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Author **Tennyson. A.**

Title **Selected Poems. 1949**

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SELECTED POEMS
OF
TENNYSON

SELECTED POEMS
OF
TENNYSON

Edited
with an Introduction by
SIR JOHN SQUIRE

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1947

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INTRODUCTION

THIS Selection, from Lord Tennyson's poems was projected many years ago, for reasons which will be presently made plain. Its completion and publication have been postponed until now for reasons which have varied with the changing times. Before any further remarks are made as to its desirability, a summary of Tennyson's external life should be made, for the benefit of those who were born after the days when to every literate person, his face and earthly pilgrimage and "date's" were as familiar as those of Queen Victoria, and to some of whom this Selection may serve as an Introduction.

Alfred Tennyson was born on August 6, 1809, at Somersby, Lincolnshire, where his father, Dr. G. C. Tennyson, was Rector: the family was of great traceable antiquity in those parts, and in Yorkshire. At seven he was sent to the Louth Grammar School: it was a rough place and, after two years, his father, a versatile scholar, took him away and, thereafter, coached him at home. [His inclinations and destiny were early apparent; he wrote verse copiously as a boy, and when Byron died he was so stricken that he felt that the sun had gone out. In 1828 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, where FitzGerald, Arthur Hallam (the subject of "In Memoriam"), Thackeray and Monckton Milnes (later Lord Houghton) were among his contemporaries. At first, not having been acclimatized at a public school, he felt ill at ease in the boisterous University life of his time. But his striking face, figure and mind soon brought him into the

society of kindred spirits ; and before he left Cambridge he had become the centre of the intellectual group known as the " Apostles," and the winner of the Chancellor's Medal with a resplendent poem nominally about Timbuctoo. " He lived," as Sir Alfred Lyall says "among men who made the right use of a University,) who delighted in the interchange of ideas and opinions, in the pursuit of knowledge, in the discussion of politics, in literature, speculation, and scientific discoveries ; who were keenly interested in the world around them, and in the condition of their own country. In short, he was one of the few great English poets who have fallen in readily with the ways and manners of a cultured class and their social surroundings, who did not in their youth either hold themselves apart from the ordinary life of school or college, or live recklessly, or rebel against social conventions."

That gives a clue to his whole character and the career which ended with a peerage and a funeral service in the Abbey in 1892, with Dukes and Cabinet Ministers bearing the pall. In temperament he was reserved and practised the "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control " which he preached. In his outlook on affairs he was a reasonable improver. As an artist he compensated for an absence of the highest imaginative flights by unremitting and fastidious craftsmanship and an absence of that vague and slapdash improvisation into which the wilder singers, like Shelley and Swinburne, are apt to fall when they get a tune into their heads. Conscience was strong in him and governed his acts both as a man and as a writer : it was responsible,

amongst other things, for some of his triter didactic work : the responsibility of his office weighed upon him : he aspired to be numbered not merely amongst the sweet singers but amongst " the great sage poets " of whom he spoke with reverence.)

His life was dedicated entirely to his life and self-imposed mission as a poet. A small private income enabled this from the start: even so, since it was very small, he had to postpone his marriage to the patient Emily Sellwood for twenty years, in order to avoid the necessity of extraneous work, which would probably have been miscellaneous journalism, and might have crippled him as an artist. Biographers will find little to say about him. His one great tragedy, the death of Arthur Hallam, came early ; his domestic happiness was unruffled; and he had no non-poetic activities, except the occasional support of a "good cause"—his only tentative escapade occurred when he was twenty-two, had secret meetings in the Pyrenees with Spanish refugees plotting one of the chronic Spanish revolutions : luckily he did not join in the projected invasion, for when it was attempted all the invaders were caught and executed. Another reason why there is so little to tell about his personal life is that he lived so long. There are early years, spent wandering about England, of which we know little ; had he died young, like his great immediate predecessors Shelley, Byron and Keats, his companions of those years would have been fertile — if not of some-

¹ Had the modern tax on unearned income been in existence we might have heard little, as poets, of Milton, Shelley, Byron, Browning, Swinburne and others.

thing like the "chatter about Harriet," or Augusta Leigh, or Fanny Brawne — at least of records of his conversation and daily doings. But by the time that his devoted son compiled his very filial and painstaking "Memoir," those early companions were all dead and gone, and their memories with them. When his long life ended, it was the older Tennyson whom men remembered, the grave and bearded Laureate who had read poems to the widowed and weeded Queen, the friend of Mr. Gladstone, the honoured guest in steam yachts, the friend and confidant of elderly statesmen, bishops and soldiers, in fact, tht^" Great Victorian.^ (The youth of men is seldom known unless the men died young) even among Tennyson's portraits those of the baldish and shaggy elder are far more familiar than Lawrence's picture of the superbly handsome young man who gradually changed and left little legend behind him. Later, even those who knew him in his last days died off, and few now remain. Those last survivors were always indignant at the prevalent false impression of his personality, the conception of him as a [Soft sentimentalist with a taste for the pretty] This view, based like the corresponding view of Dickens on certain demure heroines like the Miller's Daughter and the Queen of the May, was always false, even of the poet. He also wrote "The Reve'nge," and "Lucretius" and "The Vision of Sin"; his "prettinesses" were the result of a powerful and sophisticated man's response to the beauty of virginal simplicity: the mode then was not for virgins perched on high stools by cocktail bars. They were the sweetness that came

from strength : honey from the lion. And as a man, his virility and even gruffness can still be attested by living people. I remember the late Sic Edmund Gosse, exasperated by some young thing's sneers at Tennyson's alleged " mawkishness " and " piudery " (alternative terms for gentleness, decorum and morality), telling me that he encountered " the swarthy old gipsy " (as he called him) wandering about on the outskirts of a party in the gipsy's own garden. " And how are you, Lord Tennyson ? " asked the solicitous and elaborate young Gosse : " Old and ugly, old and ugly," growled the Laureate, who smoked a pipe incessantly and, in his prime, could have faced his nightly bottle of port with any man of the eighteenth century.

There is always a reaction, after their deaths, against great writers who have been very popular in their life-times. Dogs who would not have barked behind powerful living heels have their day when the heels are no longer active ; reasonable critics, also, wish to redress a balance which has probably become lop-sided, and consequently tend to concentrate on faults rather than merits, on the ephemeral rather than the durable, with the attendant risk of giving the impression that the sun is a large dark body, simply because it has spots on it. [The more popular the poet the more, as a rule, vulnerable."] For the popularity of living poets is less likely to be based on what the late George Moore used to call " Pure Poetry " than on the admixture which takes the form of stories, or novelettes, in verse — witness Scott, Byron, Macfarlane and many

much lesser men. These are bound to reflect " the taste of the time " and fashions change : even the realist Thackeray has been called a sentimentalist (at other times, equally falsely, a cynic) because of certain passages which, to our taste, are gushing. And in long narratives there are bound to be (" Q " spoke of the necessary dullness of "joimng-up bits " in epic, and Poe said a long poem was impossible) passages of description or comment which, detached, seem banal, and even comic. Tennyson did not so often sink to such depths of commonplace (or rise to sych heights of sublimity) as Wordsworth, whose " A Mr. Wilkinson, a Clergyman " might well be given a rest by those who delight in Searching for dung in pearl-hills, but whose " Ecclesiastical Sonnets " certainly read like the work of one who was determined to do his Dally Poetical Dozen. But lines he certainly produced which invited the attention of the imps of mischief. They are especially fond of the end of " Enoch Arden " :

" And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral."

But detaching sentences from their contexts is often unfair.

For instance, this example. Anyone who reads " Enoch Arden " through (and, end and all, it is in this selection) must admit it is a splendidly told story ; and the end in keeping with its surroundings — after all, though it may seem deplorable to superior persons, the poor still do express their admiration and affection with " costly funerals "—

and not the poor only. The extremely costly funeral of the great Duke of Wellington was fully described by Tennyson : nobody has ever jeered at that: presumably because expense is suitable for the obsequies of a Duke but not for those of a working-man : Tennyson being far less of a snob than his critics.

That poem stands here as a specimen of his domestic narratives. An attempt has been made, with a view to recalling attention to fthe many-sidedness of his genius)to illustrate all its aspects, except the formally dramatic which would have demanded the inclusion of the whole of " Becket" ; the best effort of a poet working in an age when poetry and the theatre were notably divorced, and when practical experience of the stage was hard to get for anybody who did not produce social comedy or melodramatic rant. It would have been possible to have produced an anthology more consistently exquisite by concentrating on some one section of his work. The author of " Morte d'Arthur " was as much a Pre-Raphaelite as Burne-Jones; the poet of " The Lady of Shalott " was as much a Pre-Raphaelite as the William Morris of " The Defence of Guinevere." He had that in him which fled behind the mediaeval arras from the horrors of the Industrial Revolution; but he had that in him which faced and denounced them, as witness passages in " Maud " and elsewhere. CHe was one of the few Laureates who have ever done their public job well:] it was no longer compulsory in his day to write Odes on Royal Birthdays in return

for his butt of Canaiy, or the equivalent: but when occasion called he spoke for England with eloquence and dignity, even if sometimes he produced (as in "The Charge of the Light Brigade") what was not only metaphorically, but literally, a metricization of a leading article in a newspaper. Now and then — and to the end he was capable of sudden impulsive beauties — he produced a spontaneous and perfect lyric like "Break, break, break," composed during a nocturnal walk within sound of the sea. He could be witty and humorous and conversational with the best of the versifiers in Locker-Lampson's *Jyra idegantium* • witness "The Talking Dak" and "Will Waterproof's Monologue." And he was one of the best landscape-poets who ever lived.

Wordsworth, before him, was a magician at landscape; Robert Bridges, after him (a great poet who seems to "He as neglected in death as he was in life), recorded the scenery of Southern England as vividly as any water-colourist who ever lived; but neither of them excelled Tennyson in this sphere, which is more "extraordinary as he was very short-sighted and his landscapes were by no means impressionistic, for He is often praised for his observation of natural phenomena: it evoked general attention in the age of Charles Darwin, when accurate observation was the mode, just as did his reconciliation of evolution and religion, at a time when honest men did not want to have to choose between them, and Tennyson, like Henry Drummond, came to the rescue. Some of this, as we learn from the "Memoir," was assisted by the keeping of note-books: He would record a natural

phenomenon and tuck it away for future use as an image. The ingenious sticking-in of these minute observations is sometimes palpable. More black than ash-buds in the front of March is often quoted as an example of his close scrutiny of Nature: but it isn't quite in keeping as a description of a woman's hair. His real status as a describer of visible things is determined not by his recordings of botanical minutiae but by his power of conjuring up whole broad scenes, English or foreign, with the brightness and vividness of detail which he admired in the drawings of his friend and contemporary, Edward Lear whose talents as a sktcher have been overlaid by his reputation as the inventor, or popularizer, of the Limerick.

This can be seen in several poems here included : notably in " The Daisy." Compressed in that poem there is as much graphic information as could be found in a whole travel-diary by an ordinary tourist. In a plangent rhythm, he proceeds — the whole series of miniatures being linked by the main emotional theme — through Monaco to Genoa, to Florence, to the Lombard towns, to Como, to Milan, remembering them all at last by

" the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North."

Scarcely a stanza could be improved : everywhere there is compression without congestion, a few cunning lines conjuring up whole panoramas, with

the climax the view from the roof of Milan's white,
and nowadays denigrated, cathedral :

" O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazoned fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory I
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.

I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencil'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air."

Thus conjured up, by indications, not by micro-
scopic note-taking, is many an English scene in
" In Memoriam " :

¹¹ Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:
Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :
Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding mam."

-The eye passes insensibly from objects close at hand to a broad sweep of country resembling one of the vast prospects of de Wint or Wilson Steer.

This gift of his, it is to be hoped, is amply illustrated in this selection from a poet of great production, whose work is seldom negligible, with the exception of some of those "Juvenilia" which have made, for so long, so unfortunate an introduction to his *Collected Poems*, and which were little more than exercises: "Clanbel" and the like. So also his treatment of Classic story and myth which, after Keats and Shelley, exercised a permanent fascination over our nineteenth-century poets. And the book would have been incomplete without extracts from "The Idylls of the King," his most imposing bid for narrative eminence, the subject being one which was long considered as theme for an epic by Milton, before he decided that Satan, as a central figure, suited him better than King Arthur,

These "Idylls," impatiently waited for by the Victorian public, have long been the butt of those who like removing heroes from their pedestals. One of the commonest charges is that Tennyson's Arthur is "too much like the Prince Consort": the answer to which is that if the Prince Consort was anything like Tennyson's King Arthur he must have been a very brave, noble, patient, generous, tolerant and devout prince. The companion complaint is that Tennyson's stories are "nothing like Malory" and his telling "not so good as Malory." The latter point can plausibly be supported by quoting selected passages: Malory's prose at moments (as in Bedivere's tale of how he "heard the waters

wap and the waves wan") soars into a beauty of sound which no metrist could excel. But Malory is uneven ; his book, full of splendid things as it is, like the almost-novel about Lancelot and Elaine of Astolat, is rather inchoate in a narrative, as in a moral, sense ; and, in any event, when he is dealing with Arthur, why should Tennyson be tied down by the conception of Sir Thomas Malory, or of his French sources ? After all, the real King Arthur was no more a contemporary of Malory's than he was of Tennyson's. That dim Celtic figure, fighting desperately against the hordes of barbarian Picts and Scots and Saxons after the last of the Roman Christian legions had left the island, may have borne no more resemblance to Malory's King than he bore to Tennyson's—or the Prince Consort. And most certainly his accoutrements, his tournaments, his architecture and all his panoply were not those ascribed to him by Malory, who lived many centuries after him. Malory dressed up the legendary British heroes in mediaeval costumes and ascribed to them mediaeval codes of chivalry. Tennyson made a lesser shift : he certainly manipulated the stories, altered the tone, eliminated some of the savagery, but at least he did not follow in Malory's footsteps to the extent of garbing the King and his Knights in top-hats, frock-coats and trousers, in the manner of the " Shakespeare in Modern Dress " School.

What really matters is whether, should Malory's work completely disappear, readers might still find pleasure and inspiration in the tales as Tennyson told them: as I think those who do not approach

them in a hostile spirit, but are willing to surrender to them, always will find those things. (The ^{cc} Idylls " are uneven : not one of them may live up to the superb level of " The Passing of Arthur ; and they may have their passages of Wardour Street *decor* and stilted rhetoric.^f But they are heroic in spirit, stirring and touching, full of brilliant tapestries, and fine and various in sound.^j Perhaps the fashion has passed from them partly because the fashion has passed from the whole Arthurian cycle : there was a time when almost every poetaster had his " go " at " Tristram and Iseult " or some kindred theme, and the public had enough of it. But time sifts the good things out; and a generation will come which will find in the "Idylls" something more than the "period-period" pieces (like Victorian Gothic churches) which they are at present deemed. I say " at present deemed " : I am referring, of course, only to vocal critical circles. The general public, though indirectly affected to some extent, has never abandoned Tennyson, any more than it has abandoned George Eliot, who is now, in some quarters, supposed to be both unreadable and unread.

This is a very small volume compared with the one-volume *Collected Works*. But it has (apart from any merits which I am not competent to discuss) the advantages of larger print and no double-column setting — a tiresome thing, but necessary when a vast amount of verse has to be squeezed inside one pair of covers. Every reader will find favourite poems omitted : that cannot be helped with size limited and the attempt made at all-round

representation. And if some readers think that some verses are included which are below the artistic level of the others, let that effort at representing the various kinds of poem be taken as explanation.

Dr, of course, my bad taste ! — but that, as has long been proverbially stated, is beyond argument. An abiding love of Tennyson, however, I will allow no man to deny me.

J. C. SQUIRE

MARIANA

" Mariana in the moated grange."
Measure for Measure

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

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

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :

The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, " The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead I "

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

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.

She only said, ^{ft} The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, " I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead 1 "

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

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, " I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said ;
She wept, " I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead 1 "

SONNET TD —

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, " All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or where."
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true —
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —
That tho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And either lived in either's heart and speech.

" IF I WERE LOVED . . ."

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear,— if I were loved by thee ?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert
mine,

As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
'Twere Joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death — mute — careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.

SONG FROM "THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER"

IT is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear :
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest :
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

;

FATIMA

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

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

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
 O Love, O fire I once he drew
 With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
 My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
 In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

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

CENONE

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

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

" O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops : the golden bee
Is Illy-cradled : I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all weary of my life.

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

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

" D mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
I sat alone : white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin

Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.
" ^c My own CEnone,
Beautiful-brow'd CEnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
" For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Dread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prcst the blossom of his lips to mine,
Ana added ' This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Here comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,

Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon : one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they carne to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vint,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran not, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro*.

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, ' from many a vale
And nver-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honour,' she said, ' and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers/

" O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
' Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour
 crowns

Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fall from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

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

" ' Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear ;

And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

" Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said : ' I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge affair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circl'd thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'

" Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ^f D Paris,
Give it to Pallas 1 ' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me I

" O mother Ida, many-fountain¹ d Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Italian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot

Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

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

" Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rams
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

" O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone CEnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

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

" D mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone ?
Seal'd it with kisses ? water'd it with tears ?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these 1
D happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
D happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
D death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :

I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

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

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

THE LOTOS-EATERS

" COURAGE I " he said, and pointed toward the
land,
" This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams I some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land ; far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery
drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seem'd the same I
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more " ;
And all at once they sang, " Our island home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

CHDRIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that genther on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in
sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?
All things have rest : why should we toll alone,
We only toll, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm ! "
Why should we only toll, the roof and crown of
things ?

in

Lo I in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo I sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.

All its allotted length *of* days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

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

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream I
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;

To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass I

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change ;
For surely now our household hearths are cold :
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,

Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine 1
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the
 pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
 surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal
 mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar,, and the bolts are
 hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
 lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-
 ing world :

Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a dole-
ful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the
soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whis-
per'd — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
and oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
more.

A FAREWELL

FLOW down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver :
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet then a river :
No where by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder tree,
And here thine aspen shiver ;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver ;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

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

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho' my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs ;
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet

Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and
brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
 In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew
The maiden splendours of the morning star
 Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
 Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest
 green,
 New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
 And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
 Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
 Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
 Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
 Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
 The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
 The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in
 dew,
 Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
 Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame

The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,
" Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

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

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

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

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

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

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years :
My father held his hand upon his face ;
I, blinded with my tears,

" Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with
sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

" The high masts flickered as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
" I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had rolPd me deep below,
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea :
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, " Come here,
That I may look on thee,"

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
Dnc sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :
" I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd

All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

¹¹ The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood :
That makes my only woe.

" Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cxsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

" The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at *our* nod.

" We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O my life
In Egypt I D the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

" And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die I

" And there he died : and when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left ? look here 1 "

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever ! — lying robed and crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tlpt his keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro' the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

" The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro' the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

" The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine :
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied
To where he stands,— so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure ; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : " Heaven heads the count
of crimes
With that wild oath." She render'd answer high :
" Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

" Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

" My God, my land, my father — these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,

Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

" And I went mourning, ' No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers '— emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

" Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

" The Light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

" Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

" When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire I

" It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

" Moreover it is written that my race
 Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, **from Aroer**
On Ajnon unto Minneth." Here her face
 Glow'd, as I look'd at her.

She lock'd her lips : she left me where I stood :
 " Glory to God," she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
 Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
 As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
 And the old year is dead.

¹¹ Alas ! alas I " a low voice, full of care,
 Murmur'd beside me : " Turn and look on me :
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
 If what I was I be.

" Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor I
 D me, that I should ever see the light I
Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
 Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust:
 To whom the Egyptian : " O, you tamely died I
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
 The dagger thro' her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping
 beams,
Stol'n to my brain, dissolved the mystery

Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp'd in her last trance
Her murder'd father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France ;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again I
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be express'd
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

" YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE "

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great —
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind I I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls ;
Once more before my face
I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke ;
And ah I with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that, which in me burn'd,
The love, that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return^d ;

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarised a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under Heavea
None else could understand ;
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour ;

"Twere well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place 1

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.—

" O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old Summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace :

" Old Summers, when the monk was fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the check,

" Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,
Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowls adrift:

" And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces, that would thrive
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five ;

" And all that from the town would stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork :

" The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but ail-to-o-full in bud
For puritanic stays :

" And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties, that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn ;

" And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

" I swear (and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall)
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

" For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago ;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

" From when she gamboll'd on the greens
A baby-germ, to when
The maiden blossoms of her teens
Could number five from ten.

" I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain,
 (And hear me -with thine ears,)
That, tho' I circle in the grain
 Five hundred rings of years —

" Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
 Did never creature pass
So slightly, musically made,
 So light upon the grass :

" For as to fairies, that will flit
 To make the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
 But far too spare of flesh."

Dh, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
 And overlook the chace ;
And from thy topmost branch discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place.

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
 That oft hast heard my vows,
Declare when last Olivia came
 To sport beneath thy boughs.

" O yesterday, you know, the fair
 Was holden at the town ;
Her father left his good arm-chair,
 And rode his hunter down.

" And -with him Albert came on his.
 I look'd at him with joy :
As cowslip unto uxsip is,
 So seems she to the boy.

" An hour had past — and, sitting straight
Within the low-wheel'd chaise,
Her mother trundled to the gate
Behind the dappled grays.

¹¹ But as for her, she stay'd at home,
And on the roof she went,
And down the way you use to come,
She look'd with discontent.

" She left the novel half-uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf;
She left the new piano shut:
She could not please herself.

" Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
And livelier than a lark
She sent her voice thro' all the holt
Before her, and the park.

" A light wind chased her on the wing,
And in the chase grew wild,
As close as might be would he cling
About the darling child :

" But light as any wind that blows
So fleetly did she stir,
The flower, she touch'd on, dipt and rose,
And turn'd to look at her.

" And here she came, and round me play'd,
And sang to me the whole
Of those three stanzas that you made
About my ' giant bole ';

" And in a fit of frolic mirth
She strove to span my waist :
Alas, I was so broad of girth,
I could not be embraced.

" I wish'd myself the fair young beech
That here beside me stands,
That round me, clasping each in each,
She might have lock'd her hands.

" Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as sweet
As woodbine's fragile hold,
Or when I feel about my feet
The berried briony fold."

O muffle round thy knees with fern,
And shado^A^Sumner-chace !
Long may thy topmost branch discern
The roofs of Sumner-place !

But tell me, did she read the name
I carved with many vows
When last with throbbing heart I came
To rest beneath thy boughs ?

" O yes, she wander'd round and round
These knotted knees of mine,
And found, and kiss'd the name she found,
And sweetly murmur'd thine.

" A teardrop trembled from its source,
And down my surface crept.
My sense of touch is something coarse,
But I believe she wept.

" Then flush'd her cheek with rosy light,
She glanced across the plain ;
But not a creature was in sight :
She kiss'd me once again,

" Her kisses were so close and kind,
That, trust me on my word,
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd :

" And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the Spring,
That show the year is turn'd.

" Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm.

" I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust:

" For ah ! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that, which breathes within the leaf,
Could slip its bark and walk.

" But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray, and branch, and stem,
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

" She had not found me so remiss ;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto."

O flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea,
Pursue thy loves among the bowers
But leave thou mine to me.

D flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well ;
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

" 'Tis little more : the day was warm ;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

" Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves,
I breathed upon her eyes
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

" I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife
And lulFd them in my own.

" Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye ;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly ;

" A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine ;
* Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine,

"Then close and dark my arms I spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dewes upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

" But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

" And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

" I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O kiss him once for me.

" O kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss,
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this."

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs discern
The front of Sumner-placc.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest,
That but a moment lay
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetise
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land.

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O rock upon thy towery-top
All throats that gurgle sweet I
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow —
And while he sinks or swells
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells.

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes 1
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes I

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep !

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
And praise thee more in both
Than bard has honour'd beech or lime,
Or that Thessalian growth,

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
And mystic sentence spoke ;
And more than England honours that,
Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode
Till all the paths were dim,
And far below the Roundhead rode,
And humm'd a surly hymn.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

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

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

By the margin, willow-veil¹d,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, " 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott."

PART II

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

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

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

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

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
 Beside remote Shalott.

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

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

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

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,

She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and flDated wide;
The mirror crack⁷d from side to side;
¹⁶ The curse is come upon me/' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd CameTot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalvtt.

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

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and light —

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

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

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

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:

But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, " She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

ULYSSES

IT little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not
me.

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea : I am become a name ;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known ; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburmsh'd, not to shine in use !
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains : but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bngger of new things ; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire

To follow knowledge like- a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port ; the vessel puffs her sail :
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought
with me —

That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old ;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;
Death closes all : but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks :
The long day wanes : the slow moon climbs : the
deep

Moans round with many voices. Come, my
friends,

'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows ; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths

Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down :
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And sec the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides ; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven ; that which we are, we
are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TITHDNUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas I for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God I
I ask'd thee, " Give me immortality,"
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their
 wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me ? Let me go : take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,

Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all ?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd,
Thy cheek begins to redden thro¹ the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo I ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true ?
" The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me I ay me I with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —
The lucid outline forming round thee ; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings ;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East :
How can my nature longer mix with thine ?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground ;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave :
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn ;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis
early morn :

Leave me here, and when you want me, sound
upon the bugle-horn.

Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the
curlews call,

Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over
Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the
sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I
went to rest,
Did I look on great Drion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the
mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver
braid,

Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a
youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result
of Time ;

**When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land
reposed ;**

When I clung to all the present for the promise that
it closed :

When I dipt into the future far as human eye could
see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be.——

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the
robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself
another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd
dove ;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be
for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observ-
ance hung.

And I said, " My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the
truth to me,
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to
thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and
a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern
night.

And she turn'd — her bosom shaken with a sudden
storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel
eyes —

Saying, " I have hid my feelings, fearing they should
do me wrong " ;

Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin ? " weeping,
" I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turn'd it in his
glowing hands ;

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden
sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the
chords with might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, pass'd in
music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the
copses ring,

And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness
of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the
stately ships,

And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of
the lips.

D my cousin, shallow-hearted I D my Amy, mine
no more !

D the dreary, dreary moorland I D the barren,
barren shore I

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs
have sung,

Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish
tongue I

Is it well to wish thee happy ? — having known me
— to decline

On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart
than mine I

Yet it shall be : thou shalt lower to his level day by
day,

What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathise
with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is : thou art mated with
a clown,

And the grossness of his nature will have weight to
drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent
its novel force,

Something better than his dog, a little dearer than
his horse.

What is this ? his eyes are heavy : think not they
are glazed with wme.

Go to him : it is thy duty : kiss him : take his hand
in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is over-
wrought :

Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with
thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to under-
stand —

Better thou wert dead before me, tho' I slew thee
with my hand I

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the
heart's disgrace,
RulFd in one another's arms, and silent in a last
embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin against the
strength of youth I
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the
living truth 1

Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest
Nature's rule 1
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead
of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster I — Hadst thou
less unworthy proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than
ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears
but bitter fruit ?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho' my heart be at
the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of
years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging
rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the
mind ?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew
her, kind ?

I remember one that perish'd : sweetly did she speak
and move :
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to
love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love
she bore ?
No — she never loved me truly : love is love for
evermore.

Comfort ? comfort scorn'd of devils I this is truth
the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering
happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart
be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on
the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring
at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows
rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his
drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to the tears that
thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the " Never, never," whisper'd by
the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of
thine ears ;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness
on thy pain.

Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow : get thee to thy
rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace ; for a tender
voice will cry.

'Tis a purer life than thine ; a lip to drain thy
trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down: my latest rival brings
thee rest.

Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the
mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness
not his due.

Half is thine and half is his : it will be worthy of the
two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a
daughter's heart.

" They were dangerous guides the feelings — she
herself was not exempt —

Truly, she herself had suffer'd"—Perish in thy self-
contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy I wherefore
should I care ?

I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by
despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon
days like these ?

Every door is barr'd with gold, and opens but to
golden keys.

Every gate is throng'd with suitors, all the markets
overflow.

I have but an angry fancy : what is that which I
should do ?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's
ground,

When the ranks are roll'd in vapour, and the winds
are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that
Honour feels.

And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each
other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness ? I will turn that earlier
page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous
Mother-Age I

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the
strife,

When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of
my life ;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming
years would yield,

Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his
father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and
nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light *of* London flaring like a
dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before
him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the
throngs of men :

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping
something new :
That which they have done but earnest of the things
that they shall do :

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could
see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
that would be ;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of
magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with
costly bales ;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd
a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central
blue ;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging thro'
the thunder-storm ;

Till the war-drum throb'd no longer, and the battle-
flags were furl'd

In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the
world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful
realm in awe,

And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal
law.

Sol triumph'd ere my passion sweeping thro' me
left me dry,

Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the
jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out
of joint:

Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from
point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion creeping
nigher,

Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-
dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose
runs,

And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the pro-
cess of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his
youthful joys,

Tho' the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a
boy's ?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger
on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more
and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears
a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness
of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the
bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for
their scorn :

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a
moulder'd string ?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to have loved so
slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness I woman's
pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a
shallower brain :

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions,
match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto
wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah,
for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began
to beat;

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-
starr'd ; —

I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's
ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far
away,

On from island unto island at the gateways of the
day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and
happy skies,

Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots
of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European
^{fl}ag,

Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the
trailer from the crag ;

Droops the heavy-blossom'd bower, hangs the heavy-
fruited tree —

Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres
of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in
this march of mind,

In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts
that shake mankind.

There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have
scope and breathing space ;

I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my
dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall dive, and
they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances
in the sun ;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows
of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable
books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy I but I *know* my
words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Chris-
tian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our
glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with
lower pains I

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun
or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files or
time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by
one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's
moon in Ajalon I

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward
let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing
grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the
younger day :
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not), help me as when
life begun :
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings,
weigh the Sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not
set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well thro' all my fancy
yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locks-
ley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the
roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening over
heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a
thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire
or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I
go.

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
Clothes and reclothes the happy plains,
Here rests the sap within the leaf,
Here stays the blood along the veins.
Faint shadows, vapours lightly curl'd,
Faint murmurs from the meadows come,
Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn.
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake withdrawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their eggs :
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily : no sound is made,
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the wall.

IV

Here sits the Butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honour blooming fair ;
The page has caught her hand in his :
Her lips are sever'd as to speak :
His own are pouted to a kiss :
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams, that thro' the Oriel shine,
Make prisms in every carven glass,
And beaker brimm'd with noble wine.
Bach baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gathered in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king.

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and shows
At distance like a little wood ;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as blood ;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and briar,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers die,
And thought and time be born again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of men ?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

ST. ACNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the *moon* :
My breath to heaven like vapour goes ;
May my soul follow soon !
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord :
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
To yonder shining ground ;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round ;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee ;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord I and far,
Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors ;
The flashes come and go ;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And straws her lights below,

And deepens on and up I the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
One sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with his bride I

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time ? 'Tis five o'clock.
Go fetch a pint of port:
But let it not be such as that
You set before chance-comers,
But such whose father-grape grew fat
On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
But may she still be kind,
And whisper lovely words, and use
Her influence on the mind,
To make me write my random rhymes,
Ere they be half-forgotten ;
Nor add and alter, many times,
Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
Her laurel in the wine,
And lays it thrice upon my lips,
These favour'd lips of mine ;
Until the charm have power to make
New lifeblood warm the bosom,
And barren commonplaces break
In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
Her gradual fingers steal

And touch upon the master-chord
Of all I felt and feel.
Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
And phantom hopes assemble ;
And that child's heart within the man's
Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
By many pleasant ways,
Against its fountain upward runs
The current of my days :
I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd ;
The gas-light wavers dimmer ;
And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
My college friendships glimmer.

I grow in worth, and wit, and sense,
Unboding critic-pen,
Or that eternal want of pence,
Which vexes public men,
Who hold their hands to all, and cry
For that which all deny them —
Who sweep the crossings, wet or dry,
And all the world go by them.

Ah yet, tho' all the world forsake,
Tho' fortune clip my wings,
I will not cramp my heart, nor take
Half-views of men and things,
Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
There must be stormy weather ;
But for some true result of good
All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes ;
If old things, there are new ;
Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
Yet glimpses of the true.
Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
We lack not rhymes and reasons,
As on this whirligig of Time
We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid ;
With fair horizons bound :
This whole wide earth of light and shade
Comes out a perfect round.
High over roaring Temple-bar,
And set in Heaven's third story,
I look at all things as they are,
But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honour'd by the guest
Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
The pint, you brought me, was the best
That ever came from pipe.
But tho' the port surpasses praise,
My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
Is there some magic in the place ?
Or do my peptics differ ?

For since I came to live and learn,
No pint of white or red
Had ever half the power to turn
This wheel within my head,

Which bears a seasoned brain about,
Unsubject to confusion,
Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
With many kinsmen gay,
Where long and largely we carouse
As who shall say me nay:
Each month, a birth-day coming on,
We drink defying trouble,
Or sometimes two would meet in one,
And then we drank it double ;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
Had relish fiery-new,
Or elbow-deep in sawdust, slept,
As old as Waterloo ;
Or stow'd, when classic Canning died,
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is I
She answer'd to my call,
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all:
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.
He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley.

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stcpt forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop ;
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw :
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and good,
Flew over roof and casement :
His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe and spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire
Came crowing over Thames.

Right down by smoky Paul's they bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than common ;
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me down
Into the common day ?
Is it the weight of that half-crown,
Which I shall have to pay ?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
And thrumming on the table :

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task ;
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask :
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet:
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up ;
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup :
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone I
We know not what we know.
But for my pleasant hour, 'tis gone ;
'Tis gone, and let it go.
'Tis gone : a thousand such have slipt
Away from my embraces,
And fall'n into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

GD, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more ;
With peals of genial clamour sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy hits,
From misty men of letters ;
The tavern-hours of mighty wits —
Thine elders and thy betters.

Hours, when the Poet's words and looks
Had yet their native glow :
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show;

But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days, that deal in ana, swarm'd
His literary leeches.

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou last,
At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should pass :
With time I will not quarrel:
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort,
I too must part: I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And wheresoever thou move, good luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots :
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots :
Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit,
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruets.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies ;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall tread
The corners of thine eyes :
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Dur changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes.

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more ;
No carved cross-bones, the types of Death,
Shall show thee past to Heaven :
But carved crass-pipes, and, underneath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven again
The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sun-lit rail of rain.

 In crystal vapour everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
 From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song :
Sometimes the throstle whistled strong :
Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of wrong :

 By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran,
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
 Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

 She seem'd a part of joyous Spring:
A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before ;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
 Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern set :
 And fleeter now she skimrn'd the plains
Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to eery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland rings
 With jingling bridle-reins.

As fast she fled thro' sun and shade,
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid :
She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
 The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
 Upon her perfect lips.

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have
 flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise :
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips —
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes —
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins or wine, and piles
 of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground ;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Wov'n in circles : they that heard it sigh'd,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied ;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail;
Then the music touch'd the gates and died;
Rose again from where it seem'd to fail,
Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing gale ;

Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throb'd and
 palpitated ;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round :
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dash'd together in blinding dew :
Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

in

And then I look'd up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn :
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded : and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapour heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Game floating on for many a month and year,

Unheeded : and I thought I would have spoken,
And warn'd that madman ere it grew too late :
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapour touch'd the palace gate,
And Imk'd again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a wither'd heath,
And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said :

IV

" Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin I
Here is custom come your way ;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

" Bitter barmaid, waning fast I
See that sheets are on my bed ;
What I the flower of life is past :
It is long before you wed.

" Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath I
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

¹¹ I am old, but let me drink ;
Bring me spices, bring me wine ;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

" Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,

When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

" Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee :
What care I for any name ?
What for order or degree ?

" Let me screw thee up a peg :
Let me loose thy tongue with wine :
Callest thou that thing a leg ?
Which is thinnest ? thine or mine ?

" Thou shalt not be saved by works :
Thou hast been a sinner too :
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you 1

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

" We are men of ruin'd blood ;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

" Name and fame I to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

¹¹ Friendship I —to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack I
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

" Virtue I — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

" O ! we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbour's wife.

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Have a rouse before the morn :
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

" Drink, and let the parties rave :
They are fill'd with idle spleen ;
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

" He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power ;
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

" Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread ;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

" No, I love not what is new ;
She is of an ancient house :
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

" Let her *go* I her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

" Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Vision's of a perfect State :
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

¹¹ Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

" Fear not thou to loose thy tongue ;
Set thy hoary fancies free ;
What is loathsome to the young
Savours well to thee and me.

" Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

" Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance;
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

" Fill the can, and fill the cup :
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

" Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads :
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !

" You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modelFd on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex 1
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex,
From the fashion of your bones.

" No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip :
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

" Lo ! God's likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor framed :
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed I

" Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath I
Drink to heavy Ignorance I
Hob-and-nob with brother Death I

" Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near :
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

" Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

" Fill the cup, and fill the can :
Mingle madness, mingle scorn I
Dregs of life, and lees of man :
Yet we will not die forlorn."

V

The voice grew faint : there came a further change :
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range :
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms ;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Did splash of rams, and refuse patch'd with moss.
Then some one spake : " Behold I it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."
Another said : " The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame."
And one : " He had not wholly quench'd his power ;

A little grain of conscience made him sour."
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, " Is there any hope ? "
To which an answer peal'd from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand ;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Penei'an pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there :

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track¹d you still on classic ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd—here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random thrown
By fountain-urns; —and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks,
And fluted to the morning sea.

"BREAK, BREAK, BREAK"¹

BREAK, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, D Sea I
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,

That he shouts with his sister at play I
D well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay I

And the stately ships go on

To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still I

Break, break, break,

At the foot of thy crags, O Sea I
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

ENOCH ARDEN

LONG lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow sands ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow wharf
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ; and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd mill;
And high in heaven behind it a gray down
With Danish barrows ; and a hazelwood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.

Here on this beach a hundred years ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,
And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
Made orphan by a winter shipwreck, play'd
Among the waste and lumber of the shore,
Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fishing-nets,
Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats updrawn ;
And built their castles of dissolving sand
To watch them overflow'd, or following up
And flying the white breaker, dally left
The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the cliff:
In this the children play'd at keeping house.
Enoch was host one day, Philip the next,
While Annie still was mistress ; but at times
Enoch would hold possession for a week :
" This is my house and this my little wife."
" Mine too," said Philip, " turn and turn about " :

When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch stronger-made
Was master : then would Philip, his blue eyes
All flooded with the helpless wrath of tears,
Shriek out " I hate you, Enoch," and at this
The little wife would weep for company,
And pray them not to quarrel for her sake,
And say she would be little wife to both.

But when the dawn of rosy childhood past,
And the new warmth of life's ascending sun
Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
On that one girl; and Enoch spoke his love,
But Philip loved in silence ; and the girl
Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him ;
But she loved Enoch ; tho' she knew it not,
And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
A purpose evermore before his eyes,
To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
To purchase his own boat, and make a home
For Annie : and so prospered that at last
A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
For leagues along that breaker-beaten coast
Than Enoch. Likewise had he served a year
On board a merchantman, and made himself
Full sailor ; and he thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas :
And all men look'd upon him favourably :
And ere he touch'd his one-and-twentieth May
He purchased his own boat, and made a home
For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway up
The narrow street that clamber'd toward the mill.

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
The younger people making holiday,
With bag and sack and basket, great and small,
Went nutting to the hazels. Philip stay'd
(His father lying sick and needing him)
An hour behind ; but as he climb'd the hill,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, saw the pair,
Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-hand,
His large gray eyes and weather-beaten face
All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
That burn'd as on an altar. Philip look'd,
And in their eyes and faces read his doom ;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood ;
There, while the rest were loud in merrymaking,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
Seven happy years of health and competence,
And mutual love and honourable toil ;
With children ; first a daughter. In him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the noble wish
To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers ; a wish renew'd,
When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes,
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful seas,
Or often journeying landward ; for in truth

Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand winter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp,
And peacock-yewtree of the lonely Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's ministering.

Then came a change, as all things human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow port
Open'd a larger haven : thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or sea ;
And once when there, and clambering on a mast
In harbour, by mischance he slipt and fell :
A limb was broken when they lifted him ;
And while he lay recovering there, his wife
Bore him another son, a sickly one :
Another hand crept too across his trade
Taking her bread and theirs : and on him fell,
Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
To see his children leading evermore
Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
And her, he loved, a beggar : then he pray'd
" Save them from this, whatever comes to me."
And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance,
Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go ?
There yet were many weeks before she sall'd,

SaiPd from this port. Would Enoch have the
place ?

And Enoch all at once assented to it,
Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
No graver than as when some little cloud
Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
And isles a light in the offing : yet the wife —
When he was gone — the children — what to do ?
Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans ;
To sell the boat — and yet he loved her well —
How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her I
He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse —
And yet to sell her—then with what she brought
Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in trade
With all that seamen needed or their wives —
SD might she keep the house while he was gone.
Should he not trade himself out yonder ? go
This voyage more than once? yea twice or thncc —
As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
Become the master of a larger craft,
With fuller profits lead an easier life,
Have all his pretty young ones educated,
And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all :
Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born.
Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms ;
Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
Appraised his weight and fondlsd fatherhke,

But had no heart to break his purposes
To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
Her finger, Annie fought against his will:
Yet not with brawling opposition she,
But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
Many a sad kiss by day by night renew'd
(Sure that all evil would come out of it)
Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
For her or his dear children, not to go.
He not for his own self caring but her,
Her and her children, let her plead in vain ;
So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
To fit their little streetward sitting-room
With shelf and corner for the goods and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful hand,—
The space was narrow,—having order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature packs
Her blossom or her seedling, paused ; and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to the last,
Ascending tired, heavily slept till morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's fears,
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to him.

Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mystery
Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes
Whatever came to him : and then he said
" Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.
Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it."
Then lightly rocking baby's cradle " and he,
This pretty, puny, weakly little one,—
Nay — for I love him all the better for it —
God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees
And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,
And make him merry, when I come home again.
Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go."

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,
And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd
The current of his talk to graver things
In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
Dn providence and trust in Heaven, she heard,
Heard and not heard him ; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke, " O Enoch, you are wise ;
And yet for all your wisdom well know I
That I shall look upon your face no more."

"Well, then," said Enoch, "I shall look on yours."
Annie, the ship I sail in passes here

(He named the day) get you a seaman's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears."

But when the last of those last moments came,
" Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,
Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must go.
Ana fear no more for me ; or if you fear
Cast all your cares on God ; that anchor holds.
Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning ? if I flee to these
Can I go from Him ? and the sea is His,
The sea is His : He made it."

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,
And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones ;
But for the third, the sickly one, who slept
After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him Enoch said
" Wake him not; let him sleep ; how should the
child
Remember this ? " and kiss'd him in his cot.
But Annie from her baby's forehead dipt
A tiny curl, and gave it : this he kept
Thro' all his future ; but now hastily caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She when the day, that Enoch mention'd, came,
Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain : perhaps
She could not fix the glass to suit her eye ;
Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous ;

She saw him not : and while he stood on deck
Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Ev'n to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watch'd it, and departed weeping for him ;
Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his,
But throve not in her trade, not being bred
To barter, nor compensating the want
By shrewdness, neither capable of lies,
Nar asking overmuch and taking less,
And still foreboding " what would Enoch say ? "
For more than once, in days of difficulty
And pressure, had she sold her wares for less
Than what she gave in buying what she sold :
She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ; and thus,
Expectant of that news which never came,
Gain'd for her own a scanty sustenance,
And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born and grew
Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
With all a mother's care : nevertheless,
Whether her business often call'd her from it,
Or thro' the want of what it needed most,
Or means to pay the voice who best could tell
What most it needed — howsoe'er it was,
After a lingering,— ere she was aware,—
Like the caged bird escaping suddenly,
The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie buried it,
Philip's true heart, which hunger'd far her peace

(Since Enoch left he had not look'd upon her),
Smote him, as having kept aloof so long.
" Surely," said Philip, " I may see her now,
May be some little comfort " ; therefore went,
Past thro' the solitary room in front,
Paused for a moment at an inner door,
Then struck it thrice, and, no one opening,
Enter'd ; but Annie, seated with her grief.
Fresh from the burial of her little one,
Cared not to look on any human face,
But turn'd her own toward the wall and wept.
Then Philip standing up said faltenngly
" Annie, I came to ask a favour of you."

He spoke ; the passion in her moan'd reply
" Favour from one so sad and so forlorn
As I am ! " half abash¹ d him ; yet unask'd,
His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
He set himself beside her, saying to her :

" I came to speak to you of what he wish'd,
Enoch, your husband : I have ever said
You chose the best among us — a strong man :
For where he fixt his heart he set his hand
To do the thing he will'd, and bore it thro'.
And wherefore did he go this weary way,
And leave you lonely ? not to see the world —
For pleasure ? — nay, but for the wherewithal
To give his babes a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or yours : that was his wish.
And if he come again, vext will he be
To find the precious morning hours were lost.
And it would vex him even m his grave,

If he could know his babes were running wild
Like colts about the waste. So, Annie, now —
Have we not known each other all our lives ?
I do beseech you by the love you bear
Him and his children not to say me nay —
For, if you will, when Enoch comes again
Why then he shall repay me — if you will,
Annie — for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to school:
This is the favour that I came to ask."

Then Annie with her brows against the wall
Answer'd " I cannot look you in the face ;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke me down ;
And now I think your kindness breaks me down ;
But Enoch lives ; that is borne in on me :
He will repay you : money can be repaid ;
Not kindness such as yours."

And Philip ask'd
" Then you will let me, Annie ? "

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly face,
Then calling down a blessing on his head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it passionately,
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books, and every way,

Like one who docs his duty by his own,
Made himself theirs ; and tho' for Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest wish,
And seldom crost her threshold, yet he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the meal
To save the offence of charitable, flour
From his tall mill that whistled on the waste.

But Philip did not fathom Annie's mind :
Scarce could the woman when he came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless gratitude,
Light on a broken word to thank him with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily ;
Lords of his house and of his mill were they ;
Worried his passive ear with petty wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd with him
And call'd him Father Philip. Philip gain'd
As Enoch lost; for Enoch seem'd to them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where : and so ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native land,
Fled forward, and *no* news of Enoch came.

It chanced one evening Annie's children long'd
To go with others, nutting to the wood,

And Annie would go with them ; then they begg'd
For Father Philip (as they call'd him) too :
Him, like the working bee in blossom-dust,
Blanch'd with his mill, they found ; and saying to
him

" Come with us, Father Philip " he denied ;
But when the children pluck'd at him to go,
He laugh'd, and yieldea readily to their wish,
For was not Annie with them ? and they went.

But after scaling half the weary down,
Just where the prone edge of the wood began
To feather toward the hollow, all her force
Fail'd her ; and sighing, " Let me rest, " she said :
So Philip rested with her well-content ;
While all the younger ones with jubilant cries
Bioke from their elders, and tumultuously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear away
Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood.

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow : at last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, " Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie ? " for she did not speak a word.
" Tired ? " but her face had fall'n upon her hands ;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
" The ship was lost," he said, " the ship was lost 1

No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite ? " And Annie said
"I thought not of it : but — I know not why —
Their voices make me feel so solitary."

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke.
" Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long,
That tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last. O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance,
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living ; well, then — let me speak :
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help :
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless — they say that women are so quick —
Perhaps you know what I would have you know —
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children : I do think
They love me as a father : I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own;
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years,
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon it:
For I am well-to-do — no km, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours :
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know."

Then answer'd Annie ; tenderly she spoke :
" You have been as God's good angel in our house.
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,

Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice ? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was ? what is it that you ask ? "
" I am content," he answer'd, " to be loved
A little after Enoch." " O " she cried,
Scared as it were, " dear Philip, wait a while:
If Enoch comes — but Enoch will not come —
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long :
Surely I shall be wiser in a year :
O wait a little ! " Philip sadly said
" Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little." " Nay," she cried,
" I am bound : you have my promise—in a year :
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine ? "
And Philip answer'd " I will bide my year."

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow overhead ;
Then fearing night and chill for Annie, rose
And sent his voice beneath him thro' the wood.
Up came the children laden with their spoil;
Then all descended to the port, and there
At Annie's door he paused and gave his hand.
Saying gently " Annie, when I spoke to you,
That was your hour of weakness. I was wrong,
I am always bound to you, but you are free."
Then Annie weeping answer'd " I am bound."

She spoke ; and in one moment as it were,
While yet she went about her household ways,
Ev'n as she dwelt upon his latest words,
That he had loved her longer than she knew,

That autumn into autumn flash'd again,
And there he stood once more before her face,
Claiming her promise. " Is it a year ? " she ask'd.
" Yes, if the nuts," he said, " be ripe again :
Come out and see." But she — she put him off—
So much to look to — such a change — a month —
Give her a month—she knew that she was bound—
A month—no more. Then Philip with his eyes
Full of that lifelong hunger, and his voice
Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,
" Take your own time, Annie, take your own
time."

And Annie could have wept for pity of him ;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-sufferance,
Till half-another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost,
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle with her ;
Some that she but held off to draw him on ;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip too,
As simple folk that knew not their own minds,
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his wish ;
But evermore the daughter prest upon her
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty ;
And Philip's rosy face contracting grew

Careworn and wan ; and all these things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but earnestly
Pray'd for a sign " my Enoch is he gone ? "
Then compass'd round by the bhnd wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself a light,
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her ringer on the text,
" Under the palm-tree." That was nothing to her :
No meaning there : she closed the Book and slept :
When ID ! her Enoch sitting on a height,
Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun :
" He is gone," she thought, " he is happy, he is singing
Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms
Whereof the happy people strowing cried
¹ Hosanna in the highest ! "' Here she woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly to him
" There is no reason why we should not wed."
" Then for God's sake," he answered, " both our
sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once."

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence ; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to be left

Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What all'd her then, that ere she enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the latch,
Fearing to enter ? Philip thought he knew :
Such doubts and fears were common to her state,
Being with child : but when her child was born,
Then her new child was as herself renew'd,
Then the new mother came about her heart,
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly died.

And where was Enoch ? prosperously sail'd
The ship " Good Fortune," tho' at setting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward, shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet unvext
She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon, also, for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage : at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows :
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,
Then baffling, a long course of them ; and last

Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of " breakers " came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots ;
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,
Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.

For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death-in-life.
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem ;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning " wait."

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to Heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
The lustre of the long convolvuluses

That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Ev'n to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,
All these he saw ; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean-fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
The moving whisper of huge trees that branched
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, or all day long
Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail:
No sail from day to day, but every day
The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
Among the palms and ferns and precipices ;
The blaze upon the waters to the east ;
The blaze upon his island overhead ;
The blaze upon the waters to the west ;
Then the great stars that globed themselves in
Heaven,
The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
The scarlet shafts of sunrise — but no sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd to watch,
So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
A phantom made of many phantoms moved
Before him haunting him, or he himself
Moved haunting people, things and places, known
Far in a darker isle beyond the line ;
The babes, their babble, Annie, the small house,
The climbing street, the mill, the leafy lanes,

The pcacock-yewtree and the lonely Hall,
The horse he drove, the boat he sold, the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-colour'd seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far away —
He heard the pealing of his parish bells ;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart
Spoken with That, which being everywhere
Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering head
The sunny and rainy seasons came and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another ship
(She wanted water) blown by baffling winds,
Like the Good Fortune, from her destined
course,

Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where she lay :
For since the mate had seen at early dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen isle
The silent water slipping from the hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd the shores
With clamour. Downward from his mountain

gorge

There Enoch spoke no word to any one,
But homeward — home — what home ? had he a
home ?

His home, he walk'd. Bright was that afternoon,
Sunny but chill; till drawn thro' either chasm,
Where either haven open'd on the deeps,
Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the world in gray ;
Cut off the length of highway on before,
And left but narrow breadth to left and right
Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping haze
The dead weight of the dead leaf bore it down :
Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the gloom ;
Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted light
Flared on him, and he came upon the place.

Then down the long street having slowly stolen,
His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd the home
Where Annie lived and loved him, and his babes
In those far-off seven happy years were born ;
But finding neither light nor murmur there
(A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the drizzle) crept
Still downward thinking " dead or dead to me I "

Down to the pool and narrow wharf he went,
Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
A front of timber-crest antiquity,
So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
He thought it must have gone ; but he was gone
Who kept it; and his widow Miriam Lane,
With daily-dwindling profits held the house ;

A haunt of brawling seamen once, but now
Still, with yet a bed for wandering men.
There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and garrulous,
Nor let him be, but often breaking in,
Told him, with other annals of the port,
Not knowing — Enoch was so brown, so bow'd,
So broken — all the story of his house.
His baby's death, her growing poverty,
How Philip put her little ones to school,
And kept them *in* it, his long wooing her,
Her slow consent, and marriage, and the birth
Of Philip's child : and o'er his countenance
No shadow past, nor motion : any one,
Regarding, well had deem'd he felt the tale
Less than the teller : only when she closed
" Enoch, poor man, was cast away and lost "
He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
Repeated muttering " cast away and lost " ;
Again in deeper inward whispers " lost 1 "

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face again ;
" If I might look on her sweet face again
And know that she is happy." So the thought
Haunted and harassed him, and drove him forth,
At evening when the dull November day
Was growing duller twilight, to the hill.
There he sat down gazing on all below ;
There did a thousand memories roll upon him,
Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
The ruddy square of comfortable light,
Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's house,

Allured him, as the beacon-blaze allures
The bird of passage, till he madly strikes
Against it, and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the street,
The latest house to landward : but behind,
With one small gate that open'd on the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and walFd :
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yewtree, and all round it ran a walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it :
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and thence
That which he better might have shunn'd, if
 gnefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd board
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the hearth :
And on the right hand of the hearth he saw
Philip, the slighted suitor of old times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his knees ;
And o'er her second father stoopt a girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they laugh'd :
And on the left hand of the hearth he saw
The mother glancing often toward her babe,
But turning now and then to speak with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tali and strong,
And saying that which pleased him, for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the happiness,
And his own children tall and beautiful,
And him, that other, reigning in his place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's love,—
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told him all,
Because things seen are mightier than things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and be found,
Crept to the gate, and open'd it, and closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-door,
Behind him, and came out upon the waste.

And there he would have knelt, but that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and pray'd.

" Too hard to bear I why did they take me thence ?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour, Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
A little longer I aid me, give me strength
Not to tell her, never to let her know.
Help me not to break in upon her peace.

My children too I must I not speak to these ?
They know me not. I should betray myself.
Never : No father's kiss for me — the girl
So like her mother, and the boy, my son."

There speech and thought and nature fail'd a
little,
And he lay tranced ; but when he rose and paced
Back toward his solitary home again,
All down the long and narrow street he went
Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
" Not to tell her, never to let her know."

He was not all unhappy. His resolve
Upbore him, and firm faith, and evermore
Prayer from a living source within the will,
And beating up thro' all the bitter world,
Like fountains of sweet water in the sea,
Kept him a living soul, " This miller's wife,"
He said to Miriam, " that you spoke about,
Has she no fear that her first husband lives ? "
" Ay, ay, poor soul," said Miriam, " fear enow
If you could tell her you had seen him dead,
Why, that would be her comfort " ; and he
thought
" After the Lord has call'd me she shall know,
I wait His time," and Enoch set himself,
Scorning an alms, to work whereby to live.
Almost to all things could he turn his hand.
Cooper he was and carpenter, and wrought
To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or help'd
At lading and unlading the tall barks,

That brought the stinted commerce of those days ;
Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself:
Yet since he did but labour for himself,
Work without hope, there was not life in it
Whereby the man could live ; and as the year
Roll'd itself round again to meet the day
When Enoch had return'd, a languor came
Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
Weakening the man, till he could do no more,
But kept the house, his chair, and last his bed.
And Enoch bore his weakness cheerfully.
For sure no gladlier does the stranded wreck
See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting squall
The boat that bears the hope of life approach
To save the life despair'd of, than he saw
Death dawning on him, and the close of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a kindlier hope
On Enoch thinking " after I am gone,
Then may she learn I lov'd her to the last."
He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and said
" Woman, I have a secret— only swear,
Before I tell you — swear upon the book
Not to reveal it, till you see me dead."

¹¹ Dead," clamour'd the good woman, ¹² hear him
talk I

I warrant, man, that we shall bring you round."
" Swear," added Enoch sternly, " on the book."
And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam swore.
Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes upon her,
" Did you know Enoch Arden of this town ? "
" Know him ? " she said, " I knew him far away.
Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;

Held his head high, and cared for no man, he."
Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her ;

" His head is low, and 110 man cares for him.

I think I have not three dfiys more to live ;

I am the man " At which the woman gave

A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry.

" You Arden, you ! nay,—sure he was a foot

Higher than you be." Enoch said again

" My Cud has bow'd me d[]wn to what I am ;

My grief and solitude have broken me ;

Nevertheless, know you that I am he

Who married—but that name has twice been
changed—

I married her who marLied Philip Ray.

Sit, listen." Then he told her of his voyage,

His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,

His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,

And how he kept it. As the woman heard,

Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,

While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly

To rush abroad all round the little haven,

Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes ;

But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,

Saying only "See your bairns before you go 1

Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden," and arose

Eager to bring them down, for Enoch hung

A moment on her words, but then replied :

" Woman, disturb me not now at the last,

But let me hold my purpose till I die.

Sit down again ; mark me and understand,

While I have power to speak. I charge you now,

When you shall see her, tell her that I died

Blessing her, praying for her, loving her ;
Save for the bar between us, loving her
As when she laid her head beside my own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I saw
So like her mother, that my latest breath
Was spent in blessing her and praying for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing him.
And say to Philip that I blest him too ;
He never meant us any thing but good.
But if my children care to see me dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them come,
I am their father ; but she must not come,
For my dead face would vex her after-life.
And now there is but one of all my blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-be :
This hair is his : she cut it off and gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these years,
And thought to bear it with me to my grave ;
But now my mind is changed, for I shall see him,
My babe in bliss : wherefore when I am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may comfort her :
It will moreover be a token to her,
That I am he."

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promising all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at intervals,

There came so loud a calling of the sea,
That all the houses in the haven rang,
He "woke, he rose, he spread his arms abroad
Crying with a loud voice " A sail I a sail !
I am saved " ; and so fell back and spoke no
more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

SONG FROM " THE BROOK "

I COME from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To oickcr down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,

And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers ;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses ;
I linger by my shingly bars ;
I loiter round my cresses ;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold ; *for* when the morning flush
Of passion and the first embrace had died
Between them, tho' he lov'd her none the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his foot
Return from paces in the field, and ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master took
Small notice, or austere, for — his mind
Half buried in some weightier argument,
Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
And long roll of the Hexameter — he past
To turn and ponder those three hundred scrolls
Left by the Teacher, whom he held divine.
She brook'd it not ; but wrathful, petulant,
Dreaming some rival, sought and found a witch
Who brew'd the philtre which had power, they
said,
To lead an errant passion home again.
And this, at times, she mingled with his drink,
And this destroy'd him ; for the wicked broth
Confused the chemic labour of the blood,
And tickling the brute brain within the man's
Made havoc among those tender cells, and check'd
His power to shape ; he loathed himself ; and once
After a tempest woke upon a morn
That mock'd him with returning calm, and cried :

" Storm in the night 1 for thrice I heard the
rain
Rushing ; and once the flash of a thunderbolt —
Methought I never saw so fierce a fork —

Struck out the streaming mountain-side, and show'd
A riotous confluence of watercourses
Blanching and billowing in a hollow of it,
Where all but yester-eve was dusty-dry.

" Storm, and what dreams, ye holy Gods, what
dreams I

For thrice I waken'd after dreams. Perchance
We do but recollect the dreams that come
Just ere the waking : terrible I for it seem'd
A void was made in Nature ; all her bonds
Crack'd ; and I saw the flaring atom-streams
And torrents of her myriad universe,
Ruining along the illimitable inane,
Fly on to clash together again, and make
Another and another frame of things
For ever : that was mine, my dream, I knew it —
Of and belonging to me, as the dog
With inward yelp and restless forefoot plies
His function of the woodland : but the next I
I thought that all the blood by Sylla shed
Came driving rainlike down again on earth,
And where it dash'd the reddening meadow, sprang
No dragon warriors from Cadmean teeth,
For these I thought my dream would show to me,
But girls, Hetairai, curious in their art,
Hired animalisms, vile as those that made
The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies worse
Than aught they fable of the quiet Gods.
And hands they mixt, and yell'd and round me drove
In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and saw —
Was it the first beam of my latest day ?

" Then, then, from utter gloom stood out the
breasts,
The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly a sword
Now over and now under, now direct,
Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down shamed
At all that beauty ; and as I stared, a fire,
The fire that left a roofless Ilion,
Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that I woke.

" Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus, thine,
Because I would not one of thine own doves,
Not ev'n a rose, were offer'd to thee ? thine,
Forgetful how my rich prooeminn makes
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy Deity ?

" Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at all ?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite and scorn,
Live the great life which all our greatest fain
Would follow, center'd in eternal calm.

" Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like ourselves
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender arms
Round him, and keep him from the lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-house of Rome.

" Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant not her,
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers, and tempt

The Trojan, while his neat-herds were abroad ;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter wept
Her Deity false in human-amorous tears ;
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse —
Ay, and this Kypris also — did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow forth
The all-generating powers and genial heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro¹ the thick blood
Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the bird
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze of flowers :
Which things appear the work of mighty Gods.

" The Gods I and if I go *my* work is left
Unfims'd — *if I* go. The Gods, who haunt
The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm I and such,
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods, the Gods I
If all be atoms, how then should the Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law ? My master held
That Gods there are, for all men so believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely *to* lead my Memmius in a train

Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless. Meant ? I
meant ?

I have forgotten what I meant: my mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are lamed.

" Look where another of our Gods, the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion — what you will —
Has mounted yonder ; since he never sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on wretched man,
That he would only shine among the dead
Hereafter ; tales 1 for never yet on earth
Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roasting ox
Moan round the spit — nor knows he what he sees ;
King of the East altho' he seem, and girt
With song and flame and fragrance, slowly lifts
His golden feet on those empurpled stairs
That climb into the windy halls of heaven ;
And here he glances on an eye new-born,
And gets for greeting but a wail of pain ;
And here he stays upon a freezing orb
That fain would gaze upon him to the last;
And here upon a yellow eyelid fall'n
And closed by those who mourn a friend in vain,
Not thankful that his troubles are no more.
And me, altho' his fire is on my face
Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
Whether I mean this day to end myself,
Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
That men like soldiers may not quit the post
Allotted by the Gods : but he that holds
The Gods are careless, wherefore need he care

Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at once,
Being troubled, wholly out of sight, and sink
Past earthquake — ay, and gout and stone, that break
Body toward death, and palsy, death-in-life,
And wretched age — and worst disease of all,
These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,
Abominable, strangers at my hearth
Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,
The phantom husks of something foully done,
And fleeting thro' the boundless universe,
And blasting the long quiet of my breast
With animal heat and dire insanity ?

" How should the mind, except it loved them, clasp
These idols to herself? or do they fly
Now thinner, and now thicker, like the flakes
In a fall of snow, and so press in, perforce
Of multitude, as crowds that in an hour
Of civic tumult jam the doors, and bear
The keepers down, and throng, their rags and they
The basest, far into that council-hall
Where sit the best and stateliest of the land ?

" Can I not fling this horror off me again,
Seeing with how great ease Nature can smile,
Balmier and nobler from her bath of storm,
At random ravage ? and how easily
The mountain there has cast his cloudy slough,
Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
A mountain o'er a mountain,— ay, and within
All hollow as the hopes and fears of men ?

" But who was he, that in the garden snared
Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods ? a talc
To laugh at — more to laugh at m myself —
For look I what is it ? there ? yon arbutus
Totters ; a noiseless riot underneath
Strikes through the wood, sets all the tops quiver-
ing—

The mountain quickens into Nymph and Faun ;
And here an Oread — how the sun delights
To glance and shift about her slippery sides,
And rnsy knees and supple roundedness,
And budded bosom-peaks — who this way runs
Before the rest — A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows ; but him I proved impossible ;
Twy-natured is no nature : yet he draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender :
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him ; and she
Loathes him as well ; such a precipitate heel,
Fledged as it were with Mercury's ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me : but will she fling herself,
Shameless upon me ? Catch her, goat-foot : nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wilderness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide I do I wish —
What ? — that the bush were leafless ? or to overwhelm
All of them in one massacre ? O ye Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to you
From childly wont and ancient use I call —
I thought I lived securely as yourselves —
No Icwdness, narrowing envy, monkey-spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice, none :

No larger feast than under plane or pine
With neighbours laid along the grass, to take
Only such cups as left us friendly-warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy —
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems some unseen monster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my will,
Wrenching it backward into his ; and spoils
My bliss in being ; and it was not great ;
For save when shutting reasons up in rhythm,
Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life —
Puor little life that toddles half an hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and there an end —
And since the nobler pleasure seems to fade,
Why should I, beastlike as I find myself,
Not manlike end myself? — our privilege —
What beast has heart to do it ? And what man,
What Roman would be dragg'd in triumph thus ?
Not I; not he, who bears one name with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless doom of kings,
When, brooking not the Tarquim in her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guiltless air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in her heart.
And from it sprang the Commonwealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now !

" And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb of all,

Great Nature, take, and forcing far apart
Those blind beginnings that have made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles — into man once more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent flower :
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one day
Cracks all to pieces,— and that hour perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man
Shall seem no more a something to himself,
But he, his hopes and hates, his homes and fanes,
And even his bones long laid within the grave,
The very sides of the grave itself shall pass,
Vanishing, atom and void, atom and void,
Into the unseen for ever,— till that hour,
My golden work in which I told a truth
That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake, and plucks
The mortal soul from out immortal hell,
Shall stand : ay, surely : then it falls at last
And perishes as I must; for D Thou,
Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
Who fall to find thee, being as thou art
Without one pleasure and without one pain,
Howbeit I know thou surely must be mine
Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
How roughly men may woo thee so they win —
Thus — thus : the soul flies out and dies in the air."

With that he drove the knife into his side :
She heard him raging, heard him fall; ran in,

Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon herself
As having fail'd in duty to him, shriek'd
That she but meant to win him back, fell on him,
Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd : he answer'd, " Care
 not thou !
Thy duty ? What is duty ? Fare thee well I "

"THE SPLENDOUR FALLS"

THE splendour falls on castle walls

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

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

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

"TEARS, IDLE TEARS"

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

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

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

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

"NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL"

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

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

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

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

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

"COME **DOWN**, **O** MAID"

COME down, O maid, from yonder mountain height:
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Dr foxhke in the vine ; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley ; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air :
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

DDE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

I

BURY the Great Duke

With an empire's lamentation,
Let us bury the Great Duke

To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation,
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

ii

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore ?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the Past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute :

Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warnor, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretence,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fall'n at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that
blew I
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no
more.

v

All is over and done :
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be toll'd.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mould.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest for ever
Among the wise and the bold.

Let the bell be toll'd :
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, me sable steeds :
Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be toll'd :
And a deeper knell in the heart be knoll'd ;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem roll'd
Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss ;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom :
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame ;
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, ami asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name,
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attemper'd frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song.

VI

Who is he that cometh, like an honoured guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and
with priest,

With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?
Mighty Seaman, this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea ;
His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
O give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee ;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gain'd a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clash'd with his fiery few and won ;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labour'd rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Follow'd up in valley and glen

With blare of bugle, clamour of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings ;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud sabbath shook the spoiler down ;
A day of onsets of despair !
Dash'd on every rocky square
Their surging charges foam'd themselves away ;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
Thro' the long-tormented air
Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there,
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
D saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
D shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine I
And thro' the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,

Attest their great commander's claim
With honour, honour, honour, Immour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
Tho' all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers;
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice, with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control;
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings ;
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts ;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons moulder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
For ever ; and whatever tempests lour
For ever silent ; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all

He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor palter'd with Eternal God for power ;
Who let the turbid streams of rumour flow
Thro' either babbling world of high and low ;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
Who never spoke against a foe ;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right :
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named ;
Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo, the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honour shower'd all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great,
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden

All voluptuous garden-foses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story,
The path of duty was the way to glory :
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Thro' the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevail'd,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he : his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure,
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure :
Till in all lands and thro' all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory :
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illuminated cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honour, honour, honour, honour to him,
Eternal honour to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmoulded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see:
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung :

O peace, it is a day of pain
For one, upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Durs the pain, be his the gain I
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere ;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane :
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will ;
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears :
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and
tears :
The black earth yawns : the mortal disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seem'd so great.—
Gone ; but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him.
God accept him, Christ receive him.

1852

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
" Forward, the Light Brigade I
Charge for the guns I " he said ;
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

ii

" Forward, the Light Brigade ! "
Was there a man dismay'd ?
Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd :
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die :
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

in

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,

Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd :
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made I
All the world wonder'd.
Honour the charge they made !
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and mine,
In lands of palm and southern pine ;
 In lands of palm, of orange-blossom,
Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine.

What Roman strength Turbla show'd
In ruin, by the mountain road ;
 How like a gem, beneath, the city
Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd.

How richly down the rocky dell
The torrent vineyard streaming fell
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
That only heaved with a summer swell.

What slender campanili grew
By bays, the peacock's neck in hue ;
 Where, here and there, on sandy beaches
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew.

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain cornice,
And steering, now, from a purple cove,

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
And drank, and loyally drank to him.

Nor knew we well what pleased us most,
Not the dipt palm of which they boast;

But distant colour, happy hamlet,
A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
A light amid its olives green ;

Or olive-hoary cape in ocean ;
Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
Of silent torrents, gravel-spread ;
And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
Those niched shapes of noble mould,
A princely people's awful princes,
The grave, severe Genovese of old.

At Florence too what golden hours,
In those long galleries, were ours ;
What drives about the fresh Cascine,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers.

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet.

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ;
Of rain at Reggie, rain at Parma ;
At Lodi, rain, Piacenza, rain.

And stern and sad (so rare the smiles
Of sunlight) look'd the Lombard piles ;
Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And somore, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ;
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faint]y-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air.

Remember how we came at last
To Como ; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded ; and how we past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgillan rustic measure
Of Lari Maxurne, all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on The Lariano crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake
A cypress in the moonlight shake,
 The moonlight touching o'er a terrace
One tall Agave above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splugen drew,
 But ere we reach'd the highest summit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy.
 O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea ;

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold :
 Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and dry,
This nurseling of another sky
 Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by :

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens Heaven and Earth,
 The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance, to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance, to charm a vacant brain,
 Perchance, to dream you still beside me,
My fancy Red to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy :
Your presence will be sun in winter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few,
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Shouldeightly-thousandcollege-councils
Thunder " Anathema," friend, at you ;

Should all our churchmen foam in spite
At you, so careful of the right,
Yet one lay-hearth would give you welcome
(Take it and come) to the Isle of Wight ;

Where, far from noise and smoke of town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a cardess-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine :

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand ;
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand ;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin ;
Dispute the claims, arrange the chances ;
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win :

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood ;
Till you should turn to dearer matters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God ;

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor ;
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valour and charity more and more.

Come, Maurice, come ; the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime, or spongy-wet ;
But when the wreath of March has blossom'd,
Crocus, anemone, violet,

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear ;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January 1854

WILL

I

O WELL for him whose will is strong !
He suffers, but he will not suffer long ;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong :
For him nor moves the loud world's random
mock,

Nor all Calamity's hugest waves confound,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still I
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walk'd to-day,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee :
Shadows of three dead! men
Walk'd in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men and thou
wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods :
The Master was far away :
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day ;
Still in the house in his coffin the Prince
of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee :
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be :
Three dead men have I loved and thou
art last of the three,

"FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL"

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

EXPERIMENTS IN QUANTITY

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

Hexameters and Pentameters

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of
Homer !

No — but a most burlesque barbarous experi-
ment.

When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses,
in England ?

When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon ?
Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON

Alcaics

OMIGHTY-MDUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages ;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset —
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India

Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Htndtcasyllabics

O YOU chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant Magazines, regard me rather —
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —
As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbemgny.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal **Love**,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot perceive ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and ID, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
(The highest, holiest manhood, thou : J;
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them **thine**.

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
What seem'd my worth since I began ;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust h^e lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth ;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849

I
I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match ?
Or reach a hand thro¹ time to catch
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
" Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
D sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip ?

" The stars," she whispers, " blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun :

" And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good ;
 Or crush her, like a vice of Wood,
Upon the threshold of the mind ?

VI

One writes, that " Other friends remain,"
 That " Loss is common to the race "—
 And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more :
 Too common ! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done.
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor,— while thy head is bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well ;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, " here to-day,"
Or " here to-morrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove.
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love I

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking " this will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night;
And with the thought her colour burns ;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
Had fallen, and her future Lord
Was drown'd in passing thro' the ford,
Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?
And what to me remains of good ?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain ; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not sec
 Till all my widow'd race be run ;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

I hear the noise about thy keel;
 I hear the bell struck in the night :
 I see the cabin-window bright;
I sec the sailor at the wheel.

Thau bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;
And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if cairn at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day :
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

'The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd.
The cattle huddled on the lea ;
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak :
" This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers, " Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth : " Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power ?

" A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon ? "

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged ;
And one is sad ; her note is changed.
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cape,
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes
His licence in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid ; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlla me when a boy ;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave ?

" Where wert thou, brother, those four days ?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ I
The rest remaineth unrevcal'd ;
He told it not ; or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

L

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blond creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and stine and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI

" So careful of the type ? " but no.
From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, " A thousand types are gone :
I care for nothing, all shall go.

" Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the breath :
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roli'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seaPd within the iron hills ?

No more ? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail I
O for thy voice to soothe and bless !
What hope of answer, or redress ?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace ; come away : the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song :
Peace ; come away : we do him wrong
To sing so wildly : let us go,

Come ; let us go : your cheeks are pale ;
But half my life I leave behind :
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass ; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead ;
And " AVE, Ave, Ave," said,
" Adieu, adieu " for evermore.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXXIX

" More than my brothers are to me/'—
Let this not vex thee, noble heart 1
1 know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
111 brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper " Peace."

ci

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away :

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;
Or into sliver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CIV

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is peeling, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That -wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night ;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
 The civic slander and the spite ;
 Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
 Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
 Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
 The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
 Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

evil

It is the day when he was born,
 A bitter day that eaily sank
 Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
 To deck the banquet. Fiercely flics
 The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
 To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
 Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
 To darken on the rolling brine
 That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
 To make a solid core of heat;
 Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
 With books and music, surely we
 Will drink to him, whatever he be,
And sing the songs he loved to heat.

CXV

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too ; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath :
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :
 Let Science prove we are, and then
 What matters Science unto men,
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
 Hereafter, up from childhood shape
 His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

CXXV

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
 She did but look through dimmer eyes ;
 Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of caie,
 He breathed the spirit of the song ;
 And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
 And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

rxvvi

Love is and was my Lord and King,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air ;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then ? I cannot guess ;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less :

My love involves the love before ;
My love is vaster passion now ;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh ;
I have thee still, and I rejoice ;
I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house ; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years : they went and came
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere noon ?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee ; they meet thy look
 And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
 As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent ; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride ;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
 That shielded all her life from harm
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The " wilt thou " answer'd, and again
The " wilt thou " ask'd, till out of twain
Her sweet " I will " has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn ;
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze ;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

D happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

Ohappy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favour'd horses wait;
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she look'd, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire :
 Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapour sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
 And breaking let the splendour fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge ; under whose command
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

"I HAVE LED HER HOME"

I

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

ii

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

iii

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

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

IV

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

V

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

VI

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;

It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII

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

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, lone as my pulses play ;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stol'n away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright !
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go :
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night 1

Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendours that you look so bright ?
I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below.
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so :
Let all be well, be well.

" COME INTO THE GARDEN, MAUD"

I

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

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is an high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

III

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

IV

I said to the lily, " There is but one
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play."

Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V

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

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII

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

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;

The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me ;
The lilies and roses 'were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one ;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
She is coming, my life, my fate ;
The red rose cries, " She is near, she is near " ;
And the white rose weeps, " She is late " ;
The larkspur listens, " I hear, I hear " ;
And the lily whispers, " I wait."

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead ;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

" O THAT 'TWERE POSSIBLE "

I

O THAT 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again !

II

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
Than anything on earth.

III

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee :
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be.

THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGoNET, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,
At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,
Danced like a wither¹d leaf before the hall.
And toward him from the hall, with harp in hand,
And from the crown thereof a carcanet
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the prize
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
Came Tristram, saying, " Why skip ye so, Sir Fool ? "

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding once
Far down beneath a winding wall of rock
Heard a child wall. A stump of oak half-dead,
From roots like some black coil of carven snakes,
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro' mid air
Bearing an eagle's nest: and thro' the tree
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro' the wind
Pierced ever a child's cry : and crag and tree
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the perilous nest,
This ruby necklace thrice around her neck,
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon, brought
A maiden babe ; which Arthur pitying took,
Then gave it to his Queen to rear : the Queen
But coldly acquiescing, in her white arms
Received, and after loved it tenderly,
And named it Nestling ; so forgot herself
A moment, and her cares ; till that young life
Being smitten in mid heaven with mortal cold
Past from her ; and in time the carcanet
Vext her with plaintive memories of the child :
So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,

" Take thou the jewels of this dead innocence,
And make them, an thou wilt, a tourney-prize."

To whom the King, " Peace to thine eagle-borne
Dead nestling, and this honour after death,
Following thy will! but, D my Queen, I muse
Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or zone
Those diamonds that I rescued from the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for thee to wear."

" Would rather you had let them fall," she cried,
" Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they were,
A bitterness to me ! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon as given —
Slid from my hands, when I was leaning out
Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge : but rosier luck will go
With these rich jewels, seeing that they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-slayer,
But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows ? — the purest of thy
knights
May win them for the purest of my maids."

She ended, and the cry of a great jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the ways
From Camelot in among the faded fields
To furthest towers ; and everywhere the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the King.

But on the hither side of that loud morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage nbb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals, his nose

Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one hand oft⁷,
And one with shatter'd fingers dangling lame,
A churl, to whom indignantly the King,

" My churl, for whom Christ died, what evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy face ? or fiend ?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image in thee
thus ? "

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of splinter'd
teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said the maim'd churl,

"He took them and he drave them to his tower —
Some hold he was a table-knight of thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red Knight, he —
Lord, I was tending swine, and the Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drave them to his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as one
That doest right by gentle and by churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would outright have
slain,

Save that he sware me to a message, saying,
' Tell thou the King and all his liars, that I
Have founded my Round Table in the North,
And whatsoever his own knights have sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to it — and say
My tower is full of harlots, like his court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess
To be none other than themselves — and say
My knights are all adulterers like his own,
But mine are truer, seeing they profess

To be none other ; and say his hour is come,
The heathen are upon him, his long lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.' "

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the seneschal,
⁴¹ Take thou my churl, and tend him curiously
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be whole.
The heathen — but that ever-climbing wave,
HurFd back again so often in empty foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and renegades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confusion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of elsewhere,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your fealty,— now
Make their last head like Satan in the North.
My younger knights, new-made, in whom your
 flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden deeds,
Move with me toward their quelling, which
 achieved,
The loneliest ways are safe from shore to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the field ;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own again ?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent: is it well ? "

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd, " It is well :
Yet better if the King abide, and leave
The leading of his younger knights to me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is well."

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot follow'd him,
And while they stood without the doors, the King

Turn'd to him saying, " Is it then so well ?
Dr mine the blame that oft I seem as he
Of whom was written, 'A sound is in his ears ' ?
The foot that loiters, bidden go,— the glance
That only seems half-loyal to command,—
A manner somewhat fall'n from reverence —
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and lower ?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm, uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
From flat confusion and brute violences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no more ? "

He spoke, and taking all his younger knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply turn'd
North by the gate. In her high bower the Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not that she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the strange rhyme
Df bygone Merlin, " Where is he who knows ?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

But when the morning of a tournament,
By these in earnest those in mockery call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Innocence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lancelot,
Round whose sick head all night, like birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd, arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds of pure
White samite, and by fountains running wine,
Where children sat in white with cups of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with slow sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd chair.

He glanced and saw the stately galleries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of their Queen
White-robed in honour of the stainless child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low roll
Of Autumn thunder, and the jousts began :
And ever the wind blew, and yellowing leaf
And gloom and gleam, and shower and shorn plume
Went down it. Sighing weanedly, as one
Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
When all the goodlier guests are past away,
Sat their great umpire, looking o'er the lists.
He saw the laws that ruled the tournament
Broken, but spake not; once, a knight cast down
Before his throne of arbitration cursed
The dead babe and the follies of the King ;
And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
And show'd him, like a vermin in its hole,
Modred, a narrow face : anon he heard
The voice that blllow'd round the barriers roar
An ocean-sounding welcome to one knight,
But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
And armour'd all in forest green, whereon
There tnpt a hundred tiny silver deer,
And wearing but a holly-spray for crest,
With ever-scattering berries, and on shield
A spear, a harp, a bugle — Tristram — late
From overseas in Brittany return'd,
And marriage with a princess of that realm,

Isolt the White — Sir Tristram of the Woods —
Whom Lancelot knew, had held sometime with pain
His own against him, and now yearn'd to shake
The burthen off his heart in one full shock
With Tristram ev'n to death : his strong hands gript
And dinted the gilt dragons right and left,
Until he groan'd for wrath — so many of those,
That ware their ladies' colours on the casque.
Drew from before Sir Tristram to the bounds,
And there with gibes and flickering mockeries
Stood, while he mutter'd, " Craven crests I O shame I
What faith have these in whom they swear to love
The glory of our Round Table is no more."

So Tristram won, and Lancelot gave, the gems,
Not speaking other word than " Hast thou won ?
Art thou the purest, brother ? See, the hand
Wherewith thou takest this, is red I " to whom
Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's languorous
mood,

Made answer, " Ay, but wherefore toss me this
Like a dry bone cast to some hungry hound ?
Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy. Strength of heart
And might of limb, but mainly use and skill,
Are winners in this pastime of our King.
My hand — belike the lance hath dript upon it —
No blood of mine, I trow ; but O chief knight,
Right arm of Arthur in the battlefield,
Great brother, thou nor I have made the world;
Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in mine."

And Tristram round the gallery made his horse
Caracole ; then bow'd his homage, bluntly saying,

" Fair damsels, each to him who worships each
Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, behold
This day my Queen of Beauty is not here."
And most of these were mute, some anger'd, one
Murmuring, " All courtesy is dead," and one,
" The glory of our Round Table is no more."

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt and mantle
clung,
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan day
Went glooming down in wet and weariness :
But under her black brows a swarthy one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying, " Praise the patient
saints,
Our one white day of Innocence hath past,
Tho" somewhat draggled at the skirt. So be it.
The snowdrop only, flowering thro' the year,
Would make the world as blank as Winter-tide.
Come — let us gladden their sad eyes, our Queen's
And Lancelot's, at this night's solemnity
With all the kindlier colours of the field."

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the feast
Variously gay : for he that tells the tale
Liken'd them, saying, as when an hour of cold
Falls on the mountain in midsummer snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour returns
With veer of wind, and all are flowers again ;
So dame and damsel cast the simple white,
And glowing in ail colours, the live grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup, poppy, glanced
About the revels, and with mirth so loud

Beyond all use, that, half-amazed, the Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the lawless jousts,
Brake up their sports, then slowly to her bower
Parted, and in her bosom pain was lord.

And little Dagonet on the morrow morn,
High over all the yellowing Autumn-tide,
Danced like a withered leaf before the hall.
Then Tristram saying, " Why skip ye so, Sir Fool ? "
Wheel'd round on either heel, Dagonet replied,
" Belike for lack of wiser company ;
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
Makes the world rotten, why, belike I skip
To know myself the wisest knight of all."
" Ay, fool," said Tristram, " but 'tis eating dry
To dance without a catch, a roundelay
To dance to." Then he twangled on his harp,
And while he twangled little Dagonet stood
Quiet as any water-sodden log
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a brook ;
But when the twangling ended, skipt again ;
And being ask'd, "Why skipt ye not, Sir Fool ? "
Made answer, " I had liefer twenty years
Skip to the broken music of my brains
Than any broken music thou canst make."
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip to come,
" Good now, what music have I broken, fool ? "
And little Dagonet, skipping, " Arthur, the King's ;
For when thou playest that air with Queen Isolt,
Thou makest broken music with thy bride,
Her daintier namesake down in Brittany —
And so thou breakest Arthur's music too."
" Save for that broken music in thy brains,

Sir Fool," said Tristram, " I would break thy head.
Fool, I came late, the heathen wars were o'er,
The life had flown, we sware but by the shell —
I am but a fool to reason with a fool —
Come, thou art crabb'd and sour : but lean me down,
Sir Dagonet, one of thy long ass's ears,
And harken if my music be not true.

" ' Free love — free field — we love but while we
may :
The woods are hush'd, their music is no more :
The leaf is dead, the yearning past away :
New leaf, new life — the days of frost are o'er :
New life, new love, to suit the newer day :
New loves are sweet as those that went before :
Free love — free field — we love but while we may.'

" Ye might have moved slow-measure to my tune,
Not stood stockstill. I made it in the woods,
And heard it ring as true as tested gold."

But Dagonet with one foot poised in his hand,
" Friend, did ye mark that fountain yesterday
Made to run wine ? — but this had run itself
All out like a long life to a sour end —
And them that round it sat with golden cups
To hand the wine to whosoever came —
The twelve small damosels white as Innocence,
In honour of poor Innocence the babe,
Who left the gems which Innocence the Queen
Lent to the King, and Innocence the King
Gave for a prize — and one of those white slips
Handed her cup and piped, the pretty one,

¹ Drink, drink, Sir Fool/ and thereupon I drank,
Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the draught was
mud."

And Tristram, " Was it muddier than thy gibes ?
Is all the laughter gone dead out of thee ? —
Not marking how the knighthood mock thee, fool —

¹ Fear God : honour the King — his one true
knight —

Sole follower of the vows '— for here be they
Who knew thee swine enow before I came,
Smuttier than blasted grain : but when the King
Had made thee fool, thy vanity so shot up
It frightened all free fool from out thy heart;
Which left thee less than fool, and less than swine,
A naked aught — yet swine I hold thee still,
For I have flung thee pearls and find thee swine."

And little Dagonet mincing with his feet,
" Knight, an ye fling those rubles round my neck
In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast some touch
Of music, since I care not for thy pearls.
Swine ? I have wallow'd, I have wash'd — the
world

Is flesh and shadow — I have had my day.
The dirty nurse, Experience, in her kind
Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then I wash'd —
I have had my day and my philosophies —
And thank the Lord I am King Arthur's fool.
Swine, say ye ? swine, goats, asses, rams and geese
Troop'd round a Paynim harper once, who thrumm'd
On such a wire as musically as thou
Some such fine song — but never a king's fool."

And Tristram, " Then were swine, goats, asses,
geese
The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim bard
Had such a mastery of his mystery
That he could harp his wife up out of hell."

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball of his foot,
" And whither harp'st thou thine ? down ! and
thyself
Down ! and two more : a helpful harper thou,
That harpest downward I Dost thou know the star
We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven ? "

And Tristram, " Ay, Sir Fool, for when our King
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the knights,
Glorying in each new glory, set his name
High on all hills, and in the signs of heaven."

And Dagonet answer'd, " Ay, and when the land
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye set yourself
To babble about him, all to show your wit —
And whether he were King by courtesy,
Or King by right — and so went harping down
The black king's highway, got so far, and grew
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and drakes
With Arthur's vows on the great lake of fire.
Tuwhoo I do ye see it ? do ye see the star ? "

" Nay, fool," said Tristram, " not in open day."
And Dagonet, " Nay, nor will: I see it and hear.
It makes a silent music up in heaven,
And I, and Arthur and the angels hear,

And then we skip." " Lo, fool," he said, " ye talk
Fool's treason : is the King thy brother fool ? "
Then little Dagonet clapt his hands and shrill'd,
" Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of fools I
Conceits himself as God that he can make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles, milk
From burning spurge, honey from hornet-combs,
And men from beasts — Long live the king of
fools I "

And down the city Dagonet danced away;
But thro' the slowly-mellowing avenues
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and the west.
Before him fled the face of Queen Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or perch'd, or flew.
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath blown,
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape
Df one that in them sees himself, return'd ;
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or ev'n a fall'n feather, vamsh'd again.

So on for all that day from lawn to lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he rode. At length
A lodge of intertwined beechen-boughs
Furze-cramm'd, and bracken-re oft, the which him-
self
Built for a summer day with Queen Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to where

She lived a moon in that low lodge with him :
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cornish King,
With six or seven, when Tristram was away,
And snatch'd her thence ; yet dreading worse than
 shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any word,
But bode his hour, devising wretchedness.

And now that desert lodge to Tristram lookt
So sweet, that halting, in he past, and sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-blown ;
But could not rest for musing how to smoothe
And sleek his marriage over to the Queen.
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from all
The tonguesters of the court she had not heard.
But then what folly had sent him overseas
After she left him lonely here ? a name ?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the King ? " Isolt
Of the white hands " they call'd her : the sweet name
Allured him first, and then the maid herself,
Who served him well with those white hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had thought
He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily, and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish eyes
Had drawn him home — what marvel ? then he laid
His brows upon the drifted leaf and dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-chain, and both
Began to struggle for it, till his Queen

Graspt it so hard, that all her hand was red.
Then cried the Breton, " Look, her hand is red I
These be no rubies, this is frozen blood,
And melts within her hand — her hand is hot
With ill desires, but this I gave thee, look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower."
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and then
A whimpering of the spirit of the child,
Because the twain had spoil'd her carcanet.

He dream'd ; but Arthur with a hundred spears
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing splash and sallowy isle,
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, whereout was roll'd
A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil song.
" Lo there," said one of Arthur's youth, for there,
High on a grim dead tree before the tower,
A goodly brother of the Table Round
Swung by the neck : and on the boughs a shield
Showing a shower of blood in a field noir,
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the knights
At that dishonour done the gilded spur,
Till each would clash the shield, ana blow the
horn.

But Arthur waved them back. Alone he rode.
Then at the dry harsh roar of the great horn,
That sent the face of all the marsh aloft
An ever upward-rushing storm and cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight heard, and all,

Even to Upmost lance and topmost helm,
In blood-red armour sallying, howl'd to the King,

" The teeth of Hell flay bare and gnash thee
flat! —

LD I art thou not that eunuch-hearted King
Who fain had dipt free manhood from the world —
The woman-worshipper ? Yea, God's curse, and I!
Slain was the brother of my paramour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard her whine
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that twists in hell,
And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I fought
And tumbled. Art thou King ? — Look to thy
life I "

He ended : Arthur knew the voice ; the face
Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the name
Went wandering somewhere darkling in his mind.
And Arthur deign'd not use of worcfor sword,
But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd from horse
To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to the swamp
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching wave,
Heard in dead night along that table-shore,
Drops flat, and after the great waters break
Whitening for half a league, and thin themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon and cloud,
From less and less to nothing ; thus he fell
Head-heavy ; then the knights, who watch'd him,
roar'd
And shouted and leapt down upon the fall'n ;

There trampled out his face from being known,
And sank his head in mire, and slimed themselves :
Nor heard the King for their own cries, but sprang
Thro' open doors, and swording right and left
Men, women, on their sodden faces, hurl'd
The tables over and the wines, and slew
Till all the rafters rang with woman-yells,
And all the pavement stream'd with massacre :
Then, echoing yell with yell, they fired the tower,
Which half that autumn night, like the live North,
Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
Made all above it, and a hundred meres
About it, as the water Moab saw
Come round by the East, and out beyond them
flush'd
The long low dune, and lazy-plunging sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore to shore,
But in the heart of Arthur pain was lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the red dream
Fled with a shout, and that low lodge return'd,
Mid-forest, and the wind among the boughs.
He whistled his good warhorse left to graze
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon him,
And rode beneath an ever-showering leaf,
Till one lone woman, weeping near a cross,
Stay'd him. " Why weep ye ? " " Lord," she said,
" my man
Hath left me or is dead " ; whereon he thought —
" What, if she hate me now ? I would not this.
What, if she love me still ? I would not that.
I know not what I would " — but said to her,

" Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate return,
He find thy favour changed and love thee not "—
Then pressing day by day thro' Lyonesse
Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard
The hounds of Mark, and felt the goodly hounds
Yelp at his heart, but turning, past and gain'd
Tintagil, half in sea, and high on land,
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the Queen.
And when she heard the feet of Tristram grind
The spiring stone that scaled about her tower,
Flush'd, started, met him at the doors, and there
Belted his body with her white embrace,
Crying aloud, " Not Mark — not Mark, my soul !
The footstep flutter'd me at first : not he :
Catlike thro' his own castle steals my Mark,
But warrior-wise thou stndest thro' his halls
Who hates thee, as I him — ev'n to the death.
My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
Quicken within me, and knew that thou wert nigh."
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, " I am here.
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine."

And drawing somewhat backward she replied,
" Can he be wrong'd who is not ev'n his own,
But save for dread of thee had beaten me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me somehow —
Mark?

What rights are his that dare not strike for them ?
Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found me thus I
But harken I have ye met him ? hence he went

To-day for three days' hunting — as he said —
And so returns belike within an hour,
Mark's way, my soul I — but eat not thou with Mark,
Because he hates thee even more than fears ;
Nor drink : and when thou passest any wood
Close vistor, lest an arrow from the bush
Should leave me all alone with Mark and hell.
My God, the measure of my hate for Mark
Is as the measure of my love for thee."

So, pluck'd one way by hate and one by love,
Drain'd of her force, again she sat, and spake
To Tristram, as he knelt before her, saying,
" O hunter, and O blower of the horn,
Harper, and thou hast been a rover too,
For, ere I mated with my shambling king,
Ye twain had fallen out about the bride
Of one — his name is out of me — the prize,
If prize she were — (what marvel — she could see) —
Thine, friend ; and ever since my craven seeks
To wreck thee villainously : but, O Sir Knight,
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd to last ? "

And Tristram, " Last to my Queen Paramount,
Here now to my Queen Paramount of love
And loveliness — ay, lovelier than when first
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyonesse,
Sailing from Ireland."

Softly laugh'd Isolt;
" Flatter me not, for hath not our great Queen
My dole of beauty trebled ? " and he said,
¹¹ Her beauty is her beauty, and thine thine,

And thine is more to me — soft, gracious, kind —
Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy lips
Most gracious ; but she, haughty, ev'n to him,
Lancelot; for I have seen him wan enow
To make one doubt if ever the great Queen
Have yielded him her love."

To whom Is oh,
" Ah then, false hunter and false harper, thou
Who brakest thro' the scruple of my bond,
Calling me thy white hind, and saying to me
That Guinevere had smn'd against the highest,
And I — misyoked with such a want of man —
That I could hardly sin against the lowest."

He answer'd, " O my soul, be comforted !
If this be sweet, to sin in leading-strings,
If here be comfort, and if ours be sin,
Crown'd warrant had we for the crowning sin
That made us happy : but how ye greet me — fear
And fault and doubt — no word of that fond tale —
Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet memories
Df Tristram in that year he was away."

And, saddening on the sudden, spake Isolt,
" I had forgotten all in my strong joy
To see thee — yearnings ? — ay I for, hour by hour,
Here in the never-ended afternoon,
O sweeter than all memories of thee,
Deeper than any yearnings after thee
Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-smiling seas,
Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of Britain dash'd
Before Isolt of Brittany on the strand,

Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss ? Wedded
her?

Fought in her father's battles ? wounded there ?
The King was all fulfill'd with gratefulness,
And she, my namesake of the hands, that heal'd
Thy hurt and heart with unguent and caress —
Well — can I wish her any huger wrong
Than having known thee? her too hast thou left
To pine and waste in those sweet memories.
O were I not my Mark's, by whom all men
Are noble, I should hate thee more than love."

And Tristram, fondling her light hands, replied,
" Grace, Queen, for being loved : she loved me
well.

Did I love her ? the name at least I loved.
Isolt ? — I fought his battles, for Isolt I
The night was dark ; the true star set. Isolt I
The name was ruler of the dark——Isolt ?
Care not for her I patient, and prayerful, meek,
Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to God."

And Isoit answer'd, " Yea, and why not I ?
Mine is the larger need, who am not meek,
Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell thee now.
Here one black, mute midsummer night I sat,
Lonely, but musing on thee, wondering where,
Murmuring a light song I had heard thee sing,
And once or twice I spake thy name aloud.
Then flash'd a levin-brand ; and near me sto3d,
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a fiend —
Mark's way to steal behind one in the dark —
For there was Mark : ' He has wedded her/ he said,

Not said, but hiss'd it: then this crown **of** towers
So shook to such a roar of all the sky,
That here in utter dark I swoon'd away,
And woke again in utter dark, and cried,
¹ I will flee hence and give myself to God '—
And thou wert lying in thy new leman's arms."

Then Tristram, ever dallying with her hand,
" May God be with thee, sweet, when old and gray,
And past desire I " a saying that anger'd her.
" ' May God be with thee, sweet, when thou art old,
And sweet no more to me ! ' I need Him now.
For when had Lancelot utter'd aught so gross
Ev'n to the swineherd's malkin in the mast ?
The greater man, the greater courtesy.
Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's knight I
But thou, thro' ever harrying thy wild beasts —
Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a lance
Becomes thee well — art grown wild beast thyself.
How darest thou, if lover, push me even
In fancy from thy side, and set me far
In the gray distance, half a life away,
Her to be loved no more ? Unsay it, unswear !
Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and solitude,
Thy marriage and mine own, that I should suck
Lies like sweet wines : he to me : I believe.
Will ye not lie ? not swear, as there ye kneel,
And solemnly as when ye swear to him,
The man of men, our King — My God, the power
Was once in vows when men believed the King I
They lied not then, who swear, and thro' their vows
The King prevailing made his realm : — I say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me ev'n when old,
Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in despair."

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up and down,
" Vows I did you keep the vow you made to Mark
More than I mine ? Lied, say ye ? Nay, but learnt,
The vow that binds too strictly snaps itself —
My knighthood taught me this — ay, being snapt —
We run more counter to the soul thereof
Than had we never sworn. I swear no more.
I swore to the great King, and am forsworn.
For once — ev'n to the height — I honour'd him.
' Man, is he man at all ? ' methought, when first
I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and beheld
That victor of the Pagan throned in hall —
His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a brow
Like hillsnow high in heaven, the steel-blue eyes,
The golden beard that clothed his lips with light —
Moreover, that weird legend of his birth,
With Merlin's mystic babble about his end
Amazed me ; then, his foot was on a stool
Shaped as a dragon ; he seem'd to me no man,
But Michael trampling Satan ; so I sware,
Being amazed : but this went by — The vows I
O ay — the wholesome madness of an hour —
They served their use, their time ; for every knight
Believed himself a greater than himself,
And every follower eyed him as a God ;
Till he, being lifted up beyond himself,
Did mightier deeds than elsewhere he had done,
And so the realm was made ; but then their vows —
First mainly thro' that sullyng of our Queen —
Began to gall the knighthood, asking whence

Had Arthur right to bind them to himself?
 Dropt down from heaven ? wash'd up from out the
 deep ?
 They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh and blood
 Of our old kings : whence then ? a doubtful lord
 To bind them by inviolable vows,
 Which flesh and blood perforce would violate :
 For feel this arm of mine — the tide within
 Red with free chase and heather-scented air,
 Pulsing full man ; can Arthur make me pure
 As any maiden child ? lock up my tongue
 From uttering freely what I freely hear ?
 Bind me to one ? The wide world laughs at it.
 And worldling of the world am I, and know
 The ptarmigan that whitens ere his hour
 Woos his own end ; we are not angels here
 Nor shall be : vows — I am woodman of the woods,
 And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale
 Mock them : my soul, we love but while we may ;
 And therefore is my love so large for thee,
 Seeing it is not bounded save by love."

Here ending, he moved toward her, and she said,
 " Good : an I turn'd away my love for thee
 To some one thrice as courteous as thyself —
 For courtesy wins woman all as well
 As valour may, but he that closes both
 Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller indeed,
 Rosier and comeher, thou — but say I loved
 This knightliest of all knights, and cast thee back
 Thine own small saw, ' We love but while we
 may,'
 Well then, what answer ? "

He that while she spake,
Mindful of what he brought to adorn her with,
The jewels, had let one finger lightly touch
The warm white apple of her throat, replied,
" Press this a little closer, sweet, until —
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd — meat,
Wine, wine — and I will love thee to the death,
And out beyond into the dream to come."

So then, when both were brought to full accord,
She rose, and set before him all he will'd ;
And after these had comforted the blood
With meats and wines, and satiated their hearts —
Now talking of their woodland paradise,
The deer, the dews, the fern, the founts, the lawns ;
Now mocking at the much ungainliness,
And craven shifts, and long crane legs of Mark —
Then Tristram laughing caught the harp, and sang:

" Ay, ay, O ay — the winds that bend the brier !
A star in heaven, a star within the mere !
Ay, ay, O ay — a star was my desire,
And one was far apart, and one was near :
Ay, ay, D ay — the winds that bow the grass !
And one was water and one star was fire,
And one will ever shine and one will pass.
Ay, ay, D ay — the winds that move the mere."

Then in the light's last glimmer Tristram show'd
And swung the ruby carcanet. She cried,
" The collar of some Order, which our King
Hath newly founded, all for thee, my soul,
For thee, to yield thee grace beyond thy peers."

" Not so, my Queen," he said, " but the red fruit
Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-heaven,
And won by Tristram as a tourney-pri2e,
And hither brought by Tristram for his last
Love-offering and peace-offering unto thee."

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging round her neck,
Claspt it, and cried " Thine Order, O my Queen ! "
But, while he bow'd to kiss the jewell'd thioat,
Out of the dark, just as the lips had touch'd,
Behind him rose a shadow and a shriek —
" Mark's way," said Mark, and clove him thro' the
brain.

That night came Arthur home, and while he
climb'd,
All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping gloom,
The stairway to the hall, and look'd and saw
The great Queen's bower was dark,— about his feet
A voice clung sobbing till he question'd it,
" What art thou ? " and the voice about his feet
Sent up an answer, sobbing, " I am thy fool,
And I shall never make thee smile again."

RIZPAH

17—

I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and
sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, " O mother, come
out to me."

Why should he call me to-night, when he knows
that I cannot go ?

For the downs are as bright as day, and the full
moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear ; they would spy us
out of the town.

The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing
over the down,

When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the
creak of the chain,

And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself
drenched with the ram.

III

Anything fallen again ? nay — what was there left
to fall ?

I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones,
I have hidden them all.

What am I saying ? and what are you ? do you
come as a spy ?

Falls ? what falls ? who knows ? As the tree falls
so must it lie.

TV

Who let her in ? how long has she been ? you —
what have you heard ?
Why did you sit so quiet ? you never have spoken
a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their
spies —
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to
darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you*
know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bilter frost
and the fright ?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were
only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you
may go your way.

VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, Madam, to sit by an old
dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an
hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out
to die.
" They dared me to do it," he said, and he never
has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he
was but a child—

" The farmer dared me to do it," he said ; he was
always so wild —
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my Willy — he
never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he
would have- been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they
never would let him be good ;
They swore that he dare not rob the mall, and he
swore that he would ;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and
when all was done
He flung it among his fellows — I'll none of it, said
my son,

VIII

I came into court to the Judge and the lawyers. I
told them my tale,
God's own truth — but they kill'd him, they kill'd
him for robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show — we had
always borne a good name —
To be hang'd for a thief — and then put away — isn't
that enough shame ?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide ! but they
set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him,
passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black laven and horrible
fowls of the air,

But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him
and hang'd him there.

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my
last goodbye ;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. " D mother!"
I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something
further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced
me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy
that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up : they fastened me
down on my bed.
" Mother, O mother I "—he call'd in the dark to
me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know
that I couldn't but hear ;
And then at the last they found I had grown so
stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had
worked their will.

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone
was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will
you call it a theft?—

My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones
that had laughed and had cried —
Theirs ? O no I they are mine — not theirs — they
had moved in my side.

XII

Do you thhik I was scared by the bones ? I kiss'd
'em, I buried 'em all —
I can't *dig* deep, I am old — in the night by the
churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of
judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy
ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up — they would hang him
again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes — we are sinners, I know — let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good will
toward men —
" Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord " — let
me hear it again ;
" Full of compassion and mercy — long-surTerinp."
Yes, O yes I
For the lawyer is born but to murder — the Saviour
lives but to bless:
He'll never put on the black cap except for the
worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have heard it in church
— and the last may be first.
Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the Lord must
know,

Year after year in the mist and the wind and the
shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you ? what ? they have told you he
never repented his sin.
How do they know it ? are *they* his mother ? are
you of his km ?
Heard ! have you ever heard, when the storm on
the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wall like a child and the sea that
'ill moan like a man ?

XV

Election, Election and Reprobation — it's all very
well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him
in Hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has
look'd into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy,
I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is all your
desire :
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be
gone to the fire ?
I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you may
have me alone —
You never have borne a child — you are just as hard
as a stone.

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon ! I think that you mean
to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice
in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he used but to call
in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not
from the gibbet — for hark !
Nay — you can hear it yourself— it is coming —
shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud——Goodnight. I
am going. He calls.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

AT FLORES in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird, came flying from
far away :

" Spanish ships of war at sea ! we have sighted fifty-
three ! "

Then swore Lord Thomas Howard : " 'Fore God I
am no coward ;

But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of
gear,

And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow
quick.

We are six ships of the line ; can we fight with fifty-
three ? "

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville : " I know you
are no coward ;

You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick
ashore.

I should count myself the coward if I left them, my
Lord Howard,

To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of
Spain."

III

So Lord Howard past away with five ships of war
that day,

Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer
heaven ;

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from
the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below ;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not
left to Spain,
To the thumbscrew and the stake, for the glory of
the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and
to fight,
And he sailed away from Flares till the Spaniard
came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather
bow.
" Shall we fight or shall we fly ?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die I
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be
set."
And Sir Richard said again: " We be all good Eng-
lish men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the
devil,
For I never turn'd my back upon Don or devil yet."

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and we roar'd a
hurrah, and so

The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the
foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety
sick below ;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left
were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro' the long sea-lane
between,

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd down from their
decks and laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad
little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hun-
dred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning
tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us
like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the star-
board lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself
and went
Having that within her womb that had left her ill
content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought
us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and
musquetcers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that
shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far
over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and
the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-
built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-
thunder and flame ;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back
with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shatter'd, and
so could fight us no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the
world before ?

X

For he said " Fight on I fight on I "
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck;

And it chanced that, when halt of the short summer
night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly
dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and
the head,
And he said " Fight on I fight on I "

xi'

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out
far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round
us all in a ring ;
But they dared not touch us again, for they fear'd
that we still could sting,
So they watch'd what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maim'd for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate
strife ;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of
them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the
powder was all of it spent ;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the
side ;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
" We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again I

We have won great glory, my men I
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die — does it matter when ?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner— sink her, split
her in twain !
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of
Spain I "

XII

And the gunner said " Ay, ay," but the seamen made
reply :
" We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to
let us go ;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another
blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the
foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore
him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard
caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly
foreign grace ;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried :
" I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant
man and true ;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do :
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die I "
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant
and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spam so
cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his Eng-
lish few ;
Was he devil or man ? He was devil for aught they
knew,
But they sank his body with honour down into the
deep,
And they mann'd the Revenge with a swarthier alien
crew,
And away she sail'd with her loss and long'd for her
own ;
When a wind from the lands they had ruin'd awoke
from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to
moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earth-
quake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their
masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell *an* the shot-
shatter'd navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the
island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the years of old,
While yet the blessed daylight made itself
Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight, and woke
These eyes, now dull, but then so keen to seek
The meanings ambush'd under all they saw,
The flight of birds, the flame of sacrifice,
What omens may foreshadow fate to man
And woman, and the secret of the Gods.

My son, the Gods, despite of human player,
Are slower to forgive than human kings.
The great God, Ares, burns in anger still
Against the guiltless heirs of him from Tyre,
Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art, who found
Beside the springs of Dirce, smote, and still'd
Thro' all its folds the multitudinous beast,
The Dragon, which our trembling father calls
The God's own son.

A tale, that told to me,
When but thine age, by age as winter-white
As mine is now, amazed, but made me yearn
For larger glimpses of that more than man
Which rolls the heavens, and lifts, and lays the deep,
Yet loves and hates with mortal hates and loves,
And moves unseen among the ways of men.

Then, in my wanderings all the lands that lie
Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
Have heard this footstep fall, altho' my wont
Was more to scale the highest of the heights
With some strange hope to see the nearer God.

One naked peak — the sister of the sun
Would climb from out the dark, and linger there

To silver all the valleys with her shafts —
There once, but long ago, five-fold thy term
Of years, I lay ; the winds were dead for heat;
The noonday crag made the hand burn ; and sick
For shadow — not one bush was near — I rose
Following a torrent till its myriad falls
Found silence in the hollows underneath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
In anger ; yet one glittering foot disturb'd
The lucid well; one snowy knee was prest
Against the margin flowers ; a dreadful light
Came from her golden hair, her golden helm
And all her golden armour on the grass,
And from her virgin breast, and virgin eyes
Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew dark
For ever, and I heard a voice that said
" Henceforth be blind, for thou hast seen too much,
And speak the truth that no man may believe."

Son, in the hidden world of sight, that lives
Behind this daikness, I behold her still,
Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,
Beyond all dieams of Godlike womanhood,
Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,
And as it were, perforce, upon me flash'd
The power of prophesying — but to me
No power — so chain'd and coupled with the curse
Of blindness and their unbelief, who heard
And heard not, when I spake of famine, plague,
Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire, flood, thunder-
bolt,

And angers of the Gods for evil done
And expiation lack'd — no power on Fate,

Theirs, or mine own ! for when the crowd would
roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was their doom,
To cast wise words among the multitude
Was flinging fruit to lions ; nor, in hours
Of civil outbreak, when I knew the twain
Would each waste each, and bring on both the ynlce
Of stronger states, was mine the voice to curb
The madness of our cities and their kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to hear
My warning that the tyranny of one
Was prelude to the tyranny of all ?
My counsel that the tyranny of all
Led backward to the tyranny of one ?

This power hath work'd no good to aught that
lives,
And these blind hands were useless in thei wars.
O therefore that the unfulfilled desire,
The grief for ever born from griefs to be,
The boundless yearning of the Prophet's heart —
Could *that* stand forth, and like a statue, rear'd
To some great citizen, win all praise from all
Who past it, saying, " That was he I "

In vain I
Virtue must shape itself in deed, and those
Whom weakness or necessity have cramp'd
Within themselves, immerging, each, his urn
In his own well, draw solace as he may.

Menceccus, thou hast eyes, and I can hear
Too plainly what full tides of onset sap
Our seven high gates, and what a weight of war
Rides on those ringing axles ! Jingle of bits,
Shouts, arrows, tramp of the hornfootcd horse

That grind the glebe to powder I Stony showers
Of that ear-stunning hail of Arcs crash
Along the sounding walls. Above, below,
Shock after shock, the song-built towais and gates
Reel, bruised and butted with the shuddenng
War-thunder of iron rams ; and fi om within
The city comes a murmur void of joy,
Lest she be taken captive — maidens, wives,
And mothers with then babblers of the dawn,
And oldest age in shadow fiom the night,
Falling about their shuncs before their Gods,
And wailing " Save us."

And they wail to thee I

These Eyeless eyes, that cannot see thine own,
Sec this, that only in thy virtue lies
The saving of our Thebes ; for, yesternight,
To me, the great God Ares, whose one bliss
Is war, and human sacrifice — himself
Blood-red from battle, spear and helmet tipt
With stormy light as on a mast at sea,
Stood out before a darkness, crying " Thebes,
Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I loathe
The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of these
By his own hand — if one of these——"

My son,

No sound is breathed so potent to coerce,
And to conciliate, as their names who dare
For that sweet mother Jand which gave them birth
Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their names,
Graven on memorial columns, are a song
Heard in the future ; few, but more than wall
And rampart, their examples reach a hand
Far thro' all years, and everywhere they meet

And kindle generous purpose, and the strength
To mould it into action pure as theirs.

Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's best end
Be to end well I and thou refusing this,
Unvenerable will thy memory be
While men shall move the lips : but if thou dmc —
Thou, one of these, the race of Cadmus — then
No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
Whose echo shall not tongue thy glorious dnom,
Nor in this pavement but shall ring thy name
To every hoof that clangs it, and the springs
Of Dirce laving yonder battle-plain,
Heard from the roofs by night, will murmur thee
To thine own Thebes, while Thebes thro' thee shall
stand
Firm-based with all her Gods.

The Dragon's cave
Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing vines —
Where once he dwelt and whence he roll'd himself
At dead of night — thou knowest, and that smooth
rock

Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of late
The woman-breasted Sphinx, with wings drawn back,
Folded her lion paws, and look'd to Thebes.
There blanch the bones of whom she slew, and these
Mixt with her own, because the fierce beast found
A wiser than herself, and dash'd herself
Dead in her rage : but thou art wise enough,
Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt the curse
Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the truth
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand strike
Thy youthful pulses into rest and quench
The red God's anger, fearing not to plunge

Thy torch of life in darkness, rather — thnu
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the stars
Send no such light upon the ways of men
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there
Thou, that hast never known the embrace of IDVC,
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand I
I felt one warm tear fall upon it. Gone I
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,
I would that I were gather'd to my rest,
And mingled with the famous kings of old,
On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods — the wise man's word,
Here trampled by the populace underfoot,
There crown'd with worship — and these eyes will
find

The men I knew, and watch the chariot whirl
About the goal again, and hunters race
The shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,
In height and prowess more than human, strive
Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic cars
Heroic hymns, and every way the vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume
Of those who mix all odour to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining fire.

" One height and one far-shining fife "
And while I fancied that my friend

For this brief idyll would require
A less diffuse and opulent end,
And would defend his judgment wcm,
If I should deem it over nice —
The tolling of his funeral bell
Bioke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic tunes
And all the phantoms of the dream,
With present grief, and made the rhymes,
That miss'd his living welcome, seem
Like would-be guests an hour ton late,
\Who down the highway moving on
'With easy laughter iind the gate
Is bolted, and the master gone.
Gone into darkness, that full light
Of friendship ! past, in sleep, away
By night, into the deeper night 1
The deeper night ? A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth —
If night, what barren toil to be !
What life, so maim'd by night, were wotth
Our living out ? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last ; and laying flowers,
This wreath, above his honour'il head,
And praying that, when I from hence
Shall fade with him into the unknown
My close of earth's experience
May prove as peaceful as his own.

TD VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS FOR THE
NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
 Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
 wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre ;

II

Landscape-lover, Lord of language
 more than he that sang the Works and Days,
All the chosen coin of fancy
 flashing out from many a golden phrase ;

III

Thou that singest wheat and woodland,
 tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd ;
All the charm of all the Muses
 often flowering in a lonely word ;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
 piping underneath his beechen bowers ;
Poet of the poet-satyr
 whom the laughing shepherd bound with
 flowers ;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
 in the blissful years again to be,

Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

VI

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind ;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human kind ;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages ;
star that glidest yet this phantnm shore ;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise no more ;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Gesar's dome —
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound for ever of Imperial Rome —

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY BROTHER'S SONNETS

Midnight, June 30, 1879

I

MIDNIGHT — in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores :
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors :

And thou hast vanished from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best,

II

Midnight — and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark :

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the ram,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again,

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,
As all my hopes were thine —
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine !

"PRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they row'd, and there we landed — " D venusta
Sirmio ! "

There *to* me thro' all the groves of olive in the
summer glow,

There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple
flowers grow,

Came that " Ave atque Vale " of the Poet's hopeless
woe,

Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen-hundred years
ago,

" Prater Ave atque Vale "— as we wander'd to and
fro

Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake
below

Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio !

CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and
Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

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THE END

PRINTED BY R. & R., CLARK, LTD., EDINBURGH

