









B No. 268



**T**HE **D**OEMS

OF

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.



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*TO.*

LAUNT THOMPSON,

SCULPTOR.



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JUDITH.









## PROLOGUE.

TO LILIAN.

**G**OD fashioned Man from out the common  
earth,

But not from earth the Woman : so does she,  
Even when fallen, ever bear with her  
Some sign of Heaven, some mystic starry light.  
Most gentle is she in all gentle deeds,  
In all sweet offices of fireside-life ;  
A touch to cool the fevered brow of pain,  
A voice to ease the heavy heart of care :  
Most holy is she, since child Jesus drew  
Life from the sacred circles of her breast.  
Nor this alone, for, grappling with her fate  
In ancient days, she buckled armor on,  
And graspt the sword and sprung the battle-bolt,  
And wore the Martyr's scarlet shroud of flame.  
Of fair heroic women not the least

Was she of Bethulîa, whose lithe hand  
Forgot its native tenderness, and smote  
The Assyrian despot on his conquered throne,  
Whereby she blest the land forevermore  
And won the love of Israel and the Lord.  
To this uncrownèd queen of elder time  
Belong the art and passion of my song ;  
And unto thee the song itself, since thou  
Hast taught me reverence for all womankind.





# JUDITH.

## I.

### JUDITH IN THE TOWER.

**N**OW Holofernes with his barbarous hordes,  
The scum of twenty servile sovereignties,  
Cross the Euphrates, laying waste the  
land

To Esdraelon, and, falling on the town  
Of Bethulia, stormed it night and day  
Incessant, till within the leaguered walls  
The boldest captains faltered ; for at length  
The wells gave out, and then the barley failed,  
And Famine, like a murderer masked and cloaked,  
Stole in among the garrison. The air  
Was filled with lamentation, women's moans

And cries of children : and at night there came  
A fever, parching as a fierce simoom.  
Yet Holofernes could not batter down  
The brazen gates, nor make a single breach  
With beam or catapult in those tough walls :  
And white with rage among the tents he strode,  
Among the squalid Tartar tents he strode  
And curst the gods that gave him not his will,  
And curst his captains, curst himself, and all ;  
Then, seeing in what strait the city was,  
Withdrew his men hard by the fated town  
Amid the hills, and with a grim-set smile  
Waited, aloof, until the place should fall.  
All day the house-tops lay in sweltering heat ;  
All night the watch-fires flared upon the towers ;  
And day and night with Israelitish spears  
The bastions bristled.

In a tall square Tower,  
Full-fronting on the vile Assyrian camp,  
Sat Judith, pallid as the cloudy moon  
That hung half-faded in the dreary sky ;  
And ever and anon she turned her eyes  
To where, between two vapor-haunted hills,

The dreadful army like a caldron seethed.  
She heard, far off, the camels' gurgling groan,  
The clank of arms, the stir and buzz of camps ;  
Beheld the camp-fires, flaming fiends of night  
That leapt, and with red hands clutched at the  
dark ;

And now and then, as some mailed warrior stalked  
Athwart the fires, she saw his armor gleam.  
Beneath her stretched the temples and the tombs,  
The city sickening of its own thick breath,  
And over all the sleepless Pleiades.

A star-like face, with floating clouds of hair —  
Merari's daughter, dead Manasses' wife,  
Who (since the barley-harvest when he died),  
By holy charities, and prayers, and fasts,  
Walked with the angels in her widow's weeds,  
And kept her pure in honor of the dead.  
But dearer to her bosom than the dead  
Was Israel, its Prophets and its God :  
And that dread midnight, in the Tower alone,  
Believing He would hear her from afar,  
She lifted up the voices of her soul  
Above the wrangling voices of the world :

‘O are we not Thy children who of old  
Trode the Chaldean idols in the dust,  
And in Mesopotamia worshipped Thee ?

‘Didst Thou not lead us unto Canaan  
For love of us, because we spurned the gods ?  
Didst Thou not bless us that we worshipped Thee ?

‘And when a famine covered all the land,  
And drove us unto Egypt, where the King  
Did persecute Thy chosen to the death, —

‘Didst Thou not smite the swart Egyptians  
then,  
And guide us through the bowels of the deep  
That swallowed up their horsemen and their King ?

‘For saw we not, as in a wondrous dream,  
The up-tost javelins, the plunging steeds,  
The chariots sinking in the wild Red Sea ?

‘O Lord, Thou hast been with us in our woe,  
And from Thy bosom Thou hast cast us forth,  
And to Thy bosom taken us again :

‘ For we have built our temples in the hills  
By Sinai, and on Jordan’s flowery banks,  
And in Jerusalem we worship Thee.

‘ O Lord, look down and help us. Stretch Thy  
hand  
And free Thy people. Make us pure in faith,  
And draw us nearer, nearer unto Thee.’

As when a harp-string trembles at a touch,  
And music runs through all its quivering length,  
And does not die, but seems to float away,  
A silvery mist uprising from the string :  
So Judith’s prayer rose tremulous in the night,  
And floated upward unto other spheres ;  
And Judith loosed the hair about her brows,  
And bent her head, and wept for Israel.

Now while she wept, bowed like a lotus-flower  
That watches its own shadow in the Nile,  
A stillness seemed to fall upon the land,  
As if from out the calyx of a cloud,  
That blossomed suddenly ’twixt the earth and  
moon,

It fell, — and presently there came a sound  
Of many pinions rustling in the dark,  
And voices mingling, far and near, and strange  
As sea-sounds on some melancholy coast  
When first the equinox unchains the Storm.  
Whereat she started, and with one quick hand  
Brushed back the plenteous tresses from a cheek  
That whitened like a lily, and so stood,  
Nor breathed, nor moved, but listened with her  
soul ;

And at her side, invisible, there leaned  
An Angel mantled in his folded wings, —  
To her invisible, but other eyes  
Beheld the saintly countenance ; for, lo !  
Great clouds of spirits swoopt about the Tower  
And drifted in the eddies of the wind.

The Angel stoopt, and from his radiant brow,  
And from the gleaming amaranth in his hair,  
A splendor fell on Judith, and she grew,  
From her black tresses to her archèd feet,  
Fairer than morning in Arabia.

Then silently the Presence spread his vans,  
And rose, — a luminous shadow in the air, —  
And through the zodiac, a white star, shot.



As one that wakens from a trance, she turned,  
And heard the twilight twitterings of birds,  
The wind i' the turret, and from far below  
Camp-sounds of pawing hoof and clinking steel ;  
And in the East she saw the early dawn  
Breaking the Night's enchantment,—saw the Moon,  
Like some wan sorceress, vanish in mid-heaven,  
Leaving a moth-like glimmer where she died.

Now from the dewy lowlands floated up  
Loose folds of mist that caught at every crag  
And melted in the sunlight ; then the Morn  
Stood full and perfect on the jasper hills.  
And Judith rose, and down the spiral stairs  
Descended to the garden of the Tower,  
Where, at the gate, lounged Achior, lately fled  
From Holofernes ; as she past she spoke :  
' The Lord be with thee, Achior, all thy days.'  
And Achior saw the Spirit of the Lord  
Had been with her, and, in a single night,  
Worked such a miracle of form and face  
As left her lovelier than all womankind  
Who was before the fairest in Judæa.  
But she, unconscious of God's miracle,

Moved swiftly on among a frozen group  
Of statues that with empty, slim-necked urns  
Taunted the thirsty Seneschal, until  
She came to where, beneath the spreading palms,  
Sat Chabris with Ozias and his friend  
Charmis, governors of the leaguered town.  
They saw a glory shining on her face  
Like daybreak, and they marvelled as she stood  
Bending before them with humility.  
And wrinkled Charmis murmured through his  
beard :

‘ This woman walketh in the smile of God.’

‘ So walk we all,’ spoke Judith. ‘ Evermore  
His light envelops us, and only those  
Who turn aside their faces droop and die  
In utter midnight. If we faint we die.  
O, is it true, Ozias, thou hast sworn  
To yield our people to their enemies  
After five days, unless the Lord shall stoop  
From heaven to help us ?’

And Ozias said :

‘ Our young men die upon the battlements ;

Our wives and children by the empty tanks  
Lie down and perish.'

'If we faint we die.

The weak heart builds its palace on the sand,  
The flood-tide eats the palace of a fool :  
But whoso trusts in God, as Jacob did,  
Though suffering greatly even to the end,  
Dwells in a citadel upon a rock  
That wind nor wave nor fire shall topple down.'

'Our young men die upon the battlements,'  
Answered Ozias ; 'by the dusty wells  
Our wives and children.'

'They shall go and dwell  
With Seers and Prophets in eternal joy !  
Is there no God ?'

'One only,' Chabris spoke,  
'But now His face is darkened in a cloud.  
He sees not Israel.'

'Is His mercy less  
Than Holofernes ' ? Shall we place our faith

In this fierce bull of Assur, — are we mad  
That we so tear our throats with our own hands ?  
And Judith's eyes flashed battle on the three,  
Though all the woman quivered at her lip  
Struggling with tears.

‘In God we place our trust,’  
Said old Ozias, ‘yet for five days more.’

‘Ah! His time is not man's time,’ Judith cried,  
‘And why should we, the dust about His feet,  
Decide the hour of our deliverance,  
Saying to Him, *Thus shalt Thou do, and so?*’

Then gray Ozias bowed his head, abashed  
That eighty winters had not made him wise,  
For all the drifted snow of his long beard :  
‘This woman speaketh wisely. We were wrong  
That in our anguish mocked the Lord our God,  
The staff, the scrip, the stream whereat we drink.’  
And then to Judith: ‘Child, what wouldst thou  
have?’

‘I know and know not. Something I know not  
Makes music in my bosom; as I move  
A presence goes before me, and I hear

New voices mingling in the upper air ;  
Within my hand there seems another hand  
Close-prest, that leads me to yon dreadful camp ;  
While in my brain the fragments of a dream  
Lie like a broken string of diamonds,  
The choicest missing. Ask no more. I know  
And know not. . . . See ! the very air is white  
With fingers pointing. Where they point I go :  
Some Spirit drags me thither, and I go.'

She spoke and paused : the three old men  
looked up

And saw a sudden motion in the air  
Of white hands waving : and they dared not speak,  
But muffled their thin faces in their robes,  
And sat like those grim statues which the wind  
Near some unpeopled city in the East  
From foot to forehead wraps in desert dust.

'Ere thrice the shadow of the temple slants  
Across the fountain, I shall come again.'  
Thus Judith softly : then a gleam of light  
Played through the silken lashes of her eyes,  
As lightning through the purple of a cloud

On some still tropic evening, when the breeze  
Lifts not a single blossom from the bough :  
'What lies in that unfolded flower of time  
No man may know. The thing I can I will,  
Leaning on God, remembering how He loved  
Jacob in Syria when he fed the flocks  
Of Laban, and what miracles He did  
For Abraham and for Isaac at their need.  
Wait thou the end ; and, till I come, keep thou  
The sanctuaries.'

And Ozias swore  
By those weird fingers pointing in the air,  
And by the soul of Abraham gone to rest,  
To keep the sanctuaries, though she came  
And found the bat sole tenant of the Tower,  
And all the people bleaching on the walls,  
And no voice left. Then Judith moved away,  
Her head bowed on her bosom, like to one  
That moulds some subtle purpose in a dream,  
And in his passion rises up and walks  
Through labyrinths of slumber to the dawn.

When she had gained her chamber she threw off  
The livery of sorrow for her lord,

The cruel sackcloth that begirt her limbs,  
And from those ashen colors issuing forth,  
Seemed like a golden butterfly new-slipt  
From its dull chrysalis. Then, after bath,  
She braided in the darkness of her hair  
A thread of opals ; on her rounded breast  
Spilt precious ointment ; and put on the robes  
Whose rustling made her pause, half-garmented,  
To dream a moment of her bridal morn.  
Of snow-white samyte were the robes, and rich  
With delicate branch-work, silver-frosted star,  
And many a broidered lily-of-the-vale.  
These things became her as the scent the rose,  
For fairest things are beauty's natural dower.  
The sun that through the jealous casement stole  
Fawned on the Hebrew woman as she stood,  
Toyed with the oval pendant at her ear,  
And, like a lover, stealing to her lips  
Taught them a deeper crimson ; then slipt down  
The tremulous lilies to the sandal straps  
That bound her snowy ankles.

Forth she went,  
A glittering wonder, through the crowded streets,

Her handmaid, like a shadow, following on.  
And as in summer when the beaded wheat  
Leans all one way, and with a longing look  
Marks the quick convolutions of the wind :  
So all eyes went with Judith as she moved,  
All hearts leaned to her with a weight of love.  
A starving woman lifted ghostly hands  
And blest her for old charities ; a child  
Smiled on her through its tears, and one gaunt chief  
Threw down his battle-axe and doffed his helm,  
As if some bright Immortal swept him by.

So forth she fared, the only thing of light  
In that dark city, thridding tortuous ways  
By gloomy arch and frowning barbican,  
Until she reached a gate of triple brass  
That opened at her coming, and swung to  
With horrid clangor and a ring of bolts.  
And there, outside the city of her love,  
The warm blood at her pulses, Judith paused  
And drank the morning ; then with silent prayers  
Moved on through flakes of sunlight, through the  
wood  
To Holofernes and his barbarous hordes.



## II.

## THE CAMP OF ASSUR.

AS on the house-tops of a seaport town,  
After a storm has lashed the dangerous coast,  
The people crowd to watch some hopeless ship  
Tearing its heart upon the unseen reef,  
And strain their sight to catch the tattered sail  
That comes and goes, and glimmers, till at length  
No eye can find it, and a sudden awe  
Falls on the people, and no soul may speak :  
So, from the windy parapets and roofs  
Of the embattled city, anxious groups  
Watched the faint flutter of a woman's dress, —  
Judith's, — who, toiling up a distant hill,  
Seemed but a speck against the sunny green ;  
Yet ever as the wind drew back her robes,  
They saw her from the towers, until she reached  
The crest, and past into the azure sky.  
Then, each one gazing on his neighbor's face,  
Speechless, descended to the level world.

Before his tent, stretched on a leopard-skin,  
Lay Holofernes, ringed by his dark lords, —  
Himself the prince of darkness. At his side  
His iron helmet poured upon the grass  
Its plume of horse-hair ; on his ponderous spear,  
The flinty barb thrust half its length in earth,  
As if some giant had flung it, hung his shield,  
And on the burnished circuit of the shield  
A sinewy dragon, rampant, silver-fanged,  
Glared horrible with sea-green emerald eyes ;  
And as the sunshine struck across it, writhed,  
And seemed a type of those impatient lords  
Who, in the loud war-council here convened,  
Gave voice for battle, and with fiery words  
Opposed the cautious wisdom of their peers.  
So seemed the restless dragon on the shield.

Baleful and sullen as a sulphurous cloud  
Packed with the lightning, Holofernes lay,  
Brooding upon the diverse arguments,  
Himself not arguing, but listening most  
To the curt phrases of the snow-haired chiefs.  
And some said : ‘Take the city by assault,  
And grind it into atoms at a blow.’

And some said : ' Wait. There's that within the  
walls

Shall gnaw its heart out, — hunger. Let us wait.'

To which the younger chieftains : ' If we wait,

Ourselves shall starve. Like locusts we have fed

Upon the land till there is nothing left,

Nor grass, nor grain, nor any living thing.

And if at last we take a famished town

With fifty thousand ragged skeletons,

What boots it ? We shall hunger all the same.

Now, by great Baäl, we 'd rather die at once

Than languish, scorching, on these sun-baked  
hills !'

At which the others called them ' fretful girls,'

And scoffed at them : ' Ye should have stayed at  
home,

And decked your hair with sunny butterflies,

Like King Arphaxad's harlots. Know ye not

Patience and valor are the head and heart

Of warriors ? Who lacks in either, fails.

Have we not hammered with our catapults

Those stubborn gates ? Have we not hurled our  
men

Against the angry torrent of their spears ?  
Mark how those birds that wheel above yon wood,  
In clanging columns, settle greedily down  
Upon the unearthed bodies of our dead.  
See where they rise, red-beaked and surfeited !  
Has it availed ? Let us be patient, then,  
And bide the sovran pleasure of the gods.'  
'And when,' quoth one, 'our stores of meat are  
gone,  
We 'll even feed upon the tender flesh  
Of these tame girls, who, though they dress in  
steel,  
Like more the dulcet tremors of a lute  
Than the shrill whistle of an arrow-head.'

'At this a score of falchions leapt in air,  
And hot-breathed words took flight from bearded  
lips,  
And they had slain each other in their heat,  
These savage captains, quick with bow and spear,  
But that dark Holofernes started up  
To his full height, and, speaking not a word,  
With anger-knitted forehead glared at them.  
As they shrunk back, their passion and their shame

Gave place to wonder, finding in their midst  
A woman whose exceeding radiance  
Of brow and bosom made her garments seem  
Threadbare and lusterless, yet whose attire  
Outshone the purples of a Persian queen.

For Judith, who knew all the mountain paths  
As one may know the delicate azure veins,  
Each crossing each, on his belovéd's wrist,  
Had stolen between the archers in the wood  
And gained the straggling outskirts of the camp,  
And seeing the haughty gestures of the chiefs,  
Halted, with fear, and knew not where to turn ;  
Then taking heart, had silently approached,  
And stood among them, until then unseen.  
And in the air, like numerous swarms of bees,  
Arose the wondering murmurs of the throng,  
Which checking, Holofernes turned and cried,  
' Who breaks upon our councils ? ' angrily,  
But drinking then the beauty of her eyes,  
And seeing the rosy magic of her mouth,  
And all the fragrant summer of her hair  
Blown sweetly round her forehead, stood amazed ;  
And in the light of her pure modesty

His voice took gentler accent unawares :

‘ Whence come ye ? ’

‘ From yon city.’

‘ By our life,

We thought the phantom of some murdered queen

Had risen from dead summers at our feet !

If these Judæan women are so shaped,

Daughters of goddesses, let none be slain.

What seek ye, woman, in the hostile camps

Of Assur ? ’

‘ Holofernes.’

‘ This is he.’

‘ O good my lord,’ cried Judith, ‘ if indeed

That art that Holofernes whom I seek,

And seeking dread to find, low at thy feet

Behold thy handmaid, who in fear has flown

From a doomed people.’

‘ Wherein thou wert wise

Beyond the usual measure of thy sex,

And shalt have such observance as a king  
Gives to his mistress, though our enemy.  
As for thy people, they shall rue the hour  
That brought not tribute to the lord of all,  
Nabuchodonosor. But thou shalt live.'

'O good my lord,' thus Judith; 'as thou wilt,  
So would thy handmaid; and I pray thee now  
Let those that listen stand awhile aloof,  
For I have that for thine especial ear  
Most precious to thee.'

Then the crowd fell back,  
Muttering, and half reluctantly, because  
Her beauty drew them as the moon the sea —  
Fell back and lingered, leaning on their shields  
Under the trees, some couchant in the grass,  
Broad-throated, large-lunged Titans overthrown,  
Eyeing the Hebrew woman, whose sweet looks  
Brought them a sudden vision of their wives  
And longings for them: and her presence there  
Was as a spring that, in Sahara's wastes,  
Taking the thirsty traveller by surprise,  
Loosens its silver music at his feet.

Thus Judith, modest, with down-drooping eyes :

‘ My lord, if yet thou holdest in thy thought  
The words which Achior the Ammonite  
Once spake to thee concerning Israel,  
O treasure them, for in them was no guile.  
True is it, master, that our people kneel  
To an unseen but not an unknown God :  
By day and night He watches over us,  
And while we worship Him we cannot die,  
Our tabernacles shall be unprofaned,  
Our spears invincible ; but if we sin,  
If we transgress the law by which we live,  
Our temples shall be desecrate, our tribes  
Thrust forth into the howling wilderness,  
Scourged and accurséd. Therefore, O my lord,  
Seeing this nation wander from the faith  
Taught of the Prophets, I have fled dismayed,  
For fear the towers might crush me as they fall.  
Heed, Holofernes, what I speak this day,  
And if the thing I tell thee prove not true  
Ere thrice the sun goes down beyond those peaks,  
Then straightway plunge thy falchion in my breast,  
For ’t were not meet that thy handmaid should live,  
Having deceived the crown and flower of men.’



She spoke and paused : and sweeter on his ear  
Were Judith's words than ever seemed to him  
The wanton laughter of the Assyrian girls  
In the bazaars ; and listening he heard not  
The never-ceasing murmurs of the camp,  
The neighing of the awful battle-steeds,  
Nor the vain wind among the drowsy palms.  
The tents that straggled up the hot hillsides,  
The warriors lying in the tangled grass,  
The fanes and turrets of the distant town,  
And all that was, dissolved and past away,  
Save this one woman with her twilight eyes  
And the miraculous cadence of her voice.

Then Judith, catching at the broken thread  
Of her discourse, resumed, to closer draw  
The silken net about the foolish prince ;  
And as she spoke, from time to time her gaze  
Dwelt on his massive stature, and she saw  
That he was shapely, knitted like a god,  
A tower beside the men of her own land.

‘ Heed, Holofernes, what I speak this day,  
And thou shalt rule not only Bethulia,

Rich with its hundred altars' crusted gold,  
But Cades-Barne, Jerusalem, and all  
The vast hill-country even to the sea :  
For I am come to give unto thy hands  
The key of Israel — Israel now no more,  
Since she disowns her Prophets and her God.  
Know then, O lord, it is our yearly use  
To lay aside the first fruit of the grain,  
And so much oil, so many skins of wine,  
Which, being sanctified, are kept intact  
For the High Priests who serve before our God  
In the great temple at Jerusalem.

This holy food — which even to touch is death —  
The rulers, sliding from their ancient faith,  
Would fain lay hands on, being wellnigh starved ;  
And they have sent a runner to the Priests  
(The Jew Ben Raphaim, who, at dead of night,  
Shot like a javelin between thy guards),  
Bearing a parchment begging that the Church  
Yield them permit to eat the sacred corn.  
But 't is not lawful they should do this thing,  
Yet will they do it. Then shalt thou behold  
The archers tumbling headlong from the walls,  
Their strength gone from them ; thou shalt see  
the spears

Splitting like reeds within the spearman's hands,  
And the pale captains tottering like old men  
Stricken with palsy. Then, O glorious prince,  
Then with thy trumpets blaring doleful dooms,  
And thy silk banners flapping in the wind,  
With squares of men and eager clouds of horse  
Thou shalt swoop down on them, and strike them  
    dead!

But now, my lord, before this come to pass,  
Three days must wane, for they touch not the  
    food

Until the Jew Ben Raphaim shall return  
With the Priests' message. Here among thy hosts,  
O Holofernes, will I dwell the while,  
Asking but this, that I and my handmaid  
Each night, at the twelfth hour, may egress have  
Unto the valley, there to weep and pray  
That God forsake this nation in its sin.  
And as my prophecy prove true or false,  
So be it with me.'

    Judith ceased, and stood,  
Her hands across her bosom, as in prayer;  
And Holofernes answered:

‘Be it so.

And if, O pearl of women, the event  
Prove not a drawf beside the prophecy,  
Then there ’s no woman like thee — no, not one.  
Thy name shall be renownéd through the world,  
Music shall wait on thee, thou shalt have crowns,  
And jewel-chests of costly camphor-wood,  
And robes as glossy as the ring-dove’s neck,  
And milk-white mares, and chariots, and slaves :  
And thou shalt dwell with me in Nineveh,  
In Nineveh, the City of the Gods !’

At which the Jewish woman bowed her head  
Humbly, that Holofernes might not see  
How blanched her cheek grew. ‘Even as thou  
wilt,  
So would thy servant.’ At a word the slaves  
Brought meat and wine, and placed them in a tent,  
A silk pavilion, wrought with arabesques,  
That stood apart, for Judith and her maid.  
But Judith ate not, saying : ‘Master, no.  
It is not lawful that we taste of these ;  
My maid has brought a pouch of parchéd corn,  
And bread, and figs, and wine of our own land,

Which shall not fail us.' Holofernes said,  
'So let it be,' and lifting up the screen  
Past out, and left them sitting in the tent.

That day he mixt not with the warriors  
As was his wont, nor watched them at their games  
In the wide shadow of the terebinth-trees ;  
But up and down within a lonely grove  
Paced slowly, brooding on her perfect face,  
Saying her smooth words over to himself,  
Heedless of time, till he looked up and saw  
The spectre of the Twilight on the hills.

The fame of Judith's loveliness had flown  
From lip to lip throughout the canvas town,  
And as the evening deepened, many came  
From neighboring camps, with frivolous excuse,  
To pass the green pavilion — long-haired chiefs  
That dwelt by the Hydaspes, and the sons  
Of the Elymeans, and slim Tartar youths ;  
But saw not her, who, shut from common air,  
Basked in the twilight of the tapestries.

But when night came, and all the camp was still,

And nothing moved beneath the icy stars  
In their blue bourns, except some stealthy guard,  
A shadow among shadows, Judith rose,  
Calling her servant, and the sentinel  
Drew back, and let her pass beyond the lines  
Into the valley. And her heart was full,  
Seeing the watch-fires burning on the towers  
Of her own city : and she knelt and prayed  
For it and them that dwelt within its walls,  
And was refreshed — such balm there lies in prayer  
For those who know God listens. Straightway  
then

The two returned, and all the camp was still.

One cresset twinkled dimly in the tent  
Of Holofernes, and Bagoas, his slave,  
Lay prone across the matting at the door,  
Drunk with the wine of slumber ; but his lord  
Slept not, or, sleeping, rested not for thought  
Of Judith's beauty. Two large lucent eyes,  
Tender and full as moons, dawned on his sleep ;  
And when he woke, they filled the vacant dark  
With an unearthly splendor. All night long  
A stately figure glided through his dream ;

Sometimes a queenly diadem weighed down  
Its braided tresses, and sometimes it came  
Draped only in a misty cloud of vails,  
Like the King's dancing-girl at Nineveh.  
And once it bent above him in the gloom,  
And touched his forehead with most hungry lips.  
Then Holofernes turned upon his couch,  
And, yearning for the daybreak, slept no more.

## III.

## THE FLIGHT.

I N the far east, as viewless tides of time  
Drew on the drifting shallop of the Dawn,  
A fringe of gold went rippling up the gray,  
And breaking rosily on cliff and spur,  
Still left the vale in shadow. While the fog  
Folded the camp of Assur, and the dew  
Yet shook in clusters on the new green leaf,  
And not a bird had dipt a wing in air,  
The restless captain, haggard with no sleep,

Stept over the curved body of his slave,  
And thridding moodily the dingy tents,  
Hives packed with sleepers, stood within the grove  
Where he had loitered the preceding day ;  
There sat him down upon a scarp of rock,  
Mantled with lichen, like a Druid throne,  
And in the cool, gray twilight gave his thought  
Wings ; but however wide his fancies flew,  
They circled still the figure of his dream.

He sat : before him rose the fluted domes  
Of Nineveh his city, and he heard  
The clatter of the merchants in the booths  
Selling their merchandise : and now he breathed  
The airs of a great river, sweeping down  
Past carven pillars, under tamarisk boughs,  
To where the broad sea sparkled : then he groped  
In a damp catacomb, he knew not where,  
By torchlight, hunting for his own grim name  
On some sarcophagus : and as he mused,  
From out the ruined kingdom of the Past  
Glided the myriad women he had wronged,  
The half-forgotten passions of his youth ;  
Dark-browed were some, with haughty, sultry eyes,



Imperious and most ferocious loves ;  
And some, meek blondes with lengths of flaxen  
hair, —

Daughters of Sunrise, shaped of fire and snow  
And Holofernes smiled a bitter smile  
Seeing these spectres in his reverie,  
When suddenly one face among the train  
Turned full upon him, — such a piteous face,  
Blanched with such anguish, looking such reproach,  
So sunken-eyed and awful in its woe,  
His heart shook in his bosom, and he rose  
As if to smite it, and before him stood  
Bagoas, the bondsman, bearing in his arms  
A jar of water, while the morning broke  
In dewy splendor all about the grove.

Then Holofernes, vexed that he was cowed  
By his own fantasy, strode back to camp,  
Bagoas following, sullen, like a hound  
That takes the color of his master's mood.  
And with the troubled captain went the shapes  
Which even the daylight could not exorcise.

‘ Go, fetch me wine, and let my soul make cheer,

For I am sick with visions of the night. .  
Some strangest malady of breast and brain  
Hath so unnerved me that a rustling leaf  
Sets my pulse leaping. 'T is a family flaw,  
A flaw in men else flawless, this dark spell :  
I do remember when my grandsire died,  
He thought a blackened Æthiope he had slain  
Was strangling him ; and, later, my own sire  
Went mad with dreams the day before his death.  
And I, too ? Slave ! go fetch me seas of wine,  
That I may drown these fantasies — no, stay !  
Ransack the camps for choicest flesh and fruit,  
And spread a feast within my tent this night,  
And hang the place with garlands of new flowers ;  
Then bid the Hebrew woman, yea or nay,  
To banquet with us. As thou lov'st the light,  
Bring her ; and if indeed the gods have called,  
The gods shall find me sitting at my feast  
Consorting with a daughter of the gods !'

Thus Holofernes, turning on his heel  
Impatiently ; and straight Bagoas went  
And spoiled the camps of viands for the feast,  
And hung the place with flowers, as he was bid ;

And seeing Judith's servant at the well,  
Gave his lord's message, to which answer came :  
' O what am I that should gainsay my lord ?'  
And Holofernes smiled within, and thought :  
' Or life or death, if I should have her not  
In spite of all, my mighty name would be  
A word for laughter among womankind.'

' So soon !' thought Judith. ' Flying pulse, be  
still !

O Thou who lovest Israel, give me strength  
And cunning such as never woman had,  
That my deceit may be his stripe and scar,  
My kisses his destruction ! This for thee,  
My city, Bethulia, this for thee !'

And thrice that day she prayed within her heart,  
Bowed down among the cushions of the tent  
In shame and wretchedness ; and thus she prayed :  
' O save me from him, Lord ! but save me most  
From mine own sinful self : for, lo ! this man,  
Though viler than the vilest thing that walks,  
A worshipper of fire and senseless stone,  
Slayer of children, enemy of God, —

He, even he, O Lord, forgive my sin,  
Hath by his heathen beauty moved me more  
Than should a daughter of Judea be moved,  
Save by the noblest. Clothe me with Thy love,  
And rescue me, and let me trample down  
All evil thought, and from my baser self  
Climb up to Thee, that aftertimes may say :  
*She tore the guilty passion from her soul, —  
Judith the pure, the faithful unto death.*'

Half-seen behind the forehead of a crag  
The evening-star grew sharp against the dusk,  
As Judith lingered by the curtained door  
Of her pavilion, waiting for Bagoas :  
Erewhile he came, and led her to the tent  
Of Holofernes ; and she entered in,  
And knelt before him in the cresset's glare  
Demurely, like a slave-girl at the feet  
Of her new master, while the modest blood  
Makes protest to the eyelids ; and he leaned  
Graciously over her, and bade her rise  
And sit beside him on the leopard-skins.  
But Judith would not, yet with gentlest grace  
Would not ; and partly to conceal her blush,

Partly to quell the riot in her breast,  
She turned, and wrapt her in her fleecy scarf,  
And stood aloof, nor looked as one that breathed,  
But rather like some jewelled deity  
Ta'en by a conqueror from its sacred niche,  
And placed among the trappings of his tent, —  
So pure was Judith.

For a moment's space  
She stood, then stealing softly to his side,  
Knielt down by him, and with uplifted face,  
Whereon the red rose blossomed with the white :  
' This night, my lord, no other slave than I  
Shall wait on thee with fruits and flowers and wine.  
So subtle am I, I shall know thy wish  
Ere thou canst speak it. Let Bagoas go  
Among his people : let me wait and serve,  
More happy as thy handmaid than thy guest.'

Thereat he laughed, and, humoring her mood,  
Gave the black bondsman freedom for the night.  
Then Judith moved, obsequious, and placed  
The meats before him, and poured out the wine,  
Holding the golden goblet while he ate,

Nor ever past it empty ; and the wine  
Seemed richer to him for those slender hands.  
So Judith served, and Holofernes drank,  
Until the lamps that glimmered round the tent  
In mad processions danced before his gaze.

Without, the moon dropt down behind the sky ;  
Within, the odors of the heavy flowers,  
And the aromas of the mist that curled  
From swinging cressets, stole into the air ;  
And through the mist he saw her come and go,  
Now showing a faultless arm against the light,  
And now a dainty sandal set with gems.  
At last he knew not in what place he was.  
For as a man who, softly held by sleep,  
Knows that he dreams, yet knows not true from  
false,  
Perplexed between the margins of two worlds :  
So Holofernes, flushed with the red wine.

Like a bride's eyes, the eyes of Judith shone,  
As ever bending over him with smiles  
She filled the generous chalice to the edge ;  
And half he shrunk from her, and knew not why,

Then wholly loved her for her loveliness,  
And drew her close to him, and breathed her  
    breath ;

And once he thought the Hebrew woman sang  
A wine-song, touching on a certain king  
Who, dying of strange sickness, drank, and past  
Beyond the touch of mortal agony, —  
A vague tradition of the cunning sprite  
That dwells within the circle of the grape.  
And thus he heard, or fancied that he heard : —

‘ The small green grapes in countless clusters  
    grew,  
Feeding on mystic moonlight and white dew  
And mellow sunshine, the long summer through :

‘ Till, with faint tremor in her veins, the Vine  
Felt the delicious pulses of the wine ;  
And the grapes ripened in the year’s decline.

‘ And day by day the Virgins watched their  
    charge ;  
And when, at last, beyond the horizon’s marge,  
The harvest-moon droopt beautiful and large,

‘The subtle spirit in the grape was caught,  
And to the slowly-dying Monarch brought,  
In a great cup fantastically wrought,

‘Whereof he drank; then straightway from his  
brain  
Went the weird malady, and once again  
He walked the Palace, free of scar or pain, —

‘But strangely changed, for somehow he had  
lost  
Body and voice: the courtiers, as he crost  
The royal chambers, whispered, — *The King’s  
Ghost!*’

‘A potent medicine for kings and men,’  
Thus Holofernes; ‘he was wise to drink.  
Be thou as wise, fair Judith.’ As he spoke,  
He stoopt to kiss the treacherous soft hand  
That rested like a snowflake on his arm,  
But stooping reeled, and from the place he sat  
Toppled, and fell among the leopard-skins:  
There lay, nor stirred; and ere ten beats of heart,  
The tawny giant slumbered. Judith knelt



And gazed upon him, and her thoughts were dark ;  
For half she longed to bid her purpose die, —  
To stay, to weep, to fold him in her arms,  
To let her long hair loose upon his face,  
As on a mountain-top some amorous cloud  
Lets down its sombre tresses of fine rain.  
For one wild instant in her burning arms  
She held him sleeping ; then grew wan as death,  
Relaxed her hold, and starting from his side  
As if an asp had stung her to the quick,  
Listened ; and listening, she heard the moans  
Of little children moaning in the streets  
Of Bethulïa, saw famished women pass,  
Wringing their hands, and on the broken walls  
The flower of Israel dying.

With quick breath

Judith blew out the tapers, all save one,  
And from his twisted baldrick loosed the sword,  
And grasping the huge hilt with her two hands,  
Thrice smote the Prince of Assur as he lay,  
Thrice on his neck she smote him as he lay,  
And from the brawny shoulders rolled the head  
Winking and ghastly in the cresset's light ;

Which done, she fled into the yawning dark,  
There met her maid, who, stealing to the tent,  
Pulled down the crimson arras on the corse,  
And in her mantle wrapt the brazen head,  
And brought it with her ; and a great gong boomed  
Twelve, as the women glided past the guard  
With measured footstep : but outside the camp,  
Terror seized on them, and they fled like wraiths  
Through the hushed midnight into the black woods,  
Where, from gnarled roots and ancient, palsied  
trees,  
Dread shapes, upstarting, clutched at them ; and  
once  
A nameless bird in branches overhead  
Screeched, and the blood grew cold about their  
hearts.  
By mouldy caves, the hooded viper's haunt,  
Down perilous steps, and through the desolate  
gorge,  
Onward they flew, with madly streaming hair,  
Bearing their hideous burden, till at last,  
Wild with the pregnant horrors of the night,  
They dashed themselves against the City's gate.

The hours dragged by, and in the Assur camp  
The pulse of life was throbbing languidly.  
When from the outer waste an Arab scout  
Rushed pale and breathless on the morning watch,  
With a strange story of a Head that hung  
High in the air above the City's wall, —  
A livid Head with knotted, snake-like curls, —  
And how the face was like a face he knew,  
And how it turned and twisted in the wind,  
And how it stared upon him with fixt orbs,  
Till it was not in mortal man to stay ;  
And how he fled, and how he thought the Thing  
Came bowling through the wheat-fields after him.  
And some that listened were appalled, and some  
Derided him ; but not the less they threw  
A furtive glance toward the shadowy wood.

Bagoas, among the idlers, heard the man,  
And quick to bear the tidings to his lord,  
Ran to the tent, and called, ' My lord, awake !  
Awake, my lord ! ' and lingered for reply.  
But answer came there none. Again he called,  
And all was still. Then, laughing in his heart  
To think how deeply Holofernes slept

Wrapt in soft arms, he lifted up the screen,  
And marvelled, finding no one in the tent  
Save Holofernes, buried, as it were,  
Head foremost in the canopies. He stoopt,  
And drawing back the damask folds, beheld  
His master, a grim torso, lying dead.

As in some breathless wilderness at night  
A leopard, pinioned by a falling tree,  
Shrieks, and the echoes, mimicking the cry,  
Repeat it in a thousand different keys  
By lonely heights and unimagined caves :  
So shrieked Bagoas, and so his cry was caught  
And voiced along the vast Assyrian lines,  
And buffeted among the hundred hills.  
Then ceased the tumult sudden as it rose,  
And a great silence fell upon the camps,  
And all the people stood like blocks of stone  
In some deserted quarry : then a voice  
Blown through a trumpet clamored : *He is dead !  
The Prince is dead ! The Hebrew witch hath slain  
Prince Holofernes ! Fly, Assyrians, fly !*

As from its lair the mad tornado leaps,

And, seizing on the yellow desert sands,  
Hurls them in swirling masses, cloud on cloud :  
So, at the sounding of that baleful voice,  
A panic seized the mighty Assur hosts,  
And flung them from their places. With wild  
shouts

Across the hills in pale dismay they fled,  
Trampling the sick and wounded under foot,  
Leaving their tents, their camels, and their arms,  
Their horses, and their gilded chariots.

Then with a dull metallic clang the gates  
Of Bethulía opened, and from each  
A sea of spears surged down the arid hills  
And broke remorseless on the flying foe, —  
Now hemmed them in upon a river's bank,  
Now drove them shrieking down a precipice,  
Now in the mountain-passes slaughtered them,  
Until the land, for many a weary league,  
Was red, as in the sunset, with their blood.

And other cities, when they saw the rout  
Of Holofernes, burst their gates, and joined  
With trump and banner in the mad pursuit.  
Three days before those unrelenting spears  
The cohorts fled, but on the fourth they past  
Beyond Damascus into their own land.

So, by God's grace and this one woman's hand,  
The tombs and temples of the Just were saved ;  
And evermore throughout fair Israel  
The name of Judith meant all noblest things  
In thought and deed ; and Judith's life was rich  
With that content the world takes not away.  
And far-off kings, enamored of her fame,  
Bluff princes, dwellers by the salt sea-sands,  
Sent caskets most laboriously carved,  
And cloths of gold, and papyrus scrolls, whereon  
Was writ their passion ; then themselves did come  
With spicy caravans, in purple state,  
To seek regard from her imperial eyes.  
But she remained unwed, and to the end  
Walked with the angels in her widow's weeds.





LEGENDS AND LYRICS.









## LEGENDS AND LYRICS.



FRIAR JEROME'S BEAUTIFUL BOOK.

A. D. 1200.



HE Friar Jerome, for some slight sin,  
Done in his youth, was struck with woe.

‘ When I am dead,’ quoth Friar Jerome,

‘ Surely, I think my soul will go

Shuddering through the darkened spheres,

Down to eternal fires below !

I shall not dare from that dread place

To lift mine eyes to Jesus’ face,

Nor Mary’s, as she sits adored

At the feet of Christ the Lord.

Alas ! December’s all too brief

For me to hope to wipe away

The memory of my sinful May !’

And Friar Jerome was full of grief,

That April evening, as he lay  
On the straw pallet in his cell.  
He scarcely heard the curfew-bell  
Calling the brotherhood to prayer;  
But he arose, for 't was his care  
Nightly to feed the hungry poor  
That crowded to the Convent door.

His choicest duty it had been :  
But this one night it weighed him down.  
' What work for an immortal soul,  
To feed and clothe some lazy clown !  
Is there no action worth my mood,  
No deed of daring, high and pure,  
That shall, when I am dead, endure,  
A well-spring of perpetual good ? '

And straight he thought of those great tomes  
With clamps of gold, — the Convent's boast, —  
How they endured, while kings and realms  
Past into darkness and were lost ;  
How they had stood from age to age,  
Clad in their yellow vellum-mail,  
'Gainst which the Paynim's godless rage,

The Vandal's fire, could naught avail :  
Though heathen sword-blows fell like hail,  
Though cities ran with Christian blood,  
Imperishable they had stood !  
They did not seem like books to him,  
But Heroes, Martyrs, Saints, — themselves  
The things they told of, not mere books  
Ranged grimly on the oaken shelves.

To those dim alcoves, far withdrawn,  
He turned with measured steps and slow,  
Trimming his lantern as he went ;  
And there, among the shadows, bent  
Above one ponderous folio,  
With whose miraculous text were blent  
Seraphic faces : Angels, crowned  
With rings of melting amethyst ;  
Mute, patient Martyrs, cruelly bound  
To blazing fagots ; here and there,  
Some bold, serene Evangelist,  
Or Mary in her sunny hair :  
And here and there from out the words  
A brilliant tropic bird took flight ;  
And through the margins many a vine

Went wandering, — roses, red and white,  
Tulip, wind-flower, and columbine  
Blossomed. To his believing mind  
These things were real, and the wind,  
Blown through the mullioned window, took  
Scent from the lilies in the book.

‘Santa Maria!’ cried Friar Jerome,  
‘Whatever man illumined this,  
Though he were steeped heart-deep in sin,  
Was worthy of unending bliss,  
And no doubt hath it! Ah! dear Lord,  
Might I so beautify Thy Word!  
What sacristan, the convents through,  
Transcribes with such precision? who  
Does such initials as I do?  
Lo! I will gird me to this work,  
And save me, ere the one chance slips.  
On smooth, clean parchment I’ll engross  
The Prophet’s fell Apocalypse;  
And as I write from day to day,  
Perchance my sins will pass away.’

So Friar Jerome began his Book.

From break of dawn till curfew-chime  
He bent above the lengthening page,  
Like some rapt poet o'er his rhyme.  
He scarcely paused to tell his beads,  
Except at night; and then he lay  
And tost, unrestful, on the straw,  
Impatient for the coming day, —  
Working like one who feels, perchance,  
That, ere the longed-for goal be won,  
Ere Beauty bare her perfect breast,  
Black Death may pluck him from the sun.  
At intervals the busy brook,  
Turning the mill-wheel, caught his ear;  
And through the grating of the cell  
He saw the honeysuckles peer;  
And knew 't was summer, that the sheep  
In fragrant pastures lay asleep;  
And felt, that, somehow, God was near.  
In his green pulpit on the elm,  
The robin, abbot of that wood,  
Held forth by times; and Friar Jerome  
Listened, and smiled, and understood.

While summer wrapt the blissful land,

What joy it was to labor so,  
To see the long-tressed Angels grow  
Beneath the cunning of his hand,  
Vignette and tail-piece deftly wrought !  
And little recked he of the poor  
That missed him at the Convent door ;  
Or, thinking of them, put the thought  
Aside. 'I feed the souls of men  
Henceforth, and not their bodies !' — yet  
Their sharp, pinched features, now and then,  
Stole in between him and his Book,  
And filled him with a vague regret.

Now on that region fell a blight :  
The corn grew cankered in its sheath ;  
And from the verdurous uplands rolled  
A sultry vapor fraught with death, —  
A poisonous mist, that, like a pall,  
Hung black and stagnant over all.  
Then came the sickness, — the malign  
Green-spotted terror, called the Pest,  
That took the light from loving eyes,  
And made the young bride's gentle breast  
A fatal pillow. Ah ! the woe,

The crime, the madness that befell!  
In one short night that vale became  
More foul than Dante's inmost hell.  
Men curst their wives; and mothers left  
Their nursing babes alone to die,  
And wantoned, singing, through the streets,  
With shameless brow and frenzied eye;  
And senseless clowns, not fearing God, —  
Such power the spotted fever had, —  
Razed Cragwood Castle on the hill,  
Pillaged the wine-bins, and went mad.  
And evermore that dreadful pall  
Of mist hung stagnant over all:  
By day, a sickly light broke through  
The heated fog, on town and field;  
By night the moon, in anger, turned  
Against the earth its mottled shield.

Then from the Convent, two and two,  
The Prior chanting at their head,  
The monks went forth to shrive the sick,  
And give the hungry grave its dead, —  
Only Jerome, he went not forth,  
But hiding in his dusty nook,

‘Let come what will, I must illumine  
The last ten pages of my Book!’  
He drew his stool before the desk,  
And sat him down, distraught and wan,  
To paint his darling masterpiece,  
The stately figure of Saint John.  
He sketched the head with pious care,  
Laid in the tint, when, powers of Grace!  
He found a grinning Death’s-head there,  
And not the grand Apostle’s face!

Then up he rose with one long cry:  
‘’T is Satan’s self does this,’ cried he,  
‘Because I shut and barred my heart  
When Thou didst loudest call to me!  
O Lord, Thou know’st the thoughts of men,  
Thou know’st that I did yearn to make  
Thy Word more lovely to the eyes  
Of sinful souls, for Christ his sake!  
Nathless, I leave the task undone:  
I give up all to follow Thee,—  
Even like him who gave his nets  
To winds and waves by Galilee!’



Which said, he closed the precious Book  
In silence with a reverent hand ;  
And, drawing his cowl about his face,  
Went forth into the Stricken Land.  
And there was joy in heaven that day, —  
More joy o'er this forlorn old friar  
Than over fifty sinless men  
Who never struggled with desire !

What deeds he did in that dark town,  
What hearts he soothed with anguish torn,  
What weary ways of woe he trod,  
Are written in the Book of God,  
And shall be read at Judgment Morn.  
The weeks crept on, when, one still day,  
God's awful presence filled the sky,  
And that black vapor floated by,  
And, lo ! the sickness past away.  
With silvery clang, by thorpe and town,  
The bells made merry in their spires,  
Men kissed each other on the street,  
And music piped to dancing feet  
The livelong night, by roaring fires !

Then Friar Jerome, a wasted shape,—  
For he had taken the Plague at last, —  
Rose up, and through the happy town,  
And through the wintry woodlands, past  
Into the Convent. What a gloom  
Sat brooding in each desolate room!  
What silence in the corridor!  
For of that long, innumerable train  
Which issued forth a month before,  
Scarce twenty had come back again!

Counting his rosary step by step,  
With a forlorn and vacant air,  
Like some unshriven churchyard thing,  
The Friar crawled up the mouldy stair  
To his damp cell, that he might look  
Once more on his beloved Book.

And there it lay upon the stand,  
Open! — he had not left it so.  
He grasped it, with a cry; for, lo!  
He saw that some angelic hand,  
While he was gone, had finished it!  
There 't was complete, as he had planned!


There, at the end, stood *Finis*, writ  
And gilded as no man could do, —  
Not even that pious anchoret,  
Bilfrid, the wonderful, — nor yet  
The miniatore Ethelwold, —  
Nor Durham's Bishop, who of old  
(England still hoards the priceless leaves)  
Did the Four Gospels all in gold.  
And Friar Jerome nor spoke nor stirred,  
But, with his eyes fixed on that word,  
He past from sin and want and scorn;  
And suddenly the chapel-bells  
Rang in the holy Christmas-Morn!

In those wild wars which racked the land  
Since then, and kingdoms rent in twain,  
The Friar's Beautiful Book was lost, —  
That miracle of hand and brain:  
Yet, though its leaves were torn and tost,  
The volume was not writ in vain!



## GARNAUT HALL.

A. D. 1598.


 HERE or hereafter? In the body here,  
 Or in the soul hereafter, do we writhe,  
 Atoning for the malice of our lives?  
 Of the uncounted millions that have died,  
 Not one has slipped the napkin from his chin  
 And loosed the jaw to tell us: even he,  
 The intrepid Captain, who gave life to find  
 A doubtful way through clanging worlds of ice, —  
 A fine inquisitive spirit, you would think,  
 One to cross-question Fate complacently,  
 Less for his own sake than for Science's, —  
 Not even he, with his rich gathered lore,  
 Returns from that dark journey down to death.  
 Here or hereafter? Only this I know,  
 That, whatsoever happen afterwards,  
 Some men do penance on this side the grave.  
 Thus Regnald Garnaut for his cruel heart.

Owner and lord was he of Garnaut Hall,  
 A relic of the Norman conquerors, —

A quaint, rook-haunted pile of masonry,  
From whose top battlement, a windy height,  
Regnald could view his twenty prosperous farms;  
His creaking mill, that, perched upon a cliff,  
With outspread wings seemed ever taking flight;  
The red-roofed cottages, the high-walled park,  
The noisy aviary, and, nearer by,  
The snow-white Doric parsonage, — all his own.  
And all his own were chests of antique plate,  
Horses and hounds and falcons, curious books,  
Chain-armor, helmets, Gobelin tapestry,  
And half a mile of painted ancestors.  
Lord of these things, he wanted one thing more,  
Not having which, all else to him was dross.

For Agnes Vail, the curate's only child, —  
A little Saxon wild-flower that had grown  
Unheeded into beauty day by day,  
And much too delicate for this rude world, —  
With that intuitive wisdom of the pure,  
Saw that he loved her beauty, not herself,  
And shrank from him, and when he came to speech  
Parried his meaning with a woman's wit.  
And Regnald's tender vanity was hurt.

‘Why, then,’ snarled he, ‘if I had asked the Queen  
To pick me some fair woman from the Court,  
’T were but the asking. A blind curate’s girl,  
It seems, is somewhat difficult, — must have,  
To feed her pride, our coronet withal!’  
And Agnes from that day avoided him,  
Clinging more closely to the old man’s side;  
And in the chapel never raised an eye,  
But knelt there like a mediæval saint,  
Her holiness her buckler and her shield, —  
That, and the golden floss of her long hair.

And Regnald felt that somehow he was foiled, —  
Foiled, but not beaten. He would have his way.  
Meanwhile he chafed; but shortly after this  
Regnald received the sorest hurt of all.  
For, one eve, lounging idly in the close,  
Watching the windows of the parsonage,  
He heard low voices in the alder-trees,  
Voices he knew, and one that sweetly said,  
‘Thine!’ and he paused with choking heart, and

saw

Eustace, his brother, and fair Agnes Vail  
In the soft moonrise lingering with claspt hands.

The two past on, and Regnald hid himself  
Among the brushwood, where his vulpine eyes  
Dilated in the darkness as they past.

There, in the dark, he lay a bitter hour  
Gnawing his nails, and then arose unseen  
And crept away with murder in his soul.

Eustace ! curse on him, with his handsome eyes !  
Regnald had envied Eustacé many a day,  
Envied his fame, and that exceeding grace  
And courtliness which he had learned at Court  
Of Sidney, Raleigh, Essex, and the rest :  
For when their father, lean Sir Egbert, died,  
Eustace, whose fortune dangled at his thigh, —  
A Damask blade, — had hastened to the Court  
To line his purse, perchance to build a name ;  
And catching there the passion of the time,  
He, with a score of doughty Devon lads,  
Sailed with bold Drake into the Spanish seas ;  
Returning whence, with several ugly scars, —  
Which made him lovelier in women's eyes, —  
And many a chest of ingots, — not the less  
These latter made him lovely, — sunned himself,  
Sometimes at Court, sometimes at Garnaut Hall, —

At Court, by favor of the Virgin Queen,  
For great Elizabeth had smiled on him.

So Regnald, who was neither good nor brave  
Nor graceful, liked not Eustace from the start,  
And this night hated him. With angry brows,  
He sat in a bleak chamber of the Hall,  
His fingers toying with his poniard's point  
Abstractedly. Three times the ancient clock,  
Bolt-upright like a mummy in its case,  
Doled out the hour : at length the round red moon,  
Rising above the sombre walnut-trees,  
Looked in on Regnald nursing his dark thought,  
Looked in on the stiff portraits on the wall,  
And dead Sir Egbert's empty coat-of-mail.

A quick step sounded on the gravel-walk,  
And then came Eustace, humming a sea-song,  
Of how the Grace of Devon, with ten guns,  
And Master Raleigh on the quarter-deck,  
Bore down and tackled the great galleon,  
Madre de Dios, raked her fore and aft,  
And took her bullion, — singing, light at heart,  
His first love's first kiss warm upon his lip.



Straight onward came young Eustace to his death !  
For hidden behind the arras near the stair  
Stood Regnald, like the Dæmon in the play,  
Grasping his rapier part-way down the blade  
To strike the foul blow with its heavy hilt.  
Straight on came Eustace, — blithely ran the song,  
*‘ Old England’s darlings are her hearts of oak. ’*  
The lights were out, and not a soul astir,  
Or else the dead man’s scabbard, as it clashed  
Against the marble pavement when he fell,  
Had brought a witness. Not a breath or sound,  
Only the sad wind wailing in the tower,  
Only the mastiff growling in his sleep,  
Outside the gate, and pawing at his dream.

Now in a wing of that old gallery,  
Hung with the relics of forgotten feuds,  
A certain door, which none but Regnald knew,  
Was fashioned like the panels of the wall,  
And so concealed by carven grapes and flowers  
A man could search for it a dozen years  
And swear it was not, though his touch had been  
Upon the very panel where it was.  
The secret spring that opened it unclosed

An inner door of iron-studded oak,  
Guarding a narrow chamber, where, perchance,  
Some bygone lord of Garnaut Hall had hid  
His threatened treasure, or, most like, bestowed  
Some too adventurous antagonist.  
Sealed in the compass of that stifling room,  
A man might live, at best, but half an hour.

Hither did Regnald bear his brother's corse  
And set it down. Perhaps he paused to gaze  
A moment on the quiet moonlit face,  
The face yet beautiful with new-told love !  
Perhaps his heart misgave him, — or, perhaps —  
Now, whether 't was some dark avenging Hand,  
Or whether 't was some fatal freak of wind,  
We may not know, but suddenly the door  
Without slammed to, and there was Regnald shut  
Beyond escape, for on the inner side  
Was neither spring nor bolt to set him free !

Mother of Mercy ! what were a whole life  
Of pain and penury and conscience-smart  
To that half-hour of Regnald's with his Dead ?

— The joyous sun rose over the white cliffs  
Of Devon, sparkled through the walnut-trees,  
And broke the death-like slumber of the Hall.  
The keeper fetched their breakfast to the hounds ;  
The smart, young ostler whistled in the stalls ;  
The pretty housemaid tripped from room to room ;  
And grave and grand behind his master's chair,  
But wroth within to have the partridge spoil,  
The senile butler waited for his lord.  
But neither Regnald nor young Eustace came.  
And when 't was found that neither slept at Hall  
That night, their couches being still unprest,  
The servants stared. And as the day wore on,  
And evening came, and then another day,  
And yet another, till a week had gone,  
The wonder spread, and riders sent in haste  
Scoured the country, dragged the neighboring  
streams,  
Tracked wayward footprints to the great chalk  
bluffs,  
But found not Regnald, lord of Garnaut Hall.  
The place that knew him knew him never more.

The red leaf withered and the green leaf grew.

And Agnes Vail, the little Saxon rose,  
Waxed pale and paler, till the country-folk  
Half guessed her fate was somehow intertwined  
With that dark house. When her pure soul had  
past, —

Just as a perfume floats from out the world, —  
Wild tales were told of how the brothers loved  
The self-same maid, whom neither one would wed  
Because the other loved her as his life ;  
And that the two, at midnight, in despair,  
From one sheer cliff plunged headlong in the sea.  
And when, at night, the hoarse east-wind rose high,  
Rattled the lintels, clamoring at the door,  
The children huddled closer round the hearth  
And whispered very softly with themselves,  
'That 's Master Regnald looking for his Bride !'

The red leaf withered and the green leaf grew.  
Decay and dolor settled on the Hall.  
The wind went howling in the dismal rooms,  
Rustling the arras ; and the wainscot-mouse  
Gnawed through the mighty Garnauts on the wall,  
And made a lodging for her glossy young  
In dead Sir Egbert's empty coat-of-mail ;

The griffon dropt from off the blazoned shield ;  
The stables rotted ; and a poisonous vine ,  
Stretched its rank nets across the lonely lawn.  
For no one went there, — 't was a haunted spot.  
A legend killed it for a kindly home, —  
A grim estate, which every heir in turn  
Left to the orgies of the wind and rain,  
The newt, the toad, the spider, and the mouse.

The red leaf withered and the green leaf grew.  
And once, 't is said, the Queen reached out her  
hand

And let it rest on Cecil's velvet sleeve,  
And spoke : ' I prithee, Cecil, tell us now,  
Was 't ever known what happened to those men, —  
Those Garnauts ? — Were they never, never found ?'  
The weasel face had fain looked wise for her,  
But no one of that century ever knew.

The red leaf withered and the green leaf grew.  
And in that year King James the Second died  
The land changed owners, and the new-made lord  
Sent down his workmen to revamp the Hall  
And make the waste place blossom as the rose


By chance, a workman in the eastern wing,  
Fitting the cornice, stumbled on a door,  
Which creaked, and seemed to open of itself;  
And there within the chamber, on the flags,  
He saw two figures in outlandish guise  
Of hose and doublet, — one stretched out full-  
length,  
And one half fallen forward on his breast,  
Holding the other's hand with vice-like grip :  
One face was calm, the other sad as death,  
With something in it of a pleading look,  
As might befall a man that dies at prayer.  
Amazed, the workman hallooed to his mates  
To see the wonder ; but ere they could come,  
The figures crumbled and were shapeless dust.



THE LADY OF CASTELNOIRE.

A. D. 1700.

1.

 RÉTAGNE had not her peer. In the  
Province far or near  
There were never such brown tresses,  
such a faultless hand :

She had youth, and she had gold, she had jewels  
all untold,  
And many a lover bold wooed the Lady of the  
Land.

2.

But she, with queenliest grace, bent low her pallid  
face,  
And 'Woo me not, for Jesus' sake, fair gentlemen,'  
she said.  
If they woo'd, then — with a frown she would  
strike their passion down :  
She might have wed a crown to the ringlets on  
her head.

## 3.

From the dizzy castle-tips, hour by hour she  
watched the ships,  
Like sheeted phantoms coming and going ever-  
more,  
While the twilight settled down on the sleepy sea-  
port town,  
On the gables peaked and brown, that had shel-  
tered kings of yore.

## 4.

Dusky belts of cedar-wood partly claspt the wi-  
dening flood ;  
Like a knot of daisies lay the hamlets on the hill ;  
In the hostelry below sparks of light would come  
and go,  
And faint voices, strangely low, from the garru-  
lous old mill.

## 5.

Here the land in grassy swells gently broke ; there  
sunk in dells  
With mosses green and purple, and prongs of rock  
and peat ;



Here, in statue-like repose, an old wrinkled mountain rose,  
With its hoary head in snows, and wild-roses at its feet.

6.

And so oft she sat alone in the turret of gray stone,  
And looked across the moorland, so woful, to the sea,  
That there grew a village-cry, how her cheek did lose its dye,  
As a ship, once, sailing by, faded on the sapphire lea.

7.

Her few walks led all one way, and all ended at the gray  
And ragged, jagged rocks that fringe the lonesome beach ;  
There she would stand, the Sweet ! with the white surf at her feet,  
While above her wheeled the fleet sparrow-hawk with startling screech.

## 8.

And she ever loved the sea, — God's half-uttered  
mystery, —  
With its million lips of shells, its never-ceasing  
roar :  
And 't was well that, when she died, they made her  
a grave beside  
The blue pulses of the tide, by the towers of Cas-  
telnoire.

## 9.

Now, one chill November morn, many russet au-  
tums gone,  
A strange ship with folded wings lay dozing off  
the lea ;  
It had lain throughout the night with its wings of  
murky white  
Folded, after weary flight, — the worn nursling of  
the sea.

## 10.

Crowds of peasants flocked the sands ; there were  
tears and clasping hands ;  
And a sailor from the ship stalked through the  
kirkyard gate.

Then amid the grass that crept, fading, over her  
who slept,  
How he hid his face and wept, crying, *Late, alas!*  
*too late!*

11.

And they called her cold. God knows . . . . Underneath the winter snows  
The invisible hearts of flowers grew ripe for blossoming!  
And the lives that look so cold, if their stories could be told,  
Would seem cast in gentler mould, would seem full of love and spring.



## AMONTILLADO.

VINTAGE, 1826.

1.



AFTERS black with smoke,  
 White with sand the floor is,  
 Twenty whiskered Dons

Calling to Dolores, —  
 Tawny flower of Spain,  
 Empress of the larder,  
 Keeper of the wines  
 In this old posada.

2.

Hither, light-of-foot,  
 Dolores, Hebe, Circe! —  
 Pretty Spanish girl,  
 With not a bit of mercy!  
 Here I'm sad and sick,  
 Faint and thirsty very,  
 And she does n't bring  
 The Amontillado Sherry!

## 3.

Thank you. Breath of June!

Now my heart beats freer:

Kisses for your hand,

Amigita mia!

You shall live in song,

Ripe and warm and cheery,

Mellowing with years,

Like Amontillado Sherry.

## 4.

Evil spirits, fly!

Care, begone, blue dragon!

Only shapes of joy

Are sculptured on the flagon:

Lyrics, — repartees, —

Kisses, — all that 's merry,

Rise to touch the lip

In Amontillado Sherry!

## 5.

Here be worth and wealth,

And love, the arch enchanter;

Here the golden blood

Of saints, in this decanter!

When old Charon comes  
To row me o'er his ferry,  
I'll bribe him with a case  
Of Amontillado Sherry!

## 6.

While the earth spins round  
And the stars lean over,  
May this amber sprite  
Never lack a lover.  
Blesséd be the man  
Who lured her from the berry,  
And blest the girl who brings  
The Amontillado Sherry.

## 7.

What! the flagon's dry?  
Hark, old Time's confession, —  
Both hands crost at XII.,  
Owning his transgression!  
Pray, old monk! for all  
Generous souls and merry,  
May they have their fill  
Of Amontillado Sherry!

## CASTLES.



HERE is a picture in my brain  
 That only fades to come again, —  
 The sunlight, through a veil of rain  
 To leeward, gilding

A narrow stretch of brown sea-sand,  
 A lighthouse half a league from land,  
 And two young lovers, hand in hand,  
 A castle-building.

Upon the budded apple-trees  
 The robins sing by twos and threes,  
 And ever at the faintest breeze  
     Down drops a blossom ;  
 And ever would that lover be  
 The wind that robs the burgeoned tree,  
 And lifts the soft tress daintily  
     On Beauty's bosom.

Ah, graybeard, what a happy thing  
 It was, when life was in its spring,

To peep through love's betrothal ring  
At Fields Elysian,  
To move and breathe in magic air,  
To think that all that seems is fair, —  
Ah, ripe young mouth and golden hair,  
Thou pretty vision !

Well, well, I think not on these two  
But the old wound breaks out anew,  
And the old dream, as if 't were true,  
In my heart nestles ;  
Then tears come welling to my eyes  
For yonder, all in saintly guise,  
As 't were, a sweet dead woman lies  
Upon the trestles !





## ROBIN BADFELLOW.



OUR bluish eggs all in the moss!  
 Soft-lined home on the cherry-bough!  
 Life is trouble, and love is loss, —  
 There 's only one robin now!

O robin up in the cherry-tree,  
 Singing your soul away,  
 Great is the grief befallen me,  
 And how can you be so gay?

Long ago when you cried in the nest,  
 The last of the sickly brood,  
 Scarcely a pin-feather warming your breast,  
 Who was it brought you food?

Who said, 'Music, come fill his throat,  
 Or ever the May be fled?'  
 Who was it loved the wee sweet note  
 And the bosom's sea-shell red?

Who said, 'Cherries, grow ripe and big,  
Black and ripe for this bird of mine?'  
How little bright-bosom bends the twig,  
Sipping the black-heart's wine!

Now that my days and nights are woe,  
Now that I weep for love's dear sake, —  
There you go singing away as though  
Never a heart could break!



## THE LILY OF LOCH-INE.



HE was very, very fair,  
 Like a Saint in her blonde hair, —  
 Like Raphael's Madonna,  
 With a certain shade of care  
 And a glory breaking on her!

In the kirkyard let her lie,  
 Let the thistles and the burs  
 Cover up the twofold life,  
 The sinless life and hers.  
 God have mercy on that day  
 When the grave gives up the Dead  
 And the World shall pass away.

Now Sir Rohan sails the sea,  
 Loud he laughs above his wine,  
 And he never, never thinks  
 Of the Lily of Loch-Ine.  
 God have mercy on that day  
 When the grave gives up the Dead  
 And the World shall pass away.

## DECEMBER.

1863.



ONLY the sea intoning,  
 Only the wainscot-mouse,  
 Only the wild wind moaning  
 Over the lonely house.

Darkest of all Decembers  
 Ever my life has known,  
 Sitting here by the embers,  
 Stunned and helpless, alone,—

Dreaming of two graves lying  
 Out in the damp and chill;  
 One where the buzzard, flying,  
 Pauses at Malvern Hill:

The other,— alas! the pillows  
 Of that uneasy bed  
 Rise and fall with the billows  
 Over our sailor's head.

Theirs the heroic story, —  
Died, by frigate and town!  
Theirs the Calm and the Glory,  
Theirs the Cross and the Crown.

Mine to linger and languish  
Here by the wintry sea.  
Ah, faint heart! in thy anguish,  
What is there left to thee?

Only the sea intoning,  
Only the wainscot-mouse,  
Only the wild wind moaning  
Over the lonely house.







CLOTH OF GOLD.

Sc







## CLOTH OF GOLD.



YOU ask us if by rule or no  
Our many-colored songs are wrought?  
Upon the cunning loom of thought,  
We weave our fancies, so and so.

The busy shuttle comes and goes  
Across the rhymes, and deftly weaves  
A tissue out of autumn leaves,  
With here a thistle, there a rose.

With art and patience thus is made  
The poet's perfect Cloth of Gold:  
When woven so, nor moth nor mould  
Nor time, can make its colors fade.

## THE CRESCENT AND THE CROSS.



IND was my friend who, in the Eastern  
land,

Remembered me with such a gracious  
hand,

And sent this Moorish Crescent which has  
Worn on the haughty bosom of a queen.

No more it sinks and rises in unrest  
To the soft music of her heathen breast ;  
No barbarous chief shall bow before it more,  
No turbaned slave shall envy and adore !

I place beside this relic of the Sun  
A Cross of Cedar brought from Lebanon,  
Once borne, perchance, by some pale monk who  
trod

The desert to Jerusalem, — and his God !

Here do they lie, two symbols of two creeds,  
Each meaning something to our human needs,

Both stained with blood, and sacred made by faith,  
By tears, and prayers, and martyrdom, and death.

That for the Moslem is, but this for me!  
The waning Crescent lacks divinity :  
It gives me dreams of battles, and the woes  
Of women shut in dim seraglios.

But when this Cross of simple wood I see,  
The Star of Bethlehem shines again for me,  
And glorious visions break upon my gloom, —  
The patient Christ, and Mary at the Tomb!



## THE SHEIK'S WELCOME.

**B**ECAUSE thou com'st, a weary guest,  
Unto my tent, I bid thee rest.  
This cruse of oil, this skin of wine,  
These tamarinds and dates, are thine;  
And while thou eatest, Medjid, there,  
Shall bathe the heated nostrils of thy mare.

Illah il' Allah! Even so  
An Arab chieftain treats a foe,  
Holds him as one without a fault  
Who breaks his bread and tastes his salt;  
And, in fair battle, strikes him dead  
With the same pleasure that he gives him bread!



## THE UNFORGIVEN.



NEAR my bed, there, hangs the picture  
jewels could not buy from me :

'T is a Siren, a brown Siren, in her sea-  
weed drapery,

Playing on a lute of amber, by the margin of a  
sea.

In the east, the rose of morning seems as if  
't would blossom soon,

But it never, never blossoms, in this picture ; and  
the moon

Never ceases to be crescent, and the June is al-  
ways June !

And the heavy-branched banana never yields its  
creamy fruit ;

In the citron-trees are nightingales forever stricken  
mute ;

And the Siren sits, her fingers on the pulses of  
the lute.

In the hushes of the midnight, when the helio-  
tropes grow strong  
With the dampness, I hear music, — hear a quiet,  
plaintive song, —  
A most sad, melodious utterance, as of some im-  
mortal wrong, —

Like the pleading, oft repeated, of a Soul that  
pleads in vain,  
Of a damnéd Soul repentant, that would fain be  
pure again! —  
And I lie awake and listen to the music of her  
pain!

And whence comes this mournful music? —  
whence, unless it chance to be  
From the Siren, the brown Siren, in her sea-weed  
drapery,  
Playing on a lute of amber, by the margin of a  
sea!



## DRESSING THE BRIDE.

## A FRAGMENT.



O, after bath, the slave-girls brought  
The broïdered raiment for her wear,  
The misty izar from Mosul,  
The pearls and opals for her hair,  
The slippers for her supple feet,  
(Two radiant crescent moons they were,)  
And lavender, and spikenard sweet,  
And attars, nedd, and richest musk.  
When they had finished dressing her,  
(The eye of morn, the heart's desire!)  
Like one pale star against the dusk,  
A single diamond on her brow  
Trembled with its imprisoned fire!



## TWO SONGS FROM THE PERSIAN.

## I.



CEASE, sweet music, let us rest :  
 Too soon the hateful light is born !  
 Henceforth let day be counted night,  
 And midnight called the morn.

O, cease, sweet music, let us rest :  
 A tearful, languid spirit lies  
 (Like the dim scent in violets,)  
 In Zela's gentle eyes.

There is a sadness in sweet sound  
 That quickens tears. O music, lest  
 We weep with thy strange sorrow, cease !  
 Be still, and let us rest.

## II.

Ah! sad are they who know not love,  
 But, far from passion's tears and smiles,



Drift down a moonless sea, beyond  
The silvery coasts of fairy isles.

And sadder they whose longing lips  
Kiss empty air, and never touch  
The dear warm mouth of those they love, —  
Waiting, wasting, suffering much.

But clear as amber, fine as musk,  
Is life to those who, pilgrim-wise,  
Move hand in hand from dawn to dusk,  
Each morning nearer Paradise.

O, not for them shall angels pray !  
They stand in everlasting light,  
They walk in Allah's smile by day,  
And nestle in his heart by night.



## TIGER-LILIES.



LIKE not lady-slippers,  
Nor yet the sweet-pea blossoms,  
Nor yet the flaky roses,  
Red, or white as snow ;  
I like the chaliced lilies,  
The heavy Eastern lilies,  
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,  
That in our garden grow !

For they are tall and slender ;  
Their mouths are dashed with carmine  
And when the wind sweeps by them,  
On their emerald stalks  
They bend so proud and graceful, —  
They are Circassian women,  
The favorites of the Sultan,  
Adown our garden walks !

And when the rain is falling,  
I sit beside the window

And watch them glow and glisten,  
How they burn and glow !  
O for the burning lilies,  
The tender Eastern lilies,  
The gorgeous tiger-lilies,  
That in our garden grow !



## THE SULTANA.



IN the draperies' purple gloom,  
In the gilded chamber she stands,  
I catch a glimpse of her bosom's bloom,  
And the white of her jewelled hands.

Each wandering wind that blows  
By the lattice, seems to bear  
From her parted lips the scent of the rose,  
And the jasmine from her hair.

Her dark-browed odalisques lean  
To the fountain's feathery rain,  
And a parroquet, by the broidered screen,  
Dangles its silvery chain.

But pallid, luminous, cold,  
Like a phantom she fills the place,  
Sick to the heart, in that cage of gold,  
With her sumptuous disgrace!

IT WAS A KNIGHT OF ARAGON.

“Fuerte qual azero entre armas,  
Y qual cera entre las damas.”

1.



T was a Knight of Aragon,  
And he was brave to see,  
His helmet and his hauberk,  
And the greaves upon his knee.  
His escuderos rode in front,  
His cavaliers behind,  
With stained plumes and gonfalons,  
And music in the wind.

2.

It was the maid Prudencia,  
The lily of Madrid,  
Who watched him from her balcony,  
Among the jasmines hid.  
'O Virgin Mother!' quoth the Knight,  
'Is that the daybreak there?'  
It was the saintly light that shone  
Above the maiden's hair!

## 3.

Then he who crost the Pyrenees  
To fight the dogs of France,  
Grew pale with love for her whose look  
Had pierced him like a lance ;  
And they will wed the morrow morn :  
Beat softly, watchful stars !—  
And mind you, gallant cavaliers,  
How Venus conquers Mars.



## WHEN THE SULTAN GOES TO ISPAHAN.



WHEN *the Sultan Shah-Zaman*

*Goes to the city Ispahan,*

Even before he gets so far

As the place where the clustered palm-trees are,

At the last of the thirty palace-gates,

The pet of the harem, Rose-in-Bloom,

Orders a feast in his favorite room, —

Glittering squares of colored ice,

Sweetened with syrop, tinctured with spice,

Creams, and cordials, and sugared dates,

Syrian apples, Othmanee quinces,

Limes, and citrons, and apricots,

And wines that are known to Eastern princes ;

And Nubian slaves, with smoking pots

Of spiced meats and costliest fish

And all that the curious palate could wish,

Pass in and out of the cedarn doors :

Scattered over mosaic floors

Are anemones, myrtles, and violets,

And a musical fountain throws its jets

Of a hundred colors into the air.  
The dusk Sultana loosens her hair,  
And stains with the henna-plant the tips  
Of her pearly nails, and bites her lips  
Till they bloom again, — but, alas, *that* rose  
Not for the Sultan buds and blows !  
*Not for the Sultan Shah-Zaman*  
*When he goes to the city Ispahan.*

Then at a wave of her sunny hand,  
The dancing-girls of Samarcand  
Float in like mists from Fairy-land !  
And to the low voluptuous swoons  
Of music rise and fall the moons  
Of their full, brown bosoms. Orient blood  
Runs in their veins, shines in their eyes :  
And there, in this Eastern Paradise,  
Filled with the fumes of sandal-wood,  
And Khoten musk, and aloes and myrrh,  
Sits Rose-in-Bloom on a silk divan,  
Sipping the wines of Astrakhan ;  
And her Arab lover sits with her.  
*That's when the Sultan Shah-Zaman*  
*Goes to the city Ispahan.*



Now, when I see an extra light,  
Flaming, flickering on the night  
From my neighbor's casement opposite,  
I know as well as I know to pray,  
I know as well as a tongue can say,  
*That the innocent Sultan Shah-Zaman  
Has gone to the city Ispahan.*



## HASCHEESH.

## 1.



TRICKEN with thought, I staggered  
 through the night;  
 The heavens leaned down to me with  
 splendid fires;

The south-wind breathing upon unseen lyres,  
 Made music as I went; and to my sight  
 A Palace shaped itself against the skies:  
 Great sapphire-studded portals suddenly  
 Opened on vast Ionic galleries  
 Of gold and porphyry, and I could see,  
 Through half-drawn curtains that let in the day,  
 Dim tropic gardens stretching far away!

## 2.

Ah! what a wonder seized upon my soul,  
 When from that structure of the upper airs  
 I saw unfold a flight of crystal stairs  
 For my ascending. . . . Then I heard the roll  
 Of unseen oceans clashing at the Pole. . . .

A terror fell upon me . . . . a vague sense  
Of near calamity. O, lead me hence!  
I shrieked, and lo! from out a darkling hole  
That opened at my feet, crawled after me,  
Up the broad staircase, creatures of huge size,  
Fanged, warty monsters, with their lips and eyes  
Hung with slim leeches sucking hungrily. —  
Away, vile drug! I will avoid thy spell,  
Honey of Paradise, black dew of Hell!



## A PRELUDE.



ASSAN BEN ABDUL at the Ivory  
Gate

Of Bagdad sat and chattered in the sun,  
Like any magpie chattered to himself,  
And four lank, swarthy Arab boys that stopt  
A gambling game with peach-pits, and drew near.  
Then Iman Khan, the friend of thirsty souls,  
The seller of pure water, ceased his cry,  
And placed his water-skins against the gate, —  
They looked so like him, with their sallow cheeks  
Puffed out like Iman's. Then a eunuch came  
And swung a pack of sweetmeats from his head,  
And stood, — a hideous pagan cut in jet.  
And then a Jew, whose sandal-straps were red  
With desert-dust, limped, cringing, to the crowd, —  
He, too, would listen; and close after him  
A jeweller that glittered like his shop:  
Then two blind mendicants, who wished to go  
Six diverse ways at once, came stumbling by,  
But hearing Hassan chatter, sat them down.

And if the Khaleef had been riding near,  
He would have paused to listen like the rest,  
For Hassan's fame was ripe in all the East.  
From spicy Cairo to far Ispahan,  
From Mecca to Damascus, he was known,  
Hassan, the Arab with the Singing Heart.  
His songs were sung by boatmen on the Nile,  
By Beddowee maidens, and in Tartar camps,  
While all men loved him as they love their eyes ;  
And when he spake, the wisest, next to him,  
Was he who listened. And thus Hassan sung.  
— And I, a stranger, lingering in Bagdad,  
Half English and half Arab, by my beard !  
Caught at the gilded epic as it grew,  
And for my Christian brothers wrote it down.



## A TURKISH LEGEND.



CERTAIN Pasha, dead five thousand  
 years,  
 Once from his harem fled in sudden  
 tears.

And had this sentence on the city's gate  
 Deeply engraven, 'Only God is great.'

So these four words above the city's noise  
 Hung like the accents of an angel's voice ;

And evermore, from the high barbican,  
 Saluted each returning caravan.

Lost is that city's glory. Every gust  
 Lifts, with crisp leaves, the unknown Pasha's dust.

And all is ruin, — save one wrinkled gate  
 Whereon is written, 'Only God is great.'



INTERLUDES.









## INTERLUDES.



### THE FADED VIOLET.



WHAT thought is folded in thy leaves !  
What tender thought, what speechless  
pain !

I hold thy faded lips to mine,  
Thou darling of the April rain !

I hold thy faded lips to mine,  
Though scent and azure tint are fled, —  
O dry, mute lips ! ye are the type  
Of something in me cold and dead :

Of something wilted like thy leaves ;  
Of fragrance flown, of beauty gone ;  
Yet, for the love of those white hands  
That found thee, April's earliest-born, —

That found thee when thy dewy mouth  
Was purpled as with stains of wine, —  
For love of her who love forgot,  
I hold thy faded lips to mine.

That thou shouldst live when I am dead,  
When hate is dead, for me, and wrong,  
For this, I use my subtlest art,  
For this, I fold thee in my song.



## GHOSTS.



THOSE forms we fancy shadows, those  
strange lights

That flash on dank morasses, the quick  
wind

That smites us by the roadside, — are the Night's  
Innumerable children. Unconfined  
By shroud or coffin, disembodied souls,  
Uneasy spirits, steal into the air  
From ancient graveyards when the curfew tolls  
At the day's death. Pestilence and despair  
Fly with the sightless bats at set of sun.  
And wheresoever murders have been done,  
In crowded palaces or lonesome woods,  
Where'er a soul has sold itself and lost  
Its high inheritance, there, hovering, broods  
Some sad, invisible, accurséd Ghost!



## D E A D .



SORROWFUL woman said to me,  
'Come in and look on our child.'  
I saw an Angel at shut of day,

And it never spoke, — but smiled.

I think of it in the city's streets,  
I dream of it when I rest, —  
The violet eyes, the waxen hands,  
And the one white rose on the breast!



## THE LUNCH.



GOTHIC window, where a damask  
curtain

Made the blank daylight shadowy and  
uncertain :

A slab of agate on four eagle-talons

Held trimly up and neatly taught to balance :

A porcelain dish, o'er which in many a cluster

Plump grapes hung down, dead-ripe and without  
lustre :

A melon cut in thin, delicious slices :

A cake that seemed mosaic-work in spices :

Two China cups with golden tulips sunny,

And rich inside with chocolate like honey ;

And she and I the banquet-scene completing

With dreamy words, — and very pleasant eating !



## BEFORE THE RAIN.



WE knew it would rain, for all the morn,  
A spirit on slender ropes of mist  
Was lowering its golden buckets down  
Into the vapory amethyst

Of marshes and swamps and dismal fens, —  
Scooping the dew that lay in the flowers,  
Dipping the jewels out of the sea,  
To sprinkle them over the land in showers.

We knew it would rain, for the poplars showed  
The white of their leaves, the amber grain  
Shrunk in the wind, — and the lightning now  
Is tangled in tremulous skeins of rain !



AFTER THE RAIN.



THE rain has ceased, and in my room  
The sunshine pours an airy flood ;  
And on the church's dizzy vane  
The ancient Cross is bathed in blood.

From out the dripping ivy-leaves,  
Antiquely-carven, gray and high,  
A dormer, facing westward, looks  
Upon the village like an eye :

And now it glimmers in the sun,  
A globe of gold, a disc, a speck :  
And in the belfry sits a Dove  
With purple ripples on her neck.



## W E D D E D .

[PROVENÇAL AIR.]

1.



HE happy bells shall ring,  
*Marguèrite* ;  
 The summer birds shall sing,  
*Marguèrite* ; —  
 You smile, but you shall wear  
 Orange blossoms in your hair,  
*Marguèrite*.

2.

Ah me! the bells have rung,  
*Marguèrite* ;  
 The summer birds have sung,  
*Marguèrite* ; —  
 But cypress leaf and rue  
 Make a sorry wreath for you,  
*Marguèrite*.





THE BLUEBELLS OF NEW ENGLAND.



THE roses are a regal troop,  
And humble folks the daisies ;  
But, Bluebells of New England,  
To you I give my praises, —  
To you, fair phantoms in the sun,  
Whom merry Spring discovers,  
With bluebirds for your laureates,  
And honey-bees for lovers.

The south-wind breathes, and lo ! you throng  
This rugged land of ours :  
I think the pale blue clouds of May  
Drop down, and turn to flowers !  
By cottage doors along the roads  
You show your winsome faces,  
And, like the spectre lady, haunt  
The lonely woodland places.

All night your eyes are closed in sleep,  
Kept fresh for day's adorning :

Such simple faith as yours can see  
God's coming in the morning !  
You lead me by your holiness  
To pleasant ways of duty :  
You set my thoughts to melody,  
You fill me with your beauty.

And you are like the eyes I love,  
So modest and so tender,  
Just touched with daybreak's glorious light,  
And evening's quiet splendor.  
Long may the heavens give you rain,  
The sunshine its caresses,  
Long may the woman that I love  
Entwine you in her tresses.



NORA M<sup>c</sup>CARTY.

[IRISH AIR.]

1.



NORA is pretty,  
 Nora is witty,  
 Witty and pretty as pretty can be!  
 She's the completest  
 Of girls, and the neatest,  
 The brightest and sweetest:  
 But she's not for me.

*Mavourneen!*

2.

Nora, be still, you!  
 Nora, why will you  
 Be witty and pretty as pretty can be,  
 So strong and so slender,  
 So haughty and tender,  
 So sweet in your splendor,—  
 And yet not for me?

*Mavourneen!*

## THE MOORLAND.



THE moorland lies a dreary waste ;  
The night is dark with drizzling rain ;  
In yonder yawning cave of cloud  
The snaky lightning writhes with pain.

O sobbing rain, outside my door,  
O wailing phantoms, make your moan ;  
Go through the night in blind despair, —  
Your shadowy lips have touched my own.

No more the robin breaks its heart  
Of music in the pathless woods !  
The ravens croak for such as I,  
The plovers screech above their broods.

All mournful things are friends of mine,  
(That weary sound of falling leaves !)  
Ah, there is not a kindred soul  
For me on earth, but moans and grieves.

I cannot sleep this lonesome night :  
The ghostly rain goes by in haste,  
And, further than the eye can reach,  
The moorland lies a dreary waste.



## NAMELESS PAIN.



IN my nostrils the summer wind  
Blows the exquisite scent of the rose!  
O for the golden, golden wind,  
Breaking the buds as it goes,  
Breaking the buds, and bending the grass,  
And spilling the scent of the rose!

O wind of the summer morn,  
Tearing the petals in twain,  
Wafting the fragrant soul  
Of the rose through valley and plain,  
I would you could tear my heart to-day,  
And scatter its nameless pain.



## THE GIRLS.

1.



MARIAN, May, and Maud  
Have not past me by, —  
Archéd foot, and mobile mouth,  
And bronze-brown eye!

2.

When my hair is gray,  
Then I shall be wise;  
Then, thank heaven! I shall not care  
For bronze-brown eyes.

3.

Then let Maud and May  
And Marian pass me by;  
So they do not scorn me now  
What care I?



## MURDER DONE.

1.



INVISIBLE fingers of air  
 Just lifted the curtain's fold,  
 Just rippled the calm of her loosened  
 hair, —

Beautiful, treacherous gold!  
 And she stood like the thought of a sculptor, carved  
 In marble, snowy and cold;  
 But her pure, sweet look was as foul a lie  
 As ever a woman told!

2.

A statue lay stark at my feet,  
 Dead to the finger-tips.  
 A darkness hung in the lengths of her hair,  
 And shadowed her perjured lips.  
 I strangled her voice, but, O heaven!  
 I could not strangle one moan  
 That followed me out in the silent streets  
 As I fled through the midnight alone.



— This in a dream. Now I ask,  
Am I guilty as if I were caught  
With my hands at her throat? Is it murder  
done? —  
I murdered her in my thought!



## GLAMOURIE.



UNDER the night,  
 In the white moonshine,  
 Sit thou with me,  
 By the graveyard tree,  
 Imogene.

The fireflies swarm  
 In the white moonshine,  
 Each with its light  
 For our bridal night,  
 Imogene.

Blushing with love,  
 In the white moonshine,  
 Lie in my arms,  
 So, safe from alarms,  
 Imogene.

Paler art thou  
 Than the white moonshine.  
 Ho! thou art lost, —  
 Thou lovest a Ghost,  
 Imogene!

## M A Y .

## 1.



EBE 's here, May is here !  
The air is fresh and sunny ;  
And the miser-bees are busy  
Hoarding golden honey !

## 2.

See the knots of buttercups,  
And the double pansies, —  
Thick as these, within my brain,  
Grow the wildest fancies !

## 3.

Let me write my songs to-day,  
Rhymes with dulcet closes, —  
Four-line epics one might hide  
In the hearts of roses.

## PALABRAS CARIÑOSAS.

[SPANISH AIR.]



GOOD-NIGHT ! I have to say good-night  
 To such a host of peerless things !  
 Good-night unto that fragile hand  
 All queenly with its weight of rings ;  
 Good-night to fond, up-lifted eyes,  
 Good-night to chestnut braids of hair,  
 Good-night unto the perfect mouth,  
 And all the sweetness nestled there, —  
 The snowy hand detains me, then  
 I'll have to say Good-night again !

But there will come a time, my love,  
 When, if I read our stars aright,  
 I shall not linger by this porch  
 With my adieus. Till then, good-night !  
 You wish the time were now ? And I.  
 You do not blush to wish it so ?  
 You would have blushed yourself to death  
 To own so much a year ago, —  
 What, both these snowy hands ! ah, then,  
 I'll have to say Good-night again !

## LITTLE MAUD.



WHERE is our dainty, our darling,  
 The daintiest darling of all ?  
 Where is the voice on the stairway,

Where is the voice in the hall ?  
 The little short steps in the entry,  
 The silvery laugh in the hall ?  
 Where is our dainty, our darling,  
 The daintiest darling of all,  
*Little Maud ?*

The peaches are ripe in the orchard,  
 The apricots ready to fall ;  
 And the grapes reach up to the sunshine  
 Over the garden-wall.  
 O rosebud of women ! where are you ?  
 (She never replies to our call !)  
 Where is our dainty, our darling,  
 The daintiest darling of all,  
*Little Maud ?*

## AT THE MORGUE.



HERE is where they bring the dead  
 When they rise from the river's bed :  
 Sinful women, who have thrown  
 Away the life they would not own, —  
 Life despised and trampled down !

Sad enough ! Now, you who write  
 Plays that give the world delight,  
 Tell me if in this you see  
 Naught for your new tragedy ?  
 Ha ! you start, you turn from me  
 A face brimful of misery !  
 Do you know that woman there,  
 That icy image of Despair ?  
 Have you heard her softly speak ?  
 Have you kissed her, lip and cheek ?  
 Faith ! you do not kiss her now,  
 Poor young mouth, and pale young brow,  
 Drenchéd hair, and glassy eye —  
 Go, put that in your tragedy.

## SONGS.

## I.



HAVE placed a golden  
Ring upon the hand  
Of the blithest little  
Lady in the land!

When the early roses  
Scent the sunny air,  
She shall gather white ones  
To tremble in her hair!

Hasten, happy roses,  
Come to me by May, —  
In your folded petals  
Lies my wedding-day.

## II.

THE chestnuts shine through the cloven rind,  
And the woodland leaves are red, my dear;

The scarlet fuchsias burn in the wind, —  
 Funeral plumes for the Year!

The Year which has brought me so much woe,  
 That if it were not for you, my dear,  
 I could wish the fuchsias' fire might glow  
 For me as well as the Year.

### III.

THE blackbird sings in the hazel-brake,  
 And the squirrel sits on the tree;  
 And Blanche she walks in the merry greenwood,  
 Down by the summer sea.

The blackbird lies when he sings of love,  
 And the squirrel, a rogue is he;  
 And Blanche is an arrant flirt, I swear,  
 And light as light can be.

O blackbird, die in the hazel-brake!  
 And, squirrel, starve on the tree!  
 And Blanche — you may walk in the merry green-  
 wood,  
 You are nothing more to me.



## IV.

OUT from the depths of my heart  
Had arisen this single cry,  
Let me behold my beloved,  
Let me behold her, and die.

At last, like a sinful soul  
At the portals of Heaven I lie,  
Never to walk with the blest,  
Ah, never! . . . only to die.



## HESPERIDES.



I thy soul, Herrick, dwelt with me,  
This is what my songs would be :  
Hints of our sea-breezes, blent  
With odors from the Orient ;  
Indian vessels deep with spice ;  
Star-showers from the Norland ice ;  
Wine-red jewels that seem to hold  
Fire, but only burn with cold ;  
Antique goblets, strangely wrought,  
Filled with the wine of happy thought ;  
Bridal measures, vain regrets,  
Laburnum buds and violets ;  
Hopeful as the break of day ;  
Clear as crystal ; new as May ;  
Musical as brooks that run  
O'er yellow shallows in the sun ;  
Soft as the satin fringe that shades  
The eyelids of thy fragrant maids ;  
Brief as thy lyrics, Herrick, are,  
And polished as the bosom of a star.

## THE POET.



HE wasted richest gifts of God.

But here 's the limit of his woes,

Sleep rest him! See, above him  
grows

The very grass whereon he trod.

He walked with dæmons, ghouls, and things

Unsightly . . . terrors and despairs,

And ever in the blackened airs

A dismal raven flapt its wings.

Behold! within this narrow grave

Is shut the baser part of him.

Behold! he could not wholly dim

The genius gracious heaven gave, —

For strains of music here and there,

Weird murmurings, vague, prophetic tones,

Are blown across the silent zones

Forever in the midnight air.

## THE ROBIN.



FROM out the blossomed cherry-tops  
Sing, blithesome Robin, chant and sing ;  
With chirp, and trill, and magic-stops  
Win thou the listening ear of Spring !

For while thou lingerest in delight,  
An idle poet, with thy rhyme,  
The summer hours will take their flight  
And leave thee in a barren clime.

Not all the Autumn's brittle gold,  
Nor sun, nor moon, nor star shall bring  
The jocund spirit which of old  
Made it an easy joy to sing !

So said a poet, — having lost  
The precious time when he was young, —  
Now wandering by the wintry coast  
With empty heart and silent tongue.



THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL,  
AND OTHER POEMS.







## THE BALLAD OF BABIE BELL.

### I.



AVE you not heard the poets tell  
How came the dainty Babie Bell  
Into this world of ours?

The gates of heaven were left ajar :  
With folded hands and dreamy eyes,  
Wandering out of Paradise,  
She saw this planet, like a star,  
Hung in the glistening depths of even, —  
Its bridges, running to and fro,  
O'er which the white-winged Angels go,  
Bearing the holy Dead to heaven.

She touched a bridge of flowers, — those feet,  
So light they did not bend the bells  
Of the celestial asphodels !  
They fell like dew upon the flowers,  
Then all the air grew strangely sweet !  
And thus came dainty Babie Bell  
Into this world of ours.

## II.

She came and brought delicious May.

The swallows built beneath the eaves ;

Like sunlight in and out the leaves,

The robins went, the livelong day ;

The lily swung its noiseless bell,

And o'er the porch the trembling vine

Seemed bursting with its veins of wine :

How sweetly, softly, twilight fell !

O, earth was full of singing-birds,

And opening spring-tide flowers,

When the dainty *Babie Bell*

Came to this world of ours !

## III.

O *Babie*, dainty *Babie Bell*,

How fair she grew from day to day !

What woman-nature filled her eyes,

What poetry within them lay :

Those deep and tender twilight eyes,

So full of meaning, pure and bright

As if she yet stood in the light

Of those oped gates of *Paradise*.

And so we loved her more and more :



Ah, never in our hearts before  
 Was love so lovely born :  
 We felt we had a link between  
 This real world and that unseen, —  
 The land beyond the morn.  
 And for the love of those dear eyes,  
 For love of her whom God led forth,  
 (The mother's being ceased on earth  
 When Babie came from Paradise,) —  
 For love of Him who smote our lives,  
 And woke the chords of joy and pain,  
 We said, *Dear Christ!* — our hearts bent down  
 Like violets after rain.

IV.

And now the orchards, which were white  
 And red with blossoms when she came,  
 Were rich in autumn's mellow prime :  
 The clustered apples burnt like flame,  
 The soft-cheeked peaches blushed and fell,  
 The ivory chestnut burst its shell,  
 The grapes hung purpling in the grange :  
 And time wrought just as rich a change  
 In little Babie Bell.

Her lissome form more perfect grew,  
 And in her features we could trace,  
 In softened curves, her mother's face!  
 Her angel-nature ripened too.  
 We thought her lovely when she came,  
 But she was holy, saintly now . . .  
 Around her pale angelic brow  
 We saw a slender ring of flame!

## v.

God's hand had taken away the seal  
 That held the portals of her speech;  
 And oft she said a few strange words  
 Whose meaning lay beyond our reach.  
 She never was a child to us,  
 We never held her being's key:  
 We could not teach her holy things:  
 She was Christ's self in purity.

## vi.

It came upon us by degrees:  
 We saw its shadow ere it fell,  
 The knowledge that our God had sent  
 His messenger for Babie Bell.

We shuddered with unlanguage'd pain,  
And all our hopes were changed to fears,  
And all our thoughts ran into tears  
Like sunshine into rain.

We cried aloud in our belief,  
'O, smite us gently, gently, God!  
Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,  
And perfect grow through grief.'  
Ah, how we loved her, God can tell;  
Her heart was folded deep in ours.  
Our hearts are broken, *Babie Bell!*

VII.

At last he came, the messenger,  
The messenger from unseen lands:  
And what did dainty *Babie Bell?*  
She only crossed her little hands,  
She only looked more meek and fair!  
We parted back her silken hair:  
We wove the roses round her brow,  
White buds, the summer's drifted snow, —  
Wrapt her from head to foot in flowers!  
And thus went dainty *Babie Bell*  
Out of this world of ours!

## PISCATAQUA RIVER.

1860.



THOU singest by the gleaming isles,  
By woods and fields of corn,  
Thou singest, and the heaven smiles  
Upon my birthday morn.

But I within a city, I,  
So full of vague unrest,  
Would almost give my life to lie  
An hour upon thy breast.

To let the wherry listless go,  
And, wrapt in dreamy joy,  
Dip, and surge idly to and fro,  
Like the red harbor-buoy!

To sit in happy indolence,  
To rest upon the oars,  
And catch the heavy earthy scents  
That blow from summer shores:

To see the rounded sun go down,  
And with its parting fires  
Light up the windows of the town  
And burn the tapering spires !

And then to hear the muffled tolls  
From steeples slim and white,  
And watch, among the Isles of Shoals,  
The Beacon's orange light,

O River ! flowing to the main  
Through woods and fields of corn,  
Hear thou my longing and my pain  
This sunny birthday morn :

And take this song which sorrow shapes  
To music like thine own,  
And sing it to the cliffs and capes  
And crags where I am known !

## PYTHAGORAS.



**A**BOVE the petty passions of the crowd  
 I stand in frozen marble like a god,  
 Inviolate, and ancient as the moon.  
 The thing I am, and not the thing Man is,  
 Fills my deep dreaming. Let him moan and die;  
 For he is dust that shall be laid again :  
 I know my own creation was divine.  
 Strewn on the breezy continents I see  
 The veinèd shells and burnished scales which once  
 Enclosed my being, — husks that had their use ;  
 I brood on all the shapes I must attain  
 Before I reach the Perfect, which is God,  
 And dream my dream, and let the rabble go ;  
 For I am of the mountains and the sea,  
 The deserts, and the caverns in the earth,  
 The catacombs and fragments of old worlds.  
 I was a spirit on the mountain-tops,  
 A perfume in the valleys, a simoom  
 On arid deserts, a nomadic wind

Roaming the universe, a tireless Voice.  
I was ere Romulus and Remus were ;  
I was ere Nineveh and Babylon ;  
I was, and am, and evermore shall be,  
Progressing, never reaching to the end.

A hundred years I trembled in the grass,  
The delicate trefoil that muffled warm  
A slope on Ida ; for a hundred years  
Moved in the purple gyre of those dark flowers  
The Grecian women strew upon the dead.  
Under the earth, in fragrant glooms, I dwelt ;  
Then in the veins and sinews of a pine  
On a lone isle, where, from the Cyclades,  
A mighty wind, like a leviathan,  
Ploughed through the brine, and from those soli-  
tudes  
Sent Silence, frightened. To and fro I swayed,  
Drawing the sunshine from the stooping clouds.  
Suns came and went, and many a mystic moon,  
Orbing and waning, and fierce meteors,  
Leaving their lurid ghosts to haunt the night.  
I heard loud voices by the sounding shore,  
The stormy sea-gods, and from fluted conchs  
Wild music, and strange shadows floated by,

Some moaning and some singing. So the years  
Clustered about me, till the hand of God  
Let down the lightning from a sultry sky,  
Splintered the pine and split the iron rock ;  
And from my odorous prison-house a bird,  
I in its bosom, darted : so we fled,  
Turning the brittle edge of one high wave,  
Island and tree and sea-gods left behind !

Free as the air from zone to zone I flew,  
Far from the tumult to the quiet gates  
Of daybreak ; and beneath me I beheld  
Vineyards, and rivers that like silver threads  
Ran through the green and gold of pasture-lands,  
And here and there a hamlet, a white rose,  
And here and there a city, whose slim spires  
And palace-roofs and swollen domes uprose  
Like scintillant stalagmites in the sun ;  
I saw huge navies battling with a storm  
By ragged reefs along the desolate coasts,  
And lazy merchantmen, that crawled, like flies,  
Over the blue enamel of the sea  
To India or the icy Labradors.

A century was as a single day.  
What is a day to an immortal soul ?



A breath, no more. And yet I hold one hour  
Beyond all price, — that hour when from the sky  
I circled near and nearer to the earth,  
Nearer and nearer, till I brushed my wings  
Against the pointed chestnuts, where a stream  
That foamed and chattered over pebbly shoals,  
Fled through the briony, and with a shout  
Leapt headlong down a precipice; and there,  
Gathering wild-flowers in the cool ravine,  
Wandered a woman more divinely shaped  
Than any of the creatures of the air,  
Or river-goddesses, or restless shades  
Of noble matrons marvellous in their time  
For beauty and great suffering; and I sung,  
I charmed her thought, I gave her dreams, and then  
Down from the dewy atmosphere I stole  
And nestled in her bosom. There I slept  
From moon to moon, while in her eyes a thought  
Grew sweet and sweeter, deepening like the dawn, —  
A mystical forewarning! When the stream,  
Breaking through leafless brambles and dead leaves,  
Piped shriller treble, and from chestnut boughs  
The fruit dropt noiseless through the autumn night,  
I gave a quick, low cry, as infants do :

We weep when we are born, not when we die !  
So was it destined ; and thus came I here,  
To walk the earth and wear the form of Man,  
To suffer bravely as becomes my state,  
One step, one grade, one cycle nearer God.

And knowing these things, can I stoop to fret,  
And lie, and haggle in the market-place,  
Give dross for dross, or everything for naught ?  
No ! let me sit above the crowd, and sing,  
Waiting with hope for that miraculous change  
Which seems like sleep ; and though I waiting  
starve,

I cannot kiss the idols that are set  
By every gate, in every street and park ;  
I cannot fawn, I cannot soil my soul :  
For I am of the mountains and the sea,  
The deserts and the caverns in the earth,  
The catacombs and fragments of old worlds.



A BALLAD OF NANTUCKET.



HERE go you, pretty Maggie,  
Where go you in the rain ?'

'I go to ask the sailors  
Who sailed the Spanish main,

'If they have seen my Willie,  
If he'll come back to me, —  
It is so sad to have him  
A-sailing on the sea.'

'O Maggie, pretty Maggie,  
Turn back to yonder town ;  
Your Willie 's in the ocean,  
A hundred fathoms down !

'His hair is turned to sea-kelp,  
His eyes are changed to stones,  
And twice two years have knitted  
The coral round his bones !

‘The blossoms and the clover  
Shall bloom and bloom again,  
But never shall your lover  
Come o’er the Spanish main!’

But Maggie never heeded,  
For mournfully said she :  
‘It is so sad to have him  
A-sailing on the sea.’

She left me in the darkness :  
I heard the sea-gulls screech,  
And burly winds were growling  
With breakers on the beach.

The bells of old Nantucket,  
What touching things they said,  
When Maggie lay a-sleeping  
With lilies round her head.

The parson preached a sermon,  
And prayed and preached again, —  
But she had gone to Willie  
Across the Spanish main !

## THE TRAGEDY.

## LA DAME AUX CAMELIAS.



*A Dame aux Camelias, —*

I think that was the play ;  
The house was packed from pit to dome  
With the gallant and the gay,  
Who had come to see the Tragedy,  
And wile the hours away.

There was the ruined Spendthrift,  
And Beauty in her prime ;  
There was the grave Historian,  
And there the man of Rhyme,  
And the surly Critic, front to front,  
To see the play of Crime.

And there was pompous Ignorance,  
And Vice in Honiton lace ;  
Sir Crœsus and Sir Pandarus, —  
And the music played apace.

But of all that crowd I only saw  
A single, single face!

That of a girl whom I had known  
In the summers long ago,  
When her breath was like the new-mown hay,  
Or the sweetest flowers that grow, —  
When her heart was light, and her soul was white  
As the winter's driven snow.

And there she sat with her great brown eyes,  
They wore a troubled look ;  
And I read the history of her life  
As it were an open book ;  
And saw her Soul, like a slimy thing  
In the bottom of a brook.

There she sat in her rustling silk,  
With diamonds on her wrist,  
And on her brow a gleaming thread  
Of pearl and amethyst.  
'A cheat, a gilded grief!' I said,  
And my eyes were filled with mist.

I could not see the players play,  
I heard the music moan ;

It moaned like a dismal autumn wind,  
That dies in the woods alone ;  
And when it stopped I heard it still,  
The mournful monotone !

What if the Count were true or false ?  
I did not care, not I ;  
What if Camille for Armand died ?  
I did not see her die.  
There sat a woman opposite  
Who held me with her eye !

The great green curtain fell on all,  
On laugh, and wine, and woe,  
Just as death some day will fall  
'Twixt us and life, I know !  
The play was done, the bitter play,  
And the people turned to go.

And did they see the Tragedy ?  
They saw the painted scene ;  
They saw Armand, the jealous fool,  
And the sick Parisian queen ;

But they did not see the Tragedy, —  
The one I saw, I mean !

They did not see that cold-cut face,  
That furtive look of care :  
Or, seeing her jewels, only said,  
'The lady 's rich and fair.'  
But I tell you, 't was the Play of Life,  
And that woman played Despair !





## HAUNTED.



NOISOME mildewed vine  
Crawls to the rotting caves ;  
The gate has dropt from the rusty hinge  
And the walks are stamped with leaves.

Close by the shattered fence  
The red-clay road runs by  
To a haunted wood, where the hemlocks groan  
And the willows sob and sigh.

Among the dank lush flowers  
The spiteful firefly glows,  
And a woman steals by the stagnant pond  
Wrapt in her burial clothes.

There 's a dark blue scar on her throat,  
And ever she makes a moan,  
And the humid lizards shine in the grass,  
And the lichens weep on the stone ;

And the Moon shrinks in a cloud,  
And the traveller shakes with fear,  
And an Owl on the skirts of the wood  
Hoots, and says, Do you hear ?

Go not there at night,  
For a spell hangs over all, —  
The palsied elms, and the dismal road,  
And the broken garden-wall.

O, go not there at night,  
For a curse is on the place ;  
Go not there, for fear you meet  
The Murdered face to face !



## PAMPINEA.

## AN IDYL.



LIVING by the summer sea  
I had a dream of Italy.  
Chalky cliffs and miles of sand,  
Mossy reefs and salty caves,  
Then the sparkling emerald waves,  
Faded ; and I seemed to stand,  
Myself a languid Florentine,  
In the heart of that fair land.  
And in a garden cool and green,  
Boccaccio's own enchanted place,  
I met Pampinea face to face, —  
A maid so lovely that to see  
Her smile is to know Italy !  
Her hair was like a coronet  
Upon her Grecian forehead set,  
Where one gem glistened sunnily  
Like Venice, when first seen at sea.

I saw within her violet eyes  
The starlight of Italian skies,  
And on her brow and breast and hand  
The olive of her native land !

And knowing how in other times  
Her lips were ripe with Tuscan rhymes  
Of love and wine and dance, I spread  
My mantle by an almond-tree,  
'And here, beneath the rose,' I said,  
'I'll hear thy Tuscan melody.'  
I heard a tale that was not told  
In those ten dreamy days of old,  
When Heaven, for some divine offence,  
Smote Florence with the pestilence ;  
And in that garden's odorous shade,  
The dames of the Decameron,  
With each a loyal lover, strayed,  
To laugh and sing, at sorest need,  
To lie in the lilies in the sun  
With glint of plume and silver brede !  
And while she whispered in my ear,  
The pleasant Arno murmured near,  
The dewy, slim chameleons run

Through twenty colors in the sun ;  
The breezes broke the fountain's glass,  
And woke æolian melodies,  
And shook from out the scented trees  
The lemon-blossoms on the grass.  
The tale ? I have forgot the tale, —  
A Lady all for love forlorn,  
A rose-bud, and a nightingale  
That bruised his bosom on the thorn :  
A pot of rubies buried deep,  
A glen, a corpse, a child asleep,  
A Monk, that was no monk at all,  
In the moonlight by a castle wall.

Now while the large-eyed Tuscan wove  
The gilded thread of her romance, —  
Which I have lost by grievous chance, —  
The one dear woman that I love,  
Beside me in our sea-side nook,  
Closed a white finger in her book,  
Half vex't that she should read, and weep  
For Petrarch, to a man asleep !  
And scorning me, so tame and cold,  
She rose, and wandered down the shore,

Her wine-dark drapery, fold in fold,  
Imprisoned by an ivory hand ;  
And on a ledge of oölite, half in sand,  
She stood, and looked at Appledore.

And waking, I beheld her there  
Sea-dreaming in the moted air,  
A siren lithe and debonair,  
With wristlets woven of scarlet weeds,  
And oblong lucent amber beads  
Of sea-kelp shining in her hair.  
And as I thought of dreams, and how  
The something in us never sleeps,  
But laughs, or sings, or moans, or weeps,  
She turned, — and on her breast and brow  
I saw the tint that seemed not won  
From kisses of New England sun ;  
I saw on brow and breast and hand  
The olive of a sunnier land !  
She turned, — and, lo ! within her eyes  
There lay the starlight of Italian skies !

Most dreams are dark, beyond the range  
Of reason ; oft we cannot tell  
If they are born of heaven or hell :

But to my soul it seems not strange  
That, lying by the summer sea,  
With that dark woman watching me,  
I slept and dreamed of Italy!



## A GREAT MAN'S DEATH.



TO-DAY a god died. Never any more  
 Shall man look on him. Never any  
 more,

In hall or senate, shall his eloquent voice  
 Give hope to a sick nation. In his prime  
 Not all the world could daunt him; yet a ghost,  
 A poor mute ghost, a something we call Death,  
 Has silenced him forever. Let the land  
 Look for his peer: he has not yet been found.

A callow bird, of not so many days  
 As there are leaves upon the wildling rose,  
 Chirps from yon sycamore; this violet  
 Sprung up an hour since from the fibrous earth:  
 At noon the rain fell, and to-night the sun  
 Will sink with its old grandeur in the sea, —  
 And yet to-day a god died. . . . Nature smiles  
 On our mortality. A sparrow's death,  
 Or the unnoticed falling of a leaf,  
 Is more to her than when a great man dies!



## KATHIE MORRIS.

## AN OLD MAN'S POEM.

## 1.



H! fine it was that April time, when  
gentle winds were blowing,  
To hunt for pale arbutus-blooms that  
hide beneath the leaves,  
To hear the slanting rain come down, and see the  
clover growing,  
And watch the airy swallows as they darted round  
the eaves!

## 2.

You wonder why I dream to-night of clover that  
was growing  
So many years ago, my wife, when we were in our  
prime;  
For, hark! the wind is in the flue, and Johnny  
says 't is snowing,  
And through the storm the clanging bells ring in  
the Christmas time.

## 3.

I cannot tell, but something sweet about my heart  
is clinging.

A vision and a memory, — 't is little that I mind  
The weary wintry weather, for I hear the robins  
singing,

And the petals of the apple-blooms are ruffled in  
the wind!

## 4.

It was a sunny morn in May, and in the fragrant  
meadow

I lay, and dreamed of one fair face, as fair and fresh  
as spring :

Would Kathie Morris love me? then in sunshine  
and in shadow

I built up lofty castles on a golden wedding-ring.

## 5.

O, sweet it was to dream of her, the soldier's only  
daughter,

The pretty pious Puritan, that flirted so with Will ;  
The music of her winsome mouth was like the  
laughing water

That broke in silvery syllables by Farmer Philip's  
mill.

## 6.

And Will had gone away to sea ; he did not leave  
her grieving ;  
Her bonny heart was not for him, so reckless and  
so vain ;  
And Will turned out a buccaneer, and hanged was  
he for thieving  
And scuttling helpless ships that sailed across the  
Spanish Main.

## 7.

And I had come to grief for her, the scornful vil-  
lage beauty,  
For, O ! she had a witty tongue could cut you like  
a knife ;  
She scorned me with her haughty eyes, and I, in  
bounden duty,  
Did love her, — loved her more for that, and wea-  
ried of my life !

## 8.

And yet 't was sweet to dream of her, to think her  
wavy tresses  
Might rest some happy, happy day, like sunshine,  
on my cheek ;

The idle winds that fanned my brow I dreamed  
were her caresses,  
And in the robin's twitterings I heard my sweet-  
heart speak.

## 9.

And as I lay and thought of her, her fairy face  
adorning  
With lover's fancies, treasuring the slightest word  
she 'd said,  
'T was Kathie broke upon me like a blushing  
summer morning,  
And a half-blown rosy clover reddened underneath  
her tread!

## 10.

Then I glanced up at Kathie, and her eyes were  
full of laughter:  
'O Kathie, Kathie Morris, I am lying at your  
feet;  
Bend above me, say you love me, that you 'll love  
me ever after,  
Or let me lie and die here, in the fragrant meadow-  
sweet!

## 11.

And then I turned my face away, and trembled at  
my daring,  
For wildly, wildly had I spoke, with flashing  
cheek and eye ;  
And there was silence ; I looked up, all pallid and  
despairing,  
For fear she 'd take me at my word, and leave me  
there to die.

## 12.

The modest lashes of her eyes upon her cheeks  
were drooping,  
Her merciless white fingers tore a blushing bud  
apart ;  
Then, quick as lightning, Kathie came, and kneel-  
ing half and stooping,  
She hid her bonny, bonny face against my beating  
heart.

## 13.

O, nestle, nestle, nestle there ! the heart would  
give thee greeting ;  
Lie thou there, all trustfully, in trouble and in  
pain ;

This breast shall shield thee from the storm and  
bear its bitter beating,  
These arms shall hold thee tenderly in sunshine  
and in rain.

## 14.

Old sexton! set your chimes in tune, and let there  
be no snarling,  
Ring out a joyous wedding-hymn to all the listen-  
ing air;  
And, girls, strew roses as she comes, the scornful,  
brown-eyed darling, —  
A princess, by the wavy gold and glistening of  
her hair!

## 15.

Hark! hear the bells. The Christmas bells? O,  
no; who set them ringing?  
I think I hear our bridal-bells, and I with joy am  
blind;  
I smell the clover in the fields, I hear the robins  
singing.  
And the petals of the apple-blooms are ruffled in  
the wind!

## 16.

Ah! Kathie, you 've been true to me in fair and  
cloudy weather;

Our Father has been good to us when we 've been  
sorely tried:

I pray to Him, when we must die, that we may  
die together,

And slumber softly underneath the clover, side by  
side.



## L A M I A .



O on your way, and let me pass.

You stop a wild despair.

I would that I were turned to brass

Like that chained lion there,

‘ Which, couchant by the postern gate,

In weather foul or fair,

Looks down serenely desolate,

And nothing does but stare !

‘ Ah, what ’s to me the burgeoned year,

The sad leaf or the gay ?

Let Launcelot and Queen Guinevere

Their falcons fly this day.

‘ ’T will be as royal sport, pardie,

As falconers have tried

At Astolat, — but let me be !

I would that I had died.



‘ I met a woman in the glade :  
Her hair was soft and brown,  
And long bent silken lashes weighed  
Her ivory eyelids down.

‘ I kissed her hand, I called her blest,  
I held her leal and fair, —  
She turned to shadow on my breast,  
And melted in the air !

‘ And, lo ! about me, fold on fold,  
A writhing serpent hung, —  
An eye of jet, a skin of gold,  
A garnet for a tongue !

‘ O, let the petted falcons fly  
Right merry in the sun ;  
But let me be ! for I shall die  
Before the year is done.’



## INVOCATION TO SLEEP.

## I.



HERE is a rest for all things. On still  
nights

There is a folding of a million  
wings, —

The swarming honey-bees in unknown woods,

The speckled butterflies, and downy broods

In dizzy poplar heights :

Rest for innumerable nameless things,

Rest for the creatures underneath the Sea,

And in the Earth, and in the starry Air . . . ,

Why will it not unburden me of care ?

It comes to meaner things than my despair.

O weary, weary night, that brings no rest to me !

## II.

Spirit of dreams and silvern memories,

Delicate Sleep !

One who is sickening of his tiresome days,

Brings thee a soul that he would have thee keep

A captive in thy mystical domain,

With Puck and Ariel, and the grotesque train  
That do inhabit slumber. Give his sight  
Immortal shapes, and bring to him again  
His Psyche that went out into the night!

## III.

Thou who dost hold the priceless keys of rest,  
Strew lotus-leaves and poppies on my breast,  
And bear me to thy castle in the land  
Touched with all colors like a burning west,—  
The Castle of Vision, where the unchecked thought  
Wanders at will upon enchanted ground,

Making no sound

In all the corridors . . .

The bell sleeps in the belfry,—from its tongue  
A drowsy murmur floats into the air,  
Like thistle-down. Slumber is everywhere.  
The rook's asleep, and, in its dreaming, caws;  
And silence mopes where nightingales have sung;  
The Sirens lie in grottos cool and deep:

The Naiads in the streams:

But I, in chilling twilight, stand and wait  
On the portcullis, at thy castle gate,  
Yearning to see the magic door of dreams  
Turn on its noiseless hinges, delicate Sleep!

## SEADRIFT.



SEE where she stands, on the wet sea-  
sands,

Looking across the water :

Wild is the night, but wilder still

The face of the fisher's daughter !

What does she there, in the lightning's glare,

What does she there, I wonder ?

What dread dæmon drags her forth

In the night and wind and thunder ?

Is it the ghost that haunts this coast ? —

The cruel waves mount higher,

And the beacon pierces the stormy dark

With its javelin of fire.

Beyond the light of the beacon bright

A merchantman is tacking ;

The hoarse wind whistling through the shrouds,

And the brittle topmasts cracking.

The sea it moans over dead men's bones,  
The sea it foams in anger ;  
The curlews swoop through the resonant air  
With a warning cry of danger.

The star-fish clings to the sea-weed's rings  
In a vague, dumb sense of peril ;  
And the spray, with its phantom-fingers, grasps  
At the mullein dry and sterile.

O, who is she that stands by the sea,  
In the lightning's glare, undaunted ? —  
Seems this now like the coast of hell  
By one white spirit haunted !

The night drags by ; and the breakers die  
Along the ragged ledges ;  
The robin stirs in its drenchéd nest,  
The hawthorn blooms on the hedges.

In shimmering lines, through the dripping pines,  
The stealthy morn advances ;  
And the heavy sea-fog straggles back  
Before those bristling lances !

Still she stands on the wet sea-sands ;  
The morning breaks above her,  
And the corpse of a sailor gleams on the rocks, —  
What if it were her lover ?



## THE QUEEN'S RIDE.

## AN INVITATION.



IS that fair time of year,

Lady mine,

When stately Guinevere,

In her sea-green robe and hood,

Went a-riding through the wood,

Lady mine.

And as the Queen did ride,

Lady mine,

Sir Launcelot at her side

Laughed and chatted, bending over,

Half her friend and all her lover!

Lady mine.

And as they rode along,

Lady mine,

The throstle gave them song,

And the buds peeped through the grass

To see youth and beauty pass !

Lady mine.

And on, through deathless time,

Lady mine,

These lovers in their prime,

(Two fairy ghosts together !)

Ride, with sea-green robe, and feather !

Lady mine.

And so we two will ride,

Lady mine,

At your pleasure, side by side,

Laugh and chat ; I bending over,

Half your friend and all your lover !

Lady mine.

But if you like not this,

Lady mine,

And take my love amiss,

Then I'll ride unto the end,

Half your lover, all your friend !

Lady mine.



So, come which way you will,  
    Lady mine,  
Vale, upland, plain and hill  
Wait your coming. For one day  
Loose the bridle, and away!  
    Lady mine.



## B A R B A R A .

[The Duke speaks.]

## I.



BARBARA has a falcon's eye,  
 And a soft white hand has Barbara ;  
 Beware, — for to make you wish to die,  
 To make you as pale as the moon or I,  
 Is a pet trick with Barbara.

Merrily bloweth the summer wind,  
 But cold and cruel is Barbara !  
 And I, a Duke, stand here like a hind,  
 Too happy, i' faith, if I am struck blind  
 By the sharp look of Barbara.

Ay, Sweetmou', you are haughty now ;  
 Time was, time was, my Barbara,  
 When I covered your lips and brow  
 And bosom with kisses, — faith, 't is snow  
 That was all fire then, Barbara.

For whom shall you hold Agatha's ring ?

Whom will you love next, Barbara ?

Choose from the Court, — your page or the King ?

Or one of those sleek-limbed fellows who bring

Rose-colored notes 'For Barbara ?'

Love the King, by all that is good !

Make eyes at him, sing to him, Barbara !

I think you might please his royal mood

For a month, and then, — what then if he *should*

Fling you aside, Queen Barbara ?

You might die out there on the moor,

(Where Rouel died for you, Barbara !)

For the world, you know, sets little store

On beauty, and charity closes the door

On fallen divinity, Barbara.

But if his Majesty grew so cold, —

In the dead of night, my Barbara,

I'd stalk to his chamber, Hate is bold,

And strangle him there in his ermine and gold,

And lay him beside you, Barbara !

## II.

MADAM, as you pass us by, .  
Dreaming of your loves and wine,  
Do not brush your rich brocade  
Against this little maid of mine,  
Madam, as you pass us by.

When in youth my blood was warm,  
Wine was royal, life complete ;  
So I drained the flasks of wine,  
So I sat at Circe's feet,  
When in youth my blood was warm.

Time has taught me pleasant truths :  
Lilies grow where thistles grew :  
Ah, you loved me not. This maid  
Loves me. There's an end of you !  
Time has taught me pleasant truths.

I will speak no bitter words :  
Too much passion made me blind.  
You were subtle. Let it go,  
For the sake of woman-kind !  
I will speak no bitter words.

But, Madam, as you pass us by,  
Dreaming of your loves and wine,  
Do not brush your rich brocade  
Against this little maid of mine,  
Madam, as you pass us by.







THE SET OF TURQUOISE.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COUNT OF LARA	. . . . .	<i>A poor nobleman.</i>
BEATRICE	. . . . .	<i>His wife.</i>
MIRIAM	} . . . . .	<i>Her dressing-maids.</i>
JACINTA		
A PAGE	. . . . .	<i>for the occasion.</i>







## THE SET OF TURQUOISE.

A DRAMATIC SKETCH.



SCENE I. — COUNT of LARA'S villa. A balcony overlooking the garden. Moonrise. LARA and BEATRICE.

LARA.



HE third moon of our marriage, Beatrice!

'T is like a face against the twilight sky,  
Making the air around it beautiful,  
Like that Madonna we at Florence saw,  
Fra Lippo Lippi's, the wild Carmelite.

BEATRICE.

Now, as 't is hidden by those drifts of cloud,  
With one thin edge just glimmering through the  
dark,

'T is like some strange, rich jewel of the east,  
In the cleft side of a mountain.

LARA.

Not unlike!

BEATRICE.

And that reminds me, — speaking of jewels, — love,  
There is a set of turquoise at Malan's,  
Ear-drops and bracelets and a necklace, — ah!  
If they were mine!

LARA.

And so they should be, dear,  
Were I Aladdin, and had slaves o' the lamp  
To fetch me ingots. Why, then, Beatrice,  
All Persia's turquoise-quarries should be yours,  
Although your hand is heavy now with gems  
That tear my lips when I would kiss its whiteness.  
O, so you pout! Well, well.

BEATRICE.

You love me not.

LARA.

A coquette's song.

BEATRICE.

I sing it.

LARA.

A poor song.

BEATRICE.

You love me not, or love me over-much,  
Which makes you jealous of the gems I wear.  
You do not deck me as becomes our state,  
For fear my grandeur should besiege the eyes  
Of Monte, Clari, Marcus, and the rest, —  
A precious set! You 're jealous, Sir!

LARA.

Not I.

I love you.

BEATRICE.

Why, that is as easy said  
As any three short words; takes no more breath  
To say, 'I hate you.' What, Sir, have I lived  
Three times four weeks your wedded, loyal wife,  
And do not know your follies? I will wager  
The rarest kisses I know how to give  
Against the turquoise, that within a month

You 'll grow so jealous, — and without a cause,  
Or with a reason thin as window-glass, —  
That you will ache to kill me ?

LARA.

Will you so ?  
And I, — let us clasp hands and kiss on it.

BEATRICE.

Clasp hands, Sir Trustful ; but not kiss, — nay,  
    nay !  
I will not pay my forfeit till I lose.

LARA.

And I 'll not lose the forfeit.

BEATRICE.

We shall see.

BEATRICE *enters the house singing :*

*There was an old earl and he wed a young wife,  
    Heigh ho, the bonny.  
And he was as jealous as Death is of Life,  
    Heigh ho, the nonny !  
Kings saw her, and sighed ;  
And wan lovers died,*

*But no one could win the bright honey*

*That lay on the lips of the bonny*

*Young bride,*

*Until Cupid, the rover, a-hearting would go,*

*Then, — heigh ho !*

[Exit.]

LARA.

She has as many fancies as the wind

Which now, like slumber, lies 'mong spicy isles,

Then suddenly blows white furrows in the sea !

Lovely and dangerous is my leopardess.

To-day, low-lying at my feet ; to-morrow,

With great eyes flashing, threatening doleful  
death, —

With strokes like velvet. She's no common clay,

But fire and dew and marble. I'll not throw

So rare a wonder in the lap o' the world.

Jealous ? I am not jealous, — though they say

Some sorts of love breed jealousy. And yet,

I would I had not wagered ; it implies

Doubt. If I doubted ? Pshaw ! I'll walk awhile

And let the cool air fan me. [*Paces the balcony.*]

'T was not wise.

'T is only Folly with its cap and bells

Can jest with sad things. She seemed earnest, too.  
 What if, to pique me, she should overstep  
 The pale of modesty, and give bold eyes  
 (I could not bear that, nay, not even that!)  
 To Marc or Claudian? Why, such things have  
 been

And no sin dreamed of. I will watch her close.  
 There, now, I wrong her. She is wild enough,  
 Playing the empress in her honeymoons:  
 But untamed falcons will not wear the hood  
 Nor sit on the wrist, at bidding. Yet if she,  
 To win the turquoise of me, if she should —  
 O curséd jewels! would that they were hung  
 About the glistening neck of some mermaiden  
 A thousand fathoms underneath the sea!

SCENE II. — *A garden: the villa seen in the back-ground.* LARA stretched on the grass with a copy of Boccaccio's '*Decameron*' in his hand. *Sunset.*

LARA. [Closing the book.]

A book for sunset, — if for any time.  
 Most spicy tongues and riant wit had they,

The merry Ladies of Boccaccio !  
What tales they told of love-in-idleness,  
(Love old as earth, and yet forever new,)  
Of monks who worshipped Venus — not in vain ;  
Of unsuspecting husbands, and gay dames  
Who held their vows but lightly — by my faith,  
Too much of the latter. 'T is a sweet, bad book.  
I would not have my sister or my wife  
Caught by its cunning. In its mellow words  
Sin is so draped with beauty, speaks so fair,  
That naught seems wrong but Virtue! Yet, for  
all,

It is a sprightly volume, and kills care.  
I need such sweet physicians. I have grown  
Sick in the mind — at swords' points with myself.  
I am mine own worst enemy.  
And wherefore? wherefore? Beatrice is kind,  
Less fanciful, and loves me, I would swear,  
Albeit she will not kiss me till the month  
Which ends our foolish wager shall have passed.  
A hundred years, and not a single kiss  
To spice the time with. What a freakish dame!

*A Page crosses the garden.*

That page again! 'T is twice within the week

The supple-waisted, pretty-ankled knave  
Has crossed my garden at this selfsame hour,  
Trolling a canzonetta with an air  
As if he owned the villa. Why, the fop!  
He might have doffed his bonnet as he passed.  
I'll teach him better if he comes again.  
What does he at the villa? O, perchance  
He comes in the evening when his master's out,  
To lisp soft romance in the ready ear  
Of Beatrice's dressing-maid; but then  
She *has* one lover. Now I think she's two:  
This gaudy popinjay would make the third,  
And that's too many for an honest girl!  
If he's not Miriam's, he's Jacinta's, then?  
I'll ask the Countess — no, I'll not do that;  
She'd laugh at me, and vow by the Madonna  
This varlet was some noble in disguise,  
Seeking *her* favor. Then I'd let the light  
Of morning through his doublet — I would — yes,  
That is, I would, were I a jealous man:  
But then I'm not. So he may come and go  
To Miriam — or the devil! I'll not care.  
I would not build around my lemon-trees,  
(Though every lemon were an emerald,)



A lattice-fence, for fear the very birds  
Should sing, *You're jealous, you are jealous, Sir.*

SCENE III. — *A wooded road near the villa. The garden-gate seen on the left. LARA leaning against a tree. Evening.*

LARA.

Sorrow itself is not so hard to bear  
As the thought of sorrow coming. Airy ghosts,  
That breed no mischief, terrify us more  
Than men in steel with bloody purposes.  
Death is not dreadful; 't is the dread of death —  
We die whene'er we think of it.

I'll not

Be cozened longer. When the page comes out  
I'll stop him, question him, and know the truth.  
I cannot sit in the garden of a night  
But he glides by me in his jaunty dress,  
Like a fantastic phantom! — never looks  
To the right nor left, but passes gayly on,  
As if I were a statue. Soft, he comes,  
I'll make him speak, or kill him; then, indeed,

It were unreasonable to ask it.    Soh !

I'll speak him gently at the first, and then —

*The Page enters by a gate in the villa-garden, and  
walks carelessly past the Count.*

Ho ! pretty page, who owns you ?

PAGE.

No one now.

Once Signor Juan, but I am his no more.

LARA.

What, then, you stole from him ?

PAGE.

O no, Sir, no.

He had so many intrigues on his hands,

There was no sleep for me nor night nor day.

Such carrying of love-favors and pink notes !

He's gone abroad now, to break other hearts,

And so I left him.

LARA.

A frank knave.

PAGE.

To-night

I've done his latest bidding —

LARA.

As you should —

PAGE.

A duty wed with pleasure — 't was to take  
A message to a countess all forlorn,  
In yonder villa.

LARA.

[*Aside.*]

Why, the devil! that 's mine!  
A message to a countess all forlorn?  
[*To the Page.*] In yonder villa?

PAGE.

Ay, Sir. You can see  
The portico among the mulberries,  
Just to the left, there.

LARA.

Ay, I see, I see.  
A pretty villa. And the lady's name?

PAGE.

The lady's name, Sir?

LARA.

Ay, the lady's name.

PAGE.

Why, that's a secret which I cannot tell.

LARA. [*Catching him by the throat.*]

No? but you shall, though, or I'll strangle you!  
In my strong hands your slender neck would snap  
Like a fragile pipe-stem.

PAGE.

You are choking me!  
O, loose your grasp, Sir!

LARA.

Then the name! the name!

PAGE.

Countess of Lara.

LARA.

Not her dressing-maid?

PAGE.

No, no, I said the mistress, not the maid.

LARA.

And then you lied. I never saw two eyes  
 So wide and frank, but they 'd a pliant tongue  
 To shape a lie for them. Say you are false.  
 Tell me you lie, and I will make you rich,  
 I'll stuff your cap with ducats twice a year.

PAGE.

[Smiling.]

Well, then — ' lie.

LARA.

Ay, now you lie, indeed !  
 I see it in the cunning of your eyes ;  
 Night cannot hide the Satan leering there.  
 Only a little lingering fear of heaven  
 Holds me from dirking you between the ribs.

[Hides his face in his hands.]

PAGE.

[Aside.]

Faith, then, I would I were well out of this.

LARA.

[Abstractedly.]

Such thin divinity ! So foul, so fair.

PAGE.

What would you have ? I will say nothing, then.

LARA.

Say everything, and end it. Here is gold.  
 You brought a billet to the Countess — well ?  
 What said the billet ?

PAGE.

Take away your hand,  
 And, by St. Mary, I will tell you all.  
 There, now, I breathe. You will not harm me,  
     Sir ?  
 Stand six yards off, or I will not a word.  
 It seems the Countess promised Signor Juan  
 A set of turquoise —

LARA.

[Starting.]

Turquoise ? Ha ! that 's well.

PAGE.

Just so — wherewith my master was to pay  
 Some gaming debts ; but yester-night the cards  
 Tumbled a heap of ducats at his feet ;  
 And ere he sailed, this morning, Signor Juan  
 Gave me, his careful Mercury, a note  
 For Countess Lara, which, with some adieus,  
 Craved her remembrance ' morning, noon, and  
     night ;

Her prayers while gone, her smiles when he re-  
turned ;

Then told his recent fortune with the cards,  
And bade her keep the jewels. That is all.

LARA.

All ? Is that all ? 'T has only cracked my heart !  
A heart, I know, of little, little worth, —  
An ill-cut ruby, scarred and scratched before,  
But now quite broken. I have no heart, then :  
Men should not have, when they are wronged like  
this.

Out of my sight, thou minion of bad news !  
O sip thy wine complacently to-night,  
Lie with thy mistress in a pleasant sleep,  
For thou hast done thy master (that 's the Devil !)  
This day a goodly service : thou hast sown  
The seeds of lightning that shall scathe and kill !

[Exit.]

PAGE. [Looking after him.]

I did not think 't would work on him like that.  
How pale he grew ! Alack ! I fear some ill  
Will come of this. I 'll to the Countess now,  
And warn her of his madness. Faith, he foamed

I' the mouth like Guido whom they hung last week  
 (God rest him!) in the jail at Mantua,  
 For killing poor Battista. Crime for crime.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV. — BEATRICE'S chamber. *A Venetian screen on the right. As the scene opens, JACINTA places lamps on a standish, and retires to the back of the stage. BEATRICE sits on a fauteuil in the attitude of listening.*

BEATRICE.

Hist! that's his step. Jacinta, place the lights  
 Farther away from me, and get thee gone.

[*Exit JACINTA.*]

And Miriam, child, keep you behind the screen,  
 Breathing no louder than a lily does;  
 For if you stir or laugh 't will ruin all.

MIRIAM. [*Behind the screen.*]

Laugh! I am faint with terror.

BEATRICE.

Then be still.

Move not for worlds until I touch the bell,



Then do the thing I told you. Hush! his step  
Sounds in the corridor, and I'm asleep.

LARA enters with his dress in disorder. He approaches within a few yards of BEATRICE, pauses, and looks at her.

## LARA.

Asleep! — and Guilt can slumber! Guilt can lie  
Down-lidded and soft-breathed, like Innocence!  
Hath dreams as sweet as childhood's, — who can  
tell? —

And paradisal prophecies in sleep,  
Its foul heart keeping measure, as it were,  
To the silver music of a mandoline!  
Were I an artist, and did wish to paint  
A devil to perfection, I'd not limn  
A hornéd monster, with a leprous skin,  
Red-hot from Pandemonium, — not I.  
But with my delicatest tints, I'd paint  
A Woman in the glamour of her youth,  
Garmented with loveliness and mystery!  
She should be sleeping in a room like this,  
With Angelos and Titians on the walls,

The deathless masters staring grandly down,  
 Draped round with folds of damask ; in the alcoves,  
 Statues of Bacchus and Eurydice,  
 And Venus's blind love-child : a globed lamp  
 Gilding the heavy darkness, while the odors  
 Of myriad hyacinths should seem to break  
 Upon her ivory bosom as she slept ;  
 And by her side, (as I by Beatrice,)  
 Her injured lord should stand and look at her.

[*Pauses.*]

How fair she is ! Her beauty glides between  
 Me and my purpose, like a pleading angel.  
 Beauty, — alack ! 't is that which wrecks us all :  
 'T is that we live for, die for, and are damned.  
 A pretty ankle and a laughing lip, —  
 They cost us Eden when the world was new,  
 They cheat us out of heaven every day.  
 To-night they win another Soul for you,  
 Master of Darkness ! . . . [BEATRICE *sighs.*]  
 Her dream 's broke, like a bubble, in a sigh.  
 She'll waken soon, and that, — that must not be !  
 I could not kill her if she looked at me.  
 I loved her, loved her, by the Saints, I did !  
 [*Unsheathes a dagger.*]

BEATRICE. [*Springing up.*]

So, you are come, — your poniard in your hand?  
 Your lips compressed and blanchéd, and your hair  
 Tumbled wildly all about your eyes,  
 Like a river-god's? O love, you frighten me!  
 And you are trembling. Tell me what this means.

LARA.

O, nothing, nothing, — I did think to write  
 A note to Juan, to Signor Juan, my friend,  
 (Your cousin and my honorable friend;)  
 But finding neither ink nor paper here,  
 I thought to scratch it with my dagger's point  
 Upon your bosom, Madam! That is all.

BEATRICE.

You've lost your senses!

LARA.

Madam, no: I've found 'em!

BEATRICE.

Then lose them quickly, and be what you were.

LARA.

I was a fool, a dupe, — a happy dupe.  
You should have kept me in my ignorance ;  
For wisdom makes us wretched, king and clown.  
Countess of Lara, you are false to me !

BEATRICE.

Now, by the Saints —

LARA.

Now, by the Saints, you are !

BEATRICE.

Upon my honor —

LARA.

On your honor ? fie !  
Swear by the ocean's feathery froth, for that  
Is not so light a substance.

BEATRICE.

Hear me, love !

LARA.

Lie to that marble Io ! I am sick  
To the heart with lying.

BEATRICE.

You've the ear-ache, Sir,  
Got with too much believing.

LARA.

Beatrice,  
I came to kill you.

BEATRICE.

Kiss me, Count, you mean.

LARA. [*Approaching her.*]

If killing you be kissing you, why yes.

BEATRICE.

Ho! come not near me with such threatening  
looks,  
Or I'll call Miriam and Jacinta, Sir,  
And rouse the villa: 't were a pretty play  
To act before our servants.

LARA.

Call your maids!  
I'll kill them, too, and claim from Royalty

Thanks, and another chevron for my shield,  
For slaying three she-scorpions, — but you first!

BEATRICE.

Stand back there, if you love me, or have loved!

*As LARA advances, BEATRICE retreats to the table and rings a small hand-bell. MIRIAM, in the dress of a page, enters from behind the screen, and steps between them.*

MIRIAM.

What would my master, Signor Juan, say —

LARA.            [*Starting back.*]

The Page? now, curse him! — What? no! Miriam?

Hold! 't was at twilight, in the villa-garden,

At dusk, too, on the road to Mantua:

But here the light falls on you, man or maid!

Stop now, my brain's bewildered. Stand you  
there,

And let me touch you with incredulous hands!

Wait till I come, nor vanish like a ghost.

If this be Juan's page, why, where is Miriam?  
If this be Miriam, where's — by all the Saints,  
I have been tricked!

MIRIAM. [Laughing.]

By *two* Saints, with your leave!

LARA.

The happiest fool in Italy, for my age!  
And all the damning tales you fed me with,  
You Sprite of Twilight, Imp of the old Moon! —

MIRIAM. [Bowing.]

Were arrant lies as ever woman told;  
And though not mine, I claim the price for them, —  
This cap stuffed full of ducats twice a year.

LARA.

A trap! a trap that only caught a fool  
So thin a plot, I might have seen through it.  
I've lost my reason!

MIRIAM.

And your ducats!

BEATRICE.

And

A certain set of turquoise at Malan's!

LARA. [*Catching BEATRICE in his arms.*]

I care not, child, so that I have not lost  
 The love I held so jealously. And you, —  
 You do forgive me? Say it with your eyes.  
 Right kindly said! Now, mark me, Beatrice:  
 If ever man or woman, gnome or fairy,  
 Breathes aught against your worthiness, — al-  
 though

The very angels from the clouds drop down  
 To sign the charge of perfidy, — I swear,  
 Upon my honor —

BEATRICE.

Nay, be careful there!

Swear by the ocean's feathery froth —

LARA.

I swear,

By heaven and all the Seraphim —



BEATRICE. [*Placing her hand on his mouth.*]

I pray you!

LARA.

I swear, — if ever I catch Miriam  
In pointed doublet and silk hose again,  
I'll —

BEATRICE.

What?

LARA.

Make love to her, by all that 's true!

BEATRICE.

O wisdom, wisdom! just two hours too late.  
You should have thought of that before, my love.

LARA.

It's not too late!

BEATRICE. [*To MIRIAM.*]

To bed, you dangerous page!  
The Count shall pay the ducats.

[*Exit MIRIAM.*]

LARA.

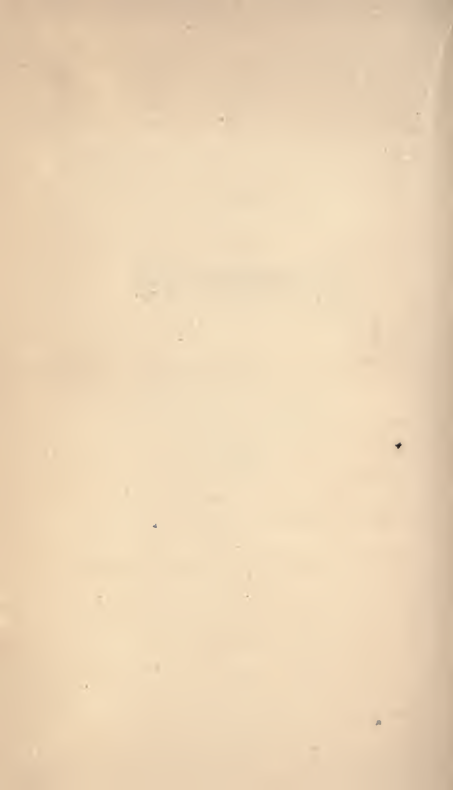
And to-morrow  
I'll clasp a manacle of blue and gold  
On those white wrists. Now, Beatrice, come here,  
And let me kiss both eyes for you.





SONNETS.







## SONNETS.



### EUTERPE.



NOW if Euterpe held me not in scorn,  
I'd shape a lyric, perfect, fair, and round  
As that thin baud of gold wherewith I  
bound

Your slender finger our betrothal morn.

Not of Desire alone is music born,

Not till the Muse wills is our passion crowned :

Unsought she comes, if sought but seldom found.

Hence is it Poets often are forlorn,

Taciturn, shy, self-immolated, pale,

Taking no healthy pleasure in their kind, —

Wrapt in their dream as in a coat-of-mail.

Hence is it I, the least, a very hind,

Have stolen away into this leafy vale

Drawn by the flutings of the silvery wind.

## AT BAY RIDGE, L. I.



PLEASANT it is to lie amid the grass  
Under these shady locusts, half the day,  
Watching the ships reflected on the Bay,  
Topmast and shroud, as in a wizard's glass :  
To see the happy-hearted martins pass,  
    Brushing the dewdrops from the lilac spray :  
    Or else to hang enamored o'er some lay  
Of fairy regions : or to muse, alas !  
On Dante, exiled, journeying outworn ;  
    On patient Milton's sorrowfulest eyes  
Shut from the splendors of the Night and Morn :  
    To think that now, beneath the Italian skies,  
In such clear`air as this, by Tiber's wave,  
Daisies are trembling over Keats's grave.

## PURSUIT AND POSSESSION.



WHEN I behold what pleasure is Pursuit,  
What life, what glorious eagerness it is ;  
Then mark how full Possession falls  
from this,

How fairer seems the blossom than the fruit, —

I am perplext, and often stricken mute

Wondering which attained the higher bliss,

The wingéd insect, or the chrysalis

It thrust aside with unreluctant foot.

Spirit of verse which still eludes my art,

You shapes of loveliness that still do haunt me,

O never, never rest upon my heart.

If when I have thee I shall little want thee !

Still flit away in moonlight, rain, and dew,

Wills o' the wisp, that I may still pursue !

## THE AMULET.



THOUGH thou wert cunninger than Vi-  
vien, —

Faithful as Enid, — fair as Guinevere, —

Pure as Elaine, — I should not hold thee dear.

Count me not cold, decorous, unlike men!

Indeed the time was, and not long since, when —

But 't is not now. An amulet I 've here

Saves me. A ring. Observe: within this sphere

Of chiselled gold a jewel is set. What then?

Why, this, — the stone and setting cannot part,  
Unless one 's broken. See with what a grace

The diamond dewdrop sinks into the white

Tulip-shaped calyx, and o'erfloods it quite!

There is a Lady set so in my heart

There 's not for any other any place.



## EGYPT.



ANTASTIC Sleep is busy with my eyes :  
I seem in some waste solitude to stand  
Once ruled of Cheops : upon either hand

A dark illimitable desert lies,

Sultry and still, — a realm of mysteries ;

A wide-browed Sphinx, half buried in the sand,

With orbless sockets stares across the land,

The woefulest thing beneath these brooding skies

Where all is woeful, weird-lit vacancy.

'T is neither midnight, twilight, nor moonrise.

Lo ! while I gaze, beyond the vast sand-sea

The nebulous clouds are downward slowly drawn,

And one bleared star, faint-glimmering like a bee,

Is shut i' the rosy outstretched hand of Dawn.

## MIRACLES.



ICK of myself and all that keeps the light  
 Of the blue skies away from me and  
 mine,

I climb this ledge, and by this wind-swept pine  
 Linger, watch the coming of the night.

'T is ever a new wonder to my sight.

Men look to God for some mysterious sign,  
 For other stars than those that nightly shine,  
 For some unnatural symbol of His might.

Wouldst see a miracle as grand as those

The prophets wrought of old in Palestine?

Come watch with me the shaft of fire that glows

In yonder West: the fair frail palaces,

The fading alps and archipelagoes,

And great cloud-continents of sunset-seas.

## FREDERICKSBURG.



THE increasing moonlight drifts across  
my bed,  
And on the churchyard by the-road, I  
know

It falls as white and noiselessly as snow.

'T was such a night two weary summers fled ;

The stars, as now, were waning overhead.

Listen ! Again the shrill-lipped bugles blow

Where the swift currents of the river flow

Past Fredericksburg, — far off the heavens are red

With sudden conflagration : on yon height,

Linstock in hand, the gunners hold their breath :

A signal-rocket pierces the dense night,

Flings its spent stars upon the town beneath :

Hark ! — the artillery massing on the right,

Hark ! — the black squadrons wheeling down  
to Death !

## ACCOMPLICES.



THE soft new grass is creeping o'er the  
graves

By the Potomac ; and the crisp ground-  
flower

Lifts its blue cup to catch the passing shower ;  
The pine-cone ripens, and the long moss waves  
Its tangled gonfalons above our braves.

Hark, what a burst of music from yon bower ! —  
The Southern nightingale that, hour by hour,  
In its melodious summer madness raves.

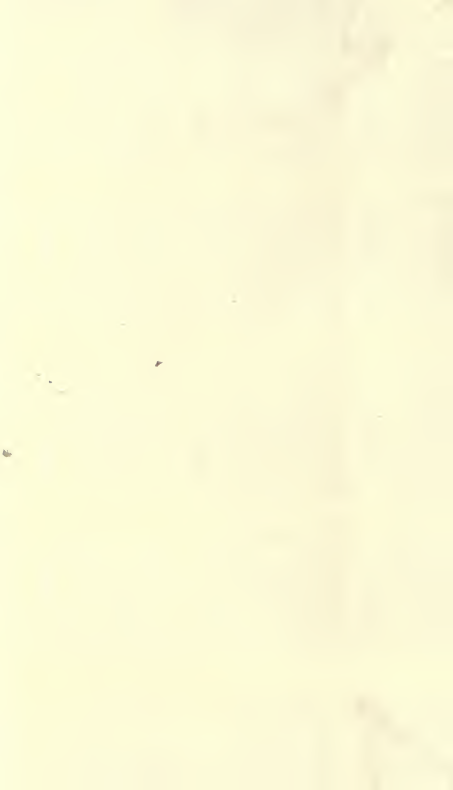
Ah, with what delicate touches of her hand,

With what sweet voices, Nature seeks to screen  
The awful Crime of this distracted land, —

Sets her birds singing, while she spreads her  
green

Mantle of velvet where the Murdered lie,

As if to hide the horror from God's eye.







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