Then in a moment when they blazed  
 again

Opening, I saw the least of little stars  
 Down on the waste, and straight  
 beyond the star  
 I saw the spiritual city and all her  
 spires  
 And gateways in a glory like one  
 pearl —  
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the  
 saints —  
 Strike from the sea; and from the  
 star there shot  
 A rose-red sparkle to the city, and  
 there  
 Dwelt, and I know it was the Holy  
 Grail,  
 Which never eyes on earth again  
 shall see.  
 Then fell the floods of heaven drown-  
 ing the deep.  
 And how my feet recrost the death-  
 ful ridge  
 No memory in me lives; but that I  
 touch'd  
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know;  
 and thence  
 Taking my war-horse from the holy  
 man,  
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more,  
 return'd  
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's  
 wars."

"O brother," ask'd Ambrosius, —  
 "for in sooth  
 These ancient books — and they would  
 win thee — teen,  
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,  
 With miracles and marvels like to  
 these,  
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,  
 Who read but on my breviary with  
 ease,  
 Till my head swims; and then go forth  
 and pass  
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so  
 close,  
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's  
 nest  
 To these old walls — and mingle with  
 our folk;  
 And knowing every honest face of  
 theirs

As well as ever shepherd knew his  
 sheep,  
 And every homely secret in their  
 hearts,  
 Delight myself with gossip and old  
 wives,  
 And ills and aches, and teething,  
 lyings-in,  
 And mirthful sayings, children of the  
 place,  
 That have no meaning half a league  
 away :  
 Or lulling random squabbles when  
 they rise,  
 Chafferings and chatterings at the  
 market-cross,  
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world  
 of mine,  
 Yea, even in their hens and in their  
 eggs —  
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,  
 Came ye on none but phantoms in  
 your quest,  
 No man, no woman ? ”

Then Sir Percivale :

“ All men, to one so bound by such a  
 vow,  
 And women were as phantoms. O,  
 my brother,  
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess  
 to thee  
 How far I falter'd from my quest and  
 vow ?  
 For after I had lain so many nights,  
 A bedmate of the snail and eft and  
 snake,  
 In grass and burdock, I was changed  
 to wan  
 And meagre, and the vision had not  
 come ;  
 And then I chanced upon a goodly  
 town  
 With one great dwelling in the middle  
 of it ;  
 Thither I made, and there was I dis-  
 arm'd  
 By maidens each as fair as any flower :  
 But when they led me into hall, be-  
 hold,  
 The Princess of that castle was the  
 one,

Brother, and that one only, who had  
 ever  
 Made my heart leap ; for when I  
 moved of old  
 A slender page about her father's hall,  
 And she a slender maiden, all my  
 heart  
 Went after her with longing : yet we  
 twain  
 Had never kiss'd a kiss, or vow'd a  
 vow.  
 And now I came upon her once again,  
 And one had wedded her, and he was  
 dead,  
 And all his land and wealth and state  
 were hers.  
 And while I tarried, every day she  
 set  
 A banquet richer than the day before  
 By me ; for all her longing and her  
 will  
 Was toward me as of old ; till one  
 fair morn,  
 I walking to and fro beside a stream  
 That flash'd across her orchard under-  
 neath  
 Her castle-walls, she stole upon my  
 walk,  
 And calling me the greatest of all  
 knights,  
 Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the  
 first time,  
 And gave herself and all her wealth  
 to me.  
 Then I remember'd Arthur's warning  
 word,  
 That most of us would follow wan-  
 dering fires,  
 And the Quest faded in my heart.  
 Anon,  
 The heads of all her people drew to  
 me,  
 With supplication both of knees and  
 tongue :  
 ‘ We have heard of thee : thou art  
 our greatest knight,  
 Our Lady says it, and we well believe :  
 Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,  
 And thou shalt be as Arthur in our  
 land.’  
 O me, my brother ! but one night my  
 vow

Burnt me within, so that I rose and fled,  
 But wail'd and wept, and hated mine own self,  
 And ev'n the Holy Quest, and all but her;  
 Then after I was join'd with Galahad  
 Cared not for her, nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk, "Poor men, when yule is cold,  
 Must be content to sit by little fires.  
 And this am I, so that ye care for me  
 Ever so little; yea, and blest be Heaven  
 That brought thee here to this poor house of ours  
 Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm  
 My cold heart with a friend: but O the pity  
 To find thine own first love once more — to hold,  
 Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,  
 Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,  
 Foregoing all her sweetness, like a weed.  
 For we that want the warmth of double life,  
 We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet  
 Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —  
 Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,  
 Seeing I never stray'd beyond the cell,  
 But live like an old badger in his earth,  
 With earth about him everywhere, despite  
 All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,  
 None of your knights?"

"Yea so," said Percivale:  
 "One night my pathway swerving east, I saw  
 The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors

All in the middle of the rising moon:  
 And toward him spurr'd, and hail'd him, and he me,  
 And each made joy of either; then he ask'd,  
 'Where is he? hast thou seen him — Lancelot? — Once,'  
 Said good Sir Bors, 'he dash'd across me — mad,  
 And maddening what he rode: and when I cried,  
 "Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest So holy," Lancelot shouted, "Stay me not!  
 I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,  
 For now there is a lion in the way."  
 So vanish'd.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,  
 Because his former madness, once the talk  
 And scandal of our table, had return'd;  
 For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him  
 That ill to him is ill to them; to Bors  
 Beyond the rest: he well had been content  
 Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,  
 The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed, Being so clouded with his grief and love,  
 Small heart was his after the Holy Quest:  
 If God would send the vision, well: if not,  
 The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors  
 Rode to the loneliest tract of all the realm,  
 And found a people there among their crags,  
 Our race and blood, a remnant that were left

Paynim amid their circles, and the  
 stones  
 They pitch up straight to heaven:  
 and their wise men  
 Were strong in that old magic which  
 can trace  
 The wandering of the stars, and  
 scoff'd at him  
 And this high Quest as at a simple  
 thing:  
 Told him he follow'd — almost Ar-  
 thur's words —  
 A mocking fire: 'what other fire than  
 he,  
 Whereby the blood beats, and the  
 blossom blows,  
 And the sea rolls, and all the world is  
 warm'd?'  
 And when his answer chafed them,  
 the rough crowd,  
 Hearing he had a difference with  
 their priests,  
 Seized him, and bound and plunged  
 him into a cell  
 Of great piled stones; and lying  
 bounden there  
 In darkness thro' innumerable  
 hours  
 He heard the hollow-ringing heavens  
 sweep  
 Over him till by miracle — what  
 else? —  
 Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt  
 and fell,  
 Such as no wind could move: and  
 thro' the gap  
 Glimmer'd the streaming scud: then  
 came a night  
 Still as the day was loud; and thro'  
 the gap  
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's  
 Table Round —  
 For, brother, so one night, because  
 they roll  
 Thro' such a round in heaven, we  
 named the stars,  
 Rejoicing in ourselves and in our  
 King —  
 And these, like bright eyes of familiar  
 friends,  
 In on him shone: 'And then to me,  
 to me,'

Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes  
 of mine,  
 Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for  
 myself —  
 Across the seven clear stars — O  
 grace to me —  
 In color like the fingers of a hand  
 Before a burning taper, the sweet  
 Grail  
 Glided and past, and close upon it peal'd  
 A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards,  
 a maid,  
 Who kept our holy faith among her  
 kin  
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him  
 go."

To whom the monk: "And I re-  
 member now  
 That pelican on the casque: Sir Bors  
 it was  
 Who spake so low and sadly at our  
 board;  
 And mighty reverent at our grace  
 was he:  
 A square-set man and honest; and his  
 eyes,  
 An out-door sign of all the warmth  
 within,  
 Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath  
 a cloud,  
 But heaven had meant it for a sunny  
 one:  
 Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But  
 when ye reach'd  
 The city, found ye all your knights  
 return'd,  
 Or was there sooth in Arthur's proph-  
 ecy,  
 Tell me, and what said each, and  
 what the King?"

Then answer'd Percivale: "And:  
 that can I,  
 Brother, and truly; since the living  
 words  
 Of so great men as Lancelot and our  
 King  
 Pass not from door to door and out  
 again,  
 But sit within the house. O, when we  
 reach'd



The city, our horses stumbling as  
they trode  
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,  
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-  
atrices,  
And shatter'd talbots, which had left  
the stones  
Raw, that they fell from, brought us  
to the hall.

“And there sat Arthur on the daïs-  
throne,  
And those that had gone out upon the  
Quest,  
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of  
them,  
And those that had not, stood before  
the King,  
Who, when he saw me, rose, and bade  
me hail,  
Saying, ‘A welfare in thine eye re-  
proves  
Our fear of some disastrous chance  
for thee  
On hill, or plain, at sea, or flooding  
ford.  
So fierce a gale made havoc here of  
late  
Among the strange devices of our  
kings;  
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall  
of ours,  
And from the statue Merlin moulded  
for us  
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but  
now — the Quest,  
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy  
Cup,  
That Joseph brought of old to Glas-  
tonbury?’”

“So when I told him all thyself  
nast heard,  
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-  
solve  
To pass away into the quiet life,  
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-  
ing, ask'd  
Of Gawain, ‘Gawain, was this Quest  
for thee?’”

“‘Nay, lord,’ said Gawain, ‘not for  
such as I.  
Therefore I communed with a jaintly  
man,  
Who made me sure the Quest was not  
for me;  
For I was much awearied of the  
Quest:  
But found a silk pavilion in a field,  
And merry maidens in it; and then  
this gale  
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-  
pin,  
And blew my merry maidens all  
about  
With all discomfourt; yea, and but for  
this,  
My twelvemonth and a day were  
pleasant to me.’”

“He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to  
whom at first  
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,  
push'd  
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,  
caught his hand,  
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him,  
stood,  
Until the King espied him, saying to  
him,  
‘Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and  
true  
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail;’  
and Bors,  
‘Ask me not, for I may not speak of  
it:  
I saw it;’ and the tears were in his  
eyes.

“Then there remain'd but Lance-  
lot, for the rest  
Spake but of sundry perils in the  
storm;  
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy  
Writ,  
Our Arthur kept his best until the  
last;  
‘Thou, too, my Lancelot,’ ask'd the  
King, ‘my friend,  
Our mightiest, hath this Quest avail'd  
for thee?’”

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lance-  
 lot, with a groan;  
 'O King!' — and when he paused,  
 methought I spied  
 A dying fire of madness in his eyes —  
 'O King, my friend, if friend of thine  
 I be,  
 Happier are those that welter in their  
 sin,  
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for  
 slime,  
 Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a  
 sin  
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of  
 pure,  
 Noble, and knightly in me twined  
 and clung  
 Round that one sin, until the whole-  
 some flower  
 And poisonous grew together, each as  
 each,  
 Not to be pluck'd asunder; and when  
 thy knights  
 Sware, I swear with them only in the  
 hope  
 That could I touch or see the Holy  
 Grail  
 They might be pluck'd asunder. Then  
 I spake  
 To one most holy saint, who wept and  
 said,  
 That save they could be pluck'd  
 asunder, all  
 My quest were but in vain; to whom  
 I vow'd  
 That I would work according as he  
 will'd.  
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd  
 and strove  
 To tear the twain asunder in my  
 heart,  
 My madness came upon me as of old,  
 And whipt me into waste fields far  
 away;  
 There was I beaten down by little  
 men,  
 Mean knights, to whom the moving  
 of my sword  
 And shadow of my spear had been  
 enow  
 To scare them from me once; and  
 then I came

All in my folly to the naked shore,  
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse  
 grasses grew;  
 But such a blast, my King, began to  
 blow,  
 So loud a blast along the shore and  
 sea,  
 Ye could not hear the waters for the  
 blast,  
 Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all  
 the sea  
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand  
 Swept like a river, and the clouded  
 heavens  
 Were shaken with the motion and the  
 sound.  
 And blackening in the sea-foam  
 sway'd a boat,  
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a  
 chain;  
 And in my madness to myself I said,  
 "I will embark and I will lose myself,  
 And in the great sea wash away my  
 sin."  
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the  
 boat.  
 Seven days I drove along the dreary  
 deep,  
 And with me drove the moon and all  
 the stars;  
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh  
 night  
 I heard the shingle grinding in the  
 surge,  
 And felt the boat shock earth, and  
 looking up,  
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-  
 bonek,  
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,  
 With chasm-like portals open to the  
 sea,  
 And steps that met the breaker! there  
 was none  
 Stood near it but a lion on each side  
 That kept the entry, and the moon  
 was full.  
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up  
 the stairs.  
 There drew my sword. With sudden-  
 flaring manes  
 Those two great beasts rose upright  
 like a man,

Each gript a shoulder, and I stood  
 between;  
 And, when I would have smitten  
 them, heard a voice,  
 "Doubt not, go forward; if thou  
 doubt, the beasts  
 Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with  
 violence  
 The sword was dash'd from out my  
 hand, and fell.  
 And up into the sounding hall I past;  
 But nothing in the sounding hall I  
 saw,  
 No bench nor table, painting on the  
 wall  
 Or shield of knight; only the rounded  
 moon  
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.  
 But always in the quiet house I heard,  
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,  
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost  
 tower  
 To the eastward: up I climb'd a thou-  
 sand steps  
 With pain: as in a dream I seem'd to  
 climb  
 For ever: at the last I reach'd a door,  
 A light was in the crannies, and I  
 heard,  
 "Glory and joy and honor to our  
 Lord  
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail."  
 Then in my madness I essay'd the  
 door;  
 It gave; and thro' a stormy glare, a  
 heat  
 As from a seventimes-heated furnace,  
 I,  
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I  
 was,  
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd  
 away—  
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy  
 Grail,  
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and  
 around  
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings  
 and eyes.  
 And but for all my madness and my  
 sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn  
 I saw

That which I saw; but what I saw  
 was veil'd  
 And cover'd; and this Quest was not  
 for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing,  
 Lancelot left  
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain  
 — nay,  
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish  
 words,—  
 A reckless and irreverent knight was  
 he,  
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his  
 King,—  
 Well, I tell thee: 'O King, my  
 liege,' he said,  
 'Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of  
 thine?  
 When have I stinted stroke in fough-  
 ten field?  
 But as for thine, my good friend  
 Percivale,  
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven  
 men mad,  
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than  
 our least.  
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I  
 swear,  
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed  
 cat,  
 And thrice as blind as any noonday  
 owl,  
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,  
 Henceforward."

"'Deafer,' said the blameless  
 King,  
 'Gawain, and blinder unto holy  
 things  
 Hope not to make thyself by idle  
 vows,  
 Being too blind to have desire to see.  
 But if indeed there came a sign from  
 heaven,  
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot and Per-  
 civale,  
 For these have seen according to  
 their sight.  
 For every fiery prophet in old times,  
 And all the sacred madness of the  
 bard,

When God make music thro' them,  
 could but speak  
 His music by the framework and the  
 chord;  
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken  
 truth.

“ Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot :  
 never yet  
 Could all of true and noble in knight  
 and man  
 Twine round one sin, whatever it  
 might be,  
 With such a closeness, but apart there  
 grew,  
 Save that he were the swine thou  
 speakest of,  
 Some root of knighthood and pure  
 nobleness;  
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear  
 its flower.

“ And spake I not too truly, O my  
 knights ?  
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said  
 To those who went upon the Holy  
 Quest,  
 That most of them would follow  
 wandering fires,  
 Lost in the quagmire ? — lost to me  
 and gone,  
 And left me gazing at a barren board,  
 And a lean Order — scarce return'd a  
 tithè —  
 And out of those to whom the vision  
 came  
 My greatest hardly will believe he  
 saw;

Another hath beheld it afar off,  
 And leaving human wrongs to right  
 themselves,  
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.  
 And one hath had the vision face to  
 face,  
 And now his chair desires him here  
 in vain,  
 However they may crown him other-  
 where.

“ And some among you held, that  
 if the King  
 Had seen the sight he would have  
 sworn the vow :

Not easily, seeing that the King must  
 guard  
 That which he rules, and is but as the  
 hind  
 To whom a space of land is given to  
 plow.  
 Who may not wander from the allot-  
 ted field  
 Before his work he done ; but, being  
 done,  
 Let visions of the night or of the  
 day  
 Come, as they will ; and many a time  
 they come,  
 Until this earth he walks on seems  
 not earth,  
 This light that strikes his eyeball is  
 not light,  
 This air that smites his forehead is  
 not air  
 But vision — yea, his very hand and  
 foot —  
 In moments when he feels he cannot  
 die,  
 And knows himself no vision to him-  
 self,  
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that  
 One  
 Who rose again : ye have seen what  
 ye have seen.'

“ So spake the King : I knew not all  
 he meant.”

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#### PELLEAS AND ETTARRE.

KING ARTHUR made new knights to  
 fill the gap  
 Left by the Holy Quest ; and as he  
 sat  
 In the hall at old Caerleon, the high  
 doors  
 Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these  
 a youth,  
 Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the  
 fields  
 Past, and the sunshine came along  
 with him.

“ Make me thy knight, because I  
 know, Sir King,

All that belongs to knighthood, and I  
love."

Such was his cry: for having heard  
the King

Had let proclaim a tournament — the  
prize

A golden circlet and a knightly sword,  
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady  
won

The golden circlet, for himself the  
sword:

And there were those who knew him  
near the King,

And promised for him: and Arthur  
made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of  
the isles —

But lately come to his inheritance,  
And lord of many a barren isle was  
he —

Riding at noon, a day or twain be-  
fore,

Across the forest call'd of Dean, to  
find

Caerleon and the King, had felt the  
sun

Beat like a strong knight on his  
helm, and reel'd

Almost to falling from his horse; but  
saw

Near him a mound of even-sloping  
side,

Whereon a hundred stately beeches  
grew,

And here and there great hollies under  
them;

But for a mile all round was open  
space,

And fern and heath: and slowly Pel-  
leas drew

To that dim day, then binding his  
good horse

To a tree, cast himself down; and as  
he lay

At random looking over the brown  
earth

Thro' that green-glooming twilight of  
the grove,

It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern  
without

Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,

So that his eyes were dazzled looking  
at it.

Then o'er it crost the dimness of a  
cloud

Floating, and once the shadow of a  
bird

Flying, and then a fawn; and his  
eyes closed.

And since he loved all maidens, but  
no maid

In special, half-awake he whisper'd,  
"Where?"

O where? I love thee, tho' I know  
thee not.

For fair thou art and pure as Guine-  
vere,

And I will make thee with my spear  
and sword

As famous — O my Queen, my Guine-  
vere,

For I will be thine Arthur when we  
meet."

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of  
talk

And laughter at the limit of the wood,  
And glancing thro' the hoary boles,  
he saw,

Strange as to some old prophet might  
have seem'd

A vision hovering on a sea of fire,  
Damsels in divers colors like the cloud  
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them  
On horses, and the horses richly trapt  
Breast-high in that bright line of  
bracken stood:

And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,  
And one was pointing this way, and  
one that,

Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,

And loosed his horse, and led him to  
the light.

There she that seem'd the chief among  
them said,

"In happy time behold our pilot-star!  
Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we  
ride,

Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the  
knights

There at Caerleon, but have lost our way:  
To right? to left? straight forward?  
back again?  
Which? tell us quickly."

And Pelleas gazing thought,  
"Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?"  
For large her violet eyes look'd, and  
her bloom  
A rosy dawn kindled in stainless  
heavens,  
And round her limbs, mature in  
womanhood;  
And slender was her hand and small  
her shape;  
And but for those large eyes, the haunts  
of scorn,  
She might have seem'd a toy to trifle  
with,  
And pass and care no more. But  
while he gazed  
The beauty of her flesh abash'd the  
boy,  
As tho' it were the beauty of her soul:  
For as the base man, judging of the  
good,  
Puts his own baseness in him by  
default  
Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend  
All the young beauty of his own soul  
to hers,  
Believing her; and when she spake  
to him,  
Stammer'd, and could not make her a  
reply.  
For out of the waste islands had he  
come,  
Where saving his own sisters he had  
known  
Scarce any but the women of his isles,  
Rough wives, that laugh'd and  
scream'd against the gulls,  
Makers of nets, and living from the  
sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the  
lady round  
And look'd upon her people; and as  
when  
A stone is flung into some sleeping  
tarn,

The circle widens till it lip the marge,  
Spread the slow smile thro' all her  
company.  
Three knights were thereamong; and  
they too smiled,  
Scorning him; for the lady was  
Ettarre,  
And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said, "O wild and of the  
woods,  
Knowest thou not the fashion of our  
speech?  
Or have the Heavens but given thee  
a fair face,  
Lacking a tongue?"

"O damsel," answer'd he,  
"I woke from dreams; and coming  
out of gloom  
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and  
crave  
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I  
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the  
King?"

"Lead then," she said; and thro'  
the woods they went.  
And while they rode, the meaning in  
his eyes,  
His tenderness of manner, and chaste  
awe,  
His broken utterances and bashful-  
ness,  
Were all a burthen to her, and in her  
heart  
She mutter'd, "I have lighted on a  
fool,  
Raw, yet so stale!" But since her  
mind was bent  
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her  
name  
And title, "Queen of Beauty," in the  
lists  
Cried — and beholding him so strong,  
she thought  
That peradventure he will fight for  
me,  
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd  
him,  
Being so gracious, that he wellnigh  
deem'd

His wish by hers was echo'd; and her  
knights  
And all her damsels too were gracious  
to him,  
For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd  
Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,  
she,  
Taking his hand, "O the strong hand,"  
she said,  
"See! look at mine! but wilt thou  
fight for me,  
And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,  
That I may love thee?"

Then his helpless heart  
Leapt, and he cried, "Ay! wilt thou  
if I win?"  
"Ay, that will I," she answer'd, and  
she laugh'd,  
And straitly nipt the hand, and flung  
it from her;  
Then glanced askew at those three  
knights of hers,  
Till all her ladies laugh'd along with  
her.

"O happy world," thought Pelleas,  
"all, meseems,  
Are happy; I the happiest of them  
all."  
Nor slept that night for pleasure in  
his blood,  
And green wood-ways, and eyes among  
the leaves;  
Then being on the morrow knighted,  
sware  
To love one only. And as he came  
away,  
The men who met him rounded on  
their heels  
And wonder'd after him, because his  
face  
Shone like the countenance of a priest  
of old  
Against the flame about a sacrifice  
Kindled by fire from heaven: so glad  
was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,  
and strange knights

From the four winds came in: and  
each one sat,  
Tho' served with choice from air, land,  
stream, and sea,  
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with  
his eyes  
His neighbor's make and might: and  
Pelleas look'd  
Noble among the noble, for he dream'd  
His lady loved him, and he knew him-  
self  
Loved of the King: and him his new-  
made knight  
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper  
moved him more  
Than all the ranged reasons of the  
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-  
ing of the jousts,  
And this was call'd "The Tournament  
of Youth:"  
For Arthur, loving his young knight,  
withheld  
His older and his mightier from the  
lists,  
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's  
love,  
According to her promise, and remain  
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur  
had the jousts  
Down in the flat field by the shore of  
Usk  
Holden: the gilded parapets were  
crown'd  
With faces, and the great tower fill'd  
with eyes  
Up to the summit, and the trumpets  
blew.  
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept  
the field  
With honor: so by that strong hand  
of his  
The sword and golden circlet were  
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved:  
the heat  
Of pride and glory fired her face; her  
eye  
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from  
his lance,

And there before the people crown'd  
herself :  
So for the last time she was gracious  
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space — her  
look  
Bright for all others, cloudier on her  
knight —

Linger'd Ettarre: and seeing Pelleas  
droop,  
Said Guinevere, " We marvel at thee  
much,

O damsel, wearing this unsunny face  
To him who won thee glory!" And  
she said,

" Had ye not held your Lancelot in  
your bower,

My Queen, he had not won." Where-  
at the Queen,

As one whose foot is bitten by an ant,  
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and  
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and  
herself,

And those three knights all set their  
faces home,

Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw  
him cried,

" Damsels — and yet I should be  
shamed to say it —

I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him back  
Among yourselves. Would rather

that we had  
Some rough old knight who knew the

worldly way,  
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride

And jest with: take him to you, keep  
him off,

And pamper him with papmeat, if ye  
will,

Old milky fables of the wolf and sheep,  
Such as the wholesome mothers tell  
their boys.

Nay, should ye try him with a merry  
one

To find his mettle, good: and if he fly  
us,

Small matter! let him." This her  
damsels heard,

And mindful of her small and cruel  
hand,

They, closing round him thro' the  
journey home,

Acted her hest, and always from her  
side

Restrain'd him with all manner of  
device,

So that he could not come to speech  
with her.

And when she gain'd her castle, up-  
sprang the bridge,

Down rang the grate of iron thro' the  
groove,

And he was left alone in open field.

" These be the ways of ladies,"  
Pelleas thought,

" To those who love them, trials of  
our faith.

Yea, let her prove me to the uttermost,  
For loyal to the uttermost am I."

So made his moan; and, darkness  
falling, sought

A priory not far off, there lodged, but  
rose

With morning every day, and, moist  
or dry,

Full-arm'd upon his charger all day  
long

Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to  
him.

And this persistence turn'd her  
scorn to wrath.

Then calling her three knights, she  
charged them, " Out!

And drive him from the walls." And  
out they came,

But Pelleas overthrew them as they  
dash'd

Against him one by one; and these  
return'd,

But still he kept his watch beneath  
the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;  
and once,

A week beyond, while walking on the  
walls

With her three knights, she pointed  
downward, " Look,



He haunts me — I cannot breathe —  
 besieges me;  
 Down! strike him! put my hate into  
 your strokes,  
 And drive him from my walls." And  
 down they went,  
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by  
 one;  
 And from the tower above him cried  
 Ettarre,  
 "Bind him, and bring him in."

He heard her voice;  
 Then let the strong hand, which had  
 overthrown  
 Her minion-knights, by those he over-  
 threw  
 Be bounden straight, and so they  
 brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,  
 the sight  
 Of her rich beauty made him at one  
 glance  
 More bondsman in his heart than in  
 his bonds.  
 Yet with good cheer he spake, "Be-  
 hold me, Lady,  
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;  
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon here,  
 Content am I so that I see thy face  
 But once a day: for I have sworn my  
 vows,  
 And thou hast given thy promise, and  
 I know  
 That all these pains are trials of my  
 faith,  
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen  
 me strain'd  
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length  
 Yield me thy love and know me for  
 thy knight."

Then she began to rail so bitterly,  
 With all her damsels, he was stricken  
 mute;  
 But when she mock'd his vows and  
 the great King,  
 Lighted on words: "For pity of thine  
 own self,  
 Peace, Lady, peace: is he not thine  
 and mine?"

"Thou fool," she said, "I never heard  
 his voice  
 But long'd to break away. Unbind  
 him now,  
 And thrust him out of doors; for save  
 he be  
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his  
 bones,  
 He will return no more." And those,  
 her three,  
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust him  
 from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again  
 She call'd them, saying, "There he  
 watches yet,  
 There like a dog before his master's  
 door!  
 Kick'd, he returns: do ye not hate  
 him, ye?  
 Ye know yourselves: how can ye bide  
 at peace,  
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?  
 Are ye but creatures of the board and  
 bed,  
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at  
 once,  
 And if ye slay him I reckon not: if ye fail,  
 Give ye the slave mine order to be  
 bound,  
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him  
 in:  
 It may be ye shall slay him in his  
 bonds."

She spake; and at her will they  
 couch'd their spears,  
 Three against one: and Gawain pass-  
 ing by,  
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw  
 Low down beneath the shadow of  
 those towers  
 A villany, three to one: and thro' his  
 heart  
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds  
 Flash'd, and he call'd, "I strike upon  
 thy side —  
 The caitiffs!" "Nay," said Pelleas,  
 "bnt forbear;  
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's  
 will."

So Gawain, looking at the villany  
done,  
Forebore, but in his heat and eagerness  
Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,  
withheld  
A moment from the vermin that he  
sees  
Before him, shivers, ere he springs  
and kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to  
three;  
And they rose up, and bound, and  
brought him in.  
Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,  
burn'd  
Full on her knights in many an evil  
name  
Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten  
hound:  
"Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit  
to touch,  
Far less to bind, your victor, and  
thrust him out,  
And let who will release him from his  
bonds.  
And if he comes again" — there she  
brake short;  
And Pelleas answer'd, "Lady, for in-  
deed  
I loved you and I deem'd you beauti-  
ful,  
I cannot brook to see your beauty  
marr'd  
Thro' evil spite: and if ye love me not,  
I cannot bear to dream you so for-  
sworn:  
I had liefer ye were worthy of my  
love,  
Than to be loved again of you — fare-  
well;  
And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my  
love,  
Vex not yourself: ye will not see me  
more."

While thus he spake, she gazed  
upon the man  
Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds,  
and thought,  
"Why have I push'd him from me?  
this man loves,

If love there be: yet him I loved not.  
Why?  
I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that  
in him  
A something — was it nobler than my-  
self? —  
Seem'd my reproach? He is not of  
my kind.  
He could not love me, did he know me  
well.  
Nay, let him go — and quickly." And  
her knights  
Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden  
out of door.

Fortb sprang Gawain, and loosed  
him from his bonds,  
And flung them o'er the walls; and  
afterward,  
Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's  
rag,  
"Faith of my body," he said, "and  
art thou not —  
Yea thou art he, whom late our Arthur  
made  
Knight of his table; yea and he that  
won  
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so  
defamed  
Thy brotherhood in me and all the  
rest,  
As let these caitiffs on thee work their  
will?"

And Pelleas answer'd, "O, their  
wills are hers  
For whom I won the circlet; and  
mine, hers,  
Thus to be bounden, so to see her  
face,  
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-  
ery now,  
Other than when I found her in the  
woods;  
And tho' she hath me bounden but in  
spite,  
And all to flout me, when they bring  
me in,  
Let me be bounden, I shall see her  
face;  
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-  
ness."

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'  
 in scorn,  
 "Why, let my lady bind me if she  
 will,  
 And let my lady beat me if she will:  
 But an she send her delegate to thrall  
 These fighting hands of mine — Christ  
 kill me then  
 But I will slice him handless by the  
 wrist,  
 And let my lady sear the stump for  
 him,  
 Howl as he may. But hold me for  
 your friend:  
 Come, ye know nothing: here I pledge  
 my troth,  
 Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,  
 I will be leal to thee and work thy  
 work,  
 And tame thy jailing princess to  
 thine hand.  
 Lend me thine horse and arms, and I  
 will say  
 That I have slain thee. She will let  
 me in  
 To hear the manner of thy fight and  
 fall;  
 Then, when I come within her coun-  
 sels, then  
 From prime to vespers will I chant  
 thy praise  
 As prowest knight and truest lover,  
 more  
 Than any have sung thee living, till  
 she long  
 To have thee back in lusty life again,  
 Not to be bound, save by white bonds  
 and warm,  
 Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now  
 thy horse  
 And armor: let me go: be comforted:  
 Give me three days to melt her fancy,  
 and hope  
 The third night hence will bring thee  
 news of gold."

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all  
 his arms,  
 Saving the goodly sword, his prize,  
 and took  
 Gawain's, and said, "Betray me not,  
 but help —

Art thou not he whom men call light-  
 of-love?"

"Ay," said Gawain, "for women be  
 so light."  
 Then bounded forward to the castle  
 walls,  
 And raised a bugle hanging from his  
 neck,  
 And winded it, and that so musically  
 That all the old echoes hidden in the  
 wall  
 Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-  
 ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the  
 tower;  
 "Avant," they cried, "our lady loves  
 thee not."  
 But Gawain lifting up his vizor said,  
 "Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's  
 court,  
 And I have slain this Pelleas whom  
 ye hate:  
 Behold his horse and armor. Open  
 gates,  
 And I will make you merry."

And down they ran,  
 Her damsels, crying to their lady,  
 "Lo!  
 Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that  
 hath  
 His horse and armor: will ye let him  
 in?  
 He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of the  
 court,  
 Sir Gawain — there he waits below the  
 wall,  
 Blowing his bugle as who should say  
 him nay."

And so, leave given, straight on  
 thro' open door  
 Rode Gawain, whom she greeted cour-  
 teously.  
 "Dead, is it so?" she ask'd. "Ay,  
 ay," said he,  
 "And oft in dying cried upon your  
 name."  
 "Pity on him," she answer'd, "a good  
 knight,

But never let me bide one hour at  
peace."

"Ay," thought Gawain, "and you be  
fair enow :

But I to your dead man have given  
my troth,

That whom ye loathe, him will I make  
you love."

So those three days, aimless about  
the land,

Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering  
Waited, until the third night brought  
a moon

With promise of large light on woods  
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent ; but a  
sound

Of Gawain ever coming, and this  
lay—

Which Pelleas had heard sung before  
the Queen,

And seen her sadden listening—vext  
his heart,

And marr'd his rest—"A worm  
within the rose."

"A rose, but one, none other rose  
had I,

A rose, one rose, and this was won-  
drous fair,

One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth  
and sky,

One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all  
mine air—

I cared not for the thorns ; the thorns  
were there.

"One rose, a rose to gather by and  
by,

One rose, a rose, to gather and to  
wear,

No rose but one—what other rose  
had I ?

One rose, my rose ; a rose that will  
not die,—

He dies who loves it,—if the worm  
be there."

This tender rhyme, and evermore  
the doubt,

"Why lingers Gawain with his golden  
news ?"

So shook him that he could not rest,  
but rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound  
his horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were  
the gates,

And no watch kept; and in thro'  
these he past,

And heard but his own steps, and his  
own heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his  
own self,

And his own shadow. Then he crost  
the court,

And spied not any light in hall or  
bower,

But saw the postern portal also wide  
Yawning; and up a slope of garden, all

Of roses white and red, and brambles  
mixt

And overgrowing them, went on, and  
found,

Here too, all hush'd below the mellow  
moon,

Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave  
Came lightening downward, and so

spilt itself  
Among the roses, and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavil-  
ions rear'd

Above the bushes, gilden-peakt : in one,  
Red after revel, droned her lurdane

knights  
Slumbering, and their three squires  
across their feet :

In one, their malice on the placid lip  
Froz'n by sweet sleep, four of her

damsels lay :

And in the third, the circlet of the  
jousts

Bound on her brow, were Gawain and  
Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'  
the leaf

To find a nest and feels a snake, he  
drew :

Back, as a coward slinks from what  
he fears

To cope with, or a traitor proven, or  
 hound  
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame  
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court  
 again,  
 Fingering at his sword-handle until he  
 stood  
 There on the castle-bridge once more,  
 and thought,  
 "I will go back, and slay them where  
 they lie."

And so went back, and seeing them  
 yet in sleep  
 Said, "Ye, that so dishallow the holy  
 sleep,  
 Your sleep is death," and drew the  
 sword, and thought,  
 "What! slay a sleeping knight? the  
 King hath bound  
 And sworn me to this brotherhood;"  
 again,  
 "Alas that ever a knight should be  
 so false."  
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and  
 groaning laid  
 The naked sword athwart their naked  
 throats,  
 There left it, and them sleeping; and  
 she lay,  
 The circlet of the tourney round her  
 brows,  
 And the sword of the tourney across her  
 throat.

And forth he past, and mounting  
 on his horse  
 Stared at her towers that, larger than  
 themselves  
 In their own darkness, thron'd into  
 the moon.  
 Then crush'd the saddle with his  
 thighs, and clench'd  
 His hands, and madden'd with himself  
 and moan'd:

"Would they have risen against  
 me in their blood  
 At the last day? I might have an-  
 swer'd them  
 Even before high God. O towers so  
 strong,

Huge, solid, would that even while I  
 gaze  
 The crack of earthquake shivering to  
 your base  
 Split you, and Hell burst up your  
 harlot roofs  
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and  
 thro' within,  
 Black as the harlot's heart — hollow  
 as a skull!  
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your  
 eyelet-holes,  
 And whirl the dust of harlots round  
 and round  
 In dung and nettles! hiss, snake — I  
 saw him there —  
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell.  
 Who yells  
 Here in the still sweet summer night,  
 but I —  
 I, the poor Pelleas whom she call'd  
 her fool?  
 Fool, beast — he, she, or I? myself  
 most fool;  
 Beast too, as lacking human wit —  
 disgraced,  
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love —  
 Love? — we be all alike: only the  
 King  
 Hath made us fools and liars. O  
 noble vows!  
 O great and sane and simple race of  
 brutes  
 That own no lust because they have  
 no law!  
 For why should I have loved her to  
 my shame?  
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my  
 shame.  
 I never loved her, I but lusted for her —  
 Away —"

He dash'd the rowel into his  
 horse,  
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'  
 the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch  
 on her throat,  
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd  
 herself

To Gawain: "Liar, for thou hast not  
 slain  
 This Pelleas! here he stood, and might  
 have slain  
 Me and thyself." And he that tells  
 the tale  
 Says that her ever-veering fancy turn'd  
 To Pelleas, as the one true knight on  
 earth,  
 And only lover; and thro' her love  
 her life  
 Wasted and pined, desiring him in vain.

But he by wild and way, for half  
 the night,  
 And over hard and soft, striking the  
 sod  
 From out the soft, the spark from off  
 the hard,  
 Rode till the star above the wakening  
 sun,  
 Beside that tower where Percivale was  
 cowl'd,  
 Glanced from the rosy forehead of  
 the dawn.  
 For so the words were flash'd into his  
 heart  
 He knew not whence or wherefore:  
 "O sweet star,  
 Pure on the virgin forehead of the  
 dawn!"  
 And there he would have wept, but  
 felt his eyes  
 Harder and drier than a fountain  
 bed  
 In summer: thither came the village  
 girls  
 And linger'd talking, and they come  
 no more  
 Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it  
 from the heights  
 Again with living waters in the change  
 Of seasons: hard his eyes; harder his  
 heart  
 Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs,  
 that he,  
 Gasping, "Of Arthur's hall am I, but  
 here,  
 Here let me rest and die," cast him-  
 self down,  
 And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;  
 so lay,

Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain  
 fired  
 The hall of Merlin, and the morning  
 star  
 Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,  
 and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some  
 one nigh,  
 Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,  
 crying,  
 "False! and I held thee pure as Guin-  
 evere."

But Percivale stood near him and  
 replied  
 "Am I but false as Guinevere is  
 pure?  
 Or art thou mazed with dreams? or  
 being one  
 Of our free-spoken Table hast not  
 heard  
 That Lancelot" — there he check'd  
 himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as  
 with one  
 Who gets a wound in battle, and the  
 sword  
 That made it plunges thro' the  
 wound again,  
 And pricks it deeper: and he shrank  
 and wail'd,  
 "Is the Queen false?" and Percivale  
 was mute.  
 "Have any of our Round Table held  
 their vows?"  
 And Percivale made answer not a  
 word.  
 "Is the King true?" "The King!"  
 said Percivale.  
 "Why then let men couple at once  
 with wolves.  
 What! art thou mad?"

But Pelleas, leaping up  
 Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on  
 his horse  
 And fled: small pity upon his horse  
 had he,  
 Or on himself, or any, and when he  
 met

A cripple, one that held a hand for  
 alms —  
 Hunch'd as he was, and like an old  
 dwarf-elm  
 That turns its back on the salt blast,  
 the boy  
 Paused not, but overrode him, shout-  
 ing, "False,  
 And false with Gawain!" and so left  
 him bruised  
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill  
 and wood  
 Went ever streaming by him till the  
 gloom,  
 That follows on the turning of the  
 world,  
 Darken'd the common path: he  
 twitch'd the reins,  
 And made his beast that better knew  
 it, swerve  
 Now off it and now on; but when he  
 saw  
 High up in heaven the hall that Mer-  
 lin built,  
 Blackening against the dead-green  
 stripes of even,  
 "Black nest of rats," he groan'd, "ye  
 build too high."

Not long thereafter from the city  
 gates  
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,  
 Warm with a gracious parting from  
 the Queen,  
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a  
 star  
 And marvelling what it was: on  
 whom the boy,  
 Across the silent seeded meadow-  
 grass  
 Borne, clash'd: and Lancelot, saying,  
 "What name hast thou  
 That ridest here so blindly and so  
 hard?"  
 "I have no name," he shouted, "a  
 scourge am I,  
 To lash the treasons of the Table  
 Round."  
 "Yea, but thy name?" "I have  
 many names," he cried:  
 "I am wrath and shame and hate  
 and evil fame,

And like a poisonous wind I pass to  
 blast  
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and  
 the Queen."  
 "First over me," said Lancelot, "shalt  
 thou pass."  
 "Fight therefore," yell'd the other,  
 and either knight  
 Drew back a space, and when they  
 closed, at once  
 The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-  
 ing flung  
 His rider, who call'd out from the  
 dark field,  
 "Thou art false as Hell: slay me: I  
 have no sword."  
 Then Lancelot, "Yea, between thy  
 lips — and sharp;  
 But here will I disedge it by thy  
 death."  
 "Slay then," he shriek'd, "my will is  
 to be slain,"  
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the  
 fall'n,  
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood,  
 then spake:  
 "Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say  
 thy say."

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-  
 horse back  
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief  
 while  
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the  
 dark field,  
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced  
 that both  
 Brake into hall together, worn and  
 pale.  
 There with her knights and dames  
 was Guinevere.  
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lance-  
 lot  
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,  
 him  
 Who had not greeted her, but cast  
 himself  
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.  
 "Have ye fought?"  
 She ask'd of Lancelot. "Ay, my  
 Queen," he said.

"And thou hast overthrown him?"  
 "Ay, my Queen."  
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, "O  
 young knight,  
 Hath the great heart of knighthood  
 in thee fail'd  
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-  
 wardly,  
 A fall from him?" Then, for he  
 answer'd not,  
 "Or hast thou other griefs? If I,  
 the Queen,  
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and  
 let me know."  
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce  
 She quail'd; and he, hissing "I have  
 no sword,"  
 Sprang from the door into the dark.  
 The Queen  
 Look'd hard upon her lover, he on  
 her;  
 And each foresaw the dolorous day  
 to be:  
 And all talk died, as in a grove all  
 song  
 Beneath the shadow of some bird of  
 prey;  
 Then a long silence came upon the  
 hall,  
 And Modred thought, "The time is  
 hard at hand."

### THE LAST TOURNAMENT.

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in  
 his mood  
 Had made mock-knight of Arthur's  
 Table Round,  
 At Camelot, high above the yellow-  
 ing woods,  
 Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
 hall.  
 And toward him from the hall, with  
 harp in hand,  
 And from the crown thereof a car-  
 canet  
 Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize  
 Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,  
 Came Tristram, saying, "Why skip  
 ye so, Sir Fool?"

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding  
 once  
 Far down beneath a winding wall of  
 rock  
 Heard a child wail. A stump of oak  
 half dead,  
 From roots like some black coil of  
 carven snakes,  
 Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'  
 mid air  
 Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro'  
 the tree  
 Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro'  
 the wind  
 Pierced ever a child's cry: and crag  
 and tree  
 Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-  
 ous nest,  
 This ruby necklace thrice around her  
 neck,  
 And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,  
 brought  
 A maiden babe; which Arthur pity-  
 ing took,  
 Then gave it to his Queen to rear:  
 the Queen  
 But coldly acquiescing, in her white  
 arms  
 Received, and after loved it tenderly,  
 And named it Nestling; so forgot  
 herself  
 A moment, and her cares; till that  
 young life  
 Being smitten in mid heaven with  
 mortal cold  
 Past from her; and in time the carcanet  
 Vext her with plaintive memories of  
 the child:  
 So she, delivering it to Arthur, said  
 "Take thou the jewels of this dead  
 innocence,  
 And make them, an thou wilt, a tour-  
 ney-prize."  
 To whom the King, "Peace to thine  
 eagle-borne  
 Dead nestling, and this honor after  
 death,  
 Following thy will! but, O my Queen,  
 I muse  
 Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or  
 zone



Those diamonds that I rescued from  
the tarn,  
And Lancelot won, methought, for  
thee to wear."

"Would rather you had let them  
fall," she cried,  
"Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as  
they were,  
A bitterness to me! — ye look amazed,  
Not knowing they were lost as soon  
as given —  
Slid from my hands, when I was lean-  
ing out  
Above the river — that unhappy child  
Past in her barge: but rosier luck  
will go  
With these rich jewels, seeing that  
they came  
Not from the skeleton of a brother-  
slayer,  
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.  
Perchance — who knows? — the pur-  
est of thy knights  
May win them for the purest of my  
maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great  
jousts  
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the  
ways  
From Camelot in among the faded  
fields  
To furthest towers; and everywhere  
the knights  
Arm'd for a day of glory before the  
King.

But on the hither side of that loud  
morn  
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage  
ribb'd  
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,  
his nose  
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one  
hand off,  
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-  
gling lame,  
A churl, to whom indignantly the  
King,

"My churl, for whom Christ died,  
what evil beast  
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy  
face? or fiend?  
Man was it who marr'd heaven's  
image in thee thus?"

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of  
splinter'd teeth,  
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with  
blunt stump  
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said  
the maim'd churl,

"He took them and he drave them  
to his tower —  
Some hold he was a table-knight of  
thine —  
A hundred goodly ones — the Red  
Knight, he —  
Lord, I was tending swine, and the  
Red Knight  
Brake in upon me and drave them to  
his tower;  
And when I call'd upon thy name as  
one  
That doest right by gentle and by  
churl,  
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would  
outright have slain,  
Save that he sware me to a message,  
saying,  
'Tell thou the King and all his liars,  
that I  
Have founded my Round Table in  
the North,  
And whatsoever his own knights have  
sworn  
My knights have sworn the counter  
to it — and say  
My tower is full of harlots, like his  
court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they  
profess  
To be none other than themselves —  
and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his  
own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-  
fess  
To be none other; and say his hour is  
come,

The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.' ”

Then Arthur turned to Kay the seneschal,  
“Take thou my churl, and tend him curiously  
) Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.  
(The heathen — but that ever-climbing wave,  
Hurl'd back again so often in empty foam,  
Hath lain for years at rest — and renegades,  
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion, whom  
The wholesome realm is purged of elsewhere,  
Friends, thro' your manhood and your fealty, — now  
Make their last head like Satan in the North.  
My younger knights, new-made, in whom your flower  
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,  
Move with me toward their quelling, which achieved,  
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to shore.  
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place  
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field;  
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle with it,  
Only to yield my Queen her own again?  
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it well?”

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, “It is well:  
Yet better if the King abide, and leave  
The leading of his younger knights to me.  
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well.”

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd him,  
And while they stood without the doors, the King  
Turn'd to him saying, “Is it then so well?  
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as he  
Of whom was written, ‘A sound is in his ears’?  
The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the glance  
That only seems half-loyal to command, —  
A manner somewhat fall'n from reverence —  
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our knights  
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower?  
Or whence the fear lest this my realm, uprear'd,  
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,  
From flat confusion and brute violences,  
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?”

He spoke, and taking all his younger knights,  
Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd  
North by the gate. In her high bower the Queen,  
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,  
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that she sigh'd.  
Then ran across her memory the strange rhyme  
Of bygone Merlin, “Where is he who knows?  
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.”

But when the morning of a tournament,  
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd  
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,  
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,

Round whose sick head all night, like  
birds of prey,  
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,  
arose,  
And down a streetway hung with folds  
of pure  
White samite, and by fountains run-  
ning wine,  
Where children sat in white with cups  
of gold,  
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow  
sad steps  
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd  
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-  
leries,  
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of  
their Queen  
White-robed in honor of the stainless  
child,  
And some with scatter'd jewels, like  
a bank  
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks  
of fire.  
He look'd but once, and vail'd his  
eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in  
a dream  
To ears but half-awaked, then one low  
roll  
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts  
began:  
And ever the wind blew, and yellow-  
ing leaf  
And gloom and gleam, and shower  
and shorn plume  
Went down it. Sighing weariedly, as  
one  
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,  
When all the goodlier guests are past  
away,  
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er  
the lists.  
He saw the laws that ruled the  
tournament  
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight  
cast down  
Before his throne of arbitration  
cursed

The dead babe and the follies of the  
King;  
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,  
And show'd him, like a vermin in its  
hole,  
Modred, a narrow face: anon he heard  
The voice that billow'd round the  
barriers roar  
An ocean-sounding welcome to one  
knight,  
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,  
And armor'd all in forest green,  
whereon  
There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,  
And wearing but a holly-spray for  
crest,  
With ever-scattering berries, and on  
shield  
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram  
— late  
From overseas in Brittany return'd,  
And marriage with a princess of that  
realm,  
Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the  
Woods —  
Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-  
time with pain  
His own against him, and now yearn'd  
to shake  
The burden off his heart in one full  
shock  
With Tristram ev'n to death: his  
strong hands gript  
And dinted the gilt dragons right and  
left,  
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many  
of those,  
That ware their ladies' colors on the  
casque,  
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the  
bounds,  
And there with gibes and flickering  
mockeries  
Stood, while he mutter'd, "Craven  
crests! O shame!  
What faith have these in whom they  
sware to love?  
The glory of our Round Table is no  
more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot  
gave, the gems,

Not speaking other word than "Hast  
 thou won?  
 Art thou the purest, brother? See,  
 the hand  
 Wherewith thou takest this, is red!"  
 to whom  
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's  
 languorous mood,  
 Made answer, "Ay, but wherefore toss  
 me this  
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry  
 hound?  
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.  
 Strength of heart  
 And might of limb, but mainly use  
 and skill,  
 Are winners in this pastime of our  
 King.  
 My hand — belike the lance hath dript  
 upon it —  
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief  
 knight,  
 Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,  
 Great brother, thou nor I have made  
 the world;  
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in  
 mine."

And Tristram round the gallery  
 made his horse  
 Caracole; then bow'd his homage,  
 bluntly saying,  
 "Fair damsels, each to him who wor-  
 ships each  
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love,  
 behold  
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not  
 here."  
 And most of these were mute, some  
 anger'd, one,  
 Murmuring, "All courtesy is dead,"  
 and one,  
 "The glory of our Round Table is no  
 more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt  
 and mantle clung,  
 And pettish cries awoke, and the wan  
 day  
 Went glooming down in wet and  
 weariness:

But under her black brows a swarthy  
 one  
 Laugh'd shrilly, crying, "Praise the  
 patient saints,  
 Our one white day of Innocence hath  
 past,  
 Tho' somewhat dragged at the skirt.  
 So be it.  
 The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the  
 year,  
 Would make the world as blank as  
 Winter-tide.  
 Come — let us gladden their sad eyes,  
 our Queen's  
 And Lancelot's at this night's solemnity  
 With all the kindlier colors of the  
 field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the  
 feast  
 Variously gay: for he that tells the  
 tale  
 Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour  
 of cold  
 Falls on the mountain in midsummer  
 snows,  
 And all the purple slopes of mountain  
 flowers  
 Pass under white, till the warm hour  
 returns  
 With veer of wind, and all are flowers  
 again;  
 So dame and damsel cast the simple  
 white,  
 And glowing in all colors, the live  
 grass,  
 Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, pop-  
 py, glanced  
 About the revels, and with mirth so  
 loud  
 Beyond all use, that, half-amazed,  
 the Queen,  
 And wroth at Tristram and the law-  
 less jousts,  
 Brake up their sports, then slowly to  
 her bower  
 Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow  
 morn,  
 High over all the yellowing Autumn-  
 tide,

Danced like a wither'd leaf before the  
hall.

Then Tristram saying, "Why skip ye  
so, Sir Fool?"

Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet  
replied,

"Belike for lack of wiser company;  
Or being fool, and seeing too much  
wit

Makes the world rotten, why, belike I  
skip

To know myself the wisest knight of  
all."

"Ay, fool," said Tristram, but 'tis  
eating dry

To dance without a catch, a roundelay  
To dance to." Then he twangled on  
his harp,

And while he twangled little Dagonet  
stood

Quiet as any water-sodden log  
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a  
brook;

But when the twangling ended, skipt  
again;

And being ask'd, "Why skip ye not,  
Sir Fool?"

Made answer, "I had liefer twenty  
years

Skip to the broken music of my brains  
Than any broken music thou canst  
make."

Then Tristram, waiting for the quip  
to come,

"Good now, what music have I  
broken, fool?"

And little Dagonet, skipping, "Arthur,  
the King's;

For when thou playest that air with  
Queen Isolt,

Thou makest broken music with thy  
bride,

Her daintier namesake down in Brit-  
tany —

And so thou breakest Arthur's music  
too."

"Save for that broken music in thy  
brains,

Sir Fool," said Tristram, "I would  
break thy head.

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars  
were o'er,

The life had flown, we sware but by  
the shell—

I am but a fool to reason with a fool—  
Come, thon art crabb'd and sour:  
but lean me down,

Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'  
ears,

And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love  
but while we may:

The woods are hush'd, their music is  
no more:

The leaf is dead, the yearning past  
away:

New leaf, new life — the days of frost  
are o'er:

New life, new love, to suit the newer  
day:

New loves are sweet as those that went  
before:

Free love — free field — we love but  
while we may.'

"Ye might have moved slow-meas-  
ure to my tune,

Not stood stockstill. I made it in the  
woods,

And heard it ring as true as tested  
gold."

But Dagonet with one foot poised  
in his hand,

"Friend, did ye mark that fountain  
yesterday

Made to run wine? — but this had run  
itself

All out like a long life to a sour  
end —

And them that round it sat with gold-  
en cups

To hand the wine to whosoever came —  
The twelve small damosels white as

Innocence,

In honor of poor Innocence the babe,  
Who left the gems which Innocence

the Queen

Lent to the King, and Innocence the  
King

Gave for a prize — and one of those  
white slips

Handed her cup and piped, the pretty  
 one,  
 'Drink, drink, Sir Fool,' and there-  
 upon I drank,  
 Spat—pish—the cup was gold, the  
 draught was mud."

And Tristram, "Was it muddier than  
 thy gibes?  
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of  
 thee?—  
 Not marking how the knighthood  
 mock thee, fool—  
 'Fear God: honor the King—his  
 one true knight—  
 Sole follower of the vows'—for here  
 be they  
 Who knew thee swine enow before I  
 came,  
 Smuttier than blasted grain: but  
 when the King  
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so  
 shot up  
 It frightened all free fool from out  
 thy heart;  
 Which left thee less than fool, and less  
 than swine,  
 A naked aught—yet swine I hold  
 thee still,  
 For I have flung thee pearls and find  
 thee swine."

And little Dagonet mincing with his  
 feet,  
 "Knight, an ye fling those rubies  
 round my neck  
 In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast  
 some touch  
 Of music, since I care not for thy  
 pearls.  
 Swine? I have wallow'd, I have  
 wash'd—the world  
 Is flesh and shadow—I have had my  
 day.  
 The dirty nurse, Experience, in her  
 kind  
 Hath foul'd me—an I wallow'd, then  
 I wash'd—  
 I have had my day and my philoso-  
 phies—  
 And thank the Lord I am King Ar-  
 thur's fool.

Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses,  
 rams and geese  
 Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,  
 who thrumm'd  
 On such a wire as musically as thou  
 Some such fine song—but never a  
 king's fool."

And Tristram, "Then were swine,  
 goats, asses, geese  
 The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim  
 bard  
 Had such a mastery of his mystery  
 That he could harp his wife up out  
 of hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball  
 of his foot,  
 "And whither harp'st thou thine?  
 down! and thyself  
 Down! and two more: a helpful harp-  
 er thou,  
 That harpest downward! Dost thou  
 know the star  
 We call the harp of Arthur up in  
 heaven?"

And Tristram, "Ay, Sir Fool, for  
 when our King  
 Was victor wellnigh day by day, the  
 knights,  
 Glorifying in each new glory, set his  
 name  
 High on hills, and in the signs of  
 heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, "Ay, and  
 when the land  
 Was freed, and the Queen false, ye  
 set yourself  
 To babble about him, all to show your  
 wit—  
 And whether he were King by cour-  
 tesy,  
 Or King by right—and so went harp-  
 ing down  
 The black king's highway, got so far,  
 and grew  
 So witty that ye play'd at ducks and  
 drakes  
 With Arthur's vows on the great lake  
 of fire.

Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the star?

"Nay, fool," said Tristram, "not in open day."

And Dagonet, "Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.

It makes a silent music up in heaven, And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,

And then we skip." "Lo, fool," he said, "ye talk

Fool's treason: is the King thy brother fool?"

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd,

"Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools!

Conceits himself as God that he can make

Flgs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk

From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,

And men from beasts — Long live the king of fools!"

And down the city Dagonet danced away;

But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues

And solitary passes of the wood Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.

Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt With ruby-circled neck, but evermore Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.

Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,

Unruffling waters re-collect the shape Of one that in them sees himself, return'd;

But at the slot or fewmets of a deer, Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vanish'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn

Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At length

A lodge of intertwisted beechen-boughs

Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-rooft, the which himself

Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt

Against a shower, dark in the golden grove

Appearing, sent his fancy back to where

She lived a moon in that low lodge with him:

Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was away,

And snatch'd her thence; yet dreading worse than shame

Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,

But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt

So sweet, that halting, in he past, and sank

Down on a drift of foliage random blown;

But could not rest for musing how to smoothe

And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.

Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all

The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.

But then what folly had sent him overseas

After she left him lonely here? a name?

Was it the name of one in Brittany, Isolt, the daughter of the King?

"Isolt

Of the white hands" they call'd her: the sweet name

Allured him first, and then the maid herself,

Who served him well with those white hands of hers,

And loved him well, until himself had thought

He loved her also, wedded easily,  
 But left her all as easily and return'd.  
 The black-blue Irish hair and Irish  
 eyes  
 Had drawn him home — what marvel ?  
 then he laid  
 His brows upon the drifted leaf and  
 dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of  
 Brittany  
 Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,  
 And show'd them both the ruby-chain,  
 and both  
 Began to struggle for it, till his  
 Queen  
 Graspt it so hard, that all her hand  
 was red.  
 Then cried the Breton, "Look, her  
 hand is red !  
 These be no rubies, this is frozen  
 blood,  
 And melts within her hand — her  
 hand is hot  
 With ill desires, but this I gave thee,  
 look,  
 Is all as cool and white as any flower."  
 Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and  
 then  
 A whimpering of the spirit of the  
 child,  
 Because the twain had spoiled her  
 carcanet.

He dream'd; but Arthur with a  
 hundred spears  
 Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,  
 And many a glancing plash and sal-  
 lowy isle,  
 The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty  
 marsh  
 Glared on a huge maohicolated tower  
 That stood with open doors, where-  
 out was roll'd  
 A roar of riot, as from men secure  
 Amid their marshes, ruffians at their  
 ease  
 Among their harlot-brides, an evil  
 song.  
 "Lo there," said one of Arthur's  
 youth, for there,

High on a grim dead tree before the  
 tower,  
 A goodly brother of the Table Round  
 Swung by the neck: and on the  
 boughs a shield  
 Showing a shower of blood in a field  
 noir,  
 And there beside a horn, inflamed the  
 knights  
 At that dishonor done the gilded spur,  
 Till each would clash the shield, and  
 blow the horn.  
 But Arthur waved them back. Alone  
 he rode.  
 Then at the dry harsh roar of the  
 great horn,  
 That sent the face of all the marsh  
 aloft  
 An ever upward-rushing storm and  
 cloud  
 Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight  
 heard, and all,  
 Even to tipmost lance and top-  
 most helm,  
 In blood-red armor sallying, how'd  
 to the King,

"The teeth of Hell flay bare and  
 gnash thee flat! —  
 Lo! art thou not that eunuch-hearted  
 King  
 Who fain had clipt free manhood  
 from the world —  
 The woman-worshipper? Yea, God's  
 curse, and I!  
 Slain was the brother of my para-  
 mour  
 By a knight of thine, and I that heard  
 her whine  
 And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,  
 Sware by the scorpion-worm that  
 twists in hell,  
 And stings itself to everlasting death,  
 To hang whatever knight of thine I  
 fought  
 And tumbled. Art thou King? —  
 Look to thy life!"

He ended: Arthur knew the voice;  
 the face  
 Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the  
 name



Went wandering somewhere darkling  
 in his mind.  
 And Arthur deign'd not use of word  
 or sword,  
 But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd  
 from horse  
 To strike him, overbalancing his  
 bulk,  
 Down from the causeway heavily to  
 the swamp  
 Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching  
 wave,  
 Heard in dead night along that table-  
 shore,  
 Drops flat, and after the great waters  
 break  
 Whitening for half a league, and thin  
 themselves,  
 Far over sands marbled with moon  
 and cloud,  
 From less and less to nothing; thus  
 he fell  
 Head-heavy; then the knights, who  
 watch'd him, roar'd  
 And shouted and leapt down upon the  
 fall'n;  
 There trampled out his face from  
 being known,  
 And sank his head in mire, and slimed  
 themselves:  
 Nor heard the King for their own  
 cries, but sprang  
 Thro' open doors, and swording right  
 and left  
 Men, women, on their sodden faces,  
 hurl'd  
 The tables over and the wines, and  
 slew  
 Till all the rafters rang with woman-  
 yells,  
 And all the pavement stream'd with  
 massacre:  
 Then, yell with yell echoing, they  
 fired the tower,  
 Which half that autumn night, like  
 the live North,  
 Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and  
 Alcor,  
 Made all above it, and a hundred  
 meres  
 About it, as the water Moab  
 saw

Come round by the East, and out be-  
 yond them flush'd  
 The long low dune, and lazy-plunging  
 sea.

So all the ways were safe from  
 shore to shore,  
 But in the heart of Arthur pain was  
 lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the  
 red dream  
 Fled with a shout, and that low lodge  
 return'd,  
 Mid-forest, and the wind among the  
 boughs.  
 He whistled his good warhorse left to  
 graze  
 Among the forest greens, vaulted  
 upon him,  
 And rode beneath an ever-showering  
 leaf,  
 Till one lone woman, weeping near a  
 cross,  
 Stay'd him. "Why weep ye?"  
 "Lord," she said, "my man  
 Hath left me or is dead;" whereon he  
 thought—  
 "What, if she hate me now? I  
 would not this.  
 "What, if she loves me still? I  
 would not that.  
 I know not what I would"—but said  
 to her,  
 "Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate  
 return,  
 He find thy favor changed and love  
 thee not"—  
 Then pressing day by day thro'  
 Lyonesse  
 Last in a rocky hollow, belling, heard  
 The hounds of Mark, and felt the  
 goodly hounds  
 Yelp at his heart, but turning, past  
 and gain'd  
 Tintagil, half in sea, and high on  
 land,  
 A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,  
 A low sea-sunset glorying round her  
 hair

And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.

And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind

The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,

Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and there

Belted his body with her white embrace,

Crying aloud, "Not Mark — not Mark, my soul!

The footstep flutter'd me at first: not he:

Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,

But warrior-wise thou stridest thro' his halls

Who hates thee, as I him — ev'n to the death.

My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark

Quickened within me, and knew that thou wert nigh."

To whom Sir Tristram smiling, "I am here.

Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,

"Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,

But save for dread of thee had beaten me,

Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow — Mark?

What rights are his that dare not strike for them?

Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me thus!

But hearken! have ye met him? hence he went

To-day for three days' hunting — as he said —

And so returns belike within an hour. Mark's way, my soul! — but eat not

thou with Mark,

Because he hates thee even more than fears;

Nor drink: and when thou passest

any wood

Close vizard, lest an arrow from the bush

Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.

My God, the measure of my hate for Mark

Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,

Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake

To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,

"O hunter, and O blower of the horn, Harper, and thou hast been a rover

too,

For, ere I mated with my shambling king,

Ye twain had fallen out about the bride

Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,

If prize she were — (what marvel — she could see) —

Thine, friend; and ever since my craven seeks

To wreck thee villanously: but, O Sir Knight,

What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last?"

And Tristram, "Last to my Queen Paramount,

Here now to my Queen Paramount of love

And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when first

Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,

Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt,

"Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen

My dole of beauty trebled?" and he said,

"Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —

Save when thy Mark is kindled on  
thy lips  
Most gracious; but she, haughty, ev'n  
to him,  
Lancelot; for I have seen him wane  
To make one doubt if ever the great  
Queen  
Have yielded him her love."

To whom Isolt,  
"Ah then, false hunter and false har-  
per, thou  
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my  
bond,  
Calling me thy white hind, and say-  
ing to me  
That Guinevere had sinn'd against  
the highest,  
And I—misyoked with such a want  
of man—  
That I could hardly sin against the  
lowest."

He answer'd, "O my soul, be com-  
forted!  
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-  
strings,  
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,  
Crown'd warrant had we for the  
crowning sin  
That made us happy: but how ye  
greet me—fear  
And fault and doubt—no word of  
that fond tale—  
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet  
memories  
Of Tristram in that year he was  
away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake  
Isolt,  
"I had forgotten all in my strong joy  
To see thee—yearnings?—ay! for,  
hour by hour,  
Here in the never-ended afternoon,  
O sweeter than all memories of thee,  
Deeper than any yearnings after thee  
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-  
smiling seas,  
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of  
Britain dash'd  
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-  
kiss? Wedded her?  
Fought in her father's battles?  
wounded there?  
The King was all fulfill'd with grate-  
fulness,  
And she, my namesake of the hands,  
that heal'd  
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and  
caress—  
Well—can I wish her any huger  
wrong  
Than having known thee? her too  
hast thou left  
To pine and waste in those sweet  
memories.  
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all  
men  
Are noble, I should hate thee more  
than love."

And Tristram, fondling her light  
hands, replied,  
"Grace, Queen, for being loved: she  
loved me well.  
Did I love her? the name at least I  
loved.  
Isolt?—I fought his battles, for Isolt!  
The night was dark; the true star set.  
Isolt!  
The name was ruler of the dark—  
Isolt?  
Care not for her! patient, and prayer-  
ful, meek,  
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to  
God."

And Isolt answer'd, "Yea, and why  
not I?  
Mine is the larger need, who am not  
meek,  
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell  
thee now.  
Here one black, mute midsummer  
night I sat,  
Lonely, but musing on thee, wonder-  
ing where,  
Murmuring a light song I had heard  
thee sing,  
And once or twice I spake thy name  
aloud.

Then flash'd a levin-brand; and near  
me stood,  
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a  
fiend—  
Mark's way to steal behind one in the  
dark—  
For there was Mark: 'He has wedded  
her,' he said,  
Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown  
of towers  
So shook to such a roar of all the  
sky,  
That here in utter dark I swoon'd  
away,  
And woke again in utter dark, and  
cried,  
'I will flee hence and give myself to  
God'—  
And thou wert lying in thy new  
leman's arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with  
her hand,  
"May God be with thee, sweet, when  
old and gray,  
And past desire!" a saying that  
anger'd her.  
"May God be with thee, sweet, when  
thou art old,  
And sweet no more to me!' I need  
Him now.  
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught  
so gross  
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the  
mast?  
The greater man, the greater courtesy.  
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's  
knight!  
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy  
wild beasts—  
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a  
lance  
Becomes thee well—art grown wild  
beast thyself.  
How darest thou, if lover, push me  
even  
In fancy from thy side, and set me  
far  
In the gray distance, half a life away,  
Her to be loved no more? Unsay it,  
unswear!  
"Platter me rather, seeing me so weak,

Broken with Mark and hate and soli-  
tude,  
Thy marriage and mine own, that I  
should suck  
Lies like sweet wines: lie to me: I  
believe.  
Will ye not lie? not swear, as there  
ye kneel,  
And solemnly as when ye sware to  
him,  
The man of men, our King—My  
God, the power  
Was once in vows when men believed  
the King!  
They lied not then, who sware, and  
thro' their vows  
The King prevailing made his realm:  
—I say,  
Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n  
when old,  
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in  
despair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up  
and down,  
"Vows! did you keep the vow you  
made to Mark  
More than I mine? Lied, say ye?  
Nay, but learnt,  
The vow that binds too strictly snaps  
itself—  
My knighthood taught me this—ay,  
being snapt—  
We run more counter to the soul  
thereof  
Than had we never sworn. I swear  
no more.  
I swore to the great King, and am  
forsworn.  
For once—ev'n to the height—I  
honor'd him.  
'Man, is he man at all?' methought,  
when first  
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and  
beheld  
That victor of the Pagan throned in  
hall—  
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a  
brow  
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the  
steel-blue eyes.

The golden beard that clothed his  
lips with light—  
Moreover, that weird legend of his  
birth,  
With Merlin's mystic babble about  
his end  
Amazed me; then, his foot was on a  
stool  
Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me  
no man,  
But Michaël trampling Satan; so I  
sware,  
Being amazed: but this went by—  
The vows!  
O ay—the wholesome madness of  
an hour—  
They served their use, their time; for  
every knight  
Believed himself a greater than him-  
self,  
And every follower eyed him as a God;  
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-  
self,  
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he  
had done,  
And so the realm was made; but  
then their vows—  
First mainly thro' that sullyng of  
our Queen—  
Began to gall the knighthood, asking  
whence  
Had Arthur right to bind them to  
himself?  
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd  
up from out the deep?  
They fail'd to trace him thro' the  
flesh and blood  
Of our old kings: whence then? a  
doubtful lord  
To bind them by inviolable vows,  
Which flesh and blood perforce would  
violate:  
For feel this arm of mine—the tide  
within  
Red with free chase and heather-  
scented air,  
Pulsing full man; can Arthur make  
me pure  
As any maiden child? lock up my  
tongue  
From uttering freely what I freely  
hear?

Bind me to one? The wide world  
laughs at it.  
And worldling of the world am I, and  
know  
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his  
hour  
Woos his own end; we are not angels  
here  
Nor shall be: vows—I am woodman  
of the woods,  
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale  
Mock them: my soul, we love but  
while we may;  
And therefore is my love so large for  
thee,  
Seeing it is not bounded save by  
love.”

Here ending, he moved toward her,  
and she said,  
“ Good: an I turn'd away my love for  
thee  
To some one thrice as courteous as  
thyself—  
For courtesy wins women all as well  
As valor may, but he that closes both  
Is perfect, he is Lancelot—taller in-  
deed,  
Rosier and comelier, thou—but say I  
loved  
This knightliest of all knights, and  
cast thee back  
Thine own small saw, ‘ We love but  
while we may,’  
Well then, what answer? ”

He that while she spake,  
Mindful of what he brought to adorn  
her with,  
The jewels, had let one finger lightly  
touch  
The warm white apple of her throat,  
replied,  
“ Press this a little closer, sweet,  
until—  
Come, I am hunger'd and half-an-  
ger'd—meat,  
Wine, wine—and I will love thee to  
the death,  
And out beyond into the dream to  
come.”

So then, when both were brought  
to full accord.  
She rose, and set before him all he  
will'd;  
And after these had comforted the  
blood  
With meats and wines, and satiated  
their hearts —  
Now talking of their woodland para-  
dise,  
The deer, the dews, the fern, the  
founts, the lawns;  
Now mocking at the much ungainli-  
ness,  
And craven shifts, and long crane  
legs of Mark —  
Then Tristram laughing caught the  
harp, and sang:

“Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that  
bend the brier!  
A star in heaven, a star within the  
mere!  
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,  
And one was far apart, and one was  
near:  
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bow  
the grass!  
And one was water and one star was  
fire,  
And one will ever shine and one will  
pass.  
Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that move  
the mere.”

Then in the light's last glimmer  
Tristram show'd  
And swung the ruby carcanet. She  
cried,  
“The collar of some Order, which  
our King  
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my  
soul,  
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond  
thy peers.”

“Not so, my Queen,” he said, “but  
the red fruit  
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-  
heaven,  
And won by Tristram as a tourney-  
prize,

And hither brought by Tristram for  
his last  
Love-offering and peace-offering unto  
thee.”

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging  
round her neck,  
Claspt it, and cried “Thine Order, O  
my Queen!”  
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jew-  
ell'd throat,  
Out of the dark, just as the lips had  
touch'd,  
Behind him rose a shadow and a  
shriek —  
“Mark's way,” said Mark, and clove  
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and  
while he climb'd,  
All in a death-dumb autumn-drip-  
ping gloom,  
The stairway to the hall, and look'd  
and saw  
The great Queen's bower was dark, —  
about his feet  
A voice clung sobbing till he ques-  
tion'd it,  
“What art thou?” and the voice  
about his feet  
Sent up an answer, sobbing, “I am  
thy fool,  
And I shall never make thee smile  
again.”

#### GUINEVERE.

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,  
and sat  
There in the holy house at Almesbury  
Weeping, none with her save a little  
maid,  
A novice: one low light betwixt them  
burn'd  
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all  
abroad,  
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,  
The white mist, like a face-cloth to  
the face,  
Clung to the dead earth, and the land  
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause  
of flight  
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle  
beast  
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the  
throne,  
Ready to spring, waiting a chance:  
for this  
He chill'd the popular praises of the  
King  
With silent smiles of slow disparage-  
ment;  
And tamper'd with the Lords of the  
White Horse,  
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left;  
and sought  
To make disruption in the Table Round  
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds  
Serving his traitorous end; and all  
his aims  
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for  
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when  
all the court,  
Green-suited, but with plumes that  
mock'd the may,  
Had been, their wont, a-maying and  
return'd,  
That Modred still in green, all ear  
and eye,  
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-  
wall  
To spy some secret scandal if he might,  
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt  
her best  
Enid, and lissome Vivien, of her court  
The wildest and the worst; and more  
than this  
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing  
by  
Spied where he crouch'd, and as the  
gardener's hand  
Picks from the colewort a green cater-  
pillar,  
So from the high wall and the flower-  
ing grove  
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by  
the heel,  
And cast him as a worm upon the way;  
But when he knew the Prince tho'  
marr'd with dust,

He, reverencing king's blood in a bad  
man,  
Made such excuses as he might, and  
these  
Full knightly without scorn; for in  
those days  
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt  
in scorn;  
But, if a man were halt or hunch'd,  
in him  
By those whom God had made full-  
limb'd and tall,  
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,  
And he was answer'd softly by the King  
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot  
help  
To raise the Prince, who rising twice  
or thrice  
Full sharply smote his knees, and  
smiled, and went:  
But, ever after, the small violence done  
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,  
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day  
long  
A little bitter pool about a stone  
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot to'd  
This matter to the Queen, at first she  
laugh'd  
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,  
Then shudder'd, as the village wife  
who cries  
" I shudder, some one steps across my  
grave; "  
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for  
indeed  
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle  
beast,  
Would track her guilt until he found,  
and hers  
Would befor evermore a name of scorn.  
Henceforward rarely could she front  
in hall,  
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy  
face,  
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persis-  
tent eye:  
Henceforward too, the Powers that  
tend the soul,  
To help it from the death that cannot  
die,

And save it even in extremes, began  
 To vex and plague her. Many a time  
     for hours,  
 Beside the placid breathings of the  
     King,  
 In the dead night, grim faces came  
     and went  
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —  
 Like to some doubtful noise of creak-  
     ing doors,  
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted  
     house,  
 That keeps the rust of murder on the  
     walls —  
 Held her awake: or if she slept, she  
     dream'd  
 An awful dream; for then she seem'd  
     to stand  
 On some vast plain before a setting  
     sun,  
 And from the sun there swiftly made  
     at her  
 A ghastly something, and its shadow  
     flew  
 Before it, till it touch'd her, and she  
     turn'd —  
 When lo! her own, that broadening  
     from her feet,  
 And blackening, swallow'd all the  
     land, and in it  
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she  
     woke.  
 And all this trouble did not pass but  
     grew;  
 Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless  
     King,  
 And trustful courtesies of household  
     life,  
 Became her bane; and at the last she  
     said,  
 "O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine  
     own land,  
 For if thou tarry we shall meet again,  
 And if we meet again, some evil chance  
 Will make the smouldering scandal  
     break and blaze  
 Before the people, and our lord the  
     King."  
 And Lancelot ever promised, but re-  
     main'd,  
 And still they met and met. Again  
     she said,

"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee  
     hence."  
 And then they were agreed upon a  
     night  
 (When the good King should not be  
     there) to meet  
 And part for ever. Passion-pale they  
     met  
 And greeted: hands in hands, and eye  
     to eye,  
 Low on the border of her couch they  
     sat  
 Stammering and staring: it was their  
     last hour,  
 A madness of farewells. And Modred  
     brought  
 His creatures to the basement of the  
     tower  
 For testimony; and crying with full  
     voice  
 "Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at  
     last," aroused  
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike  
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-  
     long, and he fell  
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and  
     bare him off,  
 And all was still: then she, "The end  
     is come,  
 And I am shamed for ever;" and he  
     said,  
 "Mine be the shame; mine was the  
     sin: but rise,  
 And fly to my strong castle overseas:  
 There will I hide thee, till my life  
     shall end,  
 There hold thee with my life against  
     the world."  
 She answer'd, "Lancelot, wilt thou  
     hold me so?  
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our  
     farewells.  
 Would God that thou couldst hide me  
     from myself!  
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and  
     thou  
 Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,  
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,  
 And bide my doom." So Lancelot  
     got her horse,  
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his  
     own.



And then they rode to the divided way,  
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for  
 he past,  
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the  
 Queen,  
 Back to his land; but she to Almes-  
 bury  
 Fled all night long by glimmering  
 waste and weald,  
 And heard the spirits of the waste  
 and weald  
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard  
 them moan:  
 And in herself she moan'd "Too late,  
 too late!"  
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the  
 morn,  
 A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying  
 high,  
 Croak'd, and she thought, "He spies  
 a field of death;  
 For now the Heathen of the Northern  
 Sea,  
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of  
 the court,  
 Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the  
 land."

And when she came to Almesbury  
 she spake  
 There to the nuns, and said, "Mine  
 enemies  
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,  
 Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor  
 ask  
 Her name to whom ye yield it, till her  
 time  
 To tell you:" and her beauty, grace  
 and power,  
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and  
 they spared  
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode  
 For many a week, unknown, among  
 the nuns;  
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her  
 name, nor sought,  
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for  
 shrift,  
 But communed only with the little  
 maid,

Who pleased her with a babbling  
 heedlessness  
 Which often lured her from herself;  
 but now,  
 This night, a rumor wildly blown  
 about  
 Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd  
 the realm,  
 And leagued him with the heathen,  
 while the King  
 Was waging war on Lancelot: then  
 she thought,  
 "With what a hate the people and  
 the King  
 Must hate me," and bow'd down upon  
 her hands  
 Silent, until the little maid, who  
 brook'd  
 No silence, brake it, uttering "Late!  
 so late!"  
 What hour, I wonder, now?" and when  
 she drew  
 No answer, by and by began to hum  
 An air the nuns had taught her;  
 "Late, so late!"  
 Which when she heard, the Queen  
 look'd up, and said,  
 "O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,  
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I may  
 weep."  
 Whereat full willingly sang the little  
 maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the  
 night and chill!  
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter  
 still.  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter  
 now.

"No light had we: for that we do  
 repent;  
 And learning this, the bridegroom  
 will relent.  
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter  
 now.

"No light: so late! and dark  
 and chill the night!  
 O let us in, that we may find the light!  
 Too late, too late: ye cannot enter  
 now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom  
is so sweet ?

O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet !  
No, no, too late ! ye cannot enter  
now."

So sang the novice, while full pas-  
sionately,  
Her head upon her hands, remember-  
ing  
Her thought when first she came,  
wept the sad Queen.  
Then said the little novice prattling  
to her,

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no  
more ;

But let my words, the words of one  
so small,  
Who knowing nothing knows but to  
obey,  
And if I do not there is penance giv-  
en —

Comfort your sorrows ; for they do  
not flow  
From evil done ; right sure I am of  
that,

Who see your tender grace and state-  
liness.

But weigh your sorrows with our lord  
the King's,  
And weighing find them less ; for  
gone is he

To wage grim war against Sir Lance-  
lot there,  
Round that strong castle where he  
holds the Queen ;

And Modred whom he left in charge  
of all,  
The traitor — Ah sweet lady, the  
King's grief

For his own self, and his own Queen,  
and realm,  
Must needs be thrice as great as any  
of ours.

For me, I thank the saints, I am not  
great.

For if there ever come a grief to me  
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.  
None knows it, and my tears have  
brought me good :

But even were the griefs of little ones

As great as those of great ones, yet  
this grief

Is added to the griefs the great must  
bear,

That howsoever much they may desire  
Silence, they cannot weep behind a  
cloud :

As even here they talk at Almsbury  
About the good King and his wicked  
Queen,

And were I such a King with such a  
Queen,

Well might I wish to veil her wicked-  
ness,

But were I such a King, it could not  
be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd  
the Queen,

"Will the child kill me with her inno-  
cent talk ?"

But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,  
If this false traitor have displaced his  
lord,

Grieve with the common grief of all  
the realm ?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all  
woman's grief,

That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life  
Hath wrought confusion in the Table  
Round

Which good King Arthur founded,  
years ago,

With signs and miracles and wonders,  
there

At Camelot, ere the coming of the  
Queen."

Then thought the Queen within her-  
self again,

"Will the child kill me with her fool-  
ish prate ?"

But openly she spake and said to her,  
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery  
walls,

What canst thou know of Kings and  
Tables Round,

Or what of signs and wonders, but the  
signs

And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?"

To whom the little novice garrulously,  
 "Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs  
 And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.  
 So said my father, and himself was knight  
 Of the great Table — at the founding of it;  
 And rode thereto from Lyonesse, and he said  
 That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain  
 After the sunset, down the coast, he heard  
 Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,  
 All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,  
 Each with a beacon-star upon his head,  
 And with a wild sea-light about his feet,  
 He saw them — headland after headland flame  
 Far on into the rich heart of the west:  
 And in the light the white mermaiden swam,  
 And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,  
 And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,  
 To which the little elves of chasm and cleft  
 Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.  
 So said my father — yea, and furthermore,  
 Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods,  
 Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy  
 Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,  
 That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes  
 When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed:  
 And still at evenings on before his horse  
 The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke  
 Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke

Flying, for all the land was full of life.  
 And when at last he came to Camelot,  
 A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand  
 Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;  
 And in the hall itself was such a feast  
 As never man had dream'd; for every knight  
 Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served  
 By hands unseen; and even as he said  
 Down in the cellars merry bloated things  
 Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts  
 While the wine ran: so glad were spirits and men  
 Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,  
 "Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,  
 Spirits and men: could none of them foresee,  
 Not even thy wise father with his signs  
 And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again,  
 "Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,  
 Full many a noble war-song had he sung,  
 Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,  
 Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;  
 And many a mystic lay of life and death  
 Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,  
 When round him bent the spirits of the hills  
 With all their dewy hair blown back like flame:  
 So said my father — and that night the bard  
 Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd  
at those

Who call'd him the false son of Gor-  
lois :

For there was no man knew from  
whence he came ;

But after tempest, when the long  
wave broke

All down the thundering shores of  
Bude and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven,  
and then

They found a naked child upon the  
sands

Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea ;  
And that was Arthur ; and they foster'd him

Till he by miracle was approv'n King :  
And that his grave should be a mystery  
From all men, like his birth ; and  
could he find

A woman in her womanhood as great  
As he was in his manhood, then, he  
sang,

The twain together well might change  
the world.

But even in the middle of his song  
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the  
harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and  
would have fall'n,

But that they stay'd him up ; nor  
would he tell

His vision ; but what doubt that he  
foresaw

This evil work of Lancelot and the  
Queen ? ”

Then thought the Queen, “ Lo !  
they have set her on.

Our simple-seeming Abbess and her  
nuns,

To play upon me,” and bow'd her  
head nor spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with  
clasp'd hands,

Shame on her own garrulity garru-  
lously,

Said the good nuns would check her  
gadding tongue

Full often, “ and, sweet lady, if I seem  
To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Unmannerly, with prattling and the  
tales

Which my good father told me, check  
me too

Nor let me shame my father's mem-  
ory, one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself  
would say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he  
died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five sum-  
mers back,

And left me ; but of others who remain,  
And of the two first-famed for  
courtesy —

And pray you check me if I ask  
amiss —

But pray you, which had noblest,  
while you moved

Among them, Lancelot or our lord  
the King ? ”

Then the pale Queen look'd up and  
answer'd her,

“ Sir Lancelot, as became a noble  
knight,

Was gracious to all ladies, and the  
same

In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and the  
King

In open battle or the tilting-field  
Forbore his own advantage, and these  
two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men  
of all ;

For manners are not idle, but the fruit  
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind.”

“ Yea,” said the maid, “ be manners  
such fair fruit ?

Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-  
sand-fold

Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,  
The most disloyal friend in all the  
world.”

To which a mournful answer made  
the Queen :

“ O closed about by narrowing nun-  
nery-walls,

What knowest thou of the world, and  
 all its lights  
 And shadows, all the wealth and all  
 the woe?  
 If ever Lancelot, that most noble  
 knight,  
 Were for one hour less noble than  
 himself,  
 Pray for him that he scape the doom  
 of fire,  
 And weep for her who drew him to  
 his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I  
 pray for both;  
 But I should all as soon believe that  
 his,  
 Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the  
 King's,  
 As I could think, sweet lady, yours  
 would be  
 Such as they are, were you the sinful  
 Queen."

So she, like many another babbler,  
 hurt  
 Whom she would soothe, and harm'd  
 where she would heal;  
 For here a sudden flush of wrathful  
 heat  
 Fired all the pale face of the Queen,  
 who cried,  
 "Such as thou art be never maiden  
 more  
 For ever! thou their tool, set on to  
 plague  
 And play upon, and harry me, petty spy  
 And traitress." When that storm of  
 anger brake  
 From Guinevere, aghast the maiden  
 rose,  
 White as her veil, and stood before  
 the Queen  
 As tremulously as foam upon the  
 beach  
 Stands in a wind, ready to break and  
 fly,  
 And when the Queen had added "Get  
 thee hence,"  
 Fled frightened. Then that other left  
 alone

Sigh'd, and began to gather heart  
 again,  
 Saying in herself, "The simple, fear-  
 ful child  
 Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-  
 ful guilt,  
 Simpler than any child, betrays itself.  
 But help me, heaven, for surely I  
 repent.  
 For what is true repentance but in  
 thought—  
 Not ev'n in inmost thought to think  
 again  
 The sins that made the past so pleasant  
 to us:  
 And I have sworn never to see him  
 more,  
 To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,  
 Her memory from old habit of the  
 mind  
 Went slipping back upon the golden  
 days  
 In which she saw him first, when  
 Lancelot came,  
 Reputed the best knight and goodliest  
 man,  
 Ambassador, to lead her to his lord  
 Arthur, and led her forth, and far  
 ahead  
 Of his and her retinue moving, they,  
 Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on  
 love  
 And sport and tilts and pleasure,  
 (for the time  
 Was maytime, and as yet no sin was  
 dream'd,)  
 Rode under groves that look'd a para-  
 dise  
 Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth  
 That seem'd the heavens upbreking  
 thro' the earth,  
 And on from hill to hill, and every day  
 Beheld at noon in some delicious  
 dale  
 The silk pavilions of King Arthur  
 raised  
 For brief repast or afternoon repose  
 By couriers gone before; and on again,  
 Till yet once more ere set of sun they  
 saw

The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
ship,  
That crown'd the state pavilion of the  
King,  
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent  
well.

But when the Queen immersed in  
such a trance,  
And moving thro' the past uncon-  
sciously,  
Came to that point where first she  
saw the King  
Ri le toward her from the city, sigh'd  
to find  
Her journey done, glanced at him,  
thought him cold,  
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,  
not like him,  
"Not like my Lancelot" — while she  
brooded thus  
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts  
again,  
There rode an armed warrior to the  
doors.  
A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-  
nery ran,  
Then on a sudden a cry "The King."  
She sat  
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when  
armed feet  
Thro' the long gallery from the outer  
doors  
Rang coming, prone from off her seat  
she fell,  
And grovell'd with her face against  
the floor:  
There with her milkwhite arms and  
shadowy hair  
She made her face a darkness from  
the King:  
And in the darkness heard his armed  
feet  
Pause by her; then came silence, then  
a voice,  
Monotonous and hollow like a Ghost's  
Denouncing judgment, but tho'  
changed, the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child  
of one

I honor'd, happy, dead before thy  
shame?  
Well is it that no child is born of  
thee.  
The children born of thee are sword  
and fire,  
Red ruin, and the breaking up of  
laws,  
The craft of kindred and the Godless  
hosts  
Of heathens swarming o'er the Northern  
Sea;  
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my  
right arm  
The mightiest of my knights, abode  
with me,  
Have everywhere about this land of  
Christ  
In twelve great battles ruining over-  
thrown.  
And knowest thou now from whence  
I come — from him,  
From waging bitter war with him:  
and he,  
That did not shun to smite me in  
worse way,  
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him  
left,  
He spared to lift his hand against the  
King  
Who made him knight: but many a  
knight was slain;  
And many more, and all his kith and  
kin  
Clave to him, and abode in his own  
land.  
And many more when Modred raised  
revolt,  
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,  
clave  
To Modred, and a remnant stays with  
me.  
And of this remnant will I leave a  
part,  
True men who love me still, for whom  
I live,  
To guard thee in the wild hour coming  
on,  
Lest but a hair of this low head be  
harm'd.  
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till  
my death.

Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies  
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet  
 my doom.  
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet  
 to me,  
 That I the King should greatly care  
 to live;  
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of  
 my life.  
 Bear with me for the last time while  
 I show,  
 Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou  
 hast sinn'd.  
 For when the Roman left us, and  
 their law  
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the  
 ways  
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and there  
 a deed  
 Of prowess done redress'd a random  
 wrong.  
 But I was first of all the kings who  
 drew  
 The knight-hood-errant of this realm  
 and all  
 The realms together under me, their  
 Head,  
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,  
 A glorious company, the flower of  
 men,  
 To serve as model for the mighty  
 world,  
 And be the fair beginning of a time.  
 I made them lay their hands in mine  
 and swear  
 To reverence the King, as if he were  
 Their conscience, and their conscience  
 as their King,  
 To break the heathen and uphold the  
 Christ,  
 To ride abroad redressing human  
 wrongs,  
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to  
 it,  
 To honor his own word as if his God's,  
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,  
 To love one maiden only, cleave to  
 her,  
 And worship her by years of noble  
 deeds,  
 Until they won her; for indeed I  
 knew

Of no more subtle master under  
 heaven  
 Than is the maiden passion for a  
 maid,  
 Not only to keep down the base in  
 man,  
 But teach high thought, and amiable  
 words  
 And courtliness, and the desire of  
 fame,  
 And love of truth, and all that makes  
 a man.  
 And all this throve before I wedded  
 thee,  
 Believing, 'lo mine helpmate, one to  
 feel  
 My purpose and rejoicing in my  
 joy.  
 Then came thy shameful sin with  
 Lancelot;  
 Then came the sin of Tristram and  
 Isolt;  
 Then others, following these my  
 mightiest knights,  
 And drawing foul ensample from fair  
 names,  
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite  
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-  
 tain,  
 And all thro' thee! so that this life of  
 mine  
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe  
 and wrong,  
 Not greatly care to lose; but rather  
 think  
 How sad it were for Arthur, should he  
 live,  
 To sit once more within his lonely  
 hall,  
 And miss the wonted number of my  
 knights,  
 And miss to hear high talk of noble  
 deeds  
 As in the golden days before thy sin.  
 For which of us, who might be left,  
 could speak  
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance  
 at thee?  
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of  
 Usk  
 Thy shadow still would glide from  
 room to room,

And I should evermore be vext with thee  
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,  
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.  
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,  
 Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.  
 I am not made of so slight elements.  
 Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.  
 I hold that man the worst of public foes  
 Who either for his own or children's sake,  
 To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife  
 Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:  
 For being thro' his cowardice allow'd  
 Her station, taken everywhere for pure,  
 She like a new disease, unknown to men,  
 Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,  
 Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,  
 and saps  
 The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse  
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.  
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!  
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart  
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,  
 The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch  
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.  
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.  
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd  
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes,  
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,  
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die  
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,  
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.  
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on the fierce law,  
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,  
 (When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.  
 The pang — which while I weigh'd thy heart with one  
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,  
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.  
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,  
 Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.  
 But how to take last leave of all I loved?  
 O golden hair, with which I used to play  
 Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,  
 And beauty such as never woman wore,  
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —  
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,  
 But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.  
 I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,  
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,  
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries  
 'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,  
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,  
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life  
 So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.



Let no man dream but that I love thee  
still.  
Perchance, and so thou purify thy  
soul,  
And so thou lean on our fair father  
Christ,  
Hereafter in that world where all are  
pure  
We two may meet before high God,  
and thou  
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine,  
and know  
I am thine husband — not a smaller  
soul,  
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me  
that,  
I charge thee, my last hope. Now  
must I hence.  
Thro' the thick night I hear the trum-  
pet blow :  
They summon me their King to lead  
mine hosts  
Far down to that great battle in the  
west,  
Where I must strike against the man  
they call  
My sister's son — no kin of mine, who  
leagues  
With Lords of the White Horse,  
heathen, and knights,  
Traitors — and strike him dead, and  
meet myself  
Death, or I know not what mysterious  
doom.  
And thou remaining here wilt learn  
the event;  
But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side; see thee no  
more —  
Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,  
She felt the King's breath wander o'er  
her neck,  
And in the darkness o'er her fallen  
head,  
Perceived the waving of his hands  
that blest.

Then, listening till those armed  
steps were gone.

Rose the pale Queen, and in her an-  
guish found  
The casement: "peradventure," so  
she thought,  
"If I might see his face, and not be  
seen."  
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!  
And near him the sad nuns with each  
a light  
Stood, and he gave them charge about  
the Queen,  
To guard and foster her for evermore.  
And while he spake to these his helm  
was lower'd,  
To which for crest the golden dragon  
ciung  
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,  
Which then was as an angel's, but she  
saw,  
Wet with the mists and smitten by the  
lights,  
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-  
ship  
Blaze, making all the night a steam  
of fire.  
And even then he turn'd; and more  
and more  
The moony vapor rolling round the  
King,  
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant  
in it,  
Enwound him fold by fold, and made  
him gray  
And grayer, till himself became as mist  
Before her, moving ghostlike to his  
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and  
cried aloud  
"Oh Arthur!" there her voice brake  
suddenly,  
Then — as a stream that spouting from  
a cliff  
Fails in mid air, but gathering at the  
base  
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the  
vale —  
Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone — my lord!  
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be  
slain!

And he forgave me, and I could not speak.  
 Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell.  
 His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,  
 My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?  
 The shadow of another cleaves to me, And makes me one pollution: he, the King,  
 Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?  
 What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,  
 If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;  
 No, nor by living can I live it down. The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,  
 The months will add themselves and make the years,  
 The years will roll into the centuries, And mine will ever be a name of scorn. I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.  
 Let the world be; that is but of the world  
 What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,  
 Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;  
 His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,  
 For mockery is the fume of little hearts.  
 And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven  
 My wickedness to him, and left me hope  
 That in mine own heart I can live down sin  
 And be his mate hereafter in the heavens  
 Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,  
 Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint  
 Among his warring senses, to thy knights—  
 To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below,  
 Would not look up, or half-despised the height  
 To which I would not or I could not climb—  
 I thought I could not breathe in that fine air  
 That pure severity of perfect light—  
 I wanted warmth and color which I found  
 In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,  
 Thou art the highest and most human too,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none  
 Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?  
 Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none:  
 Myself must tell him in that purer life,  
 But now it were too daring. Ah my God,  
 What might I not have made of thy fair world,  
 Had I but loved thy highest creature here?  
 It was my duty to have loved the highest:  
 It surely was my profit had I known:  
 It would have been my pleasure had I seen.  
 We needs must love the highest when we see it,  
 Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand  
 Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she look'd and saw  
 The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,  
 "Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?"  
 Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns  
 All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed  
 Within her, and she wept with these and said,

"Ye know me then, that wicked  
 one, who broke  
 The vast design and purpose of the  
 King.  
 O shut me round with narrowing  
 nunnery walls,  
 Meek maidens, from the voices crying  
 'shame.'  
 I must not scorn myself: he loves me  
 still.  
 Let no one dream but that he loves  
 me still.  
 So let me, if you do not shudder at me,  
 Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with  
 you;  
 Wear black and white, and be a nun  
 like you,  
 Fast with your fasts, not feasting with  
 your feasts;  
 Grieve with your griefs, not grieving  
 at your joys,  
 But not rejoicing; mingle with your  
 rites;  
 Pray and be pray'd for; lie before  
 your shrines;  
 Do each low office of your holy  
 house;  
 Walk your dim cloister, and distribute  
 dole  
 To poor sick people, richer in His eyes

Who ransom'd us, and haler too than  
 I;  
 And treat their loathsome hurts and  
 heal mine own;  
 And so wear out in almsdeed and in  
 prayer  
 The sombre close of that voluptuous  
 day,  
 Which wrought the ruin of my lord  
 the King."

She said: they took her to them-  
 selves; and she  
 Still hoping, fearing "is it yet too  
 late?"  
 Dwelt with them, till in time their  
 Abbess died.  
 Then she, for her good deeds and her  
 pure life,  
 And for the power of ministration in  
 her,  
 And likewise for the high rank she  
 had borne,  
 Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess,  
 lived  
 For three brief years, and there, an  
 Abbess, past  
 To where beyond these voices there  
 is peace.

*End of "The Round Table."*

### THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-  
 vere,  
 First made and latest left of all the  
 knights,  
 Told, when the man was no more than  
 a voice  
 In the white winter of his age, to  
 those  
 With whom he dwelt, new faces,  
 other minds.  
 For on their march to westward,  
 Bedivere,  
 Who slowly paced among the slumber-  
 ing host,  
 Heard in his tent the moanings of the  
 King:

"I found Him in the shining of the  
 stars,  
 I mark'd Him in the flowering of His  
 fields,  
 But in His ways with men I find Him  
 not.  
 I waged His wars, and now I pass and  
 die.  
 O me! for why is all around us  
 here  
 As if some lesser god had made the  
 world,  
 But had not force to shape it as he  
 would,  
 Till the High God behold it from be-  
 yond,  
 And enter it, and make it beautiful?"

Or else as if the world were wholly  
 fair,  
 But that these eyes of men are dense  
 and dim,  
 And have not power to see it as it is :  
 Perchance, because we see not to the  
 close ; —  
 For I, being simple, thought to work  
 His will,  
 And have but stricken with the sword  
 in vain ;  
 And all whereon I lean'd in wife and  
 friend  
 Is traitor to my peace, and all my  
 realm  
 Reels back into the beast, and is no  
 more.  
 My God, thou hast forgotten me in  
 my death :  
 Nay — God my Christ — I pass but  
 shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in  
 the west,  
 There came on Arthur sleeping, Ga-  
 wain kill'd  
 In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain  
 blown  
 Along a wandering wind, and past his  
 ear  
 Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all  
 delight!  
 Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass  
 away.  
 Farewell! there is an isle of rest for  
 thee.  
 And I am blown along a wandering  
 wind,  
 And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-  
 light."  
 And fainter onward, like wild birds  
 that change  
 Their season in the night and wail  
 their way  
 From cloud to cloud, down the long  
 wind the dream  
 Shrill'd; but in going mingled with  
 dim cries  
 Far in the moonlit haze among the  
 hills,  
 As of some lonely city sack'd by  
 night,

When all is lost, and wife and child  
 with wail  
 Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke  
 and call'd,  
 "Who spake? A dream. O light  
 upon the wind,  
 Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are  
 these dim cries  
 Thine? or doth all that haunts the  
 waste and wild  
 Mourn, knowing it will go along with  
 me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere  
 and spake:  
 "O me, my King, let pass whatever  
 will,  
 Elves, and the harmless glamour of  
 the field;  
 But in their stead thy name and glory  
 cling  
 To all high places like a golden cloud  
 For ever: but as yet thou shalt not  
 pass.  
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in  
 death  
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the  
 man;  
 And care not thou for dreams from  
 him, but rise —  
 I hear the steps of Modred in the  
 west,  
 And with him many of thy people,  
 and knights  
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved,  
 but grosser grown  
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows  
 and thee.  
 Right well in heart they know thee  
 for the King.  
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere:  
 "Far other is this battle in the west  
 Whereto we move, than when we  
 strove in youth,  
 And brake the petty kings, and fought  
 with Rome,  
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman  
 wall,

And shook him thro' the north. Ill  
doom is mine  
To war against my people and my  
knights.  
The king who fights his people fights  
himself.  
And they my knights, who loved me  
once, the stroke  
That strikes them dead is as my death  
to me.  
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a  
way  
Thro' this blind haze, which ever  
since I saw  
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,  
Hath folded in the passes of the  
world."

Then rose the King and moved his  
host by night,  
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league  
by league,  
Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-  
nesse —  
A land of old upheaven from the abyss  
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;  
Where fragments of forgotten peoples  
dwelt,  
And the long mountains ended in a  
coast  
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away  
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.  
There the pursuer could pursue no  
more,  
And he that fled no further fly the  
King;  
And there, that day when the great  
light of heaven  
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling  
year,  
On the waste sand by the waste sea  
they closed.  
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a  
fight  
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the  
west.  
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and  
sea:  
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed  
it, drew  
Down with his blood, till all his heart  
was cold

With formless fear; and ev'n on  
Arthur fell  
Confusion, since he saw not whom he  
fought.  
For friend and foe were shadows in  
the mist,  
And friend slew friend not knowing  
whom he slew;  
And some had visions out of golden  
youth,  
And some beheld the faces of old  
ghosts  
Look in upon the battle; and in the  
mist  
Was many a noble deed, many a base,  
And chance and craft and strength in  
single fights,  
And ever and anon with host to  
host  
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the  
hard mail hewn,  
Shield-breakings, and the clash of  
brands, the crash  
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and  
shrieks  
After the Christ, of those who falling  
down  
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw  
the mist;  
And shouts of heathen and the traitor  
knights,  
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous  
blasphemies,  
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of  
the lungs  
In that close mist, and cryings for the  
light,  
Moans of the dying, and voices of the  
dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after  
wail  
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'  
death  
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that  
shore,  
Save for some whisper of the seething  
seas,  
A dead hush fell; but when the dolo-  
rous day  
Grew drearier toward twilight falling,  
came

A bitter wind, clear from the North,  
 and blew  
 The mist aside, and with that wind the  
 tide  
 Rose, and the pale King glanced  
 across the field  
 Of battle: but no man was moving  
 there;  
 Nor any cry of Christian heard  
 thereon,  
 Nor yet of heathen; only the wan  
 wave  
 Brake in among dead faces, to and  
 fro  
 Swaying the helpless hands, and up  
 and down  
 Tumbling the hollow helmets of the  
 fallen,  
 And shiver'd brands that once had  
 fought with Rome,  
 And rolling far along the gloomy  
 shores  
 The voice of days of old and days to  
 be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
 Bedivere,  
 And whiter than the mist that all day  
 long  
 Had beld the field of battle was the  
 King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that  
 shakes the world,  
 And wastes the narrow realm whereon  
 we move,  
 And beats upon the faces of the dead,  
 My dead, as tho' they had not died  
 for me? —  
 O Bedivere, for on my heart hath  
 fall'n  
 Confusion, till I know not what I am,  
 Nor whence I am, nor whether I be  
 King.  
 Behold, I seem but King among the  
 dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:  
 "My King,  
 King everywhere! and so the dead  
 have kings,  
 There also will I worship thee as King.

Yet still thy life is whole, and still I  
 live  
 Who love thee; but who hates thee,  
 he that brought  
 The heathen back among us, yonder  
 stands,  
 Modred, unharmed, the traitor of thine  
 house."

Then spake the King: "My house  
 hath been my doom.  
 But call not thou this traitor of my  
 house  
 Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof  
 with me.  
 My house are rather they who sware  
 my vows,  
 Yea, even while they brake them,  
 own'd me King.  
 And well for thee, saying in my dark  
 hour,  
 When all the purport of my throne  
 hath fail'd,  
 That quick or dead thou holdest me  
 for King.  
 King am I, whatsoever be their cry;  
 And one last act of kinghood shalt  
 thou see  
 Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this  
 the King  
 Made at the man: then Modred smote  
 his liege  
 Hard on that helm which many a  
 heathen sword  
 Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one  
 blow,  
 Striking the last stroke with Excali-  
 bur,  
 Slew him, and all but slain himself,  
 he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle  
 roll'd  
 Among the mountains by the winter  
 sea;  
 Until King Arthur's Table, man by  
 man,  
 Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their  
 lord,  
 King Arthur. Then, because his  
 wound was deep,  
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,

And bore him to a chapel nigh the  
field,

A broken chancel with a broken cross,  
That stood on a dark strait of barren  
land :

On one side lay the Ocean, and on one  
Lay a great water, and the moon was  
full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir  
Bedivere :

"The sequel of to-day unsolders all  
The goodliest fellowship of famous  
knights

Whereof this world holds record.

Such a sleep

They sleep — the men I loved. I  
think that we

Shall never more, at any future time,  
Delight our souls with talk of knight-  
ly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the  
halls

Of Camelot, as in the days that were.  
I perish by this people which I made,—

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come  
again

To rule once more ; but, let what will  
be, be,

I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm  
That without help I cannot last till  
morn.

Thou therefore take my brand Excal-  
libur,

Which was my pride : for thou re-  
memberest how

In those old days, one summer noon,  
an arm

Rose up from out the bosom of the  
lake,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

Holding the sword — and how I row'd  
across

And took it, and have worn it, like a  
king ;

And, wheresoever I am sung or  
told

In aftertime, this also shall be known :  
But now delay not : take Excalibur,

And fling him far into the middle  
mere :

Watch what thou seest, and lightly  
bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :

"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee  
thus,

Aidless, alone, and smitten thro'  
the helm —

A little thing may harm a wounded  
man ;

Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,  
Watch what I see, and lightly bring  
thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine  
he stept,

And in the moon athwart the place of  
tombs,

Where lay the mighty bones of an-  
cient men,

Old knights, and over them the sea-  
wind sang

Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,  
stepping down

By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed  
rock,

Came on the shining levels of the  
lake.

There drew he forth the brand Ex-  
calibur,

And o'er him, drawing it, the winter  
moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,  
ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against  
the hilt :

For all the haft twinkled with dia-  
mond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-  
work

Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so  
long

That both his eyes were dazzled as he  
stood,

This way and that dividing the swift  
mind,

In act to throw : but at the last it  
seem'd

Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd  
There in the many-knotted waterflag

That whistled stiff and dry about the  
marge.  
So strode he back slow to the wound-  
ed King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bed-  
ivere :  
" Hast thou perform'd my mission  
which I gave ?  
What is it thou hast seen ? or what  
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-  
ivere :  
" I heard the ripple washing in the  
reeds,  
And the wild water lapping on the  
crag. "

To whom replied King Arthur, faint  
and pale :  
" Thou hast betray'd thy nature and  
thy name,  
Not rendering true answer, as be-  
seem'd  
Thy fēalty, nor like a noble knight :  
For surer sign had follow'd, either  
hand,  
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.  
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.  
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go  
again,  
As thou art lief and dear, and do the  
thing  
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring  
me word. "

Then went Sir Bedivere the second  
time  
Across the ridge, and paced beside  
the mere,  
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in  
thought ;  
But when he saw the wonder of the  
hilt,  
How curiously and strangely chased,  
he smote  
His palms together, and he cried  
aloud :

" And if indeed I cast the brand  
away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy  
note,  
Should thus be lost for ever from the  
earth,  
Which might have pleased the eyes  
of many men.  
What good should follow this, if this  
were done ?  
What harm, undone ? Deep harm to  
disobey,  
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.  
Were it well to obey then, if a king  
demand  
An act unprofitable, against himself ?  
The King is sick, and knows not what  
he does.  
What record, or what relic of my lord  
Should be to aftertime, but empty  
breath  
And rumors of a doubt ? But were  
this kept,  
Stored in some treasure-house of  
mighty kings,  
Some one might show it at a joust of  
arms,  
Saying, ' King Arthur's sword, Excali-  
bur,  
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the  
Lake.  
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in  
the deeps  
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'  
So might some old man speak in the  
aftertime  
To all the people, winning reverence.  
But now much honor and much fame  
were lost. "

So spake he, clouded with his own  
conceit,  
And hid Excalibur the second time,  
And so strode back slow to the wound-  
ed King.

Then spake King Arthur, breath-  
ing heavily :  
" What is it thou hast seen ? or what  
hast heard ? "

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-  
vere :



"I heard the water lapping on the crag,  
And the long ripple washing in the  
reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur,  
much in wrath:

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,  
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is  
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,  
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye  
That bowed the will. I see thee what  
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my  
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,  
Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-  
cious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl  
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the  
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,  
And the third time may prosper, get  
thee hence:

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,  
I will arise and slay thee with my  
hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere,  
and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,  
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd  
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.  
The great brand

Made lightning in the splendor of  
the moon,

And flashing round and round, and  
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern  
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of win-  
ter shock

By night, with noises of the Northern  
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Ex-  
calibur:

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an  
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and  
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in  
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the  
King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing  
thicker breath:

"Now see I by thine eyes that this is  
done.

Speak out: what is it thou hast heard,  
or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bed-  
ivere:

"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest  
the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never  
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till  
I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal  
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.  
Then with both hands I flung him,

wheeling him;  
But when I look'd again, behold an

arm,  
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-  
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and  
brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in  
the mere."

And answer made King Arthur,  
breathing hard:

"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that  
I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive  
my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I  
fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I  
shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he  
half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his  
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere  
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,  
And would have spoken, but he found  
not words;

Then took with care, and kneeling on  
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place  
of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur  
panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on  
his bed

When all the house is mute. So  
sigh'd the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,  
"Quick, quick!

I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from  
ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking,  
as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen  
hills.

He heard the deep behind him, and a  
cry

Before. His own thought drove him  
like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy  
caves

And barren chasms, and all to left  
and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round  
him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that  
rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed  
heels —

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,  
And the long glories of the winter  
moon.

Then saw they how there hove a  
dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to  
stern,

Beneath them; and descending they  
were ware

That all the decks were dense with  
stately forms,

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a  
dream — by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold:  
and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling  
stars,

And, as it were one voice, an agony  
Of lamentation, like a wind that  
shrills

All night in a waste land, where no  
one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of  
the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me  
in the barge."

So to the barge they came. There  
those three Queens

Put forth their hands, and took the  
King, and wept.

But she, that rose the tallest of them  
all

And fairest, laid his head upon her  
lap,

And loosed the shatter'd casque, and  
chafed his hands,

And call'd him by his name, complain-  
ing loud,

And dropping bitter tears against a  
brow

Striped with dark blood: for all his  
face was white

And colorless, and like the wither'd  
moon

Smote by the fresh beam of the  
springing east;

And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd  
with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous  
curls —

That made his forehead like a rising  
sun

High from the daïs-throne — were  
parch'd with dust,

Or, clotted into points and hanging  
loose,

Mix'd with the knightly growth that  
fringed his lips.

So like a shatter'd column lay the  
King;

Not like that Arthur who, with lance  
in rest,  
From spur to plume a star of tourna-  
ment,  
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and  
charged  
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir  
Bedivere :  
" Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall  
I go ?  
Where shall I hide my forehead and  
my eyes ?  
For now I see the true old times are dead,  
When every morning brought a noble  
chance,  
And every chance brought out a noble  
knight.  
Such times have been not since the  
light that led  
The holy Elders with the gift of  
myrrh.  
But now the whole Round Table is  
dissolved  
Which was an image of the mighty  
world,  
And I, the last, go forth companion-  
less,  
And the days darken round me, and  
the years,  
Among new men, strange faces, other  
minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from  
the barge :  
" The old order changeth, yielding  
place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt  
the world.  
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?  
I have lived my life, and that which  
I have done  
May He within himself make pure !  
but thou,  
If thou shouldst never see my face  
again,  
Pray for my soul. More things are  
wrought by prayer  
Than this world dreams of. Where-  
fore. let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and  
day.  
For what are men better than sheep  
or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the  
brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands  
of prayer  
Both for themselves and those who  
call them friend ?  
For so the whole round earth is every  
way  
Bound by gold chains about the feet  
of God.  
But now farewell. I am going a long  
way  
With these thou seest — if indeed I go  
(For all my mind is clouded with a  
doubt) —  
To the island-valley of Avilion ;  
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any  
snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it  
lies  
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-  
chard lawns  
And bowery hollows crown'd with  
summer sea,  
Where I will heal me of my grievous  
wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar  
and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-  
breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes  
the flood  
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir  
Bedivere  
Revolving many memories, till the hull  
Look'd one black dot against the verge  
of dawn,  
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for  
evermore,  
The stillness of the dead world's win-  
ter dawn  
Amazed him, and he groan'd, " The  
King is gone."

And therewithal came on him the weird  
rhyme,  
"From the great deep to the great  
deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly  
clomb  
The last hard footstep of that iron  
crag;  
Thence mark'd the black hull moving  
yet, and cried,  
"He passes to be King among the  
dead,  
And after healing of his grievous  
wound  
He comes again; but — if he come no  
more —  
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon  
black boat,  
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three  
whereat we gazed  
On that high day, when, clothed with  
living light,  
They stood before his throne in si-  
lence, friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at his  
need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there  
came, but faint  
As from beyond the limit of the world,  
Like the last echo born of a great cry,  
Sounds, as if some fair city were one  
voice  
Around a king returning from his wars.  
Thereat once more he moved about,  
and clomb  
Ev'n to the highest he could climb,  
and saw,  
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of  
hand,  
Or thought he saw, the speck that  
bare the King,  
Down that long water opening on the  
deep  
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,  
and go  
From less to less and vanish into light.  
And the new sun rose bringing the new  
year.

---

TO THE QUEEN.

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,  
And loyal to thy land, as this to  
thee —  
Bear witness, that rememberable day,  
When, pale as yet, and fever-worn, the  
Prince  
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering  
life again  
From halfway down the shadow of  
the grave,  
Past with thee thro' thy people and  
their love,  
And London roll'd one tide of joy  
thro' all  
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues  
of man  
And welcome! witness, too, the silent  
cry,  
The prayer of many a race and creed,  
and clime —  
Thunderless lightnings striking under  
sea

From sunset and sunrise of all thy  
realm,  
And that true North, whereof we lately  
heard  
A strain to shame us "keep you to  
yourselves;  
So loyal is too costly! friends — your  
love  
Is but a burthen: loose the bond, and  
go."  
Is this the tone of empire? here the  
faith  
That made us rulers? this, indeed,  
her voice  
And meaning, whom the roar of Hou-  
goumont  
Left mightiest of all peoples under  
heaven?  
What shock has fool'd her since, that  
she should speak  
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier —  
hour by hour!

The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,  
Some third-rate isle half-lost among  
her seas?

There rang her voice, when the full  
city peal'd.

Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to  
their crown

Are loyal to their own far sons, who  
love

Our ocean-empire with her boundless  
homes

For ever-broadening England, and her  
throne

In our vast Orient, and one isle, one  
isle,

That knows not her own greatness: if  
she knows

And dreads it we are fall'n. — But  
thou, my Queen,

Not for itself, but thro' thy living love  
For one to whom I made it o'er his  
grave

Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,  
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
with Soul

Rather than that gray king, whose  
name, a ghost,

Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,  
from mountain peak,

And cleaves to cairn and cromlech  
still; or him

Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malle-  
or's, one

Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a  
time

That hover'd between war and wan-  
tonness,

And crownings and dethronements:  
take withal

Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that  
Heaven

Will blow the tempest in the distance  
back

From thine and ours: for some are  
scared, who mark,

Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,  
Waverings of every vane with every  
wind,

And wordy trucklings to the transient  
hour,

And fierce or careless looseners of the  
faith,

And Softness breeding scorn of simple  
life,

Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,  
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,

Or Art with poisonous honey stol'n  
from France,

And that which knows, but careful for  
itself,

And that which knows not, ruling that  
which knows

To its own harm: the goal of this  
great world

Lies beyond sight: yet — if our slowly-  
grown

And crown'd Republic's crowning  
common-sense,

That saved her many times, not fail —  
their fears

Are morning shadows huger than the  
shapes

That cast them, not those gloomier  
which forego

The darkness of that battle in the  
West,

Where all of high and holy dies  
away.



# THE PRINCESS;

A MEDLEY.

## PROLOGUE.

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

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

Laborious orient ivory sphere in  
sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and  
battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on  
the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk  
and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armor  
hung.

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

"O miracle of women," said the  
book,  
"O noble heart who, being strait-  
besieged  
By this wild king to force her to his  
wish,  
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a  
soldier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd  
as lost —

Her stature more than mortal in the  
burst

Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on  
fire —

Brake with a blast of trumpets from  
the gate,

And, falling on them like a thunder-  
bolt,

'She trampled some beneath her  
horses' heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles  
of the wall,

And some were push'd with lances  
from the rock,

And part were drown'd within the  
whirling brook :

O miracle of noble womanhood ! ”

So sang the gallant glorious chroni-  
cle ;

And, I all rapt in this, “ Come out, ”  
he said,

“ To the Abbey : there is Aunt Eliza-  
beth

And sister Lilia with the rest. ” We  
went

(I kept the book and had my finger  
in it)

Down thro' the park : strange was the  
sight to me ;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,  
sown

With happy faces and with holiday.

There moved the multitude, a thou-  
sand heads :

The patient leaders of their Institute  
Taught them with facts. One rear'd

a font of stope  
And drew, from butts of water on the  
slope,

The fountain of the moment, playing,  
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of  
pearls,

Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded  
ball

Danced like a wisp : and somewhat  
lower down

A man with knobs and wires and vials  
fired

A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep  
From hollow fields : and here were  
telescopes

For azure views ; and there a group  
of girls

In circle waited, whom the electric  
shock

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter :  
round the lake

A little clock-work steamer paddling  
plied

And shook the lilies : perch'd about  
the knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam :  
A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky  
groves

And dropt a fairy parachute and  
past :

And there thro' twenty posts of tele-  
graph

They flash'd a sancy message to and  
fro

Between the mimic stations ; so that  
sport

Went hand in hand with Science ;  
otherwise

Pure sport : a herd of boys with  
clamor bowl'd

And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd  
about

Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men  
and maids

Arranged a country dance, and flew  
thro' light

And shadow, while the twangling  
violin

Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and  
overhead

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty  
lime

Made noise with bees and breeze from  
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking  
of the time ;

And long we gazed, but satiated at  
length

Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and  
ivy-claspt,

Of finest Gothic lighter than a  
fire,



Thro' one wide chasm of time and  
 frost they gave  
 The park, the crowd, the house; but  
 all within  
 The sward was trim as any garden  
 lawn:  
 And here we lit on Annt Elizabeth,  
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady  
 friends  
 From neighbor seats: and there was  
 Ralph himself,  
 A broken statne propt against the wall,  
 As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,  
 Half child half woman as she was,  
 had wound  
 A scarf of orange round the stony  
 helm,  
 And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,  
 That made the old warrior from his  
 ivied nook  
 Glow like a sunbeam: near his tomb  
 a feast  
 Shone, silver-set; about it lay the  
 guests,  
 And there we join'd them: then the  
 maiden Aunt  
 Took this fair day for text, and from  
 it preach'd  
 An universal culture for the crowd,  
 And all things great; but we, un-  
 worthier, told  
 Of college: he had climb'd across the  
 spikes,  
 And he had squeezed himself betwixt  
 the bars,  
 And he had breath'd the Proctor's  
 dogs; and one  
 Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common  
 men,  
 But honeying at the whisper of a lord;  
 And one the Master, as a rogue in  
 grain  
 Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their  
 heads I saw  
 The feudal warrior lady-clad; which  
 brought  
 My book to mind: and opening this I  
 read  
 Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that  
 rang

With tilt and tourney; then the tale  
 of her  
 That drove her foes with slaughter  
 from her walls,  
 And much I praised her nobleness,  
 and "Where,"  
 Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head  
 (she lay  
 Beside him) "lives there such a  
 woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are  
 thousands now  
 Such women, but convention beats  
 them down:  
 It is but bringing up; no more than  
 that:  
 You men have done it: how I hate  
 you all!  
 Ah, were I something great! I wish I  
 were  
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame  
 you then,  
 That love to keep us children! O I  
 wish  
 That I were some great princess, I  
 would build  
 Far off from men a college like a  
 man's,  
 And I would teach them all that men  
 are taught;  
 We are twice as quick!" And here  
 she shook aside  
 The hand that play'd the patron with  
 her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were  
 the sight  
 If our old halls could change their  
 sex, and flaunt  
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers  
 for deans,  
 And sweet girl-graduates in their  
 golden hair.  
 I think they should not wear our rusty  
 gowns,  
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths,  
 or Ralph  
 Who shines so in the corner; yet I  
 fear,  
 If there were many Lilias in the brood,

However deep you might embower the  
nest,  
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sward  
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot:  
"That's your light way; but I would  
make it death  
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself  
she laugh'd;  
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,  
And sweet as English air could make  
her, she:  
But Walter hail'd a score of names  
upon her,  
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful  
Puss,"  
And swore he long'd at college,  
only long'd,  
All else was well, for she-society.  
They boated and they cricketed; they  
talk'd

At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;  
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the  
souls of deans;  
They rode; they betted; made a hun-  
dred friends,  
And caught the blossom of the flying  
terms,  
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-  
place,  
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus  
he spoke,  
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,  
"We doubt not that. O yes, you  
miss'd us much.  
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you  
did."

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

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

We seven stay'd at Christmas up to  
read;

And there we took one tutor as to  
read:

The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube  
and square

Were out of season: never man, I  
think,

So moulder'd in a sinecure as  
he:

For while our cloisters echo'd frosty  
feet,

And our long walks were stript as bare  
as brooms,

We did but talk you over, pledge you  
all

In wassail; often, like as many girls—  
Sick for the hollies and the yews of  
home—

As many little trifling Lilies—play'd  
Charades and riddles as at Christmas  
here,

And *what's my thought* and *when* and  
*where* and *how*,

And often told a tale from mouth to  
month

As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that:

A pleasant game, she thought: she  
liked it more

Than magic music, forfeits, all the  
rest.

But these—what kind of tales did  
men tell men,

She wonder'd by themselves?

A half-disdain

Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her  
lips:

And Walter nodded at me; "*He*  
began,

The rest would follow, each in turn;  
and so

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind?  
what kind?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-  
cisms,

Seven-headed monsters only made to  
kill

Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now.

The tyrant! kill him in the summer  
too,"

Said Lilia; "Why not now?" the  
maiden Aunt.

"Why not a summer's as a winter's  
tale?"

A tale for summer as befits the time,  
And something it should be to suit the  
place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
Grave, solemn!"

Walter warp'd his mouth at this  
To something so mock-solemn, that I  
laugh'd

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling  
mirth

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,  
Hid in the ruins; till the maiden  
Aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch'd  
her face

With color) turn'd to me with "As  
you will;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
Or be yourself your hero if you will."

"Take Lilia, then, for heroine"  
clamor'd he,

"And make her some great Princess,  
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
The Prince to win her!"

"Then follow me, the Prince,"  
I answer'd, "each be hero in his turn!  
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a  
dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as re-  
quired —

But something made to suit with Time  
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,  
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,  
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,  
And, yonder, shrieks and strange ex-  
periments

For which the good Sir Ralph had  
burnt them all —

This were a medley! we should have  
him back

Who told the 'Winter's tale' to do it  
for us.

No matter. we will say whatever  
comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a  
song

To give us breathing-space."

So I began,  
And the rest follow'd. and the women  
sang

Between the rougher voices of the  
men,

Like linnets in the pauses of the wind:  
And here I give the story and the  
songs.

## I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in  
face,

Of temper amorous, as the first of  
May,

With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a  
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern  
star

There lived an ancient legend in  
our house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-  
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-  
told.

Dying, that none of all our blood  
should know

The shadow from the substance, and  
that one

Should come to fight with shadows  
and to fall.

For so, my mother said, the story ran.  
And, truly, waking dreams were, more  
or less,

An old and strange affection of the  
house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven  
knows what:

On a sudden in the midst of men and  
day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as here-  
tofore,

I seem'd to move among a world of  
ghosts,

And feel myself the shadow of a  
dream.

Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,  
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd  
 "catalepsy."  
 My mother pitying made a thousand prayers;  
 My mother was as mild as any saint,  
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,  
 So gracious was her tact and tenderness:  
 But my good father thought a king a king;  
 He cared not for the affection of the house;  
 He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand  
 To lash offence, and with long arms and hands  
 Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass  
 For judgment.

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

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
 My father sent ambassadors with furs  
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back  
 A present, a great labor of the loom;  
 And therewithal an answer vague as wind:  
 Besides, they saw the king; he took the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that was true:  
 But then she had a will; was he to blame?  
 And maiden fancies; loved to live alone  
 Among her women; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood  
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends:  
 The first, a gentleman of broken means  
 (His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts  
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,  
 And almost my half-self, for still we moved  
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face  
 Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,  
 Inflamed with wrath: he started on his feet,  
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent  
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof  
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware  
 That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
 And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chew'd  
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen,  
 Communing with his captains of the war.

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

May rue the bargain made." And  
 Florian said:  
 "I have a sister at the foreign court,  
 Who moves about the Princess; she,  
 you know,  
 Who wedded with a nobleman from  
 thence:  
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,  
 The lady of three castles in that land:  
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted  
 clean."  
 And Cyril whisper'd: "Take me with  
 you too."  
 Then laughing "what, if these weird  
 seizures come  
 Upon you in those lands, and no one  
 near  
 To point you out the shadow from the  
 truth!  
 Take me: I'll serve you better in a  
 strait;  
 I grate on rusty hinges here:" but  
 "No!"  
 Roar'd the rough king, "you shall not;  
 we ourself  
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies  
 dead  
 In iron gauntlets: break the council  
 up."

But when the council broke, I rose  
 and past  
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about  
 the town;  
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her  
 likeness out;  
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it  
 lying bathed  
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd  
 trees:  
 What were those fancies? wherefore  
 break her troth?  
 Proud look'd the lips: but while I  
 meditated  
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the  
 South,  
 And shook the songs, the whispers,  
 and the shrieks  
 Of the wild woods together; and a  
 Voice  
 Went with it, "Follow, follow, thou  
 shalt win."

Then, ere the silver sickle of that  
 month  
 Became her golden shield, I stole from  
 court  
 With Cyril and with Florian, unper-  
 ceived,  
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in-  
 dread  
 To hear my father's clamor at our  
 backs  
 With Ho! from some bay-window  
 shake the night;  
 But all was quiet: from the bastion'd  
 walls  
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we  
 dropt,  
 And flying reach'd the frontier: then  
 we crost  
 To a livelier land; and so by tith  
 and grange,  
 And vines, and blowing bosks of wil-  
 derness,  
 We gain'd the mother-city thick with  
 towers,  
 And in the imperial palace found the  
 king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and  
 small his voice,  
 But bland the smile that like a wrin-  
 kling wind  
 On glassy water drove his cheek in  
 lines;  
 A little dry old man, without a star,  
 Not like a king: three days he feasted  
 us,  
 And on the fourth I spake of why we  
 came,  
 And my betroth'd. "You do us,  
 Prince," he said,  
 Airing a snowy hand and signet  
 gem,  
 "All honor. We remember love our-  
 selves  
 In our sweet youth: there did a com-  
 pact pass  
 Long summers back, a kind of cere-  
 mony—  
 I think the year in which our olives  
 fail'd.  
 I would you had her, prince, with all  
 my heart,

With my full heart: but there were  
 widows here,  
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady  
 Blanche;  
 They fed her theories, in and out of  
 place  
 Maintaining that with equal hus-  
 bandry  
 The woman were an equal to the man.  
 They harp'd on this; with this our  
 banquets rang;  
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots  
 of talk;  
 Nothing but this; my very ears were hot  
 To hear them: knowledge, so my  
 daughter held,  
 Was all in all: they had but been, she  
 thought,  
 As children; they must lose the child,  
 assume  
 The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she  
 wrote,  
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated  
 of,  
 But all she is and does is awful;  
 odes  
 About this losing of the child; and  
 rhymes  
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
 Beyond all reason: these the women  
 sang;  
 And they that know such things — I  
 sought but peace;  
 No critic I — would call them master-  
 pieces:  
 They master'd me. At last she begg'd  
 a boon,  
 A certain summer-palace which I  
 have  
 Hard by your father's frontier: I said  
 no,  
 Yet being an easy man, gave it: and  
 there,  
 All wild to found an University  
 For maidens, on the spur she fled;  
 and more  
 We know not, — only this: they see  
 no men,  
 Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins  
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look  
 upon her  
 As on a kind of paragon; and I

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

Thus the king;  
 And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to  
 slur  
 With garrulous ease and oily courtesies  
 Our formal compact, yet, not less (all  
 frets  
 But chafing me on fire to find my  
 bride)  
 Went forth again with both my  
 friends. We rode  
 Many a long league back to the North.  
 At last  
 From hills, that look'd across a land  
 of hope,  
 We dropt with evening on a rustic  
 town  
 Set in a gleaming river's crescent-  
 curve,  
 Close at the boundary of the liberties;  
 There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd  
 mine host  
 To council, plied him with his richest  
 wines,  
 And show'd the late-writ letters of  
 the king.

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

"No doubt that we might make it  
 worth his while.  
 She once had passed that way; he  
 heard her speak;  
 She scared him; life! he never saw  
 the like;  
 She look'd as grand as doomsday and  
 as grave:  
 And he, he revered his liege-lady  
 there;  
 He always made a point to post with  
 mares;  
 His daughter and his housemaid were  
 the boys:  
 The land, he understood, for miles  
 about  
 Was till'd by women; all the swine  
 were sows,  
 And all the dogs"—  
 But while he jested thus,  
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I  
 clothed in act,  
 Remembering how we three presented  
 Maid  
 Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide  
 of feast,  
 In masque or pageant at my father's  
 court.  
 We sent mine host to purchase female  
 gear;  
 He brought it, and himself, a sight to  
 shake  
 The midriff of despair with laughter,  
 help  
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden  
 plumes  
 We rustled: him we gave a costly  
 bribe  
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good  
 steeds,  
 And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we  
 rode,  
 And rode till midnight when the col-  
 lege lights  
 Began to glitter firefly-like in copse  
 And linden alley: then we past an  
 arch,  
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with  
 wings

From four wing'd horses dark against  
 the stars;  
 And some inscription ran along the  
 front,  
 But deep in shadow: further on  
 we gain'd  
 A little street half garden and half  
 house;  
 But scarce could hear each other  
 speak for noise  
 Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-  
 mers falling  
 On silver anvils, and the splash and  
 stir  
 Of fountains spouted up and shower-  
 ing down  
 In meshes of the jasmine and the  
 rose:  
 And all about us peal'd the nightin-  
 gale,  
 Rapt in her song, and careless of the  
 snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a  
 sign,  
 By two sphere lamps blazon'd like  
 Heaven and Earth  
 With constellation and with con-  
 tinent,  
 Above an entry: riding in, we call'd;  
 A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable  
 wench  
 Came running at the call, and help'd  
 us down.  
 Then stept a buxon hostess forth,  
 and sail'd,  
 Full-blown, before us into rooms which  
 gave  
 Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost  
 In laurel: her we ask'd of that and  
 this,  
 And who were tutors. "Lady  
 Blanche," she said,  
 "And Lady Psyche." "Which was  
 prettiest,  
 Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche."  
 "Hers are we,"  
 One voice, we cried; and I sat down  
 and wrote,  
 In such a hand as when a field of corn  
 Bows all its ears before the roaring  
 East;

"Three ladies of the Northern empire  
 pray  
 Your Highness would enroll them with  
 your own,  
 As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,  
 And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,  
 And rais'd the blinding bandage from  
 his eyes :

I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;  
 And then to bed, where half in doze I  
 seem'd

To float about a glimmering night,  
 and watch

A full sea glazed with muffled moon-  
 light, swell

On some dark shore just seen that it  
 was rich.

## II.

As thro' the land at eve we went,

And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,

We fell out, my wife and I,

O we fell out I know not why,

And kiss'd again with tears.

And blessings on the falling out

That all the more endears,

When we fall out with those we love

And kiss again with tears !

For when we came where lies the child

We lost in other years,

There above the little grave,

O there above the little grave,

We kiss'd again with tears.

At break of day the College Portress  
 came :

She brought us Academic silks, in hue  
 The lilac, with a silken hood to each,

And zoned with gold ; and now when  
 these were on,

And we as rich as moths from dusk  
 cocoons,

She, courtesying her obeisance, let us  
 know

The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,  
 I first, and following thro' the porch

that sang

All round with laurel, issued in a court  
 Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with

lengths

Of classic frieze, with ample awnings  
 gay

Between the pillars, and with great  
 urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in  
 threes,

Enring'd a billowing fountain in the  
 midst ;

And here and there on lattice edges  
 lay

Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,  
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper  
 sat,

With two tame leopards couch'd be-  
 side her throne

All beauty compass'd in a female form,  
 The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant

Of some clear planet close upon the  
 Sun,

Than our man's earth ; such eyes were  
 in her head,

And so much grace and power, breath-  
 ing down

From over her arch'd brows, with  
 every turn

Lived thro' her to the tips of her long  
 hands,

And to her feet. She rose her height,  
 and said :

"We give you welcome : not with-  
 out redound

Of use and glory to yourselves ye  
 come,

The first-fruits of the stranger : after-  
 time,

And that full voice which circles round  
 the grave,

Will rank you nobly, mingled up with  
 me.

What ! are the ladies of your land so  
 tall ? "

"We of the court" said Cyril. "From  
 the court"

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

"The climax of his age ! as tho' there  
 were

One rose in all the world, your High-  
 ness that,

He worships your ideal : " she replied :

"We scarcely thought in our own hall  
 to hear



This barren verbiage, current among  
men,  
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compli-  
ment.  
Your flight from out your bookless  
wilds would seem  
As arguing love of knowledge and of  
power;  
Your language proves you still the  
child. Indeed,  
"We dream not of him: when we set  
our hand  
To this great work, we purposed with  
ourselves  
Never to wed. You likewise will do  
well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and  
fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of  
men, that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our  
lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale  
with scale."

At those high words, we conscious  
of ourselves,  
Perused the matting; then an officer  
Rose up, and read the statutes, such  
as these:  
Not for three years to correspond with  
home;  
Not for three years to cross the liber-  
ties;  
Not for three years to speak with any  
men;  
And many more, which hastily sub-  
scribed,  
We enter'd on the boards: and "Now,"  
she cried,  
"Ye are green wood, see ye warp not.  
Look, our hall!  
Our statues! — not of those that men  
desire,  
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,  
Nor stunted squaws of West or East;  
but she  
That taught the Sabine how to rule,  
and she  
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,

The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman  
brows  
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and  
lose  
Convention, since to look on noble  
forms  
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organ-  
ism  
That which is higher. O lift your  
natures up:  
Embrace our aims: work out your  
freedom. Girls,  
Knowledge is now no more a fountain  
seal'd:  
Drink deep, until the habits of the  
slave,  
The sins of emptiness, gossip and  
spite  
And slander, die. Better not be at all  
Than not be noble. Leave us: you  
may go:  
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue  
The fresh arrivals of the week before;  
For they press in from all the prov-  
inces,  
And fill the hive."  
She spoke, and bowing waved  
Dismissal: back again we crost the  
court  
To Lady Psyche's: as we enter'd in,  
There sat along the forms, like morn-  
ing doves  
That sun their milky bosoms on the  
thatch,  
A patient range of pupils; she herself  
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,  
A quick brunette, well-moulded, fal-  
con-eyed,  
And on the hither side, or so she  
look'd,  
Of twenty summers. At her left, a  
child,  
In shining draperies, headed like a  
star,  
Her maiden babe, a double April  
old,  
Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady  
glanced:  
Then Florian, but no livelier than the  
dame

That whisper'd "Asses' ears," among  
 the sedge,  
 "My sister." "Comely, too, by all  
 that's fair,"  
 Said Cyril. "O hush, hush!" and she  
 began.

"This world was once a fluid haze  
 of light,  
 Till toward the centre set the starry  
 tides,  
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling  
 cast

The planets: then the monster, then  
 the man;

Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in  
 skins,

Raw from the prime, and crushing  
 down his mate;

As yet we find in barbarous isles, and  
 here

Among the lowest."

Therupon she took  
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious  
 past;

Glanced at the legendary Amazon

As emblematic of a nobler age;

Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke  
 of those

That lay at wine with Lar and Lucu-  
 mo;

Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Ro-  
 man lines

Of empire, and the woman's state in  
 each,

How far from just; till warming with  
 her theme

She fulminated out her scorn of laws  
 Salique

And little-footed China, touch'd on  
 Mahomet

With much contempt, and came to  
 chivalry:

When some respect, however slight,  
 was paid

To woman, superstition all awry:

However then commenced the dawn:  
 a beam

Had slanted forward, falling in a  
 land

Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,  
 indeed,

Their debt of thanks to her who first  
 had dared

To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,  
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and  
 assert

None lordlier than themselves but  
 that which made

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

Here might they learn whatever men  
 were taught:

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

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

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

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

He took advantage of his strength to  
 be

First in the field: some ages had been  
 lost;

But woman ripen'd earlier, and her  
 life

Was longer; and albeit their glorious  
 names

Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since  
 in truth

The highest is the measure of the man,  
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,

Nor those horn-handed breakers of  
 the glebe,

But Homer, Plato, Verulam; even so  
 With woman: and in arts of govern-  
 ment

Elizabeth and others; arts of war  
 The peasant Joan and others; arts of  
 grace

Sappho and others vied with any man;  
 And, last not least, she who had left  
 her place,

And bow'd her state to them, that they  
 might grow

To use and power on this Oasis, lapt  
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from  
 the blight

Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last  
 She rose upon a wind of prophecy

Dilating on the future; "everywhere

Two heads in council, two beside the  
 hearth,  
 Two in the tangled business of the  
 world,  
 Two in the liberal offices of life,  
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound  
 the abyss  
 Of science, and the secrets of the  
 mind:  
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,  
 more:  
 And everywhere the broad and bound-  
 less Earth  
 Should bear a double growth of those  
 rare souls,  
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the  
 blood of the world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us:  
 the rest  
 Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-  
 come, she  
 Began to address us, and was moving  
 on  
 In gratulation, till as when a boat  
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps,  
 all her voice  
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat,  
 she cried  
 "My brother!" "Well, my sister."  
 "O," she said,  
 "What do you here? and in this  
 dress? and these?  
 Why who are these? a wolf within  
 the fold!  
 A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-  
 cious to me!  
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!"  
 "No plot, no plot," he answer'd.  
 "Wretched boy,  
 How saw you not the inscription on  
 the gate,  
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF  
 DEATH?"  
 "And if I had," he answer'd, "who  
 could think  
 The softer Adams of your Academe,  
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were  
 such  
 As chanted on the blanching bones of  
 men?"

"But you will find it otherwise" she  
 said.

"You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools!  
 my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron  
 will,

That axelike edge unturnable, our  
 Head,

The Princess." "Well then, Psyche,  
 take my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange  
 For warning: bury me beside the  
 gate,

And cut this epitaph above my bones;  
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,*

*All for the common good of womankind."*  
 "Let me die too," said Cyril, "having  
 seen

And heard the Lady Psyche."

I struck in:  
 "Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the  
 truth;

Receive it; and in me behold the  
 Prince

Your countryman, affianced years ago  
 To the Lady Ida: here, for here she  
 was,

And thus (what other way was left) I  
 came."

"O Sir, O Prince, I have no country;  
 none;

If any, this; but none. Whate'er I  
 was

Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.  
 Affianced, Sir? love-whispers may  
 not breathe

Within this vestal limit, and how  
 should I,

Who am not mine, say, live: the  
 thunder-bolt

Hangs silent; but prepare: I speak;  
 it falls."

"Yet pause," I said: "for that in-  
 scription there,

I think no more of deadly lurks therein,  
 Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,  
 To scare the fowl from fruit: if more  
 there be,

If more and acted on, what follows?  
 war;

Your own work marr'd: for this your  
 Academe,

Whichever side be Victor, in the halloo  
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass  
 With all fair theories only made to gild  
 A stormless summer." "Let the Princess judge  
 Of that" she said: "farewell, Sir — and to you.  
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go."

"Are you that Lady Psyche," I rejoin'd,  
 "The fifth in line from that old Florian,  
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall  
 (The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow  
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)  
 As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,  
 And all else fled: we point to it, and we say,  
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,  
 But branches current yet in kindred veins."  
 "Are you that Psyche," Florian added: "she  
 With whom I sang about the morning hills,  
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,  
 And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you  
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,  
 To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught  
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read  
 My sickness down to happy dreams? are you  
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?  
 You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"  
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom  
 I would be that for ever which I seem

Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,  
 And glean your scatter'd sapience."  
 Then once more,  
 "Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,  
 "That on her bridal morn before she  
 past  
 From all her old companions, when the king  
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties  
 Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;  
 That were there any of our people there  
 In want or peril, there was one to hear  
 And help them? look! for such are these and I."  
 "Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,  
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn  
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?  
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,  
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood  
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.  
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.  
 O by the bright head of my little niece,  
 You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"  
 "You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,  
 "The mother of the sweetest little maid,  
 That ever crow'd for kisses."  
 "Out upon it!"  
 She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play  
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be  
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?  
 Him you call great: he for the common weal,  
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,  
 As I might slay this child, if good need were,  
 Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom

The secular emancipation turns  
 Of half this world, be swerved from  
 right to save  
 A prince, a brother? a little will I  
 yield.  
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well  
 for you.  
 O hard, when love and duty clash! I  
 fear  
 My conscience will not count me fleck-  
 less; yet —  
 Hear my conditions: promise (other-  
 wise  
 You perish) as you came, to slip away  
 To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be  
 said,  
 These women were too barbarous,  
 would not learn;  
 They fled, who might have shamed  
 us: promise, all."

What could we else, we promised  
 each; and she,  
 Like some wild creature newly-caged,  
 commenced  
 A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused  
 By Florian; holding out her lily  
 arms  
 Took both his hands, and smiling  
 faintly said:  
 "I knew you at the first: tho' you  
 have grown  
 You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and  
 glad  
 To see you, Florian. I give thee to  
 death,  
 My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.  
 My needful seeming harshness, pardon  
 it.  
 Our mother, is she well?"  
 With that she kiss'd  
 His forehead, then, a moment after,  
 clung  
 About him, and betwixt them blos-  
 som'd up  
 From out a common vein of memory  
 Sweet household talk, and phrases of  
 the hearth,  
 And far allusion, till the gracious  
 dews  
 Began to glisten and to fall: and  
 while

They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came  
 a voice,  
 "I brought a message here from Lady  
 Blanche."  
 Back started she, and turning round  
 we saw  
 The Lady Blanche's daughter where  
 she stood,  
 Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,  
 A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,  
 That clad her like an April daffodilly  
 (Her mother's color) with her lips  
 apart,  
 And all her thoughts as fair within  
 her eyes,  
 As bottom agates seen to wave and  
 float  
 In crystal currents of clear morning  
 seas.

So stood that same fair creature at  
 the door.  
 Then Lady Psyche, "Ah — Melissa —  
 you!  
 You heard us?" and Melissa, "O  
 pardon me  
 I heard, I could not help it, did not  
 wish:  
 But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me  
 not,  
 Nor think I bear that heart within my  
 breast,  
 To give three gallant gentlemen to  
 death."  
 "I trust you," said the other, "for  
 we two  
 Were always friends, none closer, elm  
 and vine:  
 But yet your mother's jealous tem-  
 perament —  
 Let not your prudence, dearest,  
 drowse, or prove  
 The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear  
 This whole foundation ruin, and I lose  
 My honor, these their lives." "Ah,  
 fear me not"  
 Replied Melissa; "no — I would not  
 tell,  
 No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,  
 No, not to answer, Madam, all those  
 hard things  
 That Sheba came to ask of Solomon."

"Be it so" the other, "that we still  
 may lead  
 The new light up, and culminate in  
 peace,  
 For Solomon may come to Sheba yet."  
 Said Cyril, "Madam, he the wisest  
 man  
 Feasted the woman wisest then, in  
 halls  
 Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you  
 (Tho' Madam *you* should answer, *we*  
 would ask)  
 Less welcome find among us, if you  
 came  
 Among us, debtors for our lives to you,  
 Myself for something more." He said  
 not what,  
 But "Thanks," she answer'd "Go:  
 we have been too long  
 Together: keep your hoods about the  
 face;  
 They do so that affect abstraction  
 here.  
 Speak little; mix not with the rest;  
 and hold  
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet  
 be well."

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

And then we stroll'd  
 For half the day thro' stately theatres  
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we  
 sat, we heard  
 The grave Professor. On the lecture  
 slate  
 The circle rounded under female  
 hands  
 With flawless demonstration: follow'd  
 then  
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,  
 With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted  
 out

By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies  
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-  
 words-long  
 That on the stretch'd forefinger of all  
 Time  
 Sparkle for ever: then we dipt in all  
 That treats of whatsoever is, the state,  
 The total chronicles of man, the mind,  
 The morals, something of the frame,  
 the rock,  
 The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,  
 the flower,  
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,  
 And whatsoever can be taught and  
 known;  
 Till like three horses that have broken  
 fence,  
 And glutted all night long breast-  
 deep in corn,  
 We issued gorged with knowledge,  
 and I spoke:  
 "Why, Sirs, they do all this as well  
 as we."  
 "They hunt old trails," said Cyril,  
 "very well;  
 But when did woman ever yet in-  
 vent?"  
 "Ungracious!" answer'd Florian;  
 "have you learnt  
 No more from Psyche's lecture, you  
 that talk'd  
 The trash that made me sick, and  
 almost sad?"  
 "O trash," he said, "but with a ker-  
 nel in it.  
 Should I not call her wise, who made  
 me wise?  
 And learnt? I learnt more from her  
 in a flash,  
 Than if my brainpan were an empty  
 hull,  
 And every Muse tumbled a science in.  
 A thousand hearts lie fallow in these  
 halls,  
 And round these halls a thousand  
 baby loves  
 Fly twanging headless arrows at the  
 hearts,  
 Whence follows many a vacant pang;  
 but O  
 With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger  
 boy,

The Head of all the golden-shafted  
     firm,  
 The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche  
     too ;  
 He cleft me thro' the stomacher ; and  
     now  
 What think you of it, Florian ? do I  
     chase  
 The substance or the shadow ? will it  
     hold ?  
 I have no sorcerer's malison on me,  
 No ghostly hauntings like his High-  
     ness. I  
 Flatter myself that always every-  
     where  
 I know the substance when I see it.  
     Well,  
 Are castles shadows ? Three of them ?  
     Is she  
 The sweet proprietress a shadow ? If  
     not,  
 Shall those three castles patch my  
     tatter'd coat ?  
 For dear are those three castles to my  
     wants,  
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,  
 And two dear things are one of double  
     worth,  
 And much I might have said, but that  
     my zone  
 Unmann'd me: then the Doctors ! O  
     to hear  
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty  
     plants  
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to  
     roar,  
 To break my chain, to shake my  
     mane ; but thou,  
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mim-  
     icry !  
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon,  
     my throat ;  
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to  
     meet  
 Star-sisters answering under crescent  
     brows ;  
 Abate the stride, which speaks of  
     man, and loose  
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this  
     cheek,  
 Where they like swallows coming out  
     of time

Will wonder why they came: but  
     hark the bell  
 For dinner, let us go ! "

    And in we stream'd  
 Among the columns, pacing staid and  
     still

By twos and threes, till all from end  
     to end

With beauties every shade of brown  
     and fair

In colors gayer than the morning mist,  
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of  
     flowers.

How might a man not wander from  
     his wits

Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I  
     kept mine own

Intent on her, who rapt in glorious  
     dreams,

The second-sight of some Astræan age,  
 Sat compass'd with professors: they,  
     the while,

Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and  
     fro :

A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost  
     terms

Of art and science: Lady Blanche  
     alone

Of faded form and haughtiest line-  
     aments,

With all her autumn tresses falsely  
     brown,

Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat  
 In act to spring.

    At last a solemn grace  
 Concluded, and we sought the gardens:  
     there

One walk'd reciting by herself, and  
     one

In this hand held a volume as to read,  
 And smoothed a petted peacock down  
     with that :

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

In the orange thicket: others tost a  
     ball

Above the fountain-jets, and back  
     again

With laughter: others lay about the  
     lawns,

Of the older sort, and murmur'd that  
 their May  
 Was passing: what was learning unto  
 them?  
 They wish'd to marry; they could  
 rule a house;  
 Men hated learned women: but we  
 three  
 Sat muffled like the Fates; and often  
 came  
 Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts  
 Of gentle satire, kin to charity,  
 That harm'd not: then day droopt;  
 the chapel bells  
 Call'd us: we left the walks; we mixt  
 with those  
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest  
 white,  
 Before two streams of light from wall  
 to wall,  
 While the great organ almost burst  
 his pipes,  
 Groaning for power, and rolling thro'  
 the court  
 A long melodious thunder to the sound  
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,  
 The work of Ida, to call down from  
 Heaven  
 A blessing on her labors for the world.

## III.

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

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

Morn in the white wake of the morn-  
 ing star  
 Came furrowing all the orient into  
 gold.

We rose, and each by other drest with  
 care  
 Descended to the court that lay three  
 parts  
 In shadow, but the Muses' heads were  
 touch'd  
 Above the darkness from their native  
 East.

There while we stood beside the fount,  
 and watch'd  
 Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-  
 ble, approach'd  
 Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of  
 sleep,  
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy  
 eyes  
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;  
 "And fly," she cried, "O fly, while  
 yet you may!  
 My mother knows:" and when I  
 ask'd her "how,"  
 "My fault," she wept, "my fault! and  
 yet not mine;  
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon  
 me.  
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night  
 to night  
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.  
 She says the Princess should have  
 been the Head,  
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two  
 arms;  
 And so it was agreed when first they  
 came;  
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand  
 now,  
 And she the left, or not, or seldom  
 used;  
 Hers more than half the students, all  
 the love.  
 And so last night she fell to canvass  
 you:  
 Her countrywomen! she did not envy  
 her.  
 'Who ever saw such wild barbarians?  
 Girls? — more like men!' and at these  
 words the snake,  
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my  
 breast;  
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my  
 cheek



Began to burr and burn, and her lynx  
eye

To fix and make me hotter, till she  
laugh'd :

'O marvellously modest maiden, you!  
Men! girls, like men! why, if they  
had been men

You need not set your thoughts in  
rubric thus

For wholesale comment.' Pardon, I  
am shamed

That I must needs repeat for my  
excuse

What looks so little graceful: 'men'  
(for still

My mother went revolving on the  
word)

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

And with that woman closeted for  
hours!'

Then came these dreadful words out  
one by one,

'Why — these — *are* — men: ' I shud-  
der'd: 'and you know it.'

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

And she conceals it.' So my mother  
clutch'd

The truth at once, but with no word  
from me;

And now thus early risen she goes to  
inform

The Princess: Lady Psyche will be  
crush'd;

But you may yet be saved, and there-  
fore fly:

But heal me with your pardon ere you  
go."

"What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a  
blush?"

Said Cyril: "Pale one, blush again:  
than wear

Those lilies, better blush our lives  
away.

Yet let us breathe for one hour more  
in Heaven"

He added, "lest some classic Angel  
speak

In scorn of us, 'They mounted, Gany-  
medes,

To tumble, Vulcans, on the second  
morn.'

But I will melt this marble into wax  
To yield us farther furlough:" and he  
went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls,  
and thought

He scarce would prosper. "Tell us,"  
Florian ask'd,

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

"O long ago," she said, "betwixt these  
two

Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my  
mother,

Too jealous, often fretful as the wind  
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with  
her:

I never knew my father, but she says  
(God help her) she was wedded to a  
fool;

And still she rail'd against the state  
of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,  
And from the Queen's decease she  
brought her up.

But when your sister came she won  
the heart

Of Ida: they were still together, grew  
(For so they said themselves) inoscu-  
lated;

Consonant chords that shiver to one  
note;

One mind in all things: yet my mother  
still

Affirms your Psyche thieved her the-  
ories,

And angled with them for her pupil's  
love:

She calls her plagiarist; I know not  
what:

But I must go: I dare not tarry," and  
light,

As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after  
her,

"An open-hearted maiden, true and  
pure.

If I could love, why this were she:  
how pretty

Her blushing was, and how she blush'd  
again,  
As if to close with Cyril's random  
wish:  
Not like your Princess cramm'd with  
erring pride,  
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags  
in tow."

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

So saying from the court we paced,  
and gain'd  
The terrace ranged along the North-  
ern front,  
And leaning there on those balusters,  
high  
Above the empurpled champaign,  
drank the gale  
That blown about the foliage under-  
neath,  
And sated with the innumerable rose,  
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither  
came  
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task,"  
he cried;  
"No fighting shadows here! I forced  
a way  
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and  
gnarl'd.

Better to clear prime forests, heave  
and thump  
A league of street in summer solstice  
down,  
Than hammer at this reverend gentle-  
woman.  
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found  
her there  
At point to move, and settled in her  
eyes  
The green malignant light of coming  
storm.  
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase  
well-oil'd,  
As man's could be; yet maiden-meek  
I pray'd  
Concealment: she demanded who we  
were,  
And why we came? I fabled nothing  
fair,  
But, your example pilot, told her all.  
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand  
and eye.  
But when I dwelt upon your old affi-  
ance,  
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd  
astray.  
I urged the fierce inscription on the  
gate,  
And our three lives. True — we had  
limed ourselves  
With open eyes, and we must take  
the chance.  
But such extremes, I told her, well  
might harm  
The woman's cause. 'Not more than  
now,' she said,  
'So puddled as it is with favoritism.'  
I tried the mother's heart. Shame  
might befall  
Melissa, knowing, saying not she  
knew:  
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal  
with that.'  
I spoke of war to come and many  
deaths,  
And she replied, her duty was to  
speak,  
And duty duty, clear of consequences.  
I grew discouraged, Sir; but since I  
knew  
No rock so hard but that a little wave

May beat admission in a thousand  
 years,  
 I recommenced; 'Decide not ere you  
 pause.  
 I find you here but in the second place,  
 Some say the third—the authentic  
 foundress you.  
 I offer boldly: we will seat you high-  
 est:  
 Wink at our advent: help my prince  
 to gain  
 His rightful bride, and here I promise  
 you  
 Some palace in our land, where you  
 shall reign  
 The head and heart of all our fair she-  
 world,  
 And your great name flow on with  
 broadening time  
 For ever.' Well, she balanced this a  
 little,  
 And told me she would answer us to-  
 day,  
 Meantime be mute: thus much, nor  
 more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from  
 the Head.

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

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'  
 all  
 Its range of duties to the appointed  
 hour.  
 Then summon'd to the porch we went.  
 She stood  
 Among her maidens, higher by the  
 head,  
 Her back against a pillar, her foot on  
 one

Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike  
 he roll'd  
 And paw'd about her sandal. I drew  
 near;  
 I gazed. On a sudden my strange  
 seizure came  
 Upon me, the weird vision of our  
 house:  
 The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow  
 show,  
 Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,  
 Her college and her maidens, empty  
 masks,  
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
 For all things were and were not. Yet  
 I felt  
 My heart beat thick with passion and  
 with awc;  
 Then from my breast the involuntary  
 sigh  
 Brake, as she smote me with the light  
 of eyes  
 That lent my knee desire to kneel, and  
 shook  
 My pulses, till to horse we got, and so  
 Went forth in long retinue following  
 up  
 The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she  
 said:

"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd  
 us not  
 Too harsh to your companion yester-  
 morn;  
 Unwillingly we spake." "No—not  
 to her,"  
 I answer'd, "but to one of whom we  
 spake  
 Your Highness might have seem'd the  
 thing you say."  
 "Again?" she cried, "are you am-  
 bassadresses  
 From him to me? we give you, being  
 strange,  
 A license: speak, and let the topic  
 die."

I stammer'd that I knew him—  
 could have wish'd—  
 "Our king expects—was there no  
 precontract?"

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

"Poor boy," she said, "can he not  
 read — no books?  
 Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor  
 deals in that  
 Which men delight in, martial exer-  
 cise?  
 To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
 Methinks he seems no better than a  
 girl;  
 As girls were once, as we ourself have  
 been:  
 We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt  
 with them:  
 We touch on our dead self, nor shun  
 to do it,  
 Being other — since we learnt our  
 meaning here,  
 To lift the woman's fall'n divinity  
 Upon an even pedestal with man."

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

"Alas your Highness breathes full  
 East," I said,  
 "On that which leans to you. I know  
 the Prince,  
 I prize his truth: and then how vast  
 a work  
 To assail this gray præminence of  
 man!

You grant me license; might I use it?  
 think;  
 Ere half he done perchance your life  
 may fail;  
 Then comes the feebl'er heiress of your  
 plan,  
 And takes and ruins all and thus  
 your pains  
 May only make that footprint upon  
 sand  
 Which old-recurring waves of preju-  
 dice  
 Resmooth to nothing: might I dread  
 that you,  
 With only Fame for spouse and your  
 great deeds  
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and  
 miss,  
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts  
 her due,  
 Love, children, happiness?"  
 And she exclaim'd,  
 "Peace, you young savage of the  
 Northern wild!  
 What! tho' your Prince's love were  
 like a God's,  
 Have we not made ourself the sacri-  
 fice?  
 You are bold indeed: we are not  
 talk'd to thus:  
 Yet will we say for children, would  
 they grew  
 Like field-flowers everywhere! we like  
 them well:  
 But children die; and let me tell you,  
 girl,  
 Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-  
 not die;  
 They with the sun and moon renew  
 their light  
 For ever, blessing those that look on  
 them.  
 Children — that men may pluck them  
 from our hearts,  
 Kill us with pity, break us with our-  
 selves —  
 O — children — there is nothing upon  
 earth  
 More miserable than she that has a  
 son  
 And sees him err: nor would we work  
 for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the ap-  
 plause of Great,  
 Who learns the one *POU STO* whence  
 after-hands  
 May move the world, tho' she herself  
 effect  
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor  
 shrink  
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated  
 By frail successors. Would, indeed,  
 we had been,  
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race  
 Of giants living, each, a thousand  
 years,  
 That we might see our own work out,  
 and watch  
 The sandy footprint harden into  
 stone."

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

"No doubt we seem a kind of  
 monster to you ;  
 We are used to that : for women, up  
 till this  
 Cramp'd under worse than South-sea  
 isle taboo,  
 Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far  
 In high desire, they know not, cannot  
 guess  
 How much their welfare is a passion  
 to us.  
 If we could give them surer, quicker  
 proof —  
 Oh if our end were less achievable  
 By slow approaches, than by single  
 act  
 Of immolation, any phase of death,  
 We were as prompt to spring against  
 the pikes,  
 Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
 To compass our dear sisters' lib-  
 erties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble  
 tear ;

And up we came to where the river  
 sloped  
 To plunge in cataract, shattering on  
 black blocks  
 A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook  
 the woods,  
 And danced the color, and, below,  
 stuck out  
 The bones of some vast bulk that  
 lived and roar'd  
 Before man was. She gazed awhile  
 and said,  
 "As these rude bones to us, are we to  
 her  
 That will be." "Dare we dream of  
 that," I ask'd,  
 "Which wrought us, as the workman  
 and his work,  
 That practice betters?" "How," she  
 cried, "you love  
 The metaphysics! read and earn  
 our prize,  
 A golden brooch : beneath an emerald  
 plane  
 Sits Diotima, teaching him that died  
 Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to  
 the life ;  
 She rapt upon her subject, he on her :  
 For there are schools for all." "And  
 yet" I said  
 "Methinks I have not found among  
 them all  
 One anatomic." "Nay, we thought  
 of that,"  
 She answer'd, "but it pleased us not :  
 in truth  
 We shudder but to dream our maids  
 should ape  
 Those monstrous males that carve  
 the living hound,  
 And cram him with the fragments of  
 the grave,  
 Or in the dark dissolving human  
 heart,  
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
 Dabbling a shameless hand with  
 shameful jest,  
 Encarnalize their spirits : yet we  
 know  
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this  
 matter hangs :  
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,

Nor willing men should come among  
 us, learnt,  
 For many weary moons before we  
 came,  
 This craft of healing. Were you  
 sick, ourself  
 Would tend upon you. To your  
 question now,  
 Which touches on the workman and  
 his work.  
 Let there be light and there was  
 light: 'tis so:  
 For was, and is, and will be, are but  
 is;  
 And all creation is one act at once,  
 The birth of light: but we that are  
 not all,  
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,  
 now that,  
 And live, perforce, from thought to  
 thought, and make  
 One act a phantom of succession:  
 thus  
 Our weakness somehow shapes the  
 shadow, Time;  
 But in the shadow will we work, and  
 mould  
 The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes: we rode a league  
 beyond,  
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-  
 ing, came  
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,  
 Full of all beauty. "O how sweet"  
 I said  
 (For I was half-oblivious of my mask)  
 "To linger here with one that loved  
 us." "Yea,"  
 She answer'd, "or with fair philoso-  
 phies  
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these  
 fields  
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian  
 lawns,  
 Where paced the Demigods of old,  
 and saw  
 The soft white vapor streak the  
 crowned towers  
 Built to the Sun:" then, turning to  
 her maids,

"Pitch our pavilion here upon the  
 sward;  
 Lay out the viands." At the word,  
 they raised  
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought  
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here  
 she stood,  
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-  
 cheek,  
 The woman conqueror; woman-con-  
 quer'd there  
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand  
 hymns,  
 And all the men mouru'd at his side:  
 but we  
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing,  
 Cyril kept  
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I  
 With mine affianced. Many a little  
 hand  
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on  
 the rocks,  
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel  
 set  
 In the dark crag: and then we turn'd,  
 we wound  
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,  
 Hammering and clinking, chattering  
 stony names  
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and  
 trap and tuff,  
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun  
 Grew broader toward his death and  
 fell, and all  
 The rosy heights came out above the  
 lawns.

## IV.

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

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

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 They faint on hill or field or river:  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,

And grow for ever and for ever.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,  
dying.

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

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

Then she, "Let some one sing to  
us: lightlier move  
The minutes flegged with music:"  
and a maid,  
Of those beside her, smote her harp,  
and sang.

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

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,  
That brings our friends up from the under-  
world,  
Sad as the last which reddens over one

That sinks with all we love below the verge;  
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

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

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

She ended with such passion that  
the tear,  
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring  
pearl  
Lost in her bosom: but with some  
disdain  
Answer'd the Princess, "If indeed  
there haunt  
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past  
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to  
men,  
Well needs it we should cram our ears  
with wool  
And so pace by: but thine are fancies  
hatch'd  
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it  
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,  
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones  
be,  
While down the streams that float us  
each and all  
To the issue, goes, like glittering  
bergs of ice,  
Throne after throne, and molten on  
the waste  
Becomes a cloud: for all things serve  
their time  
Toward that great year of equal  
mights and rights,  
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in  
the end  
Found golden: let the past be past;  
let be  
Their cancell'd Babels: tho' the rough  
kex break  
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-  
blown goat  
Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-  
tree split

Their monstrous idols, care not while  
we hear

A trumpet in the distance pealing news  
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle,  
burns

Above the unrisen morrow :” then to  
me ;

“ Know you no song of your own land,”  
she said,

“ Not such as moans about the retro-  
spect,

But deals with the other distance and  
the hues

Of promise ; not a death's-head at the  
wine.”

Then I remember'd one myself had  
made,

What time I watch'd the swallow  
winging south

From mine own land, part made long  
since, and part

Now while I sang, and maidenlike as  
far

As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

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

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

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

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

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

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is  
flown :

Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,  
But in the North long since my nest is made.

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

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

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at  
each,

Like the Ithacensian suitors in old  
time,

Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd  
with alien lips,

And knew not what they meant ; for  
still my voice

Rang false : but smiling “ Not for  
thee,” she said,

“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan  
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,  
rather, maid,

Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-  
crake

Grate her harsh kindred in the grass :  
and this

A mere love-poem ! O for such, my  
friend,

We hold them slight : they mind us of  
the time

When we made bricks in Egypt.  
Knives are men,

That lute and flute fantastic tender-  
ness,

And dress the victim to the offering up.  
And paint the gates of Hell with Par-  
adise,

And play the slave to gain the tyranny.  
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor once ;  
She wept her true eyes blind for such  
a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.  
I loved her. Peace be with her. She  
is dead.

So they blaspheme the muse ! But  
great is song

Used to great ends : ourself have often  
tried

Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm  
have dash'd

The passion of the prophetess ; for song  
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth  
Of spirit than to junketing and love.

Love is it ? Would this same mock-  
love, and this

Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter  
bats,



Till all men grew to rate us at our  
 worth,  
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes  
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,  
 and sphered  
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.  
 Enough!  
 But now to leaven play with profit,  
 you,  
 Know you no song, the true growth of  
 your soil,  
 That gives the manners of your coun-  
 try-women ?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptu-  
 ous head with eyes  
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.  
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for  
 such a song,  
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd  
 glass had wrought,  
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, be-  
 gan  
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-  
 catch  
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-  
 ences  
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded  
 at him,  
 I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd  
 and shook;  
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;  
 "Forbear," the Princess cried; "For-  
 bear, Sir," I;  
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath  
 and love,  
 I smote him on the breast; he started  
 up;  
 There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;  
 Melissa clamor'd "Flee the death;"  
 "To horse,"  
 Said Ida; "home! to horse!" and  
 fled, as flies  
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the  
 dusk,  
 When some one batters at the dove-  
 cote-doors,  
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood  
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at  
 heart,  
 In the pavilion: there like parting  
 hopes

I heard them passing from me: hoof  
 by hoof,  
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,  
 Clang'd on the bridge; and then an-  
 other shriek,  
 "The Head, the Head, the Princess, O  
 the Head!"  
 For blind with rage she miss'd the  
 plank, and roll'd  
 In the river. Ont I sprang from glow  
 to gloom:  
 There whirl'd her white robe like a  
 blossom'd branch  
 Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I  
 gave,  
 No more; but woman-vested as I was  
 Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I  
 caught her; then  
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my  
 left  
 The weight of all the hopes of half  
 the world,  
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree  
 Was half-disrooted from his place and  
 stoop'd  
 To drench his dark locks in the gur-  
 gling wave  
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove  
 and caught,  
 And grasping down the boughs I  
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-  
 ingly group'd  
 In the hollow bank. One reaching  
 forward drew  
 My burthen from mine arms; they  
 cried "she lives:"  
 They bore her back into the tent: but  
 I,  
 So much a kind of shame within me  
 wrought,  
 Not yet endured to meet her opening  
 eyes,  
 Nor found my friends; but push'd  
 alone on foot  
 (For since her horse was lost I left  
 her mine)  
 Across the woods, and less from  
 Indian craft  
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found  
 at length

The garden portals. Two great  
statues, Art  
And Science, Caryatids lifted up  
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were  
valves  
Of open-work in which the hunter  
rued  
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his  
brows  
Had sprouted, and the branches there-  
upon  
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked  
the gates.

A little space was left between the  
horns,  
Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top  
with pain,  
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden  
walks,  
And, tost on thoughts that changed  
from hue to hue,  
Now poring on the glowworm, now  
the star,  
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had  
wheel'd  
Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step  
Of lightest echo, then a loftier form  
Than female, moving thro' the uncer-  
tain gloom,  
Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this  
were she,"  
But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist,"  
he said,  
"They seek us: out so late is out of  
rules.  
Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the  
cry.  
How came you here?" I told him:  
"I" said he,  
"Last of the train, a moral leper, I,  
To whom none spake, half-sick at  
heart, return'd.  
Arriving all confused among the rest  
With hooded brows I crept into the  
hall,  
And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-  
neath  
The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.  
Girl after girl was call'd to trial: each

Disclaim'd all knowledge of us: last  
of all,  
Melissa: trust me, Sir, I pitied her.  
She, question'd if she knew us men,  
at first  
Was silent; closer prest, denied it  
not:  
And then, demanded if her mother  
knew,  
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or de-  
nied:  
From whence the Royal mind, famil-  
iar with her,  
Easily gather'd either guilt. She  
sent  
For Psyche, but she was not there;  
she call'd  
For Psyche's child to cast it from  
the doors;  
She sent for Blanche to accuse her  
face to face;  
And I slipt out: but whither will you  
now?  
And where are Psyche, Cyril? both  
are fled:  
What, if together? that were not so  
well.  
Would rather we had never come! I  
dread  
His wildness, and the chances of the  
dark."

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

Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is  
he."

Scarce had I ceased when from a  
tamarisk near  
Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,  
"Names:"  
He, standing still, was clutch'd; but  
I began  
To thrid the musky-circled mazes,  
wind  
And double in and out the boles, and  
race  
By all the fountains: fleet I was of  
foot:  
Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;  
behind  
I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine  
ear  
Bubbled the nightingale and heeded  
not,  
And secret laughter tickled all my  
soul.  
At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,  
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,  
And falling on my face was caught  
and known.

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

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-  
ing clove  
An advent to the throne: and there-  
beside,  
Half-naked as if caught at once from  
bed  
And tumbled on the purple footcloth,  
lay  
The lily-shining child; and on the  
left,  
Bow'd on her palms and folded up  
from wrong,  
Her round white shoulder shaken with  
her sobs,  
Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche  
erect  
Stood up and spake, an affluent  
orator.

"It was not thus, O Princess, in old  
days:  
You prized my counsel, lived upon  
my lips:  
I led you then to all the Castalies;  
I fed you with the milk of every  
Muse;  
I loved you like this kneeler, and you  
me  
Your second mother: those were  
gracious times.  
Then came your new friend: you  
began to change—  
I saw it and grieved—to slacken and  
to cool;  
Till taken with her seeming openness  
You turn'd your warmer currents all  
to her,  
To me you froze: this was my meed  
for all.  
Yet I bore up in part from ancient  
love,  
And partly that I hoped to win you  
back,  
And partly conscious of my own  
deserts,  
And partly that you were my civil  
head,  
And chiefly you were born for some-  
thing great,  
In which I might your fellow-worker  
be,

When time should serve ; and thus a  
 noble scheme  
 Grew up from seed we two long since  
 had sown ;  
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's  
 gourd,  
 Up in one night and due to sudden  
 sun :  
 We took this palace ; but even from  
 the first  
 You stood in your own light and  
 darken'd mine.  
 What student came but that you  
 planed her path  
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,  
 A foreigner, and I your country-  
 woman,  
 I your old friend and tried, she new  
 in all ?  
 But still her lists were swell'd and  
 mine were lean ;  
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be  
 known :  
 Then came these wolves : *they* knew  
 her : *they* endured,  
 Long-closeted with her the yester-  
 morn,  
 To tell her what they were, and she  
 to hear :  
 And me none told not less to an eye  
 like mine  
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,  
 Last night, their mask was patent,  
 and my foot  
 Was to you : but I thought again : I  
 fear'd  
 To meet a cold ' We thank you, we  
 shall hear of it  
 From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone  
 to her,  
 She told, perforce ; and winning easy  
 grace,  
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd  
 among us  
 In our young nursery still unknown,  
 the stem  
 Less grain than touchwood, while my  
 honest heat  
 Were all miscounted as malignant  
 haste  
 To push my rival out of place and  
 power.

But public use required she should be  
 known ;  
 And since my oath was ta'en for  
 public use,  
 I broke the letter of it to keep the  
 sense.  
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd  
 them well,  
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief  
 done ;  
 And yet this day (tho' you should  
 hate me for it)  
 I came to tell you ; found that you  
 had gone,  
 Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now,  
 I thought,  
 That surely she will speak ; if not,  
 then I :  
 Did she ? These monsters blazon'd  
 what they were,  
 According to the coarseness of their  
 kind,  
 For thus I hear ; and known at last  
 (my work)  
 And full of cowardice and guilty  
 shame,  
 I grant in her some sense of shame,  
 she flies ;  
 And I remain on whom to wreak  
 your rage,  
 I, that have lent my life to build up  
 yours,  
 I that have wasted here health, wealth,  
 and time,  
 And talent, I — you know it — I will  
 not boast :  
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,  
 Divorced from my experience, will be  
 chaff  
 For every gust of chance, and men  
 will say  
 We did not know the real light, but  
 chased  
 The wisp that flickers where no foot  
 can tread."

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

Our mind is changed: we take it to  
ourselves."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vul-  
ture throat,  
And shot from crooked lips a haggard  
smile.

"The plan was mine. I built the  
nest" she said

'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!" and  
stoop'd to updrag

Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,  
Half-drooping from her, turn'd her  
face, and cast

A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,  
Which melted Florian's fancy as she  
hung,

A Niobéan daughter, one arm out,  
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven;  
and while

We gazed upon her came a little stir  
About the doors, and on a sudden  
rush'd

Among us, out of breath, as one pur-  
sued,

A woman-post in flying raiment.  
Fear

Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her  
face, and wing'd

Her transit to the throne, whereby she  
fell

Delivering seal'd dispatches which  
the Head

Took half-amazed, and in her lion's  
mood

Tore open, silent we with blind surmise  
Regarding, while she read, till over  
brow

And cheek and bosom brake the  
wrathful bloom

As of some fire against a stormy  
cloud,

When the wild peasant rights him-  
self, the rick

Flames, and his anger reddens in the  
heavens;

For anger most it seem'd, while now  
her breast,

Beaten with some great passion at  
her heart,

Palpitated, her hand shook, and we  
heard

In the dead hush the papers that she  
held

Rustle: at once the lost lamb at her  
feet

Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam;  
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire;  
she crush'd

The scrolls together, made a sudden  
turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing  
her,

She whirl'd them on to me, as who  
should say

"Read," and I read—two letters—  
one her sire's.

"Fair daughter, when we sent the  
Prince your way

We knew not your ungracious laws,  
which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you  
are built,

Came all in haste to hinder wrong,  
but fell

Into his father's hands, who has this  
night,

You lying close upon his territory,  
Slipt round and in the dark invested

you,  
And here he keeps me hostage for his  
son."

The second was my father's running  
thus:

"You have our son: touch not a hair  
of his head:

Render him up unscathed: give him  
your hand:

Cleave to your contract: tho' indeed  
we hear

You hold the woman is the better man;  
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread

Would make all women kick against  
their Lords

Thro' all the world, and which might  
well deserve

That we this night should pluck your  
palace down;

And we will do it, unless you send us  
back

Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read ;  
And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

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

Your precinct; not a scorner of your sex

But venerator, zealous it should be  
All that it might be: hear me, for I bear,

Tho' man, yet human, whatsoever your wrongs,

From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life

Less mine than yours: my nurse would tell me of you;

I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,

Vague brightness; when a boy, you stoop'd to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights,

Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south

And blown to inmost north; at eve and dawn

With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;  
The leader wildswan in among the stars

Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.  
Now,

Because I would have reach'd you, had you been

Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,  
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,

A man I came to see you: but, indeed,  
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,

O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait

On you, their centre: let me say but this,

That many a famous man and woman, town

And landskip, have I heard of, after seen

The dwarfs of presage: tho' when known, there grew

Another kind of beauty in detail  
Made them worth knowing; but in you I found

My boyish dream involved and dazzled down

And master'd, while that after-beauty makes

Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,

Within me, that except you slay me here,

According to your bitter statute-book,  
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say

The seal does music; who desire you more

Than growing boys their manhood; dying lips,

With many thousand matters left to do,

The breath of life; O more than poor men wealth,

Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but half

Without you; with you, whole; and of those halves

You worthiest; and howe'er you block and bar

Your heart with system out from mine,  
I hold

That it becomes no man to nurse despair,

But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms

To follow up the worthiest till he die:  
Yet that I came not all unauthorized

Behold your father's letter.”

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

Unopen'd at her feet: a tide of fierce  
Investive seem'd to wait behind her

lips,  
As waits a river level with the dam

Ready to burst and flood the world  
with foam:

And so she would have spoken, but  
there rose

A hubbub in the court of half the maids  
 Gather'd together: from the illumined hall  
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a press  
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,  
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,  
 And gold and golden heads; they to and fro  
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,  
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,  
 Some crying there was an army in the land,  
 And some that men were in the very walls,  
 And some they cared not; till a clamor grew  
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,  
 And worse-confounded: high above them stood  
 The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

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

“What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?  
 On me, me, me, the storm first breaks: I dare  
 All these male thunderbolts: what is it ye fear?”

Peace! there are those to avenge us and they come:  
 If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,  
 To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,  
 And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,  
 Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,  
 Die: yet I blame you not so much for fear;  
 Six thousand years of fear have made you that  
 From which I would redeem you: but for those  
 That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know  
 Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn  
 We hold a great convention: then shall they  
 That love their voices more than duty, learn  
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live  
 No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,  
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,  
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,  
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,  
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,  
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,  
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,  
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.”

She, ending, waved her hands: thereat the crowd  
 Muttering, dissolved: then with a smile, that look'd  
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,  
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom  
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said:

"You have done well and like a gentleman,  
 And like a prince: you have our thanks for all:  
 And you look well too in your woman's dress:  
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.  
 You saved our life: we owe you bitter thanks:  
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —  
 Then men had said — but now — What hinders me  
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —  
 Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,  
 You would be quenchers of the light to be,  
 Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —  
 O would I had his sceptre for one hour!  
 You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd  
 Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —  
 I wed with thee! I bound by precontract  
 Your bride, your bondslave! not tho' all the gold  
 That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,  
 And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,  
 Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us:  
 I trample on your offers and on you:  
 Begone: we will not look upon you more.  
 Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.  
 Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough  
 Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd  
 Their motion: twice I sought to plead my cause,  
 But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,  
 The weight of destiny: so from her face

They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,  
 And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

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

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

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

So Lilia sang: we thought her half-possess'd,  
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the words;



And, after, feigning pique at what she  
 call'd  
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false  
 sublime—  
 Like one that wishes at a dance to  
 change  
 The music—clapt her hands and  
 cried for war,  
 Or some grand fight to kill and make  
 an end:  
 And he that next inherited the tale  
 Half turning to the broken statue, said,  
 "Sir Ralph has got your colors: if I  
 prove  
 Your knight, and fight your battle,  
 what for me?"  
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the  
 tomb  
 Lay by her like a model of her hand.  
 She took it and she fung it. "Fight,"  
 she said,  
 "And make us all we would be, great  
 and good."  
 He knightlike in his cap instead of  
 casque,  
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,  
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the  
 Prince.

## v.

Now, scarce three paces measured  
 from the mound,  
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,  
 And "Stand, who goes?" "Two  
 from the palace" I.  
 "The second two: they wait," he said,  
 "pass on;  
 His Highness wakes:" and one, that  
 clash'd in arms,  
 By glimmering lanes and walls of  
 canvass led  
 Threading the soldier-city, till we  
 heard  
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign  
 shake  
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial  
 tent  
 Whispers of war.  
 Entering, the sudden light  
 Dazed me half-blind: I stood and  
 seem'd to hear,

As in a poplar grove when a light  
 wind wakes  
 A lisp of the innumeros leaf and  
 dies,  
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear;  
 and then  
 A strangled titter, out of which there  
 brake  
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to  
 death,  
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two  
 old kings  
 Began to wag their baldness up and  
 down,  
 The fresh young captains flash'd their  
 glittering teeth,  
 The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved  
 and blew,  
 And slain with laughter roll'd the  
 gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek  
 wet with tears,  
 Panted from weary sides "King, you  
 are free!  
 We did but keep you surety for our  
 son,  
 If this be he,—or a draggled mawkin,  
 thou,  
 That tends her bristled grunners in  
 the sludge."  
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and  
 torn with briers,  
 More crumpled than a poppy from the  
 sheath,  
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head  
 to heel.  
 Then some one sent beneath his  
 vaulted palm  
 A whisper'd jest to some one near  
 him, "Look,  
 He has been among his shadows."  
 "Satan take  
 The old women and their shadows"  
 (thus the King  
 Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight  
 with men.  
 Go: Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink  
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding  
 eye,  
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice

From what was left of faded woman-  
slough  
To sheathing splendors and the golden  
scale  
Of harness, issued in the sun, that  
now  
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the  
Earth,  
And hit the Northern hills. Here  
Cyril met us.  
A little shy at first, but by and by  
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd  
and given  
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,  
whereon  
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled  
away  
Thro' the dark land, and later in the  
night  
Had come on Psyche weeping: "then  
we fell  
Into your father's hand, and there she  
lies,  
But will not speak, nor stir."  
He show'd a tent  
A stone-shot off: we enter'd in, and  
there  
Among piled arms and rough ac-  
countrements,  
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's  
cloak,  
Like some sweet sculpture draped  
from head to foot,  
And push'd by rude hands from its  
pedestal,  
All her fair length upon the ground  
she lay:  
And at her head a follower of the  
camp,  
A char'd and wrinkled piece of wo-  
manhood,  
Sat watching like a watcher by the  
dead.

Then Florian knelt, and "Come"  
he whisper'd to her,  
"Lift up your head, sweet sister: lie  
not thus.  
What have you done but right? you  
could not slay  
Me, nor your prince: look up: be  
comforted:

Sweet is it to have done the thing one  
ought,  
When fallen in darker ways." And  
likewise I:  
"Be comforted: have I not lost her  
too,  
In whose least act abides the nameless  
charm  
That none has else for me?" She  
heard, she moved,  
She moan'd, a folded voice; and up  
she sat,  
And raised the cloak from brows as  
pale and smooth  
As those that mourn half-shrouded  
over death  
In deathless marble. "Her," she  
said, "my friend—  
Parted from her—betray'd her cause  
and mine—  
Where shall I breathe? why kept ye  
not your faith?  
O base and bad! what comfort? none  
for me!"  
To whom remorseful Cyril, "Yet I pray  
Take comfort: live, dear lady, for your  
child!"  
At which she lifted up her voice and  
cried.

"Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah,  
my child,  
My one sweet child, whom I shall see  
no more!  
For now will cruel Ida keep her back;  
And either she will die from want of  
care,  
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say  
The child is hers—for every little  
fault,  
The child is hers; and they will beat  
my girl  
Remembering her mother: O my  
flower!  
Or they will take her, they will make  
her hard,  
And she will pass me by in after-life  
With some cold reverence worse than  
were she dead.  
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,  
To lag behind, scared by the cry  
they made,

The horror of the shame among them  
 all :  
 But I will go and sit beside the doors,  
 And make a wild petition night and  
 day,  
 Until they hate to hear me like a wind  
 Wailing for ever, till they open to me,  
 And lay my little blossom at my feet,  
 My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one  
 child :  
 And I will take her up and go my way,  
 And satisfy my soul with kissing her :  
 Ah ! what might that man not deserve  
 of me  
 Who gave me back my child ? ” “ Be  
 comforted,”  
 Said Cyril, “ you shall have it : ” but  
 again  
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she  
 sank, and so  
 Like tender things that being caught  
 feign death,  
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.  
 By this a murmur ran  
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced  
 the scouts  
 With rumor of Prince Arac hard at  
 hand.  
 We left her by the woman, and with-  
 out  
 Found the gray kings at parle : and  
 “ Look you ” cried  
 My father “ that our compact be ful-  
 fill'd :  
 You have spoilt this child ; she laughs  
 at you and man :  
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,  
 and him :  
 But red-faced war has rods of steel  
 and fire ;  
 She yields, or war.”  
 Then Gama turn'd to me :  
 “ We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy  
 time  
 With our strange girl : and yet they  
 say that still  
 You love her. Give us, then, your  
 mind at large :  
 How say you, war or not ? ”  
 “ Not war, if possible,  
 O king,” I said, “ lest from the abuse  
 of war.

The desecrated shrine, the trampled  
 year;  
 The smouldering homestead, and the  
 household flower  
 Torn from the lintel — all the com-  
 mon wrong —  
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to  
 her  
 Three times a monster : now she  
 lightens scorn  
 At him that mars her plan, but then  
 would hate  
 (And every voice she talk'd with  
 ratify it,  
 And every face she look'd on justify it)  
 The general foe. More soluble is this  
 knot,  
 By gentleness than war. I want her  
 love.  
 What were I nigher this altho' we  
 dash'd  
 Your cities into shards with catapults,  
 She would not love ; — or brought her  
 chain'd, a slave,  
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,  
 Not ever would she love ; but brood-  
 ing turn  
 The book of scorn, till all my flitting  
 chance  
 Were caught within the record of her  
 wrongs,  
 And crush'd to death : and rather,  
 Sire, than this  
 I would the old God of war himself  
 were dead,  
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,  
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs  
 of wreck,  
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd  
 in ice,  
 Not to be molten out.”  
 And roughly spake  
 My father, “ Tut, you know them not,  
 the girls.  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost  
 think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you,  
 Sir !  
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his  
 game :  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the  
 chase,

We hunt them for the beauty of their  
 skins;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them  
 down.  
 Wheedling and siding with them!  
 Out! for shame!  
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear  
 to them  
 As he that does the thing they dare  
 not do,  
 Breathing and sounding beauteous  
 battle, comes  
 With the air of the trumpet round  
 him, and leaps in  
 Among the women, snares them by  
 the score  
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'  
 dash'd with death  
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I won  
 Your mother, a good mother, a good  
 wife,  
 Worth winning; but this firebrand—  
 gentleness  
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,  
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,  
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,  
 Were wisdom to it."  
     "Yea but Sire," I cried,  
 "Wild natures need wise curbs. The  
 soldier? No:  
 What dares not Ida do that she should  
 prize  
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she  
 rose  
 The yesternight, and storming in ex-  
 tremes,  
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance  
 down  
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd  
 the death,  
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her,  
 king,  
 True woman: but you clash them all  
 in one,  
 That have as many differences as we.  
 The violet varies from the lily as far  
 As oak from elm: one loves the sol-  
 dier, one  
 The silken priest of peace, one this,  
 one that,  
 And some unworthily; their sinless  
 faith,

A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,  
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence  
 they need  
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida  
 right?  
 They worth it? truer to the law with-  
 in?  
 Severer in the logic of a life?  
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences;  
 Of earth and heaven? and she of  
 whom you speak,  
 My mother, looks as whole as some  
 serene  
 Creation minted in the golden moods  
 Of sovereign artists; not a thought,  
 a touch,  
 But pure as lines of green that streak  
 the white  
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves;  
 I say,  
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,  
 Bursts of great heart and slips in  
 sensual mire,  
 But whole and one: and take them  
 all-in-all,  
 Were we ourselves but half as good,  
 as kind,  
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as  
 right  
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly  
 theirs  
 As dues of Nature. To our point:  
 not war:  
 Lest I lose all."  
     "Nay, nay, you spake but sense,"  
 Said Gama. "We remember love  
 ourself  
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate  
 him then  
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with  
 blows.  
 You talk almost like Ida: *she* can talk;  
 And there is something in it as you  
 say:  
 But you talk kindlier: we esteem you  
 for it.—  
 He seems a gracious and a gallant  
 Prince,  
 I would he had our daughter: for the  
 rest,  
 Our own detention, why, the causes  
 weigh'd,

Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —  
 We would do much to gratify your Prince —  
 We pardon it; and for your ingress here  
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,  
 You did but come as goblins in the night,  
 Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,  
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,  
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream:  
 But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,  
 He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,  
 And speak with Arac: Arac's word is thrice  
 As ours with Ida: something may be done —  
 I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.  
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,  
 Follow us: who knows? we four may build some plan  
 Foursquare to opposition.”  
 Here he reach'd  
 White hands of farewell to my sire,  
 who growl'd  
 An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,  
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king  
 across the lawns  
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings  
 of Spring  
 In every bole, a song on every spray  
 Of birds that piped their Valentines,  
 and woke  
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love  
 In the old king's ears, who promised  
 help, and oozed  
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we  
 rode

And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy  
 dews  
 Gather'd by night and peace, with  
 each light air  
 On our mail'd heads: but other  
 thoughts than Peace  
 Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,  
 And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers  
 With clamor: for among them rose a cry  
 As if to greet the king; they made a halt;  
 The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum  
 Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;  
 And in the blast and bray of the long horn  
 And serpent-throated bugle, undulated  
 The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced  
 Three captains out; nor ever had I seen  
 Such thews of men: the midmost and the highest  
 Was Arac: all about his motion clung  
 The shadow of his sister, as the beam  
 Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance  
 Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone,  
 That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;  
 And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,  
 And bickers into red and emerald, shone  
 Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first  
 I heard  
 War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of  
 of force,  
 Whose home is in the sinews of a man,  
 Stir in me as to strike: then took the king  
 His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand

And now a pointed finger, told them all :  
 A common light of smiles at our disguise  
 Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest  
 Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,  
 The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself  
 Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself  
 Your captive, yet my father wills not war:  
 And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?  
 But then this question of your troth remains:  
 And there's a downright honest meaning in her;  
 She flies too high, she flies too high!  
 and yet  
 She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme;  
 She prest and prest it on me — I myself,  
 What know I of these things? but, life and soul!  
 I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;  
 I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?  
 I take her for the flower of woman-kind,  
 And so I often told her, right or wrong,  
 And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,  
 And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all,  
 I stand upon her side: she made me swear it —  
 'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candlelight —  
 Swear by St. something — I forget her name —  
 Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;  
 She was a princess too; and so I swore.  
 Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:

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

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

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

“Yea,” answer'd I, “for this wild wreath of air,  
 This flake of rainbow flying on the highest  
 Foam of men's deeds — this honor, if ye will.  
 It needs must be for honor if at all:  
 Since, what decision? if we fail, we fail,

And if we win, we fail: she would not  
 keep  
 Her compact." "'Sdeath! but we  
 will send to her,"  
 Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she  
 should  
 Bide by this issue: let our missive thro',  
 And you shall have her answer by  
 the word."

"Boys!" shriek'd the old king, but  
 vainlier than a hen  
 To her false daughters in the pool;  
 for none  
 Regarded; neither seem'd there more  
 to say:  
 Back rode we to my father's camp,  
 and found  
 He thrice had sent a herald to the  
 gates,  
 To learn if Ida yet would cede our  
 claim,  
 Or by denial flush her babbling wells  
 With her own people's life: three  
 times he went:  
 The first, he blew and blew, but none  
 appear'd:  
 He batter'd at the doors; none came:  
 the next,  
 An awful voice within had warn'd  
 him thence:  
 The third, and those eight daughters  
 of the plough  
 Came sallying thro' the gates, and  
 caught his hair,  
 And so belabor'd him on rib and  
 cheek  
 They made him wild: not less one  
 glance he caught  
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd  
 there  
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,  
 firm  
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and  
 the noise  
 Of arms; and standing like a stately  
 Pinc  
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,  
 When storm is on the heights, and  
 right and left  
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the  
 long hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and  
 yet her will  
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

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

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

"O brother, you have known the  
 pangs we felt,  
 What heats of indignation when we  
 heard  
 Of those that iron-cramp'd their  
 women's feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the  
     poor bride  
 Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift  
     a scourge;  
 Of living hearts that crack within the  
     fire  
 Where smoulder their dead despots;  
     and of those, —  
 Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity,  
     fling  
 Their pretty maids in the running  
     flood, and swoops  
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the  
     heart  
 Made for all noble motion: and I saw  
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker  
     times  
 With smoother men: the old leaven  
     leaven'd all:  
 Millions of throats would bawl for  
     civil rights,  
 No woman named: therefore I set  
     my face  
 Against all men, and lived but for  
     mine own.  
 Far off from men I built a fold for  
     them:  
 I stored it full of rich memorial:  
 I fenced it round with gallant insti-  
     tutes,  
 And biting laws to scare the beasts  
     of prey  
 And prosper'd; till a rout of saucy  
     boys  
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd  
     our peace,  
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I  
     know not what  
 Of insolence and love, some pretext  
     held  
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my  
     will  
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings!  
     — for their sport! —  
 I tamed my leopards: shall I not  
     tame these?  
 Or you? or I? for since you think me  
     touch'd  
 In honor — what, I would not aught  
     of false —  
 Is not our cause pure? and whereas I  
     know

Your prowess, Arac, and what  
     mother's blood  
 You draw from, fight; you failing, I  
     abide  
 What end soever: fail you will not.  
     Still  
 Take not his life: he risk'd it for my  
     own;  
 His mother lives: yet whatsoe'er you  
     do,  
 Fight and fight well; strike and strike  
     home. O dear  
 Brothers, the woman's Angel guards  
     you, you  
 The sole men to be mingled with our  
     cause,  
 The sole men we shall prize in the  
     aftertime,  
 Your very armor hallow'd, and your  
     statues  
 Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly  
     brush'd aside,  
 We plant a solid foot into the Time,  
 And mould a generation strong to  
     move  
 With claim on claim from right to  
     right, till she  
 Whose name is yoked with children's,  
     know herself;  
 And Knowledge in our own land  
     make her free,  
 And, ever following those two crowned  
     twins,  
 Commerce and conquest, shower the  
     fiery grain  
 Of freedom broadcast over all that  
     orbs  
 Between the Northern and the Southern  
     morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd  
     across the rest.  
 "See that there be no traitors in your  
     camp:  
 We seem a nest of traitors — none to  
     trust  
 Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-  
     plague of men!  
 Almost our maids were better at their  
     homes,  
 Than thus man-girled here: indeed I  
     think



Our chiefest comfort is the little child  
 Of one unworthy mother; which she  
 left:  
 She shall not have it back: the child  
 shall grow  
 To prize the authentic mother of her  
 mind.  
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed  
 'This morning: there the tender orphan  
 hands  
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm  
 from thence  
 The wrath I nursed against the world.  
 farewell."

I ceased; he said, "Stubborn, but  
 she may sit  
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-  
 storms,  
 And breed up warriors! See now, tho'  
 yourself  
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to  
 sloughs  
 That swallow common sense, the  
 spindling king,  
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.  
 When the man wants weight, the  
 woman takes it up,  
 And topples down the scales; but this  
 is fixt  
 As are the roots of earth and base of  
 all;  
 Man for the field and woman for the  
 hearth:  
 Man for the sword and for the needle  
 she:  
 Man with the head and woman with  
 heart:  
 Man to command and woman to  
 obey;  
 All else confusion. Look you! the  
 gray mare  
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny  
 shrills  
 From tile to scullery, and her small  
 goodman  
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the  
 fires of Hell  
 Mix with his hearth: but you — she's  
 yet a colt —  
 Take, break her: strongly groom'd and  
 straitly curb'd

She might not rank with those detest-  
 able  
 That let the bantling scald at home,  
 and brawl  
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs  
 in the street.  
 They say she's comely; there's the  
 fairer chance:  
 I like her none the less for rating at  
 her!  
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,  
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty  
 brace  
 Of twins may weed her of her folly.  
 Boy,  
 The bearing and training of a child  
 Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king:  
 I took my leave, for it was nearly  
 noon:  
 I pored upon her letter which I held,  
 And on the little clause "take not his  
 life:"  
 I mused on that wild morning in the  
 woods,  
 And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt  
 win:"  
 I thought on all the wrathful king had  
 said,  
 And how the strange betrothment  
 was to end:  
 Then I remember'd that burnt sor-  
 cerer's curse  
 That one should fight with shadows  
 and should fall;  
 And like a flash the weird affection  
 came:  
 King, camp and college turn'd to hol-  
 low shows;  
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,  
 And doing battle with forgotten  
 ghosts,  
 To dream myself the shadow of a  
 dream:  
 And ere I woke it was the point of  
 noon,  
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied  
 and plumed  
 We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there  
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet  
 blared

At the barrier like a wild horn in a  
land  
Of echoes, and a moment, and once  
more  
The trumpet, and again: at which the  
storm  
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge  
of spears  
And riders front to front, until they  
closed  
In conflict with the crash of shivering  
points,  
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,  
I dream'd  
Of fighting. On his haunches rose  
the steed,  
And into fiery splinters leapt the  
lance,  
And out of stricken helmets sprang  
the fire.  
Part sat like rocks: part reel'd but  
kept their seats:  
Part roll'd on the earth and rose  
again and drew:  
Part stumbled mixt with floundering  
horses. Down  
From those two bulks at Arac's side,  
and down  
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's  
flail,  
The large blows rain'd, as here and  
everywhere  
He rode the mellay, lord of the ring-  
ing lists,  
And all the plain, — brand, mace, and  
shaft, and shield —  
Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil  
bang'd  
With hammers; till I thought, can  
this be he  
From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this  
be so,  
The mother makes us most — and in  
my dream  
( glanced aside, and saw the palace-  
front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'  
eyes,  
And highest, among the statues,  
statue-like,  
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a  
Jael,

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

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

## VI.

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

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

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

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

My dream had never died or lived  
again.

As in some mystic middle state I lay;  
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:  
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me  
all

So often that I speak as having seen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let them not lie in the tents with  
 coarse mankind,  
 Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer these  
 The brethren of our blood and cause,  
 that there  
 Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender  
 ministries  
 Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet  
 in her arms,  
 Descending, burst the great bronze  
 valves, and led  
 A hundred maids in train across the  
 Park.  
 Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,  
 on they came,  
 Their feet in flowers, her loveliest:  
 by them went  
 The enamor'd air sighing, and on  
 their curls  
 From the high tree the blossom waver-  
 ing fell,  
 And over them the tremulous isles of  
 light  
 Slided, they moving under shade: but  
 Blanche  
 At distance follow'd: so they came:  
 anon  
 Thro' open field into the lists they  
 wound  
 Timorously; and as the leader of the  
 herd  
 That holds a stately fretwork to the  
 Sun,  
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy  
 does,  
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on  
 air,  
 The lovely, lordly creature floated  
 on  
 To where her wounded brethren lay;  
 there stay'd;  
 Knelt on one knee,—the child on one,  
 — and prest  
 Their hands, and call'd them dear  
 deliverers,  
 And happy warriors, and immortal  
 names,  
 And said "You shall not lie in the  
 tents but here,

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

Then, whether moved by this, or  
 was it chance,  
 She past my way. Up started from  
 my side  
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp  
 less eye,  
 Silent; but when she saw me lying  
 stark,  
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly  
 pale,  
 Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd; and when  
 she saw  
 The haggard father's face and rever-  
 end beard  
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the  
 blood  
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of  
 pain  
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her  
 forehead past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and  
 she said:  
 "He saved my life: my brother slew  
 him for it."  
 No more: at which the king in bitter  
 scorn  
 Drew from my neck the painting and  
 the tress,  
 And held them up: she saw them,  
 and a day  
 Rose from the distance on her memory,  
 When the good Queen, her mother,  
 shore the tress  
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady  
 Blanche:  
 And then once more she look'd at my  
 pale face:  
 Till understanding all the foolish  
 work  
 Of fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her  
 mind;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her  
 breast:  
 She bow'd, she set the child on the  
 earth; she laid  
 A feeling finger on my brows, and  
 presently

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

She said: but at the happy word "he lives"  
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.  
 So those two foes above my fallen life,  
 With brow to brow like night and evening mixt  
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole  
 A little nearer, till the babe that by us,  
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,  
 Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,  
 Uncared for, spied its mother and began  
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance  
 Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms  
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal  
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out "Mine — mine — not yours,  
 It is not yours, but mine: give me the child"  
 Ceased all on tremble: piteous was the cry:  
 So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,  
 And turn'd each face her way: wan was her cheek  
 With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,  
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,  
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half

The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst  
 The laces toward her babe; but she nor cared  
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida heard,  
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood  
 Erect and silent, striking with her glance  
 The mother, me, the child; but he that lay  
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,  
 Trail'd himself up on one knee: then he drew  
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd  
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,  
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt his face,  
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose  
 Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew  
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand  
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said:

"O fair and strong and terrible!  
 Lioness  
 That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!  
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible  
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks,  
 We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.  
 What would you more? give her the child! remain  
 Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,  
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:  
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware  
 Lest, where you seek the common love of these,  
 The common hate with the revolving wheel  
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis

Break from a darken'd future, crown'd  
with fire,  
And tread you out for ever : but how-  
soe'er  
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own  
arms  
To hold your own, deny not hers to  
her,  
Give her the child! O if, I say, you  
keep  
One pulse that beats true woman, if  
you loved  
The breast that fed or arm that dan-  
dled you,  
Or own one port of sense not flint to  
prayer,  
Give her the child! or if you scorn  
to lay it,  
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt  
with yours,  
Or speak to her, your dearest, her  
one fault  
The tenderness, not yours, that could  
not kill,  
Give me it: I will give it her."

He said:

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

In the dead prime: but may thy  
mother prove  
As true to thee as false, false, false to  
me!  
And, if thou needs must bear the  
yoke, I wish it  
Gentle as freedom" — here she kiss'd  
it: then —  
"All good go with thee! take it, Sir,"  
and so  
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed  
hands,  
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as  
she sprang  
To meet it, with an eye that swam in  
thanks;  
Then felt it sound and whole from  
head to foot,  
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close  
enough,  
And in her hunger mouth'd and mum-  
bled it,  
And hid her bosom with it; after that  
Put on more calm and added suppli-  
antly:

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

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

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the  
ground,

And reddening in the furrows of his chin,  
And moved beyond his custom, Gama  
said :

“I’ve heard that there is iron in the blood,  
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?

Whence drew you this steel temper?  
not from me,  
Not from your mother, now a saint  
with saints.

She said you had a heart—I heard  
her say it—

‘Our Ida has a heart’—just ere she  
died—

‘But see that some one with authority  
Be near her still’ and I—I sought  
for one—

All people said she had authority—  
The Lady Blanche: much profit!  
Not one word;

No! tho’ your father sues: see how  
you stand

Stiff as Lot’s wife, and all the good  
knights maim’d,

I trust that there is no one hurt to  
death,

For your wild whim: and was it then  
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace up,  
Where we withdrew from summer  
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath  
the planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her  
that’s gone,

Ere you were born to vex us? Is it  
kind?

Speak to her I say: is this not she of  
whom,

When first she came, all flush’d you  
said to me

Now had you got a friend of your  
own age,

Now could you share your thought;  
now should men see

Two women faster welded in one  
love

Than pairs of wedlock; she you  
walk’d with, she

You talk’d with, whole nights long, up  
in the tower,  
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,  
And right ascension, Heaven knows  
what; and now

A word, but one, one little kindly  
word,

Not one to spare her: out upon you,  
flint!

You love nor her, nor me, nor any;  
nay,

You shame your mother’s judgment  
too. Not one?

You will not? well—no heart have  
you, or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut  
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-  
ness.”

So said the small king moved beyond  
his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain’d of  
her force

By many a varying influence and so  
long.

Down thro’ her limbs a drooping lan-  
guor wept:

Her head a little bent; and on her  
mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded  
moon

In a still water: then brake out my  
sire,

Lifting his grim head from my  
wounds. “O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman  
even now,

And were half fool’d to let you tend  
our son,

Because he might have wish’d it—  
but we see

The accomplice of your madness un-  
forgiven,

And think that you might mix his  
draught with death,

When your skies change again: the  
rougher hand

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

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

A tempest, thro' the cloud that  
 dimm'd her broke  
 A genial warmth and light once  
 more, and shone  
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad  
 friend.

“Come hither,  
 O Psyche,” she cried out, “embrace  
 me, come

Quick while I melt; make reconcile-  
 ment sure

With one that cannot keep her mind  
 an hour:

Come to the hollow heart they slander  
 so!

Kiss and be friends, like children  
 being chid!

I seem no more: I want forgiveness  
 too:

I should have had to do with none  
 but maids,

That have no links with men. Ah  
 false but dear,

Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —  
 why? — Yet see,

Before these kings we embrace you  
 yet once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,  
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,  
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait  
 upon him,

Like mine own brother. For my debt  
 to him,

This nightmare weight of gratitude, I  
 know it;

Taunt me no more: yourself and  
 yours shall have

Free adit; we will scatter all our  
 maids

Till happier times each to her proper  
 hearth:

What use to keep them here — now?  
 grant my prayer.

Help, father, brother, help; speak to  
 the king:

Thaw this male nature to some touch  
 of that

Which kills me with myself, and  
 drags me down

From my fixt height to mob me up  
 with all

The soft and milky rabble of woman-  
 kind,  
 Poor weakling ev'n as they are.”

Passionate tears  
 Follow'd: the king replied not: Cyril  
 said:

“Your brother, Lady — Florian, —  
 ask for him

Of your great head — for he is  
 wounded too —

That you may tend upon him with the  
 prince.”

“Ay so,” said Ida with a bitter smile,  
 “Our laws are broken: let him enter  
 too.”

Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-  
 ful song,

And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,  
 Petition'd too for him. “Ay so,” she  
 said,

“I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling  
 bour:

We break our laws with ease, but let  
 it be.”

“Ay so?” said Blanche: “Amazed  
 am I to hear

Your Highness: but your Highness  
 breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make:  
 'twas I.

I had been wedded wife, I knew man-  
 kind,

And block'd them out; but these men  
 came to woo

Your Highness — verily I think to  
 win.”

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry  
 eye:

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling  
 tower,

Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and  
 scorn.

“Fling our doors wide! all, all, not  
 one, but all,

Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend  
 or foe.



Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls  
 flit,  
 Till the storm die! but had you stood  
 by us,  
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from  
 his base  
 Had left us rock. She fain would  
 sting us too,  
 But shall not. Pass, and mingle with  
 your likes.  
 We brook no further insult but are  
 gone."

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

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

When armor clash'd or jingled,  
 while the day,  
 Descending, struck athwart the hall,  
 and shot  
 A flying splendor out of brass and  
 steel,  
 That o'er the statues leapt from head  
 to head,  
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the  
 helm,  
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on  
 flame,  
 And now and then an echo started  
 up,  
 And shuddering fled from room to  
 room, and died  
 Of fright in far apartments.

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

## VII.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the  
 sea;  
 The cloud may stoop from heaven and  
 take the shape  
 With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;  
 But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?  
 Ask me no more.  
 Ask me no more: what answer should I  
 give?  
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:  
 Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
 Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
 Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are  
seal'd:

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

So was their sanctuary violated,  
So their fair college turn'd to hos-  
pital;

At first with all confusion: by and  
by

Sweet order lived again with other  
laws:

A kindlier influence reign'd; and  
everywhere

Low voices with the ministering hand  
Hung round the sick: the maidens  
came, they talk'd,

They sang, they read: till she not fair  
hegan

To gather light, and she that was, be-  
came

Her former beauty treble; and to and  
fro

With books, with flowers, with Angel  
offices,

Like creatures native unto gracious  
act,

And in their own clear element, they  
moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,  
And hatred of her weakness, blent  
with shame.

Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke:  
but oft

Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone  
for hours

On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of  
men

Darkening her female field: void was  
her use,

And she as one that climbs a peak to  
gaze

O'er land and main, and sees a great  
black cloud

Drag inward from the deeps, a wall  
of night,

Blot out the slope of sea from verge  
to shore,

And suck the blinding splendor from  
the sand,

And quenching lake by lake and tarn  
by tarn

Expunge the world: so fared she gaz-  
ing there;

So blacken'd all her world in secret,  
blank

And waste it seem'd and vain; till  
down she came,

And found fair peace once more among  
the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by  
morn the lark

Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,  
but I

Lay silent in the muffled cage of life:  
And twilight gloom'd; and broader-  
grown the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,  
and Heaven,

Star after star, arose and fell; but I,  
Deeper than those weird doubts could  
reach me, lay

Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-  
verse,

Nor knew what eye was on me, nor  
the hand

That nursed me, more than infants in  
their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian: with  
her oft,

Melissa came; for Blanche had gone,  
but left

Her child among us, willing she should  
keep

Court-favor: here and there the small  
bright head,

A light of healing, glanced about the  
couch,

Or thro' the parted silks the tender face  
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded  
man

With blush and smile, a medicine in  
themselves

To wile the length from languorous  
hours, and draw

The sting from pain; nor seem'd it  
strange that soon

He rose up whole. and those fair  
charities

Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd  
 that hearts  
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close  
 in love,  
 Than when two dewdrops on the petal  
 shake  
 To the same sweet air, and tremble  
 deeper down,  
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

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

Nor only these : Love in the sacred  
 halls  
 Held carnival at will, and flying struck  
 With showers of random sweet on  
 maid and man.  
 Nor did her father cease to press my  
 claim,  
 Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor  
 yet  
 Did those twin brothers, risen again  
 and whole ;  
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she  
 sat :

Then came a change ; for sometimes  
 I would catch  
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
 "You are not Ida;" clasp it once again,  
 And call her Ida, tho' I know her not,  
 And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
 And call her hard and cold which  
 seem'd a truth :  
 And still she fear'd that I should lose  
 my mind,  
 And often she believed that I should  
 die :  
 Till out of long frustration of her care,  
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary  
 noons,  
 And watches in the dead, the dark,  
 when clocks  
 Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace  
 floors, or call'd  
 On flying Time from all their silver  
 tongues —  
 And out of memories of her kindlier  
 days,  
 And sidelong glances at my father's  
 grief,  
 And at the happy lovers heart in  
 heart —  
 And out of hauntings of my spoken  
 love,  
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd  
 dream,  
 And often feeling of the helpless  
 hands,  
 And wordless broodings on the wasted  
 cheek —  
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up.  
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last,  
 to these,  
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung  
 with tears  
 By some cold morning glacier ; frail  
 at first  
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close  
 to death  
 For weakness : it was evening : silent  
 light  
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein  
 were wrought

Two grand designs; for on one side  
 arose  
 The women up in wild revolt, and  
 storm'd  
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,  
 they cramm'd  
 The forum, and half-crush'd among  
 the rest  
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the  
 other side  
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; be-  
 hind,  
 A train of dames: by axe and eagle  
 sat,  
 With all their foreheads drawn in  
 Roman scowls,  
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in  
 their veins,  
 The fierce triumvirs; and before them  
 paused  
 Hortensia pleading: angry was her  
 face.

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

"If you be, what I think you, some  
 sweet dream,  
 I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,

I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die  
 to-night.  
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I  
 die."

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

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

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

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

Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars,  
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

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

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

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

"Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)

In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?  
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,  
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;  
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,  
For Love is of the valley, come thou down  
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,  
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,  
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,  
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk  
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,  
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,  
Nor find him dropt upon the firlths of ice,  
That huddling slant in furrow-cloves falls  
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors:  
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down  
To find him in the valley; let the wild  
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave  
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air:  
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales  
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth  
Arise to thee; the children call, and I  
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,  
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;  
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,  
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,  
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned; while with shut  
eyes I lay

Listening; then look'd. Pale was the  
perfect face;

The bosom with long sighs labor'd;  
and meek

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the  
luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.  
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had  
fail'd

In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;  
That all her labor was but as a block

Left in the quarry; but she still were  
loth,

She still were loth to yield herself to  
one

That wholly scorn'd to help their  
equal rights

Against the sons of men, and barbarous  
laws.

She pray'd me not to judge their  
cause from her

That wrong'd it, sought far less for  
truth than power

In knowledge: something wild within  
her breast,

A greater than all knowledge, beat  
her down.

And she had nursed me there from  
week to week:

Much had she learnt in little time.  
In part

It was ill counsel had misled the girl  
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a  
girl—

"Ah fool, and made myself a Queen  
of farce!

When comes another such? never, I  
think,

Till the Sun drop, dead, from the  
signs."

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon  
her hands,

And her great heart thro' all the  
faultful Past

Went sorrowing in a pause I dared  
not break;

Till notice of a change in the dark  
world

Was lispt about the acacias, and a  
bird,

That early woke to feed her little ones,  
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for  
light:  
She moved, and at her feet the volume  
fell.

"Blame not thyself too much," I  
said, "nor blame  
Too much the sons of men and bar-  
barous laws;  
These were the rough ways of the  
world till now.  
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,  
that know  
The woman's cause is man's: they  
rise or sink  
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or  
free:  
For she that out of Lethe scales with  
man  
The shining steps of Nature, shares  
with man  
His nights, his days, moves with him  
to one goal,  
Stays all the fair young planet in her  
hands —  
If she be small, slight-natured, miser-  
able,  
How shall men grow? but work no  
more alone!  
Our place is much: as far as in us lies  
We two will serve them both in aid-  
ing her —  
Will clear away the parasitic forms  
That seem to keep her up but drag  
her down —  
Will leave her space to burgeon out  
of all  
Within her — let her make herself  
her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn and  
be  
All that not harms distinctive woman-  
hood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse: could we make her as  
the man,  
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest  
bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they  
grow;

The man be more of woman, she of  
man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral  
height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that  
throw the world;  
She mental breadth, nor fail in child-  
ward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger  
mind;  
Till at the last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words;  
And so these twain, upon the skirts of  
Time,  
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all  
their powers,  
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,  
Self-reverent each and reverencing  
each,  
Distinct in individualities,  
But like each other ev'n as those who  
love.  
Then comes the statelier Eden back  
to men:  
Then reign the world's great bridal,  
chaste and calm:  
Then springs the crowning race of  
human-kind.  
May these things be!"

Sighing she spoke "I fear  
They will not."

"Dear, but let us type them now  
In our own lives, and this proud  
watchword rest  
Of equal; seeing either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought  
in thought,  
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they  
grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one  
full stroke,  
Life."

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

"Alone," I said, "from earlier than  
I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of  
 the world,  
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not,  
 lives  
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet  
 self,  
 Or pines in sad experience worse than  
 death,  
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt  
 with crime :  
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved  
 her, one  
 Not learned, save in gracious house-  
 hold ways,  
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender  
 wants,  
 No Angel, but a dearer being, all  
 dipt  
 In Angel instincts, breathing Para-  
 dise,  
 Interpreter between the Gods and  
 men,  
 Who look'd all native to her place,  
 and yet  
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a  
 sphere  
 Too gross to tread, and all male  
 minds perforce  
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as  
 they moved,  
 And girdled her with music. Happy  
 he  
 With such a mother ! faith in woman-  
 kind  
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all  
 things high  
 Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip  
 and fall  
 He shall not blind his soul with clay."  
 "But I,"  
 Said Ida, tremulously, "so all un-  
 like —  
 It seems you love to cheat yourself  
 with words :  
 This mother is your model. I have  
 heard  
 Of your strange doubts : they well  
 might be : I seem  
 A mockery to my own self. Never,  
 Prince ;  
 You cannot love me."  
 "Nay but thee," I said

"From yearlong poring on thy pic-  
 tured eyes,  
 Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,  
 and saw  
 Thee woman thro' the crust of iron  
 moods  
 That mask'd thee from men's rever-  
 ence up, and forced  
 Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-  
 hood : now,  
 Giv'n back to life, to life indeed, thro'  
 thee,  
 Indeed I love : the new day comes, the  
 light  
 Dearer for night, as dearer thou for  
 faults  
 Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts  
 are dead,  
 My haunting sense of hollow shows :  
 the change,  
 This truthful change in thee has kill'd  
 it. Dear,  
 Look up, and let thy nature strike on  
 mine,  
 Like yonder morning on the blind  
 half-world ;  
 Approach and fear not ; breathe upon  
 my brows ;  
 In that fine air I tremble, all the past  
 Melts mist-like into this bright hour,  
 and this  
 Is morn to more, and all the rich to-  
 come  
 Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-  
 land reels  
 Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.  
 Forgive me,  
 I waste my heart in signs : let be. My  
 bride,  
 My wife, my life. O we will walk this  
 world,  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
 And so thro' those dark gates across  
 the wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love  
 thee : come,  
 Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine  
 are one :  
 Accomplish thou my manhood and  
 thyself ;  
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and  
 trust to me."

## CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give  
 you all  
 The random scheme as wildly as it  
 rose:  
 The words are mostly mine; for when  
 we ceased  
 There came a minute's pause, and  
 Walter said,  
 "I wish she had not yielded!" then to  
 me,  
 "What, if you drest it up poetically!"  
 So pray'd the men, the women: I gave  
 assent:  
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme  
 of seven  
 Together in one sheaf? What style  
 could suit?  
 The men required that I should give  
 throughout  
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,  
 With which we banter'd little Lilia  
 first:  
 The women — and perhaps they felt  
 their power,  
 For something in the ballads which  
 they sang,  
 Or in their silent influence as they sat,  
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-  
 lesque,  
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn  
 close —  
 They hated banter, wish'd for some-  
 thing real,  
 A gallant fight, a noble princess —  
 why  
 Not make her true-heroic — true-  
 sublime?  
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the  
 close?  
 Which yet with such a framework  
 scarce could be.  
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the  
 two,  
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists:  
 And I, betwixt them both, to please  
 them both,  
 And yet to give the story as it rose,  
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
 And maybe neither pleased myself  
 nor them.

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

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

"Look there, a garden!" said my  
 college friend,  
 The Tory member's elder son, "and  
 there!  
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps  
 her off,  
 And keeps our Britain, whole within  
 herself,  
 A nation yet, the rulers and the  
 ruled —  
 Some sense of duty, something of a  
 faith,



Some reverence for the laws ourselves  
 have made,  
 Some patient force to change them  
 when we will,  
 Some civic manhood firm against the  
 crowd —  
 But yonder, whiff! there comes a sud-  
 den heat,  
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his  
 head,  
 The king is scared, the soldier will  
 not fight,  
 The little boys begin to shoot and  
 stab,  
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek  
 Like an old woman, and down rolls  
 the world  
 In mock heroics stranger than our  
 own;  
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring  
 out;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they  
 are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in  
 them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise  
 a dream  
 As some of theirs — God bless the  
 narrow seas!  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic  
 broad."

"Have patience," I replied, "our-  
 selves are full  
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest  
 dreams  
 Are but the needful preludes of the  
 truth:  
 For me, the genial day, the happy  
 crowd,  
 The sport half-science, fill me with a  
 faith,  
 This fine old world of ours is but a  
 child  
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give  
 it time  
 To learn its limbs: there is a hand  
 that guides."

In such discourse we gain'd the  
 garden rails,

And there we saw Sir Walter where  
 he stood,  
 Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,  
 Among six boys, head under head,  
 and look'd  
 No little lily-handed Baronet he,  
 A great broad-shoulder'd genial Eng-  
 lishman,  
 A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,  
 A raiser of huge melons and of pine,  
 A patron of some thirty charities,  
 A pamphleteer on guano and on  
 grain,  
 A quarter-sessions chairman, abler  
 none;  
 Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy  
 morn;  
 Now shaking hands with him, now  
 him, of those  
 That stood the nearest — now ad-  
 dress'd to speech —  
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such  
 as closed  
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for  
 the year  
 To follow: a shout rose again, and  
 made  
 The long line of the approaching  
 rookery swerve  
 From the broad elms, and shook the  
 branches of the deer  
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,  
 and rang  
 Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a  
 shout  
 More joyful than the city-roar that  
 hails  
 Premier or king! Why should not  
 these great Sirs  
 Give up their parks some dozen times  
 a year  
 To let the people breathe? So thrice  
 they cried,  
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd  
 away.  
 But we went back to the Abbey,  
 and sat on,  
 So much the gathering darkness  
 charm'd: we sat  
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless  
 reverie.

Perchance upon the future man: the walls Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd, And gradually the powers of the night, That range above the region of the wind, Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up	Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds, Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.  Last little Lilia, rising quietly, Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph From those rich silks, and home well- pleased we went.
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## MAUD; A MONODRAMA.

### PART I.

#### I.

##### I.

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

##### II.

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

##### III.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had fail'd,  
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,  
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,  
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

##### IV.

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

##### V.

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

##### VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,  
 Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;  
 And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse  
 Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

## VII.

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

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

## X.

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

## XI.

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

## XII.

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

## XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,  
 And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,  
 That the smooth-faced snnbosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,  
 And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

## XIV.

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

## XV.

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

## XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.  
 Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?  
 O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,  
 Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

## XVII.

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

## XVIII.

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

## XIX.

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

## II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm: God grant I may find it at last!  
 It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savor nor salt,  
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,  
 Perfectly beautiful: let it be granted her: where is the fault?  
 All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)  
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
 Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been  
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,  
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,  
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,  
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

## III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,  
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,  
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,  
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;  
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong  
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before

Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,  
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV.

## I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime'  
 In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be  
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,  
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.  
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,  
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man:  
 He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

## VII

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

## VIII.

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

## IX.

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

## X.

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

## V.

## I.

A voice by the cedar tree  
 In the meadow under the Hall!  
 She is singing an air that is known to  
 me,

A passionate ballad gallant and gay,  
 A martial song like a trumpet's call!  
 Singing alone in the morning of life,

In the happy morning of life and of May,  
 Singing of men that in battle array,  
 Ready in heart and ready in hand,  
 March with banner and bugle and fife  
 To the death, for their native land.

## II.

Maud with her exquisite face,  
 And wild voice pealing up to the  
 sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on an Eng-  
lish green,  
Maud in the light of her youth and  
her grace,  
Singing of Death, and of Honor that  
cannot die,  
Till I well could weep for a time so  
sordid and mean,  
And myself so languid and base.

## III.

Silence, beautiful voice!  
Be still, for you only trouble the  
mind  
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,  
A glory I shall not find.  
Still! I will hear you no more,  
For your sweetness hardly leaves me  
a choice  
But to move to the meadow and fall  
before  
Her feet on the meadow grass, and  
adore,  
Not her, who is neither courtly nor  
kind,  
Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark

Kept itself warm in the heart of my  
dreams,  
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight.

## IV.

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

## V.

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

## VI.

What if tho' her eye seem'd full  
Of a kind intent to me,  
What if that dandy-despot, he,  
That jewell'd mass of millinery,  
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull  
Smelling of musk and of insolence,  
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,  
Who wants the finer politic sense  
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,  
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —  
What if he had told her yestermorn  
How prettily for his own sweet sake  
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,  
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,  
That so, when the rotten hustings  
shake  
In another month to his brazen lies,  
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

## VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,  
Keep watch and ward, keep watch  
and ward,

Or thou wilt prove their tool.  
 Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,  
 For often a man's own angry pride  
 Is cap and bells for a fool.

## VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone  
 Came out of her pitying womanhood,  
 For am I not, am I not, here alone  
 So many a summer since she died,  
 My mother, who was so gentle and  
 good?

Living alone in an empty house,  
 Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
 Where I hear the dead at midday  
 moan,  
 And the shrieking rush of the wainscot  
 mouse,

And my own sad name in corners  
 cried,  
 When the shiver of dancing leaves is  
 thrown

About its echoing chambers wide,  
 Till a morbid hate and horror have  
 grown

Of a world in which I have hardly  
 mixt,

And a morbid eating lichen fixt  
 On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

## IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and  
 caught

By that you swore to withstand?  
 For what was it else within me wrought  
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of  
 love,

That made my tongue so stammer and  
 trip

When I saw the treasured splendor,  
 her hand,

Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
 And the sunlight broke from her lip?

## x.

I have play'd with her when a child;  
 She remembers it now we meet.  
 Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled  
 By some coquettish deceit.  
 Yet, if she were not a cheat,

If Maud were all that she seem'd,  
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,  
 Then the world were not so bitter  
 But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII.

## I.

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

## II.

Men were drinking together,  
 Drinking and talking of me;  
 "Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
 Will have plenty: so let it be."

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## VIII.

She came to the village church,  
 And sat by a pillar alone;  
 An angel watching an urn  
 Wept over her, carved in stone;  
 And once, but once, she lifted her  
 eyes,  
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely  
 blush'd

To find they were met by my own;  
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat  
 stronger

And thicker, until I heard no longer  
 The snowy-banded, dilettante,  
 Delicate-handed priest intone;  
 And thought, is it pride, and mused  
 and sigh'd

"No surely, now it cannot be pride."



## IX.

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

## X.

## I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?  
 Was not one of the two at her side  
 This new-made lord, whose splendor  
 plucks  
 The slavish hat from the villager's  
 head?  
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,  
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom  
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks  
 And laying his trams in a poison'd  
 gloom  
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted  
 mine  
 Master of half a servile shire,  
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold  
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,  
 Rich in the grace all women desire,  
 Strong in the power that all men  
 adore,  
 And simper and set their voices lower,  
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold  
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,  
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,  
 New as his title, built last year,  
 There amid perky larches and pine,  
 And over the sullen-purple moor  
 (Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

## II.

What, has he found my jewel out?  
 For one of the two that rode at her  
 side

Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:  
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a  
 bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance  
 be.

Maud could be gracious too, no doubt  
 To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,  
 A bought commission, a waxen face,  
 A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —  
 Bought? what is it he cannot buy?  
 And therefore splenetic, personal,  
 base,

A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,  
 At war with myself and a wretched  
 race,

Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

## III.

Last week came one to the county  
 town,

To preach our poor little army down,  
 And play the game of the despot kings,  
 Tho' the state has done it and thrice  
 as well:

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy  
 things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,  
 and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his  
 pence,

This huckster put down war! can he  
 tell

Whether war be a cause or a conse-  
 quence?

Put down the passions that make  
 earth Hell!

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,  
 Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind  
 The bitter springs of anger and fear;  
 Down too, down at your own fireside,  
 With the evil tongue and the evil ear,  
 For each is at war with mankind.

## IV.

I wish I could hear again  
 The chivalrous battle-song  
 That she warbled alone in her joy!  
 I might persuade myself then  
 She would not do herself this great  
 wrong,

To take a wanton dissolute boy  
 For a man and leader of men.

## v.

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

## vi.

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

## XI.

## i.

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

## ii.

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

## XII.

## i.

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

## ii.

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

## iii.

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

## iv.

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

## v.

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

## vi.

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

## vii.

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

## viii.

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling.

## XIII.

## i.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I  
scorn,  
Is that a matter to make me fret?  
That a calamity hard to be borne?  
Well, he may live to hate me yet.  
Fool that I am to be vex't with his pride!  
I past him, I was crossing his lands;  
He stood on the path a little aside;  
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,  
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red  
and white,  
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;  
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,  
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick  
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his  
hands.

## ii.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,  
I long'd so heartily then and there  
To give him the grasp of fellowship;

But while I past he was humming an  
air,  
Stopt, and then with a riding whip  
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,  
And curving a contumelious lip,  
Gorgonized me from head to foot  
With a stony British stare.

## III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?  
That old man never comes to his place:  
Shall I believe him ashamed to be  
seen?

For only once, in the village street,  
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his  
face,

A gray old wolf and a lean.  
Scarcely, now, would I call him a  
cheat;

For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,  
She might by a true descent be untrue;  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:  
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due  
To the sweeter blood by the other side;  
Her mother has been a thing complete,  
However she came to be so allied.  
And fair without, faithful within,  
Maud to him is nothing akin:  
Some peculiar mystic grace  
Made her only the child of her mother,  
And heap'd the whole inherited sin  
On that huge scapegoat of the race,  
All, all upon the brother.

## IV.

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

## XIV.

## I.

Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn;  
There she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climb'd at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate;  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

## II.

Maud's own little oak-room  
(Which Maud, like a precious stone

Set in the heart of the carven gloom,  
Lights with herself, when alone  
She sits by her music and books  
And her brother lingers late  
(With a roystering company) looks  
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:  
And I thought as I stood, if a hand,  
as white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid  
On the hasp of the window, and my  
Delight

Had a sudden desire, like a glorious  
ghost, to glide,

Like a beam of the seventh Heaven,  
down to my side,

There were but a step to be made.

## III.

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

## IV.

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

Now and then in the dim-gray dawn,  
But I look'd, and round, all round the  
house I beheld

The death-white curtain drawn;  
Felt a horror over me creep,  
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,  
Knew that the death-white curtain  
meant but sleep,

Yet I shudder'd and thought like a  
fool of the sleep of death.

## XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if I be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much  
to fear;

But if I be dear to some one else,  
Then I should be to myself more  
dear.

Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else.

## XVI.

## I.

This lump of earth has left his estate  
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;  
 And so that he find what he went to  
 seek,  
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and  
 drown  
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of  
 town,  
 He may stay for a year who has gone  
 for a week :  
 But this is the day when I must speak,  
 And I see my Oread coming down,  
 O this is the day !  
 O beautiful creature, what am I  
 That I dare to look her way ;  
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,  
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her  
 breast,  
 And dream of her beauty with tender  
 dread,  
 From the delicate Arab arch of her  
 feet  
 To the grace that, bright and light as  
 the crest  
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,  
 And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,  
 To know her beauty might half undo it.  
 I know it the one bright thing to save  
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from  
 crime,  
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

## II.

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

## III.

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

## XVII.

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

## XVIII.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

There is none like her, none.  
 Nor will he when our summers have  
 deceased.  
 O, art thou sighing for Lebanon  
 In the long breeze that streams to thy  
 delicious East,  
 Sighing for Lebanon,  
 Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here  
 increased,  
 Upon a pastoral slope as fair,  
 And looking to the South, and fed  
 With honey'd rain and delicate air,  
 And haunted by the starry head  
 Of her whose gentle will has changed  
 my fate,  
 And made my life a perfumed altar-  
 flame;  
 And over whom thy darkness must  
 have spread  
 With such delight as theirs of old,  
 thy great  
 Forefathers of the thornless garden,  
 there  
 Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from  
 whom she came.

## IV.

Here will I lie, while these long  
 branches sway,  
 And you fair stars that crown a  
 happy day  
 Go in and out as if at merry play,  
 Who am no more so all forlorn,  
 As when it seem'd far better to be  
 born  
 To labor and the mattock-harden'd  
 hand,

Than nursed at ease and brought to  
 understand  
 A sad astrology, the boundless plan  
 That makes you tyrants in your iron  
 skies,  
 Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,  
 Cold fires, yet with power to burn and  
 brand  
 His nothingness into man.

## V.

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

## VI.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death  
 may give  
 More life to Love than is or ever was  
 In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet  
 to live.  
 Let no one ask me how it came to  
 pass;  
 It seems that I am happy, that to me  
 A livelier emerald twinkles in the  
 grass,  
 A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

## VII.

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

## VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the  
swell  
Of the long waves that roll in yonder  
bay?  
And hark the clock within, the silver  
knell  
Of twelve sweet hours that past in  
bridal white,  
And died to live, long as my pulses  
play;  
But now by this my love has closed  
her sight  
And given false death her hand, and  
stol'n away  
To dreamful wastes where footless  
fancies dwell  
Among the fragments of the golden  
day.  
May nothing there her maiden grace  
affright!  
Dear heart, I feel with thee the  
drowsy spell.  
My bride to be, my evermore delight,  
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,  
farewell;  
It is but for a little space I go:  
And ye meanwhile far over moor and  
fell  
Beat to the noiseless music of the  
night!  
Has our whole earth gone nearer to  
the glow  
Of your soft splendors that you look  
so bright?  
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely  
Hell.  
Beat, happy stars, timing with things  
below,  
Beat with my heart more blest than  
heart can tell,  
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent  
woe  
That seems to draw — but it shall not  
be so:  
Let all be well, be well.

## XIX.

## I.

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

## II.

My dream? do I dream of bliss?  
I have walk'd awake with Truth.  
O when did a morning shine  
So rich in atonement as this  
For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darken'd watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and  
mine:  
For who was left to watch her but I?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

## III.

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

## IV.

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

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death.

Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn.

## v.

But the true blood spilt had in it a  
beat

To dissolve the precious seal on a  
bond,

That, if left uncancell'd, had been so  
sweet :

And none of us thought of a some-  
thing beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of  
the child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,

To be friends for her sake, to be re-  
conciled ;

And I was cursing them and my  
doom,

And letting a dangerous thought run  
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant  
gloom

Of foreign churches — I see her  
there,

Bright English lily, breathing a  
prayer

To be friends, to be reconciled !

## vi.

But then what a flint is he !

Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,

I find whenever she touch'd on me

This brother had laugh'd her down,

And at last, when each came home,

He had darken'd into a frown,

Chid her, and forbid her to speak

To me, her friend of the years be-  
fore ;

And this was what had redden'd her  
cheek

When I bow'd to her on the moor.

## vii.

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

I see she cannot but love him,

And says he is rough but kind,

And wishes me to approve him,

And tells me, when she lay

Sick once, with a fear of worse,  
Then he left his wine and horses and  
play,

Sat with her, read to her, night and  
day,

And tended her like a nurse.

## viii.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire

Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —

Rough but kind ? yet I know

He has plotted against me in this,

That he plots against me still.

Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.

Well, rough but kind ; why let it be  
so :

For shall not Maud have her will ?

## ix.

For, Maud, so tender and true,

As long as my life endures

I feel I shall owe you a debt,

That I never can hope to pay ;

And if ever I should forget

That I owe this debt to you

And for your sweet sake to yours ;

O then, what then shall I say ? —

If ever I *should* forget,

May God make me more wretched

Than ever I have been yet !

## x.

So now I have sworn to bury

All this dead body of hate,

I feel so free and so clear

By the loss of that dead weight,

That I should grow light-headed, I  
fear,

Fantastically merry ;

But that her brother comes, like a  
blight

On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-  
night.

## xx.

## i.

Strange, that I felt so gay,

Strange, that I tried to-day

To beguile her melancholy ;

The Sultan, as we name him,—

She did not wish to blame him —  
 But he vext her and perplext her  
 With his worldly talk and folly:  
 Was it gentle to reprove her  
 For stealing out of view  
 From a little lazy lover  
 Who but claima her as his due?  
 Or for chilling his caresses  
 By the coldness of her manners,  
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses?  
 Now I know her but in two,  
 Nor can pronounce upon it  
 If one should ask me whether  
 The habit, hat, and feather,  
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet  
 Be the neater and completer;  
 For nothing can be sweeter  
 Than maiden Maud in either.

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

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

## XXI.

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

## XXII.

## I.

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

## II.

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

## III.

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

## IV.

I said to the lily, "There is but one  
 With whom she has heart to be gay.  
 When will the dancers leave her  
 alone?"



She is weary of dance and play."  
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,  
 And half to the rising day;  
 Low on the sand and loud on the  
 stone  
 The last wheel echoes away.

## v.

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

## vi.

And the soul of the rose went into  
 my blood,  
 As the music clash'd in the hall;  
 And long by the garden lake I stood,  
 For I heard your rivulet fall  
 From the lake to the meadow and on  
 to the wood,  
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

## vii.

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

## viii.

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

## ix.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of  
 girls,  
 Come hither, the dances are done,

In gloss of satin and glimmer of  
 pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one;  
 Shine out, little head, sunning over  
 with curls,  
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

## x.

There has fallen a splendid tear  
 From the passion-flower at the gate.  
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;  
 She is coming, my life, my fate;  
 The red rose cries, "She is near, she  
 is near;"  
 And the white rose weeps, "She is  
 late;"  
 The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"  
 And the lily whispers, "I wait."

## xi.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;  
 Were it ever so airy a tread,  
 My heart would hear her and beat,  
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;  
 My dust would hear her and beat,  
 Had I lain for a century dead;  
 Would start and tremble under her  
 feet,  
 And blossom in purple and red.

## PART II.

## I.

## i.

"THE fault was mine, the fault was  
 mine" —  
 Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and  
 still,  
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on  
 the hill? —  
 It is this guilty hand! —  
 And there rises ever a passionate cry  
 From underneath in the darkening  
 land —  
 What is it, that has been done?  
 O dawn of Eden bright over earth  
 and sky,  
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy  
 rising sun,  
 The fires of Hell and of Hate;  
 For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken  
 a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to  
the gate,  
He came with the babe-faced lord ;  
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,  
And while she wept, and I strove to  
be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie,  
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,  
And he struck me, madman, over the  
face,

Struck me before the languid fool,  
Who was gaping and grinning by ;  
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;  
Wrought for his house an irredeem-  
able woe ;

For front to front in an hour we stood,  
And a million horrible bellowing  
echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind  
the wood,

And thunder'd up into Heaven the  
Christless code,

That must have life for a blow.  
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to  
grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?  
"The fault was mine," he whisper'd,  
"fly !"

Then glided out of the joyous wood  
The ghastly Wraith of one that I  
know ;

And there rang on a sudden a pas-  
sionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood :  
It will ring in my heart and my ears,  
till I die, till I die.

## II.

Is it gone ? my pulses beat —  
What was it ? a lying trick of the  
brain ?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
A shadow there at my feet,  
High over the shadowy land.

It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a  
gentle rain,

When they should burst and drown  
with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger  
and lust,

The little hearts that know not how  
to forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold  
Thee just,  
Strike dead the whole weak race of  
venomous worms,  
That sting each other here in the dust ;  
We are not worthy to live.

## II.

## I.

See what a lovely shell,  
Small and pure as a pearl,  
Lying close to my foot,  
Frail, but a work divine,  
Made so fairly well  
With delicate spire and whorl,  
How exquisitely minute,  
A miracle of design !

## II.

What is it ? a learned man  
Could give it a clumsy name.  
Let him name it who can,  
The beauty would be the same.

## III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,  
Void of the little living will  
That made it stir on the shore.  
Did he stand at the diamond door  
Of his house in a rainbow frill ?  
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,  
A golden foot or a fairy horn  
Thro' his dim water-world ?

## IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap  
Of my finger-nail on the sand,  
Small, but a work divine,  
Frail, but of force to withstand,  
Year upon year, the shock  
Of cataract seas that snap  
The three decker's oaken spine  
Athwart the ledges of rock,  
Here on the Breton strand !

## V.

Breton, not Briton ; here  
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast  
Of ancient fable and fear —

Plagued with a fitting to and fro,  
 A disease, a hard mechanic ghost  
 That never came from on high  
 Nor ever arose from below,  
 But only moves with the moving eye,  
 Flying along the land and the main —  
 Why should it look like Maud ?  
 Am I to be overawed  
 By what I cannot but know  
 Is a juggle born of the brain ?

## VI.

Back from the Breton coast,  
 Sick of a nameless fear,  
 Back to the dark sea-line  
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost;  
 An old song vexes my ear;  
 But that of Lamech is mine.

## VII.

For years, a measureless ill,  
 For years, for ever, to part —  
 But she, she would love me still;  
 And as long, O God, as she  
 Have a grain of love for me,  
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,  
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,  
 However weary, a spark of will  
 Not to be trampled out.

## VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught  
 With a passion so intense  
 One would think that it well  
 Might drown all life in the eye, —  
 That it should, by being so over-  
 wrought,  
 Suddenly strike on a sharper sense  
 For a shell, or a flower, little things  
 Which else would have been past by!  
 And now I remember, I,  
 When he lay dying there,  
 I noticed one of his many rings  
 (For he had many, poor worm) and  
 thought  
 It is his mother's hair.

## IX.

Who knows if he be dead ?  
 Whether I need have fled ?  
 Am I guilty of blood ?

However this may be,  
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things  
 good,  
 While I am over the sea !  
 Let me and my passionate love go by,  
 But speak to her all things holy and  
 high,  
 Whatever happen to me!  
 Me and my harmful love go by ;  
 But come to her waking, find her  
 asleep,  
 Powers of the height, Powers of the  
 deep,  
 And comfort her tho' I die.

## III.

Courage, poor heart of stone !  
 I will not ask thee why  
 Thou canst not understand  
 That thou art left for ever alone :  
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone. —  
 Or if I ask thee why,  
 Care not thou to reply :  
 She is but dead, and the time is at  
 hand  
 When thou shalt more than die.

## IV.

## I.

O that 'twere possible  
 After long grief and pain  
 To find the arms of my true love  
 Round me once again !

## II.

When I was wont to meet her  
 In the silent woody places  
 By the home that gave me birth,  
 We stood tranced in long embraces  
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter  
 Than anything on earth.

## III.

A shadow flits before me,  
 Not thou, but like to thee :  
 Ah Christ, that it were possible  
 For one short hour to see  
 The souls we loved, that they might  
 tell us  
 What and where they be.

## IV.

It leads me forth at evening,  
It lightly winds and steals  
In a cold white robe before me,  
When all my spirit reels  
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,  
And the roaring of the wheels.

## V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,  
Half in dreams I sorrow after  
The delight of early skies ;  
In a wakeful doze I sorrow  
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,  
For the meeting of the morrow,  
The delight of happy laughter,  
The delight of low replies.

## VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And a dewy splendor falls  
On the little flower that clings  
To the turrets and the walls ;  
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,  
And the light and shadow fleet ;  
She is walking in the meadow,  
And the woodland echo rings ;  
In a moment we shall meet ;  
She is singing in the meadow  
And the rivulet at her feet  
Ripples on in light and shadow  
To the ballad that she sings.

## VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,  
My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye ?  
But there rings on a sudden a pas-  
sionate cry,  
There is some one dying or dead,  
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;  
For a tumult shakes the city,  
And I wake, my dream is fled ;  
In the shuddering dawn, behold,  
Without knowledge, without pity,  
By the curtains of my bed  
That abiding phantom cold.

## VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,

Mix not memory with doubt,  
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,  
Pass and cease to move about !  
'Tis the blot upon the brain  
That will show itself without.

## IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,  
And the yellow vapors choke  
The great city sounding wide ;  
The day comes, a dull red ball  
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke  
On the misty river-tide.

## X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market  
I steal, a wasted frame,  
It crosses here, it crosses there,  
Thro' all that crowd confused and  
loud,  
The shadow still the same ;  
And on my heavy eyelids  
My anguish hangs like shame.

## XI.

Alas for her that met me,  
That heard me softly call,  
Came glimmering thro' the laurels  
At the quiet evenfall,  
In the garden by the turrets  
Of the old manorial hall.

## XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,  
From the realms of light and song,  
In the chamber or the street,  
As she looks among the blest,  
Should I fear to greet my friend  
Or to say "Forgive the wrong,"  
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,  
To the regions of thy rest" ?

## XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,  
And the shadow flits and fleets  
And will not let me be ;  
And I loathe the squares and streets,  
And the faces that one meets,  
Hearts with no love for me :  
Always I long to creep

Into some still cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep, and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

## V.

## I.

Dead, long dead,  
Long dead!  
And my heart is a handful of dust,  
And the wheels go over my head,  
And my bones are shaken with pain,  
For into a shallow grave they are  
thrust,  
Only a yard beneath the street,  
And the hoofs of the horses beat,  
beat,  
The hoofs of the horses beat,  
Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
With never an end to the stream of  
passing feet,  
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and  
clatter,  
And here beneath it is all as bad,  
For I thought the dead had peace, but  
it is not so;  
To have no peace in the grave, is that  
not sad?  
But up and down and to and fro,  
Ever about me the dead men go;  
And then to hear a dead man chatter  
Is enough to drive one mad.

## II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,  
They cannot even bury a man;  
And tho' we paid our tithes in the  
days that are gone,  
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was  
read;  
It is that which makes us loud in the  
world of the dead;  
There is none that does his work, not  
one;  
A touch of their office might have  
sufficed,  
But the churchmen fain would kill  
their church,  
As the churches have kill'd their  
Christ.

## III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,  
No limit to his distress;  
And another, a lord of all things,  
praying  
To his own great self, as I guess;  
And another, a statesman there, be-  
traying  
His party-secret, fool, to the press;  
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing  
The case of his patient—all for  
what?  
To tickle the maggot born in an  
empty head,  
And wheedle a world that loves him  
not,  
For it is but a world of the dead.

## IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble!  
For the prophecy given of old  
And then not understood,  
Has come to pass as foretold;  
Not let any man think for the public  
good,  
But babble, merely for babble.  
For I never whisper'd a private affair  
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,  
No, not to myself in the closet alone,  
But I heard it shouted at once from  
the top of the house;  
Everything came to be known.  
Who told *him* we were there?

## V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came  
not back  
From the wilderness, full of wolves,  
where he used to lie;  
He has gather'd the bones for his  
o'ergrown whelp to crack;  
Crack them now for yourself, and  
howl, and die.

## VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,  
And curse me the British vermin, the  
rat;  
I know not whether he came in the  
Hanover ship,

But I know that he lies and listens  
 mute  
 In an ancient mansion's crannies and  
 holes :  
 Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,  
 Except that now we poison our babes,  
 poor souls !  
 It is all used up for that.

## VII.

Tell him now : she is standing here at  
 my head ;  
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;  
 He may take her now ; for she never  
 speaks her mind,  
 But is ever the one thing silent here.  
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ;  
 She comes from another stiller world  
 of the dead,  
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

## VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,  
 Fairer than aught in the world be-  
 side,  
 All made up of the lily and rose  
 That blow by night, when the season  
 is good,  
 To the sound of dancing music and  
 flutes :  
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,  
 And I almost fear they are not roses,  
 but blood ;  
 For the keeper was one, so full of  
 pride,  
 He linkt a dead man there to a spec-  
 tral bride ;  
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of  
 brutes,  
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

## IX.

But what will the old man say ?  
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit  
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy  
 day ;  
 Yet now I could even weep to think  
 of it ;  
 For what will the old man say  
 When he comes to the second corpse  
 in the pit ?

## X.

Friend, to be struck by the public  
 foe,  
 Then to strike him and lay him low,  
 That were a public merit, far,  
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from  
 sin ;  
 But the red life spilt for a private  
 blow —  
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless  
 war  
 Are scarcely even akin.

## XI.

O me, why have they not buried me  
 deep enough ?  
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so  
 rough,  
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?  
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;  
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;  
 I will cry to the steps above my head  
 And somebody, surely, some kind  
 heart will come  
 To bury me, bury me  
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART III.

## VI.

## I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing  
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,  
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing:  
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year  
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,

And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer  
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns  
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,  
 That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars —  
 "And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,  
 Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars  
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

## II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight  
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,  
 That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;  
 And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair  
 When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,  
 That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,  
 The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,  
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire:  
 No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace  
 Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,  
 And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,  
 Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,  
 And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat  
 Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

## III.

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,  
 "It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I  
 (For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),  
 "It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,  
 That old hysterical mock-disease should die."  
 And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath  
 With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,  
 Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly  
 Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

## IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
 Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
 And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,  
 Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;  
 And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd!  
 Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
 For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,  
 Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar;  
 And many a darkness into the light shall leap,  
 And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,  
 And noble thought be freer under the sun,  
 And the heart of a people beat with one desire:

For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

## v.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,  
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,  
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;  
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;  
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,  
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

Tennyson tries to teach  
Self reverence.  
Self Knowledge.  
Self control.



# ENOCH ARDEN

## AND OTHER POEMS.



### ENOCH ARDEN.

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left  
a chasm;  
And in the chasm are foam and yellow  
sands;  
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow  
wharf  
In cluster; then a moulder'd church;  
and higher  
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd  
mill;  
And high in heaven behind it a gray  
down  
With Danish barrows; and a hazel-  
wood,  
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes  
Green in a cuplike hollow of the  
down.

Here on this beach a hundred years  
ago,  
Three children of three houses, Annie  
Lee,  
The prettiest little damsel in the port,  
And Philip Ray the miller's only son,  
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad  
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,  
play'd  
Among the waste and lumber of the  
shore,  
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-  
ing-nets,  
Anchors of rusty-fluke, and boats up-  
drawn;

And built their castles of dissolving  
sand  
To watch them overflow'd, or follow-  
ing up  
And flying the white breaker, daily  
left  
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the  
cliff:  
In this the children play'd at keeping  
house.  
Enoch was host one day, Philip the  
next,  
While Annie still was mistress; but  
at times  
Enoch would hold possession for a  
week:  
"This is my house and this my little  
wife."  
"Mine too" said Philip "turn and  
turn about":  
When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch  
stronger-made  
Was master: then would Philip, his  
blue eyes  
All flooded with the helpless wrath of  
tears,  
Shriek out "I hate you, Enoch," and  
at this  
The little wife would weep for com-  
pany,  
And pray them not to quarrel for her  
sake,  
And say she would be little wife to  
both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-  
hood past,  
And the new warmth of life's ascend-  
ing sun  
Was felt by either, either fixt his  
heart  
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke  
his love,  
But Philip loved in silence; and the  
girl  
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to  
him;  
But she loved Enoch; tho' she knew  
it not,  
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch  
set  
A purpose evermore before his eyes,  
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,  
To purchase his own boat, and make  
a home  
For Annie: and so prosper'd that at  
last  
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,  
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe  
For leagues along that breaker-beaten  
coast  
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served  
a year  
On board a merchantman, and made  
himself  
Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd  
a life  
From the dread sweep of the down-  
streaming seas:  
And all men look'd upon him favora-  
bly:  
And ere he touch'd his one-and-  
twentieth May,  
He purchased his own boat, and made  
a home  
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway  
up  
The narrow street that clamber'd  
toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn even-  
tide,  
The younger people making holiday,  
With bag and sack and basket, great  
and small,  
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip  
stay'd

(His father lying sick and needing  
him)  
An hour behind; but as he climb'd  
the hill,  
Just where the prone edge of the  
wood began  
To feather toward the hollow, saw the  
pair,  
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-  
hand,  
His large gray eyes and weather-  
beaten face  
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,  
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip  
look'd,  
And in their eyes and faces read his  
doom;  
Then, as their faces drew together,  
groan'd,  
And slipt aside, and like a wounded  
life  
Crept, down into the hollows of the  
wood;  
There, while the rest were loud in  
merrymaking,  
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose  
and past  
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily  
rang the bells,  
And merrily ran the years, seven  
happy years,  
Seven happy years of health and  
competence,  
And mutual love and honorable toil;  
With children; first a daughter. In  
him woke,  
With his first babe's first cry, the  
noble wish  
To save all earnings to the uttermost,  
And give his child a better bringing-up  
Than his had been, or hers; a wish  
renew'd,  
When two years after came a boy to be  
The rosy idol of her solitudes,  
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful  
seas,  
Or often journeying landward; for in  
truth  
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's  
ocean-spoil

In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,  
 Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,  
 Not only to the market-cross were known,  
 But in the leafy lanes behind the down,  
 Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,  
 And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,  
 Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.  
 Ten miles to northward of the narrow port  
 Open'd a larger haven: thither used Enoch  
 at times to go by land or sea;  
 And once when there, and clambering on a mast  
 In harbor, by mischance he slipt and fell:  
 A limb was broken when they lifted him;  
 And while he lay recovering there, his wife  
 Bore him another son, a sickly one:  
 Another hand crept too across his trade  
 Taking her bread and theirs: and on him fell,  
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,  
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.  
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,  
 To see his children leading evermore  
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,  
 And her, he loved, a beggar: then he pray'd  
 "Save them from this, whatever comes to me."  
 And while he pray'd, the master of that ship  
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,  
 Came, for he knew the man and valued him,  
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,

And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?  
 There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,  
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?  
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,  
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So raw that shadow of mischance appear'd  
 No graver than as when some little cloud  
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,  
 And isles a light in the offing: yet the wife —  
 When he was gone — the children — what to do?  
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans;  
 To sell the boat — and yet he loved her well —  
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!  
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse —  
 And yet to sell her — then with what she brought  
 Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in trade  
 With all that seamen needed or their wives —  
 So might she keep the house while he was gone.  
 Should he not trade himself out yonder? go  
 This voyage more than once? yea twice or thrice —  
 As oft as needed — last, returning rich,  
 Become the master of a larger craft,  
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,  
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,  
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all:  
 Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,  
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.  
 Forward she started with a happy cry,

And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;  
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his  
limbs,  
Appraised his weight and fondled  
fatherlike,  
But had no heart to break his purposes  
To Annie, till the morrow, when he  
spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring  
had girt  
Her finger, Annie fought against his  
will :  
Yet not with brawling opposition she,  
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,  
Many a sad kiss by day by night re-  
new'd  
(Sure that all evil would come out of  
it)  
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared  
For her or his dear children, not to go.  
He not for his own self caring but her,  
Her and her children, let her plead in  
vain ;  
So grieving held his will, and bore it  
thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-  
friend,  
Bought Annie goods and stores, and  
set his hand  
To fit their little streetward sitting-  
room  
With shelf and corner for the goods  
and stores.  
So all day long till Enoch's last at  
home,  
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer  
and axe,  
Anger and saw, while Annie seem'd to  
hear  
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd  
and rang,  
Till this was ended, and his careful  
hand, —  
The space was narrow, — having or-  
der'd all  
Almost as neat and close as Nature  
picks  
Her blossom or her seedling, paused ;  
and he,

Who needs would work for Annie to  
the last,  
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of  
farewell  
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's  
fears,  
Save, as his Annie's, were a laughter  
to him.  
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man  
Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-  
tery  
Where God-in-man is one with man-  
in-God,  
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and  
babes  
Whatever came to him : and then he  
said  
" Annie, this voyage by the grace of  
God  
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.  
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for  
me,  
For I'll be back, my girl, before you  
know it."  
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle  
" and he,  
This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —  
Nay — for I love him all the better for  
it —  
God bless him, he shall sit upon my  
knees  
And I will tell him tales of foreign  
parts,  
And make him merry, when I come  
home again.  
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I  
go."

Him running on thus hopefully she  
heard,  
And almost hoped herself ; but when  
he turn'd  
The current of his talk to graver things,  
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing  
On providence and trust in Heaven,  
she heard,  
Heard and not heard him ; as the vil-  
lage girl,  
Who sets her pitcher underneath the  
spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for  
her,  
Hears and not hears, and lets it over-  
flow.

At length she spoke "O Enoch, you  
are wise;  
And yet for all your wisdom well  
know I  
That I shall look upon your face no  
more."

"Well then," said Enoch, "I shall  
look on yours.  
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here  
(He named the day) get you a seaman's  
glass,  
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your  
fears."

But when the last of those last mo-  
ments came,  
"Annie, my girl, cheer up, be com-  
forted,  
Look to the babes, and till I come  
again  
Keep everything shipshape, for I must  
go.  
And fear no more for me; or if you  
fear  
Cast all your cares on God; that an-  
chor holds.  
Is He not yonder in those uttermost  
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these  
Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,  
The sea is His: He made it."

Enoch rose,  
Cast his strong arms about his droop-  
ing wife,  
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little  
ones;  
But for the third, the sickly one, who  
slept  
After a night of feverous wakefulness,  
When Annie would have raised him  
Enoch said  
"Wake him not; let him sleep; how  
should the child  
Remember this?" and kiss'd him in  
his cot.  
But Annie from her baby's forehead  
clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it: this he kept  
Thro' all his future; but now hastily  
caught  
His bundle, waved his hand, and went  
his way.

She, when the day that Enoch  
mention'd, came,  
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain:  
perhaps  
She could not fix the glass to suit her  
eye;  
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand trem-  
ulous;  
She saw him not: and while he stood  
on deck  
Waving, the moment and the vessel  
past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing  
sail  
She watch'd it, and departed weeping  
for him;  
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as  
his grave,  
Set her sad will no less to chime with  
his,  
But throve not in her trade, not being  
bred  
To barter, nor compensating the want  
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,  
Nor asking overmuch and taking less,  
And still foreboding "what would  
Enoch say?"  
For more than once, in days of diffi-  
culty  
And pressure, had she sold her wares  
for less  
Than what she gave in buying what  
she sold:  
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it;  
and thus,  
Expectant of that news which never  
came,  
Gain'd for her own a scanty suste-  
nance,  
And lived a life of silent melancholy.  
Now the third child was sickly-born  
and grew  
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for  
it

With all a mother's care: nevertheless,  
 Whether her business often call'd her  
 from it,  
 Or thro' the want of what it needed  
 most,  
 Or means to pay the voice who best  
 could tell  
 What most it needed — howsoe'er it  
 was,  
 After a lingering, — ere she was  
 aware, —  
 Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,  
 The little innocent soul fitted away.

In that same week when Annie  
 buried it,  
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd for  
 her peace  
 (Since Enoch left he had not look'd  
 upon her),  
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so  
 long.  
 "Surely," said Philip, "I may see her  
 now,  
 May be some little comfort"; there-  
 fore went,  
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,  
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,  
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one  
 opening,  
 Enter'd; but Annie, seated with her  
 grief,  
 Fresh from the burial of her little one,  
 Cared not to look on any human face,  
 But turn'd her own toward the wall  
 and wept.  
 Then Philip standing up said falter-  
 ingly  
 "Annie, I came to ask a favor of you."

He spoke; the passion in her moan'd  
 reply  
 "Favor from one so sad and so forlorn  
 As I am!" half abash'd him; yet  
 unask'd,  
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,  
 He set himself beside her, saying to  
 her:

"I came to speak to you of what he  
 wish'd,

Enoch, your husband: I have ever  
 said  
 You chose the best among us — a  
 strong man:  
 For where he fixt his heart he set his  
 hand  
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it  
 thro'.  
 And wherefore did he go this weary  
 way,  
 And leave you lonely? not to see the  
 world —  
 For pleasure? — nay, but for the  
 wherewithal  
 To give his babes a better bringing-up  
 Than his had been, or yours: that was  
 his wish.  
 And if he come again, vext will he be  
 To find the precious morning hours  
 were lost.  
 And it would vex him even in his  
 grave,  
 If he could know his babes were run-  
 ning wild  
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,  
 now —  
 Have we not known each other all our  
 lives?  
 I do beseech you by the love you  
 bear  
 Him and his children not to say me  
 nay —  
 For, if you will, when Enoch comes  
 again  
 Why then he shall repay me — if you  
 will,  
 Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.  
 Now let me put the boy and girl to  
 school:  
 This is the favor that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against  
 the wall  
 Answer'd "I cannot look you in the  
 face;  
 I seem so foolish and so broken down.  
 When you came in my sorrow broke  
 me down;  
 And now I think your kindness breaks  
 me down;  
 But Enoch lives; that is borne in on  
 me:

He will repay you: money can be repaid;  
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd  
"Then you will let me, Annie?"

There she turn'd,  
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,  
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,  
Then calling down a blessing on his head  
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,  
And past into the little garth beyond.  
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,  
And bought them needful books, and every way,  
Like one who does his duty by his own,  
Made himself theirs; and tho' for Annie's sake,  
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,  
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,  
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent  
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,  
The late and early roses from his wall,  
Or conies from the down, and now and then,  
With some pretext of fineness in the meal  
To save the offence of charitable, flour  
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind:  
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,  
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude  
Light on a broken word to thank him with.  
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;

From distant corners of the street they ran

To greet his hearty welcome heartily;  
Lords of his house and of his mill were they;

Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs

Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him

And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd

As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them

Uncertain as a vision or a dream,  
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn

Down at the far end of an avenue,  
Going we know not where: and so ten years,

Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,

Fled forward, and no news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd

To go with others, nutting to the wood,  
And Annie would go with them; then they begg'd

For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too:

Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,

Blanch'd with his mill, they found; and saying to him

"Come with us Father Philip" he denied;

But when the children pluck'd at him to go,

He laugh'd, and yielded readily to their wish,

For was not Annie with them? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,

Just where the prone edge of the wood began

To feather toward the hollow, all her force

Fail'd her; and sighing, "Let me rest" she said:

So Philip rested with her well-content;

While all the younger ones with jubilant cries  
 Broke from their elders, and tumultuously  
 Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge  
 To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke  
 The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away  
 Their tawny clusters, crying to each other  
 And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot  
 Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour  
 Here in this wood, when like a wounded life  
 He crept into the shadow: at last he said,  
 Lifting his honest forehead, "Listen, Annie,  
 How merry they are down yonder in the wood.  
 Tired, Annie?" for she did not speak a word.  
 "Tired?" but her face had fall'n upon her hands;  
 At which, as with a kind of anger in him,  
 "The ship was lost," he said, "the ship was lost!  
 No more of that! why should you kill yourself  
 And make them orphans quite?" And Annie said  
 "I thought not of it: but — I know not why —  
 Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.  
 "Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,  
 And it has been upon my mind so long,  
 That tho' I know not when it first came there,  
 I know that it will out at last. O Annie,

It is beyond all hope, against all chance,  
 That he who left you ten long years ago  
 Should still be living; well then — let me speak:  
 I grieve to see you poor and wanting help:  
 I cannot help you as I wish to do  
 Unless — they say that women are so quick —  
 Perhaps you know what I would have you know —  
 I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove  
 A father to your children: I do think  
 They love me as a father: I am sure  
 That I love them as if they were mine own;  
 And I believe, if you were fast my wife,  
 That after all these sad uncertain years,  
 We might be still as happy as God grants  
 To any of his creatures. Think upon it:  
 For I am well-to-do — no kin, no care,  
 No burthen, save my care for you and yours:  
 And we have known each other all our lives,  
 And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie; tenderly she spoke:  
 "You have been as God's good angel in our house.  
 God bless you for it, God reward you for it,  
 Philip, with something happier than myself.  
 Can one love twice? can you be ever loved  
 As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?"  
 "I am content" he answer'd "to be loved  
 A little after Enoch." "O" she cried,



Scared as it were, "dear Philip, wait  
a while :

If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not  
come —

Yet wait a year, a year is not so long:  
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :

O wait a little!" Philip sadly said  
"Annie, as I have waited all my life  
I well may wait a little." "Nay" she  
cried

"I am bound: you have my promise  
— in a year:

Will you not bide your year as I bide  
mine?"

And Philip answer'd "I will bide my  
year."

Here both were mute, till Philip  
glancing up

Beheld the dead flame of the fallen  
day

Pass from the Danish barrow over-  
head;

Then fearing night and chill for  
Annie, rose

And sent his voice beneath him thro'  
the wood.

Up came the children laden with their  
spoil;

Then all descended to the port, and  
there

At Annie's door he paused and gave  
his hand,

Saying gently "Annie, when I spoke  
to you,

That was your hour of weakness. I  
was wrong,

I am always bound to you, but you  
are free."

Then Annie weeping answer'd "I am  
bound."

She spoke; and in one moment as  
it were,

While yet she went about her house-  
hold ways,

Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest  
words,

That he had loved her longer than she  
knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd  
again,

And there he stood once more before  
her face,

Claiming her promise. "Is it a year?"  
she ask'd.

"Yes, if the nuts" he said "be ripe  
again:

Come out and see." But she — she  
put him off —

So much to look to — such a change  
— a month —

Give her a month — she knew that  
she was bound —

A month — no more. Then Philip  
with his eyes

Full of that lifelong hunger, and his  
voice

Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,  
"Take your own time, Annie, take  
your own time."

And Annie could have wept for pity  
of him;

And yet she held him on delayingly  
With many a scarce-believable excuse,

Trying his truth and his long-suffer-  
ance,

Till half-another year had slept away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,  
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,

Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.  
Some thought that Philip did but

trifle with her;

Some that she but held off to draw  
him on;

And others laugh'd at her and Philip  
too,

As simple folk that knew not their  
own minds,

And one, in whom all evil fancies clung  
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly

Would hint at worse in either. Her  
own son

Was silent, tho' he often look'd his  
wish;

But evermore the daughter prest upon  
her

To wed the man so dear to all of them  
And lift the household out of poverty;

And Philip's rosy face contracting  
grew

Careworn and wan; and all these  
things fell on her

Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced  
That Annie could not sleep, but ear-  
nestly

Pray'd for a sign "my Enoch is he  
gone?"

Then compass'd round by the blind  
wall of night

Brook'd not the expectant terror of  
her heart,

Started from bed, and struck herself  
a light,

Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,

Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
"Under the palm-tree." That was

nothing to her:  
No meaning there: she closed the  
Book and slept:

When lo! her Enoch sitting on a  
height,

Under a palm-tree, over him the  
Sun:

"He is gone," she thought, "he is  
happy, he is singing

Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
The Sun of Righteousness, and these

be palms  
Whereof the happy people strowing  
cried

"Hosanna in the highest!" Here  
she woke,

Resolved, sent for him and said wildly  
to him

"There is no reason why we should  
not wed."

"Then for God's sake," he answer'd,  
"both our sakes,

So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang  
the bells,

Merrily rang the bells and they were  
wed.

But never merrily beat Annie's heart.  
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her

path,  
She knew not whence; a whisper on  
her ear,

She knew not what; nor loved she to  
be left

Alone at home, nor ventured out  
alone.

What ail'd her then, that ere she  
enter'd, often

Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the  
latch,

Fearing to enter: Philip thought he  
knew:

Such doubts and fears were common  
to her state,

Being with child: but when her child  
was born,

Then her new child was as herself  
renew'd,

Then the new mother came about her  
heart,

Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,  
And that mysterious instinct wholly  
died.

And where was Enoch? prosperously  
sail'd

The ship "Good Fortune," tho' at  
setting forth

The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,  
shook

And almost overwhelm'd her, yet  
unvext

She slipt across the summer of the  
world,

Then after a long tumble about the  
Cape

And frequent interchange of foul and  
fair,

She passing thro' the summer world  
again,

The breath of heaven came continu-  
ally

And sent her sweetly by the golden  
isles,

Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself,  
and bought

Quaint monsters for the market of  
those times,

A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at  
first indeed

Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by  
day,

Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head  
 Stared o'er the ripple feathering from  
 her bows:  
 Then follow'd calms, and then winds  
 variable,  
 Then baffling, a long course of them;  
 and last  
 Storm, such as drove her under moon-  
 less heavens  
 Till hard upon the cry of "breakers"  
 came  
 The crash of ruin, and the loss of all  
 But Enoch and two others. Half the  
 night,  
 Buoy'd upon floating tackle and  
 broken spars,  
 These drifted, stranding on an isle at  
 morn  
 Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human suste-  
 nance,  
 Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nour-  
 ishing roots;  
 Nor save for pity was it hard to take  
 The helpless life so wild that it was  
 tame.  
 There in a seaward-gazing mountain-  
 gorge  
 They built, and thatch'd with leaves  
 of palm, a hut,  
 Half hut, half native cavern. So the  
 three,  
 Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,  
 Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-  
 content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more  
 than boy,  
 Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and  
 wreck,  
 Lay lingering out a five-years' death-  
 in-life.  
 They could not leave him. After he  
 was gone,  
 The two remaining found a fallen  
 stem;  
 And Enoch's comrade, careless of  
 himself,  
 Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion,  
 fell

Sun-stricken, and that other lived  
 alone.  
 In those two deaths he read God's  
 warning "wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak,  
 the lawns  
 And winding glades high up like ways  
 to Heaven,  
 The slender coco's drooping crown of  
 plumes,  
 The lightning flash of insect and of  
 bird,  
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses  
 That coil'd around the stately stems,  
 and ran  
 Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows  
 And glories of the broad belt of the  
 world,  
 All these he saw; but what he fain  
 had seen  
 He could not see, the kindly human  
 face,  
 Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard  
 The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-  
 fowl,  
 The league-long roller thundering on  
 the reef,  
 The moving whisper of huge trees  
 that branch'd  
 And blossom'd in the zenith, or the  
 sweep  
 Of some precipitous rivulet to the  
 wave,  
 As down the shore he ranged, or all  
 day long  
 Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,  
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a  
 sail:  
 No sail from day to day, but every day  
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts  
 Among the palms and ferns and  
 precipices;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the east;  
 The blaze upon his island overhead;  
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;  
 Then the great stars that globed  
 themselves in Heaven,  
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and  
 again  
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no  
 sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd  
 to watch,  
 So still, the golden lizard on him  
 paused,  
 A phantom made of many phantoms  
 moved  
 Before him haunting him, or he him-  
 self  
 Moved haunting people, things and  
 places, known  
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line;  
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the  
 small house,  
 The climbing street, the mill, the  
 leafy lanes,  
 The peacock-yewtree and the lonely  
 Hall,  
 The horse he drove, the boat he sold,  
 the chill  
 November dawns and dewy-gloom-  
 ing  
 downs,  
 The gentle shower, the smell of dying  
 leaves,  
 And the low moan of leaden-color'd  
 seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his  
 cars,  
 Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far  
 away —  
 He heard the pealing of his parish  
 bells;  
 Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,  
 started up  
 Shuddering, and when the beautiful  
 hateful isle  
 Return'd upon him, had not his poor  
 heart  
 Spoken with That, which being every-  
 where  
 Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem  
 all alone,  
 Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering  
 head  
 The sunny and rainy seasons came  
 and went  
 Year after year. His hopes to see  
 his own,  
 And pace the sacred old familiar  
 fields,

Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely  
 doom  
 Came suddenly to an end. Another  
 ship  
 (She wanted water) blown by baffling  
 winds,  
 Like the Good Fortune, from her  
 destined course,  
 Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where  
 she lay:  
 For since the mate had seen at early  
 dawn  
 Across a break on the mist-wreathen  
 isle  
 The silent water slipping from the  
 hills,  
 They sent a crew that landing burst  
 away  
 In search of stream or fount, and  
 fill'd the shores  
 With clamor. Downward from his  
 mountain gorge  
 Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded  
 solitary,  
 Brown, looking hardly human,  
 strangely clad,  
 Muttering and mumbling, idiotlike it  
 seem'd,  
 With inarticulate rage, and making  
 signs  
 They knew not what: and yet he led  
 the way  
 To where the rivulets of sweet water  
 ran;  
 And ever as he mingled with the crew,  
 And heard them talking, his long-  
 bounden tongue  
 Was loosen'd, till he made them  
 understand;  
 Whom, when their casks were fill'd  
 they took aboard:  
 And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,  
 Scarce-credited at first but more and  
 more,  
 Amazed and melted all who listen'd  
 to it:  
 And clothes they gave him and free  
 passage home;  
 But oft he work'd among the rest and  
 shook  
 His isolation from him. None of  
 these

Came from his country, or could answer him,  
 If question'd, aught of what he cared to know.  
 And dull the voyage was with long delays,  
 The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but evermore  
 His fancy fled before the lazy wind  
 Returning, till beneath a clouded moon  
 He like a lover down thro' all his blood  
 Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-breath  
 Of England, blown across her ghostly wall:  
 And that same morning officers and men  
 Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,  
 Pitying the lonely man, and gave him it:  
 Then moving up the coast they landed him,  
 Ev'n in that harbor whence he sail'd before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,  
 But homeward — home — what home? had he a home?  
 His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,  
 Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,  
 Where either haven open'd on the deeps,  
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray;  
 Cut off the length of highway on before,  
 And left but narrow breadth to left and right  
 Of wither'd holt or tith or pasturage.  
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped  
 Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze  
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down:  
 Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom;

Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light  
 Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,  
 His heart foreshadowing all calamity,  
 His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home  
 Where Annie lived and loved him, and his habes  
 In those far-off seven happy years were born;  
 But finding neither light nor murmur there  
 (A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept  
 Still downward thinking "dead or dead to me!"

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,  
 Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,  
 A front of timber-crost antiquity,  
 So propt, worm eaten, ruinously old,  
 He thought it must have gone; but he was gone  
 Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,  
 With daily-dwindling profits held the house;  
 A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now  
 Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.  
 There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,  
 Nor let him be, but often breaking in,  
 Told him, with other annals of the port,  
 Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,  
 So broken — all the story of his house.  
 His baby's death, her growing poverty,  
 How Philip put her little ones to school,  
 And kept them in it, his long wooing her,

Her slow consent, and marriage, and  
the birth  
Of Philip's child: and o'er his coun-  
tenance

No shadow past, nor motion: any one,  
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt  
the tale

Less than the teller: only when she  
closed

"Enoch, poor man, was cast away and  
lost"

He, shaking his gray head pathetically,  
Repeated muttering "cast away and  
lost";

Again in deeper inward whispers  
"lost!"

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face  
again;

"If I might look on her sweet face  
again

And know that she is happy." So the  
thought

Haunted and harass'd him, and drove  
him forth,

At evening when the dull November  
day

Was growing duller twilight, to the  
hill.

There he sat down gazing on all below;  
There did a thousand memories roll  
upon him,

Unspeakable for sadness. By and by  
The ruddy square of comfortable light,  
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's  
house,

Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-  
lures

The bird of passage, till he madly  
strikes

Against it, and beats out his weary  
life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the  
street,

The latest house to landward; but be-  
hind,

With one small gate that open'd on  
the waste,

Flourish'd a little garden square and  
wall'd:

And in it throve an ancient evergreen,  
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk  
Of shingle, and a walk divided it:

But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk  
and stole

Up by the wall, behind the yew; and  
thence

That which he better might have  
shunn'd, if griefs

Like his have worse or better, Enoch  
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd  
board

Sparkled and shone; so genial was the  
hearth:

And on the right hand of the hearth  
he saw

Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,  
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his  
knees;

And o'er her second father stoopt a  
girl,

A later but a loftier Annie Lee,  
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her  
lifted hand

Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring  
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his  
creasy arms,

Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they  
laugh'd;

And on the left hand of the hearth he  
saw

The mother glancing often toward her  
babe,

But turning now and then to speak  
with him,

Her son, who stood beside her tall and  
strong,

And saying that which pleased him,  
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life  
beheld

His wife his wife no more, and saw the  
babe

Hers, yet not his, upon the father's  
knee,

And all the warmth, the peace, the  
happiness,

And his own children tall and beauti-  
ful,

And him, that other, reigning in his  
place,  
Lord of his rights and of his children's  
love,—  
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told  
him all,  
Because things seen are mightier than  
things heard,  
Stagger'd and shook, holding the  
branch, and fear'd  
To send abroad a shrill and terrible  
cry,  
Which in one moment, like the blast  
of doom,  
Would slatter all the happiness of the  
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a  
thief,  
Lest the harsh shingle should grate  
underfoot,  
And feeling all along the garden-wall,  
Lest he should swoon and tumble and  
be found,  
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and  
closed,  
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-  
door,  
Behind him, and came out upon the  
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but  
that his knees  
Were feeble, so that falling prone he  
dug  
His fingers into the wet earth, and  
pray'd.

"Too hard to bear! why did they  
take me thence?  
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour,  
Thou  
That didst uphold me on my lonely  
isle,  
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness  
A little longer! aid me, give me  
strength  
Not to tell her, never to let her know.  
Help me not to break in upon her  
peace.  
My children too! must I not speak to  
these?"

They know me not. I should betray  
myself.  
Never: No father's kiss for me—the  
girl  
So like her mother, and the boy, my  
son."

There speech and thought and nature  
fail'd a little,  
And he lay tranced; but when he rose  
and paced  
Back toward his solitary home again,  
All down the long and narrow street  
he went  
Beating it in upon his weary brain,  
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,  
"Not to tell her, never to let her  
know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve  
Uphore him, and firm faith, and ever-  
more  
Prayer from a living source within the  
will,  
And beating up thro' all the bitter  
world,  
Like fountains of sweet water in the  
sea,  
Kept him a living soul. "This mil-  
ler's wife"  
He said to Miriam "that you spoke  
about,  
Has she no fear that her first husband  
lives?"  
"Ay, ay, poor soul" said Miriam,  
"fear enow!  
If you could tell her you had seen him  
dead,  
Why, that would be her comfort;"  
and he thought  
"After the Lord has call'd me she  
shall know,  
I wait His time," and Enoch set him-  
self,  
Scorning an alms, to work whereby  
to live.  
Almost to all things could he turn his  
hand.  
Cooper he was and carpenter, and  
wrought  
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or  
help'd

At lading and unlading the tall barks,  
That brought the stinted commerce  
of those days;

Thus earn'd a scanty living for him-  
self:

Yet since he did but labor for himself,  
Work without hope, there was not life  
in it

Whereby the man could live; and as  
the year

Roll'd itself round again to meet the  
day

When Enoch had return'd, a languor  
came

Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually  
Weakening the man, till he could do  
no more,

But kept the house, his chair, and last  
his bed.

And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-  
fully.

For sure no gladlier does the stranded  
wreck

See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting  
squall

The boat that bears the 'hope of life  
approach

To save the life despair'd of, than he  
saw

Death dawning on him, and the close  
of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a  
kindlier hope

On Enoch thinking "after I am  
gone,

Then may she learn I lov'd her to the  
last."

He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and  
said

"Woman, I have a secret — only swear,  
Before I tell you — swear upon the  
book

Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."  
"Dead," clamor'd the good woman,

"hear him talk!

I warrant, man, that we shall bring  
you round."

"Swear," added Enoch sternly "on  
the book."

And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam  
swore.

Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon  
her,

"Did you know Enoch Arden of this  
town?"

"Know him?" she said "I knew him  
far away.

Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the  
street;

Held his head high, and cared for no  
man, he."

Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd  
her;

"His head is low, and no man cares  
for him.

I think I have not three days more to  
live;

I am the man." At which the woman  
gave

A half-incredulous, half-hysterical  
cry.

"You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was  
a foot

Higher than you be." Enoch said  
again

"My God has bow'd me down to what  
I am;

My grief and solitude have broken  
me;

Nevertheless, know you that I am he  
Who married — but that name has  
twice been changed —

I married her who married Philip  
Ray.

Sit, listen." Then he told her of his  
voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming  
back,

His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,  
And how he kept it. As the woman

heard,

Fast flow'd the current of her easy  
tears,

While in her heart she yearn'd inces-  
santly

To rush abroad all round the little  
haven,

Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his  
woes;

But awed and promise-bounden she  
forbore,

Saying only "See your bairns before  
you go!



Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and  
 arose  
 Eager to bring them down, for Enoch  
 hung  
 A moment on her words, but then  
 replied:

"Woman, disturb me not now at the  
 last,  
 But let me hold my purpose till I die.  
 Sit down again; mark me and under-  
 stand,  
 While I have power to speak. I  
 charge you now,  
 When you shall see her, tell her that  
 I died  
 Blessing her, praying for her, loving  
 her;  
 Save for the bar between us, loving  
 her  
 As when she laid her head beside my  
 own.  
 And tell my daughter Annie, whom I  
 saw  
 So like her mother, that my latest  
 breath  
 Was spent in blessing her and pray-  
 ing for her.  
 And tell my son that I died blessing  
 him.  
 And say to Philip that I blest him  
 too;  
 He never meant us any thing but good.  
 But if my children care to see me  
 dead,  
 Who hardly knew me living, let them  
 come,  
 I am their father; but she must not  
 come,  
 For my dead face would vex her after-  
 life.  
 And now there is but one of all my  
 blood

Who will embrace me in the world-to-  
 be:  
 This hair is his: she cut it off and  
 gave it,  
 And I have borne it with me all these  
 years.  
 And thought to bear it with me to my  
 grave;  
 But now my mind is changed, for I  
 shall see him,  
 My babe in bliss: wherefore when I  
 am gone,  
 Take, give her this, for it may comfort  
 her:  
 It will moreover be a token to her,  
 That I am he."

He ceased; and Miriam Lane  
 Made such a voluble answer promis-  
 ing all,  
 That once again he roll'd his eyes up-  
 on her  
 Repeating all he wish'd, and once again  
 She promised.

Then the third night after this,  
 While Enoch slumber'd motionless  
 and pale,  
 And Miriam watch'd and dozed at  
 intervals,  
 There came so loud a calling of the sea,  
 That all the houses in the haven rang.  
 He woke, he rose, he spread his arms  
 abroad  
 Crying with a loud voice "A sail! a  
 sail!  
 I am saved;" and so fell back and  
 spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.  
 And when they buried him the little  
 port  
 Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

## IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCOXXXIII.

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,  
Whom we, that have not seen thy  
face,  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,  
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and  
shade;  
Thou madest Life in man and  
brute;  
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy  
foot  
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:  
Thou madest man, he knows not  
why,  
He thinks he was not made to die;  
And thou hast made him: thou art  
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,  
The highest, holiest manhood,  
thou:  
Our wills are ours, we know not  
how;  
Our wills are ours, to make them  
thine.

Our little systems have their day,  
They have their day and cease  
to be:  
They are but broken lights of  
thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;  
For knowledge is of things we see;  
And yet we trust it comes from  
thee,  
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to  
more,  
But more of reverence in us  
dwell;

That mind and soul, according  
well,  
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;  
We mock thee when we do not  
fear:  
But help thy foolish ones to bear;  
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;  
What seem'd my worth since I  
began;  
For merit lives from man to man,  
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,  
Thy creature, whom I found so  
fair.  
I trust he lives in thee, and there  
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering  
cries,  
Confusions of a wasted youth;  
Forgive them where they fail in  
truth,  
And in thy wisdom make me wise.  
1849.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings  
To one clear harp in divers tones,  
That men may rise on stepping-  
stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years  
And find in loss a gain to match?  
Or reach a hand thro' time to  
catch  
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be  
drown'd,

Let darkness keep her raven  
gloss :

Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,  
To dance with death, to beat the  
ground,

Than that the victor Hours should  
scorn

The long result of love, and  
boast,

"Behold the man that loved and  
lost,

But all he was is overworn."

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-lying dead,  
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,  
And bring the firstling to the  
flock;

And in the dusk of thee, the  
clock

Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of  
gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,  
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to fail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,  
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,  
O sweet and bitter in a breath,  
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly  
run ;

A web is wov'n across the sky ;  
From out waste places comes a  
cry,

And murmurs from the dying sun :

"And all the phantom, Nature,  
stands —

With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own, —  
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good,  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away ;  
My will is bondsman to the dark ;  
I sit within a helmless bark,  
And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now,  
That thou should'st fail from thy  
desire,

Who scarcely darest to inquire,  
"What is it makes me beat so low ?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,  
Some pleasure from thine early  
years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling  
tears,  
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross  
All night below the darken'd  
eyes ;

With morning wakes the will, and  
cries,  
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin  
To put in words the grief I feel ;  
For words, like Nature, half re-  
veal

And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies ;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,  
Like coarsest clothes against the  
cold :

But that large grief which these  
 enfold  
 Is given in outline and no more.

## VI.

One writes, that "Other friends re-  
 main,"

That "Loss is common to the  
 race" —

And common is the commonplace,  
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make  
 My own less bitter, rather more :  
 Too common! Never morning  
 wore

To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,  
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son;  
 A shot, ere half thy draught be  
 done,

Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save  
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is  
 bow'd

His heavy-shotted hammock-  
 shroud

Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought  
 At that last hour to please him  
 well;

Who mused on all I had to tell,  
 And something written, something  
 thought;

Expecting still his advent home ;  
 And ever met him on his way  
 With wishes, thinking, " here to-  
 day,"

Or " here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,  
 That sittest ranging golden hair ;  
 And glad to find thyself so fair,  
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows  
 In expectation of a guest ;

And thinking " this will please  
 him best,"  
 She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;  
 And with the thought her color  
 burns ;

And, having left the glass, she  
 turns

Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse  
 Had fallen, and her future Lord  
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the  
 ford,

Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?  
 And what to me remains of good ?  
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,  
 And unto me no second friend.

## VII.

Dark house, by which once more I  
 stand

Here in the long unlovely street,  
 Doors, where my heart was used  
 to beat

So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more —  
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
 And like a guilty thing I creep  
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away  
 The noise of life begins again,  
 And ghostly thro' the drizzling  
 rain

On the bald street breaks the blank  
 day.

## VIII.

A happy lover who has come  
 To look on her that loves him well,  
 Who 'lights and rings the gate-  
 way bell,  
 And learns her gone and far from  
 home ;

He saddens, all the magic light

Dies off at once from bower and  
hall,  
And all the place is dark, and all  
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot  
In which we two were wont to  
meet,  
The field, the chamber and the  
street,  
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there  
In those deserted walks, may find  
A flower beat with rain and wind,  
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,  
O my forsaken heart, with thee  
And this poor flower of poesy  
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,  
I go to plant it on his tomb,  
That if it can it there may bloom,  
Or dying, there at least may die.

## IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
Saiest the placid ocean-plains  
With my lost Arthur's loved re-  
mains,  
Spread thy full wings, and waft him  
o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn  
In vain ; a favorable speed  
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead  
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex  
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,  
bright  
As our pure love, thro' early light  
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;  
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the  
prow ;  
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps  
now,  
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run ;  
Dear as the mother to the son,  
More than my brothers are to me.

## x.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;  
I hear the bell struck in the night :  
I see the cabin-window bright ;  
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
And travell'd men from foreign  
lands ;  
And letters unto trembling hands ;  
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the  
rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet  
drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells  
Should gulf him fathom-deep in  
brine ;  
And hands so often clasp'd in  
mine,  
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

## xi.

Calm is the morn without a sound,  
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,  
And only thro' the faded leaf  
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,  
And on these dews that drench  
the furze,  
And all the silvery gossamers  
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain  
That sweeps with all its autumn  
bowers,

And crowded farms and lessening  
towers,  
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,  
These leaves that redden to the  
fall ;

And in my heart, if calm at all,  
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,  
And waves that sway themselves  
in rest,  
And dead calm in that noble  
breast

Which heaves but with the heaving  
deep.

## XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
To hear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,  
Some dolorous message knit below  
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;  
I leave this mortal ark behind,  
A weight of nerves without a mind,  
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,  
And reach the glow of southern  
skies,  
And see the sails at distance rise,  
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; " Comes he thus, my  
friend ?

Is this the end of all my care ? "  
And circle moaning in the air :  
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play  
About the prow, and back return  
To where the body sits, and learn  
That I have been an hour away.

## XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees  
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,  
And moves his doubtful arms,  
and feels

Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,  
A void where heart on heart re-  
posed ;  
And, where warm hands have  
prest and closed,  
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my  
choice,  
An awful thought, a life re-  
moved,  
The human-hearted man I loved,  
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many  
years,  
I do not suffer in a dream :  
For now so strange do these  
things seem,  
Mine eyes have leisure for their  
tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,  
And glance about the approach-  
ing sails,  
As tho' they brought but mer-  
chants' bales,  
And not the burthen that they bring.

## XIV.

If one should bring me this report,  
That thou hadst touch'd the land  
to-day,  
And I went down unto the quay,  
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with  
woe,  
Should see thy passengers in  
rank  
Come stepping lightly down the  
plank,  
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come  
The man I held as half-divine ;  
Should strike a sudden hand in  
mine,  
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,  
 And how my life had droop'd of  
 late,  
 And he should sorrow o'er my  
 state  
 And marvel what possess'd my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,  
 No hint of death in all his frame,  
 But found him all in all the  
 same,  
 I should not feel it to be strange.

## xv.

To-night the winds begin to rise  
 And roar from yonder dropping  
 day;  
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,  
 The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,  
 The cattle huddled on the lea;  
 And wildly dash'd on tower and  
 tree  
 The sunbeam strikes along the world:

And but for fancies, which aver  
 That all thy motions gently pass  
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,  
 I scarce could brook the strain and  
 stir

That makes the barren branches  
 loud;  
 And but for fear it is not so,  
 The wild unrest that lives in woe  
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,  
 And onward drags a laboring  
 breast,  
 And topples round the dreary  
 west,  
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

## xvi.

What words are these have fall'n  
 from me?  
 Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take  
 The touch of change in calm or  
 storm;  
 But knows no more of transient  
 form  
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark  
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven?  
 Or has the shock, so harshly  
 given,  
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,  
 And staggers blindly ere she  
 sink?  
 And stunn'd me from my power  
 to think  
 And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man  
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,  
 And flashes into false and true,  
 And mingles all without a plan?

## xvii.

Thou comest, much wept for: such a  
 breeze  
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my  
 prayer  
 Was as the whisper of an air  
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move  
 Thro' circles of the bounding  
 sky,  
 Week after week: the days go  
 by:  
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.  
 Henceforth, wherever thou may'st  
 roam,  
 My blessing, like a line of light,  
 Is on the waters day and night,  
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars  
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred  
 bark;  
 And balmy drops in summer  
 dark  
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,  
Such precious relics brought by  
thee;  
The dust of him I shall not see  
Till all my widow'd race be run.

## XVIII.

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may  
stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth  
As if the quiet bones were blest  
Among familiar names to rest  
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the  
head  
That sleeps or wears the mask of  
sleep,  
And come, whatever loves to  
weep,  
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,  
I, falling on his faithful heart,  
Would breathing thro' his lips  
impart

The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,  
And slowly forms the firmer  
mind,  
Treasuring the look it cannot  
find,

The words that are not heard again.

## XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave  
The darken'd heart that beat no  
more;

They laid him by the pleasant  
shore,  
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;  
The salt sea-water passes by,  
And hushes half the babbling  
Wye,  
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,  
And hush'd my deepest grief of  
all,  
When fill'd with tears that can-  
not fall,  
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again  
Is vocal in its wooded walls;  
My deeper anguish also falls,  
And I can speak a little then.

## XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,  
That breathe a thousand tender  
vows,  
Are but as servants in a house  
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,  
And weep the fulness from the  
mind:  
"It will be hard," they say, "to  
find  
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,  
That out of words a comfort  
win;  
But there are other griefs within,  
And tears that at their fountain  
freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit  
Cold in that atmosphere of  
Death,  
And scarce endure to draw the  
breath,  
Or like to noiseless phantoms fit:

But open converse is there none,  
So much the vital spirits sink  
To see the vacant chair, and  
think,  
"How good! how kind! and he is  
gone."

## XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,  
And, since the grasses round me  
wave,



I take the grasses of the grave,  
And make them pipes whereon to  
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,  
And sometimes harshly will he  
speak :

— This fellow would make weak-  
ness weak,  
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,  
He loves to make parade of pain,  
That with his piping he may gain  
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth : " Is this an hour  
For private sorrow's barren song,  
When more and more the people  
throng  
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

" A time to sicken and to swoon,  
When Science reaches forth her  
arms  
To feel from world to world, and  
charms  
Her secret from the latest moon ? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :  
Ye never knew the sacred dust :  
I do but sing because I must,  
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,  
For now her little ones have  
ranged ;  
And one is sad ; her note is  
changed,  
Because her brood is stol'n away.

## XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,  
Which led by tracts that pleased  
us well,  
Thro' four sweet years arose and  
fell,  
From flower to flower, from snow to  
snow :

And we with singing cheer'd the way,  
And, crown'd with all the season  
lent,  
From April on to April went,  
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walk'd began  
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,  
As we descended following Hope,  
There sat the Shadow fear'd of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,  
And spread his mantle dark and  
cold,  
And wrapt thee formless in the  
fold,  
And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see  
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,  
And think, that somewhere in the  
waste  
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

## XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,  
Or breaking into song by fits,  
Alone, alone, to where he sits,  
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,  
I wander, often falling lame,  
And looking back to whence I  
came,  
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying, How changed from where  
it ran  
Thro' lands where not a leaf was  
dumb ;  
But all the lavish hills would hum  
The murmur of a happy Pan :

When each by turns was guide to each,  
And Fancy light from Fancy  
caught,  
And Thought leapt out to wed  
with Thought  
Ere Thought could wed itself with  
Speech ;

And all we met was fair and good,  
 And all was good that Time could  
 bring,  
 And all the secret of the Spring  
 Moved in the chambers of the blood.

And many an old philosophy  
 On Argive heights divinely sang,  
 And round us all the thicket rang  
 To many a flute of Arcady.

## XXIV.

And was the day of my delight  
 As pure and perfect as I say ?  
 The very source and fount of Day  
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of  
 night.

If all was good and fair we met,  
 This earth had been the Paradise  
 It never look'd to human eyes  
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief  
 Makes former gladness loom so  
 great ?  
 The lowness of the present state,  
 That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win  
 A glory from its being far ;  
 And orb into the perfect star  
 We saw not, when we moved therein ?

## XXV.

I know that this was life, — the track  
 Whereon with equal feet we  
 fared ;  
 And then, as now, the day pre-  
 pared  
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move  
 As light as carrier-birds in air ;  
 I loved the weight I had to bear,  
 Because it needed help of Love :

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,  
 When mighty Love would cleave  
 in twain  
 The lading of a single pain,  
 And part it, giving half to him.

## XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way ;  
 I with it ; for I long to prove  
 No lapse of moons can canker  
 Love,  
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt  
 And goodness, and hath power  
 to see  
 Within the green the moulder'd  
 tree,  
 And towers fall'n as soon as built —

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee  
 Or see (in Him is no before)  
 In more of life true life no more  
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn  
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,  
 That shadow waiting with the  
 keys,  
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

## XXVII.

I envy not in any moods  
 The captive void of noble rage,  
 The linnet born within the cage,  
 That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes  
 His license in the field of time,  
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,  
 To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,  
 The heart that never plighted  
 troth  
 But stagnates in the weeds of  
 sloth ;  
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, what'er befall ;  
 I feel it, when I sorrow most ;  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost  
 Than never to have loved at all.

## XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of  
 Christ :  
 The moon is hid ; the night is still ;

The Christmas bells from hill to hill  
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,  
From far and near, on mead and moor,  
Swell out and fail, as if a door  
Were shut between me and the sound :  
Each voice four changes on the wind,  
That now dilate, and now decrease,  
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,  
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,  
I almost wish'd no more to wake,  
And that my hold on life would break

Before I heard those bells again :  
But they my troubled spirit rule,  
For they controll'd me when a boy ;  
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,  
The merry merry bells of Yule.

## XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve  
As daily vexes household peace,  
And chains regret to his decease,  
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;  
Which brings no more a welcome guest  
To enrich the threshold of the night  
With shower'd largess of delight  
In dance and song and game and jest ?  
Yet go, and while the holly boughs  
Entwine the cold baptismal font,  
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,  
That guard the portals of the house ;  
Old sisters of a day gone by,  
Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;  
Why should they miss their yearly due  
Before their time ? They too will die.

## XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave  
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;  
A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,  
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall  
We gambol'd, making vain pretence  
Of gladness, with an awful sense  
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :  
We heard them sweep the winter land ;  
And in a circle hand-in-hand  
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;  
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,  
A merry song we sang with him  
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept  
Upon us : surely rest is meet :  
" They rest," we said, " their sleep is sweet,"  
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;  
Once more we sang : " They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,  
Nor change to us, although they change ;

" Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,  
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :  
O Father, touch the east, and light  
The light that shone when Hope was born.

## XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,  
 And home to Mary's house re-  
 turn'd,  
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd  
 To hear her weeping by his grave?

“Where wert thou, brother, those  
 four days?”  
 There lives no record of reply,  
 Which telling what it is to die  
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,  
 The streets were fill'd with joyful  
 sound,  
 A solemn gladness even crown'd  
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd;  
 He told it not; or something  
 seal'd  
 The lips of that Evangelist.

## XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,  
 Nor other thought her mind ad-  
 mits  
 But, he was dead, and there he  
 sits,  
 And he that brought him back is  
 there.

Then one deep love doth supersede  
 All other, when her ardent gaze  
 Roves from the living brother's  
 face,  
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,  
 Borne down by gladness so com-  
 plete,  
 She bows, she bathes the  
 Saviour's feet  
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful  
 prayers,  
 Whose loves in higher love en-  
 dure;

What souls possess themselves so  
 pure,  
 Or is their blessedness like theirs?

## XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm  
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a  
 purer air,  
 Whose faith has centre every-  
 where,  
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,  
 Her early Heaven, her happy  
 views;  
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-  
 fuse  
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,  
 Her hands are quicker unto good:  
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood  
 To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe  
 In holding by the law within,  
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,  
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

## XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me  
 this,  
 That life shall live for evermore,  
 Else earth is darkness at the core,  
 And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,  
 Fantastic beauty; such as lurks  
 In some wild Poet, when he works  
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?  
 'Twere hardly worth my while to  
 choose  
 Of things all mortal, or to use  
 A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,  
 Like birds the charming serpent  
 draws,

To drop head-foremost in the  
jaws  
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

## xxxv.

Yet if some voice that man could  
trust  
Should murmur from the narrow  
house,  
"The cheeks drop in; the body  
bows;  
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:"

Might I not say? "Yet even here,  
But for one hour, O Love, I strive  
To keep so sweet a thing alive:"  
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,  
The sound of streams that swift  
or slow  
Draw down Æonian hills, and  
sow  
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,  
"The sound of that forgetful  
shore  
Will change my sweetness more  
and more,  
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

O me, what profits it to put  
An idle case? If Death were  
seen  
At first as Death, Love had not  
been,  
Or been in narrowest working shut,  
Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,  
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape  
Had bruised the herb and crush'd  
the grape;  
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

## xxxvi.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,  
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,  
We yield all blessing to the name  
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,  
Where truth in closest words shall  
fail,  
When truth embodied in a tale  
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and  
wrought  
With human hands the creed of  
creeds  
In loveliness of perfect deeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought;  
Which he may read that binds the  
sheaf,  
Or builds the house, or digs the  
grave,  
And those wild eyes that watch the  
wave  
In roarings round the coral reef.

## xxxvii.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:  
"Thou pratest here where thou  
art least;  
This faith has many a purer priest,  
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,  
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,  
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet  
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek:  
"I am not worthy ev'n to speak  
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,  
And owning but a little art  
To lull with song an aching heart,  
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,  
And all he said of things divine,  
(And dear to me as sacred wine  
To dying lips is all he said),

"I murmur'd, as I came along  
Of comfort clasp'd in truth re-  
veal'd;  
And loiter'd in the master's field,  
And darken'd sanctities with song."

## XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,  
 Tho' always under alter'd skies  
 The purple from the distance dies,  
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,  
 The herald melodies of spring,  
 But in the songs I love to sing  
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here  
 Survive in spirits render'd free,  
 Then are these songs I sing of  
 thee  
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

## XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,  
 And answering now my random  
 stroke  
 With fruitful cloud and living  
 smoke,  
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless  
 head,  
 To thee too comes the golden hour  
 When flower is feeling after  
 flower;  
 But Sorrow — fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of  
 men, —  
 What whisper'd from her lying  
 lips?  
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,  
 And passes into gloom again.

## XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour  
 And look on Spirits breathed  
 away,  
 As on a maiden in the day  
 When first she wears her orange-  
 flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth  
 rise  
 To take her latest leave of home,

And hopes and light regrets that  
 come  
 Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,  
 And tears are on the mother's  
 face,  
 As parting with a long embrace  
 She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,  
 Becoming as is meet and fit  
 A link among the days, to knit  
 The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given  
 A life that bears immortal fruit  
 In those great offices that suit  
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!  
 How often shall her old fireside  
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the  
 bride,  
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have  
 told,  
 And bring her babe, and make  
 her boast,  
 Till even those that miss'd her  
 most  
 Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,  
 Till growing winters lay me low;  
 My paths are in the fields I know,  
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

## XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
 Did ever rise from high to higher;  
 As mounts the heavenward altar-  
 fire,  
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something  
 strange,  
 And I have lost the links that  
 bound

Thy changes; here upon the  
ground,  
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be—  
That I could wing my will with  
might  
To leap the grades of life and  
light,  
And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields  
To that vague fear implied in  
death;  
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,  
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor  
An inner trouble I behold,  
A spectral doubt which makes me  
cold,  
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind  
The wonders that have come to  
thee,  
Thro' all the secular to-be,  
But evermore a life behind.

## XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim:  
He still outstript me in the race;  
It was but unity of place  
That made me dream I rank'd with  
him.

And so may Place retain us still,  
And he the much-beloved again,  
A lord of large experience, train  
To ripper growth the mind and will:

And what delights can equal those  
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,  
When one that loves but knows  
not, reaps

A truth from one that loves and  
knows?

## XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,  
And every spirit's folded bloom

Thro' all its interval gloom  
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,  
Bare of the body, might it last  
And silent traces of the past  
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;  
So that still garden of the souls  
In many a figured leaf enrolls  
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole  
As when he loved me here in  
Time,  
And at the spiritual prime  
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

## XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?  
For here the man is more and  
more;  
But he forgets the days before  
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,  
And yet perhaps the hoarding  
sense  
Gives out at times (he knows not  
whence)  
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years  
(If Death so taste Lethean  
springs),  
May some dim touch of earthly  
things  
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,  
O turn thee round, resolve the  
doubt;  
My guardian angel will speak out  
In that high place, and tell thee all.

## XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,  
What time his tender palm is prest  
Against the circle of the breast,  
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,  
 And learns the use of "I," and  
 "me,"  
 And finds "I am not what I see,  
 And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind  
 From whence clear memory may  
 begin,  
 As thro' the frame that binds him  
 in  
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,  
 Which else were fruitless of their  
 due,  
 Had man to learn himself anew  
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

## XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,  
 The path we came by, thorn and  
 flower,  
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,  
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last  
 In that deep dawn behind the  
 tomb,  
 But clear from marge to marge  
 shall bloom  
 The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;  
 The fruitful hours of still increase;  
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,  
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,  
 A bounded field, nor stretching  
 far;  
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,  
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

## XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate  
 whole,  
 Should move his rounds, and fus-  
 ing all  
 The skirts of self again, should  
 fall  
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:  
 Eternal form shall still divide  
 The eternal soul from all beside:  
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,  
 Enjoying each the other's good:  
 What vaster dream can hit the  
 mood  
 Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,  
 Before the spirits fade away,  
 Some landing-place, to clasp and  
 say,  
 "Farewell! We lose ourselves in  
 light."

## XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,  
 Were taken to be such as closed  
 Grave doubts and answers here  
 proposed,  
 Then these were such as men might  
 scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;  
 She takes, when harsher moods  
 remit,  
 What slender shade of doubt may  
 fit,  
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with  
 words,  
 But better serves a wholesome  
 law,  
 And holds it sin and shame to  
 draw  
 The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
 But rather loosens from the lip  
 Short swallow-flights of song, that  
 dip  
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

## XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the  
 schools,  
 Let random influences glance,



Like light in many a shiver'd lance  
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,  
The fancy's tenderest eddy  
wreathe,  
The slightest air of song shall  
breathe  
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,  
But blame not thou the winds that  
make  
The seeming-wanton ripple break,  
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears  
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,  
Whose muffled motions blindly  
drown  
The bases of my life in tears.

## L.

Be near me when my light is low,  
When the blood creeps, and the  
nerves prick  
And tingle; and the heart is sick,  
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame  
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer  
trust;  
And Time, a maniac scattering  
dust,  
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,  
And men the flies of latter spring,  
That lay their eggs, and sting  
and sing  
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,  
To point the term of human strife,  
And on the low dark verge of life  
The twilight of eternal day.

## LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead  
Should still be near us at our side ?

Is there no baseness we would  
hide ?  
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,  
I had such reverence for his  
blame,  
See with clear eye some hidden  
shame  
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :  
Shall love be blamed for want of  
faith ?  
There must be wisdom with great  
Death :  
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :  
Ye watch, like God, the rolling  
hours  
With larger other eyes than ours,  
To make allowance for us all.

## LII

I cannot love thee as I ought,  
For love reflects the thing be-  
loved ;  
My words are only words, and  
moved  
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou my plaintive  
song,"  
The Spirit of true love replied ;  
"Thou canst not move me from  
thy side,  
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true  
To that ideal which he bears ?  
What record ? not the sinless  
years  
That breathed beneath the Syrian  
blue :

"So fret not, like an idle girl,  
That life is dash'd with flecks of  
sin.  
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,  
When Time hath sunder'd shell from  
pearl."

## LIII.

How many a father have I seen,  
 A sober man, among his boys,  
 Whose youth was full of foolish  
 noise,  
 Who wears his manhood hale and  
 green :

And dare we to this fancy give,  
 That had the wild oat not been  
 sown,  
 The soil, left barren, scarce had  
 grown

The grain by which a man may live ?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound  
 For life outliving heats of youth,  
 Yet who would preach it as a  
 truth

To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :  
 For fear divine Philosophy  
 Should push beyond her mark,  
 and be

Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

## LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good  
 Will be the final goal of ill,  
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,  
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;  
 That not one life shall be de-  
 stroy'd,

Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
 When God hath made the pile com-  
 plete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;  
 That not a moth with vain desire  
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,  
 Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;  
 I can but trust that good shall  
 fall

At last — far off — at last, to all,  
 And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?  
 An infant crying in the night :  
 An infant crying for the light :  
 And with no language but a cry.

## LV.

The wish, that of the living whole  
 No life may fail beyond the grave,  
 Derives it not from what we have  
 The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
 That Nature lends such evil  
 dreams ?

So careful of the type she seems,  
 So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere  
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
 And finding that of fifty seeds  
 She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of  
 cares  
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and  
 grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and  
 call

To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

## LVI.

"So careful of the type ?" but no.  
 From scarp'd cliff and quarried  
 stone  
 She cries, " A thousand types are  
 gone :

I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me  
 I bring to life, I bring to death .  
 The spirit does but mean thine  
 breath :

I know no more." And he, shall he,  
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so  
 fair,

Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry  
skies,  
Who built him fanes of fruitless  
prayer.

Who trusted God was love indeed  
And love Creation's final law—  
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and  
claw  
With ravine, shriek'd against his  
creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the  
Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,  
A discord. Dragons of the  
prime,  
That tare each other in their  
slime,  
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!  
O for thy voice to soothe and  
bless!  
What hope of answer, or redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

## LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe  
Is after all an earthly song:  
Peace; come away: we do him  
wrong  
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are  
pale;  
But half my life I leave behind:  
Methinks my friend is richly  
shrined;  
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,  
One set slow bell will seem to toll  
The passing of the sweetest soul  
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,  
Eternal greetings to the dead;  
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,  
"Adieu, adieu" for evermore.

## LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:  
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,  
As drop by drop the water falls  
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace  
Of hearts that beat from day to  
day,  
Half-conscious of their dying  
clay,  
And those cold crypts where they  
shall cease.

The high Muse answer'd: "Wherefore  
grieve  
Thy brethren with a fruitless  
tear?  
Abide a little longer here,  
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

## LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me  
No casual mistress, but a wife,  
My bosom-friend and half of  
life;  
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside,  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,  
Nor will it lessen from to-day;  
But I'll have leave at times to  
play  
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,  
With so much hope for years to  
come,  
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some  
Could hardly tell what name were  
thine.

## LX.

He past ; a soul of nobler tone :  
 My spirit loved and loves him  
     yet,  
 Like some poor girl whose heart  
     is set  
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,  
 She finds the baseness of her lot,  
 Half jealous of she knows not  
     what,  
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;  
 She sighs amid her narrow days,  
 Moving about the household  
     ways,  
 in that dark house where she was  
     born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,  
 And tease her till the day draws  
     by :  
 At night she weeps, "How vain  
     am I !  
 How should he love a thing so low ? "

## LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,  
 Thy ransom'd reason change  
     replies  
 With all the circle of the wise,  
 The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,  
 How dimly character'd and slight,  
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and  
     night,  
 How blanch'd with darkness must I  
     grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,  
 Where thy first form was made a  
     man ;  
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor  
     can  
 The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

## LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast  
 Could make thee somewhat blench  
     or fail,  
 Then be my love an idle tale,  
 And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,  
 When he was little more than boy,  
 On some unworthy heart with joy,  
 But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while  
 His other passion wholly dies,  
 Or in the light of deeper eyes  
 Is matter for a flying smile.

## LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,  
 And love in which my hound has  
     part,  
 Can hang no weight upon my  
     heart  
 In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,  
 As thou, perchance, art more than  
     I,  
 And yet I spare them sympathy,  
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,  
 As, unto vaster motions bound,  
 The circuits of thine orbit round  
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

## LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath  
     been,  
 As some divinely gifted man,  
 Whose life in low estate began  
 And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,  
 And grasps the skirts of happy  
     chance,  
 And breaks the blows of circum-  
     stance,  
 And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known  
 And lives to clutch the golden  
 keys,  
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,  
 And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,  
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning  
 slope  
 The pillar of a people's hope,  
 The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,  
 When all his active powers are  
 still,  
 A distant dearness in the hill,  
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,  
 While yet beside its vocal springs  
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,  
 With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea  
 And reaps the labor of his hands,  
 Or in the furrow musing stands;  
 "Does my old friend remember me?"

## LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;  
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost  
 With "Love's too precious to be  
 lost,  
 A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,  
 Till out of painful phases wrought  
 There flutters up a happy thought,  
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing:

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
 And thine effect so lives in me,  
 A part of mine may live in thee  
 And move thee on to noble ends.

## LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased;  
 You wonder when my fancies play  
 To find me gay among the gay,  
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,  
 Which makes a desert in the mind,  
 Has made me kindly with my kind,  
 And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,  
 Whose jest among his friends is  
 free,  
 Who takes the children on his  
 knee,  
 And winds their curls about his hand:

He plays with threads, he beats his  
 chair  
 For pastime, dreaming of the sky.  
 His inner day can never die,  
 His night of loss is always there.

## LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,  
 I know that in thy place of rest  
 By that broad water of the west,  
 There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,  
 As slowly steals a silver flame  
 Along the letters of thy name,  
 And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;  
 From off my bed the moonlight  
 dies;  
 And closing eaves of wearied eyes  
 I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn  
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,  
 And in the dark church like a  
 ghost  
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

## LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head.  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times  
 my breath;  
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows  
 not Death,  
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,  
 When all our path was fresh with  
 dew,

And all the bugle breezes blew  
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,  
I find a trouble in thine eye,  
Which makes me sad I know not  
why,  
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea  
I wake, and I discern the truth;  
It is the trouble of my youth  
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

## LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no  
more,  
That Nature's ancient power was  
lost:  
The streets were black with smoke  
and frost,  
They chatter'd trifles at the door:

I wander'd from the noisy town,  
I found a wood with thorny  
boughs:  
I took the thorns to bind my  
brows,  
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns  
From youth and babe and hoary  
hairs:  
They call'd me in the public  
squares  
The fool that wears a crown of thorns:

They call'd me fool, they call'd me  
child:  
I found an angel of the night;  
The voice was low, the look was  
bright;  
He look'd upon my crown and smiled:

He reach'd the glory of a hand,  
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:  
The voice was not the voice of  
grief,  
The words were hard to understand.

## LXX.

I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to  
paint  
The face I know; the hues are  
faint  
And mix with hollow masks of night;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons  
wrought,  
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,  
A hand that points, and palled  
shapes  
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning  
doors,  
And shoals of pucker'd faces  
drive;  
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,  
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will  
I hear a wizard music roll,  
And thro' a lattice on the soul  
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

## LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and  
trance  
And madness, thou hast forged  
at last  
A night-long Present of the Past  
In which we went thro' summer  
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?  
Then bring an opiate trebly  
strong,  
Drug down the blindfold sense of  
wrong  
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd  
Of men and minds, the dust of  
change,  
The days that grow to something  
strange,  
In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,  
 The fortress, and the mountain  
 ridge,  
 The cataract flashing from the  
 bridge,  
 The breaker breaking on the beach.

## LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 And howlest, issuing out of night,  
 With blasts that blow the poplar  
 white,  
 And lash with storm the streaming  
 pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun  
 To pine in that reverse of doom,  
 Which sicken'd every living  
 bloom,  
 And blurr'd the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour  
 With thy quick tears that make  
 the rose  
 Pull sideways, and the daisy close  
 Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who might'st have heaved a windless  
 flame  
 Up the deep East, or, whispering,  
 play'd  
 A chequer-work of beam and  
 shade  
 Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;  
 Day, mark'd as with some hideous  
 crime,  
 When the dark hand struck down  
 thro' time,  
 And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd  
 brows  
 Thro' clouds that drench the  
 morning star,  
 And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf  
 afar,  
 And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound  
 Climb thy thick noon, disastrous  
 day;  
 Touch thy dull goal of joyless  
 gray,  
 And hide thy shame beneath the  
 ground.

## LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,  
 So little done, such things to be,  
 How know I what had need of  
 thee,  
 For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,  
 The head hath miss'd an earthly  
 wreath:  
 I curse not nature, no, nor death;  
 For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod  
 Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:  
 What fame is left for human deeds  
 In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,  
 Fade wholly, while the soul  
 exults,  
 And self-infolds the large results  
 Of force that would have forged a  
 name.

## LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,  
 To those that watch it more and  
 more,  
 A likeness, hardly seen before,  
 Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,  
 I see thee what thou art, and  
 know  
 Thy likeness to the wise below,  
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,  
 And what I see I leave unsaid,  
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has  
 made  
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

## LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd  
 In verse that brings myself relief,  
 And by the measure of my grief  
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd;

What practice howsoe'er expert  
 In fitting aptest words to things,  
 Or voice the richest-toned that  
 sings,  
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days  
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,  
 And round thee with the breeze  
 of song  
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,  
 And, while we breathe beneath the  
 sun,  
 The world which credits what is  
 done  
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;  
 But somewhere, out of human  
 view,  
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do  
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

## LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,  
 And in a moment set thy face  
 Where all the starry heavens of  
 space  
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'  
 The secular abyss to come,  
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb  
 Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke  
 The darkness of our planet, last,  
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,  
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy  
 bowers  
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are  
 vain;

And what are they when these  
 remain  
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers?

## LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme  
 To him, who turns a musing eye  
 On songs, and deeds, and lives,  
 that lie  
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain  
 May bind a book, may line a box,  
 May serve to curl a maiden's  
 locks;  
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,  
 And, passing, turn the page that  
 tells  
 A grief, then changed to some-  
 thing else,  
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darken'd ways  
 Shall ring with music all the same;  
 To breathe my loss is more than  
 fame,  
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

## LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave  
 The holly round the Christmas  
 hearth;  
 The silent snow possess'd the  
 earth,  
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eye:

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,  
 No wing of wind the region swept,  
 But over all things brooding slept  
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,  
 Again our ancient games had  
 place,  
 The mimic picture's breathing  
 grace,  
 And dance and song and hoodman-  
 blind.



Who show'd a token of distress ?  
 No single tear, no mark of pain :  
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?  
 O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die !  
 No — mixt with all this mystic  
 frame,  
 Her deep relations are the same,  
 But with long use her tears are dry.

## LXXIX.

"More than my brothers are to me,"—  
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart!  
 I know thee of what force thou  
 art  
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,  
 As moulded like in Nature's mint;  
 And hill and wood and field did  
 print  
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd  
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the  
 same  
 All winds that roam the twilight  
 came  
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,  
 One lesson from one book we  
 learn'd,  
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet  
 turn'd  
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,  
 But he was rich where I was poor,  
 And he supplied my want the more  
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,  
 That holy Death ere Arthur died  
 Had moved me kindly from his  
 side,  
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,  
 The grief my loss in him had  
 wrought,  
 A grief as deep as life or thought,  
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ; -  
 I hear the sentence that he speaks ;  
 He bears the burthen of the weeks  
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;  
 And, influence-rich to soothe and  
 save,  
 Unused example from the grave  
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,  
 "My love shall now no further  
 range ;  
 There cannot come a mellower  
 change,  
 For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store :  
 What end is here to my com-  
 plaint ?  
 This haunting whisper makes me  
 faint,  
 "More years had made me love thee  
 more."

But Death returns an answer sweet :  
 "My sudden frost was sudden  
 gain,  
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,  
 It might have drawn from after-heat."

## LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death  
 For changes wrought on form and  
 face ;  
 No lower life that earth's embrace  
 May breed with him, can fright my  
 faith.

Eternal process moving on,  
 From state to state the spirit  
 walks ;

And these are but the shatter'd  
stalks,  
Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare  
The use of virtue out of earth :  
I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak  
The wrath that garners in my  
heart ;  
He put our lives so far apart  
We cannot hear each other speak.

## LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,  
O sweet new-year delaying long ;  
Thou doest expectant nature  
wrong ;  
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded  
noons,  
Thy sweetness from its proper  
place ?

Can trouble live with April days,  
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,  
The little speedwell's darling blue,  
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,  
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,  
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,  
That longs to burst a frozen bud  
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone  
The life that had been thine below,  
And fix my thoughts on all the  
glow  
To which thy crescent would have  
grown ;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,  
A central warmth diffusing bliss  
In glance and smile, and clasp  
and kiss,  
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;  
For now the day was drawing on,  
When thou should'st link thy life  
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee ;  
But that remorseless iron hour  
Made cypress of her orange flower,  
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,  
To clap their cheeks, to call them  
mine.

I see their unborn faces shine  
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,  
Thy partner in the flowery walk  
Of letters, genial table-talk,  
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest ;

While now thy prosperous labor fills  
The lips of men with honest praise,  
And sun by sun the happy days  
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair ;  
And all the train of bounteous  
hours  
Conduct by paths of growing  
powers,

To reverence and the silver hair ;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,  
Her lavish mission richly  
wrought,  
Leaving great legacies of thought,  
Thy spirit should fail from off the  
globe ;

What time mine own might also flee,  
As link'd with thine in love and  
fate,  
And, hovering o'er the dolorous  
strait

To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,  
And He that died in Holy Land  
Would reach us out the shining  
hand,

And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant ?  
 Ah, backward fancy, wherefore  
 wake  
 The old bitterness again, and  
 break  
 The low beginnings of content.

## LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and  
 pall,  
 I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,  
 'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
 Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,  
 Demanding, so to bring relief  
 To this which is our common  
 grief,  
 What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above  
 Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd ;  
 And whether love for him have  
 drain'd

My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws  
 A faithful answer from the  
 breast,  
 Thro' light reproaches, half ex-  
 prest,  
 And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,  
 Till on mine ear this message  
 falls,  
 That in Vienna's fatal walls  
 God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair  
 That range above our mortal  
 state,  
 In circle round the blessed gate,  
 Received and gave him welcome  
 there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,  
 And show'd him in the fountain  
 fresh  
 All knowledge that the sons of  
 flesh  
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,  
 Whose life, whose thoughts were  
 little worth,  
 To wander on a darken'd earth,  
 Where all things round me breathed  
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,  
 O heart, with kindest motion  
 warm ;  
 O sacred essence, other form,  
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,  
 How much of act at human hands  
 The sense of human will demands  
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,  
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,  
 His being working in mine own,  
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd  
 With gifts of grace, that might  
 express  
 All-comprehensive tenderness,  
 All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved  
 To works of weakness, but I find  
 An image comforting the mind,  
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,  
 That loved to handle spiritual  
 strife,  
 Diffused the shock thro' all my  
 life,  
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again  
 For other friends that once I met ;  
 Nor can it suit me to forget  
 The mighty hopes that make us men .

I woo your love : I count it crime  
 To mourn for any overmuch ;  
 I, the divided half of such  
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is  
 Eternal, separate from fears:  
 The all-assuming months and  
 years  
 Can take no part away from this:

But Summer on the steaming floods,  
 And Spring that swells the nar-  
 row brooks,  
 And Autumn, with a noise of  
 rooks,  
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave  
 Recalls, in change of light or  
 gloom,  
 My old affection of the tomb,  
 And my prime passion in the grave:

My old affection of the tomb,  
 A part of stillness, yearns to  
 speak:  
 "Arise, and get thee forth and  
 seek  
 A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;  
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach;  
 But in dear words of human  
 speech  
 We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain  
 The starry clearness of the free?  
 How is it? Canst thou feel for  
 me  
 Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall;  
 "'Tis hard for thee to fathom  
 this;  
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,  
 And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;  
 Or so methinks the dead would  
 say;  
 Or so shall grief with symbols  
 play  
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,  
 That these things pass, and I shall  
 prove  
 A meeting somewhere, love with  
 love,  
 I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,  
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver  
 I could not, if I would, transfer  
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart  
 The promise of the golden hours?  
 First love, first friendship, equal  
 powers,  
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,  
 That beats within a lonely place,  
 That yet remembers his embrace,  
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest  
 Quite in the love of what is gone,  
 But seeks to beat in time with one  
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,  
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,  
 The primrose of the later year,  
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

## LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,  
 That rollest from the gorgeous  
 gloom  
 Of evening over brake and bloom  
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below  
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,  
 And shadowing down the horned  
 flood  
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh  
 The full new life that feeds thy  
 breath  
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt  
 and Death,  
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas  
 On leagues of odor streaming far,  
 To where in yonder orient star  
 A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls  
 In which of old I wore the gown;  
 I roved at random thro' the town,  
 And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes  
 The storm their high-built organs  
 make,  
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake  
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant  
 shout,  
 The measured pulse of racing  
 oars  
 Among the willows ; paced the  
 shores  
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt  
 The same, but not the same ; and  
 last  
 Up that long walk of limes I past  
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :  
 I linger'd ; all within was noise  
 Of songs, and clapping hands,  
 and boys  
 That crash'd the glass and beat the  
 floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band  
 Of youthful friends, on mind and  
 art,  
 And labor, and the changing mart,  
 And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,  
 But send it slackly from the  
 string ;  
 And one would pierce an outer  
 ring,  
 And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he,  
 Would cleave the mark. A wil-  
 ling ear  
 We lent him. Who, but hung to  
 hear  
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and  
 grace  
 And music in the bounds of law,  
 To those conclusions when we  
 saw

The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow  
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;  
 And over those ethereal eyes  
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

## LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,  
 Rings Eden thro' the budded  
 quicks,  
 O tell me where the senses mix,  
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes em-  
 ploy  
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,  
 And in the midmost heart of  
 grief  
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude  
 woe —  
 I cannot all command the strings ;  
 The glory of the sum of things  
 Will flash along the chords and go.

## LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the  
 floor  
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and  
 bright ;  
 And thou, with all thy breadth  
 and height  
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,  
 My Arthur found your shadows  
 fair,

And shook to all the liberal air  
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;  
He mixt in all our simple sports ;  
They pleased him, fresh from  
brawling courts  
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,  
Immantled in ambrosial dark,  
To drink the cooler air, and mark  
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,  
The sweep of scythe in morning  
dew,  
The gust that round the garden  
flew,  
And tumbled half the mellowing  
pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn  
About him, heart and ear were fed  
To hear him, as he lay and read  
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon  
A guest, or happy sister, sung,  
Or here she brought the harp and  
flung  
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,  
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,  
And break the lifelong summer  
day

With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to  
theme,  
Discuss'd the books to love or  
hate,

Or touch'd the changes of the  
state,  
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,  
He loved to rail against it still,  
For "ground in yonder social  
mill

We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge" he said "in form and  
gloss  
The picturesque of man and  
man."

We talk'd : the stream beneath  
us ran,  
The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;  
And last, returning from afar,  
Before the crimson-circled star  
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,  
We heard behind the woodbine  
veil  
The milk that bubbled in the pail,  
And buzzings of the honied hours.

xc.

He tasted love with half his mind,  
Nor ever drank the inviolate  
spring  
Where nighest heaven, who first  
could fling  
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying  
eyes  
Were closed with wail, resume  
their life,  
They would but find in child and  
wife

An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with  
wine,  
To pledge them with a kindly  
tear,  
To talk them o'er, to wish them  
here,  
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,  
Behold their brides in other  
hands ;  
The hard heir strides about their  
lands,  
And will not yield them for a day-

Yea, tho' their sons were none of  
these,

Not less the yet-loved sire would  
make  
Confusion worse than death, and  
shake  
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :  
Whatever change the years have  
wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee.

## XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,  
And rarely pipes the mounted  
thrush ;  
Or underneath the barren bush  
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;  
Come, wear the form by which I  
know  
Thy spirit in time among thy  
peers ;  
The hope of unaccomplish'd years  
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing  
change  
May breathe, with many roses  
sweet,  
Upon the thousand waves of  
wheat,  
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come: not in watches of the night,  
But where the sunbeam broodeth  
warm,  
Come, beauteous in thine after  
form,  
And like a finer light in light.

## XCII.

If any vision should reveal  
Thy likeness, I might count it  
vain  
As but the canker of the brain ;  
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast  
Together in the days behind,  
I might but say, I hear a wind  
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view  
A fact within the coming year ;  
And tho' the months, revolving  
near,  
Should prove the phantom-warning  
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,  
But spiritual presentiments,  
And such refraction of events  
As often rises ere they rise.

## XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say  
No spirit ever brake the band  
That stays him from the native  
land  
Where first he walk'd when claspt in  
clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,  
But he, the Spirit himself, may  
come  
Where all the nerve of sense is  
numb ;  
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range  
With gods in un conjectured bliss,  
O, from the distance of the abyss  
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear  
The wish too strong for words to  
name ;  
That in this blindness of the  
frame  
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,  
With what divine affections bold  
Should be the man whose thought  
would hold  
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call  
The spirits from their golden day,  
Except, like them, thou too canst  
say,  
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,  
 Imaginations calm and fair,  
 The memory like a cloudless air,  
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,  
 And doubt beside the portal waits,  
 They can but listen at the gates,  
 And hear the household jar within.

## xcv.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,  
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;  
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the  
 sky  
 The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn  
 Unwavering : not a cricketchirr'd :  
 The brook alone far-off was heard,  
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,  
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy  
 shapes  
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine  
 capes  
 And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that  
 peal'd  
 From knoll to knoll, where,  
 couch'd at ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and  
 the trees  
 Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,  
 Withdrew themselves from me  
 and night,  
 And in the house light after light  
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had  
 been,  
 In those fall'n leaves which kept  
 their green,  
 The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and  
 strange  
 Was love's dumb cry defying  
 change  
 To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward  
 back,  
 And keen thro' wordy snares to  
 track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,  
 The dead man touch'd me from  
 the past,  
 And all at once it seem'd at last  
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and  
 whirl'd  
 About empyreal heights of  
 thought,  
 And came on that which is, and  
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,  
 Æonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time — the shocks  
 of Chance —  
 The blows of Death. At length  
 my trance

Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with  
 doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to  
 frame

In matter-moulded forms of  
 speech,  
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach  
 Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd  
 The knolls once more where,  
 couch'd at ease,  
 The white kine glimmer'd, and  
 the trees

Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom  
 A breeze began to tremble o'er  
 The large leaves of the sycamore,  
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,



And gathering freshlier overhead,  
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms,  
 and swung  
 The heavy-folded rose, and flung  
 The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn," and died  
 away;  
 And East and West, without a  
 breath,  
 Mixt their dim lights, like life  
 and death,  
 To broaden into boundless day.

## XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-  
 blue eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew  
 In many a subtle question versed,  
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,  
 But ever strove to make it true:

Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,  
 At last he beat his music out.  
 There lives more faith in honest  
 doubt,  
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd  
 strength,  
 He would not make his judgment  
 blind,  
 He faced the spectres of the mind  
 And laid them: thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own;  
 And Power was with him in the  
 night,  
 Which makes the darkness and  
 the light,  
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
 While Israel made their gods of  
 gold,  
 Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

## XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and  
 trees;  
 He finds on misty mountain-  
 ground  
 His own vast shadow glory-  
 crown'd;  
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —  
 I look'd on these and thought of  
 thee  
 In vastness and in mystery,  
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on  
 eye,  
 Their hearts of old have beat in  
 tune,  
 Their meetings made December  
 June,  
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;  
 The days she never can forget  
 Are earnest that he loves her yet.  
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,  
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,  
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and  
 deep  
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,  
 He reads the secret of the star,  
 He seems so near and yet so far,  
 He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,  
 A wither'd violet is her bliss:  
 She knows not what his great-  
 ness is,  
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings  
 Of early faith and plighted vows;  
 She knows but matters of the  
 house,  
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,  
 She darkly feels him great and  
 wise,  
 She dwells on him with faithful  
 eyes,  
 "I cannot understand : I love."

## XCVIII.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,  
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,  
 When I was there with him ; and  
 go  
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,  
 That City. All her splendor  
 seems  
 No livelier than the wisp that  
 gleams  
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair  
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of  
 me :  
 I have not seen, I will not see  
 Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts  
 The birth, the bridal ; friend from  
 friend  
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend  
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey  
 By each cold hearth, and sad-  
 ness flings  
 Her shadow on the blaze of  
 kings :  
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town  
 With statelier progress to and  
 fro  
 The double tides of chariots flow  
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustre leaves ; nor more content,  
 He told me, lives in any crowd,  
 When all is gay with lamps, and  
 loud  
 With sport and song, in booth and  
 tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;  
 And wheels the circled dance, and  
 breaks  
 The rocket molten into flakes  
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

## XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,  
 So loud with voices of the birds,  
 So thick with lowings of the  
 herds,  
 Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red  
 On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles  
 fast  
 By meadows breathing of the  
 past,  
 And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliage'd eaves  
 A song that slights the coming  
 care,  
 And Autumn laying here and  
 there  
 A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath  
 To myriads on the genial earth,  
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,  
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,  
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,  
 To-day they count as kindred  
 souls ;  
 They know me not, but mourn with  
 me.

## c.

I climb the hill : from end to end  
 Of all the landscape underneath,  
 I find no place that does not  
 breathe  
 Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,  
 Or low morass and whispering  
 reed,  
 Or simple stile from mead to  
 mead,  
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw  
That hears the latest linnet trill,  
Nor quarry trench'd along the  
nill

And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;  
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves  
To left and right thro' meadowy  
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,  
And each reflects a kindlier day ;  
And, leaving these, to pass away,  
I think once more he seems to die.

## CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall  
sway,

The tender blossom flutter down,  
Unloved, that beech will gather  
brown,

This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,  
Ray round with flames her disk  
of seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed  
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,  
The brook shall babble down the  
plain,

At noon or when the lesser wain  
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,  
And flood the haunts of hern and  
crake ;

Or into silver arrows break  
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild  
A fresh association blow,  
And year by year the landscape  
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills  
His wonted glebe, or lops the  
glades,

And year by year our memory  
fades  
From all the circle of the hills.

## CII.

We leave the well-beloved place  
Where first we gazed upon the  
sky ;

The roofs, that heard our earliest  
cry,  
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,  
As down the garden-walks I  
move,

Two spirits of a diverse love  
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood  
sung

Long since its matin song, and  
heard

The low love-language of the bird  
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here  
Thy feet have stray'd in after  
hours

With thy lost friend among the  
bowers,  
And this hath made them trebly  
dear."

These two have striven half the day,  
And each prefers his separate  
claim,

Poor rivals in a losing game,  
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go: my feet are set  
To leave the pleasant fields and  
farms ;

They mix in one another's arms  
To one pure image of regret.

## CIII.

On that last night before we went  
From out the doors where I was  
bred,

I dream'd a vision of the dead,  
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,  
 And maidens with me: distant hills  
 From hidden summits fed with rills  
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.  
 They sang of what is wise and good  
 And graceful. In the centre stood  
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,  
 The shape of him I loved, and love  
 For ever: then flew in a dove  
 And brought a summons from the sea:

And when they learnt that I must go  
 They wept and wail'd, but led the way  
 To where a little shallop lay  
 At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,  
 And shadowing bluff that made the banks,  
 We glided winding under ranks  
 Of iris, and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore  
 And roll'd the floods in grander space,  
 The maidens gather'd strength and grace  
 And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart  
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every limb;  
 I felt the thews of Anakim,  
 The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,  
 And one would chant the history  
 Of that great race, which is to be,  
 And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides  
 Began to foam, and we to draw  
 From deep to deep, to where we saw  
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,  
 But thrice as large as man he bent  
 To greet us. • Up the side I went,  
 And fell in silence on his neck:

Whereat those maidens with one mind  
 Bewail'd their lot; I did them wrong:  
 "We served thee here," they said,  
 "so long,  
 And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win  
 An answer from my lips, but he  
 Replying, "Enter likewise ye  
 And go with us:" they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep  
 A music out of sheet and shroud,  
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud  
 That landlike slept along the deep.

## CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;  
 The moon is hid, the night is still;  
 A single church below the hill  
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,  
 That wakens at this hour of rest  
 A single murmur in the breast,  
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,  
 In lands where not a memory strays,  
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,  
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

## CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave  
 This laurel, let this holly stand:  
 We live within the stranger's land,  
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve

Our father's dust is left alone  
 And silent under other snows :  
 There in due time the woodbine  
 blows,  
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse  
 The genial hour with mask and  
 mine ;  
 For change of place, like growth  
 of time,  
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,  
 By which our lives are chiefly  
 proved,  
 A little spare the night I loved,  
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,  
 Nor howl of wassail mantle warm ;  
 For who would keep an ancient  
 form  
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no  
 more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;  
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be  
 blown ;  
 No dance, no motion, save alone  
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.  
 Long sleeps the summer in the  
 seed ;  
 Run out your measured arcs, and  
 lead  
 The closing cycle rich in good.

## CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,  
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :  
 The year is dying in the night ;  
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
 Ring, happy bells, across the  
 snow :  
 The year is going, let him go ;  
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
 For those that here we see no  
 more ;  
 Ring out the feud of rich and  
 poor,  
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
 And ancient forms of party strife ;  
 Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
 With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
 The faithless coldness of the  
 times ;  
 Ring out, ring out my mournful  
 rhymes,  
 But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and  
 blood,  
 The civic slander and the spite ;  
 Ring in the love of truth and right,  
 Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;  
 Ring out the narrowing lust of  
 gold ;  
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
 Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,  
 The larger heart, the kindlier  
 hand ;  
 Ring out the darkness of the land,  
 Ring in the Christ that is to be.

## CVII.

It is the day when he was born,  
 A bitter day that early sank  
 Behind a purple-frosty bank  
 Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves  
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely  
 flies  
 The blast of North and East, and  
 ice  
 Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns  
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs

Above the wood which grides and  
clangs  
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass  
To darken on the rolling brine  
That breaks the coast. But fetch  
the wine,  
Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,  
To make a solid core of heat ;  
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat  
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,  
With books and music, surely we  
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,  
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

## CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone,  
I will not eat my heart alone,  
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,  
And vacant yearning, tho' with  
might  
To scale the heaven's highest  
height,  
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,  
But mine own phantom chanting  
hymns ?  
And on the depths of death there  
swims  
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be  
Of sorrow under human skies :  
'Tis held that sorrow makes us  
wise,  
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

## CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk  
From household fountains never  
dry ;  
The critic clearness of an eye,  
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force  
To seize and throw the doubts of  
man ;  
Impassion'd logic, which outran  
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,  
But touch'd with no ascetic  
gloom ;  
And passion pure in snowy bloom  
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,  
Of freedom in her regal seat  
Of England ; not the schoolboy  
heat,  
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would  
twine  
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,  
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine  
eyes  
Have look'd on : if they look'd  
in vain,  
My shame is greater who remain,  
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

## CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,  
The men of rathe and riper years :  
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,  
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,  
The proud was half disarm'd of  
pride,  
Nor cared the serpent at thy side  
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thouwert by,  
The flippant put himself to school.  
And heard thee, and the brazen  
fool  
Was soften'd, and he knew not why.

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,  
And felt thy triumph was as mine ;

And loved them more, that they  
 were thine,  
 The graceful tact, the Christian art;  
 Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,  
 But mine the love that will not  
 tire,  
 And, born of love, the vague  
 desire  
 That spurs an imitative will.

## CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down  
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,  
 To him who grasps a golden ball,  
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil  
 His want in forms for fashion's  
 sake,  
 Will let his coltish nature break  
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,  
 To whom a thousand memories  
 call,  
 Not being less but more than all  
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and  
 join'd  
 Each office of the social hour  
 To noble manners, as the flower  
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,  
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,  
 Drew in the expression of an eye,  
 Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse  
 The grand old name of gentleman,  
 Defamed by every charlatan,  
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

## CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,  
 That I, who gaze with temperate  
 eyes  
 On glorious insufficiencies,  
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room  
 Of all my love, art reason why  
 I seem to cast a careless eye  
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel  
 power  
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,  
 And hope could never hope too  
 much,  
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,  
 And tracts of calm from tempest  
 made,  
 And world-wide fluctuations way'd  
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

## CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;  
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps  
 with thee  
 Which not alone had guided me,  
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen  
 In intellect, with force and skill  
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —  
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have  
 been :

A life in civic action warm,  
 A soul on highest mission sent,  
 A potent voice of Parliament,  
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,  
 Becoming, when the time has  
 birth,  
 A lever to uplift the earth  
 And roll it in another course,

With thotsand shocks that come and  
 go,  
 With agonies, with energies,  
 With overthrowings, and with  
 cries,  
 And undulations to and fro.

## CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who  
 shall rail

Against her beauty? May she  
 mix  
 With men and prosper! Who  
 shall fix  
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire:  
 She sets her forward countenance  
 And leaps into the future chance,  
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —  
 She cannot fight the fear of death.  
 What is she, cut from love and  
 faith,  
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
 All barriers in her onward race  
 For power. Let her know her  
 place;  
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
 If all be not in vain; and guide  
 Her footsteps, moving side by side  
 With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,  
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,  
 Who grewest not alone in power  
 And knowledge, but by year and  
 hour  
 In reverence and in charity.

## CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,  
 Now burgeons every maze of  
 quick  
 About the flowering squares, and  
 thick  
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,  
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,  
 And drown'd in yonder living blue  
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,  
 The flocks are whiter down the  
 vale,  
 And milkier every milky sail  
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives  
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly  
 The happy birds, that change  
 their sky  
 To build and brood; that live their  
 lives

From land to land; and in my breast  
 Spring wakens too; and my re-  
 gret  
 Becomes an April violet,  
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

## CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time  
 That keenlier in sweet April  
 wakes,  
 And meets the year, and gives  
 and takes  
 The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,  
 The life re-orient out of dust,  
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten  
 trust  
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine  
 Upon me, while I muse alone;  
 And that dear voice, I once have  
 known,  
 Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me  
 For days of happy commune  
 dead;  
 Less yearning for the friendship  
 fled,  
 Than some strong bond which is to be

## CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this  
 To hold me from my proper place,  
 A little while from his embrace,  
 For fuller gain of after bliss:



That out of distance might ensue  
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet;  
 And unto meeting when we meet,  
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,  
 And every span of shade that  
 steals,  
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,  
 And all the courses of the suns.

## CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,  
 The giant laboring in his youth;  
 Nor dream of human love and  
 truth,  
 As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead  
 Are breathers of an ampler day  
 For ever nobler ends. They say,  
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,  
 And grew to seeming-random  
 forms,  
 The seeming prey of cyclic  
 storms,  
 Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime  
 to clime,  
 The herald of a higher race,  
 And of himself in higher place,  
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;  
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe  
 Like glories, move his course,  
 and show  
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,  
 And heated hot with burning  
 fears,  
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,  
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly  
 The reeling Faun, the sensual  
 feast;

Move upward, working out the  
 best,  
 And let the ape and tiger die.

## CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to  
 beat  
 So quickly, not as one that weeps  
 I come once more; the city sleeps;  
 I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see  
 Betwixt the black fronts long-  
 withdrawn  
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,  
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,  
 And bright the friendship of  
 thine eye;  
 And in my thoughts with scarce  
 a sigh  
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

## CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:  
 I think we are not wholly brain,  
 Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,  
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with  
 Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:  
 Let Science prove we are, and  
 then  
 What matters Science unto men,  
 At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs  
 Hereafter, up from childhood  
 shape  
 His action like the greater ape,  
 But I was *born* to other things.

## CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun  
 And ready, thou, to die with him.  
 Thou watchest all things ever  
 dim  
 And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosen'd from the wain,  
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;  
Thou listenest to the closing door,  
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,  
By thee the world's great work is heard  
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;  
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,  
And voices hail it from the brink ;  
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,  
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name  
For what is one, the first, the last,  
Thou, like my present and my past,  
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

## CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,  
While I rose up against my doom,  
And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,  
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,  
The strong imagination roll  
A sphere of stars about my soul,  
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave  
Divide us not, be with me now,  
And enter in at breast and brow,  
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,  
And like an inconsiderate boy,  
As in the former flash of joy,  
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,  
And every dew-drop paints a bow,  
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,  
And every thought breaks out a rose.

## CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.

O earth, what changes hast thou seen !

There where the long street roars,  
hath been

The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves  
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;

Fortho' my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.

## CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless ;  
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;

He, They, One, All ; within, without ;

The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,  
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;  
Nor thro' the questions men may try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt

The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart

Stood up and answer'd "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
But that blind clamor made me wise :

Then was I as a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again  
What is, and no man understands;  
And out of darkness came the  
hands  
That reach thro' nature, moulding  
men.

## CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,  
Some bitter notes my harp would  
give,  
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to  
live

A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;  
She did but look through dimmer  
eyes;

Or Love but play'd with gracious  
lies,  
Because he felt so fix'd in truth:

And if the song were full of care,  
He breathed the spirit of the song;  
And if the words were sweet and  
strong

He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail  
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,  
And this electric force, that keeps  
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

## CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,  
And in his presence I attend  
To hear the tidings of my friend,  
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,  
And will be, tho' as yet I keep  
Within his court on earth, and  
sleep  
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel  
Who moves about from place to  
place,

And whispers to the words of  
space,  
In the deep night, that all is well.

## CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form  
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;  
Well roars the storm to those that  
hear

A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,  
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again  
The red fool-fury of the Seine  
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,  
And him, the lazar, in his rags:  
They tremble, the sustaining  
crag;

The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;  
The fortress crashes from on high,  
The brute earth lightens to the  
sky,

And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;  
While thou, dear spirit, happy  
star,

O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,  
And smilest, knowing all is well.

## CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with  
Death,

Is comrade of the lesser faith  
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood  
Of onward time shall yet be made,  
And throned races may degrade;  
Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and  
Fear,

If all your office had to do  
With old results that look like  
new;

If this werc all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,  
 To fool the crowd with glorious  
 lies,  
 To cleave a creed in sects and  
 cries,  
 To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,  
 To cramp the student at his desk,  
 To make old bareness picturesque  
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend  
 On you and yours. I see in part  
 That all, as in some piece of art,  
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

## CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,  
 So far, so near in woe and weal;  
 O loved the most, when most I feel  
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;  
 Sweet human hand and lips and  
 eye;  
 Dear heavenly friend that canst  
 not die,  
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;  
 Loved deeper, darker under-  
 stood;  
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,  
 And mingle all the world with thee.

## CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;  
 I hear thee where the waters run;  
 Thou standest in the rising sun,  
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;  
 But tho' I seem in star and flower  
 To feel thee some diffusive power,  
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;  
 My love is vaster passion now;  
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature  
 thou,  
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;  
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;  
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;  
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

## CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure  
 When all that seems shall suffer  
 shock,  
 Rise in the spiritual rock,  
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them  
 pure,

That we may lift from out of dust  
 A voice as unto him that hears,  
 A cry above the conquer'd years  
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,  
 The truths that never can be  
 proved  
 Until we close with all we loved,  
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,  
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;  
 In that it is thy marriage day  
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss  
 Since first he told me that he  
 loved  
 A daughter of our house; nor  
 proved  
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er  
 Some thrice three years: they went  
 and came,  
 Remade the blood and changed  
 the fame,  
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm  
 In dying songs a dead regret,  
 But like a statue solid-set,  
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more  
 Than in the summers that are  
 flown,

For I myself with these have grown  
 To something greater than before ;  
 Which makes appear the songs I made  
 As echoes out of weaker times,  
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,  
 The sport of random sun and shade.  
 But where is she, the bridal flower,  
 That must be made a wife ere noon ?  
 She enters, glowing like the moon  
 Of Eden on its bridal bower :  
 On me she bends her blissful eyes  
 And then on thee ; they meet thy look  
 And brighten like the star that shook  
 Betwixt the palms of paradise.  
 O when her life was yet in bud,  
 He too foretold the perfect rose.  
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows  
 For ever, and as fair as good.  
 And thou art worthy ; full of power ;  
 As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,  
 Consistent ; wearing all that weight  
 Of learning lightly like a flower.  
 But now set out : the noon is near,  
 And I must give away the bride ;  
 She fears not, or with thee beside  
 And me behind her, will not fear.  
 For I that danced her on my knee,  
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,  
 That shielded all her life from harm  
 At last must part with her to thee ;  
 Now waiting to be made a wife,  
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;  
 Their pensive tablets round her head,  
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,  
 The "wilt thou" answer'd, and again  
 The "wilt thou" ask'd, till out of twain  
 Her sweet "I will" has made you one.  
 Now sign your names, which shall be read,  
 Mute symbols of a joyful morn,  
 By village eyes as yet unborn ;  
 The names are sign'd, and overhead  
 Begins the clash and clang that tells  
 The joy to every wandering breeze ;  
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees  
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.  
 O happy hour, and happier hours  
 Await them. Many a merry face  
 Salutes them — maidens of the place,  
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.  
 O happy hour, behold the bride  
 With him to whom her hand I gave.  
 They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
 That has to-day its sunny side.  
 To-day the grave is bright for me,  
 For them the light of life increased,  
 Who stay to share the morning feast,  
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.  
 Let all my genial spirits advance  
 To meet and greet a whiter sun ;  
 My drooping memory will not shun  
 The foaming grape of eastern France.  
 It circles round, and fancy plays,  
 And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,  
 As drinking health to bride and groom  
 We wish them store of happy days

Nor count me all to blame if I  
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
 Perchance, perchance, among the  
 rest,  
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,  
 And those white-favor'd horses  
 wait;  
 They rise, but linger; it is late;  
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark  
 From little cloudlets on the grass,  
 But sweeps away as out we pass  
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,  
 And talk of others that are wed,  
 And how she look'd, and what he  
 said,  
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,  
 The shade of passing thought,  
 the wealth  
 Of words and wit, the double  
 health,  
 The crowning cup, the three-times-  
 three,

And last the dance; — till I retire:  
 Dumb is that tower which spake  
 so loud,  
 And high in heaven the stream-  
 ing cloud,  
 And on the downs a rising fire:

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,  
 Till over down and over dale  
 All night the shining vapor sail  
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing  
 rills,

And catch at every mountain  
 head,  
 And o'er the friths that branch  
 and spread  
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,  
 With tender gloom the roof, the  
 wall;  
 And breaking let the splendor fall  
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,  
 And, star and system rolling past,  
 A soul shall draw from out the  
 vast  
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,  
 Result in man, be born and think,  
 And act and love, a closer link  
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look  
 On knowledge; under whose com-  
 mand  
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their  
 hand  
 Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,  
 For all we thought and loved and  
 did,  
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but  
 seed  
 Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man, that with me trod  
 This planet, was a noble type  
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,  
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves.  
 One God, one law, one element,  
 And one far-off divine event,  
 To which the whole creation moves.

## THE LOVER'S TALE.



THE original Preface to "The Lover's Tale" states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends however who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — "The Golden Supper"?

May, 1879.

### ARGUMENT.

JULIAN, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

#### I.

HERE far away, seen from the top-  
most cliff,  
Filling with purple gloom the vacan-  
cies  
Between the tufted hills, the sloping  
seas  
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way  
down rare sails,  
White as white clouds, floated from  
sky to sky.  
Oh! pleasant breast of waters, quiet  
bay,  
Like to a quiet mind in the loud  
world,  
Where the chafed breakers of the  
outer sea  
Sank powerless, as anger falls aside  
And withers on the breast of peaceful  
love;  
Thou didst receive the growth of pines  
that fledged  
The hills that watch'd thee, as Love  
watcheth Love,  
In thine own essence, and delight thy-  
self

To make it wholly thine on sunny  
days.  
Keep thou thy name of "Lover's  
Bay." See, sirs,  
Even now the Goddess of the Past,  
that takes  
The heart, and sometimes touches but  
one string  
That quivers, and is silent, and some-  
times  
Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd  
chords  
To some old melody, begins to play  
That air which pleased her first. I  
feel thy breath;  
I come, great Mistress of the ear and  
eye:  
Thy breath is of the pinewood; and  
tho' years  
Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy  
strait  
Betwixt the native land of Love and  
me,  
Breathe but a little on me, and the  
sail  
Will draw me to the rising of the  
sun,

The lucid chambers of the morning  
 star,  
 And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,  
 To pass my hand across my brows,  
 and muse  
 On those dear hills, that never more  
 will meet  
 The sight that throbs and aches be-  
 neath my touch,  
 As, tho' there beat a heart in either  
 eye;  
 For when the outer lights are darken'd  
 thus,  
 The memory's vision hath a keener  
 edge.  
 It grows upon me now — the semi-  
 circle  
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow  
 fringe  
 Of curving beach — its wreaths of  
 dripping green —  
 Its pale pink shells — the summer-  
 house aloft  
 That open'd on the pines with doors  
 of glass,  
 A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat  
 that rock'd,  
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel  
 to keel,  
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the  
 wave,  
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!  
 They come, they crowd upon me all  
 at once —  
 Moved from the cloud of unforgotten  
 things,  
 That sometimes on the horizon of the  
 mind  
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in  
 storm —  
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me  
 — days  
 Of dewy dawning and the amber  
 eyes  
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and  
 I  
 Were borne about the bay or safely  
 moor'd

Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where  
 the tide  
 Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all  
 without  
 The slowly-ridging rollers on the  
 cliffs  
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and  
 thro' the arch  
 Down those loud waters, like a setting  
 star,  
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-  
 house shone,  
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell  
 Would often loiter in her balmy  
 blue,  
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love  
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when day  
 hung  
 From his mid-dome in Heaven's airy  
 halls;  
 Gleams of the water-circles as they  
 broke,  
 Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about  
 her lips,  
 Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,  
 Leapt like a passing thought across  
 her eyes;  
 And mine with one that will not pass,  
 till earth  
 And heaven pass too, dwelt on my  
 heaven, a face  
 Most starry-fair, but kindled from  
 within  
 As 'twere with dawn. She was dark-  
 hair'd, dark-eyed:  
 Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance  
 of them  
 Will govern a whole life from birth  
 to death,  
 Careless of all things else, led on  
 with light  
 In trances and in visions: look at  
 them,  
 You lose yourself in utter ignorance;  
 You cannot find their depth; for they  
 go back,  
 And farther back, and still withdraw  
 themselves  
 Quite into the deep soul, that ever-  
 more



Fresh springing from her fountains in  
the brain,  
Still pouring thro', floods with redun-  
dant life  
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago  
I should have died, if it were possible  
To die in gazing on that perfectness  
Which I do bear within me: I had  
died,  
But from my farthest lapse, my latest  
ebb,  
Thine image, like a charm of light  
and strength  
Upon the waters, push'd me back  
again  
On these deserted sands of barren  
life.  
Tho' from the deep vault where the  
heart of Hope  
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the  
dark —  
Forgetting how to render beautiful  
Her countenance with quick and  
healthful blood —  
Thou didst not sway me upward;  
could I perish  
While thou, a meteor of the sepul-  
chre,  
Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's  
quiet urn  
For ever? He, that saith it, hath  
o'er-stept  
The slippery footing of his narrow  
wit,  
And fall'n away from judgment.  
Thou art light,  
To which my spirit leaneth all her  
flowers,  
And length of days, and immortality  
Of thought, and freshness ever self-  
renew'd.  
For Time and Grief abode too long  
with Life,  
And, like all other friends i' the world,  
at last  
They grew weary of her fellowship:  
So Time and Grief did beckon unto  
Death,  
And Death drew nigh and beat the  
doors of Life;

But thou didst sit alone in the inner  
house,  
A wakeful portress, and didst parle  
with Death, —  
"This is a charmed dwelling which I  
hold;"  
So Death gave back, and would no  
further come.  
Yet is my life nor in the present time,  
Nor in the present place. To me  
alone,  
Push'd from his chair of regal heri-  
tage,  
The Present is the vassal of the Past:  
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,  
And cannot die, and am, in having  
been —  
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,  
Thrust forward on to-day and out of  
place;  
A body journeying onward, sick with  
toil,  
The weight as if of age upon my  
limbs,  
The grasp of hopeless grief about my  
heart,  
And all the senses weaken'd, save in  
that,  
Which long ago they had glean'd and  
garner'd up  
Into the granaries of memory —  
The clear brow, bulwark of the  
precious brain,  
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd — and  
all the while  
The light soul twines and mingles  
with the growths  
Of vigorous early days, attracted,  
won,  
Married, made one with, molten into  
all  
The beautiful in Past of act or place,  
And like the all-enduring came,  
driven  
Far from the diamond fountain by the  
palms,  
Who toils across the middle moonlit  
nights,  
Or when the white heats of the blin-  
ing noons  
Beat from the concave sand, yet in  
him keeps

A draught of that sweet fountain that  
 he loves,  
 To stay his feet from falling, and his  
 spirit  
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,  
 When I began to love. How should  
 I tell you ?

Or from the after-fulness of my heart,  
 Flow back again unto my slender  
 spring

And first of love, tho' every turn and  
 depth

Between is clearer in my life than all  
 its present flow. Ye know not what  
 ye ask.

How should the broad and open flower  
 tell

What sort of bud it was, when, prest  
 together

In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken  
 folds,

It seem'd to keep its sweetness to it-  
 self,

Yet was not the less sweet for that it  
 seem'd ?

For young Life knows not when young  
 Life was born,

But takes it all for granted : neither  
 Love,

Warm in the heart, his cradle, can  
 remember

Love in the womb, but resteth satisfac-  
 ed,

Looking on her that brought him to  
 the light :

Or as men know not when they fall  
 asleep

Into delicious dreams, our other life,  
 So know I not when I began to love.

This is my sum of knowledge — that  
 my love

Grew with myself — say rather, was  
 my growth,

My inward sap, the hold I have on  
 earth,

My outward circling air wherewith I  
 breathe,

Which yet upholds my life, and ever-  
 more

Is to me daily life and daily death :

For how should I have lived and not  
 have loved ?

Can ye take off the sweetness from  
 the flower,

The color and the sweetness from the  
 rose,

And place them by themselves ; or set  
 apart

Their motions and their brightness  
 from the stars,

And then point out the flower or the  
 star ?

Or build a wall betwixt my life and love,  
 And tell me where I am ? 'Tis even  
 thus :

In that I live I love ; because I love  
 I live : whate'er is fountain to the one

Is fountain to the other ; and whene'er  
 Our God unknits the riddle of the

one,

There is no shade or fold of mystery  
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years,  
 (For they seem many and my most of  
 life,

And well I could have linger'd in that  
 porch,

So unproportion'd to the dwelling-  
 place,)

In the Maydews of childhood, opposite  
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived

together,  
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father  
 died,

And he was happy that he saw it not ;  
 But I and the first daisy on his grave

From the same clay came into light  
 at once.

As Love and I do number equal years,  
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.

How like each other was the birth of  
 each !

On the same morning, almost the same  
 hour,

Under the selfsame aspect of the stars,  
 (Oh falsehood of all starcraft!) we

were born.

How like each other was the birth of  
 each !

The sister of my mother — she that bore  
 Camilla close beneath her beating heart,  
 Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,  
 With its true-touched pulses in the flow  
 And hourly visitation of the blood,  
 Sent notes of preparation manifold,  
 And mellow'd echoes of the outer world —  
 My mother's sister, mother of my love,  
 Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,  
 One twofold mightier than the other was,  
 In giving so much beauty to the world,  
 And so much wealth as God had charged her with —  
 Loathing to put it from herself for ever,  
 Left her own life with it; and dying thus,  
 Crown'd with her highest act the placid face  
 And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless  
 And I without a father. So from each  
 Of those two pillars which from earth uphold  
 Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all  
 The careful burthen of our tender years  
 Trembled upon the other. He that gave  
 Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd  
 All lovingkindnesses, all offices  
 Of watchful care and trembling tenderness.  
 He waked for both: he pray'd for both: he slept  
 Dreaming of both: nor was his love the less  
 Because it was divided, and shot forth

Boughs on each side, laden with wholesome shade,  
 Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,  
 And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister: on one arm  
 The flaxen ringlets of our infancies  
 Wander'd, the while we rested: one soft lap  
 Pillow'd us both: a common light of eyes  
 Was on us as we lay: our baby lips,  
 Kissing one bosom, ever drew from thence  
 The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,  
 One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,  
 Still larger moulding all the house of thought,  
 Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps —  
 All — all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,  
 Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatso'er  
 Our general mother meant for me alone,  
 Our mutual mother dealt to both of us:  
 So what was earliest mine in earliest life,  
 I shared with her in whom myself remains.  
 As was our childhood, so our infancy,  
 They tell me, was a very miracle  
 Of fellow-feeling and communion.  
 They tell me that we would not be alone, —  
 We cried when we were parted; when I wept,  
 Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,  
 Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved  
 The sound of one-another's voices more  
 Than the gray cuckoo loves his name, and learn'd  
 To lisp in tune together; that we slept

In the same cradle always, face to face.  
 Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing  
 lip,  
 Folding each other, breathing on each  
 other,  
 Dreaming together (dreaming of each  
 other  
 They should have added), till the  
 morning light  
 Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy  
 pane  
 Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we  
 woke  
 To gaze upon each other. If this be  
 true,  
 At thought of which my whole soul  
 languishes  
 And faints, and hath no pulse, no  
 breath — as tho'  
 A man in some still garden should in-  
 fuse  
 Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,  
 Till, drunk with its own wine, and  
 overfull  
 Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,  
 It fall on its own thorns — if this be  
 true —  
 And that way my wish leads me ever-  
 more  
 Still to believe it — 'tis so sweet a  
 thought,  
 Why in the utter stillness of the  
 soul  
 Doth question'd memory answer not,  
 nor tell  
 Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,  
 Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-  
 mony?  
 O blossom'd portal of the lonely  
 house,  
 Green prelude, April promise, glad  
 new year  
 Of Being, which with earliest violets  
 And lavish carol of clear-throated larks  
 Fill'd all the March of life! — I will  
 not speak of thee.  
 These have not seen thee, these can  
 never know thee,  
 They cannot understand me. Pass  
 we then  
 A term of eighteen years. Ye would  
 but laugh,

If I should tell you how I hoard in  
 thought  
 The faded rhymes and scraps of an-  
 cient crones,  
 Gray relics of the nurseries of the  
 world,  
 Which are as gems set in my memory,  
 Because she learnt them with me; or  
 what use  
 To know her father left us just before  
 The daffodil was blown? or how we  
 found  
 The dead man cast upon the shore?  
 All this  
 Seems to the quiet daylight of your  
 minds  
 But cloud and smoke, and in the dark  
 of mine  
 Is traced with flame. Move with me  
 to the event.

There came a glorious morning,  
 such a one  
 As dawns but once a season. Mercury  
 On such a morning would have flung  
 himself  
 From cloud to cloud, and swum with  
 balanced wings  
 To some tall mountain: when I said  
 to her,  
 "A day for Gods to stoop," she an-  
 swered. "Ay,  
 And men to soar:" for as that other  
 gazed,  
 Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,  
 The prophet and the chariot and the  
 steeds,  
 Suck'd into oneness like a little star  
 Were drunk into the inmost blue, we  
 stood,  
 When first we came from out the  
 pines at noon,  
 With hands for eaves, uplooking and  
 almost  
 Waiting to see some blessed shape in  
 heaven,  
 So bathed we were in brilliance.  
 Never yet  
 Before or after have I known the  
 spring  
 Pour with such sudden deluges of  
 light

Into the middle summer; for that day  
Love, rising, shook his wings, and  
charged the winds

With spiced May-sweets from bound  
to bound, and blew

Fresh fire into the sun, and from  
within

Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent  
his soul

Into the songs of birds, and touch'd  
far-off

His mountain-altars, his high hills,  
with flame

Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:  
The great pine shook with lonely  
sounds of joy

That came on the sea-wind. As  
mountain streams

Our blood ran free: the sunshine  
seem'd to brood

More warmly on the heart than on  
the brow.

We often paused, and, looking back,  
we saw

The clefts and openings in the moun-  
tains fill'd

With the blue valley and the glisten-  
ing brooks,

And all the low dark groves, a land  
of love!

A land of promise, a land of memory,  
A land of promise flowing with the  
milk

And honey of delicious memories!  
And down to sea, and far as eye could  
ken,

Each way from verge to verge a Holy  
Land,

Still growing holier as you near'd the  
bay,

For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd  
The grassy platform on some hill, I  
stoop'd,

I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her  
brows

And mine made garlands of the self-  
same flower,

Which she took smiling, and with my  
work thus

Crown'd her clear forehead. Onee or  
twice she told me

(For I remember all things) to let grow  
The flowers that run poison in their  
veins.

She said, "The evil flourish in the  
world."

Then playfully she gave herself the  
lie—

"Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;  
So, brother, pluck and spare not."

So I wove  
Ev'n the dull-blooded poppy-stem,

"whose flower,  
Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sun-  
rise,

Liketo the wild youth of an evil prince,  
Is without sweetness, but who crowns  
himself

Above the naked poisons of his heart  
In his old age." A graceful thought  
of hers

Grav'n on my fancy! And oh, how  
like a nymph,

A stately mountain nymph she look'd!  
how native

Unto the hills she trod on! While I  
gazed

My coronal slowly disentwined itself  
And fell between us both; tho' while

I gazed  
My spirit leap'd as with those thrills  
of bliss

That strike across the soul in prayer,  
and show us

That we are surely heard. Methought  
a light

Burst from the garland I had wov'n,  
and stood

A solid glory on her bright black hair;  
A light methought broke from her  
dark, dark eyes,

And shot itself into the singing winds;  
A mystic light flash'd ev'n from her  
white robe

As from a glass in the sun, and fell  
about

My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came  
To what our people call "The Hill of  
Woe."

A bridge is there, that, look'd at from  
beneath

Seems but a cobweb filament to link  
The yawning of an earthquake-cloven  
chasm.

And thence one night, when all the  
winds were loud,

A woful man (for so the story went)  
Had thrust his wife and child and  
dash'd himself

Into the dizzy depth below. Below,  
Fierce in the strength of far descent,  
a stream

Flies with a shatter'd foam along the  
chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown  
with crags:

We mounted slowly; yet to both  
there came

The joy of life in steepness overcome,  
And victories of ascent, and looking  
down

On all that had look'd down on us;  
and joy

In breathing nearer heaven; and joy  
to me,

High over all the azure-circled earth.  
To breath with her as if in heaven it-  
self;

And more than joy that I to her be-  
came

Her guardian and her angel, raising her  
Still higher, past all peril, until she saw  
Beneath her feet the region far away,  
Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky  
brows,

Arise in open prospect—heath and hill,  
And hollow lined and wooded to the  
lips,

And deep-down walls of battlemented  
rock

Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into  
spires,

And glory of broad waters interfused,  
Whence rose as it were breath and  
steam of gold,

And over all the great wood rioting  
And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at  
intervals

With falling brook or blossom'd bush  
—and last,

Framing the mighty landscape to the  
west,

A purple range of mountain-cones,  
between

Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding  
bursts

The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point and stand-  
ing both,

There on the tremulous bridge, that  
from beneath

Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in  
air,

We paused amid the splendor. All  
the west

And ev'n unto the middle south was  
ribb'd

And barr'd with bloom on bloom.  
The sun below,

Held for a space 'twixt cloud and  
wave, shower'd down

Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over  
That various wilderness a tissue of  
light

Unparallel'd. On the other side, the  
moon,

Half-melted into thin blue air, stood  
still,

And pale and fibrous as a wither'd  
leaf,

Not yet endured in presence of His eyes  
To indue his lustre; most unloverlike,  
Since in his absence full of light and  
joy.

And giving light to others. But this  
most,

Next to her presence whom I loved  
so well,

Spoke loudly even into my inmost  
heart

As to my outward hearing: the loud  
stream,

Forth issuing from his portals in the  
crag

(A visible link unto the home of my  
heart),

Ran amber toward the west, and nigh  
the sea

Parting my own loved mountains was  
received,

Shorn of its strength, into the sym-  
 pathy  
 Of that small bay, which out to open  
 main  
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath  
 the sun.  
 Spirit of Love! that little hour was  
 bound  
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to  
 thee:  
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,  
 and the earth  
 They fell on became hallow'd ever-  
 more.

We turn'd: our eyes met: hers  
 were bright, and mine  
 Were dim with floating tears, that shot  
 the sunset  
 In lightnings round me; and my name  
 was borne  
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my  
 name has been  
 A hallow'd memory like the names of  
 old,  
 A center'd, glory-circled memory,  
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking  
 not  
 Exchange or currency: and in that  
 hour  
 A hope flow'd round me, like a golden  
 mist  
 Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,  
 A moment, ere the onward whirlwind  
 shatter it,  
 Waver'd and floated — which was less  
 than Hope,  
 Because it lack'd the power of perfect  
 Hope;  
 But which was more and higher than  
 all Hope,  
 Because all other Hope had lower aim;  
 Even that this name to which her  
 gracious lips  
 Did lend such gentle utterance, this  
 one name,  
 In some obscure hereafter, might in-  
 wreath  
 (How lovelier, nobler then!) her life,  
 her love,  
 With my life, love, soul, spirit, and  
 heart and strength.

"Brother," she said, "let this be  
 call'd henceforth  
 The Hill of Hope;" and I replied,  
 "O sister,  
 My will is one with thine; the Hill of  
 Hope."  
 Nevertheless, we did not change the  
 name.

I did not speak: I could not speak  
 my love.  
 Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in  
 lip-depths.  
 Love wraps his wings on either side  
 the heart,  
 Constraining it with kisses close and  
 warm,  
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet  
 thoughts  
 So that they pass not to the shrine of  
 sound.  
 Else had the life of that delighted hour  
 Drunk in the largeness of the utter-  
 ance  
 Of Love; but how should Earthly  
 measure mete  
 The Heavenly-unmeasured or unlimit-  
 ed Love,  
 Who scarce can tune his high majestic  
 sense  
 Unto the thundersong that wheels the  
 spheres,  
 Scarce living in the Æolian harmony,  
 And flowing odor of the spacious air,  
 Scarce housed within the circle of this  
 Earth,  
 Be cabin'd up in words and syllables,  
 Which pass with that which breathes  
 them? Sooner Earth  
 Might go round Heaven, and the strait  
 girth of Time  
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
 Than language grasp the infinite of  
 Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy  
 hour,  
 Thou art blessed in the years, divinest  
 day!  
 O Genius of that hour which dost up-  
 hold  
 Thy coronal of glory like a God.

Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,  
 Who walk before thee, ever turning  
 round  
 To gaze upon thee till their eyes are  
 dim  
 With dwelling on the light and depth  
 of thine,  
 Thy name is ever worshipp'd among  
 hours!  
 Had I died then, I had not seem'd to  
 die,  
 For bliss stood round me like the light  
 of Heaven, —  
 Had I died then, I had not known the  
 death;  
 Yea had the Power from whose right  
 hand the light  
 Of Life issueth, and from whose left  
 hand floweth  
 The Shadow of Death, perennial efflu-  
 ences,  
 Whereof to all that draw the whole-  
 some air,  
 Somewhile the one must overflow the  
 other;  
 Then had he stemm'd my day with  
 night, and driven  
 My current to the fountain whence it  
 sprang, —  
 Even his own abiding excellence —  
 On me, methinks, that shock of gloom  
 had fall'n  
 Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged  
 The other, like the sun I gazed  
 upon,  
 Which seeming for the moment due  
 to death,  
 And dipping his head low beneath the  
 verge,  
 Yet bearing round about him his own  
 day,  
 In confidence of unabated strength,  
 Steppeth from Heaven to Heaven,  
 from light to light,  
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead  
 far  
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the down-  
 ward hill;  
 We past from light to dark. On the  
 other side

Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain  
 hall,  
 Which none have fathom'd. If you  
 go far in  
 (The country people rumor) you may  
 hear  
 The moaning of the woman and the  
 child,  
 Shut in the secret chambers of the  
 rock.  
 I too have heard a sound — perchance  
 of streams  
 Running far on within its inmost  
 halls,  
 The home of darkness; but the cav-  
 ern-mouth,  
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,  
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that  
 passing lightly  
 Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,  
 Is presently received in a sweet grave  
 Of eglantines, a place of burial  
 Far lovelier than its cradle; for un-  
 seen,  
 But taken with the sweetness of the  
 place,  
 It makes a constant bubbling melody  
 That drowns the nearer echoes. Low-  
 er down  
 Spreads out a little lake, that, flood-  
 ing, leaves  
 Low banks of yellow sand; and from  
 the woods  
 That belt it rise three dark, tall cy-  
 presses, —  
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal  
 woe,  
 That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,  
 And sitting 'down upon the golden  
 moss,  
 Held converse sweet and low — low  
 converse sweet,  
 In which our voices bore least part.  
 The wind  
 Told a lovetale beside us, how he woo'd  
 The waters, and the waters answering  
 lisp'd  
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with  
 love,  
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again



To utterance of passion. Ye cannot  
 shape  
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.  
 Methought all excellence that ever was  
 Had drawn herself from many thou-  
 sand years,  
 And all the separate Edens of this  
 earth,  
 To centre in this place and time. I  
 listen'd,  
 And her words stole with most pre-  
 vailing sweetness  
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies  
 come  
 To boys and girls when summer days  
 are new,  
 And soul and heart and body are all  
 at ease :

What marvel my Camilla told me all ?  
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a  
 place,  
 And I was as the brother of her blood,  
 And by that name I moved upon her  
 breath ;  
 Dear name, which had too much of  
 nearness in it  
 And heralded the distance of this time !  
 At first her voice was very sweet and  
 low,  
 As if she were afraid of utterance ;  
 But in the onward current of her  
 speech,  
 (As echoes of the hollow-banked  
 brooks  
 Are fashion'd by the channel which  
 they keep),  
 Her words did of their meaning bor-  
 row sound,  
 Her cheek did catch the color of her  
 words.  
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but  
 hear ;  
 My heart paused — my raised eyelids  
 would not fall,  
 But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.  
 I seem'd the only part of Time stood  
 still,  
 And saw the motion of all other things ;  
 While her words, syllable by syllable,  
 Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear  
 Fell ; and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not  
 to speak ;

But she spake on, for I did name no  
 wish,  
 What marvel my Camilla told me all  
 Her maiden dignities of Hope and  
 Love —  
 "Perchance," she said, "return'd."  
 Even then the stars  
 Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;  
 But she spake on, for I did name no  
 wish,  
 No wish — no hope. Hope was not  
 wholly dead,  
 But breathing hard at the approach  
 of Death, —  
 Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine  
 No longer in the dearest sense of mine —  
 For all the secret of her inmost heart,  
 And all the maiden empire of her  
 mind,  
 Lay like a map before me, and I saw  
 There, where I hoped myself to reign  
 as king,  
 There, where that day I crown'd my-  
 self as king,  
 There in my realm and even on my  
 throne,  
*Another !* then it seem'd as tho' a link  
 Of some tight chain within my inmost  
 frame  
 Was riven in twain : that life I heeded  
 not  
 Flow'd from me, and the darkness of  
 the grave,  
 The darkness of the grave and utter  
 night,  
 Did swallow up my vision ; at her feet,  
 Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,  
 Smit with exceeding sorrow unto  
 Death.

Then had the earth beneath me  
 yawning cloven  
 With such a sound as when an iceberg  
 splits  
 From cope to base — had Heaven from  
 all her doors,  
 With all her golden thresholds clash-  
 ing, roll'd  
 Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as  
 dead,  
 Mute, blind and motionless as then I  
 lay ;

Dead, for henceforth there was no life  
for me!  
Mute, for henceforth what use were  
words to me!  
Blind, for the day was as the night to  
me!  
The night to me was kinder than the  
day;  
The night in pity took away my day,  
Because my grief as yet was newly  
born  
Of eyes too weak to look upon the  
light;  
And thro' the hasty notice of the ear  
Frail Life was startled from the ten-  
der love  
Of him she brooded over. Would I  
had lain  
Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound  
Round my worn limbs, and the wild  
brier had driven  
Its knotted thorns thro' my unpain-  
ing brows,  
Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.  
The wind had blown above me, and  
the rain  
Had fall'n upon me, and the gilded  
snake  
Had nestled in this bosom-throne of  
Love,  
But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.  
All too soon  
Life (like a wanton too-officious friend,  
Who will not *hear* denial, vain and  
rude  
With proffer of unwish'd-for services)  
Entering all the avenues of sense  
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,  
With hated warmth of apprehensive-  
ness.  
And first the chillness of the sprinkled  
brook  
Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd  
to hear  
Its murmur, as the drowning seaman  
hears,  
Who with his head below the surface  
dropt  
Listens the muffled booming indistinct  
Of the confused floods, and dimly knows

His head shall rise, no more: and then  
came in  
The white light of the weary moon  
above,  
Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.  
Was my sight drunk that it did shape  
to me  
Him who should own that name? Were  
it not well  
If so be that the echo of that name  
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn  
A fashion and a phantasm of the  
form  
It should attach to? Phantom! —  
had the ghastliest  
That ever lusted for a body, sucking  
The foul steam of the grave to thicken  
by it,  
There in the shuddering moonlight  
brought its face  
And what it has for eyes as close to  
mine  
As he did — better than his, than  
he  
The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the  
beloved,  
The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,  
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,  
All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.  
O how her choice did leap forth from  
his eyes!  
O how her love did clothe itself in  
smiles  
About his lips! and — not one mo-  
ment's grace —  
Then when the effect weigh'd seas  
upon my head  
To come my way! to twit me with the  
cause!

Was not the land as free thro' all  
her ways  
To him as me? Was not his wont to  
walk  
Between the going light and growing  
night?  
Had I not learnt my loss before he  
came?  
Could that be more because he came  
my way?  
Why should he not come my way if  
he would?

And yet to-night, to-night — when all  
 my wealth  
 Flash'd from me in a moment and I  
 fell  
 Beggard'd for ever — why *should* he  
 come my way  
 Robed in those robes of light I must  
 not wear,  
 With that great crown of beams about  
 his brows —  
 Come like an angel to a damned soul,  
 To tell him of the bliss he had with  
 God —  
 Come like a careless and a greedy  
 heir  
 That scarce can wait the reading of  
 the will  
 Before he takes possession? Was  
 mine a mood  
 To be invaded rudely, and not rather  
 A sacred, secret unapproached woe,  
 Unspeakable? I was shut up with  
 Grief;  
 She took the body of my past delight,  
 Narded and swathed and balm'd it  
 for herself,  
 And laid it in a sepulchre of rock  
 Never to rise again. I was led mute  
 Into her temple like a sacrifice;  
 I was the High Priest in her holiest  
 place,  
 Not to be loudly broken in upon.

Oh friend, thoughts deep and heavy  
 as these well-nigh  
 O'erbore the limits of my brain: but he  
 Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm  
 upstay'd.  
 I thought it was an adder's fold, and  
 once  
 I strove to disengage myself, but  
 fail'd,  
 Being so feeble: she bent above me,  
 too;  
 Wan was her cheek; for whatsoe'er  
 of blight  
 Lives in the dewy touch of pity had  
 made  
 The red rose there a pale one — and  
 her eyes —  
 I saw the moonlight glitter on their  
 tears —

And some few drops of that distress-  
 ful rain  
 Fell on my face, and her long ringlets  
 moved,  
 Drooping and beaten by the breeze,  
 and brush'd  
 My fallen forehead in their to and  
 fro,  
 For in the sudden anguish of her heart  
 Loosed from their simple thrall they  
 had flow'd abroad,  
 And floated on and parted round her  
 neck,  
 Mantling her form halfway. She,  
 when I woke,  
 Something she ask'd, I know not what,  
 and ask'd,  
 Unanswer'd, since I spake not; for  
 the sound  
 Of that dear voice so musically low,  
 And now first heard with any sense  
 of pain,  
 As it had taken life away before,  
 Choked all the syllables, that strove  
 to rise  
 From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,  
 From his great hoard of happiness  
 distill'd  
 Some drops of solace; like a vain  
 rich man,  
 That, having always prosper'd in the  
 world,  
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable  
 words  
 To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in  
 truth,  
 Fair speech was his and delicate of  
 phrase,  
 Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-  
 dress'd  
 More to the inward than the outward  
 ear,  
 As rain of the midsummer midnight  
 soft,  
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and  
 the green  
 Of the dead spring: but mine was  
 wholly dead,  
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit  
 for me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd  
 wrong ?  
 And why was I to darken their pure  
 love,  
 If, as I found, they two did love each  
 other,  
 Because my own was darken'd ? Why  
 was I  
 To cross between their happy star and  
 them ?  
 To stand a shadow by their shining  
 doors,  
 And vex them with my darkness ?  
 Did I love her ?  
 Ye know that I did love her ; to this  
 present  
 My full-orb'd love has waned not.  
 Did I love her,  
 And could I look upon her tearful  
 eyes ?  
 What had *she* done to weep ? Why  
 should *she* weep ?  
 O innocent of spirit — let my heart  
 Break rather — whom the gentlest  
 airs of Heaven  
 Should kiss with an unwonted gentle-  
 ness.  
 Her love did murder mine ? What  
 then ? She deem'd  
 I wore a brother's mind : she call'd  
 me brother :  
 She told me all her love : she shall  
 not weep.

The brightness of a burning thought,  
 awhile  
 In battle with the glooms of my dark  
 will,  
 Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up  
 There on the depth of an unfathom'd  
 woe  
 Reflex of action. Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own  
 death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in  
 Love ;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she  
 lov'd,  
 And laid it in her own, and sent my  
 cry  
 Thro' the blank night to Him who  
 loving made

The happy and the unhappy love,  
 that He  
 Would hold the hand of blessing over  
 them,  
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her,  
 his bride !  
 Let them so love that men and boys  
 may say,  
 " Lo ! how they love each other ! " till  
 their love  
 Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all  
 Known, when their faces are forgot in  
 the land —  
 One golden dream of love, from which  
 may death  
 Awake them with heaven's music in a  
 life  
 More living to some happier happi-  
 ness,  
 Swallowing its precedent in victory.  
 And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —  
 The dew of tears is an unwholesome  
 dew,  
 They will but sicken the sick plant  
 the more.  
 Deem that I love thee but as brothers  
 do,  
 So shalt thou love me still as sisters  
 do ;  
 Or if thou dream aught farther,  
 dream but low  
 I could have loved thee, had there  
 been none else  
 To love as lovers, loved again by  
 thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I  
 spake,  
 When I beheld her weep so rue-  
 fully ;  
 For sure my love should ne'er indue  
 the front  
 And mask of Hate, who lives on  
 others' moans.  
 Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bit-  
 ter draughts,  
 And batten on her poisons ? Love  
 forbid !  
 Love passeth not the threshold of cold  
 Hate,  
 And Hate is strange beneath the roof  
 of Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up  
 these tears  
 Shed for the love of Love; for tho'  
 mine image,  
 The subject of thy power, be cold in  
 her,  
 Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the  
 source  
 Of these sad tears, and feeds their  
 downward flow.  
 So Love, arraign'd to judgment and  
 to death,  
 Received unto himself a part of  
 blame,  
 Being guiltless, as an innocent pris-  
 oner,  
 Who, when the woful sentence hath  
 been past,  
 And all the clearness of his fame hath  
 gone  
 Beneath the shadow of the curse of  
 man,  
 First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom  
 awaked,  
 And looking round upon his tearful  
 friends,  
 Forthwith and in his agony con-  
 ceives  
 A shameful sense as of a cleaving  
 crime —  
 For whence without some guilt should  
 such grief be ?

So died that hour, and fell into the  
 abysm  
 Of forms outworn, but not to me out-  
 worn,  
 Who never hail'd another — was there  
 one ?  
 There might be one — one other, worth  
 the life  
 That made it sensible. So that hour  
 died  
 Like odor rapt into the winged  
 wind  
 Borne into alien lands and far away.

There be some hearts so airily built,  
 that they,  
 They — when their love is wreck'd —  
 if Love can wreck —  
 On that sharp ridge of utmost doom  
 ride highly

Above the perilous seas of Change  
 and Chance;  
 Nay, more, hold out the lights of  
 cheerfulness;  
 As the tall ship, that many a dreary  
 year  
 Knit to some dismal sandbank far at  
 sea,  
 All thro' the livelong hours of utter  
 dark,  
 Showers slanting light upon the dolor-  
 ous wave.  
 For me — what light, what gleam on  
 those black ways  
 Where Love could walk with banish'd  
 Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters  
 fair;  
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the  
 neck of Hope,  
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love  
 drew in her breath  
 In that close kiss, and drank her  
 whisper'd tales.  
 They said that Love would die when  
 Hope was gone,  
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd  
 after Hope;  
 At last she sought out Memory, and  
 they trod  
 The same old paths where Love had  
 walk'd with Hope,  
 And Memory fed the soul of Love  
 with tears.

## II.

From that time forth I would not see  
 her more;  
 But many weary moons I lived  
 alone —  
 Alone, and in the heart of the great  
 forest.  
 Sometimes upon the hills beside the  
 sea  
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of  
 shade,  
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the  
 sands  
 Insensibly I drew her name, until  
 The meaning of the letters shot into

My brain ; anon the wanton billow  
 wash'd  
 Them over, till they faded like my  
 love.  
 The hollow caverns heard me—the  
 black brooks  
 Of the midforest heard me—the soft  
 winds,  
 Laden with thistledown and seeds of  
 flowers,  
 Paused in their course to hear me, for  
 my voice  
 Was all of thee: the merry linnet  
 knew me,  
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragon-  
 fly  
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.  
 The rough brier tore my bleeding  
 palms ; the hemlock,  
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as  
 I past ;  
 Yet trod I not the wildflower in my  
 path,  
 Nor bruised the wildbird's egg.

Was this the end ?

Why grew we then together in one  
 plot ?  
 Why fed we from one fountain ? drew  
 one sun ?  
 Why were our mothers' branches of  
 one stem ?  
 Why were we one in all things, save  
 in that  
 Where to have been one had been the  
 cope and crown  
 Of all I hoped and fear'd ?— if that  
 same nearness  
 Were father to this distance, and that  
 one  
 Vauntcourier to the *double* ? if Affec-  
 tion  
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy  
 hew'd out  
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy ?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the  
 hill  
 Where last we roam'd together, for the  
 sound  
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and  
 the wind

Came woingly with woodbine smells  
 Sometimes  
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,  
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-  
 cones  
 That spired above the wood ; and with  
 mad hand  
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-  
 screen,  
 I cast them in the noisy brook be-  
 neath,  
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd  
 from my sight  
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-  
 tines :  
 And all the fragments of the living  
 rock  
 (Huge blocks, which some old trem-  
 bling of the world  
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till  
 they fell  
 Half-digging their own graves) these  
 in my agony  
 Did I make bare of all the golden  
 moss,  
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the  
 spring  
 Had liveried them all over. In my  
 brain  
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought  
 to thought,  
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist :  
 my blood  
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my  
 languid limbs ;  
 The motions of my heart seem'd far  
 within me,  
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its  
 pulses ;  
 And yet it shook me, that my frame  
 would shudder,  
 As if 'twere drawn asunder by the rack.  
 But over the deep graves of Hope and  
 Fear,  
 And all the broken palaces of the  
 Past,  
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,  
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky  
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-  
 shock'd,—  
 Hung round with ragged rims and  
 burning folds,—

Embathing all with wild and woful  
hues,  
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed  
masses  
Of thundershaken columns indistinct,  
And fused together in the tyrannous  
light —  
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me !

Sometimes I thought Camilla was  
no more,  
Some one had told me she was dead,  
and ask'd  
If I would see her burial: then I seem'd  
To rise, and through the forest-shadow  
borne  
With more than mortal swiftness, I  
ran down  
The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon  
Thereof of a procession, curving round  
The silver-sheeted bay: in front of  
which  
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbear  
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest  
lawn,  
Wreathed round the bier with gar-  
lands: in the distance,  
From out the yellow woods upon the  
hill  
Look'd forth the summit and the pin-  
nacles  
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals  
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,  
Save those six virgins which upheld  
the bier,  
Were stoled from head to foot in flow-  
ing black ;  
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd  
his brow,  
And he was loud in weeping and in  
praise  
Of her we follow'd: a strong sympathy  
Shook all my soul: I flung myself  
upon him  
In tears and cries: I told him all my  
love,  
How I had loved her from the first ;  
whereat  
He shrank and howl'd, and from his  
brow drew back  
His hand to push me from him ; and  
the face.

The very face and form of Lionel  
Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-  
most brain,  
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and  
fall,  
To fall and die away. I could not rise  
Albeit I strove to follow. They past  
on,  
The lordly Phantasms! in their float-  
ing folds  
They past and were no more: hut I  
had fallen  
Prone by the dashing runnel on the  
grass.

Always the inaudible invisible  
thought,  
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,  
Shaped by the audible and visible,  
Moulded the audible and visible ;  
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf  
and wind,  
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain ;  
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the  
wood,  
The mountain, the three cypresses, the  
cave,  
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of  
the moon  
Below black firs, when silent-creeping  
winds  
Laid the long night in silver streaks  
and bars,  
Were wrought into the tissue of my  
dream :  
The moanings in the forest, the loud  
brook,  
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key  
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-  
hawk-whirr  
Awoke me not, but were a part of  
sleep,  
And voices in the distance calling to me  
And in my vision bidding me dream on,  
Like sounds without the twilight realm  
of dreams,  
Which wander round the bases of the  
hills,  
And murmur at the low-dropt eaves  
of sleep,  
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes  
The vision had fair prelude, in the end

Opening on darkness, stately vestibules  
 To caves and shows of Death: whether the mind,  
 With some revenge — even to itself unknown, —  
 Made strange division of its suffering  
 With her, whom to have suffering view'd had been  
 Extremest pain; or that the clear-eyed Spirit,  
 Being blunted in the Present, grew at length  
 Prophetic and prescient of what'er The Future had in store: or that which most  
 Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit  
 Was of so wide a compass it took in  
 All I had loved, and my dull agony,  
 Ideally to her transferr'd, became  
 Anguish intolerable.

The day waned;

Alone I sat with her: about my brow  
 Her warm breath floated in the utterance  
 Of silver-chorded tones: her lips were sunder'd  
 With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke in light  
 Like morning from her eyes — her eloquent eyes,  
 (As I have seen them many a hundred times)  
 Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine down rain'd  
 Their spirit-searching splendors. As a vision  
 Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd  
 In damp and dismal dungeons underground,  
 Confined on points of faith, when strength is shock'd  
 With torment, and expectancy of worse  
 Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls,  
 All unawares before his half-shut eyes,  
 Comes in upon him in the dead of night,

And with the excess of sweetness and of awe,  
 Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run over  
 Upon his steely gyves; so those fair eyes  
 Shone on my darkness, forms which ever stood  
 Within the magic cirque of memory,  
 Invisible but deathless, waiting still  
 The edict of the will to reassume  
 The semblance of those rare realities  
 Of which they were the mirrors. Now the light  
 Which was their life, burst through the cloud of thought  
 Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,  
 Hung round with paintings of the sea, and one  
 A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow  
 Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin wind  
 In her sail roaring. From the outer day,  
 Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad  
 And solid beam of isolated light,  
 Crowded with driving atomies, and fell  
 Slanting upon that picture, from prime youth  
 Well-known well-loved. She drew it long ago  
 Fortgazing on the waste and open sea,  
 One morning when the upblown billow ran  
 Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had pour'd  
 Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms  
 Color and life: it was a bond and seal  
 Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles;  
 A monument of childhood and of love;  
 The poesy of childhood; my lost love



Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it  
 together  
 In mute and glad remembrance, and  
 each heart  
 Grew closer to the other, and the eye  
 Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing  
 like  
 The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low-  
 couch'd—  
 A beauty which is death; when all at  
 once  
 That painted vessel, as with inner  
 life,  
 Began to heave upon that painted  
 sea;  
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,  
 made the ground  
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul,  
 life  
 And breath and motion, past and  
 flow'd away  
 To those unreal billows: round and  
 round  
 A whirlwind caught and bore us;  
 mighty gyres  
 Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-  
 driven  
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she  
 shriek'd;  
 My heart was cloven with pain; I  
 wound my arms  
 About her: we whirl'd giddily; the  
 wind  
 Sung; but I clasp'd her without fear:  
 her weight  
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim  
 eyes,  
 And parted lips which drank her  
 breath, down-hung  
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from  
 me flung  
 Her empty phantom: all the sway and  
 whirl  
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm,  
 and I  
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and  
 ever.

## III.

I CAME one day and sat among the  
 stones

Strewn in the entry of the moaning  
 cave;  
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran  
 over  
 The rippling levels of the lake, and  
 blew  
 Coolness and moisture and all smells  
 of bud  
 And foliage from the dark and drip-  
 ping woods  
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook  
 and throbb'd  
 From temple unto temple. To what  
 height  
 The day had grown I know not. Then  
 came on me  
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all  
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore  
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd  
 his brow.  
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen  
 bell  
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on the  
 shore  
 Sloped into louder surf: those that  
 went with me,  
 And those that held the bier before  
 my face,  
 Moved with one spirit round about  
 the bay,  
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walk'd  
 with these  
 In marvel at that gradual change, I  
 thought  
 Four bells instead of one began to  
 ring,  
 Four merry bells, four merry marriage-  
 bells,  
 In clanging cadence jangling-peal on  
 peal—  
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-  
 bells.  
 Then those who led the van, and those  
 in rear,  
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild Bac-  
 chanals  
 Fled onward to the steeple in the  
 woods:  
 I, too, was borne along and felt the  
 blast  
 Beat on my heated eyelids: all at  
 once

The front rank made a sudden halt ;  
 the bells  
 Lapsed into frightful stillness ; the  
 surge fell  
 From thunder into whispers ; those six  
 maids  
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on  
 the sand  
 Threw down the bier ; the woods upon  
 the hill  
 Waved with a sudden gust that sweep-  
 ing down  
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew  
 it far  
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud  
 Over the sounding seas : I turn'd : my  
 heart  
 Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the  
 hand,  
 Waiting to see the settled countenance  
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading  
 flowers.  
 But she from out her death-like  
 chrysalis,  
 She from her bier, as into fresher  
 life,  
 My sister, and my cousin, and my  
 love,  
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white —  
 her hair  
 Studded with one rich Provence rose  
 — a light  
 Of smiling welcome round her lips —  
 her eyes  
 And cheeks as bright as when she  
 climb'd the hill.  
 One hand she reach'd to those that  
 came behind,  
 And while I mused nor yet endured  
 to take  
 So rich a prize, the man who stood  
 with me  
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down  
 his robes,  
 And clapt her hand in his : again the  
 bells  
 Jangled and clang'd : again the stormy  
 surf  
 Crash'd in the shingle : and the whirl-  
 ing rout  
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,  
 and fled

Wind-footed to the steeple in the  
 woods,  
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy  
 bowers,  
 And I stood sole beside the vacant  
 bier.

There, there, my latest vision — then  
 the event !

## IV.

THE GOLDEN SUPPER.<sup>1</sup>

(Another speaks.)

HE flies the event : he leaves the event  
 to me :  
 Poor Julian — how he rush'd away ;  
 the bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear  
 and heart —  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you  
 saw,  
 As who should say "Continue." Well  
 he had  
 One golden hour — of triumph shall I  
 say ?  
 Solace at least — before he left his  
 home.

Would you had seen him in that  
 hour of his !  
 He moved thro' all of it majesti-  
 cally —  
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close —  
 but now —

Whether they were his lady's mar-  
 riage bells,  
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,  
 I never ask'd : but Lionel and the girl  
 Were wedded, and our Julian came  
 again  
 Back to his mother's house among the  
 pines.  
 But these, their gloom, the mountains  
 and the Bay,  
 The whole land weigh'd him down as  
 Ætna does  
 The Giant of Mythology : he would  
 go,

<sup>1</sup> This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 647.

Would leave the land for ever, and  
 had gone  
 Surely, but for a whisper, "Go not  
 yet,"  
 Some warning — sent divinely — as it  
 seem'd  
 By that which follow'd — but of this  
 I deem  
 As of the visions that he told — the  
 event  
 Glanced back upon them in his after  
 life,  
 And partly made them — tho' he knew  
 it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not  
 look at her —  
 No not for months: but, when the  
 eleventh moon  
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,  
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell,  
 and said,  
 Would you could toll me out of life,  
 but found —  
 All softly as his mother broke it to  
 him —  
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear,  
 For that low knell tolling his lady  
 dead —  
 Dead — and had lain three days with-  
 out a pulse:  
 All that look'd on her had pronounced  
 her dead.  
 And so they bore her (for in Julian's  
 land  
 They never nail a dumb head up in  
 elm),  
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of  
 heaven,  
 And laid her in the vault of her own  
 kin.

What did he then? not die: he is  
 here and hale —  
 Not plunge headforemost from the  
 mountain there,  
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap:  
 not he:  
 He knew the meaning of the whisper  
 now,  
 Thought that he knew it. "This, I  
 stay'd for this;

O love, I have not seen you for so  
 long.  
 Now, now, will I go down into the  
 grave,  
 I will be all alone with all I love,  
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his  
 no more:  
 The dead returns to me, and I go down  
 To kiss the dead."

The fancy stirr'd him so  
 He rose and went, and entering the  
 dim vault,  
 And, making there a sudden light, be-  
 held  
 All round about him that which all  
 will be.  
 The light was but a flash, and went  
 again.  
 Then at the far end of the vault he saw  
 His lady with the moonlight on her  
 face;  
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars  
 Of black and bands of silver, which  
 the moon  
 Struck from an open grating overhead  
 High in the wall, and all the rest of  
 her  
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of  
 the vault.

"It was my wish," he said, "to pass,  
 to sleep,  
 To rest, to be with her — till the great  
 day  
 Peal'd on us with that music which  
 rights all,  
 And raised us hand in hand." And  
 kneeling there  
 Down in the dreadful dust that once  
 was man,  
 Dust, as he said, that once was loving  
 hearts,  
 Hearts that had heat with such a love  
 as mine —  
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as  
 her —  
 He softly put his arm about her neck  
 And kiss'd her more than once, till  
 helpless death  
 And silence made him bold — nay, but  
 I wrong him,

He reverenced his dear lady even in death;  
 But, placing his true hand upon her heart,  
 "O, you warm heart," he moan'd,  
 "not even death  
 Can chill you all at once:" then start-  
 ing, thought  
 His dreams had come again. "Do I  
 wake or sleep?  
 Or am I made immortal, or my love  
 Mortal once more?" It beat — the  
 heart — it beat:  
 Faint — but it beat: at which his own  
 began  
 To pulse with such a vehemence that  
 it drown'd  
 The feebler motion underneath his  
 hand.  
 But when at last his doubts were sat-  
 isfied,  
 He raised her softly from the sepul-  
 chre,  
 And, wrapping her all over with the  
 cloak  
 He came in, and now striding fast, and  
 now  
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore  
 Holding his golden burthen in his  
 arms,  
 So bore her thro' the solitary land  
 Back to the mother's house where she  
 was born.

There the good mother's kindly min-  
 istering,  
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd  
 Her fluttering life: she rais'd an eye  
 that ask'd  
 "Where?" till the things familiar to  
 her youth  
 Had made a silent answer: then she  
 spoke  
 "Here! and how came I here?" and  
 learning it  
 (They told her somewhat rashly as I  
 think)  
 At once began to wander and to wail,  
 "Ay, but you know that you must give  
 me back:  
 Send! bid him come;" but Lionel  
 was away —

Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none  
 knew where.  
 "He casts me out," she wept, "and  
 goes" — a wail  
 That seeming something, yet was noth-  
 ing, born  
 Not from believing mind, but shatter'd  
 nerve,  
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-  
 proof  
 At some precipitance in her burial.  
 Then, when her own true spirit had  
 return'd,  
 "Oh yes, and you," she said, "and  
 none but you?  
 For you have given me life and love  
 again,  
 And none but you yourself shall tell  
 him of it,  
 And you shall give me back when he  
 returns."  
 "Stay then a little," answer'd Julian,  
 "here,  
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to  
 yourself;  
 And I will do your will. I may not  
 stay,  
 No, not an hour; but send me notice  
 of him  
 When he returns, and then will I re-  
 turn,  
 And I will make a solemn offering of  
 you  
 To him you love." And faintly she  
 replied,  
 "And I will do *your* will, and none  
 shall know."

Not know? with such a secret to be  
 known.  
 But all their house was old and loved  
 them both,  
 And all the house had known the loves  
 of both;  
 Had died almost to serve them any-  
 way,  
 And all the land was waste and soli-  
 tary:  
 And then he rode away; but after this,  
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail came  
 Upon her, and that day a boy was born,  
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,  
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,  
 There fever seized upon him: myself  
 was then  
 Travelling that land, and meant to  
 rest an hour;  
 And sitting down to such a base repast,  
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—  
 I heard a groaning overhead, and  
 climb'd  
 The moulder'd stairs (for everything  
 was vile)  
 And in a loft, with none to wait on  
 him,  
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,  
 Raving of dead men's dust and beat-  
 ing hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
 A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
 But there from fever and my care of  
 him  
 Sprang up a friendship that may help  
 us yet.  
 For while we roam'd along the dreary  
 coast,  
 And waited for her message, piece by  
 piece  
 I learnt the dearier story of his life;  
 And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,  
 Found that the sudden wail his lady  
 made  
 Dwelt in his fancy: did he know her  
 worth,  
 Her beauty even? should he not be  
 taught,  
 Ev'n by the price that others set upon it,  
 The value of that jewel he had to  
 guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we  
 past,  
 I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,  
 the soul:  
 That makes the sequel pure; tho'  
 some of us  
 Beginning at the sequel know no more.  
 Not such am I: and yet I say the bird  
 That will not hear my call, however  
 sweet,

But if my neighbor whistle answers  
 him—  
 What matter? there are others in the  
 wood.  
 Yet when I saw her (and I thought him  
 crazed,  
 Tho' not with such a craziness as needs  
 A cell and keeper), those dark eyes  
 of hers—  
 Oh! such dark eyes! and not her eyes  
 alone,  
 But all from these to where she touch'd  
 on earth,  
 For such a craziness as Julian's look'd  
 No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came  
 To greet us, her young hero in her  
 arms!  
 "Kiss him," she said. "You gave me  
 life again.  
 He, but for you, had never seen it once.  
 His other father you! Kiss him, and  
 then  
 Forgive him, if his name be Julian too."

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart!  
 his own  
 Sent such a flame into his face, I  
 knew  
 Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him  
 there.

But he was all the more resolved to  
 go,  
 And sent at once to Lionel, praying  
 him  
 By that great love they both had  
 borne the dead,  
 To come and revel for one hour with  
 him  
 Before he left the land for evermore;  
 And then to friends—they were not  
 many—who lived  
 Scatteringly about that lonely land  
 of his,  
 And bade them to a banquet of fare-  
 wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast: I  
 never  
 Sat at a costlier; for all round his hall

From column on to column, as in a  
wood,  
Not such as here — an equatorial one,  
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;  
and beneath,  
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of  
Art,  
Chalice and salver, wines that, Heaven  
knows when,  
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten  
sun,  
And kept it thro' a hundred years of  
gloom,  
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby — cups  
Where nymph and god ran ever round  
in gold —  
Others of glass as costly — some with  
gems  
Movable and resettable at will,  
And trebling all the rest in value —  
Al! heavens!  
Why need I tell you all? — suffice to  
say  
That whatsoever such a house as his,  
And his was old, has in it rare or fair  
Was brought before the guest: and did  
they, the guests,  
Wonder'd at some strange light in  
Julian's eyes  
(I told you that he had his golden  
hour),  
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd  
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his  
And that resolved self-exile from a  
land  
He never would revisit, such a feast  
So rich, so strange, and stranger ev'n  
than rich,  
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the  
hall  
Two great funeral curtains, looping  
down,  
Parted a little ere they met the floor,  
About a picture of his lady, taken  
Some years before, and falling hid the  
frame.  
And just above the parting was a  
lamp:  
So the sweet figure folded round with  
night

Seem'd stepping out of darkness with  
a smile.

Well then — our solemn feast — we  
ate and drank,  
And might — the wines being of such  
nobleness —  
Have jested also, but for Julian's eyes,  
And something weird and wild about  
it all:  
What was it? for our lover seldom  
spoke,  
Scarce touch'd the meats; but ever  
and anon  
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine  
Arising, show'd he drank beyond his  
use;  
And when the feast was near an end,  
he said:

“There is a custom in the Orient,  
friends —  
I read of it in Persia — when a man  
Will honor those who feast with him,  
he brings  
And shows them whatsoever he ac-  
counts  
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,  
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may be.  
This custom —”

Pausing here a moment, all  
The guests broke in upon him with  
meeting hands  
And cries about the banquet — “ Beau-  
tiful!  
Who could desire more beauty at a  
feast?”

The lover answer'd, “There is more  
than one  
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me  
not  
Before my time, but hear me to the  
close.  
This custom steps yet further when  
the guest  
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost  
For after he hath shown him gems or  
gold,  
He brings and sets before him in rich  
guise

That which is thrice as beautiful as  
these,  
The beauty that is dearest to his  
heart —  
'O my heart's lord, would I could  
show you,' he says,  
'Ev'n my heart too.' And I propose  
to-night  
To show you what is dearest to my  
heart,  
And my heart too.

"But solve me first a doubt.  
I knew a man, nor many years ago;  
He had a faithful servant, one who  
loved  
His master more than all on earth  
beside.  
He falling sick, and seeming close on  
death,  
His master would not wait until he  
died,  
But bade his menials bear him from  
the door,  
And leave him in the public way to  
die.  
I knew another, not so long ago,  
Who found the dying servant, took  
him home,  
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved  
his life.  
I ask you now, should this first master  
claim  
His service, whom does it belong to?  
him  
Who thrust him out, or him who saved  
his life?"

This question, so flung down before  
the guests,  
And balanced either way by each, at  
length  
When some were doubtful how the  
law would hold,  
Was handed over by consent of all  
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of  
phrase.  
And he beginning languidly — his loss  
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming  
as he went,

Glanced at the point of law, to pass  
it by,  
Affirming that as long as either lived,  
By all the laws of love and grateful-  
ness,  
The service of the one so saved was  
due  
All to the saver — adding, with a  
smile,  
The first for many weeks — a semi-  
smile  
As at a strong conclusion — "body  
and soul  
And life and limbs, all his to work hi  
will."

Then Julian made a secret sign to  
me  
To bring Camilla down before them  
all.  
And crossing her own picture as she  
came,  
And looking as much lovelier as her-  
self  
Is lovelier than all others — on her  
head  
A diamond circlet, and from under  
this  
A veil, that seemed no more than  
gilded air,  
Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern  
gauze  
With seeds of gold — so, with that  
grace of hers,  
Slow-moving as a wave against the  
wind,  
That flings a mist behind it in the  
sun —  
And bearing high in arms the mighty  
babe,  
The younger Julian, who himself was  
crown'd  
With roses, none so rosy as himself —  
And over all her babe and her the  
jewels  
Of many generations of his house  
Sparkled and flash'd, for he had  
decked them out  
As for a solemn sacrifice of love —  
So she came in: — I am long in telling  
it,  
I never yet beheld a thing so strange,

Sad, sweet, and strange together —  
 floated in —  
 While all the guests in mute amaze-  
 ment rose —  
 And slowly pacing to the middle  
 hall,  
 Before the board, there paused and  
 stood, her breast  
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her  
 feet,  
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.  
 But him she carried, him nor lights  
 nor feast  
 Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men ;  
 who cared  
 Only to use his own, and staring wide  
 And hungering for the gilt and  
 jewell'd world  
 About him, look'd, as he is like to  
 prove,  
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he  
 saw.

“My guests,” said Julian: “you  
 are honor'd now  
 Ev'n to the uttermost: in her behold  
 Of all my treasures the most beau-  
 tiful,  
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to  
 me.”  
 Then waving us a sign to seat our-  
 selves,  
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.  
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his face  
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again  
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble  
 too,  
 And heard him muttering, “So like,  
 so like ;  
 She never had a sister. I knew none.  
 Some cousin of his and hers — O God,  
 so like !”  
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if  
 she were.  
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,  
 and was dumb.  
 And then some other question'd if she  
 came  
 From foreign lands, and still she did  
 not speak.  
 Another, if the boy were hers: but  
 she

To all their queries answer'd not a  
 word,  
 Which made the amazement more,  
 till one of them  
 Said, shuddering, “Her spectre !”  
 But his friend  
 Replied, in half a whisper, “Not at  
 least  
 The spectre that will speak if spoken  
 to.  
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful  
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,  
 dumb !”

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd  
 all :  
 “She is but dumb, because in her you  
 see  
 That faithful servant whom we spoke  
 about,  
 Obedient to her second master now ;  
 Which will not last. I have here to-  
 night a guest  
 So bound to me by common love and  
 loss —  
 What ! shall I bind him more ? in his  
 behalf,  
 Shall I exceed the Persian, giving  
 him  
 That which of all things is the dearest  
 to me,  
 Not only showing ? and he himself  
 pronounced  
 That my rich gift is wholly mine to  
 give.

“Now all be dumb, and promise all  
 of you  
 Not to break in on what I say by  
 word  
 Or whisper, while I show you all my  
 heart.”  
 And then began the story of his love  
 As here to-day, but not so wordily —  
 The passionate moment would not  
 suffer that —  
 Past thro' his visions to the burial ;  
 thence  
 Down to this last strange hour in his  
 own hall ;  
 And then rose up, and with him all  
 his guests



Once more as by enchantment; all  
 but he,  
 Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell  
 again,  
 And sat as if in chains — to whom he  
 said :

“Take my free gift, my consin, for  
 your wife;  
 And were it only for the giver's sake,  
 And tho' she seem so like the one you  
 lost,  
 Yet cast her not away so suddenly,  
 Lest there be none left here to bring  
 her back :  
 I leave this land for ever.” Here he  
 ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one  
 hand,  
 And bearing on one arm the noble  
 babe,  
 He slowly brought them both to  
 Lionel.  
 And there the widower husband and  
 dead wife  
 Rush'd each at each with a cry, that  
 rather seem'd

For some new death than for a life  
 renew'd;  
 Whereat the very babe began to wail;  
 At once they turn'd, and caught and  
 brought him in  
 To their charm'd circle, and, half kill-  
 ing him  
 With kisses, round him closed and  
 claspt again.  
 But Lionel, when at last he freed him-  
 self  
 From wife and child, and lifted up a  
 face  
 All over glowing with the sun of  
 life,  
 And love, and boundless thanks —  
 the sight of this  
 So frighted our good friend, that turn-  
 ing to me  
 And saying, “It is over: let us  
 go” —  
 There were our horses ready at the  
 doors —  
 We bade them no farewell, but mount-  
 ing these  
 He past for ever from his native land;  
 And I with him, my Julian, back to  
 mine.

# BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS.

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON,

MY GRANDSON.

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is one with mine,  
Crazy with laughter and babble and earth's new wine,  
Now that the flower of a year and a half is thine,  
O little blossom, O mine, and mine of mine,  
Glorious poet who never hast written a line,  
Laugh, for the name at the head of my verse is thine.  
May'st thou never be wrong'd by the name that is mine!

## THE FIRST QUARREL.

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT.)

I.

"WAIT a little," you say, "you are  
sure it'll all come right,"  
But the boy was born i' trouble, an'  
looks so wan an' so white:  
Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I hadn't  
to wait for long.

Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. —  
No, no, you are doing me  
wrong!

Harry and I were married: the boy  
can hold up his head,

The boy was born in wedlock, but  
after my man was dead;

I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'  
I work an' I wait to the end.

I am all alone in the world, an' you  
are my only friend.

II.

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you  
the tale o' my life.

When Harry an' I were children, he  
call'd me his own little wife;

I was happy when I was with him, an'  
sorry when he was away,  
An' when we play'd together, I loved  
him better than play;  
He workt me the daisy chain — he  
made me the cowslip ball,  
He fought the boys that were rude,  
an' I loved him better than all.  
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at  
home in disgrace,  
I never could quarrel with Harry — I  
had but to look in his face.

III.

There was a farmer in Dorset of  
Harry's kin, that had need

Of a good stout lad at his farm; he  
sent, an' the father agreed;

So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire  
farm for years an' for years;

I walked with him down to the quay,  
poor lad, an' we parted in tears.

The boat was beginning to move, we  
heard them a-ringing the bell,

"I'll never love any but you, God  
bless you, my own little Nell."

IV.

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'  
he came to harm;

There was a girl, a hussy, that workt  
with him up at the farm,  
One had deceived her an' left her  
alone with her sin an' her shame,  
And so shewas wicked with Harry; the  
girl was the most to blame.

## v

And years went over till I that was  
little had grown so tall,  
The men would say of the maids, "Our  
Nelly's the flower of 'em all."  
I didn't take heed o' *them*, but I taught  
myself all I could  
To make a good wife for Harry, when  
Harry came home for good.

## vi.

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as  
happy too,  
For I heard it abroad in the fields "I'll  
never love any but you";  
"I'll never love any but you" the  
morning song of the lark,  
"I'll never love any but you" the night-  
ingale's hymn in the dark.

## vii.

And Harry came home at last, but he  
look'd at me sidelong and shy,  
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so  
many years had gone by,  
I had grown so handsome and tall —  
that I might ha' forgot him  
somehow —  
For he thought — there were other  
lads — he was fear'd to look  
at me now.

## viii.

Hard was the frost in the field, we were  
married o' Christmas day,  
Married among the red berries, an' all  
as merry as May —  
Those were the pleasant times, my  
house an' my man were my  
pride,  
We seem'd like ships i' the Channel  
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

## ix.

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'  
he tried the villages round,  
So Harry went over the Solent to see  
if work could be found;  
An' he wrote, "I ha' six weeks' work,  
little wife, so far as I know;  
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'  
kiss you before I go."

## x.

So I set to righting the house, for  
wasn't he coming that day?  
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was  
push'd in a corner away,  
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a  
letter along wi' the rest,  
I had better ha' put my naked hand  
in a hornets' nest.

## xi.

"Sweetheart" — this was the letter —  
this was the letter I read —  
"You promised to find me work near  
you, an' I wish I was dead —  
Didn't you kiss me an' promise? you  
haven't done it, my lad,  
An' I almost died o' your going away,  
an' I wish that I had."

## xii.

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant  
times that had past,  
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my*  
quarrel — the first an' the last.

## xiii.

For Harry came in, an' I flung him  
the letter that drove me wild,  
An' he told it me all at once, as simple  
as any child,  
"What can it matter, my lass, what I  
did wi' my single life?  
I ha' been as true to you as ever a  
man to his wife;  
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst."  
"Then," I said, "I'm none o' the  
best."  
An' he smiled at me, "Ain't you, my  
love? Come, come, little wife,  
'et it rest!

The man isn't like the woman, no  
 need to make such a stir."  
 But he anger'd me all the more, an' I  
 said "You were keeping with her,  
 When I was a-loving you all along an'  
 the same as before."  
 An' he didn't speak for a while, an'  
 he anger'd me more and more.  
 Then he patted my hand in his gentle  
 way, "Let bygones be!"  
 "Bygones! you kept yours hush'd," I  
 said, "when you married me!  
 By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' she  
 — in her shame an' her sin —  
 You'll have her to nurse my child, if  
 I die o' my lying in!  
 You'll make her its second mother! I  
 hate her — an' I hate you!"  
 Ah, Harry, my man, you had better  
 ha' beaten me black an' blue  
 Than ha' spoken as kind as you did,  
 when I were so crazy wi' spite,  
 "Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it 'ill  
 all come right."

## XIV.

An' he took three turns in the rain,  
 an' I watch'd him, an' when he  
 came in  
 I felt that my heart was hard, he was  
 all wet thro' to the skin,  
 An' I never said "off wi' the wet," I  
 never said "on wi' the dry,"  
 So I knew my heart was hard, when  
 he came to bid me goodbye.  
 "You said that you hated me, Ellen,  
 but that isn't true, you know;  
 I am going to leave you a bit — you'll  
 kiss me before I go?"

## XV.

"Going! you're going to her — kiss  
 her — if you will," I said, —  
 I was near my time wi' the boy, I must  
 ha' been light i' my head —  
 "I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!"  
 — I didn't know well what I  
 meant,  
 But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he  
 turn'd *his* face an' he went.

## XVI.

And then he sent me a letter, "I've  
 gotten my work to do;  
 You wouldn't kiss me, my lass, an' I  
 never loved any but you;  
 I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry  
 for what she wrote,  
 I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go  
 to-night by the boat."

## XVII.

An' the wind began to rise, an' I  
 thought of him out at sea,  
 An' I felt I had been to blame; he  
 was always kind to me.  
 "Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it  
 'ill all come right" —  
 An' the boat went down that night —  
 the boat went down that night.

## RIZPAH.

## 17—.

## I.

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind  
 over land and sea —  
 And Willy's voice in the wind, "O  
 mother, come out to me."  
 Why should he call me to-night, when  
 he knows that I cannot go?  
 For the downs are as bright as day, and  
 the full moon stares at the snow.

## II.

We should be seen, my dear; they  
 would spy us out of the town.  
 The loud black nights for us, and the  
 storm rushing over the down,  
 When I cannot see my own hand, but  
 am led by the creak of the chain,  
 And grovel and grope for my son till I  
 find myself drenched with the  
 rain.

## III.

Anything fallen again? nay — what  
 was there left to fall?  
 I have taken them home, I have num-  
 ber'd the bones, I have hidden  
 them all.

What am I saying? and what are you?  
do you come as a spy?  
Falls? what falls? who knows? As  
the tree falls so must it lie.

## IV.

Who let her in? how long has she been?  
you — what have you heard?  
Why did you sit so quiet? you never  
have spoken a word.  
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady  
— none of their spies —  
But the night has crept into my heart,  
and begun to darken my eyes.

## V.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft,  
what should you know of the  
night,  
The blast and the burning shame and  
the bitter frost and the fright?  
I have done it, while you were asleep —  
you were only made for the day.  
I have gather'd my baby together —  
and now you may go your way.

## VI.

Nay — for it's kind of you, Madam, to  
sit by an old dying wife.  
But say nothing hard of my boy, I  
have only an hour of life.  
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before  
he went out to die.  
"They dared me to do it," he said,  
and he never has told me a lie.  
I whipt him for robbing an orchard  
once when he was but a child —  
"The farmer dared me to do it," he  
said; he was always so wild —  
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my  
Willy — he never could rest.  
The King should have made him a  
soldier, he would have been  
one of his best.

## VII.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,  
and they never would let him  
be good;  
They swore that he dare not rob the  
mail, and he swore that he  
would:

And he took no life, but he took one  
purse, and when all was done  
He flung it among his fellows — I'll  
none of it, said my son.

## VIII.

I came into court to the Judge and the  
lawyers. I told them my tale.  
God's own truth — but they kill'd him,  
they kill'd him for robbing the  
mail.  
They hang'd him in chains for a show  
— we had always horne a good  
name —  
To be hang'd for a thief — and then  
put away — isn't that enough  
shame?  
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide!  
but they set him so high  
That all the ships of the world could  
stare at him, passing by.  
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven  
and horrible fowls of the air,  
But not the black heart of the lawyer  
who kill'd him and hang'd him  
there.

## IX.

And the jailer forced me away. I had  
bid him my last goodbye;  
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.  
"O mother!" I heard him cry.  
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had  
something further to say,  
And now I never shall know it. The  
jailer forced me away.

## X.

Then since I couldn't but hear that  
cry of my boy that was dead,  
They seized me and shut me up: they  
fasten'd me down on my bed.  
"Mother, O mother!" — he call'd in the  
dark to me year after year —  
They beat me for that, they beat me  
— you know that I couldn't but  
hear;  
And then at the last they found I had  
grown so stupid and still  
They let me abroad again — but the  
creztures had worked their will.

## XI.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone  
of my bone was left—  
I stole them all from the lawyers—  
and you, will you call it a  
theft?—  
My baby, the bones that had suck'd  
me, the bones that had laughed  
and had cried—  
Theirs? O no! they are mine— not  
theirs— they had moved in my  
side.

## XII.

Do you think I was scared by the  
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried  
'em all—  
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the  
night by the churchyard wall.  
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the  
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,  
But I charge you never to say that I  
laid him in holy ground.

## XIII.

They would scratch him up— they  
would hang him again on the  
cursed tree.  
Sin? O yes— we are sinners, I know  
— let all that be,  
And read me a Bible verse of the  
Lord's good will toward men—  
"Full of compassion and mercy, the  
Lord"— let me hear it again;  
"Full of compassion and mercy—  
long-suffering." Yes, O yes!  
For the lawyer is born but to murder  
— the Saviour lives but to bless.  
He'll never put on the black cap except  
for the worst of the worst,  
And the first may be last—I have  
heard it in church—and the  
last may be first.  
Suffering— O long-suffering— yes, as  
the Lord must know,  
Year after year in the mist and the  
wind and the shower and the  
snow.

## XIV.

Heard, have you? what? they have  
told you he never repented his  
sin.  
How do they know it? are *they* his  
mother? are *you* of his kin?  
Heard! have you ever heard, when  
the storm on the downs began,  
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and  
the sea that 'ill moan like a  
man?

## XV.

Election, Election and Reprobation—  
it's all very well.  
But I go to-night to my boy, and I  
shall not find him in Hell.  
For I cared so much for my boy that  
the Lord has look'd into my  
care,  
And He means me I'm sure to be happy  
with Willy, I know not where.

## XVI.

And if *he* be lost— but to save *my* soul,  
that is all your desire:  
Do you think that I care for *my* soul  
if my boy be gone to the fire?  
I have been with God in the dark— go,  
go, you may leave me alone—  
You never have borne a child— you  
are just as hard as a stone.

## XVII.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think  
that you mean to be kind,  
But I cannot hear what you say for my  
Willy's voice in the wind—  
The snow and the sky so bright— he  
used but to call in the dark,  
And he calls to me now from the  
church and not from the gibbet  
— for hark!  
Nay— you can hear it yourself— it is  
coming— shaking the walls—  
Willy— the moon's in a cloud—  
Good night. I am going. He  
calls.

## THE NORTHERN COBBLER.

## I.

WAÄIT till our Sally cooms in, fur  
 thou mun a' sights<sup>1</sup> to tell.  
 Eh, but I be maän glad to seeä tha sa  
 'arty an' well.  
 "Cast awaäy an a disolut land wi' a  
 vartical soon<sup>2</sup>!"  
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what  
 saäilors a' seëan an' a' doon;  
 "Summat to drink — sa' 'ot?" I 'a  
 nowt but Adam's wine:  
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side to  
 the 'eät o' the line?

## II.

\* What's i' tha bottle a-stanning  
 theer?" I'll tell tha. Gin.  
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun  
 goä fur it down to the inn.  
 Naay — fur I be maän-glad, but thaw  
 tha was iver sa dry,  
 Thougits naw gin fro' the bottle theer,  
 an' I'll tell tha why.

## III.

Meä an' thy sister was married, when  
 wur it? back-end o' June,  
 Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well  
 as a fiddle i' tune:  
 I could fettle and clump owd booöts  
 and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,  
 As fur as fro' Thursby thurn hup to  
 Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.  
 We was busy as beeäs i' the bloom an'  
 as 'appy as 'art could think,  
 An' then the babby wur burn, and  
 then I taäkes to the drink.

<sup>1</sup> The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately  
 though in the closest conjunction, best render  
 the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect.  
 But since such words as *craän*, *daän*, *whai*,  
*ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page  
 of express phonetics, I have thought it better  
 to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and trust that my  
 readers will give them the broader pronounci-  
 ation.

<sup>2</sup> The *oo* short, as in "wood."

## IV.

An' I weänt gaäinsaäy it, my lad, thaw  
 I he hafe shaämed on it now,  
 We could sing a good song at the  
 Plow, we could sing a good song  
 at the Plow;  
 Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd  
 an' hurted my huck,<sup>1</sup>  
 An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes  
 slaäpe down i' the squad an'  
 the muck:  
 An' once I fowt wi' the Taäilor — not  
 hafe ov a man, my lad —  
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scatted my faäce  
 like a cat, an' it maäde 'er sa  
 mad  
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-bang-  
 er,<sup>2</sup> an' raäted ma, 'Sottin' thy  
 braäins  
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'  
 hawmin' <sup>3</sup> about i' the laänes,  
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not  
 touch thy 'at to the Squire;<sup>3</sup>  
 An' I loök'd cock-eyed at my noäse  
 an' I seeäd 'im a-gitten' o' fire;  
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an' hal-  
 lus as droonk as a king,  
 Foälks' coostom fittet awaäy like a  
 kite wi' a brokken string.

## V.

An' Sally she wesh'd foälks' cloäths  
 to keep the wolf fro' the door,  
 Eh but the moor she riled me, she  
 druv me to drink the moor,  
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,  
 wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur  
 'id,  
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde,  
 and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

## VI.

An' one night I cooms 'oäm like a  
 bull gotten loose at a faäir,  
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'  
 cryin' and teärin' 'er 'aäir,  
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'  
 sweär'd as I'd break ivry stick

<sup>1</sup> Hip.<sup>2</sup> Scold.<sup>3</sup> Lounging.

O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied  
our Sally a kick,  
An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,  
an' she an' the babby beäl'd,<sup>1</sup>  
Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did  
nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

## VII.

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I  
seeäd that our Sally went  
läämed  
Cos' o' the kick as I gied 'er, an' I wur  
dreädfül ashaämed;  
An' Sally wur sloomy<sup>2</sup> an' draggle  
taäil'd in an owd turn gown,  
An' the babby's faäce wur'n't wesh'd  
and the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

## VIII.

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty  
an' neät an' sweeät,  
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower  
fro' 'eäd to feeät:  
An' then I minded the fust küss I gied  
'er by Thursby thurn;  
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of  
a Sunday at murn,  
Couldn't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-  
mountin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,  
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e  
shined like a sparkle o' fire.  
"Doesn't tha see 'im," she axes, "fur  
I can see 'im?" an' I  
Seeäd nobbut the smile o' the sun as  
danced in 'er pratty blue eye;  
An' I says "I mun gie tha a kiss," an'  
Sally says "Noä, thou moänt,"  
But I gied'er a kiss, an' then anoother,  
an' Sally says "doänt!"

## IX.

An' when we coom'd into Meeätin', at  
fust she wur all in a tew,  
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn together  
like birds on a beugh;  
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' Hell-fire  
an' the loove o' God fur men,  
An then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally  
gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

<sup>1</sup> Bellowed, cried out.<sup>2</sup> Sluggish, out of spirits.

## x.

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick  
like Saätan as fell  
Down out o' heaven i' Hell-fire — thaw  
theer's naw drinkin' i' Hell;  
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the  
wolf fro' the door,  
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er  
as well as afoor.

## XI.

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blub-  
ber'd awaäy o' the bed —  
"Weänt niver do it naw moor;"  
an' Sally looökt up an' she said,  
"I'll upowd it<sup>1</sup> tha weänt; thou'rt  
like the rest o' the men,  
Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till  
tha does it agëan.  
Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I  
knavs, as knaws tha sa well,  
That, if tha seeäs 'im an' smells 'im  
tha'll foller 'im slick into Hell."

## XII.

"Naäy," says I, "fur I weänt goä  
sniffin' about the tap."  
"Weänt tha?" she says, an' mysen I  
thowt i' mysen "mayhap."  
"Noä:" an' I started awaäy like a  
shot, an' down to the Hinn,  
An' I browt what tha seeäs stannin'  
theer, yon big black bottle o'  
gin.

## XIII.

"That caps owt,"<sup>2</sup> says Sally, an' saw  
she begins to cry,  
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands 'an I says  
to 'er, "Sally," says I,  
"Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the  
Lord an' the power ov 'is  
Graäce,  
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll looök my  
hennemy straät i' the faäce,  
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let  
ma looök at 'im then,  
'E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an'  
'e's the Devil's oän sen."

<sup>1</sup> I'll uphold it.<sup>2</sup> That's beyond everything.



## XIV.

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, couldn't  
do naw work an' all,  
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'  
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,  
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'  
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,  
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till  
ageän I feel'd mysen free.

## XV.

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk  
stood a-gawmin'<sup>1</sup> in,  
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd  
instead of a quart o' gin;  
An' some on 'em said it wur watter —  
an' I wur chousin' the wife,  
Fur I couldn't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur  
it nobbut to saäve my life;  
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick  
ov 'is airm, an' 'e shaws it to me,  
"Feäl thou this! thou can't grow  
this upo' watter!" says he.  
An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just  
as candles was lit,  
"Thou moänt do it," he says, "tha  
mun break 'im off bit by bit."  
"Thou'rt but a Methody-man," says  
Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,  
An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, "but  
I respects tha fur that;"  
An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks  
down fro' the 'All to see,  
An' 'e spansk 'is 'and into mine, "fur  
I respects tha," says 'e;  
An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a  
wind fro' far an' wide,  
And browt me the booöts to be cob-  
bled fro' hafe the coontryside.

## XVI.

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall  
stan to my dying daäy;  
I 'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in  
anoother kind of a waäy,  
Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I  
keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,  
Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts  
'im, an' puts 'im back i' the light.

<sup>1</sup> Staring vacantly.

## XVII.

Wouldn't a pint a' sarved as well as a  
quart? Naw doubt:  
But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'  
an' fowt it out.  
Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I  
cared to taäste,  
But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur  
I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-  
graaced.

## XVIII.

An' once I said to the Missis, "My  
lass, when I cooms to die,  
Smash the bottle to smithers, the  
Divil's in 'im," said I.  
But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if  
Sally be left aloän,  
I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an' taäke  
'im afoor the Throän.

## XIX.

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin'  
along the streeät,  
Doesn't tha know 'er — sa pratty, an'  
feät, an' neät, an' sweetät?  
Look at the cloäths on 'er back,  
thebbe ammost spick-span-new,  
An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a  
codlin wesh'd i' the dew.

## XX.

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we  
be a-goin to dine,  
Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-  
din'<sup>1</sup> an' Adam's wine;  
But if tha wants ony grog tha mun  
goä fur it down to the Hinn,  
Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is blood,  
noä, not fur Sally's oän kin.

## THE REVENGE.

## A BALLAD OF THE FLEET.

## I.

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard  
Grenville lay,  
And a pinnance, like a flutter'd bird,  
came flying from far away:

<sup>1</sup> A pudding made with the first milk of  
the cow after calving.

"Spanish ships of war at sea! we  
have sighted fifty-three!"

Then swore Lord Thomas Howard.

"Fore God I am no coward;

But I cannot meet them here, for my  
ships are out of gear,

And the half my men are sick. I  
must fly, but follow quick.

¶ We are six ships of the line; can we  
fight with fifty-three?"

## II.

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I  
know you are no coward;

You fly them for a moment to fight  
with them again.

But I've ninety men and more that  
are lying sick ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I  
left them, my Lord Howard,

To these Inquisition dogs and the  
devildoms of Spain."

## III.

So Lord Howard past away with five  
ships of war that day,

Till he melted like a cloud in the  
silent summer heaven;

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his  
sick men from the land

Very carefully and slow,  
Men of Bideford in Devon,

And we laid them on the ballast down  
below;

For we brought them all aboard,  
And they blest him in their pain, that  
they were not left to Spain,

To the thumbscrew and the stake, for  
the glory of the Lord.

## IV.

He had only a hundred seamen to  
work the ship and to fight,

And he sailed away from Flores till  
the Spaniard came in sight,

With his huge sea-castles heaving  
upon the weather bow.

"Shall we fight or shall we fly?

Good Sir Richard, tell us now,

For to fight is but to die!

There'll be little of us left by the  
time this sun be set."

And Sir Richard said again: "We be  
all good English men.

Let us hang these dogs of Seville, the  
children of the devil,

For I never turn'd my back upon  
Don or devil yet."

## V.

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and  
we roar'd a hurrah, and so

The little Revenge ran on sheer into  
the heart of the foe,

With her hundred fighters on deck,  
and her ninety sick below,

For half of their fleet to the right  
and half to the left were seen,

And the little Revenge ran on thro'  
the long sea-lane between.

## VI.

Thousands of their soldiers look'd  
down from their decks and

laugh'd,  
Thousands of their seamen made

mock at the mad little craft  
Running on and on, till delay'd

By their mountain-like San Philip  
that, of fifteen hundred tons,

And up-shadowing high above us with  
her yawning tiers of guns,

Took the breath from our sails, and  
we stay'd.

## VII.

And while now the great San Philip  
hung above us like a cloud

Whence the thunderbolt will fall  
Long and loud,

Four galleons drew away  
From the Spanish fleet that day,

And two upon the larboard and two  
upon the starboard lay,

And the battle-thunder broke from  
them all.

## VIII.

But anon the great San Philip, she be-  
thought herself and went

Having that within her womb that  
had left her ill content;

And the rest they came aboard us, and  
they fought us hand to hand,  
For a dozen times they came with  
their pikes and musqueteers,  
And a dozen times we shook 'em off  
as a dog that shakes his ears  
When he leaps from the water to the  
land.

## IX.

And the sun went down, and the stars  
came out far over the summer  
sea,  
But never a moment ceased the fight  
of the one and the fifty-three.  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
their high-built galleons came,  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
with her battle-thunder and  
flame;  
Ship after ship, the whole night long,  
drew back with her dead and her  
shame.  
For some were sunk and many were  
shatter'd, and so could fight us  
no more —  
God of battles, was ever a battle like  
this in the world before ?

## X.

For he said "Fight on! fight on!"  
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;  
And it chanced that, when half of the  
short summer night was gone,  
With a grisly wound to be drest he  
had left the deck,  
But a bullet struck him that was  
dressing it suddenly dead,  
And himself he was wounded again in  
the side and the head,  
And he said "Fight on! fight on!"

## XI.

And the night went down, and the sun  
smiled out far over the summer  
sea,  
And the Spanish fleet with broken  
sides lay round us all in a ring;  
But they dared not touch us again,  
for they fear'd that we still  
could sting,

So they watch'd what the end would be,  
And we had not fought them in vain,  
But in perilous plight were we,  
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were  
slain,  
And half of the rest of us maim'd for  
life

In the crash of the cannonades and  
the desperate strife;  
And the sick men down in the hold  
were most of them stark and  
cold,

And the pikes were all broken or bent,  
and the powder was all of it  
spent;

And the masts and the rigging were  
lying over the side;

But Sir Richard cried in his English  
pride,

"We have fought such a fight for a  
day and a night

As may never be fought again!

We have won great glory, my men!

And a day less or more

At sea or ashore,

We die — does it matter when ?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner —  
sink her, split her in twain!

Fall into the hands of God, not into  
the hands of Spain!"

## XII.

And the gunner said "Ay, ay," but  
the seamen made reply:

"We have children, we have wives,

And the Lord hath spared our lives.

We will make the Spaniard promise,  
if we yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to  
strike another blow."

And the lion there lay dying, and they  
yielded to the foe.

## XIII.

And the stately Spanish men to their  
flagship bore him then,

Where they laid him by the mast, old  
Sir Richard caught at last,

And they praised him to his face with  
their courtly foreign grace;

But he rose upon their decks, and he  
cried:

“I have fought for Queen and Faith  
 like a valiant man and true;  
 I have only done my duty as a man is  
 bound to do:  
 With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard  
 Grenville die!”  
 And he fell upon their decks, and he  
 died.

## XIV.

And they stared at the dead that had  
 been so valiant and true,  
 And had holden the power and glory  
 of Spain so cheap  
 That he dared her with one little ship  
 and his English few;  
 Was he devil or man? He was devil  
 for aught they knew,  
 But they sank his body with honor  
 down into the deep,  
 And they mann'd the Revenge with a  
 swarthier alien crew,  
 And away she sail'd with her loss and  
 long'd for her own;  
 When a wind from the lands they had  
 ruin'd awoke from sleep,  
 And the water began to heave and the  
 weather to moan,  
 And or ever that evening ended a  
 great gale blew,  
 And a wave like the wave that is  
 raised by an earthquake grew,  
 Till it smote on their hulls and their  
 sails and their masts and their  
 flags,  
 And the whole sea plunged and fell on  
 the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,  
 And the little Revenge herself went  
 down by the island crags  
 To be lost evermore in the main.

## THE SISTERS.

THEY have left the doors ajar; and  
 by their clash,  
 And prelude on the keys, I know the  
 song,  
 Their favorite — which I call “The  
 Tables Turned.”  
 Evelyn begins it “O diviner Air.”

## EVELYN.

O diviner Air,  
 Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust,  
 the glare,  
 Far from out the west in shadowing  
 showers,  
 Over all the meadow baked and bare,  
 Making fresh and fair  
 All the bowers and the flowers,  
 Fainting flowers, faded bowers,  
 Over all this weary world of ours,  
 Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could  
 better that.  
 Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

## EDITH.

O diviner light,  
 Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon  
 with night,  
 Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding  
 showers,  
 Far from out a sky for ever bright,  
 Over all the woodland'sflooded bowers,  
 Over all the meadow's drowning flow-  
 ers,  
 Over all this ruin'd world of ours,  
 Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and  
 themselves!  
 Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the  
 other,  
 As one is somewhat graver than the  
 other —  
 Edith than Evelyn. Your good Uncle,  
 whom  
 You count the father of your fortune,  
 longs  
 For this alliance: let me ask you then,  
 Which voice most takes you? for I  
 do not doubt  
 Being a watchful parent, you are  
 taken  
 With one or other: tho' sometimes I  
 fear  
 You may be flickering, fluttering in a  
 doubt  
 Between the two — which must not be  
 — which might

Be death to one: they both are beautiful:  
 Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says  
 'The common voice, if one may trust  
 it: she?  
 No! but the paler and the graver,  
 Edith.  
 Woo her and gain her then: no  
 wavering, boy!  
 The graver is perhaps the one for you  
 Who jest and laugh so easily and so  
 well.  
 For love will go by contrast, as by  
 likes.  
 No sisters ever prized each other  
 more.  
 Not so: their mother and her sister  
 loved  
 More passionately still.  
 But that my best  
 And oldest friend, your Uncle, wishes  
 it,  
 And that I know you worthy every-  
 way  
 To be my son, I might, perchance, be  
 loath  
 To part them, or part from them: and  
 yet one  
 Should marry, or all the broad lands  
 in your view  
 From this bay window — which our  
 house has held  
 Three hundred years — will pass col-  
 laterally.  
 My father with a child on either  
 knee,  
 A hand upon the head of either child,  
 Smoothing their locks, as golden as  
 his own  
 Were silver, "get them wedded"  
 would he say.  
 And once my prattling Edith ask'd  
 him "why?"  
 Ay, why? said he, "for why should I  
 go lame?"  
 Then told them of his wars, and of  
 his wound.  
 For see — this wine — the grape from  
 whence it flow'd  
 Was blackening on the slopes of  
 Portugal,

When that brave soldier, down the  
 terrible ridge  
 Plunged in the last fierce charge at  
 Waterloo,  
 And caught the laming bullet. He  
 left me this,  
 Which yet retains a memory of its  
 youth,  
 As I of mine, and my first passion.  
 Come!  
 Here's to your happy union with my  
 child!

Yet must you change your name:  
 no fault of mine!  
 You say that you can do it as willingly  
 As birds make ready for their bridal-  
 time  
 By change of feather: for all that,  
 my boy,  
 Some birds are sick and sullen when  
 they moult.  
 An old and worthy name! but mine  
 that stirr'd  
 Among our civil wars and earlier too  
 Among the Roses, the more venerable.  
 I care not for a name — no fault of  
 mine.  
 Once more — a happier marriage than  
 my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on the  
 plain.  
 The highway running by it leaves a  
 breadth  
 Of sward to left and right, where, long  
 ago,  
 One bright May morning in a world  
 of song,  
 I lay at leisure, watching overhead  
 The aerial poplar wave, an amber  
 spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landau-  
 let  
 Whirl'd by, which, after it had past  
 me, show'd  
 Turning my way, the loveliest face  
 on earth.  
 The face of one there sitting opposite,  
 On whom I brought a strange unhap-  
 piness,  
 That time I did not see.

Love at first sight  
 May seem— with goodly rhyme and  
 reason for it—  
 Possible—at first glimpse, and for a  
 face  
 Gone in a moment— strange. Yet  
 once, when first  
 I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,  
 A moonless night with storm—one  
 lightning-fork  
 Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I  
 loiter'd there  
 The full day after, yet in retrospect  
 That less than momentary thunder-  
 sketch  
 Of lake and mountain conquers all  
 the day.

The Sun himself has limn'd the face  
 for me.  
 Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as  
 well.  
 For look you here— the shadows are  
 too deep,  
 And like the critic's blurring comment  
 make  
 The veriest beauties of the work  
 appear  
 The darkest faults: the sweet eyes  
 frown: the lips  
 Seem but a gash. My sole memorial  
 Of Edith—no, the other,— both  
 indeed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'  
 sense and soul  
 And by the poplar vanish'd—to be  
 found  
 Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the  
 tall  
 Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping  
 beechen boughs  
 Of our New Forest. I was there  
 alone:  
 The phantom of the whirling landau-  
 let  
 For ever past me by: when one quick  
 peal  
 Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-  
 mering glades  
 Down to the snowlike sparkle of a  
 cloth

On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face  
 again,  
 My Rosalind in this Arden— Edith  
 — all  
 One bloom of youth, health, beauty,  
 happiness,  
 And moved to merriment at a passing  
 jest.

There one of those about her know-  
 ing me  
 Call'd me to join them; so with these  
 I spent  
 What seem'd my crowning hour, my  
 day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccess-  
 fully,  
 The worse for her, for me! was I con-  
 tent?  
 Ay—no, not quite; for now and then  
 I thought  
 Laziness, vague love-longings; the  
 bright May,  
 Had made a heated haze to magnify  
 The charm of Edith—that a man's  
 ideal  
 Is high in Heaven, and lodged with  
 Plato's God,  
 Not findable here—content, and not  
 content,  
 In some such fashion as a man may  
 be  
 That having had the portrait of his  
 friend  
 Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and  
 says,  
 "Good! very like! not altogether he."

As yet I had not bound myself by  
 words,  
 Only, believing I loved Edith, made  
 Edith love me. Then came the day  
 when I,  
 Flattering myself that all my doubts  
 were fools  
 Born of the fool this Age that doubts  
 of all—  
 Not I that day of Edith's love or  
 mine—  
 Had braced my purpose to declar-  
 my self:

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.  
 The golden gates would open at a  
 word.  
 I spoke it — told her of my passion,  
 seen  
 And lost and found again, had got so  
 far,  
 Had caught her hand, her eyelids  
 fell — I heard  
 Wheels, and a noise of welcome at  
 the doors —  
 On a sudden after two Italian years  
 Had set the blossom of her health  
 again,  
 The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd  
 — there,  
 There was the face, and altogether  
 she.  
 The mother fell about the daughter's  
 neck,  
 The sisters closed in one another's  
 arms,  
 Their people throng'd about them  
 from the hall,  
 And in the thick of question and  
 reply  
 I fled the house, driven by one angel  
 face,  
 And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;  
 I could not free myself in honor —  
 bound  
 Not by the sounded letter of the word,  
 But counterpressures of the yielded  
 hand  
 That timorously and faintly echoed  
 mine,  
 Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of  
 her eyes  
 Upon me when she thought I did not  
 see —  
 Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but  
 could I wed her  
 Loving the other? do her that great  
 wrong?  
 Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-  
 morn?  
 Had I not known where Love, at first  
 a fear,  
 Grew after marriage to full height  
 and form?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister  
 there —  
 Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of  
 it —  
 Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —  
 What end but darkness could ensue  
 from this  
 For all the three? So Love and Honor  
 jarr'd  
 Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise  
 the full  
 High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up  
 and down  
 Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:  
 "My mother bids me ask" (I did not  
 tell you —  
 A widow with less guile than many a  
 child.  
 God help the wrinkled children that  
 are Christ's  
 As well as the plump cheek — she  
 wrought us harm,  
 Poor soul, not knowing) "are you  
 ill?" (so ran  
 The letter) "you have not been here  
 of late.  
 You will not find me here. At last I  
 go  
 On that long-promised visit to the  
 North.  
 I told your wayside story to my  
 mother  
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.  
 Farewell.  
 Pray come and see my mother. Al-  
 most blind  
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she  
 thinks  
 She sees you when she hears. Again  
 farewell."  
 Cold words from one I had hoped to  
 warm so far  
 That I could stamp my image on her  
 heart!  
 "Pray come and see my mother, and  
 farewell."  
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of  
 heaven  
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,  
 strange!

What dwarfs are men ! my strangled  
 vanity  
 Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vex't  
 myself  
 And all in vain for her — cold heart  
 or none —  
 No bride for me. Yet so my path  
 was clear  
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.  
 For Evelyn knew not of my former  
 suit,  
 Because the simple mother work'd upon  
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of it.  
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on  
 the day.

But on that day, not being all at  
 ease,  
 I from the altar glancing back upon  
 her,  
 Before the first "I will" was utter'd,  
 saw  
 The bridesmaid pale, statuelike, pas-  
 sionless —  
 "No harm, no harm" I turn'd again,  
 and placed  
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke  
 no word,  
 She wept no tear, but round my  
 Evelyn clung  
 In utter silence for so long, I thought  
 "What, will she never set her sister  
 free?"

We left her, happy each in each,  
 and then,  
 As tho' the happiness of each in each  
 Were not enough, must fain have tor-  
 rents, lakes,  
 Hills, the great things of Nature and  
 the fair,  
 To lift us as it were from common-  
 place,  
 And help us to our joy. Better have  
 sent  
 Our Edith thro' the glories of the  
 earth,  
 To change with her horizon, if true  
 Love  
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would  
 not live  
 Save that I think this gross hard-  
 seeming world  
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
 Behind the world, that make our griefs  
 our gains.

For on the dark night of our mar-  
 riage-day  
 The great Tragedian, that had  
 quenched herself  
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid  
 — she  
 That loved me — our true Edith —  
 her brain broke  
 With over-acting, till she rose and  
 fled  
 Beneath a pitiless rush of Autumn  
 rain  
 To the deaf church — to be let in —  
 to pray  
 Before *that* altar — so I think; and  
 there  
 They found her beating the hard Pro-  
 testant doors.  
 She died and she was buried ere we  
 knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.  
 At once  
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn,  
 that had sunn'd  
 The morning of our marriage, past  
 away:  
 And on our home-return the daily  
 want  
 Of Edith in the house, the garden,  
 still  
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by  
 and by,  
 Either from that necessity for talk  
 Which lives with blindness, or plain  
 innocence  
 Of nature, or desire that her lost  
 child  
 Should earn from both the praise of  
 heroism,  
 The mother broke her promise to the  
 dead,  
 And told the living daughter with  
 what love



Edith had welcomed my brief wooing  
of her,  
And all her sweet self-sacrifice and  
death.

Henceforth that mystic bond be-  
twixt the twins —  
Did I not tell you they were twins?  
—prevail'd

So far that no caress could win my  
wife

Back to that passionate answer of full  
heart

I had from her at first. Not that her  
love,

Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power  
of love,

Had lessen'd, but the mother's gar-  
rulous wail

For ever woke the unhappy Past  
again,

Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to  
be my bride,

Put forth cold hands between us, and  
I fear'd

The very fountains of her life were  
chill'd;

So took her thence, and brought her  
here, and here

She bore a child, whom reverently we  
call'd

Edith; and in the second year was  
born

A second — this I named from her  
own self,

Evelyn; then two weeks — no more  
— she joined,

In and beyond the grave, that one  
she loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,  
Thro' dreams by night and trances of  
the day,

The sisters glide about me hand in  
hand,

Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell  
One from the other, no, nor care to tell

One from the other, only know they  
come,

They smile upon me, till, remembering  
all

The love they both have borne me,  
and the love

I bore them both — divided as I am  
From either by the stillness of the  
grave —

I know not which of these I love the  
best.

But *you* love Edith; and her own  
true eyes  
Are traitors to her; our quick Ev-  
elyn —

The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they  
talk,

And not without good reason, my  
good son —

Is yet untouched: and I that hold  
them both

Dearest of all things — well, I am not  
sure —

But if there lie a preference either way,  
And in the rich vocabulary of Love

“Most dearest” be a true superla-  
tive —

I think *I* likewise love your Edith  
most.

## THE VILLAGE WIFE; OR, THE ENTAIL. <sup>1</sup>

### I.

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha my lass, fur  
New Squire coom'd last night.  
Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll  
goã wi' tha back: all right;  
Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-  
rants the heggs be as well,  
Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya  
breäk's the shell.

### II.

Sit thysen down fur a bit: hev a glass  
o' cowslip wine!

I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as  
thaw they was gells o' mine,

Fur then we was all es one, the Squire  
an' 'is darters an' me,

Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I  
niver not took to she:

But Nelly, the last of the cletch<sup>2</sup> I  
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,

<sup>1</sup> See note to “Northern Cobbler.”

<sup>2</sup> A brood of chickens.

Fur hoffsens we talkt o' my darter es  
died o' the fever at fall :  
An' I thowt 'twur the will o' the Lord,  
but Miss Annie she said it wur  
draäins,  
Fur she hedn't naw coomfut in 'er, an'  
arn'd naw thanks fur 'er paäius.  
Eh ! thebbe all wi' the Lord my childer,  
I han't gotten none !  
Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in  
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

## III.

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass : tha  
dosn' knaw what that be ?  
But I knaws the law, I does, for the  
lawyer ha towd it me.  
" When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by  
the fault o' that ere maäle —  
The gells they counts fur nowt, and  
the next un he taäkes the taäil."

## IV.

What be the next un like ? can tha  
tell ony harm on 'im lass ? —  
Naay sit down — naw 'urry — sa  
cowl ! — hev another glass !  
Straänge an' cowl fur the time ! we  
may happen a fall o' snaw —  
Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,  
but I likes to knaw.  
An' I 'oaps es 'e beänt boooklarn'd :  
but 'e dosn' not coom fro' the  
shere ;  
We' new o' that wi' the Squire, an'  
we haätes boooklarnin' ere.

## V.

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholard, an'  
niver lookt arter the land —  
Whoäts or turmutts or taätes — e' 'ed  
hallus a boook i' 'is 'and,  
Hallus aloän wi' 'is boooks, thaw nigh  
upo' seventy year.  
An' boooks, what's boooks ? thou  
knaws thebbe neyther 'ere nor  
theer.

## VI.

An' the gells, they hadn't naw taäils,  
an' the lawyer he towd it me

That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he  
couldn't cut down a tree !  
" Drat the trees," says I, to be sewer I  
haätes 'em, my lass,  
Fur we puts the muck o' the land an'  
they sucks the muck fro' the  
grass.

## VII.

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'  
gied to the tramps goin' by —  
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'  
hoffsens a drop in 'is eye.  
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her  
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,  
An' they rampaged about wi' their  
grooms, an' was 'untin' arter  
the men,  
An' hallus a-dallackt<sup>1</sup> an' dizen'd out,  
an' a-buyin' new cloäthes,  
While 'e sit like a graät glimmer-  
gowk<sup>2</sup> wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is  
noäse,  
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it  
couldn't be scroob'd awaäy,  
Fur atween 'is reädin' an' writin' 'e  
snifft up a box in a daäy,  
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor  
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,  
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e  
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,  
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,  
but Charlie 'e cotech'd the pike,  
For 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'  
'e didn't take kind to it like ;  
But I eärs es 'e'd gie fur a howry<sup>3</sup> owd  
book thutty pound an' moor,  
An' 'e'd wrote an owd book, his awn  
sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom  
to be poor ;  
An' 'e gied — I be fear'd to tell tha 'ow  
much — fur an owd scratted  
stoän,  
An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land  
an' 'e got a brown pot an' a  
boän,  
An' 'e bowt owd money, es wouldn't  
goä, wi' good gowd o' the  
Queen,

<sup>1</sup> Overdressed in gay colors.<sup>2</sup> Owl.<sup>3</sup> Filthy.

An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt  
 an' which was a shaame to be  
 seen ;  
 But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e  
 niver not seed to owt,  
 An' 'e niver knawd nowt but booöks,  
 an' booöks, as thou knaws,  
 beänt nowt.

## VIII.

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she  
 lived she kep 'em all clear,  
 Thaw es long es she lived I never hed  
 none of 'er darters 'ere ;  
 But arter she died we was all es one,  
 the childer an' me,  
 An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an'  
 offens we hed 'em to tea.  
 Lawk ! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses  
 'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,  
 An' the Missis talk'd o' the lasses. —  
 I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.  
 Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck  
 oop, like 'er mother afoor —  
 'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver  
 derken'd my door.

## IX.

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till  
 'e'd gotten a fright at last,  
 An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's  
 letters they foller'd sa fast ;  
 But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son,  
 an' 'e says to 'im, meek as a  
 mouse,  
 "Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or  
 the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,  
 Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I  
 'oäps es thou'll 'elp me a bit,  
 An' if thou'll 'gree to cut off thy taäil  
 I may saäve mysen yit."

## X.

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, 'an 'e  
 sweärs, an' 'e says to im "Noä.  
 I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäil an'  
 be dang'd if I iver let goä !  
 Coom ! coom ! feyther," 'e says, "why  
 shouldn't thy booöks be sowd ?  
 I hears es soon o' thy booöks mebbe  
 worth their weight i' gowd."

## XI.

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' see'd  
 'em, belong'd to the Squire,  
 But the lasses 'ed teärd out leaves i'  
 the middle to kindle the fire ;  
 Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd  
 nigh to nowt at the saäle,  
 And Squire were at Charlie ageän to  
 git 'im to cut off 'is taäil.

## XII.

Ya wouldn't find Charlie's likes — 'e  
 were that outdacious at oäm,  
 Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out Hell  
 wi' a small-tooth coämb —  
 Droonk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'  
 droonk wi' the farmer's säle,  
 Mad wi' the lasses an' all — an' 'e  
 wouldn't cut off the taäil.

## XIII.

Thou's coom'd oop by the beek ; and  
 a thurn be a-grawin' theer,  
 I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the  
 Maäy es I see'd it to-year —  
 Theerabouts Charlie joompt — and it  
 gied me a scare tother night,  
 Fur I thowt i' wur Charlie's ghoäst i'  
 the derk, fur it looökt sa white.  
 "Billy," says 'e, "hev a joomp!" —  
 thaw the banks o' the beck be  
 sa high,  
 Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,  
 thaw niver a hair wur awry ;  
 But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'  
 Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,  
 Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäil, fur  
 'e lost 'is taäil i' the beck.

## XIV.

Sa 'is taäil wur lost an' 'is booöks wur  
 gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,  
 An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but  
 'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eäd :  
 Hallus a soft un Squire ! an' 'e smiled,  
 fur 'e hedn't naw friend,  
 Sa feyther an' son was buried together,  
 an' this wur the hend.

## XV.

An' Parson as hesn't the call, nor the  
 mooney, but hes the pride,

'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'  
the tother side;  
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord,  
howsiver they praäy'd an'  
praäy'd,  
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves  
their debts to be paäid.  
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'  
poor owd Squire i' the wood,  
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur  
they weant niver coom to naw  
good.

## XVI.

Fur Molly the long un she walkt  
awaäy wi' a hofficer lad,  
An' nawaybody 'eard on 'er sin, sa o'  
coorse she be gone to the bad!  
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-  
'arts she niver 'ed none —  
Straänge an' unheppen<sup>1</sup> Miss Lucy!  
we naämed her "Dot an' gaw  
one!"  
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hatties,  
wi'out ony harm i' the legs,  
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'ead  
as bald as one o' them heggs,  
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as  
big i' the mouth as a cow,  
An' saw she mun hammergrate,<sup>2</sup> lass,  
or she weänt git a maäte ony-  
how!  
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me  
afoor my awn foälks to my  
faäce  
"A hignorant village wife as 'ud hev  
to be larn'd her awn plaäce,"  
Hes for Miss Hannie the heldest hes  
now be a grawin sa howd,  
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt  
not fit to be towd!

## XVII.

Sa I didn't not taäke it kindly ov owd  
Miss Annie to saäy  
Es I should be talkin ageän 'em, es  
soon es they went awaäy,  
Fur, lawks! 'ow I cried when they  
went, an' our Nelly she gied me  
'er 'and,

<sup>1</sup> Ungainly, awkward.    <sup>2</sup> Emigrate.

Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an'  
'is gells es belong'd to the land;  
Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe ney-  
ther 'ere nor theer!  
But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs  
fur huppuds o' twenty year.

## XVIII.

An' they hallus paäid what I hax'd,  
sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,  
An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an'  
they knaw'd what a hegg wur  
an' all;  
Hugger-mugger they lived, but they  
wasn't that eäsy to pleäse,  
Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they  
laäid big heggs es tha seas;  
An' I niver puts saäme<sup>1</sup> i' my butter,  
they does it at Willis's farm,  
Taäste another drop o' the wine—  
tweänt do tha na harm.

## XIX.

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in  
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;  
I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter  
my nightcap wur on;  
Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he  
coom'd last night sa laäte —  
Pluksh!!!<sup>2</sup> the hens i' the peäs! why  
didn't tha hesp tha gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL.

## EMMIE.

## I.

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I  
never had seen him before,  
But he sent a chill to my heart when  
I saw him come in at the door,  
Fresh from the surgery-schools of  
France and of other lands —  
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest,  
big merciless hands!  
Wonderful cures he had done, O yes,  
but they said too of him

<sup>1</sup> Lard.

<sup>2</sup> A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands  
to scare trespassing fowl.

He was happier using the knife than  
 in trying to save the limb,  
 And that I can well believe, for he  
 look'd so coarse and so red,  
 I could think he was one of those who  
 would break their jests on the  
 dead,  
 And mangle the living dog that had  
 loved him and fawn'd at his  
 knee —  
 Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that  
 ever such things should be!

## II.

Here was a boy — I am sure that some  
 of our children would die  
 But for the voice of Love, and the  
 smile, and the comforting eye —  
 Here was a boy in the ward, every  
 bone seem'd out of its place —  
 Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was  
 all but a hopeless case:  
 And he handled him gently enough;  
 but his voice and his face were  
 not kind,  
 And it was but a hopeless case, he  
 had seen it and made up his  
 mind,  
 And he said to me roughly "The lad  
 will need little more of your  
 care."  
 - All the more need," I told him, "to  
 seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;  
 They are all his children here, and I  
 pray for them all as my own:"  
 But he turn'd to me, "Ay, good woman,  
 can prayer set a broken bone?"  
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but  
 I know that I heard him say  
 "All very well — but the good Lord  
 Jesus has had his day."

## III.

Had? has it come? It has only  
 dawn'd. It will come by and  
 by.  
 O how could I serve in the wards if the  
 hope of the world were a lie?  
 How could I bear with the sights and  
 the loathsome smells of disease  
 But that He said "Ye do it to me,  
 when ye do it to these"?

## IV.

So he went. And we past to this  
 ward where the younger chil-  
 dren are laid:  
 Here is the cot of our orphan, our dar-  
 ling, our meek little maid;  
 Empty you see just now! We have  
 lost her who loved her so  
 much —  
 Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-  
 sitive plant to the touch;  
 Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often  
 moved me to tears,  
 Hers was the gratefulest heart I have  
 found in a child of her years —  
 Nay you remember our Emmie; you  
 used to send her the flowers;  
 How she would smile at 'em, play  
 with 'em, talk to 'em hours  
 after hours!  
 They that can wander at will where the  
 works of the Lord are reveal'd  
 Little guess what joy can be got from  
 a cowslip out of the fields;  
 Flowers to these "spirits in prison"  
 are all they can know of the  
 spring,  
 They freshen and sweeten the wards  
 like the waft of an Angel's  
 wing;  
 And she lay with a flower in one hand  
 and her thin hands crost on her  
 breast —  
 Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-  
 sire, and we thought her at rest,  
 Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doc-  
 tor said "Poor little dear,  
 Nurse, I must do it to-morrow; she'll  
 never live thro' it, I fear."

## V.

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as  
 far as the head of the stair,  
 Then I return'd to the ward; the child  
 didn't see I was there.

## VI.

Never since I was nurse, had I been  
 so grieved and so vex't!  
 Emmie had heard him. Softly she  
 call'd from her cot to the next.

"He says I shall never live thro' it, O  
Annie, what shall I do?"  
Annie consider'd. "If I," said the  
wise little Annie, "was you,  
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to  
help me, for, Emmie, you see,  
It's all in the picture there; 'Little  
children should come to me.'" (Meaning  
the print that you gave us, I find that  
it always can please Our children, the  
dear Lord Jesus with children about his  
knees.) "Yes, and I will," said Emmie,  
"but then if I call to the Lord,  
How should he know that it's me?  
such a lot of beds in the ward!"  
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again  
she consider'd and said:  
"Emmie, you put out your arms, and  
you leave 'em outside on the bed—  
The Lord has so much to see to! but,  
Emmie, you tell it him plain,  
It's the little girl with her arms lying  
out on the counterpane."

## VII.

I had sat three nights by the child—  
I could not watch her for four—  
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I  
could do it no more.  
That was my sleeping-night, but I  
thought that it never would  
pass.  
There was a thunderclap once, and a  
clatter of hail on the glass,  
And there was a phantom cry that I  
heard as I tost about,  
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the  
storm and the darkness with-  
out;  
My sleep was broken beside with  
dreams of the dreadful knife  
And fears for our delicate Emmie who  
scarce would escape with her  
life;  
Then in the gray of the morning it  
seem'd she stood by me and  
smiled,  
And the doctor came at his hour, and  
we went to see to the child.

## VIII.

He had brought his ghastly tools: we  
believed her asleep again—  
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying  
out on the counterpane;  
Say that His day is done! Ah why  
should we care what they say?  
The Lord of the children had heard  
her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE  
PRINCESS ALICE.

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that,  
which lived  
True life, live on—and if the fatal  
kiss,  
Born of true life and love, divorcee  
thee not  
From earthly love and life—if what  
we call  
The spirit flash not all at once from  
out  
This shadow into Substance—then  
perhaps  
The mellow'd murmur of the people's  
praise  
From thine own State, and all our  
breadth of realm,  
Where Love and Longing dress thy  
deeds in light,  
Ascends to thee; and this March  
morn that sees  
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-  
bloom  
Break thro' the yews and cypress of  
thy grave,  
And thine Imperial mother smile  
again,  
May send one ray to thee! and who  
can tell—  
Thou—England's England-loving  
daughter—thou  
Dying so English thou wouldst have  
her flag  
Borne on thy coffin—where is he can  
swear  
But that some broken gleam from our  
poor earth  
May touch thee, while remembering  
thee, I lay

At thy pale feet this ballad of the  
deeds  
Of England, and her banner in the  
East?

### THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW.

#### I.

BANNER of England, not for a season,  
O banner of Britain, hast thou  
Floated in conquering battle or flapt  
to the battle-cry!

Never with mightier glory than when  
we had rear'd thee on high  
Flying at top of the roofs in the  
ghastly siege of Lucknow—  
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard,  
but ever we raised thee anew,  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

#### II.

Frail were the works that defended  
the hold that we held with our  
lives—

Women and children among us, God  
help them, our children and  
wives!

Hold it we might—and for fifteen  
days or for twenty at most.

“Never surrender, I charge you, but  
every man die at his post!”

Voice of the dead whom we loved,  
our Lawrence the best of the  
brave:

Cold were his brows when we kiss'd  
him—we laid him that night  
in his grave.

“Every man die at his post!” and  
there hail'd on our houses and  
halls

Death from their rifle-bullets, and  
death from their cannon-balls,

Death in our innermost chamber, and  
death at our slight barricade,

Death while we stood with the mus-  
ket, and death while we stoopt  
to the spade,

Death to the dying, and wounds to  
the wounded, for often there  
fell,

Striking the hospital wall, crashing  
thro' it, their shot and their  
shell,

Death—for their spies were among  
us, their marksmen were told  
of our best,

So that the brute bullet broke thro'  
the brain that could think for  
the rest;

Bullets would sing by our foreheads,  
and bullets would rain at our  
feet—

Fire from ten thousand at once of the  
rebels that girdled us round—

Death at the glimpse of a finger from  
over the breadth of a street,

Death from the heights of the mosque  
and the palace, and death in  
ground!

Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!  
down, down! and creep thro'  
the hole!

Keep the revolver in hand! you can  
hear him—the murderous mole!

Quiet, ah! quiet—wait till the point  
of the pickaxe be thro'!

Click with the pick, coming nearer  
and nearer again than before—

Now let it speak, and you fire, and the  
dark pioneer is no more;

And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew!

#### III.

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many  
times, and it chanced on a day

Soon as the blast of that underground  
thunderclap echo'd away,

Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur  
like so many fiends in their  
hell—

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on  
volley, and yell upon yell—

Fiercely on all the defences our myr-  
iad enemy fell.

What have they done? where is it?  
Out yonder. Guard the Redan!

Storm at the Water-gate! storm at the  
Bailey-gate! storm, and it ran

Surging and swaying all round us, as  
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is  
daily drown'd by the tide —  
So many thousands that if they be bold  
enough, who shall escape ?  
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall  
know we are soldiers and men !  
Ready ! take aim at their leaders —  
their masses are gapp'd with  
our grape —  
Backward they reel like the wave, like  
the wave flinging forward again,  
Flying and foil'd at the last by the  
handful they could not subdue ;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## IV.

Handful of men as we were, we were  
English in heart and in limb,  
Strong with the strength of the race  
to command, to obey, to endure,  
Each of us fought as if hope for the  
garrison hung but on him ;  
Still — could we watch at all points ?  
we were every day fewer and  
fewer.  
There was a whisper among us, but  
only a whisper that past :  
“ Children and wives — if the tigers  
leap into the fold unawares —  
Every man die at his post — and the  
foe may outlive us at last —  
Better to fall by the hands that they  
love, than to fall into theirs ! ”  
Roar upon roar in a moment two  
mines by the enemy sprung  
Clove into perilous chasms our walls  
and our poor palisades.  
Rifleman, true is your heart, but be  
sure that your hand be as true !  
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed  
are your flank fusillades —  
Twice do we hurl them to earth from  
the ladders to which they had  
clung,  
Twice from the ditch where they shel-  
ter we drive them with hand-  
grenades ;  
And ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner of England blew.

## V.

Then on another wild morning another  
wild earthquake out-tore  
Clean from our lines of defence ten or  
twelve good paces or more.  
Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden  
there from the light of the  
sun —  
One has leapt up on the beach, crying  
out : “ Follow me, follow me ! ” —  
Mark him — he falls ! then another,  
and *him* too, and down goes he.  
Had they been bold enough then, who  
can tell but the traitors had  
won ?  
Boardings and rafters and doors — an  
embrasure ! make way for the  
gun !  
Now double-charge it with grape ! It  
is charged and we fire, and they  
run.  
Praise to our Indian brothers, and let  
the dark face have his due !  
Thanks to the kindly dark faces who  
fought with us, faithful and few,  
Fought with the bravest among us,  
and drove them, and smote  
them, and slew,  
That ever upon the topmost roof our  
banner in India blew.

## VI.

Men will forget what we suffer and  
not what we do. We can fight !  
But to be soldier all day and be senti-  
nel all thro' the night —  
Ever the mine and assault, our sallies,  
their lying alarms,  
Bugles and drums in the darkness, and  
shoutings and soundings to  
arms,  
Ever the labor of fifty that had to be  
done by five,  
Ever the marvel among us that one  
should be left alive,  
Ever the day with its traitorous death  
from the loopholes around,  
Ever the night with its coffinless  
corpse to be laid in the ground,  
Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a  
deluge of cataract skies,



Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,  
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,  
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,  
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —  
 Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save us a life.  
 Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,  
 Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,  
 Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,  
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief,  
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew —  
 Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls  
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls —  
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

## VII.

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,  
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?  
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!  
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,  
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,  
 Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,  
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers,  
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!  
 Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it you? is it you?  
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of Heaven!  
 "Hold it for fifteen days!" we have held it for eighty-seven!

And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

## SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM.

(IN WALES.)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout  
 To take me to that hiding in the hills;  
 I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —  
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wail  
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;  
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,  
 For I am emptier than a friar's brains;  
 But God is with me in this wilderness,  
 These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms —  
 And God's free air, and hope of better things.

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,  
 Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,  
 Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —  
 But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd  
 They said with such heretical arrogance  
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel —  
 So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here  
 But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;  
 "Bara!" — what use? The Shepherd, when I speak,  
 Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard "Dim Saesneg" passes, wroth at things of old —  
 No fault of mine. Had he God's word in Welsh  
 He might be kindlier: happily come the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Bethlehem

In Judah, for in thee the Lord was born;  
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutterworth,  
Least, for in thee the word was born  
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living  
word,  
Who whilome spakest to the South in  
Greek

About the soft Mediterranean shores,  
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,  
As good need was — thou hast come  
to talk our isle.

Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,  
Must learn to use the tongues of all  
the world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that  
thou bringest  
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,  
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I  
cross

In flying hither? that one night a  
crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the  
city gates:

The king was on them suddenly with  
a host.

Why there? they came to hear their  
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good  
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king —  
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him — took  
and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt — how many  
— thirty-nine —

Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor  
friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for  
your Priest

Labels — to take the king along with  
him —

All heresy, treason: but to call men  
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,  
Red in thy birth, redder with house-  
hold war,

Now reddest with the blood of holy  
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —  
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor  
sang

Fluttering the hawks of this crown-  
lusting line —

By firth and loch thy silver sister  
grow,<sup>1</sup>

That were my rose, there my allegi-  
ance due.

Self-starved, they say — nay, mur-  
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved: my friend  
was he,

Once my fast friend: I would have  
given my life

To help his own from scathe, a thou-  
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have  
come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning: but the worldly  
Priests

Who fear the king's hard common-  
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-  
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O had he  
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke  
for him,

But he would not; far liefer led my  
friend

Back to the pure and universal  
church,

But he would not: whether that heir-  
less flaw

In his throne's title make him feel so  
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his  
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,  
In matters of the faith, alas the while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of  
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the  
Priest.

Burnt — good Sir Roger Acton, my  
dear friend!

Burnt too, my faithful preacher,  
Beverley!

<sup>1</sup> Richard II.

Lord give thou power to thy two witnesses!

Lest the false faith make merry over them!

Two — nay but thirty-nine have risen and stand,

Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,

Before thy light, and cry continually — Cry — against whom?

Him, who should bear the sword Of Justice — what! the kingly, kindly boy;

Who took the world so easily heretofore,

My boon companion, tavern-fellow — him

Who gibed and japed — in many a merry tale

That shook our sides — at Pardoners, Summoners,

Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries And nunneries, when the wild hour

Had set the wits aflame.

Harry of Monmouth, Or Amurath of the East?

Better to sink Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and fling

Thy royalty back into the riotous fits Of wine and harlotry — thy shame, and mine,

Thy comrade — than to persecute the Lord,

And play the Saul that never will be Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred Arundel

Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the flame,

The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his clerks

Into the suburb — their hard celibacy, Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness, molten

Into adulterous living, or such crimes As holy Paul — a shame to speak of them —

Among the heathen — Sanctuary granted

To bandit, thief, assassin — yea to him Who hacks his mother's throat — denied to him,

Who finds the Saviour in his mother tongue.

The Gospel, the Priest's pearl, flung down to swine —

The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who will come,

God willing, to outlearn the filthy friar.

Ah rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel, meant

To course and range thro' all the world, should be

Tether'd to these dead pillars of the Church —

Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,

Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack heart, and life

Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how long,

O Lord, how long!

My friend should meet me here. Here is the copse, the fountain and — a Cross!

To thee, dead wood, I bow not head nor knees.

Rather to thee, green boscaige, work of God,

Black holly, and white-flower'd way-faring-tree!

Rather to thee, thou living water, drawn

By this good Wielif mountain down from heaven,

And speaking clearly in thy native tongue —

No Latin — He that thirsteth, come and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking me

To worship Holy Cross! I spread mine arms,

God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and blood

And holier. That was heresy. (My good friend

By this time should be with me.) "Images?"

"Bury them as God's truer images

Are daily buried." "Heresy. —  
 Penance?" "Fast,  
 Hairshirt and scourge — nay, let a  
 man repent,  
 Do penance in his heart, God hears  
 him" "Heresy —  
 Not shriven, not saved?" "What  
 profits an ill Priest  
 Between me and my God? I would  
 not spurn  
 Good counsel of good friends, but  
 shrive myself  
 No, not to an Apostle." "Heresy."  
 (My friend is long in coming.) "Pil-  
 grimages?"  
 Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's-  
 dances, vice.  
 The poor man's money gone to fat the  
 friar.  
 Who reads of begging saints in Scrip-  
 ture?" — "Heresy" —  
 (Hath he been here — not found me  
 — gone again?)  
 Have I mislearnt our place of meet-  
 ing?) "Bread —  
 Bread left after the blessing?" how  
 they stared,  
 That was their main test-question —  
 glared at me!  
 "He veil'd himself in flesh, and now  
 He veils  
 His flesh in bread, body and bread  
 together."  
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd  
 wolves,  
 "No bread, no bread. God's body!"  
 Archbishop, Bishop,  
 Priors, Canons, Friars, bellringers,  
 Parish-clerks —  
 "No bread, no bread!" — "Authority  
 of the Church,  
 Power of the keys!" — Then I, God  
 help me, I  
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two  
 whole days —  
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,  
 And rail'd at all the Popes, that ever  
 since  
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-  
 wealth  
 Into the church, had only prov'n  
 themselves

Poisoners, murderers. Well — God  
 pardon all —  
 Me, them, and all the world — yea,  
 that proud Priest.  
 That mock-meeek mouth of utter Anti-  
 christ,  
 That traitor to King Richard and the  
 truth,  
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire.  
 Amen!  
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of  
 life  
 Be by me in my death.  
 Those three! the fourth  
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt  
 were they.  
 On *them* the smell of burning had not  
 past.  
 That was a miracle to convert the king.  
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel  
 What miracle could turn? *He* here  
 again,  
*He* thwarting their traditions of Him-  
 self,  
*He* would be found a heretic to Him-  
 self,  
 And doom'd to burn alive.  
 So, caught, I burn.  
 Burn? heathen men have borne as  
 much as this,  
 For freedom, or the sake of those they  
 loved,  
 Or some less cause, some cause far  
 less than mine;  
 For every other cause is less than  
 mine.  
 The moth will singe her wings, and  
 singed return,  
 Her love of light quenching her fear  
 of pain —  
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the  
 fire?  
 Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stom-  
 ach'd! faint as I am,  
 God willing, I will burn for Him.  
 Who comes?  
 A thousand marks are set upon my  
 head.  
 Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for  
 it then!  
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well  
 disguised,

I knew thee not. Hast thou brought  
bread with thee ?  
I have not broken bread for fifty hours.  
None ? I am damn'd already by the  
Priest  
For holding there was bread where  
bread was none —  
No bread. My friends await me yon-  
der ? Yes.  
Lead on then. *Up* the mountain ?  
Is it far ?  
Not far. Climb first and reach me  
down thy hand.  
I am not like to die for lack of bread,  
For I must live to testify by fire.<sup>1</sup>

## COLUMBUS.

CHAINS, my good lord: in your raised  
brows I read  
Some wonder at our chamber orna-  
ments.  
We brought this iron from our isles  
of gold.

Does the king know you deign to  
visit him  
Whom once he rose from off his  
throne to greet  
Before his people, like his brother  
king ?  
I saw your face that morning in the  
crowd.

At Barcelona — tho' you were not  
then  
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd  
herself  
To meet me, roar'd my name; the  
king, the queen  
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell  
them all  
The story of my voyage, and while I  
spoke  
The crowd's roar fell as at the "Peace,  
be still!"  
And when I ceased to speak, the king,  
the queen,  
Sank from their thrones, and melted  
into tears,

<sup>1</sup> He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

And knelt, and lifted hand and heart  
and voice  
In praise to God who led me thro' the  
waste.  
And then the great "Landamus" rose  
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the  
Ocean ! chains  
For him who gave a new heaven, a  
new earth,  
As holy John had prophesied of me,  
Gave glory and more empire to the  
kings  
Of Spain than all their battles ! chains  
for him  
Who push'd his prows into the setting  
sun,  
And made West East, and sail'd the  
Dragon's mouth,  
And came upon the Mountain of the  
World,  
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise !

Chains ! we are Admirals of the  
Ocean, we,  
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand  
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic  
queen —  
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Ad-  
mirals we —  
Our title, which we never mean to  
yield,  
Our guerdon not alone for what we  
did,  
But our amends for all we might have  
done —  
The vast occasion of our stronger  
life —  
Eighteen long years of waste, seven in  
your Spain,  
Lost, showing courts and kings a truth  
the babe  
Will suck in with his milk hereafter  
— earth  
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca ? No.  
We fronted there the learning of all  
Spain,  
All their cosmogonies, their astrono-  
mies :

Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the  
 golden guess  
 Is morning-star to the full round of  
 truth.  
 No guess-work! I was certain of my  
 goal;  
 Some thought it heresy, but that  
 would not hold.  
 King David call'd the heavens a hide,  
 a tent  
 Spread over earth, and so this earth  
 was flat:  
 Some cited old Lactantius: could it be  
 That trees grew downward, rain fell  
 upward, men  
 Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and  
 besides,  
 The great Augustine wrote that none  
 could breathe  
 Within the zone of heat; so might  
 there be  
 Two Adams, two mankinds, and that  
 was clean  
 Against God's word: thus was I  
 beaten back,  
 And chiefly to my sorrow by the  
 Church,  
 And thought to turn my face from  
 Spain, appeal  
 Once more to France or England;  
 but our Queen  
 Recall'd me, for at last their High-  
 nesses  
 Were half-assured this earth might  
 be a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,  
 All glory to the mother of our Lord,  
 And Holy Church, from whom I never  
 swerved  
 Not even by one hair's-breadth of  
 heresy,  
 I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a  
 dream—I sail'd  
 On my first voyage, harass'd by the  
 frights  
 Of my first crew, their curses and  
 their groans.  
 The great flame-banner borne by Tene-  
 riffe,

The compass, like an old friend false  
 at last  
 In our most need, appall'd them, and  
 the wind  
 Still westward, and the weedy seas—  
 at length  
 The landbird, and the branch with  
 berries on it,  
 The carven staff—and last the light,  
 the light  
 On Guanahani! but I changed the  
 name;  
 San Salvador I call'd it; and the  
 light  
 Grew as I gazed, and brought out a  
 broad sky  
 Of dawning over—not those alien  
 palms,  
 The marvel of that fair new nature—  
 not  
 That Indian isle, but our most ancient  
 East  
 Moriah with Jernsalem; and I saw  
 The glory of the Lord flash up, and  
 beat  
 Thro' all the homely town from jas-  
 per, sapphire,  
 Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-  
 dius,  
 Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,  
 Jacynth, and amethyst—and those  
 twelve gates,  
 Pearl—and I woke, and thought—  
 death—I shall die—  
 I am written in the Lamb's own Book  
 of Life  
 To walk within the glory of the Lord  
 Sunless and moonless, utter light—  
 but no!  
 The Lord had sent this bright, strange  
 dream to me  
 To mind me of the secret vow I made  
 When Spain was waging war against  
 the Moor—  
 I strove myself with Spain against  
 the Moor.  
 There came two voices from the Sep-  
 ulchre,  
 Two friars crying that if Spain should  
 oust  
 The Moslem from her limit, he, the  
 fierce

Soldan of Egypt, would break down  
and raze  
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon  
I vow'd  
That, if our Princes harken'd to my  
prayer,  
Whatever wealth I brought from that  
new world  
Should, in this old, be consecrate to  
lead  
A new crusade against the Saracen,  
And free the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your Princes  
gold enough  
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,  
I am handled worse than had I been a  
Moor,  
And breach'd the belting wall of  
Cambalu,  
And given the Great Khan's palaces  
to the Moor,  
Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-  
ter John,  
And cast it to the Moor: but *had* I  
brought  
From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir  
all  
The gold that Solomon's navies car-  
ried home,  
Would that have gilded *me*? Blue  
blood of Spain,  
Tho' quartering your own royal arms  
of Spain,  
I have not: blue blood and black blood  
of Spain,  
The noble and the convict of Cas-  
tile,  
How'd me from Hispaniola; for you  
know  
The flies at home, that ever swarm  
about  
And cloud the highest heads, and  
murmur down  
Truth in the distance — these out-  
buzz'd me so  
That even our prudent king, our right-  
eous queen —  
I pray'd them being so calumniated  
They would commission one of weight  
and worth

To judge between my slander'd self  
and me —  
Fonseca my main enemy at their court,  
They send me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,  
one  
As ignorant and impolitic as a beast —  
Blockish irreverence, brainless greed  
— who sack'd  
My dwelling, seized upon my papers,  
loosed  
My captives, feed the rebels of the  
crown,  
Sold the crown-farms for all but noth-  
ing, gave  
All but free leave for all to work the  
mines,  
Drove me and my good brothers home  
in chains,  
And gathering ruthless gold — a sin-  
gle piece  
Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castil-  
lanos — so  
They tell me — weigh'd him down  
into the abyss —  
The hurricane of the latitude on him  
fell,  
The seas of our discovering over-roll  
Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,  
With what was mine, came happily to  
the shore.  
*There* was a glimmering of God's hand.

And God  
Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O  
my lord,  
I swear to you I heard his voice be-  
tween  
The thunders in the black Veragua  
nights,  
"O soul of little faith, slow to believe!  
Have I not been about thee from thy  
birth?  
Given thee the keys of the great  
Ocean-sea?  
Set thee in light till time shall be no  
more?  
Is it I who have deceived thee or the  
world?  
Endure! thou hast done so well for  
men, that men  
Cry out against thee. was it otherwise  
With mine own Son?"

And more than once in days  
 Of doubt and cloud and storm, when  
 drowning hope  
 Sank all but out of sight, I heard his  
 voice,  
 "Be not cast down. I lead thee by  
 the hand,  
 Fear not." And I shall hear his  
 voice again —  
 I know that he has led me all my life,  
 I am not yet too old to work his will —  
 His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,  
 I lying here bedridden and alone,  
 Cast off, put by, scouted by court and  
 king —  
 The first discoverer starves — his fol-  
 lowers, all  
 Flower into fortune — our world's way  
 — and I,  
 Without a roof that I can call mine  
 own,  
 With scarce a coin to buy a meal  
 withal,  
 And seeing what a door for scoundrel  
 scum  
 I open'd to the West, thro' which the  
 lust,  
 Villany, violence, avarice, of your  
 Spain  
 Pour'd in on all those happy naked  
 isles —  
 Their kindly native princes slain or  
 slaved,  
 Their wives and children Spanish con-  
 cubines,  
 Their innocent hospitalities quench'd  
 in blood,  
 Some dead of hunger, some beneath  
 the scourge,  
 Some over-labor'd, some by their own  
 hands, —  
 Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Nature,  
 kill  
 Their babies at the breast for hate of  
 Spain —  
 Ah God, the harmless people whom  
 we found  
 In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!  
 Who took us for the very Gods from  
 Heaven,

And we have sent them very fiends  
 from Hell;  
 And I myself, myself not blameless. I  
 Could sometimes wish I had never led  
 the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic  
 Queen  
 Smiles on me, saying, "Be thou com-  
 forted!  
 This creedless people will be brought  
 to Christ  
 And own the holy governance of  
 Rome."

But who could dream that we, who  
 bore the Cross  
 Thither, were excommunicated there,  
 For curbing crimes that scandalized  
 the Cross,  
 By him, the Catalonian Minorite,  
 Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who be-  
 lieve  
 These hard memorials of our truth to  
 Spain  
 Clung closer to us for a longer term  
 Than any friend of ours at Court?  
 and yet  
 Pardon — too harsh, unjust. I am  
 rack'd with pains.

You see that I have hung them by  
 my bed,  
 And I will have them buried in my  
 grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are  
 God's  
 Own voice to justify the dead — per-  
 chance  
 Spain once the most chivalric race on  
 earth,  
 Spain then the mightiest, wealthiest  
 realm on earth,  
 So made by me, may seek to unbury  
 me,  
 To lay me in some shrine of this old  
 Spain,  
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to  
 Spain.  
 Then some one standing by my grave  
 will say,



"Behold the bones of Christopher  
Colòn" —

"Ay, but the chains, what do *they*  
mean — the chains?" —

I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain  
Who then will have to answer, "These  
same chains

Bound these same bones back thro'  
the Atlantic sea,

Which he unchain'd for all the world  
to come."

O Queen of Heaven who seest the  
souls in Hell

And purgatory, I suffer all as much  
As they do — for the moment. Stay,  
my son

Is here anon: my son will speak for  
me

Ablier than I can in these spasms that  
grind

Bone against bone. You will not.  
One last word.

You move about the Court, I pray  
you tell

King Ferdinand who plays with me,  
that one,

Whose life has been no play with him  
and his

Hidalgos — shipwrecks, famines, fe-  
vers, fights,

Mutinies, treacheries — wink'd at, and  
condoned —

That I am loyal to him till the death,  
And ready — tho' our Holy Catholic  
Queen,

Who fain had pledged her jewels on  
my first voyage,

Whose hope was mine to spread the  
Catholic faith,

Who wept with me when I return'd  
in chains,

Who sits beside the blessed Virgin  
now,

To whom I send my prayer by night  
and day —

She is gone — but you will tell the  
King, that I,

Rack'd as I am with gout, and  
wrench'd with pains

Gain'd in the service of His Highness,  
yet

Am ready to sail forth on one last  
voyage,

And readier, if the King would hear,  
to lead

One last crusade against the Saracen,  
And save the Holy Sepulchre from  
thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted: you  
have dared

Somewhat perhaps in coming? my  
poor thanks!

I am but an alien and a Genovese.

## THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE.

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND.  
A.D. 700.)

### I.

I WAS the chief of the race — he had  
stricken my father dead —

But I gather'd my fellows together, I  
swore I would strike off his  
head.

Each one of them look'd like a king,  
and was noble in birth as in  
worth,

And each of them boasted he sprang  
from the oldest race upon earth.

Each was as brave in the fight as the  
bravest hero of song,

And each of them liefer had died than  
have done one another a wrong.

*He* lived on an isle in the ocean — we  
sail'd on a Friday morn —

He that had slain my father the day  
before I was born.

### II.

And we came to the isle in the ocean,  
and there on the shore was he.

But a sudden blast blew us out and  
away thro' a boundless sea.

### III.

And we came to the Silent Isle that  
we never had touch'd at before.

Where a silent ocean always broke on  
a silent shore,

And the brooks glitter'd on in the light  
without sound, and the long  
waterfalls  
Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the  
base of the mountain walls,  
And the poplar and cypress unshaken  
by storm flourish'd up beyond  
sight,  
And the pine shot aloft from the crag  
to an unbelievable height,  
And high in the heaven above it there  
flicker'd a songless lark,  
And the cock couldn't crow, and the  
bull couldn't low, and the dog  
couldn't bark.  
And round it we went, and thro' it, but  
never a murmur, a breath —  
It was all of it fair as life, it was all  
of it quiet as death,  
And we hated the beautiful Isle, for  
whenever we strove to speak  
Our voices were thinner and fainter  
than any flittermouse-shriek ;  
And the men that were mighty of  
tongue and could raise such  
a battle-cry  
That a hundred who heard it would  
rush on a thousand lances and  
die —  
O they to be dumb'd by the charm !  
— so fluster'd with anger were  
they  
They almost fell on each other ; but  
after we sail'd away.

## iv.

And we came to the Isle of Shouting,  
we landed, a score of wild birds  
Cried from the topmost summit with  
human voices and words ;  
Once in an hour they cried, and when-  
ever their voices peal'd  
The steer fell down at the plow and  
the harvest died from the field,  
And the men dropt dead in the valleys  
and half of the cattle went lame,  
And the roof sank in on the hearth,  
and the dwelling broke into  
flame ;  
And the shouting of these wild birds  
ran into the hearts of my crew,

Till they shouted along with the shout-  
ing and seized one another and  
slew ;  
But I drew them the one from the  
other ; I saw that we could not  
stay,  
And we left the dead to the birds and  
we sail'd with our wounded  
away.

## v.

And we came to the Isle of Flowers :  
their breath met us out on the  
seas,  
For the Spring and the middle Sum-  
mer sat each on the lap of the  
breeze ;  
And the red passion-flower to the  
cliffs, and the dark-blue cle-  
matis, clung,  
And starr'd with a myriad blossom  
the long convolvulus hung ;  
And the topmost spire of the moun-  
tain was lilies in lieu of snow,  
And the lilies like glaciers winded  
down, running out below  
Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,  
the blaze of gorse, and the  
blush  
Of millions of roses that sprang with-  
out leaf or a thorn from the  
bush ;  
And the whole isle-side flashing down  
from the peak without ever a  
tree  
Swept like a torrent of gems from the  
sky to the blue of the sea ;  
And we roll'd upon capes of crocus  
and vaunted our kith and our  
kin,  
And we wallow'd in beds of lilies,  
and chanted the triumph of  
Finn,  
Till each like a golden image was  
pollen'd from head to feet  
And each was as dry as a cricket,  
with thirst in the middle-day  
heat.  
Blossom and blossom, and promise of  
blossom, but never a fruit !  
And we hated the Flowering Isle, as  
we hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the  
million and flung them in bight  
and bay,  
And we left but a naked rock, and in  
anger we sail'd away.

## VI.

And we came to the Isle of Fruits :  
all round from the cliffs and  
the capes,  
Purple or amber, dangled a hundred  
fathom of grapes,  
And the warm melon lay like a little  
sun on the tawny sand,  
And the fig ran up from the beach  
and rioted over the land,  
And the mountain arose like a jew-  
ell'd throne thro' the fragrant  
air,  
Glowing with all-color'd plums and  
with golden masses of pear,  
And the crimson and scarlet of berries  
that flamed upon bine and vine,  
But in every berry and fruit was the  
poisonous pleasure of wine ;  
And the peak of the mountain was  
apples, the hugest that ever  
were seen,  
And they prest, as they grew, on each  
other, with hardly a leaflet be-  
tween,  
And all of them redder than rosiest  
health or than utterest shame,  
And setting, when Even descended,  
the very sunset aflame ;  
And we stay'd three days, and we  
gorged and we madden'd, till  
every one drew  
His sword on his fellow to slay him,  
and ever they struck and they  
slew ;  
And myself, I had eaten but sparely,  
and fought till I sunder'd the  
fray,  
Then I bade them remember my  
father's death, and we sail'd  
away.

## VII.

And we came to the Isle of Fire : we  
were lured by the light from  
afar,

For the peak sent up one league of  
fire to the Northern Star :  
Lured by the glare and the blare, but  
scarcely could stand upright,  
For the whole isle shudder'd and  
shook like a man in a mortal  
affright :  
We were giddy besides with the fruits  
we had gorged, and so crazed  
that at last  
There were some leap'd into the fire ;  
and away we sail'd, and we  
past  
Over that undersea isle, where the  
water is clearer than air :  
Down we look'd : what a garden ! O  
bliss, what a Paradise there !  
Towers of a happier time, low down  
in a rainbow deep  
Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal  
sleep !  
And three of the gentlest and best of  
my people, whate'er I could  
say,  
Plunged head down in the sea, and  
the Paradise trembled away.

## VIII.

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,  
where the heavens lean low on  
the land,  
And ever at dawn from the cloud  
glitter'd o'er us a sunbright  
hand,  
Then it open'd and dropt at the side  
of each man, as he rose from  
his rest,  
Bread enough for his need till the  
laborless day dipt under the  
West ;  
And we wander'd about it and thro'  
it. O never was time so  
good !  
And we sang of the triumphs of  
Finn, and the boast of our  
ancient blood,  
And we gazed at the wandering wave  
as we sat by the gurgle of  
springs,  
And we chanted the songs of the  
Bards and the glories of fairy-  
kings :

But at length we began to be weary,  
to sigh, and to stretch and  
yawn,

Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and  
the sunbright hand of the  
dawn,

For there was not an enemy near, but  
the whole green Isle was our  
own,

And we took to playing at ball, and  
we took to throwing the stone,  
And we took to playing at battle, but  
that was a perilous play,

For the passion of the battle was in  
us, we slew and we sail'd  
away.

## IX.

And we came to the Isle of Witches  
and heard their musical cry —  
“Come to us, O come, come” in the  
stormy red of a sky

Dashing the fires and the shadows of  
dawn on the beautiful shapes,  
For a wild witch naked as heaven  
stood on each of the loftiest  
capes,

And a hundred ranged on the rock  
like white sea-birds in a row,

And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced  
on the wrecks in the sand be-  
low,

And a hundred splash'd from the  
ledges, and bosom'd the burst  
of the spray,

But I knew we should fall on each  
other, and hastily sail'd away.

## X.

And we came in an evil time to the  
Isle of the Double Towers,

One was of smooth-cut stone, one  
carved all over with flowers,

But an earthquake always moved in  
the hollows under the dells,

And they shock'd on each other and  
butted each other with clashing  
of bells,

And the daws flew out of the Towers  
and jangled and wrangled in  
vain,

And the clash and boom of the bells  
rang into the heart and the brain,

Till the passion of battle was on us,  
and all took sides with the  
Towers,

There were some for the clean-cut  
stone, there were more for the  
carven flowers,

And the wrathful thunder of God  
peal'd over us all the day,

For the one half slew the other and  
after we sail'd away.

## XI.

And we came to the Isle of a Saint  
who had sail'd with St. Brendan  
of yore,

He had lived ever since on the Isle  
and his winters were fifteenscore,  
And his voice was low as from other  
worlds, and his eyes were  
sweet,

And his white hair sank to his beels  
and his white beard fell to his  
feet,

And he spake to me, “O Maeldune,  
let be this purpose of thine!

Remember the words of the Lord  
when he told us ‘Vengeance is  
mine!’

His fathers have slain thy fathers  
in war or in single strife,

Thy fathers have slain his fathers,  
each taken a life for a life,

Thy father had slain his father, how  
long shall the murder last?

Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer  
the Past to be Past.”

And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard  
and we pray'd as we heard him  
pray,

And the Holy man he assoil'd us, and  
sadly we sail'd away.

## XII.

And we came to the Isle we were blown  
from, and there on the shore  
was he,

The man that had slain my father. I  
saw him and let him be.

O weary was I of the travel, the  
trouble, the strife and the sin,

When I landed again, with a tithe of  
my men, on the Isle of Finn.

## DE PROFUNDIS:

## THE TWO GREETINGS.

## I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
 Where all that was to be, in all that was,  
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast  
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-  
 ing light—  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,  
 Thro' all this changing world of  
 changeless law,  
 And every phase of ever-heightening  
 life,  
 And nine long months of antenatal  
 gloom,  
 With this last moon, this crescent—  
 her dark orb  
 Touch'd with earth's light— thou  
 comest, darling boy;  
 Our own; a babe in lineament and  
 limb  
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect  
 man;  
 Whose face and form are hers and  
 mine in one,  
 Indissolubly married like our love;  
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and  
 serve  
 This mortal race thy kin so well, that  
 men  
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O  
 young life  
 Breaking with laughter from the dark;  
 and may  
 The fated channel where thy motion  
 lives  
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway thy  
 course  
 Along the years of haste and random  
 youth  
 Unshatter'd; then full-current thro'  
 full man;  
 And last in kindly curves, with gen-  
 tlest fall,  
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,

To that last deep where we and thou  
 are still.

## II.

## I.

Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that great deep, before our  
 world begins,  
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as  
 he will—  
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the  
 deep,  
 From that true world within the world  
 we see,  
 Whereof our world is but the bound-  
 ing shore—  
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the deep,  
 With this ninth moon, that sends the  
 hidden sun  
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest,  
 darling boy.

## II.

For in the world, which is not ours,  
 They said  
 "Let us make man" and that which  
 should be man,  
 From that one light no man can look  
 upon,  
 Drew to this shore lit by the suns and  
 moons  
 And all the shadows. O dear Spirit  
 half-lost  
 In thine own shadow and this fleshly  
 sign  
 That thou art thou—who wailest  
 being born  
 And banish'd into mystery, and the  
 pain  
 Of this divisible-indivisible world  
 Among the numerable-innumerable  
 Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite  
 space  
 In finite-infinite Time—our mortal  
 veil  
 And shatter'd phantom of that infinite  
 One,  
 Who made thee unconceivably Thy-  
 self  
 Out of His whole World-self and all  
 in all—

Live thou: and of the grain and husk,  
 the grape  
 And ivyberry, choose; and still depart  
 From death to death thro' life and  
 life, and find  
 Nearer and ever nearer Him, who  
 wrought  
 Not Matter, nor the finite-infinite,  
 But this main-miracle, that thou art  
 thou,  
 With power on thine own act and on  
 the world.

## THE HUMAN CRY.

## I.

HALLOWED be Thy name — Halle-  
 luiah! —  
 Infinite Ideality!  
 Immeasurable Reality!  
 Infinite Personality!  
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

## II.

We feel we are nothing — for all is  
 Thou and in Thee;  
 We feel we are something — *that* also  
 has come from Thee;  
 We know we are nothing — but Thou  
 wilt help us to be.  
 Hallowed be Thy name — Halleluiah!

## PREFATORY SONNET

TO THE "NINETEENTH CENTURY."

THOSE that of late had fled to far and  
 fast  
 To touch all shores, now leaving to  
 the skill  
 Of others their old craft seaworthy still,  
 Have charter'd this; where, mindful  
 of the past,  
 Our true co-mates regather round the  
 mast;  
 Of diverse tongue, but with a com-  
 mon will  
 Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil  
 And crocus, to put forth and brave  
 the blast;  
 For some, descending from the sacred  
 peak

Of hoar high-templed Faith, have  
 leagued again  
 Their lot with ours to rove the world  
 about;  
 And some are wilder comrades, sworn  
 to seek  
 If any golden harbor 'be for men  
 In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of  
 Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOK-  
FIELD.

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that  
 knew you best,  
 Old Brooks, who loved so well to  
 mouth my rhymes,  
 How oft we two have heard St. Mary's  
 chimes!  
 How oft the Cantab supper, host and  
 guest,  
 Would echo helpless laughter to your  
 jest!  
 How oft with him we paced that walk  
 of lines,  
 Him, the lost light of those dawn-  
 golden times,  
 Who loved you well! Now both are  
 gone to rest.  
 You man of humorous-melancholy  
 mark,  
 Dead of some inward agony — is it so?  
 Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past  
 away!  
 I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:  
 Σκιάς ὄναρ — dream of a shadow, go —  
 God bless you. I shall join you in a day.

## MONTENEGRO.

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle  
 sails,  
 They kept their faith, their freedom,  
 on the height,  
 Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day  
 and night  
 Against the Turk; whose inroad no-  
 where scales  
 Their headlong passes, but his foot-  
 step fails,

And red with blood the Crescent reels  
 from fight  
 Before their dauntless hundreds, in  
 prone flight  
 By thousands down the crags and  
 thro' the vales.  
 O smallest among peoples! rough  
 rock-throne  
 Of Freedom! warriors beating back  
 the swarm  
 Of Turkish Islam for five hundred  
 years,  
 Great Tsernogora! never since thine  
 own  
 Black ridges drew the cloud and brake  
 the storm  
 Has breathed a race of mightier  
 mountaineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO.

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,  
 Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes  
 and fears,

French of the French, and Lord of  
 human tears;  
 Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit  
 laurels glance  
 Darkening the wreaths of all that  
 would advance,  
 Beyond our strait, their claim to be  
 thy peers;  
 Weird Titan by thy winter weight of  
 years  
 As yet unbroken, Stormy voice of  
 France!  
 Who dost not love our England — so  
 they say;  
 I know not — England, France, all  
 man to be  
 Will make one people ere man's race  
 be run:  
 And I, desiring that diviner day,  
 Yield thee full thanks for thy full  
 courtesy  
 To younger England in the boy my  
 son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH.

Constantinus, King of the Scots, after having sworn allegiance to Athelstan, allied himself with the Danes of Ireland under Anlaf, and invading England, was defeated by Athelstan and his brother Edmund with great slaughter at Brunanburh in the year 937.

I.

<sup>1</sup>ATHELSTAN King,  
 Lord among Earls,  
 Bracelet-bestower and  
 Baron of Barons,  
 He with his brother,  
 Edmund Atheling,  
 Gaining a lifelong  
 Glory in battle,

<sup>1</sup> I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the *Contemporary Review* (November 1876).

Slew with the sword-edge  
 There by Brunanburh,  
 Brake the shield-wall,  
 Hew'd the linden-wood,<sup>1</sup>  
 Hack'd the battleshield,  
 Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II.

Theirs was a greatness  
 Got from their Grandsires —  
 Theirs that so often in  
 Strife with their enemies  
 Struck for their hoards and their  
 hearths and their homes.

III.

Bow'd the spoiler,  
 Bent the Scotsman,

<sup>1</sup> Shields of lindenwood.

Fell the shipcrews  
Doom'd to the death.

All the field with blood of the fighters  
Flow'd, from when first the great  
Sun-star of morningtide,  
Lamp of the Lord God  
Lord everlasting,  
Glode over earth till the glorious  
creature  
Sank to his setting.

## IV.

There lay many a man  
Marr'd by the javelin,  
Men of the Northland  
Shot over shield.  
There was the Scotsman  
Weary of war.

## V.

We the West-Saxons,  
Long as the daylight  
Lasted, in companies  
Troubled the track of the host that  
we hated,  
Grimly with swords that were sharp  
from the grindstone,  
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before  
us.

## VI.

Mighty the Mercian,  
Hard was his hand-play,  
Sparing not any of  
Those that with Anlaf,  
Warriors over the  
Weltering waters  
Borne in the bark's-bosom,  
Drew to this island :  
Doom'd to the death.

## VII.

Five young kings put asleep by the  
sword-stroke,  
Seven strong Earls of the army of  
Anlaf  
Fell on the war-field, numberless  
numbers,  
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

## VIII.

Then the Norse leader,  
Dire was his need of it,  
Few were his following,

Fled to his warship :  
Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king  
in it,  
Saving his life on the fallow flood.

## IX.

Also the crafty one,  
Constantinus,  
Crept to his North again,  
Hoar-headed hero!

## X.

Slender warrant had  
*He* to be proud of  
The welcome of war-knives —  
He that was reft of his  
Folk and his friends that had  
Fallen in conflict,  
Leaving his son too  
Lost in the carnage,  
Mangled to morsels,  
A youngster in war!

## XI.

Slender reason had  
*He* to be glad of  
The clash of the war-glaive —  
Traitor and trickster  
And spurner of treaties —  
He nor had Anlaf  
With armies so broken  
A reason for bragging  
That they had the better  
In perils of battle  
On places of slaughter —  
The struggle of standards,  
The rush of the javelins,  
The crash of the charges,<sup>1</sup>  
The wielding of weapons —  
The play that they play'd with  
The children of Edward.

## XII.

Then with their nail'd prows  
Parted the Norsemen, a  
Blood-redden'd relic of  
Javelins over  
The jarring breaker, the deep-  
sea billow,  
Shaping their way toward Dy-  
flen<sup>2</sup> again,  
Shamed in their souls.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "the gathering of men." <sup>2</sup> Dublin.



## XIII.

Also the brethren,  
King and Atheling,  
Each in his glory,  
Went to his own in his own West-  
Saxonland,  
Glad of the war.

## XIV.

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,  
Many a livid one, many a sallow-  
skin —  
Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear  
it, and  
Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to  
rend it, and  
Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to  
gorge it, and  
That gray beast, the wolf of the weald.

## XV.

Never had huger  
Slaughter of heroes  
Slain by the sword-edge —  
Such as old writers  
Have writ of in histories —  
Hapt in this isle, since  
Up from the East hither  
Saxon and Angle from  
Over the broad billow  
Broke into Britain with  
Haughty war-workers who  
Harried the Welshman, when  
Earls that were lured by the  
Hunger of glory gat  
Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE  
TRENCH.

ILIAD, xviii. 202.

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.  
Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus; and  
round  
The warrior's puissant shoulders Pallas  
flung  
Her fringed ægis, and around his  
head  
The glorious goddess wreath'd a  
golden cloud,

And from it lighted an all-shining  
flame.  
As when a smoke from a city goes to  
heaven  
Far off from out an island girt by  
foes,  
All day the men contend in grievous  
war  
From their own city, but with set of  
sun  
Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the  
glare  
Flies streaming, if perchance the  
neighbors round  
May see, and sail to help them in the  
war;  
So from his head the splendor went  
to heaven.  
From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,  
nor join'd  
The Achæans — honoring his wise  
mother's word —  
There standing, shouted, and Pallas  
far away  
Call'd; and a boundless panic shook  
the foe.  
For like the clear voice when a trum-  
pet shrills,  
Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a  
town,  
So rang the clear voice of Æakidès;  
And when the brazen cry of Æakidès  
Was heard among the Trojans, all  
their hearts  
Were troubled, and the full-maned  
horses whirl'd  
The chariots backward, knowing griefs  
at hand;  
And sheer-astounded were the chari-  
oteers  
To see the dread, unweariable fire  
That always o'er the great Peleion's  
head  
Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess  
made it burn.  
Thrice from the dyke he sent his  
mighty shout,  
Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans  
and allies;  
And there and then twelve of their  
noblest died  
Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA  
ON HER MARRIAGE.

O YOU that were eyes and light to the  
King till he past away  
From the darkness of life—  
He saw not his daughter—he blest  
her: the blind King sees you  
to-day,  
He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER  
ABBEY.

Not here! the white North has thy  
bones; and thou,  
Heroic sailor-soul,  
Art passing on thine happier voyage  
now  
Toward no earthly pole.

---

TO DANTE.

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLORENTINES.)

KING, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and grown  
In power, and ever growest, since thine own  
Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,  
Thy Florence now the crown of Italy,  
Hath sought the tribute of a verse from me,  
I, wearing but the garland of a day,  
Cast at thy feet one flower that fades away.

# TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS.



TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING,

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY

WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST,

AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

TO E. FITZGERALD.

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb  
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,  
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,  
And greet it with a kindly smile ;

Whom yet I see as there you sit  
Beneath your sheltering garden-  
tree,

And watch your doves about you flit,  
And plant on shoulder, hand and  
knee,

Or on your head their rosy feet,  
As if they knew your diet spares  
Whatever moved in that full sheet

Let down to Peter at his prayers ;  
Who live on milk and meal and  
grass ;

And once for ten long weeks I tried  
Your table of Pythagoras,  
And seem'd at first 'a thing en-  
skied'

(As Shakespeare has it) airy-light  
To float above the ways of men,  
Then fell from that half-spiritual  
height

Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again

One night when earth was winter-  
black,

And all the heavens flash'd in frost ;  
And on me, half-asleep, came back  
That wholesome heat the blood had  
lost,

And set me climbing icy capes  
And glaciers, over which there  
roll'd

To meet me long-arm'd vines with  
grapes

Of Eshcol hugeness ; for the cold  
Without, and warmth within me,  
wrought

To mould the dream ; but none can  
say

That Lenten fare makes Lenten  
thought,

Who reads your golden Eastern  
lay,

Than which I know no version done  
In English more divinely well ;  
A planet equal to the sun

Which cast it, that large infidel  
Your Omar ; and your Omar drew  
Full-handed plaudits from our best  
In modern letters, and from two,  
Old friends outvaluing all the rest,

Two voices heard on earth no more ;  
 But we old friends are still alive,  
 And I am nearing seventy-four,  
 While you have touch'd at seventy-  
 five,  
 And so I send a birthday line  
 Of greeting ; and my son, who dipt  
 In some forgotten book of mine  
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,  
 And dating many a year ago,  
 Has hit on this, which you will take,  
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know  
 Less for its own than for the sake  
 Of one recalling gracious times,  
 When, in our younger London days,  
 You found some merit in my rhymes,  
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

---

 TIRESIAS.

I WISH I were as in the years of old,  
 While yet the blessed daylight made  
 itself  
 Buddy thro' both the roofs of sight,  
 and woke  
 These eyes, now dull, but then so  
 keen to seek  
 The meanings ambush'd under all  
 they saw,  
 The flight of birds, the flame of sac-  
 rifice,  
 What omens may foreshadow fate to  
 man  
 And woman, and the secret of the Gods.  
 My son, the Gods, despite of human  
 prayer,  
 Are slower to forgive than human  
 kings.  
 The great God, Arês, burns in anger  
 still  
 Against the guiltless heirs of him  
 from Tyre,  
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,  
 who found  
 Beside the springs of Dircê, smote,  
 and still'd  
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous  
 beast,  
 The dragon, which our trembling  
 fathers call'd  
 The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,  
 When but thine age, by age as win-  
 ter-white  
 As mine is now, amazed, but made  
 me yearn  
 For larger glimpses of that more  
 than man  
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts,  
 and lays the deep,  
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates  
 and loves,  
 And moves unseen among the ways  
 of men.  
 Then, in my wanderings all the  
 lands that lie  
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge  
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho'  
 my wont  
 Was more to scale the highest of the  
 heights  
 With some strange hope to see the  
 nearer God.  
 One naked peak — the sister of the  
 sun  
 Would climb from out the dark, and  
 linger there  
 To silver all the valleys with her  
 shafts —  
 There once, but long ago, five-fold  
 thy term  
 Of years, I lay ; the winds were dead  
 for heat ;  
 The noonday crag made the hand  
 burn ; and sick  
 For shadow — not one bush was near  
 — I rose  
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls  
 Found silence in the hollows under-  
 neath.  
 There in a secret olive-glade I saw  
 Pallas Athene climbing from the  
 bath  
 In anger ; yet one glittering foot dis-  
 turb'd  
 The lucid well ; one snowy knee was  
 preat  
 Against the margin flowers ; a dread-  
 ful light  
 Came from her golden hair, her gold-  
 en helm  
 And all her golden armor on the  
 grass,

And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes  
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark  
 For ever, and I heard a voice that said  
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too much,  
 And speak the truth that no man may believe.'  
 Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives  
 Behind this darkness, I behold her still,  
 Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,  
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,  
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,  
 And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd  
 The power of prophesying — but to me  
 No power — so chain'd and coupled with the curse  
 Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard  
 And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,  
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunderbolt,  
 And angers of the Gods for evil done  
 And expiation lack'd — no power on Fate,  
 Theirs, or mine own! for when the crowd would roar  
 For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,  
 To cast wise words among the multitude  
 Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in hours  
 Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain  
 Would each waste each, and bring on both the yoke  
 Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb  
 The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear  
 My warning that the tyranny of one Was prelude to the tyranny of all?  
 My counsel that the tyranny of all Led backward to the tyranny of one?  
 This power hath work'd no good to aught that lives,  
 And these blind hands were useless in their wars.  
 O therefore that the unfulfill'd desire, The grief for ever born from griefs to be,  
 The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart —  
 Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd  
 To some great citizen, win all praise from all  
 Who past it, saying, 'That was he!' In vain!  
 Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those  
 Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd  
 Within themselves, immerging, each, his urn  
 In his own well, draw solace as he may.  
 Menaceus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear  
 Too plainly what full tides of onset sap  
 Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war  
 Rides on those ringing axles! jingle of bits,  
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-footed horse  
 That grind the glebe to powder! Stony showers  
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash  
 Along the sounding walls. Above, below,  
 Shock after shock, the song-built towers and gates  
 Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddering  
 War-thunder of iron rams; and from within  
 The city comes a murmur void of joy,

Lest she be taken captive — maidens,  
 wives,  
 And mothers with their babblers of  
 the dawn,  
 And oldest age in shadow from the  
 night,  
 Falling about their shrines before  
 their Gods,  
 And wailing 'Save us.'  
 And they wail to thee!  
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see  
 thine own,  
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies  
 The saving of our Thebes; for, yes-  
 ternight,  
 To me, the great God Arès, whose  
 one bliss  
 Is war, and human sacrifice — himself  
 Blood-red from battle, spear and  
 helmet tipt  
 With stormy light as on a mast at  
 sea,  
 Stood out before a darkness, crying  
 'Thebes,  
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for  
 I loathe  
 The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of  
 these  
 By his own hand — if one of these ——'  
 My son,  
 No sound is breathed so potent to  
 coerce,  
 And to conciliate, as their names who  
 dare  
 For that sweet motherland which gave  
 them birth  
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their  
 names,  
 Graven on memorial columns, are a  
 song  
 Heard in the future; few, but more  
 than wall  
 And rampart, their examples reach a  
 hand  
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere  
 they meet  
 And kindle generous purpose, and the  
 strength  
 To mould it into action pure as theirs.  
 Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's  
 best end  
 Be to end well! and thou refusing this,

Unvenerable will thy memory be  
 While men shall move the lips: but  
 if thou dare —  
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cad-  
 mus — then  
 No stone is fitted in yon marble girth  
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy  
 glorious doom,  
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring  
 thy name  
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the  
 springs  
 Of Dircè laving yonder battle-plair,  
 Heard from the roofs by night, will  
 murmur thee  
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes  
 thro' thee shall stand  
 Firm-based with all her Gods.  
 The Dragon's cave  
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing  
 vines —  
 Where once he dwelt and whence he  
 roll'd himself  
 At dead of night — thou knowest, and  
 that smooth rock  
 Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late  
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with  
 wings drawn back,  
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to  
 Thebes.  
 There blanch the bones of him she  
 slew, and these  
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce  
 beast found  
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd her-  
 self  
 Dead in her rage: but thou art wise  
 enough,  
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt  
 the curse  
 Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the  
 truth  
 Believe I speak it, let thine own hand  
 strike  
 Thy youthful pulses into rest and  
 quench  
 The red God's anger, fearing not to  
 plunge  
 Thy torch of life in darkness, rather  
 — thou  
 Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the  
 stars

Send no such light upon the ways of  
men

As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there  
Thou, that hast never known the em-  
brace of love,  
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!  
I felt one warm tear fall upon it.  
Gone!

He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,  
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,  
And mingled with the famous kings  
of old,

On whom about their ocean-islands  
flash

The faces of the Gods—the wise  
man's word,

Here trampled by the populace under-  
foot,

There crown'd with worship—and  
these eyes will find

The men I knew, and watch the  
chariot whirl

About the goal again, and hunters race  
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-  
kings,

In height and prowess more than hu-  
man, strive

Again for glory, while the golden lyre  
Is ever sounding in heroic ears  
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales  
Wind, clouded with the grateful  
incense-fume

Of those who mix all odor to the Gods  
On one far height in one far-shining  
fire.

'One height and one far-shining fire'  
And while I fancied that my friend  
For this brief idyll would require  
A less diffuse and opulent end,  
And would defend his judgment well,  
If I should deem it over nice—  
The tolling of his funeral bell

Broke on my Pagan Paradise,  
And mixt the dream of classic times,  
And all the phantoms of the dream,  
With present grief, and made the  
rhymes,

That miss'd his living welcome,  
seem  
Like would-be guests an hour too  
late,

Who down the highway moving on  
With easy laughter find the gate  
Is bolted, and the master gone.

Gone into darkness, that full light  
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away  
By night, into the deeper night!

The deeper night? A clearer day  
Than our poor twilight dawn on  
earth—

If night, what barren toil to be!  
What life, so maim'd by night, were  
worth

Our living out? Not mine to me  
Remembering all the golden hours  
Now silent, and so many dead,  
And him the last; and laying flowers,  
This wreath, above his honor'd  
head,

And praying that, when I from hence  
Shall fade with him into the un-  
known,

My close of earth's experience  
May prove as peaceful as his own.

## THE WRECK.

### I.

**H**IDE me, Mother! my Fathers belong'd to the church of old,  
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the ancient fold,  
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the Faith that saves,  
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and the roar of waves,  
My life itself is a wreck, I have sullied a noble name,  
I am flung from the rushing tide of the world as a waif of shame,

I am roused by the wail of a child, and awake to a livid light,  
 And a ghastlier face than ever has haunted a grave by night,  
 I would hide from the storm without, I would flee from the storm within—  
 I would make my life one prayer for a soul that died in his sin,  
 I was the tempter, Mother, and mine was the deeper fall;  
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my face, I will tell you all.

## II.

He that they gave me to, Mother, a heedless and innocent bride —  
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I have only wounded his pride —  
 Spain in his blood and the Jew ——— dark-visaged, stately and tall —  
 A princelier-looking man never stepped thro' a Prince's hall.  
 And who, when his anger was kindled, would venture to give him the nay .  
 And a man men fear is a man to be loved by the women they say.  
 And I could have loved him too, if the blossom can doat on the blight,  
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the frost that sears it at night;  
 He would open the books that I prized, and toss them away with a yawn,  
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the which my nature was drawn,  
 The word of the Poet by whom the deeps of the world are stirr'd,  
 The music that robs it in language beneath and beyond the word!  
 My Shelley would fall from my hands when he cast a contemptuous glance  
 From where he was poring over his Tables of Trade and Finance;  
 My hands, when I heard him coming would drop from the chords or the keys,  
 But ever I fail'd to please him, however I strove to please —  
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the city, and there  
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances of dividend, consol, and share —  
 And at home if I sought for a kindly caress, being woman and weak,  
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of snow on the cheek:  
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when I held it aloft in my joy,  
 He look'd at it coldly, and said to me "Pity isn't a hoy."  
 The one thing given me, to love and to live for, glanced at in scorn!  
 The child that I felt I could die for — as if she were basely born!  
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was planted now in a tomb;  
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I closed my heart to the gloom;  
 I threw myself all abroad — I would play my part with the young  
 By the low foot-lights of the world — and I caught the wreath that was flung.

## III.

Mother, I have not — however their tongues may have babbled of me —  
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all but a dwarf was he,  
 And all but a hunchback too; and I look'd at him, first, askance  
 With pity — not he the knight for an amorous girl's romance!  
 Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd in the light of a dowerless smile,  
 Having lands at home and abroad in a rich West-Indian isle;  
 But I came on him once at a ball, the heart of a listening crowd —  
 Why, what a brow was there! he was seated — speaking aloud  
 To women, the flower of the time, and men at the helm of state —  
 Flowing with easy greatness and touching on all things great,  
 Science, philosophy, song — till I felt myself ready to weep  
 For I knew not what, when I heard that voice, — as mellow and deep



As a psalm by a mighty master and peal'd from an organ,—roll  
 Rising and falling—for, Mother, the voice was the voice of the soul;  
 And the sun of the soul made day in the dark of his wonderful eyes.  
 Here was the hand that would help me, would heal me—the heart that was  
 wise!

And he, poor man, when he learnt that I hated the ring I wore,  
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd me with sorrow forevermore.

## IV.

For I broke the bond. That day my nurse had brought me the child.  
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but it coo'd to the Mother and smiled.  
 "Anything ailing," I ask'd her, "with baby?" She shook her head,  
 And the Motherless Mother kiss'd it, and turn'd in her haste and fled.

## V.

Low warm winds had gently breathed us away from the land—  
 Ten long sweet summer days upon deck, sitting hand in hand—  
 When he clothed a naked mind with the wisdom and wealth of his own,  
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave to his intellectual throne,  
 When he coin'd into English gold some treasure of classical song,  
 When he louted a statesman's error, or flamed at a public wrong,  
 When he rose as it were on the wings of an eagle beyond me, and past  
 Over the range and the change of the world from the first to the last,  
 When he spoke of his tropical home in the canes by the purple tide,  
 And the high star-crowns of his palms on the deep-wooded mountain-side,  
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that dropt to the brink of his bay,  
 And trees like the towers of a minster, the sons of a winterless day.  
 "Paradise there!" so he said, but I seem'd in Paradise then  
 With the first great love I had felt for the first and greatest of men,  
 Ten long days of summer and sin—if it must be so—  
 But days of a larger light than I ever again shall know—  
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro' life to my latest breath;  
 "No frost there," so he said, "as in truest Love no Death."

## VI.

Mother, one morning a bird with a warble plaintively sweet  
 Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell fluttering down at my feet;  
 I took it, he made it a cage, we fondled it, Stephen and I,  
 But it died, and I thought of the child for a moment, I scarce know why.

## VII.

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as many will say,  
 My sin to my desolate little one found me at sea on a day,  
 When her orphan wail came borne in the shriek of a growing wind,  
 And a voice rang out in the thunders of Ocean and Heaven "Thou hast sinn'd."  
 And down in the cabin were we, for the towering crest of the tides  
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a cataract off from her sides,  
 And ever the great storm grew with a howl and a hoot of the blast  
 In the rigging, voices of hell—then came the crash of the mast.

"The wages of sin is death," and then I began to weep,  
 "I am the Jonah, the crew should cast me into the deep,  
 For ah God, what a heart was mine to forsake her even for you."  
 "Never the heart among women," he said, "more tender and true."  
 "The heart! not a mother's heart, when I left my darling alone."  
 "Comfort yourself, for the heart of the father will care for his own."  
 "The heart of the father will spurn her," I cried, "for the sin of the wife,  
 The cloud of the mother's shame will enfold her and darken her life."  
 Then his pale face twitch'd; "O Stephen, I love you, I love you, and yet" —  
 As I lean'd away from his arms — "would God, we had never met!"  
 And he spoke not — only the storm; till after a little, I yearn'd  
 For his voice again, and he call'd to me "Kiss me!" and there — as I turn'd —  
 "The heart, the heart!" I kiss'd him, I clung to the sinking form,  
 And the storm went roaring above us, and he — was out of the storm.

## VIII.

And then, then, Mother, the ship stagger'd under a thunderous shock,  
 That shook us asunder, as if she had struck and crash'd on a rock;  
 For a huge sea smote every soul from the decks of The Falcon but one;  
 All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to the helm had gone;  
 And I fell — and the storm and the days went by, but I knew no more —  
 Lost myself — lay like the dead by the dead on the cabin floor,  
 Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the loss that was mine,  
 With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand giving bread and wine,  
 Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood still, and the skies were blue,  
 But the face I had known, O Mother, was not the face that I knew.

## IX.

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so amazed me, that I  
 Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling myself over and die!  
 But one — he was waving a flag — the one man left on the wreck —  
 "Woman" — he graspt at my arm — "stay there" — I crouch'd on the deck —  
 "We are sinking, and yet there's hope: look yonder," he cried, "a sail"  
 In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate tears, and the wail  
 Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was nearing us — then  
 All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the child again.

## X.

They lower'd me down the side, and there in the boat I lay  
 With sad eyes fixt on the lost sea-home, as we glided away,  
 And I sigh'd, as the low dark hull dipt under the smiling main,  
 "Had I stayed with *him*, I had now — with *him* — been out of my pain."

## XI.

They took us aboard: the crew were gentle, the captain kind;  
 But I was the lonely slave of an often-wandering mind;  
 For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a stormier wave,  
 "O Stephen," I moan'd, "I am coming to thee in thine Ocean-grave."  
 And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peacefuller sea,  
 I found myself moaning again "O child, I am coming to thee."

## XII.

The broad white brow of the Isle — that bay with the color'd sand —  
 Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land ;  
 All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch into spray  
 At the feet of the cliff ; and I pray'd — “ my child ” — for I still could pray —  
 “ May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd by the curse  
 Of a sin, not hers ! ”

Was it well with the child ?

I wrote to the nurse

Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart ; and an answer came  
 Not from the nurse — nor yet to the wife — to her maiden name !  
 I shook as I open'd the letter — I knew that hand too well, —  
 And from it a scrap, clipt out of the “ deaths ” in a paper, fell.  
 “ Ten long sweet summer days ” of fever, and want of care !  
 And gone — that day of the storm — O Mother, she came to me there.

## DESPAIR.

A man and his wife having lost faith in a God, and hope of a life to come, and being  
 utterly miserable in this, resolve to end themselves by drowning. The woman is drowned,  
 but the man rescued by a minister of the sect he had abandoned.

## I.

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand ?  
 Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and drew me to land ?

## II.

What did I feel that night ? You are curious. How should I tell ?  
 Does it matter so much what I felt ? You rescued me — yet — was it well  
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd, between me and the deep and my doom,  
 Three days since, three more dark days of the Godless gloom  
 Of a life without sun, without health, without hope, without any delight  
 In anything here upon earth ? but ah God, that night, that night  
 When the rolling eyes of the light-house there on the fatal neck  
 Of land running out into rock — they had saved many hundreds from wreck —  
 Glared on our way toward death, I remember I thought, as we past,  
 Does it matter how many they saved ? we are all of us wreck'd at last —  
 “ Do you fear,” and there came thro' the roar of the breaker a whisper, a breath,  
 “ Fear ? am I not with you ? I am frighted at life not death.”

## III.

And the suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in the sky,  
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was a lie —  
 Bright as with deathless hope — but, however they sparkled and shone,  
 The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe like our own —  
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,  
 A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe.

## IV.

See, we were nursed in the drear night-fold of your fatalist creed,  
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn, we had hoped for a dawn indeed,  
 When the light of a Sun that was coming would scatter the ghosts of the Past,  
 And the cramping creeds that had madden'd the peoples would vanish at last,  
 And we broke away from the Christ, our human brother and friend,  
 For He spoke, or it seem'd that He spoke, of a Hell without help, without end.

## V.

Hoped for a dawn and it came, but the promise had faded away ;  
 We had past from a cheerless night to the glare of a drearier day ;  
 He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire,  
 The guess of a worm in the dust and the shadow of its desire —  
 Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the weak trodden down by the strong,  
 Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre, murder, and wrong.

## VI.

O we poor orphans of nothing — alone on that lonely shore —  
 Born of the brainless Nature who knew not that which she bore !  
 Trusting no longer that earthly flower would be heavenly fruit —  
 Come from the brute, poor souls — no souls — and to die with the brute —

## VII.

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity: I know you of old —  
 Small pity for those that have ranged from the narrow warmth of your fold,  
 Where you bawl'd the dark side of your faith and a God of eternal rage,  
 Till you flung us back on ourselves, and the human heart, and the Age.

## VIII.

But pity — the Pagan held it a vice — was in her and in me,  
 Helpless, taking the place of the pitying God that should be !  
 Pity for all that aches in the grasp of an idiot power,  
 And pity for our own selves on an earth that bore not a flower ;  
 Pity for all that suffers on land or in air or the deep,  
 And pity for our own selves till we long'd for eternal sleep.

## IX.

“ Lightly step over the sands ! the waters — you hear them call !  
 Life with its anguish, and horrors, and errors — away with it all ! ”  
 And she laid her hand in my own — she was always loyal and sweet —  
 Till the points of the foam in the dusk came playing about our feet.  
 There was a strong sea-current would sweep us out to the main.  
 “ Ah God ” tho' I felt as I spoke I was taking the name in vain —  
 “ Ah God ” and we turn'd to each other, we kiss'd, we embraced she and I.  
 Knowing the Love we were used to believe everlasting would die :

We had read their know-nothing books and we lean'd to the darker side—  
 Ah God, should we find Him, perhaps, perhaps, if we died, if we died;  
 We never had found Him on earth, this earth is a fatherless Hell—  
 "Dear Love, forever and ever, forever and ever farewell,"  
 Never cry so desolate, not since the world began,  
 Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the coming of man!

## X.

But the blind wave cast me ashore, and you saved me, a valueless life.  
 Not a grain of gratitude mine! You have parted the man from the wife.  
 I am left alone on the land, she is all alone in the sea;  
 If a curse meant ought, I would curse you for not having let me be.

## XI.

Visions of youth — for my brain was drunk with the water, it seems;  
 I had past into perfect quiet at length out of pleasant dreams,  
 And the transient trouble of drowning — what was it when match'd with the  
 pains  
 Of the hellish heat of a wretched life rushing back thro' the veins?

## XII.

Why should I live? one son had forged on his father and fled,  
 And if I believed in a God, I would thank him, the other is dead,  
 And there was a baby-girl, that had never look'd on the light:  
 Happiest she of us all, for she past from the night to the night.

## XIII.

But the crime, if a crime, of her eldest-born, her glory, her boast,  
 Struck hard at the tender heart of the mother, and broke it almost;  
 Tho' glory and shame dying out forever in endless time,  
 Does it matter so much whether crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd for a crime?

## XIV.

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood there, naked, amazed  
 In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd myself turning crazed,  
 And I would not be mock'd in a madhouse! and she, the delicate wife,  
 With a grief that could only be cured, if cured, by the surgeon's knife,—

## XV.

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain,  
 If every man die forever, if all his griefs are in vain,  
 And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space,  
 Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race,  
 When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-worm will have  
 fled  
 From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?

## XVI.

Have I crazed myself over their horrible infidel writings ? O yes,  
 For these are the new dark ages, you see, of the popular press,  
 When the bat comes out of his cave, and the owls are whooping at noon,  
 And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill and crows to the sun and the moon,  
 Till the Sun and the Moon of our science are both of them turn'd into blood,  
 And Hope will have broken her heart, running after a shadow of good ;  
 For their knowing and know-nothing books are scatter'd from hand to hand —  
 We have knelt in your know-all chapel too looking over the sand.

## XVII.

What ! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well ?  
 Infinite cruelty rather that made everlasting Hell,  
 Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own ;  
 Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan !

## XVIII.

Hell ? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,  
 The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for his gold,  
 And so there were Hell forever ! but were there a God as you say,  
 His Love would have power over Hell till it utterly vanish'd away.

## XIX.

Ah yet — I have had some glimmer, at times, in my gloomiest woe,  
 Of a God behind all — after all — the great God for aught that I know ;  
 But the God of Love and of Hell together — they cannot be thought,  
 If there be such a God, may the Great God curse him and bring him to nought !

## XX.

Blasphemy ! whose is the fault ? is it mine ? for why would you save  
 A madman to vex you with wretched words, who is best in his grave ?  
 Blasphemy ! ay, why not, being damn'd beyond hope of grace ?  
 O would I were yonder with her, and away from your faith and your face !  
 Blasphemy ! true ! I have scared you pale with my scandalous talk,  
 But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all in the way that you walk.

## XXI.

Hence ! she is gone ! can I stay ? can I breathe divorced from the Past ?  
 You needs must have good lynx-eyes if I do not escape you at last.  
 Our orthodox coroner doubtless will find it a felode-se,  
 And the stake and the cross-road, fool, if you will, does it matter to me ?

## THE ANCIENT SAGE.

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of  
Christ  
From out his ancient city came a  
Seer  
Whom one that loved, and honor'd  
him, and yet  
Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but  
worn  
From wasteful living, follow'd — in  
his hand  
A scroll of verse — till that old man  
before  
A cavern whence an affluent fountain  
pour'd  
From darkness into daylight, turn'd  
and spoke.

This wealth of waters might but seem  
to draw  
From yon dark cave, but, son, the  
source is higher,  
Yon summit half-a-league in air —  
and higher,  
The cloud that hides it — higher still,  
the heavens  
Whereby the cloud was moulded, and  
whereout  
The cloud descended. Force is from  
the heights.  
I am wearied of our city, son, and go  
To spend my one last year among the  
hills.  
What hast thou there? Some death-  
song for the Ghouls  
To make their banquet relish? let  
me read.

How far thro' all the bloom and brake  
That nightingale is heard!  
What power but the bird's could make  
This music in the bird?  
How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?  
But man to-day is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen.

If thou would'st hear the Nameless,  
and wilt dive  
Into the Temple-cave of thine own self,

There, brooding by the central altar,  
thou  
May'st haply learn the Nameless hath  
a voice,  
By which thou wilt abide, if thou be  
wise,  
As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst  
not know;  
For Knowledge is the swallow on the  
lake  
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow  
there  
But never yet hath dipt into the  
abysm,  
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath,  
within  
The blue of sky and sea, the green  
of earth,  
And in the million-millionth of a grain  
Which cleft and cleft again fore  
more,  
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,  
To me, my son, more mystic than  
myself,  
Or even than the Nameless is to me.  
And when thou sendest thy free  
soul thro' heaven,  
Nor understandest bound nor bound-  
lessness,  
Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-  
dred names.  
And if the Nameless should with-  
draw from all  
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy  
world  
Might vanish like thy shadow in the  
dark.

And since — from when this earth began —  
The Nameless never came  
Among us, never spake with man,  
And never named the Name —

Thou canst not prove the Nameless,  
O my son,  
Nor canst thou prove the world thou  
movest in,  
Thou canst not prove that thou art  
body alone,  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
spirit alone  
Nor canst thou prove that thou art  
both in one:

Thou canst not prove thou art immortal, no  
 Nor yet that thou art mortal — nay my son,  
 Thou canst not prove that I, who speak with thee,  
 Am not thyself in converse with thyself,  
 For nothing worthy proving can be proven,  
 Nor yet disproven: wherefore thou be wise,  
 Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,  
 And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith!  
 She reels not in the storm of warring words,  
 She brightens at the clash of "Yes" and "No,"  
 She sees the Best that glimmers thro' the Worst,  
 She feels the Sun is hid but for a night,  
 She spies the summer thro' the winter bud,  
 She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,  
 She hears the lark within the songless egg,  
 She finds the fountain where they wail'd "Mirage!"

What Power? aught akin to Mind,  
 The mind in me and you?  
 Or power as of the Gods gone blind  
 Who see not what they do?

But some in yonder city hold, my son,  
 That none but Gods could build this house of ours,  
 So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond  
 All work of man, yet, like all work of man,  
 A beauty with defect — — till That which knows,  
 And is not known, but felt thro' what we feel  
 Within ourselves is highest, shall descend  
 On this half-deed, and shape it at the last  
 According to the Highest in the Highest.

What Power but the Years that make  
 And break the vase of clay,  
 And stir the sleeping earth, and wake  
 The bloom that fades away?  
 What rulers but the Days and Hours  
 That cancel weal with woe,  
 And wiod the front of youth with flowers,  
 And cap our age with snow?

The days and hours are ever glancing by,  
 And seem to flicker past thro' sun and shade,  
 Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads, or Pain;  
 But with the Nameless is nor Day nor Hour;  
 Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from thought to thought  
 Break into "Thens" and "Whens" the Eternal Now:  
 This double seeming of the single world! —  
 My words are like the babblings in a dream  
 Of nightmare, when the babblings break the dream.  
 But thou be wise in this dream-world of ours,  
 Nor take thy dial for thy deity,  
 But make the passing shadow serve thy will.

The years that made the stripling wise  
 Undo their work again,  
 And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,  
 The last and least of men;  
 Who clings to earth, and once would dare  
 Hell-heat or Arctic cold,  
 And now one breath of cooler air  
 Would loose him from his hold;  
 His winter chills him to the root,  
 He withers marrow and mid;  
 The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit  
 Is jutting thro' the rind;  
 The tiger spasms tear his chest,  
 The palsy wags his head;  
 The wife, the sons, who love him best  
 Would fain that he were dead;  
 The griefs by which he once was wrung  
 Were never worth the while —

Who knows? or whether this earth-narrow life  
 Be yet but yolk, and forming in the shell?

The shaft of scorn that once had stung  
 But wakes a dotard smile.



The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

The statesman's brain that sway'd the past  
Is feebler than his knees;  
The passive sailor wrecks at last  
In ever-silent seas;  
The warrior bath forgot his arms,  
The Learned all his lore;  
The changing market frets or charms  
The merchant's hope no more;  
The prophet's beacou burn'd in vain,  
And now is lost in cloud;  
The plowman passes, bent with pain,  
To mix with what he plow'd;  
The poet whom his Age would quote  
As heir of endless fame —  
He knows not ev'n the book he wrote,  
Not even his own name.  
For man has overlied his day,  
And, darkeuing in the light,  
Scarce feels the senses break away  
To mix with ancient Night.

The shell must break before the bird  
can fly.

The years that when my Youth began  
Had set the lily and rose  
By all my ways where'er they ran,  
Have ended mortal foes;  
My rose of love forever gone,  
My lily of truth and trust —  
They made her lily and rose in one,  
And changed her into dust.  
O rosetree planted in my grief,  
And growing, on her tomb,  
Her dust is greening in your leaf,  
Her blood is in your bloom.  
O slender lily waving there,  
And laughing back the light,  
In vain you tell me "Earth is fair"  
When all is dark as night.

My son, the world is dark with griefs  
and graves,  
So dark that men cry out against the  
Heavens.  
Who knows but that the darkness is  
in man?  
The doors of Night may be the gates  
of Light;  
For wert thou born or blind or deaf,  
and then  
Suddenly heal'd, how would'st thou  
glory in all  
The splendors and the voices of the  
world!  
And we, the poor earth's dying race,  
and yet

No phantoms, watching from a phan-  
tom shore  
Await the last and largest sense to  
make  
The phantom walls of this illusion  
fade,  
And show us that the world is wholly  
fair.

But vain the tears for darke'd years  
As laughter over wine,  
And vain the laughter as the tears,  
O brother, mine or thine,  
For all that laugh, and all that weep,  
And all that breathe are one  
Slight ripple on the boundless deep  
That moves, and all is gone.

But that one ripple on the boundless  
deep  
Feels that the deep is boundless, and  
itself  
Forever changing form, but evermore  
One with the boundless motion of the  
deep.

Yet wine and laughter friends! and set  
The lamps alight, and call  
For golden music, and forget  
The darkness of the pall.

If utter darkness closed the day,  
my son ———  
But earth's dark forehead flings  
athwart the heavens  
Her shadow crown'd with stars — and  
yonder — out  
To northward — some that never set,  
but pass  
From sight and night to lose them-  
selves in day.  
I hate the black negation of the bier,  
And wish the dead, as happier than  
ourselves  
And higher, having climb'd one step  
beyond  
Our village miseries, might be borne  
in white  
To burial or to burning, hymn'd from  
hence  
With songs in praise of death, and  
crown'd with flowers!

O worms and maggots of to-day  
Without their hope of wings!

But louder than thy rhyme the silent  
Word  
Of that world-prophet in the heart of  
man.

Tho' some have gleams or so they say  
Of more than mortal things.

To-day? but what of yesterday? for  
oft

On me, when boy, there came what  
then I call'd,

Who knew no books and no philoso-  
phies,

In my boy-phrase "The Passion of  
the Past."

The first gray streak of earliest sum-  
mer-dawn,

The last long stripe of waning crim-  
son gloom,

As if the late and early were but one —  
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a  
flower

Had murmurs "Lost and gone and  
lost and gone!"

A breath, a whisper — some divine  
farewell —

Desolate sweetness — far and far  
away —

What had he loved, what had he lost,  
the boy?

I know not and I speak of what has  
been.

And more, my son! for more than  
once when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself  
The word that is the symbol of myself,

The mortal limit of the Self was  
loosed,

And past into the Nameless, as a cloud  
Melts into Heaven. I touch'd my

limbs, the limbs  
Were strange not mine — and yet no

shade of doubt,  
But utter clearness, and thro' loss of  
Self

The gain of such large life as match'd  
with ours

Were Sun to spark — unshadowable  
in words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-  
world.

And idle gleams will come and go,  
But still the clouds remain;

The clouds themselves are children of  
the Sun.

And Night and Shadow rule below  
When only Day should reign.

And Day and Night are children of  
the Sun,

And idle gleams to thee are light to me,  
Some say, the Light was father of the  
Night,

And some, the Night was father of  
the Light.

No night no day! — I touch thy world  
again —

No ill no good! such counter-terms,  
my son,

Are border-races, holding, each its  
own

By endless war: but night enough is  
there

In yon dark city: get thee back: and  
since

The key to that weird casket, which  
for thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor  
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than  
man,

Or in man's hand when man is more  
than man,

Let be thy wail and help thy fellow  
men,

And make thy gold thy vassal not thy  
king,

And fling free alms into the beggar's  
bowl,

And send the day into the darken'd  
heart;

Nor list for guerdon in the voice of  
men,

A dying echo from a falling wall;  
Nor care — for Hunger hath the Evil  
eye —

To vex the noon with fiery gems, or  
fold

Thy presence in the silk of sumptu-  
ous looms;

Nor roll thy viands on a luscious  
tongue,

<p>Nor drown thyself with flies in honied wine;          Nor thou be rageful, like a handled bee,          And lose thy life by usage of thy sting;          Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for harm,          Nor make a snail's horn shrink for wantonness;          And more — think well! Do-well will follow thought,          And in the fatal sequence of this world          An evil thought may soil thy children's blood;          But curb the beast would cast thee in the mire,</p>	<p>And leave the hot swamp of voluptuousness          A cloud between the Nameless and thyself,          And lay thine uphill shoulder to the wheel,          And climb the Mount of Blessing, whence, if thou          Look higher, then — perchance — thou mayest — beyond          A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,          And past the range of Night and Shadow — see          The high-heaven dawn of more than mortal day          Strike on the Mount of Vision!          So, farewell.</p>
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THE FLIGHT.

## I.

ARE you sleeping? have you forgotten? do not sleep, my sister dear!  
 How *can* you sleep? the morning brings the day I hate and fear;  
 The cock has crow'd already once, he crows before his time;  
 Awake! the creeping glimmer steals, the hills are white with rime.

## II.

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah, fold me to your breast!  
 Ah, let me weep my fill once more, and cry myself to rest!  
 To rest? to rest and wake no more were better rest for me,  
 Than to waken every morning to that face I loathe to see:

## III.

I envied your sweet slumber, all night so calm you lay,  
 The night was calm, the morn is calm, and like another day;  
 But I could wish yon moaning sea would rise and burst the shore,  
 And such a whirlwind blow these woods, as never blew before.

## IV.

For, one by one, the stars went down across the gleaming pane,  
 And project after project rose, and all of them were vain;  
 The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls and leaves the bitter sloe,  
 The hope I catch at vanishes and youth is turn'd to woe.

## V.

Come, speak a little comfort! all night I pray'd with tears,  
 And yet no comfort came to me, and now the morn appears,  
 When he will tear me from your side, who bought me for his slave :  
 This father pays his debt with me, and weds me to my grave.

## VI.

What father, this or mine, was he, who, on that summer day  
 When I had fall'n from off the crag we clamber'd up in play,  
 Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd, and took and kiss'd me, and again  
 He kiss'd me; and I loved him then; he *was* my father then.

## VII.

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a tyrant vice!  
 The Godless Jephtha vows his child . . . to one cast of the dice.  
 These ancient woods, this Hall at last will go — perhaps have gone,  
 Except his own meek daughter yield her life, heart, soul to one —

## VIII.

To one who knows I scorn him. O the formal mocking bow,  
 The cruel smile, the courtly phrase that masks his malice now —  
 But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam of all things ill —  
 It is not Love but Hate that weds a bride against her will;

## IX.

Hate, that would pluck from this true breast the locket that I wear,  
 The precious crystal into which I braided Edwin's hair!  
 The love that keeps this heart alive beats on it night and day —  
 One golden curl, his golden gift, before he past away.

## X.

He left us weeping in the woods; his boat was on the sand;  
 How slowly down the rocks he went, how loth to quit the land!  
 And all my life was darken'd, as I saw the white sail run,  
 And darken, up that lane of light into the setting sun.

## XI.

How often have we watch'd the sun fade from us thro' the West,  
 And follow Edwin to those isles, those islands of the Blest!  
 Is *he* not there? would I were there, the friend, the bride, the wife,  
 With him, where summer never dies, with Love, the Sun of life!

## XII.

O would I were in Edwin's arms — once more — to feel his breath  
 Upon my cheek — on Edwin's ship, with Edwin, ev'n in death,  
 Tho' all about the shuddering wreck the death-white sea should rave,  
 Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows of the wave.

## XIII.

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*? I swear and swear forsworn  
 To love him most, whom most I loathe, to honor whom I scorn?  
 The Fiend would yell, the grave would yawn, my mother's ghost would  
 rise —  
 To lie, to lie — in God's own house — the blackest of all lies!

## XIV.

Why — rather than that hand in mine, tho' every pulse would freeze,  
 I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of some foul disease:  
 Wed him? I will not wed him, let them spurn me from the doors,  
 And I will wander till I die about the barren moors.

## XV.

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd her bridegroom on her bridal night —  
 If mad, then I am mad, but sane, if she were in the right.  
 My father's madness makes me mad — but words are only words!  
 I am not mad, not yet, not quite — There! listen how the birds

## XVI.

Begin to warble yonder in the budding orchard trees!  
 The lark has past from earth to Heaven upon the morning breeze.  
 How gladly, were I one of those, how early would I wake!  
 And yet the sorrow that I bear is sorrow for *his* sake.

## XVII.

They love their mates, to whom they sing; or else their songs, that meet  
 The morning with such music, would never be so sweet!  
 And tho' these fathers will not hear, the blessed Heavens are just,  
 And Love is fire, and burns the feet would trample it to dust.

## XVIII.

A door was open'd in the house — who? who? my father sleeps!  
 A stealthy foot upon the stair! he — some one — this way creeps!  
 If he? yes, he . . . lurks, listens, fears his victim may have fled —  
 Hel! where is some sharp-pointed thing? he comes, and finds me dead.

## XIX.

Not he, not yet! and time to act — but how my temples burn!  
 And idle fancies flutter me, I know not where to turn;  
 Speak to me, sister; counsel me; this marriage must not be.  
 You only know the love that makes the world a world to me!

## XX.

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived — but we were left alone:  
 That other left us to ourselves; he cared not for his own;  
 So all the summer long we roam'd in these wild woods of ours,  
 My Edwin loved to call us then "His two wild woodland flowers."

## XXI.

Wild flowers blowing side by side in God's free light and air,  
 Wild flowers of the secret woods, when Edwin found us there,  
 Wild woods in which we roved with him, and heard his passionate vow,  
 Wild woods in which we rove no more, if we be parted now!

## XXII.

You will not leave me thus in grief to wander forth forlorn;  
 We never changed a bitter word, not one since we were born;  
 Our dying mother join'd our hands; she knew this father well;  
 She bad us love, like souls in Heaven, and now I fly from Hell,

## XXIII.

And you with me; and we shall light upon some lonely shore,  
 Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes, and hear the waters roar,  
 And see the ships from out the West go dipping thro' the foam,  
 And sunshine on that sail at last which brings our Edwin home.

## XXIV.

But look, the morning grows apace, and lights the old church-tower,  
 And lights the clock! the hand points five — O me — it strikes the hour —  
 I bide no more, I meet my fate, whatever ills betide!  
 Arise, my own true sister, come forth! the world is wide.

## XXV.

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my eyes are dim with dew,  
 I seem to see a new-dug grave up yonder by the yew!  
 If we should never more return, but wander hand in hand  
 With breaking hearts, without a friend, and in a distant land.

## XXVI.

O sweet, they tell me that the world is hard, and harsh of mind  
 But can it be so hard, so harsh, as those that should be kind?  
 That matters not: let come what will; at last the end is sure,  
 And every heart that loves with truth is equal to endure.

## TOMORROW.

## I.

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to? Whin, yer Honor? last year —  
 Standin' here be the bridge, when last yer Honor was here?  
 An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of the mornin', "Tomorra" says she.  
 What did they call her, yer Honor? They call'd her Molly Magee.  
 An' yer Honor's the throe ould blood that always manes to be kind,  
 But there's rason in all things, yer Honor, for Molly was out of her mind.

## II.

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night comin' down be the sthrame,  
 An' it seems to me now like a bit of yisther-day in a dhrame —  
 Here where yer Honor seen her — there was but a slip of a moon,  
 But I hard thim — Molly Magee wid her batchelor, Danny O'Roon —  
 "You've been takin' a dhrop o' the crathur" an' Danny says "Troth, an' I been  
 Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;<sup>1</sup>  
 But I must be lavin' ye soon." "Ochone are ye goin' away?"  
 "Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate" he says "over the say" —  
 "An' whin will ye meet me agin?" an' I hard him "Molly asthore,  
 I'll meet you agin tomorra," says he, "be the chapel-door."  
 "An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?" "O' Monday mornin'" says he;  
 "An' shure thin ye'll meet me tomorra?" "Tomorra, tomorra, Machree!"  
 Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor, that had no likin' for Dan,  
 Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to come away from the man,  
 An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me, as light as a lark,  
 An' Dan stood there for a minute, an' thin wint into the dark.  
 But wirrah! the storm that night — the tundher, an' rain that fell,  
 An' the sthrames runnin' down at the back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownded Hell.

## III.

But airth was at pace nixt mornin', an' Hiven in its glory smiled,  
 As the Holy Mother o' Glory that smiles at her sleepin' child —  
 Ethen — she stept an the chapel-green, an' she turn'd herself roun'  
 Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for Danny was not to be foun',  
 An' many's the time that I watch'd her at mass lettin' down the tear,  
 For the Divil a Danny was there, yer Honor, for forty year.

## IV.

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the rose an' the white o' the May,  
 An' yer hair as black as the night, an' yer eyes as bright as the day!  
 Achora, yer laste little whishper was sweet as the lilt of a bird!  
 Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to music wid ivery word!  
 An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre in sich an illigant han',  
 An' the fall of yer foot in the dance was as light as snow an the lan',

<sup>1</sup> Grog-shop.

An' the sun kem out of a cloud whiniver ye walkt in the shreet,  
 An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda, an' laid himself undher yer feet,  
 An' I loved ye meself wid a heart and a half, me darlin', and he  
 'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a kiss of ye, Molly Magee.

## V.

But shure we wor betther frinds whin I crack'd his skull for her sake,  
 An' he ped me back wid the best he could give at ould Donovan's wake —  
 For the boys wor about her agin whin Dan didn't come to the fore,  
 An' Shamus along wid the rest, but she put thim all to the door.  
 An', afther, I thried her meself av the bird 'ud come to me call,  
 But Molly, begorra, 'ud listhen to naither at all, at all.

## VI.

An' her nahors an' frinds 'ud consowl an' condowl wid her, airly and late,  
 "Your Danny," they says, "niver crasst over say to the Sassenach whate;  
 He's gone to the States, aroon, an' he's married another wife,  
 An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of the thraithur agin in life!  
 An' to dhrame of a married man, death alive, is a mortal sin."  
 But Molly says "I'd his hand-promise, an' shure he'll meet me agin."

## VII.

An' afther her paärints had inter'd glory, an' both in wan day,  
 She began to spake to herself, the crathur, an' wishper, an' say  
 "Tomorra, Tomorra!" an' Father Molowny he tuk her in han',  
 "Molly, you're manin'," he says, "me dear, av I undherstan',  
 That ye'll meet your paärinta agin an' yer Danny O'Roon afore God  
 Wid his blessed Marthyr's an' Saints;" an' she gev him a frindly nod,  
 "Tomorra, Tomorra," she says, an' she didn't intind to desave,  
 But her wits wor dead, an' her hair was white as the snow an a grave.

## VIII.

Arrah now, here last month they wor diggin' the bog, an' they foun'  
 Dhrowned in black bog-wather a corp lyin' undher groun'.

## IX.

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me wanst, at Katty's shebeen,  
 "The Divil take all the black lan', for a blessin' 'ud come wid the green!"  
 An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut his bit o' turf for the fire?  
 But och: bad scran to the bogs whin they swallies the man intire!  
 An' sorra the bog that's in Hiven wid all the light an' the glow,  
 An' there's hate enough, shure, widout *thim* in the Divil's kitchen below.

## X.

Thim ould blind nagers in Egypt, I hard his Riverence say,  
 Could keep their haithen kings in the flesh for the Jidgemint day,  
 An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they kep the cat an' the dog,  
 But it 'ud 'a been aisier work av they lived be an Irish bog.



## XI.

How-an-iver they laid this body they foun' an the grass  
 Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud see it that wint into mass —  
 But a frish gineration had riz, an' most of the ould was few,  
 An' I didn't know him meself, an' none of the parish knew.

## XII.

But Molly kem limp'in' up wid her stick, she was lamed iv a knee,  
 Thin a slip of a gossoon call'd, "Div ye know him, Molly Magee?"  
 An' she stood up strait as the Queen of the world — she lifted her head —  
 "He said he would meet me tomorra!" an' dhropt down dead an the dead.

## XIII.

Och, Molly, we thought, machree, ye would start back agin into life,  
 Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer wake like husban' an' wife.  
 Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet for the frinds that was gone!  
 Sorra the silent throat but we hard it cryin' "Ochone!"  
 An' Shanus O'Shea that has now ten childer, handsome an' tall,  
 Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if he had lost thim all.

## XIV.

Thin his Riverence buried thim both in wan grave be the dead boor-tree,<sup>1</sup>  
 The young man Danny O'Roon wid his ould woman, Molly Magee.

## XV.

May all the flowers o' Jeroosilim blossom an' spring from the grass,  
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other — as ye did — over yer Crass!  
 An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid his song to the Sun an' the Moon,  
 An' tell thim in Hiven about Molly Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,  
 Till Holy St. Pether gets up wid his kays an' opens the gate!  
 An' shure, be the Crass, that's betther nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate  
 To be there wid the Blessed Mother, an' Sâints an' Marthyrs galore,  
 An' singin' yer "Aves" an' "Pathers" foriver an' ivermore.

## XVI.

An' now that I tould yer Honor whativer I hard an' seen,  
 Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to dhrink yer health in potheen.

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 THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS.

## I.

MILK for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it mun be the time about now  
 When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end close wi' her paâils fro' the cow.  
 Eh! tha be new to the plaâce — thou'rt gaâpin' — doesn't tha see  
 I calls 'em arter the fellers es once was sweet upo' me ?

<sup>1</sup> Elder-tree.

## II.

Naäy to be sewer it be past 'er time. What maäkes 'er sa laäte ?  
Goä to the laäne at the back, an' looök thruf Maddison's gaäte !

## III.

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a lighted to-night upo' one.  
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I niver not listen'd to noän !  
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my oän kettle theere o' the hob,  
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the second, an' Steevie an' Rob.

## IV.

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou sees that i' spite o' the men  
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two 'oonderd a-year to mysen ;  
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es ony lass i' the Shere,  
An' thou be es pretty a Tabby, but Robby I seed thruf ya theere.

## V.

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly as sin, an' I beänt not vaäin,  
But I niver wur downright hugly, thaw soom 'ud 'a thowt ma plaäin,  
An' I wasn't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons, ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,  
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt sich a fool as ye thinks ;  
Ye was stroäkin ma down wi' the 'air, as I be a-stroäkin o' you,  
But whiniver I looök'd i' the glass I wur sewer that it couldn't be true ;  
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye knaw'd it wur pleasant to 'ear,  
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty, but my two 'oonderd a-year.

## VI.

D'ya mind the murnin' when we was a-walkin' togheter, an' stood  
By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the foälk be sa scared at, i' Gigglesby wood,  
Wheer the poor wench drownid hersen, black Sal, es 'ed been disgraäced ?  
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur a-creeäpin about my waäist ;  
An' me es wur allus afeard'd of a man's gittin' ower fond,  
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt foot fust i' the pond ;  
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa well, as I did that daäy,  
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro' the claäy.  
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop thy taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,  
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoam an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin' Yis.  
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we was shaämed to cross Gigglesby Greeän,  
Fur a cat may looök at a king thon knaws but the cat mun be cleän.  
Sa we boäth on us kep out o' sight o' the winders o' Gigglesby Hinn —  
Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet! they pricks cleän thruf to the skin —  
An' wa boäth slinkt 'oäm by the brokken shed i' the laäne at the back,  
Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha' once, an' thou runn'd oop o' the thack ;  
An' tha squee'dg'd my 'and i' the shed, fur there we was forced to 'ide,  
Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin', and one o' the Tommies beside.

## VII.

Theere now, what art'a mewin at, Steevie ? for owt I can tell —  
Robby wur fust to be sewer, or I mowt 'a liked tha as well.

## VIII.

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the while I wur chaängin' my gown,  
 An' I thowt shall I chaänge ny staäte? but, O Lord, upo' coomin' down —  
 My bran-new carpet es fresh es a midder o' flowers i' Maäy —  
 Why 'edn't tha wiped thy shoes? it wur clatted all ower wi' claäy.  
 An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I seed that it couldn't be,  
 An' Robby I gied tha a raätin that sattled thy coortin o' me.  
 An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we was a-cleänin' the floor,  
 That a man be a durty thing an' a trouble an' plague wi' indoor.  
 But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck to tha more na the rest,  
 But I couldn't 'a lived wi' a man an' I knaws it be all fur the best.

## IX.

Naäy — let ma stroäk tha down till I maäkes tha as smooth as silk,  
 But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou'd not 'a been worth thy milk,  
 Thou'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but 'a left me the work to do,  
 And 'a taäen to the bottle beside, so es all that I 'ears be true;  
 But I loovs tha to maäke thysen 'appy, an' soa purr awaäy, my dear,  
 Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy fro' my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

## X.

Sweärin agean, you Toms, as ye used to do twelve years sin'!  
 Ye niver 'eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it wur at a dog coomin' in.  
 An' boath o' ye mun be fools to be hallus a-shawin' your claws,  
 Fur I niver cared nothink for neither — an' one o' ye deäd ye knaws!  
 Coom gif hoäver then, weant ye? I warrant ye soom fine daäy —  
 There, lig down — I shall hev to gie one or tother awaäy.  
 Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye shant hev a drop fro' the paäil.  
 Steevie be right good manners bang thruf to the tip o' the taäil.

## XI.

Robby, git down wi'tha, wilt tha? let Steevie coom oop o' my knee.  
 Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh been the Steevie fur me!  
 Robby wur fust to be sewer, 'e wur burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,  
 But thou be es 'ansom a tabby as iver patted a mouse.

## XII.

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I 'ed led tha a quieter life  
 Nor her wi' the hepitaph yonder! "A faäithful an' loovin' wife!"  
 An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an' thy windmill oop o' the croft,  
 Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did tha? but that wur a bit ower soft,  
 Thaw thou was es soäber as daäy, wi' a niced red faäce, an' es cleän  
 Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a bran-new 'eäd o' the Queeän,  
 An' thy farmin' es cleän es thysen, fur, Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät  
 That I niver not spied sa much as a poppy along wi' the wheät,  
 An' the wool of a thistle a-flyin' an' seeädin' tha haäted to see;  
 'Twur as bad as a battle-twig<sup>1</sup> 'ere i' my oän blue chamber to me.  
 Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur I could 'a taäen to tha well,  
 But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a bouncin' boy an' a gell.

<sup>1</sup> Earwig.

## XIII.

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es I be mysen o' my cats,  
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I hevn't naw likin' fur brats;  
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop, an' they goäs fur a walk,  
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an' doesn't not 'inder the talk!  
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their mucky bibs, an' the clats an' the clouts,  
 An' their mashin' their toys to pieäces an' maäkin' ma deäf wi' their shouts,  
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if they was set upo' springs,  
 An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions, an' saäyin' ondecnt things,  
 An' a-callin' ma "hugly" mayhap to my faäce, or a teärin' my gown —  
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them Tommies — Steevie git down.

## XIV.

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you. I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!  
 Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an' tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

## XV.

There! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I married the Tommies — O Lord,  
 To loove an' obaäy the Tommies! I couldn't 'a stuck by my word.  
 To be horder'd about, an' waäked, when Molly 'd put out the light,  
 By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at ony hour o' the night!  
 An' the taäble staäin'd wi' 'is aäle, an' the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,  
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an' the mark o' 'is 'eäd o' the chairs!  
 An' noän o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a let me 'a hed my oän waäy,  
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taäils when they 'evn't a word to saäy.

## XVI.

An' I sits i' my oän little parlor, an' sarved by my oän little lass,  
 Wi' my oän little garden outside, an' my oän bed o' sparrow-grass,  
 An' my oän door-poorch wi' the woodbine an' jessmine a-dressin' it greeän,  
 An' my oän fine Jackman i' purple a roäbin' the 'ouse like a Queeän.

## XVII.

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens es I be abroad i' the laänes,  
 When I goäs to coomfut the poor es be down wi' their haäches an' their pääins:  
 An' a haäf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o' meät when it beänt, too dear,  
 They maäkes ma a graäter Laädy nor 'er i' the mansion theer,  
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how much to spare or to spend;  
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if soä pleäse God, to the hend.

## XVIII.

Mew! mew! — Bess wi' the milk! what ha' maäde our Molly sa laäte?  
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an' there — it be strikin' height —  
 "Cushie wur craäzed fur 'er cauf" well — I 'eärd 'er a maäkin' 'er moän,  
 An' I thowt to mysen "thank God that I hevn't naw cauf o' my oän."  
 There!

Set it down!

Now Robby!

You Tommies shall waäit to-night  
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap — an' it sarvcs ye right.

BALIN AND BALAN.<sup>1</sup>

PELLAM the King, who held and lost  
with Lot  
In that first war, and had his realm  
restored  
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late  
To send his tribute; wherefore Ar-  
thur call'd  
His treasurer, one of many years, and  
spake,  
"Go thou with him and him and  
bring it to us,  
Lest we should set one truer on his  
throne.  
Man's word is God in man."  
His Baron said  
"We go but harken: there be two  
strange knights  
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain-  
side,  
A mile beneath the forest, challeng-  
ing  
And overthrowing every knight who  
comes.  
Wilt thou I undertake them as we  
pass,  
And send them to thee?"  
Arthur laugh'd upon him.  
"Old friend, too old to be so young,  
depart,  
Delay not thou for ought, but let  
them sit,  
Until they find a lustier than them-  
selves."  
So these departed. Early, one fair  
dawn,  
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth  
return'd  
On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself  
and went,  
So coming to the fountain-side beheld  
Balin and Balan sitting statuelike,  
Brethren, to right and left the spring,  
that down,  
From underneath a plume of lady-fern,  
Sang, and the sand danced at the bot-  
tom of it.  
And on the right of Balin Balin's  
horse

<sup>1</sup> An introduction to "Merlin and Vivien."

Was fast beside an alder, on the left  
Of Balan Balan's near a poplartree.  
"Fair Sirs," said Arthur, "wherefore  
sit ye here?"  
Balin and Balan answer'd "For the  
sake  
Of glory; we be mightier men than  
all  
In Arthur's court; that also have we  
proved;  
For whatsoever knight against us  
came  
Or I or he have easily overthrown."  
"I too," said Arthur, "am of Arthur's  
hall,  
But rather proven in his Paynim  
wars  
Than famous jousts; but see, or  
proven or not,  
Whether me likewise ye can over-  
throw."  
And Arthur lightly smote the breth-  
ren down,  
And lightly so return'd, and no man  
knew.  
Then Balin rose, and Balan, and  
beside  
The carolling water set themselves  
again,  
And spake no word until the shadow  
turn'd;  
When from the fringe of coppice  
round them burst  
A spangled pursuivant, and crying  
"Sirs,  
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the  
King,"  
They follow'd; whom when Arthur  
seeing ask'd  
"Tell me your names; why sat ye  
by the well?"  
Balin the stillness of a minute broke  
Saying "An unmelodious name to  
thee,  
Balin, 'the Savage' — that addition  
thine —  
My brother and my better, this man  
here,  
Balan. I smote upon the naked  
skull  
A thrall of thine in open hall, my  
hand

Was gauntleted, half slew him; for  
 I heard  
 He had spoken evil of me; thy just  
 wrath  
 Sent me a three-years' exile from  
 thine eyes.  
 I have not lived my life delight-  
 somely:  
 For I that did that violence to thy  
 thrall,  
 Had often wrought some fury on my-  
 self,  
 Saving for Balan: those three king-  
 less years  
 Have past—were wormwood-bitter  
 to me. King,  
 Methought that if we sat beside the  
 well,  
 And hurl'd to ground what knight  
 soever spurr'd  
 Against us, thou would'st take me  
 gladlier back,  
 And make, as ten-times worthier to  
 be thine  
 Than twenty Balins, Balan knight.  
 I have said.  
 Not so—not all. A man of thine  
 to-day  
 Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.  
 Thy will?"  
 Said Arthur "Thou hast ever spoken  
 truth;  
 Thy too fierce manhood would not  
 let thee lie.  
 Rise, my true knight. As children  
 learn, be thou  
 Wiser for falling! walk with me,  
 and move  
 To music with thine Order and the  
 King.  
 Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,  
 stands  
 Vacant, but thou retake it, mine  
 again!"  
 Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd  
 hall,  
 The Lost one Found was greeted as  
 in Heaven  
 With joy that blazed itself in wood-  
 land wealth  
 Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of  
 flowers,

Along the walls and down the board;  
 they sat,  
 And cup clash'd cup; they drank  
 and some one sang,  
 Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome,  
 whereupon  
 Their common shout in chorus,  
 mounting, made  
 Those banners of twelve battles over-  
 head  
 Stir, as they stirr'd of old, when Ar-  
 thur's host  
 Proclaim'd him Victor, and the day  
 was won.  
 Then Balan added to their Order  
 lived  
 A wealthier life than heretofore with  
 these  
 And Balin, till their embassy re-  
 turn'd.  
 "Sir King" they brought report  
 "we hardly found,  
 So bush'd about it is with gloom, the  
 hall  
 Of him to whom ye sent us Pellam,  
 once  
 A Christless foe of thine as ever  
 dash'd  
 Horse against horse; but seeing that  
 thy realm  
 Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ,  
 the King  
 Took, as in rival heat, to holy things;  
 And finds himself descended from the  
 Saint  
 Arimathæan Joseph; him who first  
 Brought the great faith to Britain  
 over seas;  
 He boasts his life as prarer than thine  
 own;  
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse  
 abeat;  
 Hath push'd aside his faithful wife,  
 nor lets  
 Or dame or damsel enter at his  
 gates  
 Lest he should be polluted. This  
 gray King  
 Show'd us a shrine wherein were won-  
 ders—yea—  
 Rich arks with priceless bones of  
 martyrdom,

Thorns of the crown and shivers of  
the cross,  
And therewithal (for thus he told us)  
brought

By holy Joseph hither, that same spear  
Wherewith the Roman pierced the  
side of Christ.

He much amazed us; after, when we  
sought

The tribute, answer'd 'I have quite  
foregone

All matters of this world: Garlon,  
mine heir

Of him demand it,' which this Gar-  
lon gave

With much ado, railing at thine and  
thee.

But when we left, in those deep  
woods we found

A knight of thine spear-stricken from  
behind,

Dead, whom we buried; more than  
one of us

Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman  
there

Reported of some demon in the woods  
Was once a man, who driven by evil  
tongues

From all his fellows, lived alone, and  
came

To learn black magic, and to hate his  
kind

With such a hate, that when he died,  
his soul

Became a Fiend, which, as the man  
in life

Was wounded by blind tongues he saw  
not whence,

Strikes from behind. This woodman  
show'd the cave

From which he sallies, and wherein  
he dwelt.

We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no  
more."

Then Arthur, "Let who goes before  
me, see

He do not fall behind me: foully  
slain

And villainously! who will hunt for  
me

This demon of the woods?" Said  
Balan, "I" |

So claim'd the quest and rode away,  
but first,

Embracing Balin, "Good, my brother,  
hear!

Let not thy moods prevail, when I am  
gone

Who used to lay them! hold them  
outer fiends,

Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake  
them aside,

Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea,  
but to dream

That any of these would wrong thee,  
wrongs thyself.

Witness their flowery welcome. Bound  
are they

To speak no evil. Truly save for  
fears,

My fears for thee, so rich a fellow-  
ship

Would make me wholly blest: thou  
one of them,

Be one indeed: consider them, and all  
Their bearing in their common bond  
of love,

No more of hatred than in Heaven  
itself,

No more of jealousy than in Para-  
dise."

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin  
remain'd:

Who — for but three brief moons had  
glanced away

From being knighted till he smote the  
thrall,

And faded from the presence into  
years

Of exile — now would strictlier set  
himself

To learn what Arthur meant by cour-  
tesy,

Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore  
hover'd round

Lancelot, but when he mark'd his  
high sweet smile

In passing, and a transitory word  
Made knight or churl or child or dam-  
sel seem

From being smiled at happier in  
themselves —

Sigh'd, as a boy lame-born beneath a  
height,

That glooms his valley, sighs to see  
 the peak  
 Sun-flush'd, or touch at night the  
 northern star;  
 For one from out his village lately  
 climb'd  
 And brought report of azure lands  
 and fair,  
 Far seen to left and right; and he  
 himself  
 Hath hardly scaled with help a hun-  
 dred feet  
 Up from the base: so Balin marvel-  
 ling of  
 How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd  
 to move,  
 Groan'd, and at times would mutter,  
 "These be gifts,  
 Born with the blood, not learnable,  
 divine,  
 Beyond *my* reach. Well had I  
 foughten — well —  
 In those fierce wars, struck hard —  
 and had I crown'd  
 With my slain self the heaps of whom  
 I slew —  
 So — better! — But this worship of  
 the Queen,  
 That honor too wherein she holds him  
 — this,  
 This was the sunshine that hath given  
 the man  
 A growth, a name that branches o'er  
 the rest,  
 And strength against all odds, and  
 what the King  
 So prizes — overprizes — gentleness.  
 Her likewise would I worship an I  
 might.  
 I never can be close with her, as he  
 That brought her hither. Shall I  
 pray the King  
 To let me bear some token of his  
 Queen  
 Whereon to gaze, remembering her  
 — forget  
 My heats and violences? live afresh?  
 What, if the Queen disdain'd to grant  
 it! nay  
 Beings so stately-gentle, would she make  
 My darkness blackness? and with  
 how sweet grace

She greeted my return! Bold will I  
 be —  
 Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,  
 In lieu of this rough beast upon my  
 shield,  
 Langued gules, and tooth'd with grin-  
 ning savagery."  
 And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought  
 him, said  
 "What wilt thou bear?" Balin was  
 bold, and ask'd  
 To bear her own crown-royal upon  
 shield,  
 Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to  
 the King,  
 Who answer'd "Thou shalt put the  
 crown to use.  
 The crown is but the shadow of the  
 King,  
 And this a shadow's shadow, let him  
 have it,  
 So this will help him of his vio-  
 lences!"  
 "No shadow" said Sir Balin "O my  
 Queen,  
 But light to me! no shadow, O my King  
 But golden earnest of a gentler life!"  
 So Balin bare the crown, and all  
 the knights  
 Approved him, and the Queen, and  
 all the world  
 Made music, and he felt his being  
 move  
 In music with his Order, and the  
 King.  
 The nightingale, full-toned in mid-  
 dle May,  
 Hath ever and anon a note so thin  
 It seems another voice in other  
 groves;  
 Thus, after some quick burst of sud-  
 den wrath,  
 The music in him seem'd to change,  
 and grow  
 Faint and far-off.  
 And once he saw the thrall  
 His passion half had gauntleted to  
 death,  
 That causer of his banishment and  
 shame,  
 Smile at him, as he deem'd, presump-  
 tuously:



His arm half rose to strike again, but  
fell :

The memory of that cognizance on  
shield

Weighted it down, but in himself he  
moan'd :

“Too high this mount of Camelot  
for me :

These high-set courtesies are not for  
me.

Shall I not rather prove the worse  
for these ?

Fierier and stormier from restraining,  
break

Into some madness ev'n before the  
Queen ? ”

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain  
home,

And glancing on the window, when  
the gloom

Of twilight deepens round it, seems a  
flame

That rages in the woodland far below,  
So when his moods were darken'd,  
court and King

And all the kindly warmth of Ar-  
thur's hall

Shadow'd an angry distance : yet he  
strove

To learn the graces of their Table,  
fought

Hard with himself, and seem'd at  
length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that  
Sir Balin sat

Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the  
hall.

A walk of roses ran from door to  
door ;

A walk of lilies crost it to the bower :  
And down that range of roses the  
great Queen

Came with slow steps, the morning  
on her face ;

And all in shadow from the counter  
door

Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at  
once,

As if he saw not, glanced aside, and  
paced

The long white walk of lilies toward  
the bower.

Follow'd the Queen ; Sir Balin heard  
her “ Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen,  
As pass without good morrow to thy  
Queen ? ”

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes  
on earth,

“ Fain would I still be loyal to the  
Queen.”

“ Yea so ” she said “ but so to pass  
me by —

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself,  
Whom all men rate the king of cour-  
tesy.

Let be : ye stand, fair lord, as in a  
dream.”

Then Lancelot with his hand among  
the flowers

“ Yea — for a dream. Last night me-  
thought I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with  
lily in hand

In yonder shrine. All round her  
prest the dark,

And all the light upon her silver  
face

Flow'd from the spiritual lily that  
she held.

Lo ! these her emblems drew mine  
eyes — away :

For see, how perfect-pure ! As light  
a flush

As hardly tints the blossom of the  
quince

Would mar their charm of stainless  
maidenhood.”

“ Sweeter to me ” she said “ this  
garden rose

Deep-hued and many-folded ! sweeter  
still

The wild-wood hyacinth and the  
bloom of May.

Prince, we have ridd'n before among  
the flowers

In those fair days — not all as cool as  
these,

Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad ?  
or sick ?

Our noble King will send thee his  
own leech —

Sick ? or for any matter anger'd at  
me ? ”

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes ;  
 they dwelt  
 Deep-tranced on hers, and could not  
 fall : her hue  
 Changed at his gaze : so turning side  
 by side  
 They past, and Balin started from  
 his bower.

"Queen ? subject ? but I see not  
 what I see.

'Damsel and lover ? hear not what I  
 hear.

My father hath begotten me in his  
 wrath.

I suffer from the things before me,  
 know,

Learn nothing ; am not worthy to be  
 knight ;

A churl, a clown ! " and in him gloom  
 on gloom

Deepen'd : he sharply caught his  
 lance and shield,

Nor stay'd to crave permission of the  
 king,

But, mad for strange adventure,  
 dash'd away.

He took the selfsame track as Ba-  
 lan, saw

The fountain where they sat together,  
 sigh'd

"Was I not better there with him ?"  
 and rode

The skyless woods, but under open  
 blue

Came on the hoarhead woodman at a  
 bough

Wearily hewing, "Churl, thine axe !"  
 he cried,

Descended, and disjoined it at a  
 blow :

To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-  
 ingly

"Lord, thou couldst lay the Devil of  
 these woods

If arm of flesh could lay him." Bal-  
 lin cried

"Him, or the viler devil who plays  
 his part.

To lay that devil would lay the Devil  
 in me."

"Nay" said the churl, "our devil is a  
 truth.

I saw the flash of him but yestereven.  
 And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon  
 too

Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride  
 unseen.

Look to the cave." But Balin  
 answer'd him

"Old fabler, these be fancies of the  
 churl,

Look to thy woodcraft," and so leav-  
 ing him,

Now with slack rein and careless of  
 himself,

Now with dug spur and raving at  
 himself,

Now with droopt brow down the long  
 glades he rode ;

So mark'd not on his right a cavern-  
 chasm

Yawn over darkness, where, not far  
 within

The whole day died, but, dying,  
 gleam'd on rocks

Roof-pendent, sharp ; and others from  
 the floor,

Tusklike, arising, made that mouth  
 of night

Whereout the Demon issued up from  
 Hell.

He mark'd not this, but blind and  
 deaf to all

Save that chain'd rage, which ever  
 yelp'd within,

Past eastward from the falling sun.  
 At once

He felt the hollow-beaten mosses  
 thud

And tremble, and then the shadow of  
 a spear,

Shot from behind him, ran along the  
 ground.

Sideways he started from the path,  
 and saw,

With pointed lance as if to pierce, a  
 shape,

A light of armor by him flash, and pass  
 And vanish in the woods ; and fol-  
 low'd this,

But all so blind in rage that un-  
 awares

He burst his lance against a forest  
 bough,

Dishorsed himself, and rose again,  
and fled

Far, till the castle of a King, the hall  
Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly  
draped

With streaming grass, appear'd, low-  
built but strong;

The ruinous donjon as a knoll of  
moss,

The battlement overtopped with ivytods,  
A home of bats, in every tower an  
owl.

Then spake the men of Pellam cry-  
ing "Lord,

Why wear ye this crown-royal upon  
shield?"

Said Balin "For the fairest and the  
best

Of ladies living gave me this to  
bear."

So stall'd his horse, and strode across  
the court,

But found the greetings both of  
knight and King

Faint in the low dark hall of banquet:  
leaves

Laid their green faces flat against the  
panes,

Sprays grated, and the canker'd  
boughs without

Whined in the wood; for all was  
hush'd within,

Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise  
ask'd

"Why wear ye that crown-royal?"  
Balin said

"The Queen we worship, Lancelot,  
I, and all,

As fairest, best and purest, granted  
me

To bear it!" Such a sound (for  
Arthur's knights

Were hated strangers in the hall) as  
makes

The white swan-mother, sitting, when  
she hears

A strange knee rustle thro' her secret  
reeds,

Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly  
smiled.

"Fairest I grant her: I have seen;  
but best,

Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall,  
and yet

So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are  
these

So far besotted that they fail to see  
This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret  
shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but  
babes."

A goblet on the board by Balin,  
boss'd

With holy Joseph's legend, on his  
right

Stood, all of massiest bronze: one  
side had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing  
on it:

And one was rough with pole and  
scaffoldage

Of that low church he built at Glas-  
tonbury.

This Balin graspt, but while in act to  
hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the  
shield

Relax'd his hold: "I will be gentle"  
he thought

"And passing gentle" caught his  
hand away,

Then fiercely to Sir Garlon "eyes  
have I

That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,  
Shot from behind me, run along the  
ground;

Eyes too that long have watch'd how  
Lancelot draws

From homage to the best and purest,  
might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but  
scantly thine,

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst  
endure

To mouth so huge a foulness—to  
thy guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon  
talk!

Let be! no more!"

But not the less by night  
The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all  
his rest,

Stung him in dreams. At length, and  
dim thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,  
 and old boughs  
 Whined in the wood. He rose, de-  
 scended, met  
 The scorn in the castle court, and  
 fain,  
 For hate and loathing, would have  
 past him by;  
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-  
 wise;  
 "What, wear ye still that same crown-  
 scandalous?"  
 His countenance blacken'd, and his  
 forehead veins  
 Blcated, and branch'd; and tearing  
 out of sheath  
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery  
 "Ha!  
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee  
 ghost,"  
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the  
 blade flew  
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon  
 the stones.  
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly back-  
 ward, fell,  
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm  
 Dragg'd him, and struck, but from  
 the castle a cry  
 Sounded across the court, and — men-  
 at-arms,  
 A score with pointed lances, making  
 at him —  
 He dash'd the pummel at the fore-  
 most face,  
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made  
 his feet  
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery,  
 till he mark'd  
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel  
 wide  
 And inward to the wall; he stept  
 behind;  
 Thence in a moment heard them pass  
 like wolves  
 Howling; but while he stared about  
 the shrine,  
 In which he scarce could spy the  
 Christ for Saints,  
 Beheld before a golden altar lie  
 The longest lance his eyes had ever  
 seen,

Point-painted red; and seizing there-  
 upon  
 Push'd thro' an open casement down,  
 lean'd on it,  
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth;  
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from  
 what side  
 The blindfold rummage buried in the  
 walls  
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and  
 found  
 His charger, mounted on him and  
 away.  
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to  
 the left,  
 One overhead; and Pellam's feeble  
 cry  
 "Stay, stay him! he defileth heavenly  
 things  
 With earthly uses" — made him  
 quickly dive  
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro'  
 many a mile  
 Of dense and open, till his goodly  
 horse,  
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,  
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face  
 to ground.  
 Half-wroth he had not ended, but  
 all glad,  
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet  
 unlamed,  
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his  
 neck,  
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and  
 thought  
 "I have shamed thee so that now  
 thou shamest me,  
 Thee will I bear no more," high on a  
 branch  
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the  
 woods,  
 And there in gloom cast himself all  
 along,  
 Moaning "My violences, my vio-  
 lences!"  
 But now the wholesome music of  
 the wood  
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall  
 of Mark,  
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she  
 rode

The woodland alleys, Vivien, with  
her Squire.

“The fire of Heaven has kill'd the  
barren cold,  
And kindled all the plain and all the  
wold.

The new leaf ever pushes off the old.  
The fire of Heaven is not the flame  
of Hell.

Old priest, who mumble worship in  
your quire—

Old monk and nun, ye scorn the  
world's desire,

Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the  
fire!

The fire of Heaven is not the flame  
of Hell.

The fire of Heaven is on the dusty  
ways.

The wayside blossoms open to the  
blaze.

The whole wood-world is one full  
peal of praise.

The fire of Heaven is not the flame  
of Hell.

The fire of Heaven is lord of all  
things good,

And starve not thou this fire within  
thy blood,

But follow Vivien thro' the fiery  
flood!

The fire of Heaven is not the flame of  
Hell!”

Then turning to her Squire “This  
fire of Heaven,

This old sun-worship, boy, will rise  
again,

And beat the cross to earth, and break  
the King

And all his Table.”

Then they reach'd a glade,  
Where under one long lane of cloud-  
less air

Before another wood, the royal crown  
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless  
elm

Drew the vague glance of Vivien, and  
her Squire;

Amazed were these; “Lo there” she  
cried—“a crown—

Borne by some high lord-prince of  
Arthur's hall,

And there a horse! the rider? where  
is he?

See, yonder lies one dead within the  
wood.

Not dead; he stirs!—but sleeping,  
I will speak.

Hail, royal knight, we break on thy  
sweet rest,

Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble  
deeds.

But bouden art thou, if from  
Arthur's hall,

To help the weak. Behold, I fly from  
shame,

A lustful King, who sought to win my  
love

Thro' evil ways: the knight, with  
whom I rode,

Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my  
squire

Hath in him small defence; but thou,  
Sir Prince,

Wilt surely guide me to the warrior  
King,

Arthur the blameless, pure as any  
maid,

To get me shelter for my maiden-  
hood.

I charge thee by that crown upon thy  
shield,

And by the great Queen's name, arise  
and hence.”

And Balin rose, “Thither no more!  
nor Prince

Nor knight am I, but one that hath  
defamed

The cognizance she gave me: here I  
dwell

Savage among the savage woods,  
here die—

Die: let the wolves' black maws en-  
sepulchre

Their brother beast, whose anger was  
his lord.

O me, that such a name as Guine-  
vere's,

Which our high Lancelot hath so  
lifted up,

And been thereby uplifted, should  
thro' me,

My violence, and my villainy, come  
to shame.”

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and shrill, anon  
 Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to her  
 "Is this thy courtesy — to mock me, ha?  
 Hence, for I will not with thee." Again she sigh'd  
 "Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens often laugh  
 When sick at heart, when rather we should weep.  
 I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon thy rest,  
 And now full loth am I to break thy dream,  
 But thou art man, and canst abide a truth,  
 Tho' bitter. Hither, boy — and mark me well.  
 Dost thou remember at Caerleon once —  
 A year ago — nay, then I love thee not —  
 Ay, thou rememberest well — one summer dawn —  
 By the great tower — Caerleon upon Usk —  
 Nay, truly we were hidden: this fair lord,  
 The flower of all their vestal knight-hood, knelt  
 In amorous homage — knelt — what else? — O ay  
 Knelt, and drew down from out his night-black hair  
 And mumbled that white hand whose ring'd caress  
 Had wander'd from her own King's golden head,  
 And lost itself in darkness, till she cried —  
 I thought the great tower would crash down on both —  
 'Rise, my sweet king, and kiss me on the lips,  
 Thou art my King.' This lad, whose lightest word  
 Is mere white truth in simple nakedness,  
 Saw them embrace: he reddens, cannot speak,

So bashful, he! but all the maiden Saints,  
 The deathless mother-maidenhood of Heaven  
 Cry out upon her. Up then, ride with me!  
 Talk not of shame! thou canst not, an thou would'st,  
 Do these more shame than these have done themselves."  
 She lied with ease; but horror-stricken he,  
 Remembering that dark bower at Camelot,  
 Breathed in a dismal whisper "It is truth."  
 Sunnily she smiled "And even in this lone wood  
 Sweet lord, ye do right well to whisper this.  
 Fools prate, and perish traitors. Woods have tongues,  
 As walls have ears: but thou shalt go with me,  
 And we will speak at first exceeding low.  
 Meet is it the good King be not deceived.  
 See now, I set thee high on vantage ground,  
 From whence to watch the time, and eagle-like  
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the Queen."  
 She ceased; his evil spirit upon him leapt,  
 He ground his teeth together, sprang with a yell,  
 Tore from the branch, and cast on earth, the shield,  
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the royal crown,  
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it from him  
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed the tale,  
 The told-of, and the teller.  
 That weird yell,  
 Unearthly than all shriek of bird or beast,  
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan lurking there

(His quest was unaccomplish'd) heard  
 and thought  
 "The scream of that Wood-devil I  
 came to quell!"  
 Then nearing "Lo! he hath slain some  
 brother-knight,  
 And tramples on the goodly shield to  
 show  
 'His loathing of our Order and the  
 Queen.  
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil  
 or man  
 Guard thou thine head." Sir Balin  
 spake not word,  
 But snatch'd a sudden buckler from  
 the Squire,  
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they  
 crash'd  
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy  
 spear,  
 Reputed to be red with sinless  
 blood,  
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the  
 point  
 Across the maiden shield of Balan  
 prick'd  
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's  
 horse  
 Was wearied to the death, and, when  
 they clash'd,  
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the  
 man  
 Inward, and either fell, and swoon'd  
 away.  
 Then to her Squire mutter'd the  
 damsel "Fools!  
 This fellow hath wrought some foul-  
 ness with his Queen:  
 Else never had he borne her crown,  
 nor raved  
 And thus foam'd over at a rival  
 name:  
 But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast  
 broken shell,  
 Art yet half-yolk, not even come to  
 down—  
 Who never sawest Caerleon upon  
 Usk—  
 And yet hast often pleaded for my  
 love—  
 See what I see, be thou where I have  
 been,

Or else Sir Chick — dismount and  
 loose their casques  
 I fain would know what manner of  
 men they be."  
 And when the Squire had loosed them,  
 "Goodly! — look!  
 They might have crompt the myriad  
 flower of May,  
 And butt each other here, like brain-  
 less bulls,  
 Dead for one heifer!"  
 Then the gentle Squire  
 "I hold them happy, so they died for  
 love:  
 And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like  
 your dog,  
 I too could die, as now I live, for  
 thee."  
 "Live on, Sir Boy," she cried. "I  
 better prize  
 The living dog than the dead lion:  
 away!  
 I cannot brook to gaze upon the  
 dead."  
 Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen  
 oak,  
 And bounding forward "Leave them  
 to the wolves."  
 But when their foreheads felt the  
 cooling air,  
 Balin first woke, and seeing that true  
 face,  
 Familiar up from cradle-time, so  
 wan,  
 Crawl'd slowly with low moans to  
 where he lay,  
 And on his dying brother cast him-  
 self  
 Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he  
 felt  
 One near him; all at once they found  
 the world,  
 Staring wild-wide; then with a child-  
 like wail,  
 And drawing down the dim disastrous  
 brow  
 That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it,  
 moan'd and spake;  
 "O Balin, Balin, I that fain had  
 died  
 To save thy life, have brought thee  
 to thy death.

Why had ye not the shield I knew ?  
 and why  
 Trampled ye thus on that which bare  
 the Crown ? ”  
 Then Balin told him brokenly, and  
 in gasps,  
 All that had chanced, and Balan  
 moan'd again.  
 “ Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's  
 hall :  
 This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded  
 not.  
 And one said ‘ Eat in peace ! a liar  
 is he,  
 And hates thee for the tribute ! ’ this  
 good knight  
 Told me, that twice a wanton damsel  
 came,  
 And sought for Garlon at the castle-  
 gates,  
 Whom Pellam drove away with holy  
 heat.  
 I well believe this damsel, and the  
 one  
 Who stood beside thee even now, the  
 same.  
 ‘ She dwells among the woods ’ he  
 said ‘ and meets  
 And dallies with him in the Mouth-of  
 Hell.’  
 Foul are their lives ; foul are their  
 lips ; they lied.  
 Pure as our own true Mother is our  
 Queen.”  
 “ O brother ” answer'd Balin “ Woe  
 is me !  
 My madness all thy life has been thy  
 doom,  
 Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day ;  
 and now  
 The night has come. I scarce can  
 see thee now.  
 Goodnight ! for we shall never bid  
 again  
 Goodmorrow — Dark my doom was  
 here, and dark  
 It will be there. I see thee now no  
 more.  
 I would not mine again should darken  
 thine,  
 Goodnight, true brother.”

Balan answer'd low  
 “ Goodnight, true brother here ! good-  
 morrow there !  
 We two were born together, and we  
 die  
 Together by one doom : ” and while  
 he spoke  
 Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and  
 slept the sleep  
 With Balin, either lock'd in either's  
 arm.

PROLOGUE TO GENERAL  
 HAMLEY.

Our birches yellowing and from each  
 The light leaf falling fast,  
 While squirrels from our fiery beech  
 Were bearing off the mast,  
 You came, and look'd and loved the  
 view  
 Long-known and loved by me,  
 Green Sussex fading into blue  
 With one gray glimpse of sea ;  
 And, gazing from this height alone,  
 We spoke of what had been  
 Most marvellous in the wars your  
 own  
 Crimean eyes had seen ;  
 And now — like old-world inns that  
 take  
 Some warrior for a sign  
 That therewithin a guest may make  
 True cheer with honest wine —  
 Because you heard the lines I read  
 Nor utter'd word of blame,  
 I dare without your leave to head  
 These rhymings with your name,  
 Who know you but as one of those  
 I fain would meet again,  
 Yet know you, as your England knows  
 That you and all your men  
 Were soldiers to her heart's desire,  
 When, in the vanish'd year,  
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire  
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir  
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was driven,  
 And Wolseley overthrew  
 Arâbi, and the stars in heaven  
 Paled, and the glory grew.



THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY  
BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA.

OCTOBER 25, 1854.

## I.

THE charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade!  
Down the hill, down the hill, thousands of Russians,  
Thousands of horsemen, drew to the valley — and stay'd;  
For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hundred were riding by  
When the points of the Russian lances arose in the sky;  
And he call'd "Left wheel into line!" and they wheel'd and obey'd.  
Then he look'd at the host that had halted he knew not why,  
And he turn'd half round, and he had his trumpeter sound  
To the charge, and he rode on ahead, as he waved his blade  
To the gallant three hundred whose glory will never die —  
"Follow," and up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,  
Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

## II.

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight!  
Thousands of horsemen had gather'd there on the height,  
With a wing push'd out to the left, and a wing to the right,  
And who shall escape if they close? but he dash'd up alone  
Thro' the great gray slope of men, Sway'd his sabre, and held his own  
Like an Englishman there and then; All in a moment follow'd with force  
Three that were next in their fiery course,  
Wedged themselves in between horse and horse,  
Fought for their lives in the narrow gap they had made —

Four amid thousands! and up the hill, up the hill,  
Gallop'd the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade.

## III.

Fell like a cannonshot,  
Burst like a thunderbolt,  
Crash'd like a hurricane,  
Broke thro' the mass from below,  
Drove thro' the midst of the foe,  
Plunged up and down, to and fro,  
Rode flashing blow upon blow,  
Brave Inniskillens and Greys  
Whirling their sabres in circles of light!  
And some of us, all in amaze,  
Who were held for a while from the fight,  
And were only standing at gaze,  
When the dark-muffled Russian crowd  
Folded its wings from the left and the right,  
And roll'd them around like a cloud,—  
O mad for the charge and the battle were we,  
When our own good redcoats sank from sight,  
Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,  
And we turn'd to each other, whispering, all dismay'd,  
"Lost are the gallant three hundred of Scarlett's Brigade!"

## IV.

"Lost one and all" were the words  
Mutter'd in our dismay;  
But they rode like Victors and Lords  
Thro' the forest of lances and swords  
In the heart of the Russian hordes,  
They rode, or they stood at bay —  
Struck with the sword-hand and slew,  
Down with the bridle-hand drew  
The foe from the saddle and threw  
Underfoot there in the fray —  
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock  
In the wave of a stormy day;  
Till suddenly shock upon shock  
Stagger'd the mass from without,  
Drove it in wild disarray,

For our men gallopt up with a cheer  
 and a shout,  
 And the foeman surged, and waver'd,  
 and reel'd  
 Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,  
 out of the field,  
 And over the brow and away.

v.

Glory to each and to all, and the charge  
 that they made!  
 Glory to all the three hundred, and all  
 the Brigade!

NOTE.-- The "three hundred" of the "Heavy Brigade" who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2nd squadroo of Inniskillings; the remainder of the "Heavy Brigade" subsequently dashing up to their support.

The "three" were Scarlett's aide-de-camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him.

## EPILOGUE.

IRENE.

Not this way will you set your name  
 A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should  
 blame  
 The barbarism of wars.  
 A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,  
 And that bright hair the modern sun,  
 Those eyes the blue to-day,  
 You wrong me, passionate little friend.  
 I would that wars should cease,  
 I would the globe from end to end  
 Might sow and reap in peace,  
 And some new Spirit o'erbear the old,  
 Or Trade re-frain the Powers  
 From war with kindly links of gold,  
 Or Love with wreaths of flowers.  
 Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all  
 My friends and brother souls,  
 With all the peoples, great and small,  
 That wheel between the poles.  
 But since, our mortal shadow, ill  
 To waste this earth began —  
 Perchance from some abuse of Will  
 In worlds before the man

Involving ours — he needs must fight  
 To make true peace his own,  
 He needs must combat might with  
 might,  
 Or Might would rule alone;  
 And who loves War for War's own  
 sake  
 Is fool, or crazed, or worse;  
 But let the patriot-soldier take  
 His meed of fame in verse;  
 Nay — tho' that realm were in the  
 wrong  
 For which her warriors bleed,  
 It still were right to crown with song  
 The warrior's noble deed —  
 A crown the Singer hopes may last,  
 For so the deed endures;  
 But Song will vanish in the Vast;  
 And that large phrase of yours  
 "A Star among the stars," my dear,  
 Is girlish talk at best;  
 For dare we dally with the sphere  
 As he did half in jest,  
 Old Horace? "I will strike" said he  
 "The stars with head sublime,"  
 But scarce could see, as now we see,  
 The man in Space and Time,  
 So drew perchance a happier lot  
 Than ours, who rhyme to-day.  
 The fires that arch this dusky dot —  
 Yon myriad-worlded way —  
 The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,  
 World-isles in lonely skies,  
 Whole heavens within themselves,  
 amaze  
 Our brief humanities;

And so does Earth; for Homer's  
fame,  
Tho' carved in harder stone —  
The falling drop will make his name  
As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

Let it live then — ay, till when ?  
Earth passes, all is lost  
In what they prophesy, our wise men,  
Sun-flame or sunless frost,  
And deed and song alike are swept  
Away, and all in vain  
As far as man can see, except  
The man himself remain ;  
And tho', in this lean age forlorn,  
Too many a voice may cry  
That man can have no after-morn,  
Not yet of these am I.  
The man remains, and whatsoe'er  
He wrought of good or brave  
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year  
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his Art  
Not all in vain may plead  
"The song that nerves a nation's  
heart,  
Is in itself a deed."

### TO VIRGIL.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE  
MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH  
CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH.

I.

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest  
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,  
Ilion falling, Rome arising,  
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's  
pyre ;

II.

Landscape-lover, lord of language  
more than he that sang the Works  
and Days,

All the chosen coin of fancy  
flashing out from many a golden  
phrase ;

III.

Thou that singest wheat and wood-  
land,  
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse  
and herd ;  
All the charm of all the Muses  
often flowering in a lonely word ;

IV.

Poet of the happy Tityrus  
piping underneath his beechen  
bowers ;  
Poet of the poet-satyr  
whom the laughing shepherd  
bound with flowers ;

V.

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying  
in the blissful years again to be,  
Summers of the snakeless meadow,  
unlaborious earth and oarless sea ;

VI.

Thou that seest Universal  
Nature moved by Universal  
Mind ;  
Thou majestic in thy sadness  
at the doubtful doom of human  
kind ;

VII.

Light among the vanish'd ages ;  
star that gildest yet this phantom  
shore ;  
Golden branch amid the shadows,  
kings and realms that pass to  
rise no more ;

VIII.

Now thy Forum roars no longer,  
fallen every purple Cæsar's  
dome —  
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm  
sound forever of Imperial  
Rome —

## IX.

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,  
and the Rome of freemen holds  
her place,  
I, from out the Northern Island  
sunder'd once from all the hu-  
man race,

## X.

I salute thee, Mantovano,  
I that loved thee since my day  
began,  
Wielder of the stateliest measure  
ever moulded by the lips of man.

---

 THE DEAD PROPHECY.

## 182-

## I.

DEAD!  
And the Muses cried with a stormy  
cry  
"Send them no more, forevermore.  
Let the people die."

## II.

Dead!  
"Is it he then brought so low?"  
And a careless people flock'd from  
the fields  
With a purse to pay for the show.

## III.

Dead, who had served his time,  
Was one of the people's kings,  
Had labor'd in lifting them out of  
slime,  
And showing them, souls have  
wings!

## IV.

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.  
His friends had stript him bare,  
And roll'd his nakedness everyway  
That all the crowd might stare.

## V.

A storm-worn signpost not to be read,  
And a tree with a moulder'd nest

On its barkless bones, stood stark by  
the dead;  
And behind him, low in the West,

## VI.

With shifting ladders of shadow and  
light,  
And blurr'd in color and form,  
The sun hung over the gates of Night,  
And glared at a coming storm.

## VII.

Then glided a vulturous Beldam forth,  
That on dumb death had thriven;  
They call'd her "Reverence" here  
upon earth,  
And "The Curse of the Prophet"  
in Heaven.

## VIII.

She knelt — "We worship him" —  
all but wept —  
"So great so noble was he!"  
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she  
swept  
The dust of earth from her knee.

## IX.

"Great! for he spoke and the people  
heard,  
And his eloquence caught like a  
flame  
From zone to zone of the world, till  
his Word  
Had won him a noble name.

## X.

"Noble! he sung, and the sweet sound  
ran  
Thro' palace and cottage door,  
For he touch'd on the whole sad  
planet of man,  
The kings and the rich and the  
poor;

## XI.

"And he sung not alone of an old sun  
set,  
But a sun coming up in his youth!  
Great and noble — O yes — but yet —  
For man is a lover of Truth,

**Missing Page**

**Missing Page**

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the  
Garda Lake below  
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-  
silvery Sirmio!

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### HELEN'S TOWER.<sup>1</sup>

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,  
Dominant over sea and land.  
Son's love built me, and I hold  
Mother's love engrav'n in gold.  
Love is in and out of time,  
I am mortal stone and lime.  
Would my granite girth were strong  
As either love, to last as long!  
I should wear my crown entire  
To and thro' the Doomsday fire,  
And be found of angel eyes  
In earth's recurring Paradise.

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### EPITAPH ON LORD STRAT- FORD DE REDCLIFFE.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THOU third great Canning, stand  
among our best  
And noblest, now thy long day's  
work hath ceased,  
Here silent in our Minster of the  
West  
Who wert the voice of England in  
the East.

---

### EPITAPH ON GENERAL GOR- DON.

FOR A CENOTAPH.

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, not  
laid below,  
But somewhere dead far in the  
waste Soudan,  
Thou livest in all hearts, for all  
men know  
This earth has borne no simpler,  
nobler man.

<sup>1</sup> Written at the request of my friend,  
Lord Dufferin.

### EPITAPH ON CAXTON.

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

FIAT LUX (his motto).

THY prayer was "Light — more Light  
— while Time shall last!"  
Thou sawest a glory growing on the  
night,  
But not the shadows which that light  
would cast,  
Till shadows vanish in the Light of  
Light.

---

### TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise  
to know  
The limits of resistance, and the  
bounds  
Determining concession; still be bold  
Not only to slight praise but suffer  
scorn;  
And be thy heart a fortress to main-  
tain  
The day against the moment, and the  
year  
Against the day; thy voice, a music  
heard  
Thro' all the yells and counter-yells  
of feud  
And faction, and thy will, a power to  
make  
This ever-changing world of circum-  
stance,  
In changing, chime with never-chang-  
ing Law.

---

### HANDS ALL ROUND.

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn  
night,  
Then drink to England, every guest;  
That man's the true Cosmopolite  
Who loves his native country best.  
May freedom's oak forever live  
With stronger life from day to day;  
That man's the best Conservative  
Who lops the moulder'd branch  
away.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England,  
round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long  
To keep our English Empire whole !  
To all our noble sons, the strong  
New England of the Southern Pole !  
To England under Indian skies,  
To those dark millions of her realm !  
To Canada whom we love and prize,  
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great name of England drink,  
my friends,  
And all her glorious empire, round  
and round.

To all our statesmen so they be  
True leaders of the land's desire !  
To both our Houses, may they see  
Beyond the borough and the shire !  
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state ;  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Through craven fears of being great.

Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !  
To this great cause of Freedom drink,  
my friends,  
And the great name of England,  
round and round.

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FREEDOM.

I.

O THOU so fair in summers gone,  
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul  
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,  
The glittering Capitol ;

II.

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,  
But scarce of such majestic mien  
As here with forehead vapor-swathed  
In meadows ever green ;

III.

For thou — when Athens reign'd and  
Rome,  
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd  
with pain  
To mark in many a freeman's home  
The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

IV.

O follower of the Vision, still  
In motion to the distant gleam,  
How'er blind force and brainless  
will  
May jar thy golden dream

V.

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,  
Of civic Hate no more to be,  
Of Love to leaven all the mass,  
Till every Soul be free ;

VI.

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not  
mar  
By changes all too fierce and fast  
This order of Her Human Star,  
This heritage of the past ;

VII.

O scorner of the party cry  
That wanders from the public good,  
Thou — when the nations rear on high  
Their idol smear'd with blood,

VIII.

And when they roll their idol down  
Of saner worship sanely proud ;  
Thou loather of the lawless crown  
As of the lawless crowd ;

IX.

How long thine ever-growing mind  
Hath still'd the blast and strown  
the wave,  
Tho' some of late would raise a wind  
To sing thee to thy grave,



## x.

Men loud against all forms of  
power—  
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous  
tongues—  
Expecting all things in an hour—  
Brass mouths and iron lungs!

## TO H.R.H. PRINCESS BEATRICE.

Two Suns of Love make day of hu-  
man life,  
Which else with all its pains, and  
griefs, and deaths,  
Were utter darkness— one, the Sun  
of dawn  
That brightens thro' the Mother's  
tender eyes,  
And warms the child's awakening  
world— and one  
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,  
Which from her household orbit  
draws the child  
To move in other spheres. The  
Mother weeps  
At that white funeral of the single life,  
Her maiden daughter's marriage;  
and her tears  
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—  
the child  
Is happy— ev'n in leaving *her!* but  
Thou,  
True daughter, whose all-faithful,  
filial eyes  
Have seen the loneliness of earthly  
thrones,  
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,  
nor let  
This later light of Love have risen in  
vain,  
But moving thro' the Mother's home,  
between

The two that love thee, lead a sum-  
mer life,  
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to  
each Love,  
Like some conjectured planet in mid  
heaven  
Between two Suns, and drawing down  
from both  
The light and genial warmth of  
double day.

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOG-  
RAPHIES.

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier  
skies,  
Old Virgil who would write ten  
lines, they say,  
At dawn, and lavish all the golden  
day  
To make them wealthier in his  
readers' eyes;  
And you, old popular Horace, you the  
wise  
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd  
lay,  
And you, that wear a wreath of  
sweeter bay,  
Catullus, whose dead songster never  
dies;  
If, glancing downward on the kindly  
sphere  
That once had roll'd you round and  
round the Sun,  
You see your Art still shrined in  
human shelves,  
You should be jubilant that you flour-  
ish'd here  
Before the Love of Letters, over-  
done,  
Had swampt the sacred poets with,  
themselves.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER.

LATE, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,  
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,  
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So — your happy suit was blasted — she the faultless, the divine;  
And you liken — boyish babble — this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;  
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

“Curse him!” curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?  
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;  
I remember how you kiss'd the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting — Amy's arms about my neck —  
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasp'd my neck had flown;  
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment, will you sicken for her sake?  
You, not you! your modern amourist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy was a timid child;  
But your Judith — but your worldling — *she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,  
While she vows “till death shall part us,” she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings — father, mother — be content,  
Ev'n the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,  
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;  
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the mouldering aisle have stood,  
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where of old we knelt in prayer,  
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley — there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,  
Lies my Amy dead in child-birth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead — and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now,  
I this old white-headed dreamer stoopt and kiss'd her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,  
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years.

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fall'n away.  
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,  
All his virtues — I forgive them — black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,  
Some thro' age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, loyal, lowly, sweet,  
Feminine to her inmost heart, and feminine to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,  
She that link'd again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while I wander'd down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;  
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,  
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt, being true as he was brave;  
Good, for Good is Good, he follow'd, yet he look'd beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,  
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him who saw the death but kept the deck,  
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone forever! Ever? no — for since our dying race began,  
Ever, ever, and forever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife,  
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night,  
Ev'n the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The Good, the True, the Pure, the  
Just;  
Take the charm "Forever" from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost within a growing gloom;  
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,  
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

"Forward" rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.  
Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old Assyrian kings would flay  
Captives whom they caught in battle — iron-hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,  
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls,

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,  
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquer'd Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;  
Christian love among the Churches look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coin'd himself a curse:  
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

France had shown a light to all men, preach'd a Gospel, all men's good;  
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun,  
Crown'd with sunlight — over darkness — from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?  
"Kill your enemy, for you hate him," still, "your enemy" was a man.

Have we sunk below them? peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive  
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers — burnt at midnight, found at  
morn,  
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?  
Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers  
Sisters, brothers — and the beasts — whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end!  
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,  
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise:  
When was age so cramm'd with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,  
Cries to Weakest as to Strongest, "Ye are equals, equal-born."

Equal-born? O yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.  
Charm us, Orator, till the Lion look no larger than the Cat.

Till the Cat thro' that mirage of overheated language loom  
Larger than the Lion, — Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall we fight her? shall we yield?  
Pause, before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial sceptre now,  
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,  
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,  
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;  
So the Higher wields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;  
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;  
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom known to Europe, known to all;  
Step by step we rose to greatness, — thro' the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices — tell them "old experience is a fool,"  
Teach your flatter'd kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;  
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,  
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,  
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors — atheist, essayist, novelist, realist, rhymester, play your part,  
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;  
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence — forward — naked — let them  
stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;  
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism, —  
Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;  
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only "dust to dust" for me that sicken at your lawless din,  
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you — you wonder — well, it scarce becomes mine age —  
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?  
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray:  
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,  
Some diviner force to guide us thro' the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, Kingdoms and Republics fall,  
Something kindlier, higher, holier — all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;  
All the millions one at length, with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no man halt, or deaf or blind;  
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue,  
I have seen her far away — for is not Earth as yet so young? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion kill'd,  
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,  
 Universal ocean softly washing all her warless Isles.

Warless ? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then —  
 All her harvest all too narrow — who can fancy warless men ?

Warless ? war will die out late then. Will it ever ? late or soon ?  
 Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon ?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. . . . On this day and at this hour,  
 In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years ago —  
 She and I — the moon was falling greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now —  
 Here we stood and claspt each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. . . .

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass !  
 Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her ! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,  
 Closer on the Sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the Bringer home of all good things.  
 All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to that splendor or in Mars,  
 We should see the Globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,  
 Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light ?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,  
 Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, "Would to God that we were  
 there" ?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,  
 Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols of innumerable man,  
 Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan ?

Is there evil but on earth ? or pain in every peopled sphere ?  
 Well be grateful for the sounding watchword, "Evolution" here.

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,  
 And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us ? cried the king of sacred song ;  
 Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent Heavens roll, and Suns along their fiery way,  
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an Æon moulded earth before her highest, man, was born,  
Many an Æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded — pools of salt, and plots of land —  
Shallow skin of green and azure — chains of mountain, grains of sand !

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless Heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul ;  
Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

\* \* \* \* \*

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.  
Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-morrow — you, you come so late.

Wreck'd — your train — or all but wreck'd ? a shatter'd wheel ? a vicious  
boy !  
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy ?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,  
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime ?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,  
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,  
There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,  
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your "forward," yours are hope and youth, but I —  
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night ;  
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of Even ? light the glimmer of the dawn ?  
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be  
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,  
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest ?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.



Not the Hall to-night, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.  
Leave the Master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,  
Kindly landlord, boon companion — youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.  
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,  
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village — Art and Grace are less and less:  
Science grows and Beauty dwindles — roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old Hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,  
Till the peasant cow shall butt the "Lion passant" from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,  
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!  
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this Hostel — I remember — I repent it o'er his grave —  
Like a clown — by chance he met me — I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the mouldering bricks —  
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six —

While I shelter'd in this archway from a day of driving showers —  
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here to-night! the Hall to-morrow, when they toll the Chapel bell!  
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, "I have loved thee well."

Then a peal that shakes the portal — one has come to claim his bride,  
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shriek'd, and started from my side —

Silent echoes! you, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,  
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to help his homelier brother men,  
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wrong'd him? who shall swear it cannot be?  
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her Heavenly-best, a God must mingle with the game:  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the Will.

Follow you the Star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man can half-control his doom —  
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the Past.  
I that loathed, have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;  
Then I leave thee Lord and Master, latest Lord of Locksley Hall.

### THE FLEET.<sup>1</sup>

#### I.

You, you, *if* you shall fail to under-  
stand  
What England is, and what her all-  
in-all,  
On you will come the curse of all the  
land,  
Should this old England fall  
Which Nelson left so great.

<sup>1</sup> The speaker said that "he should like to be assured that other outlying portions of the Empire, the Crown colonies, and important coaling stations were being as promptly and as thoroughly fortified as the various capitals of the self-governing colonies. He was credibly informed this was not so. It was impossible, alao, not to feel some degree of anxiety about the efficacy of present provision to defend and protect, by means of swift, well-armed cruisers, the immense mercantile fleet of the Empire. A third source of anxiety, so far as the colonies were concerned, was the apparently insufficient provision for the rapid manufacture of armaments and their prompt despatch when ordered to their colonial destination. Hence the necessity for manufacturing appliances equal to the requirements, not of Great Britain alone, but of the whole Empire. But the keystone of the whole was the necessity for an overwhelmingly powerful fleet and efficient defence for all necessary coaling sta-

#### II.

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power  
on earth,  
Our own fair isle, the lord of every  
sea —  
Her fuller franchise — what would  
that be worth —  
Her ancient fame of Free —  
Were she . . . a fallen state ?

tions. This was an essential for the colonies as for Great Britain. It was the one condition for the continuance of the Empire. All that Continental Powers did with respect to armies England should effect with her navy. It was essentially a defensive force, and could be moved rapidly from point to point, but it should be equal to all that was expected from it. It was to strengthen the fleet that colonists would first readily tax themselves, because they realized how essential a powerful fleet was to the safety, not only of that extensive commerce sailing in every sea, but ultimately to the security of the distant portions of the Empire. Who could estimate the loss involved in even a brief period of disaster to the Imperial Navy. Any amount of money timely expended in preparation would be quite insignificant when compared with the possible calamity he had referred to." — *Extract from Sir Graham Berry's Speech at the Colonial Institute, 9th November, 1886.*

## III.

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so  
small,  
Her island-myriads fed from alien  
lands —  
The fleet of England is her all-in-all;  
Her fleet is in your hands,  
And in her fleet her Fate.

## IV.

You, you, that have the ordering of  
her fleet,  
If you should only compass her  
disgrace,  
When all men starve, the wild mob's  
million feet  
Will kick you from your place,  
But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND  
COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY  
THE QUEEN.

## I.

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!  
In your welfare we rejoice,  
Sons and brothers that have sent,  
From isle and cape and continent,  
Produce of your field and flood,  
Mount and mine, and primal wood;  
Works of subtle brain and hand,  
And splendors of the morning land,  
Gifts from every British zone;  
Britons, hold your own!

## II.

May we find, as ages run,  
The mother featured in the son;  
And may yours forever be  
That old strength and constancy  
Which has made your fathers great  
In our ancient island State,  
And wherever her flag fly,  
Glorying between sea and sky,  
Makes the might of Britain known;  
Britons, hold your own!

## III.

Britain fought her sons of yore —  
Britain failed; and never more,  
Careless of our growing kin,  
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,  
Men that in a narrower day —  
Unprophetic rulers they —  
Drove from out the mother's nest  
That young eagle of the West  
To forage for herself alone;  
Britons, hold your own!

## IV.

Sharers of our glorious past,  
Brothers, must we part at last?  
Shall we not thro' good and ill  
Cleave to one another still?  
Britain's myriad voices call,  
"Sons, be wedded each and all,  
Into one imperial whole,  
One with Britain, heart and soul!  
One life, one flag, one fleet, one  
Throne!"  
Britons, hold your own!

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUF-  
FERIN AND AVA.

## I.

At times our Britain cannot rest,  
At times her steps are swift and  
rash;  
She moving, at her girdle clash  
The golden keys of East and West.

## II.

Not swift or rash, when late she lent  
The sceptres of her West, her East,  
To one, that ruling has increase<sup>d</sup>  
Her greatness and her self-content.

## III.

Your rule has made the people love  
Their ruler. Your viceregal days  
Have added fulness to the phrase  
Of "Gauntlet in the velvet glove."

## IV.

But since your name will grow with  
Time,  
Not all, as honoring your fair fame  
Of Statesman, have I made the  
name  
A golden portal to my rhyme :

## V.

But more, that you and yours may  
know  
From me and mine, how dear a debt  
We owed you, and are owing yet  
To you and yours, and still would owe.

## VI.

For he — your India was his Fate,  
And drew him over sea to you —  
He fain had ranged her thro' and  
thro',  
To serve her myriads and the State,—

## VII.

A soul that, watch'd from earliest  
youth,  
And on thro' many a brightening  
year,  
Had never swerved for craft or fear,  
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

## VIII.

Who might have chased and claspt  
Renown  
And caught her chaplet here — and  
there  
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air  
The flame of life went wavering down ;

## IX.

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
And lay on that funereal boat,  
Dying, " Unspeakable " he wrote  
" Their kindness," and he wrote no  
more ;

## X.

And sacred is the latest word ;  
And now The was, the Might-have-  
been,

And those lone rites I have not seen,  
And one drear sound I have not heard,

## XI.

Are dreams that scarce will let me be,  
Not there to bid my boy farewell,  
When That within the coffin fell,  
Fell and flash'd into the Red Sea,

## XII.

Beneath a hard Arabian moon  
And alien stars. To question, why  
The sons before the fathers die,  
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

## XIII.

But while my life's late eve endures,  
Nor settles into hueless gray,  
My memories of his briefer day  
Will mix with love for you and yours.

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN  
VICTORIA.

## I.

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd  
and faded,  
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,  
Since our Queen assumed the globe,  
the sceptre.

## II.

She beloved for a kindliness  
Rare in Fable or History,  
Queen and Empress of India,  
Crown'd so long with a diadem  
Never worn by a worthier,  
Now with prosperous auguries  
Comes at last to the bounteous  
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

## III.

Nothing of the lawless, of the Despot,  
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglori-  
ous,  
All is gracious, gentle, great and  
Queenly.

## IV.

You then joyfully, all of you,  
Set the mountain aflame to-night,  
Shoot your stars to the firmament,  
Deck your houses, illuminate  
All your towns for a festival,  
And in each let a multitude  
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,  
One full voice of allegiance,  
Hail the fair Ceremonial  
Of this year of her Jubilee.

## V.

Queen, as true to womanhood as  
Queenhood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the  
lowest!

## VI.

You, that wanton in affluence,  
Spare not now to be bountiful,  
Call your poor to regale with you,  
All the lowly, the destitute,  
Make their neighborhood health-  
fuller,  
Give your gold to the Hospital,  
Let the weary be comforted,  
Let the needy be banqueted,  
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice  
At this glad Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## VII.

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,  
Gray with distance Edward's fifty  
summers,  
Ev'n her Grandsire's fifty half for-  
gotten.

## VIII.

You, the Patriot Architect,  
You that shape for Eternity,  
Raise a stately memorial,  
Make it regally gorgeous,  
Some Imperial Institute,  
Rich in symbol, in ornament,  
Which may speak to the centuries,  
All the centuries after us,

Of this great Ceremonial,  
And this year of her Jubilee.

## IX.

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-  
merce!  
Fifty years of ever-brightening Sci-  
ence!  
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

## X.

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,  
You, the Lord-territorial,  
You, the Lord-manufacturer,  
You, the hardy, laborious,  
Patient children of Albion,  
You, Canadian, Indian,  
Australasian, African,  
All your hearts be in harmony,  
All your voices in unison,  
Singing "Hail to the glorious  
Golden year of her Jubilee!"

## XI.

Are there thunders moaning in the  
distance?  
Are there spectres moving in the  
darkness?  
Trust the Hand of Light will lead  
her people,  
Till the thunders pass, the spectres  
vanish,  
And the Light is the Victor, and  
the darkness  
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

## TO PROFESSOR JEBB,

## WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

FAIR things are slow to fade away,  
Bear witness you, that yesterday<sup>1</sup>  
From out the Ghost of Pindar in  
you  
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> They say, for the fact is doubtful.

That here the torpid mummy wheat  
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet  
As that which gilds the glebe of  
England,  
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile  
If greeted by your classic smile,  
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,  
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE.

(IN ENNA.)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that  
flies  
All night across the darkness, and at  
dawn  
Falls on the threshold of her native  
land,  
And can no more, thou camest, O my  
child,  
Led upward by the God of ghosts  
and dreams,  
Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and  
dumb  
With passing thro' at once from state  
to state,  
Until I brought thee hither, that the  
day,  
When here thy hands let fall the  
gather'd flower,  
Might break thro' clouded memories  
once again  
On thy lost self. A sudden nightin-  
gale  
Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of  
song  
And welcome; and a gleam as of the  
moon,  
When first she peers along the tremu-  
lous deep,  
Fled wavering o'er thy face, and  
chased away  
That shadow of a likeness to the king  
Of shadows, thy dark mate. Per-  
sephone!  
Queen of the dead no more — my  
child! Thine eyes

Again were human-godlike, and the  
Sun  
Burst from a swimming fleece of win-  
ter gray,  
And robed thee in his day from head  
to feet —  
"Mother!" and I was folded in thine  
arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpas-  
sion'd, eyes  
Awed even me at first, thy mother —  
eyes  
That oft had seen the serpent-wanded  
power  
Draw downward into Hades with his  
drift  
Of flickering spectres, lighted from  
below  
By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;  
But when before have Gods or men  
beheld  
The Life that had descended re-arise,  
And lighted from above him by the  
Sun?  
So mighty was the mother's childless  
cry,  
A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth,  
and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand  
again,  
The field of Enna, now once more  
ablaze  
With flowers that brighten as thy  
footstep falls,  
All flowers — but for one black blur  
of earth  
Left by that closing chasm, thro'  
which the car  
Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee  
hence.  
And here, my child, tho' folded in  
thine arms,  
I feel the deathless heart of mother-  
hood  
Within me shudder, lest the naked  
glebe  
Should yawn once more into the  
gulf, and thence  
The shrilly whinnings of the team  
of Hell,

Ascending, pierce the glad and song-  
ful air,  
And all at once their arch'd necks,  
midnight-maned,  
Jet upward thro' the mid-day blos-  
som. No!  
For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all  
the space  
Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself  
afresh,  
And breaks into the crocus-purple  
hour  
That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,  
I envied human wives, and nested  
birds,  
Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in  
search of thee  
Thro' many a palace, many a cot,  
and gave  
Thy breast to ailing infants in the  
night,  
And set the mother waking in amaze  
To find her sick one whole; and forth  
again  
Among the wail of midnight winds,  
and cried,  
"Where is my loved one? Where-  
fore do ye wail?"  
And out from all the night an answer  
shrill'd,  
"We know not, and we know not why  
we wail."  
I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the  
seas,  
And ask'd the waves that moan about  
the world  
"Where? do ye make your moaning  
for my child?"  
And round from all the world the  
voices came  
"We know not, and we know not why  
we moan."  
"Where"? and I stared from every  
eagle-peak,  
I thridded the black heart of all the  
woods,  
I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in  
the storms  
Of Autumn swept across the city,  
and heard

The murmur of their temples chant-  
ing me,  
Me, me, the desolate Mother:  
"Where"? — and turn'd,  
And fled by many a waste, forlorn of  
man,  
And grieved for man thro' all my  
grief for thee, —  
The jangle rooted in his shatter'd  
hearth,  
The serpent coil'd about his broken  
shaft,  
The scorpion crawling over naked  
skulls; —  
I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane  
Spring from his fallen God, but trace  
of thee  
I saw not; and far on, and, following  
out  
A league of labyrinthine darkness,  
came  
On three gray heads beneath a gleam-  
ing rift.  
"Where"? and I heard one voice  
from all the three  
"We know not, for we spin the lives  
of men,  
And not of Gods, and know not why  
we spin!  
There is a Fate beyond us." Nothing  
knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying  
man,  
Without his knowledge, from him  
flits to warn  
A far-off friendship that he comes no  
more,  
So he, the God of dreams, who heard  
my cry,  
Drew from thyself the likeness of  
thyself  
Without thy knowledge, and thy  
shadow past  
Before me, crying "The Bright one  
in the highest  
Is brother of the Dark one in the  
lowest,  
And Bright and Dark have sworn  
that I, the child  
Of thee, the great Earth-Mother,  
thee, the Power

That lifts her buried life from gloom  
to bloom,  
Should be forever and forevermore  
The Bride of Darkness."

So the Shadow wail'd.

Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the  
Gods of Heaven.

I would not mingle with their feasts;  
to me

Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on  
the lips,

Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.

The man, that only lives and loves an  
hour,

Seem'd nobler than their hard Eter-  
nities.

My quick tears kill'd the flower, my  
ravings hush'd

The bird, and lost in utter grief I  
fail'd

To send my life thro' olive-yard and  
vine

And golden grain, my gift to helpless  
man.

Rain-rotten died the wheat, the bar-  
ley-spears

Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell,  
and the sun,

Pale at my grief, drew down before  
his time

Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter  
snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-  
ness, He

Who still is highest, glancing from  
his height

On earth a fruitless fallow, when he  
miss'd

The wonted steam of sacrifice, the  
praise

And prayer of men, decreed that thou  
should'st dwell

For nine white moons of each whole  
year with me,

The three dark oncs in the shadow  
with thy King.

Once more the reaper in the gleam  
of dawn

Will see me by the landmark far away,  
Blessing his field, or seated in the dusk

Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,  
Rejoicing in the harvest and the  
grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-  
content

With them, who still are highest.  
Those gray heads,

What meant they by their "Fate  
beyond the Fates?"

But younger kindlier Gods to bear  
us down,

As we bore down the Gods before us?  
Gods,

To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,  
to stay,

Not spread the plague, the famine;  
Gods indeed,

To send the noon into the night and  
break

The sunless halls of Hades into  
Heaven?

Till thy dark lord accept and love  
the Sun,

And all the Shadow die into the  
Light,

When thou shalt dwell the whole  
bright year with me,

And souls of men, who grew beyond  
their race,

And made themselves as Gods against  
the fear

Of Death and Hell; and thou that  
hast from men,

As Queen of Death, that worship  
which is Fear,

Henceforth, as having risen from out  
the dead,

Shalt ever send thy life along with mine  
From buried grain thro' springing

blade, and bless

Their garner'd Autumn also, reap  
with me,

Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns  
of Earth

The worship which is Love, and see  
no more

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-  
glimmering lawns

Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires  
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior  
glide

Along the silent field of Asphodel.



OWD ROÄ.<sup>1</sup>

NAÄY, noä mander<sup>2</sup> o' use to be callin' 'm Roä, Roä, Roä,  
Fo' the dog's stoän-deäf, an' e's blind, 'e can neither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge as 'appy as iver I can,  
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I iver owäd mottal man.

Thou's rode of 'is back when a babby, afoor thou was gotten too owd,  
For 'e'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e fowt; 'e could howd<sup>8</sup> 'is oan,  
An' Roä was the dog as know'd when an' wheere to bury his boane.

An' 'e kep his heäd hoop like a king, an' 'e'd niver not down wi' 'is täail,  
Fur 'e'd niver done nowt to be shäamed on, when we was i' Howlaby Daäle.

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e lived, that, Dick, when 'e cooms to be deääd,  
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom soort of a sarvice reäd.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Parliament man 'at stans fur us 'ere,  
An' I'd voät fur 'im, my oan sen, if 'e could but stan fur the Shere.

"Faäithful an' True" — them words be 'Scriptur — an' Faäithful an' True  
Ull be fnn'<sup>4</sup> upo' four short legs ten times fur one upo' two.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two but I knaws they runs upo' four,<sup>5</sup> —  
Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha 'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,  
Ten year sin — Naäy — naäy! tha mun nobbut hev' one glass of aäle.

Straänge an' owd-farran'd<sup>6</sup> the 'ouse, an' belt<sup>7</sup> long afoor my daäy  
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd<sup>8</sup> an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs, 'ud coom at the fall o' the year,  
An' saddle their ends upo stools to pictur the door-poorch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds stannin' there o' the brokken stick;<sup>9</sup>  
An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'<sup>10</sup> as graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' there i' the 'ouse one night — but it's down, an' all on it now  
Goan into mangles an' tonups,<sup>11</sup> an' raäved slick thru' by the plow —

There, when the 'ouse wur a house, one night I wur sittin' aloän,  
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an' sleeäpin still as a stoän,

<sup>1</sup> Old Rover.<sup>2</sup> Manner.<sup>5</sup> Hold.<sup>4</sup> Found.<sup>5</sup> "Ou" as in "house."<sup>6</sup> "Owd-farran'd," old-fashioned.<sup>7</sup> Built.<sup>8</sup> "Twizzen'd," twisted.<sup>9</sup> On a staff *ragulé*.<sup>10</sup> Ivy.<sup>11</sup> Mangolds and turnips.

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as coud as this, an' the midders<sup>1</sup> as white,  
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop wi' the windle<sup>2</sup> that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin alongside Roäver, but I wur awaäke,  
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things — Doänt maäke thysen sick wi' the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,  
An' 'ed goän their wääys; ther was nobbut threë, an' noän on 'em there.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the Ghoäst an' dussn't not slecäp i' the 'ouse,  
But Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins<sup>3</sup> was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst<sup>4</sup> at the night, an' the daäle was all of a thaw,  
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät heäps o' the snaw slushin' down fro' the bank to the beck,  
An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o' the good owd times 'at was goan,  
An' the munney they maäde by the war, an' the times 'at was coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a gawin' to let in furriners wheät,  
Howiver was British farmers to stan' ageän o' their feeät.

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an' to pääy my men?  
An' all along o' the feller<sup>5</sup> as turn'd 'is back of hissén.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us, we couldn't ha' 'eärd tha call,  
Sa Moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha down, an' thy craädle an' all;

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi' tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,  
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when Moother 'ed gotten to bed,  
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an' the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my 'ead,

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an' I says to him "Squire, ya're lääte,"  
Then I seed at 'is faäce wur as red as the Yuleblock theer i' the graäte.

An' 'e says "can ya pääy me the rent to-night?" an' I says to 'im "Noä,"  
An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,<sup>6</sup> "Then hout to-night tha shall goä."

"Tha'll niver," says I, "be a-turnin ma hout upo' Christmas Eäve?"  
Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' my slieäve.

An' I thowt as 'e'd goän cleän-wnd,<sup>7</sup> fur I noäwaëys knaw'd 'is intent;  
An' I says "Git awaäy, ya beäst," an' I fetcht 'im a kick an' 'e went.

Then 'e tumbled up stairs, fur I 'eärd 'im, as if 'e'd 'a brokken 'is neck,  
An' I'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy chaumber door wouldn't sneck;<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Meadows.<sup>2</sup> Drifted snow.<sup>3</sup> "Moästlins," for the most part, generally.<sup>4</sup> Once.<sup>5</sup> Peel.<sup>6</sup> Ärm.<sup>7</sup> Mad.<sup>8</sup> Latch.

An' I slep' i' my chair ageän wi' my haim hingin' down to the floor,  
An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin' an' teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän, but I kick'd thy Moother istead.  
"What arta snorin' there fur? the house is afire," she said.

Thy Moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about the gell o' the farm,  
She offens 'ud spy summut wrong when there warn't not a mossel o' harm;

An' she didn't not solidly meän I wur gawin' that waäy to the bad,  
Fur the gell<sup>1</sup> was as howry a trollope as iver traäps'd i' the squad.

But Moother was free of 'er tongue, as I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,  
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says "I'd be good to tha, Bess, if tha'd onywaäys let ma be good,"  
But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the chair, an' screeäd like a Howl gone wud<sup>2</sup>—.

"Ya mun run fur the lether.<sup>3</sup> Git oop, if ya're onywaäys good for owt."  
And I says "If I beänt noäwaäys — not nowadaäys — good fur nowt —

"Yit I beänt sich a Nowt<sup>4</sup> of all Nowts as 'ull hallus do as 'e's bid."  
"But the stairs is afire," she said; then I seed 'er a-cryin', I did.

An' she beäld "Ya mun saäve little Dick, an' be sharp about it an' all,"  
Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an' sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder hin, when I gits to the top,  
But the heät druv hout i' my heyes till I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy Moother was howdin' the lether, an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,  
An' I wasn't afeärd, or I thinks leästwaäys as I wasn't afeärd;

But I couldn't see for the smoäke where thou was a-liggin, my lad,  
An' Roäver was there i' the chaumber a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an' a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,  
An' it wasn't a bite but a burn, fur the merk's<sup>5</sup> o' thy shou'der yit;

Then I call'd out Roä, Roä, Roä, thaw I didn't haäfe think as 'e'd 'ear,  
*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn i' 's mouth to the winder there!*

He coom'd like a Hangel o' marcy as soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,  
Or like tother Hangel i' Scriptor 'at summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son, an' 'e promised a son to she,  
An' Roä was as good as the Hangel i' saävin' a son fur me.

<sup>1</sup> The girl was as dirty a slut as ever trudged in the mud, but there is a sense of slatterniness in "traäpes'd" which is not expressed in "trudged."

<sup>2</sup> She half overturned me and shrieked like an owl gone mad.

<sup>3</sup> A thoroughly insignificant or worthless person.

<sup>5</sup> Ladder.

<sup>6</sup> Mark.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says "I mun gaw up ageän fur Roä."  
 "Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?" I tell'd 'er "Yeäs I maun goä."

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the winder, an' clemm'd<sup>1</sup> owd Roä by the 'eäd,  
 An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I taäked 'im at fust fur deäd;

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein', an' seeäm'd as blind as a poop,  
 An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.<sup>2</sup> I couldn't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to the harn, fur the barn wouln't burn  
 Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy, an' the wind wasn't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e waggled 'is taäl fur a bit,  
 But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' crawin' all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round, and thou was a-squeälin' thysen,  
 An' Moother was naggin' an' groänin' an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks<sup>3</sup> rummle down when the roof gev waäy,  
 Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin' an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

Warm enew theree sewer-ly, but the barn was as cowd as owt,  
 An' we cuddled and huddled together, an' happt<sup>4</sup> wersens oop as we mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but Moother 'ed beän sa soäk'd wi' the thaw  
 'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowd that night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when the rigtree<sup>5</sup> was tummlin' in —  
 Too laäte — but it's all ower now — hall hower — an' ten year sin;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed, hut I'll coom an' I'll squench the light,  
 Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires — and soa little Dick, good-night.

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## VASTNESS.

### I.

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanish'd face,  
 Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the dust of a vanish'd race.

### II.

Raving politics, never at rest — as this poor earth's pale history runs, —  
 What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns ?

### III.

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless violence mourn'd by the  
 Wise,  
 Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular torrent of lies upon lies;

<sup>1</sup> Clutched.    <sup>2</sup> "Bubbling," a young unfledged bird.    <sup>3</sup> Beams.    <sup>4</sup> Wrapt ourselves.  
<sup>5</sup> The beam that runs along the roof of the house just beneath the ridge.

## IV.

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious annals of army and fleet,  
 Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause, trumpets of victory,  
 groans of defeat;

## V.

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity setting the martyr  
 aflame;  
 Thralldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and reckes not to ruin a  
 realm in her name.

## VI.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts that darken the  
 schools;  
 Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, follow'd up by her vassal legion  
 of fools;

## VII.

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and her vintage, her silk and  
 her corn;  
 Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famishing populace, wharves forlorn;

## VIII.

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; gloom of the evening, Life at a  
 close;  
 Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-way with her flying robe and her  
 poison'd rose;

## IX.

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse of Pleasure, a worm which writhes all  
 day, and at night  
 Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back to the curse of  
 the light;

## X.

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest Poverty, bare to the  
 bone;  
 Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the rift in a throne;

## XI.

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge to Time and  
 to Fate;  
 Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the laurel'd graves of the Great;

## XII.

Love for the maiden, crown'd with marriage, no regrets for aught that has  
 been,  
 Household happiness, gracious children, debtless competence, golden mean;

## XIII.

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy spites of the village spire;  
 Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and vows that are snapt in a  
 moment of fire:

## XIV.

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the doing it, flesh  
without mind;  
He that has nail'd all flesh to the Cross, till Self died out in the love of his  
kind;

## XV.

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all these old revolutions of  
earth;  
All new-old revolutions of Empire — change of the tide — what is all of  
it worth?

## XVI.

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer?  
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is fair?

## XVII.

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-coffins at last,  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the deeps of a meaningless  
Past?

## XVIII.

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's anger of bees in  
their hive? —

\* \* \* \* \*

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him forever: the dead are not  
dead but alive.

*Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell.*

## THE RING.

## MIRIAM AND HER FATHER.

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,  
Bright in blue,  
Moon of married hearts,  
Hear me, you!

Twelve times in the year  
Bring me bliss,  
Globing Honey Moons  
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times  
From the night.  
Young again you grow  
Out of sight.

Silver crescent-curve,  
Coming soon,  
Globe again, and make  
Honey Moon.

Shall not *my* love last,  
Moon, with you,  
For ten thousand years  
Old and new?

## FATHER.

And who was he with such love-  
drunken eyes  
They made a thousand honey moons  
of one?

## MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert  
— his

The words, and mine the setting.  
 "Air and Words,"  
 Said Hubert, when I sang the song,  
 "are bride  
 And bridegroom." Does it please  
 you?

FATHER.

Mainly, child,  
 Because I hear your Mother's voice  
 in yours.  
 She—, why, you shiver tho' the  
 wind is west  
 With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM.

Well, I felt  
 On a sudden I know not what, a  
 breath that past  
 With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.  
 The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that  
 once was Man,  
 But cannot wholly free itself from  
 Man,  
 Are calling to each other thro' a dawn  
 Stranger than earth has ever seen;  
 the veil  
 Is rending, and the Voices of the day  
 Are heard across the Voices of the dark.  
 No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,  
 for man,  
 But thro' the Will of One who knows  
 and rules—  
 And utter knowledge is but utter  
 love—  
 Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,  
 Thro' all the Spheres — an ever open-  
 ing height,  
 An ever lessening earth — and she  
 perhaps,  
 My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly  
 link  
 With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low, what is it?  
 Your "Miriam breaks" — is making  
 a new link  
 Breaking an old one?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,  
 Have been till now each other's all-  
 in-all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the  
 child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not  
 known.

MIRIAM.

And who? what other?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound?  
 For Naples which we only left in  
 May?

MIRIAM.

No! father, Spain, but Hubert brings  
 me home  
 With April and the swallow. Wish  
 me joy!

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert  
 weds in you  
 The heart of Love, and you the soul  
 of Truth  
 In Hubert?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once  
 The lovely maiden-Princess of the  
 wood,  
 Who meant to sleep her hundred  
 summers out  
 Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now  
 Your fairy Prince has found you,  
 take this ring.

MIRIAM.

"Io t'amo"—and these diamonds—  
beautiful!  
"From Walter," and for me from  
you then?

FATHER.

Well,

One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.

Miriam am I not?

FATHER.

This ring bequeath'd you by your  
mother, child,  
Was to be given you—such her  
dying wish—  
Given on the morning when you came  
of age  
Or on the day you married. Both  
the days  
Now close in one. The ring is doubly  
yours.  
Why do you look so gravely at the  
tower?

MIRIAM.

I never saw it yet so all ablaze  
With creepers crimsoning to the pin-  
nacles,  
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,  
And all ablaze too in the lake below!  
And how the birds that circle round  
the tower  
Are cheeping to each other of their  
flight  
To summer lands!

FATHER.

And that has made you grave?  
Fly—care not. Birds and brides  
must leave the nest.  
Child, I am happier in your happi-  
ness  
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.

It is not that!

FATHER.

What else?

MIRIAM.

That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.

What chamber, child?  
Your nurse is here?

MIRIAM.

My Mother's nurse and mine.  
She comes to dress me in my bridal  
veil.

FATHER.

What did she say?

MIRIAM.

She said, that you and I  
Had been abroad for my poor health  
so long  
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I  
ask'd  
About my Mother, and she said,  
"Thy hair  
Is golden like thy Mother's, not so  
fine."

FATHER.

What then? what more?

MIRIAM.

She said—perhaps indeed  
She wander'd, having wander'd now  
so far  
Beyond the common date of death—  
that you,  
When I was smaller than the statuette  
Of my dear Mother on your bracket  
here—  
You took me to that chamber in the  
tower,  
The topmost—a chest there, by which  
you knelt—  
And there were books and dresses—  
left to me,  
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I,  
she said,



I babbled, Mother, Mother — as I used  
To prattle to her picture — stretch'd  
my hands

As if I saw her; then a woman came  
And caught me from my nurse. I  
hear her yet —

A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER.

Garrulous old crone.

MIRIAM.

Poor nurse!

FATHER.

I bad her keep,  
Like a seal'd book, all mention of  
the ring,  
For I myself would tell you all to-day.

MIRIAM.

"She too might speak to-day," she  
mumbled. Still,  
I scarce have learnt the title of your  
book,  
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day!  
I brought you to that chamber on  
your third  
September birthday with your nurse,  
and felt  
An icy breath play on me, while I  
stoopt  
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM.

To t'amo?  
This very ring

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine  
That, in the misery of my married life,  
Miriam your Mother might appear to  
me.  
She came to you, not me. The storm,  
you hear  
Far-off, is Muriel — your step-  
mother's voice.

MIRIAM.

Vext, that you thought my Mother  
came to me?  
Or at my crying "Mother?" or to find  
My Mother's diamonds hidden from  
her there,  
Like worldly beauties in the Cell,  
not shown  
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.  
Your Mother and step-mother —  
Miriam Erne  
And Muriel Erne — the two were  
cousins — lived  
With Muriel's mother on the down,  
that sees  
A thousand squares of corn and  
meadow, far  
As the gray deep, a landscape which  
your eyes  
Have many a time ranged over when  
a babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert yester-  
day,  
And from the thousand squares, one  
silent voice  
Came on the wind, and seem'd to  
say "Again."  
We saw far off an old forsaken house,  
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER.

And there  
I found these cousins often by the  
brook,  
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel  
threw the fly;  
The girls of equal age, but one was  
fair,  
And one was dark, and both were  
beautiful.  
No voice for either spoke within my  
heart  
Then, for the surface eye, that only  
doats  
On outward beauty, glancing from  
the one

To the other, knew not that which  
 pleased it most,  
 The raven ringlet or the gold; but  
 both  
 Were dowerless, and myself, I used  
 to walk  
 This Terrace — morbid, melancholy;  
 mine  
 And yet not mine the hall, the farm,  
 the field;  
 For all that ample woodland whis-  
 per'd "debt,"  
 The brook that feeds this lakelet  
 murmur'd "debt,"  
 And in yon arching avenue of old  
 elms,  
 Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the  
 sober rook  
 And carrion crow cry "Mortgage."

MIRIAM.

Father's fault  
 Visited on the children!

FATHER.

Ay, but then  
 A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to  
 Rome —  
 He left me wealth — and while I  
 journey'd hence,  
 And saw the world fly by me like a  
 dream,  
 And while I communed with my  
 truest self,  
 I woke to all of truest in myself,  
 Till, in the gleam of those mid-sum-  
 mer dawns,  
 The form of Muriel faded, and the face  
 Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;  
 And past and future mix'd in Heaven  
 and made  
 The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him, who left  
 you wealth,  
 Your kinsman?

FATHER.

I had seen the man but once;  
 He loved my name not me; and then  
 I pass'd

Home, and thro' Venice, where a  
 jeweller,  
 So far gone down, or so far up in life,  
 That he was nearing his own hundred,  
 sold  
 This ring to me, then laugh'd "the  
 ring is weird."  
 And weird and worn and wizard-like  
 was he.  
 "Why weird?" I ask'd him; and he  
 said "The souls  
 Of two repentant Lovers guard the  
 ring;"  
 Then with a ribald twinkle in his  
 bleak eyes —  
 "And if you give the ring to any maid,  
 They still remember what it cost  
 them here,  
 And hind the maid to love you by  
 the ring;  
 And if the ring were stolen from the  
 maid,  
 The theft were death or madness to  
 the thief,  
 So sacred those Ghost Lovers hold  
 the gift."  
 And then he told their legend:

"Long ago  
 Two lovers parted by a scurrilous tale  
 Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting  
 sent  
 This ring 'Io t'amo' to his best be-  
 loved,  
 And sent it on her birthday. She in  
 wrath  
 Return'd it on her birthday, and that  
 day  
 His death-day, when, half-frenzied by  
 the ring,  
 He wildly fought a rival suitor, him  
 The causer of that scandal, fought  
 and fell;  
 And she that came to part them all  
 too late,  
 And found a corpse and silence, drew  
 the ring  
 From his dead finger, wore it till her  
 death,  
 Shrined him within the temple of her  
 heart,  
 Made every moment of her after life

A virgin victim to his memory,  
And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,  
and cried  
'I see him, Io t'amo, Io t'amo.'

MIRIAM.

Legend or true? so tender should be  
true!  
Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

FATHER.

Ay!

But that half skeleton, like a barren  
ghost  
From out the fleshless world of spirits,  
laugh'd:  
A hollow laughter!

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost  
Himself, to laugh at love in death!  
But you?

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this  
ring  
Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I  
Would call thro' this "Io t'amo" to  
the heart  
Of Miriam; then I bad the man en-  
grave  
"From Walter" on the ring, and send  
it—wrote  
Name, surname, all as clear as noon,  
but he—  
Some younger hand must have en-  
graven the ring—  
His fingers were so stiffen'd by the  
frost  
'Of seven and ninety winters, that he  
scrawl'd  
A "Miriam" that might seem a  
"Muriel";  
And Muriel claim'd and open'd what  
I meant  
For Miriam, took the ring, and  
flaunted it  
Before that other whom I loved and  
love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a min-  
ster there,

A galleried palace, or a battlefield,  
Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but  
—coming home—

And on your Mother's birthday—all  
but yours—

A week betwixt—and when the tower  
as now

Was all ablaze with crimson to the  
roof,

And all ablaze too plunging in the lake  
Head-foremost—who were those that  
stood between

The tower and that rich phantom of  
the tower?

Muriel and Miriam, each in white,  
and like

May-blossoms in mid autumn—was  
it they?

A light shot upward on them from  
the lake.

What sparkled there? whose hand  
was that? they stood

So close together. I am not keen of  
sight,

But coming nearer—Muriel had the  
ring—

"O Miriam! have you given your  
ring to her?"

O Miriam!" Miriam reddened, Muriel  
clench'd

The hand that wore it, till I cried  
again:

"O Miriam, if you love me take the  
ring!"

She glanced at me, at Muriel, and  
was mute.

"Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be."  
Then—Muriel standing ever statue-  
like—

She turn'd, and in her soft imperial  
way

And saying gently: "Muriel, by your  
leave,"

Unclosed the hand, and from it drew  
the ring,

And gave it me, who pass'd it down  
her own,

"Io t'amo, all is well then." Muriel  
fled.

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel!

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel when you hear  
 What follows! Miriam loved me  
 from the first,  
 Not thro' the ring; but on her mar-  
 riage-morn  
 This birthday, death-day, and be-  
 trothal ring,  
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;  
 And after hours of search and doubt  
 and threats,  
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,  
 "See! —  
 Found in a chink of that old moulder'd  
 floor!"  
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying  
 smile,  
 As who should say "that those who  
 lose can find."  
 Then I and she were married for a  
 year,  
 One year without a storm, or even a  
 cloud;  
 And you my Miriam born within the  
 year;  
 And she my Miriam dead within the  
 year.  
 I sat beside her dying, and she gaspt:  
 "The books, the miniature, the lace  
 are hers,  
 My ring too when she comes of age,  
 or when  
 She marries; you—you loved me,  
 kept your word.  
 You love me still 'Io t'amo.'— Muriel  
 — no —  
 She cannot love; she loves her own  
 hard self,  
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose.  
 Promise me,  
 Miriam not Muriel — she shall have  
 the ring."  
 And there the light of other life,  
 which lives  
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,  
 Gleam'd for a moment in her own on  
 earth.  
 I swore the vow, then with my latest  
 kiss  
 Upon them, closed her eyes, which  
 would not close,

But kept their watch upon the ring  
 and you.  
 Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor Mother!  
 And you, poor desolate Father, and  
 poor me,  
 The little senseless, worthless, word-  
 less babe,  
 Saved when your life was wreck'd!

FATHER.

Desolate? yes!  
 Desolate as that sailor whom the  
 storm  
 Had parted from his comrade in the  
 boat,  
 And dash'd half dead on barren  
 sands, was I.  
 Nay, you were my one solace; only  
 — you  
 Were always sailing. Muriel's mother  
 sent,  
 And sure am I, by Muriel, one day  
 came  
 And saw you, shook her head, and  
 patted yours,  
 And smiled, and making with a kindly  
 pinch  
 Each poor pale cheek a momentary  
 rose —  
 "That should be fix'd," she said;  
 "your pretty bud,  
 So blighted here, would flower into  
 full health  
 Among our heath and bracken. Let  
 her come!  
 And we will feed her with our moun-  
 tain air,  
 And send her home to you rejoicing."  
 No —  
 We could not part. And once, when  
 you my girl  
 Rode on my shoulder home — the  
 tiny fist  
 Had graspt a daisy from your Mother's  
 grave —  
 By the lych-gate was Muriel. "Ay,"  
 she said,  
 "Among the tombs in this damp vale  
 of yours!

You scorn my Mother's warning, but  
 the child  
 Is paler than before. We often walk  
 In open sun, and see beneath our  
 feet  
 The mist of autumn gather from your  
 lake,  
 And shroud the tower; and once we  
 only saw  
 Your gilded vane, a light above the  
 mist" —  
 (Our old bright bird that still is  
 veering there  
 Above his four gold letters) "and  
 the light,"  
 She said, "was like that light" — and  
 there she paused,  
 And long; till I believing that the  
 girl's  
 Lean fancy, groping for it, could not  
 find  
 One likeness, laugh'd a little and  
 found her two —  
 "A warrior's crest above the cloud of  
 war" —  
 "A fiery phoenix rising from the  
 smoke,  
 The pyre he burnt in." — "Nay," she  
 said, "the light  
 That glimmers on the marsh and on  
 the grave."  
 And spoke no more, but turn'd and  
 pass'd away.  
 Miriam, I am not surely one of  
 those  
 Caught by the flower that closes on  
 the fly,  
 But after ten slow weeks her fix'd  
 intent,  
 In aiming at an all but hopeless mark  
 To strike it, struck; I took, I left  
 you there;  
 I came, I went, was happier day by  
 day;  
 For Muriel nursed you with a moth-  
 er's care;  
 Till on that clear and heather-scented  
 height  
 The rounder cheek had brighten'd  
 into bloom.  
 She always came to meet me carrying  
 you,

And all her talk was of the babe she  
 loved;  
 So, following her old pastime of the  
 brook,  
 She threw the fly for me; but oftener  
 left  
 That angling to the mother. "Muriel's  
 health  
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.  
 Strange!  
 She used to shun the wailing babe,  
 and doats  
 On this of yours." But when the  
 matron saw  
 That hinted love was only wasted  
 bait,  
 Not risen to, she was bolder. "Ever  
 since  
 You sent the fatal ring" — I told her  
 "sent  
 To Miriam," "Doubtless — ay, but  
 ever since  
 In all the world my dear one sees  
 but you —  
 In your sweet babe she finds but you  
 — she makes  
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but  
 you."  
 And then the tear fell, the voice  
 broke. *Her heart!*  
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man  
 Who sees his face in water, and a stone,  
 That glances from the bottom of the  
 pool,  
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet  
 at last,  
 Gratitude — loneliness — desire to  
 keep  
 So skilled a nurse about you always  
 — nay!  
 Some half remorseful kind of pity  
 too —  
 Well! well, you know I married  
 Muriel Erne.  
 "I take thee Muriel for my wedded  
 wife" —  
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,  
 child —  
 When all at once with some electric  
 thrill  
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the  
 hands

Fell from each other, and were join'd again.

No second cloudless honeymoon was mine.

For by and by she sicken'd of the farce,

She dropt the gracious mask of motherhood,

She came no more to meet me, carrying you,

Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,  
Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,  
Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly smile,

Nor ever ceased to clamor for the ring;

Why had I sent the ring at first to her?

Why had I made her love me thro' the ring,

And then had changed? so fickle are men — the best!

Not she — but now my love was hers again,

The ring by right, she said, was hers again.

At times too shrilling in her angrier moods,

"That weak and watery nature love you? No!

"*Io t'amo, Io t'amo!*" flung herself Against my heart, but often while her lips

Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,

As from the grating of a sepulchre,  
Past over both. I told her of my vow,

No pliable idiot I to break my vow;  
But still she made her outcry for the ring;

For one monotonous fancy madden'd her,

Till I myself was madden'd with her cry,

And even that "*Io t'amo,*" those three sweet

Italian words became a weariness.

My people too were scared with eerie sounds,

A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,

A noise of falling weights that never fell,

Weird whispers, bells that rang without a hand,

Door-handles turn'd when none was at the door,

And bolted doors that open'd of themselves:

And one betwixt the dark and light had seen

*Her*, bending by the cradle of her babe.

MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked

By noises in the house — and no one near —

I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle hand

Fall on my forehead, and a sudden face

Look'd in upon me like a gleam and pass'd,

And I was quieted, and slept again.

Or is it some half memory of a dream?

FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM.

And the face,  
The hand, — my Mother.

FATHER.

Miriam, on that day  
Two lovers parted by no scurrilous tale —

Mere want of gold — and still for twenty years

Bound by the golden cord of their first love —

Had ask'd us to their marriage, and to share

Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler then

Than ever you were in your cradle, moan'd,

"I am fitter for my bed, or for my grave,

I cannot go, go you." And then she rose,

She clung to me with such a hard  
 embrace,  
 So lingeringly long, that half-amazed  
 I parted from her, and I went alone.  
 And when the bridegroom murmur'd,  
 "With this ring,"  
 I felt for what I could not find, the  
 key,  
 The guardian of her relics, of her  
 ring.  
 I kept it as a sacred amulet  
 About me, — gone! and gone in that  
 embrace!  
 Then, hurrying home, I found her  
 not in house  
 Or garden — up the tower — an icy  
 air  
 Fled by me. — There, the chest was  
 open — all  
 The sacred relics tost about the  
 floor —  
 Among them Muriel lying on her  
 face —  
 I raised her, call'd her "Muriel,  
 Muriel wake!"  
 The fatal ring lay near her; the  
 glazed eye  
 Glared at me as in horror: Dead!  
 I took  
 And chafed the freezing hand. A red  
 mark ran  
 All round one finger pointed straight,  
 the rest  
 Were crumpled inwards. Dead! —  
 and maybe stung  
 With some remorse, had stolen, worn  
 the ring —  
 Then torn it from her finger, or as  
 if —  
 For never had I seen her show  
 remorse —  
 As if —

MIRIAM.

— those two Ghost lovers —

FATHER.

Lovers yet —

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes!

FATHER.

— but dead so long, gone up so far,  
 That now their ever-rising life has  
 dwarf'd  
 Or lost the moment of their past on  
 earth,  
 As we forget our wail at being born.  
 As if —

MIRIAM.

a dearer ghost had —

FATHER.

— wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful  
 eyes,  
 Till from her own hand she had torn  
 the ring  
 In fright, and fallen dead. And I  
 myself  
 Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER.

Well, no more!  
 No bridal music this! but fear not you!  
 You have the ring she guarded; that  
 poor link  
 With earth is broken, and has left her  
 free,  
 Except that, still drawn downward  
 for an hour,  
 Her spirit hovering by the church,  
 where she  
 Was married too, may linger, till she  
 sees  
 Her maiden coming like a Queen, who  
 leaves  
 Some colder province in the North to  
 gain  
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells  
 Clash welcome — linger, till her own,  
 the babe  
 She lean'd to from her Spiritual sphere,  
 Her lonely maiden-Princess, crown'd  
 with flowers,  
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-world  
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil —  
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me child  
 and go.

## FORLORN.

## I.

"HE is fled — I wish him dead —  
 He that wrought my ruin —  
 O the flattery and the craft  
 Which were my undoing . . .  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the storms are blowing.

## II.

"Who was witness of the crime?  
 Who shall now reveal it?  
 He is fled, or he is dead,  
 Marriage will conceal it . . .  
 In the night, in the night,  
 While the gloom is growing."

## III.

Catherine, Catherine, in the night  
 What is this you're dreaming?  
 There is laughter down in Hell  
 At your simple scheming . . .  
 In the night, in the night,  
 When the ghosts are fleeing.

## IV.

You to place a hand in his  
 Like an honest woman's,  
 You that lie with wasted lung  
 Waiting for your summons . . .  
 In the night, O the night!  
 O the deathwatch beating!

## V.

There will come a witness soon  
 Hard to be confuted,  
 All the world will hear a voice  
 Scream you are polluted . . .  
 In the night! O the night,  
 When the owls are wailing!

## VI.

Shame and marriage, Shame and  
 marriage,  
 Fright and foul dissembling,  
 Bantering bridesman, reddening  
 priest,  
 Tower and altar trembling . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 When the mind is failing!

## VII.

Mother, dare you kill your child?  
 How your hand is shaking!  
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,  
 What is this you're taking? . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the house is sleeping.

## VIII.

Dreadful! has it come to this,  
 O unhappy creature?  
 You that would not tread on a worm  
 For your gentle nature . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 O the night of weeping!

## IX.

Murder would not veil your sin,  
 Marriage will not hide it,  
 Earth and Hell will brand your name,  
 Wretch you must abide it . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 Long before the dawning.

## X.

Up, get up, and tell him all,  
 Tell him you were lying!  
 Do not die with a lie in your mouth,  
 You that know you're dying . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the grave is yawning.

## XI.

No — you will not die before,  
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;  
 You will live till *that* is born,  
 Then a little longer . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 While the Fiend is prowling.

## XII.

Death and marriage, Death and mar-  
 riage!  
 Funeral hearses rolling!  
 Black with bridal favors mixt!  
 Bridal bells with tolling! . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 When the wolves are howling.



## XIII.

Up, get up, the time is short,  
 Tell him now or never!  
 Tell him all before you die,  
 Lest you die for ever . . .  
 In the night, O the night,  
 Where there's no forgetting.

## XIV.

Up she got, and wrote him all,  
 All her tale of sadness,  
 Blister'd every word with tears,  
 And eased her heart of madness . . .  
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,  
 And while the moon was setting

## HAPPY.

## THE LEPER'S BRIDE.

## I.

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and what is it that you fear?  
 Is he sick your mate like mine? have you lost him, is he fled?  
 And there — the heron rises from his watch beside the mere,  
 And flies above the leper's hut, where lives the living-dead.

## II.

Come back, nor let me know it! would he live and die alone?  
 And has he not forgiven me yet, his over-jealous bride,  
 Who am, and was, and will be his, his own and only own,  
 To share his living death with him, die with him side by side?

## III.

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary moor,  
 Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn, and wears the leper's weed?  
 The door is open. He! is he standing at the door,  
 My soldier of the Cross? it is he and he indeed!

## IV.

My roses — will he take them *now* — mine, his — from off the tree  
 We planted both together, happy in our marriage morn?  
 O God, I could blaspheme, for he fought Thy fight for Thee,  
 And Thou hast made him leper to compass him with scorn —

## V.

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the coward and the base,  
 And set a crueller mark than Cain's on him, the good and brave!  
 He sees me, waves me from him. I will front him face to face.  
 You need not wave me from you. I would leap into your grave,

\* \* \* \* \*

## VI.

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of the conquering sword,  
 The roses that you cast aside — once more I bring you these.  
 No nearer? do you scorn me when you tell me O my lord,  
 You would not mar the beauty of your bride with your disease.

## VII.

You say your body is so foul — then here I stand apart,  
 Who yearn to lay my loving head upon your leprous breast,  
 Thé leper plague may scale my skin but never taint my heart;  
 Your body is not foul to me, and body is foul at best.

## VIII.

I loved you first when young and fair, but now I love you most;  
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on which the worm will feast;  
 This poor rib-grated dungeon of the holy human ghost,  
 This house with all its hateful needs no cleaner than the beast,

## IX.

This coarse diseaseful creature which in Eden was divine,  
 This Satan-haunted ruin, this little city of sewers,  
 This wall of solid flesh that comes between your soul and mine,  
 Will vanish and give place to the beauty that endures,

## X.

The beauty that endures on the Spiritual height,  
 When we shall stand transfigured, like Christ on Hermon hill,  
 And moving each to music, soul in soul and light in light,  
 Shall flash thro' one another in a moment as we will.

## XI.

Foul! foul! the word was yours not mine, I worship that right hand  
 Which fell'd the foes before you as the woodman fells the wood,  
 And sway'd the sword that lighten'd back the sun of Holy land,  
 And clove the Moslem crescent moon, and changed it into blood.

## XII.

And once i worshipt all too well this creature of decay,  
 For Age will chink the face, and Death will freeze the supplest limbs—  
 Yet you in your mid manhood — O the grief when yesterday  
 They bore the Cross before you to the chant of funeral hymns.

## XIII.

“Libera me, Domine!” you sang the Psalm, and when  
 The Priest pronounced you dead, and flung the mould upon your feet,  
 A beauty came upon your face, not that of living men,  
 But seen upon the silent brow when life has ceased to beat.

## XIV.

“Libera nos, Domine” — you knew not one was there  
 Who saw you kneel beside your bier, and weeping scarce could see;  
 May I come a little nearer, I that heard, and changed the prayer  
 And sang the married “nos” for the solitary “me.”

## XV.

*My* beauty marred by you? by you! so be it. All is well  
 If I lose it and myself in the higher beauty, yours.  
*My* beauty lured that falcon from his eyry on the fell,  
 Who never caught one gleam of the beauty which endures —

## XVI.

The Count who sought to snap the bond that link'd us life to life,  
 Who whisper'd me "your Ulric loves" — a little nearer still —  
 He hiss'd, "Let us revenge ourselves, your Ulric woos my wife" —  
 A lie by which he thought he could subdue me to his will.

## XVII.

I knew that you were near me when I let him kiss my brow;  
 Well, he kiss'd me on the lips, I was jealous, anger'd, vain,  
 And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are you jealous of me now?  
 Your pardon, O my love, if I ever gave you pain.

## XVIII.

You never once accused me, but I wept alone, and sigh'd  
 In the winter of the Present for the summer of the Past;  
 That icy winter silence — how it froze you from your bride,  
 Tho' I made one barren effort to break it at the last.

## XIX.

I brought you, you remember, these roses, when I knew  
 You were parting for the war, and you took them tho' you frown'd;  
 You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them. All at once the trumpet blew,  
 And you spur'd your fiery horse, and you hurl'd them to the ground.

## XX.

You parted for the Holy War without a word to me,  
 And clear myself unask'd — not I. My nature was too proud.  
 And him I saw but once again, and far away was he,  
 When I was praying in a storm — the crash was long and loud —

## XXI.

That God would ever slant His bolt from falling on your head —  
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was coming down the fell —  
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire from Heaven had dash'd him dead,  
 And sent him charr'd and blasted to the deathless fire of Hell.

## XXII.

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I repented and repent,  
 And trust myself forgiven by the God to whom I kneel.  
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly be content  
 Till I be leper like yourself, my love, from head to heel.

## XXIII.

O foolish dreams, that you, that I, would slight our marriage oath :  
 I held you at that moment even dearer than before ;  
 Now God has made you leper in His loving care for both,  
 That we might cling together, never doubt each other more.

## XXIV.

The Priest, who join'd you to the dead, has join'd our hands of old ;  
 If man and wife be but one flesh, let mine be leprous too,  
 As dead from all the human race as if beneath the mould ;  
 If you be dead, then I am dead, who only live for you.

## XXV.

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be follow'd by the Moon ?  
 The leech forsake the dying bed for terror of his life ?  
 The shadow leave the Substance in the brooding light of noon ?  
 Or if I had been the leper would you have left the wife ?

## XXVI.

Not take them ? Still you wave me off — poor roses — must I go —  
 I have worn them year by year — from the bush we both had set —  
 What ? fling them to you ? — well — that were hardly gracious. No !  
 Your plague but passes by the touch. A little nearer yet !

## XXVII.

There, there ! he buried you, the Priest ; the Priest is not to blame,  
 He joins us once again, to his either office true :  
 I thank him. I am happy, happy. Kiss me. In the name  
 Of the everlasting God, I will live and die with you.

[DEAN MILMAN has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest conducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm "Libera me domine," and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily ; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions : "I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress." He concluded : "Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility ; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you." Then in this old ritual follow these sad words : "When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the church-yard." At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's *Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography* will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, St. Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. — BUCHER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

## TO ULYSSES.

"Ulysses," the title of a number of essays by W. G. Palgrave. He died at Monte Video before seeing either this volume or my poem.

## I.

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,  
Whose eyes have known this globe  
of ours,  
Her tribes of men, and trees, and  
flowers,  
From Corrientes to Japan.

## II.

To you that bask below the Line,  
I soaking here in winter wet —  
The century's three strong eights  
have met  
To drag me down to seventy-nine.

## III.

In summer if I reach my day —  
To you, yet young, who breathe the  
balm  
Of summer-winters by the palm  
And orange grove of Paraguay,

## IV.

I tolerant of the colder time,  
Who love the winter woods, to trace  
On paler heavens the branching  
grace  
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

## V.

And see my cedar green, and there  
My giant ilex keeping leaf  
When frost is keen and days are  
brief —  
Or marvel how in English air

## VI.

My yucca, which no winter quells,  
Altho' the months have scarce be-  
gun,  
Has push'd toward our faintest sun  
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells —

## VII.

Or watch the waving pine which here  
The warrior of Caprera set,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, "I wish I had your trees."

A name that earth will not forget  
Till earth has roll'd her latest year —

## VIII.

I, once half-crazed for larger light  
On broader zones beyond the foam,  
But chaining fancy now at home  
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

## IX.

Not less would yield full thanks to  
you  
For your rich gift, your tale of  
lands  
I know not,<sup>1</sup> your Arabian sands;  
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-  
boo,

## X.

The wealth of tropic bower and  
brake;  
Your Oriental Edēn-isles,<sup>2</sup>  
Where man, nor only Nature smiles;  
Your wonder of the boiling lake;<sup>3</sup>

## XI.

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,<sup>4</sup>  
Phra-bat<sup>5</sup> the step; your Pontic  
coast;  
Crag-cloister;<sup>6</sup> Anatolian Ghost;<sup>7</sup>  
Hong-Kong,<sup>8</sup> Karnac,<sup>9</sup> and all the  
rest.

## XII.

Thro' which I follow'd line by line  
Your leading hand, and came, my  
friend,  
To prize your various book, and  
send  
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

<sup>1</sup> The tale of Nejd.

<sup>2</sup> The Philippines.

<sup>3</sup> In Dominica.

<sup>4</sup> The shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

<sup>5</sup> The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

<sup>6</sup> The monastery of Sumels.

<sup>7</sup> Anatolian Spectre stories.

<sup>8</sup> The three cities.

<sup>9</sup> Travels in Egypt.

## TO MARY BOYLE.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

## I.

"SPRING-FLOWERS"! While you still  
 delay to take  
 Your leave of Town,  
 Our elmtree's ruddy-hearted blossom-  
 flake  
 Is fluttering down.

## II.

Be truer to your promise. There! I  
 heard  
 One cuckoo call.  
 Be needle to the magnet of your word,  
 Nor wait, till all

## III.

Our vernal bloom from every vale and  
 plain  
 And garden pass,  
 And all the gold from each laburnum  
 chain  
 Drop to the grass.

## IV.

Is memory with your Marian gone to  
 rest,  
 Dead with the dead?  
 For ere she left us, when we met, you  
 prest  
 My hand, and said

## V.

"I come with your spring-flowers."  
 You came not, friend;  
 My birds would sing,  
 You heard not. Take then this spring-  
 flower I send,  
 This song of spring,

## VI.

Found yesterday — forgotten mine  
 own rhyme  
 By mine old self,  
 As I shall be forgotten by old Time,  
 Laid on the shelf —

## VII.

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the  
 whitening snow  
 And kingcup blaze,  
 And more than half a hundred years  
 ago,  
 In rick-fire days,

## VIII.

When Dives loathed the times, and  
 paced his land  
 In fear of worse,  
 And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant  
 hand  
 Fill with *his* purse.

## IX.

For lowly minds were madden'd to  
 the height  
 By tonguester tricks,  
 And once — I well remember that red  
 night  
 When thirty ricks,

## X.

All flaming, made an English home-  
 stead Hell —  
 These hands of mine  
 Have helpt to pass a bucket from the  
 well  
 Along the line,

## XI.

When this bare dome had not begun  
 to gleam  
 Thro' youthful curls,  
 And you were then a lover's fairy  
 dream,  
 His girl of girls;

## XII.

And you, that now are lonely, and  
 with Grief  
 Sit face to face,  
 Might find a flickering glimmer of  
 relief  
 In change of place.

## XIII.

What use to brood? this life of mingled pains  
 And joys to me,  
 Despite of every Faith and Creed,  
 Remains  
 The Mystery.

## XIV.

Let golden youth bewail the friend,  
 the wife,  
 For ever gone.  
 He dreams of that long walk thro'  
 desert life  
 Without the one.

## XV.

The silver year should cease to mourn  
 and sigh —  
 Not long to wait —  
 So close arc we, dear Mary, you and  
 I  
 To that dim gate.

## XVI.

Take, read! and be the faults your  
 Poet makes  
 Or many or few,  
 He rests content, if his young music  
 wakes  
 A wish in you

## XVII.

To change our dark Queen-city, all  
 her realm  
 Of sound and smoke,  
 For his clear heaven, and these few  
 lanes of elm  
 And whispering oak.

## THE PROGRESS OF SPRING.

## I.

THE groundflame of the crocus breaks  
 the mould,  
 Fair Spring slides hither o'er the  
 Southern sea,  
 Wavers on her thin stem the snow-  
 drop cold

That trembles not to kisses of the  
 bee:  
 Come Spring, for now from all the  
 dripping eaves  
 The spear of ice has wept itself  
 away,  
 And hour by hour unfolding wood-  
 bine leaves  
 O'er his uncertain shadow droops  
 the day.  
 She comes! The loosen'd rivulets  
 run;  
 The frost-bead melts upon her  
 golden hair;  
 Her mantle, slowly greening in the  
 Sun,  
 Now wraps her close, now arching  
 leaves her bare  
 To breaths of balmier air;

## II.

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-  
 come her,  
 About her glance the tits, and  
 shriek the jays,  
 Before her skirts the jubilant wood-  
 pecker,  
 The linnet's bosom blushes at her  
 gaze,  
 While round her brows a woodland  
 culver flits,  
 Watching her large light eyes and  
 gracious looks,  
 And in her open palm a halcyon sits  
 Patient—the secret splendor of  
 the brooks.  
 Come Spring! She comes on waste  
 and wood,  
 On farm and field: but enter also  
 here,  
 Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my  
 blood,  
 And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,  
 Lodge with me all the year!

## III.

Once more a downy drift against the  
 brakes,  
 Self-darken'd in the sky, descend-  
 ing slow!  
 But gladly see I thro' the wavering  
 flakes

Yon blanching apricot like snow in  
snow.  
These will thine eyes not brook in  
forest-paths,  
On their perpetual pine, nor round  
the beech;  
They fuse themselves to little spicy  
baths,  
Solved in the tender blushes of the  
peach;  
They lose themselves and die  
On that new life that gems the  
hawthorn line;  
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put  
them by,  
And out once more in varnish'd  
glory shine  
Thy stars of celandine.

## IV.

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven  
lours,  
But in the tearful splendor of her  
smiles  
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut  
towers  
Fill out the spaces by the barren  
tiles.  
Now past her feet the swallow cir-  
cling flies,  
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet  
her hand;  
Her light makes rainbows in my  
closing eyes,  
I hear a charm of song thro' all  
the land.  
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth  
is glad  
To roll her North below thy deep-  
ening dome,  
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly  
clad,  
And these low bushes dip their  
twigs in foam,  
Make all true hearths thy home.

## V.

Across my garden! and the thicket  
stirs,  
The fountain pulses high in sunnier  
jets,

The blackcap warbles, and the turtle  
purrs,  
The starling claps his tiny casta-  
nets.  
Still round her forehead wheels the  
woodland dove,  
And scatters on her throat the  
sparks of dew,  
The kingcup fills her footprint, and  
above  
Broaden the glowing isles of ver-  
nal blue.  
Hail ample presence of a Queen,  
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,  
Whose mantle, every shade of glanc-  
ing green,  
Flies back in fragrant breezes to  
display  
A tunic white as May!

## VI.

She whispers, "From the South I  
bring you balm,  
For on a tropic mountain was I  
born,  
While some dark dweller by the coco-  
palm  
Watch'd my far meadow zoned  
with airy morn;  
From under rose a muffled moan of  
floods;  
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;  
There no one came, the turf was  
fresh, the woods  
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their  
vales below.  
I saw beyond their silent tops  
The steaming marshes of the scar-  
let cranes,  
The slant seas leaning on the man-  
grove copse,  
And summer basking in the sultry  
plains  
About a land of canes;

## VII.

"Then from my vapor-girdle soar-  
ing forth  
I scaled the buoyant highway of  
the birds,



And drank the dews and drizzle of  
 the North,  
 That I might mix with men, and  
 hear their words  
 On pathway'd plains; for — while my  
 hand exults  
 Within the bloodless heart of lowly  
 flowers  
 To work old laws of Love to fresh  
 results,  
 Thro' manifold effect of simple  
 powers —  
 I too would teach the man  
 Beyond the darker hour to see the  
 bright,  
 That his fresh life may close as it  
 began,  
 The still-fulfilling promise of a  
 light  
 Narrowing the bounds of night."

## VIII.

So wed thee with my soul, that I may  
 mark  
 The coming year's great good and  
 varied ills,  
 And new developments, whatever  
 spark  
 Be struck from out the clash of  
 warring wills;  
 Or whether, since our nature cannot  
 rest,  
 The smoke of war's volcano burst  
 again  
 From hoary deeps that belt the  
 changeful West,  
 Old Empires, dwellings of the  
 kings of men;  
 Or should those fail, that hold the  
 helm,  
 While the long day of knowledge  
 grows and warms,  
 And in the heart of this most ancient  
 realm  
 A hateful voice be utter'd, and  
 alarms  
 Sounding "To arms! to arms!"

## IX.

A simpler, saner lesson might he  
 learn

Who reads thy gradual process,  
 Holy Spring.  
 Thy leaves possess the season in their  
 turn,  
 And in their time thy warblers rise  
 on wing.  
 How surely glidest thou from March  
 to May,  
 And changest, breathing it, the  
 sullen wind,  
 Thy scope of operation, day by day,  
 Larger and fuller, like the human  
 mind!  
 Thy warmths from bud to bud  
 Accomplish that blind model in the  
 seed,  
 And men have hopes, which race the  
 restless blood,  
 That after many changes may suc-  
 ceed  
 Life, which is Life indeed.

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM.

## I.

O YOUNG Mariner,  
 You from the haven  
 Under the sea-cliff,  
 You that are watching  
 The gray Magician  
 With eyes of wonder,  
 I am Merlin,  
 And I am dying,  
 I am Merlin  
 Who follow The Gleam.

## II.

Mighty the Wizard  
 Who found me at sunrise,  
 Sleeping, and woke me  
 And learn'd me Magic;  
 Great the Master,  
 And sweet the Magic,  
 When over the valley,  
 In early summers,  
 Over the mountain,  
 On human faces,  
 And all around me,  
 Moving to melody,  
 Floated The Gleam.

## III.

Once at the croak of a Raven  
 who crost it,  
 A barbarous people,  
 Blind to the magic,  
 And deaf to the melody,  
 Snarl'd at and cursed me.  
 A demon vext me,  
 The light retreated,  
 The landskip darken'd,  
 The melody deaden'd,  
 The Master whisper'd  
 "Follow The Gleam."

## IV.

Then to the melody,  
 Over a wilderness  
 Gliding, and glancing at  
 Elf of the woodland,  
 Gnome of the cavern,  
 Griffin and Giant,  
 And dancing of Fairies  
 In desolate hollows,  
 And wraiths of the mountain,  
 And rolling of dragons  
 By warble of water,  
 Or cataract music  
 Of falling torrents,  
 Flitted The Gleam.

## V.

Down from the mountain  
 And over the level,  
 And streaming and shining on  
 Silent river,  
 Silvery willow,  
 Pasture and plowland,  
 Horses and oxen,  
 Innocent maidens,  
 Garrulous children,  
 Homestead and harvest,  
 Reaper and gleaner,  
 And rough-ruddy faces  
 Of lowly labor,  
 Slided The Gleam.—

## VI.

Then, with a melody  
 Stronger and statelier,  
 Led me at length  
 To the city and palace

Of Arthur the king ;  
 Touch'd at the golden  
 Cross of the churches,  
 Flash'd on the Tournament,  
 Flicker'd and bicker'd  
 From helmet to helmet,  
 And last on the forehead  
 Of Arthur the blameless  
 Rested The Gleam.

## VII.

Clouds and darkness  
 Closed upon Camelot ;  
 Arthur had vanish'd  
 I knew not whither,  
 The king who loved me,  
 And cannot die ;  
 For out of the darkness  
 Silent and slowly  
 The Gleam, that had waned to a  
 wintry glimmer  
 On icy fallow  
 And faded forest,  
 Drew to the valley  
 Named of the shadow,  
 And slowly brightening  
 Out of the glimmer,  
 And slowly moving again to a  
 melody  
 Yearningly tender,  
 Fell on the shadow,  
 No longer a shadow,  
 But clothed with The Gleam.

## VIII.

And broader and brighter  
 The Gleam flying onward,  
 Wed to the melody,  
 Sang thro' the world ;  
 And slower and fainter,  
 Old and weary,  
 But eager to follow,  
 I saw, whenever  
 In passing it glanced upon  
 Hamlet or city,  
 That under the Crosses  
 The dead man's garden,  
 The mortal hillock,  
 Would break into blossom:  
 And so to the land's  
 Last limit I came —  
 And can no longer,

But die rejoicing,  
For thro' the Magic  
Of Him the Mighty,  
Who taught me in childhood,  
There on the border  
Of boundless Ocean,  
And all but in Heaven  
Hovers The Gleam.

## IX.

Not of the sunlight,  
Not of the moonlight,  
Not of the starlight!  
O young Mariner,  
Down to the haven,  
Call your companions,  
Launch your vessel,  
And crowd your canvas,  
And, ere it vanishes  
Over the margin,  
After it, follow it,  
Follow The Gleam.

## ROMNEY'S REMORSE.

"I read Hayley's Life of Romney the other day — Romney wanted hut education and reading to make him a very fine painter; but his ideal was not high nor fixed. How touching is the close of his life! He married at nineteen, and because Sir Joshua and others had said that 'marriage spoilt an artist' almost immediately left his wife in the North and scarce saw her till the end of his life; when old, nearly mad and quite desolate, he went back to her and she received him and nursed him till he died. This quiet act of hers is worth all Romney's pictures! even as a matter of Art, I am sure." (*Letters and Literary Remains of Edward Fitzgerald*, vol. i.)

"BEAT, little heart — I give you this  
and this" —

Who are you? What! the Lady  
Hamilton?

Good, I am never weary painting you.  
To sit once more? Cassandra, Hebe,  
Joan,

Or spinning at your wheel beside the  
vine —

Bacchante, what you will; and if I  
fail

To conjure and concentrate into form  
And color all you are, the fault is less

In me than Art. What Artist ever  
yet

Could make pure light live on the  
canvas? Art!

Why should I so disrelish that short  
word?

Where am I? snow on all the hills!  
so hot,

So fever'd! never colt would more  
delight

To roll himself in meadow grass  
than I

To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired? or came of  
your own will

To wait on one so broken, so forlorn?  
Have I not met you somewhere 'long  
ago?

I am all but sure I have — in Kendal  
church —

O yes! I hired you for a season  
there,

And then we parted; but you look so  
kind

That you will not deny my sultry  
throat

One draught of icy water. There —  
you spill

The drops upon my forehead. Your  
hand shakes.

I am ashamed. I am a trouble to  
you,

Could kneel for your forgiveness.  
Are they tears?

For me — they do me too much grace  
— for me?

O Mary, Mary!

Vexing you with words!

Words only, born of fever, or the  
fumes

Of that dark opiate dose you gave  
me, — words,

Wild babble. I have stumbled back  
again

Into the common day, the sounder  
self.

God stay me there, if only for your  
sake,

The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted  
wife

That ever wore a Christian marriage-  
ring.

My curse upon the Master's apo-  
thegm,  
That wife and children drag an Artist  
down!

This seem'd my lodestar in the  
Heaven of Art,

And lured me from the household  
fire on earth.

To you my days have been a life-long  
lie,

Grafted on half a truth, and tho' you  
say

"Take comfort, you have won the  
Painter's fame;"

The best in me that sees the worst in  
me,

And groans to see it, finds no com-  
fort there.

What fame? I am not Raphaël,  
Titian — no

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.  
Wrong there! The painter's fame?

but mine, that grew

Blown into glittering by the popular  
breath,

May float awhile beneath the sun,  
may roll

The rainbow hues of heaven about  
it —

There!

The color'd bubble bursts above the  
abyss

Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so?

Her sad eyes plead for my own fame  
with me

To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen

To flame along another dreary day.

Your hand. How bright you keep  
your marriage-ring!

Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then

Bred this black mood? or am I con-  
scious, more

Than other Masters, of the chasm  
between

Work and Ideal? Or does the gloom  
of Age

And suffering cloud the height I  
stand upon  
Even from myself? stand? stood . . .  
no more.

And yet

The world would lose, if such a wife  
as you

Should vanish unrecorded. Might I  
crave

One favor? I am bankrupt of all  
claim

On your obedience, and my strongest  
wish

Falls flat before your least unwilling-  
ness.

Still would you — if it please you —  
sit to me?

I dream'd last night of that clear  
summer noon,

When seated on a rock, and foot to  
foot

With your own shadow in the placid  
lake,

You claspt our infant daughter, heart  
to heart.

I had been among the hills, and  
brought you down

A length of staghorn-moss, and this  
you twined

About her cap. I see the picture yet,  
Mother and child. A sound from far  
away,

No louder than a bee among the  
flowers,

A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep.  
You still'd it for the moment with a  
song

Which often echo'd in me, while I  
stood

Before the great Madonna-master-  
pieces

Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.  
Mary, my crayons! if I can, I will.

You should have been — I might have  
made you once,

Had I but known you as I know you  
now —

The true Alcestis of the time. Your  
song —

Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof  
That I — even I — at times remem-  
ber'd you.

"Beat upon mine, little heart! beat,  
beat!

Beat upon mine! you are mine, my  
sweet!

All mine from your pretty blue eyes  
to your feet,

My sweet."

Less profile! turn to me—three-  
quarter face.

"Sleep, little blossom, my honey,  
my bliss!

For I give you this, and I give you  
this!

And I blind your pretty blue eyes  
with a kiss!

Sleep!"

Too early blinded by the kiss of  
death—

"Father and Mother will watch  
you grow"—

You watch'd, not I, she did not grow,  
she died.

"Father and Mother will watch  
you grow,

And gather the roses whenever  
they blow,

And find the white heather wherever  
you go,

My sweet."

Ah, my white heather only grows in  
heaven

With Milton's amaranth. There,  
there, there! a child

Had shamed me at it—Down, you  
idle tools,

Stamp into dust—tremulous, all  
awry,

Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled  
pool,—

Not one stroke firm. This Art, that  
harlot-like

Seducer me from you, leaves me  
harlot-like,

Who love her still, and whimper,  
impotent

To win her back before I die—and  
then—

Then, in the loud world's bastard  
judgment-day,

One truth will damn me with the  
mindless mob,

Who feel no touch of my temptation,  
more

More than all the myriad lies, that  
blacken round

The corpse of every man that gains a  
name;

"This model husband, this fine Art-  
ist"! Fool,

What matters? Six foot deep of  
burial mound

Will dull their comments! Ay, but  
when the shout

Of His descending peals from Heaven,  
and throbs

Thro' earth, and all her graves, if *He*  
should ask

"Why left you wife and children?  
for my sake,

According to my word?" and I replied  
"Nay, Lord, for *Art*," why, that would

sound so mean  
That all the dead, who wait the doom

of Hell  
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,

Wife-murders,—nay, the ruthless  
Mussulman

Who flings his bowstrung Harem in  
the sea,

Would turn, and glare at me, and  
point and jeer,

And gibber at the worm, who, living,  
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and  
lost

Salvation for a sketch.  
I am wild again!

The coals of fire you heap upon my  
head

Have crazed me. Someone knocking  
there without?

No! Will my Indian brother come?  
to find

Me or my coffin? Should I know the  
man?

This worn-out Reason dying in her  
house

May leave the windows blinded, and  
if so,

Bid him farewell for me, and tell  
him—

Hope!  
 I hear a death-bed Angel whisper  
 "Hope."  
 "The miserable have no medicine  
 But only Hope!" He said it . . .  
 in the play.  
 His crime was of the senses; of the  
 mind  
 Mine; worse, cold, calculated.  
 Tell my son—  
 O let me lean my head upon your  
 breast.

"Beat little heart" on this fool brain  
 of mine.  
 I once had friends—and many—  
 none like you.  
 I love you more than when we mar-  
 ried. Hope!  
 O yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,  
 Human forgiveness touches heaven,  
 and thence—  
 For you forgive me, you are sure of  
 that—  
 Reflected, sends a light on the forgiven.

---

 PARNASSUS.

Exegi monumentum . . .  
 Quod non . . .  
 Possit diruere . . .  
 . . . innumerabilis.  
 Annorum series et fuga temporum.—HORACE.

## I.

WHAT be those crown'd forms high over the sacred fountain?  
 Bards, that the mighty Muses have raised to the heights of the mountain,  
 And over the flight of the Ages! O Goddesses, help me up thither!  
 Lightning may shrivel the laurel of Cæsar, but mine would not wither.  
 Steep is the mountain, but you, you will help me to overcome it,  
 And stand with my head in the zenith, and roll my voice from the summit,  
 Sounding forever and ever thro' Earth and her listening nations,  
 And mixt with the great Sphere-music of stars and of constellations.

## II.

What be those two shapes high over the sacred fountain,  
 Taller than all the Muses, and huger than all the mountain?  
 On those two known peaks they stand ever spreading and heightening;  
 Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted by more than lightning!  
 Look, in their deep double shadow the crown'd ones all disappearing!  
 Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope for a deathless hearing!  
 "Sounding forever and ever?" pass on! the sight confuses—  
 These are Astronomy and Geology, terrible Muses!

## III.

If the lips were touch'd with fire from off a pure Pierian altar,  
 Tho' their music here be mortal need the singer greatly care?  
 Other songs for other worlds! the fire within him would not falter;  
 Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer here is Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST.

THE Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,  
 And the man said "Am I your debtor?"  
 And the Lord — "Not yet: but make it as clean as you can,  
 And then I will let you a better."

I.

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain, or a fable,  
 Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of morning shines,  
 I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my stable,  
 Youth and Health, and birth and wealth, and choice of women and of wines?

II.

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save breaking my bones on the  
 rack?  
 Would I had past in the morning that looks so bright from afar!

OLD AGE.

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was linkt with thee eighty years  
 back.  
 Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs on a star.

I.

If my body come from brutes, tho' somewhat finer than their own,  
 I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?  
 No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,  
 Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and rule thy Province of the brute.

II.

I have climb'd to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,  
 Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,  
 But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last  
 As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is  
 higher.

FAR — FAR — AWAY.

(FOR MUSIC.)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the  
 fields he knew  
 As where earth's green stole into  
 heaven's own hue,  
 Far — far — away?

What sound was dearest in his native  
 dells?  
 The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening  
 bells  
 Far — far — away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic  
 pain or joy,  
 Thro' those three words would haunt  
 him when a boy  
 Far — far — away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a  
 breath  
 From some fair dawn beyond the  
 doors of death  
 Far — far — away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the  
 gates of Birth,  
 The faint horizons, all the bounds of  
 earth,  
 Far — far — away?

What charm in words, a charm no  
words could give ?  
O dying words, can Music make you  
live

Far — far — away ?

### POLITICS.

WE move, the wheel must always  
move,  
Nor always on the plain,  
And if we move to such a goal  
As Wisdom hopes to gain,  
Then you that drive, and know your  
Craft,

Will firmly hold the rein,  
Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
Or you may drive in vain,  
For some cry "Quick" and some cry  
"Slow,"

But, while the hills remain,  
Up hill "Too-slow" will need the  
whip,  
Down hill "Too-quick" the chain.

### BEAUTIFUL CITY.

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater  
of European confusion,  
O you with your passionate shriek  
for the rights of an equal hu-  
manity,  
How often your Re-volution has  
proven but E-volution  
Roll'd again back on itself in the  
tides of a civic insanity !

### THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE.

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,  
When I was in my June, you in  
your May,  
Two words, "My Rose" set all your  
face aglow,  
And now that I am white, and you  
are gray,  
That blush of fifty years ago, my  
dear,  
Blooms in the Past, but close to  
me to-day

As this red rose, which on our terrace  
here  
Glows in the blue of fifty miles  
away.

### THE PLAY.

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so  
gloom'd with woe  
You all but sicken at the shifting  
scenes.  
And yet be patient. Our Playwright  
may show  
In some fifth Act what this wild  
Drama means.

### ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER.

WHILE man and woman still are in-  
complete,  
I prize that soul where man and  
woman meet,  
Which types all Nature's male and  
female plan,  
But, friend, man-woman is not  
woman-man.

### TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH.

You make our faults too gross, and  
thence maintain  
Our darker future. May your fears  
be vain !  
At times the small black fly upon  
the pane  
May seem the black ox of the dis-  
tant plain.

### THE SNOWDROP.

MANY, many welcomes  
February fair-maid,  
Ever as of old time,  
Solitary firstling,  
Coming in the cold time,  
Prophet of the gay time,  
Prophet of the May time,  
Prophet of the roses,  
Many, many welcomes  
February fair-maid !



## THE THROSTLE.

"SUMMER is coming, summer is coming.

I know it, I know it, I know it.  
Light again, leaf again, life again,  
love again,"

Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.

Last year you sang it as gladly.

"New, new, new!" Is it then  
so new

That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again,  
young again,"

Never a prophet so crazy!

And hardly a daisy as yet, little  
friend,

See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy  
year!"

O warble unhidden, unbidden!

Summer is coming, is coming, my  
dear,

And all the winters are hidden.

## THE OAK.

LIVE thy Life,  
Young and old,  
Like yon oak,  
Bright in spring,  
Living gold;

Summer-rich  
Then; and then  
Autumn-changed,  
Soberer-hued  
Gold again.

All his leaves  
Fall'n at length,  
Look, he stands,  
Trunk and bough,  
Naked strength.

## IN MEMORIAM.

W. G. WARD.

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I  
shall not find,

Whose Faith and Work were bells  
of full accord,

My friend, the most unworldly of  
mankind,

Most generous of all Ultramon-  
tanes, Ward,

How subtle at tierce and quart of  
mind with mind,

How loyal in the following of thy  
Lord!

## CROSSING THE BAR.

SUNSET and evening star,

And one clear call for me!

And may there be no moaning of the  
bar,

When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems  
asleep,

Too full for sound and foam,

When that which drew from out the  
boundless deep

Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark!

And may there be no sadness of fare-  
well,

When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time  
and Place

The flood may bear me far,

I hope to see my Pilot face to face  
When I have crost the bar.



## NOTES.

### *To the Queen*, p. 1.

First printed in the seventh edition of Tennyson's *Poems*, 1851. A defective stanza, relating to the Crystal Palace Exhibition, was omitted in later editions:—

“She brought a vast design to pass  
When Europe and the scattered ends  
Of our fierce world did meet as friends  
And brethren, in her halls of glass.”

Other changes were made in the text. Another version of *To the Queen*, in thirteen stanzas, was published in Jones's *Growth of the Idylls of the King*, 1895, pp. 152-54. Tennyson was appointed poet laureate in 1850, to succeed Wordsworth.

### *Claribel*, p. 3.

First printed in *Poems, chiefly Lyri- cal*, 1830. This poem is peculiarly Tennysonian in rhythm, diction, and feeling. It is appropriately placed first in the collection of *Juvenilia*.<sup>1</sup>

### *Nothing will die*, p. 3.

First printed in 1830, and for a long time suppressed. The poem is a versified statement of the old Heraclitean philosophy of the eternity of matter. Cf. *Lucretius*, p. 160.

<sup>1</sup> Most of the poems included in the *Juvenilia* were printed in the books of 1830 and 1832, but not all. Some of the pieces in these earlier volumes were for many years withdrawn from publication, and restored at various times in the collected editions (from 1869 to 1886).

### *All Things will die*, p. 4.

First printed in 1830, and afterward suppressed. A companion poem to *Nothing will die*, giving the opposite view of the beginning and ending of the world.

### *Leonine Elegiacs*, p. 4.

First printed, with the title *Elegiacs*, in 1830, and suppressed in later editions. Of *Leonine* Mr. Luce remarks: “From Leo or Leoninus, canon of the Church of St. Victor, Paris, twelfth century, who wrote many such. The end of the line rhymes with the middle.” (*Handbook to Tennyson's Works*, 1895, p. 80.) Cf. lines 13 and 14 with the paraphrase of Sappho's verses in Frederick Tennyson's *Isles of Greece*:—

“Hesper, thou bringest back again  
All that the gaudy daybeams part,  
The sheep, the goat back to their pen,  
The child home to his mother's heart.”

Also see couplet on Hesper in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, p. 645.

### *Supposed Confessions*, p. 4.

First printed in 1830, with the title *Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind not in Unity with Itself*; suppressed in later editions, and afterward restored. The poem probably contains some autobiographical touches, revealing the poet's introspective habits and questioning moods in youth, notwithstanding the pious atmosphere of his Somersby home. Cf. *In Memoriam*, XCVI.

*The Kraken*, p. 7.

First printed in 1830; suppressed in later editions, and afterward restored.

*Song*, p. 7.

First printed in 1830, but suppressed in later editions. The influence of Shelley is apparent in this song, as in other poems of Tennyson's.

*Lilian*, p. 7.

First published in 1830. Of Tennyson's portraits of women, Lilian, Adeline, etc., Taine says: "I have translated many ideas and many styles, but I shall not attempt to translate one of these portraits. Each word of them is like a tint, curiously deepened or shaded by the neighboring tint, with all the boldness and results of the happiest refinement. The least alteration would obscure all. And there an art so just, so consummate, is necessary to paint the charming prettinesses, the sudden haughtens, the half-blushes, the imperceptible and fleeting caprices of feminine beauty." (*Hist. Eng. Lit.*, V., vi.)

*Isabel*, p. 7.

First printed in 1830. The poet's much-loved mother is the woman whose praises are sung in this poem and elsewhere in his works. See *Memoir* by his son, 1897, Vol. I., pp. 17, 18.

*Mariana*, p. 8.

First printed in 1830, substantially as it is now. Even then Tennyson was fond of using uncommon words, such as *marsh* for *marsh*, a habit that clung to him through life. The poem is an admirable piece of word-painting, built on the merest suggestion in Shakespeare's drama. Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, III., ii., stanzas 28, 29. According to Tennyson, "the Moated Grange is an imaginary house in the fen." Napier

says: "Moated granges of this description still exist in the fenny districts of Lincolnshire, but they are many miles distant from Somersby, hence the scenery which colors this poem is not taken from the country round the poet's birth place, as it has no features in common with the landscape depicted in 'Mariana.'" (*Homes and Haunts of Tennyson*, 1892, p. 84.)

*Mariana in the South*, p. 9.

First printed in the 1832 *Poems*; rewritten, with two new stanzas, for the 1842 edition. The scenery is said to be that of southern France, which the poet visited in 1830.

*To —*, p. 10.

First printed in 1830. The "clear-headed friend" was J. W. Blakesley (1808-85), who belonged to the intimate circle of Tennyson's associates at Cambridge; he was later Dean of Lincoln.

*Madeline*, p. 11.

First printed in 1830. Possibly this poem and other word-portraits of women contain references to the love affairs of the poet in his early manhood.

*The Owl*, p. 11.

First printed in 1830. The poem is an echo of the song in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor Lost*, V., ii.

*Second Song*, p. 12.

First printed in 1830. Tennyson when a boy had a pet owl. (*Memoir*, I., p. 19.)

*Recollections of the Arabian Nights*  
p. 12.

First printed in 1830. A piece of gorgeous description after the manner of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. Says Luce: "Probably there is no more striking

achievement of musical word-painting in the language."

*Ode to Memory*, p. 14.

First printed in 1830. Stauza IV. is reminiscent of Teunyson's boyhood home in Somersby. "In later life he would often recall with affection his early haunts, the gray hill near the Rectory, the winding lanes shadowed by tall elm trees, and the two brooks that meet at the bottom of the glebe-field." Stanza V. refers to the seaside town of Mablethorpe on the Lincolnshire coast, where the Tennysons used to spend the summer months.

*Song*, p. 15.

Printed in 1830. Luce regards it as poor poetry. There seems to be an echo of the refrain,

"Heavily hangs the broad sunflower  
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly,"  
etc., in Poe's *Dreamland*.

*A Character*, p. 16.

Printed in 1830. The poem is said to be a portraiture of Thomas Sunderland, a man of eccentric tastes and materialistic views, whom the poet knew at Cambridge.

*The Poet*, p. 16.

Printed in 1830. Like Milton, Tennyson, when a young man, realized the bard's exalted mission. The true poet is here represented to be a seer rather than a literary artist.

*The Poet's Mind*, p. 17.

Printed in 1830. Tennyson's point of view in this poem is the same as Wordsworth's in *A Poet's Epitaph*.

*The Sea-Fairies*, p. 18.

Printed in 1830. The main thought of the poem recalls a passage in the

*Odyssey*, XII., describing the "clear-toned song" of the Sirens.

*The Deserted House*, p. 18.

Printed in 1830, but omitted in the 1842 *Poems*; restored in the next edition. The poem is an allegory; "the deserted house" is the body after the spirit has fled.

*The Dying Swan*, p. 19.

Printed in 1830. Though not much is said of "the wild swan's death-hymn," the poem is remarkable for the realistic description of the desolate landscape.

*A Dirge*, p. 19.

Printed in 1830. A poem in Tennyson's peculiar manner, musical and felicitous.

*Love and Death*, p. 20.

Printed in 1830. A striking poem, giving beautiful expression to Tennyson's spiritual philosophy, suggestive of the triumphant close of *In Memoriam*.

*The Ballad of Oriana*, p. 20.

Printed in 1830. The poem is an imitation of the ballads on the death of Helen of Kirkconnel.

*Circumstance*, p. 21.

Printed in 1830. A good example of Tennyson's wondrous faculty of condensing much into little.

*The Merman*, p. 22.

Printed in 1830. Parodied in Aytoun and Martin's *Bon Gaultier Ballads*, 1843.

*The Mermaid*, p. 22.

Printed in 1830. The poem recalls the voice of the ocean spirit in Byron's *Manfred*, I., i. Luce remarks of *The Merman* and *The Mermaid*: "They

may be called trifles in the volumes of Tennyson, but they would look more than pretty in the pages of a lesser poet. They exhibit his accustomed wealth of diction, in which they often resemble Shelley and Keats, and they have much witchery of sound."

*Adeline*, p. 23.

Printed in 1830. A blemish in some of Tennyson's early poems is the careless use of rhymes occasionally found, such as *skies* and *spice* in stanza V.

*Margaret*, p. 24.

First printed in 1832. This may be a portrait from life; the "pale Margaret" is said to have been the poet's cousin.

*Rosalind*, p. 25.

First printed in 1832; omitted in later editions, and afterward restored. Rosalind is evidently a girl of the middle or upper classes, as are the majority of Tennyson's women.

*Eleänore*, p. 25.

First printed in 1832. Perhaps an idealized portrait of an English maiden born in a foreign land, possibly France. Lines 127-41 may be an echo of Sappho's famous ode. Says Luce: "'Eleänore' recalls Shelley more than a dozen times, and many other poets, ancient and modern, enter into its elaborate composition."

*My life is full of weary days*, p. 27.

First printed with the title, *To* —, in 1832; omitted in later editions. Two stanzas of the second piece were reprinted in 1865. Several changes were made in the text.

*To* —, p. 28.

This sonnet was first printed in 1832, and was for many years withdrawn from publication. The peculiar trance-

experience described is often spoken of in Tennyson's later works.

*To J. M. K.*, p. 28.

Printed in 1830. The initials are those of the eminent Anglo-Saxon scholar, John Mitchell Kemble (1807-57), one of the poet's college friends. The poem hints at the degenerate state of the Anglican clergy in the days before the Oxford movement.

*Mine be the strength*, p. 28.

First printed in 1832, and omitted in later editions. This sonnet, though faulty in some respects, well illustrates Tennyson's use of natural phenomena for poetical material.

*Alexander*, p. 28.

First published in the Library edition of Tennyson's Works, 6 vols., 1871-73. Based on an incident related by Arrian, *De Exped. Alexandri*, Lib. III., 3 and 4. In this sonnet Tennyson turns to good account proper names, as did Milton in many passages of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*.

*Buonaparte*, p. 29.

First printed in 1832, but omitted in later editions. Exhibits the Briton's characteristic pride in the English victories over the French.

*Poland*, p. 29.

First printed in 1832 with the title, *On the Result of the late Russian Invasion of Poland*; omitted in later editions. The poet's hostility to Russia breaks out again in the poem, *To the Rev. F. D. Maurice*, p. 182.

*Caress'd or chidden*, p. 29.

First printed in 1865 with the two following sonnets under the title, *Three Sonnets to a Coquette*. "Though not full-bodied nor trumpet-toned, they are

as original as they are beautiful." (Luce).

*If I were loved*, p. 30.

First printed in 1832; suppressed in later editions, and restored (in 1871-73?).

*The Bridesmaid*, p. 30.

First printed in Library edition, 1871-73. The bridesmaid was Emily Sellwood, afterward Lady Tennyson, and the bride was her younger sister, Louisa, married to the poet's older brother Charles (May 24, 1836).

*The Lady of Shalott*, p. 31.

First printed in 1832. Said to be named after an Italian romance, *Donna di Scalotta*. The poem is an earlier version of the story of Lancelot and Elaine.

*The Two Voices*, p. 33.

First printed in 1842, though written late in 1833 when Tennyson was broken in spirit by the death of Arthur Hallam. Tyrrell says of Lucretius: "I know of no other poem except Tennyson's *Two Voices* in which the same wealth of poesy is enlisted to explain and beautify abstruse argument. Nearly every verse of the *Two Voices* illustrates this exquisite marriage of poetry and logic."

Devey, in his *Estimate of Modern English Poets*, pp. 290-91, thus comments on the poem: "In the 'Two Voices' the poet deals with the existence of evil and the enigma of life and death purely upon philosophic grounds, but his verses are little more than an English rendering of Goethe's, except that the casual conjectures which the German poet thought worthy of being treated only in a spirit of sportive banter, the English poet has invested with an air of sepulchral solemnity." The reference is likely to *Faust*, Prologue in Heaven and Act I.

The divisions of the argument are as follows: stanzas 1-15; 16-33; 34-76;

77-105; 106-34; 135-54. Cf. stanzas 127-28 with *To* — p. 28. The same thought is developed by Wordsworth in *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

*The Miller's Daughter*, p. 39.

First printed in 1832. This exquisite lyric was rewritten and greatly improved before its republication in 1842. It contains many borrowings from Homer, Ronsard, and other poets. The incident is related that the Queen chanced to pick up one of Tennyson's earlier books, and was charmed with the simple story of *The Miller's Daughter*; she procured a copy of the volume for the Princess Alice, and thus brought Tennyson's poetry into favor with the British aristocracy in the mid-century.

*Fatima*, p. 42.

First printed in 1832. Fatima is an example of the passionate Oriental woman. Like the sentimental Mariana, she makes love all in all. Says Luce: "The merit of the poem is considerable; the four rhymes followed by three produce a fine effect of intense and prolonged emotion; indeed, music, imagery, passion, all are remarkable, and more than worthy to be the inspiration of Mr. Swinburne."

*Cœnone*, p. 43.

First printed in 1832. Part of the poem was written in the summer of 1830, when Tennyson (with Hallam) was visiting the Pyrenees, which are described in some of the loveliest passages. The last lines are prophetic of the burning of Troy. An account of the nymph's tragic end is given in one of his latest poems, *The Death of Cœnone* (1892).

*The Sisters*, p. 47.

First printed in 1832. Swinburne has a rather remarkable comment on this poem: "In those six short stanzas,

without effort, without pretence, without parade—in other words, without any of the component qualities of Byron's serious poetry—there is simple and sufficient expression for the combined and contending passions of womanly pride and rage, physical attraction and spiritual abhorrence, all the outer and inner bitterness and sweetness of hatred and desire, resolution and fruition and revenge." (*Miscellanies*, p. 94.)

To —, p. 48.

First printed in 1832. It has been asserted that the soul described here stands for Goethe, but the poem following can have only partial application to the poet whose self-confessed aim in life was—"im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen, Resolut zu leben."

*The Palace of Art*, p. 48.

First printed in 1832. The poem was afterward almost entirely rewritten. A study of the changes in the text as printed in 1842 and later corrections was made by Dr. Henry van Dyke, who says: "In 1833 the poem, including the notes, contained eighty-three stanzas; in 1884 it has only seventy-five. Of the original number thirty-one have been entirely omitted—in other words, more than a third of the structure has been pulled down; and, in place of these, twenty-two new stanzas have been added, making a change of fifty-three stanzas. The fifty-two that remain have almost all been retouched and altered, so that very few stand to-day in the same shape which they had at the beginning. I suppose there is no other poem in the language, not even among the writings of Tennyson, which has been worked over so carefully as this." (*The Poetry of Tennyson*, 1892, p. 41.)

*Lady Clara Vere de Vere*, p. 53.

Written in 1833, and first published

in 1842. One of Tennyson's representative poems, showing him to be in touch with the growing democratic spirit in England.

*The May Queen*, p. 54.

The two first divisions of *The May Queen* were first published in 1832; the Conclusion in 1842, though composed in 1833.

*The Lotos-Eaters*, p. 58.

First published in 1832, and later subjected to thorough revision. So many lines in VIII. were changed, that it was practically a new stanza in the text of 1842. The suggestion of the poem was doubtless derived from the *Odyssey*, IX., 82-102, and other passages. Collins says Tennyson "has laid other poets under contribution for his enchanting poem, notably Bion, Moschus, Spenser (description of the Idle Lake, *Faerie Queene*, bk. ii. canto vi.), and Thomson (*Castle of Indolence*)."

*A Dream of Fair Women*, p. 61.

First printed in 1832, but greatly changed before and after its appearance in 1842. Of some "balloon stanzas" beginning the poem of 1832 Fitzgerald said, "They make a perfect poem by themselves without affecting the 'dream.'" The women seen by the poet in vision are Helen of Troy, Iphigenia, Cleopatra, Jephtha's daughter, Rosamund, Margaret Roper, and Queen Eleanor. Cf. Goethe's treatment of the story of Iphigenia (*Iphigenia in Tauris*, V., i., tr. by Swanwick):—

"I trembling kneeled before the altar,  
once,  
And solemnly the shade of early death  
Environed me. Aloft the knife was  
raised  
To pierce my hosom, throbbing with  
warm life;  
A dizzy horror overwhelmed my soul;  
My eyes grew dim;—I found myself  
in safety."



See song of Jephtha's daughter in Byron's *Hebrew Melodies*.

*The Blackbird*, p. 66.

Written in 1833; first printed in 1842. The bird is of the thrush species common in England, not the American blackbird.

*The Death of the Old Year*, p. 67.

First printed in 1832.

*To J. S.*, p. 67.

First printed in 1832. The poem was addressed to James Spedding, on the death of his brother Edward. Spedding (1808-81), the noted Bacon scholar, was one of the poet's most intimate friends at Cambridge. Stanzas 5 and 6 refer to the death of Dr. G. C. Tennyson (March 16, 1831).

*On a Mourner*, p. 68.

First printed in *A Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson*, 1865.

*You ask me, why*, p. 69.

Written in 1833; first published in 1842. This poem and the two companion pieces following were occasioned by the discussion of the Reform Bill of 1832, which added half a million electors (from the middle classes).

*Of old sat Freedom on the heights*, p. 69.

Written in 1833; first published in 1842. The poem briefly traces the development of constitutional liberty in England. Of this and the preceding poem Wordsworth remarked once in conversation: "I must acknowledge that these two poems are very solid and noble in thought. Their diction also seems singularly stately."

*Love thou thy land*, p. 70.

Written in 1833; first published in

1842. These three poems (62, 63, 64) contain an epitome of Tennyson's political philosophy. They show his intense Englishness and his aristocratic leanings. He was a moderate Conservative, who believed in gradual reform.

*England and America in 1782*, p. 71.

First printed in an American newspaper in 1872; republished in the Cabinet edition of Tennyson's Works, 12 vols., 1874-77. The poem affords abundant evidence of the changed attitude of Englishmen toward Americans, notwithstanding the violent disruption of the British Empire in the Revolutionary War.

*The Goose*, p. 72.

First printed in 1842. The poem "is a lively allegory of commerce and free trade."

*The Epic*, p. 73.

First published in 1842 as an introduction to the blank-verse fragment, *Morte d'Arthur*. The poem is interesting for its incidental references to the tendencies of the age, social and religious.

*Morte d'Arthur*, p. 74.

The first draft of this poem seems to have been written as early as 1833, though not published until 1842. Afterward incorporated in the concluding poem of *Idylls of the King* (1869). Tennyson's epic, "his King Arthur, some twelve books," was finished in 1885 by the publication of *Balin and Balan*, p. 619.

*The Gardener's Daughter*, p. 79.

Mentioned in letters of 1833, but first printed in 1842. Of the English idylls, "pictures of English home and country life," published in 1842, it has been remarked that the fundamental note is the sanctity of the family relation, the fidelity of lover and sweetheart and of husband and wife. On the purity of the

home depends not only the happiness but the permanence of the nation. It is said that this poem contains Tennyson's favorite line: —

"The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm."

See prologue to *The Gardener's Daughter* in *Memoir* by his son, I, pp. 199, 200.

*Dora*, p. 84.

Written as early as 1835; first printed in 1842. The pathetic incident of this idyl is based on a tale in Miss Mitford's *Village*. Said Tennyson of its style: "'Dora,' being the tale of a nobly simple country girl, had to be told in the simplest possible poetical language, and therefore was one of the poems which gave most trouble." Wordsworth, who highly appreciated its merit, once remarked to him: "Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your 'Dora' and have not succeeded." Aubrey de Vere called *Dora* "an English Ruth."

*Audley Court*, p. 87.

First printed in 1842. This poem, "partially suggested by Abbey Park at Torquay," is valuable for its vigorous pictures of middle-class life in England. The landscape and the men, as Aubrey de Vere says, "mutually reflect each other."

*Walking to the Mail*, p. 89.

First published in 1842. The poem is rather remarkable for its allusions to the stirring events of the thirties and forties. Of the "two parties" Tennyson belonged to "those that have," yet he was in sympathy with movements for the physical and intellectual improvement of the people. See *Memoir*, I, p. 185.

*Edwin Morris*, p. 91.

Written in Wales in 1839; first printed in *Poems*, 7th ed., 1851. A mannerism,

*shrilled* (p. 93), is often found in Tennyson's later writings.

*St. Simeon Stylites*, p. 94.

First printed in 1842. A good illustration of the dramatic monologue, which Browning used so successfully. The celebrated Syrian pillar-saint (d. 459) figures in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. XXXVII.

*The Talking Oak*, p. 97.

First printed in 1842. One of Tennyson's happiest ventures in the ballad measure.

*Love and Duty*, p. 101.

First published in 1842. The poem exhibits Tennyson's moralizing habit. The importance of self-control, of obedience to duty, is the keynote of many of his utterances.

*The Golden Year*, p. 103.

First printed in *Poems*, 4th ed., 1846. In this poem Tennyson has admirably caught the spirit of reform and philanthropy that pervaded England in the early years of the Victorian reign.

*Ulysses*, p. 104.

First published in 1842. Of *Ulysses*, which was composed not long after Arthur Henry Hallam's death, in 1833, Tennyson said it "was written under the sense of loss, and that all had gone by, but that still life must be fought out to the end." This striking poem not only shows Tennyson in his most heroic mood, it reflects the unrest and aspiration of the period. The poet was especially indebted to Horace (I., 7) and to Dante (*Inferno*, 26) for the leading motive.

*Tithonus*, p. 106.

First printed in the *Cornhill Magazine*, February, 1860. It was written

many years before, about the time that *Ulysses* was composed, and is as beautiful as that masterpiece. Waugh says: "‘Tithonus,’ which in the original opened a little differently—

‘Ay me! Ay mè! the woods decay and fall,’—

is not only touched with Tennyson’s richest color, it has also a distinct place in his work as an utterance of his favorite creed. *Μηδὲν ἄγαν* is once more its motto. The immortality which Tithonus desired turns to ashes in his mouth: he is sick of life, who cannot die." (*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, 1893, p. 185.)

*Locksley Hall*, p. 107.

First printed in 1842; its composition is said to have occupied the poet six weeks. The main thought he owed to a translation of the Arabic *Moallakát*, prize odes "which were written in golden letters and hung up on the portals of the sacred shrine at Mecca." Tennyson thus comments on the place and the poem: "‘Locksley Hall’ is an imaginary place (tho’ the coast is Lincolnshire) and the hero is imaginary. The whole poem represents young life, its good side, its deficiencies, and its yearnings. Mr. Hallam said to me that the English people liked verse in trochaics, so I wrote the poem in this metre."

There is a close parallel between couplets 9 and 10 and these lines from *Pervigilium Veneris*:—

“Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, qui que  
amavit cras amet,  
Ver novum, vir jam canorum; vere  
natus orbis est,  
Vere concordant amores, vere nubent  
alites.”

Couplet 16 recalls Goethe’s epigram:—

“Eros, wie seh’ ich dich hier! Im jeg-  
lichem Händchen die Sanduhr!  
Wie? Leichtsinuiger Gott, missest  
du doppelt die Zeit?”

“Langsam rinnen aus einer die Stunden  
entfernter Geliebten:  
Gegenwärtigen fließt eilig die zweite  
herab.”

Couplet 38, from Dante’s *Inferno*, V., 121, is also similar to Alfred de Musset’s lines in *Lucie*:—

“Il n’est pire douleur,  
Qu’un souvenir heureux dans les jours  
du malheur.”

The poet got the simile of the lion (line 135) from Pringle’s *Travels*, which he was reading in 1837.

A considerable number of the phrases and lines of this deservedly popular poem have become familiar quotations, admired for their consummate brevity and felicity. Some of the more striking thoughts and images of *Locksley Hall* occur again and again in Tennyson’s later works, in slightly different form.

*Godiva*, p. 113.

First published in 1842. While waiting for the train at Coventry in 1840 Tennyson shaped this ancient legend into an exquisite idyl, which has suggested two or three statues of Lady Godiva. A brief account of the circumstance, which took place in the eleventh century, is given in Dugdale’s *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 1656. Cf. poems on Godiva by Moultrie and Leigh Hunt.

*The Day-Dream*, p. 114.

First published in 1842, except the part entitled *The Sleeping Beauty*, printed in 1830. Edward Fitzgerald heard the poem read in 1835, all but the prologue and the epilogue. Incidentally the poem reveals the new interest in physical science felt in England in the thirties. Lady Flora is evidently one of the few women in Tennyson’s works who are intellectual and personally attractive.

*Amphion*, p. 118.

First published in 1842, but later sub-

jected to more or less revision. The fifth stanza originally began with these lines:—

“The birch tree swung her fragrant hair,  
The bramble cast her berry,  
The gin within the juniper  
Began to make him merry.”

*St. Agnes' Eve*, p. 120.

First printed, with the title *St. Agnes*, in *The Keepsake*, 1837. The poem is mentioned in correspondence of 1834. Says Professor Cook: “‘St. Agnes' Eve’ is a study of medieval mysticism,—of pure devotional passion such as we encounter in the lives of St. Catharine of Siena and St. Teresa of Jesus. It belongs in the same class with ‘St. Simeon Stylites’ and ‘Sir Galahad,’ and may be regarded, together with them, as a lyrical forerunner of portions of the ‘Idylls of the King,’ particularly of such passages as the description of Percival’s sister in ‘The Holy Grail’ and the cloistered penitence of Guinevere as depicted in the idyll of that name.” (*Poet-Lore*, January, 1891, p. 10.)

*Sir Galahad*, p. 120.

First published in 1842, though written as early as 1834. Says Luce: “‘Sir Galahad’ is an ideal of chivalry as well as a type of religion. But from one point of view he is St. Agnes in the form of a man. Like hers is his stainless purity and his ecstatic devotion to an ideal that has usurped the dearer instincts of humanity. But the poem, though full of lyrical splendor, is not so good as the former; that was perfect in its sufficiency; this is imperfect in its opulence.” (*Handbook*, p. 183.)

*Edward Gray*, p. 121.

First published in 1842. The “sweet Emma Morelaud” of this pretty hallad (written in 1340) forms the subject of a fine painting by Sir John E. Millais.

*Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue*, p. 122.

First published in 1842. One change in stanza 5 may be noted. The lines—

“Against its fountain upward runs  
The current of my days”—

were substituted in 1853 for—

“Like Hezekiah’s backward runs  
The shadow of my days.”

Edward Fitzgerald remarks: “‘The plump head-waiter of The Cock,’ by Temple Bar, famous for chop and porter, was rather offended when told of the poem (‘Will Waterproof’). ‘Had Mr. Tennyson dined oftener there, he would not have minded it so much,’ he said.” In 1887 the proprietors of the Cock Tavern remembered the poet with the gift of an old tankard, which he prized as an heirloom of “the old vanished Tavern.”

The poem, which is written in a pleasant vein, proves that Tennyson was not always steeped in melancholy and gloom in his early manhood.

*Lady Clare*, p. 124.

First published in 1842. Some changes were made in the text in 1851. The poem is based on the plot of Miss Ferrier’s novel, *The Inheritance*. Says Napier, in *Homes and Haunts of Tennyson*, p. 90: “The marriage relationship is a favorite theme with him, and many of his finest poems circle round it. In ‘The Lord of Burleigh,’ ‘Lady Clare,’ etc., he brushes aside all traditions, and with exquisite pathos, revels in that true sentiment he is so fond of, showing that when there exists between two persons what Scott calls ‘the secret sympathy,’ their union is almost sure to be a happy one.”

*The Captain*, p. 126.

First published in *A Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson*, 1865. Of

this "legend of the navy" Luce says: "The incidents are improbable; no enemy would riddle a ship that did not fire a shot in return."

*The Lord of Burleigh*, p. 127.

First published in 1842, though written as early as 1835. According to Mr. Napier, this "ballad of ballads" is "more than the creation of a poet's fancy, being rather a narrative in verse, with the usual poetic licenses, of the wooing and romantic marriage of the tenth Earl and first Marquis of Exeter." Under the assumed name of John Jones he married a farmer's daughter, Sarah Hoggins, of Bolas, Shropshire (April 13, 1790). She died in 1797, "aged 24," sincerely lamented by her husband and all his dependents. Burleigh House dates back to 1587 and is situated "in Northamptonshire, on the borders of the counties of Rutland and Lincoln."

*The Voyage*, p. 128.

First printed, apparently, in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. The poem is an allegorical description of the pursuit of the ideal. Cf. Tennyson's later poem, *Merlin and The Gleam*, p. 679.

*Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*,  
p. 129.

First published in 1842. Even in his college days Tennyson was attracted by the Arthurian legend and composed some verses on Launcelot and Guinevere. A single stanza of these unpublished verses was preserved by Edward Fitzgerald:—

"Life of the Life within my blood,  
Light of the Light within mine eyes,  
The May begins to breathe and bud,  
And softly blow the balmy skies;  
Bathe with me in the fiery flood,  
And mingle kisses, tears, and sighs,  
Life of the Life within my blood,  
Light of the Light within mine eyes."

*A Farewell*, p. 129.

First published in 1842. This lovely little lyric dates back, no doubt, to 1837, when the Tennysons left Somersby. Probably the "cold rivulet" is the brook of his *Ode to Memory*, IV. (p. 15)

*The Beggar Maid*, p. 130.

First published in 1842. The beggar maid, to whose incomparable charms King Cophetua fell a willing prey, figures in old ballads and in three of Shakespeare's plays.

*The Eagle*, p. 130.

First published in *Poems*, 7th ed., 1851. There is an unfortunate change in the first line of this much-admired fragment, due to the poet's habit of ceaselessly revising his published writings. The first reading was

"He clasps the crag with hooked hands."

Some of the emendations of later years were not always for the better.

*Move eastward, happy earth*, p. 130.

First published in 1842. A felicitous mingling of poetry and science.

*Come not, when I am dead*, p. 130.

First included in *Poems*, 7th ed., 1851. These stanzas were printed in *The Keepsake*, 1851.

*The Letters*, p. 130.

First published in *Maud, and Other Poems*, 1855.

*The Vision of Sin*, p. 131.

First published in 1842. The poem as published in *A Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson*, 1865, contained two lines afterward omitted. They are near the close of the poem:—

"Another answer'd, 'But a crime of sense?"

Give him new nerves with old experience.'"

According to Shepherd (*Bibliography of Tennyson*, 1896, pp. 40-41) these lines occur only in this edition.

The poem itself is an allegory conveying a religious lesson—the just and inevitable penalty that sooner or later overtakes the sensualist. As Palgrave puts it: "The life of selfish pleasure ends in cynicism and cynicism in moral death."

To —, p. 134.

Contributed to the *Examiner*, March 24, 1849. First included in *Poems*, 6th ed., 1850, and reprinted (with slight changes) in 1853. Like *The Dead Prophet* (p. 634), the poem expresses Tennyson's abhorrence of publicity.

To *E. L.*, on his *Travels in Greece*, p. 135.

First published in *Poems*, 8th ed., 1853. Addressed to Edward Lear (1812-88), author of *Journal of a Landscape Painter in Greece and Albania*, 1851, and other illustrated books of travel.

*Break, break, break*, p. 135.

First published in 1842, but probably composed in the spring of 1834. This melodious wail, occasioned by the death of Arthur Hallam, was not written at Clevedon by the Severn, but "in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning."

*The Poet's Song*, p. 135.

First published in 1842. Cf. *The Poet* (p. 16) and *The Poet's Mind* (p. 17).

*The Brook*, p. 136.

First published in *Maud, and Other Poems*, 1855. It is said that the poem, or one on the same subject, was written some twenty years before and, like other verses of this productive period, was thrown aside. The manuscript was

rescued by chance from a pile of waste paper. The babbling stream of this exquisite idyl is not the rivulet near Somersby, but a brook existing only in the poet's imagination. The "figure like a wizard pentagram" (line 103) recalls a passage in *Faust*, Pt. I, Act I,—"The wizard's foot that on the threshold made is," etc.

Lines 20-25 of *The Brook* recall Goethe's *Büchlein*.

*Aylmer's Field*, p. 140.

First published in 1855. Mr. Woolner, who was a friend of Tennyson's, furnished the plot. It is the opinion of Mr. Luce that the locality is in Kent, while Mr. Napier thinks the scenery is like that near Bayons Manor, the seat of the Tennyson-d'Eyncourts. It is certainly depicted with wonderful loveliness and effectiveness. It is a labored idyl, which the poet found hard to manage. Says Napier: "In 'Maud' and 'Locksley Hall' he declaims in tones of thunder against those who sin against 'the truth of love' and especially in 'Aylmer's Field,' taking for his text the words, 'Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!' he teaches the lesson of pride trampling on love, and leaving in its train desolation and ruin."

*Sea Dreams*, p. 155.

First printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, January, 1860; afterward included in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. *Sea Dreams*, says Stopford Brooke, in his work on Tennyson, p. 419, "is not a narrative of years and of many characters, but of a single day in the life of a man and his wife, and of a crisis in their souls." The poem is especially entitled to the name "Idyl of the Hearth," being an affecting recital of the ups and downs of domestic life in the middle classes. The kind-hearted, pious wife has in her the right material for a true woman.

*Lucretius*, p. 160.

First printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1868; included in the *Holy Grail* volume, 1869. In Mrs. Tennyson's *Journal* for 1865 is this entry, dated Oct. 6th: "A. read me some 'Lucretius,' and the '1st Epistle of St. Peter.' (At work at his new poem of 'Lucretius')." As first printed the last line was:—

"Care not thou  
What matters? All is over: Fare thee  
well!"

The later reading (of 1869) is still retained.

At the time the poem was written the materialistic teaching of the Epicureans was coming into favor in England. Professor Tyndall was one of its new exponents. The Lucretian doctrine briefly stated is this: "Atoms wrought on by impulse and gravity, and excited in every mode to cohere, and having been tried in all possible aggregations, motions, and relations, fell at last into those that could endure." Given atoms and motion, the universe was the result.

Professor Jebb thus comments on Tennyson's remarkably successful poem dealing with the philosophy and personality of the Roman poet-philosopher (who lived in the first century B.C.): "Apart from its artistic qualities, the poem has another which, in a work of art, is accidental,—its historical truth; that is, the Lucretius whom it describes has a true resemblance to the real Lucretius, as revealed in his own work; the picture is not merely a picture but happens to be a portrait also."

Cf. the description of the Lucretian Gods (lines 94-100) with the concluding passage of *The Lotus Eaters* (p. 61).

The allusion in lines 120-22 is to the *Odyssey*, XII., 374-96. According to the story in Ovid's *Fasti* it was King Numa who "snared Picus and Faunus" and compelled them to reveal "the secret of

averting Jove's angry lightnings." It is needless to cite instances of Tennyson's use of the thoughts and imagery of Lucretius' great poem *De Rerum Natura*.

*Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, p. 165.

First published in pamphlet form on the morning of Nov. 18, 1852, and again in 1853; included in the *Maud* volume, 1855. The poem was written in the interval between the death of the Duke (Sept. 14), and his funeral (Nov. 18). This elaborate ode was not appreciated at first, but Sir Henry Taylor wrote of it: "It has a greatness worthy of its theme, and an absolute simplicity and truth, with all the poetic passion of your nature moving beneath." Its patriotic passages especially appeal to the national heart and conscience.

*The Third of February*, p. 169.

Contributed to the *Examiner*, Feb. 7, 1852; included in the Library edition of Tennyson's collected Works, 1872. This and other patriotic poems were occasioned by the disturbed political condition of England after the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon.

*The Charge of the Light Brigade*  
p. 170.

Contributed to the *Examiner*, Dec. 5, 1854; reprinted (with changes) in the *Maud* volume, 1855. A four-page copy was privately printed for distribution among the soldiers before Sebastopol. The famous charge took place in the Crimean War (Oct. 25, 1854). Says Waugh: "The poem has become almost too popular for discussion; it is the one stirring, galloping piece of energy which all shades of mind and sympathy seem to admire alike."

*Ode sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition*, p. 171.

Published in *Fraser's Magazine*, June, 1862; reprinted in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1862. The ode, with music by Sterndale Bennett, was sung on the opening day of the International Exhibition, May 1, 1862. Cf. V. with *The Golden Year* (p. 103).

*A Welcome to Alexandra*, p. 172.

Printed in a four-page pamphlet, 1863; republished, with changes and additions, in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. The poem is a heart-felt welcome to Princess Alexandra, of Denmark, on the occasion of her marriage (March 7, 1863) to Albert Edward, Prince of Wales.

*A Welcome to her Royal Highness, Marie Alexandrovna, Duchess of Edinburgh*, p. 172.

Published in a four-page sheet, 1874; also printed in the *London Times* on the day of the marriage of the Russian princess to Alfred, second son of Queen Victoria. The lines in III. beginning "For thrones and peoples are as waifs that swing," contain a favorite and oft-repeated sentiment of Tennyson's.

*The Grandmother*, p. 173.

First published in *Once a Week*, July 16, 1859 (with a capital illustration by J. E. Millais); reprinted in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. Professor Jowett quoted a saying of an old lady, "The spirits of my children always seem to hover about me," which so impressed Teunyson that the poem (first called *The Grandmother's Apology*) was the result.

*Northern Farmer (Old Style)*, p. 177.

Published in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. The poem, written in 1861,

is imaginative, though founded on character-studies of Lincolnshire farmers.

*Northern Farmer (New Style)*, p. 179.

First published in the *Holy Grail* volume, 1869. According to the poet himself, this poem was suggested by the words of a rich farmer living in his neighborhood, "When I canters my 'erse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears proputt, proputt, proputt." From this characteristic saying he conjectured and portrayed the man. The Lincolnshire dialect, which Tennyson uses so successfully in this poem and in the *Northern Cobbler* and the *Village Wife*, he learned when a boy, by hearing the talk of farm laborers around Somersby and Caistor. Cf. Jean Inge-low's *High Tide*.

*The Daisy*, p. 181.

First published in the *Maud* volume, 1855. This poem, written at Edinburgh in 1853, was addressed to Mrs. Tennyson; it was suggested by the finding of a daisy in a book, the flower having been plucked by her on the Splügen and placed between the leaves of a volume as a memento of their Italian journey in 1851. The reference in the twenty-fourth stanza is to their baby son, Hal-lam (born in 1852). The measure is one of several that Tennyson invented. "He was proud of the metre of 'The Daisy,' which he called a far-off echo of the Horatian Alcaic."

*To the Rev. F. D. Maurice*, p. 182.

Dated January, 1854; first published in 1855 with *Maud*. Addressed to the eminent preacher, F. D. Maurice (1805-72), leader of the Broad Church Party, who concerned himself not only with books but with the practical interests of English workingmen. In his liberal views on religious matters Tennyson had much in common with Maurice.



whose essays and sermons involved him in some fierce controversies. Stanzas 4-7 describe the poet's new home near Freshwater. The eighth stanza touches on the Crimean War.

*Will*, p. 183.

First published with *Maud* in 1855. Man's free-will was one of the fundamentals of Tennyson's creed. See prologue of *In Memoriam* and CXXXI. (p. 522).

*In the Valley of Caunteretz*, p. 183.

First published with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. Written while the poet was travelling in the French Pyrenees in 1861, overcome by reminiscences of other days when he and Arthur Hallam visited this lovely valley together in 1830. The mistake in writing "two and thirty years" seems to have been due to carelessness.

*In the Garden at Swainston*, p. 184.

First published in Cabinet edition of Tennyson's Works, 12 vols., 1874-77. Written at the home of Sir John Simeon, one of the poet's dearest friends, who died in 1870. To Lady Simeon he wrote (June 27, 1870), "I knew none like him for tenderness and generosity, not to mention his other noble qualities, and he was the very Prince of Courtesy." The other two men were Arthur Hallam and Henry Lushington. Cf. the line

"With a love that ever will be"

with the last line of *Vastness* (p. 660).

*The Flower*, p. 184.

First published with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. Described in Tennyson's manuscript notes as "an universal apologue." One interpretation was to the effect that the "seed" was a new metre of Tennyson's, and "the flowers" were the poems of his imitators. He wrote a letter to J. B. Selkirk, saying that this

was not the right explanation of the parable. The poem seems to be a metrical paraphrase of the quotation, "In this world are few voices and many echoes."

*Requiescat*, p. 184.

First published with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. The stanzas recall Wordsworth's verses on "Lucy," written in 1799-1800.

*The Sailor Boy*, p. 184.

First published in *Victoria Regia*, Dec. 25, 1861; reprinted with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. The poem well expresses youthful love of adventurous activity and dislike of indolent ease.

*The Islet*, p. 185.

First published in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. Of the purpose of the poem Luce remarks: "Dwelling apart by ourselves, seeking only our own happiness, may be likened to solitary existence on a beautiful island in the tropics; when the real work of life is suspended, where the only music is the false note of the mocking-bird, and where loathsome diseases lurk in every profusion of loveliness. Like 'The Voyage,' this slighter poem is an occasion for vivid sketches of far-off isle and ocean."

*The City Child*, p. 185.

This and the companion poem (125) were first published in *St. Nicholas* (February, 1880); reprinted in the collected edition of Tennyson's Works, 1886. These "child-songs" and many other lyrics of Tennyson's were set to music by his wife.

*Minnie and Winnie*, p. 186.

First published in *St. Nicholas*, New York (February, 1880). The same magazine for February and March contains Mrs. Tennyson's settings of the two poems.

*The Spiteful Letter*, p. 186.

First published in *Once a Week* (January, 1868); reprinted with alterations in Library edition of Tennyson's Works, 1871-73. The poet wrote: "It is no particular letter that I meant. I have had dozens of them from one quarter or another."

*Literary Squabbles*, p. 186.

First printed with the title *Afterthought* in *Punch*, March 7, 1846; re-published with new title in Library edition, 1872. Throughout his long career Tennyson was free from the petty spites and jealousies of authors. Once, in 1846, he deigned to reply to an attack by Bulwer, but he regretted the unauthorized publication of his satirical verses—*The New Timon and the Poets* (in *Punch*, March 7, 1846), and in this second poem expressed his attitude of indifference and silence.

*The Victim*, p. 186.

First published in *Good Words*, January, 1868; reprinted with the *Holy Grail*, 1869. Privately printed, 1867.

*Wages*, p. 188.

First printed in *Macmillan's Magazine*, February, 1868, and republished in the *Holy Grail* volume, 1869. The poem is an expression of Tennyson's passionate desire for personal immortality. Cf. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, lines 67-72 (p. 642).

*The Higher Pantheism*, p. 188.

First published in the *Holy Grail* volume, 1869. The poem was read at the first meeting of the Metaphysical Society (June 2, 1869). Mrs. Tennyson's journal for 1867 contains this entry (dated Dec. 1st.): "A. is reading Hebrew (*Job* and the *Song of Solomon* and *Genesis*): he talked much about his Hebrew, and about all-pervading Spirit being more understandable by him than solid mat-

ter. He brought down to me his psalm-like poem, 'Higher Pantheism.'" See *Memoir*, I., p. 514 (Reminiscences by Allingham).

*The Voice and the Peak*, p. 188.

First published in Cabinet edition, 1874. According to Luce this poem "is another attempt to find a voice for the ineffable, and to apprehend the infinite." Liue 4 describes a torrent in Val d'Anzasca in the Alps, which Tennyson visited in September, 1873.

*Flower in the crannied wall*, p. 188.

First published in *Holy Grail* volume, 1869. The meaning of these verses, which show Tennyson's interest in philosophical problems, is illustrated by Goethe's lines:—

"Wouldst know the whole? then scan  
the parts; for all  
That moulds the great lies mirrored  
in the small."

Says Leibnitz: "He who should know perfectly one monad would in it know the world, whose mirror it is."

*A Dedication*, p. 189.

First published in *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. A tribute to his wife, who was the presiding genius of the Tennyson household for more than forty years. Edith, in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, is doubtless another name for Lady Tennyson. She is also praised in *June Bracken and Heather* (1892). In his mother and in his wife Tennyson found his high ideal 'of womanhood realized.

*Boädicea*, p. 190.

First published with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. An experiment in a new metrical form, "an echo of the metre in the 'Atys' of Catullus," written in 1859. The poet "wanted some one to annotate it musically so that people could understand the rhythm." Queen Boädicea

(d. 62 A.D.) headed an unsuccessful revolt against the Romans in Britain.

*Hexameters and Pentameters,*  
p. 192.

First printed in *Cornhill Magazine*, December, 1863, but not republished in 1864 with the following experiments in classic metres (136 and 137); restored in collected editions of later years. Cf. Arnold's *Lectures on Translating Homer*.

*Milton*, p. 192.

Printed in the *Cornhill* (December, 1863), and later in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. See notes of Tennyson's talk on *Paradise Lost*, in *Memoir*, II., pp. 518-23.

*Hendecasyllabics*, p. 192.

Printed in the *Cornhill* (December, 1863), and later in the *Enoch Arden* volume, 1864. A skilful handling of "the dainty metre" of Catullus in English. Tennyson expressed his appreciation of the graceful Roman singer in *Frater Ave atque Vale* (p. 636).

*Specimen of Translation of  
Homer's Iliad*, p. 192.

Printed in the *Cornhill* (December, 1863), and later with *Enoch Arden*, 1864. An admirable rendering of this oft-quoted passage. "He's a wonderful man for dovetailing words together," said Carlyle of Tennyson, whom he begged to translate Sophocles.

*The Window*, p. 193.

Privately printed in 1867, and published with alterations in 1870; afterward republished in collected editions of Tennyson's Works. The *Window Songs* call for no special comment. A phrase in the preliminary note (dated December, 1870) needs explanation. Mrs. Tennyson writes in her journal for No-

vember 4: "A. did not like publishing songs that were so trivial at such a grave crisis of affairs in Europe," because of the Franco-Prussian War; hence the words — "in the dark shadow of these days."

*Idylls of the King*, p. 197.

About the time of the publication of *The Holy Grail* (1869) Tennyson said: "At twenty-four I meant to write an epic of a drama of King Arthur; and I thought that I should take twenty years about the work. Now they will say I have been forty years about it." The *Morte d'Arthur* of the 1842 volumes was a fragment of the proposed epic. The earliest of his published Arthurian poems was *The Lady of Shalott* (1832), described as "another version of the story of Lancelot and Elaine."

Tennyson was familiar with the history of Arthur through the books of Geoffrey and Malory. He seems to have got some details from Ellis's *Metrical Romances*. He made no exhaustive study of the sources of the Arthur legend. Had he read the tales in the Old French of Chrestien de Troyes, the Thornton *Morte Arthure*, *Sir Gawayne*, and other Middle-English romances, he would have formed a different conception of "the blameless king," of Gawain, and other knights of the Table Round. Besides the old chronicles and romances, he found more or less material in Celtic myths and traditions, especially the stories of the *Mabinogion*, translated by Charlotte Guest. He depended for much upon his own imagination. Says Hutton: "In taking his subject from the great mediæval myth of English chivalry, it was of course open to Mr. Tennyson to adopt any treatment of it which would really incorporate the higher and grander aspects of the theme, and also find an ideal unity for a number of legends in which of unity there was none."

For many years not much progress was made in the composition of Tenny-

son's epic, probably because of Hallam's death and other circumstances. After *Maud* was off his hands, he resumed work on the subject that had haunted him and wrote *Vivien* and *Enid* in 1856. In the summer of 1857 these two idylls were privately printed, with the title: *Enid and Nimuë; or, The True and the False*. It is said that of the six original copies only one is now in existence, that in the British Museum. There is an interesting record in Mrs. Tennyson's journal of this year: "A. has brought me as a birthday present the first two lines that he has made of 'Guinevere,' which might be the nucleus of a great poem. Arthur is parting from Guinevere, and says:—

"But hither shall I never come again,  
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more;  
Farewell!"

In the winter of 1858 *Guinevere* was completed. Then *Elaine* was written, and in 1859 these four Arthurian stories appeared with the title: *Idylls of the King*. They were arranged in this order: *Enid, Vivien, Elaine, Guinevere*.

Then preparation for other idylls was begun, but the undertaking was interrupted for several years. The poet was urged to write on the Sangreal, but was not "in the mood for it." In 1868 *The Holy Grail* was written; it "came suddenly as if by a breath of inspiration." Others followed, and in 1869 another instalment of four idylls was published: *The Holy Grail, The Coming of Arthur, Pelleas and Ettarre, and The Passing of Arthur*. Afterward *The Last Tournament* was printed in the *Contemporary Review* (December, 1871) and republished in 1872 with *Gareth and Lynette*. A little later *Balin and Balan* was written, though not published until 1885 in the *Tiresias* volume.

Of the innumerable changes in the text, Professor Jones has made thorough study in his *Growth of the Idylls of the King*, 1895. The poet's last correction

was made in 1891, when he inserted the line—

"Ideal manhood closed in real man" —

in the Epilogue after the line—

"New-old, and shadowing Sense at war  
with Soul."

The most important addition, lines 6-146 of *Merlin and Vivien*, appeared first in 1874, with a few variations from the present reading. In 1888 *Geraint and Enid* was divided into two idylls, with the titles: *The Marriage of Geraint and Geraint and Enid*. The later editions of *Idylls of the King* have ten tales in the Round Table, or "twelve books," including the introductory and closing idylls.

#### *The Princess*, p. 381.

While at Eastbourne, in the summer of 1845, Tennyson was engaged on *The Princess*, but the poem was mostly written in London. *Come down, O maid* (p. 435), was composed among the Alps in 1846, and was "descriptive of the waste Alpine heights and gorges, and of the sweet, rich valleys below." The poet told Aubrey de Vere that the *Bugle Song* (p. 404) was written at Kilarney, and *O Swallow, Swallow* (p. 406) was first composed in rhyme. Concerning one of his most characteristic and successful strains, that wonderful "blank-verse lyric" — *Tears, idle tears* (p. 405), he said: "The passion of the past, the abiding in the transient, was expressed in 'Tears, idle tears,' which was written in the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories." In the manuscript the first line originally stood:—

"Ah foolish tears, I know not what they mean."

The hand of the artist made a happy change to "Tears, idle tears."

Possibly the first hint of the plot was suggested by Johnson's *Rasselas*, Chap.

XLIX. However, the main structure of the poem was essentially original with Tennyson. Collins pointed out a number of phrases and similes that sound like echoes of older singers. Dawson calls the *Princess* "a transfusion of the Greek spirit into modern life."

The first edition of *The Princess* was a very different poem from that of 1853, which has remained unchanged. The dedication to Henry Lushington,<sup>1</sup> in the second edition, was dated January, 1848; but few alterations were made in the text of the poem. A number of additions and omissions were made in the third edition (1850); the intercalary songs were inserted, and the Prologue and conclusion were revised. In the fourth edition (1851) "the passages relating to the weird seizures of the Prince" were inserted. The fifth edition (1853) contains many new readings, also lines 35-49 of the Prologue; this is the final text of the poem.

*Maud*, p. 440.

The nameless stanzas, *O that 'twere possible*, written in 1834 and printed in the *Tribute* (1837), later became the foundation of *Maud*. As the poet wrote: "Sir John Simeon years after begged me to weave a story round this poem and so 'Maud' came into being." It was thus written backward, the work being chiefly done in 1854 and 1855. In the early proofs of the poem the title was *Maud; or the Madness*. The laureate remarked, "This poem is a little 'Hamlet.'" The lyrics in it which he liked best were: *I have led her home; Courage, poor heart of stone; and O that 'twere possible*. He was vexed at the hostile reception of the poem on the part of the critics, and was grateful for the defence of Dr. Mann and for the fine commentary of Brinley. With the proceeds of the sale of *Maud* he bought

<sup>1</sup> Park House, home of the Lushingtons, near Maldstone, is Vivian Place (referred to in the Prologue).

(1856) Farringford, which had been leased in 1853.<sup>1</sup>

The second edition of *Maud* (1856) contained "considerable additions, extending to some ten pages." The poem was afterward divided into two parts, and ultimately into three parts. Of section IV. (pp. 457-59), contributed to the *Tribute*, Luce remarks: "The stanzas, as they originally appeared, formed a poem of strange and pathetic beauty. A portion of them, with certain alterations, now constitute the fourth section of the second part of 'Maud.'"

*Enoch Arden*, p. 463.

First published in 1864 in the volume entitled *Idylls of the Hearth*. The poem was first called the *Old Fisherman*. It was written in the summer of 1862, and occupied him only about two weeks when once started, though he had brooded on the subject a long while. Tennyson got the incident from the sculptor Thomas Woolner. Similar stories had been told in Suffolk, Brittany, and other places. Here was a theme well suited to his powers, one that took him into a different world from that of the Arthurian idylls. He was so much at home in the society of humble fisher-folk that

<sup>1</sup> A writer in *Good Words* (October, 1892) refers to the beautiful word-pictures in *Maud* of the sea and sky as observed at Farringford in the Isle of Wight: "If one would wish to see the influence which the island has had on the great minstrel, let him read 'Maud,' where its magic has been most profusely translated into speech. . . . Here, too, surely is the 'little grove' where he sits while

'A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime;'

and here in a gap of the trees one catches a gleam of white, where

'The far-off eall is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,  
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,  
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land.'

he fairly won the title bestowed upon him, "The poet of the people."

Tennyson's treatment of the subject is considerably different from that of Adelaide Procter's *Homeward Bound*, first published in her *Legends and Lyrics* (1858). A few passages in *Enoch Arden* bear a striking resemblance to certain stanzas of Miss Procter's touching poem, which is the brief narrative of a seaman wrecked on the Barbary coast and kept in bondage ten long years in Algiers, who is freed and returns to his old English home to find his wife married to his "ancient comrade."

He took pains to be accurate in depicting the ways of fishermen and in matters of local color. Mrs. Tennyson wrote to Edward Fitzgerald, asking a number of fishing questions for Alfred's benefit. In his diary the poet speaks of meeting the eminent botanist, Joseph Hooker, "who told me my tropical island (in 'Enoch') was all right; but X—in his illustrations has made it all wrong, putting a herd of antelopes upon it, which never occur in Polynesia."

When the poet and his son were cruising around the coast of Wales in the summer of 1887, they "landed at Clovelly, and he thought it one of the most beautiful places he had seen. It reminded him of Enoch Arden's village, although 'Long lines of cliff breaking had left a chasm' was not true of Clovelly; he did not think of any particular village when writing the poem."

On the coast of Cornwall is sometimes heard that strange atmospherical phenomenon, "the calling of the sea" (mentioned in the closing lines of *Enoch Arden*). "A murmuring or a roaring noise, proceeding from the shore, is sometimes heard at the distance of several miles inland, whereas at other times, although the atmosphere may appear equally favorable for transmitting sounds, no sound whatever from

the shore can be heard at the twentieth part of that distance." (Edmunds, *Land's End District*, 1862, p. 142.)

*In Memoriam*, p. 480.

The few lines "which proved to be the germ of 'In Memoriam'" were written late in the year 1833, a few months after the death of Arthur Henry Hallam.<sup>1</sup> Sections IX., XXX., XXXI., LXXXV and XXVIII. were evidently jotted down in December of this year. These manuscript poems circulated among Tennyson's friends and were much admired.

Professor Edmund Lushington (the "true in word and tried in deed" of LXXXV.), who was with the Tennysons at Boxley during the holidays of 1841, writes that "the number of memorial poems had rapidly increased" in the autumn of that year. In the summer of 1845 he visited the poet, who showed him the epithalamium celebrating the marriage of the professor and Cecilia Tennyson in 1842 (pp. 522-23).

In November, 1845, Tennyson wrote to Moxon, his publisher: "I want you to get me a book which I see advertised in the *Examiner*; it seems to contain many speculations with which I have been familiar for years, and on which I have written more than one poem. The book is called 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation.'" Commenting on this passage, the son says (Vol. I., p. 223) that the evolutionary sections of *In Memoriam*, referred to here by the poet, had been written years before Chambers' book was published in 1844. Possibly the sections meant are LIV.-LVI. (pp. 496-7), and CXVIII. (p. 519).

In 1891 the poet explained the allusions in the first stanza of I.,

"I held it truth, with him who sings

To one clear harp with divers tones,"

as referring to Goethe, whom he "placed

<sup>1</sup> *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* by his son, 1897, Vol. I., p. 107.

foremost among the moderns as a lyrical poet," because "consummate in so many different styles." The sentiment in the oft-quoted lines,

"That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things,"

occurs in the *West-Easterly Divan*,

"Die to the old; live to the new;  
Grow strong with each to-morrow,"

and in other works of Goethe's.

It was not until 1848 that Tennyson made up his mind to print the *Elegies*, as he called the cantos of *In Memoriam*. He thought of entitling the new poem *Fragments of an Elegy*, and sometimes called it *The Way of the Soul*. Three sections (printed in the *Memoir*, I., pp. 306-7) were omitted as redundant. LIX. was inserted in 1851, and XXXIX. in 1869 (in the Pocket-Volume edition of Tennyson's Works).

The first Christmas Eve, mentioned in XXVIII., was December 25, 1833; the second (in LXXVIII.) in 1834, and the one referred to in CV. was in 1837. The date of CVI., *Ring out, wild bells*, is likely about December 31, 1837; and CXV. probably describes the spring of 1838. XCVIII. was suggested by the wedding-trip of Charles Tennyson Turner in the summer of 1836; this much-loved brother is the "noble heart" of LXXIX. The anniversary of Hallam's death (September 15, 1833) is spoken of in LXXII. and XCIX., and his birthday is remembered in CVII. (February 1, 1838). The dates of some other sections may be conjectured, but not with certainty. As to the metre of *In Memoriam*, the poet supposed himself to be the originator of it.

*The Lover's Tale*, p. 525.

A fragment of this work was printed in 1832 (dated 1833), and a few copies were distributed among Tennyson's friends before it was suppressed. In 1869 the poem (revised) was again sent

to press, and for some reason it was withdrawn from publication for ten years. In 1879 the three parts, with a reprint of *The Golden Supper* (published in 1869) as a fourth part, appeared in a small volume. This boyish production contains many quotable passages, some of them similar to lines in his later works, as "A morning air, sweet after rain," suggesting "Sweet after showers, ambrosial air" (*In Memoriam*, LXXXVI.). The closing lines of I. recall Byron's poem, *Written beneath a Picture*, "'Tis said with Sorrow Time can cope," etc.

*The First Quarrel*, p. 552.

The book of ballads, of which this is the first, appeared in 1880, addressed to the poet's first grandson (b. 1878). *The First Quarrel* was founded on a true story, told to him by Dr. Dabbs of the Isle of Wight. "A dreary tragic tale," Carlyle called it.

*Rizpah*, p. 554.

Of this powerful poem, which is based on fact, Swinburne remarks: "Never since the very beginning of all poetry were the twin passions of terror and pity more divinely done into deathless words or set to more perfect and profound magnificence of music." (*Miscellanies*, 1886, p. 219). This dramatic monologue reveals the very life of the rough times and people of the eighteenth century.

*The Northern Cobbler*, p. 557.

This characteristic dialect poem is founded on an incident that the poet "heard in early youth. A man set up a bottle of gin in his window when he gave up drinking, in order to defy the drink."

*The Revenge*, p. 559.

The first line of *The Revenge* lay on Tennyson's desk for years, then "he

finished the hallad at last all at once in a day or two." He read up about Grenville in old histories and steeped himself in the spirit of the time and of the valiant seamen whose heroic deeds he celebrated in ringing verse. The poem appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1878; reprinted in *Ballads, and Other Poems*, 1880.

*The Sisters*, p. 562.

The plot of this narrative-poem is partly founded on a story that the poet had heard. Cf. the lines which "he would quote as his own belief,"

"My God, I would not live  
Save that I think this gross hard-seem-  
ing world  
Is our misshaping vision of the Powers  
Behind the world, that make our griefs  
our gains,"

with the parallel passage in *In Memoriam*, LVI., stanza 7 (p. 497). See also *The Ancient Sage*, "And we the poor earth's dying race," etc. The songs of Evelyn and Edith recall the songs in Shelley's *Prometheus*.

*The Village Wife*, p. 567.

"Among his Lincolnshire poems," says his son, "'The Village Wife' is the only one that is in any way a portrait. The rest of them are purely imaginative."

*In the Children's Hospital*, p. 570.

This poem was based on a true story told to Tennyson by Miss Gladstone. He says: "The doctors and hospital are unknown to me. The two children are the only characters, in this little dramatic poem, taken from life."

*Dedicatory Poem to the Princess Alice*, p. 572.

First published in the *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1879. The Princess

Alice (1843-78) was "the best loved of all the Queen's children."

*The Defence of Lucknow*, p. 573.

First printed with *Dedicatory Poem* (183) in the *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1879. Professor Jowett suggested to Tennyson that recent English history in India offered material for poetry, and this hallad, celebrating an incident of the mutiny of 1857, was the result.

*Sir John Oldcastle*, p. 575.

Lord Cobham; a prominent leader of the English Lollards, was put to death (1417) for alleged treason and heresy.

*The Voyage of Maeldune*, p. 583.

In writing this poem Tennyson utilized an old Irish story translated in Joyce's *Celtic Romances*, but most of the details were his own. Says Collins: "He has dealt with it in the same way as he has dealt with Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in such idylls as *The Coming of Arthur*, deriving from his original little more than the framework of his poem."

*De Profundis*, p. 587.

Published in the *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1880; reprinted in *Ballads and Other Poems*, 1880. A brief but forceful statement of Tennyson's mystical philosophy.

*Prefatory Sonnet*, p. 588.

First published in the *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1877. This sonnet is an expression of Tennyson's characteristic attitude toward doubt, and of his open-minded search for truth.

*To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield*, p. 588.

Published in the *Memoir of Brookfield*, 1875. William Henry Brookfield (1809-74), one of the poet's intimate friends at Cambridge, was a noted preacher and educator.



*Montenegro*, p. 588.

First published in the *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1877. This fine sonnet, like that on Poland, written in his youth, shows Tennyson's interest in the cause of freedom.

To *Victor Hugo*, p. 589.

First printed in the *Nineteenth Century*, June, 1877.

*Achilles over the Trench*, p. 591.

This blank-verse translation of a spirited passage of the *Iliad* appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*, August, 1877.

To *E. Fitzgerald*, p. 593.

The prefatory lines of *Tiresias*, and *Other Poems*, 1885, were addressed to the poet's lifelong friend, the scholarly translator of the *Rubáiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Edward Fitzgerald died in 1883, before the poem was published, and his death called forth the passionate cry for immortality in the closing lines of the poem (p. 597). *Tiresias*, the blind Theban seer, who lived before Homer's time, is celebrated in Greek legend.

*Despair*, p. 601.

Published in *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1881; reprinted in the *Tiresias* volume, 1885. The poem is a protest at once against extreme Calvinism and Atheism.

*The Ancient Sage*, p. 605.

The introspective poet of *The Two Voices* has grown to fuller intellectual stature in *The Ancient Sage*, which contains a number of personal touches. According to the poet himself, "The Ancient Sage" is not the philosophy of the Chinese philosopher, Laot-ze, but it was written after reading his life and maxims." Says Tyndall, "The poem is, throughout, a discussion between a

believer in immortality and one who is unable to believe." The point of view is that of intuitional idealism. Cf. the passage describing the state of trance-consciousness:—

"for more than once when I  
Sat all alone," etc.,

with *In Memoriam*, XCV., stanzas 9-12. The poet finds the remedy for scepticism in well-doing, beneficent activity dulling the edge of doubt.

*Balin and Balan*, p. 619.

A prose-sketch of this idyll, dictated to James Knowles, appeared in *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1893. The purpose of the poem seems to be to show the gradual development of the powers of evil at Arthur's court, working ill and bringing the king's fair hopes to ruin. The time is the eighth year of Arthur's reign of twelve years.

*Prologue to General Hamley*, p. 630.

In the opening lines of this poem Tennyson pictures Aldworth, his summer home on Blackdown Heath, in Sussex. Says Church, "The prospect from the terrace of the house is one of the finest to be found in the south of England."

*The Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava*, p. 631.

First published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1882; reprinted with *Tiresias* in 1885.

To *Virgil*, p. 633.

First published in the *Nineteenth Century*, September, 1882; reprinted with *Tiresias*, 1885. There is an excellent chapter in Collins's *Illustrations of Tennyson* comparing Tennyson and Virgil. The two bards have much in common.

*Early Spring*, p. 635.

First published in the *Youth's Com*

panion, 1884; reprinted with *Tiresias*, 1885.

*Prefatory Poem to my Brother's Sonnets*, p. 636.

First printed in *Collected Sonnets, Old and New*, by C. T. Turner, 1884. A touching tribute to this brother, who was for many years vicar of Grasby.

"*Frater Ave atque Vale*," p. 636.

First published in the *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1883. These lines on Catullus were composed while the poet and his son were visiting Italy in 1880. They passed a delightful day, exploring the groves and ruins of Sirmio, the home of the graceful Roman singer, which recalled to memory that plaintive strain: *Accipe fraterno multum manantia fletu, Atque in perpetuum, frater, ave atque vale!*

*Helen's Tower*, p. 637.

Lines written for Lord Dufferin in 1861, and afterward printed in *Good Words*, 1884.

*Hands all round*, p. 637.

Contributed to the *Examiner*, February 7, 1852.

*Freedom*, p. 638.

Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, December, 1884, also in the *New York Independent* for 1884; reprinted with *Tiresias*, 1885.

*Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, p. 640.

Published in 1886, with several short poems and *The Promise of May*. Says H. S. Salt: "In politics, Lord Tennyson's principles are distinctly reactionary; the best that can be said of them is that, having begun as a sham Liberal, he at least ended as a real and undisguised Tory." (*Tennyson as a Thinker*,

1893, p. 28.) There is some foundation for this criticism. As Wilson remarks, "The eager impulse to advance is lost within a growing gloom, as the wise old poet contemplates a nation fallen on evil days." (*'Tis Sixty Years Since*, 1894, p. 26.) Other eminent Englishmen shared this distrust of Liberalism. On the other hand, many public men of England welcomed the change to self-government on the part of the masses of the workingmen, who were given the ballot in 1885.

*The Fleet*, p. 648.

Contributed to the *London Times*, April 23, 1885. The verses are in keeping with other utterances of Tennyson's, by which he is rightly called the "poet of imperialism."

*To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava*, p. 649.

Published in *Demeter, and Other Poems*, 1889. These stanzas, in the metre of *In Memoriam*, were addressed to the Marquis of Dufferin in appreciation of his kindnesses to Lionel Tennyson, the poet's youngest son, who died of jungle-fever contracted in India in 1886.

*On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria*, p. 650.

Published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1887; reprinted in the *Demeter* volume, 1889. Written to celebrate the fiftieth year of the Queen's reign.

*Demeter and Persephone*, p. 652.

First published in 1889. In dealing with this old classic legend, Tennyson fully equalled the beautiful antique poems of his early years.

*Vastness*, p. 658.

First published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, November, 1885; reprinted in the

*Demeter* volume, 1889. A poem that repeats the lyrical triumphs of Tennyson's palmiest days.

*The Ring*, p. 660.

First published in 1889. To an American, J. R. Lowell, the poet was indebted for the strange tale related in this dramatic sketch, which recalls the story of *The Sisters* (p. 562). The poem shows the drift of his thinking on mystical subjects.

*To Ulysses*, p. 675.

First published in 1889. Addressed to William Gifford Palgrave (1826-88), a well-known missionary and diplomatist, who lived many years in the East.

*The Progress of Spring*, p. 677.

Of this poem Waugh writes: "It must have been about the time of leaving Somersby that Alfred Tennyson wrote the 'Progress of Spring,' a poem laid aside and forgotten by the writer, till it turned up again in 1888, to be printed in the 'Demeter' volume in the following year." (*Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, 1893, pp. 74, 75.)

*Merlin and The Gleam*, p. 679.

The poem is an allegory, containing in brief the poet's literary biography. His son says, "From his boyhood he had felt the magic of Merlin—that spirit of poetry—which bade him know his power and follow throughout his work a pure and high ideal."

*Romney's Remorse*, p. 681.

The poem is based on some episodes in the domestic life of the renowned English painter, George Romney (1734-1802). After his marriage to Mary Abbott at Kendal (1756), he was separated from her nearly all his life (except the last two years).

In old age the poet found intense de-

light in playing with his grandchildren; and when eighty "wrote the lullaby in 'Romney's Remorse,' partly for his little grandson Lionel."

*By an Evolutionist*, p. 685.

This poem and *Parnassus*, as well as other pieces (published in 1892), indicate Tennyson's partial acceptance of the evolutionary theory. See closing stanzas of *In Memoriam* and *Maud*, Pt. I., IV., stanzas 4 and 6.

*The Throstle*, p. 687.

Published in the *New Review*, October, 1889; also printed in a number of American newspapers the same year.

*Crossing the Bar*, p. 687.

Of this beautiful hymn, that has sung its way into the hearts of thousands, a fine interpretation is given by R. S. Herries in the *London Times* (Oct. 31, 1892): "The goal to which the poet wishes to attain is obviously the open sea of Eternal Life after crossing the bar of Death. The poet embarks at night, the night of death, following on the day of life on earth. During the darkness the poet sleeps, while the Pilot, as yet unseen by him, watches over the safety of the ship and conducts it safely across the bar." Cf. *In Memoriam*, CXXXI., st. 3; also epilogue, st. 31.









