

POEMS

J. S. Phillimore



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POEMS

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John Swinnerton Phillimore

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TO
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Preface

MOST of these pieces have appeared in print before :—No. vii. in the *Book of the Jubilee*, Glasgow ; Nos. xi. and xxvi. in *Literature*, for leave to reprint which I have to thank the Editor of *The Academy and Literature* ; Nos. i., ii., iii., xii., xiii., xvii., xxii., xxvii., xxviii., xxix., xxxi., xxxiii., xxxvi., xxxvii., xxxviii., xl., are republished by kind permission of the *Oxford Magazine* ; and to the Editor of *The Speaker* I owe leave to reprint Nos. viii., ix., x., xv., xxiii., xxx., xxxii., xxxix. Nos. iv., v., xxv., xxxvi., and Translation iv., were included in the *Book of the Horace Club*.

J. S. P.



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Prologue

O SELF in self en-isled 'mid all mankind !
What greater marvel shewed the Eternal Light
To Dante than the Angelic Doctor's sight
Passing thro' open doors from mind to mind ?

Could man with man be friends so one in heart
To hear confession of his doubt and hope ;
So justly levell'd to his spirit's scope
That speech and thought might never shrink
apart !

Yet here's a solace too, for who can fashion
His discomposèd thought in rhythmic page,
And by confession to the world assuage
The intimate unrest of mind and passion.

Prologue

Confession to the world?—For sympathy
Rather divide himself, and so present
The humbler to the noblest element
In all his natural multiplicity :

Which worthier self within himself must be
Courtèd with harmonies, cajolèd with numbers,
As born immune of what for us encumbers
Universal number and harmony.

For tho' the measures tinkle in his hands
Blindly (who knows the hidden spring of Muses
Whereout his thread of holy secret oozes?);
And, singing, least of all he understands

What antemundane ordinance of Time
In these sweet necessary intervals
Questions and answers, climbs and floods and falls:
Yet by the rounded verse and pairing rime,

The petty atom binds his thoughts and sorrows
In with the Highest and the One Unseen,
And, least remotest planet, a serene
Luminous motion of the great sun borrows.

1896.

I

Carmen Vernum

“O primavera gioventù dell’ anno !
O gioventù primavera della vita !”

THE sweet Spring-season is the Youth of the year,
And Youth the high Spring-season of our days ;
That ever-alternating Youth I praise
Which makes our fugitive Spring-season dear.

As the light vapours of an Alpine dawn
Fledged by the sun swim upward into air,
And dress the morn with plumes of pearl and
rare
Laces of shimmering silk and windy lawn ;

Carmen Verum

So, scarce unheard, the saps are on the wing,
And from the brooding-bottoms of the field
In jets, and drifts, and spiry steams unsealed,
Urge to the light and pave the floors of spring.

The strong South-wind uprising from the sea
On his broad shoulders arched the cumbering
wrack
Of Winter, as the countryman rolls back
His wagon-tilt, and left the heaven free.

Pure light at noon the flawless arc embayed,
And evening beams along the horizon gilded,
Sailing the northern sky, the vapour-built
Ballooned leviathans in cavalcade.

First on the weedy spits and level beaches
The tide's invasion, mystically led,
Swings and enlarges; then the heavier head,
Gathering all along the cliff-bound reaches,

Carmen Vernum

Obliterates the scored sea-sand, and flushes
Each inmost coign and pocket of the shore,
Clapping against the rock as more and more
Falls to his long assaults and foamy rushes.

The tides of sap, the sea of vital juices
Reclaiming their surrendered coasts, begin
The tree-tops and the crust of earth to win;
Then full the high creative humour sluices

Broad naps of grass and lines of curious leaf,
Horn-tips of dewy bud, and bubbled flowers
Blown through the stiff glebe, as the secret
powers
Play tenderly up in colour and relief.

I walk in dewy forage ankle-deep
Of warm grass growing—such a florison
Of white and yellow quilted thereupon,
In fields awaked to laughter out of sleep!

Carmen Venum

Quick buds wrap all the hedges in a net ;
Beside what gossamer green webs take place
Spun high up yonder in the air to enlace
The grey stems of the beech. No leaf as yet :

A hive of specks, a point of airy stitches
Half seen, half dreamed, to veil the lady limes ;
And a green swarm of curly favours climbs
The captain oaks and signal poplar-switches.

II

Zephyrus Vernus

SPRING noons are lusty, morning primes are brave.

I shut my eyes, and in the flustered brakes

See the young Wind at work, with cherry-flakes
Speckling his shoulders brown ; the little knave,

The Wind who tithes all flowers without the
plucking,

Tickles the tender boskages to seize

Their fresh exhalèd virtue for his breeze,

But cannot keep light-fingered bees from sucking

The gummy sweetness off the unwrinkling leaf :

Nor stays for that, but bustles through the woods,

To strip the coverts of their sober hoods,

And bring November's quaker-rags to grief.

Zephyrus Vernus

Unresting all day long : yet ere he goes
To bed, his pageant for the heaven invents,
Mapping the blue with crimson continents
And isles in amber archipelagoes.

Last, while the quiet sands of darkness run,
Up in a tree he sleeps with folded wings
Till daylight breaks his dream ; then off he
flings
To sup the dews and meet the morning sun.

III

Noctes Vernae

NOR only when the Master of the Hours
Keeps in mid heaven his all-observèd state,
Does Earth in panegyric songs dilate
And make the lark interpret leaves and flowers.

Sentinel serenaders hear and hail
Amorous sentinels without a pause
Till Mother Night the feeble stars withdraws
Into her bosom. First a nightingale

Chucked a quiet prelude, then another
(From where, trim-feathered and in good conceit,
He cheers the wedded sweetheart at his feet,
Down on the nest the breaking hazels smother),

Noctes Vernae

Throating a hearty succulence of song,
Melted the night and made the Moon rejoice,
Full-dipping as a Southern woman's voice
When ripe male notes the tenderness prolong.

And as I hear it sung how year by year
The primal heat through all our wisdom burns,
And year by year the Golden Age returns,
Time and the World are music in my ear.

O THE familiar smell of the buxom mould
Sweating the jolly humours of her blood!
These seedlings last night's rain pricked into
bud!
That long brown flank the shining plough unrolled!

Bland atmospheres the rapid balms refine
Wherein the passion, wonder and delight
Of the rejuvenated Earth take flight,
The Old Earth working as she works in wine.

Noctes Vernae

Sharp strokes of overmastering delight

Play thro' and thro' me; hearing, sight, and
smell

Riddled with pleasure breach my carnal shell
Quick to the Soul, as hearing, smell, and sight

Transformed become three sympathies in chief,
Besides within my heart what rarer strings
Nameless make answer to the heart of things,
Myself to these small selves in flower and leaf.

So in a happy nympholepsy caught
By the sweet persons of the budding trees,
Imparadised in high melodious ease,
Tippling the royal sunlight, all my thought

Swims solved in Contemplation. Look, this clod
Fermenting into flowers my brother is,
My flesh and blood, one breath is mine and his,
The breath that lights our life, the breath of God!

Noctes Vernae

THE young world calm in health adds day to day ;
Undreamed the flush'd satiety of Summer,
Undreamed the time when Autumn, silent
mummer,
In scarlet weeds performs a farce of May

Without the music. So unfailing rise
The powers that freshly day by day enable
Earth's sweet successions, even change grows
stable ;
Eternity miraged in temporal skies.

In Spring the world began, wise poets sing :
Life dies to Life, Eld ages round to Youth ;
We flower into the Knowledge of the Truth
Sown in a wintry womb, reborn in Spring.

IV

Summer

HER cloak is of the purple dusk that rims
 Beaches remote of Mediterranean seas ;
 She stars her hair with sparks the dolphin frees
From moonless calms round Sicily as he swims :

Her smile is in the twinkling flame which crowns
 The sappy furnace-labour of the spring ;
 Her whisper sets the vineyards colouring,
Her feet go by like wind upon the downs.

The sun robs half the night to contemplate her
 (The moon, the pearl of jealous maidenhead,
 Glassed in a pool of water blushing red) ;
Roses proclaim and lily-buds await her.

Summer

She takes the sunlight captive in her cups,
And all the rains of Earth are in the fruits,
Whereon to songs of love and light pursuits
In pleasure and magnificence she sups.

I saw her feasting in the pillar'd shade
Encastled in the inviolable woods,
And lo! the veinèd canopy that hoods
The fluted trees, an inlet rare was made

Whereby the sun distilled in golden pieces
Slips down to lap about her and about ;
Whom when the jealous winds would fain shut
out,
So much the more his eager shower increases.

See where she lodges darkling, unrecluse,
When silence on the nightingales is come
And the hot crickets in the grass are dumb ;
Elves of the season printing early dews

Easily pass that semblance of a watch
The heavy-headed wind of evening keeps,
To crown her balmy threshold while she sleeps,
And string fresh flowers on the open latch.

Summer

Nothing to her is sealed or unpermitted,
She sweetens foul and consecrates profane ;
Down like a wish she settles on the plain,
And Earth hums round her, fond and feeble-witted.

Perfection sits upon the leaf she brushes,
Perfection creams the flower beneath her feet ;
For her the notes of all the seasons meet,
Piped in a knot of scented river-rushes.

And he who pipes (if eyes we had to see
What wiser men saw centuries ago)
Is smooth and brown of skin from top to toe,
Lithe, leaning at his ease against a tree ;

A drowsy-twinkling eye, a pointed ear,
Approve the air his fond and smiling lips
Yield to the modulating finger-tips ;
On his slant head two little horns appear.

Trees, birds, and clouds to his wise reed incline ;
And Summer laughs to list how as he wills
The huge delight of the warm world distils
A thread of music simple and divine.

Gifts of Summer

GOD, who from father Adam stole a rib
Sleeping, and left him richer by the loss,
Taught her to range the land and sea across
And as she skips the radiant earth to crib

A perfume here, and there a beam of light,
Flying to take a little tax in haste
Of prodigal Paradieses flower'd to waste,
And trim the unequal scales of joy aright.

To some great London squatting foul and glum,
Beside a stream debauched, in purblind skies,
She comes at night to give the heaven his eyes
And drive a golden highway down the slum.

Gifts of Summer

A touch like dew upon a burning tongue !
On wrinkled brows a breath, a stroking beam !
A nameless change to make the pavement seem
Less like a tombstone on the dead world flung !

Under the planes by terraced river-banks,
And in the garden by the city gate,
In lovers' ears she murmurs early and late,
Happy to take their happiness for thanks.

Childhood revives in tired children's faces ;
Sunlight beyond the hours of labour leaves
A time to live ; between the holiday eves
And eager morns a thread of midnight races.

Are human hearts the poorer for a tear
Shed, or the richer for a laugh unlaughed ?
Or gold that to the goldsmith's handicraft
Renders the lump and lets the form appear ?

Her shimmering island treasuries of balms
Meet her with lights and odours undiminished,
Whispering cornfields hail the progress finished,
Deep woods more tranquil for the willing alms.

VI

The Fall

DEGENERATE heirs belie the master-month.
And yet the purse of glory is not stinted ;
In scarlet goes the year and Sidon-tinted,
And golden-lacquered like the melolonth.¹

Bright burns the dawn, and long the daylight
burns :
Ay me, but not so long as yesterday ;
The Sun he smiles and smiles in the old way,
And yet averse his inmost purpose turns.

Oh is there human sorrow tongue can say—
Pain and the loss of friends and breach of loves,—
Unsymbolized when every morrow moves
A little narrowed from his yesterday ?

¹ The golden beetle of the Attic poets.

The Fall

Is it the year grown old, or Death in prime
Flames in the piled beech-hanger on the down?
Death (flaked with blood and fevered is his
crown)
Keeps heyday here, a prince in pantomime.

Of old magnificences garnered up
He draws the sluice and sinks the world with
store;
And yet a little one thing less or more
Makes poison or ambrosia of the cup.

The Earth has gemm'd herself and 'tired and
farded,
And long the sun lay captive in her lap,
For every sense a darling-baited trap:
What has she done to be so disregarded?

Her grain and grape are turned to bread and
wine,
Her lovelinesses overcharged and stale;
A secret worm of anguish lean and pale
With her heartstrings begins to intertwine.

The Fall

And still the Sun smiles kindly on her noon,
But where the morning solitary rambles
He sees the anguish beaded on the brambles,
And in the afternoon *Too soon, too soon*

Too soon is all the burden of the woods,
And echoing to his footfall in the stubble
Not yet, not yet, a whispered voice of trouble,
And tears are in the eye which evening hoods.

A milky pallor films the wistful skies,
And all the countryside is tense and mute :
Dully the nursing leaf outlives the fruit.
Sad in his wisdom, and in sadness wise

The year turns slowly homeward to his grave :
Weary and disabused, he sighs for glory
Quick-won, quick-lost, and pleasure transitory,
Fall'n Emperor gathered to the slaves a slave.

Nay, rather, with a coat upon his shoulder
More bravely painted than a pursuivant's
He does his public penance, and recants
The flourished hopes and vaunts when youth was
bolder.

The Fall

Death buried in his charnel, overlaid

With webs of grass and blossom-broidered woof,
Breathes thro' the close pall of his plague-pit roof,
And stirs against the leaf his black crusade.

Slapping in air a somersault, a fish

Stirs the darkly lustrous pane of the pond ;
The wrinkle opens wide—beyond—beyond—
And breaks against the margin with a swish

Thro' sallow reeds a-tremble. Mutely drift

Dead leaves on dead Autumnal waters brown
Where midges dancing in a wayward crown
Fear no invasion from the banished swift.

A golden-green profusion tessellates

The sliding floor of rivers melancholy :
And sad perpetual mail of box and holly
Glowers on the tattered flimsy of their mates.

The world awaits, arrested in a pause ;

And sound is no more sound but silence jarr'd :
For lamentation there are hurts too hard,
Sorrows a sigh would mock like rude applause.

The Fall

The Year knows every leaf a drop of blood
 Ebbed from his faint complexion ; leaflets pale
 Which no slant April musketries of hail,
No fiery droughts disheartened—how they stud

And cloak and heap the dank self-coloured loam !
 A pause ! And in the chilly pause of life
 The spirit drives a trebly whetted knife
Through the fine mesh of man's illusion, home

To prick the vital sensitive despair.
 Look, for the veil has fallen : Death's about.
 Listen along the countryside : he's out.
Smell : he is poignant in the windless air.

Look, every leaflet whispering his name
 Faints toward annihilation in his arms ;
 Listen, for not a swallow round the farms
Titters against him. Silence, like the shame

Of lovely youth for beauty and for strength
 Wanton'd away, benumbs the haggard field ;
 His voice, a fount of poison, hums unsealed
Pouring across the land a wicked length

The Fall

Of envious corruption, hums perceived
Huge in the silence by the subtler sense
Which hangs in fear and misery snapping-tense
O'er sallow lawn, swol'n brook, and oak disleaved.

This is the end, or sadder than the end,
Defeat foretasted and the prisoner's hour
Whose last appeal falls dumb on the ears of
power
Tho' by the very muse of anguish penned.

Come forth, condemned! The earth's a scaffold
drest
With dreary skies and sullen-coloured lands.
Wasted and gray and naked, there he stands,
And tearless Time beside him, axe addressed.

The winds he knew have changed their bland
applause
To hissing murder in the elm-tree tops;
He bows his head and listens in the copse
The roaring overthrow of his mild laws.

The Fall

Stoop windward on the storm-bewildered cliff,
Look on the sea, and if you read not there
Brooding the visible image of Despair
Read me no sign in Nature's hieroglyph !

The wolfish seas a lean sou'wester whips
Leap high and howl ; the dingy strangling wrack
Athwart the white-stone-dotted coastguard track
Rolls inland, cold as kiss of Vampire lips.

Fugitive gesture of the ash-tree stunt,
A tattered cripple on the dun down's edge !
Sobb'd whistle in the salt-bitten elder hedge
Leaned agonizing landward from the brunt !

Pale-wing'd Alastors toss and shriek and pine
Where grisly wave and air self-coloured meet,
And loud the giant wind with hammer feet
Tramples his murky vintage in the brine.

O Earth in persecution seared and torn,
Thy martyr's blood takes wings on every wind :
Sleep well till throes of death are anodyned,
And faith repaired in better worlds reborn.

The Fall

Take heart, for death is but a landlord's balk
Which overlook'd is lightly overleapt :
At birth unbroke our thread of life we kept :
Strange if a quickset hedge could bar my walk !

Let life replenish all her secret springs
After a droughty garish wasteful stage :
Over her shell the rain and wind may rage,
But Earth lies lapp'd in white imaginings.

She lies withdrawn, such meditation keeping
As theirs who when the Temple Veil was rent
Trembled what sudden beam of wonderment
Sever'd the oozy ages o'er them creeping.

The Autumn-havock of the ancient day
Twitch'd and awakened into glance and gesture ;
And lo ! the spinning of a new-year's vesture
For each adviséd soul that knew the Ray :

Who thro' three turns of upper day's complexion
The Labyrinth of Expectation trod,
Then rose ; and in the rising wake of God
Suspired th' innumerable Resurrection.—

The Fall

So, deep in the intervital hollows, deep,
Amid the treasure-house of seeds in thrall
Rises the starry Stature, softly fall
The feet of Christ along the floors of Sleep.

A silent Presence felt in darkness, heard
Above the secular silence, in the curl'd
Root-riddled alleys moist of the underworld :
And all the looms of herb and tree are stirred.

Meekly towards the courts of light they crave.
Wreak, bitter wind, thy rapine overhead :
Pastime of opiate music for the dead
Whose ears are touched to seize the opening grave !

1901.

VII

Mantis

POOR Soul, poor Soul! why must you sit alone
Under the magic of the earth and air;
When spells are in the leaf and in the stone,
And greater music than the brain can bear?
Shuddering lest he come and yearning yet,
You dream and wait and dream: quick as a blast
The Wonder takes you captive in the net,
The Glory of the Mountain clips you fast.
Smiling, he gives you peace because you ask it,
Token of his handfasting, cruelly,
Pleasure enveloped in a lockless casket,
Perpetual hunger digged by memory.

Thrilled with divine communications, pale,
With no more root in earth, you homeward creep;

Mantis

And every night you watch without avail,
And all men take your waking day for sleep.
Flown with a dark evangel, break your wings
Like giddy birds against a window-pane :
“ There is no meaning in the word he sings.
“ Most surely moonstruck. Let him sing in vain.”
Come these of Godhead blabbed in ears profane—
Madness and mockery, servitude and death ?
Impart the revelation or contain :
These are the wages of the rarer breath !

Fairer than all, but not as others fair
She mated much with solitude, and drew
Light veils of melancholy round her hair,
Wind-films dissembling ocean-deeps from view.

Far from the City, on the mountain side
She steeped in drowsy noon her thirsting sense
And thinking, thinking, watched the high sun ride
A metal heaven, in anguished indolence.

A million crickets' fiddling cracked the brakes ;
She heard the lizard whisper through the thyme,
Murmuring sounds the full-drawn silence makes
Possessed her like an unforgotten rhyme.

Mantis

But all within was drougthy emptiness ;
Her thought ran, dull and drugged, a tasteless
road ;
And all the things she knew and loved grew less :
The deep earth dross for one unquarried lode.

When lo ! beneath the plodding march of thought
Sudden abysses dropt : her eyes were dark :
Vast expectation tingled out of naught ;
Her eyes saw strange like eyes half waking,
Hark !

A sudden hush of crickets told *The God!*
Ray-white he came : the scarlet blossom, slow
Redressed her bruised plumes, grateful to be trod.
Around the immortal temples seemed to grow
A little wind where every wind was laid.
O strung for crowns of juvenal address,
Male in the brow, but in the eyes a maid,
Lord of the arena, breathing loveliness !

What says the orient sun to the opening rose ?
How greets the frankincense the altar fire ?
As urgent seas behind a vessel close,
The aching hollows of the heart's desire

Mantis

Regorged with satisfaction. Full and fresh
As lilies in a midnight rain she lay :
Little delights went arrowy through her flesh
Like minnows in a stream on longest day.
The hours burned faster than a fire of straw :
Only the balanced eagle in ample rings
Scaling the towered air on Ida, saw
Apollo and the child of Phrygian Kings.
Shimmering through the amethystine air—
As when a Seagod with an earthquake's-flaw
Cracks the sheeted sapphire calms that spare
To wake a holy Eastern isle—she saw
Phoebus depart. Late in the sunset-smoke
She stole through Troy, to wonder all night
long
And meet the morn with wonder ; never spoke
But strained for echoes of elusive song.

The silly days were sheets of lead to robe her ;
Too strong for silence but too weak for speech,
To teasing sisters' questions put to probe her
Few words she said but miracles in each.
Was it a taunt from one of those who trod
The rustling lady-chambers, made the treason ?

Mantis

Or willy-nilly she confest the God
Shedding her secret like the rose in season?—
Wrung from her as the notes of Memnon's harp
Which winds unasked along the desert roll?
Or did set lips fall open at the sharp
Razor of thoughts unuttered, near the soul?

Did ever tiny grain of treason breed
Such monstrous shades as choked Cassandra's
head?
Forsaken, unforgetting, doomed to read
Behind the golden veil the texts of dread,
She saw tall Troy couch down into the fire,
Royal women along the ruined street
Haled by the hair, because the World's-Desire
Must jangle Europe and Asia at her feet.
Night after night she sucked the cup of dreams,
Day after day they mocked her "*Mind thy wool,*"
Forewept her tears on the unregarded theme,
Till lo! 'twas time; the cup of act was full.
Foam on the mouth, glazed eyes, a death in life:
What epilepsies shake this wench of ours?
Doubt withers at the glance of Paris' wife
Set safe within the curtain-crown of towers.

Mantis

Pitched in the raddled galley, prey to serve
The war-worn monarch of the thousand ships;
What matter if they gallop home or swerve
To wreck? Live carrion for the Lion's lips
In the house of carnage, yet she loved her shame—
Lest one be lost of all the pains in life:
Shrieking in alien ears to death she came
By the She-Devil and the House-dog's knife.

1900.

VIII

Citharistria

HER forehead through the siege of summer heat
 Palely sustained a burden of black hair ;
 Black brows made heavy bridges to a pair
Of candid eyes unfathomably sweet.
The noon burned clearly in the empty street ;
 Dazed, with a dreamy step she came to where
 They drank in the inn-arbour on the square ;
And in the dust none heard the tired feet,
 Till, shyly taking place before the gang,
 She had unslung a mandolin and sang.

She sang of evenings cool when the early star
 Winks from the pale-green porches of the night
On silken seas where azure faints to white :

Citharistria

*The doors of hushèd senses just ajar
Watching the dark remake what day did mar,
Take in the tender thrice-refinèd light,
And feel how dust and herb and tree requite
Grace with the grace of breathing all they are.
Slow veils drop off the soul and leave her bare
Lured out a-tremble on the kindred air.*

*What of a tan-faced boy and a blue-eyed maid
In the owlet light slow strolling arm in arm,
Half-drunk with love, yet dashed with sweet
alarm ?
Her words with his like April sparrows played,
His eye in the dusk her melting eye waylaid :
'Tis cheek to cheek, 'tis lip to lip—what harm
If hives of hisses break away and swarm ?
Lasses and lads were each for other made.
Glittering eyes told tales of hearts bewitched,
And fingers, as they filled the glasses, twitched.*

Once more she sang : the passion of her numbers
Strained out the shallow anguish in the strings ;
Sob in the throat and tear in the eye she sings :

Citharistria

*Whose is the fault if Autumn leaf encumbers
Coldly the pleasant place of noonday slumbers?
Whose fault when back to sea the floodtide
swings ?*

*Love came dancing and all his toes were wings,
But sick and lame and empty home he lumbers.
So fancy free (not his the blow he dealt)
He roams, a dead heart dangling at his belt ;*

*And I unburied walk the stranger's road
Hunting a penny and a human tear.*

The old complaint of life was loud in the ear,
Over the hills forgotten sadness flowed ;
Deep in the veins of earth the secret lode
Of sadness dulled the lovely fields with fear,
That sours the sun and knows the green for sere :
Life in each heart confessed the tale she showed.
Then some went slowly to the tryst, but none
Marked when again she took the dust and sun.

1899

IX

Mortalia

SOUL, is it nothing to you? While you measure
Imaginary ocean-calms alone,
Deep-drugged with light, and scented music
blown
From surflless isles of undeflowered pleasure ;
Grey hairs for brown—and chilly blood for leaping,
Smooth brows bescrewled with the reproach of
care,
And eager thews untuned to do or dare,
And life a gem bedimmed with sloven keeping,
And age for youth—make all things whisper
Fate ;
Who, with the cankered magic of her breath,
Burns in the black bar-sinister of death
Across the gloried blazon of our state.

Mortalia

O soul, come home ; the poor predestined flesh,
 Agonizing to live and dying yet,
 Should wrench thy soul with pity and regret,
A dumb thing, wounded, in a stifling mesh !

The Sea-Lady, the Silver-footed one,
 Wept for Achilles when the fatal strife
 Robbed him of prize, and friend, and last of life,
The immortal mother of a human son.

1899.

X

Suor Acqua

WATER is best, the golden poet sings :
Not song itself's a match for her, nor gold ;
A glory and a riddle, million-fold
And one, the jewel of created things.

Of vap'rous worlds unwoven a crystal thread,
The savourless clean sum of human savours
(Dew of the flint, true born the flint she favours)
Quick as a wish she fills the fountain-head.
Wonder of day and wonder of the night
Close in her eye when sudden from the core
Of things to be and things to be no more
She comes, an angel of the infinite ;
A disimprisoned vein of cheerfulness
To skid mercurial down the granite shelves :
And laughter, laughter ! all her many selves
A single mind of laughter still confess.

Suor Acqua

The morning riot passing from her slows
To fuller rhythms touch'd with human sense
Of Whither doubted and forgotten Whence,
And then serenely riper as she goes
The flawless body of her flood conceives
By the huge bewild'ring sun and inly breeds
A spawn of dancing lights to thrid the weeds,
Mad eyes a-twinkle under the margin-eaves.
Rude storms her prone crystalline webs entangle ;
She grinds her banks and spits above her brims
Rolling a battlefield of sappy limbs
Which bacchant winds in shrieking forests mangle.
By next day's noon to smooth oblivion woo'd
Mute in the dusk-in-daylight of her dreaming
She fills the ear, and dead to motion seeming
Moves down the meditative solitude.

And last——. But oh! the human wit avails
But to corrupt with thinking overlong,
And surfeit cankers gold and poisons song.
Water, I dare to hail thee as he hails
At peace with God, with Nature hand-in-glove,
The little sister of a clearer-soul'd
Than ever walked, and walking blest the mould,
The humble saint who praises thee for love.

XI

Psyche Rapta

WHEN Psyche from the granite brow forlorn
Leapt down she knew not whither, in despair
Under her falling feet she was aware
Of Zephyr : down thro' gulfs of sunlight borne
(An almond-blossom from the orchard torn),
Dropping she heard the eddies of the air
Sigh on her cheek and whisper in her hair.
Great pinions, coloured as the snows at morn,
(Poised on his diving head she dives) to left and
right
Arose and fell, arose and floated in the light.

Faint-coloured far below the plain appears
A dawning Paradise undreamed of man ;
Softlier past the living plummet ran
The push of ever-yielding atmospheres.

Psyche Rapta

The haven which the strange sky-vessel nears,
Takes clearer brilliance and a lesser span ;
Now smells of Earth, now butterflies began
To meet her, when her sudden Zephyr veers :
She slips her perch, and settles like a flake on deep
Piled meadow-beds of grass, thick furred with
flowers, asleep.

My soul had climbed the weary slopes of Thought
To that high edge where Thought no further
leads,
And blind with such despair as thinking
breeds,
Stared into unattempted seas of Naught ;
When Music on her angel-pinions caught
The tearless brain, cold heart, and foot that
bleeds :
Easy as rivers lapsing thro' their reeds
I plumb the golden gulf of Truth untaught ;
And all the balmy zones of Contemplation past,
Decline on fields of Peace, a dreaming child at last.

1898.

XII

Exspes

WHY sing of suns you cannot see, in vain?—
Here where dull day from night scarce diff'rent
pales,
And fog as grisly as a dead man's nails
Freezes opaquely at the window pane ;

Here where the laughter and the living eye
Of dormant water, blind and mute beneath
The black ice-shell, like spirits after death
Steal unadmired their passage. Down the sky

Like fruitless seed of seasons overblown,
The fluff-winged atomies tumble and amass,
Muffling the pale and sapless winter grass
Under a clammy still oblivion.

Too slight to fall, we drift with every phase,
We start and scuffle, playthings of the air ;
Then with a shuddering whisper of despair
Go out like snowflakes in a woodman's blaze.

Oxford, 1897.

XIII

Pines

*Πέμπετέ μ' εἰς ὄρος**

εἶμι πρὸς ὕλην καὶ παρὰ πεύκας.—Euripides.

THE pines, the pines! By many a windy hollow
Muster the humble starveling parasites,
Ambitious highland scorners of delights ;
One springs to lead and half a million follow.

Low where the liberal valley floors indulge
Green beeches leave them, half-way up the larch
Withdraws his plummy striplings from the march
Where the last easy flanks of pasture bulge :

Still these hold good nor hesitate till there
A broken decimated rout they come
Where perpendicular desolations plumb
Clean from near clouds, a curtain of despair.

Pines

At last the heavy-hearted pioneers
 Fling up their hands and agonize and fail,
 While slow reliefs yet loiter in the vale,
And hope foredates in vain the work of years.

But brothers undismayed pursue their stage,
 Warrior monks in sombre uniform
 Not flown with pride of leaf nor dashed by storm,
Fighting an immemorial pilgrimage.

The merry waters shout around their feet,
 Smooth hills of grass slip softly from them
 marching,
 Cumbered with winter burdens overarching,
Wasted with brazen noons of August heat.

Diamonded with the fresh tears of night,
 When the high sun at noonday rules intenser
 To him they wave a tributary censer
Of natural thankfulness for heat and light :

—Rather themselves a holy temple-close,
 Themselves a balmy living holocaust,
 Phase after phase they quietly exhaust
Their simple calendar of suns and snows.

Pines

Prone millions kneeling at the crumbled heap
Of some vast idol older than the Fall
Darken the long steps of his pedestal ;
Who in his pitiless immortal sleep

Destroys his votaries, to all their prayer
Answering bolts of stone and avalanches :
And yet the Spring the wounds of Winter stanches,
And yet the Summer finds them suppliant there.

Here with a grave incline they gain the brook,
And there they spurn the water's stationless
Eternity of transitoriness,
Stiffly addressed against the slope : and look !

Palmers unwitting bound for unknown shrines,
One valley past into the next they fare,—
Look where they take the horizon, high in air,
Steady as nights and days, the pines, the pines !

S. Martino di Castrozza, 1897.

XIV

Psyche Desmôtis

A Platonizing Elegy

THE wise when Summer brims his golden bowl,
Enjoying hive betimes perennial treasures :
Enough of light conceits and fancied measures,
Hear now the Allegory of the Soul.

A little sunbeam Daughter which the Sun
Made of his Virtue, fledged with fire and sent
Down the awful spaces of the Firmament
His errand in the wondering Air to run ;

Full oft (when past the generous winds and past
The tearful haze of Earth, the Earth she reaches)
Lodged in the mire a leprous pallet bleaches,
Or on a midden spends her kiss at last.

Psyche Desmôtis

In Matter by no kind adoption caught
Grovels the immaterial Soul ; no more
She flies the harmonious firmament to explore,
And weaves in Music golden threads of Thought,

But falls (a Queen to sluttish ends employed)
To be mere Life, the wherewithal this Flesh
May feed and ebb to appetite afresh,
Till alternate satiety and void

Meet in the term of Death. Who all her days
Seeing the very fabric of her jail
Fused in mutation, through the jointed vail
Resolving grain for grain its yearly phase,

Athwart the dizzy reeling of the plates
In that Promethean engine forged of dross
—(Like some lithe beast who cannot swim across
A sudden flood : beleaguered, as he waits

Narrowly round his twitching eager feet
The crystal siege of endless winding snares
Hurries and deepens ; islanded he stares.
Famine ! or drowning when the waters meet),—

Psyche Desmôtis

Keeps an uneasy correspondence yet
 With that Without herself and that Beyond.
 For diamond dust is native diamond :
Things never taught the heart can ne'er forget.

Only the Powers and Virtues which of old
 Served her, no more a faithful service render :
 So stiff the dungeon-bars from Truth defend her,
So heavily the dungeon-damps enfold.

Hearing has now a flawed and started pipe ;
 Sight feebly speeds the unpenetrating shaft ;
 Smell draws a turbid unessential draft ;
Taste runs to pick Perfection still unripe

And wags a stale misrepresenting tongue ;
 Touch fumbles with a palsied apprehension :
 All put her off with counterfeit invention
For Truth unseen, untasted, and unsung.

No more irradiated on the Soul
 Truth tallies summ'd with harmony of Senses ;
 Reason, a Mean of quarrelling impotences,
Must reign, and More-than-half set up for Whole.

Psyche Desmôtis

Shocks of Mortality tap the unseen wires,
Short of response the glance of Heaven falls,
Wisdom exudes mere Knowledge off the walls,
And cosmic passion chills to brute desires.

She feeds on melancholy discontent,
Counting it honourable in distress
Not to forget and not to acquiesce :
Memory takes turns with Hope to watch the event.

Sick for a word of old companionship,
Starving the husks of Falsehood still she chews,
Blurred and obscure comes down the holy news,
Hard to interpret—like the trodden slip

A beggar snatches from the mire to read,
And learns a broken inkling out of date
Of worlds discovered, tumult in the State,
Tall ships gone down at sea, and poets dead.

At times awake when all's asleep, she hears
The moats of eager blood that bind her round,
Throb to a momentary calm : no sound
Of empty business importunes her ears.

Psyche Desmôtis

Up to the unpermitted bars she climbs
And faintly hears an unforgotten tune
Of stars her sisters dancing round the moon,
And dimly sees, and tingles to their times.

So drowned in milky moonlight float the hours
Slowly as nights of Summer when the South
Witches the Earth with music in his mouth,
Waving from rhythmic hands a wind of flowers.

Day coldly dawns, and Visions die away,
Leaving a passion burning at the heart
Uneased for lack of organ to impart
The intimate fever. Rarely in the day,

Rarely the flux and tumult in her shell
Pause, and a message calls her from despair.
Quick left and right she looks—no jailer's there!
Then kneeling, rapt worlds distant from the cell,

Through closed eyes she sees the perfect Wonder
Which fragmentary mocked her appetite ;
Hears Melody melted in the air like light,
Long mute, a violin confused in thunder ;

Psyche Desmôtis

Serenely takes the authentic taste of Earth,
And smells the keen balm's edge unfiled and new :
Touch turns to Sympathy, and Sense to true
Essential understanding. Sick of dearth

And durance, in her hand before she plucks
The golden fruits of Knowledge reach themselves.
Hark ! All along a slope of laughing shelves
The song of vintage ! and herself she sucks

Purple and amber grapes of Paradise.
The sunlight urging with a tenderer breath
Than stealthy-pinioned Sleep or wheedling
Death
Drops a delicious weakness on her eyes :

She sleeps adreaming of deliverances,
Adreaming bonds forgot and prison slipt ;
Gem long extinguished in a robber's crypt,
Bound on the forehead of a King she glances.

She sleeps, she dreams : till unexhausted Fates
Of Being rudely wake her and reclaim
The runaway to heavier terms of shame,
Who set at naught the insuperable gates.

Psyche Desmôtis

Dizzily round her spins the devilish cage,
Tortured and mad, the lithe mechanic trap
Confounds her memories of the stolen hap ;
As cares renewed efface the pilgrimage

And blot the pale lamps of far sanctuaries.
Withered are all her quick imaginings,
And paralysed the frail untimely wings :
No hope curtains, nor joy her sentence varies—

Till death, the Archangel's magnet, dislocates
The webs of steel : sharp lightnings of God's
eyes
Crumple the adamant—she flies, she flies
Out of the smoke of her consuming fates !

The seven-hued bow of Liberty leads above ;
For hearing utter Melody, Light for eyes !
From Life she wakes, from traps of Time she
flies
Eternal, Truth to know and Love to love.

1896.

Elegy in Lanarkshire

THIS place is quick with fire as was the mount
Cithaeron once with madness, though the fount
Into no blinding lake
Nor Phlegethontine sluice of flame outbreak,
But parcelled in a brick-knit honeycomb
The Demiurge become the myriad gnome,
And, like a river tapped for millwheel leets
And conduit-pipes, retail his sovereign heats.

Pale curdled clouds above the monstrous town
Remotely neighbouring, neither smile nor frown ;
And shires of stithies bristle up to them,
Whose every burly sky-provoking stem
Blossoms the white, the dusk, the swarthy bloom
Of orbèd vapour, flying a Captain's plume
Upon Vulcanic chivalries at work.

Elegy in Lanarkshire

Half blaze, half-murk,
The battlefield of the hammer and the forge
Pavilioned of the mettle they disgorge
From thousand rough embrasèd throats of force,
Darkles and roars ; the daylight runs his course
Dishonoured, and the natural night descends
Unheeded, and the labour never ends,
But still relaying squad for weary squad
They serve the altars of the tireless god.

All through the quiet evening shines a dance,
Timed to the beat of uncomposed chance,
Of supple flames uptossing in the void,
Lithe as a ball on fountain jet upbuoyed,
Lickerish modes, a caper and a squat,
Still catching after prey where prey is not
Except the sodden irresponsive air
That chills the flashes to a surly glare.
Knowing no sleep
The whole night long they leap and lurch and leap,
And sear the edges of the night where dim
She mats about the sooty chimney-brim :
Unseen of any—save such watch as keeps
The drowsy midnight traveller, who peeps

Elegy in Lanarkshire

Through purblind panes, and feels the train devour
Her half-a-hundred roaring miles an hour,
And counts the constellated railway lights
Low-hung in jewelled reds and greens and whites,
And counts the Fells and moonlit Midland swards
That fade beside him bolting Londonwards.

O sadly fallen God of Fire,
A slave thyself by human slaveries groomed,
Drudging for just a fuel-ration's hire
In crypts of clay and gaols of ore inhumed !

Could he release awhile his early rage,
Kick free from this mechanic equipage
The giant anger minced in menial blast,
Son of the Sun disowned, inearthed, outcast
From highest inheritance,
Shamefaced to skulk and blink his father's glance !
Think you he would not with a sudden magic
Turn the long sport they make of him to tragic ?
Think you not every prison wall would pass
Into a red, translucent veil of glass ?
Oh ! he'd but draw a deeper breath—a whiff,
And lo ! the tides would melt the rooted cliff !

Elegy in Lanarkshire

Swung in the clasp of that absorbing gust
His captors' world would blind the skies with dust,
With winds of waste the inland airs defile
And stifle every trembling leeward isle!

Glasgow, 1900.

XVI

Beauty Dead

THE darling momentary beads of prime
The elfin gift of unobservèd fingers,
There's not a gem of all the crown that lingers
After the golden clock has beamed their time.

Because the mortal stuff which for a season
Apprized the eye of present loveliness
And fired the heart to wonder and to bless,
By Time decayed, though Time deplore his
treason,

From loveliness divorces life asunder,
And puts for love and wonder in the breast
The piteous changeling memory to rest
(O cold moon-mirror of the sun gone under !);

Doubt not the Master Craftsman has the mould
In keeping till the nobler metal flow,
The while his furnace burning clear and slow
Perfects the thrice-refining of the gold.

XVII

Theates

“ Est regnum mihi maius in fenestra.”

THIS is to be a little God indeed !
Under my eye the ribbon of the world
In merry lengths of motley runs uncurl'd,
And common things like circus-pomps proceed.

The blind man taps the kerb, the sun in's face,
Until the lamp-post bids him ford the street ;
The shop-lad whistling very loud and sweet
(His leaping spirit else would crack its place),

Tray on his head, goes swinging through the crowd,
A jolly progress full of nodded greetings,
Foolish surprises, welcome daily meetings
With lads who whistle just as sweet and loud.

Theates

Big drays of beer drum down the cobble-stones,
High nodding wains of hay divide the traps ;
No dearth of dogs and sparrows, and perhaps
The girl with the accordion or the bones ;

Perhaps a band—O Paradise ! a band !—
Of seedy, wistful exiles, making fun
For foreign ears, and fellow finding none
Save by their tunes which all men understand.

A pool of quiet sky where oft a rook
Cuts, beating home towards his burnished gang,
And now four dreamy tufts of vapour hang :
I own the air, my title's just a look !

Yon limping sheep have left on Berkshire brambles
Dew-beaded tufts of wool for nesting birds,
Strange glare of town the doubtful pilgrim girds
Towards pastures new beyond or Oxford shambles.

And then two trees before my window stand
To show me all the majesties and graces
That April wears in holy woodland-spaces
In the undeflowered heart of Fairyland.

Theates

Before my panes all earthly pities plead,
Nature and man exult in love and strife :
Wonder of human labour and of life !
This is to be a little God indeed.

Oxford, 1899.

XVIII

Rain at Naples

LISTEN, Tryphaena ; every bird is dumb,
The tingling stir of the cicala stops.
Rain on the burnished orange-leaf!—like drops
Oozed from an overladen honeycomb,

So slow, so rare. On dusty road and tree
Drops, kicking up the faint smells where they
pat.

The skies are blind, the sea a sparkless flat,
And drops like beads fall tinkling on the sea.

Thicker on herb and mould they urge and crush
Volleys of eager exhalation out ;
Sleep enters at the window, roundabout
I hear his light wings in the raindrops' rush.

To-morrow morn, Tryphaena, what a flush
And youth! The rain has been so long away :
Listen, he has a world of things to say ;
We must not speak against his whisper—hush !

1898.

XIX

The Funeral March

IN pity and fear the measured voices grow,
Phrasing majestically an ancient strife
Of Light with darkness and of Death with Life,
And Man between them bandied to and fro.

Hark in the weary ineffectual hum
Death is the only voice rings high and strong ;
Whose glory leads the willing heart along,
His Fear-no-more all fears hath overcome.

Sorrow is but a feeble hated thing :
Exult ! the slow and monstrous pomps of Fate
Alone are large enough the soul to sate.
Perish the wounded captive ! Hail the King !

The Funeral March

*For Death blows louder than the trump of Fame,
Blows cold upon the laurels of renown ;
Your crowns of evergreen drop down, drop down :
A thousand kings are dust without a name.*

*Bow low, bow low before the Conqueror's car !
Deep treasure of magnificences past,
Vainly deferred, we fall to thee at last :
Hail glorious death, sole heir of all we are !*

*Run to embrace with trembling hands elate
The Admirable Terror ! Rise ! Appear,
O unambiguous, ultimate, sincere !
Come, take us all who art so true and great !*

They pale, the pomps of Death decline and pale :
Mute is delirious brass, tempestuous drum
Which struck the melting pipes of Sorrow dumb.
Soul, what is left thee now when all things fail ?

The Funeral March

The common murmur of the world goes on ;
 Breaking hearts with a sharp and sudden cry
 Like blades of lightning in a desert sky
Point the black silence of Oblivion.

Despair, yet wonder. There are things too strange
 For open eyes, for waking wits too hard :
 The wings of Music beat in chambers barred,
And purchased only with a life's exchange.

The Void—but in the Void serenely warm
 And clear the silver tongues of hope, unsealed,
 Bubble a tranquil melody new-revealed :
Death dips the horizon like a vented storm.

Listen ! She has the word : a second prime
 Comes tenderly of dust and tears to birth.
 O fruitful dust ! Wise peace of tears for mirth !
And Faith rides steady on the wheels of Time.

Oxford, 1899.

XX

Night in the Desert

An Elegy at Helouan

NIGHT in the secret East unlocks her doors ;
Quickly the leaden-coloured sluice she pours,
Surging, the arabesque of sunset drowns,
The whips and fans the scarlet scarves and crowns,
The parting sun with fiery pencil scrawls
Upon the enamelled heaven. Full she falls
On the old and awful Desert, blind and dead,
With dews and rains for mockery idly fed,
Between the dun hills and the shining river
Who lags his far-fetched burden to deliver ;
An urn of meditative dusk she spills
Into the vessel of the Arabian hills,
And blurs the melancholy Pyramids :
My gazing eyes grow weak to lift their lids.

Night in the Desert

This way perhaps the swarthy slaveries went,
Myriad-footed, creeping at the rope,
A monstrous man-compacted instrument,
Sweet lives made misery for an idle hope
Of sovereignty in death, to heave one pile
A little higher than the rest, awhile
Longer defer the inevitable dust,
And build *Not yet, not yet!* against *Thou must.*

And look, his grave is fly-blown by the mob,
Eager to scan, to desecrate, to rob ;
The secret of his sepulchre proclaimed
To every curious alien unashamed ;
And, with his vessels and his gems, himself
Obscenely pilloried on a showroom shelf!

Happier than this the unregarded slave
Who dropped to freedom in a nameless grave ;
Happier the poor whose cemetery fills
Yon bay among the brown Arabian hills,
Each with a pair of tutelary stones
Presiding, head and feet, to watch his bones :
And when the suns that suck the Desert's veins,
When brush of winds and quiet biting rains,

Night in the Desert

Which seem to do no hurt and never spare,
Disperse the weak memorial on the air,
Better to know thy former human heart
And all that loved laborious mortal part
Drift from the mouldering ark to meet the sand
And pass incorporate with thy native land!
The stone, the tree, the fountain—these shall be
A quiet anchor for the soul of thee
Riding the harbour-calms at home and free!

Dim as the card-built cities of a dream
The sprawling hovels of the hamlet gleam;
Quick through the dusk the starry needles quiver
Upon the dun hills and the shoaling river.

Helouan, 1898.

XXI

Requiem

BROTHER, we do not lay you down so deep
But we ourselves shall overtake you soon :
We dream a little longer, while you sleep ;
And sleep than dreaming, yours the better boon.

Who sleeps not and is thankful when he can ?
In dreaming there is little rest, be still.
We are but oxen of the Husbandman,
In his good time we sow what seed he will.

Till Earth put out her dead like buds in Spring,
'Twere well to sleep the whole black winter
thro'.
Sweetly the cool earth round your ears shall cling ;
We turn to dreams again : sleep soundly, you.

Oxford, 1897.

XXII

Lines on an Old Theme

As in a dream I heard all humankind
Singing together : for a whole day long
Troop caught from troop the antiphon of song
Where none outran and none was left behind.

First rose the song of Youth with the rising sun,
The slow hours of the morn with music winging ;
And Joy was all the burden of his singing,
The Joy of all things to be thought and done.

So Pleasure broadened in the breadth of light,
A thousand rivers flooding one great sea,
Until his large diffusion rolling free
Touch'd the eternal verges of delight.

Lines on an Old Theme

And so Youth pass'd, but with the perfect noon
Came graver quires of men in middle span,
Who set the latter excellence of man
To a more sober and advisèd tune—

Chanting how action ripening 'neath the eye
Of him who plann'd, and high hopes full achieved
(Mature strength proving all young faith believed)
Made the bud blossom and the fledgeling fly.

These also pass'd as eventide drew near,
And with twilight appeared a new succession,
Old men, who sang how peace excels possession,
Age rounds to the full Youth's sunny hemisphere ;

How looking back they saw that life was well,
Nor mourn'd their inactivity who lay
Sheaves reap'd and garner'd for the threshing
day.

An hour they sang, then ceas'd, and darkness fell.

Oxford, 1894.

XXIII

To My Fire

TALK to me, Fire, for I am solitary
And in the room no voice but yours to cheer :
Your little countless elfin whispers carry
Companionable comfort to the ear ;
And else, my Fire, I still must only hearken
To those knell-voices in the blood, the dim
Cries of the blood, perceived when eyelids darken
Singing a round of Death from limb to limb.
Chuckle and lick your lips about the nugget
Of bright black meat to glut your glowing maw,
(Simple the lust if crumbs of coal can drug it ;)
And then fulfilled your quiet breathing draw
Wrapped round in yon red embers sleeps my fancy
Healthy and calm as the Eleusinian brat.
O whispered spells! could ever necromancy
Call up the roll of dreams and dreams, like that?
Make me the music, not for ears unwary,
The planes and crickets made in Academe ;
Talk to me, Fire, for I am solitary,
And send me dreams, if hope's a waking dream.

1899.

XXIV

Viator

NOWHERE I sojourn but I thence depart,
Leaving a little portion of my heart ;
Then day-dreams make the heart's division good
With many a loved Italian solitude.
As sons the whole year scattered here and there
Gather at Christmas round their father's chair,
Prodigal memories tenderly come home—
Suns Neapolitan, white noons at Rome ;
Watches that from the wreck'd Arena wall
Saw Alps and Plain deny the Sun in his fall,
And rosy gold upon Verona tarry.
O Cloister-Castle that the high winds harry,
Butting Saint Benet's tower and doubling short
To whisper with the rosebush in the Court !
How sweet the frogs by reedy Mantuan marges

Viator

Cried in the broken moonlight round the barges,
Where, glib decline of glass, the Mincio's march
Flaws in a riot at the Causeway arch !
How Cava from grey wall and silence green
Echoes the humming voice of the ravine,
The while a second spell the brain composes,
Fresh elder mixt with sun-dishevell'd roses !
How that first sunbeam on Assisi fell
To wake Saint-Mary-of-the-Angels' bell,
Before the tides of noonday washed the pale
Mist-bloom from off the purple Umbrian vale !
Multitudinous colonies of my love !
But there's a single village dear above
Cities and scenes, a township of kind hearts
The quick Boïte laughs to and departs
Burying his snowy leaps in pools of green.
My tower that climbs to see what can be seen
Towards Three Crosses or the high Giàù daisies,
Or where the great white highway southward
 blazes !
My sloping barley plots, my hayfield lawn
Breathing heavy and sweet, before the dawn
Shews up her pillared bulwarks one by one—
Cortina, open-hearted to the Sun !

Viator

Oft as the pilgrim spirit, most erect,
Dares the poor dole of *Here* and *Now* reject,
The lust of larger things invades and fills—
The heart's homesickness for the hills, the hills!

1897.

An August Day in Gardena

A BLOOM o'ertides the forest sides
 Like Autumn on the grape ;
 Much light upon the mountain hides
 The starkly hammered shape.

High flies the wind and straight, he crimps
 Clear skies above the South ;
 Moon-coloured cloud in shuffled wisps
 Unrolls before his mouth.

O'er Northwind loud and lucent cloud
 The master sun supreme,
 Holds all a happy valley bowed
 Enchanted in a dream :

Dream such as human hearts indulge
 When, with a sudden birth,
 Silence and solitude divulge
 The secret of the earth.

1898.

XXVI

Saint George for England

A SONG

BRITAIN loves the men who sweat
In the furnace and the mine,
Faithful till the eyes forget
Daylight and the sweet sunshine :
Lusty arms and quick to forge
The fighting armour of Saint George.

Britain loves the fustian fellow
Stooped to sickle, spade and plough,
Who in the brown field and the yellow
Dutifully bends his brow :
He cuts a stick to feed the fire,
John Barleycorn's Saint George's squire.

Saint George for England

And she loves the high-stool hermit,
Shiny elbows, pasty face ;
For however men may term it,
Buy-and-Sell's a true man's place :
By the club and by the pen
Prentices are Saint George's men.

But give her redcoat and bluejacket
Who plough the blue and reap the red,
Mine a wall of steel and crack it,
Buy and sell their lead for lead :
Round his shaft the Dragon curled,
Spear-point in the Dragon's gorge,
His helm a lightning to the world,
Saint George himself, Saint George, Saint
George !

1899.

XXVII

Song of Spring Rains

HEARTS aloft! hearts aloft!
Here's the true Spring rain, the tender
—Not the taunts November scoff'd:
Let sad Earth aspire,
Summer, tardy squire,
Finds persuasions sweet to send her.

Hearts aloft! hearts aloft!
Mildly on the mute Earth's bosom
Raindrops numberless and soft
Fall from milk-white skies,
Till she mollifies
Touched again to bud and blossom.

Song of Spring Rains

Hearts aloft ! hearts aloft !

Like a little word repeated
By a lover very oft
In a woman's ear
Till she needs must hear,
Earth is by the rain entreated.

Hearts aloft ! hearts aloft !

She will listen, she will listen :
Sapless field and chattering croft
Hearing rains prepares ;
Many-beaded prayers,
Whispering suns to come, they glisten.

Hearts aloft ! hearts aloft !

Cold neglects no more benumb her,
Winter widowhood she's doffed :
Silver-tongued, astute
Rains have won the suit :
Like a bride she waits the Summer.

XXVIII

Desiderium

ἀπροσίκτων δ' ἐρώτων δεξιτεραι μάναι.

Pindar.

VINES overlay
With webs of trailing green the wheat-field gray :
In yon brave mount who shoulders for a cloak
Chestnut and oak,
An idle challenge idly answering
The cuckoos sing—
Till in my eyes an English copse appears
Miraged in tears.

The sea unseen
Twinkles imagined where the last hills lean ;
Each far white hamlet russet-roof'd reclines
Nested in vines.
Murmurs out of the river-gully creep
Whispering " Sleep " ;
The fountain patters from a failing jet
—And yet, and yet !

Desiderium

Only with these
The multitudinous hum of labouring bees,
And woodmen's voices indistinctly heard,
 Sound without word ;
Fresh elder with the sun-dishevelled roses
 A spell composes :
Dreams entering by the sense the brain beset,
 —And yet, and yet!

Of scenes that still
The fretful Reason and the peevish Will,
Electuary against Solitude
 There is not brewed.
O Fiend and Angel double-faced, whose eyes,
 As April skies
Trim deftly in an hour from joy to sadness,
 Look Peace or Madness!

Corpo di Cava, June 1st, 1896

XXIX

In a Meadow

THIS is the place
Where far from the unholy populace
The daughter of Philosophy and Sleep
Her court doth keep,
Sweet Contemplation. To her service bound
Hover around
The little amiable summer airs,
Her courtiers.

The deep black soil
Makes mute her palace-floors with thick trefoil ;
The grasses sagely nodding overhead
Curtain her bed ;
And lest the feet of strangers overpass
Her walls of grass,
Gravely a little river goes his rounds
To beat the bounds.

In a Meadow

—No bustling flood

To make a tumult in her neighbourhood,
But such a stream as knows to go and come
Discreetly dumb.

Therein are chambers tapestried with weeds
And screened with reeds ;
For roof the waterlily-leaves serene
Spread tiles of green.

The sun's large eye
Falls soberly upon me where I lie ;
For delicate webs of immaterial haze
Refine his rays.

The air is full of music none knows what,
Or half-forgot ;
The living echo of dead voices fills
The unseen hills.

I hear the song
Of cuckoo answering cuckoo all day long ;
And know not if it be my inward sprite
For my delight
Making remembered poetry appear
As sound in the ear :
Like a salt savour poignant in the breeze
From distant seas.

In a Meadow

Dreams without sleep,
And sleep too clear for dreaming and too deep ;
And Quiet very large and manifold
 About me rolled ;
Satiety, that momentary flower,
 Stretched to an hour :
These are her gifts which all mankind may use,
And all refuse.

Oxford, 1894.

XXX

Song

HASTE you, man of woman born,
Kiss the rosy lips of Morn ;
Plumb the drowsy eyes of Noon,
Haste, for you and she must leave
Partnership forever, soon ;

Haste you, son of man, to weave
Your fingers in the hair of Eve ;
Trust you not the sweet word sworn
To young ears by the amorous Moon,
She will leave grey hairs forlorn.

Sup while you may the sugar'd tune
Which persuasive Seasons croon
And sincerely still deceive ;
Their new lovers daily born
Daily die : they cannot grieve.

1901.

Summer is a Dying

SUMMER is a dying
 In her autumnal swoon,
 Lapp'd in vapours, lying
 Cold and virginal
 As the white midwinter moon.

Rough-tongued winds outcrying
 A lamentable tune,
 Set the dead leaves flying
 Till a drifted pall
 Hides the perished limbs of June.

Only lorn woods sighing
 Her deaf ears importune ;
 Little birds come prying
 Where she lies, but all
 Have done their singing time too soon.

XXXII

Omnivolus

A SEQUENCE OF FIVE SONNETS

WHEN all the holy primal part of me
 Arises up within me to salute
The glorious vision of the Earth and Sea,
 Which are the kindred of the destitute ;
When passionate and happy like a lover
 I laugh and tease the laughing winds, I twine
Aspiring arms about the clouds, I cover
 The eager lips of Earth with lips of mine ;
Oh, then I sob for words which are denied,
 As living creatures buried sob for breath,
Who cannot stir, but keen with eyelids wide
 Taste all the helpless agonies of death,
Growing to cold communion with the sod,
And perish broken-hearted, doubting God.

Omnivolus

The lightning-stroke of fear hath oftentimes
Knocked out a spark of speech on dumb men's
tongues ;

I fain would render out in clarion rhymes
This glorious air of Earth which fills my lungs ;
The Sun, his birth, his ride, his solemn fall,
The rain, the lovely looks of English ground !
And happier larks make mention of them all
In sovereign springs of elemental sound.

But that diviner breath which through me blows,
Nor makes me prophesy nor lets me rest
(O happy lark to sing whate'er he knows !)
But aches uneased within me, unexpress ;
For song still-born's a triply-heated fire,
Love disappointed, shame, and vain desire.

O happy lark to sing whate'er he knows,
In God's approval, dimly starr'd there
Whither by fiery stress of song he rose,
His chantry fixt in wandering aisles of air ;
His song out-tops the riches of his thought,
Whom April field, and tree, and river's brim,
And quiet rains, and dazing sunshine taught
The high transfigured sweetness of his hymn.

Omnivolus

Sing for us all, my brother! lend your wings
To spirit away my yearning from the ground,—
'Twi'xt thanks and envy while another sings,
Dumb-devilled, flown with heady hopes and
bound,
As, primed with sovereign flights the tied
balloon
Tugs to be towering freely towards the moon.

I sob for words attuned to the pitch
Of high delight and wonder everywhere
Dinned in my ears, for words to paint the rich
Eyes'-festival of colour in the air:
Opulences, persuasions, tendernesses,
Nameless elations, strange familiar awes,
Tears mixt with laughter in divine distresses—
And all too shy, too rare for song's applause!
Largess thyself, large Giver: who but grudges
To drink of joy and know not where the fount
is,
Heartbroke for debts of love the heart adjudges,
Confest a churl by unrequited bounties?
So many mercies throng my doors about,
No yearning word of thanks and praise can out.

Omnivolus

No yearning word of thanks and praise can out!
The destined messengers of thankfulness
Rolled back upon me by the inbreaking rout
Struggle against them, chafing while they bless :
“ Make way for us, make way for us ! The red
Torch of the word unuttered sears our eyes,
And burns our palms, until we fire the dead
Blind world awaiting us to evangelize.
Give us no more, but only let us free ;
We faint beneath your kindness overburdened.
Shall clouds with bounty of the earth and sea
Fulfilled, let the good world go unguerdoned ? ”
O song, the long-committed fires impart !
O tears, release the secret of the heart !

XXXIII

Virgil's Statue at Pietole

E quell' ombra gentil per cui si noma
Pietola più che villa Mantovana.

DANTE, *Purg.* xviii. 83.

A WHITE and dusty cross the highways sign
On flowered yellow stubbles which the vine
Figures from crutch to crutch with a green line :
Prosperous labours as in song of thine !
 Phrasing gravely a speech of master shape
 To render Rome, or musing grain and grape,
 Among the poplars there in bronze he stands.

Yonder down a green trodden avenue
Towards him the village church looks over, who
Bearing his lamp behind led others through
The dark, and sang of greater than he knew.
 Son of these quiet fields a league away
 From the white reedy lakes where Manto lay,
 Poet and prophet to all times and lands !

1897.

XXXIV

On Hearing the News of
Mr. Gladstone's Death

THE rumour of the world fades out of his ears,
The weight of the world grows lighter on the
brow ;
Like one that seaward drives a darkling prow,
Light after light the loved shore disappears,
Only the whisper of the seas he hears,
Only the high stars lead and light him now ;
Of battle gained, and bold accomplished vow,
And fame that bridged the jealous hemispheres,
Generous flights of sovereign speech, new laws
Erected, glorious toils of government,
Brows knit upon a nation's horoscope,—
A memory flown with wings of past applause
Leads him beneath full sails unfaltering, bent
For ultimate undiscovered isles of hope.

On Mr. Gladstone's Death

Happily dead! When seeds of eating fire
Kindled in roof and wall of the world he knew,
Wait but a wind to blossom and endue
The house of Earth in conflagration dire :
The hungry peoples with a sick desire
In their old wound to risk the knife anew,
Mutter of battle ; huger on the view
He looms, whom all 'twixt fear and hate require.
Echoes of music breathed on tranquil air,
To thee on that well-meditated road
The howling of our latter wars shall send.
Earth will have war to sear corruptions : there,
Wise, peaceful soul humane, is peace bestowed
By Him who waits thee at thy journey's end.

1899.

XXXV

In Wytham Woods

SING, honey-throated, for Tryphaena's sake!
Breathing the blue and footing in the green
Passes the Youth o' the Year in shade and
sheen:
Sing nightingale in the undiscovered brake!
Sing loud, the baby-buds are all awake.
Under the hill the woodman's work I've seen,
A milk-white havock of the axe between
The living oaks. And lo! (as if to slake
The passion heats of April,) millionfold
Needles of momentary diamond
Blown in a curtain past the Sun, a gale
Of broken lights and whispers!—and the gold
Again! ah, breathe it Earth, and Heaven re-
spond!
This is Tryphaena, sing it nightingale!

1898.

XXXVI

Trieste to Alexandria

Rhymed Hendecasyllables

HERE Dalmat'ra, dimly amethystine,
Flecks with ivory homes her hill-recesses,
Pearls with ivory towns the hazy, curving
Rims of Hadria, where to land he presses
Sapphire-panoplied, unrebuked, a pristine
Urgent lover of Earth the unreserving.

There aloft in a milky opalescent
Scene of sky—is he cloud?—or undetermined,
Sketched in heaven, a drift of alabaster,
Apennine in an icy wrapper ermined,
Keeps the moon o' to-night, the puny crescent
Waiting there for the sea to drown her master?

Trieste to Alexandria

Candid-blue as an early periwinkle,
League-long Hadria, mapped for admiration,
Floats now lank as a sheet o' silky tissue,
Now ballooned with a fickle suspiration—
Look, a dolphin! He rends the oily wrinkle,
Snubnosed, finned to a knife, he cuts an issue!

Southwind! Demagogue! How the many-headed
Mobs of Hadria, desperately justling,
Hear thee clamour of Atlas and Sahara,
Densely shouldering, each on other hustling!
Wisps of spray spun agog! A field o' tedded
Sea-swathes, left as he drives away to Zara!

Dusky isle upon isle below th' horizon
(Where the furrowy flood towards a bound'ry
Reels out after us always undiminished)
Pales like masses of iron in the foundry.
Sinks Messenia: hardly light the eyes on
Snows of Candia: all the flaws be finished—

Pure the Mediterranean, the jewel
Fused to facility, radiantly plastic,
Swings enormous, a king's domain of ocean;

Trieste to Alexandria

While the ship with a hearty pulse elastic
Runs the gauntlet again, again the duel
Faces, nerved to a rhythm o' tense emotion.

Night unrolls as a mist along the water ;
Small stars gather aloft with each a candle ;
Low suspended upon the hems of heaven
Yon moon-sickle o' brass without a handle
Waits a reaper to thrust her in, to slaughter
Undreamed acres of ears. A busy leaven

Brews the mother-o'-pearly flower enamelled
Momentarily on the murky liquor ;
Dots of fire i' the mazy ripple shiver :
Deep below thro' the glassy antre flicker,
Feebly pushed, in steely seas betrammelled,
Vanguard streams o' the great, the holy River.

So to sleep. With to-morrow morn a trenchant
Fringe of white to the azure and the azure :
Alexandria, hospitable portal,
(Bright seed carried upon the windy pleasure
Of victorious Hellas) opes the ancient
Eastern mother of all the West, immortal.

S.S. *Hapsburg*, 1898.

XXXVII

Lines to Tryphaena

(Rhymed Hendecasyllables)

DEARER than the decline o' day, Tryphaena!
—When long after his hours tyrannically
Brazen-hearted he lingers and he lingers
With the surfeited earth awhile to dally,
And on languorous eyes an' heart, Tryphaena,
Urges torturer-like his heavy fingers.

—O but such a decline o' day as only
Orange-garden or apple-walk, Tryphaena,
(Shades uncertain, a dusk o' flow'ry branches)
Breathes ambrosial; and the sense, Tryphaena,
Stung with intimate airs beneath the lonely
Stars, sleeps buried in od'rous avalanches.

Lines to Tryphaena

Dearer thou than a birth o' day, a summer
Dawn of day, when he leaps to birth desired
From the sleepless abyss o' night, Tryphaena ;
—Young, rose-mailed, heroically fired,
Spurns the tarrying, hated hours ; a comer
Loved for newness, a knight to save, Tryphaena!

XXXVIII

November

WEEP on, my trees. I hear the slow drops pat
On dun leaves heaped, I see the slow drops gather.
Time was these meadow-floors were all a lather
Of blossom, like the bubbled vintage vat ;

And field and hedgerow pricked a million ears,
Twinkled a million eyes of laughter, made
The morn a song, the night a serenade—
Weep on, my trees : the world is all for tears.

The Earth was mailed in jewels, every gem
Globed with the hot fulfilling pride of life ;
The Heaven came down and took the World to
wife—

Dear days ! weep on, my trees, for me and them.

November

The trees I knew, shock-headed, sleek of stem,
Sunshot pavilions, courts of rumourous bees ;
The bully sons of generous Earth, the trees,
Stoop for their lives and moult their diadem.

It is not night, and yet the day is gone.
The lank fog beaded round the skeleton spray
Tolls little drops upon the leaf's decay.
And Winter's yet to come ! My trees, weep on.

1897.

XXXIX

A Cathedral Voluntary

I.

SEE where the jets of music break and fly
Like dizzy swallows in an amber sky ;
And the devout dusk flooding aisle and aisle
Labours gigantic mysteries the while.

Grave women level-coifed, whose eyeballs gaze
Into the void from long-forgotten days,
Relax ; crowned faces mild of bearded kings ;
And piteous, nameless, misbegotten things
(Jests of the chisel, made to flout mankind)
Under the corbel of the arch consigned,
Lean to the recreative airs that make
The semblance live and frozen stones awake.
The gray dust stirr'd in yon Crusader's tomb
Recalls a soul to haunt her ruined room ;

A Cathedral Voluntary

The mailed feet propped against the marble hound
Tingle with penetrating spells of sound,
And in the stony palms and ears of stone
He feels again the holy madness blown—
Challenge of dazzling cities mountain-walled,
Leaguer and march and melley and stratagem,
And hears the European trump that called
The knights to escalate Jerusalem.

II.

Think you, Magician, 'tis a little gift
With modulated fingertips to uplift
The lids of sense, and damp the murky fires
Which reek to blot the heaven of pure desires?
Can common air whereby we live and are,
Brayed in a torment of mechanic mazes,
Prove angel's diction, tongues alert with phrases
Stol'n from beyond the furthest star?
And all because the Master on a scroll
Ciphered the worth and height of his own soul.

III.

What is your message, loud imperious pipes?
Wine to the faint heart, oil upon my stripes!

A Cathedral Voluntary

Such resolution as the initiate soul
Suffers when cerements of this flesh unroll?
Glory of tireless wing and boundless room,
Foretasted? So the Baptist in the womb
Leapt and adored
The footsteps of the Mother of his Lord!

IV.

Richer and greater than the world that is,
The world behind the veil is figured out.
O turbine-sweep of galloping cavalries
Harrying the torn flanks of innumerable rout!
What hosts are those obey this bugle and drum
In what imaginary Christendom?
What haggard armies drag this lost retreat
In empires never marched by human feet?
What victors wave these broadswords in the
chase,
A cataract of lightnings poured in space?

V.

Out of a scuffle of bewildered sound
Long threads of melody languorously unwound!
—Slow, sweetly measured like the tale of birth

A Cathedral Voluntary

And death, the forest crown'd and soon discrown'd
By the unknown Moon that leads blood-tides in
earth.

VI.

Great stairs of flaming sound erected clear
Beyond the madness of the mountaineer :
And who shall sail in all terrestrial seas
Such lucent ocean-sanctuaries as these ?
Were human purpose tempered half so fine
As that which in these trumpets I divine,
Then would we take the morning star for neigh-
bour ;

Lighthearted as the labouring wind our labour
(Who charioteers the nodding pomps of cloud),
To thrid the last pale strangling depths of sea
Free where Leviathan alone lurks free,
To breathe the central furnace disallowed,
To bask and laugh aloud
On Polar floors to secular silence vowed.

VII.

Ages of action melted in a breath,
In quintessential tones of life and death !

A Cathedral Voluntary

All that I might be, all the thing I am
Fight in the skies on wings of dithyramb.
O rare elusive moment unexplored
Of satisfaction and perfection, stored
Within the uttered compass of a chord!

1899.

XL

A Bicycle Ride on the Appia
Nuova

EVENTIDE puts all the mills to sleep,
When quietly the harass'd waters creep
To comb their crystal tresses at the weirs.
All day an outlaw, Peace at eve appears :
No drudge mechanic but at evening shelves
His trade—the hour when men may be themselves—
And handles happiness awhile.

And I,

Italian hearted with Italian sky,
At evening felt the cranks and wheels of Reason
Muffle their angry travail for a season ;
And, all the scolding tongues of Reason mute,
Tasted pleasure and knowledge absolute.

A Bicycle Ride on the Appia Nuova

Each brutish pore grown wiser than the mind,
Pure single spirit the league of sense combined.

The leaves of spring were tender as the beams
Of sunlight on the floor of shallow streams ;
On blossomed almond orchards changed the flush ;
Sweet from the beanfields came the throb and rush
In my ear and over my cheek of the breeze
Stroking the plain with breath of placid seas.
Red with the sunset still beside the road
Rome in innumerable arches strode ;
Each white acclivity of town that fills
The shadowy creases in the Alban hills,
Six leagues away seemed just a stone's-throw
distant.

Master of life and free of all existent,
Thanking God for awhile to know and feel,
Silent I slid upon my twinkling wheel.

1896.

TRANSLATIONS

I

Theseus

Literally translated from the XVII. Poem of Bacchylides

BLUE shadows wreathed the galley's prow that
bore

Twice seven Attic youth, a glorious train
For Theseus, captain of the brunt of war,
Over the Cretan main.

The North wind filled the shining sails above,
Thanks to the bucklered Goddess of the Fight ;
But Minos' heart was sore with pains of Love,
Love brow-bound with delight.

Sweet Eriboea ! he refrained no more
His hands, he touched her cheek of virgin white :
" *Son of Pandion, save !*" Her cries implore
The brazen-armoured knight.

Theseus

Theseus had seen ; beneath his frowning brow
Dark rolls the sudden anger of his eyes ;
Hard in his heart the stab of grief : “ *How now !*
Son of great Zeus,” he cries,

“ *No more thine unpermitted humour’s course*
Within thyself thou governest aright ;
Hold, Prince, I charge thee, thy presuming force !
Not against Fate we fight :

“ *All that the God’s appointment and decree,*
All that the scales of Justice shall require,
We will fulfil whene’er the hour may be ;
Stay but thy fell desire.

“ *What though the princess of the lovely name*
Bedded to Zeus in Ida gave thee birth,
To be the first of all the world in fame ?
Am I as nothing worth ?

“ —*I whom the child of treasured Pittheus bare*
To one whose reign doth all the seas enfold ?
Nymphs of the deep with violet-coloured hair
Gave her a veil of gold.

Theseus

*" Therefore, great Captain of the Cnosian men,
Forfend the grievous quarrel! Yon dear light
Of day I would not choose to see again,
Should'st thou do rude despite*

*" To one of these :—Oh, better combat's chance—
A challenge !—God shall judge the issue true !"*

So said the valiant master of the lance :

Fear fell on all the crew,

Fear for the overboldness of the man.

Then in his soul the son-in-law of the Sun
Was angry, and he schemed an evil plan,
And prayed, "*Most Mighty One,*

*" Hear, Father Zeus ! If thou'rt my sire indeed,
Of the white-wristed Tyrian's child true sire,
Give me a visible sign ! Send down with speed
The lightning's tress of fire !*

*" Prince, if Troezenian Aethra mothered thee
Got by Poseidon, Shaker of the Earth,
Cast thyself boldly down into the sea,
His home who gave thee birth !*

Theseus

*“ Fetch me this golden jewel from my hand
Out of the deep ! Soon shalt thou be aware
Whether the Lord of Thunder, whose command
Rules all, will hear my prayer.”*

Zeus to that high request his ear inclined,
And with peculiar praise to magnify
His son, and give a sign to all mankind,
Did lighten in the sky.

Then at the welcome sign the Warrior-King
Spreading his palms to hallowed heaven wide,
*“ Theseus, the grace of God is in this thing
“ Made manifest,”* he cried.

*“ Go, get thee down into the sounding swell !
Surely the God thy father shall upraise
In all the wooded earth for thee as well
Exceeding glory and praise.”*

But Theseus at the word, no whit unmanned,
Turnèd not back in spirit : on deck he stood
Poised for a leap, and passed within the bland
Sanctuary of the flood.

Theseus

The son of Zeus was merry in his mind ;
The tight ship to the breeze he bade them lay ;
Fast flew the keel, the strong North drove behind :
But Fate ruled not that way.

All the Athenians trembled when the first
Knight of their number seaward sprang, the tear
Ran down smooth faces, waiting for the worst
In heavy hopeless fear.

But quick the dolphin-people of the deep
Down to his father's vasty dwelling steered ;
He saw the state the Gods of Ocean keep,
And at the sight he feared :

The daughters of the blessed Nereus there
Beamed from their radiant limbs a fiery blaze,
Ribbons of golden web reeled round their hair,
All dancing in a maze

Of fluent feet for pleasure ; and he saw
His father's wife the Lady Amphitrite,
Eyed like an ox,—a Goddess throned for awe
In chambers of delight.

Theseus

She flung about him purple raiment brave,
Over his curls a perfect wreath she laid,
The wedding-gift that cozening Venus gave,
Thick roses in a braid.

The thing God wills, the wise man never deems
Beyond belief. Close by the slender stern
The Prince appeared, and O the world of schemes
He slit by that return,

Miraculous from the deep! Bright maids arow
Sang for surprise and joy—Upon his limbs
Shone gifts of Gods!—laud sang the lads also—
The sea was loud with hymns.

*We came from Ceos with a song and dance :
Lord God of Delos be well pleased this day,
Send us the conduct of thy lucky chance
To help us on our way.*

1897.

II

Michelangelo. Sonnet lvi

THE journey of my life doth now arrive,
 (My frail ship through tempestuous seas conveyed)
 Unto the common port, where reckoning's paid
 For good and evil action while we live :

Whereby, the fancy dear and fugitive
 Which had of Art a king and idol made,
 With grievous error I perceive o'erweigh'd :
 To man's desire life can but error give.

My thoughts that in my loss were once well-pleased,
 Where are they ? T'ward two Deaths I now
 decline :
 Death sure, and second Death if grace forsake
 us.

By sculptor's, painter's art no more appeased
 My Soul now turns toward the Love Divine,
 Which opened on the Cross His arms to take us.

1898.

III

Song

From the Italian *Se cerca, se dice*

IF missing perchance her
Poor lover, she say
“*Where is he?*” then answer
“*Poor lover, he died.*”

Must she be downhearted
For my sake? Nay, nay :
Say, “*In tears he departed,*”
And nothing beside.

1898.

IV

The Enemies of Society

From Paul Verlaine's 'Les Grottesques'

WITH only shanks to ride on,
And golden looks to squander,
In rags, and hollow-eyed, on
The ways of chance they wander.

Shocked virtue flings rebukes at 'em,
And idiots wish them wisdom,
The children all cock snooks at 'em,
And every girl has quizz'd 'em.

Designed for hate and jeering,
An evil sort they seem,
At dusk of day appearing
Like horrors in a dream.

The Enemies of Society

For their desperate fingers twiddle
 (A homesick outlaws' air)
The strings of a whining fiddle
 To harsh words from God-knows-where ;

And in their eyes the passion
 Smiles tearful, hard to please,
For gods long out of fashion,
 Dead names, eternities.

Go, homeless tramps, they hate you !
 You leave a curse behind ;
The abyss, the beach await you,
 And Paradise is blind.

And not man only breaks you ;
 Just Nature helps to cow
The dolorous pride that makes you
 Walk on with steadfast brow.

With fierce high hopes abhorred
 You took her name in vain ;
She wrecks on your damn'd forehead
 Her murderous tempest-train.

The Enemies of Society

Junes burn you, and Decembers
Nip flesh and bone ; you bleed,
Your ague-ridden members
Gashed by the piercing reed.

Disgust and horror greet you ;
When Death takes you away,
The wolves will scorn to eat you,
A cold and meagre prey !

THE END.

19 02



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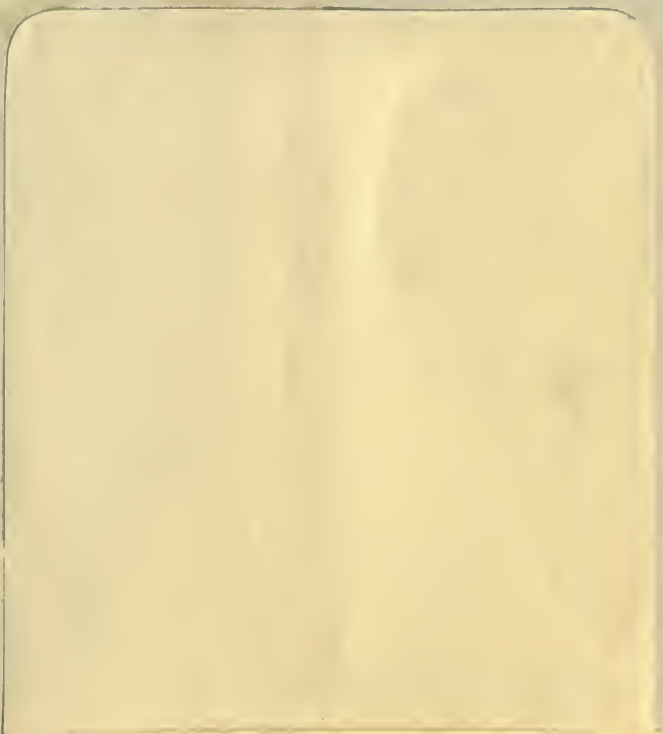
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