DELPHI POETS SERIES

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

DELPHI CLASSICS

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CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(1830–1894)

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CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI by Theodore Watts-Dunton

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Version 1

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By Delphi Classics, 2012

NOTE

When reading poetry on an eReader, it is advisable to use a small font size, which will allow the lines of poetry to display correctly.

The Poetry Collections

38 Charlotte Street (now 105 Hallam Street), London — Rossetti's birthplace

The poet with her mother, painted by her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous Pre-Raphaelite artist. Their mother Frances Polidori was the sister of Lord Byron's friend and physician, John William Polidori.

The poet's father, Gabriele Rossetti, a poet and political exile from Vasto, Abruzzo

VERSES, 1847

Christina Rossetti was the first member of the Pre-Raphaelites to achieve widespread literary success, following the 1862 publication of her narrative poem *Goblin Market*. Born in London in 1830, her parents were Gabriele Rossetti, a poet and a political exile from Vasto and Frances Polidori, the sister of Lord Byron's friend and physician, John William Polidori. Christina was the youngest of four children in a family fused with literary and artistic interests. Like her older siblings, Christina began writing and drawing at an early age. Her maternal grandfather Polidori doted on Christina and in 1847 he had the following collection of her verses privately published. Her first public poems appeared later in the Athenaeum, when she was only eighteen years old. She wrote poetry, fiction and non-fiction works prolifically throughout her life.

Christina's early poetry reflects her deep religious devotion. She was a High Church Anglican and a disciple of Tractarianism, a radically conservative position. When she was 13, Christina began attending Christ Church with her mother and sister Maria. About this time, Christina went through a transformation that her friends and family were at a loss to explain. As a girl, she was spirited, passionate and hot-tempered to the point of self-destruction: she reports once ripping her arm with scissors after her mother chastised her for some small offense. Her brother William Michael Rossetti wrote that "In innate character she was vivacious and open to pleasurable impressions, and during girlhood, one might readily have supposed that she would develop into a woman of expansive heart, fond of society and diversions, and taking part in them of more than average brilliancy."

Portrait of Rossetti, by her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti

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THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE

I bore with thee long weary days and nights,
   Through many pangs of heart, through many tears;
I bore with thee, thy hardness, coldness, slights,
      For three and thirty years.

Who else had dared for thee what I have dared?
   I plunged the depth most deep from bliss above;
I not My flesh, I not My spirit spared:
      Give thou Me love for love.

For thee I thirsted in the daily drouth,
   For thee I trembled in the nightly frost:
Much sweeter thou than honey to My mouth:
      Why wilt thou still be lost?

I bore thee on My shoulders and rejoiced:
   Men only marked upon My shoulders borne
The branding cross; and shouted hungry-voiced,
      Or wagged their heads in scorn.

Thee did nails grave upon My hands, thy name
   Did thorns for frontlets stamp between Mine eyes:
I, Holy One, put on thy guilt and shame;
      I, God, Priest, Sacrifice.

A thief upon My right hand and My left;
   Six hours alone, athirst, in misery:
At length in death one smote My heart and cleft
      A hiding-place for thee.

Nailed to the racking cross, than bed of down
More dear, whereon to stretch Myself and sleep:
So did I win a kingdom, — share my crown;
A harvest, — come and reap.

A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK

I will accept thy will to do and be,
Thy hatred and intolerance of sin,
Thy will at least to love, that burns within
And thirsteth after Me:
So will I render fruitful, blessing still,
The germs and small beginnings in thy heart,
Because thy will cleaves to the better part. —
Alas, I cannot will.

Dost not thou will, poor soul? Yet I receive
The inner unseen longings of the soul,
I guide them turning towards Me; I control
And charm hearts till they grieve:
If thou desire, it yet shall come to pass,
Though thou but wish indeed to choose My love;
For I have power in earth and heaven above. —
I cannot wish, alas!

What, neither choose nor wish to choose? and yet
I still must strive to win thee and constrain:
For thee I hung upon the cross in pain,
How then can I forget?
If thou as yet dost neither love, nor hate,
Nor choose, nor wish, — resign thyself, be still
Till I infuse love, hatred, longing, will. —
I do not deprecate.

A BETTER RESURRECTION

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
   My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears.
   Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
   No everlasting hills I see;
My life is in the falling leaf:
   O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
   My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly my life is void and brief
   And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
   No bud nor greenness can I see:
Yet rise it shall — the sap of Spring;
   O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
   A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
   Or cordial in the searching cold
Cast in the fire the perished thing,
   Melt and remould it, till it be
A royal cup for Him my King:
   O Jesus, drink of me.

ADVENT: THIS ADVENT MOON SHINES COLD AND CLEAR

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
   These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year
   And still their flame is strong.
‘Watchman, what of the night?’ we cry,
   Heart-sick with hope deferred:
‘No speaking signs are in the sky,’
   Is still the watchman’s word.

The Porter watches at the gate,
   The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes and late,
   The prize is slow to win.
‘Watchman, what of the night?’ But still
   His answer sounds the same:
‘No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
   Nor pale our lamps of flame.’

One to another hear them speak
   The patient virgins wise:
‘Surely He is not far to seek’ —
   ‘All night we watch and rise.’
‘The days are evil looking back,
   The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
   But watch and wait for Him.’

One with another, soul with soul,
   They kindle fire from fire:
‘Friends watch us who have touched the goal.’
   ‘They urge us, come up higher.’
‘With them shall rest our waysore feet,

With them is built our home,
With Christ.' — 'They sweet, but He most sweet,
Sweeter than honeycomb.'

There no more parting, no more pain,
The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again,
Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast, Who wept
For us, we hold Him fast;
And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

Weeping we hold Him fast tonight;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, 'Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away.'

THE THREE ENEMIES

the flesh

‘Sweet, thou art pale.’
‘More pale to see,
Christ hung upon the cruel tree
And bore His Father’s wrath for me.’

‘Sweet, thou art sad.’
‘Beneath a rod
More heavy, Christ for my sake trod
The winepress of the wrath of God.’

‘Sweet, thou art weary.’
‘Not so Christ:
Whose mighty love of me sufficed
For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist.’

‘Sweet, thou art footsore.’
‘If I bleed,
His feet have bled; yea in my need
His Heart once bled for mine indeed.’

the world

‘Sweet, thou art young.’
‘So He was young
Who for my sake in silence hung
Upon the Cross with Passion wrung.’

‘Look, thou art fair.’
‘He was more fair

Than men, Who deigned for me to wear
A visage marred beyond compare.'

'And thou hast riches.'
'Daily bread:
All else is His: Who, living, dead,
For me lacked where to lay His Head.'

'And life is sweet.'
'It was not so
To Him, Whose Cup did overflow
With mine unutterable woe.'

the devil

'Thou drinkest deep.'
'When Christ would sup
He drained the dregs from out my cup:
So how should I be lifted up?'

'Thou shalt win Glory.'
'In the skies,
Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes
Lest they should look on vanities.'

'Thou shalt have Knowledge.'
'Helpless dust!
In Thee, O Lord, I put my trust:
Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just.'

'And Might.' —
'Get thee behind me. Lord,
Who hast redeemed and not abhorred
My soul, oh keep it by Thy Word.'

ONE CERTAINTY

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith,
   All things are vanity. The eye and ear
   Cannot be filled with what they see and hear.
Like early dew, or like the sudden breath
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth,
   Is man, tossed to and fro by hope and fear:
   So little joy hath he, so little cheer,
Till all things end in the long dust of death.
Today is still the same as yesterday,
   Tomorrow also even as one of them;
And there is nothing new under the sun:
Until the ancient race of Time be run,
   The old thorns shall grow out of the old stem,
And morning shall be cold and twilight grey.

CHRISTIAN AND JEW: A DIALOGUE

‘Oh happy happy land!
Angels like rushes stand
About the wells of light.’ —
‘Alas, I have not eyes for this fair sight:
Hold fast my hand.’ —

‘As in a soft wind, they
Bend all one blessed way,
Each bowed in his own glory, star with star.’ —
‘I cannot see so far,
Here shadows are.’ —

‘White-winged the cherubim,
Yet whiter seraphim,
Glow white with intense fire of love.’ —
‘Mine eyes are dim:
I look in vain above,
And miss their hymn.’ —

‘Angels, Archangels cry
One to other ceaselessly
(I hear them sing)
One “Holy, Holy, Holy” to their King.’ —
‘I do not hear them, I.’ —

‘At one side Paradise
Is curtained from the rest,
Made green for wearied eyes;
Much softer than the breast
Of mother-dove clad in a rainbow’s dyes.

‘All precious souls are there

Most safe, elect by grace,
All tears are wiped for ever from their face:
Untired in prayer
They wait and praise
Hidden for a little space.

‘Boughs of the Living Vine
They spread in summer shine
Green leaf with leaf:
Sap of the Royal Vine it stirs like wine
In all both less and chief.

‘Sing to the Lord,
All spirits of all flesh, sing;
For He hath not abhorred
Our low estate nor scorn’d our offering:
Shout to our King.’ —

‘But Zion said:
My Lord forgetteth me.
Lo, she hath made her bed
In dust; forsaken weepeth she
Where alien rivers swell the sea.

‘She laid her body as the ground,
Her tender body as the ground to those
Who passed; her harpstrings cannot sound
In a strange land; discrowned
She sits, and drunk with woes.’ —

‘O drunken not with wine,
Whose sins and sorrows have fulfilled the sum, —
Be not afraid, arise, be no more dumb;
Arise, shine,
For thy light is come.’ —

‘Can these bones live?’ —
‘God knows:
The prophet saw such clothed with flesh and skin;
A wind blew on them and life entered in;
They shook and rose.
Hasten the time, O Lord, blot out their sin,
Let life begin.’

SWEET DEATH

The sweetest blossoms die.
   And so it was that, going day by day
   Unto the church to praise and pray,
And crossing the green churchyard thoughtfully,
   I saw how on the graves the flowers
   Shed their fresh leaves in showers,
And how their perfume rose up to the sky
   Before it passed away.

The youngest blossoms die.
   They die, and fall and nourish the rich earth
   From which they lately had their birth;
Sweet life, but sweeter death that passeth by
   And is as though it had not been: —
   All colors turn to green:
The bright hues vanish, and the odors fly,
   The grass hath lasting worth.

And youth and beauty die.
   So be it, O my God, Thou God of truth:
   Better than beauty and than youth
Are Saints and Angels, a glad company;
   And Thou, O lord, our Rest and Ease,
   Are better far than these.
Why should we shrink from our full harvest? why
   Prefer to glean with Ruth?

SYMBOLS

I watched a rosebud very long
   Brought on by dew and sun and shower,
   Waiting to see the perfect flower:
Then, when I thought it should be strong,
   It opened at the matin hour
And fell at evensong.

I watched a nest from day to day,
   A green nest full of pleasant shade,
   Wherein three speckled eggs were laid:
But when they should have hatched in May,
   The two old birds had grown afraid
Or tired, and flew away.

Then in my wrath I broke the bough
   That I had tended so with care,
   Hoping its scent should fill the air;
I crushed the eggs, not heeding how
   Their ancient promise had been fair:
I would have vengeance now.

But the dead branch spoke from the sod,
   And the eggs answered me again:
   Because we failed dost thou complain?
Is thy wrath just? And what if God,
   Who waiteth for thy fruits in vain,
Should also take the rod?

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

Flowers preach to us if we will hear: —
The rose saith in the dewy morn:
I am most fair;
Yet all my loveliness is born
Upon a thorn.
The poppy saith amid the corn:
Let but my scarlet head appear
And I am held in scorn;
Yet juice of subtle virtue lies
Within my cup of curious dyes.
The lilies say: Behold how we
Preach without words of purity.
The violets whisper from the shade
Which their own leaves have made:
Men scent our fragrance on the air,
Yet take no heed
Of humble lessons we would read.

But not alone the fairest flowers:
The merest grass
Along the roadside where we pass,
Lichen and moss and sturdy weed,
Tell of His love who sends the dew,
The rain and sunshine too,
To nourish one small seed.

THE WORLD

By day she woos me, soft, exceeding fair:
   But all night as the moon so changeth she;
   Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy
And subtle serpents gliding in her hair.
By day she woos me to the outer air,
   Ripe fruits, sweet flowers, and full satiety:
   But through the night, a beast she grins at me,
A very monster void of love and prayer.
By day she stands a lie: by night she stands
   In all the naked horror of the truth
With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands.
Is this a friend indeed; that I should sell
   My soul to her, give her my life and youth,
Till my feet, cloven too, take hold on hell?

A TESTIMONY

I said of laughter: it is vain.
   Of mirth I said: what profits it?
   Therefore I found a book, and writ
Therein how ease and also pain,
How health and sickness, every one
Is vanity beneath the sun.

Man walks in a vain shadow; he
   Disquieteth himself in vain.
   The things that were shall be again;
The rivers do not fill the sea,
But turn back to their secret source;
The winds too turn upon their course.

Our treasures moth and rust corrupt,
   Or thieves break through and steal, or they
   Make themselves wings and fly away.
One man made merry as he supped,
Nor guessed how when that night grew dim,
His soul would be required of him.

We build our houses on the sand
   Comely withoutside and within;
   But when the winds and rains begin
To beat on them, they cannot stand;
They perish, quickly overthrown,
Loose from the very basement stone.

All things are vanity, I said:
   Yea vanity of vanities.
   The rich man dies; and the poor dies:

The worm feeds sweetly on the dead.
Whate'er thou lackest, keep this trust:
All in the end shall have but dust.

The one inheritance, which best
   And worst alike shall find and share:
   The wicked cease from troubling there,
And there the weary are at rest;
There all the wisdom of the wise
Is vanity of vanities.

Man flourishes as a green leaf,
   And as a leaf doth pass away;
   Or as a shade that cannot stay,
And leaves no track, his course is brief:
Yet doth man hope and fear and plan
Till he is dead: — oh foolish man!

Our eyes cannot be satisfied
   With seeing, nor our ears be filled
   With hearing: yet we plant and build
And buy and make our borders wide;
We gather wealth, we gather care,
But know not who shall be our heir.

Why should we hasten to arise
   So early, and so late take rest?
   Our labour is not good; our best
Hopes fade; our heart is stayed on lies:
Verily, we sow wind; and we
Shall reap the whirlwind, verily.

He who hath little shall not lack;
   He who hath plenty shall decay:
   Our fathers went; we pass away;

Our children follow on our track:
So generations fail, and so
They are renewed, and come and go.

The earth is fattened with our dead;
    She swallows more and doth not cease:
    Therefore her wine and oil increase
And her sheaves are not numberèd;
Therefore her plants are green, and all
Her pleasant trees lusty and tall.

Therefore the maidens cease to sing,
    And the young men are very sad;
    Therefore the sowing is not glad,
And mournful is the harvesting.
Of high and low, of great and small,
Vanity is the lot of all.

A King dwelt in Jerusalem;
    He was the wisest man on earth;
    He had all riches from his birth,
And pleasures till he tired of them;
Then, having tested all things, he
Witnessed that all are vanity.

SLEEP AT SEA

Sound the deep waters: —
   Who shall sound that deep? —
Too short the plummet,
   And the watchmen sleep.
Some dream of effort
   Up a toilsome steep;
Some dream of pasture grounds
   For harmless sheep.

White shapes flit to and fro
   From mast to mast;
They feel the distant tempest
   That nears them fast:
Great rocks are straight ahead,
   Great shoals not past;
They shout to one another
   Upon the blast.

Oh, soft the streams drop music
   Between the hills,
And musical the birds' nests
   Beside those rills:
The nests are types of home
   Love-hidden from ills,
The nests are types of spirits
   Love-music fills.

So dream the sleepers,
   Each man in his place;
The lightning shows the smile
   Upon each face:
The ship is driving, driving,

It drives apace:
And sleepers smile, and spirits
Bewail their case.

The lightning glares and reddens
Across the skies;
It seems but sunset
To those sleeping eyes.
When did the sun go down
On such a wise?
From such a sunset
When shall day arise?

‘Wake,’ call the spirits:
But to heedless ears:
They have forgotten sorrows
And hopes and fears;
They have forgotten perils
And smiles and tears;
Their dream has held them long,
Long years and years.

‘Wake,’ call the spirits again:
But it would take
A louder summons
To bid them awake.
Some dream of pleasure
For another’s sake;
Some dream, forgetful
Of a lifelong ache.

One by one slowly,
Ah, how sad and slow!
Wailing and praying
The spirits rise and go:

Clear stainless spirits
    White as white as snow;
Pale spirits, wailing
    For an overthrow.

One by one flitting,
    Like a mournful bird
Whose song is tired at last
    For no mate is heard.
The loving voice is silent,
    The useless word;
One by one flitting
    Sick with hope deferred.

Driving and driving,
    The ship drives amain:
While swift from mast to mast
    Shapes flit again,
Flit silent as the silence
    Where men lie slain;
Their shadow cast upon the sails
    Is like a stain.

No voice to call the sleepers,
    No hand to raise:
They sleep to death in dreaming,
    Of length of days.
Vanity of vanities,
    The Preacher says:
Vanity is the end
    Of all their ways.

FROM HOUSE TO HOME

The first was like a dream through summer heat,
   The second like a tedious numbing swoon,
While the half-frozen pulses lagged to beat
      Beneath a winter moon.

‘But,’ says my friend, ‘what was this thing and where?’
   It was a pleasure-place within my soul;
An earthly paradise supremely fair
      That lured me from the goal.

The first part was a tissue of hugged lies;
   The second was its ruin fraught with pain:
Why raise the fair delusion to the skies
      But to be dashed again?

My castle stood of white transparent glass
   Glittering and frail with many a fretted spire,
But when the summer sunset came to pass
      It kindled into fire.

My pleasaunce was an undulating green,
   Stately with trees whose shadows slept below,
With glimpses of smooth garden-beds between
      Like flame or sky or snow.

Swift squirrels on the pastures took their ease,
   With leaping lambs safe from the unfeared knife;
All singing-birds rejoicing in those trees
      Fulfilled their careless life.

Woodpigeons cooed there, stockdoves nestled there;
My trees were full of songs and flowers and fruit,
Their branches spread a city to the air
And mice lodged in their root.

My heath lay farther off, where lizards lived
In strange metallic mail, just spied and gone;
Like darted lightnings here and there perceived
But nowhere dwelt upon.

Frogs and fat toads were there to hop or plod
And propagate in peace, an uncouth crew,
Where velvet-headed rushes rustling nod
And spill the morning dew.

All caterpillars throve beneath my rule,
With snails and slugs in corners out of sight;
I never marred the curious sudden stool
That perfects in a night.

Safe in his excavated gallery
The burrowing mole groped on from year to year;
No harmless hedgehog curled because of me
His prickly back for fear.

Oft times one like an angel walked with me,
With spirit-discerning eyes like flames of fire,
But deep as the unfathomed endless sea,
Fulfilling my desire:

And sometimes like a snowdrift he was fair,
And sometimes like a sunset glorious red,
And sometimes he had wings to scale the air
With aureole round his head.

We sang our songs together by the way,
   Calls and recalls and echoes of delight;
So communed we together all the day,
      And so in dreams by night.

I have no words to tell what way we walked.
   What unforgotten path now closed and sealed;
I have no words to tell all things we talked,
      All things that he revealed:

This only can I tell: that hour by hour
   I waxed more feastful, lifted up and glad;
I felt no thorn-prick when I plucked a flower,
      Felt not my friend was sad.

‘Tomorrow,’ once I said to him with smiles:
   ‘Tonight,’ he answered gravely and was dumb,
But pointed out the stones that numbered miles
      And miles to come.

‘Not so,’ I said: ‘tomorrow shall be sweet;
   Tonight is not so sweet as coming days.’
Then first I saw that he had turned his feet,
      Had turned from me his face:

Running and flying miles and miles he went,
   But once looked back to beckon with his hand
And cry: ‘Come home, O love, from banishment:
      Come to the distant land.’

That night destroyed me like an avalanche;
   One night turned all my summer back to snow:
Next morning not a bird upon my branch,

Not a lamb woke below, —

No bird, no lamb, no living breathing thing;
No squirrel scampered on my breezy lawn,
No mouse lodged by his hoard: all joys took wing
And fled before that dawn.

Azure and sun were starved from heaven above,
No dew had fallen, but biting frost lay hoar:
O love, I knew that I should meet my love,
Should find my love no more.

‘My love no more,’ I muttered stunned with pain:
I shed no tear, I wrung no passionate hand,
Till something whispered: ‘You shall meet again,
Meet in a distant land.’

Then with a cry like famine I arose,
I lit my candle, searched from room to room,
Searched up and down; a war of winds that froze
Swept through the blank of gloom.

I searched day after day, night after night;
Scant change there came to me of night or day:
‘No more,’ I wailed, ‘no more:’ and trimmed my light,
And gnashed but did not pray,

Until my heart broke and my spirit broke:
Upon the frost-bound floor I stumbled, fell,
And moaned: ‘It is enough: withhold the stroke.
Farewell, O love, farewell.’

Then life swooned from me. And I heard the song
Of spheres and spirits rejoicing over me:
One cried: ‘Our sister, she hath suffered long.’ —
One answered: ‘Make her see.’ —

One cried: ‘Oh blessèd she who no more pain,
Who no more disappointment shall receive.’ —
One answered: ‘Not so: she must live again;
Strengthen thou her to live.’

So while I lay entranced a curtain seemed
To shrivel with crackling from before my face;
Across mine eyes a waxing radiance beamed
And showed a certain place.

I saw a vision of a woman, where
Night and new morning strive for domination;
Incomparably pale, and almost fair,
And sad beyond expression.

Her eyes were like some fire-enshrining gem,
Were stately like the stars, and yet were tender;
Her figure charmed me like a windy stem
Quivering and drooped and slender.

I stood upon the outer barren ground,
She stood on inner ground that budded flowers;
While circling in their never-slackening round
Danced by the mystic hours.

But every flower was lifted on a thorn,
And every thorn shot upright from its sands0
To gall her feet; hoarse laughter pealed in scorn
With cruel clapping hands.

She bled and wept, yet did not shrink; her strength
Was strung up until daybreak of delight:
She measured measureless sorrow toward its length,

And breadth, and depth, and height.

Then marked I how a chain sustained her form,
A chain of living links not made nor riven:
It stretched sheer up through lighting, wind, and storm,
And anchored fast in heaven.

One cried: ‘How long? yet founded on the Rock
She shall do battle, suffer, and attain.’ —
One answered: ‘Faith quakes in the tempest shock:
Strengthen her soul again.’

I saw a cup sent down and come to her
Brimfull of loathing and of bitterness:
She drank with livid lips that seemed to stir
The depth, not make it less.

But as she drank I spied a hand distil
New wine and virgin honey; making it
First bitter-sweet, then sweet indeed, until
She tasted only sweet.

Her lips and cheeks waxed rosy-fresh and young;
Drinking she sang: ‘My soul shall nothing want;’
And drank anew: while soft a song was sung,
A mystical slow chant.

One cried: ‘The wounds are faithful of a friend:
The wilderness shall blossom as a rose.’ —
One answered: ‘Rend the veil, declare the end,
Strengthen her ere she goes.’

Then earth and heaven were rolled up like a scroll;
Time and space, change and death, had passed away;

Weight, number, measure, each had reached its whole;
The day had come, that day.

Multitudes — multitudes — stood up in bliss,
Made equal to the angels, glorious, fair;
With harps, palms, wedding-garments, kiss of peace
And crowned and haloed hair.

They sang a song, a new song in the height,
Harping with harps to Him Who is Strong and True:
They drank new wine, their eyes saw with new light,
Lo, all things were made new.

Tier beyond tier they rose and rose and rose
So high that it was dreadful, flames with flames:
No man could number them, no tongue disclose
Their secret sacred names.

As though one pulse stirred all, one rush of blood
Fed all, one breath swept through them myriad-voiced,
They struck their harps, cast down their crowns, they stood
And worshipped and rejoiced.

Each face looked one way like a moon new-lit,
Each face looked one way towards its Sun of Love;
Drank love and bathed in love and mirrored it
And knew no end thereof.

Glory touched glory on each blessèd head,
Hands locked dear hands never to sunder more:
These were the new-begotten from the dead
Whom the great birthday bore.

Heart answered heart, soul answered soul at rest,
   Double against each other, filled, sufficed:
All loving, loved of all; but loving best
      And best beloved of Christ.

I saw that one who lost her love in pain,
   Who trod on thorns, who drank the loathsome cup;
The lost in night, in day was found again;
      The fallen was lifted up.

They stood together in the blessèd noon,
   They sang together through the length of days;
Each loving face bent Sunwards like a moon
      New-lit with love and praise.

Therefore, O friend, I would not if I might
   Rebuild my house of lies, wherein I joyed
One time to dwell: my soul shall walk in white,
      Cast down but not destroyed.

Therefore in patience I possess my soul;
   Yea, therefore as a flint I set my face,
To pluck down, to build up again the whole —
      But in a distant place.

These thorns are sharp, yet I can tread on them;
   This cup is loathsome, yet He makes it sweet:
My face is steadfast toward Jerusalem,
      My heart remembers it.

I lift the hanging hands, the feeble knees —
   I, precious more than seven times molten gold —
Until the day when from his storehouses
      God shall bring new and old;

Beauty for ashes, oil of joy for grief,
Garment of praise for spirit of heaviness:
Although today I fade as doth a leaf,
I languish and grow less.

Although today He prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root:
Tomorrow I shall put forth buds again
And clothe myself with fruit.

Although today I walk in tedious ways,
Today His staff is turned into a rod,
Yet will I wait for Him the appointed days
And stay upon my God.

OLD AND NEW YEAR DITTIES

1.

New Year met me somewhat sad:
   Old Year leaves me tired,
Stripped of favorite things I had
   Baulked of much desired:
Yet farther on my road today
God willing, farther on my way.

New Year coming on apace
   What have you to give me?
Bring you scathe, or bring you grace,
Face me with an honest face;
   You shall not deceive me:
Be it good or ill, be it what you will,
It needs shall help me on my road,
My rugged way to heaven, please God.

2.

Watch with me, men, women, and children dear,
You whom I love, for whom I hope and fear,
Watch with me this last vigil of the year.
Some hug their business, some their pleasure-scheme;
Some seize the vacant hour to sleep or dream;
Heart locked in heart some kneel and watch apart.

Watch with me blessèd spirits, who delight
All through the holy night to walk in white,
Or take your ease after the long-drawn fight.
I know not if they watch with me: I know
They count this eve of resurrection slow,
And cry, ‘How long?’ with urgent utterance strong.

Watch with me Jesus, in my loneliness:
Though others say me nay, yet say Thou yes;
Though others pass me by, stop Thou to bless.
Yea, Thou dost stop with me this vigil night;
Tonight of pain, tomorrow of delight:
I, Love, am Thine; Thou, Lord my God, art mine.

3.

Passing away, saith the World, passing away:
Chances, beauty and youth sapped day by day:
Thy life never continueth in one stay.
Is the eye waxen dim, is the dark hair changing to grey
That hath won neither laurel nor bay?
I shall clothe myself in Spring and bud in May:
Thou, root-stricken, shalt not rebuild thy decay
On my bosom for aye.
Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my Soul, passing away:
With its burden of fear and hope, of labour and play;
Hearken what the past doth witness and say:
Rust in thy gold, a moth is in thine array,
A canker is in thy bud, thy leaf must decay.
At midnight, at cockcrow, at morning, one certain day
Lo, the Bridegroom shall come and shall not delay:
Watch thou and pray.

Then I answered: Yea.

Passing away, saith my God, passing away:
Winter passeth after the long delay:
New grapes on the vine, new figs on the tender spray,
Turtle calleth turtle in Heaven's May.
Though I tarry wait for Me, trust Me, watch and pray:
Arise, come away, night is past and lo it is day,
My love, My sister, My spouse, thou shalt hear Me say.
Then I answered: Yea.

AMEN

It is over. What is over?
   Nay, now much is over truly! —
Harvest days we toiled to sow for;
   Now the sheaves are gathered newly,
   Now the wheat is garnered duly.

It is finished. What is finished?
   Much is finished known or unknown:
Lives are finished; time diminished;
   Was the fallow field left unsown?
   Will these buds be always unblown?

It suffices. What suffices?
   All suffices reckoned rightly:
Spring shall bloom where now the ice is,
   Roses make the bramble sightly,
   And the quickening sun shine brightly,
   And the latter wind blow lightly,
And my garden teem with spices.

DESPISED AND REJECTED

My sun has set, I dwell
In darkness as a dead man out of sight;
And none remains, not one, that I should tell
To him mine evil plight
This bitter night.
I will make fast my door
That hollow friends may trouble me no more.

‘Friend, open to Me.’ — Who is this that calls?
Nay, I am deaf as are my walls:
Cease crying, for I will not hear
Thy cry of hope or fear.
Others were dear,
Others forsook me: what art thou indeed
That I should heed
Thy lamentable need?
Hungry should feed,
Or stranger lodge thee here?

‘Friend, My Feet bleed.
Open thy door to Me and comfort Me.’
I will not open, trouble me no more.
Go on thy way footsore,
I will not rise and open unto thee.

‘Then is it nothing to thee? Open, see
Who stands to plead with thee.
Open, lest I should pass thee by, and thou
One day entreat My Face
And howl for grace,
And I be deaf as thou art now.
Open to Me.’

Then I cried out upon him: Cease,
Leave me in peace:
Fear not that I should crave
Aught thou mayst have.
Leave me in peace, yea trouble me no more,
Lest I arise and chase thee from my door.
What, shall I not be let
Alone, that thou dost vex me yet?

But all night long that voice spake urgently:
'Open to Me.'
Still harping in mine ears:
'Rise, let Me in.'
Pleading with tears:
'Open to Me that I may come to thee.'
While the dew dropped, while the dark hours were cold:
'My Feet bleed, see My Face,
See My Hands bleed that bring thee grace,
My Heart doth bleed for thee,
Open to Me.'

So till the break of day:
Then died away
That voice, in silence as of sorrow;
Then footsteps echoing like a sigh
Passed me by,
Lingering footsteps slow to pass.
On the morrow
I saw upon the grass
Each footprint marked in blood, and on my door
The mark of blood for evermore.

LONG BARREN

Thou who didst hang upon a barren tree,
My God, for me;
    Though I till now be barren, now at length
    Lord, give me strength
To bring forth fruit to Thee.

Thou who didst bear for me the crown of thorn,
Spitting and scorn;
    Though I till now have put forth thorns, yet now
    Strengthen me Thou
That better fruit be borne.

Thou Rose of Sharon, Cedar of broad roots,
Vine of sweet fruits,
    Thou Lily of the vale with fadeless leaf,
    Of thousands Chief,
Feed Thou my feeble shoots.

IF ONLY

If I might only love my God and die!
   But now He bids me love Him and live on,
   Now when the bloom of all my life is gone,
The pleasant half of life has quite gone by.
My tree of hope is lopped that spread so high,
   And I forget how summer glowed and shone,
   While autumn grips me with its fingers wan
And frets me with its fitful windy sigh.
When autumn passes then must winter numb,
   And winter may not pass a weary while,
      But when it passes spring shall flower again;
   And in that spring who weepeth now shall smile,
      Yea, they shall wax who now are on the wane,
Yea, they shall sing for love when Christ shall come.

DOST THOU NOT CARE?

I love and love not: Lord, it breaks my heart
   To love and not to love.
Thou veiled within Thy glory, gone apart
   Into Thy shrine, which is above,
Dost Thou not love me, Lord, or care
   For this mine ill? —
I love thee here or there,
   I will accept thy broken heart, lie still.

Lord, it was well with me in time gone by
   That cometh not again,
When I was fresh and cheerful, who but I?
   I fresh, I cheerful: worn with pain
Now, out of sight and out of heart;
   O Lord, how long? —
I watch thee as thou art,
   I will accept thy fainting heart, be strong.

'Lie still,' 'be strong,' today; but, Lord, tomorrow,
   What of tomorrow, Lord?
Shall there be rest from toil, be truce from sorrow,
   Be living green upon the sward
Now but a barren grave to me,
   Be joy for sorrow? —
Did I not die for thee?
   Did I not live for thee? Leave Me tomorrow.

WEARY IN WELL-DOING

I would have gone; God bade me stay:
    I would have worked; God bade me rest.
He broke my will from day to day,
    He read my yearnings unexpressed
        And said them nay.

Now I would stay; God bids me go:
    Now I would rest; God bids me work.
He breaks my heart tossed to and fro,
    My soul is wrung with doubts that lurk
        And vex it so.

I go, Lord, where Thou sendest me;
    Day after day I plod and moil:
But, Christ my God, when will it be
    That I may let alone my toil
        And rest with Thee?

MARTYRS' SONG

We meet in joy, though we part in sorrow;
We part tonight, but we meet tomorrow.
Be it flood or blood the path that's trod,
All the same it leads home to God:
Be it furnace-fire voluminous,
One like God's Son will walk with us.

What are these that glow from afar,
These that lean over the golden bar,
Strong as the lion, pure as the dove,
With open arms and hearts of love?
They the blessed ones gone before,
They the blessed for evermore.
Out of great tribulation they went
Home to their home of Heaven-content;
Through flood, or blood, or furnace-fire,
To the rest that fulfils desire.

What are these that fly as a cloud,
With flashing heads and faces bowed,
In their mouths a victorious psalm,
In their hands a robe and palm?
Welcoming angels these that shine,
Your own angel, and yours, and mine;
Who have hedged us, both day and night
On the left hand and the right,
Who have watched us both night and day
Because the devil keeps watch to slay.

Light above light, and Bliss beyond bliss,
Whom words cannot utter, lo, Who is This?
As a King with many crowns He stands,

And our names are graven upon His hands;
As a Priest, with God-uplifted eyes,
He offers for us His sacrifice;
As the Lamb of God for sinners slain,
That we too may live He lives again;
As our Champion behold Him stand,
Strong to save us, at God's Right Hand.

God the Father give us grace
To walk in the light of Jesus' Face.
God the Son give us a part
In the hiding-place of Jesus' Heart:
God the Spirit so hold us up
That we may drink of Jesus' cup;

Death is short and life is long;
Satan is strong, but Christ more strong.
At His Word, Who hath led us hither.
The Red Sea must part hither and thither.
As His Word, Who goes before us too,
Jordan must cleave to let us through.

Yet one pang searching and sore,
And then Heaven for evermore;
Yet one moment awful and dark,
Then safety within the Veil and the Ark;
Yet one effort by Christ His grace,
Then Christ for ever face to face.

God the Father we will adore,
In Jesus' Name, now and evermore:
God the Son we will love and thank
In this flood and on the further bank:
God the Holy Ghost we will praise
In Jesus' Name, through endless days:
God Almighty, God Three in One,

God Almighty, God alone.

AFTER THIS THE JUDGEMENT

As eager homebound traveller to the goal,
   Or steadfast seeker on an unsearched main,
Or martyr panting for an aureole,
   My fellow-pilgrims pass me, and attain
That hidden mansion of perpetual peace
   Where keen desire and hope dwell free from pain:
That gate stands open of perennial ease;
   I view the glory till I partly long,
Yet lack the fire of love which quickens these.
   O passing Angel, speed me with a song,
A melody of heaven to reach my heart
   And rouse me to the race and make me strong;
Till in such music I take up my part
   Swelling those Hallelujahs full of rest,
One, tenfold, hundredfold, with heavenly art,
   Fulfilling north and south and east and west,
Thousand, ten thousandfold, innumerable,
   All blent in one yet each one manifest;
Each one distinguished and beloved as well
   As if no second voice in earth or heaven
Were lifted up the Love of God to tell.
   Ah, Love of God, which Thine own Self hast given
To me most poor, and made me rich in love,
   Love that dost pass the tenfold seven times seven,
Draw Thou mine eyes, draw Thou my heart above,
   My treasure ad my heart store Thou in Thee,
Brood over me with yearnings of a dove;
   Be Husband, Brother, closest Friend to me;
Love me as very mother loves her son,
   Her sucking firstborn fondled on her knee:
Yea, more than mother loves her little one;
   For, earthly, even a mother may forget
And feel no pity for its piteous moan;
   But thou, O Love of God, remember yet,

Through the dry desert, through the waterflood
(Life, death) until the Great White Throne is set.
If now I am sick in chewing the bitter cud
Of sweet past sin, though solaced by Thy grace
And ofttimes strengthened by Thy Flesh and Blood,
How shall I then stand up before Thy face
When from Thine eyes repentance shall be hid
And utmost Justice stand in Mercy's place:
When every sin I thought or spoke or did
Shall meet me at the inexorable bar,
And there be no man standing in the mid
To plead for me; while star fallen after star
With heaven and earth are like a ripened shock,
And all time's mighty works and wonders are
Consumed as in a moment; when no rock
Remains to fall on me, no tree to hide,
But I stand all creation's gazing-stock
Exposed and comfortless on every side,
Placed trembling in the final balances
Whose poise this hour, this moment, must be tried? —
Ah Love of God, if greater love than this
Hath no man, that a man die for his friend,
And if such love of love Thine Own Love is,
Plead with Thyself, with me, before the end;
Redeem me from the irrevocable past;
Pitch Thou Thy Presence round me to defend;
Yea seek with piercèd feet, yea hold me fast
With piercèd hands whose wounds were made by love;
Not what I am, remember what Thou wast
When darkness hid from Thee Thy heavens above,
And sin Thy Father's Face, while thou didst drink
The bitter cup of death, didst taste thereof
For every man; while Thou wast nigh to sink
Beneath the intense intolerable rod,
Grown sick of love; not what I am, but think
Thy Life then ransomed mine, my God, my God.

GOOD FRIDAY

Am I a stone and not a sheep
   That I can stand, O Christ, beneath Thy Cross,
   To number drop by drop Thy Blood's slow loss,
And yet not weep?

Not so those women loved
   Who with exceeding grief lamented Thee;
   Not so fallen Peter weeping bitterly;
Not so the thief was moved;

Not so the Sun and Moon
   Which hid their faces in a starless sky,
   A horror of great darkness at broad noon —
I, only I.

Yet give not o'er,
   But seek Thy sheep, true Shepherd of the flock;
   Greater than Moses, turn and look once more
And smite a rock.

THE LOWEST PLACE

Give me the lowest place: not that I dare
    Ask for that lowest place, but Thou hast died
That I might live and share
    Thy glory by Thy side.

Give me the lowest place: or if for me
    That lowest place too high, make one more low
Where I may sit and see
    My God and love Thee so.

GOBLIN MARKET AND OTHER POEMS

First published in 1862, this poetry collection features Rossetti's most celebrated poem, which was illustrated by her brother, the Pre-Raphaelite artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Although in later times the poem has been well documented for its feminist and homosexual interpretations, Rossetti later explained in a letter to her editor that *Goblin Market* was not originally intended for children. Nevertheless, the poet often stated in public that it was meant for a young audience, allowing her to target children's poetry in following collections.

Goblin Market employs an irregular rhyme scheme, using couplets and alternate rhymes, as well as an irregular metre, supporting the disturbing nature of the narrative. The poem concerns two close sisters, Laura and Lizzie, as well as the goblin creatures referred to in the title. Although the sisters are young, they live alone in a house, where they draw water every evening from a stream. As the poem opens, twilight is falling and the sisters hear the calls from the goblin merchants, who sell fruits in fantastic abundance. As Laura lingers at the stream, after her sister has left for home, she is intrigued by the goblins' strange manner and appearance. Wanting fruit but having no money, the impulsive Laura offers instead a lock of her hair and "a tear more rare than pearl."

The first edition

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"Buy from us with a golden curl"

GOBLIN MARKET

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
‘Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries, 10
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries; —
All ripe together
In summer weather, —
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine, 20
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,

Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye; 30
Come buy, come buy.'

Evening by evening
Among the brookside rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes:
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
'Lie close,' Laura said, 40
Pricking up her golden head:
'We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?'
'Come buy,' call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
'Oh,' cried Lizzie, 'Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.'
Lizzie covered up her eyes, 50
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
'Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds weight.
How fair the vine must grow 60
Whose grapes are so luscious;
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes.'

‘No,’ said Lizzie, ‘No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.’
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man. 70
One had a cat’s face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat’s pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather. 80

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backwards up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
‘Come buy, come buy.’ 90
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown

Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown 100
(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her:
'Come buy, come buy,' was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money:
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-faced spoke a word 110
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried 'Pretty Goblin' still for 'Pretty Polly;' —
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
'Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze 120
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather.'
'You have much gold upon your head,'
They answered all together:
'Buy from us with a golden curl.'
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine, 130
Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;

Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gathered up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone. 140

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
'Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers 150
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the noonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low:
I planted daisies there a year ago 160
That never blow.
You should not loiter so.'
'Nay, hush,' said Laura:
'Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more:' and kissed her:
'Have done with sorrow;
I'll bring you plums to-morrow 170
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs

My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed:
Odorous indeed must be the mead 180
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap.'

The long hours go and come and go

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed:
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall'n snow,
Like two wands of ivory 190

Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their rest:
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning, 200
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart, 210
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came:
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep;
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags, 220
Then turning homeward said: 'The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags,
No wilful squirrel wags,
The beasts and birds are fast asleep.'
But Laura loitered still among the rushes

And said the bank was steep.

And said the hour was early still
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill:
Listening ever, but not catching 230
The customary cry,
'Come buy, come buy,'
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words:
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling;
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single, 240
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, 'O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark:
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather, 250
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?'

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
'Come buy our fruits, come buy.'
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life drooped from the root: 260

She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for baulked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry:
'Come buy, come buy;' —
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen:
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and grey;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none;
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run:
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveller sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,

Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook:
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care 300
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
'Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:' —
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her, 310
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest Winter time
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp Winter time.

Till Laura dwindling 320
Seemed knocking at Death's door:
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping: 330
Came towards her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like, 340
Ratel-and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter skelter, hurry skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes, —
Hugged her and kissed her:
Squeezed and caressed her:
Stretched up their dishes, 350
Panniers, and plates:
'Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs; 360
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs.' —

'Good folk,' said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
'Give me much and many:' —

Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
‘Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,’
They answered grinning: 370
‘Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavour would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us, 380
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us.’ —
‘Thank you,’ said Lizzie: ‘But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee.’ —
They began to scratch their pates, 390
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her, 400
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,

Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood, —
Like a rock of blue-veined stone 410
Lashed by tides obstreperously, —
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire, —
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee, —
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet 420
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water,
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,
Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word; 430
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that syrupped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took, 440

Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore thro' the furze, 450
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse, —
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse:
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear; 460
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried 'Laura,' up the garden,
'Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew. 470
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me:
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men.'

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
'Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden, 480
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?' —
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her:
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth; 490
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast:
Writhing as one possessed she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch 500
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name: 510

Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea, 520
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves:
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves, 530
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day
Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of grey, 540
Her breath was sweet as May
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,

Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone 550
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood;
(Men sell not such in any town:)
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote:
Then joining hands to little hands 560
Would bid them cling together,
'For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.'

IN THE ROUND TOWER AT JHANSI, JUNE 8, 1857

A hundred, a thousand to one; even so;
   Not a hope in the world remained:
The swarming howling wretches below
   Gained and gained and gained.

Skene looked at his pale young wife: —
   'Is the time come?' — 'The time is come!' —
Young, strong, and so full of life:
   The agony struck them dumb.

Close his arm about her now,
   Close her cheek to his,
Close the pistol to her brow —
   God forgive them this!

'Will it hurt much?' — 'No, mine own:
   I wish I could bear the pang for both.'
'I wish I could bear the pang alone:
   Courage, dear, I am not loth.'

Kiss and kiss: 'It is not pain
   Thus to kiss and die.
One kiss more.' — 'And yet one again.' —
   'Good-bye.' — 'Good-bye.'

DREAM LAND

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep:
    Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
    Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight cold and lorn
    And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
    That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
    The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain;
She cannot feel the rain
    Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
    Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;

Night that no morn shall break
Till joy shall overtake
    Her perfect peace.

AT HOME

When I was dead, my spirit turned
   To seek the much-frequented house:
I passed the door, and saw my friends
   Feasting beneath green orange boughs;
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
   They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
      For each was loved of each.

I listened to their honest chat:
   Said one: 'Tomorrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands,
   And coasting miles and miles of sea.'
Said one: 'Before the turn of tide
   We will achieve the eyrie-seat.'
Said one: 'Tomorrow shall be like
      Today, but much more sweet.'

'Tomorrow,' said they, strong with hope,
   And dwelt upon the pleasant way:
'Tomorrow,' cried they, one and all,
   While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
   I, only I, had passed away:
'Tomorrow and today,' they cried;
      I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
   No chill across the tablecloth;
I, all-forgotten, shivered, sad
   To stay, and yet to part how loth:
I passed from the familiar room,
   I who from love had passed away,

Like the remembrance of a guest
That tarrieth but a day.

A TRIAD

Three sang of love together: one with lips
   Crimson, with cheeks and bosom in a glow,
Flushed to the yellow hair and finger-tips;
   And one there sang who soft and smooth as snow
   Bloomed like a tinted hyacinth at a show;
And one was blue with famine after love,
   Who like a harpstring snapped rang harsh and low
The burden of what those were singing of.
One shamed herself in love; one temperately
   Grew gross in soulless love, a sluggish wife;
One famished died for love. Thus two of three
   Took death for love and won him after strife;
One droned in sweetness like a fattened bee:
   All on the threshold, yet all short of life.

LOVE FROM THE NORTH

I had a love in soft south land,
   Beloved through April far in May;
He waited on my lightest breath,
   And never dared to say me nay.

He saddened if my cheer was sad,
   But gay he grew if I was gay;
We never differed on a hair,
   My yes his yes, my nay his nay.

The wedding hour was come, the aisles
   Were flushed with sun and flowers that day;
I pacing balanced in my thoughts:
   'It's quite too late to think of nay.' —

My bridegroom answered in his turn,
   Myself had almost answered 'yea:'
When through the flashing nave I heard
   A struggle and resounding 'nay.'

Bridemaids and bridegroom shrank in fear,
   But I stood high who stood at bay:
'And if I answer yea, fair Sir,
   What man art thou to bar with nay?'

He was a strong man from the north,
   Light-locked, with eyes of dangerous grey:
'Put yea by for another time
   In which I will not say thee nay.'

He took me in his strong white arms,
   He bore me on his horse away

O’er crag, morass, and hairbreadth pass,
    But never asked me yea or nay.

He made me fast with book and bell,
    With links of love he makes me stay;
Till now I’ve neither heart nor power
    Nor will nor wish to say him nay.

WINTER RAIN

Every valley drinks,
   Every dell and hollow:
Where the kind rain sinks and sinks,
   Green of Spring will follow.

Yet a lapse of weeks
   Buds will burst their edges,
Strip their wool-coats, glue-coats, streaks,
   In the woods and hedges;

Weave a bower of love
   For birds to meet each other,
Weave a canopy above
   Nest and egg and mother.

But for fattening rain
   We should have no flowers,
Never a bud or leaf again
   But for soaking showers;

Never a mated bird
   In the rocking tree-tops,
Never indeed a flock or herd
   To graze upon the lea-crops.

Lambs so woolly white,
   Sheep the sun-bright leas on,
They could have no grass to bite
   But for rain in season.

We should find no moss

In the shadiest places,
Find no waving meadow grass
Pied with broad-eyed daisies:

But miles of barren sand,
With never a son or daughter,
Not a lily on the land,
Or lily on the water.

COUSIN KATE

I was a cottage maiden
   Hardened by sun and air,
Contented with my cottage mates,
   Not mindful I was fair.
Why did a great lord find me out,
   And praise my flaxen hair?
Why did a great lord find me out
   To fill my heart with care?

He lured me to his palace home —
   Woe's me for joy thereof —
To lead a shameless shameful life,
   His plaything and his love.
He wore me like a silken knot,
   He changed me like a glove;
So now I moan, an unclean thing,
   Who might have been a dove.

O Lady Kate, my cousin Kate,
   You grew more fair than I:
He saw you at your father's gate,
   Chose you, and cast me by.
He watched your steps along the lane,
   Your work among the rye;
He lifted you from mean estate
   To sit with him on high.

Because you were so good and pure
   He bound you with his ring:
The neighbours call you good and pure,
   Call me an outcast thing.
Even so I sit and howl in dust,

You sit in gold and sing:
Now which of us has tenderer heart?
You had the stronger wing.

O cousin Kate, my love was true,
Your love was writ in sand:
If he had fooled not me but you,
If you stood where I stand,
He'd not have won me with his love
Nor bought me with his land;
I would have spit into his face
And not have taken his hand.

Yet I've a gift you have not got,
And seem not like to get:
For all your clothes and wedding-ring
I've little doubt you fret.
My fair-haired son, my shame, my pride,
Cling closer, closer yet:
Your father would give lands for one
To wear his coronet.

NOBLE SISTERS

‘Now did you mark a falcon,
  Sister dear, sister dear,
Flying toward my window
  In the morning cool and clear?
With jingling bells about her neck,
  But what beneath her wing?
It may have been a ribbon,
  Or it may have been a ring.’ —
  ‘I marked a falcon swooping
    At the break of day;
  And for your love, my sister dove,
    I ‘frayed the thief away.’ —

‘Or did you spy a ruddy hound,
  Sister fair and tall,
Went snuffing round my garden bound,
  Or crouched by my bower wall?
With a silken leash about his neck;
  But in his mouth may be
A chain of gold and silver links,
  Or a letter writ to me.’ —
  ‘I heard a hound, highborn sister,
    Stood baying at the moon;
  I rose and drove him from your wall
    Lest you should wake too soon.’ —

‘Or did you meet a pretty page
  Sat swinging on the gate;
Sat whistling whistling like a bird,
  Or may be slept too late;
With eaglets broidered on his cap,
  And eaglets on his glove?
If you had turned his pockets out,

You had found some pledge of love.' —
'I met him at this daybreak,
Scarce the east was red:
Lest the creaking gate should anger you,
I packed him home to bed.' —

'Oh patience, sister. Did you see
A young man tall and strong,
Swift-footed to uphold the right
And to uproot the wrong,
Come home across the desolate sea
To woo me for his wife?
And in his heart my heart is locked,
And in his life my life.' —
'I met a nameless man, sister,
Hard by your chamber door:
I said: Her husband loves her much.
And yet she loves him more.' —

'Fie, sister, fie, a wicked lie,
A lie, a wicked lie,
I have none other love but him,
Nor will have till I die.
And you have turned him from our door,
And stabbed him with a lie:
I will go seek him thro' the world
In sorrow till I die.' —
'Go seek in sorrow, sister,
And find in sorrow too:
If thus you shame our father's name
My curse go forth with you.'

SPRING

Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young grass springs on the plain;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap put forth their shoots;
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;
Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back
Along the trackless track —
God guides their wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing lack, —
Before the daisy grows a common flower,
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,

Like Spring that passes by;
There is no life like Spring-life born to die, —
Piercing the sod,
Clothing the uncouth clod,
Hatched in the nest,
Fledged on the windy bough,
Strong on the wing:
There is no time like Spring that passes by,
Now newly born, and now
Hastening to die.

THE LAMBS OF GRASMERE, 1860

The upland flocks grew starved and thinned:
   Their shepherds scarce could feed the lambs
Whose milkless mothers butted them,
   Or who were orphaned of their dams.
The lambs athirst for mother's milk
   Filled all the place with piteous sounds:
Their mothers' bones made white for miles
   The pastureless wet pasture grounds.

Day after day, night after night,
   From lamb to lamb the shepherds went,
With teapots for the bleating mouths
   Instead of nature's nourishment.
The little shivering gaping things
   Soon knew the step that brought them aid,
And fondled the protecting hand,
   And rubbed it with a woolly head.

Then, as the days waxed on to weeks,
   It was a pretty sight to see
These lambs with frisky heads and tails
   Skipping and leaping on the lea,
Bleating in tender, trustful tones,
   Resting on rocky crag or mound.
And following the beloved feet
   That once had sought for them and found.

These very shepherds of their flocks,
   These loving lambs so meek to please,
Are worthy of recording words
   And honor in their due degrees:
So I might live a hundred years,

And roam from strand to foreign strand,
Yet not forget this flooded spring
And scarce-saved lambs of Westmoreland.

A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
   Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree
   Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
   That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
   Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
   Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves, and pomegranates,
   And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
   In leaves, and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
   Is come, my love is come to me.

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

AFTER DEATH

The curtains were half drawn, the floor was swept
And strewn with rushes, rosemary and may
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,
Where through the lattice ivy-shadows crept.
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept
And could not hear him; but I heard him say:
'Poor child, poor child:' and as he turned away
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold
That hid my face, or take my hand in his,
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head:
He did not love me living; but once dead
He pitied me; and very sweet it is
To know he still is warm though I am cold.

AN END

Love, strong as Death, is dead.
Come, let us make his bed
Among the dying flowers:
A green turf at his head;
And a stone at his feet,
Whereon we may sit
In the quiet evening hours.

He was born in the Spring,
And died before the harvesting:
On the last warm summer day
He left us; he would not stay
For Autumn twilight cold and grey.
Sit we by his grave, and sing
He is gone away.

To few chords and sad and low
Sing we so:
Be our eyes fixed on the grass
Shadow-veiled as the years pass
While we think of all that was
In the long ago.

MY DREAM

Hear now a curious dream I dreamed last night
Each word whereof is weighed and sifted truth.

I stood beside Euphrates while it swelled
Like overflowing Jordan in its youth:
It waxed and coloured sensibly to sight;
Till out of myriad pregnant waves there welled
Young crocodiles, a gaunt blunt-featured crew,
Fresh-hatched perhaps and daubed with birthday dew.
The rest if I should tell, I fear my friend
My closest friend would deem the facts untrue;
And therefore it were wisely left untold;
Yet if you will, why, hear it to the end.

Each crocodile was girt with massive gold
And polished stones that with their wearers grew:
But one there was who waxed beyond the rest,
Wore kinglier girdle and a kingly crown,
Whilst crowns and orbs and sceptres starred his breast.
All gleamed compact and green with scale on scale,
But special burnishment adorned his mail
And special terror weighed upon his frown;
His punier brethren quaked before his tail,
Broad as a rafter, potent as a flail.
So he grew lord and master of his kin:
But who shall tell the tale of all their woes?
An execrable appetite arose,
He battened on them, crunched, and sucked them in.
He knew no law, he feared no binding law,
But ground them with inexorable jaw:
The luscious fat distilled upon his chin,
Exuded from his nostrils and his eyes,
While still like hungry death he fed his maw;

Till every minor crocodile being dead
And buried too, himself gorged to the full,
He slept with breath oppressed and unstrung claw.
Oh marvel passing strange which next I saw:
In sleep he dwindled to the common size,
And all the empire faded from his coat.
Then from far off a wingèd vessel came,
Swift as a swallow, subtle as a flame:
I know not what it bore of freight or host,
But white it was as an avenging ghost.
It levelled strong Euphrates in its course;
Supreme yet weightless as an idle mote
It seemed to tame the waters without force
Till not a murmur swelled or billow beat:
Lo, as the purple shadow swept the sands,
The prudent crocodile rose on his feet
And shed appropriate tears and wrung his hands.

What can it mean? you ask. I answer not
For meaning, but myself must echo, What?
And tell it as I saw it on the spot.

SONG: OH ROSES FOR THE FLUSH OF YOUTH

Oh roses for the flush of youth,
  And laurel for the perfect prime;
But pluck an ivy branch for me
    Grown old before my time.

Oh violets for the grave of youth,
  And bay for those dead in their prime;
Give me the withered leaves I chose
    Before in the old time.

THE HOUR AND THE GHOST

BRIDE

O love, love, hold me fast,
He draws me away from thee;
I cannot stem the blast,
Nor the cold strong sea:
Far away a light shines
Beyond the hills and pines;
It is lit for me.

BRIDEGROOM

I have thee close, my dear,
No terror can come near;
Only far off the northern light shines clear.

GHOST

Come with me, fair and false,
To our home, come home.
It is my voice that calls:
Once thou wast not afraid
When I woo'd, and said,
'Come, our nest is newly made' —
Now cross the tossing foam.

BRIDE

Hold me one moment longer,
He taunts me with the past,
His clutch is waxing stronger,
Hold me fast, hold me fast.
He draws me from thy heart,
And I cannot withhold:
He bids my spirit depart
With him into the cold: —
Oh bitter vows of old!

BRIDEGROOM

Lean on me, hide thine eyes:
Only ourselves, earth and skies,
Are present here: be wise.

GHOST

Lean on me, come away,
I will guide and steady:
Come, for I will not stay:
Come, for house and bed are ready.
Ah, sure bed and house,
For better and worse, for life and death:
Goal won with shortened breath:
Come, crown our vows.

BRIDE

One moment, one more word,
While my heart beats still,
While my breath is stirred
By my fainting will.
O friend forsake me not,
Forget not as I forgot:
But keep thy heart for me,
Keep thy faith true and bright;
Through the lone cold winter night
Perhaps I may come to thee.

BRIDEGROOM

Nay peace, my darling, peace:
Let these dreams and terrors cease:
Who spoke of death or change or aught but ease?

GHOST

O fair frail sin,
O poor harvest gathered in!
Thou shalt visit him again
To watch his heart grow cold;
To know the gnawing pain
I knew of old;
To see one much more fair
Fill up the vacant chair,
Fill his heart, his children bear: —
While thou and I together
In the outcast weather
Toss and howl and spin.

A SUMMER WISH

Live all thy sweet life thro',
   Sweet Rose, dew-sprent,
Drop down thine evening dew
To gather it anew
When day is bright:
   I fancy thou wast meant
Chiefly to give delight.

Sing in the silent sky,
   Glad soaring bird;
Sing out thy notes on high
To sunbeam straying by
Or passing cloud;
   Heedless if thou art heard
Sing thy full song aloud.

Oh that it were with me
   As with the flower;
Blooming on its own tree
For butterfly and bee
Its summer morns:
   That I might bloom mine hour
A rose in spite of thorns.

Oh that my work were done
   As birds' that soar
Rejoicing in the sun:
That when my time is run
And daylight too,
   I so might rest once more
Cool with refreshing dew.

AN APPLE GATHERING

I plucked pink blossoms from mine apple-tree
   And wore them all that evening in my hair:
Then in due season when I went to see
      I found no apples there.

With dangling basket all along the grass
   As I had come I went the selfsame track:
My neighbours mocked me while they saw me pass
      So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lilias smiled in trudging by,
   Their heaped-up basket teased me like a jeer;
Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky,
      Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full,
   A stronger hand than hers helped it along;
A voice talked with her through the shadows cool
      More sweet to me than song.

Ah Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
   Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
I counted rosiest apples on the earth
      Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk
   Laughing and listening in this very lane:
To think that by this way we used to walk
      We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbours pass me, ones and twos
    And groups; the latest said the night grew chill,
And hastened: but I loitered, while the dews
        Fell fast I loitered still.

SONG: TWO DOVES UPON THE SELFSAME BRANCH

Two doves upon the selfsame branch,
   Two lilies on a single stem,
Two butterflies upon one flower: —
   Oh happy they who look on them.

Who look upon them hand in hand
   Flushed in the rosy summer light;
Who look upon them hand in hand
   And never give a thought to night.

MAUDE CLARE

Out of the church she followed them
    With a lofty step and mien:
His bride was like a village maid,
    Maude Clare was like a queen.

‘Son Thomas,’ his lady mother said,
    With smiles, almost with tears:
‘May Nell and you but live as true
    As we have done for years;

‘Your father thirty years ago
    Had just your tale to tell;
But he was not so pale as you,
    Nor I so pale as Nell.’

My lord was pale with inward strife,
    And Nell was pale with pride;
My lord gazed long on pale Maude Clare
    Or ever he kissed the bride.

‘Lo, I have brought my gift, my lord,
    Have brought my gift,’ she said:
‘To bless the hearth, to bless the board,
    To bless the marriage-bed.

‘Here’s my half of the golden chain
    You wore about your neck,
That day we waded ankle-deep
    For lilies in the beck:

‘Here’s my half of the faded leaves

We plucked from budding bough,
With feet amongst the lily leaves, —
The lilies are budding now.'

He strove to match her scorn with scorn,
He faltered in his place:
'Lady,' he said, — 'Maude Clare,' he said, —
'Maude Clare:' — and hid his face.

She turn'd to Nell: 'My Lady Nell,
I have a gift for you;
Though, were it fruit, the bloom were gone,
Or, were it flowers, the dew.

'Take my share of a fickle heart,
Mine of a paltry love:
Take it or leave it as you will,
I wash my hands thereof.'

'And what you leave,' said Nell, 'I'll take,
And what you spurn, I'll wear;
For he's my lord for better and worse,
And him I love, Maude Clare.

'Yea, though you're taller by the head,
More wise, and much more fair;
I'll love him till he loves me best,
Me best of all, Maude Clare.'

ECHO

Come to me in the silence of the night;
   Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright
   As sunlight on a stream;
      Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,
   Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;
   Where thirsting longing eyes
      Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
   My very life again though cold in death:
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give
   Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
      Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago!

WINTER: MY SECRET

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
Perhaps someday, who knows?
But not today; it froze, and blows, and snows,
And you're too curious: fie!
You want to hear it? well:
Only, my secret's mine, and I won't tell.

Or, after all, perhaps there's none:
Suppose there is no secret after all,
But only just my fun.
Today's a nipping day, a biting day;
In which one wants a shawl,
A veil, a cloak, and other wraps:
I cannot ope to everyone who taps,
And let the draughts come whistling through my hall;
Come bounding and surrounding me,
Come buffeting, astounding me,
Nipping and clipping through my wraps and all.
I wear my mask for warmth: who ever shows
His nose to Russian snows
To be pecked at by every wind that blows?
You would not peck? I thank you for good will,
Believe, but leave that truth untested still.

Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
March with its peck of dust,
Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,
Nor even May, whose flowers
One frost may wither through the sunless hours.

Perhaps some languid summer day,
When drowsy birds sing less and less,

And golden fruit is ripening to excess,
If there’s not too much sun nor too much cloud,
And the warm wind is neither still nor loud,
Perhaps my secret I may say,
Or you may guess.

ANOTHER SPRING

If I might see another Spring
   I'd not plant summer flowers and wait:
I'd have my crocuses at once,
My leafless pink mezereons,
   My chill-veined snowdrops, choicer yet
   My white or azure violet,
Leaf-nested primrose; anything
      To blow at once, not late.

If I might see another Spring
   I'd listen to the daylight birds
That build their nests and pair and sing,
Nor wait for mateless nightingale;
   I'd listen to the lusty herds,
   The ewes with lambs as white as snow,
I'd find out music in the hail
      And all the winds that blow.

If I might see another Spring —
   Oh stinging comment on my past
That all my past results in 'if' —
   If I might see another Spring
I'd laugh today, today is brief;
I would not wait for anything:
   I'd use today that cannot last,
      Be glad today and sing.

A PEAL OF BELLS

Strike the bells wantonly,
   Tinkle tinkle well;
Bring me wine, bring me flowers,
   Ring the silver bell.
All my lamps burn scented oil,
   Hung on laden orange-trees,
Whose shadowed foliage is the foil
   To golden lamps and oranges.
Heap my golden plates with fruit,
   Golden fruit, fresh-plucked and ripe;
   Strike the bells and breathe the pipe;
Shut out showers from summer hours —
Silence that complaining lute —
   Shut out thinking, shut out pain,
   From hours that cannot come again.

Strike the bells solemnly,
   Ding dong deep:
My friend is passing to his bed,
   Fast asleep;
There's plaited linen round his head,
   While foremost go his feet —
His feet that cannot carry him.
My feast's a show, my lights are dim;
   Be still, your music is not sweet, —
There is no music more for him:
   His lights are out, his feast is done;
His bowl that sparkled to the brim
Is drained, is broken, cannot hold;
My blood is chill, his blood is cold;
   His death is full, and mine begun.

FATA MORGANA

A blue-eyed phantom far before
   Is laughing, leaping toward the sun:
Like lead I chase it evermore,
      I pant and run.

It breaks the sunlight bound on bound:
   Goes singing as it leaps along
To sheep-bells with a dreamy sound
      A dreamy song.

I laugh, it is so brisk and gay;
   It is so far before, I weep:
I hope I shall lie down some day,
      Lie down and sleep.

NO, THANK YOU, JOHN

I never said I loved you, John:
Why will you tease me day by day,
And wax a weariness to think upon
With always ‘do’ and ‘pray’?

You know I never loved you, John;
No fault of mine made me your toast:
Why will you haunt me with a face as wan
As shows an hour-old ghost?

I dare say Meg or Moll would take
Pity upon you, if you’d ask:
And pray don’t remain single for my sake
Who can’t perform that task.

I have no heart? — Perhaps I have not;
But then you’re mad to take offence
That I don’t give you what I have not got:
Use your own common sense.

Let bygones be bygones:
Don’t call me false, who owed not to be true:
I’d rather answer ‘No’ to fifty Johns
Than answer ‘Yes’ to you.

Let’s mar our pleasant days no more,
Song-birds of passage, days of youth:
Catch at today, forget the days before:
I’ll wink at your untruth.

Let us strike hands as hearty friends;
No more, no less; and friendship's good:
Only don't keep in view ulterior ends,
And points not understood

In open treaty. Rise above
Quibbles and shuffling off and on:
Here's friendship for you if you like; but love, —
No, thank you, John.

MAY: I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW IT WAS

I cannot tell you how it was;
But this I know: it came to pass
Upon a bright and breezy day
When May was young; ah, pleasant May!
As yet the poppies were not born
Between the blades of tender corn;
The last eggs had not hatched as yet,
Nor any bird forgone its mate.

I cannot tell you what it was;
But this I know: it did but pass.
It passed away with sunny May,
With all sweet things it passed away,
And left me old, and cold, and grey.

A PAUSE OF THOUGHT

I looked for that which is not, nor can be,
And hope deferred made my heart sick in truth:
But years must pass before a hope of youth
Is resigned utterly.

I watched and waited with a steadfast will:
And though the object seemed to flee away
That I so longed for, ever day by day
I watched and waited still.

Sometimes I said: This thing shall be no more;
My expectation wearies and shall cease;
I will resign it now and be at peace:
Yet never gave it o'er.

Sometimes I said: It is an empty name
I long for; to a name why should I give
The peace of all the days I have to live? —
Yet gave it all the same.

Alas, thou foolish one! alike unfit
For healthy joy and salutary pain:
Thou knowest the chase useless, and again
Turnest to follow it.

TWILIGHT CALM

Oh, pleasant eventide!
Clouds on the western side
Grow grey and greyer hiding the warm sun:
The bees and birds, their happy labours done,
Seek their close nests and bide.

Screened in the leafy wood
The stock-doves sit and brood:
The very squirrel leaps from bough to bough
But lazily; pauses; and settles now
Where once he stored his food.

One by one the flowers close,
Lily and dewy rose
Shutting their tender petals from the moon:
The grasshoppers are still; but not so soon
Are still the noisy crows.

The dormouse squats and eats
Choice little dainty bits
Beneath the spreading roots of a broad lime;
Nibbling his fill he stops from time to time
And listens where he sits.

From far the lowings come
Of cattle driven home:
From farther still the wind brings fitfully
The vast continual murmur of the sea,
Now loud, now almost dumb.

The gnats whirl in the air,
The evening gnats; and there
The owl opes broad his eyes and wings to sail
For prey; the bat wakes; and the shell-less snail
Comes forth, clammy and bare.

Hark! that's the nightingale,
Telling the selfsame tale
Her song told when this ancient earth was young:
So echoes answered when her song was sung
In the first wooded vale.

We call it love and pain
The passion of her strain;
And yet we little understand or know:
Why should it not be rather joy that so
Throbs in each throbbing vein?

In separate herds the deer
Lie; here the bucks, and here
The does, and by its mother sleeps the fawn:
Through all the hours of night until the dawn
They sleep, forgetting fear.

The hare sleeps where it lies,
With wary half-closed eyes;
The cock has ceased to crow, the hen to cluck:
Only the fox is out, some heedless duck
Or chicken to surprise.

Remote, each single star
Comes out, till there they are
All shining brightly: how the dews fall damp!
While close at hand the glow-worm lights her lamp

Or twinkles from afar.

But evening now is done
As much as if the sun
Day-giving had arisen in the East:
For night has come; and the great calm has ceased,
The quiet sands have run.

WIFE TO HUSBAND

Pardon the faults in me,
For the love of years ago:
Good-bye.
I must drift across the sea,
I must sink into the snow,
I must die.

You can bask in this sun,
You can drink wine, and eat:
Good-bye.
I must gird myself and run,
Though with unready feet:
I must die.

Blank sea to sail upon,
Cold bed to sleep in:
Good-bye.
While you clasp, I must be gone
For all your weeping:
I must die.

A kiss for one friend,
And a word for two, —
Good-bye: —
A lock that you must send,
A kindness you must do:
I must die.

Not a word for you,
Not a lock or kiss,
Good-bye.

We, one, must part in two;
Verily death is this:
I must die.

THREE SEASONS

‘A cup for hope!’ she said,
In springtime ere the bloom was old:
The crimson wine was poor and cold
By her mouth’s richer red.

‘A cup for love!’ how low,
How soft the words; and all the while
Her blush was rippling with a smile
Like summer after snow.

‘A cup for memory!’
Cold cup that one must drain alone:
While autumn winds are up and moan
Across the barren sea.

Hope, memory, love:
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening grey
And solitary dove.

MIRAGE

The hope I dreamed of was a dream,
    Was but a dream; and now I wake,
Exceeding comfortless, and worn, and old,
    For a dream's sake.

I hang my harp upon a tree,
    A weeping willow in a lake;
I hang my silent harp there, wrung and snapt
    For a dream's sake.

Lie still, lie still, my breaking heart;
    My silent heart, lie still and break:
Life, and the world, and mine own self, are changed
    For a dream's sake.

SHUT OUT

The door was shut. I looked between
   Its iron bars; and saw it lie,
   My garden, mine, beneath the sky,
Pied with all flowers bedewed and green:

From bough to bough the song-birds crossed,
   From flower to flower the moths and bees;
   With all its nests and stately trees
It had been mine, and it was lost.

A shadowless spirit kept the gate,
   Blank and unchanging like the grave.
   I peering through said: ‘Let me have
Some buds to cheer my outcast state.’

He answered not. ‘Or give me, then,
   But one small twig from shrub or tree;
   And bid my home remember me
Until I come to it again.’

The spirit was silent; but he took
   Mortar and stone to build a wall;
   He left no loophole great or small
Through which my straining eyes might look:

So now I sit here quite alone
   Blinded with tears; nor grieve for that,
   For nought is left worth looking at
Since my delightful land is gone.

A violet bed is budding near,

Wherein a lark has made her nest:
And good they are, but not the best;
And dear they are, but not so dear.

SOUND SLEEP

Some are laughing, some are weeping;
She is sleeping, only sleeping.
Round her rest wild flowers are creeping;
There the wind is heaping, heaping
Sweetest sweets of Summer's keeping.
By the corn-fields ripe for reaping.

There are lilies, and there blushes
The deep rose, and there the thrushes
Sing till latest sunlight flushes
In the west; a fresh wind brushes
Through the leaves while evening hushes.

There by day the lark is singing
And the grass and weeds are springing;
There by night the bat is winging;
There forever winds are bringing
Far-off chimes of church-bells ringing.

Night and morning, noon and even,
Their sound fills her dreams with Heaven:
The long strife at lent is striven:
Till her grave-bands shall be riven
Such is the good portion given
To her soul at rest and shriven.

SONG: SHE SAT AND SANG ALWAY

She sat and sang alway
   By the green margin of a stream,
Watching the fishes leap and play
   Beneath the glad sunbeam.

I sat and wept alway
   Beneath the moon's most shadowy beam,
Watching the blossoms of the May
   Weep leaves into the stream.

I wept for memory;
   She sang for hope that is so fair:
My tears were swallowed by the sea;
   Her songs died on the air.

SONG: WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST

When I am dead, my dearest,
   Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
   Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
   With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
   And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
   I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
   Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight
   That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
   And haply may forget.

DEAD BEFORE DEATH

Sonnet

Ah! changed and cold, how changed and very cold,
With stiffened smiling lips and cold calm eyes:
Changed, yet the same; much knowing, little wise;
This was the promise of the days of old!
Grown hard and stubborn in the ancient mould,
Grown rigid in the sham of lifelong lies:
We hoped for better things as years would rise,
But it is over as a tale once told.
All fallen the blossom that no fruitage bore,
All lost the present and the future time,
All lost, all lost, the lapse that went before:
So lost till death shut-to the opened door,
So lost from chime to everlasting chime,
So cold and lost forever evermore.

BITTER FOR SWEET

Summer is gone with all its roses,
Its sun and perfumes and sweet flowers,
Its warm air and refreshing showers:
And even Autumn closes.

Yea, Autumn's chilly self is going,
And winter comes which is yet colder;
Each day the hoar-frost waxes bolder,
And the last buds cease blowing.

SISTER MAUDE

Who told my mother of my shame,
   Who told my father of my dear?
Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,
   Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,
   With his clotted curls about his face:
The comeliest corpse in all the world
   And worthy of a queen's embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,
   Have spared my soul, your own soul too:
Though I had not been born at all,
   He'd never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,
   My mother at Heaven-gate:
But sister Maude shall get no sleep
   Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden gown,
   My mother a crown may win;
If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate
   Perhaps they'd let us in:
But sister Maude, oh sister Maude,
   Bide *you* with death and sin.

REST

O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
   Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
   Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
   Hushed in and curtained with a blessèd dearth
   Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noon-day holdeth her,
   Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
   And when she wakes she will not think it long.

THE FIRST SPRING DAY

I wonder if the sap is stirring yet,
If wintry birds are dreaming of a mate,
If frozen snowdrops feel as yet the sun
And crocus fires are kindling one by one:
    Sing, robin, sing;
I still am sore in doubt concerning Spring.

I wonder if the springtide of this year
Will bring another Spring both lost and dear;
If heart and spirit will find out their Spring,
Or if the world alone will bud and sing:
    Sing, hope, to me;
Sweet notes, my hope, soft notes for memory.

The sap will surely quicken soon or late,
The tardiest bird will twitter to a mate;
So Spring must dawn again with warmth and bloom,
Or in this world, or in the world to come:
    Sing, voice of Spring,
Till I too blossom and rejoice and sing.

THE CONVENT THRESHOLD

There's blood between us, love, my love,
There's father's blood, there's brother's blood;
And blood's a bar I cannot pass:
I choose the stairs that mount above,
Stair after golden skyward stair,
To city and to sea of glass.
My lily feet are soiled with mud,
With scarlet mud which tells a tale
Of hope that was, of guilt that was,
Of love that shall not yet avail;
Alas, my heart, if I could bare
My heart, this selfsame stain is there:
I seek the sea of glass and fire
To wash the spot, to burn the snare;
Lo, stairs are meant to lift us higher:
Mount with me, mount the kindled stair.

Your eyes look earthward, mine look up.
I see the far-off city grand,
Beyond the hills a watered land,
Beyond the gulf a gleaming strand
Of mansions where the righteous sup;
Who sleep at ease among their trees,
Or wake to sing a cadenced hymn
With Cherubim and Seraphim;
They bore the Cross, they drained the cup,
Racked, roasted, crushed, wrenched limb from limb,
They the offscouring of the world:
The heaven of starry heavens unfurled,
The sun before their face is dim.

You looking earthward what see you?
Milk-white wine-flushed among the vines,

Up and down leaping, to and fro,
Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,
Blooming as peaches pearled with dew,
Their golden windy hair afloat,
Love-music warbling in their throat,
Young men and women come and go.

You linger, yet the time is short:
Flee for your life, gird up your strength
To flee; the shadows stretched at length
Show that day wanes, that night draws nigh;
Flee to the mountain, tarry not.
Is this a time for smile and sigh,
For songs among the secret trees
Where sudden blue birds nest and sport?
The time is short and yet you stay:
Today while it is called today
Kneel, wrestle, knock, do violence, pray;
Today is short, tomorrow nigh:
Why will you die? why will you die?

You sinned with me a pleasant sin:
Repent with me, for I repent.
Woe's me the lore I must unlearn!
Woe's me that easy way we went,
So rugged when I would return!
How long until my sleep begin,
How long shall stretch these nights and days?
Surely, clean Angels cry, she prays;
She laves her soul with tedious tears:
How long must stretch these years and years?

I turn from you my cheeks and eyes,
My hair which you shall see no more —
Alas for joy that went before,
For joy that dies, for love that dies.
Only my lips still turn to you,

My livid lips that cry, Repent.
Oh weary life, oh weary Lent,
Oh weary time whose stars are few.

How should I rest in Paradise,
Or sit on steps of heaven alone?
If Saints and Angels spoke of love
Should I not answer from my throne:
Have pity upon me, ye my friends,
For I have heard the sound thereof:
Should I not turn with yearning eyes,
Turn earthwards with a pitiful pang?
Oh save me from a pang in heaven.
By all the gifts we took and gave,
Repent, repent, and be forgiven:
This life is long, but yet it ends;
Repent and purge your soul and save:
No gladder song the morning stars
Upon their birthday morning sang
Than Angels sing when one repents.

I tell you what I dreamed last night:
A spirit with transfigured face
Fire-footed clomb an infinite space.
I heard his hundred pinions clang,
Heaven-bells rejoicing rang and rang,
Heaven-air was thrilled with subtle scents,
Worlds spun upon their rushing cars:
He mounted shrieking: ‘Give me light.’
Still light was poured on him, more light;
Angels, Archangels he outstripped
Exultant in exceeding might,
And trod the skirts of Cherubim.
Still ‘Give me light,’ he shrieked; and dipped
His thirsty face, and drank a sea,
Athirst with thirst it could not slake.
I saw him, drunk with knowledge, take

From aching brows the aureole crown —
His locks writhed like a cloven snake —
He left his throne to grovel down
And lick the dust of Seraphs' feet:
For what is knowledge duly weighed?
Knowledge is strong, but love is sweet;
Yea all the progress he had made
Was but to learn that all is small
Save love, for love is all in all.

I tell you what I dreamed last night:
It was not dark, it was not light,
Cold dews had drenched my plenteous hair
Through clay; you came to seek me there.
And 'Do you dream of me?' you said.
My heart was dust that used to leap
To you; I answered half asleep:
'My pillow is damp, my sheets are red,
There's a leaden tester to my bed:
Find you a warmer playfellow,
A warmer pillow for your head,
A kinder love to love than mine.'
You wrung your hands; while I like lead
Crushed downwards through the sodden earth:
You smote your hands but not in mirth,
And reeled but were not drunk with wine.

For all night long I dreamed of you:
I woke and prayed against my will,
Then slept to dream of you again.
At length I rose and knelt and prayed:
I cannot write the words I said,
My words were slow, my tears were few;
But through the dark my silence spoke
Like thunder. When this morning broke,
My face was pinched, my hair was grey,
And frozen blood was on the sill

Where stifling in my struggle I lay.

If now you saw me you would say:
Where is the face I used to love?
And I would answer: Gone before;
It tarries veiled in paradise.
When once the morning star shall rise,
When earth with shadow flees away
And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up: for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set;
There we shall meet as once we met
And love with old familiar love.

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
   Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
   From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
   A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
   You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
   Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
   They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
   Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
   Yea, beds for all who come.

THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS AND OTHER POEMS

Published in 1866, this poetry collection was also illustrated by the poet's brother Dante Gabriel, and the title poem is considered to be one of Rossetti's most accomplished works. *The Prince's Progress* is a long narrative poem that forms a sequel to *Goblin Market* and also concerns the theme of false expectations of love. The poem deals with philosophical issues related to betrayal in love, somewhat more mature in approach than in the previous collection. On its surface level the poem depicts a deserving Princess bride, who is betrayed by an inadequately devoted lover. Yet, as in the majority of Rossetti's love poems, mutability lingers in the background of the narrative, impelling the characters' reactions to their circumstances and preventing the fulfilment of love.

The first edition

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'Dante Gabriel Rossetti' by George Frederic Watts, 1871

THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS

Till all sweet gums and juices flow,
Till the blossom of blossoms blow,
The long hours go and come and go,
   The bride she sleepeth, waketh, sleepeth,
Waiting for one whose coming is slow: —
      Hark! the bride weepeth.

'How long shall I wait, come heat come rime?' —
'Till the strong Prince comes, who must come in time'
(Her women say), 'there's a mountain to climb,
   A river to ford. Sleep, dream and sleep;
Sleep' (they say): 'we've muffled the chime,
      Better dream than weep.'

In his world-end palace the strong Prince sat,
Taking his ease on cushion and mat,
Close at hand lay his staff and his hat.
   'When wilt thou start? the bride waits, O youth.' —
'Now the moon's at full; I tarried for that,
      Now I start in truth.

'But tell me first, true voice of my doom,
Of my veiled bride in her maiden bloom;
Keeps she watch through glare and through gloom,
   Watch for me asleep and awake?' —
'Spell-bound she watches in one white room,
      And is patient for thy sake.

'By her head lilies and rosebuds grow;
The lilies droop, will the rosebuds blow?
The silver slim lilies hang the head low;
   Their stream is scanty, their sunshine rare:

Let the sun blaze out, and let the stream flow,
They will blossom and wax fair.

‘Red and white poppies grow at her feet,
The blood-red wait for sweet summer heat,
Wrapped in bud-coats hairy and neat;
But the white buds swell, one day they will burst,
Will open their death-cups drowsy and sweet —
Which will open the first?’

Then a hundred sad voices lifted a wail,
And a hundred glad voices piped on the gale:
‘Time is short, life is short,’ they took up the tale:
‘Life is sweet, love is sweet, use today while you may;
Love is sweet, and tomorrow may fail;
Love is sweet, use today.’

While the song swept by, beseeching and meek,
Up rose the Prince with a flush on his cheek,
Up he rose to stir and to seek,
Going forth in the joy of his strength;
Strong of limb if of purpose weak,
Starting at length.

Forth he set in the breezy morn,
Crossing green fields of nodding corn,
As goodly a Prince as ever was born;
Caroling with the caroling lark; —
Sure his bride will be won and worn,
Ere fall of the dark.

So light his step, so merry his smile,
A milkmaid loitered beside a stile,
Set down her pail and rested awhile,
A wave-haired milkmaid, rosy and white;
The Prince, who had journeyed at least a mile,

Grew athirst at the sight.

‘Will you give me a morning draught?’ —
‘You’re kindly welcome,’ she said, and laughed.
He lifted the pail, new milk he quaffed;
Then wiping his curly black beard like silk:
‘Whitest cow that ever was calved
Surely gave you this milk.’

Was it milk now, or was it cream?
Was she a maid, or an evil dream?
Here eyes began to glitter and gleam;
He would have gone, but he stayed instead;
Green they gleamed as he looked in them:
‘Give me my fee,’ she said. —

‘I will give you a jewel of gold.’ —
‘Not so; gold is heavy and cold.’ —
‘I will give you a velvet fold
Of foreign work your beauty to deck.’ —
‘Better I like my kerchief rolled
Light and white round my neck.’ —

‘Nay,’ cried he, ‘but fix your own fee.’ —
She laughed, ‘You may give the full moon to me;
Or else sit under this apple-tree
Here for one idle day by my side;
After that I’ll let you go free,
And the world is wide.’

Loth to stay, but to leave her slack,
He half turned away, then he quite turned back:
For courtesy’s sake he could not lack
To redeem his own royal pledge;
Ahead too the windy heaven lowered black
With a fire-cloven edge.

So he stretched his length in the apple-tree shade,
Lay and laughed and talked to the maid,
Who twisted her hair in a cunning braid
   And writhed it shining in serpent-coils,
And held him a day and night fast laid
      In her subtle toils.

At the death of night and the birth of day,
When the owl left off his sober play,
And the bat hung himself out of the way,
   Woke the song of mavis and merle,
And heaven put off its hodden grey
      For mother-o'-pearl.

Peeped up daisies here and there,
Here, there, and everywhere;
Rose a hopeful lark in the air,
   Spreading out towards the sun his breast;
While the moon set solemn and fair
      Away in the West.

'Up, up, up,' called the watchman lark,
In his clear réveillée: 'Hearken, oh hark!
Press to the high goal, fly to the mark.
   Up, O sluggard, new morn is born;
If still asleep when the night falls dark,
      Thou must wait a second morn.'

'Up, up, up,' sad glad voices swelled:
'So the tree falls and lies as it's felled.
Be thy bands loosed, O sleeper, long held
   In sweet sleep whose end is not sweet.
Be the slackness girt and the softness quelled
      And the slowness fleet.'

Off he set. The grass grew rare,

A blight lurked in the darkening air,
The very moss grew hueless and spare,
   The last daisy stood all astunt;
Behind his back the soil lay bare,
      But barer in front.

A land of chasm and rent, a land
Of rugged blackness on either hand:
If water trickled its track was tanned
   With an edge of rust to the chink;
If one stamped on stone or on sand
      It returned a clink.

A lifeless land, a loveless land,
Without lair or nest on either hand:
Only scorpions jerked in the sand,
   Black as black iron, or dusty pale;
From point to point sheer rock was manned
      By scorpions in mail.

A land of neither life nor death,
Where no man buildeth or fashioneth,
Where none draws living or dying breath;
   No man cometh or goeth there,
No man doeth, seeketh, saith,
      In the stagnant air.

Some old volcanic upset must
Have rent the crust and blackened the crust;
Wrenched and ribbed it beneath its dust
   Above earth's molten centre at seethe,
Heaved and heaped it by huge upthrust
      Of fire beneath.

Untrodden before, untrodden since:

Tedious land for a social Prince;
Halting, he scanned the outs and ins,
   Endless, labyrinthine, grim,
Of the solitude that made him wince,
      Laying wait for him.

By bulging rock and gaping cleft,
Even of half mere daylight reft,
Rueful he peered to right and left,
   Muttering in his altered mood:
'The fate is hard that weaves my weft,
      Though my lot be good.'

Dim the changes of day to night,
Of night scarce dark to day not bright.
Still his road wound towards the right,
   Still he went, and still he went,
Till one night he espied a light,
      In his discontent.

Out it flashed from a yawn-mouthed cave,
Like a red-hot eye from a grave.
No man stood there of whom to crave
   Rest for wayfarer plodding by:
Though the tenant were churl or knave
      The Prince might try.

In he passed and tarried not,
Groping his way from spot to spot,
Towards where the cavern flare glowed hot: —
   An old, old mortal, cramped and double,
Was peering into a seething-pot,
      In a world of trouble.

The veriest atomy he looked,

With grimy fingers clutching and crooked,
Tight skin, a nose all bony and hooked,
   And a shaking, sharp, suspicious way;
His blinking eyes had scarcely brooked
      The light of day.

Stared the Prince, for the sight was new;
Stared, but asked without more ado:
'My a weary traveller lodge with you,
   Old father, here in your lair?
In your country the inns seem few,
      And scanty the fare.'

The head turned not to hear him speak;
The old voice whistled as through a leak
(Out it came in a quavering squeak):
   'Work for wage is a bargain fit:
If there's aught of mine that you seek
      You must work for it.

'Buried alive from light and air
This year is the hundredth year,
I feed my fire with a sleepless care,
   Watching my potion wane or wax:
Elixir of Life is simmering there,
      And but one thing lacks.

'If you're fain to lodge here with me,
Take that pair of bellows you see —
Too heavy for my old hands they be —
   Take the bellows and puff and puff:
When the steam curls rosy and free
      The broth's boiled enough.

'Then take your choice of all I have;
I will give you life if you crave.

Already I'm mildewed for the grave,
So first myself I must drink my fill:
But all the rest may be yours, to save
Whomever you will.'

'Done,' quoth the Prince, and the bargain stood,
First he piled on resinous wood,
Next plied the bellows in hopeful mood;
Thinking, 'My love and I will live.
If I tarry, why life is good,
And she may forgive.'

The pot began to bubble and boil;
The old man cast in essence and oil,
He stirred all up with a triple coil
Of gold and silver and iron wire,
Dredged in a pinch of virgin soil,
And fed the fire.

But still the steam curled watery white;
Night turned to day and day to night;
One thing lacked, by his feeble sight
Unseen, unguessed by his feeble mind:
Life might miss him, but Death the blight
Was sure to find.

So when the hundredth year was full
The thread was cut and finished the school.
Death snapped the old worn-out tool,
Snapped him short while he stood and stirred
(Though stiff he stood as a stiff-necked mule)
With never a word.

Thus at length the old crab was nipped.
The dead hand slipped, the dead finger dipped

In the broth as the dead man slipped, —
    That same instant, a rosy red
Flushed the steam, and quivered and clipped
        Round the dead old head.

The last ingredient was supplied
(Unless the dead man mistook or lied).
Up started the Prince, he cast aside
    The bellows plied through the tedious trial,
Made sure that his host had died,
        And filled a phial.

‘One night’s rest,’ though the Prince: ‘This done,
Forth I start with the rising sun:
With the morrow I rise and run,
    Come what will of wind or of weather.
This draught of Life when my Bride is won
        We’ll drink together.’

Thus the dead man stayed in his grave,
Self-chosen, the dead man in his cave;
There he stayed, were he fool or knave,
    Or honest seeker who had not found:
While the Prince outside was prompt to crave
        Sleep on the ground.

‘If she watches, go bid her sleep;
Bit her sleep, for the road is steep:
He can sleep who holdeth her cheap,
    Sleep and wake and sleep again.
Let him sow, one day he shall reap,
        Let him sow the grain.

‘When there blows a sweet garden rose,
Let it bloom and wither if no man knows:
But if one knows when the sweet thing blows,

Knows, and lets it open and drop,
If but a nettle his garden grows
He hath earned the crop.'

Through his sleep the summons rang,
Into his ears it sobbed and it sang.
Slow he woke with a drowsy pang,
Shook himself without much debate,
Turned where he saw green branches hang,
Started though late.

For the black land was travelled o'er,
He should see the grim land no more.
A flowering country stretched before
His face when the lovely day came back:
He hugged the phial of Life he bore,
And resumed his track.

By willow courses he took his path,
Spied what a nest the kingfisher hath,
Marked the fields green to aftermath,
Marked where the red-brown field-mouse ran,
Loitered a while for a deep-stream bath,
Yawned for a fellow-man.

Up on the hills not a soul in view,
In a vale not many nor few;
Leaves, still leaves, and nothing new.
It's oh for a second maiden, at least,
To bear the flagon, and taste it too,
And flavour the feast.

Lagging he moved, and apt to swerve;
Lazy of limb, but quick of nerve.
At length the water-bed took a curve,

The deep river swept its bankside bare;
Waters streamed from the hill-reserve —
Waters here, waters there.

High above, and deep below,
Bursting, bubbling, swelling the flow,
Like hill torrents after the snow, —
Bubbling, gurgling, in whirling strife,0
Swaying, sweeping, to and fro, —
He must swim for his life.

Which way? — which way? — his eyes grew dim
With the dizzying whirl — which way to swim?
The thunderous downshoot deafened him;
Half he choked in the lashing spray:
Life is sweet, and the grave is grim —
Which way? — which way?

A flash of light, a shout from the strand:
'This way — this way; here lies the land!'
His phial clutched in one drowning hand;
He catches — misses — catches a rope;
His feet slip on the slipping sand:
Is there life? — is there hope?

Just saved, without pulse or breath, —
Scarcely saved from the gulp of death;
Laid where a willow shadoweth —
Laid where a swelling turf is smooth.
(O Bride! but the Bridegroom lingereth
For all thy sweet youth.)

Kind hands do and undo,
Kind voices whisper and coo:
'I will chafe his hands' — 'And I' — 'And you
Raise his head, put his hair aside.'

(If many laugh, one well may rue:
Sleep on, thou Bride.)

So the Prince was tended with care:
One wrung foul ooze from his clustered hair;
Two chafed his hands, and did not spare;
But one held his drooping head breast-high,0
Till his eyes oped, and at unaware
They met eye to eye.

Oh, a moon face in a shadowy place,
And a light touch and a winsome grace,
And a thrilling tender voice that says:
'Safe from waters that seek the sea —
Cold waters by rugged ways —
Safe with me.'

While overhead bird whistles to bird,
And round about plays a gamesome herd:
'Safe with us' — some take up the word —
'Safe with us, dear lord and friend:
All the sweeter if long deferred
Is rest in the end.'

Had he stayed to weigh and to scan,
He had been more or less than a man:
He did what a young man can,
Spoke of toil and an arduous way —
Toil tomorrow, while golden ran
The sands of today.

Slip past, slip fast,
Uncounted hours from first to last,
Many hours till the last is past,
Many hours dwindling to one —
One hour whose die is cast,

One last hour gone.

Come, gone — gone forever —
Gone as an unreturning river —
Gone as to death the merriest liver —
Gone as the year at the dying fall —
Tomorrow, today, yesterday, never —
Gone once for all.

Came at length the starting-day,
With last words, and last words to say,
With bodiless cries from far away —
Chiding wailing voices that rang
Like a trumpet-call to the tug and fray;
And thus they sang:

‘Is there life? — the lamp burns low;
Is there hope? — the coming is slow:
The promise promised so long ago,
The long promise, has not been kept.
Does she live? — does she die? — she slumbers so
Who so oft has wept.

‘Does she live? — does she die? — she languisheth
As a lily drooping to death,
As a drought-worn bird with failing breath,
As a lovely vine without a stay,
As a tree whereof the owner saith,
“Hew it down today.”‘

Stung by that word the Prince was fain
To start on his tedious road again.
He crossed the stream where a ford was plain,
He clomb the opposite bank though steep,
And swore to himself to strain and attain
Ere he tasted sleep.

Huge before him a mountain frowned
With foot of rock on the valley ground,
And head with snows incessant crowned,
   And a cloud mantle about its strength,
And a path which the wild goat hath not found
      In its breadth and length.

But he was strong to do and dare:
If a host had withstood him there,
He had braved a host with little care
   In his lusty youth and his pride,
Tough to grapple though weak to snare.
      He comes, O Bride.

Up he went where the goat scarce clings,
Up where the eagle folds her wings,
Past the green line of living things,
   Where the sun cannot warm the cold, —
Up he went as a flame enrings
      Where there seems no hold.

Up a fissure barren and black,
Till the eagles tired upon his track,
And the clouds were left behind his back,
   Up till the utmost peak was past,
Then he gasped for breath and his strength fell slack;
      He paused at last.

Before his face a valley spread
Where fatness laughed, wine, oil, and bread,
Where all fruit-trees their sweetness shed,
   Where all birds made love to their kind,
Where jewels twinkled, and gold lay red

And not hard to find.

Midway down the mountain side
(On its green slope the path was wide)
Stood a house for a royal bride,
Built all of changing opal stone,
The royal palace, till now descried
In his dreams alone.

Less bold than in days of yore,
Doubting now though never before,
Doubting he goes and lags the more:
Is the time late? does the day grow dim?
Rose, will she open the crimson core
Of her heart to him?

Take heart of grace! the potion of Life
May go far to woo him a wife:
If she frown, yet a lover's strife
Lightly raised can be laid again:
A hasty word is never the knife
To cut love in twain.

Far away stretched the royal land,
Fed by dew, by a spice-wind fanned:
Light labour more, and his foot would stand
On the threshold, all labour done;
Easy pleasure laid at his hand,
And the dear Bride won.

His slackening steps pause at the gate —
Does she wake or sleep? — the time is late —
Does she sleep now, or watch and wait?
She has watched, she has waited long,
Watching athwart the golden grate

With a patient song.

Fling the golden portals wide,
The Bridegroom comes to his promised Bride;
Draw the gold-stiff curtains aside,
Let them look on each other's face,
She in her meekness, he in his pride —
Day wears apace.

Day is over, the day that wore.
What is this that comes through the door,
The face covered, the feet before?
This that coming takes his breath;
The Bride not seen, to be seen no more
Save of Bridegroom Death?

Veiled figures carrying her
Sweep by yet make no stir;
There is a smell of spice and myrrh,
A bride-chant burdened with one name;
The bride-song rises steadier
Than the torches' flame:

'Too late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

‘Ten years ago, five years ago,
   One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
   Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
   Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
   The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
   To melt the snow.

‘Is she fair now as she lies?
   Once she was fair;
Meet queen for any kingly king,
   With gold-dust on her hair.
Now these are poppies in her locks,
   White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
   And the want graven there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
   Cast off the care?

‘We never saw her with a smile
   Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
   Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
   Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
   Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
   That used to be so brown.

‘We never heard her speak in haste;
   Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
   As it was meet:

Her heart sat silent through the noise
    And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
    No hurry in her feet;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
    That she might run to greet.

You should have wept her yesterday

‘You should have wept her yesterday,
    Wasting upon her bed:
But wherefore should you weep today
    That she is dead?
Lo, we who love weep not today,
    But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
    Your roses are too red:
Let be these poppies, not for you
    Cut down and spread.’

MAIDEN-SONG

Long ago and long ago,
   And long ago still,
There dwelt three merry maidens
   Upon a distant hill.
One was tall Meggan,
   And one was dainty May,
But one was fair Margaret,
   More fair than I can say,
Long ago and long ago.

When Meggan plucked the thorny rose,
   And when May pulled the brier,
Half the birds would swoop to see,
   Half the beasts draw nigher;
Half the fishes of the streams
   Would dart up to admire:
But when Margaret plucked a flag-flower,
   Or poppy hot aflame,
All the beasts and all the birds
   And all the fishes came
To her hand more soft than snow.

Strawberry leaves and May-dew
   In brisk morning air,
Strawberry leaves and May-dew
   Make maidens fair.
'I go for strawberry leaves,'
   Meggan said one day:
'Fair Margaret can bide at home,
   But you come with me, May;
Up the hill and down the hill,
   Along the winding way
You and I are used to go.'

So these two fair sisters
   Went with innocent will
Up the hill and down again,
   And round the homestead hill:
While the fairest sat at home,
   Margaret like a queen,
Like a blush-rose, like the moon
   In her heavenly sheen,
Fragrant-breathed as milky cow
   Or field of blossoming bean,
Graceful as an ivy bough
   Born to cling and lean;
Thus she sat to sing and sew.

When she raised her lustrous eyes
   A beast peeped at the door;
When she downward cast her eyes
   A fish gasped on the floor;
When she turned away her eyes
   A bird perched on the sill,
Warbling out its heart of love,
   Warbling warbling still,
With pathetic pleadings low.

Light-foot May with Meggan
   Sought the choicest spot,
Clothed with thyme-alternate grass:
   Then, while day waxed hot,
Sat at ease to play and rest,
   A gracious rest and play;
The loveliest maidens near or far,
   When Margaret was away,
Who sat at home to sing and sew.

Sun-glow flushed their comely cheeks,
   Wind-play tossed their hair,
Creeping things among the grass
   Stroked them here and there;
Meggan piped a merry note,
   A fitful wayward lay,
While shrill as bird on topmost twig
   Piped merry May;
Honey-smooth the double flow.

Sped a herdsman from the vale,
   Mounting like a flame,
All on fire to hear and see,
   With floating locks he came.
Looked neither north nor south,
   Neither east nor west,
But sat him down at Meggan's feet
   As love-bird on his nest,
And wooed her with a silent awe,
   With trouble not expressed;
She sang the tears into his eyes,
   The heart out of his breast:
So he loved her, listening so.

She sang the heart out of his breast,
   The words out of his tongue;
Hand and foot and pulse he paused
   Till her song was sung.
Then he spoke up from his place
   Simple words and true:
'Scanty goods have I to give,
   Scanty skill to woo;
But I have a will to work,
   And a heart for you:
Bid me stay or bid me go.'

Then Meggan mused within herself:

‘Better be first with him,
Than dwell where fairer Margaret sits,
Who shines my brightness dim,
For ever second where she sits,
However fair I be:
I will be lady of his love,
And he shall worship me;
I will be lady of his herds
And stoop to his degree,
At home where kids and fatlings grow.’

Sped a shepherd from the height
Headlong down to look,
(White lambs followed, lured by love
Of their shepherd’s crook):
He turned neither east nor west,
Neither north nor south,
But knelt right down to May, for love
Of her sweet-singing mouth;
Forgot his flocks, his panting flocks
In parching hill-side drouth;
Forgot himself for weal or woe.

Trilled her song and swelled her song
With maiden coy caprice
In a labyrinth of throbs,
Pauses, cadences;
Clear-noted as a dropping brook,
Soft-noted like the bees,
Wild-noted as the shivering wind
Forlorn through forest trees:
Love-noted like the wood-pigeon
Who hides herself for love,
Yet cannot keep her secret safe,
But coos and coos thereof:
Thus the notes rang loud or low.

He hung breathless on her breath;
   Speechless, who listened well;
Could not speak or think or wish
   Till silence broke the spell.
Then he spoke, and spread his hands,
   Pointing here and there:
‘See my sheep and see the lambs,
   Twin lambs which they bare.
All myself I offer you,
   All my flocks and care,
Your sweet song hath moved me so.’

In her fluttered heart young May
   Mused a dubious while:
‘If he loves me as he says’ —
   Her lips curved with a smile:
‘Where Margaret shines like the sun
   I shine but like a moon;
If sister Meggan makes her choice
   I can make mine as soon;
At cockcrow we were sister-maids,
   We may be brides at noon.’
Said Meggan, ‘Yes;’ May said not ‘No.’

Fair Margaret stayed alone at home,
   Awhile she sang her song,
Awhile sat silent, then she thought:
   ‘My sisters loiter long.’
That sultry noon had waned away,
   Shadows had waxen great:
‘Surely,’ she thought within herself,
   ‘My sisters loiter late.’
She rose, and peered out at the door,
   With patient heart to wait,
And heard a distant nightingale
   Complaining of its mate;
Then down the garden slope she walked,
   Down to the garden gate,

Leaned on the rail and waited so.

The slope was lightened by her eyes
   Like summer lightning fair,
Like rising of the haloed moon
   Lightened her glimmering hair,
While her face lightened like the sun
   Whose dawn is rosy white.
Thus crowned with maiden majesty
   She peered into the night,
Looked up the hill and down the hill,
   To left hand and to right,
Flashing like fire-flies to and fro.

Waiting thus in weariness
   She marked the nightingale
Telling, if any one would heed,
   Its old complaining tale.
Then lifted she her voice and sang,
   Answering the bird:
Then lifted she her voice and sang,
   Such notes were never heard
From any bird when Spring's in blow.

The king of all that country
   Coursing far, coursing near,
Curbed his amber-bitted steed,
   Coursed amain to hear;
All his princes in his train,
   Squire, and knight, and peer,
With his crown upon his head,
   His sceptre in his hand,
Down he fell at Margaret's knees
   Lord king of all that land,
To her highness bending low.

Every beast and bird and fish
   Came mustering to the sound,
Every man and every maid
   From miles of country round:
Meggan on her herdsman's arm,
   With her shepherd May,
Flocks and herds trooped at their heels
   Along the hill-side way;
No foot too feeble for the ascent,
   Not any head too grey;
Some were swift and none were slow.

So Margaret sang her sisters home
   In their marriage mirth;
Sang free birds out of the sky,
   Beasts along the earth,
Sang up fishes of the deep —
   All breathing things that move
Sang from far and sang from near
   To her lovely love;
Sang together friend and foe;

Sang a golden-bearded king
   Straightway to her feet,
Sang him silent where he knelt
   In eager anguish sweet.
But when the clear voice died away,
   When longest echoes died,
He stood up like a royal man
   And claimed her for his bride.
So three maids were wooed and won
   In a brief May-tide,
Long ago and long ago.

JESSIE CAMERON

‘Jessie, Jessie Cameron,
   Hear me but this once,’ quoth he.
‘Good luck go with you, neighbor’s son,
   But I’m no mate for you,’ quoth she.
Day was verging toward the night
   There beside the moaning sea,
Dimness overtook the light
   There where the breakers be.
‘O Jessie, Jessie Cameron,
   I have loved you long and true.’ —
‘Good luck go with you, neighbor’s son,
   But I’m no mate for you.’

She was a careless, fearless girl,
   And made her answer plain,
Outspoken she to earl or churl,
   Kindhearted in the main,
But somewhat heedless with her tongue,
   And apt at causing pain;
A mirthful maiden she and young,
   Most fair for bliss or bane.
‘Oh, long ago I told you so,
   I tell you so today:
Go you your way, and let me go
   Just my own free way.’

The sea swept in with moan and foam,
   Quickening the stretch of sand;
They stood almost in sight of home;
   He strove to take her hand.
‘Oh, can’t you take your answer then,
   And won’t you understand?
For me you’re not the man of men,

I've other plans are planned.
You're good for Madge, or good for Cis,
Or good for Kate, may be:
But what's to me the good of this
While you're not good for me?'

They stood together on the beach,
They two alone,
And louder waxed his urgent speech,
His patience almost gone:
'Oh, say but one kind word to me,
Jessie, Jessie Cameron.' —
'I'd be too proud to beg,' quoth she,
And pride was in her tone.
And pride was in her lifted head,
And in her angry eye
And in her foot, which might have fled,
But would not fly.

Some say that he had gipsy blood;
That in his heart was guile:
Yet he had gone through fire and flood
Only to win her smile.
Some say his grandam was a witch,
A black witch from beyond the Nile,
Who kept an image in a niche
And talked with it the while.
And by her hut far down the lane
Some say they would not pass at night,
Lest they should hear an unked strain
Or see an unked sight.

Alas, for Jessie Cameron! —
The sea crept moaning, moaning nigher:
She should have hastened to begone, —
The sea swept higher, breaking by her:
She should have hastened to her home

While yet the west was flushed with fire,
But now her feet are in the foam,
The sea-foam, sweeping higher.
O mother, linger at your door,
And light your lamp to make it plain,
But Jessie she comes home no more,
No more again.

They stood together on the strand,
They only, each by each;
Home, her home, was close at hand,
Utterly out of reach.
Her mother in the chimney nook
Heard a startled sea-gull screech,
But never turned her head to look
Towards the darkening beach:
Neighbours here and neighbours there
Heard one scream, as if a bird
Shrilly screaming cleft the air: —
That was all they heard.

Jessie she comes home no more,
Comes home never;
Her lover's step sounds at his door
No more forever.
And boats may search upon the sea
And search along the river,
But none know where the bodies be:
Sea-winds that shiver,
Sea-birds that breast the blast,
Sea-waves swelling,
Keep the secret first and last
Of their dwelling.

Whether the tide so hemmed them round
With its pitiless flow,

That when they would have gone they found
   No way to go;
Whether she scorned him to the last
   With words flung to and fro,
Or clung to him when hope was past,
   None will ever know:
Whether he helped or hindered her,
   Threw up his life or lost it well,
The troubled sea, for all its stir
   Finds no voice to tell.

Only watchers by the dying
   Have thought they heard one pray
Wordless, urgent; and replying
   One seem to say him nay:
And watchers by the dead have heard
   A windy swell from miles away,
With sobs and screams, but not a word
   Distinct for them to say:
And watchers out at sea have caught
   Glimpse of a pale gleam here or there,
Come and gone as quick as thought,
   Which might be hand or hair.

SPRING QUIET

Gone were but the Winter,
   Come were but the Spring,
I would go to a covert
   Where the birds sing;

Where in the whitethorn
   Singeth a thrush,
And a robin sings
   In the holly-bush.

Full of fresh scents
   Are the budding boughs
Arching high over
   A cool green house:

Full of sweet scents,
   And whispering air
Which sayeth softly:
   ‘We spread no snare;

‘Here dwell in safety,
   Here dwell alone,
With a clear stream
   And a mossy stone.

‘Here the sun shineth
   Most shadily;
Here is heard an echo
   Of the far sea,
   Though far off it be.’

THE POOR GHOST

‘Oh whence do you come, my dear friend, to me,
With your golden hair all fallen below your knee,
And your face as white as snowdrops on the lea,
And your voice as hollow as the hollow sea?’

‘From the other world I come back to you,
My locks are uncurled with dripping drenching dew.
You know the old, whilst I know the new:
But tomorrow you shall know this too.’

‘Oh not tomorrow into the dark, I pray;
Oh not tomorrow, too soon to go away:
Here I feel warm and well-content and gay:
Give me another year, another day.’

‘Am I so changed in a day and a night
That mine own only love shrinks from me with fright,
Is fain to turn away to left or right
And cover up his eyes from the sight?’

‘Indeed I loved you, my chosen friend,
I loved you for life, but life has an end;
Through sickness I was ready to tend:
But death mars all, which we cannot mend.

‘Indeed I loved you; I love you yet,
If you will stay where your bed is set,
Where I have planted a violet,
Which the wind waves, which the dew makes wet.’

‘Life is gone, then love too is gone,
It was a reed that I leant upon:

Never doubt I will leave you alone
And not wake you rattling bone with bone.

‘I go home alone to my bed,
Dug deep at the foot and deep at the head,
Roofed in with a load of lead,
Warm enough for the forgotten dead.

‘But why did your tears soak through the clay,
And why did your sobs wake me where I lay?
I was away, far enough away:
Let me sleep now till the Judgment Day.’

A PORTRAIT

I

She gave up beauty in her tender youth,
   Gave all her hope and joy and pleasant ways;
   She covered up her eyes lest they should gaze
On vanity, and chose the bitter truth.
Harsh towards herself, towards others full of ruth,
   Servant of servants, little known to praise,
   Long prayers and fasts trenched on her nights and days:
She schooled herself to sights and sounds uncouth
That with the poor and stricken she might make
   A home, until the least of all sufficed
Her wants; her own self learned she to forsake,
Counting all earthly gain but hurt and loss.
So with calm will she chose and bore the cross
   And hated all for love of Jesus Christ.

II

They knelt in silent anguish by her bed,
   And could not weep; but calmly there she lay.
   All pain had left her; and the sun's last ray
Shone through upon her, warming into red
The shady curtains. In her heart she said:
   'Heaven opens; I leave these and go away;
   The Bridegroom calls, — shall the Bride seek to stay?'
Then low upon her breast she bowed her head.
O lily flower, O gem of priceless worth,
   O dove with patient voice and patient eyes,

O fruitful vine amid a land of dearth,
    O maid replete with loving purities,
Thou bowedst down thy head with friends on earth
    To raise it with the saints in Paradise.

DREAM-LOVE

Young Love lies sleeping
   In May-time of the year,
Among the lilies,
   Lapped in the tender light:
White lambs come grazing,
   White doves come building there:
And round about him
   The May-bushes are white.

Soft moss the pillow
   For oh, a softer cheek;
Broad leaves cast shadow
   Upon the heavy eyes:
There winds and waters
   Grow lulled and scarcely speak;
There twilight lingers
   The longest in the skies.

Young Love lies dreaming;
   But who shall tell the dream?
A perfect sunlight
   On rustling forest tips;
Or perfect moonlight
   Upon a rippling stream;
Or perfect silence,
   Or song of cherished lips.

Burn odors round him
   To fill the drowsy air;
Weave silent dances
   Around him to and fro;
For oh, in waking

The sights are not so fair,
And song and silence
Are not like these below.

Young Love lies dreaming
Till summer days are gone, —
Dreaming and drowsing
Away to perfect sleep:
He sees the beauty
Sun hath not looked upon,
And tastes the fountain
Unutterably deep.

Him perfect music
Doth hush unto his rest,
And through the pauses
The perfect silence calms:
Oh, poor the voices
Of earth from east to west,
And poor earth's stillness
Between her stately palms.

Young Love lies drowsing
Away to poppied death;
Cool shadows deepen
Across the sleeping face:
So fails the summer
With warm, delicious breath;
And what hath autumn
To give us in its place?

Draw close the curtains
Of branched evergreen;
Change cannot touch them
With fading fingers sere:

Here the first violets
    Perhaps will bud unseen,
And a dove, may be,
    Return to nestle here.

TWICE

I took my heart in my hand
   (O my love, O my love),
I said: Let me fall or stand,
   Let me live or die,
But this once hear me speak —
   (O my love, O my love) —
Yet a woman's words are weak;
   You should speak, not I.

You took my heart in your hand
   With a friendly smile,
With a critical eye you scanned,
   Then set it down,
And said: It is still unripe,
   Better wait awhile;
Wait while the skylarks pipe,
   Till the corn grows brown.

As you set it down it broke —
   Broke, but I did not wince;
I smiled at the speech you spoke,
   At your judgment that I heard:
But I have not often smiled
   Since then, nor questioned since,
Nor cared for corn-flowers wild,
   Nor sung with the singing bird.

I take my heart in my hand,
   O my God, O my God,
My broken heart in my hand:
   Thou hast seen, judge Thou.
My hope was written on sand,

O my God, O my God:
Now let thy judgment stand —
Yea, judge me now.

This contemned of a man,
This marred one heedless day,
This heart take Thou to scan
Both within and without:
Refine with fire its gold,
Purge thou its dross away —
Yea, hold it in Thy hold,
Whence none can pluck it out.

I take my heart in my hand —
I shall not die, but live —
Before Thy face I stand;
I, for Thou callest such:
All that I have I bring,
All that I am I give,
Smile Thou and I shall sing,
But shall not question much.

SONGS IN A CORNFIELD

A song in a cornfield
   Where corn begins to fall,
Where reapers are reaping,
   Reaping one, reaping all.
Sing pretty Lettice,
   Sing Rachel, sing May;
Only Marian cannot sing
   While her sweetheart's away.

Where is he gone to
   And why does he stay?
He came across the green sea
   But for a day,
Across the deep green sea
   To help with the hay.

His hair was curly yellow
   And his eyes were grey,
He laughed a merry laugh
   And said a sweet say.
Where is he gone to
   That he comes not home?
Today or tomorrow
   He surely will come.
Let him haste to joy
   Lest he lag for sorrow,
For one weeps today
   Who'll not weep tomorrow:
Today she must weep
   For gnawing sorrow,
Tonight she may sleep
   And not wake tomorrow.

May sang with Rachel
In the waxing warm weather,
Lettice sang with them,
They sang all together: —

‘Take the wheat in your arm
Whilst day is broad above,
Take the wheat to your bosom,
But not a false love.
Out in the fields
Summer heat gloweth,
Out in the fields
Summer wind bloweth,
Out in the fields
Summer friend showeth,
Out in the fields
Summer wheat groweth;
But in the winter
When summer heat is dead
And summer wind has veered
And summer friend has fled,
Only summer wheat remaineth,
White cakes and bread.
Take the wheat, clasp the wheat
That’s food for maid and dove;
Take the wheat to your bosom,
But not a false false love.’

A silence of full noontide heat
Grew on them at their toil:
The farmer’s dog woke up from sleep,
The green snake hid her coil.
Where grass stood thickest, bird and beast
Sought shadows as they could,
The reaping men and women paused
And sat down where they stood;
They ate and drank and were refreshed,
For rest from toil is good.

While the reapers took their ease,
   Their sickles lying by,
Rachel sang a second strain,
   And singing seemed to sigh: —

‘There goes the swallow —
Could we but follow!
   Hasty swallow stay,
   Point us out the way;
Look back swallow, turn back swallow, stop swallow.

‘There went the swallow —
Too late to follow:
   Lost our note of way,
   Lost our chance today;
Good bye swallow, sunny swallow, wise swallow.

‘After the swallow
All sweet things follow:
   All things go their way,
   Only we must stay,
Must not follow; good bye swallow, good swallow.’

Then listless Marian raised her head
   Among the nodding sheaves;
Her voice was sweeter than that voice;
   She sang like one who grieves:
Her voice was sweeter than its wont
   Among the nodding sheaves;
All wondered while they heard her sing
   Like one who hopes and grieves: —

   ‘Deeper than the hail can smite,
   Deeper than the frost can bite,

Deep asleep through day and night,
Our delight.

‘Now thy sleep no pang can break,
No tomorrow bid thee wake,
Not our sobs who sit and ache
For thy sake.

‘Is it dark or light below?
Oh, but is it cold like snow?
Dost thou feel the green things grow
Fast or slow?

‘Is it warm or cold beneath,
Oh, but is it cold like death?
Cold like death, without a breath,
Cold like death?’

If he comes today
He will find her weeping;
If he comes tomorrow
He will find her sleeping;
If he comes the next day
He’ll not find her at all,
He may tear his curling hair,
Beat his breast and call.

A YEAR'S WINDFALLS

On the wind of January
   Down flits the snow,
Travelling from the frozen North
   As cold as it can blow.
Poor robin redbreast,
   Look where he comes;
Let him in to feel your fire,
   And toss him of your crumbs.

On the wind in February
   Snowflakes float still,
Half inclined to turn to rain,
   Nipping, dripping, chill.
Then the thaws swell the streams,
   And swollen rivers swell the sea: —
If the winter ever ends
   How pleasant it will be!

In the wind of windy March
   The catkins drop down,
Curly, caterpillar-like,
   Curious green and brown.
With concourse of nest-building birds
   And leaf-buds by the way,
We begin to think of flowers
   And life and nuts some day.

With the gusts of April
   Rich fruit-tree blossoms fall,
On the hedged-in orchard-green,
   From the southern wall.
Apple-trees and pear-trees

Shed petals white or pink,
Plum-trees and peach-trees;
While sharp showers sink and sink.

Little brings the May breeze
Beside pure scent of flowers,
While all things wax and nothing wanes
In lengthening daylight hours.
Across the hyacinth beds
The wind lags warm and sweet,
Across the hawthorn tops,
Across the blades of wheat.

In the wind of sunny June
Thrives the red rose crop,
Every day fresh blossoms blow
While the first leaves drop;
White rose and yellow rose
And moss-rose choice to find,
And the cottage cabbage-rose
Not one whit behind.

On the blast of scorched July
Drives the pelting hail,
From thunderous lightning-clouds, that blot
Blue heaven grown lurid-pale.
Weedy waves are tossed ashore,
Sea-things strange to sight
Gasp upon the barren shore
And fade away in light.

In the parching August wind
Corn-fields bow the head,
Sheltered in round valley depths,
On low hills outspread.

Early leaves drop loitering down
    Weightless on the breeze,
First fruits of the year's decay
    From the withering trees.

In brisk wind of September
    The heavy-headed fruits
Shake upon their bending boughs
    And drop from the shoots;
Some glow golden in the sun,
    Some show green and streaked,
Some set forth a purple bloom,
    Some blush rosy-cheeked.

In strong blast of October
    At the equinox,
Stirred up in his hollow bed
    Broad ocean rocks;
Plunge the ships on his bosom,
    Leaps and plunges the foam, —
It's oh! for mothers' sons at sea,
    That they were safe at home.

In slack wind of November
    The fog forms and shifts;
All the world comes out again
    When the fog lifts.
Loosened from their sapless twigs
    Leaves drop with every gust;
Drifting, rustling, out of sight
    In the damp or dust.

Last of all, December,
    The year's sands nearly run,
Speeds on the shortest day,

Curtails the sun;
With its bleak raw wind
Lays the last leaves low,
Brings back the nightly frosts,
Brings back the snow.

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

How comes it, Flora, that, whenever we
Play cards together, you invariably,
    However the pack parts,
    Still hold the Queen of Hearts?

I've scanned you with a scrutinizing gaze,
Resolved to fathom these your secret ways:
    But, sift them as I will,
    Your ways are secret still.

I cut and shuffle; shuffle, cut, again;
But all my cutting, shuffling, proves in vain:
    Vain hope, vain forethought too;
    The Queen still falls to you.

I dropped her once, prepense; but, ere the deal
Was dealt, your instinct seemed her loss to feel:
    'There should be one card more,'
    You said, and searched the floor.

I cheated once; I made a private notch
In Heart-Queen's back, and kept a lynx-eyed watch;
    Yet such another back
    Deceived me in the pack:

The Queen of Clubs assumed by arts unknown
An imitative dint that seemed my own;
    This notch, not of my doing,
    Misled me to my ruin.

It baffles me to puzzle out the clue,
Which must be skill, or craft, or luck in you:
    Unless, indeed, it be
    Natural affinity.

ONE DAY

I will tell you when they met:
In the limpid days of Spring;
Elder boughs were budding yet,
Oaken boughs looked wintry still,
But primrose and veined violet
In the mossful turf were set,
While meeting birds made haste to sing
And build with right good will.

I will tell you when they parted:
When plenteous Autumn sheaves were brown,
Then they parted heavy-hearted;
The full rejoicing sun looked down
As grand as in the days before;
Only they had lost a crown;
Only to them those days of yore
Could come back nevermore.

When shall they meet? I cannot tell,
Indeed, when they shall meet again,
Except some day in Paradise:
For this they wait, one waits in pain.
Beyond the sea of death love lies
For ever, yesterday, today;
Angels shall ask them, ‘Is it well?’
And they shall answer, ‘Yea.’

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

'Croak, croak, croak,'
Thus the Raven spoke,
Perched on his crooked tree
As hoarse as hoarse could be.
Shun him and fear him,
Lest the Bridegroom hear him;
Scout him and rout him
With his ominous eye about him.

Yet, 'Croak, croak, croak,'
Still tolled from the oak;
From that fatal black bird,
Whether heard or unheard:
'O ship upon the high seas,
Freighted with lives and spices,
Sink, O ship,' croaked the Raven:
'Let the Bride mount to heaven.'

In a far foreign land,
Upon the wave-edged sand,
Some friends gaze wistfully
Across the glittering sea.
'If we could clasp our sister,'
Three say, 'now we have missed her!'
'If we could kiss our daughter!'
Two sigh across the water.

Oh, the ship sails fast
With silken flags at the mast,
And the home-wind blows soft;
But a Raven sits aloft,
Chuckling and choking,
Croaking, croaking, croaking: —

Let the beacon-fire blaze higher;
Bridegroom, watch; the Bride draws nigher.

On a sloped sandy beach,
Which the spring-tide billows reach,
Stand a watchful throng
Who have hoped and waited long:
‘Fie on this ship, that tarries
With the priceless freight it carries.
The time seems long and longer:
O languid wind, wax stronger;’ —

Whilst the Raven perched at ease
Still croaks and does not cease,
One monotonous note
Tolled from his iron throat:
‘No father, no mother,
But I have a sable brother:
He sees where ocean flows to,
And he knows what he knows, too.’

A day and a night
They kept watch worn and white;
A night and a day
For the swift ship on its way:
For the Bride and her maidens
— Clear chimes the bridal cadence —
For the tall ship that never
Hove in sight for ever.

On either shore, some
Stand in grief loud or dumb
As the dreadful dread
Grows certain though unsaid.
For laughter there is weeping,
And waking instead of sleeping,
And a desperate sorrow

Morrow after morrow.

Oh, who knows the truth,
How she perished in her youth,
And like a queen went down
Pale in her royal crown:
How she went up to glory
From the sea-foam chill and hoary,
From the sea-depth black and riven
To the calm that is in Heaven?

They went down, all the crew,
The silks and spices too,
The great ones and the small,
One and all, one and all.
Was it through stress of weather,
Quicksands, rocks, or all together?
Only the Raven knows this,
And he will not disclose this. —

After a day and year
The bridal bells chime clear;
After a year and a day
The Bridegroom is brave and gay:
Love is sound, faith is rotten;
The old Bride is forgotten: —
Two ominous Ravens only
Remember, black and lonely.

LIGHT LOVE

‘Oh, sad thy lot before I came,
   But sadder when I go;
My presence but a flash of flame,
   A transitory glow
   Between two barren wastes like snow.
What wilt thou do when I am gone,
   Where wilt thou rest, my dear?
For cold thy bed to rest upon,
   And cold the falling year
   Whose withered leaves are lost and sere.’

She hushed the baby at her breast,
   She rocked it on her knee:
‘And I will rest my lonely rest,
   Warmed with the thought of thee,
   Rest lulled to rest by memory.’
She hushed the baby with her kiss,
   She hushed it with her breast:
‘Is death so sadder much than this —
   Sure death that builds a nest
   For those who elsewhere cannot rest?’

‘Oh, sad thy note, my mateless dove,
   With tender nestling cold;
But hast thou ne’er another love
   Left from the days of old,
   To build thy nest of silk and gold,
To warm thy paleness to a blush
   When I am far away —
To warm thy coldness to a flush,
   And turn thee back to May,
   And turn thy twilight back to day?’

She did not answer him again,
   But leaned her face aside,
Weary with the pang of shame and pain,
   And sore with wounded pride:
   He knew his very soul had lied.
She strained his baby in her arms,
   His baby to her heart:
‘Even let it go, the love that harms:
   We twain will never part;
   Mine own, his own, how dear thou art.’

‘Now never teaze me, tender-eyed,
   Sigh-voiced,’ he said in scorn:
‘For nigh at hand there blooms a bride,
   My bride before the morn;
   Ripe-blooming she, as thou forlorn.
Ripe-blooming she, my rose, my peach;
   She woos me day and night:
I watch her tremble in my reach;
   She reddens, my delight,
   She ripens, reddens in my sight.’

‘And is she like a sunlit rose?
   Am I like withered leaves?
Haste where thy spicèd garden blows:
   But in bare Autumn eves
   Wilt thou have store of harvest sheaves?
Thou leavest love, true love behind,
   To seek a love as true;
Go, seek in haste: but wilt thou find?
   Change new again for new;
   Pluck up, enjoy — yea, trample too.

‘Alas for her, poor faded rose,
   Alas for her her, like me,
Cast down and trampled in the snows.’
   ‘Like thee? nay, not like thee:

She leans, but from a guarded tree.
Farewell, and dream as long ago,
Before we ever met:
Farewell; my swift-paced horse seems slow.'
She raised her eyes, not wet
But hard, to Heaven: 'Does God forget?'

ON THE WING

Once in a dream (for once I dreamed of you)
We stood together in an open field;
Above our heads two swift-winged pigeons wheeled,
Sporting at ease and courting full in view.
When loftier still a broadening darkness flew,
Down-swooping, and a ravenous hawk revealed;
Too weak to fight, too fond to fly, they yield;
So farewell life and love and pleasures new.
Then as their plumes fell fluttering to the ground,
Their snow-white plumage flecked with crimson drops,
I wept, and thought I turned towards you to weep:
But you were gone; while rustling hedgerow tops
Bent in a wind which bore to me a sound
Of far-off piteous bleat of lambs and sheep.

A RING POSY

Jess and Jill are pretty girls,
   Plump and well to do,
In a cloud of windy curls:
   Yet I know who
Loves me more than curls or pearls.

I'm not pretty, not a bit —
   Thin and sallow-pale;
When I trudge along the street
   I don't need a veil:
Yet I have one fancy hit.

Jess and Jill can trill and sing
   With a flute-like voice,
Dance as light as bird on wing,
   Laugh for careless joys:
Yet it's I who wear the ring.

Jess and Jill will mate some day,
   Surely, surely:
Ripen on to June through May,
While the sun shines make their hay,
   Slacken steps demurely:
Yet even there I lead the way.

BEAUTY IS VAIN

While roses are so red,
   While lilies are so white,
Shall a woman exalt her face
   Because it gives delight?
She's not so sweet as a rose,
   A lily's straighter than she,
And if she were as red or white
   She'd be but one of three.

Whether she flush in love's summer
   Or in its winter grow pale,
Whether she flaunt her beauty
   Or hide it away in a veil,
Be she red or white,
   And stand she erect or bowed,
Time will win the race he runs with her
   And hide her away in a shroud.

MAGGIE A LADY

You must not call me Maggie, you must not call me Dear,
   For I'm Lady of the Manor now stately to see;
And if there comes a babe, as there may some happy year,
   'Twill be little lord or lady at my knee.

Oh, but what ails you, my sailor cousin Phil,
   That you shake and turn white like a cockcrow ghost?
You're as white as I turned once down by the mill,
   When one told me you and ship and crew were lost:

Philip my playfellow, when we were boy and girl
   (It was the Miller's Nancy told it to me),
Philip with the merry life in lip and curl,
   Philip my playfellow drowned in the sea!

I thought I should have fainted, but I did not faint;
   I stood stunned at the moment, scarcely sad,
Till I raised my wail of desolate complaint
   For you, my cousin, brother, all I had.

They said I looked so pale — some say so fair —
   My lord stopped in passing to soothe me back to life:
I know I missed a ringlet from my hair
   Next morning; and now I am his wife.

Look at my gown, Philip, and look at my ring,
   I'm all crimson and gold from top to toe:
All day long I sit in the sun and sing,
   Where in the sun red roses blush and blow.

And I'm the rose of roses says my lord;
   And to him I'm more than the sun in the sky,
While I hold him fast with the golden cord
   Of a curl, with the eyelash of an eye.

His mother said 'fie,' and his sisters cried 'shame,'
   His highborn ladies cried 'shame' from their place:
They said 'fie' when they only heard my name,
   But fell silent when they saw my face.

Am I so fair, Philip? Philip, did you think
   I was so fair when we played boy and girl,
Where blue forget-me-nots bloomed on the brink
   Of our stream which the mill-wheel sent a whirl?

If I was fair then sure I'm fairer now,
   Sitting where a score of servants stand,
With a coronet on high days for my brow
   And almost a sceptre for my hand.

You're but a sailor, Philip, weatherbeaten brown,
   A stranger on land and at home on the sea,
Coasting as best you may from town to town:
   Coasting along do you often think of me?

I'm a great lady in a sheltered bower,
   With hands grown white through having nought to do:
Yet sometimes I think of you hour after hour
   Till I nigh wish myself a child with you.

WHAT WOULD I GIVE?

What would I give for a heart of flesh to warm me through,
Instead of this heart of stone ice-cold whatever I do;
Hard and cold and small, of all hearts the worst of all.

What would I give for words, if only words would come;
But now in its misery my spirit has fallen dumb:
Oh, merry friends, go your own way, I have never a word to say.

What would I give for tears, not smiles but scalding tears,
To wash the black mark clean, and to thaw the frost of years,
To wash the stain ingrain and to make me clean again.

THE BOURNE

Underneath the growing grass,
  Underneath the living flowers,
  Deeper than the sound of showers:
  There we shall not count the hours
By the shadows as they pass.

Youth and health will be but vain,
  Beauty reckoned of no worth:
  There a very little girth
  Can hold round what once the earth
Seemed too narrow to contain.

SUMMER

Winter is cold-hearted
   Spring is yea and nay,
Autumn is a weather-cock
   Blown every way:
Summer days for me
When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,
   And Jenny Wren's a bride,
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,
   Over the wheat-fields wide,
   And anchored lilies ride,
And the pendulum spider
   Swings from side to side,

And blue-black beetles transact business,
   And gnats fly in a host,
And furry caterpillars hasten
   That no time be lost,
And moths grow fat and thrive,
And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,
   Before green nuts embrown,
Why, one day in the country
   Is worth a month in town;
   Is worth a day and a year
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion
   That days drone elsewhere.

AUTUMN

I dwell alone — I dwell alone, alone,
Whilst full my river flows down to the sea,
    Gilded with flashing boats
    That bring no friend to me:
O love-songs, gurgling from a hundred throats,
    O love-pangs, let me be.

Fair fall the freighted boats which gold and stone
    And spices bear to sea:
Slim, gleaming maidens swell their mellow notes,
    Love-promising, entreating —
    Ah! sweet, but fleeting —
    Beneath the shivering, snow-white sails.
    Hush! the wind flags and fails —
Hush! they will lie becalmed in sight of strand —
    Sight of my strand, where I do dwell alone;
Their songs wake singing echoes in my land —
    They cannot hear me moan.

    One latest, solitary swallow flies
        Across the sea, rough autumn-tempest tossed,
        Poor bird, shall it be lost?
Dropped down into this uncongenial sea,
    With no kind eyes
    To watch it while it dies,
    Unguessed, uncared for, free:
    Set free at last,
    The short pang past,
In sleep, in death, in dreamless sleep locked fast.

Mine avenue is all a growth of oaks,
        Some rent by thunder strokes,

Some rustling leaves and acorns in the breeze;
Fair fall my fertile trees,
That rear their goodly heads, and live at ease.

A spider's web blocks all mine avenue;
He catches down and foolish painted flies
That spider wary and wise.
Each morn it hangs a rainbow strung with dew
Betwixt boughs green with sap,
So fair, few creatures guess it is a trap:
I will not mar the web,
Though sad I am to see the small lives ebb.

It shakes — my trees shake — for a wind is roused
In cavern where it housed:
Each white and quivering sail,
Of boats among the water leaves
Hollows and strains in the full-throated gale:
Each maiden sings again —
Each languid maiden, whom the calm
Had lulled to sleep with rest and spice and balm
Miles down my river to the sea
They float and wane,
Long miles away from me.

Perhaps they say: 'She grieves,
Uplifted, like a beacon, on her tower.'
Perhaps they say: 'One hour
More, and we dance among the golden sheaves.'
Perhaps they say: 'One hour
More, and we stand,
Face to face, hand in hand;
Make haste, O slack gale, to the looked-for land!'

My trees are not in flower,
I have no bower,

And gusty creaks my tower,
And lonesome, very lonesome, is my strand.

THE GHOST'S PETITION

'There's a footstep coming: look out and see,'
  'The leaves are falling, the wind is calling;
No one cometh across the lea.' —

'There's a footstep coming; O sister, look.' —
  'The ripple flashes, the white foam dashes;
No one cometh across the brook.' —

'But he promised that he would come:
  Tonight, tomorrow, in joy or sorrow,
He must keep his word, and must come home.

'For he promised that he would come:
  His word was given; from earth or heaven,
He must keep his word, and must come home.

'Go to sleep, my sweet sister Jane;
  You can slumber, who need not number
Hour after hour, in doubt and pain.

'I shall sit here awhile, and watch;
  Listening, hoping, for one hand groping
In deep shadow to find the latch.'

After the dark, and before the light,
  One lay sleeping; and one sat weeping,
Who had watched and wept the weary night.

After the night, and before the day,
  One lay sleeping; and one sat weeping —
Watching, weeping for one away.

There came a footstep climbing the stair;
   Some one standing out on the landing
Shook the door like a puff of air —

Shook the door, and in he passed.
   Did he enter? In the room centre
Stood her husband: the door shut fast.

‘O Robin, but you are cold —
   Chilled with the night-dew: so lily-white you
Look like a stray lamb from our fold.

‘O Robin, but you are late:
   Come and sit near me — sit here and cheer me.’ —
(Blue the flame burnt in the grate.)

‘Lay not down your head on my breast:
   I cannot hold you, kind wife, nor fold you
In the shelter that you love best.

‘Feel not after my clasping hand:
   I am but a shadow, come from the meadow
Where many lie, but no tree can stand.

‘We are trees which have shed their leaves:
   Our heads lie low there, but no tears flow there;
Only I grieve for my wife who grieves.

‘I could rest if you would not moan
   Hour after hour; I have no power
To shut my ears where I lie alone.

‘I could rest if you would not cry;
   But there’s no sleeping while you sit weeping —
Watching, weeping so bitterly.’ —

‘Woe’s me! woe’s me! for this I have heard.
   Oh night of sorrow! — oh black tomorrow!
Is it thus that you keep your word?

‘O you who used so to shelter me
   Warm from the least wind — why, now the east wind
Is warmer than you, whom I quake to see.

‘O my husband of flesh and blood,
   For whom my mother I left, and brother,
And all I had, accounting it good,

‘What do you do there, underground,
   In the dark hollow? I’m fain to follow.
What do you do there? — what have you found?’ —

‘What I do there I must not tell:
   But I have plenty: kind wife, content ye:
It is well with us — it is well.

‘Tender hand hath made our nest;
   Our fear is ended, our hope is blended
With present pleasure, and we have rest.’ —

‘Oh, but Robin, I’m fain to come,
   If your present days are so pleasant;
For my days are so wearisome.

‘Yet I’ll dry my tears for your sake:
   Why should I tease you, who cannot please you
Any more with the pains I take?’

MEMORY

I

I nursed it in my bosom while it lived,
   I hid it in my heart when it was dead;
In joy I sat alone, even so I grieved
      Alone and nothing said.

I shut the door to face the naked truth,
   I stood alone — I faced the truth alone,
Stripped bare of self-regard or forms or ruth
      Till first and last were shown.

I took the perfect balances and weighed;
   No shaking of my hand disturbed the poise;
Weighed, found it wanting: not a word I said,
      But silent made my choice.

None know the choice I made; I make it still.
   None know the choice I made and broke my heart,
Breaking mine idol: I have braced my will
      Once, chosen for once my part.

I broke it at a blow, I laid it cold,
   Crushed in my deep heart where it used to live.
My heart dies inch by inch; the time grows old,
      Grows old in which I grieve.

II

I have a room whereinto no one enters
   Save I myself alone:
   There sits a blessed memory on a throne,
There my life centres.

While winter comes and goes — oh tedious comer! —
   And while its nip-wind blows;
   While bloom the bloodless lily and warm rose
Of lavish summer.

If any should force entrance he might see there
   One buried yet not dead,
   Before whose face I no more bow my head
Or bend my knee there;

But often in my worn life's autumn weather
   I watch there with clear eyes,
   And think how it will be in Paradise
When we're together.

A ROYAL PRINCESS

I, a princess, king-descended, decked with jewels, gilded, drest,
Would rather be a peasant with her baby at her breast,
For all I shine so like the sun, and am purple like the west.

Two and two my guards behind, two and two before,
Two and two on either hand, they guard me evermore;
Me, poor dove, that must not coo — eagle that must not soar.

All my fountains cast up perfumes, all my gardens grow
Scented woods and foreign spices, with all flowers in blow
That are costly, out of season as the seasons go.

All my walls are lost in mirrors, whereupon I trace
Self to right hand, self to left hand, self in every place,
Self-same solitary figure, self-same seeking face.

Then I have an ivory chair high to sit upon,
Almost like my father's chair, which is an ivory throne;
There I sit uplift and upright, there I sit alone.

Alone by day, alone by night, alone days without end;
My father and my mother give me treasures, search and spend —
O my father! O my mother! have you ne'er a friend?

As I am a lofty princess, so my father is
A lofty king, accomplished in all kingly subtilties,
Holding in his strong right hand world-kingdoms' balances.

He has quarrelled with his neighbours, he has scourged his foes;

Vassal counts and princes follow where his pennon goes,
Long-descended valiant lords whom the vulture knows,

On whose track the vulture swoops, when they ride in state
To break the strength of armies and topple down the great:
Each of these my courteous servant, none of these my mate.

My father counting up his strength sets down with equal pen
So many head of cattle, head of horses, head of men;
These for slaughter, these for breeding, with the how and when.

Some to work on roads, canals; some to man his ships;
Some to smart in mines beneath sharp overseers' whips;
Some to trap fur-beasts in lands where utmost winter nips.

Once it came into my heart, and whelmed me like a flood,
That these too are men and women, human flesh and blood;
Men with hearts and men with souls, though trodden down like mud.

Our feasting was not glad that night, our music was not gay:
On my mother's graceful head I marked a thread of grey,
My father frowning at the fare seemed every dish to weigh.

I sat beside them sole princess in my exalted place,
My ladies and my gentlemen stood by me on the dais:
A mirror showed me I look old and haggard in the face;

It showed me that my ladies all are fair to gaze upon,
Plump, plenteous-haired, to everyone love's secret lore is known,
They laugh by day, they sleep by night; ah me, what is a throne?

The singing men and women sang that night as usual,
The dancers danced in pairs and sets, but music had a fall,
A melancholy windy fall as at a funeral.

Amid the toss of torches to my chamber back we swept;
My ladies loosed my golden chain; meantime I could have wept
To think of some in galling chains whether they waked or slept.

I took my bath of scented milk, delicately waited on,
They burned sweet things for my delight, cedar and cinnamon,
They lit my shaded silver lamp, and left me there alone.

A day went by, a week went by. One day I heard it said:
'Men are clamouring, women, children, clamouring to be fed;
Men like famished dogs are howling in the streets for bread.'

So two whispered by my door, not thinking I could hear,
Vulgar naked truth, ungarnished for a royal ear;
Fit for cooping in the background, not to stalk so near.

But I strained my utmost sense to catch this truth, and mark:
'There are families out grazing like cattle in the park.'
'A pair of peasants must be saved even if we build an ark.'

A merry jest, a merry laugh, each strolled upon his way;
One was my page, a lad I reared and bore with day by day;
One was my youngest maid as sweet and white as cream in May.

Other footsteps followed softly with a weightier tramp;
Voices said: 'Picked soldiers have been summoned from the camp
To quell these base-born ruffians who make free to howl and stamp.'

'Howl and stamp?' one answered: 'They made free to hurl a stone
At the minister's state coach, well aimed and stoutly thrown.'
'There's work then for the soldiers, for this rank crop must be mown.'

'One I saw, a poor old fool with ashes on his head,
Whimpering because a girl had snatched his crust of bread:

Then he dropped; when someone raised him, it turned out he was dead.'

'After us the deluge,' was retorted with a laugh:
'If bread's the staff of life, they must walk without a staff.'
'While I've a loaf they're welcome to my blessing and the chaff.'

These passed. The king: stand up. Said my father with a smile:
'Daughter mine, your mother comes to sit with you awhile,
She's sad today, and who but you her sadness can beguile?'

He too left me. Shall I touch my harp now while I wait, —
(I hear them doubling guard below before our palace gate —)
Or shall I work the last gold stitch into my veil of state;

Or shall my woman stand and read some unimpassioned scene,
There's music of a lulling sort in words that pause between;
Or shall she merely fan me while I wait here for the queen?

Again I caught my father's voice in sharp word of command:
'Charge!' a clash of steel: 'Charge again, the rebels stand.
Smite and spare not, hand to hand; smite and spare not, hand to hand.'

There swelled a tumult at the gate, high voices waxing higher;
A flash of red reflected light lit the cathedral spire;
I heard a cry for faggots, then I heard a yell for fire.

'Sit and roast there with your meat, sit and bake there with your bread,
You who sat to see us starve,' one shrieking woman said:
'Sit on your throne and roast with your crown upon your head.'

Nay, this thing will I do, while my mother tarrieth,
I will take my fine spun gold, but not to sew therewith,
I will take my gold and gems, and rainbow fan and wreath;

With a ransom in my lap, a king's ransom in my hand,

I will go down to this people, will stand face to face, will stand
Where they curse king, queen, and princess of this cursed land.

They shall take all to buy them bread, take all I have to give;
I, if I perish, perish; they today shall eat and live;
I, if I perish, perish; that's the goal I half conceive:

Once to speak before the world, rend bare my heart and show
The lesson I have learned which is death, is life, to know.
I, if I perish, perish; in the name of God I go.

SHALL I FORGET?

Shall I forget on this side of the grave?
I promise nothing: you must wait and see
    Patient and brave.
(O my soul, watch with him and he with me.)

Shall I forget in peace of Paradise?
I promise nothing: follow, friend, and see
    Faithful and wise.
(O my soul, lead the way he walks with me.)

VANITY OF VANITIES: AH, WOE IS ME FOR PLEASURE THAT IS VAIN

Ah, woe is me for pleasure that is vain,
   Ah, woe is me for glory that is past:
   Pleasure that bringeth sorrow at the last,
Glory that at the last bringeth no gain!
So saith the sinking heart; and so again
   It shall say till the mighty angel-blast
   Is blown, making the sun and moon aghast
And showering down the stars like sudden rain.
And evermore men shall go fearfully
   Bending beneath their weight of heaviness;
And ancient men shall lie down wearily,
   And strong men shall rise up in weariness;
Yea, even the young shall answer sighingly
   Saying one to another: How vain it is!

L. E. L

‘Whose heart was breaking for a little love.’

Downstairs I laugh, I sport and jest with all;
   But in my solitary room above
I turn my face in silence to the wall;
   My heart is breaking for a little love.
      Though winter frosts are done,
      And birds pair every one,
And leaves peep out, for springtide is begun.

I feel no spring, while spring is wellnigh blown,
   I find no nest, while nests are in the grove:
Woe’s me for mine own heart that dwells alone,
   My heart that breaketh for a little love.
      While golden in the sun
      Rivulets rise and run,
While lilies bud, for springtide is begun.

All love, are loved, save only I; their hearts
   Beat warm with love and joy, beat full thereof:
They cannot guess, who play the pleasant parts,
   My heart is breaking for a little love.
      While beehives wake and whirr,
      And rabbit thins his fur,
In living spring that sets the world astir.

I deck myself with skills and jewelry,
   I plume myself like any mated dove:
They praise my rustling show, and never see
   My heart is breaking for a little love.
      While sprouts green lavender

With rosemary and myrrh,
For in quick spring the sap is all astir.

Perhaps some saints in glory guess the truth,
Perhaps some angels read it as they move,
And cry one to another full of ruth,
'Her heart is breaking for a little love.'
Though other things have birth,
And leap and sing for mirth,
When springtime wakes and clothes and feeds the earth.

Yet saith a saint: 'Take patience for thy scathe;'
Yet saith an angel: 'Wait, for thou shalt prove
True best is last, true life is born of death,
O thou, heart-broken for a little love.
Then love shall fill they girth,
And love make fat thy dearth,
When new spring builds new heaven and clean new earth.'

LIFE AND DEATH

Life is not sweet. One day it will be sweet
    To shut our eyes and die:
Nor feel the wild flowers blow, nor birds dart by
    With flitting butterfly,
Nor grass grow long above our heads and feet,
Nor hear the happy lark that soars sky high,
Nor sigh that spring is fleet and summer fleet,
    Nor mark the waxing wheat,
Nor know who sits in our accustomed seat.

Life is not good. One day it will be good
    To die, then live again;
To sleep meanwhile: so not to feel the wane
Of shrunk leaves dropping in the wood,
Nor hear the foamy lashing of the main,
Nor mark the blackened bean-fields, nor where stood
    Rich ranks of golden grain
Only dead refuse stubble clothe the plain:
Asleep from risk, asleep from pain.

BIRD OR BEAST?

Did any bird come flying
    After Adam and Eve,
When the door was shut against them
    And they sat down to grieve?

I think not Eve's peacock
    Splendid to see,
And I think not Adam's eagle;
    But a dove may be.

Did any beast come pushing
    Through the thorny hedge
Into the thorny thistly world,
    Out from Eden's edge?

I think not a lion,
    Though his strength is such;
But an innocent loving lamb
    May have done as much.

If the dove preached from her bough
    and the lamb from his sod,
The lamb and dove
    Were preachers sent from God.

EVE

‘While I sit at the door
Sick to gaze within
Mine eye weepeth sore
For sorrow and sin:
As a tree my sin stands
To darken all lands;
Death is the fruit it bore.

‘How have Eden bowers grown
Without Adam to bend them!
How have Eden flowers blown
Squandering their sweet breath
Without me to tend them!
The Tree of Life was ours,
Tree twelvefold-fruited,
Most lofty tree that flowers,
Most deeply rooted:
I chose the tree of death.

‘Hadst thou but said me nay,
Adam, my brother,
I might have pined away;
I, but none other:
God might have let thee stay
Safe in our garden,
By putting me away
Beyond all pardon.

‘I, Eve, sad mother
Of all who must live,
I, not another
Plucked bitterest fruit to give

My friend, husband, lover —
O wanton eyes, run over;
Who but I should grieve? —
Cain hath slain his brother:
Of all who must die mother,
Miserable Eve!’

Thus she sat weeping,
Thus Eve our mother,
Where one lay sleeping
Slain by his brother.
Greatest and least
Each piteous beast
To hear her voice
Forgot his joys
And set aside his feast.

The mouse paused in his walk
And dropped his wheaten stalk;
Grave cattle wagged their heads
In rumination;
The eagle gave a cry
From his cloud station;
Larks on thyme beds
Forbore to mount or sing;
Bees drooped upon the wing;
The raven perched on high
Forgot his ration;
The conies in their rock,
A feeble nation,
Quaked sympathetical;
The mocking-bird left off to mock;
Huge camels knelt as if
In deprecation;
The kind hart’s tears were falling;
Chattered the wistful stork;
Dove-voices with a dying fall
Cooed desolation

Answering grief by grief.

Only the serpent in the dust
Wriggling and crawling,
Grinned an evil grin and thrust
His tongue out with its fork.

GROWN AND FLOWN

I loved my love from green of Spring
   Until sere Autumn's fall;
But now that leaves are withering
   How should one love at all?
   One heart's too small
For hunger, cold, love, everything.

I loved my love on sunny days
   Until late Summer's wane;
But now that frost begins to glaze
   How should one love again?
   Nay, love and pain
Walk wide apart in diverse ways.

I loved my love — alas to see
   That this should be, alas!
I thought that this could scarcely be,
   Yet has it come to pass:
   Sweet sweet love was,
Now bitter bitter grown to me.

A FARM WALK

The year stood at its equinox
   And bluff the North was blowing,
A bleat of lambs came from the flocks,
   Green hardy things were growing;
I met a maid with shining locks
   Where milky kine were lowing.

She wore a kerchief on her neck,
   Her bare arm showed its dimple,
Her apron spread without a speck,
   Her air was frank and simple.

She milked into a wooden pail
   And sang a country ditty,
An innocent fond lovers' tale,
   That was not wise nor witty,
Pathetically rustical,
   Too pointless for the city.

She kept in time without a beat
   As true as church-bell ringers,
Unless she tapped time with her feet,
   Or squeezed it with her fingers;
Her clear unstudied notes were sweet
   As many a practised singer's.

I stood a minute out of sight,
   Stood silent for a minute
To eye the pail, and creamy white
   The frothing milk within it;

To eye the comely milking maid
   Herself so fresh and creamy:
‘Good day to you,’ at last I said;
   She turned her head to see me:
‘Good day,’ she said with lifted head;
   Her eyes looked soft and dreamy,

And all the while she milked and milked
   The grave cow heavy-laden:
I’ve seen grand ladies plumed and silked,
   But not a sweeter maiden;

But not a sweeter fresher maid
   Than this in homely cotton,
Whose pleasant face and silky braid
   I have not yet forgotten.

Seven springs have passed since then, as I
   Count with a sober sorrow;
Seven springs have come and passed me by,
   And spring sets in tomorrow.

I’ve half a mind to shake myself
   Free just for once from London,
To set my work upon the shelf
   And leave it done or undone;

To run down by the early train,
   Whirl down with shriek and whistle,
And feel the bluff North blow again,
   And mark the sprouting thistle
Set up on waste patch of the lane
   Its green and tender bristle.

And spy the scarce-blown violet banks,

Crisp primrose leaves and others,
And watch the lambs leap at their pranks
And butt their patient mothers.

Alas, one point in all my plan
My serious thoughts demur to:
Seven years have passed for maid and man,
Seven years have passed for her too;

Perhaps my rose is overblown,
Not rosy or too rosy;
Perhaps in farmhouse of her own
Some husband keeps her cosy,
Where I should show a face unknown.
Good-bye, my wayside posy.

SOMEWHERE OR OTHER

Somewhere or other there must surely be
   The face not seen, the voice not heard,
The heart that not yet — never yet — ah me!
      Made answer to my word.

Somewhere or other, may be near or far;
   Past land and sea, clean out of sight;
Beyond the wandering moon, beyond the star
      That tracks her night by night.

Somewhere or other, may be far or near;
   With just a wall, a hedge, between;
With just the last leaves of the dying year
      Fallen on a turf grown green.

A CHILL

What can lambkins do
All the keen night through?
Nestle by their woolly mother
The careful ewe.

What can nestlings do
In the nightly dew?
Sleep beneath their mother's wing
Till day breaks anew.

If in a field or tree
There might only be
Such a warm soft sleeping-place
Found for me!

CHILD'S TALK IN APRIL

I wish you were a pleasant wren,
   And I your small accepted mate;
How we'd look down on toilsome men!
   We'd rise and go to bed at eight
   Or it may be not quite so late.

Then you should see the nest I'd build,
   The wondrous nest for you and me;
The outside rough perhaps, but filled
   With wool and down; ah, you should see
   The cosy nest that it would be.

We'd have our change of hope and fear,
   Small quarrels, reconcilements sweet:
I'd perch by you to chirp and cheer,
   Or hop about on active feet,
   And fetch you dainty bits to eat.

We'd be so happy by the day,
   So safe and happy through the night,
We both should feel, and I should say,
   It's all one season of delight,
And we'll make merry whilst we may.

Perhaps someday there'd be an egg
   When spring had blossomed from the snow:
I'd stand triumphant on one leg;
   Like chanticleer I'd almost crow
   To let our little neighbours know.

Next you should sit and I would sing
Through lengthening days of sunny spring;
    Till, if you wearied of the task,
I'd sit; and you should spread your wing
    From bough to bough; I'd sit and bask.

Fancy the breaking of the shell,
    The chirp, the chickens wet and bare,
The untried proud paternal swell;
    And you with housewife-matron air
    Enacting choicer bills of fare.

Fancy the embryo coats of down,
    The gradual feathers soft and sleek;
Till clothed and strong from tail to crown,
    With virgin warblings in their beak,
    They too go forth to soar and seek.

So would it last an April through
And early summer fresh with dew:
    Then should we part and live as twain,
Love-time would bring me back to you
    And build our happy nest again.

GONE FOR EVER

O happy rose-bud blooming
   Upon thy parent tree,
Nay, thou art too presuming;
For soon the earth entombing
   Thy faded charms shall be,
And the chill damp consuming.

O happy skylark springing
   Up to the broad blue sky,
Too fearless in thy winging,
Too gladsome in thy singing,
   Thou also soon shalt lie
Where no sweet notes are ringing.

And through life's shine and shower
   We shall have joy and pain;
But in the summer bower,
And at the morning hour,
   We still shall look in vain
For the same bird and flower.

THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN

Oh the rose of keenest thorn!
One hidden summer morn
Under the rose I was born.

I do not guess his name
Who wrought my Mother's shame,
And gave me life forlorn,
But my Mother, Mother, Mother,
I know her from all other.
My Mother pale and mild,
Fair as ever was seen,
She was but scarce sixteen,
Little more than a child,
When I was born
To work her scorn.
With secret bitter throes,
In a passion of secret woes,
She bore me under the rose.

One who my Mother nursed
Took me from the first: —
'O nurse, let me look upon
This babe that costs so dear;
Tomorrow she will be gone:
Other mothers may keep
Their babes awake and asleep,
But I must not keep her here.' —
Whether I know or guess,
I know this not the less.

So I was sent away
That none might spy the truth:

And my childhood waxed to youth
And I left off childish play.
I never cared to play
With the village boys and girls;
And I think they thought me proud,
I found so little to say
And kept so from the crowd:
But I had the longest curls
And I had the largest eyes
And my teeth were small like pearls;
The girls might flout and scout me,
But the boys would hang about me
In sheepish mooning wise.

Our one-street village stood
A long mile from the town,
A mile of windy down
And bleak one-sided wood,
With not a single house.
Our town itself was small,
With just the common shops,
And throve in its small way.
Our neighbouring gentry reared
The good old-fashioned crops,
And made old-fashioned boasts
Of what John Bull would do
If Frenchman Frog appeared,
And drank old-fashioned toasts,
And made old-fashioned bows
To my Lady at the Hall.

My Lady at the Hall
Is grander than they all:
Hers is the oldest name
In all the neighbourhood;
But the race must die with her
Though she's a lofty dame,

For she's unmarried still.
Poor people say she's good
And has an open hand
As any in the land,
And she's the comforter
Of many sick and sad;
My nurse once said to me
That everything she had
Came of my Lady's bounty:
'Though she's greatest in the county
She's humble to the poor,
No beggar seeks her door
But finds help presently.
I pray both night and day
For her, and you must pray:
But she'll never feel distress
If needy folk can bless.'

I was a little maid
When here we came to live
From somewhere by the sea.
Men spoke a foreign tongue
There where we used to be
When I was merry and young,
Too young to feel afraid;
The fisher folk would give
A kind strange word to me,
There by the foreign sea:
I don't know where it was,
But I remember still
Our cottage on a hill,
And fields of flowering grass
On that fair foreign shore.

I liked my old home best,
But this was pleasant too:
So here we made our nest
And here I grew.

And now and then my Lady
In riding past our door
Would nod to Nurse and speak,
Or stoop and pat my cheek;
And I was always ready
To hold the field-gate wide
For my Lady to go through;
My Lady in her veil
So seldom put aside,
My Lady grave and pale.

I often sat to wonder
Who might my parents be,
For I knew of something under
My simple-seeming state.
Nurse never talked to me
Of mother or of father,
But watched me early and late
With kind suspicious cares:
Or not suspicious, rather
Anxious, as if she knew
Some secret I might gather
And smart for unawares.
Thus I grew.

But Nurse waxed old and grey,
Bent and weak with years.
There came a certain day
That she lay upon her bed
Shaking her palsied head,
With words she gasped to say
Which had to stay unsaid.
Then with a jerking hand
Held out so piteously
She gave a ring to me
Of gold wrought curiously,
A ring which she had worn

Since the day I was born,
She once had said to me:
I slipped it on my finger;
Her eyes were keen to linger
On my hand that slipped it on;
Then she sighed one rattling sigh
And stared on with sightless eye: —
The one who loved me was gone.

How long I stayed alone
With the corpse I never knew,
For I fainted dead as stone:
When I came to life once more
I was down upon the floor,
With neighbours making ado
To bring me back to life.
I heard the sexton's wife
Say: 'Up, my lad, and run
To tell it at the Hall;
She was my Lady's nurse,
And done can't be undone.
I'll watch by this poor lamb.
I guess my Lady's purse
Is always open to such:
I'd run up on my crutch
A cripple as I am,'
(For cramps had vexed her much)
'Rather than this dear heart
Lack one to take her part.'

For days day after day
On my weary bed I lay
Wishing the time would pass;
Oh, so wishing that I was
Likely to pass away:
For the one friend whom I knew
Was dead, I knew no other,
Neither father nor mother;

And I, what should I do?

One day the sexton's wife
Said: 'Rouse yourself, my dear:
My Lady has driven down
From the Hall into the town,
And we think she's coming here.
Cheer up, for life is life.'

But I would not look or speak,
Would not cheer up at all.
My tears were like to fall,
So I turned round to the wall
And hid my hollow cheek
Making as if I slept,
As silent as a stone,
And no one knew I wept.
What was my Lady to me,
The grand lady from the Hall?
She might come, or stay away,
I was sick at heart that day:
The whole world seemed to be
Nothing, just nothing to me,
For aught that I could see.

Yet I listened where I lay:
A bustle came below,
A clear voice said: 'I know;
I will see her first alone,
It may be less of a shock
If she's so weak today:' —
A light hand turned the lock,
A light step crossed the floor,
One sat beside my bed:
But never a word she said.

For me, my shyness grew
Each moment more and more:
So I said never a word
And neither looked nor stirred;
I think she must have heard
My heart go pit-a-pat:
Thus I lay, my Lady sat,
More than a mortal hour —
(I counted one and two
By the house-clock while I lay):
I seemed to have no power
To think of a thing to say,
Or do what I ought to do,
Or rouse myself to a choice.

At last she said: 'Margaret,
Won't you even look at me?'
A something in her voice
Forced my tears to fall at last,
Forced sobs from me thick and fast;
Something not of the past,
Yet stirring memory;
A something new, and yet
Not new, too sweet to last,
Which I never can forget.

I turned and stared at her:
Her cheek showed hollow-pale;
Her hair like mine was fair,
A wonderful fall of hair
That screened her like a veil;
But her height was statelier,
Her eyes had depth more deep;
I think they must have had
Always a something sad,
Unless they were asleep.

While I stared, my Lady took
My hand in her spare hand
Jeweled and soft and grand,
And looked with a long long look
Of hunger in my face;
As if she tried to trace
Features she ought to know,
And half hoped, half feared, to find.
Whatever was in her mind
She heaved a sigh at last,
And began to talk to me.

‘Your nurse was my dear nurse,
And her nursling’s dear,’ said she:
‘I never knew that she was worse
Till her poor life was past’
(Here my Lady’s tears dropped fast):
‘I might have been with her,
But she had no comforter.
She might have told me much
Which now I shall never know,
Never never shall know.’
She sat by me sobbing so,
And seemed so woe-begone,
That I laid one hand upon
Hers with a timid touch,
Scarce thinking what I did,
Not knowing what to say:
That moment her face was hid
In the pillow close by mine,
Her arm was flung over me,
She hugged me, sobbing so
As if her heart would break,
And kissed me where I lay.

After this she often came

To bring me fruit or wine,
Or sometimes hothouse flowers.
And at nights I lay awake
Often and often thinking
What to do for her sake.
Wet or dry it was the same:
She would come in at all hours,
Set me eating and drinking
And say I must grow strong;
At last the day seemed long
And home seemed scarcely home
If she did not come.

Well, I grew strong again:
In time of primroses,
I went to pluck them in the lane;
In time of nestling birds,
I heard them chirping round the house;
And all the herds
Were out at grass when I grew strong,
And days were waxen long,
And there was work for bees
Among the May-bush boughs,
And I had shot up tall,
And life felt after all
Pleasant, and not so long
When I grew strong.

I was going to the Hall
To be my Lady's maid:
'Her little friend,' she said to me,
'Almost her child,'
She said and smiled
Sighing painfully;
Blushing, with a second flush
As if she blushed to blush.

Friend, servant, child: just this
My standing at the Hall;
The other servants call me ‘Miss,’
My Lady calls me ‘Margaret,’
With her clear voice musical.
She never chides when I forget
This or that; she never chides.
Except when people come to stay,
(And that’s not often) at the Hall,
I sit with her all day
And ride out when she rides.
She sings to me and makes me sing;
Sometimes I read to her,
Sometimes we merely sit and talk.
She noticed once my ring
And made me tell its history:
That evening in our garden walk
She said she should infer
The ring had been my father’s first,
Then my mother’s, given for me
To the nurse who nursed
My mother in her misery,
That so quite certainly
Someone might know me, who…
Then she was silent, and I too.

I hate when people come:
The women speak and stare
And mean to be so civil.
This one will stroke my hair,
That one will pat my cheek
And praise my Lady’s kindness,
Expecting me to speak;
I like the proud ones best
Who sit as struck with blindness,
As if I wasn’t there.
But if any gentleman

Is staying at the Hall
(Though few come prying here),
My Lady seems to fear
Some downright dreadful evil,
And makes me keep my room
As closely as she can:
So I hate when people come,
It is so troublesome.
In spite of all her care,
Sometimes to keep alive
I sometimes do contrive
To get out in the grounds
For a whiff of wholesome air,
Under the rose you know:
It's charming to break bounds,
Stolen waters are sweet,
And what's the good of feet
If for days they mustn't go?
Give me a longer tether,
Or I may break from it.

Now I have eyes and ears
And just some little wit:
'Almost my Lady's child;'
I recollect she smiled,
Sighed and blushed together;
Then her story of the ring
Sounds not improbable,
She told it me so well
It seemed the actual thing: —
Oh, keep your counsel close,
But I guess under the rose,
In long past summer weather
When the world was blossoming,
And the rose upon its thorn:
I guess not who he was
Flawed honor like a glass,
And made my life forlorn,

But my Mother, Mother, Mother,
Oh, I know her from all other.

My Lady, you might trust
Your daughter with your fame.
Trust me, I would not shame
Our honorable name,
For I have noble blood
Though I was bred in dust
And brought up in the mud.
I will not press my claim,
Just leave me where you will:
But you might trust your daughter,
For blood is thicker than water
And you're my mother still.

So my Lady holds her own
With condescending grace,
And fills her lofty place
With an untroubled face
As a queen may fill a throne.
While I could hint a tale —
(But then I am her child) —
Would make her quail;
Would set her in the dust,
Lorn with no comforter,
Her glorious hair defiled
And ashes on her cheek:
The decent world would thrust
Its finger out at her,
Not much displeased I think
To make a nine days' stir;
The decent world would sink
Its voice to speak of her.

Now this is what I mean

To do, no more, no less:
Never to speak, or show
Bare sign of what I know.
Let the blot pass unseen;
Yea, let her never guess
I hold the tangled clue
She huddles out of view.
Friend, servant, almost child,
So be it and nothing more
On this side of the grave.
Mother, in Paradise,
You'll see with clearer eyes;
Perhaps in this world even
When you are like to die
And face to face with Heaven
You'll drop for once the lie:
But you must drop the mask, not I.

My Lady promises
Two hundred pounds with me
Whenever I may wed
A man she can approve:
And since besides her bounty
I'm fairest in the county
(For so I've heard it said,
Though I don't vouch for this),
Her promised pounds may move
Some honest man to see
My virtues and my beauties;
Perhaps the rising grazier,
Or temperance publican,
May claim my wifely duties.
Meanwhile I wait their leisure
And grace-bestowing pleasure,
I wait the happy man;
But if I hold my head
And pitch my expectations
Just higher than their level,

They must fall back on patience:
I may not mean to wed,
Yet I'll be civil.

Now sometimes in a dream
My heart goes out of me
To build and scheme,
Till I sob after things that seem
So pleasant in a dream:
A home such as I see
My blessed neighbours live in
With father and with mother,
All proud of one another,
Named by one common name
From baby in the bud
To full-blown workman father;
It's little short of Heaven.
I'd give my gentle blood
To wash my special shame
And drown my private grudge;
I'd toil and moil much rather
The dingiest cottage drudge
Whose mother need not blush,
Than live here like a lady
And see my Mother flush
And hear her voice unsteady
Sometimes, yet never dare
Ask to share her care.

Of course the servants sneer
Behind my back at me;
Of course the village girls,
Who envy me my curls
And gowns and idleness,
Take comfort in a jeer;
Of course the ladies guess
Just so much of my history

As points the emphatic stress
With which they laud my Lady;
The gentlemen who catch
A casual glimpse of me
And turn again to see,
Their valets on the watch
To speak a word with me,
All know and sting me wild;
Till I am almost ready
To wish that I were dead,
No faces more to see,
No more words to be said,
My Mother safe at last
Disburdened of her child,
And the past past.

‘All equal before God’ —
Our Rector has it so,
And sundry sleepers nod:
It may be so; I know
All are not equal here,
And when the sleepers wake
They make a difference.
‘All equal in the grave’ —
That shows an obvious sense:
Yet something which I crave
Not death itself brings near;
Now should death half atone
For all my past; or make
The name I bear my own?

I love my dear old Nurse
Who loved me without gains;
I love my mistress even,
Friend, Mother, what you will:
But I could almost curse
My Father for his pains;

And sometimes at my prayer
Kneeling in sight of Heaven
I almost curse him still:
Why did he set his snare
To catch at unaware
My Mother's foolish youth;
Load me with shame that's hers,
And her with something worse,
A lifelong lie for truth?

I think my mind is fixed
On one point and made up:
To accept my lot unmixed;
Never to drug the cup
But drink it by myself.
I'll not be wooed for pelf;
I'll not blot out my shame
With any man's good name;
But nameless as I stand,
My hand is my own hand,
And nameless as I came
I go to the dark land.

'All equal in the grave' —
I bide my time till then:
'All equal before God' —
Today I feel His rod,
Tomorrow He may save:
Amen.

BY THE SEA

Why does the sea moan evermore?
   Shut out from heaven it makes its moan.
It frets against the boundary shore;
   All earth's full rivers cannot fill
   The sea, that drinking thirsteth still.

Sheer miracles of loveliness
   Lie hid in its unlooked-on bed:
Anemones, salt, passionless,
   Blow flower-like; just enough alive
   To blow and multiply and thrive.

Shells quaint with curve, or spot, or spike,
   Encrusted live things argus-eyed,
All fair alike, yet all unlike,
   Are born without a pang, and die
   Without a pang, — and so pass by.

FROM SUNSET TO STAR RISE

Go from me, summer friends, and tarry not:
   I am no summer friend, but wintry cold,
   A silly sheep benighted from the fold,
A sluggard with a thorn-choked garden plot.
Take counsel, sever from my lot your lot,
   Dwell in your pleasant places, hoard your gold;
   Lest you with me should shiver on the wold,
Athirst and hungering on a barren spot.

For I have hedged me with a thorny hedge,
   I live alone, I look to die alone:
Yet sometimes when a wind sighs through the sedge,
   Ghosts of my buried years and friends come back,
My heart goes sighing after swallows flown
   On sometime summer's unreturning track.

DAYS OF VANITY

A dream that waketh,
   Bubble that breaketh,
Song whose burden sigheth,
   A passing breath,
   Smoke that vanisheth, —
Such is life that dieth.

   A flower that fadeth,
   Fruit the tree sheddeth,
Trackless bird that flieth,
   Summer time brief,
   Falling of the leaf, —
Such is life that dieth.

   A scent exhaling,
   Snow waters failing,
Morning dew that drieth,
   A windy blast,
   Lengthening shadows cast, —
Such is life that dieth.

   A scanty measure,
   Rust-eaten treasure,
Spending that nought buyeth,
   Moth on the wing,
   Toil unprofiting, —
Such is life that dieth.

   Morrow by morrow
   Sorrow breeds sorrow,
For this my song sigheth;

From day to night
We lapse out of sight, —
Such is life that dieth.

ONCE FOR ALL

(MARGARET)

I said: This is a beautiful fresh rose.
   I said: I will delight me with its scent,
   Will watch its lovely curve of languishment,
Will watch its leaves unclose, its heart unclose.
I said: Old Earth has put away her snows,
   All living things make merry to their bent,
   A flower is come for every flower that went
In autumn; the sun glows, the south wind blows.
So walking in a garden of delight
   I came upon one sheltered shadowed nook
Where broad leaf shadows veiled the day with night,
   And there lay snow unmelted by the sun: —
I answered: Take who will the path I took,
   Winter nips once for all; love is but one.

ENRICA, 1865

She came among us from the South
   And made the North her home awhile
   Our dimness brightened in her smile,
Our tongue grew sweeter in her mouth.

We chilled beside her liberal glow,
   She dwarfed us by her ampler scale,
   Her full-blown blossom made us pale,
She summer-like and we like snow.

We Englishwomen, trim, correct,
   All minted in the self-same mould,
   Warm-hearted but of semblance cold,
All-courteous out of self-respect.

She woman in her natural grace,
   Less trammeled she by lore of school,
   Courteous by nature not by rule,
Warm-hearted and of cordial face.

So for awhile she made her home
   Among us in the rigid North,
   She who from Italy came forth
And scaled the Alps and crossed the foam.

But if she found us like our sea,
   Of aspect colourless and chill,
   Rock-girt; like it she found us still
Deep at our deepest, strong and free.

AUTUMN VIOLETS

Keep love for youth, and violets for the spring:
   Or if these bloom when worn-out autumn grieves,
   Let them lie hid in double shade of leaves,
Their own, and others dropped down withering;
For violets suit when home birds build and sing,
   Not when the outbound bird a passage cleaves;
   Not with dry stubble of mown harvest sheaves,

But when the green world buds to blossoming.
Keep violets for the spring, and love for youth,
   Love that should dwell with beauty, mirth, and hope:
      Or if a later sadder love be born,
   Let this not look for grace beyond its scope,
But give itself, nor plead for answering truth —
      A grateful Ruth tho' gleaning scanty corn.

A DIRGE

Why were you born when the snow was falling?
You should have come to the cuckoo's calling,
Or when grapes are green in the cluster,
Or, at least, when lithe swallows muster
        For their far off flying
        From summer dying.

Why did you die when the lambs were cropping?
You should have died at the apples' dropping,
When the grasshopper comes to trouble,
And the wheat-fields are sodden stubble,
        And all winds go sighing
        For sweet things dying.

THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY

I.

I would not if I could undo my past,
   Tho' for its sake my future is a blank;
   My past for which I have myself to thank,
For all its faults and follies first and last.
I would not cast anew the lot once cast,
   Or launch a second ship for one that sank,
   Or drug with sweets the bitterness I drank,
Or break by feasting my perpetual fast.
I would not if I could: for much more dear
   Is one remembrance than a hundred joys,
      More than a thousand hopes in jubilee;
   Dearer the music of one tearful voice
      That unforgotten calls and calls to me,
"Follow me here, rise up, and follow here."

II.

What seekest thou, far in the unknown land?
   In hope I follow joy gone on before;
   In hope and fear persistent more and more,
As the dry desert lengthens out its sand.
Whilst day and night I carry in my hand
   The golden key to ope the golden door
   Of golden home; yet mine eye weepeth sore,
For long the journey is that makes no stand.
And who is this that veiled doth walk with thee?
   Lo, this is Love that walketh at my right;
      One exile holds us both, and we are bound
   To selfsame home-joys in the land of light.
Weeping thou walkest with him; weepeth he? —
      Some sobbing weep, some weep and make no sound.

III.

A dimness of a glory glimmers here
   Thro' veils and distance from the space remote,
   A faintest far vibration of a note
Reaches to us and seems to bring us near;
Causing our face to glow with braver cheer,
   Making the serried mist to stand afloat,
   Subduing languor with an antidote,
And strengthening love almost to cast out fear:
Till for one moment golden city walls
   Rise looming on us, golden walls of home,
Light of our eyes until the darkness falls;
   Then thro' the outer darkness burdensome
I hear again the tender voice that calls,
   "Follow me hither, follow, rise, and come."

A GREEN CORNFIELD

"And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."

The earth was green, the sky was blue:
   I saw and heard one sunny morn
A skylark hang between the two,
   A singing speck above the corn;

A stage below, in gay accord,
   White butterflies danced on the wing,
And still the singing skylark soared
   And silent sank, and soared to sing.

The cornfield stretched a tender green
   To right and left beside my walks;
I knew he had a nest unseen
   Somewhere among the million stalks:

And as I paused to hear his song
   While swift the sunny moments slid,
Perhaps his mate sat listening long,
   And listened longer than I did.

A BRIDE SONG

Through the vales to my love!
   To the happy small nest of home
Green from basement to roof;
   Where the honey-bees come
To the window-sill flowers,
   And dive from above,
Safe from the spider that weaves
   Her warp and her woof
In some outermost leaves.

Through the vales to my love!
   In sweet April hours
   All rainbows and showers,
While dove answers dove, —
   In beautiful May,
When the orchards are tender
   And frothing with flowers, —
   In opulent June,
When the wheat stands up slender
   By sweet-smelling hay,
And half the sun's splendour
   Descends to the moon.

Through the vales to my love!
   Where the turf is so soft to the feet,
   And the thyme makes it sweet,
And the stately foxglove
   Hangs silent its exquisite bells;
   And where water wells
The greenness grows greener,
   And bulrushes stand
Round a lily to screen her.

Nevertheless, if this land,
   Like a garden to smell and to sight,
Were turned to a desert of sand,
   Stripped bare of delight,
   All its best gone to worst,
For my feet no repose,
   No water to comfort my thirst,
And heaven like a furnace above, —
   The desert would be
   As gushing of waters to me,
The wilderness be as a rose,
   If it led me to thee,
   O my love!

CONFLUENTS

As rivers seek the sea,
   Much more deep than they,
So my soul seeks thee
   Far away:
As running rivers moan
On their course alone
   So I moan
   Left alone.

As the delicate rose
   To the sun's sweet strength
Doth herself unclose,
   Breadth and length:
So spreads my heart to thee
Unveiled utterly,
   I to thee
   Utterly.

As morning dew exhales
   Sunwards pure and free,
So my spirit fails
   After thee:
As dew leaves not a trace
On the green earth's face;
   I, no trace
   On thy face.

Its goal the river knows,
   Dewdrops find a way,
Sunlight cheers the rose
   In her day:
Shall I, lone sorrow past,

Find thee at the last?
    Sorrow past,
    Thee at last?

THE LOWEST ROOM

Like flowers sequestered from the sun
  And wind of summer, day by day
I dwindled paler, whilst my hair
    Showed the first tinge of grey.

"Oh, what is life, that we should live?
  Or what is death, that we must die?
A bursting bubble is our life:
    I also, what am I?"

"What is your grief? now tell me, sweet,
  That I may grieve," my sister said;
And stayed a white embroidering hand
    And raised a golden head:

Her tresses showed a richer mass,
  Her eyes looked softer than my own,
Her figure had a statelier height,
    Her voice a tenderer tone.

"Some must be second and not first;
  All cannot be the first of all:
Is not this, too, but vanity?
  I stumble like to fall.

"So yesterday I read the acts
  Of Hector and each clangorous king
With wrathful great Aeacides: —
    Old Homer leaves a sting."

The comely face looked up again,

The deft hand lingered on the thread
"Sweet, tell me what is Homer's sting,
Old Homer's sting?" she said.

"He stirs my sluggish pulse like wine,
He melts me like the wind of spice,
Strong as strong Ajax' red right hand,
And grand like Juno's eyes.

"I cannot melt the sons of men,
I cannot fire and tempest-toss: —
Besides, those days were golden days,
Whilst these are days of dross."

She laughed a feminine low laugh,
Yet did not stay her dexterous hand:
"Now tell me of those days," she said,
"When time ran golden sand."

"Then men were men of might and right,
Sheer might, at least, and weighty swords;
Then men in open blood and fire
Bore witness to their words, —

"Crest-rearing kings with whistling spears;
But if these shivered in the shock
They wrenched up hundred-rooted trees,
Or hurled the effacing rock.

"Then hand to hand, then foot to foot,
Stern to the death-grip grappling then,
Who ever thought of gunpowder
Amongst these men of men?

"They knew whose hand struck home the death,

They knew who broke but would not bend,
Could venerate an equal foe
And scorn a laggard friend.

"Calm in the utmost stress of doom,
Devout toward adverse powers above,
They hated with intenser hate
And loved with fuller love.

"Then heavenly beauty could allay
As heavenly beauty stirred the strife:
By them a slave was worshipped more
Than is by us a wife."

She laughed again, my sister laughed;
Made answer o'er the laboured cloth:
"I rather would be one of us
Than wife, or slave, or both."

"Oh better then be slave or wife
Than fritter now blank life away:
Then night had holiness of night,
And day was sacred day.

"The princess laboured at her loom,
Mistress and handmaiden alike;
Beneath their needles grew the field
With warriors armed to strike.

"Or, look again, dim Dian's face
Gleamed perfect through the attendant night:
Were such not better than those holes
Amid that waste of white?

“A shame it is, our aimless life;
I rather from my heart would feed
From silver dish in gilded stall
With wheat and wine the steed —

“The faithful steed that bore my lord
In safety through the hostile land,
The faithful steed that arched his neck
To fondle with my hand.”

Her needle erred; a moment’s pause,
A moment’s patience, all was well.
Then she: “But just suppose the horse,
Suppose the rider fell?

“Then captive in an alien house,
Hungering on exile’s bitter bread, —
They happy, they who won the lot
Of sacrifice,” she said.

Speaking she faltered, while her look
Showed forth her passion like a glass:
With hand suspended, kindling eye,
Flushed cheek, how fair she was!

“Ah well, be those the days of dross;
This, if you will, the age of gold:
Yet had those days a spark of warmth,
While these are somewhat cold —

“Are somewhat mean and cold and slow,
Are stunted from heroic growth:
We gain but little when we prove
The worthlessness of both.”

“But life is in our hands,” she said;
“In our own hands for gain or loss:
Shall not the Sevenfold Sacred Fire
Suffice to purge our dross?

“Too short a century of dreams,
One day of work sufficient length:
Why should not you, why should not I,
Attain heroic strength?

“Our life is given us as a blank,
Ourselves must make it blest or curst:
Who dooms me I shall only be
The second, not the first?

“Learn from old Homer, if you will,
Such wisdom as his books have said:
In one the acts of Ajax shine,
In one of Diomed.

“Honored all heroes whose high deeds
Through life, through death, enlarge their span
Only Achilles in his rage
And sloth is less than man.”

“Achilles only less than man?
He less than man who, half a god,
Discomfited all Greece with rest,
Cowed Ilion with a nod?

“He offered vengeance, lifelong grief
To one dear ghost, uncounted price:
Beasts, Trojans, adverse gods, himself,
Heaped up the sacrifice.

“Self-immolated to his friend,
   Shrined in world’s wonder, Homer’s page,
Is this the man, the less than men
      Of this degenerate age?”

“Gross from his acorns, tusky boar
   Does memorable acts like his;
So for her snared offended young
      Bleeds the swart lioness.”

But here she paused; our eyes had met,
   And I was whitening with the jeer;
She rose: “I went too far,” she said;
      Spoke low: “Forgive me, dear.

“To me our days seem pleasant days,
   Our home a haven of pure content;
Forgive me if I said too much,
      So much more than I meant.

“Homer, though greater than his gods,
   With rough-hewn virtues was sufficed
And rough-hewn men: but what are such
      To us who learn of Christ?”

The much-moved pathos of her voice,
   Her almost tearful eyes, her cheek
Grown pale, confessed the strength of love
      Which only made her speak.

For mild she was, of few soft words,
   Most gentle, easy to be led,
Content to listen when I spoke,
      And reverence what I said:

I elder sister by six years;
   Not half so glad, or wise, or good:
Her words rebuked my secret self
      And shamed me where I stood.

She never guessed her words reproved
   A silent envy nursed within,
A selfish, souring discontent
      Pride-born, the devil's sin.

I smiled, half bitter, half in jest:
   "The wisest man of all the wise
Left for his summary of life
      'Vanity of vanities.'

"Beneath the sun there's nothing new:
   Men flow, men ebb, mankind flows on:
If I am wearied of my life,
      Why, so was Solomon.

"Vanity of vanities he preached
   Of all he found, of all he sought:
Vanity of vanities, the gist
      Of all the words he taught.

"This in the wisdom of the world,
   In Homer's page, in all, we find:
As the sea is not filled, so yearns
      Man's universal mind.

"This Homer felt, who gave his men
   With glory but a transient state:
His very Jove could not reverse

Irrevocable fate.

"Uncertain all their lot save this —
Who wins must lose, who lives must die:
All trodden out into the dark
Alike, all vanity."

She scarcely answered when I paused,
But rather to herself said: "One
Is here," low-voiced and loving, "Yea,
Greater than Solomon."

So both were silent, she and I:
She laid her work aside, and went
Into the garden-walks, like spring,
All gracious with content:

A little graver than her wont,
Because her words had fretted me;
Not warbling quite her merriest tune
Bird-like from tree to tree.

I chose a book to read and dream:
Yet half the while with furtive eyes
Marked how she made her choice of flowers
Intuitively wise,

And ranged them with instinctive taste
Which all my books had failed to teach;
Fresh rose herself, and daintier
Than blossom of the peach.

By birthright higher than myself,
Though nestling of the self-same nest:
No fault of hers, no fault of mine,

But stubborn to digest.

I watched her, till my book unmarked
Slid noiseless to the velvet floor;
Till all the opulent summer-world
Looked poorer than before.

Just then her busy fingers ceased,
Her fluttered colour went and came:
I knew whose step was on the walk,
Whose voice would name her name.

*

Well, twenty years have passed since then:
My sister now, a stately wife
Still fair, looks back in peace and sees
The longer half of life —

The longer half of prosperous life,
With little grief, or fear, or fret:
She, loved and loving long ago,
Is loved and loving yet.

A husband honorable, brave,
Is her main wealth in all the world:
And next to him one like herself,
One daughter golden-curled:

Fair image of her own fair youth,
As beautiful and as serene,
With almost such another love
As her own love has been.

Yet, though of world-wide charity,
And in her home most tender dove,
Her treasure and her heart are stored
In the home-land of love.

She thrives, God's blessed husbandry;
Most like a vine which full of fruit
Doth cling and lean and climb toward heaven,
While earth still binds its root.

I sit and watch my sister's face:
How little altered since the hours
When she, a kind, light-hearted girl,
Gathered her garden flowers:

Her song just mellowed by regret
For having teased me with her talk;
Then all-forgetful as she heard
One step upon the walk.

While I? I sat alone and watched;
My lot in life, to live alone
In mine own world of interests,
Much felt, but little shown.

Not to be first: how hard to learn
That lifelong lesson of the past;
Line graven on line and stroke on stroke:
But, thank God, learned at last.

So now in patience I possess
My soul year after tedious year,
Content to take the lowest place,
The place assigned me here.

Yet sometimes, when I feel my strength
Most weak, and life most burdensome,
I lift mine eyes up to the hills
From whence my help shall come:

Yea, sometimes still I lift my heart
To the Archangelic trumpet-burst,
When all deep secrets shall be shown,
And many last be first.

DEAD HOPE

Hope new born one pleasant morn
    Died at even;
Hope dead lives nevermore,
    No, not in heaven.

If his shroud were but a cloud
    To weep itself away;
Or were he buried underground
    To sprout some day!
But dead and gone is dead and gone
    Vainly wept upon.

Nought we place above his face
    To mark the spot,
But it shows a barren place
    In our lot.

A DAUGHTER OF EVE

A fool I was to sleep at noon,
   And wake when night is chilly
Beneath the comfortless cold moon;
A fool to pluck my rose too soon,
   A fool to snap my lily.

My garden-plot I have not kept;
   Faded and all-forsaken,
I weep as I have never wept:
Oh it was summer when I slept,
   It's winter now I waken.

Talk what you please of future spring
   And sun-warmed sweet tomorrow: —
Stripped bare of hope and everything,
No more to laugh, no more to sing,
   I sit alone with sorrow.

SONG: OH WHAT COMES OVER THE SEA

Oh what comes over the sea,
   Shoals and quicksands past;
And what comes home to me,
   Sailing slow, sailing fast?

A wind comes over the sea
   With a moan in its blast;
But nothing comes home to me,
   Sailing slow, sailing fast.

Let me be, let me be,
   For my lot is cast:
Land or sea all's one to me,
   And sail it slow or fast.

VENUS' LOOKING-GLASS

I marked where lovely Venus and her court
With song and dance and merry laugh went by;
Weightless, their wingless feet seemed made to fly,
Bound from the ground and in mid air to sport.
Left far behind I heard the dolphins snort,
Tracking their goddess with a wistful eye,
Around whose head white doves rose, wheeling high
Or low, and cooed after their tender sort.
All this I saw in spring. Through summer heat
I saw the lovely Queen of Love no more.
But when flushed autumn through the woodlands went
I spied sweet Venus walk amid the wheat:
Whom seeing, every harvester gave o'er
His toil, and laughed and hoped and was content.

LOVE LIES BLEEDING

Love that is dead and buried, yesterday
  Out of his grave rose up before my face,
  No recognition in his look, no trace
Of memory in his eyes dust-dimmed and grey.
While I, remembering, found no word to say,
  But felt my quickened heart leap in its place;
  Caught afterglow thrown back from long set days,
Caught echoes of all music passed away.
Was this indeed to meet? — I mind me yet
  In youth we met when hope and love were quick,
    We parted with hope dead, but love alive:
  I mind me how we parted then heart sick,
    Remembering, loving, hopeless, weak to strive: —
Was this to meet? Not so, we have not met.

BIRD RAPTURES

The sunrise wakes the lark to sing,
   The moonrise wakes the nightingale.
Come darkness, moonrise, every thing
   That is so silent, sweet, and pale:
   Come, so ye wake the nightingale.

Make haste to mount, thou wistful moon,
   Make haste to wake the nightingale:
Let silence set the world in tune
   To hearken to that wordless tale
   Which warbles from the nightingale

O herald skylark, stay thy flight
   One moment, for a nightingale
Floods us with sorrow and delight.
   Tomorrow thou shalt hoist the sail;
Leave us tonight the nightingale.

MY FRIEND

Two days ago with dancing glancing hair,
  With living lips and eyes:
  Now pale, dumb, blind, she lies;
So pale, yet still so fair.

We have not left her yet, not yet alone;
  But soon must leave her where
  She will not miss our care,
Bone of our bone.

Weep not; O friends, we should not weep:
  Our friend of friends lies full of rest;
  No sorrow rankles in her breast,
Fallen fast asleep.

She sleeps below,
  She wakes and laughs above;
  Today, as she walked, let us walk in love,
Tomorrow follow so.

TWILIGHT NIGHT

I.

We met, hand to hand,
   We clasped hands close and fast,
As close as oak and ivy stand;
   But it is past:
   Come day, come night, day comes at last.

We loosed hand from hand,
   We parted face from face;
Each went his way to his own land
   At his own pace:
   Each went to fill his separate place.

If we should meet one day,
   If both should not forget.
We shall clasp hands the accustomed way,
   As when we met
   So long ago, as I remember yet.

II.

Where my heart is (wherever that may be)
   Might I but follow!
If you fly thither over heath and lea,
O honey-seeking bee,
   O careless swallow!
Bid some for whom I watch keep watch for me

Alas! that we must dwell, my heart and I,

So far asunder.
Hours wax to days, and days and days creep by;
I watch with wistful eye,
I wait and wonder:
When will that day draw nigh — that hour draw nigh?

Not yesterday, and not I think today;
Perhaps tomorrow.
Day after day "tomorrow," thus I say:
I watched so yesterday
In hope and sorrow,
Again today I watch the accustomed way.

A BIRD SONG

It's a year almost that I have not seen her:
Oh, last summer green things were greener,
Brambles fewer, the blue sky bluer.

It's surely summer, for there's a swallow:
Come one swallow, his mate will follow,
The bird race quicken and wheel and thicken.

Oh happy swallow whose mate will follow
O'er height, o'er hollow! I'd be a swallow,
To build this weather one nest together.

A SMILE AND A SIGH

A smile because the nights are short!
   And every morning brings such pleasure
Of sweet love-making, harmless sport:
   Love that makes and finds its treasure;
   Love, treasure without measure.

A sigh because the days are long!
   Long, long these days that pass in sighing,
A burden saddens every song:
   While time lags which should be flying,
   We live who would be dying.

AMOR MUNDI

"O where are you going with your love-locks flowing,
   On the west wind blowing along this valley track?"
"The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,
   We shall escape the uphill by never turning back."

So they two went together in glowing August weather,
   The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and right;
And dear she was to doat on, her swift feet seemed to float on
   The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

"Oh, what is that in heaven where grey cloud-flakes are seven,
   Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy skirt?"
"Oh, that's a meteor sent us, a message dumb, portentous,
   An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt."

"Oh, what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers grow thickly,
   Their scent comes rich and sickly?" — "A scaled and hooded worm."
"Oh, what's that in the hollow, so pale I quake to follow?"
   "Oh, that's a thin dead body which waits the eternal term."

"Turn again, O my sweetest, — turn again, false and fleetest:
   This beaten way thou beatest I fear is hell's own track."
"Nay, too steep for hill mounting; nay, too late for cost counting:
   This downhill path is easy, but there's no turning back."

THE GERMAN-FRENCH CAMPAIGN 1870-1871

These two pieces, written during the suspense of a great nation's agony, aim at expressing human sympathy, not political bias.

THY BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIETH

All her corn-fields rippled in the sunshine,
   All her lovely vines, sweets-laden, bowed;
Yet some weeks to harvest and to vintage:
   When, as one man's hand, a cloud
Rose and spread, and, blackening, burst asunder
         In rain and fire and thunder.

Is there nought to reap in the day of harvest?
   Hath the vine in her day no fruit to yield?
Yea, men tread the press, but not for sweetness,
   And they reap a red crop from the field.
Build barns, ye reapers, garner all aright,
         Though your souls be called tonight.

A cry of tears goes up from blackened homesteads,
   A cry of blood goes up from reeking earth:
Tears and blood have a cry that pierces Heaven
   Through all its Hallelujah swells of mirth;
God hears their cry, and though He tarry, yet
         He doth not forget.

Mournful Mother, prone in dust weeping,
   Who shall comfort thee for those who are not?
As thou didst, men do to thee; and heap the measure,
   And heat the furnace sevenfold hot:
As thou once, now these to thee — who pitieth thee
         From sea to sea?

O thou King, terrible in strength, and building
   Thy strong future on thy past!
Though he drink the last, the King of Sheshach,

Yet he shall drink at the last.
Art thou greater than great Babylon,
Which lies overthrown?

Take heed, ye unwise among the people;
O ye fools, when will ye understand? —
He that planted the ear shall He not hear,
Nor He smite who formed the hand?
“Vengeance is Mine, is Mine,” thus saith the Lord: —
O Man, put up thy sword.

TODAY FOR ME

She sitteth still who used to dance,
She weepeth sore and more and more —
Let us sit with thee weeping sore,
O fair France!

She trembleth as the days advance
Who used to be so light of heart: —
We in thy trembling bear a part,
Sister France!

Her eyes shine tearful as they glance:
"Who shall give back my slaughtered sons?
"Bind up," she saith, "my wounded ones." —
Alas, France!

She struggles in a deathly trance,
As in a dream her pulses stir,
She hears the nations calling her,
"France, France, France!"

Thou people of the lifted lance,
Forbear her tears, forbear her blood:
Roll back, roll back, thy whelming flood,
Back from France.

Eye not her loveliness askance,
Forge not for her a galling chain;
Leave her at peace to bloom again,
Vine-clad France.

A time there is for change and chance,
A time for passing of the cup:
And One abides can yet bind up
Broken France.

A time there is for change and chance:
Who next shall drink the trembling cup,
Wring out its dregs and suck them up
After France?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

In the bleak mid-winter
   Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
   Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
   Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
   Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
   Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away
   When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
   A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty
   Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
   Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
   And a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him whom angels
   Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
   Which adore.

Angels and archangels
   May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
   Throng'd the air,
But only His mother

In her maiden bliss
Worshipped her Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part, —
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

CONSIDER

Consider
The lilies of the field whose bloom is brief: —
We are as they;
Like them we fade away,
As doth a leaf.

Consider
The sparrows of the air of small account:
Our God doth view
Whether they fall or mount, —
He guards us too.

Consider
The lilies that do neither spin nor toil,
Yet are most fair: —
What profits all this care
And all this coil?

Consider
The birds that have no barn nor harvest-weeks;
God gives them food: —
Much more our Father seeks
To do us good.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON B.C. 570

Here, where I dwell, I waste to skin and bone;
  The curse is come upon me, and I waste
  In penal torment powerless to atone.
The curse is come on me, which makes no haste
  And doth not tarry, crushing both the proud
  Hard man and him the sinner double-faced.
Look not upon me, for my soul is bowed
  Within me, as my body in this mire;
  My soul crawls dumb-struck, sore bestead and cowed
As Sodom and Gomorrah scourged by fire,
  As Jericho before God's trumpet-peal,
  So we the elect ones perish in His ire.
Vainly we gird on sackcloth, vainly kneel
  With famished faces toward Jerusalem:
  His heart is shut against us not to feel,
His ears against our cry He shutteth them,
  His hand He shorteneth that He will not save,
  His law is loud against us to condemn:
And we, as unclean bodies in the grave
  Inheriting corruption and the dark,
  Are outcast from His presence which we crave.
Our Mercy hath departed from His Ark,
  Our Glory hath departed from His rest,
  Our Shield hath left us naked as a mark
Unto all pitiless eyes made manifest.
  Our very Father hath forsaken us,
  Our God hath cast us from Him: we oppress'd
Unto our foes are even marvellous,
  A hissing and a butt for pointing hands,
  Whilst God Almighty hunts and grinds us thus;
For He hath scattered us in alien lands,
  Our priests, our princes, our anointed king,

And bound us hand and foot with brazen bands.
Here while I sit, my painful heart takes wing
Home to the home-land I may see no more,
Where milk and honey flow, where waters spring
And fail not, where I dwelt in days of yore
Under my fig-tree and my fruitful vine,
There where my parents dwelt at ease before:
Now strangers press the olives that are mine,
Reap all the corners of my harvest-field,
And make their fat hearts wanton with my wine;
To them my trees, to them my gardens yield
Their sweets and spices and their tender green,
O'er them in noontide heat outspread their shield.
Yet these are they whose fathers had not been
Housed with my dogs; whom hip and thigh we smote
And with their blood washed their pollutions clean,
Purging the land which spewed them from its throat;
Their daughters took we for a pleasant prey,
Choice tender ones on whom the fathers dote:
Now they in turn have led our own away;
Our daughters and our sisters and our wives
Sore weeping as they weep who curse the day,
To live, remote from help, dishonored lives,
Soothing their drunken masters with a song,
Or dancing in their golden tinkling gyves:
Accurst if they remember through the long
Estrangement of their exile, twice accursed
If they forget and join the accursèd throng.
How doth my heart that is so wrung not burst
When I remember that my way was plain,
And that God's candle lit me at the first,
Whilst now I grope in darkness, grope in vain,
Desiring but to find Him Who is lost,
To find him once again, but once again!
His wrath came on us to the uttermost,
His covenanted and most righteous wrath.
Yet this is He of Whom we made our boast,
Who lit the Fiery Pillar in our path,
Who swept the Red Sea dry before our feet,

Who in His jealousy smote kings, and hath
Sworn once to David: One shall fill thy seat
Born of thy body, as the sun and moon
'Stablished for aye in sovereignty complete.
O Lord, remember David, and that soon.
The Glory hath departed, Ichabod!
Yet now, before our sun grow dark at noon,
Before we come to nought beneath Thy rod,
Before we go down quick into the pit,
Remember us for good, O God, our God: —
Thy Name will I remember, praising it,
Though Thou forget me, though Thou hide Thy face,
And blot me from the Book which Thou hast writ;
Thy Name will I remember in my praise
And call to mind Thy faithfulness of old,
Though as a weaver Thou cut off my days
And end me as a tale ends that is told.

PARADISE

Once in a dream I saw the flowers
    That bud and bloom in Paradise;
    More fair they are than waking eyes
Have seen in all this world of ours.
And faint the perfume-bearing rose,
    And faint the lily on its stem,
And faint the perfect violet
        Compared with them.

I heard the songs of Paradise:
    Each bird sat singing in his place;
    A tender song so full of grace
It soared like incense to the skies.
Each bird sat singing to his mate
    Soft-cooing notes among the trees:
The nightingale herself were cold
        To such as these.

I saw the fourfold River flow,
    And deep it was, with golden sand;
    It flowed between a mossy land
With murmured music grave and low.

It hath refreshment for all thirst,
    For fainting spirits strength and rest;
Earth holds not such a draught as this
        From east to west.

The Tree of Life stood budding there,
    Abundant with its twelvefold fruits;
    Eternal sap sustains its roots,

Its shadowing branches fill the air.
Its leaves are healing for the world,
   Its fruit the hungry world can feed,
Sweeter than honey to the taste,
      And balm indeed.

I saw the gate called Beautiful;
   And looked, but scarce could look within;
   I saw the golden streets begin,
And outskirts of the glassy pool.
Oh harps, oh crowns of plenteous stars,
   O green palm branches many-leaved —
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
      Nor heart conceived!

I hope to see these things again,
   But not as once in dreams by night;
   To see them with my very sight,
And touch and handle and attain:
To have all Heaven beneath my feet
   For narrow way that once they trod;
To have my part with all the saints,
      And with my God.

MOTHER COUNTRY

Oh what is that country
   And where can it be,
Not mine own country,
   But dearer far to me?
Yet mine own country,
   If I one day may see
Its spices and cedars,
   Its gold and ivory.

As I lie dreaming
   It rises, that land;
There rises before me
   Its green golden strand,
With the bowing cedars
   And the shining sand;
It sparkles and flashes
   Like a shaken brand.

Do angels lean nearer
   While I lie and long?
I see their soft plumage
   And catch their windy song,
Like the rise of a high tide
   Sweeping full and strong;
I mark the outskirts
   Of their reverend throng.

Oh what is a king here,
   Or what is a boor?
Here all starve together,
   All dwarfed and poor;
Here Death's hand knocketh

At door after door,
He thins the dancers
From the festal floor.

Oh what is a handmaid,
Or what is a queen?
All must lie down together
Where the turf is green,
The foulest face hidden,
The fairest not seen;
Gone as if never
They had breathed or been.

Gone from sweet sunshine
Underneath the sod,
Turned from warm flesh and blood
To senseless clod;
Gone as if never
They had toiled or trod,
Gone out of sight of all
Except our God.

Shut into silence
From the accustomed song
Shut into solitude
From all earth's throng,
Run down though swift of foot,
Thrust down though strong;
Life made an end of,
Seemed it short or long.

Life made an end of,
Life but just begun;
Life finished yesterday,
Its last sand run;

Life new-born with the morrow
    Fresh as the sun:
While done is done for ever;
    Undone, undone.

And if that life is life,
    This is but a breath,
The passage of a dream
    And the shadow of death;
But a vain shadow
    If one considereth;
Vanity of vanities,
    As the Preacher saith.

I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS

I am pale with sick desire,
   For my heart is far away
From this world's fitful fire
   And this world's waning day;
In a dream it overleaps
   A world of tedious ills
To where the sunshine sleeps
   On the everlasting hills. —
   Say the Saints: There Angels ease us
      Glorified and white.
   They say: We rest in Jesus,
      Where is not day or night.

My soul saith: I have sought
   For a home that is not gained,
I have spent yet nothing bought,
   Have laboured but not attained;
My pride strove to mount and grow,
   And hath but dwindled down;
My love sought love, and lo!
   Hath not attained its crown. —
   Say the Saints: Fresh souls increase us,
      None languish or recede.
   They say: We love our Jesus,
      And He loves us indeed.

I cannot rise above,
   I cannot rest beneath,
I cannot find out love,
   Or escape from death;
Dear hopes and joys gone by
   Still mock me with a name;
My best belovèd die,

And I cannot die with them. —
Say the Saints: No deaths decrease us,
Where our rest is glorious.
They say: We live in Jesus,
Who once died for us.

O my soul, she beats her wings
And pants to fly away
Up to immortal things
In the heavenly day:
Yet she flags and almost faints;
Can such be meant for me? —
Come and see, say the Saints.
Saith Jesus: Come and see.
Say the Saints: His pleasures please us
Before God and the Lamb.
Come and taste My sweets, saith Jesus:
Be with Me where I am.

THE MASTER IS COME, AND CALLETH FOR THEE

Who calleth? — Thy Father calleth,
   Run, O Daughter, to wait on Him:
He Who chasteneth but for a season
   Trims thy lamp that it burn not dim.

Who calleth? — Thy Master calleth,
   Sit, Disciple, and learn of Him:
He Who teacheth wisdom of Angels
   Makes thee wise as the Cherubim,

Who calleth? — Thy Monarch calleth,
   Rise, O Subject, and follow Him:
He is stronger than Death or Devil,
   Fear not thou if the foe be grim.

Who calleth? — Thy Lord God calleth.
   Fall, O Creature, adoring Him:
He is jealous, thy God Almighty,
   Count not dear to thee life or limb.

Who calleth? — Thy Bridegroom calleth,
   Soar, O Bride, with the Seraphim:
He Who loves thee as no man loveth,
   Bids thee give up thy heart to Him.

WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?

God strengthen me to bear myself;
That heaviest weight of all to bear,
Inalienable weight of care.

All others are outside myself;
I lock my door and bar them out,
The turmoil, tedium, gad-about.

I lock my door upon myself,
And bar them out; but who shall wall
Self from myself, most loathed of all?

If I could once lay down myself,
And start self-purged upon the race
That all must run! Death runs apace.

If I could set aside myself,
And start with lightened heart upon
The road by all men overgone!

God harden me against myself,
This coward with pathetic voice
Who craves for ease and rest and joys:

Myself, arch-traitor to myself;
My hollowest friend, my deadliest foe,
My clog whatever road I go.

Yet One there is can curb myself,

Can roll the strangling load from me.
Break off the yoke and set me free.

WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED, I WILL COMPLAIN

"O Lord, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?
   Me whom thou settest in a barren land,
   Hungry and thirsty on the burning sand,
Hungry and thirsty where no waters be
Nor shadows of date-bearing tree: —
O Lord, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?"

"I came from Edom by as parched a track,
   As rough a track beneath My bleeding feet.
   I came from Edom seeking thee, and sweet
I counted bitterness; I turned not back
But counted life as death, and trod
The winepress all alone: and I am God."

"Yet, Lord, how canst Thou say Thou lovest me?
   For Thou art strong to comfort: and could I
   But comfort one I love, who, like to die,
Lifts feeble hands and eyes that fail to see
In one last prayer for comfort — nay,
I could not stand aside or turn away."

"Alas! thou knowest that for thee I died
   For thee I thirsted with the dying thirst;
   I, Blessed, for thy sake was counted cursed,
In sight of men and angels crucified:
All this and more I bore to prove
My love, and wilt thou yet mistrust My love?"

"Lord, I am fain to think Thou lovest me,
   For Thou art all in all and I am Thine;
   And lo! Thy love is better than new wine,
And I am sick of love in loving Thee.
But dost Thou love me? speak and save,

For jealousy is cruel as the grave.”

“Nay, if thy love is not an empty breath
My love is as thine own — deep answers deep.
Peace, peace: I give to my beloved sleep,
Not death but sleep, for love is strong as death:
Take patience; sweet thy sleep shall be,
Yea, thou shalt wake in Paradise with Me.”

AFTER COMMUNION

Why should I call Thee Lord, Who art my God?
Why should I call Thee Friend, Who art my Love?
Or King, Who art my very Spouse above?
Or call Thy Sceptre on my heart Thy rod?
Lo, now Thy banner over me is love,
All heaven flies open to me at Thy nod:
For Thou hast lit Thy flame in me a clod,
Made me a nest for dwelling of Thy Dove.
What wilt Thou call me in our home above,
Who now hast called me friend? how will it be
When Thou for good wine settest forth the best?
Now Thou dost bid me come and sup with Thee,
Now Thou dost make me lean upon Thy breast:
How will it be with me in time of love?

SAINTS AND ANGELS

It's oh in Paradise that I fain would be,
   Away from earth and weariness and all beside;
Earth is too full of loss with its dividing sea,
   But Paradise upbuilds the bower for the bride.

Where flowers are yet in bud while the boughs are green,
   I would get quit of earth and get robed for heaven;
Putting on my raiment white within the screen,
   Putting on my crown of gold whose gems are seven

Fair is the fourfold river that maketh no moan,
   Fair are the trees fruit-bearing of the wood,
Fair are the gold and bdellium and the onyx stone,
   And I know the gold of that land is good.

O my love, my dove, lift up your eyes
   Toward the eastern gate like an opening rose;
You and I who parted will meet in Paradise,
   Pass within and sing when the gates unclose.

This life is but the passage of a day,
   This life is but a pang and all is over;
But in the life to come which fades not away
   Every love shall abide and every lover.

He who wore out pleasure and mastered all lore,
   Solomon, wrote "Vanity of vanities:"
Down to death, of all that went before
   In his mighty long life, the record is this.

With loves by the hundred, wealth beyond measure,
   Is this he who wrote “Vanity of vanities”?
Yea, “Vanity of vanities” he saith of pleasure,
   And of all he learned set his seal to this.

Yet we love and faint not, for our love is one,
   And we hope and flag not, for our hope is sure,
Although there be nothing new beneath the sun
   And no help for life and for death no cure.

The road to death is life, the gate of life is death,
   We who wake shall sleep, we shall wax who wane;
Let us not vex our souls for stoppage of a breath,
   The fall of a river that turneth not again.

Be the road short, and be the gate near, —
   Shall a short road tire, a strait gate appall?
The loves that meet in Paradise shall cast out fear,
   And Paradise hath room for you and me and all.

A ROSE PLANT IN JERICHO

At morn I plucked a rose and gave it Thee,
A rose of joy and happy love and peace,
A rose with scarce a thorn:
But in the chillness of a second morn
My rose bush drooped, and all its gay increase
Was but one thorn that wounded me.

I plucked the thorn and offered it to Thee;
And for my thorn Thou gavest love and peace,
Not joy this mortal morn:
If Thou hast given much treasure for a thorn,
Wilt thou not give me for my rose increase
Of gladness, and all sweets to me?

My thorny rose, my love and pain, to Thee
I offer; and I set my heart in peace,
And rest upon my thorn:
For verily I think tomorrow morn
Shall bring me Paradise, my gift's increase,
Yea, give Thy very Self to me.

SING-SONG: A NURSERY RHYME BOOK

RHYMES
DEDICATED
WITHOUT PERMISSION
TO
THE BABY
WHO
SUGGESTED
THEM

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ANGELS AT THE FOOT

Angels at the foot,
    And Angels at the head,
And like a curly little lamb
    My pretty babe in bed.

LOVE ME, — I LOVE YOU

Love me, — I love you,
   Love me, my baby;
Sing it high, sing it low,
   Sing it as may be.

Mother's arms under you,
   Her eyes above you;
Sing it high, sing it low,
   Love me — I love you.

MY BABY HAS A FATHER AND A MOTHER

My baby has a father and a mother,
    Rich little baby!
Fatherless, motherless, I know another
    Forlorn as may be:
    Poor little baby!

OUR LITTLE BABY FELL ASLEEP

Our little baby fell asleep,
    And may not wake again
For days and days, and weeks and weeks;
    But then he'll wake again,
And come with his own pretty look,
    And kiss Mamma again.

KOOKOOROOKOO! KOOKOOROOKOO!

"Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!"
Crows the cock before the morn;
"Kikirikee! kikirikee!"
Roses in the east are born.

"Kookoorookoo! kookoorookoo!"
Early birds begin their singing;
"Kikirikee! kikirikee!"
The day, the day, the day is springing.

BABY CRY

Baby cry, —
Oh fie! —
At the physic in the cup:
Gulp it twice
And gulp it thrice,
Baby gulp it up.

EIGHT O’CLOCK

Eight o’clock;
The postman’s knock!
Five letters for Papa;
    One for Lou,
    And none for you,
And three for dear Mamma.

BREAD AND MILK FOR BREAKFAST

Bread and milk for breakfast,
    And woolen frocks to wear,
And a crumb for robin redbreast
    On the cold days of the year.

THERE'S SNOW ON THE FIELDS

There's snow on the fields,
   And cold in the cottage,
While I sit in the chimney nook
   Supping hot pottage.

My clothes are soft and warm,
   Fold upon fold,
But I'm so sorry for the poor
   Out in the cold.

DEAD IN THE COLD, A SONG-SINGING THRUSH

Dead in the cold, a song-singing thrush,
Dead at the foot of a snowberry bush, —
Weave him a coffin of rush,
Dig him a grave where the soft mosses grow,
Raise him a tombstone of snow.

I DUG AND DUG AMONGST THE SNOW

I dug and dug amongst the snow,
And thought the flowers would never grow;
I dug and dug amongst the sand,
And still no green thing came to hand.

Melt, O snow! the warm winds blow
To thaw the flowers and melt the snow;
But all the winds from every land
Will rear no blossom from the sand.

A CITY PLUM IS NOT A PLUM

A city plum is not a plum;
A dumb-bell is no bell, though dumb;
A party rat is not a rat;
A sailor’s cat is not a cat;
A soldier’s frog is not a frog;
A captain’s log is not a log.

YOUR BROTHER HAS A FALCON

Your brother has a falcon,
    Your sister has a flower;
But what is left for mannikin,
    Born within a hour?

I'll nurse you on my knee, my knee,
    My own little son;
I'll rock you, rock you, in my arms,
    My least little one.

HEAR WHAT THE MOURNFUL LINNETS SAY

Hear what the mournful linnets say:
    “We built our nest compact and warm,
But cruel boys came round our way
    And took our summerhouse by storm.

“They crushed the eggs so neatly laid;
    So now we sit with drooping wing,
And watch the ruin they have made,
    Too late to build, too sad to sing.”

A BABY'S CRADLE WITH NO BABY IN IT

A baby's cradle with no baby in it,
   A baby's grave where autumn leaves drop sere;
The sweet soul gathered home to Paradise,
   The body waiting here.

HOP-O'-MY-THUMB AND LITTLE JACK HORNER

Hop-o'-my-thumb and little Jack Horner,
    What do you mean by tearing and fighting?
Sturdy dog Trot close round the corner,
    I never caught him growling and biting.

HOPE IS LIKE A HAREBELL TREMBLING FROM ITS BIRTH

Hope is like a harebell trembling from its birth,
Love is like a rose the joy of all the earth;
Faith is like a lily lifted high and white,
Love is like a lovely rose the world's delight;
Harebells and sweet lilies show a thornless growth,
But the rose with all its thorns excels them both.

O WIND, WHY DO YOU NEVER REST

O wind, why do you never rest
    Wandering, whistling to and fro,
Bringing rain out of the west,
    From the dim north bringing snow?

CRYING, MY LITTLE ONE, FOOTSORE AND WEARY?

Crying, my little one, footsore and weary?
   Fall asleep, pretty one, warm on my shoulder:
I must tramp on through the winter night dreary,
   While the snow falls on me colder and colder.

You are my one, and I have not another;
   Sleep soft, my darling, my trouble and treasure;
Sleep warm and soft in the arms of your mother,
   Dreaming of pretty things, dreaming of pleasure.

GROWING IN THE VALE

Growing in the vale
   By the uplands hilly,
Growing straight and frail,
   Lady Daffadowndilly.

In a golden crown,
And a scant green gown
   While the spring blows chilly,
Lady Daffadown,
   Sweet Daffadowndilly.

A LINNET IN A GILDED CAGE

A linnet in a gilded cage, —
   A linnet on a bough, —
In frosty winter one might doubt
   Which bird is luckier now.

But let the trees burst out in leaf,
   And nests be on the bough,
Which linnet is the luckier bird,
   Oh who could doubt it now?

WRENS AND ROBINS IN THE HEDGE

Wrens and robins in the hedge,
Wrens and robins here and there;
Building, perching, pecking, fluttering,
Everywhere!

MY BABY HAS A MOTTLED FIST

My baby has a mottled fist,
   My baby has a neck in creases;
My baby kisses and is kissed,
   For he’s the very thing for kisses.

WHY DID BABY DIE

Why did baby die,
Making Father sigh,
Mother cry?

Flowers, that bloom to die,
Make no reply
Of “why?”
But bow and die.

IF ALL WERE RAIN AND NEVER SUN

If all were rain and never sun,
    No bow could span the hill;
If all were sun and never rain,
    There'd be no rainbow still.

O WIND, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN

O wind, where have you been,
    That you blow so sweet?
Among the violets
    Which blossom at your feet.

The honeysuckle waits
    For Summer and for heat.
But violets in the chilly Spring
    Make the turf so sweet.

ON THE GRASSY BANKS

On the grassy banks
Lambkins at their pranks;
Woolly sisters, woolly brothers
    Jumping off their feet
While their woolly mothers
    Watch by them and bleat.

RUSHES IN A WATERY PLACE

Rushes in a watery place,
   And reeds in a hollow;
A soaring skylark in the sky,
   A darting swallow;
And where pale blossom used to hang
   Ripe fruit to follow.

MINNIE AND MATTIE

Minnie and Mattie
   And fat little May,
Out in the country,
   Spending a day.

Such a bright day,
   With the sun glowing,
And the trees half in leaf,
   And the grass growing.

Pinky white pigling
   Squeals through his snout,
Woolly white lambkin
   Frisks all about.

Cluck! cluck! the nursing hen
   Summons her folk, —
Ducklings all downy soft
   Yellow as yolk.

Cluck! cluck! the mother hen
   Summons her chickens
To peck the dainty bits
   Found in her pickings.

Minnie and Mattie
   And May carry posies,
Half of sweet violets,
   Half of primroses.

Give the sun time enough,
    Glowing and glowing,
He'll rouse the roses
    And bring them blowing.

Don't wait for roses
    Losing today,
O Minnie, Mattie,
    And wise little May.

Violets and primroses
    Blossom today
For Minnie and Mattie
    And fat little May.

HEARTSEASE IN MY GARDEN BED

Heartsease in my garden bed,
    With sweetwilliam white and red,
Honeysuckle on my wall: —
    Heartsease blossoms in my heart
When sweet William comes to call,
    But it withers when we part,
And the honey-trumpets fall.

IF I WERE A QUEEN

If I were a Queen,
    What would I do?
I'd make you King,
    And I'd wait on you.

If I were a King,
    What would I do?
I'd make you Queen,
    For I'd marry you.

WHAT ARE HEAVY? SEA-SAND AND SORROW

What are heavy? sea-sand and sorrow:
What are brief? today and tomorrow:
What are frail? Spring blossoms and youth:
What are deep? the ocean and truth.

THERE IS BUT ONE MAY IN THE YEAR

There is but one May in the year,
   And sometimes May is wet and cold;
There is but one May in the year
   Before the year grows old.

Yet though it be the chilliest May,
   With least of sun and most of showers,
Its wind and dew, its night and day,
   Bring up the flowers.

THE SUMMER NIGHTS ARE SHORT

The summer nights are short
    Where northern days are long:
For hours and hours lark after lark
    Trills out his song.

The summer days are short
    Where southern nights are long:
Yet short the night when nightingales
    Trill out their song.

THE DAYS ARE CLEAR

The days are clear,
   Day after day,
When April's here,
   That leads to May,
And June
Must follow soon:
   Stay, June, stay! —
If only we could stop the moon
And June!

TWIST ME A CROWN OF WIND-FLOWERS

Twist me a crown of wind-flowers;
    That I may fly away
To hear the singers at their song,
    And players at their play.

Put on your crown of wind-flowers:
    But whither would you go?
Beyond the surging of the sea
    And the storms that blow.

Alas! your crown of wind-flowers
    Can never make you fly:
I twist them in a crown today,
    And tonight they die.

BROWN AND FURRY

Brown and furry
Caterpillar in a hurry,
Take your walk
To the shady leaf, or stalk,
Or what not,
Which may be the chosen spot.
No toad spy you,
Hovering bird of prey pass by you;
Spin and die,
To live again a butterfly.

A TOADSTOOL COMES UP IN A NIGHT

A toadstool comes up in a night, —
   Learn the lesson, little folk: —
An oak grows on a hundred years,
   But then it is an oak.

A POCKET HANDKERCHIEF TO HEM

A pocket handkerchief to hem —
   Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!
How many stitches it will take
   Before it's done, I fear.

Yet set a stitch and then a stitch,
   And stitch and stitch away,
Till stitch by stitch the hem is done —
   And after work is play!

IF A PIG WORE A WIG

If a pig wore a wig,
  What could we say?
Treat him as a gentleman,
  And say “Good day.”

If his tail chanced to fail,
  What could we do? —
Send him to the tailoress
  To get one new.

SELDOM “CAN’T,”

Seldom “can’t,”
  Seldom “don’t”;
Never “shan’t,”
  Never “won’t.”

1 AND 1 ARE 2

1 and 1 are 2 —
That's for me and you.

2 and 2 are 4 —
That's a couple more.

3 and 3 are 6
Barley-sugar sticks.

4 and 4 are 8
Tumblers at the gate.

5 and 5 are 10
Bluff seafaring men.

6 and 6 are 12
Garden lads who delve.

7 and 7 are 14
Young men bent on sporting.

8 and 8 are 16
Pills the doctor's mixing.

9 and 9 are 18
Passengers kept waiting.

10 and 10 are 20
Roses — pleasant plenty!

11 and 11 are 22
Sums for brother George to do.

12 and 12 are 24
Pretty pictures, and no more.

HOW MANY SECONDS IN A MINUTE?

How many seconds in a minute?
Sixty, and no more in it.

How many minutes in an hour?
Sixty for sun and shower.

How many hours in a day?
Twenty-four for work and play.

How many days in a week?
Seven both to hear and speak.

How many weeks in a month?
Four, as the swift moon runn'th.

How many months in a year?
Twelve the almanack makes clear.

How many years in an age?
One hundred says the sage.

How many ages in time?
No one knows the rhyme.

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR MY POUND?

What will you give me for my pound?
Full twenty shillings round.
What will you give me for my shilling?
Twelve pence to give I'm willing.
What will you give me for my penny?
Four farthings, just so many.

JANUARY COLD DESOLATE

January cold desolate;
February all dripping wet;
March wind ranges;
April changes;
Birds sing in tune
   To flowers of May,
And sunny June
   Brings longest day;
In scorched July
The storm-clouds fly
Lightning-torn;
August bears corn,
September fruit;
In rough October
Earth must disrobe her;
Stars fall and shoot
In keen November;
And night is long
And cold is strong
In bleak December.

WHAT IS PINK? A ROSE IS PINK

What is pink? a rose is pink
By the fountain's brink.
What is red? a poppy's red
In its barley bed.
What is blue? the sky is blue
Where the clouds float thro'.
What is white? a swan is white
Sailing in the light.
What is yellow? pears are yellow,
Rich and ripe and mellow.
What is green? the grass is green,
With small flowers between.
What is violet? clouds are violet
In the summer twilight.
What is orange? why, an orange,
Just an orange!

MOTHER SHAKE THE CHERRY-TREE

Mother shake the cherry-tree,
    Susan catch a cherry;
Oh how funny that will be,
    Let's be merry!

One for brother, one for sister,
    Two for mother more,
Six for father, hot and tired,
    Knocking at the door.

A PIN HAS A HEAD, BUT HAS NO HAIR

A pin has a head, but has no hair;
A clock has a face, but no mouth there;
Needles have eyes, but they cannot see;
A fly has a trunk without lock or key;
A timepiece may lose, but cannot win;
A corn-field dimples without a chin;
A hill has no leg, but has a foot;
A wine-glass a stem, but not a root;
A watch has hands, but no thumb or finger;
A boot has a tongue, but is no singer;
Rivers run, though they have no feet;
A saw has teeth, but it does not eat;
Ash-trees have keys, yet never a lock;
And baby crows, without being a cock.

HOPPING FROG, HOP HERE AND BE SEEN

Hopping frog, hop here and be seen,
   I'll not pelt you with stick or stone:
Your cap is laced and your coat is green;
   Good bye, we'll let each other alone.

Plodding toad, plod here and be looked at,
You the finger of scorn is crooked at:
But though you're lumpish, you're harmless too;
You won't hurt me, and I won't hurt you.

WHERE INNOCENT BRIGHT-EYED DAISIES ARE

Where innocent bright-eyed daisies are,
    With blades of grass between,
Each daisy stands up like a star
    Out of a sky of green.

THE CITY MOUSE LIVES IN A HOUSE

The city mouse lives in a house; —
   The garden mouse lives in a bower,
He's friendly with the frogs and toads,
   And sees the pretty plants in flower.

The city mouse eats bread and cheese; —
   The garden mouse eats what he can;
We will not grudge him seeds and stalks,
   Poor little timid furry man.

WHAT DOES THE DONKEY BRAY ABOUT

What does the donkey bray about?
What does the pig grunt through his snout?
What does the goose mean by a hiss?
Oh, Nurse, if you can tell me this,
I'll give you such a kiss.

The cockatoo calls "cockatoo,"
The magpie chatters "how d'ye do?"
The jackdaw bids me "go away,"
Cuckoo cries "cuckoo" half the day:
What do the others say?

THREE PLUM BUNS

Three plum buns
    To eat here at the stile
In the clover meadow,
    For we have walked a mile.

One for you, and one for me,
    And one left over:
Give it to the boy who shouts
    To scare sheep from the clover.

A MOTHERLESS SOFT LAMBKIN

A motherless soft lambkin
   Along upon a hill;
No mother's fleece to shelter him
   And wrap him from the cold: —
I'll run to him and comfort him,
   I'll fetch him, that I will;
I'll care for him and feed him
   Until he's strong and bold.

DANCING ON THE HILL-TOPS

Dancing on the hill-tops,
   Singing in the valleys,
Laughing with the echoes,
   Merry little Alice.

Playing games with lambkins
   In the flowering valleys,
Gathering pretty posies,
   Helpful little Alice.

If her father's cottage
   Turned into a palace,
And he owned the hill-tops
   And the flowering valleys,
She'd be none the happier,
   Happy little Alice.

WHEN FISHES SET UMBRELLAS UP

When fishes set umbrellas up
   If the rain-drops run,
Lizards will want their parasols
   To shade them from the sun.

THE PEACOCK HAS A SCORE OF EYES

The peacock has a score of eyes,
    With which he cannot see;
The cod-fish has a silent sound,
    However that may be;

No dandelions tell the time,
    Although they turn to clocks;
Cat's-cradle does not hold the cat,
    Nor foxglove fit the fox.

PUSSY HAS A WHISKERED FACE

Pussy has a whiskered face,
Kitty has such pretty ways;
Doggie scampers when I call,
And has a heart to love us all.

THE DOG LIES IN HIS KENNEL

The dog lies in his kennel,
   And Puss purrs on the rug,
And baby perches on my knee
   For me to love and hug.

Pat the dog and stroke the cat,
   Each in its degree;
And cuddle and kiss my baby,
   And baby kiss me.

IF HOPE GREW ON A BUSH

If hope grew on a bush,
   And joy grew on a tree,
What a nosegay for the plucking
   There would be!

But oh! in windy autumn,
   When frail flowers wither,
What should we do for hope and joy,
   Fading together?

I PLANTED A HAND

I planted a hand
   And there came up a palm,
I planted a heart
   And there came up balm.

Then I planted a wish,
   But there sprang a thorn,
While heaven frowned with thunder
   And earth sighed forlorn.

UNDER THE IVY BUSH

Under the ivy bush
   One sits sighing,
And under the willow tree
   One sits crying: —

Under the ivy bush
   Cease from your sighing,
But under the willow-tree
   Lie down a-dying.

THERE IS ONE THAT HAS A HEAD WITHOUT AN EYE

There is one that has a head without an eye,
And there's one that has an eye without a head:
You may find the answer if you try;
And when all is said,
Half the answer hangs upon a thread!

IF A MOUSE COULD FLY

If a mouse could fly,
   Or if a crow could swim,
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
   I'd like to be like him.

If a mouse could fly,
   He might fly away;
Or if a crow could swim,
   It might turn him grey;
Or if a sprat could walk and talk,
What would he find to say?

SING ME A SONG

Sing me a song —
    What shall I sing? —
Three merry sisters
    Dancing in a ring,
Light and fleet upon their feet
    As birds upon the wing.

Tell me a tale —
    What shall I tell?
Two mournful sisters,
    And a tolling knell,
Tolling ding and tolling dong,
    Ding dong bell.

THE LILY HAS AN AIR

The lily has an air,
   And the snowdrop a grace,
And the sweetpea a way,
   And the heartsease a face, —
Yet there's nothing like the rose
      When she blows.

MARGARET HAS A MILKING-PAIL

Margaret has a milking-pail,
   And she rises early;
Thomas has a threshing-flail,
      And he's up betimes.

Sometimes crossing through the grass
   Where the dew lies pearly,
They say "Good morrow" as they pass
      By the leafy limes.

IN THE MEADOW — WHAT IN THE MEADOW?

In the meadow — what in the meadow?
Bluebells, buttercups, meadowsweet,
And fairy rings for the children's feet
In the meadow.

In the garden — what in the garden?
Jacob's-ladder and Solomon's-seal,
And Love-lies-bleeding beside All-heal
In the garden.

A FRISKY LAMB

A frisky lamb
And a frisky child
Playing their pranks
    In a cowslip meadow:
The sky all blue
And the air all mild
And the fields all sun
    And the lanes half shadow.

MIX A PANCAKE

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
    Pop it in the pan;
Fry the pancake,
Toss the pancake, —
    Catch it if you can.

THE WIND HAS SUCH A RAINY SOUND

The wind has such a rainy sound
   Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound, —
   Will the ships go down?

The apples in the orchard
   Tumble from their tree. —
Oh will the ships go down, go down,
   In the windy sea?

THREE LITTLE CHILDREN

Three little children
On the wide wide earth,
Motherless children —
Cared for from their birth
By tender angels.

Three little children
On the wide wide sea,
Motherless children —
Safe as safe can be
With guardian angels.

FLY AWAY, FLY AWAY OVER THE SEA

Fly away, fly away over the sea,
   Sun-loving swallow, for summer is done;
Come again, come again, come back to me,
   Bringing the summer and bringing the sun.

MINNIE BAKES OATEN CAKES

Minnie bakes oaten cakes,
  Minnie brews ale,
All because her Johnny's coming
        Home from sea.
And she glows like a rose
  Who was so pale,
And "Are you sure the church clock goes?"
        Says she.

A WHITE HEN SITTING

A white hen sitting
   On white eggs three:
Next, three speckled chickens
   As plump as plump can be.

An owl, and a hawk,
   And a bat come to see:
But chicks beneath their mother's wing
   Squat safe as safe can be.

CURRANTS ON A BUSH

Currants on a bush,
    And figs upon a stem,
And cherries on a bending bough,
    And Ned to gather them.

I HAVE BUT ONE ROSE IN THE WORLD

I have but one rose in the world,
    And my one rose stands a-drooping:
Oh, when my single rose is dead
    There'll be but thorns for stooping.

ROSY MAIDEN WINIFRED

Rosy maiden Winifred,
With a milkpail on her head,
Tripping through the corn,
    While the dew lies on the wheat
        In the sunny morn.
Scarlet shepherd's-weatherglass
    Spreads wide open at her feet
        As they pass;
Cornflowers give their almond smell
    While she brushes by,
    And a lark sings from the sky
        "All is well."

WHEN THE COWS COME HOME THE MILK IS COMING

When the cows come home the milk is coming,
Honey's made while the bees are humming;
Duck and drake on the rushy lake,
And the deer live safe in the breezy brake;
And timid, funny, brisk little bunny,
Winks his nose and sits all sunny.

ROSES BLUSHING RED AND WHITE

Roses blushing red and white,
For delight;
Honeysuckle wreaths above,
For love;
Dim sweet-scented heliotrope,
For hope;
Shining lilies tall and straight,
For royal state;
Dusky pansies, let them be
For memory;
With violets of fragrant breath,
For death.

DING A DING

“Ding a ding,”
The sweet bells sing,
And say:
“Come, all be gay”
For a wedding day.

“Dong a dong,”
The bells sigh long,
And call:
“Weep one, weep all”
For a funeral.

A RING UPON HER FINGER

A ring upon her finger,
    Walks the bride,
With the bridegroom tall and handsome
    At her side.

A veil upon her forehead
    Walks the bride,
With the bridegroom proud and merry
    At her side.

Fling flowers beneath the footsteps
    Of the bride;
Fling flowers before the bridegroom
    At her side.

FERRY ME ACROSS THE WATER

"Ferry me across the water,
   Do, boatman, do."
"If you've a penny in your purse
   I'll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse,
   And my eyes are blue;
So ferry me across the water,
   Do, boatman, do."

"Step into my ferry-boat,
   Be they black or blue,
And for the penny in your purse
   I'll ferry you."

WHEN A MOUNTING SKYLARK SINGS

When a mounting skylark sings
    In the sunlit summer morn,
I know that heaven is up on high,
    And on earth are fields of corn.

But when a nightingale sings
    In the moonlit summer even,
I know not if earth is merely earth,
    Only that heaven is heaven.

WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

Who has seen the wind?
   Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling
   The wind is passing thro'.

Who has seen the wind?
   Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads
   The wind is passing by.

THE HORSES OF THE SEA

The horses of the sea
   Rear a foaming crest,
But the horses of the land
   Serve us the best.

The horses of the land
   Munch corn and clover,
While the foaming sea-horses
   Toss and turn over.

O SAILOR, COME ASHORE

O sailor, come ashore,
    What have you brought for me?
Red coral, white coral,
    Coral from the sea.

I did not dig it from the ground,
    Nor pluck it from a tree;
Feeble insects made it
    In the stormy sea.

A DIAMOND OR A COAL?

A diamond or a coal?
   A diamond, if you please:
Who cares about a clumsy coal
   Beneath the summer trees?

A diamond or a coal?
   A coal, sir, if you please:
One comes to care about the coal
   What time the waters freeze.

AN EMERALD IS AS GREEN AS GRASS

An emerald is as green as grass;
   A ruby red as blood;
A sapphire shines as blue as heaven;
   A flint lies in the mud.

A diamond is a brilliant stone,
   To catch the world's desire;
An opal holds a fiery spark;
   But a flint holds fire.

BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS

Boats sail on the rivers,
   And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
   Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
   As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
   And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
   Is prettier far than these.

THE LILY HAS A SMOOTH STALK

The lily has a smooth stalk,
   Will never hurt your hand;
But the rose upon her briar
   Is lady of the land.

There's sweetness in an apple tree,
   And profit in the corn;
But lady of all beauty
   Is a rose upon a thorn.

When with moss and honey
   She tips her bending briar,
And half unfolds her glowing heart,
   She sets the world on fire.

HURT NO LIVING THING

Hurt no living thing:
   Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
   Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
   Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep.

I CAUGHT A LITTLE LADYBIRD

I caught a little ladybird
    That flies far away;
I caught a little lady wife
    That is both staid and gay.

Come back, my scarlet ladybird,
    Back from far away;
I weary of my dolly wife,
    My wife that cannot play.

She’s such a senseless wooden thing
    She stares the livelong day;
Her wig of gold is stiff and cold
    And cannot change to grey.

ALL THE BELLS WERE RINGING

All the bells were ringing
And all the birds were singing,
When Molly sat down crying
   For her broken doll:
   O you silly Moll!
Sobbing and sighing
   For a broken doll,
When all the bells are ringing
And all the birds are singing.

WEE WEE HUSBAND

Wee wee husband,
   Give me some money,
I have no comfits,
   And I have no honey.

Wee wee wifie,
   I have no money,
Milk, nor meat, nor bread to eat,
   Comfits, nor honey.

I HAVE A LITTLE HUSBAND

I have a little husband
  And he is gone to sea,
The winds that whistle round his ship
  Fly home to me.

The winds that sigh about me
  Return again to him;
So I would fly, if only I
  Were light of limb.

THE DEAR OLD WOMAN IN THE LANE

The dear old woman in the lane
   Is sick and sore with pains and aches,
We'll go to her this afternoon,
   And take her tea and eggs and cakes.

We'll stop to make the kettle boil,
   And brew some tea, and set the tray,
And poach an egg, and toast a cake,
   And wheel her chair round, if we may.

SWIFT AND SURE THE SWALLOW

Swift and sure the swallow,
    Slow and sure the snail:
Slow and sure may miss his way,
    Swift and sure may fail.

I DREAMT I CAUGHT A LITTLE OWL

“I dreamt I caught a little owl
    And the bird was blue — ”

“But you may hunt for ever
And not find such a one.”

“I dreamt I set a sunflower,
    And red as blood it grew — ”

“But such a sunflower never
Bloomed beneath the sun.”

WHAT DOES THE BEE DO?

What does the bee do?
  Bring home honey.
And what does Father do?
  Bring home money.
And what does Mother do?
  Lay out the money.
And what does baby do?
  Eat up the honey.

I HAVE A POLL PARROT

I have a Poll parrot,
    And Poll is my doll,
And my nurse is Polly,
    And my sister Poll.

“Polly!” cried Polly,
“Don’t tear Polly dolly” —
While soft-hearted Poll
Trembled for the doll.

A HOUSE OF CARDS

A house of cards
   Is neat and small:
Shake the table,
   It must fall.

Find the Court cards
   One by one;
Raise it, roof it, —
   Now it's done: —
Shake the table!
   That's the fun.

THE ROSE WITH SUCH A BONNY BLUSH

The rose with such a bonny blush,
    What has the rose to blush about?
If it's the sun that makes her flush,
    What's in the sun to flush about?

THE ROSE THAT BLUSHES ROSY RED

The rose that blushes rosy red,
    She must hang her head;
The lily that blows spotless white,
    She may stand upright.

OH, FAIR TO SEE

Oh, fair to see
Blossom-laden cherry tree,
    Arrayed in sunny white;
    An April day's delight,
Oh, fair to see!

Oh, fair to see
Fruit-laden cherry tree,
    With balls of shining red
    Decking a leafy head,
Oh, fair to see!

CLEVER LITTLE WILLIE WEE

Clever little Willie wee,
   Bright-eyed, blue-eyed little fellow;
Merry little Margery
   With her hair all yellow.

Little Willie in his heart
   Is a sailor on the sea,
And he often cons a chart
   With sister Margery.

THE PEACH TREE ON THE SOUTHERN WALL

The peach tree on the southern wall
   Has basked so long beneath the sun,
Her score of peaches great and small
   Bloom rosy, every one.

A peach for brothers, one for each,
   A peach for you and a peach for me;
But the biggest, rosiest, downiest peach
   For Grandmamma with her tea.

A ROSE HAS THORNS AS WELL AS HONEY

A rose has thorns as well as honey,
I'll not have her for love or money;
An iris grows so straight and fine,
That she shall be no friend of mine;
Snowdrops like the snow would chill me;
Nightshade would caress and kill me;
Crocus like a spear would fright me;
Dragon's-mouth might bark or bite me;
Convolvulus but blooms to die;
A wind-flower suggests a sigh;
Love-lies-bleeding makes me sad;
And poppy-juice would drive me mad: —
But give me holly, bold and jolly,
Honest, prickly, shining holly;
Pluck me holly leaf and berry
For the day when I make merry.

IS THE MOON TIRED? SHE LOOKS SO PALE

Is the moon tired? she looks so pale
Within her misty veil:
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.

Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.

IF STARS DROPPED OUT OF HEAVEN

If stars dropped out of heaven,
   And if flowers took their place,
The sky would still look very fair,
   And fair earth's face.

Winged angels might fly down to us
   To pluck the stars,
Be we could only long for flowers
   Beyond the cloudy bars.

GOODBYE IN FEAR, GOODBYE IN SORROW

“Goodbye in fear, goodbye in sorrow,
  Goodbye, and all in vain,
Never to meet again, my dear — ”
  “Never to part again.”
“Goodbye today, goodbye tomorrow,
  Goodbye till earth shall wane,
Never to meet again, my dear — ”
  “Never to part again.”

IF THE SUN COULD TELL US HALF

If the sun could tell us half
    That he hears and sees,
Sometimes he would make us laugh,
        Sometimes make us cry:
Think of all the birds that make
    Homes among the trees;
Think of cruel boys who take
        Birds that cannot fly.

IF THE MOON CAME FROM HEAVEN

If the moon came from heaven,
   Talking all the way,
What could she have to tell us,
   And what could she say?

"I've seen a hundred pretty things,
   And seen a hundred gay;
But only think: I peep by night
   And do not peep by day!"

O LADY MOON, YOUR HORNS POINT TOWARD THE EAST

O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the east:
Shine, be increased;
O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the west:
Wane, be at rest.

WHAT DO THE STARS DO

What do the stars do
   Up in the sky,
Higher than the wind can blow,
   Or the clouds can fly?

Each star in its own glory
   Circles, circles still;
As it was lit to shine and set,
   And do its Maker's will.

MOTHERLESS BABY AND BABYLESS MOTHER

Motherless baby and babyless mother,
Bring them together to love one another.

CRIMSON CURTAINS ROUND MY MOTHER'S BED

Crimson curtains round my mother's bed,
    Silken soft as may be;
Cool white curtains round about my bed,
    For I am but a baby.

BABY LIES SO FAST ASLEEP

Baby lies so fast asleep
    That we cannot wake her:
Will the angels clad in white
    Fly from heaven to take her?

Baby lies so fast asleep
    That no pain can grieve her;
Put a snowdrop in her hand,
    Kiss her once and leave her.

I KNOW A BABY, SUCH A BABY

I know a baby, such a baby, —
   Round blue eyes and cheeks of pink,
Such an elbow furrowed with dimples,
   Such a wrist where creases sink.

“Cuddle and love me, cuddle and love me,”
   Crows the mouth of coral pink:
Oh, the bald head, and, oh, the sweet lips,
   And, oh, the sleepy eyes that wink!

LULLABY, OH, LULLABY!

Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
Flowers are closed and lambs are sleeping;
    Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
Stars are up, the moon is peeping;
    Lullaby, oh, lullaby!
While the birds are silence keeping,
    (Lullaby, oh, lullaby!)
Sleep, my baby, fall a-sleeping,
    Lullaby, oh, lullaby!

LIE A-BED

Lie a-bed,
Sleepy head,
Shut up eyes, bo-peep;
Till daybreak
Never wake: —
Baby, sleep.

BROWNIE, BROWNIE, LET DOWN YOUR MILK

Brownie, Brownie, let down your milk
White as swansdown and smooth as silk,
Fresh as dew and pure as snow:
For I know where the cowslips blow,
And you shall have a cowslip wreath
No sweeter scented than your breath.

STROKE A FLINT, AND THERE IS NOTHING TO ADMIRE

Stroke a flint, and there is nothing to admire:
Strike a flint, and forthwith flash out sparks of fire.

I AM A KING

I am a King,
   Or an Emperor rather,
I wear crown-imperial
   And prince's-feather;
Golden-rod is the sceptre
   I wield and wag,
And a broad purple flag-flower
   Waves for my flag.

Elder the pithy
   With old-man and sage,
These are my councillors
   Green in old age;
Lord-and-ladies in silence
   Stand round me and wait,
While gay ragged-robin
   Makes bows at my gate.

PLAYING AT BOB CHERRY

Playing at bob cherry
    Tom and Nell and Hugh:
Cherry bob! cherry bob!
    There's a bob for you.

Tom bobs a cherry
    For gaping snapping Hugh,
While curly-pated Nelly
    Snaps at it too.

Look, look, look —
    Oh what a sight to see!
The wind is playing cherry bob
    With the cherry tree.

BLIND FROM MY BIRTH

Blind from my birth,
Where flowers are springing
I sit on earth
All dark.
Hark! hark!
A lark is singing.
His notes are all for me,
For me his mirth: —
Till some day I shall see
Beautiful flowers
And birds in bowers
Where all Joy Bells are ringing.

A PAGEANT AND OTHER POEMS

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SONNETS ARE FULL OF LOVE, AND THIS MY TOME

Sonnets are full of love, and this my tome
  Has many sonnets: so here now shall be
  One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,
  To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;
  Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my loadstar while I go and come.
And so because you love me, and because
  I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
    Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honored name:
    In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
  Of time and change and mortal life and death.

THE KEY-NOTE

Where are the songs I used to know,
   Where are the notes I used to sing?
   I have forgotten everything
I used to know so long ago;
Summer has followed after Spring;
   Now Autumn is so shrunk and sere,
I scarcely think a sadder thing
   Can be the Winter of my year.

Yet Robin sings through Winter's rest,
   When bushes put their berries on;
   While they their ruddy jewels don,
He sings out of a ruddy breast;
The hips and haws and ruddy breast
   Make one spot warm where snowflakes lie
They break and cheer the unlovely rest
   Of Winter's pause — and why not I?

THE MONTHS: A PAGEANT

PERSONIFICATIONS.

Boys.	*Girls*.
January.	February.
March.	April.
July.	May.
August.	June.
October.	September.
December.	November.

Robin Redbreasts; Lambs and Sheep; Nightingale and Nestlings.

Various Flowers, Fruits, *etc.*

Scene: A Cottage with its Grounds.

[A room in a large comfortable cottage; a fire burning on the hearth; a table on which the breakfast things have been left standing. January discovered seated by the fire.]

JANUARY.

Cold the day and cold the drifted snow,
Dim the day until the cold dark night.
[Stirs the fire.]

Crackle, sparkle, fagot; embers glow:
Some one may be plodding through the snow
Longing for a light,
For the light that you and I can show.
If no one else should come,
Here Robin Redbreast's welcome to a crumb,
And never troublesome:
Robin, why don't you come and fetch your crumb?

Here's butter for my hunch of bread,
And sugar for your crumb;
Here's room upon the hearthrug,
If you'll only come.

In your scarlet waistcoat,
With your keen bright eye,
Where are you loitering?
Wings were made to fly!

Make haste to breakfast,
Come and fetch your crumb,
For I'm as glad to see you
As you are glad to come.

[Two Robin Redbreasts are seen tapping with their beaks at the lattice, which January opens. The birds flutter in, hop about the floor, and peck up the crumbs and sugar thrown to them. They have scarcely finished their meal, when a knock is heard at the door. January hangs a guard in front of the fire, and opens to February, who appears with a bunch of snowdrops in her hand.]

JANUARY.

Good-morrow, sister.

FEBRUARY.

Brother, joy to you!
I've brought some snowdrops; only just a few,
But quite enough to prove the world awake,
Cheerful and hopeful in the frosty dew
And for the pale sun's sake.

[She hands a few of her snowdrops to January, who retires into the background. While February stands arranging the remaining snowdrops in a glass of water on the window-sill, a soft butting and bleating are heard outside. She opens the door, and sees one foremost lamb, with other sheep and lambs bleating and crowding towards her.]

FEBRUARY.

O you, you little wonder, come — come in,
You wonderful, you woolly soft white lamb:
You panting mother ewe, come too,

And lead that tottering twin
Safe in:
Bring all your bleating kith and kin,
Except the horny ram.

[February opens a second door in the background, and the little flock files through into a warm and sheltered compartment out of sight.]

The lambkin tottering in its walk
    With just a fleece to wear;
The snowdrop drooping on its stalk
        So slender, —
Snowdrop and lamb, a pretty pair,
Braving the cold for our delight,
        Both white,
        Both tender.

[A rattling of doors and windows; branches seen without, tossing violently to and fro.]

How the doors rattle, and the branches sway!
Here's brother March comes whirling on his way
With winds that eddy and sing.

[She turns the handle of the door, which bursts open, and discloses March hastening up, both hands full of violets and anemones.]

FEBRUARY.

Come, show me what you bring;
For I have said my say, fulfilled my day,
And must away.

MARCH.

[Stopping short on the threshold.]

I blow an arouse
Through the world's wide house
To quicken the torpid earth:
Grappling I fling
Each feeble thing,
But bring strong life to the birth.
I wrestle and frown,
And topple down;
I wrench, I rend, I uproot;
Yet the violet
Is born where I set
The sole of my flying foot,

[Hands violets and anemones to February, who retires into the background.]

And in my wake
Frail wind-flowers quake,
And the catkins promise fruit.
I drive ocean ashore
With rush and roar,
And he cannot say me nay:
My harpstrings all
Are the forests tall,
Making music when I play.
And as others perforce,
So I on my course
Run and needs must run,
With sap on the mount
And buds past count
And rivers and clouds and sun,
With seasons and breath
And time and death
And all that has yet begun.

[Before March has done speaking, a voice is heard approaching accompanied by

a twittering of birds. April comes along singing, and stands outside and out of sight to finish her song.]

APRIL.

[Outside.]

Pretty little three
Sparrows in a tree,
    Light upon the wing;
    Though you cannot sing
    You can chirp of Spring:
Chirp of Spring to me,
Sparrows, from your tree.

Never mind the showers,
Chirp about the flowers
    While you build a nest:
    Straws from east and west,
    Feathers from your breast,
Make the snuggest bowers
In a world of flowers.

You must dart away
From the chosen spray,
    You intrusive third
    Extra little bird;
    Join the unwedded herd!
These have done with play,
And must work today.

APRIL.

[Appearing at the open door.]

Good-morrow and good-bye: if others fly,
Of all the flying months you're the most flying.

MARCH.

You're hope and sweetness, April.

APRIL.

Birth means dying,
As wings and wind mean flying;
So you and I and all things fly or die;
And sometimes I sit sighing to think of dying.
But meanwhile I've a rainbow in my showers,
And a lapful of flowers,
And these dear nestlings aged three hours;
And here's their mother sitting,
Their father's merely flitting
To find their breakfast somewhere in my bowers.

[As she speaks April shows March her apron full of flowers and nest full of birds. March wanders away into the grounds. April, without entering the cottage, hangs over the hungry nestlings watching them.]

APRIL.

What beaks you have, you funny things,
  What voices shrill and weak;
Who'd think that anything that sings
  Could sing through such a beak?
Yet you'll be nightingales one day,
  And charm the country-side,
When I'm away and far away

And May is queen and bride.

[May arrives unperceived by April, and gives her a kiss. April starts and looks round.]

APRIL.

Ah May, good-morrow May, and so good-bye.

MAY.

That's just your way, sweet April, smile and sigh:
Your sorrow's half in fun,
Begun and done
And turned to joy while twenty seconds run.
I've gathered flowers all as I came along,
At every step a flower
Fed by your last bright shower, —

[She divides an armful of all sorts of flowers with April, who strolls away through the garden.]

MAY.

And gathering flowers I listened to the song
Of every bird in bower.

The world and I are far too full of bliss
To think or plan or toil or care;
The sun is waxing strong,
The days are waxing long,
And all that is,
Is fair.

Here are my buds of lily and of rose,
And here's my namesake-blossom, may;
And from a watery spot
See here forget-me-not,
With all that blows
Today.

Hark to my linnets from the hedges green,
Blackbird and lark and thrush and dove,
And every nightingale
And cuckoo tells its tale,
And all they mean
Is love.

[June appears at the further end of the garden, coming slowly towards May, who, seeing her, exclaims]

MAY.

Surely you're come too early, sister June.

JUNE.

Indeed I feel as if I came too soon
To round your young May moon
And set the world a-gasping at my noon.
Yet come I must. So here are strawberries
Sun-flushed and sweet, as many as you please;
And here are full-blown roses by the score,
More roses, and yet more.

[May, eating strawberries, withdraws among the flower beds.]

JUNE.

The sun does all my long day's work for me,
Raises and ripens everything;
I need but sit beneath a leafy tree
And watch and sing.

[Seats herself in the shadow of a laburnum.]

Or if I'm lulled by note of bird and bee,
Or lulled by noontide's silence deep,
I need but nestle down beneath my tree
And drop asleep.

[June falls asleep; and is not awakened by the voice of July, who behind the scenes is heard half singing, half calling.]

JULY.

[Behind the scenes.]

Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,
Which will you take? yellow, blue, speckled!
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,
Each in its way has not a fellow.

[Enter July, a basket of many-colored irises slung upon his shoulders, a bunch of ripe grass in one hand, and a plate piled full of peaches balanced upon the other. He steals up to June, and tickles her with the grass. She wakes.]

JUNE.

What, here already?

JULY.

Nay, my tryst is kept;
The longest day slipped by you while you slept.
I've brought you one curved pyramid of bloom,

[Hands her the plate.]

Not flowers, but peaches, gathered where the bees,
As downy, bask and boom
In sunshine and in gloom of trees.
But get you in, a storm is at my heels;
The whirlwind whistles and wheels,
Lightning flashes and thunder peals,
Flying and following hard upon my heels.

[June takes shelter in a thickly-woven arbor.]

JULY.

The roar of a storm sweeps up
From the east to the lurid west,
The darkening sky, like a cup,
    Is filled with rain to the brink;
The sky is purple and fire,
Blackness and noise and unrest;
The earth, parched with desire,
    Opens her mouth to drink.

Send forth thy thunder and fire,
Turn over thy brimming cup,
O sky, appease the desire
    Of earth in her parched unrest;

Pour out drink to her thirst,
Her famishing life lift up;
Make thyself fair as at first,
With a rainbow for thy crest.

Have done with thunder and fire,
O sky with the rainbow crest;
O earth, have done with desire,
Drink, and drink deep, and rest.

[Enter August, carrying a sheaf made up of different kinds of grain.]

JULY.

Hail, brother August, flushed and warm
And scatheless from my storm.
Your hands are full of corn, I see,
As full as hands can be:
And earth and air both smell as sweet as balm
In their recovered calm,
And that they owe to me.

[July retires into a shrubbery.]

AUGUST.

Wheat sways heavy, oats are airy,
Barley bows a graceful head,
Short and small shoots up canary,
Each of these is some one's bread;
Bread for man or bread for beast,
Or at very least
A bird's savory feast.

Men are brethren of each other,
One in flesh and one in food;
And a sort of foster brother
Is the litter, or the brood,
Of that folk in fur or feather,
    Who, with men together,
    Breast the wind and weather.

[August descries September toiling across the lawn.]

AUGUST.

My harvest home is ended; and I spy
September drawing nigh
With the first thought of Autumn in her eye,
And the first sigh
Of Autumn wind among her locks that fly.

[September arrives, carrying upon her head a basket heaped high with fruit]

SEPTEMBER.

Unload me, brother. I have brought a few
Plums and these pears for you,
A dozen kinds of apples, one or two
Melons, some figs all bursting through
Their skins, and pearled with dew
These damsons violet-blue.

[While September is speaking, August lifts the basket to the ground, selects various fruits, and withdraws slowly along the gravel walk, eating a pear as he goes.]

SEPTEMBER.

My song is half a sigh
Because my green leaves die;
Sweet are my fruits, but all my leaves are dying;
And well may Autumn sigh,
And well may I
Who watch the sere leaves flying.

My leaves that fade and fall,
I note you one and all;
I call you, and the Autumn wind is calling,
Lamenting for your fall,
And for the pall
You spread on earth in falling.

And here's a song of flowers to suit such hours:
A song of the last lilies, the last flowers,
Amid my withering bowers.

In the sunny garden bed
Lilies look so pale,
Lilies droop the head
In the shady grassy vale;
If all alike they pine
In shade and in shine,
If everywhere they grieve,
Where will lilies live?

[October enters briskly, some leafy twigs bearing different sorts of nuts in one hand, and a long ripe hop-bine trailing after him from the other. A dahlia is stuck in his buttonhole.]

OCTOBER.

Nay, cheer up, sister. Life is not quite over,

Even if the year has done with corn and clover,
With flowers and leaves; besides, in fact it's true,
Some leaves remain and some flowers too.
For me and you.
Now see my crops:

[Offering his produce to September.]

I've brought you nuts and hops;
And when the leaf drops, why, the walnut drops.

[October wreaths the hop-bine about September's neck, and gives her the nut twigs. They enter the cottage together, but without shutting the door. She steps into the background: he advances to the hearth, removes the guard, stirs up the smoldering fire, and arranges several chestnuts ready to roast.]

OCTOBER.

Crack your first nut and light your first fire,
  Roast your first chestnut crisp on the bar;
Make the logs sparkle, stir the blaze higher;
  Logs are cheery as sun or as star,
  Logs we can find wherever we are.

Spring one soft day will open the leaves,
  Spring one bright day will lure back the flowers;
Never fancy my whistling wind grieves,
  Never fancy I've tears in my showers;
  Dance, nights and days! and dance on, my hours!

[Sees November approaching.]

OCTOBER.

Here comes my youngest sister, looking dim
And grim,
With dismal ways.
What cheer, November?
November.

[Entering and shutting the door.]

Nought have I to bring,
Tramping a-chill and shivering,
Except these pine-cones for a blaze, —
Except a fog which follows,
And stuffs up all the hollows, —
Except a hoar frost here and there, —
Except some shooting stars
Which dart their luminous cars
Trackless and noiseless through the keen night air.

[October, shrugging his shoulders, withdraws into the background, while November throws her pine cones on the fire, and sits down listlessly.]

NOVEMBER.

The earth lies fast asleep, grown tired
   Of all that's high or deep;
There's nought desired and nought required
      Save a sleep.

I rock the cradle of the earth,
   I lull her with a sigh;
And know that she will wake to mirth
      By and by.

[Through the window December is seen running and leaping in the direction of the door. He knocks.]

NOVEMBER.

[Calls out without rising.]

Ah, here's my youngest brother come at last:
Come in, December.

[He opens the door and enters, loaded with evergreens in berry, etc.]

NOVEMBER.

Come, and shut the door,
For now it's snowing fast;
It snows, and will snow more and more;
Don't let it drift in on the floor.
But you, you're all aglow; how can you be
Rosy and warm and smiling in the cold?

DECEMBER.

Nay, no closed doors for me,
But open doors and open hearts and glee
To welcome young and old.

Dimmest and brightest month am I;
My short days end, my lengthening days begin;
What matters more or less sun in the sky,
When all is sun within?

[He begins making a wreath as he sings.]

Ivy and privet dark as night,

I weave with hips and haws a cheerful show,
And holly for a beauty and delight,
    And milky mistletoe.

  While high above them all I set
Yew twigs and Christmas roses pure and pale;
Then Spring her snowdrop and her violet
    May keep, so sweet and frail;

  May keep each merry singing bird,
Of all her happy birds that singing build:
For I've a carol which some shepherds heard
    Once in a wintry field.

[While December concludes his song all the other Months troop in from the garden, or advance out of the background. The Twelve join hands in a circle, and begin dancing round to a stately measure as the Curtain falls.]

PASTIME

A boat amid the ripples, drifting, rocking,
   Two idle people, without pause or aim;
While in the ominous west there gathers darkness
      Flushed with flame.

A haycock in a hayfield backing, lapping,
   Two drowsy people pillowed round about;
While in the ominous west across the darkness
      Flame leaps out.

Better a wrecked life than a life so aimless,
   Better a wrecked life than a life so soft;
The ominous west glooms thundering, with its fire
      Lit aloft.

ITALIA, IO TI SALUTO!

To come back from the sweet South, to the North
Where I was born, bred, look to die;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
Play out my play —
Amen, amen, say I.

To see no more the country half my own,
Nor hear the half familiar speech,
Amen, I say; I turn to that bleak North
Whence I came forth —
The South lies out of reach.

But when our swallows fly back to the South,
To the sweet South, to the sweet South,
The tears may come again into my eyes
On the old wise,
And the sweet name to my mouth.

MIRRORS OF LIFE AND DEATH

The mystery of Life, the mystery
Of Death, I see
Darkly as in a glass;
Their shadows pass,
And talk with me.

As the flush of a Morning Sky,
As a Morning Sky colorless —
Each yields its measure of light
To a wet world or a dry;
Each fares through day to night
With equal pace,
And then each one
Is done.

As the Sun with glory and grace
In his face,
Benignantly hot,
Graciously radiant and keen,
Ready to rise and to run, —
Not without spot,
Not even the Sun.

As the Moon
On the wax, on the wane,
With night for her noon;
Vanishing soon,
To appear again.

As Roses that droop
Half warm, half chill, in the languid May,

And breathe out a scent
Sweet and faint;
Till the wind gives one swoop
To scatter their beauty away.

As Lilies a multitude,
One dipping, one rising, one sinking,
On rippling waters, clear blue
And pure for their drinking;
One new dead, and one opened anew,
And all good.

As a cankered pale Flower,
With death for a dower,
Each hour of its life half dead;
With death for a crown
Weighing down
Its head.

As an Eagle, half strength and half grace,
Most potent to face
Unwinking the splendor of light;
Harrying the East and the West,
Soaring aloft from our sight;
Yet one day or one night dropped to rest,
On the low common earth
Of his birth.

As a Dove,
Not alone,
In a world of her own
Full of fluttering soft noises
And tender sweet voices
Of love.

As a Mouse
Keeping house
In the fork of a tree,
With nuts in a crevice,
And an acorn or two;
What cares he
For blossoming boughs,
Or the song-singing bevies
Of birds in their glee,
Scarlet, or golden, or blue?

As a Mole grubbing underground;
When it comes to the light
It grubs its way back again,
Feeling no bias of fur
To hamper it in its stir,
Scant of pleasure and pain,
Sinking itself out of sight
Without sound.

As Waters that drop and drop,
Weariness without end,
That drop and never stop,
Wear that nothing can mend,
Till one day they drop —
Stop —
And there's an end,
And matters mend.

As Trees, beneath whose skin
We mark not the sap begin
To swell and rise,
Till the whole bursts out in green:
We mark the falling leaves
When the wide world grieves
And sighs.

As a Forest on fire,
Where maddened creatures desire
Wet mud or wings
Beyond all those things
Which could assuage desire
On this side the flaming fire.

As Wind with a sob and sigh
To which there comes no reply
But a rustle and shiver
From rushes of the river;
As Wind with a desolate moan,
Moaning on alone.

As a Desert all sand,
Blank, neither water nor land
For solace, or dwelling, or culture,
Where the storms and the wild creatures howl;
Given over to lion and vulture,
To ostrich, and jackal, and owl:
Yet somewhere an oasis lies;
There waters arise
To nourish one seedling of balm,
Perhaps, or one palm.

As the Sea,
Murmuring, shifting, swaying;
One time sunnily playing,
One time wrecking and slaying;
In whichever mood it be,
Worst or best,
Never at rest.

As still Waters and deep,

As shallow Waters that brawl,
As rapid Waters that leap
To their fall.

As Music, as Color, as Shape,
Keys of rapture and pain
Turning in vain
In a lock which turns not again,
While breaths and moments escape.

As Spring, all bloom and desire;
As Summer, all gift and fire;
As Autumn, a dying glow;
As Winter, with nought to show:

Winter which lays its dead all out of sight,
All clothed in white,
All waiting for the long-awaited light.

A BALLAD OF BODING

There are sleeping dreams and waking dreams;
What seems is not always as it seems.

I looked out of my window in the sweet new morning,
And there I saw three barges of manifold adorning
Went sailing toward the East:
The first had sails like fire,
The next like glittering wire,
But sackcloth were the sails of the least;
And all the crews made music, and two had spread a feast.

The first choir breathed in flutes,
And fingered soft guitars;
The second won from lutes
Harmonious chords and jars,
With drums for stormy bars:
But the third was all of harpers and scarlet trumpeters;
Notes of triumph, then
An alarm again,
As for onset, as for victory, rallies, stirs,
Peace at last and glory to the vanquishers.

The first barge showed for figurehead a Love with wings;
The second showed for figurehead a Worm with stings;
The third, a Lily tangled to a Rose which clings.
The first bore for freight gold and spice and down;
The second bore a sword, a sceptre, and a crown;
The third, a heap of earth gone to dust and brown.
Winged Love meseemed like Folly in the face;
Stinged Worm meseemed loathly in his place;
Lily and Rose were flowers of grace.

Merry went the revel of the fire-sailed crew,
Singing, feasting, dancing to and fro:
Pleasures ever changing, ever graceful, ever new;
Sighs, but scarce of woe;
All the sighing
Wooed such sweet replying;
All the sighing, sweet and low,
Used to come and go
For more pleasure, merely so.
Yet at intervals someone grew tired
Of everything desired,
And sank, I knew not whither, in sorry plight,
Out of sight.

The second crew seemed ever
Wider-visioned, graver,
More distinct of purpose, more sustained of will;
With heads erect and proud,
And voices sometimes loud;
With endless tacking, counter-tacking,
All things grasping, all things lacking,
It would seem;
Ever shifting helm, or sail, or shroud,
Drifting on as in a dream.
Hoarding to their utmost bent,
Feasting to their fill,
Yet gnawed by discontent,
Envy, hatred, malice, on their road they went.
Their freight was not a treasure,
Their music not a pleasure;
The sword flashed, cleaving through their bands,
Sceptre and crown changed hands.

The third crew as they went
Seemed mostly different;
They toiled in rowing, for to them the wind was contrary,
As all the world might see.

They labored at the oar,
While on their heads they bore
The fiery stress of sunshine more and more.
They labored at the oar hand-sore,
Till rain went splashing,
And spray went dashing,
Down on them, and up on them, more and more.
Their sails were patched and rent,
Their masts were bent,
In peril of their lives they worked and went.
For them no feast was spread,
No soft luxurious bed
Scented and white,
No crown or sceptre hung in sight;
In weariness and painfulness,
In thirst and sore distress,
They rowed and steered from left to right
With all their might.
Their trumpeters and harpers round about
Incessantly played out,
And sometimes they made answer with a shout;
But oftener they groaned or wept,
And seldom paused to eat, and seldom slept.
I wept for pity watching them, but more
I wept heart-sore
Once and again to see
Some weary man plunge overboard, and swim
To Love or Worm ship floating buoyantly:
And there all welcomed him.

The ships steered each apart and seemed to scorn each other,
Yet all the crews were interchangeable;
Now one man, now another,
— Like bloodless spectres some, some flushed by health, —
Changed openly, or changed by stealth,
Scaling a slippery side, and scaled it well.
The most left Love ship, hauling wealth
Up Worm ship's side;

While some few hollow-eyed
Left either for the sack-sailed boat;
But this, though not remote,
Was worst to mount, and whoso left it once
Scarce ever came again,
But seemed to loathe his erst companions,
And wish and work them bane.

Then I knew (I know not how) there lurked quicksands full of dread,
Rocks and reefs and whirlpools in the water-bed,
Whence a waterspout
Instantaneously leaped out,
Roaring as it reared its head.

Soon I spied a something dim,
Many-handed, grim,
That went flitting to and fro the first and second ship;
It puffed their sails full out
With puffs of smoky breath
From a smoldering lip,
And cleared the waterspout
Which reeled roaring round about
Threatening death.
With a horny hand it steered,
And a horn appeared
On its sneering head upreared
Haughty and high
Against the blackening lowering sky.
With a hoof it swayed the waves;
They opened here and there,
Till I spied deep ocean graves
Full of skeletons
That were men and women once
Foul or fair;
Full of things that creep
And fester in the deep
And never breathe the clean life-nurturing air.

The third bark held aloof
From the Monster with the hoof,
Despite his urgent beck,
And fraught with guile
Abominable his smile;
Till I saw him take a flying leap on to that deck.
Then full of awe,
With these same eyes I saw
His head incredible retract its horn
Rounding like babe's new born,
While silvery phosphorescence played
About his dis-horned head.
The sneer smoothed from his lip,
He beamed blandly on the ship;
All winds sank to a moan,
All waves to a monotone
(For all these seemed his realm),
While he laid a strong caressing hand upon the helm.

Then a cry well nigh of despair
Shrieked to heaven, a clamor of desperate prayer.
The harpers harped no more,
While the trumpeters sounded sore
An alarm to wake the dead from their bed:
To the rescue, to the rescue, now or never,
To the rescue, O ye living, O ye dead,
Or no more help or hope forever! —
The planks strained as though they must part asunder,
The masts bent as though they must dip under,
And the winds and the waves at length
Girt up their strength,
And the depths were laid bare,
And heaven flashed fire and volleyed thunder
Through the rain-choked air,
And sea and sky seemed to kiss
In the horror and the hiss

Of the whole world shuddering everywhere.

Lo! a Flyer swooping down
With wings to span the globe,
And splendor for his robe
And splendor for his crown.
He lighted on the helm with a foot of fire,
And spun the Monster overboard:
And that monstrous thing abhorred,
Gnashing with balked desire,
Wriggled like a worm infirm
Up the Worm
Of the loathly figurehead.
There he crouched and gnashed;
And his head re-horned, and gashed
From the other's grapple, dripped bloody red.

I saw that thing accurst
Wreak his worst
On the first and second crew:
Some with baited hook
He angled for and took,
Some dragged overboard in a net he threw,
Some he did to death
With hoof or horn or blasting breath.

I heard a voice of wailing
Where the ships went sailing,
A sorrowful voice prevailing
Above the sound of the sea,
Above the singers' voices,
And musical merry noises;
All songs had turned to sighing,
The light was failing,
The day was dying —
Ah me,
That such a sorrow should be!

There was sorrow on the sea and sorrow on the land
When Love ship went down by the bottomless quicksand
To its grave in the bitter wave.
There was sorrow on the sea and sorrow on the land
When Worm ship went to pieces on the rock-bound strand,
And the bitter wave was its grave.
But land and sea waxed hoary
In whiteness of a glory
Never told in story
Nor seen by mortal eye,
When the third ship crossed the bar
Where whirls and breakers are,
And steered into the splendors of the sky;
That third bark and that least
Which had never seemed to feast,
Yet kept high festival above sun and moon and star.

YET A LITTLE WHILE

I dreamed and did not seek: today I seek
Who can no longer dream;
But now am all behindhand, waxen weak,
And dazed amid so many things that gleam
Yet are not what they seem.

I dreamed and did not work: today I work
Kept wide awake by care
And loss, and perils dimly guessed to lurk;
I work and reap not, while my life goes bare
And void in wintry air.

I hope indeed; but hope itself is fear
Viewed on the sunny side;
I hope, and disregard the world that's here,
The prizes drawn, the sweet things that betide;
I hope, and I abide.

HE AND SHE

“Should one of us remember,
    And one of us forget,
I wish I knew what each will do —
    But who can tell as yet?”

“Should one of us remember,
    And one of us forget,
I promise you what I will do —
And I’m content to wait for you,
    And not be sure as yet.”

MONNA INNOMINATA

A Sonnet Of Sonnets.

Beatrice, immortalized by “altissimo poeta … cotanto amante;” Laura, celebrated by a great though an inferior bard, — have alike paid the exceptional penalty of exceptional honor, and have come down to us resplendent with charms, but (at least, to my apprehension) scant of attractiveness.
These heroines of world-wide fame were preceded by a bevy of unnamed ladies “donne innominate” sung by a school of less conspicuous poets; and in that land and that period which gave simultaneous birth to Catholics, to Albigenses, and to Troubadours, one can imagine many a lady as sharing her lover’s poetic aptitude, while the barrier between them might be one held sacred by both, yet not such as to render mutual love incompatible with mutual honor.
Had such a lady spoken for herself, the portrait left us might have appeared more tender, if less dignified, than any drawn even by a devoted friend. Or had the Great Poetess of our own day and nation only been unhappy instead of happy, her circumstances would have invited her to bequeath to us, in lieu of the “Portuguese Sonnets,” an inimitable “donna innominata” drawn not from fancy but from feeling, and worthy to occupy a niche beside Beatrice and Laura.

1.

“Lo dì che han detto a’ dolci amici addio.” — Dante.
“Amor, con quanto sforzo oggi mi vinci!” — Petrarca.

Come back to me, who wait and watch for you: —
    Or come not yet, for it is over then,
    And long it is before you come again,
So far between my pleasures are and few.
While, when you come not, what I do I do
    Thinking “Now when he comes,” my sweetest “when:”

For one man is my world of all the men
This wide world holds; O love, my world is you.
Howbeit, to meet you grows almost a pang
Because the pang of parting comes so soon;
My hope hangs waning, waxing, like a moon
Between the heavenly days on which we meet:
Ah me, but where are now the songs I sang
When life was sweet because you called them sweet?

2.

"Era già l'ora che volge il desio." — Dante.
"Ricorro al tempo ch' io vi vidi prima." — Petrarca.

I wish I could remember that first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me,
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for aught I can say;
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet for many a May.
If only I could recollect it, such
A day of days! I let it come and go
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow;
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much;
If only now I could recall that touch,
First touch of hand in hand — Did one but know!

3.

"O ombre vane, fuor che ne l'aspetto!" — Dante.

“Immaginata guida la conduce.” — Petrarca.

I dream of you to wake: would that I might
   Dream of you and not wake but slumber on;
   Nor find with dreams the dear companion gone,
As Summer ended Summer birds take flight.
In happy dreams I hold you full in sight,
   I blush again who waking look so wan;
   Brighter than sunniest day that ever shone,
In happy dreams your smile makes day of night.
Thus only in a dream we are at one,
   Thus only in a dream we give and take
      The faith that maketh rich who take or give;
   If thus to sleep is sweeter than to wake,
      To die were surely sweeter than to live,
Though there be nothing new beneath the sun.

4.

“Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda.” — Dante.
“Ogni altra cosa, ogni pensier va fore,
E sol ivi con voi rimansi amore.” — Petrarca.

I loved you first: but afterwards your love
   Outsoaring mine, sang such a loftier song
As drowned the friendly cooings of my dove.
   Which owes the other most? my love was long,
   And yours one moment seemed to wax more strong;
I loved and guessed at you, you construed me
And loved me for what might or might not be —
   Nay, weights and measures do us both a wrong.
For verily love knows not “mine” or “thine;”
   With separate “I” and “thou” free love has done,

For one is both and both are one in love:
Rich love knows nought of “thine that is not mine;”
Both have the strength and both the length thereof,
Both of us of the love which makes us one.

5.

“Amor che a nulla amato amar perdona.” — Dante.
“Amor m’addusse in sì gioiosa spene.” — Petrarca.

O my heart’s heart, and you who are to me
More than myself myself, God be with you,
Keep you in strong obedience leal and true
To Him whose noble service setteth free,
Give you all good we see or can foresee,
Make your joys many and your sorrows few,
Bless you in what you bear and what you do,
Yea, perfect you as He would have you be.
So much for you; but what for me, dear friend?
To love you without stint and all I can
Today, tomorrow, world without an end;
To love you much and yet to love you more,
As Jordan at his flood sweeps either shore;
Since woman is the helpmeet made for man.

6.

“Or puoi la quantitate
Comprender de l’amor che a te mi scalda.” — Dante.
“Non vo’ che da tal nodo amor mi scioglia.” — Petrarca.

Trust me, I have not earned your dear rebuke,
   I love, as you would have me, God the most;
   Would lose not Him, but you, must one be lost,
Nor with Lot's wife cast back a faithless look
Unready to forego what I forsook;
   This say I, having counted up the cost,
   This, though I be the feeblest of God's host,
The sorriest sheep Christ shepherds with His crook,
Yet while I love my God the most, I deem
   That I can never love you overmuch;
      I love Him more, so let me love you too;
   Yea, as I apprehend it, love is such
I cannot love you if I love not Him,
      I cannot love Him if I love not you.

7.

"Qui primavera sempre ed ogni frutto." — Dante.
"Ragionando con meco ed io con lui." — Petrarca.

"Love me, for I love you" — and answer me,
   "Love me, for I love you" — so shall we stand
   As happy equals in the flowering land
Of love, that knows not a dividing sea.
Love builds the house on rock and not on sand,
   Love laughs what while the winds rave desperately;
And who hath found love's citadel unmanned?
   And who hath held in bonds love's liberty?
My heart's a coward though my words are brave —
   We meet so seldom, yet we surely part
   So often; there's a problem for your art!
      Still I find comfort in his Book, who saith,
Though jealousy be cruel as the grave,
      And death be strong, yet love is strong as death.

8.

“Come dicesse a Dio: D’altro non calme.” — Dante.
“Spero trovar pietà non che perdono.” — Petrarca.

“I, if I perish, perish” — Esther spake:
   And bride of life or death she made her fair
   In all the lustre of her perfumed hair
And smiles that kindle longing but to slake.
She put on pomp of loveliness, to take
   Her husband through his eyes at unaware;
   She spread abroad her beauty for a snare,
Harmless as doves and subtle as a snake.
She trapped him with one mesh of silken hair,
   She vanquished him by wisdom of her wit,
      And built her people’s house that it should stand: —
      If I might take my life so in my hand,
And for my love to Love put up my prayer,
   And for love’s sake by Love be granted it!

9.

“O dignitosa coscienza e netta!” — Dante.
“Spirto più acceso di virtuti ardenti.” — Petrarca.

Thinking of you, and all that was, and all
   That might have been and now can never be,
   I feel your honored excellence, and see
Myself unworthy of the happier call:
For woe is me who walk so apt to fall,
   So apt to shrink afraid, so apt to flee,
   Apt to lie down and die (ah, woe is me!)

Faithless and hopeless turning to the wall.
And yet not hopeless quite nor faithless quite,
Because not loveless; love may toil all night,
    But take at morning; wrestle till the break
        Of day, but then wield power with God and man: —
        So take I heart of grace as best I can,
    Ready to spend and be spent for your sake.

10.

"Con miglior corso e con migliore stella." — Dante.
"La vita fugge e non s'arresta un' ora." — Petrarca.

Time flies, hope flags, life plies a wearied wing;
    Death following hard on life gains ground apace;
    Faith runs with each and rears an eager face,
Outruns the rest, makes light of everything,
Spurns earth, and still finds breath to pray and sing;
    While love ahead of all uplifts his praise,
    Still asks for grace and still gives thanks for grace,
Content with all day brings and night will bring.
Life wanes; and when love folds his wings above
    Tired hope, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
        Let us go fall asleep, dear friend, in peace:
        A little while, and age and sorrow cease;
    A little while, and life reborn annuls
Loss and decay and death, and all is love.

11.

"Vien dietro a me e lascia dir le genti." — Dante.
"Contando i casi della vita nostra." — Petrarca.

Many in aftertimes will say of you
"He loved her" — while of me what will they say?
Not that I loved you more than just in play,
For fashion's sake as idle women do.
Even let them prate; who know not what we knew
Of love and parting in exceeding pain,
Of parting hopeless here to meet again,
Hopeless on earth, and heaven is out of view.
But by my heart of love laid bare to you,
My love that you can make not void nor vain,
Love that foregoes you but to claim anew
Beyond this passage of the gate of death,
I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
My love of you was life and not a breath.

12.

"Amor, che ne la mente mi ragiona." — Dante.
"Amor vien nel bel viso di costei." — Petrarca.

If there be any one can take my place
And make you happy whom I grieve to grieve,
Think not that I can grudge it, but believe
I do commend you to that nobler grace,
That readier wit than mine, that sweeter face;
Yea, since your riches make me rich, conceive
I too am crowned, while bridal crowns I weave,
And thread the bridal dance with jocund pace.
For if I did not love you, it might be
That I should grudge you someone dear delight;
But since the heart is yours that was mine own,
Your pleasure is my pleasure, right my right,
Your honorable freedom makes me free,

And you companioned I am not alone.

13.

“E drizzeremo glí occhi al Primo Amore.” — Dante.
“Ma trovo peso non da le mie braccia.” — Petrarca.

If I could trust mine own self with your fate,
Shall I not rather trust it in God’s hand?
Without Whose Will one lily doth not stand,
Nor sparrow fall at his appointed date;
Who numbereth the innumerable sand,
Who weighs the wind and water with a weight,
To Whom the world is neither small nor great,
Whose knowledge foreknew every plan we planned.
Searching my heart for all that touches you,
I find there only love and love’s goodwill
Helpless to help and impotent to do,
Of understanding dull, of sight most dim;
And therefore I commend you back to Him
Whose love your love’s capacity can fill.

14.

“E la Sua Volontade è nostra pace.” — Dante.
“Sol con questi pensier, con altre chiome.” — Petrarca.

Youth gone, and beauty gone if ever there
Dwelt beauty in so poor a face as this;
Youth gone and beauty, what remains of bliss?
I will not bind fresh roses in my hair,

To shame a cheek at best but little fair, —
   Leave youth his roses, who can bear a thorn, —
I will not seek for blossoms anywhere,
   Except such common flowers as blow with corn.
Youth gone and beauty gone, what doth remain?
   The longing of a heart pent up forlorn,
      A silent heart whose silence loves and longs;
      The silence of a heart which sang its songs
   While youth and beauty made a summer morn,
Silence of love that cannot sing again.

LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL

Beautiful, tender, wasting away for sorrow;
Thus today; and how shall it be with thee tomorrow?
        Beautiful, tender — what else?
                A hope tells.

Beautiful, tender, keeping the jubilee
In the land of home together, past death and sea;
        No more change or death, no more
                Salt sea-shore.

DE PROFUNDIS

Oh why is heaven built so far,
   Oh why is earth set so remote?
I cannot reach the nearest star
      That hangs afloat.

I would not care to reach the moon,
   One round monotonous of change;
Yet even she repeats her tune
      Beyond my range.

I never watch the scattered fire
   Of stars, or sun's far-trailing train,
But all my heart is one desire,
      And all in vain:

For I am bound with fleshly bands,
   Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope;
I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,
      And catch at hope.

TEMPUS FUGIT

Lovely Spring,
A brief sweet thing,
Is swift on the wing;
Gracious Summer,
A slow sweet comer,
Hastens past;
Autumn while sweet
Is all incomplete
With a moaning blast, —
Nothing can last,
Can be cleaved unto,
Can be dwelt upon;
It is hurried through,
It is come and gone,
Undone it cannot be done,
It is ever to do,
Ever old, ever new,
Ever waxing old
And lapsing to Winter cold.

GOLDEN GLORIES

The buttercup is like a golden cup,
   The marigold is like a golden frill,
The daisy with a golden eye looks up,
   And golden spreads the flag beside the rill,
   And gay and golden nods the daffodil,
The gorsey common swells a golden sea,
   The cowslip hangs a head of golden tips,
And golden drips the honey which the bee
   Sucks from sweet hearts of flowers and stores and sips.

JOHNNY

Founded On An Anecdote Of The First French Revolution.

Johnny had a golden head
   Like a golden mop in blow,
Right and left his curls would spread
   In a glory and a glow,
And they framed his honest face
Like stray sunbeams out of place.

Long and thick, they half could hide
   How threadbare his patched jacket hung;
They used to be his Mother's pride;
   She praised them with a tender tongue,
And stroked them with a loving finger
That smoothed and stroked and loved to linger.

On a doorstep Johnny sat,
   Up and down the street looked he;
Johnny did not own a hat,
   Hot or cold tho' days might be;
Johnny did not own a boot
To cover up his muddy foot.

Johnny's face was pale and thin,
   Pale with hunger and with crying;
For his Mother lay within,
   Talked and tossed and seemed a-dying,
While Johnny racked his brains to think
How to get her help and drink,

Get her physic, get her tea,

Get her bread and something nice;
Not a penny piece had he,
And scarce a shilling might suffice;
No wonder that his soul was sad,
When not one penny piece he had.

As he sat there thinking, moping,
Because his Mother's wants were many,
Wishing much but scarcely hoping
To earn a shilling or a penny,
A friendly neighbor passed him by
And questioned him: Why did he cry?

Alas! his trouble soon was told:
He did not cry for cold or hunger,
Though he was hungry both and cold;
He only felt more weak and younger,
Because he wished so to be old
And apt at earning pence or gold.

Kindly that neighbor was, but poor,
Scant coin had he to give or lend;
And well he guessed there needed more
Than pence or shillings to befriend
The helpless woman in her strait,
So much loved, yet so desolate.

One way he saw, and only one:
He would — he could not — give the advice,
And yet he must: the widow's son
Had curls of gold would fetch their price;
Long curls which might be clipped, and sold
For silver, or perhaps for gold.

Our Johnny, when he understood
    Which shop it was that purchased hair,
Ran off as briskly as he could,
    And in a trice stood cropped and bare,
Too short of hair to fill a locket,
But jingling money in his pocket.

Precious money — tea and bread,
    Physic, ease, for Mother dear,
Better than a golden head:
    Yet our hero dropped one tear
When he spied himself close shorn,
Barer much than lamb new born.

His Mother throve upon the money,
    Ate and revived and kissed her son:
But oh! when she perceived her Johnny,
    And understood what he had done
All and only for her sake,
She sobbed as if her heart must break.

HOLLOW-SOUNDING AND MYSTERIOUS

There's no replying
To the Wind's sighing,
Telling, foretelling,
Dying, undying,
Dwindling and swelling,
Complaining, droning,
Whistling and moaning,
Ever beginning,
Ending, repeating,
Hinting and dinning,
Lagging and fleeting —
We've no replying
Living or dying
To the Wind's sighing.

What are you telling,
Variable Wind-tone?
What would be teaching,
O sinking, swelling,
Desolate Wind-moan?
Ever for ever
Teaching and preaching,
Never, ah never
Making us wiser —
The earliest riser
Catches no meaning,
The last who hearkens
Garners no gleaning
Of wisdom's treasure,
While the world darkens: —
Living or dying,
In pain, in pleasure,
We've no replying
To wordless flying

Wind’s sighing.

MAIDEN MAY

Maiden May sat in her bower,
In her blush rose bower in flower,
Sweet of scent;
Sat and dreamed away an hour,
Half content, half uncontent.

"Why should rose blossoms be born,
Tender blossoms, on a thorn
Though so sweet?
Never a thorn besets the corn
Scentless in its strength complete.

"Why are roses all so frail,
At the mercy of the gale,
Of a breath?
Yet so sweet and perfect pale,
Still so sweet in life and death."

Maiden May sat in her bower,
In her blush rose bower in flower,
Where a linnet
Made one bristling branch the tower
For her nest and young ones in it.

"Gay and clear the linnet trills;
Yet the skylark only, thrills
Heaven and earth
When he breasts the height, and fills
Height and depth with song and mirth.

"Nightingales which yield to night

Solitary strange delight,
Reign alone:
But the lark for all his height
Fills no solitary throne;

“While he sings, a hundred sing;
Wing their flight below his wing
Yet in flight;
Each a lovely joyful thing
To the measure of its delight.

“Why then should a lark be reckoned
One alone, without a second
Near his throne?
He in skyward flight unslackened,
In his music, not alone.”

Maiden May sat in her bower;
Her own face was like a flower
Of the prime,
Half in sunshine, half in shower,
In the year’s most tender time.

Her own thoughts in silent song
Musically flowed along,
Wise, unwise,
Wistful, wondering, weak or strong:
As brook shallows sink or rise.

Other thoughts another day,
Maiden May, will surge and sway
Round your heart;
Wake, and plead, and turn at bay,
Wisdom part, and folly part.

Time not far remote will borrow
Other joys, another sorrow,
All for you;
Not today, and yet tomorrow
Reasoning false and reasoning true.

Wherefore greatest? Wherefore least?
Hearts that starve and hearts that feast?
You and I?
Stammering Oracles have ceased,
And the whole earth stands at "why?"

Underneath all things that be
Lies an unsolved mystery;
Over all
Spreads a veil impenetrably,
Spreads a dense unlifted pall.

Mystery of mysteries:
This creation hears and sees
High and low —
Vanity of vanities:
This we test and *this* we know.

Maiden May, the days of flowering
Nurse you now in sweet embowering,
Sunny days;
Bright with rainbows all the showering,
Bright with blossoms all the ways.

Close the inlet of your bower,
Close it close with thorn and flower,
Maiden May;
Lengthen out the shortening hour, —
Morrows are not as today.

Stay today which wanes too soon,
Stay the sun and stay the moon,
Stay your youth;
Bask you in the actual noon,
Rest you in the present truth.

Let today suffice today:
For itself tomorrow may
Fetch its loss;
Aim and stumble, say its say,
Watch and pray and bear its cross.

TILL TOMORROW

Long have I longed, till I am tired
Of longing and desire;
Farewell my points in vain desired,
My dying fire;
Farewell all things that die and fail and tire.

Springtide and youth and useless pleasure
And all my useless scheming,
My hopes of unattainable treasure,
Dreams not worth dreaming,
Glow-worms that gleam but yield no warmth in gleaming,

Farewell all shows that fade in showing:
My wish and joy stand over
Until tomorrow; Heaven is glowing
Through cloudy cover,
Beyond all clouds loves me my Heavenly Lover.

DEATH-WATCHES

The Spring spreads one green lap of flowers
   Which Autumn buries at the fall,
No chilling showers of Autumn hours
   Can stay them or recall;
Winds sing a dirge, while earth lays out of sight
Her garment of delight.

The cloven East brings forth the sun,
   The cloven West doth bury him
What time his gorgeous race is run
   And all the world grows dim;
A funeral moon is lit in heaven's hollow,
And pale the star-lights follow.

TOUCHING NEVER

Because you never yet have loved me, dear,
   Think you you never can nor ever will?
   Surely while life remains hope lingers still,
Hope the last blossom of life's dying year.
Because the season and mine age grow sere,
   Shall never Spring bring forth her daffodil,
   Shall never sweeter Summer feast her fill
Of roses with the nightingales they hear?
If you had loved me, I not loving you,
   If you had urged me with the tender plea
Of what our unknown years to come might do
(Eternal years, if Time should count too few),
   I would have owned the point you pressed on me,
Was possible, or probable, or true.

BRANDONS BOTH

Oh fair Milly Brandon, a young maid, a fair maid!
   All her curls are yellow and her eyes are blue,
And her cheeks were rosy red till a secret care made
   Hollow whiteness of their brightness as a care will do.

Still she tends her flowers, but not as in the old days,
   Still she sings her songs, but not the songs of old:
If now it be high Summer her days seem brief and cold days,
   If now it be high Summer her nights are long and cold.

If you have a secret keep it, pure maid Milly;
   Life is filled with troubles and the world with scorn;
And pity without love is at best times hard and chilly,
   Chilling sore and stinging sore a heart forlorn.

Walter Brandon, do you guess Milly Brandon's secret?
   Many things you know, but not everything,
With your locks like raven's plumage, and eyes like an egret,
   And a laugh that is music, and such a voice to sing.

Nelly Knollys, she is fair, but she is not fairer
   Than fairest Milly Brandon was before she turned so pale:
Oh, but Nelly's dearer if she be not rarer,
   She need not keep a secret or blush behind a veil.

Beyond the first green hills, beyond the nearest valleys,
   Nelly dwells at home beneath her mother's eyes:
Her home is neat and homely, not a cot and not a palace,
   Just the home where love sets up his happiest memories.

Milly has no mother; and sad beyond another
   Is she whose blessed mother is vanished out of call:
Truly comfort beyond comfort is stored up in a mother
   Who bears with all, and hopes through all, and loves us all.

Where peacocks nod and flaunt up and down the terrace,
   Furling and unfurling their scores of sightless eyes,
To and fro among the leaves and buds and flowers and berries
   Maiden Milly strolls and pauses, smiles and sighs.

On the hedged-in terrace of her father's palace
   She may stroll and muse alone, may smile or sigh alone,
Letting thoughts and eyes go wandering over hills and valleys
   Today her father's, and one day to be all her own.

If her thoughts go coursing down lowlands and up highlands,
   It is because the startled game are leaping from their lair;
If her thoughts dart homeward to the reedy river islands,
   It is because the waterfowl rise startled here or there.

At length a footfall on the steps: she turns, composed and steady,
   All the long-descended greatness of her father's house
Lifting up her head; and there stands Walter keen and ready
   For hunting or for hawking, a flush upon his brows.

"Good-morrow, fair cousin." "Good-morrow, fairest cousin:
   The sun has started on his course, and I must start today.
If you have done me one good turn you've done me many a dozen,
   And I shall often think of you, think of you away."

"Over hill and hollow what quarry will you follow,
   Or what fish will you angle for beside the river's edge?
There's cloud upon the hill-top and there 's mist deep down the hollow,
   And fog among the rushes and the rustling sedge."

“I shall speed well enough be it hunting or hawking,
   Or casting a bait towards the shyest daintiest fin.
But I kiss your hands, my cousin; I must not loiter talking,
   For nothing comes of nothing, and I’m fain to seek and win.”

“Here’s a thorny rose: will you wear it an hour,
   Till the petals drop apart still fresh and pink and sweet?
Till the petals drop from the drooping perished flower,
   And only the graceless thorns are left of it.”

“Nay, I have another rose sprung in another garden,
   Another rose which sweetens all the world for me.
Be you a tenderer mistress and be you a warier warden
   Of your rose, as sweet as mine, and full as fair to see.”

“Nay, a bud once plucked there is no reviving,
   Nor is it worth your wearing now, nor worth indeed my own;
The dead to the dead, and the living to the living.
   It’s time I go within, for it’s time now you were gone.”

“Good-bye, Milly Brandon, I shall not forget you,
   Though it be good-bye between us forever from today;
I could almost wish today that I had never met you,
   And I’m true to you in this one word that I say.”

“Good-bye, Walter. I can guess which thornless rose you covet;
   Long may it bloom and prolong its sunny morn:
Yet as for my one thorny rose, I do not cease to love it,
   And if it is no more a flower I love it as a thorn.”

A LIFE'S PARALLELS

Never on this side of the grave again,
   On this side of the river,
On this side of the garner of the grain,
            Never, —

Ever while time flows on and on and on,
   That narrow noiseless river,
Ever while corn bows heavy-headed, wan,
            Ever, —

Never despairing, often fainting, ruing,
   But looking back, ah never!
Faint yet pursuing, faint yet still pursuing
            Ever.

AT LAST

Many have sung of love a root of bane:
  While to my mind a root of balm it is,
  For love at length breeds love; sufficient bliss
For life and death and rising up again.
Surely when light of Heaven makes all things plain,
  Love will grow plain with all its mysteries;
  Nor shall we need to fetch from over seas
Wisdom or wealth or pleasure safe from pain.
Love in our borders, love within our heart,
  Love all in all, we then shall bide at rest,
  Ended for ever life's unending quest,
    Ended for ever effort, change and fear:
Love all in all; — no more that better part
    Purchased, but at the cost of all things here.

GOLDEN SILENCES

There is silence that saith, “Ah me!”
    There is silence that nothing saith;
        One the silence of life forlorn,
    One the silence of death;
One is, and the other shall be.

One we know and have known for long,
    One we know not, but we shall know,
        All we who have ever been born;
    Even so, be it so, —
There is silence, despite a song.

Sowing day is a silent day,
    Resting night is a silent night;
        But whoso reaps the ripened corn
    Shall shout in his delight,
While silences vanish away.

IN THE WILLOW SHADE

I sat beneath a willow tree,
   Where water falls and calls;
While fancies upon fancies solaced me,
   Some true, and some were false.

Who set their heart upon a hope
   That never comes to pass,
Droop in the end like fading heliotrope,
   The sun's wan looking-glass.

Who set their will upon a whim
   Clung to through good and ill,
Are wrecked alike whether they sink or swim,
   Or hit or miss their will.

All things are vain that wax and wane,
   For which we waste our breath;
Love only doth not wane and is not vain,
   Love only outlives death.

A singing lark rose toward the sky,
   Circling he sang amain;
He sang, a speck scarce visible sky-high,
   And then he sank again.

A second like a sunlit spark
   Flashed singing up his track;
But never overtook that foremost lark,
   And songless fluttered back.

A hovering melody of birds
   Haunted the air above;
They clearly sang contentment without words,
   And youth and joy and love.

O silvery weeping willow tree
   With all leaves shivering,
Have you no purpose but to shadow me
   Beside this rippled spring?

On this first fleeting day of Spring,
   For Winter is gone by,
And every bird on every quivering wing
   Floats in a sunny sky;

On this first Summer-like soft day,
   While sunshine steeps the air,
And every cloud has gat itself away,
   And birds sing everywhere.

Have you no purpose in the world
   But thus to shadow me
With all your tender drooping twigs unfurled,
   O weeping willow tree?

With all your tremulous leaves outspread
   Betwixt me and the sun,
While here I loiter on a mossy bed
   With half my work undone;

My work undone, that should be done
   At once with all my might;
For after the long day and lingering sun
   Comes the unworking night.

This day is lapsing on its way,
   Is lapsing out of sight;
And after all the chances of the day
   Comes the resourceless night.

The weeping-willow shook its head
   And stretched its shadow long;
The west grew crimson, the sun smoldered red,
   The birds forbore a song.

Slow wind sighed through the willow leaves,
   The ripple made a moan,
The world drooped murmuring like a thing that grieves;
   And then I felt alone.

I rose to go, and felt the chill,
   And shivered as I went;
Yet shivering wondered, and I wonder still,
   What more that willow meant;

That silvery weeping-willow tree
   With all leaves shivering,
Which spent one long day overshadowing me
   Beside a spring in Spring.

FLUTTERED WINGS

The splendor of the kindling day,
The splendor of the setting sun,
These move my soul to wend its way,
And have done
With all we grasp and toil amongst and say.

The paling roses of a cloud,
The fading bow that arches space,
These woo my fancy toward my shroud;
Toward the place
Of faces veiled, and heads discrowned and bowed.

The nation of the awful stars,
The wandering star whose blaze is brief,
These make me beat against the bars
Of my grief;
My tedious grief, twin to the life it mars.

O fretted heart tossed to and fro,
So fain to flee, so fain to rest!
All glories that are high or low,
East or west,
Grow dim to thee who art so fain to go.

A FISHER-WIFE

The soonest mended, nothing said;
   And help may rise from east or west;
But my two hands are lumps of lead,
   My heart sits leaden in my breast.

O north wind swoop not from the north,
   O south wind linger in the south,
Oh come not raving raging forth,
   To bring my heart into my mouth;

For I've a husband out at sea,
   Afloat on feeble planks of wood;
He does not know what fear may be;
   I would have told him if I could.

I would have locked him in my arms,
   I would have hid him in my heart;
For oh! the waves are fraught with harms,
   And he and I so far apart.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Why has Spring one syllable less
Than any its fellow season?
There may be some other reason,
And I'm merely making a guess;
But surely it hoards such wealth
Of happiness, hope and health,
Sunshine and musical sound,
It may spare a foot from its name
Yet all the same
Superabound.

Soft-named Summer,
Most welcome comer,
Brings almost everything
Over which we dream or sing
Or sigh;
But then Summer wends its way,
Tomorrow, — today, —
Good-bye!

Autumn, — the slow name lingers,
While we likewise flag;
It silences many singers;
Its slow days drag,
Yet hasten at speed
To leave us in chilly need
For Winter to strip indeed.

In all-lack Winter,
Dull of sense and of sound,
We huddle and shiver
Beside our splinter

Of crackling pine,
Snow in sky and snow on ground.
Winter and cold
Can’t last forever!
Today, tomorrow, the sun will shine;
When we are old,
But some still are young,
Singing the song
Which others have sung,
Ringing the bells
Which others have rung, —
Even so!
We ourselves, who else?
We ourselves long
Long ago.

MARIANA

Not for me marring or making,
Not for me giving or taking;
   I love my Love and he loves not me,
I love my Love and my heart is breaking.

Sweet is Spring in its lovely showing,
Sweet the violet veiled in blowing,
   Sweet it is to love and be loved;
Ah, sweet knowledge beyond my knowing!

Who sighs for love sighs but for pleasure,
Who wastes for love hoards up a treasure;
   Sweet to be loved and take no count,
Sweet it is to love without measure.

Sweet my Love whom I loved to try for,
Sweet my Love whom I love and sigh for,
   Will you once love me and sigh for me,
You my Love whom I love and die for?

MEMENTO MORI

Poor the pleasure
Doled out by measure,
Sweet though it be, while brief
As falling of the leaf;
Poor is pleasure
By weight and measure.

Sweet the sorrow
Which ends tomorrow;
Sharp though it be and sore,
It ends for evermore:
Zest of sorrow,
What ends tomorrow.

ONE FOOT ON SEA, AND ONE ON SHORE

"Oh tell me once and tell me twice
   And tell me thrice to make it plain,
When we who part this weary day,
   When we who part shall meet again."

"When windflowers blossom on the sea
   And fishes skim along the plain,
Then we who part this weary day,
   Then you and I shall meet again."

"Yet tell me once before we part,
   Why need we part who part in pain?
If flowers must blossom on the sea,
   Why, we shall never meet again.

"My cheeks are paler than a rose,
   My tears are salter than the main,
My heart is like a lump of ice
   If we must never meet again."

"Oh weep or laugh, but let me be,
   And live or die, for all's in vain;
For life's in vain since we must part,
   And parting must not meet again

"Till windflowers blossom on the sea,
   And fishes skim along the plain;
Pale rose of roses let me be,
   Your breaking heart breaks mine again."

BUDS AND BABIES

A million buds are born that never blow,
That sweet with promise lift a pretty head
To blush and wither on a barren bed
And leave no fruit to show.

Sweet, unfulfilled. Yet have I understood
One joy, by their fragility made plain:
Nothing was ever beautiful in vain,
Or all in vain was good.

BOY JOHNNY

“If you’ll busk you as a bride
    And make ready,
It’s I will wed you with a ring,
    O fair lady.”

“Shall I busk me as a bride,
    I so bonny,
For you to wed me with a ring,
    O boy Johnny?”

“When you’ve busked you as a bride
    And made ready,
Who else is there to marry you,
    O fair lady?”

“I will find my lover out,
    I so bonny,
And you shall bear my wedding-train,
    O boy Johnny.”

FREAKS OF FASHION

Such a hubbub in the nests,
   Such a bustle and squeak!
Nestlings, guiltless of a feather,
   Learning just to speak,
Ask — ”And how about the fashions?”
   From a cavernous beak.

Perched on bushes, perched on hedges,
   Perched on firm hahas,
Perched on anything that holds them,
   Gay papas and grave mammas
Teach the knowledge-thirsty nestlings:
   Hear the gay papas.

Robin says: “A scarlet waistcoat
   Will be all the wear,
Snug, and also cheerful-looking
   For the frostiest air,
Comfortable for the chest too
   When one comes to plume and pair.”

“Neat gray hoods will be in vogue,”
   Quoth a Jackdaw: “Glossy gray,
Setting close, yet setting easy,
   Nothing fly-away;
Suited to our misty mornings,
   À la negligée.”

Flushing salmon, flushing sulphur,
   Haughty Cockatoos
Answer — ”Hoods may do for mornings,
   But for evenings choose
High head-dresses, curved like crescents,

Such as well-bred persons use."

"Top-knots, yes; yet more essential
Still, a train or tail,"
Screamed the Peacock: "Gemmed and lustrous
Not too stiff, and not too frail;
Those are best which rearrange as
Fans, and spread or trail."

Spoke the Swan, entrenched behind
An inimitable neck:
"After all, there's nothing sweeter
For the lawn or lake
Than simple white, if fine and flaky
And absolutely free from speck."

"Yellow," hinted a Canary,
"Warmer, not less *distingué*."
"Peach color," put in a Lory,
"Cannot look *outré*."
"All the colors are in fashion,
And are right," the Parrots say.

"Very well. But do contrast
Tints harmonious,"
Piped a Blackbird, justly proud
Of bill aurigerous;
"Half the world may learn a lesson
As to that from us."

Then a Stork took up the word:
"Aim at height and *chic*:
Not high heels, they're common; somehow,
Stilted legs, not thick,
Nor yet thin:" he just glanced downward
And snapped to his beak.

Here a rustling and a whirring,
    As of fans outspread,
Hinted that mammas felt anxious
    Lest the next thing said
Might prove less than quite judicious,
    Or even underbred.

So a mother Auk resumed
    The broken thread of speech:
“Let colors sort themselves, my dears,
    Yellow, or red, or peach;
The main points, as it seems to me,
    We mothers have to teach,

“Are form and texture, elegance,
    An air reserved, sublime;
The mode of wearing what we wear
    With due regard to month and clime.
But now, let’s all compose ourselves,
    It’s almost breakfast-time.”

A hubbub, a squeak, a bustle!
    Who cares to chatter or sing
With delightful breakfast coming?
    Yet they whisper under the wing:
“So we may wear whatever we like,
    Anything, everything!”

AN OCTOBER GARDEN

In my Autumn garden I was fain
   To mourn among my scattered roses;
   Alas for that last rosebud which uncloses
To Autumn's languid sun and rain
When all the world is on the wane!
   Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,
   Nor heard the nightingale in tune.

Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,
   You are but coarse compared with roses:
   More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses
Faint-scented, pinched, upon its stalk,
That least and last which cold winds balk;
   A rose it is though least and last of all,
   A rose to me though at the fall.

SUMMER IS ENDED

To think that this meaningless thing was ever a rose
Scentless, colorless, *this*!
Will it ever be thus (who knows?)
Thus with our bliss,
If we wait till the close?

Though we care not to wait for the end, there comes the end
Sooner, later, at last,
Which nothing can mar, nothing mend:
An end locked fast,
Bent we cannot re-bend.

PASSING AND GLASSING

All things that pass
Are woman's looking-glass;
They show her how her bloom must fade,
And she herself be laid
With withered roses in the shade;
With withered roses and the fallen peach,
Unlovely, out of reach
Of summer joy that was.

All things that pass
Are woman's tiring-glass;
The faded lavender is sweet,
Sweet the dead violet
Culled and laid by and cared for yet;
The dried-up violets and dried lavender
Still sweet, may comfort her,
Nor need she cry Alas!

All things that pass
Are wisdom's looking-glass;
Being full of hope and fear, and still
Brimful of good or ill,
According to our work and will;
For there is nothing new beneath the sun;
Our doings have been done,
And that which shall be was.

I WILL ARISE

Weary and weak, — accept my weariness;
   Weary and weak and downcast in my soul,
With hope growing less and less,
   And with the goal
Distant and dim, — accept my sore distress.
I thought to reach the goal so long ago,
   At outset of the race I dreamed of rest,
Not knowing what now I know
   Of breathless haste,
   Of long-drawn straining effort across the waste.

One only thing I knew, Thy love of me;
   One only thing I know, Thy sacred same
Love of me full and free,
   A craving flame
Of selfless love of me which burns in Thee.
How can I think of thee, and yet grow chill;
   Of Thee, and yet grow cold and nigh to death?
Re-energize my will,
   Rebuild my faith;
   I will arise and run, Thou giving me breath.

I will arise, repenting and in pain;
   I will arise, and smite upon my breast
And turn to Thee again;
   Thou choosest best,
Lead me along the road Thou makest plain.
Lead me a little way, and carry me
   A little way, and listen to my sighs,
And store my tears with Thee,
   And deign replies
   To feeble prayers; — O Lord, I will arise.

A PRODIGAL SON

Does that lamp still burn in my Father's house,
  Which he kindled the night I went away?
I turned once beneath the cedar boughs,
  And marked it gleam with a golden ray;
  Did he think to light me home some day?

Hungry here with the crunching swine,
  Hungry harvest have I to reap;
In a dream I count my Father's kine,
  I hear the tinkling bells of his sheep,
  I watch his lambs that browse and leap.

There is plenty of bread at home,
  His servants have bread enough and to spare;
The purple wine-fat froths with foam,
  Oil and spices make sweet the air,
  While I perish hungry and bare.

Rich and blessed those servants, rather
  Than I who see not my Father's face!
I will arise and go to my Father: —
    "Fallen from sonship, beggared of grace,
    Grant me, Father, a servant's place."

SOEUR LOUISE DE LA MISÉRICORDE

(1674.)

I have desired, and I have been desired;
   But now the days are over of desire,
   Now dust and dying embers mock my fire;
Where is the hire for which my life was hired?
   Oh vanity of vanities, desire!

Longing and love, pangs of a perished pleasure,
   Longing and love, a disenkindled fire,
   And memory a bottomless gulf of mire,
And love a fount of tears outrunning measure;
   Oh vanity of vanities, desire!

Now from my heart, love's deathbed, trickles, trickles,
   Drop by drop slowly, drop by drop of fire,
   The dross of life, of love, of spent desire;
Alas, my rose of life gone all to prickles, —
   Oh vanity of vanities, desire!

Oh vanity of vanities, desire;
   Stunting my hope which might have strained up higher,
   Turning my garden plot to barren mire;
Oh death-struck love, oh disenkindled fire,
   Oh vanity of vanities, desire!

AN IMMURATA SISTER

Life flows down to death; we cannot bind
  That current that it should not flee:
Life flows down to death, as rivers find
  The inevitable sea.

Men work and think, but women feel;
  And so (for I'm a woman, I)
  And so I should be glad to die
And cease from impotence of zeal,
And cease from hope, and cease from dread,
  And cease from yearnings without gain,
  And cease from all this world of pain,
And be at peace among the dead.

Hearts that die, by death renew their youth,
  Lightened of this life that doubts and dies;
Silent and contented, while the Truth
  Unveiled makes them wise.

Why should I seek and never find
  That something which I have not had?
  Fair and unutterably sad
The world hath sought time out of mind;
The world hath sought and I have sought, —
  Ah, empty world and empty I!
  For we have spent our strength for nought,
And soon it will be time to die.

Sparks fly upward toward their fount of fire,
  Kindling, flashing, hovering: —
Kindle, flash, my soul; mount higher and higher,

Thou whole burnt-offering!

IF THOU SAYEST, BEHOLD, WE KNEW IT NOT

— Proverbs xxiv. 11, 12.

1.

I have done I know not what, — what have I done?
   My brother's blood, my brother's soul, doth cry:
   And I find no defence, find no reply,
No courage more to run this race I run
Not knowing what I have done, have left undone;
   Ah me, these awful unknown hours that fly
   Fruitless it may be, fleeting fruitless by
Rank with death-savor underneath the sun.
For what avails it that I did not know
   The deed I did? what profits me the plea
That had I known I had not wronged him so?
      Lord Jesus Christ, my God, him pity Thou;
   Lord, if it may be, pity also me:
      In judgment pity, and in death, and now.

2.

Thou Who hast borne all burdens, bear our load,
   Bear Thou our load whatever load it be;
   Our guilt, our shame, our helpless misery,
Bear Thou Who only canst, O God my God.
   Seek us and find us, for we cannot Thee
Or seek or find or hold or cleave unto:
We cannot do or undo; Lord, undo
   Our self-undoing, for Thine is the key

Of all we are not though we might have been.
Dear Lord, if ever mercy moved Thy mind,
If so be love of us can move Thee yet,
If still the nail-prints in Thy Hands are seen,
Remember us, — yea, how shouldst Thou forget?
Remember us for good, and seek, and find.

3.

Each soul I might have succored, may have slain,
All souls shall face me at the last Appeal,
That great last moment poised for woe or weal,
That final moment for man's bliss or bane.
Vanity of vanities, yea all is vain
Which then will not avail or help or heal:
Disfeatured faces, worn-out knees that kneel,
Will more avail than strength or beauty then.
Lord, by Thy Passion, — when Thy Face was marred
In sight of earth and hell tumultuous,
And Thy heart failed in Thee like melting wax,
And Thy Blood dropped more precious than the nard, —
Lord, for Thy sake, not ours, supply our lacks,
For Thine own sake, not ours, Christ, pity us.

THE THREAD OF LIFE

1.

The irresponsive silence of the land,
   The irresponsive sounding of the sea,
   Speak both one message of one sense to me: —
Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof, so stand
Thou too aloof bound with the flawless band
   Of inner solitude; we bind not thee;
   But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free?
What heart shall touch thy heart? what hand thy hand? —
And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek,
   And sometimes I remember days of old
When fellowship seemed not so far to seek
   And all the world and I seemed much less cold,
   And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold,
And hope felt strong and life itself not weak.

2.

Thus am I mine own prison. Everything
   Around me free and sunny and at ease:
   Or if in shadow, in a shade of trees
Which the sun kisses, where the gay birds sing
And where all winds make various murmuring;
   Where bees are found, with honey for the bees;
   Where sounds are music, and where silences
Are music of an unlike fashioning.
Then gaze I at the merrymaking crew,
   And smile a moment and a moment sigh

Thinking: Why can I not rejoice with you?
   But soon I put the foolish fancy by:
I am not what I have nor what I do;
   But what I was I am, I am even I.

3.

Therefore myself is that one only thing
   I hold to use or waste, to keep or give;
   My sole possession every day I live,
And still mine own despite Time's winnowing.
Ever mine own, while moons and seasons bring
   From crudeness ripeness mellow and sanative;
   Ever mine own, till Death shall ply his sieve;
And still mine own, when saints break grave and sing.
And this myself as king unto my King
   I give, to Him Who gave Himself for me;
Who gives Himself to me, and bids me sing
   A sweet new song of His redeemed set free;
He bids me sing: O death, where is thy sting?
   And sing: O grave, where is thy victory?

AN OLD-WORLD THICKET

… “Una selva oscura.” — Dante.

Awake or sleeping (for I know not which)
I was or was not mazed within a wood
Where every mother-bird brought up her brood
Safe in some leafy niche
Of oak or ash, of cypress or of beech,

Of silvery aspen trembling delicately,
Of plane or warmer-tinted sycamore,
Of elm that dies in secret from the core,
Of ivy weak and free,
Of pines, of all green lofty things that be.

Such birds they seemed as challenged each desire;
Like spots of azure heaven upon the wing,
Like downy emeralds that alight and sing,
Like actual coals on fire,
Like anything they seemed, and everything.

Such mirth they made, such warblings and such chat
With tongue of music in a well-tuned beak,
They seemed to speak more wisdom than we speak,
To make our music flat
And all our subtlest reasonings wild or weak.

Their meat was nought but flowers like butterflies,
With berries coral-colored or like gold;
Their drink was only dew, which blossoms hold
Deep where the honey lies;
Their wings and tails were lit by sparkling eyes.

The shade wherein they reveled was a shade
That danced and twinkled to the unseen sun;
Branches and leaves cast shadows one by one,
And all their shadows swayed
In breaths of air that rustled and that played.

A sound of waters neither rose nor sank,
And spread a sense of freshness through the air;
It seemed not here or there, but everywhere,
As if the whole earth drank,
Root fathom deep and strawberry on its bank.

But I who saw such things as I have said,
Was overdone with utter weariness;
And walked in care, as one whom fears oppress
Because above his head
Death hangs, or damage, or the dearth of bread.

Each sore defeat of my defeated life
Faced and outfaced me in that bitter hour;
And turned to yearning palsy all my power,
And all my peace to strife,
Self stabbing self with keen lack-pity knife.

Sweetness of beauty moved me to despair,
Stung me to anger by its mere content,
Made me all lonely on that way I went,
Piled care upon my care,
Brimmed full my cup, and stripped me empty and bare:

For all that was but showed what all was not,
But gave clear proof of what might never be;
Making more destitute my poverty,

And yet more blank my lot,
And me much sadder by its jubilee.

Therefore I sat me down: for wherefore walk?
And closed mine eyes: for wherefore see or hear?
Alas, I had no shutter to mine ear,
And could not shun the talk
Of all rejoicing creatures far or near.

Without my will I hearkened and I heard
(Asleep or waking, for I know not which),
Till note by note the music changed its pitch;
Bird ceased to answer bird,
And every wind sighed softly if it stirred.

The drip of widening waters seemed to weep,
All fountains sobbed and gurgled as they sprang,
Somewhere a cataract cried out in its leap
Sheer down a headlong steep;
High over all cloud-thunders gave a clang.

Such universal sound of lamentation
I heard and felt, fain not to feel or hear;
Nought else there seemed but anguish far and near;
Nought else but all creation
Moaning and groaning wrung by pain or fear,

Shuddering in the misery of its doom:
My heart then rose a rebel against light,
Scouring all earth and heaven and depth and height,
Ingathering wrath and gloom,
Ingathering wrath to wrath and night to night.

Ah me, the bitterness of such revolt,

All impotent, all hateful, and all hate,
That kicks and breaks itself against the bolt
Of an imprisoning fate,
And vainly shakes, and cannot shake the gate.

Agony to agony, deep called to deep,
Out of the deep I called of my desire;
My strength was weakness and my heart was fire;
Mine eyes that would not weep
Or sleep, scaled height and depth, and could not sleep;

The eyes, I mean, of my rebellious soul,
For still my bodily eyes were closed and dark:
A random thing I seemed without a mark,
Racing without a goal,
Adrift upon life's sea without an ark.

More leaden than the actual self of lead
Outer and inner darkness weighed on me.
The tide of anger ebbed. Then fierce and free
Surged full above my head
The moaning tide of helpless misery.

Why should I breathe, whose breath was but a sigh?
Why should I live, who drew such painful breath?
Oh weary work, the unanswerable why! —
Yet I, why should I die,
Who had no hope in life, no hope in death?

Grasses and mosses and the fallen leaf
Make peaceful bed for an indefinite term;
But underneath the grass there gnaws a worm —
Haply, there gnaws a grief —
Both, haply always; not, as now, so brief.

The pleasure I remember, it is past;
The pain I feel is passing, passing by;
Thus all the world is passing, and thus I:
All things that cannot last
Have grown familiar, and are born to die.

And being familiar, have so long been borne
That habit trains us not to break but bend:
Mourning grows natural to us who mourn
In foresight of an end,
But that which ends not who shall brave or mend?

Surely the ripe fruits tremble on their bough,
They cling and linger trembling till they drop:
I, trembling, cling to dying life; for how
Face the perpetual Now?
Birthless and deathless, void of start or stop,

Void of repentance, void of hope and fear,
Of possibility, alternative,
Of all that ever made us bear to live
From night to morning here,
Of promise even which has no gift to give.

The wood, and every creature of the wood,
Seemed mourning with me in an undertone;
Soft scattered chirpings and a windy moan,
Trees rustling where they stood
And shivered, showed compassion for my mood.

Rage to despair; and now despair had turned
Back to self-pity and mere weariness,
With yearnings like a smoldering fire that burned,
And might grow more or less,
And might die out or wax to white excess.

Without, within me, music seemed to be;
   Something not music, yet most musical,
Silence and sound in heavenly harmony;
      At length a pattering fall
Of feet, a bell, and bleatings, broke through all.

Then I looked up. The wood lay in a glow
   From golden sunset and from ruddy sky;
   The sun had stooped to earth though once so high;
      Had stooped to earth, in slow
Warm dying loveliness brought near and low.

Each water-drop made answer to the light,
   Lit up a spark and showed the sun his face;
   Soft purple shadows paved the grassy space
      And crept from height to height,
   From height to loftier height crept up apace.

While opposite the sun a gazing moon
   Put on his glory for her coronet,
Kindling her luminous coldness to its noon,
      As his great splendor set;
   One only star made up her train as yet.

Each twig was tipped with gold, each leaf was edged
   And veined with gold from the gold-flooded west;
Each mother-bird, and mate-bird, and unfledged
      Nestling, and curious nest,
   Displayed a gilded moss or beak or breast.

And filing peacefully between the trees,
   Having the moon behind them, and the sun
Full in their meek mild faces, walked at ease

A homeward flock, at peace
With one another and with everyone.

A patriarchal ram with tinkling bell
Led all his kin; sometimes one browsing sheep
Hung back a moment, or one lamb would leap
And frolic in a dell;
Yet still they kept together, journeying well,

And bleating, one or other, many or few,
Journeying together toward the sunlit west;
Mild face by face, and woolly breast by breast,
Patient, sun-brightened too,
Still journeying toward the sunset and their rest.

ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE, O LORD

A PROCESSIONAL OF CREATION.

all.

I, All-Creation, sing my song of praise
To God Who made me and vouchsafes my days,
And sends me forth by multitudinous ways.

seraph.

I, like my Brethren, burn eternally
With love of Him Who is Love, and loveth me;
The Holy, Holy, Holy Unity.

cherub.

I, with my Brethren, gaze eternally
On Him Who is Wisdom, and Who knoweth me;
The Holy, Holy, Holy Trinity.

all angels.

We rule, we serve, we work, we store His treasure,
Whose vessels are we, brimmed with strength and pleasure;
Our joys fulfil, yea, overfill our measure.

heavens.

We float before the Presence Infinite,
We cluster round the Throne in our delight,
Revolving and rejoicing in God's sight.

firmament.

I, blue and beautiful, and framed of air,
At sunrise and at sunset grow most fair;
His glory by my glories I declare.

powers.

We Powers are powers because He makes us strong;
Wherefore we roll all rolling orbs along,
We move all moving things, and sing our song.

sun.

I blaze to Him in mine engarlanding
Of rays, I flame His whole burnt-offering,
While as a bridegroom I rejoice and sing.

moon.

I follow, and am fair, and do His Will;
Through all my changes I am faithful still,
Full-orbed or strait, His mandate to fulfil.

stars.

We Star-hosts numerous, innumerous,
Throng space with energy untumultuous,
And work His Will Whose eye beholdeth us.

galaxies and nebulae.

No thing is far or near; and therefore we
Float neither far nor near; but where we be
Weave dances round the Throne perpetually.

comets and meteors.

Our lights dart here and there, whirl to and fro,
We flash and vanish, we die down and glow;
All doing His Will Who bids us do it so.

showers.

We give ourselves; and be we great or small,
Thus are we made like Him Who giveth all,
Like Him Whose gracious pleasure bids us fall.

dews.

We give ourselves in silent secret ways,
Spending and spent in silence full of grace;
And thus are made like God, and show His praise.

winds.

We sift the air and winnow all the earth;
And God Who poised our weights and weighs our worth
Accepts the worship of our solemn mirth.

fire.

My power and strength are His Who fashioned me,
Ordained me image of His Jealousy,
Forged me His weapon fierce exceedingly.

heat.

I glow unto His glory, and do good:
I glow, and bring to life both bud and brood;
I glow, and ripen harvest-crops for food.

winter and summer.

Our wealth and joys and beauties celebrate
His wealth of beauty Who sustains our state,
Before Whose changelessness we alternate.

spring and autumn.

I hope, —
And I remember, —
We give place
Either to other with contented grace,
Acceptable and lovely all our days.

frost.

I make the unstable stable, binding fast
The world of waters prone to ripple past:
Thus praise I God, Whose mercies I forecast.

cold.

I rouse and goad the slothful, apt to nod,
I stir and urge the laggards with my rod:
My praise is not of men, yet I praise God.

snow.

My whiteness shadoweth Him Who is most fair,
All spotless: yea, my whiteness which I wear
Exalts His Purity beyond compare.

vapors.

We darken sun and moon, and blot the day,
The good Will of our Maker to obey:
Till to the glory of God we pass away.

night.

Moon and all stars I don for diadem
To make me fair: I cast myself and them
Before His feet, Who knows us gem from gem.

day.

I shout before Him in my plenitude
Of light and warmth, of hope and wealth and food;
Ascribing all good to the Only Good.

light and darkness.

I am God's dwelling-place, —
And also I
Make His pavilion, —
Lo, we bide and fly
Exulting in the Will of God Most High.

lightning and thunder.

We indivisible flash forth His Fame,
We thunder forth the glory of His Name,
In harmony of resonance and flame.

clouds.

Sweet is our store, exhaled from sea or river:
We wear a rainbow, praising God the Giver
Because His mercy is forever and ever.

earth.

I rest in Him rejoicing: resting so
And so rejoicing, in that I am low;
Yet known of Him, and following on to know.

mountains.

Our heights which laud Him, sink abased before
Him higher than the highest evermore:
God higher than the highest we adore.

hills.

We green-tops praise Him, and we fruitful heads,
Whereon the sunshine and the dew He sheds:
We green-tops praise Him, rising from out beds.

green things.

We all green things, we blossoms bright or dim,
Trees, bushes, brushwood, corn and grasses slim,
We lift our many-favored lauds to Him.

rose, — lily, — violet.

I praise Him on my thorn which I adorn, —
And I, amid my world of thistle and thorn, —
And I, within my veil where I am born.

apple, — citron, — pomegranate.

We, Apple-blossom, Citron, Pomegranate,
We, clothed of God without our toil and fret,
We offer fatness where His Throne is set.

vine, — cedar, — palm.

I proffer Him my sweetness, who am sweet, —
I bow my strength in fragrance at His feet, —
I wave myself before His Judgment Seat.

medicinal herbs.

I bring refreshment, —
I bring ease and calm, —
I lavish strength and healing, —
I am balm, —
We work His pitiful Will and chant our psalm.

a spring.

Clear my pure fountain, clear and pure my rill,
My fountain and mine outflow deep and still,
I set His semblance forth and do His Will.

sea.

Today I praise God with a sparkling face,
My thousand thousand waves all uttering praise:
Tomorrow I commit me to His Grace.

floods.

We spring and swell meandering to and fro,

From height to depth, from depth to depth we flow,
We fertilize the world, and praise Him so.

whales and sea mammals.

We Whales and Monsters gambol in His sight
Rejoicing every day and every night,
Safe in the tender keeping of His Might.

fishes.

Our fashions and our colors and our speeds
Set forth His praise Who framed us and Who feeds,
Who knows our number and regards our needs.

birds.

Winged Angels of this visible world, we fly
To sing God's praises in the lofty sky;
We scale the height to praise our Lord most High.

eagle and dove.

I the sun-gazing Eagle, —
I the Dove,
With plumes of softness and a note of love, —
We praise by divers gifts One God above.

beasts and cattle.

We forest Beasts, —
We Beasts of hill or cave, —
We border-loving Creatures of the wave, —
We praise our King with voices deep and grave.

small animals.

God forms us weak and small, but pours out all
We need, and notes us while we stand or fall:
Wherefore we praise Him, weak and safe and small.

lamb.

I praise my loving Lord, Who maketh me
His type by harmless sweet simplicity:
Yet He the Lamb of lambs incomparably.

lion.

I praise the Lion of the Royal Race,
Strongest in fight and swiftest in the chase:
With all my might I leap and lavish praise.

all men.

All creatures sing around us, and we sing:
We bring our own selves as our offering,
Our very selves we render to our King.

israel.

Flock of our Shepherd's pasture and His fold,
Purchased and well-beloved from days of old,
We tell His praise which still remains untold.

priests.

We free-will Shepherds tend His sheep, and feed;
We follow Him while caring for their need;
We follow praising Him, and them we lead.

Servants of God.

We love God, for He loves us; we are free
In serving Him, who serve Him willingly:
As kings we reign, and praise His Majesty.

holy and humble persons.

All humble souls he calls and sanctifies;
All holy souls He calls to make them wise;
Accepting all, His free-will sacrifice.

Babes.

He maketh me, —
And me, —
And me, —
To be
His blessed little ones around His knee,
Who praise Him by mere love confidingly.

women.

God makes our service love, and makes our wage
Love: so we wend on patient pilgrimage,
Extolling Him by love from age to age.

men.

God gives us power to rule: He gives us power
To rule ourselves, and prune the exuberant flower
Of youth, and worship Him hour after hour.

spirits and souls —

Lo, in the hidden world we chant our chant
To Him Who fills us that we nothing want,
To Him Whose bounty leaves our craving scant.

of babes —

With milky mouths we praise God, from the breast
Called home betimes to rest the perfect rest,
By love and joy fulfilling His behest.

of women —

We praise His Will which made us what He would,
His Will which fashioned us and called us good,
His Will our plenary beatitude.

of men.

We praise His Will Who bore with us so long,
Who out of weakness wrought us swift and strong,
Champions of right and putters-down of wrong.

all.

Let everything that hath or hath not breath,
Let days and endless days, let life and death,
Praise God, praise God, praise God, His creature saith.

LATER LIFE: A DOUBLE SONNET OF SONNETS

1.

Before the mountains were brought forth, before
   Earth and the world were made, then God was God:
And God will still be God, when flames shall roar
   Round earth and heaven dissolving at His nod:
   And this God is our God, even while His rod
Of righteous wrath falls on us smiting sore:
And this God is our God for evermore
   Through life, through death, while clod returns to clod.
For though He slay us we will trust in Him;
   We will flock home to Him by divers ways:
   Yea, though He slay us we will vaunt His praise,
Serving and loving with the Cherubim,
Watching and loving with the Seraphim,
   Our very selves His praise through endless days.

2.

Rend hearts and rend not garments for our sins;
   Gird sackcloth not on body but on soul;
   Grovel in dust with faces toward the goal
Nor won, nor neared: he only laughs who wins.
Not neared the goal, the race too late begins;
   Or left undone, we have yet to do the whole;
   The sun is hurrying west and toward the pole
Where darkness waits for earth with all her kins.
Let us today, while it is called today,
   Set out, if utmost speed may yet avail —

The shadows lengthen and the light grows pale:
For who through darkness and the shadow of death,
Darkness that may be felt, shall find a way,
Blind-eyed, deaf-eared, and choked with failing breath?

3.

Thou Who didst make and knowest whereof we are made,
Oh bear in mind our dust and nothingness,
Our wordless tearless dumbness of distress:
Bear Thou in mind the burden Thou hast laid
Upon us, and our feebleness unstayed
Except Thou stay us: for the long long race
Which stretches far and far before our face
Thou knowest, — remember Thou whereof we are made.
If making makes us Thine, then Thine we are;
And if redemption, we are twice Thine own:
If once Thou didst come down from heaven afar
To seek us and to find us, how not save?
Comfort us, save us, leave us not alone,
Thou Who didst die our death and fill our grave.

4.

So tired am I, so weary of today,
So unrefreshed from foregone weariness,
So overburdened by foreseen distress,
So lagging and so stumbling on my way,
I scarce can rouse myself to watch or pray,
To hope, or aim, or toil for more or less, —
Ah, always less and less, even while I press
Forward and toil and aim as best I may.
Half-starved of soul and heartsick utterly,

Yet lift I up my heart and soul and eyes
(Which fail in looking upward) toward the prize:
Me, Lord, Thou seest though I see not Thee;
Me now, as once the Thief in Paradise,
Even me, O Lord my Lord, remember me.

5.

Lord, Thou Thyself art Love and only Thou;
Yet I who am not love would fain love Thee;
But Thou alone being Love canst furnish me
With that same love my heart is craving now.
Allow my plea! for if Thou disallow,
No second fountain can I find but Thee;
No second hope or help is left to me,
No second anything, but only Thou.
O Love accept, according my request;
O Love exhaust, fulfilling my desire:
Uphold me with the strength that cannot tire,
Nerve me to labor till Thou bid me rest,
Kindle my fire from Thine unkindled fire,
And charm the willing heart from out my breast.

6.

We lack, yet cannot fix upon the lack:
Not this, nor that; yet somewhat, certainly.
We see the things we do not yearn to see
Around us: and what see we glancing back?
Lost hopes that leave our hearts upon the rack,
Hopes that were never ours yet seemed to be,
For which we steered on life's salt stormy sea
Braving the sunstroke and the frozen pack.

If thus to look behind is all in vain,
   And all in vain to look to left or right,
Why face we not our future once again,
Launching with hardier hearts across the main,
   Straining dim eyes to catch the invisible sight,
And strong to bear ourselves in patient pain?

7.

To love and to remember; that is good:
   To love and to forget; that is not well:
   To lapse from love to hatred; that is hell
And death and torment, rightly understood.
Soul dazed by love and sorrow, cheer thy mood;
   More blest art thou than mortal tongue can tell:
   Ring not thy funeral but thy marriage bell,
And salt with hope thy life's insipid food.
Love is the goal, love is the way we wend,
   Love is our parallel unending line
      Whose only perfect Parallel is Christ,
Beginning not begun, End without end:
      For He Who hath the heart of God sufficed,
   Can satisfy all hearts, — yea, thine and mine.

8.

We feel and see with different hearts and eyes: —
   Ah Christ, if all our hearts could meet in Thee
   How well it were for them and well for me,
Our hearts Thy dear accepted sacrifice.
Thou, only Life of hearts and Light of eyes,
   Our life, our light, if once we turn to Thee,
   So be it, O Lord, to them and so to me;

Be all alike Thine own dear sacrifice.
Thou Who by death hast ransomed us from death,
Thyself God's sole well-pleasing Sacrifice,
Thine only sacred Self I plead with Thee:
Make Thou it well for them and well for me
That Thou hast given us souls and wills and breath;
And hearts to love Thee; and to see Thee, eyes.

9.

Star Sirius and the Pole Star dwell afar
Beyond the drawings each of other's strength:
One blazes through the brief bright summer's length
Lavishing life-heat from a flaming car;
While one unchangeable upon a throne
Broods o'er the frozen heart of earth alone,
Content to reign the bright particular star
Of some who wander or of some who groan.
They own no drawings each of other's strength,
Nor vibrate in a visible sympathy,
Nor veer along their courses each toward each:
Yet are their orbits pitched in harmony
Of one dear heaven, across whose depth and length
Mayhap they talk together without speech.

10.

Tread softly! all the earth is holy ground.
It may be, could we look with seeing eyes,
This spot we stand on is a Paradise
Where dead have come to life and lost been found,
Where Faith has triumphed, Martyrdom been crowned,
Where fools have foiled the wisdom of the wise;

From this same spot the dust of saints may rise,
And the King's prisoners come to light unbound.
O earth, earth, earth, hear thou thy Maker's Word:
"Thy dead thou shalt give up, nor hide thy slain" —
Some who went weeping forth shall come again
Rejoicing from the east or from the west,
As doves fly to their windows, love's own bird
Contented and desirous to the nest. "Quali colombe dal disio chiamate
Con l'ali aperte e ferme al dolce nido
Volan per l'aer dal voler portate."

Dante.

11.

Lifelong our stumbles, lifelong our regret,
Lifelong our efforts failing and renewed,
While lifelong is our witness, "God is good:"
Who bore with us till now, bears with us yet,
Who still remembers and will not forget,
Who gives us light and warmth and daily food;
And gracious promises half understood,
And glories half unveiled, whereon to set
Our heart of hearts and eyes of our desire;
Uplifting us to longing and to love,
Luring us upward from this world of mire,
Urging us to press on and mount above
Ourselves and all we have had experience of,
Mounting to Him in love's perpetual fire.

12.

A dream there is wherein we are fain to scream,
While struggling with ourselves we cannot speak:

And much of all our waking life, as weak
And misconceived, eludes us like the dream.
For half life's seemings are not what they seem,
And vain the laughs we laugh, the shrieks we shriek;
Yea, all is vain that mars the settled meek
Contented quiet of our daily theme.
When I was young I deemed that sweets are sweet:
But now I deem some searching bitters are
Sweeter than sweets, and more refreshing far,
And to be relished more, and more desired,
And more to be pursued on eager feet,
On feet untired, and still on feet though tired.

13.

Shame is a shadow cast by sin: yet shame
Itself may be a glory and a grace,
Refashioning the sin-disfashioned face;
A nobler bruit than hollow-sounded fame,
A new-lit lustre on a tarnished name,
One virtue pent within an evil place,
Strength for the fight, and swiftness for the race,
A stinging salve, a life-requickening flame.
A salve so searching we may scarcely live,
A flame so fierce it seems that we must die,
An actual cautery thrust into the heart:
Nevertheless, men die not of such smart;
And shame gives back what nothing else can give,
Man to himself, — then sets him up on high.

14.

When Adam and when Eve left Paradise

Did they love on and cling together still,
Forgiving one another all that ill
The twain had wrought on such a different wise?
She propped upon his strength, and he in guise
Of lover though of lord, girt to fulfil
Their term of life and die when God should will;
Lie down and sleep, and having slept arise.
Boast not against us, O our enemy!
Today we fall, but we shall rise again;
We grope today, tomorrow we shall see:
What is today that we should fear today?
A morrow cometh which shall sweep away
Thee and thy realm of change and death and pain.

15.

Let woman fear to teach and bear to learn,
Remembering the first woman's first mistake.
Eve had for pupil the inquiring snake,
Whose doubts she answered on a great concern;
But he the tables so contrived to turn,
It next was his to give and hers to take;
Till man deemed poison sweet for her sweet sake,
And fired a train by which the world must burn.
Did Adam love his Eve from first to last?
I think so; as we love who works us ill,
And wounds us to the quick, yet loves us still.
Love pardons the unpardonable past:
Love in a dominant embrace holds fast
His frailer self, and saves without her will.

16.

Our teachers teach that one and one make two:
   Later, Love rules that one and one make one:
   Abstruse the problems! neither need we shun,
But skilfully to each should yield its due.
The narrower total seems to suit the few,
   The wider total suits the common run;
   Each obvious in its sphere like moon or sun;
Both provable by me, and both by you.
Befogged and witless, in a wordy maze
   A groping stroll perhaps may do us good;
   If cloyed we are with much we have understood,
If tired of half our dusty world and ways,
   If sick of fasting, and if sick of food; —
And how about these long still-lengthening days?

17.

Something this foggy day, a something which
   Is neither of this fog nor of today,
   Has set me dreaming of the winds that play
Past certain cliffs, along one certain beach,
   And turn the topmost edge of waves to spray:
   Ah pleasant pebbly strand so far away,
So out of reach while quite within my reach,
   As out of reach as India or Cathay!
I am sick of where I am and where I am not,
   I am sick of foresight and of memory,
   I am sick of all I have and all I see,
      I am sick of self, and there is nothing new;
Oh weary impatient patience of my lot! —
      Thus with myself: how fares it, Friends, with you?

18.

So late in Autumn half the world's asleep,
   And half the wakeful world looks pinched and pale;
   For dampness now, not freshness, rides the gale;
And cold and colorless comes ashore the deep
With tides that bluster or with tides that creep;
   Now veiled uncouthness wears an uncouth veil
   Of fog, not sultry haze; and blight and bale
Have done their worst, and leaves rot on the heap.
So late in Autumn one forgets the Spring,
   Forgets the Summer with its opulence,
The callow birds that long have found a wing,
   The swallows that more lately gat them hence:
Will anything like Spring, will anything
   Like Summer, rouse one day the slumbering sense?

19.

Here now is Winter. Winter, after all,
   Is not so drear as was my boding dream
   While Autumn gleamed its latest watery gleam
On sapless leafage too inert to fall.
Still leaves and berries clothe my garden wall
   Where ivy thrives on scantiest sunny beam;
   Still here a bud and there a blossom seem
Hopeful, and robin still is musical.
Leaves, flowers and fruit and one delightful song
   Remain; these days are short, but now the nights
   Intense and long, hang out their utmost lights;
Such starry nights are long, yet not too long;
Frost nips the weak, while strengthening still the strong
   Against that day when Spring sets all to rights.

20.

A hundred thousand birds salute the day: —
   One solitary bird salutes the night:
Its mellow grieving wiles our grief away,
   And tunes our weary watches to delight;
It seems to sing the thoughts we cannot say,
   To know and sing them, and to set them right;
Until we feel once more that May is May,
   And hope some buds may bloom without a blight.
This solitary bird outweighs, outvies,
   The hundred thousand merry-making birds
Whose innocent warblings yet might make us wise
Would we but follow when they bid us rise,
   Would we but set their notes of praise to words
And launch our hearts up with them to the skies.

21.

A host of things I take on trust: I take
   The nightingales on trust, for few and far
   Between those actual summer moments are
When I have heard what melody they make.
So chanced it once at Como on the Lake:
   But all things, then, waxed musical; each star
   Sang on its course, each breeze sang on its car,
All harmonies sang to senses wide-awake.
All things in tune, myself not out of tune,
   Those nightingales were nightingales indeed:
   Yet truly an owl had satisfied my need,
And wrought a rapture underneath that moon,
   Or simple sparrow chirping from a reed;
For June that night glowed like a doubled June.

22.

The mountains in their overwhelming might
   Moved me to sadness when I saw them first,
And afterwards they moved me to delight;
   Struck harmonies from silent chords which burst
   Out into song, a song by memory nursed;
Forever unrenewed by touch or sight
Sleeps the keen magic of each day or night,
   In pleasure and in wonder then immersed.
All Switzerland behind us on the ascent,
   All Italy before us we plunged down
      St. Gothard, garden of forget-me-not:
      Yet why should such a flower choose such a spot?
Could we forget that way which once we went
   Though not one flower had bloomed to weave its crown?

23.

Beyond the seas we know stretch seas unknown,
   Blue and bright-colored for our dim and green;
   Beyond the lands we see, stretch lands unseen
With many-tinted tangle overgrown;
And icebound seas there are like seas of stone,
   Serenely stormless as death lies serene;
   And lifeless tracks of sand, which intervene
Betwixt the lands where living flowers are blown.
This dead and living world befits our case
   Who live and die: we live in wearied hope,
We die in hope not dead; we run a race
Today, and find no present halting-place;
   All things we see lie far within our scope,
And still we peer beyond with craving face.

24.

The wise do send their hearts before them to
   Dear blessed Heaven, despite the veil between;
   The foolish nurse their hearts within the screen
Of this familiar world, where all we do
Or have is old, for there is nothing new:
   Yet elder far that world we have not seen;
   God's Presence antedates what else hath been:
Many the foolish seem, the wise seem few.
Oh foolishest fond folly of a heart
   Divided, neither here nor there at rest!
      That hankers after Heaven, but clings to earth;
      That neither here nor there knows thorough mirth,
Half-choosing, wholly missing, the good part: —
   Oh fool among the foolish, in thy quest.

25.

When we consider what this life we lead
   Is not, and is; how full of toil and pain,
   How blank of rest and of substantial gain,
Beset by hunger earth can never feed,
And propping half our hearts upon a reed;
   We cease to mourn lost treasures mourned in vain,
   Lost treasures we are fain and yet not fain
To fetch back for a solace of our need.
For who that feel this burden and this strain,
   This wide vacuity of hope and heart,
Would bring their cherished well-beloved again:
   To bleed with them and wince beneath the smart,
To have with stinted bliss such lavish bane,
   To hold in lieu of all so poor a part?

26.

This Life is full of numbness and of balk,
   Of haltingness and baffled short-coming,
   Of promise unfulfilled, of everything
That is puffed vanity and empty talk:
Its very bud hangs cankered on the stalk,
   Its very song-bird trails a broken wing,
   Its very Spring is not indeed like Spring,
But sighs like Autumn round an aimless walk.
This Life we live is dead for all its breath;
   Death's self it is, set off on pilgrimage,
   Travelling with tottering steps the first short stage:
      The second stage is one mere desert dust
      Where Death sits veiled amid creation's rust: —
Unveil thy face, O Death who art not Death.

27.

I have dreamed of Death: — what will it be to die
   Not in a dream, but in the literal truth
   With all Death's adjuncts ghastly and uncouth,
The pang that is the last and the last sigh?
Too dulled, it may be, for a last good-bye,
   Too comfortless for anyone to soothe,
   A helpless charmless spectacle of ruth
Through long last hours, so long while yet they fly.
So long to those who hopeless in their fear
   Watch the slow breath and look for what they dread:
While I supine, with ears that cease to hear,
      With eyes that glaze, with heart-pulse running down,
   (Alas! no saint rejoicing on her bed),
      May miss the goal at last, may miss a crown.

28.

In life our absent friend is far away:
   But death may bring our friend exceeding near,
   Show him familiar faces long so dear
And lead him back in reach of words we say.
He only cannot utter yea or nay
   In any voice accustomed to our ear;
   He only cannot make his face appear
And turn the sun back on our shadowed day.
The dead may be around us, dear and dead;
   The unforgotten dearest dead may be
      Watching us, with unslumbering eyes and heart,
Brimful of words which cannot yet be said,
      Brimful of knowledge they may not impart,
   Brimful of love for you and love for me.

FOR THINE OWN SAKE, O MY GOD

Wearied of sinning, wearied of repentance,
Wearied of self, I turn, my God, to Thee;
To Thee, my Judge, on Whose all-righteous sentence
Hangs mine eternity:
I turn to Thee, I plead Thyself with Thee, —
Be pitiful to me.

Wearied I loathe myself, I loathe my sinning,
My stains, my festering sores, my misery:
Thou the Beginning, Thou ere my beginning
Didst see and didst foresee
Me miserable, me sinful, ruined me, —
I plead Thyself with Thee.

I plead Thyself with Thee Who art my Maker,
Regard Thy handiwork that cries to Thee;
I plead Thyself with Thee Who wast partaker
Of mine infirmity,
Love made Thee what Thou art, the love of me, —
I plead Thyself with Thee.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAK

When will the day bring its pleasure?
   When will the night bring its rest?
Reaper and gleaner and thresher
   Peer toward the east and the west: —
   The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

Meteors flash forth and expire,
   Northern lights kindle and pale;
These are the days of desire,
   Of eyes looking upward that fail;
   Vanishing days as a finishing tale.

Bows down the crop in its glory
   Tenfold, fifty-fold, hundred-fold;
The millet is ripened and hoary,
   The wheat ears are ripened to gold: —
   Why keep us waiting in dimness and cold?

The Lord of the harvest, He knoweth
   Who knoweth the first and the last:
The Sower Who patiently soweth,
   He scanneth the present and past:
   He saith, "What thou hast, what remaineth, hold fast."

Yet, Lord, o'er Thy toil-wearied weepers
   The storm-clouds hang muttering and frown:
On threshers and gleaners and reapers,
   O Lord of the harvest, look down;
   Oh for the harvest, the shout, and the crown!

"Not so," saith the Lord of the reapers,

The Lord of the first and the last:
"O My toilers, My weary, My weepers,
What ye have, what remaineth, hold fast.
Hide in My heart till the vengeance be past."

OF HIM THAT WAS READY TO PERISH

Lord, I am waiting, weeping, watching for Thee:
My youth and hope lie by me buried and dead,
My wandering love hath not where to lay its head
Except Thou say "Come to Me."

My noon is ended, abolished from life and light,
My noon is ended, ended and done away,
My sun went down in the hours that still were day,
And my lingering day is night.

How long, O Lord, how long in my desperate pain
Shall I weep and watch, shall I weep and long for Thee?
Is Thy grace ended, Thy love cut off from me?
How long shall I long in vain?

O God Who before the beginning hast seen the end,
Who hast made me flesh and blood, not frost and not fire,
Who hast filled me full of needs and love and desire
And a heart that craves a friend,

Who hast said "Come to Me and I will give thee rest,"
Who hast said "Take on thee My yoke and learn of Me,"
Who calledst a little child to come to Thee
And pillowedst John on Thy breast;

Who spak'st to women that followed Thee sorrowing,
Bidding them weep for themselves and weep for their own;
Who didst welcome the outlaw adoring Thee all alone,
And plight Thy word as a King, —

By Thy love of these and of all that ever shall be,

By Thy love of these and of all the born and unborn,
Turn Thy gracious eyes on me and think no scorn
Of me, not even of me.

Beside Thy Cross I hang on my cross in shame,
My wounds, weakness, extremity cry to Thee:
Bid me also to Paradise, also me
For the glory of Thy Name.

BEHOLD THE MAN!

Shall Christ hang on the Cross, and we not look?
   Heaven, earth, and hell stood gazing at the first,
   While Christ for long-cursed man was counted cursed;
Christ, God and Man, Whom God the Father strook
And shamed and sifted and one while forsook: —
   Cry shame upon our bodies we have nursed
   In sweets, our souls in pride, our spirits immersed
In willfulness, our steps run all acrook.
Cry shame upon us! for He bore our shame
   In agony, and we look on at ease
With neither hearts on flame nor cheeks on flame:
   What hast thou, what have I, to do with peace?
Not to send peace but send a sword He came,
   And fire and fasts and tearful night-watches.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS

Is this the Face that thrills with awe
   Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the Face without a flaw,
   The Face that is the Face of Love?
Yea, this defaced, a lifeless clod,
   Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
   This Face the Face of Jesus Christ.

IT IS FINISHED

Dear Lord, let me recount to Thee
Some of the great things thou hast done
For me, even me
Thy little one.

It was not I that cared for Thee, —
But Thou didst set Thy heart upon
Me, even me
Thy little one.

And therefore was it sweet to Thee
To leave Thy Majesty and Throne,
And grow like me
A Little One,

A swaddled Baby on the knee
Of a dear Mother of Thine own,
Quite weak like me
Thy little one.
Thou didst assume my misery,
And reap the harvest I had sown,
Comforting me
Thy little one.

Jerusalem and Galilee, —
Thy love embraced not those alone,
But also me
Thy little one.

Thy unblemished Body on the Tree
Was bared and broken to atone

For me, for me
Thy little one.

Thou lovedst me upon the Tree, —
Still me, hid by the ponderous stone, —
Me always, — me
Thy little one.

And love of me arose with Thee
When death and hell lay overthrown:
Thou lovedst me
Thy little one.

And love of me went up with Thee
To sit upon Thy Father's Throne:
Thou lovest me
Thy little one.

Lord, as Thou me, so would I Thee
Love in pure love's communion,
For Thou lov'st me
Thy little one:

Which love of me brings back with Thee
To Judgment when the Trump is blown,
Still loving me
Thy little one.

AN EASTER CAROL

Spring bursts today,
For Christ is risen and all the earth's at play.

Flash forth, thou Sun,
The rain is over and gone, its work is done.

Winter is past,
Sweet Spring is come at last, is come at last.

Bud, Fig and Vine,
Bud, Olive, fat with fruit and oil and wine.

Break forth this morn
In roses, thou but yesterday a Thorn.

Uplift thy head,
O pure white Lily through the Winter dead.

Beside your dams
Leap and rejoice, you merry-making Lambs.

All Herds and Flocks
Rejoice, all Beasts of thickets and of rocks.

Sing, Creatures, sing,
Angels and Men and Birds and everything.

All notes of Doves
Fill all our world: this is the time of loves.

BEHOLD A SHAKING

1.

Man rising to the doom that shall not err, —
   Which hath most dread: the arouse of all or each;
   All kindreds of all nations of all speech,
Or one by one of *him* and *him* and *her*?
While dust reanimate begins to stir
   Here, there, beyond, beyond, reach beyond reach;
   While every wave refashions on the beach
Alive or dead-in-life some seafarer.
Now meeting doth not join or parting part;
   True meeting and true parting wait till then,
      When whoso meet are joined for evermore,
Face answering face and heart at rest in heart: —
      God bring us all rejoicing to the shore
   Of happy Heaven, His sheep home to the pen.

2.

Blessed that flock safe penned in Paradise;
   Blessed this flock which tramps in weary ways;
   All form one flock, God's flock; all yield Him praise
By joy or pain, still tending toward the prize.
Joy speaks in praises there, and sings and flies
   Where no night is, exulting all its days;
   Here, pain finds solace, for, behold, it prays;
In both love lives the life that never dies.
Here life is the beginning of our death,
   And death the starting-point whence life ensues;

Surely our life is death, our death is life:
Nor need we lay to heart our peace or strife,
But calm in faith and patience breathe the breath
God gave, to take again when He shall choose.

ALL SAINTS

They are flocking from the East
And the West,
They are flocking from the North
And the South,
Every moment setting forth
From realm of snake or lion,
Swamp or sand,
Ice or burning;
Greatest and least,
Palm in hand
And praise in mouth,
They are flocking up the path
To their rest,
Up the path that hath
No returning.

Up the steeps of Zion
They are mounting,
Coming, coming,
Throngs beyond man's counting;
With a sound
Like innumerable bees
Swarming, humming
Where flowering trees
Many-tinted,
Many-scented,
All alike abound
With honey, —
With a swell
Like a blast upswaying unrestrainable
From a shadowed dell
To the hill-tops sunny, —
With a thunder
Like the ocean when in strength

Breadth and length
It sets to shore;
More and more
Waves on waves redoubled pour
Leaping flashing to the shore
(Unlike the under
Drain of ebb that loseth ground
For all its roar.)

They are thronging
From the East and West,
From the North and South,
Saints are thronging, loving, longing,
To their land
Of rest,
Palm in hand
And praise in mouth.

TAKE CARE OF HIM

"Thou whom I love, for whom I died,
   Lovest thou Me, My bride?" —
Low on my knees I love Thee, Lord,
   Believed in and adored.

"That I love thee the proof is plain:
   How dost thou love again?" —
In prayer, in toil, in earthly loss,
   In a long-carried cross.

"Yea, thou dost love: yet one adept
   Brings more for Me to accept." —
I mould my will to match with Thine,
   My wishes I resign.

"Thou givest much: then give the whole
   For solace of My soul." —
More would I give, if I could get:
   But, Lord, what lack I yet?

"In Me thou lovest Me: I call
   Thee to love Me in all." —
Brim full my heart, dear Lord, that so
   My love may overflow.

"Love Me in sinners and in saints,
   In each who needs or faints." —
Lord, I will love Thee as I can
   In every brother man.

“All sore, all crippled, all who ache,
Tend all for My dear sake.” —
All for Thy sake, Lord: I will see
In every sufferer, Thee.

“So I at last, upon My Throne
Of glory, Judge alone,
So I at last will say to thee:
Thou diddest it to Me.”

A MARTYR

The Vigil Of The Feast

Inner not outer, without gnash of teeth
   Or weeping, save quiet sobs of some who pray
   And feel the Everlasting Arms beneath, —
Blackness of darkness this, but not for aye;
   Darkness that even in gathering fleeteth fast,
   Blackness of blackest darkness close to day.
Lord Jesus, through Thy darkened pillar cast,
   Thy gracious eyes all-seeing cast on me
   Until this tyranny be overpast.
Me, Lord, remember who remember Thee,
   And cleave to Thee, and see Thee without sight,
   And choose Thee still in dire extremity,
And in this darkness worship Thee my Light,
   And Thee my Life adore in shadow of death,
   Thee loved by day, and still beloved by night.
It is the Voice of my Beloved that saith:
   "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, I go
   Whither that soul knows well that followeth" —
O Lord, I follow, little as I know;
   At this eleventh hour I rise and take
   My life into my hand, and follow so,
With tears and heart-misgivings and heart-ache;
   Thy feeblest follower, yet Thy follower
   Indomitable for Thine only sake.
Tonight I gird my will afresh, and stir
   My strength, and brace my heart to do and dare,
   Marveling: Will tomorrow wake the whirr
Of the great rending wheel, or from his lair
   Startle the jubilant lion in his rage,
   Or clench the headsman's hand within my hair,
Or kindle fire to speed my pilgrimage,
   Chariot of fire and horses of sheer fire

Whirling me home to heaven by one fierce stage?
Thy Will I will, I Thy desire desire;
Let not the waters close above my head,
Uphold me that I sink not in this mire:
For flesh and blood are frail and sore afraid;
And young I am, unsatisfied and young,
With memories, hopes, with cravings all unfed,
My song half sung, its sweetest notes unsung,
All plans cut short, all possibilities,
Because my cord of life is soon unstrung.
Was I a careless woman set at ease
That this so bitter cup is brimmed for me?
Had mine own vintage settled on the lees?
A word, a puff of smoke, would set me free;
A word, a puff of smoke, over and gone:…
Howbeit, whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee?
Yea, only Thee my choice is fixed upon
In heaven or earth, eternity or time: —
Lord, hold me fast, Lord, leave me not alone,
Thy silly heartless dove that sees the lime
Yet almost flutters to the tempting bough:
Cover me, hide me, pluck me from this crime.
A word, a puff of smoke, would save me now:…
But who, my God, would save me in the day
Of Thy fierce anger? only Saviour Thou.
Preoccupy my heart, and turn away
And cover up mine eyes from frantic fear,
And stop mine ears lest I be driven astray:
For one stands ever dinning in mine ear
How my gray Father withers in the blight
Of love for me, who cruel am and dear;
And how my Mother through this lingering night
Until the day, sits tearless in her woe,
Loathing for love of me the happy light
Which brings to pass a concourse and a show
To glut the hungry faces merciless,
The thousand faces swaying to and fro,
Feasting on me unveiled in helplessness
Alone, — yet not alone: Lord, stand by me

As once by lonely Paul in his distress.
As blossoms to the sun I turn to Thee;
Thy dove turns to her window, think no scorn;
As one dove to an ark on shoreless sea,
To Thee I turn mine eyes, my heart forlorn;
Put forth Thy scarred right Hand, kind Lord, take hold
Of me Thine all-forsaken dove who mourn:
For Thou hast loved me since the days of old,
And I love Thee Whom loving I will love
Through life's short fever-fits of heat and cold;
Thy Name will I extol and sing thereof,
Will flee for refuge to Thy Blessed Name.
Lord, look upon me from thy bliss above:
Look down on me, who shrink from all the shame
And pangs and desolation of my death,
Wrenched piecemeal or devoured or set on flame,
While all the world around me holds its breath
With eyes glued on me for a gazing-stock,
Pitiless eyes, while no man pitieth.
The floods are risen, I stagger in their shock,
My heart reels and is faint, I fail, I faint:
My God, set Thou me up upon the rock,
Thou Who didst long ago Thyself acquaint
With death, our death; Thou Who didst long ago
Pour forth Thy soul for sinner and for saint.
Bear me in mind, whom no one else will know;
Thou Whom Thy friends forsook, take Thou my part,
Of all forsaken in mine overthrow;
Carry me in Thy bosom, in Thy heart,
Carry me out of darkness into light,
Tomorrow make me see Thee as Thou art.
Lover and friend Thou hidest from my sight: —
Alas, alas, mine earthly love, alas,
For whom I thought to don the garments white
And white wreath of a bride, this rugged pass
Hath utterly divorced me from thy care;
Yea, I am to thee as a shattered glass
Worthless, with no more beauty lodging there,
Abhorred, lest I involve thee in my doom:

For sweet are sunshine and this upper air,
And life and youth are sweet, and give us room
For all most sweetest sweetnesses we taste:
Dear, what hast thou in common with a tomb?
I bow my head in silence, I make haste
Alone, I make haste out into the dark,
My life and youth and hope all run to waste.
Is this my body cold and stiff and stark,
Ashes made ashes, earth becoming earth,
Is this a prize for man to make his mark?
Am I, that very I who laughed in mirth
A while ago, a little, little while,
Yet all the while a-dying since my birth?
Now am I tired, too tired to strive or smile;
I sit alone, my mouth is in the dust:
Look Thou upon me, Lord, for I am vile.
In Thee is all my hope, is all my trust,
On Thee I centre all myself that dies,
And self that dies not with its mortal crust,
But sleeps and wakes, and in the end will rise
With hymns and hallelujahs on its lips,
Thee loving with the love that satisfies.
As once in Thine unutterable eclipse
The sun and moon grew dark for sympathy,
And earth cowered quaking underneath the drips
Of Thy slow Blood priceless exceedingly,
So now a little spare me, and show forth
Some pity, O my God, some pity of me.
If trouble comes not from the south or north,
But meted to us by Thy tender hand,
Let me not in Thine eyes be nothing worth:
Behold me where in agony I stand,
Behold me no man caring for my soul,
And take me to Thee in the far-off land,
Shorten the race and lift me to the goal.

WHY?

Lord, if I love Thee and Thou lovest me,
Why need I any more these toilsome days;
Why should I not run singing up Thy ways
Straight into heaven, to rest myself with Thee?
What need remains of death-pang yet to be,
If all my soul is quickened in Thy praise;
If all my heart loves Thee, what need the amaze,
Struggle and dimness of an agony? —
Bride whom I love, if thou too lovest Me,
Thou needs must choose My Likeness for thy dower:
So wilt thou toil in patience, and abide
Hungering and thirsting for that blessed hour
When I My Likeness shall behold in thee,
And thou therein shalt waken satisfied.

LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH

"I have not sought Thee, I have not found Thee,
   I have not thirsted for Thee:
And now cold billows of death surround me,
Buffeting billows of death astound me, —
   Wilt Thou look upon, wilt Thou see
   Thy perishing me?"

"Yea, I have sought thee, yea, I have found thee,
   Yea, I have thirsted for thee,
Yea, long ago with love's bands I bound thee:
Now the Everlasting Arms surround thee, —
   Through death's darkness I look and see
   And clasp thee to Me."

BIRCHINGTON CHURCHYARD

A lowly hill which overlooks a flat,
   Half sea, half country side;
   A flat-shored sea of low-voiced creeping tide
Over a chalky, weedy mat.

A hill of hillocks, flowery and kept green
   Round Crosses raised for hope,
   With many-tinted sunsets where the slope
Faces the lingering western sheen.

A lowly hope, a height that is but low,
   While Time sets solemnly,
   While the tide rises of Eternity,
Silent and neither swift nor slow.

ONE SEA-SIDE GRAVE

Unmindful of the roses,
   Unmindful of the thorn,
A reaper tired reposes
   Among his gathered corn:
   So might I, till the morn!

Cold as the cold Decembers,
   Past as the days that set,
While only one remembers
   And all the rest forget, —
   But one remembers yet.

BROTHER BRUIN

A dancing Bear grotesque and funny
Earned for his master heaps of money,
Gruff yet good-natured, fond of honey,
And cheerful if the day was sunny.
Past hedge and ditch, past pond and wood
He tramped, and on some common stood;
There, cottage children circling gaily,
He in their midmost footed daily.
Pandean pipes and drum and muzzle
Were quite enough his brain to puzzle:
But like a philosophic bear
He let alone extraneous care
And danced contented anywhere.

Still, year on year, and wear and tear,
Age even the gruffest, bluffest bear.
A day came when he scarce could prance,
And when his master looked askance
On dancing Bear who would not dance.
To looks succeeded blows; hard blows
Battered his ears and poor old nose.
From bluff and gruff he waxed curmudgeon;
He danced indeed, but danced in dudgeon,
Capered in fury fast and faster.
Ah, could he once but hug his master
And perish in one joint disaster!
But deafness, blindness, weakness growing,
Not fury's self could keep him going.
One dark day when the snow was snowing
His cup was brimmed to overflowing:
He tottered, toppled on one side,
Growled once, and shook his head, and died.
The master kicked and struck in vain,
The weary drudge had distanced pain

And never now would wince again.
The master growled; he might have howled
Or coaxed, — that slave's last growl was growled.
So gnawed by rancor and chagrin
One thing remained: he sold the skin.

What next the man did is not worth
Your notice or my setting forth,
But hearken what befell at last.
His idle working days gone past,
And not one friend and not one penny
Stored up (if ever he had any
Friends; but his coppers had been many),
All doors stood shut against him but
The workhouse door, which cannot shut.
There he droned on, — a grim old sinner,
Toothless, and grumbling for his dinner,
Unpitied quite, uncared for much
(The rate-payers not favoring such),
Hungry and gaunt, with time to spare;
Perhaps the hungry, gaunt old Bear
Danced back, a haunting memory.
Indeed, I hope so, for you see
If once the hard old heart relented,
The hard old man may have repented.

A HELPMEET FOR HIM

Woman was made for man's delight, —
   Charm, O woman! Be not afraid!
His shadow by day, his moon by night,
   Woman was made.

Her strength with weakness is overlaid;
   Meek compliances veil her might;
Him she stays, by whom she is stayed.

World-wide champion of truth and right,
   Hope in gloom, and in danger aid,
Tender and faithful, ruddy and white,
   Woman was made.

A SONG OF FLIGHT

While we slumber and sleep,
The sun leaps up from the deep, —
Daylight born at the leap, —
Rapid, dominant, free,
Athirst to bathe in the uttermost sea.

While we linger at play —
If the year would stand at May! —
Winds are up and away,
Over land, over sea,
To their goal, wherever their goal may be.

It is time to arise,
To race for the promised prize;
The sun flies, the wind flies,
We are strong, we are free,
And home lies beyond the stars and the sea.

A WINTRY SONNET

A robin said: The Spring will never come,
   And I shall never care to build again.
A Rosebush said: These frosts are wearisome,
   My sap will never stir for sun or rain.
The half Moon said: These nights are fogged and slow,
   I neither care to wax nor care to wane.
The Ocean said: I thirst from long ago,
   Because earth's rivers cannot fill the main.
When springtime came, red Robin built a nest,
   And trilled a lover's song in sheer delight.
   Gray hoarfrost vanished, and the Rose with might
   Clothed her in leaves and buds of crimson core.
The dim Moon brightened. Ocean sunned his crest,
   Dimpled his blue, — yet thirsted evermore.

RESURGAM

From depth to height, from height to loftier height,
   The climber sets his foot and sets his face,
   Tracks lingering sunbeams to their halting-place,
And counts the last pulsations of the light.
Strenuous thro' day and unsurprised by night
   He runs a race with Time, and wins the race,
   Emptied and stripped of all save only Grace,
Will, Love, — a threefold panoply of might.
Darkness descends for light he toiled to seek;
   He stumbles on the darkened mountain-head,
      Left breathless in the unbreathable thin air,
   Made freeman of the living and the dead, —
He wots not he has topped the topmost peak,
      But the returning sun will find him there.

TODAY'S BURDEN

"Arise, depart, for this is not your rest." —
  Oh, burden of all burdens, — still to arise
  And still depart, nor rest in any wise!
Rolling, still rolling thus to east from west,
Earth journeys on her immemorial quest,
  Whom a moon chases in no different guise.
  Thus stars pursue their courses, and thus flies
The sun, and thus all creatures manifest
Unrest, the common heritage, the ban
  Flung broadcast on all humankind, — on all
    Who live; for living, all are bound to die.
That which is old, we know that it is man.
    These have no rest who sit and dream and sigh,
  Nor have those rest who wrestle and who fall.

THERE IS A BUDDING MORROW IN MIDNIGHT

Wintry boughs against a wintry sky;
Yet the sky is partly blue
And the clouds are partly bright.
Who can tell but sap is mounting high
Out of sight,
Ready to burst through?

Winter is the mother-nurse of Spring,
Lovely for her daughter's sake.
Not unlovely for her own;
For a future buds in everything
Grown or blown
Or about to break.

EXULTATE DEO

Many a flower hath perfume for its dower,
    And many a bird a song,
And harmless lambs milkwhite beside their dams
    Frolic along, —
Perfume and song and whiteness offering praise
    In humble, peaceful ways.

Man's high degree hath will and memory,
    Affection and desire;
By loftier ways he mounts of prayer and praise,
    Fire unto fire,
Deep unto deep responsive, height to height,
    Until he walk in white.

A HOPE CAROL

A night was near, a day was near;
   Between a day and night
I heard sweet voices calling clear,
      Calling me:
I heard a whirr of wing on wing,
   But could not see the sight;
I long to see my birds that sing, —
      I long to see.

Below the stars, beyond the moon,
   Between the night and day,
I heard a rising falling tune
      Calling me:
I long to see the pipes and strings
   Whereon such minstrels play;
I long to see each face that sings, —
      I long to see.
Today or may be not today,
   Tonight or not tonight;
All voices that command or pray,
      Calling me,
Shall kindle in my soul such fire,
   And in my eyes such light,
That I shall see that heart's desire
      I long to see.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

WHOSO HEARS A CHIMING FOR CHRISTMAS AT THE NIGHEST

Whoso hears a chiming for Christmas at the nighest,
   Hears a sound like Angels chanting in their glee,
Hears a sound like palm-boughs waving in the highest,
   Hears a sound like ripple of a crystal sea.

Sweeter than a prayer-bell for a saint in dying,
   Sweeter than a death-bell for a saint at rest,
Music struck in Heaven with earth's faint replying,
   "Life is good, and death is good, for Christ is Best."

A HOLY, HEAVENLY CHIME

A holy, heavenly chime
Rings fulness in of time,
And on His Mother's breast
Our Lord God ever-Blest
Is laid a Babe at rest.

Stoop, Spirits unused to stoop,
Swoop, Angels, flying swoop,
Adoring as you gaze,
Uplifting hymns of praise, —
"Grace to the Full of Grace!"

The cave is cold and strait
To hold the angelic state.
More strait it is, more cold,
To foster and infold
Its Maker one hour old.

Thrilled through with awestruck love,
Meek Angels poised above,
To see their God look down.
"What, is there never a Crown
For Him in swaddled gown?

"How comes He soft and weak
With such a tender cheek,
With such a soft, small hand? —
The very Hand which spann'd
Heaven when its girth was plann'd.

"How comes He with a voice

Which is but baby-noise? —
That Voice which spake with might:
‘Let there be light!’ and light
Sprang out before our sight.

“What need hath He of flesh
Made flawless now afresh?
What need of human heart? —
Heart that must bleed and smart,
Choosing the better part.

“But see: His gracious smile
Dismisses us a while
To serve Him in His kin.
Haste we, make haste, begin
To fetch His brethren in.”

Like stars they flash and shoot,
The Shepherds they salute.
“Glory to God” they sing;
“Good news of peace we bring,
For Christ is born a King.”

LO! NEWBORN JESUS

Lo! newborn Jesus,
   Soft and weak and small,
Wrapped in baby's bands
By His Mother's hands,
   Lord God of all.

Lord God of Mary,
   Whom His Lips caress
While He rocks to rest
On her milky breast
   In helplessness.

Lord God of shepherds
   Flocking through the cold,
Flocking through the dark
To the only Ark,
   The only Fold.

Lord God of all things,
   Be they near or far,
Be they high or low;
Lord of storm and snow,
   Angel and star.

Lord God of all men, —
   My Lord and my God!
Thou who lovest me,
Keep me close to Thee
   By staff and rod.

Lo! newborn Jesus,
    Loving great and small,
Love's free Sacrifice,
Opening Arms and Eyes
    To one and all.

A CANDLEMAS DIALOGUE

"Love brought Me down; and cannot love make thee
Carol for joy to Me?
Hear cheerful robin carol from his tree,
Who owes not half to Me
I won for thee."

"Yea, Lord, I hear his carol's wordless voice;
And well may he rejoice
Who hath not heard of death's discordant noise.
So might I too rejoice
With such a voice."

"True, thou hast compassed death; but hast not thou
The tree of life's own bough?
Am I not Life and Resurrection now?
My Cross balm-bearing bough
For such as thou?"

"Ah me, Thy Cross! — but that seems far away;
Thy Cradle-song today
I too would raise, and worship Thee and pray:
Not empty, Lord, today
Send me away."

"If thou wilt not go empty, spend thy store;
And I will give thee more,
Yea, make thee ten times richer than before.
Give more and give yet more
Out of thy store."

"Because Thou givest me Thyself, I will
Thy blessed word fulfil,

Give with both hands, and hoard by giving still;
Thy pleasure to fulfil,
And work Thy Will."

MARY MAGDALENE AND THE OTHER MARY

A SONG FOR ALL MARIES

Our Master lies asleep and is at rest;
   His Heart has ceased to bleed, His Eye to weep.
The sun ashamed has dropt down in the west;
   Our Master lies asleep.

   Now we are they who weep, and trembling keep
Vigil, with wrung heart in a sighing breast,
   While slow time creeps, and slow the shadows creep.

Renew Thy youth, as eagle from the nest;
   O Master, who hast sown, arise to reap:
No cock-crow yet, no flush on eastern crest;
   Our Master lies asleep.

PATIENCE OF HOPE

The flowers that bloom in sun and shade
And glitter in the dew,
The flowers must fade.
The birds that build their nest and sing
When lovely spring is new,
Must soon take wing.

The sun that rises in his strength
To wake and warm the world,
Must set at length.
The sea that overflows the shore
With billows frothed and curled,
Must ebb once more.

All come and go, all wax and wane,
O Lord, save only Thou
Who dost remain
The Same to all eternity.
All things which fail us now
We trust to Thee.

VERSES, 1893

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ALONE LORD GOD, IN WHOM OUR TRUST AND PEACE

Alone Lord God, in Whom our trust and peace,
Our love and our desire, glow bright with hope;
Lift us above this transitory scope
Of earth, these pleasures that begin and cease,
This moon which wanes, these seasons which decrease:
We turn to Thee; as on an eastern slope
Wheat feels the dawn beneath night's lingering cope,
Bending and stretching sunward ere it sees.
Alone Lord God, we see not yet we know;
By love we dwell with patience and desire,
And loving so and so desiring pray;
Thy will be done in earth as heaven today;
As yesterday it was, tomorrow so;
Love offering love on love's self-feeding fire.

SEVEN VIALS HOLD THY WRATH: BUT WHAT CAN HOLD

Seven vials hold Thy wrath: but what can hold
   Thy mercy save Thine own Infinitude
   Boundlessly overflowing with all good,
All lovingkindness, all delights untold?
Thy Love, of each created love the mould;
   Thyself, of all the empty plenitude;
   Heard of at Ephrata, found in the Wood,
For ever One, the Same, and Manifold.

Lord, give us grace to tremble with that dove
   Which Ark-bound winged its solitary way
   And overpast the Deluge in a day,
      Whom Noah's hand pulled in and comforted:
For we who much more hang upon Thy Love
      Behold its shadow in the deed he did.

WHERE NEITHER RUST NOR MOTH DOTH CORRUPT

Nerve us with patience, Lord, to toil or rest,
    Toiling at rest on our allotted level;
    Unsnared, unscared by world or flesh or devil,
Fulfilling the good Will of Thy behest;
    Not careful here to hoard, not here to revel;
But waiting for our treasure and our zest
Beyond the fading splendour of the west,
    Beyond this deathstruck life and deathlier evil.
Not with the sparrow building here a house:
    But with the swallow tabernacling so
    As still to poise alert to rise and go
        On eager wings with wing-outspeeding wills
Beyond earth's gourds and past her almond boughs,
    Past utmost bound of the everlasting hills.

AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARDS

Lord, grant us wills to trust Thee with such aim
Of hope and passionate craving of desire,
That we may mount aspiring, and aspire
Still while we mount; rejoicing in Thy Name
Yesterday, this day, day by day the Same:
So sparks fly upward scaling heaven by fire,
Still mount and still attain not, yet draw nigher
While they have being to their fountain flame.

To saints who mount, the bottomless abyss
Is as mere nothing, they have set their face
Onward and upward toward that blessèd place
Where man rejoices with his God, and soul
With soul, in the unutterable kiss
Of peace for every victor at the goal.

LORD, MAKE US ALL LOVE ALL: THAT WHEN WE MEET

Lord, make us all love all: that when we meet
Even myriads of earth's myriads at Thy Bar,
We may be glad as all true lovers are
Who having parted count reunion sweet.
Safe gathered home around Thy blessèd Feet,
Come home by different roads from near or far,
Whether by whirlwind or by flaming car,
From pangs or sleep, safe folded round Thy seat.
Oh, if our brother's blood cry out at us,
How shall we meet Thee Who hast loved us all,
Thee Whom we never loved, not loving him?
The unloving cannot chant with Seraphim,
Bear harp of gold or palm victorious,
Or face the Vision Beatifical.

O LORD, I AM ASHAMED TO SEEK THY FACE

O lord, I am ashamed to seek Thy Face
As tho' I loved Thee as Thy saints love Thee:
Yet turn from those Thy lovers, look on me,
Disgrace me not with uttermost disgrace;
But pour on me ungracious, pour Thy grace
To purge my heart and bid my will go free,
Till I too taste Thy hidden Sweetness, see
Thy hidden Beauty in the holy place.
O Thou Who callest sinners to repent,
Call me Thy sinner unto penitence,
For many sins grant me the greater love:
Set me above the waterfloods, above
Devil and shifting world and fleshly sense,
Thy Mercy's all-amazing monument.

IT IS NOT DEATH, O CHRIST, TO DIE FOR THEE

It is not death, O Christ, to die for Thee:
Nor is that silence of a silent land
Which speaks Thy praise so all may understand:
Darkness of death makes Thy dear lovers see
Thyself Who Wast and Art and Art to Be;
Thyself, more lovely than the lovely band
Of saints who worship Thee on either hand,
Loving and loved thro' all eternity.
Death is not death, and therefore do I hope:
Nor silence silence; and I therefore sing
A very humble hopeful quiet psalm,
Searching my heart-field for an offering;
A handful of sun-courting heliotrope,
Of myrrh a bundle, and a little balm.

LORD, GRANT US EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR

Lord, grant us eyes to see and ears to hear,
  And souls to love and minds to understand,
  And steadfast faces toward the Holy Land,
And confidence of hope, and filial fear,
And citizenship where Thy saints appear
  Before Thee heart in heart and hand in hand,
  And Alleluias where their chanting band
As waters and as thunders fill the sphere.
Lord, grant us what Thou wilt, and what Thou wilt
  Deny, and fold us in Thy peaceful fold:
    Not as the world gives, give to us Thine own:
Inbuild us where Jerusalem is built
  With walls of jasper and with streets of gold,
    And Thou Thyself, Lord Christ, for Corner Stone.

CRIED OUT WITH TEARS

Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief:
  Lord, I repent, help mine impenitence:
  Hide not Thy Face from me, nor spurn me hence,
Nor utterly despise me in my grief;
Nor say me nay, who worship with the thief
  Bemoaning my so long lost innocence: —
  Ah me! my penitence a fresh offence,
Too tardy and too tepid and too brief.
Lord, must I perish, I who look to Thee?
  Look Thou upon me, bid me live, not die;
    Say "Come," say not "Depart," tho' Thou art just:
    Yea, Lord, be mindful how out of the dust
I look to Thee while Thou dost look on me,
  Thou Face to face with me and Eye to eye.

O LORD, ON WHOM WE GAZE AND DARE NOT GAZE

O Lord, on Whom we gaze and dare not gaze,
   Increase our faith that gazing we may see,
   And seeing love, and loving worship Thee
Thro' all our days, our long and lengthening days.
O Lord, accessible to prayer and praise,
   Kind Lord, Companion of the two or three,
   Good Lord, be gracious to all men and me,
Lighten our darkness and amend our ways.
Call up our hearts to Thee, that where Thou art
   Our treasure and our heart may dwell at one:
   Then let the pallid moon pursue her sun,
So long as it shall please Thee, far apart, —
   Yet art Thou with us, Thou to Whom we run,
We hand in hand with Thee and heart in heart.

I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM

O Lord God, hear the silence of each soul,
  Its cry unutterable of ruth and shame,
  Its voicelessness of self-contempt and blame:
Nor suffer harp and palm and aureole
Of multitudes who praise Thee at the goal,
  To set aside Thy poor and blind and lame;
  Nor blazing Seraphs utterly to outflame
The spark that flies up from each earthly coal.
My price Thy priceless Blood; and therefore I
  Price of Thy priceless Blood am precious so
    That good things love me in their love of Thee:
    I comprehend not why Thou lovedst me
  With Thy so mighty Love; but this I know,
No man hath greater love than thus to die.

AH LORD, LORD, IF MY HEART WERE RIGHT WITH THINE

Ah Lord, Lord, if my heart were right with Thine
As Thine with mine, then should I rest resigned
Awaiting knowledge with a quiet mind
Because of heavenly wisdom's anodyne.
Then would Thy Love be more to me than wine,
Then should I seek being sure at length to find,
Then should I trust to Thee all humankind
Because Thy Love of them is more than mine.
Then should I stir up hope and comfort me
Remembering Thy Cradle and Thy Cross;
How Heaven to Thee without us had been loss,
How Heaven with us is Thy one only Heaven,
Heaven shared with us thro' all eternity,
With us long sought, long loved, and much forgiven.

THE GOLD OF THAT LAND IS GOOD

I long for joy, O Lord, I long for gold,
   I long for all Thou profferest to me,
I long for the unimagined manifold
   Abundance laid up in Thy treasury.
   I long for pearls, but not from mundane sea;
I long for palms, but not from earthly mould;
   Yet in all else I long for, long for Thee,
Thyself to hear and worship and behold.
For Thee, beyond the splendour of that day
   Where all is day and is not any night;
      For Thee, beyond refreshment of that rest
   To which tired saints press on for its delight: —
Or if not thus for Thee, yet Thee I pray
      To make me long so till Thou make me blest.

WEIGH ALL MY FAULTS AND FOLLIES RIGHTEOUSLY

Weigh all my faults and follies righteously,
   Omissions and commissions, sin on sin;
   Make deep the scale, O Lord, to weigh them in;
Yea, set the Accuser vulture-eyed to see
All loads ingathered which belong to me:
   That so in life the judgement may begin,
   And Angels learn how hard it is to win
One solitary sinful soul to Thee.
I have no merits for a counterpoise:
   Oh vanity my work and hastening day,
What can I answer to the accusing voice?
      Lord, drop Thou in the counterscale alone
One Drop from Thine own Heart, and overweigh
      My guilt, my folly, even my heart of stone.

LORD, GRANT ME GRACE TO LOVE THEE IN MY PAIN

Lord, grant me grace to love Thee in my pain,
   Thro' all my disappointment love Thee still,
   Thy love my strong foundation and my hill,
Tho' I be such as cometh not again,
A fading leaf, a spark upon the wane:
   So evermore do Thou Thy perfect Will
   Beloved thro' all my good, thro' all mine ill,
Beloved tho' all my love beside be vain.
If thus I love Thee, how wilt Thou love me,
   Thou Who art greater than my heart? (Amen!)
      Wilt Thou bestow a part, withhold a part?
The longing of my heart cries out to Thee,
      The hungering thirsting longing of my heart:
   What I forewent wilt Thou not grant me then?

Lord, make me one with Thine own faithful ones,
   Thy Saints who love Thee and are loved by Thee;
   Till the day break and till the shadows flee,
At one with them in alms and orisons;
At one with him who toils and him who runs,
   And him who yearns for union yet to be;
   At one with all who throng the crystal sea
And wait the setting of our moons and suns.
Ah, my beloved ones gone on before,
   Who looked not back with hand upon the plough!
      If beautiful to me while still in sight,
   How beautiful must be your aspects now;
      Your unknown, well-known aspects in that light
Which clouds shall never cloud for evermore.

LIGHT OF LIGHT

O Christ our Light, Whom even in darkness we
(So we look up) discern and gaze upon,
O Christ, Thou loveliest Light that ever shone,
Thou Light of Light, Fount of all lights that be,
Grant us clear vision of Thy Light to see,
Tho' other lights elude us, or begone
Into the secret of oblivion,
Or gleam in places higher than man's degree.
Who looks on Thee looks full on his desire,
Who looks on Thee looks full on Very Love:
Looking, he answers well, What lack I yet?
His heat and cold wait not on earthly fire,
His wealth is not of earth to lose or get;
Earth reels, but he has stored his store above.

THE RANSOMED OF THE LORD

Thy lovely saints do bring Thee love,
  Incense and joy and gold;
Fair star with star, fair dove with dove,
  Beloved by Thee of old.
I, Master, neither star nor dove,
  Have brought Thee sins and tears;
Yet I too bring a little love
  Amid my flaws and fears.
A trembling love that faints and fails
  Yet still is love of Thee,
A wondering Love that hopes and hails
  Thy boundless Love of me;
Love kindling faith and pure desire,
  Love following on to bliss,
A spark, O Jesu, from Thy fire,
  A drop from Thine abyss.

LORD, WE ARE RIVERS RUNNING TO THY SEA

Lord, we are rivers running to Thy sea,
Our waves and ripples all derived from Thee:
A nothing we should have, a nothing be,
    Except for Thee.

Sweet are the waters of Thy shoreless sea,
Make sweet our waters that make haste to Thee;
Pour in Thy sweetness, that ourselves may be
    Sweetness to Thee.

AN EXCEEDING BITTER CRY

Contempt and pangs and haunting fears —
    Too late for hope, too late for ease,
        Too late for rising from the dead;
    Too late, too late to bend my knees,
        Or bow my head,
Or weep, or ask for tears.

Hark! … One I hear Who calls to me:
    ”Give Me thy thorn and grief and scorn,
        Give Me thy ruin and regret.
    Press on thro’ darkness toward the morn:
        One loves thee yet:
Have I forgotten thee?”

Lord, Who art Thou? Lord, is it Thou
    My Lord and God Lord Jesus Christ?
        How said I that I sat alone
    And desolate and unsufficed?
        Surely a stone
Would raise Thy praises now!

O LORD, WHEN THOU DIDST CALL ME, DIDST THOU KNOW

O Lord, when Thou didst call me, didst Thou know
My heart disheartened thro' and thro',
Still hankering after Egypt full in view
Where cucumbers and melons grow?
— Yea, I knew. —

But, Lord, when Thou didst choose me, didst Thou know
How marred I was and withered too,
Nor rose for sweetness nor for virtue rue,
Timid and rash, hasty and slow?
— "Yea, I knew." —

My Lord, when Thou didst love me, didst Thou know
How weak my efforts were, how few,
Tepid to love and impotent to do,
Envious to reap while slack to sow?
— "Yea, I knew." —

Good Lord, Who knowest what I cannot know
And dare not know, my false, my true,
My new, my old; Good Lord, arise and do
If loving Thou hast known me so.
— "Yea, I knew." —

THOU, GOD, SEEST ME

Ah me, that I should be
Exposed and open evermore to Thee! —
    ”Nay, shrink not from My light,
    And I will make thee glorious in My sight
    With the overcoming Shulamite.” —
Yea, Lord, Thou moulding me.

… Without a hiding-place
To hide me from the terrors of Thy Face. —
    ”Thy hiding-place is here
    In Mine own heart, wherefore the Roman spear
    For thy sake I accounted dear.” —
My Jesus! King of Grace.

… Without a veil, to give
Whiteness before Thy Face that I might live. —
    ”Am I too poor to dress
    Thee in My royal robe of righteousness?
    Challenge and prove My Love’s excess.” —
Give, Lord, I will receive.

… Without a pool wherein
To wash my piteous self and make me clean. —
    ”My Blood hath washed away
    Thy guilt, and still I wash thee day by day:
    Only take heed to trust and pray.” —
Lord, help me to begin.

LORD JESUS, WHO WOULD THINK THAT I AM THINE?

Lord Jesus, who would think that I am Thine?
    Ah, who would think
Who sees me ready to turn back or sink,
    That Thou art mine?

I cannot hold Thee fast tho' Thou art mine:
    Hold Thou me fast,
So earth shall know at last and heaven at last
    That I am Thine.

THE NAME OF JESUS

Jesus, Lord God from all eternity,
    Whom love of us brought down to shame,
I plead Thy life with Thee,
    I plead Thy death, I plead Thy name.

Jesus, Lord God of every living soul,
    Thy love exceeds its uttered fame,
Thy will can make us whole,
    I plead Thyself. I plead Thy name.

LORD GOD OF HOSTS, MOST HOLY AND MOST HIGH

Lord God of Hosts, most Holy and most High,
    What made Thee tell Thy Name of Love to me?
What made Thee live our life? what made Thee die ?
    “My love of thee.”

I pitched so low, Thou so exceeding high,
    What was it made Thee stoop to look at me
While flawless sons of God stood wondering by?
    “My love of thee.”

What is there which can lift me up on high
    That we may dwell together, Thou with me,
When sin and death and suffering are gone by?
    “My love of thee.”

O Lord, what is that best thing hid on high
    Which makes heaven heaven as Thou hast promised me,
Yea, makes it Christ to live and gain to die?
    My love of thee.

LORD, WHAT HAVE I THAT I MAY OFFER THEE?

Lord, what have I that I may offer Thee?
Look, Lord, I pray Thee, and see. —

What is it thou hast got?
Nay, child, what is it thou hast not?
Thou hast all gifts that I have given to thee:
Offer them all to Me,
The great ones and the small;
I will accept them one and all. —

I have a will, good Lord, but it is marred;
A heart both crushed and hard:
Not such as these the gift
Clean-handed lovely saints uplift. —

Nay, child, but wilt thou judge for Me?
I crave not thine, but thee.

Ah Lord Who lovest me!
Such as I have now give I Thee.

IF I SHOULD SAY “MY HEART IS IN MY HOME

If I should say “my heart is in my home,”
I turn away from that high halidom
    Where Jesus sits: for nowhere else
    But with its treasure dwells
    The heart: this Truth and this experience tells.

If I should say “my heart is in a grave,”
I turn away from Jesus risen to save:
    I slight that death He died for me;
    I too deny to see
    His beauty and desirability.

O Lord, Whose Heart is deeper than my heart,
Draw mine to Thine to worship where Thou art;
    For Thine own glory join the twain
    Never to part again,
    Nor to have lived nor to have died in vain.

LEAF FROM LEAF CHRIST KNOWS

Leaf from leaf Christ knows;
Himself the Lily and the Rose:

Sheep from sheep Christ tells;
Himself the Shepherd, no one else:

Star and star He names,
Himself outblazing all their flames:

Dove by dove, He calls
To set each on the golden walls:

Drop by drop, He counts
The flood of ocean as it mounts:

Grain by grain, His hand
Numbers the innumerable sand.

Lord, I lift to Thee
In peace what is and what shall be:

Lord, in peace I trust
To Thee all spirits and all dust.

LORD, CARRY ME. — NAY, BUT I GRANT THEE STRENGTH

Lord, carry me. — Nay, but I grant thee strength
To walk and work thy way to Heaven at length. —

Lord, why then am I weak? — Because I give
Power to the weak, and bid the dying live. —

Lord, I am tired. — He hath not much desired
The goal, who at the starting-point is tired. —

Lord, dost Thou know? — I know what is in man;
What the flesh can, and what the spirit can. —

Lord, dost Thou care? — Yea, for thy gain or loss
So much I cared, it brought Me to the Cross. —

Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief. —
Good is the word; but rise, for life is brief.

The follower is not greater than the Chief:
Follow thou Me along My way of grief.

LORD, I AM HERE. — BUT, CHILD, I LOOK FOR THEE

Lord, I am here. — But, child, I look for thee
Elsewhere and nearer Me. —
Lord, that way moans a wide insatiate sea:
How can I come to Thee? —
Set foot upon the water, test and see
If thou canst come to Me. —
Couldst Thou not send a boat to carry me,
Or dolphin swimming free? —
Nay, boat nor fish if thy will faileth thee:
For My Will too is free. —
O Lord, I am afraid. — Take hold on Me:
I am stronger than the sea. —
Save, Lord, I perish. — I have hold of thee,
I made and rule the sea,
I bring thee to the haven where thou wouldst be.

NEW CREATURES; THE CREATOR STILL THE SAME

New creatures; the Creator still the Same
For ever and for ever: therefore we
Win hope from God's unsearchable decree
And glorify His still unchanging Name.
We too are still the same: and still our claim,
Our trust, our stay, is Jesus, none but He:
He still the Same regards us, and still we
Mount toward Him in old love's accustomed flame.
We know Thy wounded Hands: and Thou dost know
Our praying hands, our hands that clasp and cling
To hold Thee fast and not to let Thee go.
All else be new then, Lord, as Thou hast said:
Since it is Thou, we dare not be afraid,
Our King of old and still our Self-same King.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

Is this that Name as ointment poured forth
   For which the virgins love Thee; King of kings
   And Lord of lords? All Seraphs clad in wings;
All Cherubs and all Wheels which south and north,
Which east and west turn not in going forth;
   All many-semblanced ordered Spirits, as rings
   Of rainbow in unwonted fashionings,
Might answer, Yes. But we from south and north,
From east and west, a feeble folk who came
   By desert ways in quest of land unseen,
   A promised land of pasture ever green
      And ever springing ever singing wave,
Know best Thy Name of Jesus: Blessed Name,
      Man's life and resurrection from the grave.

THY NAME, O CHRIST, AS INCENSE STREAMING FORTH

Thy Name, O Christ, as incense streaming forth
Sweetens our names before God's Holy Face;
Luring us from the south and from the north
Unto the sacred place.

In Thee God's promise is Amen and Yea.
What art Thou to us? Prize of every lot,
Shepherd and Door, our Life and Truth and Way: —
Nay, Lord, what art Thou not?

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

O Shepherd with the bleeding Feet,
Good Shepherd with the pleading Voice,
What seekest Thou from hill to hill?
Sweet were the valley pastures, sweet
The sound of flocks that bleat their joys,
And eat and drink at will.
Is one worth seeking, when Thou hast of Thine
Ninety and nine? —

How should I stay My bleeding Feet,
How should I hush My pleading Voice?
I Who chose death and clomb a hill,
Accounting gall and wormwood sweet,
That hundredfold might bud My joys
For love's sake and good will.
I seek My one, for all there bide of Mine
Ninety and nine.

REJOICE WITH ME

Little Lamb, who lost thee? —
    I myself, none other. —
Little Lamb, who found thee? —
    Jesus, Shepherd, Brother.
Ah, Lord, what I cost Thee!
    Canst Thou still desire? —

Still Mine arms surround thee,
    Still I lift thee higher,
    Draw thee nigher.

SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT?

Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?
   Yea, Lord, altho' Thou say me nay:
Shall not His Will be to me life and light?
   Yea, Lord, altho' Thou slay.

Yet, Lord, remembering turn and sift and see,
   Remember tho' Thou sift me thro',
Remember my desire, remember me,
   Remember, Lord, and do.

ME AND MY GIFT: KIND LORD, BEHOLD

Me and my gift: kind Lord, behold,
   Be not extreme to test or sift;
Thy Love can turn to fire and gold
   Me and my gift.

   Myself and mine to Thee I lift:
Gather us to Thee from the cold
   Dead outer world where dead things drift.

If much were mine, then manifold
   Should be the offering of my thrift:
I am but poor, yet love makes bold
   Me and my gift.

HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF

Love still is Love, and doeth all things well,
Whether He show me heaven or hell
    Or earth in her decay
    Passing away
    On a day.

Love still is Love, tho' He should say, "Depart,"
And break my incorrigible heart,
    And set me out of sight
    Widowed of light
    In the night.

Love still is Love, is Love, if He should say,
"Come," on that uttermost dread day;
    "Come," unto very me,
    "Come where I be,
    Come and see."

Love still is Love, whatever comes to pass:
O Only Love, make me Thy glass,
    Thy pleasure to fulfil
    By loving still
    Come what will.

SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD

Slain for man, slain for me, O Lamb of God, look down;
   Loving to the end look down, behold and see:
Turn Thine Eyes of pity, turn not on us Thy frown,
   O Lamb of God, slain for man, slain for me.

Mark the wrestling, mark the race for indeed a crown;
   Mark our chariots how we drive them heavily;
Mark the foe upon our track blasting thundering down,
   O Lamb of God, slain for man, slain for me.

Set as a Cloudy Pillar against them Thy frown,
   Thy Face of Light toward us gracious utterly;
Help granting, hope granting, until Thou grant a crown,
   O Lamb of God, slain for man, slain for me.

LORD JESU, THOU ART SWEETNESS TO MY SOUL

Lord Jesu, Thou art sweetness to my soul:
I to myself am bitterness:

Regard my fainting struggle toward the goal,
Regard my manifold distress,
O Sweet Jesu.

Thou art Thyself my goal, O Lord my King:
Stretch forth Thy hand to save my soul:
What matters more or less of journeying?
While I touch Thee I touch my goal,
O Sweet Jesu.

I, LORD, THY FOOLISH SINNER LOW AND SMALL

I, Lord, Thy foolish sinner low and small,
Lack all.
His heart too high was set
Who asked, What lack I yet?
Woe's me at my most woeful pass!
I, Lord, who scarcely dare adore,
Weep sore:
Steeped in this rotten world I fear to rot.
Alas! what lack I not?
Alas! alas for me! alas
More and yet more! —

Nay, stand up on thy feet, betaking thee
To Me.
Bring fear; but much more bring
Hope to thy patient King:
What, is My pleasure in thy death?
I loved that youth who little knew
The true
Width of his want, yet worshipped with goodwill:
So love I thee, and still
Prolong thy day of grace and breath.
Rise up and do. —

Lord, let me know mine end, and certify
When I
Shall die and have to stand
Helpless on Either Hand,
Cut off, cut off, my day of grace. —
Not so: for what is that to thee?

I see
The measure and the number of thy day:

Keep patience, tho’ I slay;
Keep patience till thou see My Face.
Follow thou Me.

BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US

I was hungry, and Thou feddest me;
Yea, Thou gavest drink to slake my thirst:
O Lord, what love gift can I offer Thee
Who hast loved me first? —

Feed My hungry brethren for My sake;
Give them drink, for love of them and Me:
Love them as I loved thee, when Bread I brake
In pure love of thee. —

Yea, Lord, I will serve them by Thy grace;
Love Thee, seek Thee, in them; wait and pray:
Yet would I love Thyself, Lord, face to face,
Heart to heart, one day. —

Let today fulfil its daily task,
Fill thy heart and hand to them and Me:
Tomorrow thou shalt ask, and shalt not ask
Half I keep for thee.

LORD, HAST THOU SO LOVED US, AND WILL NOT WE

Lord, hast Thou so loved us, and will not we
   Love Thee with heart and mind and strength and soul,
   Desiring Thee beyond our glorious goal,
Beyond the heaven of heavens desiring Thee?
Each saint, all saints cry out: Yea me, yea me,
   Thou hast desired beyond an aureole,
   Beyond Thy many Crowns, beyond the whole
Ninety and nine unwandering family.
Souls in green pastures of the watered land,

Faint pilgrim souls wayfaring thro' the sand,
   Abide with Thee and in Thee are at rest:
   Yet evermore, kind Lord, renew Thy quest
After new wanderers; such as once Thy Hand
   Gathered, Thy Shoulders bore, Thy Heart caressed.

AS THE DOVE WHICH FOUND NO REST

As the dove which found no rest
   For the sole of her foot, flew back
To the ark her only nest
         And found safety there;
Because Noah put forth his hand,
   Drew her in from ruin and wrack,
And was more to her than the land
         And the air:

So my spirit, like that dove,
   Fleeth away to an ark
Where dwelleth a Heart of Love,
         A Hand pierced to save,
Tho' the sun and the moon should fail,
   Tho' the stars drop into the dark,
And my body lay itself pale
         In a grave.

THOU ART FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN

A rose, a lily, and the Face of Christ
   Have all our hearts sufficed:
For He is Rose of Sharon nobly born,
   Our Rose without a thorn;
And He is Lily of the Valley, He
   Most sweet in purity.
But when we come to name Him as He is,
   Godhead, Perfection, Bliss,
All tongues fall silent, while pure hearts alone
   Complete their orison.

AS THE APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD

As one red rose in a garden where all other roses are white
   Blossoms alone in its glory, crowned all alone
In a solitude of own sweetness and fragrance of own delight,
   With loveliness not another's and thorns its own;
As one ruddy sun amid million orbs comely and colourless,
   Among all others, above all others is known;
As it were alone in the garden, alone in the heavenly place,
   Chief and centre of all, in fellowship yet alone.

NONE OTHER LAMB, NONE OTHER NAME

None other Lamb, none other Name,
   None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,
         None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low,
   Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe,
         Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life tho' I be dead,
   Love's Fire Thou art however cold I be:
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
         Nor home, but Thee.

THY FRIEND AND THY FATHER'S FRIEND FORGET NOT

Friends, I commend to you the narrow way:
Not because I, please God, will walk therein,
But rather for the Love Feast of that day,
The exceeding prize which whoso will may win.
Earth is half spent and rotting at the core,
Here hollow death's heads mock us with a grin,

Here heartiest laughter leaves us tired and sore.
Men heap up pleasures and enlarge desire,
Outlive desire, and famished evermore
Consume themselves within the undying fire.
Yet not for this God made us: not for this
Christ sought us far and near to draw us nigher,
Sought us and found and paid our penalties.
If one could answer "Nay" to God's command,
Who shall say "Nay" when Christ pleads all He is
For us, and holds us with a wounded Hand?

SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS

Christ's Heart was wrung for me, if mine is sore;
And if my feet are weary, His have bled;
He had no place wherein to lay His Head;
If I am burdened, He was burdened more.
The cup I drink, He drank of long before;
He felt the unuttered anguish which I dread;
He hungered Who the hungry thousands fed,
And thirsted Who the world's refreshment bore.
If grief be such a looking-glass as shows
Christ's Face and man's in some sort made alike,
Then grief is pleasure with a subtle taste:
Wherefore should any fret or faint or haste?
Grief is not grievous to a soul that knows
Christ comes, — and listens for that hour to strike.

THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN

Clother of the lily, Feeder of the sparrow,
   Father of the fatherless, dear Lord,
Tho' Thou set me as a mark against Thine arrow,
   As a prey unto Thy sword,
As a ploughed up field beneath Thy harrow,
   As a captive in Thy cord,
Let that cord be love; and some day make my narrow
   Hallowed bed according to Thy Word.

DARKNESS AND LIGHT ARE BOTH ALIKE TO THEE

Darkness and light are both alike to Thee:
  Therefore to Thee I lift my darkened face;
Upward I look with eyes that fail to see,
  Athirst for future light and present grace.
  I trust the Hand of Love I scarcely trace.
With breath that fails I cry, Remember me:
  Add breath to breath, so I may run my race
That where Thou art there may Thy servant be.
For Thou art gulf and fountain of my love,
  I unreturning torrent to Thy sea,
    Yea, Thou the measureless ocean for my rill:
    Seeking I find, and finding seek Thee still:
And oh! that I had wings as hath a dove,
  Then would I flee away to rest with Thee.

AND NOW WHY TARRIEST THOU?

Lord, grant us grace to mount by steps of grace
From grace to grace nearer, my God, to Thee;
Not tarrying for tomorrow,
Lest we lie down in sorrow
And never see
Unveiled Thy Face.

Life is a vapour vanishing in haste;
Life is a day whose sun grows pale to set;
Life is a stint and sorrow,
One day and not the morrow;
Precious, while yet
It runs to waste.

Lord, strengthen us; lest fainting by the way
We come not to Thee, we who come from far;
Lord, bring us to that morrow
Which makes an end of sorrow,
Where all saints are
On holyday.

Where all the saints rest who have heard Thy call,
Have risen and striven and now rejoice in rest:
Call us too home from sorrow
To rest in Thee tomorrow;
In Thee our Best,
In Thee our All.

HAVE I NOT STRIVEN, MY GOD, AND WATCHED AND PRAYED?

Have I not striven, my God, and watched and prayed?
Have I not wrestled in mine agony?
Wherefore still turn Thy Face of Grace from me?
Is Thine Arm shortened that Thou canst not aid?
Thy silence breaks my heart: speak tho' to upbraid,
For Thy rebuke yet bids us follow Thee.
I grope and grasp not; gaze, but cannot see.
When out of sight and reach my bed is made,
And piteous men and women cease to blame
Whispering and wistful of my gain or loss;
Thou Who for my sake once didst feel the Cross,
Lord, wilt Thou turn and look upon me then,
And in Thy Glory bring to nought my shame,
Confessing me to angels and to men?

GOD IS OUR HOPE AND STRENGTH

Tempest and terror below; but Christ the Almighty above.
Tho' the depth of the deep overflow, tho' fire run along on the ground,
Tho' all billows and flames make a noise, — and where is an Ark for the dove? —
Tho' sorrows rejoice against joys, and death and destruction abound:
Yet Jesus abolisheth death, and Jesus Who loves us we love;
His dead are renewed with a breath, His lost are the sought and the found.

Thy wanderers call and recall, Thy dead men lift out of the ground;
O Jesus, Who lovest us all, stoop low from Thy Glory above:
Where sin hath abounded make grace to abound and to superabound,
Till we gaze on Thee face unto Face, and respond to Thee love unto Love.

DAY AND NIGHT THE ACCUSER MAKES NO PAUSE

Day and night the Accuser makes no pause,
Day and night protest the Righteous Laws,
Good and Evil witness to man's flaws;
Man the culprit, man's the ruined cause,
Man midway to death's devouring jaws
    And the worm that gnaws.

Day and night our Jesus makes no pause,
Pleads His own fulfilment of all laws,
Veils with His Perfections mortal flaws,
Clears the culprit, pleads the desperate cause,
Plucks the dead from death's devouring jaws
    And the worm that gnaws.

O MINE ENEMY

O mine enemy
Rejoice not over me!
    Jesus waiteth to be gracious:
        I will yet arise,
Mounting free and far,
Past sun and star,
    To a house prepared and spacious
        In the skies.

Lord, for Thine own sake
Kindle my heart and break;
    Make mine anguish efficacious
        Wedded to Thine own:

Be not Thy dear pain,
Thy Love in vain,
    Thou Who waitest to be gracious
        On Thy Throne.

LORD, DOST THOU LOOK ON ME, AND WILL NOT I

Lord, dost Thou look on me, and will not I
   Launch out my heart to Heaven to look on Thee?
   Here if one loved me I should turn to see,
And often think on him and often sigh,
And by a tender friendship make reply
   To love gratuitous poured forth on me,
   And nurse a hope of happy days to be,
And mean "until we meet" in each good-bye.
Lord, Thou dost look and love is in Thine Eyes,
   Thy Heart is set upon me day and night,
      Thou stoopest low to set me far above:
O Lord, that I may love Thee make me wise;
   That I may see and love Thee grant me sight;
      And give me love that I may give Thee love.

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU

Tumult and turmoil, trouble and toil,
Yet peace withal in a painful heart;
Never a grudge and never a broil,
And ever the better part.

O my King and my heart's own choice,
Stretch Thy Hand to Thy fluttering dove;
Teach me, call to me with Thy Voice,
Wrap me up in Thy Love.

O CHRIST OUR ALL IN EACH, OUR ALL IN ALL!

O Christ our All in each, our All in all!
Others have this or that, a love, a friend,
A trusted teacher, a long-worked-for end:
But what to me were Peter or were Paul
Without Thee? fame or friend if such might be?
Thee wholly will I love, Thee wholly seek,
Follow Thy foot-track, hearken for Thy call.
O Christ mine All in all, my flesh is weak,
A trembling fawning tyrant unto me:
Turn, look upon me, let me hear Thee speak:
Tho' bitter billows of Thine utmost sea
Swathe me, and darkness build around its wall,
Yet will I rise, Thou lifting when I fall,
And if Thou hold me fast, yet cleave to Thee.

BECAUSE THY LOVE HATH SOUGHT ME

Because Thy Love hath sought me,
   All mine is Thine and Thine is mine:
Because Thy Blood hath bought me,
   I will not be mine own but Thine.

I lift my heart to Thy Heart,
   Thy Heart sole resting-place for mine:
Shall Thy Heart crave for my heart,
   And shall not mine crave back for Thine?

THY FAINTING SPOUSE, YET STILL THY SPOUSE

Thy fainting spouse, yet still Thy spouse;
   Thy trembling dove, yet still Thy dove;
Thine own by mutual vows,
   By mutual love.

Recall Thy vows, if not her vows;
   Recall Thy Love, if not her love:
For weak she is, Thy spouse,
   And tired, Thy dove.

LIKE AS THE HART DESIRETH THE WATER BROOKS

My heart is yearning:
Behold my yearning heart,
And lean low to satisfy
Its lonely beseeching cry,
For Thou its fulness art.

Turn, as once turning
Thou didst behold Thy Saint
In deadly extremity;
Didst look, and win back to Thee
His will frightened and faint.

Kindle my burning
From Thine unkindled Fire;
Fill me with gifts and with grace
That I may behold Thy Face,
For Thee I desire.

My heart is yearning,
Yearning and thrilling thro'
For Thy Love mine own of old,
For Thy Love unknown, untold,
Ever old, ever new.

THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO

How know I that it looms lovely that land I have never seen,
With morning-glories and heartsease and unexampled green,
With neither heat nor cold in the balm-redolent air?
    Some of this, not all, I know; but this is so;
        Christ is there.

How know I that blessedness befalls who dwell in Paradise,
The outwearied hearts refreshing, rekindling the worn-out eyes,
All souls singing, seeing, rejoicing everywhere?
    Nay, much more than this I know; for this is so;
        Christ is there.

O Lord Christ, Whom having not seen I love and desire to love,
O Lord Christ, Who lookest on me uncomely yet still Thy dove,
Take me to Thee in Paradise, Thine own made fair;
    For whatever else I know, this thing is so;
        Thou art there.

JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE

Lord, purge our eyes to see
Within the seed a tree,
    Within the glowing egg a bird,
        Within the shroud a butterfly:

Till taught by such, we see
Beyond all creatures Thee,
    And hearken for Thy tender word,
        And hear it, “Fear not: it is I.”

MY GOD, WILT THOU ACCEPT, AND WILL NOT WE

My God, wilt Thou accept, and will not we
   Give aught to Thee?
The kept we lose, the offered we retain
   Or find again.

Yet if our gift were lost, we well might lose
   All for Thy use:
Well lost for Thee, Whose Love is all for us
   Gratuitous.

A CHILL BLANK WORLD. YET OVER THE UTMOST SEA

A chill blank world. Yet over the utmost sea
The light of a coming dawn is rising to me,
    No more than a paler shade of darkness as yet;
While I lift my heart, O Lord, my heart unto Thee
    Who hast not forgotten me, yea, Who wilt not forget.

Forget not Thy sorrowful servant, O Lord my God,
Weak as I cry, faint as I cry underneath Thy rod,
    Soon to lie dumb before Thee a body devoid of breath,
Dust to dust, ashes to ashes, a sod to the sod:
    Forget not my life, O my Lord, forget not my death.

THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND

O Jesu, better than Thy gifts
   Art Thou Thine only Self to us!
Palm branch its triumph, harp uplifts
   Its triumph-note melodious:
      But what are such to such as we?
O Jesu, better than Thy saints
   Art Thou Thine only Self to us!
The heart faints and the spirit faints
   For only Thee all-Glorious,
      For Thee, O only Lord, for Thee.

SOME FEASTS AND FASTS

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ADVENT SUNDAY

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go ye out
With lighted lamps and garlands round about
To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

It may be at the midnight, black as pitch,
Earth shall cast up her poor, cast up her rich.

It may be at the crowing of the cock
Earth shall upheave her depth, uproot her rock.

For lo, the Bridegroom fetcheth home the Bride:
His Hands are Hands she knows, she knows His Side.

Like pure Rebekah at the appointed place,
Veiled, she unveils her face to meet His Face.

Like great Queen Esther in her triumphing,
She triumphs in the Presence of her King.

His Eyes are as a Dove's, and she's Dove-eyed;
He knows His lovely mirror, sister, Bride.

He speaks with Dove-voice of exceeding love,
And she with love-voice of an answering Dove.

Behold, the Bridegroom cometh: go we out
With lamps ablaze and garlands round about

To meet Him in a rapture with a shout.

ADVENT

Earth grown old, yet still so green,
Deep beneath her crust of cold
Nurses fire unfelt, unseen:
Earth grown old.

We who live are quickly told:
Millions more lie hid between
Inner swathings of her fold.

When will fire break up her screen?
When will life burst thro' her mould?
Earth, earth, earth, thy cold is keen,
Earth grown old.

SOONER OR LATER: YET AT LAST

Sooner or later: yet at last
The Jordan must be past;

It may be he will overflow
His banks the day we go;

It may be that his cloven deep
Will stand up on a heap.

Sooner or later: yet one day
We all must pass that way;

Each man, each woman, humbled, pale,
Pass veiled within the veil;

Child, parent, bride, companion,
Alone, alone, alone.

For none a ransom can be paid,
A suretyship be made:

I, bent by mine own burden, must
Enter my house of dust;

I, rated to the full amount,
Must render mine account.

When earth and sea shall empty all
Their graves of great and small;

When earth wrapped in a fiery flood
Shall no more hide her blood;

When mysteries shall be revealed;
All secrets be unsealed;

When things of night, when things of shame,
Shall find at last a name,

Pealed for a hissing and a curse
Throughout the universe:

Then Awful Judge, most Awful God,
Then cause to bud Thy rod,

To bloom with blossoms, and to give
Almonds; yea, bid us live.

I plead Thyself with Thee, I plead
Thee in our utter need:

Jesus, most Merciful of Men,
Show mercy on us then;

Lord God of Mercy and of men,
Show mercy on us then.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas hath a darkness
   Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
   Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
   Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
   Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,
   Birds that sing and bells that ring;
Heaven hath answering music
   For all Angels soon to sing:
Earth, put on your whitest
   Bridal robe of spotless snow:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
   Brought for us so low.

CHRISTMAS DAY

A baby is a harmless thing
   And wins our hearts with one accord,
And Flower of Babies was their King,
   Jesus Christ our Lord:
Lily of lilies He
Upon His Mother's knee;
Rose of roses, soon to be
Crowned with thorns on leafless tree.

A lamb is innocent and mild
   And merry on the soft green sod;
And Jesus Christ, the Undefiled,
   Is the Lamb of God:
Only spotless He
Upon His Mother's knee;
White and ruddy, soon to be
Sacrificed for you and me.

Nay, lamb is not so sweet a word,
   Nor lily half so pure a name;
Another name our hearts hath stirred,
   Kindling them to flame:
"Jesus" certainly
Is music and melody:
Heart with heart in harmony
Carol we and worship we.

CHRISTMASTIDE

Love came down at Christmas,
  Love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
  Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
  Love Incarnate, Love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
  But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
  Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
  Love for plea and gift and sign.

ST. JOHN, APOSTLE

Earth cannot bar flame from ascending,
Hell cannot bind light from descending,
Death cannot finish life never ending.

Eagle and sun gaze at each other,
Eagle at sun, brother at Brother,
Loving in peace and joy one another.

O St. John, with chains for thy wages,
Strong thy rock where the storm-blast rages,
Rock of refuge, the Rock of Ages.

Rome hath passed with her awful voice,
Earth is passing with all her joys,
Heaven shall pass away with a noise.

So from us all follies that please us,
So from us all falsehoods that ease us, —
Only all saints abide with their Jesus.

Jesus, in love looking down hither,
Jesus, by love draw us up thither,
That we in Thee may abide together.

BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, SAYS ST. JOHN

"Beloved, let us love one another," says St. John,
Eagle of eagles calling from above:
Words of strong nourishment for life to feed upon,
"Beloved, let us love."

Voice of an eagle, yea, Voice of the Dove:
If we may love, winter is past and gone;
Publish we, praise we, for lo! it is enough.

More sunny than sunshine that ever yet shone,
Sweetener of the bitter, smoother of the rough,
Highest lesson of all lessons for all to con,
"Beloved, let us love."

HOLY INNOCENTS

They scarcely waked before they slept,
  They scarcely wept before they laughed;
  They drank indeed death's bitter draught,
But all its bitterest dregs were kept
And drained by Mothers while they wept.

From Heaven the speechless Infants speak:
  Weep not (they say), our Mothers dear,
  For swords nor sorrows come not here.
Now we are strong who were so weak,
And all is ours we could not seek.

We bloom among the blooming flowers,
  We sing among the singing birds;
  Wisdom we have who wanted words:
Here morning knows not evening hours,
All's rainbow here without the showers.

And softer than our Mother's breast,
  And closer than our Mother's arm,
  Is here the Love that keeps us warm
And broods above our happy nest.
Dear Mothers, come: for Heaven is best.

UNSPOTTED LAMBS TO FOLLOW THE ONE LAMB

Unspotted lambs to follow the one Lamb,
   Unspotted doves to wait on the one Dove;
To whom Love saith, “Be with Me where I am,”
   And lo! their answer unto Love is love.

For tho’ I know not any note they know,
   Nor know one word of all their song above,
I know Love speaks to them, and even so
   I know the answer unto Love is love.

EPIPHANY

"Lord Babe, if Thou art He
We sought for patiently,
Where is Thy court?
Hither may prophecy and star resort;
Men heed not their report." —
    "Bow down and worship, righteous man:
        This Infant of a span
Is He man sought for since the world began!" —
"Then, Lord, accept my gold, too base a thing
For Thee, of all kings King." —

"Lord Babe, despite Thy youth
I hold Thee of a truth
Both Good and Great:
But wherefore dost Thou keep so mean a state,
Low-lying desolate?" —
    "Bow down and worship, righteous seer:
    The Lord our God is here
    Approachable, Who bids us all draw near." —
"Wherefore to Thee I offer frankincense,
Thou Sole Omnipotence." —

"But I have only brought
Myrrh; no wise afterthought
Instructed me
To gather pearls or gems, or choice to see
Coral or ivory." —
    "Not least thine offering proves thee wise:
    For myrrh means sacrifice,
    And He that lives, this Same is He that dies." —
"Then here is myrrh: alas! yea, woe is me
That myrrh befitteth Thee." —

Myrrh, frankincense, and gold:
And lo! from wintry fold
Good-will doth bring
A Lamb, the innocent likeness of this King
Whom stars and seraphs sing:
    And lo! the bird of love, a Dove
    Flutters and coos above:
    And Dove and Lamb and Babe agree in love: —
Come all mankind, come all creation hither,
Come, worship Christ together.

EPIPHANYTIDE

Trembling before Thee we fall down to adore Thee,
  Shamefaced and trembling we lift our eyes to Thee:
O First and with the last! annul our ruined past,
  Rebuild us to Thy glory, set us free
  From sin and from sorrow to fall down and worship Thee.

Full of pity view us, stretch Thy sceptre to us,
  Bid us live that we may give ourselves to Thee:
O faithful Lord and True! stand up for us and do,
  Make us lovely, make us new, set us free —
  Heart and soul and spirit — to bring all and worship Thee.

SEPTUAGESIMA

"So run that ye may obtain."

One step more, and the race is ended;
One word more, and the lesson's done;
One toil more, and a long rest follows
At set of sun.

Who would fail, for one step withholden?
Who would fail, for one word unsaid?
Who would fail, for a pause too early?
Sound sleep the dead.

One step more, and the goal receives us;
One word more, and life's task is done;
One toil more, and the Cross is carried
And sets the sun.

SEXAGESIMA

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake."

Yet earth was very good in days of old,
   And earth is lovely still:
Still for the sacred flock she spreads the fold,
   For Sion rears the hill.

Mother she is, and cradle of our race,
   A depth where treasures lie,
The broad foundation of a holy place,
   Man's step to scale the sky.

She spreads the harvest-field which Angels reap,
   And lo! the crop is white;
She spreads God's Acre where the happy sleep
   All night that is not night.

Earth may not pass till heaven shall pass away,
   Nor heaven may be renewed
Except with earth: and once more in that day
   Earth shall be very good.

THAT EDEN OF EARTH'S SUNRISE CANNOT VIE

That Eden of earth's sunrise cannot vie
With Paradise beyond her sunset sky
Hidden on high.

Four rivers watered Eden in her bliss,
But Paradise hath One which perfect is
In sweetnesses.

Eden had gold, but Paradise hath gold
Like unto glass of splendours manifold
Tongue hath not told.

Eden had sun and moon to make her bright;
But Paradise hath God and Lamb for light,
And hath no night.

Unspotted innocence was Eden's best;
Great Paradise shows God's fulfilled behest,
Triumph and rest.

Hail, Eve and Adam, source of death and shame!
New life has sprung from death, and Jesu's Name
Clothes you with fame.

Hail Adam, and hail Eve! your children rise
And call you blessed, in their glad surmise
Of Paradise.

QUINQUAGESIMA

Love is alone the worthy law of love:
   All other laws have presupposed a taint:
   Love is the law from kindled saint to saint,
From lamb to lamb, from dove to answering dove.
Love is the motive of all things that move
   Harmonious by free will without constraint:
   Love learns and teaches: love shall man acquaint
With all he lacks, which all his lack is love.
Because Love is the fountain, I discern
   The stream as love: for what but love should flow
      From fountain Love? not bitter from the sweet!
   I ignorant, have I laid claim to know?
      Oh, teach me, Love, such knowledge as is meet
For one to know who is fain to love and learn.

PITEOUS MY RHYME IS

Piteous my rhyme is
What while I muse of love and pain,
Of love misspent, of love in vain,
Of love that is not loved again:
    And is this all then?
    As long as time is,
Love loveth. Time is but a span,
The dalliance space of dying man:
And is this all immortals can?
    The gain were small then.

    Love loves for ever,
And finds a sort of joy in pain,
And gives with nought to take again,
And loves too well to end in vain:
    Is the gain small then?
    Love laughs at “never,”
Outlives our life, exceeds the span
Appointed to mere mortal man:
All which love is and does and can
    Is all in all then.

ASH WEDNESDAY

My God, my God, have mercy on my sin,
For it is great; and if I should begin
To tell it all, the day would be too small
To tell it in.

My God, Thou wilt have mercy on my sin
For Thy Love's sake: yea, if I should begin
To tell This all, the day would be too small
To tell it in.

GOOD LORD, TODAY

Good Lord, today
I scarce find breath to say:
    Scourge, but receive me.
For stripes are hard to bear, but worse
Thy intolerable curse;
    So do not leave me.

Good Lord, lean down
In pity, tho' Thou frown;
    Smite, but retrieve me:
For so Thou hold me up to stand
And kiss Thy smiting hand,
    It less will grieve me.

LENT

It is good to be last not first,
    Pending the present distress;
It is good to hunger and thirst,
    So it be for righteousness.
It is good to spend and be spent,
    It is good to watch and to pray:
Life and Death make a goodly Lent
    So it leads us to Easter Day.

EMBERTIDE

I saw a Saint. — How canst thou tell that he
   Thou sawest was a Saint? —
I saw one like to Christ so luminously
   By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint
Seemed made his groundwork for humility.

And when he marked me downcast utterly
   Where foul I sat and faint,
Then more than ever Christ-like kindled he;
   And welcomed me as I had been a saint,
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.

Christ bade him, "Do thou likewise." Wherefore he
   Waxed zealous to acquaint
His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be
   He might retrieve some latent saint: —
"Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me!"

MID-LENT

Is any grieved or tired? Yea, by God's Will:
  Surely God's Will alone is good and best:
  O weary man, in weariness take rest,
O hungry man, by hunger feast thy fill.
Discern thy good beneath a mask of ill,
  Or build of loneliness thy secret nest:
  At noon take heart, being mindful of the west,
At night wake hope, for dawn advances still.
At night wake hope. Poor soul, in such sore need
  Of wakening and of girding up anew,
  Hast thou that hope which fainting doth pursue?
    No saint but hath pursued and hath been faint;
Bid love wake hope, for both thy steps shall speed,
    Still faint yet still pursuing, O thou saint.

PASSIONTIDE

It is the greatness of Thy love, dear Lord, that we would celebrate
With sevenfold powers.
Our love at best is cold and poor, at best unseemly for Thy state,
This best of ours.
Creatures that die, we yet are such as Thine own hands deigned to create:
We frail as flowers,
We bitter bondslaves ransomed at a price incomparably great
To grace Heaven's bowers.

Thou callest: "Come at once" — and still Thou callest us: "Come late, tho' late" —
(The moments fly) —
"Come, every one that thirsteth, come" — "Come prove Me, knocking at My gate" —
(Some souls draw nigh!) —
"Come thou who waiting seekest Me" — "Come thou for whom I seek and wait" —
(Why will we die?) —
"Come and repent: come and amend: come joy the joys unsatiate" —
— (Christ passeth by …) —
Lord, pass not by — I come — and I — and I.
Amen.

PALM SUNDAY

"He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

I lift mine eyes, and see
Thee, tender Lord, in pain upon the tree,
Athirst for my sake and athirst for me.

"Yea, look upon Me there,
Compassed with thorns and bleeding everywhere,
For thy sake bearing all, and glad to bear."

I lift my heart to pray:
Thou Who didst love me all that darkened day,
Wilt Thou not love me to the end alway?

"Yea, thee My wandering sheep,
Yea, thee My scarlet sinner slow to weep,
Come to Me, I will love thee and will keep."

Yet am I racked with fear:
Behold the unending outer darkness drear,
Behold the gulf unbridgeable and near!

"Nay, fix thy heart, thine eyes,
Thy hope upon My boundless sacrifice:
Will I lose lightly one so dear-bought prize?"

Ah, Lord; it is not Thou,
Thou that wilt fail; yet woe is me, for how
Shall I endure who half am failing now?

"Nay, weld thy resolute will

To Mine: glance not aside for good or ill:
I love thee; trust Me still and love Me still."

Yet Thou Thyself hast said,
When Thou shalt sift the living from the dead
Some must depart shamed and uncomforted.

"Judge not before that day:
Trust Me with all thy heart, even tho' I slay:
Trust Me in love, trust on, love on, and pray."

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK

"The Voice of my Beloved."

Once I ached for thy dear sake:
Wilt thou cause Me now to ache?
Once I bled for thee in pain:
Wilt thou rend My Heart again?
Crown of thorns and shameful tree,
Bitter death I bore for thee,
Bore My Cross to carry thee,
And wilt thou have nought of Me?

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

By Thy long-drawn anguish to atone,
Jesus Christ, show mercy on Thine own:
Jesus Christ, show mercy and atone
Not for other sake except Thine own.

Thou Who thirsting on the Cross didst see
All mankind and all I love and me,
Still from Heaven look down in love and see
All mankind and all I love and me.

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

Man's life is death. Yet Christ endured to live,
  Preaching and teaching, toiling to and fro,
Few men accepting what He yearned to give,
  Few men with eyes to know
  His Face, that Face of Love He stooped to show.

Man's death is life. For Christ endured to die
  In slow unuttered weariness of pain,
A curse and an astonishment, passed by,
  Pointed at, mocked again
  By men for whom He shed His Blood — in vain?

MAUNDY THURSDAY

"And the Vine said … Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"

The great Vine left its glory to reign as Forest King.
"Nay," quoth the lofty forest trees, "we will not have this thing;
We will not have this supple one enring us with its ring.
Lo, from immemorial time our might towers shadowing:
Not we were born to curve and droop, not we to climb and cling:
We buffet back the buffeting wind, tough to its buffeting:
We screen great beasts, the wild fowl build in our heads and sing,
Every bird of every feather from off our tops takes wing:
I a king, and thou a king, and what king shall be our king?"

Nevertheless the great Vine stooped to be the Forest King,
While the forest swayed and murmured like seas that are tempesting:
Stooped and drooped with thousand tendrils in thirsty languishing;
Bowed to earth and lay on earth for earth's replenishing;
Put off sweetness, tasted bitterness, endured time's fashioning;
Put off life and put on death: and lo! it was all to bring
All its fellows down to a death which hath lost the sting,
All its fellows up to a life in endless triumphing, —
I a king, and thou a king, and this King to be our King.

GOOD FRIDAY MORNING

"Bearing His Cross."

Up Thy Hill of Sorrows
   Thou all alone,
Jesus, man's Redeemer,
   Climbing to a Throne:
Thro' the world triumphant,
   Thro' the Church in pain,
Which think to look upon Thee
   No more again.

Upon my hill of sorrows
   I, Lord, with Thee,
Cheered, upheld, yea, carried,
   If a need should be:
Cheered, upheld, yea, carried,
   Never left alone,
Carried in Thy heart of hearts
   To a throne.

GOOD FRIDAY

Lord Jesus Christ, grown faint upon the Cross,
A sorrow beyond sorrow in Thy look,
The unutterable craving for my soul;
Thy love of me sufficed
To load upon Thee and make good my loss
In face of darkened heaven and earth that shook: —
In face of earth and heaven, take Thou my whole
Heart, O Lord Jesus Christ.

GOOD FRIDAY EVENING

"Bring forth the Spear."

No Cherub's heart or hand for us might ache,
No Seraph's heart of fire had half sufficed:
Thine own were pierced and broken for our sake,
O Jesus Christ.

Therefore we love Thee with our faint good-will,
We crave to love Thee not as heretofore,
To love Thee much, to love Thee more, and still
More and yet more.

A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY WELL-BELOVED UNTO ME

Thy Cross cruciferous doth flower in all
    And every cross, dear Lord, assigned to us:
Ours lowly-statured crosses; Thine how tall,
    Thy Cross cruciferous.

    Thy Cross alone life-giving, glorious:
For love of Thine, souls love their own when small,
    Easy and light, or great and ponderous.

Since deep calls deep, Lord, hearken when we call;
    When cross calls Cross racking and emulous: —
Remember us with him who shared Thy gall,
    Thy Cross cruciferous.

EASTER EVEN

The tempest over and gone, the calm begun,
   Lo, “it is finished” and the Strong Man sleeps:
All stars keep vigil watching for the sun,
      The moon her vigil keeps.

A garden full of silence and of dew
   Beside a virgin cave and entrance stone:
Surely a garden full of Angels too,
      Wondering, on watch, alone.

They who cry “Holy, Holy, Holy,” still
   Veiling their faces round God’s Throne above,
May well keep vigil on this heavenly hill
      And cry their cry of love,

Adoring God in His new mystery
   Of Love more deep than hell, more strong than death;
Until the day break and the shadows flee,
      The Shaking and the Breath.

OUR CHURCH PALMS ARE BUDDING WILLOW TWIGS

While Christ lay dead the widowed world
More willow green for hope undone:
Till, when bright Easter dews impearled
The chilly burial earth,
All north and south, all east and west,
Flushed rosy in the arising sun;
Hope laughed, and Faith resumed her rest,
And Love remembered mirth.

EASTER DAY

Words cannot utter
   Christ His returning:
Mankind, keep jubilee,
   Strip off your mourning,
Crown you with garlands,
   Set your lamps burning.

Speech is left speechless;
   Set you to singing,
Fling your hearts open wide,
   Set your bells ringing:
Christ the Chief Reaper
   Comes, His sheaf bringing.

Earth wakes her song-birds,
   Puts on her flowers,
Leads out her lambkins,
   Builds up her bowers:
This is man's spousal day,
   Christ's day and ours.

EASTER MONDAY

Out in the rain a world is growing green,
    On half the trees quick buds are seen
        Where glued-up buds have been.
Out in the rain God's Acre stretches green,
    Its harvest quick tho' still unseen:
        For there the Life hath been.

If Christ hath died His brethren well may die,
    Sing in the gate of death, lay by
        This life without a sigh:
For Christ hath died and good it is to die;
    To sleep whenso He lays us by,
        Then wake without a sigh.

Yea, Christ hath died, yea, Christ is risen again:
    Wherefore both life and death grow plain
        To us who wax and wane;
For Christ Who rose shall die no more again:
    Amen: till He makes all things plain
        Let us wax on and wane.

EASTER TUESDAY

"Together with my dead body shall they arise."
Shall my dead body arise? then amen and yea
On track of a home beyond the uttermost skies
Together with my dead body shall they.

We know the way: thank God Who hath showed us the way!
Jesus Christ our Way to beautiful Paradise,
Jesus Christ the Same forever, the Same today.

Five Virgins replenish with oil their lamps, being wise,
Five Virgins awaiting the Bridegroom watch and pray:
And if I one day spring from my grave to the prize,
Together with my dead body shall they.

ROGATIONTIDE

Who scatters tares shall reap no wheat,
But go hungry while others eat.

Who sows the wind shall not reap grain;
The sown wind whirleth back again.

What God opens must open be,
Tho' man pile the sand of the sea.

What God shuts is opened no more,
Tho' man weary himself to find the door.

ASCENSION EVE

O Lord Almighty, Who hast formed us weak,
With us whom Thou hast formed deal fatherly;
Be found of us whom Thou has deigned to seek,
Be found that we the more may seek for Thee;
Lord, speak and grant us ears to hear Thee speak;
Lord, come to us and grant us eyes to see;
Lord, make us meek, for Thou Thyself art meek;
Lord, Thou art Love, fill us with charity.
O Thou the Life of living and of dead,
Who givest more the more Thyself hast given,
Suffice us as Thy saints Thou hast sufficed;
That beautified, replenished, comforted,
Still gazing off from earth and up at heaven
We may pursue Thy steps, Lord Jesus Christ.

ASCENSION DAY

"A Cloud received Him out of their sight."

When Christ went up to Heaven the Apostles stayed
Gazing at Heaven with souls and wills on fire,
Their hearts on flight along the track He made,
Winged by desire.

Their silence spake: "Lord, why not follow Thee?
Home is not home without Thy Blessed Face,
Life is not life. Remember, Lord, and see,
Look back, embrace.

"Earth is one desert waste of banishment,
Life is one long-drawn anguish of decay.
Where Thou wert wont to go we also went:
Why not today?"

Nevertheless a cloud cut off their gaze:
They tarry to build up Jerusalem,
Watching for Him, while thro' the appointed days
He watches them.

They do His Will, and doing it rejoice,
Patiently glad to spend and to be spent:
Still He speaks to them, still they hear His Voice
And are content.

For as a cloud received Him from their sight,
So with a cloud will He return ere long:
Therefore they stand on guard by day, by night,

Strenuous and strong.

They do, they dare, they beyond seven times seven
Forgive, they cry God's mighty word aloud:
Yet sometimes haply lift tired eyes to Heaven —
"Is that His cloud?"

WHITSUN EVE

"As many as I love." — Ah, Lord, Who lovest all,
If thus it is with Thee why sit remote above,
Beholding from afar, stumbling and marred and small,
So many Thou dost love?

Whom sin and sorrow make their worn reluctant thrall;
Who fain would flee away but lack the wings of dove;
Who long for love and rest; who look to Thee, and call
To Thee for rest and love.

WHITSUN DAY

"When the Day of Pentecost was fully come."

At sound as of rushing wind, and sight as of fire,
Lo! flesh and blood made spirit and fiery flame,
Ambassadors in Christ's and the Father's Name,
To woo back a world's desire.

These men chose death for their life and shame for their boast,
For fear courage, for doubt intuition of faith,
Chose love that is strong as death and stronger than death
In the power of the Holy Ghost.

WHITSUN MONDAY

"A pure River of Water of Life."

We know not a voice of that River,
   If vocal or silent it be,
Where forever and ever and ever
      It flows to no sea.

More deep than the seas is that River,
   More full than their manifold tides,
Where forever and ever and ever
      It flows and abides.

Pure gold is the bed of that River
   (The gold of that land is the best),
Where forever and ever and ever
      It flows on at rest.

Oh goodly the banks of that River,
   Oh goodly the fruits that they bear,
Where forever and ever and ever
      It flows and is fair.

For lo! on each bank of that River
   The Tree of Life life-giving grows,
Where forever and ever and ever
      The Pure River flows.

WHITSUN TUESDAY

Lord Jesus Christ, our Wisdom and our Rest,
  Who wisely dost reveal and wisely hide,
  Grant us such grace in wisdom to abide
According to Thy Will whose Will is best.
Contented with Thine uttermost behest,
  Too sweet for envy and too high for pride;
  All simple-souled, dove-hearted and dove-eyed,
Soft-voiced, and satisfied in humble nest.
Wondering at the bounty of Thy Love
  Which gives us wings of silver and of gold;
  Wings folded close, yet ready to unfold
    When Thou shalt say, "Winter is past and gone:"
When Thou shalt say, "Spouse, sister, love and dove,
    Come hither, sit with Me upon My Throne."

TRINITY SUNDAY

My God, Thyself being Love Thy heart is love,
  And love Thy Will and love Thy Word to us,
  Whether Thou show us depths calamitous
Or heights and flights of rapturous peace above.
O Christ the Lamb, O Holy Ghost the Dove,
  Reveal the Almighty Father unto us;
  That we may tread Thy courts felicitous,
Loving Who loves us, for our God is Love.
Lo, if our God be Love thro' heaven's long day,
  Love is He thro' our mortal pilgrimage,
    Love was He thro' all aeons that are told.
  We change, but Thou remainest; for Thine age
    Is, Was, and Is to come, nor new nor old;
We change, but Thou remainest; yea and yea!

CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

O blessed Paul elect to grace,
    Arise and wash away thy sin,
Anoint thy head and wash thy face,
    Thy gracious course begin.
To start thee on thy outrunning race
Christ shows the splendour of His Face:
What will that Face of splendour be
When at the goal He welcomes thee?

IN WEARINESS AND PAINFULNESS ST. PAUL

In weariness and painfulness St. Paul
   Served God and pleased Him: after-saints no less
Can wait on and can please Him, one and all
      In weariness and painfulness,

   By faith and hope triumphant thro' distress:
Not with the rankling service of a thrall;
   But even as loving children trust and bless,

Weep and rejoice, answering their Father's call,
   Work with tired hands, and forward upward press
On sore tired feet still rising when they fall,
      In weariness and painfulness.

VIGIL OF THE PRESENTATION

Long and dark the nights, dim and short the days,
Mounting weary heights on our weary ways,
    Thee our God we praise.
Scaling heavenly heights by unearthly ways,
Thee our God we praise all our nights and days,
    Thee our God we praise.

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION

O Firstfruits of our grain,
Infant and Lamb appointed to be slain,
A Virgin and two doves were all Thy train,
With one old man for state,
When Thou didst enter first Thy Father's gate.

Since then Thy train hath been
Freeman and bondman, bishop, king and queen,
With flaming candles and with garlands green:
Oh happy all who wait
One day or thousand days around Thy gate.

And these have offered Thee,
Beside their hearts, great stores for charity,
Gold, frankincense and myrrh; if such may be
For savour or for state
Within the threshold of Thy golden gate.

Then snowdrops and my heart
I'll bring, to find those blacker than Thou art:
Yet, loving Lord, accept us in good part;
And give me grace to wait
A bruised reed bowed low before Thy gate.

THE PURIFICATION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

Purity born of a Maid:
Was such a Virgin defiled?
Nay, by no shade of a shade.
She offered her gift of pure love,
A dove with a fair fellow-dove.
She offered her Innocent Child
The Essence and Author of Love;
The Lamb that indwelt by the Dove
Was spotless and holy and mild;
More pure than all other,
More pure than His Mother,
Her God and Redeemer and Child.

VIGIL OF THE ANNUNCIATION

All weareth, all wasteth,
All flitteth, all hasteth,
All of flesh and time: —
Sound, sweet heavenly chime,
Ring in the unutterable eternal prime.

Man hopeth, man feareth,
Man droopeth: — Christ cheereth,
Compassing release,
Comforting with peace,
Promising rest where strife and anguish cease.

Saints waking, saints sleeping,
Rest well in safe keeping;
Well they rest today
While they watch and pray, —
But their tomorrow's rest what tongue shall say?

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Whereto shall we liken this Blessed Mary Virgin,
Fruitful shoot from Jesse's root graciously emerging?
Lily we might call her, but Christ alone is white;
Rose delicious, but that Jesus is the one Delight;
Flower of women, but her Firstborn is mankind's one flower:

He the Sun lights up all moons thro' their radiant hour.
"Blessed among women, highly favored," thus
Glorious Gabriel hailed her, teaching words to us:
Whom devoutly copying we too cry "All hail!"
Echoing on the music of glorious Gabriel.

HERSELF A ROSE, WHO BORE THE ROSE

Herself a rose, who bore the Rose,
    She bore the Rose and felt its thorn.
    All Loveliness new-born
Took on her bosom its repose,
        And slept and woke there night and morn.

Lily herself, she bore the one
    Fair Lily; sweeter, whiter, far
    Than she or others are:
The Sun of Righteousness her Son,
        She was His morning star.

She gracious, He essential Grace,
    He was the Fountain, she the rill:
    Her goodness to fulfil
And gladness, with proportioned pace
        He led her steps thro' good and ill.

Christ's mirror she of grace and love,
    Of beauty and of life and death:
    By hope and love and faith
Transfigured to His Likeness, "Dove,
        Spouse, Sister, Mother," Jesus saith.

ST. MARK

Once like a broken bow Mark sprang aside:
Yet grace recalled him to a worthier course,
To feeble hands and knees increasing force,
Till God was magnified.

And now a strong Evangelist, St. Mark
Hath for his sign a Lion in his strength;
And thro' the stormy water's breadth and length
He helps to steer God's Ark.

Thus calls he sinners to be penitents,
He kindles penitents to high desire,
He mounts before them to the sphere of saints,
And bids them come up higher.

ST. BARNABAS

"Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand." — *Acts* xxi. 3.

"We sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary." — *Acts* xxvii. 4.

St. Barnabas, with John his sister's son,
Set sail for Cyprus; leaving in their wake
That chosen Vessel, who for Jesus' sake
Proclaimed the Gentiles and the Jews at one.
Divided while united, each must run
His mighty course not hell should overtake;
And pressing toward the mark must own the ache
Of love, and sigh for heaven not yet begun.
For saints in life-long exile yearn to touch
Warm human hands, and commune face to face;
But these we know not ever met again:
Yet once St. Paul at distance overmuch
Just sighted Cyprus; and once more in vain
Neared it and passed; — not there his landing-place.

VIGIL OF ST. PETER

O Jesu, gone so far apart
Only my heart can follow Thee,
That look which pierced St. Peter's heart
Turn now on me.

Thou Who dost search me thro' and thro'
And mark the crooked ways I went,
Look on me, Lord, and make me too
Thy penitent.

ST. PETER

"Launch out into the deep," Christ spake of old
   To Peter: and he launched into the deep;
   Strengthened should tempest wake which lay asleep,
Strengthened to suffer heat or suffer cold.
Thus, in Christ's Prescience: patient to behold
   A fall, a rise, a scaling Heaven's high steep;
   Prescience of Love, which deigned to overleap
The mire of human errors manifold.
Lord, Lover of Thy Peter, and of him
   Beloved with craving of a humbled heart
      Which eighteen hundred years have satisfied;
Hath he his throne among Thy Seraphim
   Who love? or sits he on a throne apart,
      Unique, near Thee, to love Thee human-eyed?

ST. PETER ONCE: “LORD, DOST THOU WASH MY FEET?”

St. Peter once: “Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?” —
    Much more I say: Lord, dost Thou stand and knock
    At my closed heart more rugged than a rock,
Bolted and barred, for Thy soft touch unmeet,
Nor garnished nor in any wise made sweet?
    Owls roost within and dancing satyrs mock.
    Lord, I have heard the crowing of the cock

And have not wept: ah, Lord, Thou knowest it.
Yet still I hear Thee knocking, still I hear:
    “Open to Me, look on Me eye to eye,
        That I may wring thy heart and make it whole;
And teach thee love because I hold thee dear,
        And sup with thee in gladness soul with soul,
    And sup with thee in glory by and by.”

I FOLLOWED THEE, MY GOD, I FOLLOWED THEE

I followed Thee, my God, I followed Thee
    To see the end:
I turned back flying from Gethsemane,
Turned back on flying steps to see
    Thy Face, my God, my Friend.

Even fleeing from Thee my heart clave to Thee:
    I turned perforce
Constrained, yea chained by love which maketh free;
I turned perforce, and silently
    Followed along Thy course.

Lord, didst Thou know that I was following Thee?
    I weak and small
Yet Thy true lover, mean tho' I must be,
Sinning and sorrowing — didst Thou see?
    O Lord, Thou sawest all.

I thought I had been strong to die for Thee;
    I disbelieved
Thy word of warning spoken patiently:
My heart cried, "That be far from me,"
    Till Thy bruised heart I grieved.

Once I had urged: "Lord, this be far from Thee:" —
    Rebel to light,
It needed first that Thou shouldst die for me
Or ever I could plumb and see
    Love's lovely depth and height.

Alas that I should trust myself, not Thee;
   Not trust Thy word:
I faithless slumberer in Gethsemane,
Blinded and rash; who instantly
   Put trust, but in a sword.

Ah Lord, if even at the last in Thee
   I had put faith,
I might even at the last have counselled me,
And not have heaped up cruelty
   To sting Thee in Thy death.

Alas for me, who bore to think on Thee
   And yet to lie:
While Thou, O Lord, didst bear to look on me
Goaded by fear to blasphemy,
   And break my heart and die.

No balm I find in Gilead, yet in Thee
   Nailed to Thy palm
I find a balm that wrings and comforts me:
Balm wrung from Thee by agony,
   My balm, mine only balm.

Oh blessed John who standeth close to Thee,
   With Magdalene,
And Thine own Mother praying silently,
Yea, blessed above women she,
   Now blessed even as then.

And blessed the scorned thief who hangs by Thee,
   Whose thirsting mouth
Thirsts for Thee more than water, whose eyes see,
Whose lips confess in ecstasy

Nor feel their parching drouth.

Like as the hart the water-brooks I Thee
Desire, my hands
I stretch to Thee; O kind Lord, pity me:
Lord, I have wept, wept bitterly,
I driest of dry lands.

Lord, I am standing far far off from Thee;
Yet is my heart
Hanging with Thee upon the accursed tree;
The nails, the thorns, pierce Thee and me:
My God, I claim my part.

Scarce in Thy throne and kingdom; yet with Thee
In shame, in loss,
In Thy forsaking, in Thine agony:
Love crucified, behold even me,
Me also bear Thy cross.

VIGIL OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW

Lord, to Thine own grant watchful hearts and eyes;
  Hearts strung to prayer, awake while eyelids sleep;
  Eyes patient till the end to watch and weep.
So will sleep nourish power to wake and rise
With Virgins who keep vigil and are wise,
  To sow among all sowers who shall reap,
  From out man's deep to call Thy vaster deep,
And tread the uphill track to Paradise.
Sweet souls! so patient that they make no moan,
  So calm on journey that they seem at rest,
    So rapt in prayer that half they dwell in heaven
    Thankful for all withheld and all things given;
  So lit by love that Christ shines manifest
Transfiguring their aspects to His own.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW

He bore an agony whereof the name
   Hath turned his fellows pale:
But what if God should call us to the same,
   Should call, and we should fail?

Nor earth nor sea could swallow up our shame,
   Nor darkness draw a veil:
For he endured that agony whose name
   Hath made his fellows quail.

ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

"Ye that excel in strength."

Service and strength, God's Angels and Archangels;
His Seraphs fires, and lamps His Cherubim:
Glory to God from highest and from lowest,
Glory to God in everlasting hymn
From all His creatures.

Princes that serve, and Powers that work His pleasure,
Heights that soar to'ard Him, Depths that sink to'ard Him;
Flames fire out-flaming, chill beside His Essence;
Insight all-probing, save where scant and dim
To'ard its Creator.

Sacred and free exultant in God's pleasure,
His Will their solace, thus they wait on Him;
And shout their shout of ecstasy eternal,
And trim their splendours that they burn not dim
To'ard their Creator.

Wherefore with Angels, wherefore with Archangels,
With lofty Cherubs, loftier Seraphim,
We laud and magnify our God Almighty,
And veil our faces rendering love to Him
With all His creatures.

VIGIL OF ALL SAINTS

Up, my drowsing eyes!
   Up, my sinking heart!
Up to Jesus Christ arise!
   Claim your part
In all raptures of the skies.

Yet a little while,
   Yet a little way,
Saints shall reap and rest and smile
   All the day.
Up! let’s trudge another mile.

ALL SAINTS

As grains of sand, as stars, as drops of dew,
   Numbered and treasured by the Almighty Hand,
   The Saints triumphant throng that holy land
Where all things and Jerusalem are new.
We know not half they sing or half they do,
   But this we know, they rest and understand;
   While like a conflagration freshly fanned
Their love glows upward, outward, thro' and thro'.
Lo! like a stream of incense launched on flame
   Fresh Saints stream up from death to life above,
   To shine among those others and rejoice:
What matters tribulation whence they came?
   All love and only love can find a voice
Where God makes glad His Saints, for God is Love.

ALL SAINTS: MARTYRS

Once slain for Him Who first was slain for them,
   Now made alive in Him for evermore,
   All luminous and lovely in their gore
With no more buffeting winds or tides to stem
The Martyrs look for New Jerusalem;
   And cry "How long?" remembering all they bore,
   "How long?" with heart and eyes sent on before
Toward consummated throne and diadem.
"How long?" White robes are given to their desire;
   "How long?" deep rest that is and is to be;
      With a great promise of the oncoming host,
Loves to their love and fires to flank their fire:
   So rest they, worshipping incessantly
      One God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

I GAVE A SWEET SMELL

Saints are like roses when they flush rarest,
Saints are like lilies when they bloom fairest,
Saints are like violets sweetest of their kind:
Bear in mind
This today. Then tomorrow:
All like roses rarer than the rarest,
All like lilies fairer than the fairest,
All like violets sweeter than we know.
Be it so.
Tomorrow blots out sorrow.

HARK! THE ALLELUIAS OF THE GREAT SALVATION

Hark! the Alleluias of the great salvation
   Still beginning, never ending, still begin,
The thunder of an endless adoration:
Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation
   Which have kept the truth may enter in.

Roll ye back, ye pearls, on your twelvefold station:
   No more deaths to die, no more fights to win!
Lift your heads, ye gates, that the righteous nation
Led by the Great Captain of their sole salvation,
   Having kept the truth, may enter in.

A SONG FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS

Love is the key of life and death,
   Of hidden heavenly mystery:
Of all Christ is, of all He saith,
            Love is the key.

As three times to His Saint He saith,
   He saith to me, He saith to thee,
Breathing His Grace-conferring Breath:
            "Lovest thou Me?"

Ah, Lord, I have such feeble faith,
   Such feeble hope to comfort me:
But love it is, is strong as death,
            And I love Thee.

SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT

The end of all things is at hand. We all
   Stand in the balance trembling as we stand;
Or if not trembling, tottering to a fall.
   The end of all things is at hand.

   O hearts of men, covet the unending land!
O hearts of men, covet the musical,
   Sweet, never-ending waters of that strand!

While Earth shows poor, a slippery rolling ball,
   And Hell looms vast, a gulf unplumbed, unspanned,
And Heaven flings wide its gates to great and small,
   The end of all things is at hand.

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LORD, GRANT US GRACE TO REST UPON THY WORD

LOVE LOVETH THEE, AND WISDOM LOVETH THEE

Love loveth Thee, and wisdom loveth Thee:
The love that loveth Thee sits satisfied;
Wisdom that loveth Thee grows million-eyed,
Learning what was, and is, and is to be.
Wisdom and love are glad of all they see;
Their heart is deep, their hope is not denied;
They rock at rest on time's unresting tide,
And wait to rest thro' long eternity.
Wisdom and love and rest, each holy soul
Hath these today while day is only night:
What shall souls have when morning brings to light
Love, wisdom, rest, God's treasure stored above?
Palm shall they have, and harp and aureole,
Wisdom, rest, love — and lo! the whole is love.

LORD, GIVE ME LOVE THAT I MAY LOVE THEE MUCH

Lord, give me love that I may love Thee much,
    Yea, give me love that I may love Thee more,
    And all for love may worship and adore
And touch Thee with love's consecrated touch.
I halt today; be love my cheerful crutch,
    My feet to plod, some day my wings to soar:
    Some day; but, Lord, not any day before
Thou call me perfect, having made me such.
This is a day of love, a day of sorrow,
    Love tempering sorrow to a sort of bliss;
        A day that shortens while we call it long:
A longer day of love will dawn tomorrow,
    A longer, brighter, lovelier day than this,
        Endless, all love, no sorrow, but a song.

AS A KING, … . UNTO THE KING

Love doth so grace and dignify
   That beggars treat as king with king
Before the Throne of God most High:
Love recognizes love's own cry,
   And stoops to take love's offering.

A loving heart, tho' soiled and bruised;
   A kindling heart, tho' cold before;
Who ever came and was refused
By Love? Do, Lord, as Thou art used
   To do, and make me love Thee more.

O YE WHO LOVE TODAY

O ye who love today,
Turn away
From Patience with her silver ray:
    For Patience shows a twilight face,
        Like a half-lighted moon
    When daylight dies apace.

But ye who love tomorrow
Beg or borrow
Today some bitterness of sorrow:
    For Patience shows a lustrous face,
        In depth of night her noon;
    Then to her sun gives place.

LIFE THAT WAS BORN TODAY

Life that was born today
Must make no stay,
   But tend to end
As blossom-bloom of May.
O Lord, confirm my root,
Train up my shoot,
   To live and give
Harvest of wholesome fruit.

Life that was born to die
Sets heart on high,
   And counts and mounts
Steep stages of the sky.
Two things, Lord, I desire
And I require;
   Love's name, and flame
To wrap my soul in fire.

Life that was born to love
Sends heart above
   Both cloud and shroud,
And broods a peaceful dove.
Two things I ask of Thee;
Deny not me;
   Eyesight and light
Thy Blessed Face to see.

PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR

Lord, give me blessed fear,
   And much more blessed love
That fearing I may love Thee here
   And be Thy harmless dove:

Until Thou cast out fear,
   Until Thou perfect love,
Until Thou end mine exile here
   And fetch Thee home Thy dove.

HOPE IS THE COUNTERPOISE OF FEAR

Hope is the counterpoise of fear
While night enthralls us here.

Fear hath a startled eye that holds a tear:
Hope hath an upward glance, for dawn draws near
With sunshine and with cheer.
Fear gazing earthwards spies a bier;
And sets herself to rear
A lamentable tomb where leaves drop sere,
Bleaching to congruous skeletons austere:
Hope chants a funeral hymn most sweet and clear,
And seems true chanticleer
Of resurrection and of all things dear
In the oncoming endless year.

Fear ballasts hope, hope buoys up fear,
And both befit us here.

SUBJECT TO LIKE PASSIONS AS WE ARE

Whoso hath anguish is not dead in sin,
   Whoso hath pangs of utterless desire.
   Like as in smouldering flax which harbours fire, —
Red heat of conflagration may begin,
Melt that hard heart, burn out the dross within,
   Permeate with glory the new man entire,
   Crown him with fire, mould for his hands a lyre
Of fiery strings to sound with those who win.
Anguish is anguish, yet potential bliss,
   Pangs of desire are birth-throes of delight;
   Those citizens felt such who walk in white,
And meet, but no more sunder, with a kiss;
Who fathom still unfathomed mysteries,
   And love, adore, rejoice, with all their might.

EXPERIENCE BOWS A SWEET CONTENTED FACE

Experience bows a sweet contented face,
  Still setting to her seal that God is true:
  Beneath the sun, she knows, is nothing new;
All things that go return with measured pace,
Winds, rivers, man's still recommencing race: —
  While Hope beyond earth's circle strains her view,
  Past sun and moon, and rain and rainbow too,
Enamoured of unseen eternal grace.
Experience saith, "My God doth all things well:"
  And for the morrow taketh little care,
    Such peace and patience garrison her soul: —
    While Hope, who never yet hath eyed the goal,
  With arms flung forth, and backward floating hair,
Touches, embraces, hugs the invisible.

CHARITY NEVER FAILETH

Such is Love, it comforts in extremity,
   Tho' a tempest rage around and rage above,
Tempest beyond tempest, far as eye can see:
   Such is Love,

   That it simply heeds its mourning inward Dove;
Dove which craves contented for a home to be
   Set amid the myrtles or an olive grove.

Dove-eyed Love contemplates the Twelve-fruited Tree,
   Marks the bowing palms which worship as they move;
Simply sayeth, simply prayeth, "All for me!"
   Such is Love.

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY

A moon impoverished amid stars curtailed,
   A sun of its exuberant lustre shorn,
   A transient morning that is scarcely morn,
A lingering night in double dimness veiled. —
Our hands are slackened and our strength has failed:
   We born to darkness, wherefore were we born?
   No ripening more for olive, grape, or corn:
Faith faints, hope faints, even love himself has paled.
Nay! love lifts up a face like any rose
   Flushing and sweet above a thorny stem,
Softly protesting that the way he knows;
   And as for faith and hope, will carry them
   Safe to the gate of New Jerusalem,
Where light shines full and where the palm-tree blows.

ALL BENEATH THE SUN HASTETH

All beneath the sun hasteth,
All that hath begun wasteth;
Earth-notes change in tune
With the changeful moon,
Which waneth
While earth's chant complaineth.

Plumbs the deep, Fear descending;
Scales the steep, Hope ascending;
Faith betwixt the twain
Plies both goad and rein,
Half fearing,
All hopeful, day is nearing.

IF THOU BE DEAD, FORGIVE AND THOU SHALT LIVE

If thou be dead, forgive and thou shalt live;
If thou hast sinned, forgive and be forgiven;
God waiteth to be gracious and forgive,
And open heaven.

Set not thy will to die and not to live;
Set not thy face as flint refusing heaven;
Thou fool, set not thy heart on hell: forgive
And be forgiven.

LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK

Can man rejoice who lives in hourly fear?
Can man make haste who toils beneath a load?
Can man feel rest who has no fixed abode?
All he lays hold of, or can see or hear,
Is passing by, is prompt to disappear,
Is doomed, foredoomed, continueth in no stay:
This day he breathes in is his latter day,
This year of time is this world's latter year.
Thus in himself is he most miserable:
Out of himself, Lord, lift him up to Thee,
Out of himself and all these worlds that flee;
Hold him in patience underneath the rod,
Anchor his hope beyond life's ebb and swell,
Perfect his patience in the love of God.

PATIENCE MUST DWELL WITH LOVE, FOR LOVE AND SORROW

Patience must dwell with Love, for Love and Sorrow
Have pitched their tent together here:
Love all alone will build a house tomorrow,
And sorrow not be near.

Today for Love's sake hope, still hope, in sorrow,
Rest in her shade and hold her dear:
Today she nurses thee; and lo! tomorrow
Love only will be near.

LET EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD

All that we see rejoices in the sunshine,
All that we hear makes merry in the Spring:
God grant us such a mind to be glad after our kind,
And to sing
His praises for everything.

Much that we see must vanish with the sunshine,
Sweet Spring must fail, and fail the choir of Spring:
But Wisdom shall burn on when the lesser lights are gone,
And shall sing
God's praises evermore for everything.

WHAT IS THE BEGINNING? LOVE. WHAT THE COURSE? LOVE STILL

What is the beginning? Love. What the course? Love still.
What the goal? The goal is Love on the happy hill.
Is there nothing then but Love, search we sky or earth?
There is nothing out of Love hath perpetual worth:
All things flag but only Love, all things fail or flee;
There is nothing left but Love worthy you and me.

LORD, MAKE ME PURE

Lord, make me pure:
Only the pure shall see Thee as Thou art
And shall endure.
Lord, bring me low;
For Thou wert lowly in Thy blessed heart:
Lord, keep me so.

LOVE, TO BE LOVE, MUST WALK THY WAY

Love, to be love, must walk Thy way
And work Thy Will;
Or if Thou say, “Lie still,”
Lie still and pray.

Love, Thine own Bride, with all her might
Will follow Thee,
And till the shadows flee
Keep Thee in sight.

Love will not mar her peaceful face
With cares undue,
Faithless and hopeless too
And out of place.

Love, knowing Thou much more art Love,
Will sun her grief,
And pluck her myrtle-leaf,
And be Thy dove.

Love here hath vast beatitude:
What shall be hers
Where there is no more curse,
But all is good?

LORD, I AM FEEBLE AND OF MEAN ACCOUNT

Lord, I am feeble and of mean account:
Thou Who dost condescend as well as mount,
    Stoop Thou Thyself to me
    And grant me grace to hear and grace to see.

Lord, if Thou grant me grace to hear and see
Thy very Self Who stoopest thus to me,
    I make but slight account
    Of aught beside wherein to sink or mount.

TUNE ME, O LORD, INTO ONE HARMONY

Tune me, O Lord, into one harmony
With Thee, one full responsive vibrant chord;
Unto Thy praise all love and melody,
Tune me, O Lord.

Thus need I flee nor death, nor fire, nor sword:
A little while these be, then cease to be,
And sent by Thee not these should be abhorred.

Devil and world, gird me with strength to flee,
To flee the flesh, and arm me with Thy word:
As Thy Heart is to my heart, unto Thee
Tune me, O Lord.

THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW

Whiteness most white. Ah, to be clean again
   In mine own sight and God's most holy sight!
To reach thro' any flood or fire of pain
   Whiteness most white:

   To learn to hate the wrong and love the right
Even while I walk thro' shadows that are vain,
   Descending thro' vain shadows into night.

Lord, not today: yet some day bliss for bane
   Give me, for mortal frailty give me might,
Give innocence for guilt, and for my stain
   Whiteness most white.

THY LILIES DRINK THE DEW

Thy lilies drink the dew,
Thy lambs the rill, and I will drink them too;
For those in purity
And innocence are types, dear Lord, of Thee.
The fragrant lily flower
Bows and fulfils Thy Will its lifelong hour;
The lamb at rest and play
Fulfils Thy Will in gladness all the day;
They leave tomorrow's cares
Until the morrow, what it brings it bears.
And I, Lord, would be such;
Not high or great or anxious overmuch,
But pure and temperate,
Earnest to do Thy Will betimes and late,
Fragrant with love and praise
And innocence thro' all my appointed days;
Thy lily I would be,
Spotless and sweet, Thy lamb to follow Thee.

WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE I CALLED UPON THE LORD

A burdened heart that bleeds and bears
   And hopes and waits in pain,
And faints beneath its fears and cares,
      Yet hopes again:

Wilt Thou accept the heart I bring,
   O gracious Lord and kind,
To ease it of a torturing sting,
      And staunch and bind?

Alas, if Thou wilt none of this,
   None else have I to give:
Look Thou upon it as it is,
      Accept, relieve.

Or if Thou wilt not yet relieve,
   Be not extreme to sift:
Accept a faltering will to give,
      Itself Thy gift.

GRANT US SUCH GRACE THAT WE MAY WORK THY WILL

Grant us such grace that we may work Thy Will
And speak Thy words and walk before Thy Face,
Profound and calm, like waters deep and still:
Grant us such grace.

Not hastening and not loitering in our pace
For gloomiest valley or for sultriest hill,
Content and fearless on our downward race.

As rivers seek a sea they cannot fill
But are themselves filled full in its embrace,
Absorbed, at rest, each river and each rill:
Grant us such grace.

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?

As violets so be I recluse and sweet,
   Cheerful as daisies unaccounted rare,
Still sunward-gazing from a lowly seat,
      Still sweetening wintry air.

While half-awakened Spring lags incomplete,
   While lofty forest trees tower bleak and bare,
Daisies and violets own remotest heat
      And bloom and make them fair.

DO THIS, AND HE DOETH IT

Content to come, content to go,
  Content to wrestle or to race,
Content to know or not to know,
    Each in his place;

Lord, grant us grace to love Thee so
  That glad of heart and glad of face
At last we may sit, high or low,
    Each in his place;

Where pleasures flow as rivers flow,
  And loss has left no barren trace,
And all that are, are perfect so,
    Each in his place.

THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN

Be faithful unto death. Christ proffers thee
   Crown of a life that draws immortal breath:
To thee He saith, yea, and He saith to me,
   “Be faithful unto death.”

   To every living soul that same He saith,
“Be faithful”: — whatsoever else we be,
   Let us be faithful, challenging His faith.

Tho’ trouble storm around us like the sea,
   Tho’ hell surge up to scare us and to scathe,
Tho’ heaven and earth betake themselves to flee,
   “Be faithful unto death.”

YE ARE COME UNTO MOUNT SION

Fear, Faith, and Hope have sent their hearts above:
  Prudence, Obedience, and Humility
  Climb at their call, all scaling heaven toward Love.
Fear hath least grace but great expediency;
  Faith and Humility show grave and strong;
  Prudence and Hope mount balanced equally.
Obedience marches marshalling their throng,
  Goes first, goes last, to left hand or to right;
  And all the six uplift a pilgrim's song.
By day they rest not, nor they rest by night:
  While Love within them, with them, over them,
  Weans them and woos them from the dark to light.
Each plies for staff not reed with broken stem,
  But olive branch in pledge of patient peace;
  Till Love being theirs in New Jerusalem,
Transfigure them to Love, and so they cease.
  Love is the sole beatitude above:
  All other graces, to their vast increase
Of glory, look on Love and mirror Love.

SIT DOWN IN THE LOWEST ROOM

Lord, give me grace
To take the lowest place;
Nor even desire,
Unless it be Thy Will, to go up higher.
Except by grace,
I fail of lowest place;
Except desire
Sit low, it aims awry to go up higher.

LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE

Grant us, O Lord, that patience and that faith:
  Faith's patience imperturbable in Thee,
  Hope's patience till the long-drawn shadows flee,
Love's patience unresentful of all scathe.
Verily we need patience breath by breath;
  Patience while faith holds up her glass to see,
  While hope toils yoked in fear's copartnery,
And love goes softly on the way to death.
How gracious and how perfecting a grace
  Must patience be on which those others wait:
Faith with suspended rapture in her face,
  Hope pale and careful hand in hand with fear,
Love — ah, good love who would not antedate
  God's Will, but saith, Good is it to be here.

LORD, GRANT US GRACE TO REST UPON THY WORD

Lord, grant us grace to rest upon Thy word,
    To rest in hope until we see Thy Face;
To rest thro' toil unruffled and unstirred,
    Lord, grant us grace.

    This burden and this heat wear on apace:
Night comes, when sweeter than night's singing bird
    Will swell the silence of our ended race.

Ah, songs which flesh and blood have never heard
    And cannot hear, songs of the silent place
Where rest remains! Lord, slake our hope deferred,
    Lord, grant us grace.

THE WORLD: SELF-DESTRUCTION

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A VAIN SHADOW

The world, — what a world, ah me!
   Mouldy, worm-eaten, grey:
Vain as a leaf from a tree,
   As a fading day,
As veriest vanity,
   As the froth and the spray
Of the hollow-billowed sea,
As what was and shall not be,
   As what is and passes away.

LORD, SAVE US, WE PERISH

O Lord, seek us, O Lord, find us
    In Thy patient care;
Be Thy Love before, behind us,
    Round us, everywhere:
Lest the god of this world blind us,
    Lest he speak us fair,
Lest he forge a chain to bind us,
    Lest he bait a snare.
Turn not from us, call to mind us,
    Find, embrace us, bear;
Be Thy Love before, behind us,
    Round us, everywhere.

WHAT IS THIS ABOVE THY HEAD

What is this above thy head,
   O Man? —
The World, all overspread
With pearls and golden rays
And gems ablaze;
A sight which day and night
   Fills an eye's span.

What is this beneath thy feet,
   O Saint? —
The World, a nauseous sweet
Puffed up and perishing;
A hollow thing,
A lie, a vanity,
   Tinsel and paint.

What is she while time is time,
   O Man? —
In a perpetual prime
Beauty and youth she hath;
And her footpath
Breeds flowers thro' dancing hours
   Since time began.

While time lengthens what is she,
   O Saint? —
Nought: yea, all men shall see
How she is nought at all,
When her death-pall
Of fire ends their desire
   And brands her taint.

Ah, poor Man, befooled and slow
    And faint!
Ah, poorest Man, if so
Thou turn thy back on bliss
And choose amiss!
For thou art choosing now:
    Sinner, — or Saint.

BABYLON THE GREAT

Foul is she and ill-favored, set askew:
   Gaze not upon her till thou dream her fair,
   Lest she should mesh thee in her wanton hair,
Adept in arts grown old yet ever new.
Her heart lusts not for love, but thro' and thro'
   For blood, as spotted panther lusts in lair;
   No wine is in her cup, but filth is there
Unutterable, with plagues hid out of view.
Gaze not upon her, for her dancing whirl
   Turns giddy the fixed gazer presently:
   Gaze not upon her, lest thou be as she
      When, at the far end of her long desire,
Her scarlet vest and gold and gem and pearl
      And she amid her pomp are set on fire.

STANDING AFAR OFF FOR THE FEAR OF HER TORMENT

Is this the end? is there no end but this?
   Yea, none beside:
   No other end for pride
And foulness and besottedness.

Hath she no friend? hath she no clinging friend?
   Nay, none at all;
   Who stare upon her fall
Quake for themselves with hair on end.

Will she be done away? vanish away?
   Yea, like a dream;
   Yea, like the shades that seem
Somewhat, and lo! are nought by day.

Alas for her amid man's helpless moan,
   Alas for her!
   She hath no comforter:
In solitude of fire she sits alone.

O LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING!

Of fallen star! a darkened light,
   A glory hurtled from its car,
Self-blasted from the holy height:
      Oh fallen star!

   Fallen beyond earth's utmost bar,
Beyond return, beyond far sight
   Of outmost glimmering nebular.

Now blackness, which once walked in white;
   Now death, whose life once glowed afar;
Oh son of dawn that loved the night,
      Oh fallen star!

ALAS, ALAS! FOR THE SELF-DESTROYED

Alas, alas! for the self-destroyed
   Vanish as images from a glass,
Sink down and die down by hope unbuoyed: —
   Alas, alas!

   Who shall stay their ruinous mass?
Besotted, reckless, possessed, decoyed,
   They hurry to the dolorous pass.

Saints fall a-weeping who would have joyed,
   Sore they weep for a glory that was,
For a fulness emptied into the void,
   Alas, alas!

AS FROTH ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP

As froth on the face of the deep,
   As foam on the crest of the sea,
As dreams at the waking of sleep,
   As gourd of a day and a night,
As harvest that no man shall reap,
   As vintage that never shall be,
   Is hope if it cling not aright,
      O my God, unto Thee.

WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED

In tempest and storm blackness of darkness forever,
A fire unextinguished, a worm's indestructible swarm;
Where no hope shall ever be more, and love shall be never,
In tempest and storm;
Where the form of all things is fashionless, void of all form;
Where from death that severeth all, the soul cannot sever
In tempest and storm.

TOLL, BELL, TOLL. FOR HOPE IS FLYING

Toll, bell, toll. For hope is flying
   Sighing from the earthbound soul:
Life is sighing, life is dying:
   Toll, bell, toll.

   Gropes in its own grave the mole
Wedding darkness, undescrying,
   Tending to no different goal.

Self-slain soul, in vain thy sighing:
   Self-slain, who should make thee whole?
Vain the clamour of thy crying:
   Toll, bell, toll.

DIVERS WORLDS:TIME AND ETERNITY

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FOR EACH
FOR ALL

EARTH HAS CLEAR CALL OF DAILY BELLS

Earth has clear call of daily bells,
   A chancel-vault of gloom and star,
   A rapture where the anthems are,
A thunder when the organ swells:
Alas, man's daily life — what else? —
Is out of tune with daily bells.

While Paradise accords the chimes
   Of Earth and Heaven, its patient pause
   Is rest fulfilling music's laws.
Saints sit and gaze, where oftentimes
Precursive flush of morning climbs
And air vibrates with coming chimes.

ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN

I peered within, and saw a world of sin;
   Upward, and saw a world of righteousness;
Downward, and saw darkness and flame begin
      Which no man can express.

I girt me up, I gat me up to flee
   From face of darkness and devouring flame:
And fled I had, but guilt is loading me
      With dust of death and shame.

Yet still the light of righteousness beams pure,
   Beams to me from the world of far-off day: —
Lord, Who hast called them happy that endure,
      Lord, make me such as they.

I LIFT MINE EYES TO SEE: EARTH VANISHETH

I lift mine eyes to see: earth vanisheth.
   I lift up wistful eyes and bend my knee:
Trembling, bowed down, and face to face with Death,
   I lift mine eyes to see.

   Lo, what I see is Death that shadows me:
Yet whilst I, seeing, draw a shuddering breath,
   Death like a mist grows rare perceptibly.

Beyond the darkness light, beyond the scathe
   Healing, beyond the Cross a palm-branch tree,
Beyond Death Life, on evidence of faith:
   I lift mine eyes to see.

YET A LITTLE WHILE

Heaven is not far, tho' far the sky
   Overarching earth and main.
It takes not long to live and die,
   Die, revive, and rise again.
Not long: how long? Oh, long re-echoing song!
O Lord, how long?

BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD

All things are fair, if we had eyes to see
   How first God made them goodly everywhere:
And goodly still in Paradise they be, —
   All things are fair.

   O Lord, the solemn heavens Thy praise declare;
The multi-fashioned saints bring praise to Thee,
   As doves fly home and cast away their care.

As doves on divers branches of their tree,
   Perched high or low, sit all contented there
Not mourning anymore; in each degree
   All things are fair.

WHATSOEVER IS RIGHT, THAT SHALL YE RECEIVE

When all the overwork of life
   Is finished once, and fallen asleep
We shrink no more beneath the knife,
   But having sown prepare to reap;
Delivered from the crossway rough,
   Delivered from the thorny scourge,
   Delivered from the tossing surge,
Then shall we find — (please God!) — it is enough?

Not in this world of hope deferred,
   This world of perishable stuff;
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
   Nor heart conceived that full "enough":
Here moans the separating sea,
   Here harvests fail, here breaks the heart;
   There God shall join and no man part,
All one in Christ, so one — (please God!) — with me.

THIS NEAR-AT-HAND LAND BREEDS PAIN BY MEASURE

This near-at-hand land breeds pain by measure:
That far-away land overflows with treasure
    Of heaped-up good pleasure.

Our land that we see is befouled by evil:
The land that we see not makes mirth and revel,
    Far from death and devil.

This land hath for music sobbing and sighing:
That land hath soft speech and sweet soft replying
    Of all loves undying.

This land hath for pastime errors and follies:
That land hath unending unflagging solace
    Of full-chanted "Holies."

Up and away, call the Angels to us;
Come to our home where no foes pursue us,
    And no tears bedew us;

Where that which riseth sets again never,
Where that which springeth flows in a river
    Forever and ever;

Where harvest justifies labour of sowing,
Where that which budded comes to the blowing
    Sweet beyond your knowing.

Come and laugh with us, sing in our singing;
Come, yearn no more, but rest in your clinging.
    See what we are bringing;

Crowns like our own crowns, robes for your wearing;
For love of you we kiss them in bearing,
    All good with you sharing:

Over you gladdening, in you delighting;
Come from your famine, your failure, your fighting;
    Come to full wrong-righting.

Come, where all balm is garnered to ease you;
Come, where all beauty is spread out to please you;
    Come, gaze upon Jesu.

WAS THY WRATH AGAINST THE SEA?

The sea laments with unappeasable
Hankering wail of loss,
Lifting its hands on high and passing by
Out of the lovely light:
No foambow any more may crest that swell
Of clamorous waves which toss;
Lifting its hands on high it passes by
From light into the night.
Peace, peace, thou sea! God's wisdom worketh well,
Assigns it crown or cross:
Lift we all hands on high, and passing by
Attest: God doeth right.

AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA

Voices from above and from beneath,
Voices of creation near and far,
Voices out of life and out of death,
Out of measureless space,
Sun, moon, star,
In oneness of contentment offering praise.

Heaven and earth and sea jubilant,
Jubilant all things that dwell therein;
Filled to fullest overflow they chant,
Still roll onward, swell,
Still begin,
Never flagging praise interminable.

Thou who must fall silent in a while,
Chant thy sweetest, gladdest, best, at once;
Sun thyself today, keep peace and smile;
By love upward send
Orisons,
Accounting love thy lot and love thine end.

ROSES ON A BRIER

Roses on a brier,
   Pearls from out the bitter sea,
Such is earth's desire
   However pure it be.

Neither bud nor brier,
   Neither pearl nor brine for me:
Be stilled, my long desire;
   There shall be no more sea.

Be stilled, my passionate heart;
   Old earth shall end, new earth shall be:
Be still, and earn thy part
   Where shall be no more sea.

WE ARE THOSE WHO TREMBLE AT THY WORD

We are those who tremble at Thy word;
   Who faltering walk in darkness toward our close
Of mortal life, by terrors curbed and spurred:
   We are of those.

   We journey to that land which no man knows
Who any more can make his voice be heard
   Above the clamour of our wants and woes.

Not ours the hearts Thy loftiest love hath stirred,
   Not such as we Thy lily and Thy rose: —
Yet, Hope of those who hope with hope deferred,
   We are of those.

AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST

The night is far spent, the day is at hand:
Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,
And let us put on the armour of light.
Night for the dead in their stiffness and starkness!
Day for the living who mount in their might
Out of their graves to the beautiful land.

Far, far away lies the beautiful land:
Mount on wide wings of exceeding desire,
Mount, look not back, mount to life and to light,
Mount by the gleam of your lamps all on fire
Up from the dead men and up from the night.
The night is far spent, the day is at hand.

WE KNOW NOT WHEN, WE KNOW NOT WHERE

We know not when, we know not where,
   We know not what that world will be;
But this we know: it will be fair
      To see.

With heart athirst and thirsty face
   We know and know not what shall be:
Christ Jesus bring us of His grace
      To see.

Christ Jesus bring us of His grace,
   Beyond all prayers our hope can pray,
One day to see Him face to Face,
      One day.

I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS

When sick of life and all the world —
How sick of all desire but Thee! —
I lift mine eyes up to the hills,
    Eyes of my heart that see,
I see beyond all death and ills
Refreshing green for heart and eyes,
The golden streets and gateways pearled,
    The trees of Paradise.

"There is a time for all things," saith
The Word of Truth, Thyself the Word;
And many things Thou reasonest of:
    A time for hope deferred,
But time is now for grief and fears;
A time for life, but now is death;
Oh, when shall be the time of love
    When Thou shalt wipe our tears?

Then the new Heavens and Earth shall be
Where righteousness shall dwell indeed;
There shall be no more blight, nor need,
    Nor barrier of the sea;

No sun and moon alternating,
For God shall be the Light thereof;
No sorrow more, no death, no sting,
    For God Who reigns is Love.

THEN WHOSE SHALL THOSE THINGS BE?

Oh what is earth, that we should build
Our houses here, and seek concealed
Poor treasure, and add field to field,
And heap to heap, and store to store,
Still grasping more and seeking more,
While step by step Death nears the door?

HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE

In that world we weary to attain,
   Love's furled banner floats at large unfurled:
There is no more doubt and no more pain
   In that world.

   There are gems and gold and inlets pearled;
There the verdure fadeth not again;
   There no clinging tendrils droop uncurled.

Here incessant tides stir up the main,
   Stormy miry depths aloft are hurled:
There is no more sea, or storm, or stain,
   In that world.

BELOVED, YIELD THY TIME TO GOD, FOR HE

Beloved, yield thy time to God, for He
   Will make eternity thy recompense;
Give all thy substance for His Love, and be
   Beatified past earth's experience.
Serve Him in bonds, until He set thee free;
   Serve Him in dust, until He lift thee thence;

Till death be swallowed up in victory
   When the great trumpet sounds to bid thee hence.
Shall setting day win day that will not set?
   Poor price wert thou to spend thyself for Christ,
   Had not His wealth thy poverty sufficed:
      Yet since He makes His garden of thy clod,
Water thy lily, rose, or violet,
      And offer up thy sweetness unto God.

TIME SEEMS NOT SHORT

Time seems not short:
   If so I call to mind
   Its vast prerogative to loose or bind,
And bear and strike amort
   All humankind.

Time seems not long:
   If I peer out and see
   Sphere within sphere, time in eternity,
And hear the alternate song
   Cry endlessly.

Time greatly short,
   O time so briefly long,
   Yea, time sole battle-ground of right and wrong:
Art thou a time for sport
   And for a song?

THE HALF MOON SHOWS A FACE OF PLAINTIVE SWEETNESS

The half moon shows a face of plaintive sweetness
   Ready and poised to wax or wane;
A fire of pale desire in incompleteness,
   Tending to pleasure or to pain: —
Lo, while we gaze she rolleth on in fleetness
   To perfect loss or perfect gain.

Half bitterness we know, we know half sweetness;
   This world is all on wax, on wane:
When shall completeness round time's incompleteness,
   Fulfilling joy, fulfilling pain? —
Lo, while we ask, life rolleth on in fleetness
   To finished loss or finished gain.

AS THE DOVES TO THEIR WINDOWS

They throng from the east and the west,
   The north and the south, with a song;
To golden abodes of their rest
   They throng.

   Eternity stretches out long:
Time, brief at its worst or its best,
   Will quit them of ruin and wrong.

A rainbow aloft for their crest,
   A palm for their weakness made strong!
As doves breast all winds to their nest,
   They throng.

OH KNELL OF A PASSING TIME

Oh knell of a passing time,
Will it never cease to chime?
Oh stir of the tedious sea,
Will it never cease to be?
Yea, when night and when day,
Moon and sun, pass away.

Surely the sun burns low,
The moon makes ready to go,
Broad ocean ripples to waste,
Time is running in haste,
Night is numbered, and day
Numbered to pass away.

TIME PASSETH AWAY WITH ITS PLEASURE AND PAIN

Time passeth away with its pleasure and pain,
   Its garlands of cypress and bay,
With wealth and with want, with a balm and a bane,
   Time passeth away.

   Eternity cometh to stay,
Eternity stayeth to go not again;
   Eternity barring the way,

Arresting all courses of planet or main,
   Arresting who plan or who pray,
Arresting creation: while grand in its wane
   Time passeth away.

THE EARTH SHALL TREMBLE AT THE LOOK OF HIM

Tremble, thou earth, at the Presence of the Lord
   Whose Will conceived thee and brought thee to the birth,
Always, everywhere, thy Lord to be adored:
   Tremble, thou earth.

   Wilt thou laugh time away in music and mirth?
Time hath days of pestilence, hath days of a sword,
   Hath days of hunger and thirst in desolate dearth.

Till eternity wake up the multicord
   Thrilled harp of heaven, and breathe full its organ's girth
For joy of heaven and infinite reward,
   Tremble, thou earth.

TIME LENGTHENING, IN THE LENGTHENING SEEMETH LONG

Time lengthening, in the lengthening seemeth long:
   But ended Time will seem a little space,
   A little while from morn to evensong,
A little while that ran a rapid race;
   A little while, when once Eternity
   Denies proportion to the other's pace.
Eternity to be and be and be,
   Ever beginning, never ending still,
   Still undiminished far as thought can see;
Farther than thought can see, by dint of will
   Strung up and strained and shooting like a star
   Past utmost bound of everlasting hill:
Eternity unswaddled, without bar,
   Finishing sequence in its awful sum;
   Eternity still rolling forth its car,
Eternity still here and still to come.

ALL FLESH IS GRASS

So brief a life, and then an endless life
   Or endless death;
So brief a life, then endless peace or strife:
   Whoso considereth
How man but like a flower
   Or shoot of grass
Blooms an hour,
   Well may sigh "Alas!"

So brief a life, and then an endless grief
   Or endless joy;
So brief a life, then ruin or relief:
   What solace, what annoy
Of Time needs dwelling on?
   It is, it was,
It is done,
   While we sigh "Alas!"

Yet saints are singing in a happy hope
   Forecasting pleasure,
Bright eyes of faith enlarging all their scope;
   Saints love beyond Time's measure:
Where love is, there is bliss
   That will not pass;
Where love is,
   Dies away "Alas!"

HEAVEN'S CHIMES ARE SLOW, BUT SURE TO STRIKE AT LAST

Heaven's chimes are slow, but sure to strike at last:
Earth's sands are slow, but surely dropping thro':
And much we have to suffer, much to do,
Before the time be past.

Chimes that keep time are neither slow nor fast:
Not many are the numbered sands nor few:
A time to suffer, and a time to do,
And then the time is past.

THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Rest remains when all is done,
   Work and vigil, prayer and fast,
   All fulfilled from first to last,
   All the length of time gone past
And eternity begun!

Fear and hope and chastening rod
   Urge us on the narrow way:
   Bear we now as best we may
   Heat and burden of today,
Struggling, panting up to God.

PARTING AFTER PARTING

Parting after parting,
   Sore loss and gnawing pain:
Meeting grows half a sorrow
   Because of parting again.
When shall the day break
   That these things shall not be?
When shall new earth be ours
   Without a sea,
And time that is not time
   But eternity?

To meet, worth living for;
   Worth dying for, to meet;
To meet, worth parting for,
   Bitter forgot in sweet:
To meet, worth parting before
   Never to part more.

THEY PUT THEIR TRUST IN THEE, AND WERE NOT CONFOUNDED

I.

Together once, but never more
   While Time and Death run out their runs:
Tho' sundered now as shore from shore,
   Together once.

   Nor rising suns, nor setting suns,
Nor life renewed which springtide bore,
   Make one again Death's sundered ones.

Eternity holds rest in store,
   Holds hope of long reunions:
But holds it what they hungered for
   Together once?

II.

Whatso it be, howso it be, Amen.
   Blessed it is, believing, not to see.
Now God knows all that is; and we shall, then,
   Whatso it be.

   God's Will is best for man whose will is free.
God's Will is better to us, yea, than ten
   Desires whereof He holds and weighs the key.

Amid her household cares He guides the wren,

He guards the shifty mouse from poverty;
He knows all wants, allots each where and when,
Whatso it be.

SHORT IS TIME, AND ONLY TIME IS BLEAK

Short is time, and only time is bleak;
  Gauge the exceeding height thou hast to climb:
Long eternity is nigh to seek:
  Short is time.

  Time is shortening with the wintry rime:
Pray and watch and pray, girt up and meek;
  Praying, watching, praying, chime by chime.

Pray by silence if thou canst not speak:
  Time is shortening; pray on till the prime:
Time is shortening; soul, fulfil thy week:
  Short is time.

FOR EACH

My harvest is done, its promise is ended,
   Weak and watery sets the sun,
Day and night in one mist are blended,
   My harvest is done.

   Long while running, how short when run,
Time to eternity has descended,
   Timeless eternity has begun.

Was it the narrow way that I wended?
   Snares and pits was it mine to shun?
The scythe has fallen, so long suspended,
   My harvest is done.

FOR ALL

Man's harvest is past, his summer is ended,
   Hope and fear are finished at last,
Day hath descended, night hath ascended,
   Man's harvest is past.

   Time is fled that fleeted so fast:
All the unmended remains unmended,
   The perfect, perfect: all lots are cast.

Waiting till earth and ocean be rended,
   Waiting for call of the trumpet blast,
Each soul at goal of that way it wended, —
   Man's harvest is past.

NEW JERUSALEM AND ITS CITIZENS

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THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is built of gold,
   Of crystal, pearl, and gem:
Oh fair thy lustres manifold,
   Thou fair Jerusalem!
Thy citizens who walk in white
Have nought to do with day or night,
And drink the river of delight.

Jerusalem makes melody
   For simple joy of heart;
An organ of full compass she,
   One-tuned thro' every part:
While not to day or night belong
Her matins and her evensong,
The one thanksgiving of her throng.

Jerusalem a garden is,
   A garden of delight;
Leaf, flower, and fruit make fair her trees,
   Which see not day or night:
Beside her River clear and calm
The Tree of Life grows with the Palm,
For triumph and for food and balm.

Jerusalem, where song nor gem
   Nor fruit nor waters cease,
God bring us to Jerusalem,
   God bring us home in peace;
The strong who stand, the weak who fall,
The first and last, the great and small,
Home one by one, home one and all.

WHEN WICKEDNESS IS BROKEN AS A TREE

When wickedness is broken as a tree
   Paradise comes to light, ah holy land!
   Whence death has vanished like a shifting sand,
And barrenness is banished with the sea.
Its bulwarks are salvation fully manned,
   All gems it hath for glad variety,
   And pearls for pureness radiant glimmeringly,
And gold for grandeur where all good is grand.
An inner ring of saints meets linked above,
   And linked of angels is an outer ring;
      For voice of waters or for thunders' voice
      Lo! harps and songs wherewith all saints rejoice,
   And all the trembling there of any string
Is but a trembling of enraptured love.

JERUSALEM OF FIRE

Jerusalem of fire
   And gold and pearl and gem,
Saints flock to fill thy choir,
   Jerusalem.

   Lo, thrones thou hast for them;
Desirous they desire
   Thy harp, thy diadem,

Thy bridal white attire,
   A palm-branch from thy stem:
Thy holiness their hire,
   Jerusalem.

SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT UNTO THE KING

The King's Daughter is all glorious within,
   Her clothing of wrought gold sets forth her bliss;
Where the endless choruses of heaven begin
   The King's Daughter is;

   Perfect her notes in the perfect harmonies;
With tears wiped away, no conscience of sin,
   Loss forgotten and sorrowful memories;

Alight with Cherubin, afire with Seraphin,
   Lily for pureness, rose for charities,
With joy won and with joy evermore to win,
   The King's Daughter is.

WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH UP NOT ALONE

Who is this that cometh up not alone
   From the fiery-flying-serpent wilderness,
Leaning upon her own Beloved One:
   Who is this:

   Lo, the King of king's daughter, a high princess,
Going home as bride to her Husband's Throne,
   Virgin queen in perfected loveliness.

Her eyes a dove's eyes and her voice a dove's moan,
   She shows like a full moon for heavenliness:
Eager saints and angels ask in heaven's zone,
   Who is this?

WHO SITS WITH THE KING IN HIS THRONE? NOT A SLAVE BUT A BRIDE

Who sits with the King in His Throne? Not a slave but a Bride,
With this King of all Greatness and Grace Who reigns not alone;
His Glory her glory, where glorious she glows at His side
Who sits with the King in His Throne.

She came from dim uttermost depths which no Angel hath known,
Leviathan's whirlpool and Dragon's dominion worldwide,
From the frost or the fire to Paradisiacal zone.

Lo, she is fair as a dove, silvery, golden, dove-eyed:
Lo, Dragon laments and Death laments, for their prey is flown:
She dwells in the Vision of Peace, and her peace shall abide
Who sits with the King in His Throne.

ANTIPAS

Hidden from the darkness of our mortal sight,
Hidden in the Paradise of lovely light,
Hidden in God's Presence, worshipped face to face,
Hidden in the sanctuary of Christ's embrace.
Up, O Wills! to track him home among the bless'd;
Up, O Hearts! to know him in the joy of rest;
Where no darkness more shall hide him from our sight,
Where we shall be love with love, and light with light,
Worshipping our God together face to face,
Wishless in the sanctuary of Christ's embrace.

BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION

A lovely city in a lovely land,
  Whose citizens are lovely, and whose King
  Is Very Love; to Whom all Angels sing;
To Whom all saints sing crowned, their sacred band
Saluting Love with palm-branch in their hand:
  Thither all doves on gold or silver wing
  Flock home thro' agate windows glistering
Set wide, and where pearl gates wide open stand.
A bower of roses is not half so sweet,
  A cave of diamonds doth not glitter so,
    Nor Lebanon is fruitful set thereby:
    And thither thou, beloved, and thither I
  May set our heart and set our face and go,
Faint yet pursuing, home on tireless feet.

LORD, BY WHAT INCONCEIVABLE DIM ROAD

Lord, by what inconceivable dim road
  Thou leadest man on footsore pilgrimage!
  Weariness is his rest from stage to stage,
Brief halting-places are his sole abode.
Onward he fares thro' rivers overflowed,
  Thro' deserts where all doleful creatures rage;
  Onward from year to year, from age to age,
He groans and totters onward with his load.
Behold how inconceivable his way;
  How tenfold inconceivable the goal,
    His goal of hope deferred, his promised peace:
    Yea, but behold him sitting down at ease,
  Refreshed in body and refreshed in soul,
At rest from labour on the Sabbath Day.

AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY

"Golden haired, lily white,
   Will you pluck me lilies?
Or will you show me where they grow,
   Show where the limpid rill is?
But is your hair of gold or light,
   And is your foot of flake or fire,
And have you wings rolled up from sight
   And songs to slake desire?"

"I pluck fresh flowers of Paradise,
   Lilies and roses red,
A bending sceptre for my hand,
   A crown to crown my head.
I sing my songs, I pluck my flowers
   Sweet-scented from their fragrant trees;
I sing, we sing, amid the bowers
   And gather palm-branches."

"Is there a path to Heaven
   My stumbling foot may tread?
And will you show that way to go,
   That bower and blossom bed?"
"The path to Heaven is steep and straight
   And scorched, but ends in shade of trees,
Where yet a while we sing and wait
   And gather palm-branches."

CAST DOWN BUT NOT DESTROYED, CHASTENED NOT SLAIN

Cast down but not destroyed, chastened not slain:
  Thy Saints have lived that life, but how can I?
  I, who thro' dread of death do daily die
By daily foretaste of an unfelt pain.
Lo, I depart who shall not come again;
  Lo, as a shadow I am flitting by;
  As a leaf trembling, as a wheel I fly,
While death flies faster and my flight is vain.
Chastened not slain, cast down but not destroyed: —
  If thus Thy Saints have struggled home to peace,
    Why should not I take heart to be as they?
    They too pent passions in a house of clay,
  Fear and desire, and pangs and ecstasies;
Yea, thus they joyed who now are overjoyed.

LIFT UP THINE EYES TO SEEK THE INVISIBLE

Lift up thine eyes to seek the invisible:
Stir up thy heart to choose the still unseen:
Strain up thy hope in glad perpetual green
To scale the exceeding height where all saints dwell.
— Saints, it is well with you? — Yea, it is well. —
Where they have reaped, by faith kneel thou to glean:
Because they stooped so low to reap, they lean
Now over golden harps unspeakable.
— But thou purblind and deafened, knowest thou
Those glorious beauties unexperienced
By ear or eye or by heart hitherto? —
I know Whom I have trusted: wherefore now
All amiable, accessible tho' fenced,
Golden Jerusalem floats full in view.

LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH

As flames that consume the mountains, as winds that coerce the sea,
   Thy men of renown show forth Thy might in the clutch of death:
Down they go into silence, yet the Trump of the Jubilee
   Swells not Thy praise as swells it the breathless pause of their breath.

What is the flame of their fire, if so I may catch the flame;
   What the strength of their strength, if also I may wax strong?
The flaming fire of their strength is the love of Jesu's Name,
   In Whom their death is life, their silence utters a song.

LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS

Crimson as the rubies, crimson as the roses,
   Crimson as the sinking sun,
Singing on his crimsoned bed each saint reposes,
   Fought his fight, his battle won;
Till the rosy east the day of days discloses,
   All his work, save waiting, done.

Far above the stars, while underneath the daisies,
   Resting, for his race is run,
Unto Thee his heart each quiet saint upraises,
   God the Father, Spirit, Son;
Unto Thee his heart, unto Thee his praises,
   O Lord God, the Three in One.

SLAIN IN THEIR HIGH PLACES: FALLEN ON REST

Slain in their high places: fallen on rest
   Where the eternal peace lights up their faces,
In God's sacred acre breast to breast: —
   Slain in their high places.

   From all tribes, all families, all races,
Gathered home together; east or west
   Sending home its tale of gifts and graces.

Twine, oh twine, heaven's amaranth for their crest,
   Raise their praise while home their triumph paces;
Kings by their own King of kings confessed,
   Slain in their high places.

WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!

The shout of a King is among them. One day may I be
Of that perfect communion of lovers contented and free
In the land that is very far off, and far off from the sea.

The shout of the King is among them. One King and one song,
One thunder of manifold voices harmonious and strong,
One King and one love, and one shout of one worshipping throng.

BEFORE THE THRONE, AND BEFORE THE LAMB

As the voice of many waters all saints sing as one,
   As the voice of an unclouded thundering;
Unswayed by the changing moon and unswayed by the sun,
   As the voice of many waters all saints sing.

   Circling round the rainbow of their perfect ring,
Twelve thousand times twelve thousand voices in unison
   Swell the triumph, swell the praise of Christ the King.

Where raiment is white of blood-steeped linen slowly spun,
   Where crowns are golden of Love's own largessing,
Where eternally the ecstasy is but begun,
   As the voice of many waters all saints sing.

HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT

Once within, within for evermore:
   There the long beatitudes begin:
Overflows the still unwasting store,
   Once within.

   Left without are death and doubt and sin;
All man wrestled with and all he bore,
   Man who saved his life, skin after skin.

Blow the trumpet-blast unheard before,
   Shout the unheard-of shout for these who win,
These, who cast their crowns on Heaven's high floor
   Once within.

YEA, BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE THAT HATH PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION!

Yea, blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection!
We mark well his bulwarks, we set up his tokens, we gaze, even we,
On this lustre of God and of Christ, this creature of flawless perfection:
Yea, blessed and holy is he.

But what? an offscouring of earth, a wreck from the turbulent sea,
A bloodstone unflinchingly hewn for the Temple's eternal erection,
One scattered and peeled, one sifted and chastened and scourged and set free?

Yea, this is that worshipful stone of the Wise Master Builder's election,
Yea, this is that King and that Priest where all Hallows bow down the knee,
Yea, this man set nigh to the Throne is Jonathan of David's delection,
Yea, blessed and holy is he.

THE JOY OF SAINTS, LIKE INCENSE TURNED TO FIRE

The joy of Saints, like incense turned to fire
In golden censers, soars acceptable;
And high their heavenly hallelujahs swell
Desirous still with still-fulfilled desire.
Sweet thrill the harpstrings of the heavenly choir,
Most sweet their voice while love is all they tell;
Where love is all in all, and all is well
Because their work is love and love their hire.
All robed in white and all with palm in hand,
Crowns too they have of gold and thrones of gold;
The street is golden which their feet have trod,
Or on a sea of glass and fire they stand:
And none of them is young, and none is old,
Except as perfect by the Will of God.

WHAT ARE THESE LOVELY ONES, YEA, WHAT ARE THESE?

What are these lovely ones, yea, what are these?
   Lo, these are they who for pure love of Christ
Stripped off the trammels of soft silken ease,
   Beggaring themselves betimes, to be sufficed
Throughout heaven's one eternal day of peace:
   By golden streets, thro' gates of pearl unpriced,
They entered on the joys that will not cease,
   And found again all firstfruits sacrificed.
And wherefore have you harps, and wherefore palms,
   And wherefore crowns, O ye who walk in white?
Because our happy hearts are chanting psalms,
   Endless Te Deum for the ended fight;
While thro' the everlasting lapse of calms
   We cast our crowns before the Lamb our Might.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

Bring me to see, Lord, bring me yet to see
   Those nations of Thy glory and Thy grace
   Who splendid in Thy splendour worship Thee.
Light in all eyes, content in every face,
   Raptures and voices one while manifold,
   Love and are well-beloved the ransomed race: —
Great mitred priests, great kings in crowns of gold,
   Patriarchs who head the army of their sons,
   Matrons and mothers by their own extolled,
Wise and most harmless holy little ones,
   Virgins who, making merry, lead the dance,
   Full-breathed victorious racers from all runs,
Home-comers out of every change and chance,
   Hermits restored to social neighbourhood,
   Aspects which reproduce One Countenance,
Life-losers with their losses all made good,
   All blessed hungry and athirst sufficed,
   All who bore crosses round the Holy Rood,
Friends, brethren, sisters, of Lord Jesus Christ.

EVERY ONE THAT IS PERFECT SHALL BE AS HIS MASTER

How can one man, how can all men,
  How can we be like St. Paul,
Like St. John, or like St. Peter,
  Like the least of all
  Blessed Saints? for we are small.

Love can make us like St. Peter,
  Love can make us like St. Paul,
Love can make us like the blessed
  Bosom friend of all,
  Great St. John, tho' we are small.

Love which clings and trusts and worships,
  Love which rises from a fall,
Love which, prompting glad obedience,
  Labours most of all,
  Love makes great the great and small.

AS DYING, AND BEHOLD WE LIVE!

"As dying, and behold we live!"
So live the Saints while time is flying;
Make all they make, give all they give,
As dying;

Bear all they bear without replying;
They grieve as tho' they did not grieve,
Uplifting praise with prayer and sighing.

Patient thro' life's long-drawn reprieve,
Aloof from strife, at peace from crying,
The morrow to its day they leave,
As dying.

SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

I think of the saints I have known, and lift up mine eyes
To the far-away home of beautiful Paradise,
Where the song of saints gives voice to an undividing sea
On whose plain their feet stand firm while they keep their jubilee.

As the sound of waters their voice, as the sound of thunderings,
While they all at once rejoice, while all sing and while each one sings;
Where more saints flock in, and more, and yet more, and again yet more,
And not one turns back to depart thro' the open entrance-door.

O sights of our lovely earth, O sound of our earthly sea,
Speak to me of Paradise, of all blessed saints to me:
Or keep silence touching them, and speak to my heart alone
Of the Saint of saints, the King of kings, the Lamb on the Throne.

OUR MOTHERS, LOVELY WOMEN PITIFUL

Our Mothers, lovely women pitiful;
    Our Sisters, gracious in their life and death;
    To us each unforgotten memory saith:
"Learn as we learned in life's sufficient school,
Work as we worked in patience of our rule,
    Walk as we walked, much less by sight than faith,
    Hope as we hoped, despite our slips and scathe,
Fearful in joy and confident in dule."
I know not if they see us or can see;
    But if they see us in our painful day,
        How looking back to earth from Paradise
        Do tears not gather in those loving eyes? —
    Ah, happy eyes! whose tears are wiped away
Whether or not you bear to look on me.

SAFE WHERE I CANNOT LIE YET

Safe where I cannot lie yet,
   Safe where I hope to lie too,
Safe from the fume and the fret;
   You, and you,
Whom I never forget.

Safe from the frost and the snow,
   Safe from the storm and the sun,
Safe where the seeds wait to grow
   One by one
And to come back in blow.

IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?

Lying a-dying.
Have done with vain sighing:
Life not lost but treasured,
God Almighty pleasured,
God's daughter fetched and carried,
Christ's bride betrothed and married.
Our tender little dove
Meek-eyed and simple,
Our love goes home to Love:
There shall she walk in white,
Where God shall be the Light,
And God the Temple.

DEAR ANGELS AND DEAR DISEMBODIED SAINTS

Dear Angels and dear disembodied Saints
  Unseen around us, worshipping in rest,
May wonder that man's heart so often faints
  And his steps lag along the heavenly quest,
What while his foolish fancy moulds and paints
  A fonder hope than all they prove for best;
A lying hope which undermines and taints
  His soul, as sin and sloth make manifest.
Sloth, and a lie, and sin: shall these suffice
  The unfathomable heart of craving man,
    That heart which being a deep calls to the deep?
  Behold how many like us rose and ran
    When Christ, life-giver, roused them from their sleep
To rise and run and rest in Paradise!

TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY

Bone to his bone, grain to his grain of dust:
   A numberless reunion shall make whole
   Each blessed body for its blessed soul,
Refashioning the aspects of the just.
Each saint who died must live afresh, and must
   Ascend resplendent in the aureole
   Of his own proper glory to his goal,
As seeds their proper bodies all upthrust.
Each with his own not with another's grace,
   Each with his own not with another's heart,
Each with his own not with another's face,
Each dove-like soul mounts to his proper place: —
   O faces unforgotten! if to part
Wrung sore, what will it be to re-embrace?

WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?

Have dead men long to wait? —

There is a certain term
For their bodies to the worm
And their souls at heaven gate.
Dust to dust, clod to clod,
These precious things of God,
Trampled underfoot by man
And beast the appointed years. —

Their longest life was but a span
For change and smiles and tears.
Is it worthwhile to live,
Rejoice and grieve,
Hope, fear, and die?
Man with man, truth with lie,
The slow show dwindles by:
At last what shall we have
Besides a grave? —

Lies and shows no more,
No fear, no pain,
But after hope and sleep
Dear joys again.
Those who sowed shall reap:
Those who bore
The Cross shall wear the Crown:
Those who clomb the steep
There shall sit down.

The Shepherd of the sheep
Feeds His flock there,

In watered pastures fair
They rest and leap.
“Is it worth while to live?”
Be of good cheer:
Love casts out fear:
Rise up, achieve.

SONGS FOR STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS

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HER SEED; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD

Astonished Heaven looked on when man was made,
When fallen man reproved seemed half forgiven;
Surely that oracle of hope first said,
Astonished Heaven.

Even so while one by one lost souls are shriven,
A mighty multitude of quickened dead;
Christ's love outnumbering ten times sevenfold seven.

Even so while man still tosses high his head,
While still the All-Holy Spirit's strife is striven; —
Till one last trump shake earth, and undismayed
Astonished Heaven.

JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME

Love understands the mystery, whereof
We can but spell a surface history:
Love knows, remembers: let us trust in Love:
Love understands the mystery.

Love weighs the event, the long pre-history,
Measures the depth beneath, the height above,
The mystery, with the ante-mystery.

To love and to be grieved befits a dove
Silently telling her bead-history:
Trust all to Love, be patient and approve:
Love understands the mystery.

HOW GREAT IS LITTLE MAN!

How great is little man!
   Sun, moon, and stars respond to him,
   Shine or grow dim
Harmonious with his span.

How little is great man!
   More changeable than changeful moon,
   Nor half in tune
With Heaven's harmonious plan.

Ah, rich man! ah, poor man!
   Make ready for the testing day
   When wastes away
What bears not fire or fan.

Thou heir of all things, man,
   Pursue the saints by heavenward track:
   They looked not back;
Run thou, as erst they ran.

Little and great is man:
   Great if he will, or if he will
   A pigmy still;
For what he will he can.

MAN'S LIFE IS BUT A WORKING DAY

Man's life is but a working day
   Whose tasks are set aright:
A time to work, a time to pray,
   And then a quiet night.
And then, please God, a quiet night
Where palms are green and robes are white;
A long-drawn breath, a balm for sorrow,
And all things lovely on the morrow.

If not with hope of life,
   Begin with fear of death:
Strive the tremendous life-long strife
      Breath after breath.

Bleed on beneath the rod;
   Weep on until thou see;
Turn fear and hope to love of God
      Who loveth thee.

Turn all to love, poor soul;
   Be love thy watch and ward;
Be love thy starting-point, thy goal,
      And thy reward.

THE DAY IS AT HAND

Watch yet a while,
Weep till that day shall dawn when thou shalt smile:
Watch till the day
When all save only Love shall pass away.

Then Love rejoicing shall forget to weep,
Shall hope or fear no more, or watch or sleep,
But only love and stint not, deep beyond deep.
Now we sow love in tears, but then shall reap.
Have patience as True Love's own flock of sheep:
Have patience with His Love
Who served for us, Who reigns for us above.

ENDURE HARDNESS

A cold wind stirs the blackthorn
   To burgeon and to blow,
Besprinkling half-green hedges
   With flakes and sprays of snow.

Thro' coldness and thro' keenness,
   Dear hearts, take comfort so:
Somewhere or other doubtless
   These make the blackthorn blow.

WHITHER THE TRIBES GO UP, EVEN THE TRIBES OF THE LORD

Light is our sorrow for it ends tomorrow,
   Light is our death which cannot hold us fast;
So brief a sorrow can be scarcely sorrow,
   Or death be death so quickly past.

One night, no more, of pain that turns to pleasure,
   One night, no more, of weeping weeping sore;
And then the heaped-up measure beyond measure,
   In quietness for evermore.

Our face is set like flint against our trouble,
   Yet many things there are which comfort us;
This bubble is a rainbow-coloured bubble,
   This bubble-life tumultuous.

Our sails are set to cross the tossing river,
   Our face is set to reach Jerusalem;
We toil awhile, but then we rest for ever,
   Sing with all Saints and rest with them.

WHERE NEVER TEMPEST HEAVETH

Where never tempest heaveth,
Nor sorrow grieveth,
Nor death bereaveth,
Nor hope deceiveth,
Sleep.

Where never shame bewaileth,
Nor serpent traileth,
Nor death prevaileth,
Nor harvest faileth,
Reap.

MARVEL OF MARVELS, IF I MYSELF SHALL BEHOLD

Marvel of marvels, if I myself shall behold
With mine own eyes my King in His city of gold;
Where the least of lambs is spotless white in the fold,
Where the least and last of saints in spotless white is stoled,

Where the dimmest head beyond a moon is aureoled.
O saints, my beloved, now mouldering to mould in the mould,
Shall I see you lift your heads, see your cerements unrolled,
See with these very eyes? who now in darkness and cold
Tremble for the midnight cry, the rapture, the tale untold,
"The Bridegroom cometh, cometh, His Bride to enfold."

Cold it is, my beloved, since your funeral bell was tolled:
Cold it is, O my King, how cold alone on the wold.

WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME

Lie still, my restive heart, lie still:
God's Word to thee saith, "Wait and bear."
The good which He appoints is good,
The good which He denies were ill:
Yea, subtle comfort is thy care,
Thy hurt a help not understood.

"Friend, go up higher," to one: to one,
"Friend, enter thou My joy," He saith:
To one, "Be faithful unto death."
For some a wilderness doth flower,
Or day's work in one hour is done: —
"But thou, could'st thou not watch one hour?"

Lord, I had chosen another lot,
But then I had not chosen well;
Thy choice and only Thine is good:
No different lot, search heaven or hell,
Had blessed me fully understood;
None other, which Thou orderest not.

WORSHIP GOD

Lord, if Thy word had been "Worship Me not,
For I than thou am holier: draw not near:"
We had besieged Thy Face with prayer and tear
And manifold abasement in our lot,
Our crooked ground, our thorned and thistled plot;
Envious of flawless Angels in their sphere,
Envious of brutes, and envious of the mere
Unliving and undying unbegot.
But now Thou hast said, "Worship Me, and give
Thy heart to Me, My child:" now therefore we
Think twice before we stoop to worship Thee:
We proffer half a heart while life is strong
And strung with hope; so sweet it is to live!
Wilt Thou not wait? Yea, Thou hast waited long.

AFTERWARD HE REPENTED, AND WENT

Lord, when my heart was whole I kept it back
   And grudged to give it Thee.
Now then that it is broken, must I lack
   Thy kind word “Give it Me”?
Silence would be but just, and Thou art just.
Yet since I lie here shattered in the dust,
   With still an eye to lift to Thee,
A broken heart to give,
I think that Thou wilt bid me live,
   And answer “Give it Me.”

ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS?

Lord, whomsoever Thou shalt send to me,
Let that same be
    Mine Angel predilect:
Veiled or unveiled, benignant or austere,
Aloof or near;
    Thine, therefore mine, elect.

So may my soul nurse patience day by day,
Watch on and pray
    Obedient and at peace;
Living a lonely life in hope, in faith;
Loving till death,
    When life, not love, shall cease.

… . Lo, thou mine Angel with transfigured face
Brimful of grace,
    Brimful of love for me!
Did I misdoubt thee all that weary while,
Thee with a smile
    For me as I for thee?

OUR LIFE IS LONG. NOT SO, WISE ANGELS SAY

Our life is long. Not so, wise Angels say
Who watch us waste it, trembling while they weigh
Against eternity one squandered day.

Our life is long. Not so, the Saints protest,
Filled full of consolation and of rest:
"Short ill, long good, one long unending best."

Our life is long. Christ's word sounds different:
"Night cometh: no more work when day is spent.
Repent and work today, work and repent."

Lord, make us like Thy Host who day nor night
Rest not from adoration, their delight,
Crying "Holy, Holy, Holy," in the height.

Lord, make us like Thy Saints who wait and long
Contented: bound in hope and freed from wrong
They speed (may be) their vigil with a song.

Lord, make us like Thyself: for thirty-three
Slow years of toil seemed not too long to Thee,
That where Thou art, there Thy Beloved might be.

LORD, WHAT HAVE I TO OFFER? SICKENING FEAR

Lord, what have I to offer? sickening fear
    And a heart-breaking loss.
Are these the cross Thou givest me? then dear
    I will account this cross.

If this is all I have, accept even this
    Poor priceless offering,
A quaking heart with all that therein is,
    O Thou my thorn-crowned King.

Accept the whole, my God, accept my heart
    And its own love within:
Wilt Thou accept us and not sift apart?
    — Only sift out my sin.

JOY IS BUT SORROW

Joy is but sorrow,
While we know
It ends tomorrow: —
Even so!
Joy with lifted veil
Shows a face as pale
As the fair changing moon so fair and frail.

Pain is but pleasure,
If we know
It heaps up treasure: —
Even so!
Turn, transfigured Pain,
Sweetheart, turn again,
For fair thou art as moonrise after rain.

CAN I KNOW IT? — NAY

Can I know it? — Nay. —
Shall I know it? — Yea,
When all mists have cleared away
For ever and aye. —

Why not then today? —
Who hath said thee nay?
Lift a hopeful heart and pray
In a humble way. —

Other hearts are gay. —
Ask not joy today:
Toil today along thy way
Keeping grudge at bay. —

On a past May-day
Flowers pranked all the way;
Nightingales sang out their say
On a night of May. —

Dost thou covet May
On an Autumn day?
Foolish memory saith its say
Of sweets past away. —

Gone the bloom of May,
Autumn beareth bay:
Flowerless wreath for head grown grey
Seemly were today. —

Dost thou covet bay?
Ask it not today:

Rather for a palm-branch pray;
None will say thee nay.

WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED I WILL COMPLAIN

"The fields are white to harvest, look and see,
Are white abundantly.
The full-orbed harvest moon shines clear,
The harvest time draws near,
Be of good cheer."

"Ah, woe is me!
I have no heart for harvest time,
Grown sick with hope deferred from chime to chime."

"But Christ can give thee heart Who loveth thee:
Can set thee in the eternal ecstasy
Of His great jubilee:
Can give thee dancing heart and shining face,
And lips filled full of grace,
And pleasures as the rivers and the sea.
Who knocketh at His door
He welcomes evermore:

Kneel down before
That ever-open door
(The time is short) and smite
Thy breast, and pray with all thy might."

"What shall I say?"
"Nay, pray.
Tho' one but say 'Thy Will be done,'
He hath not lost his day
At set of sun."

PRAYING ALWAYS

After midnight, in the dark
   The clock strikes one,
   New day has begun.
Look up and hark!
With singing heart forestall the caroling lark.

After mid-day, in the light
   The clock strikes one,
   Day-fall has begun.
Cast up, set right
The day's account against the on-coming night.

After noon and night, one day
   For ever one
   Ends not, once begun.
Whither away,
O brothers and O sisters? Pause and pray.

AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE

Day that hath no tinge of night,
   Night that hath no tinge of day,
These at last will come to sight
      Not to fade away.

This is twilight that we know,
   Scarcely night and scarcely day;
This hath been from long ago
      Shed around man's way:

Step by step to utter night,
   Step by step to perfect day,
To the Left Hand or the Right
      Leading all away.

This is twilight: be it so;
   Suited to our strength our day:
Let us follow on to know,
      Patient by the way.

A HEAVY HEART, IF EVER HEART WAS HEAVY

A heavy heart, if ever heart was heavy,
   I offer Thee this heavy heart of me.
Are such as this the hearts Thou art fain to levy
   To do and dare for Thee, to bleed for Thee?
   Ah, blessed heaviness, if such they be!

Time was I bloomed with blossom and stood leafy
   How long before the fruit, if fruit there be:
Lord, if by bearing fruit my heart grows heavy,
   Leafless and bloomless yet accept of me
   The stripped fruit-bearing heart I offer Thee.

Lifted to Thee my heart weighs not so heavy,
   It leaps and lightens lifted up to Thee;
It sings, it hopes to sing amid the bevy
   Of thousand thousand choirs that sing, and see
   Thy Face, me loving, for Thou lovest me.

IF LOVE IS NOT WORTH LOVING, THEN LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING

If love is not worth loving, then life is not worth living,
Nor aught is worth remembering but well forgot;
For store is not worth storing and gifts are not worth giving,
If love is not;

And idly cold is death-cold, and life-heat idly hot,
And vain is any offering and vainer our receiving,
And vanity of vanities is all our lot.

Better than life's heaving heart is death's heart unheaving,
Better than the opening leaves are the leaves that rot,
For there is nothing left worth achieving or retrieving,
If love is not.

WHAT IS IT JESUS SAITH UNTO THE SOUL?

What is it Jesus saith unto the soul?
"Take up the Cross, and come and follow Me."
One word He saith to all men: none may be
Without a cross yet hope to touch the goal.
Then heave it bravely up, and brace thy whole
Body to bear; it will not weigh on thee
Past strength; or if it crush thee to thy knee
Take heart of grace, for grace shall be thy dole.
Give thanks today, and let tomorrow take
Heed to itself; today imports thee more,
Tomorrow may not dawn like yesterday:
Until that unknown morrow go thy way,
Suffer and work and strive for Jesus' sake: —
Who tells thee what tomorrow keeps in store?

THEY LIE AT REST, OUR BLESSED DEAD

They lie at rest, our blessed dead;
The dews drop cool above their head,
They knew not when fleet summer fled.

Together all, yet each alone;
Each laid at rest beneath his own
Smooth turf or white allotted stone.

When shall our slumber sink so deep,
And eyes that wept and eyes that weep
Weep not in the sufficient sleep?

God be with you, our great and small,
Our loves, our best beloved of all,
Our own beyond the salt sea-wall.

YE THAT FEAR HIM, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT

Great or small below,
   Great or small above;
Be we Thine, whom Thou dost know
         And love:

First or last on earth,
   First or last in Heaven;
Only weighted with Thy worth,
         And shriven.

Wise or ignorant,
   Strong or weak; Amen;
Sifted now, cast down, in want: —
         But then?

Then, — when sun nor moon,
   Time nor death, finds place,
Seeing in the eternal noon
         Thy Face:

Then, — when tears and sighing,
   Changes, sorrows, cease;
Living by Thy Life undying
         In peace:

Then, — when all creation
   Keeps its jubilee,
Crowned amid Thy holy nation;
Crowned, discrowned, in adoration
         Of Thee.

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

The lowest place. Ah, Lord, how steep and high
That lowest place whereon a saint shall sit!
Which of us halting, trembling, pressing nigh,
Shall quite attain to it?

Yet, Lord, Thou pressest nigh to hail and grace
Some happy soul, it may be still unfit
For Right Hand or for Left Hand, but whose place
Waits there prepared for it.

THE SINNER'S OWN FAULT? SO IT WAS

The sinner's own fault? So it was.
   If every own fault found us out,
   Dogged us and hedged us round about,
What comfort should we take because
   Not half our due we thus wrung out?

Clearly his own fault. Yet I think
   My fault in part, who did not pray
   But lagged and would not lead the way.
I, haply, proved his missing link.
   God help us both to mend and pray.

WHO CARES FOR EARTHLY BREAD THO' WHITE?

Who cares for earthly bread tho' white?
   Nay, heavenly sheaf of harvest corn!
Who cares for earthly crown tonight?
   Nay, heavenly crown tomorrow morn!
I will not wander left or right,
   The straightest road is shortest too;
And since we hold all hope in view
   And triumph where is no more pain,
Tonight I bid good night to you
   And bid you meet me there again.

LAUGHING LIFE CRIES AT THE FEAST

Laughing Life cries at the feast, —
   Craving Death cries at the door, —
“Fish, or fowl, or fatted beast?”
   “Come with me, thy feast it o’er.” —
“Wreathe the violets.” — ”Watch them fade.” —
“I am sunshine.” — ”I am shade:
I am the sun-burying west.” —
“I am pleasure.” — ”I am rest:
Come with me, for I am best.”

THE END IS NOT YET

Home by different ways. Yet all
   Homeward bound thro' prayer and praise,
Young with old, and great with small,
   Home by different ways.

   Many nights and many days
Wind must bluster, rain must fall,
   Quake the quicksand, shift the haze.

Live hath called and death will call
   Saints who praying kneel at gaze,
Ford the flood or leap the wall,
   Home by different ways.

WHO WOULD WISH BACK THE SAINTS UPON OUR ROUGH

Who would wish back the Saints upon our rough
    Wearisome road?
        Wish back a breathless soul
        Just at the goal?
    My soul, praise God
For all dear souls which have enough.

I would not fetch one back to hope with me
    A hope deferred,
        To taste a cup that slips
        From thirsting lips: —
    Hath he not heard
And seen what was to hear and see?

How could I stand to answer the rebuke
    If one should say:
        "O friend of little faith,
        Good was my death,
    And good my day
Of rest, and good the sleep I took"?

THAT WHICH HATH BEEN IS NAMED ALREADY, AND IT IS KNOWN THAT IT IS MAN

"Eye hath not seen:" — yet man hath known and weighed
A hundred thousand marvels that have been:
What is it which (the Word of Truth hath said)
Eye hath not seen?

"Ear hath not heard:" — yet harpings of delight,
Trumpets of triumph, song and spoken word,
Man knows them all: what lovelier, loftier might
Hath ear not heard?

"Nor heart conceived:" — yet man hath now desired
Beyond all reach, beyond his hope believed,
Loved beyond death: what fire shall yet be fired
No heart conceived?

"Deep calls to deep:" — man's depth would be despair
But for God's deeper depth: we sow to reap,
Have patience, wait, betake ourselves to prayer:
Deep answereth deep.

OF EACH SAD WORD WHICH IS MORE SORROWFUL

Of each sad word which is more sorrowful,
    “Sorrow” or “Disappointment”? I have heard
Subtle inflections baffling subtlest rule,
    Of each sad word.

    Sorrow can mourn: and lo! a mourning bird
Sings sweetly to sweet echoes of its dule,
    While silent disappointment broods unstirred.

Yet both nurse hope, where Penitence keeps school
    Who makes fools wise and saints of them that erred:
Wise men shape stepping stone, or curb, or tool,
    Of each sad word.

I SEE THAT ALL THINGS COME TO AN END

I.

No more! while sun and planets fly,
   And wind and storm and seasons four,
And while we live and while we die, —
   No more.

   Nevertheless old ocean's roar,
And wide earth's multitudinous cry,
   And echo's pent reverberant store

Shall hush to silence by and bye:
   Ah, rosy world gone cold and hoar!
Man opes no more a mortal eye,
   No more.

BUT THY COMMANDMENT IS EXCEEDING BROAD

II.

Once again to wake, nor wish to sleep;
   Once again to feel, nor feel a pain!
Rouse thy soul to watch and pray and weep
   Once again.

   Hope afresh, for hope shall not be vain:
Start afresh along the exceeding steep
   Road to glory, long and rough and plain.

Sow and reap: for while these moments creep,
   Time and earth and life are on the wane:
Now, in tears; tomorrow, laugh and reap
   Once again.

SURSAM CORDA

“Lift up your hearts.” “We lift them up.” Ah me!
I cannot, Lord, lift up my heart to Thee:
Stoop, lift it up, that where Thou art I too may be.

“Give Me thy heart.” I would not say Thee nay,
But have no power to keep or give away
My heart: stoop, Lord, and take it to Thyself today.

Stoop, Lord, as once before, now once anew
Stoop, Lord, and hearken, hearken, Lord, and do,
And take my will, and take my heart, and take me too.

O YE, WHO ARE NOT DEAD AND FIT

O ye, who are not dead and fit
Like blasted tree beside the pit
But for the axe that levels it,

Living show life of love, whereof
The force wields earth and heaven above:
Who knows not love begetteth love?

Love poises earth in space, Love rolls
Wide worlds rejoicing on their poles,
And girds them round with aureoles.

Love lights the sun, Love thro' the dark
Lights the moon's evanescent arc,
Lights up the star, lights up the spark.

O ye who taste that love is sweet,
Set waymarks for all doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

Sing notes of love: that some who hear
Far off inert may lend an ear,
Rise up and wonder and draw near.

Lead life of love: that others who
Behold your life, may kindle too
With love, and cast their lot with you.

WHERE SHALL I FIND A WHITE ROSE BLOWING?

Where shall I find a white rose blowing? —
   Out in the garden where all sweets be. —
But out in my garden the snow was snowing
   And never a white rose opened for me.
Nought but snow and a wind were blowing
                And snowing.

Where shall I find a blush rose blushing? —
   On the garden wall or the garden bed. —
But out in my garden the rain was rushing
   And never a blush rose raised its head.
Nothing glowing, flushing or blushing:
                Rain rushing.

Where shall I find a red rose budding? —
   Out in the garden where all things grow. —
But out in my garden a flood was flooding
   And never a red rose began to blow.
Out in a flooding what should be budding?
                All flooding!

Now is winter and now is sorrow,
   No roses but only thorns today:
Thorns will put on roses tomorrow,
   Winter and sorrow scudding away.
No more winter and no more sorrow
                Tomorrow.

REDEEMING THE TIME

A life of hope deferred too often is
A life of wasted opportunities;
A life of perished hope too often is
A life of all-lost opportunities:
Yet hope is but the flower and not the root,
And hope is still the flower and not the fruit; —
Arise and sow and weed: a day shall come
When also thou shalt keep thy harvest home.

NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY

Love said nay, while Hope kept saying
All his sweetest say,
Hope so keen to start a-maying! —
Love said nay.

Love was bent to watch and pray;
Long the watching, long the praying;
Hope grew drowsy, pale and grey.

Hope in dreams set off a-straying,
All his dream-world flushed by May;
While unslumbering, praying, weighing,
Love said nay.

A CASTLE-BUILDER'S WORLD

"The line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness."

Unripe harvest there hath none to reap it
   From the misty gusty place,
Unripe vineyard there hath none to keep it
   In unprofitable space.
Living men and women are not found there,
   Only masks in flocks and shoals;
Flesh-and-bloodless hazy masks surround there,
   Ever wavering orbs and poles;
Flesh-and-bloodless vapid masks abound there,
   Shades of bodies without souls.

THESE ALL WAIT UPON THEE

Innocent eyes not ours
Are made to look on flowers,
Eyes of small birds and insects small:
Morn after summer morn
The sweet rose on her thorn
Opens her bosom to them all.
The least and last of things
That soar on quivering wings,
Or crawl among the grass blades out of sight,
Have just as clear a right
To their appointed portion of delight
As Queens or Kings.

DOETH WELL … DOETH BETTER

My love whose heart is tender said to me,
"A moon lacks light except her sun befriend her.
Let us keep tryst in heaven, dear Friend," said she,
My love whose heart is tender.

From such a loftiness no words could bend her:
Yet still she spoke of "us" and spoke as "we,"
Her hope substantial, while my hope grew slender.

Now keeps she tryst beyond earth's utmost sea,
Wholly at rest, tho' storms should toss and rend her;
And still she keeps my heart and keeps its key,
My love whose heart is tender.

OUR HEAVEN MUST BE WITHIN OURSELVES

Our heaven must be within ourselves,
   Our home and heaven the work of faith
All thro' this race of life which shelves
                Downward to death.

So faith shall build the boundary wall,
   And hope shall plant the secret bower,
That both may show magnifical
                With gem and flower.

While over all a dome must spread,
   And love shall be that dome above;
And deep foundations must be laid,
                And these are love.

VANITY OF VANITIES

Of all the downfalls in the world,
    The flutter of an Autumn leaf
    Grows grievous by suggesting grief:
Who thought, when Spring was first unfurled,
Of this? The wide world lay empearled;
Who thought of frost that nips the world?
                Sigh on, my ditty.

There lurk a hundred subtle stings
    To prick us in our daily walk:
    An apple cankered on its stalk,
A robin snared for all his wings,
A voice that sang but never sings;
Yea, sight or sound or silence stings.
                Kind Lord, show pity.

THE HILLS ARE TIPPED WITH SUNSHINE, WHILE I WALK

The hills are tipped with sunshine, while I walk
In shadows dim and cold:
The unawakened rose sleeps on her stalk
In a bud's fold,
Until the sun flood all the world with gold.

The hills are crowned with glory, and the glow
Flows widening down apace:
Unto the sunny hill-tops I, set low,
Lift a tired face, —
Ah, happy rose, content to wait for grace!

How tired a face, how tired a brain, how tired
A heart I lift, who long
For something never felt but still desired;
Sunshine and song,
Song where the choirs of sunny heaven stand choired.

SCARCE TOLERABLE LIFE, WHICH ALL LIFE LONG

Scarce tolerable life, which all life long
   Is dominated by one dread of death;
   Is such life, life? if so, who pondereth
May call salt sweetness or call discord song.
Ah me, this solitude where swarms a throng!
   Life slowly grows and dwindles breath by breath:
   Death slowly grows on us; no word it saith,
Its cords all lengthened and its pillars strong.
Life dies apace, a life that but deceives:
   Death reigns as tho' it lived, and yet is dead:
Where is the life that dies not but that lives?
      The sweet long life, immortal, ever young,
   True life that woes us with a silver tongue
Of hope, much said and much more left unsaid.

ALL HEAVEN IS BLAZING YET

All heaven is blazing yet
    With the meridian sun:
Make haste, unshadowing sun, make haste to set;
    O lifeless life, have done.
I choose what once I chose;
    What once I willed, I will:
Only the heart its own bereavement knows;
    O clamorous heart, lie still.

That which I chose, I choose;
    That which I willed, I will;
That which I once refused, I still refuse:
    O hope deferred, be still.
That which I chose and choose
    And will is Jesus' Will:
He hath not lost his life who seems to lose:
    O hope deferred, hope still.

BALM IN GILEAD

Heartsease I found, where Love-lies-bleeding
   Empurpled all the ground:
Whatever flowers I missed unheeding,
   Heartsease I found.

   Yet still my garden mound
Stood sore in need of watering, weeding,
   And binding growths unbound.

Ah, when shades fell to light succeeding
   I scarcely dared look round:
"Love-lies-bleeding" was all my pleading,
   Heartsease I found.

IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS

That Song of Songs which is Solomon's
   Sinks and rises, and loves and longs,
Thro' temperate zones and torrid zones,
   That Song of Songs.

   Fair its floating moon with her prongs:
Love is laid for its paving stones:
   Right it sings without thought of wrongs.

Doves it hath with music of moans,
   Queens in throngs and damsels in throngs,
High tones and mysterious undertones,
   That Song of Songs.

SHE CAME FROM THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH

"The half was not told me," said Sheba's Queen,
Weighing that wealth of wisdom and of gold:
"Thy fame falls short of this that I have seen:
The half was not told.

"Happy thy servants who stand to behold,
Stand to drink in thy gracious speech and mien;
Happy, thrice happy, the flock of thy fold.

"As the darkened moon while a shadow between
Her face and her kindling sun is rolled,
I depart; but my heart keeps memory green:
The half was not told."

ALLELUIA! OR ALAS! MY HEART IS CRYING

Alleluia! or Alas! my heart is crying:
So yours is sighing;
Or replying with content undying,
        Alleluia!

Alas! grieves overmuch for pain that is ending,
Hurt that is mending,
Life descending soon to be ascending,
        Alleluia!

THE PASSION FLOWER HATH SPRUNG UP TALL

The Passion Flower hath sprung up tall,
   Hath east and west its arms outspread;
   The heliotrope shoots up its head
To clear the shadow of the wall:
Down looks the Passion Flower,
   The heliotrope looks upward still,
      Hour by hour
   On the heavenward hill.

The Passion Flower blooms red or white,
   A shadowed white, a cloudless red;
   Caressingly it droops its head,
Its leaves, its tendrils, from the light:
Because that lowlier flower
   Looks up, but mounts not half so high,
      Hour by hour
   Tending toward the sky.

GOD'S ACRE

Hail, garden of confident hope!
Where sweet seeds are quickening in darkness and cold;
For how sweet and how young will they be
When they pierce thro' the mould.
Balm, myrtle, and heliotrope
There watch and there wait out of sight for their Sun:
While the Sun, which they see not, doth see
Each and all one by one.

THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH

Young girls wear flowers,
   Young brides a flowery wreath,
But next we plant them
   In garden plots of death.
Whose lot is best:
The maiden's curtained rest,
   Or bride's whose hoped-for sweet
   May yet outstrip her feet?
Ah! what are such as these
To death's sufficing ease?
He sleeps indeed who sleeps in peace
   Where night and morning meet.

Dear are the blossoms
   For bride's or maiden's head,
But dearer planted
   Around our blessed dead.
Those mind us of decay
And joys that fade away,
   These preach to us perfection,
   Long love and resurrection.
We make our graveyards fair,
For spirit-like birds of air,
For Angels may be finding there
   Lost Eden's own delection.

THOU KNEWEST … THOU OUGHTEST THEREFORE

Behold in heaven a floating dazzling cloud,
So dazzling that I could but cry Alas!
Alas, because I felt how low I was;
Alas, within my spirit if not aloud,
Foreviewing my last breathless bed and shroud:
Thus pondering, I glanced downward on the grass;
And the grass bowed when airs of heaven would pass,
Lifting itself again when it had bowed.
That grass spake comfort; weak it was and low,
Yet strong enough and high enough to bend
In homage at a message from the sky:
As the grass did and prospered, so will I;
Tho' knowing little, doing what I know,
And strong in patient weakness till the end.

GO IN PEACE

Can peach renew lost bloom,
Or violet lost perfume,
Or sullied snow turn white as overnight?
Man cannot compass it, yet never fear:
The leper Naaman
Shows what God will and can;
God Who worked there is working here;
Wherefore let shame, not gloom, betinge thy brow,
God Who worked then is working now.

HALF DEAD

O Christ the Life, look on me where I lie
Ready to die:
O Good Samaritan, nay, pass not by.

O Christ, my Life, pour in Thine oil and wine
To keep me Thine;
Me ever Thine, and Thee for ever mine.

Watch by Thy saints and sinners, watch by all
Thy great and small:
Once Thou didst call us all, — O Lord, recall.

Think how Thy saints love sinners, how they pray
And hope alway,
And thereby grow more like Thee day by day.

O Saint of saints, if those with prayer and vow
Succour us now… .
It was not they died for us, it was Thou.

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS WITH A SPEAR PIERCED HIS SIDE

Ah, Lord, we all have pierced Thee: wilt Thou be
   Wroth with us all to slay us all?
Nay, Lord, be this thing far from Thee and me:
   By whom should we arise, for we are small,
By whom if not by Thee?

Lord, if of us who pierced Thee Thou spare one,
   Spare yet one more to love Thy Face,
And yet another of poor souls undone,
   Another, and another — God of grace,
Let mercy overrun.

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE COMES SORROW

Where love is, there comes sorrow
Today or else tomorrow:
Endure the mood,
Love only means our good.

Where love is, there comes pleasure
With or withouten measure,
Early or late
Cheering the sorriest state.

Where love is, all perfection
Is stored for heart's delection;
For where love is
Dwells every sort of bliss.

Who would not choose a sorrow
Love's self will cheer tomorrow?
One day of sorrow,
Then such a long tomorrow!

BURY HOPE OUT OF SIGHT

Bury Hope out of sight,
   No book for it and no bell;
It never could bear the light
   Even while growing and well:
Think if now it could bear

The light on its face of care
And grey scattered hair.

No grave for Hope in the earth,
   But deep in that silent soul
Which rang no bell for its birth
   And rings no funeral toll.
Cover its once bright head;
Nor odours nor tears be shed:
It lived once, it is dead.

Brief was the day of its power,
   The day of its grace how brief:
As the fading of a flower,
   As the falling of a leaf,
So brief its day and its hour;
No bud more and no bower
Or hint of a flower.

Shall many wail it? not so:
   Shall one bewail it? not one:
Thus it hath been from long ago,
   Thus it shall be beneath the sun.
O fleet sun, make haste to flee;
O rivers, fill up the sea;

O Death, set the dying free.

The sun nor loiters nor speeds,
    The rivers run as they ran,
Thro' clouds or thro' windy reeds
    All run as when all began.
Only Death turns at our cries: —
Lo, the Hope we buried with sighs
Alive in Death's eyes!

A CHURCHYARD SONG OF PATIENT HOPE

All tears done away with the bitter unquiet sea,
   Death done away from among the living at last,
Man shall say of sorrow — Love grant it to thee and me! —
      At last, "It is past."

Shall I say of pain, "It is past," nor say it with thee,
   Thou heart of my heart, thou soul of my soul, my Friend?
Shalt thou say of pain, "It is past," nor say it with me
      Beloved to the end?

ONE WOE IS PAST. COME WHAT COME WILL

One woe is past. Come what come will
   Thus much is ended and made fast:
Two woes may overhang us still;
   One woe is past.

   As flowers when winter puffs its last
Wake in the vale, trail up the hill,
   Nor wait for skies to overcast;

So meek souls rally from the chill
   Of pain and fear and poisonous blast,
To lift their heads: come good, come ill,
   One woe is past.

TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW

Who knows? God knows: and what He knows
   Is well and best.
The darkness hideth not from Him, but glows
Clear as the morning or the evening rose
   Of east or west.

Wherefore man's strength is to sit still:
   Not wasting care
To antedate tomorrow's good or ill;
Yet watching meekly, watching with good will,
   Watching to prayer.

Some rising or some setting ray
   From east or west,
If not today, why then another day
Will light each dove upon the homeward way
   Safe to her nest.

CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD

Solomon most glorious in array
  Put not on his glories without care: —
Clothe us as Thy lilies of a day,
  As the lilies Thou accountest fair,
    Lilies of Thy making,
    Of Thy love partaking,
  Filling with free fragrance earth and air:
  Thou Who gatherest lilies, gather us and wear.

SON, REMEMBER

I laid beside thy gate, am Lazarus;
   See me or see me not I still am there,
   Hungry and thirsty, sore and sick and bare,
Dog-comforted and crumbs-solicitous:
While thou in all thy ways art sumptuous,
   Daintily clothed, with dainties for thy fare:
   Thus a world's wonder thou art quit of care,
And be I seen or not seen I am thus.
One day a worm for thee, a worm for me:
   With my worm angel songs and trumpet burst
      And plenitude an end of all desire:
But what for thee, alas! but what for thee?
   Fire and an unextinguishable thirst,
      Thirst in an unextinguishable fire.

HEAVINESS MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

No thing is great on this side of the grave,
   Nor any thing of any stable worth:
   Whatso is born from earth returns to earth:
No thing we grasp proves half the thing we crave:

The tidal wave shrinks to the ebbing wave:
   Laughter is folly, madness lurks in mirth:
   Mankind sets off a-dying from the birth:
Life is a losing game, with what to save?
Thus I sat mourning like a mournful owl,
   And like a doleful dragon made ado,
      Companion of all monsters of the dark:
When lo! the light cast off its nightly cowl,
      And up to heaven flashed a caroling lark,
   And all creation sang its hymn anew.

While all creation sang its hymn anew
   What could I do but sing a stave in tune?
   Spectral on high hung pale the vanishing moon
Where a last gleam of stars hung paling too.
Lark's lay — a cockcrow — with a scattered few
   Soft early chirpings — with a tender croon
   Of doves — a hundred thousand calls, and soon
A hundred thousand answers sweet and true.
These set me singing too at unawares:
   One note for all delights and charities,
      One note for hope reviving with the light,
   One note for every lovely thing that is;
Till while I sang my heart shook off its cares
   And reveled in the land of no more night.

THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE

O Lord, fulfil Thy Will
Be the days few or many, good or ill:
Prolong them, to suffice
For offering up ourselves Thy sacrifice;
Shorten them if Thou wilt,
To make in righteousness an end of guilt.
Yea, they will not be long
To souls who learn to sing a patient song;
Yea, short they will not be
To souls on tiptoe to flee home to Thee.
O Lord, fulfil Thy Will:
Make Thy Will ours, and keep us patient still
Be the days few or many, good or ill.

LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Treasure plies a feather,
   Pleasure spreadeth wings,
Taking flight together, —
   Ah! my cherished things.

Fly away, poor pleasure,
   That art so brief a thing:
Fly away, poor treasure,
   That hast so swift a wing.

Pleasure, to be pleasure,
   Must come without a wing:
Treasure, to be treasure,
   Must be a stable thing.

Treasure without feather,
   Pleasure without wings,
Elsewhere dwell together
   And are heavenly things.

WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH

"One sorrow more? I thought the tale complete." —
He bore amiss who grudges what he bore:
Stretch out thy hands and urge thy feet to meet
One sorrow more.

Yea, make thy count for two or three or four:
The kind Physician will not slack to treat
His patient while there's rankling in the sore.

Bear up in anguish, ease will yet be sweet;
Bear up all day, for night has rest in store:
Christ bears thy burden with thee, rise and greet
One sorrow more.

THEN SHALL YE SHOUT

It seems an easy thing
Mayhap one day to sing
Yet the next day
We cannot sing or say.

Keep silence with good heart,
While silence fits our part:
Another day
We shall both sing and say.

Keep silence, counting time
To strike in at the chime:
Prepare to sound, —
Our part is coming round.

Can we not sing or say?
In silence let us pray,
And meditate
Our love-song while we wait.

EVERYTHING THAT IS BORN MUST DIE

Everything that is born must die;
   Everything that can sigh may sing;
Rocks in equal balance, low or high,
   Everything.

   Honeycomb is weighed against a sting;
Hope and fear take turns to touch the sky;
   Height and depth respond alternating.

O my soul, spread wings of love to fly,
   Wings of dove that soars on home-bound wing:
Love trusts Love, till Love shall justify
   Everything.

LORD, GRANT US CALM, IF CALM CAN SET FORTH THEE

Lord, grant us calm, if calm can set forth Thee;
    Or tempest, if a tempest set Thee forth;
    Wind from the east or west or south or north,
Or congelation of a silent sea,
With stillness of each tremulous aspen tree.

Still let fruit fall, or hang upon the tree;
    Still let the east and west, the south and north,
Curb in their winds, or plough a thundering sea;
    Still let the earth abide to set Thee forth,
Or vanish like a smoke to set forth Thee.

CHANGING CHIMES

It was not warning that our fathers lacked,
It is not warning that we lack today.
The Voice that cried still cries: “Rise up and act:
Watch alway, — watch and pray, — watch alway, —
All men.”

Alas, if aught was lacked goodwill was lacked;
Alas, goodwill is what we lack today.
O gracious Voice, grant grace that all may act,
Watch and act, — watch and pray, — watch alway. —
Amen.

THY SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT WITH THIS PHILISTINE

Sorrow of saints is sorrow of a day,
  Gladness of saints is gladness evermore:
  Send on thy hope, send on thy will before
To chant God's praise along the narrow way.
Stir up His praises if the flesh would sway,
  Exalt His praises if the world press sore,
  Peal out His praises if black Satan roar
A hundred thousand lies to say them nay.

Devil and Death and Hades, threefold cord
  Not quickly broken, front thee to thy face;
    Front thou them with a face of tenfold flint:
    Shout for the battle, David! never stint
  Body or breath or blood, but proof in grace
Die for thy Lord, as once for thee thy Lord.

THRO’ BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY

Thro’ burden and heat of the day
   How weary the hands and the feet
That labour with scarcely a stay,
   Thro’ burden and heat!

   Tired toiler whose sleep shall be sweet,
Kneel down, it will rest thee to pray:
   Then forward, for daylight is fleet.

Cool shadows show lengthening and grey,
   Cool twilight will soon be complete:
What matters this wearisome way
   Thro’ burden and heat?

THEN I COMMENDED MIRTH

"A merry heart is a continual feast."
Then take we life and all things in good part:
To fast grows festive while we keep at least
A merry heart

Well pleased with nature and well pleased with art;
A merry heart makes cheer for man and beast,
And fancies music in a creaking cart.

Someday, a restful heart whose toils have ceased,
A heavenly heart gone home from earthly mart:
Today, blow wind from west or wind from east,
A merry heart.

SORROW HATH A DOUBLE VOICE

Sorrow hath a double voice,
   Sharp today but sweet tomorrow:
Wait in patience, hope, rejoice,
      Tried friends of sorrow.

Pleasure hath a double taste,
   Sweet today but sharp tomorrow:
Friends of pleasure, rise in haste,
      Make friends with sorrow.

Pleasure set aside today
   Comes again to rule tomorrow:
Welcomed sorrow will not stay,
      Farewell to sorrow!

SHADOWS TODAY, WHILE SHADOWS SHOW GOD'S WILL

Shadows today, while shadows show God's Will.
    Light were not good except He sent us light.
    Shadows today, because this day is night
Whose marvels and whose mysteries fulfil
Their course and deep in darkness serve Him still.
    Thou dim aurora, on the extremest height
    Of airy summits wax not over-bright;
Refrain thy rose, refrain thy daffodil.
Until God's Word go forth to kindle thee
    And garland thee and bid thee stoop to us,
        Blush in the heavenly choirs and glance not down:
        Today we race in darkness for a crown,
In darkness for beatitude to be,
    In darkness for the city luminous.

TRULY THE LIGHT IS SWEET

Light colourless doth colour all things else:
Where light dwells pleasure dwells
And peace excels.
    Then rise and shine,
    Thou shadowed soul of mine,
    And let a cheerful rainbow make thee fine.

Light, fountain of all beauty and delight,
Leads day forth from the night,
Turns blackness white.
    Light waits for thee
    Where all have eyes to see:
    Oh, well is thee, and happy shalt thou be!

ARE YE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEY?

The twig sprouteth,
The moth outeth,
The plant springeth,
The bird singeth:
Tho' little we sing today
Yet are we better than they;
Tho' growing with scarce a showing,
Yet, please God, we are growing.

The twig teacheth,
The moth preacheth,
The plant vaunteth,
The bird chanteth,
God's mercy overflowing
Merciful past man's knowing.
Please God to keep us growing
Till the awful day of mowing.

YEA, THE SPARROW HATH FOUND HER AN HOUSE

Wisest of sparrows that sparrow which sitteth alone
   Perched on the housetop, its own upper chamber, for nest;
Wisest of swallows that swallow which timely has flown
   Over the turbulent sea to the land of its rest:
      Wisest of sparrows and swallows, if I were as wise!

Wisest of spirits that spirit which dwelleth apart
   Hid in the Presence of God for a chapel and nest,
Sending a wish and a will and a passionate heart
   Over the eddy of life to that Presence in rest:
      Seated alone and in peace till God bids it arise.

I AM SMALL AND OF NO REPUTATION

The least, if so I am;
   If so, less than the least,
May I reach heaven to glorify the Lamb
   And sit down at the Feast.

I fear and I am small,
   Whence am I of good cheer;
For I who hear Thy call, have heard Thee call
   To Thee the small who fear.

O CHRIST MY GOD WHO SEEST THE UNSEEN

O Christ my God Who seest the unseen,
O Christ my God Who knowest the unknown,
Thy mighty Blood was poured forth to atone
For every sin that can be or hath been.

O Thou Who seest what I cannot see,
Thou Who didst love us all so long ago,
O Thou Who knowest what I must not know,
Remember all my hope, remember me.

YEA, IF THOU WILT, THOU CANST PUT UP THY SWORD

Yea, if Thou wilt, Thou canst put up Thy sword;
   But what if Thou shouldst sheathe it to the hilt
Within the heart that sues to Thee, O Lord?
   Yea, if Thou wilt.

   For if Thou wilt Thou canst purge out the guilt
Of all, of any, even the most abhorred:
   Thou canst pluck down, rebuild, build up the unbuilt.

Who wanders, canst Thou gather by love's cord?
   Who sinks, uplift from the under-sucking silt
To set him on Thy rock within Thy ward?
   Yea, if Thou wilt.

SWEETNESS OF REST WHEN THOU SHEDDEST REST

Sweetness of rest when Thou sheddest rest,
    Sweetness of patience till then;
Only the Will of our God is best
    For all the millions of men.

For all the millions on earth today,
    On earth and under the earth;
Waiting for earth to vanish away,
    Waiting to come to the birth.

O FOOLISH SOUL! TO MAKE THY COUNT

O foolish Soul! to make thy count
   For languid falls and much forgiven,
When like a flame thou mightest mount
      To storm and carry heaven.

A life so faint, — is this to live?
   A goal so mean, — is this a goal?
Christ love thee, remedy, forgive,
      Save thee, O foolish Soul.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING THOU HAST FOREKNOWN THE END

Before the beginning Thou hast foreknown the end,
    Before the birthday the death-bed was seen of Thee:
Cleanse what I cannot cleanse, mend what I cannot mend,
    O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me.

While the end is drawing near I know not mine end;
    Birth I recall not, my death I cannot foresee:
O God, arise to defend, arise to befriend,
    O Lord All-Merciful, be merciful to me.

THE GOAL IN SIGHT! LOOK UP AND SING

The goal in sight! Look up and sing,
   Set faces full against the light,
Welcome with rapturous welcoming
   The goal in sight.

   Let be the left, let be the right:
Straight forward make your footsteps ring
   A loud alarum thro' the night.

Death hunts you, yea, but reft of sting;
   Your bed is green, your shroud is white:
Hail! Life and Death and all that bring
   The goal in sight.

LOOKING BACK ALONG LIFE'S TRODDEN WAY

Looking back along life's trodden way
   Gleams and greenness linger on the track;
Distance melts and mellows all today,
      Looking back.

Rose and purple and a silvery grey,
   Is that cloud the cloud we called so black?
Evening harmonizes all today,
      Looking back.

Foolish feet so prone to halt or stray,
   Foolish heart so restive on the rack!
Yesterday we sighed, but not today
      Looking back.

PRIVATELY PUBLISHED POEMS

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DEATH'S CHILL BETWEEN

Chide not; let me breathe a little,
   For I shall not mourn him long.
Tho' the life-cord was so brittle
   The love-cord was very strong.
I would wake a little space
Till I find a sleeping-place.

You can go, I shall not weep;
   You can go unto your rest;
My heart-ache is all too deep,
   And too sore my throbbing breast.
Can sobs be, or angry tears,
Where are neither hopes nor fears?

Tho' with you I am alone,
   And must be so everywhere,
I will make no useless moan;
   None shall say: "She could not bear;"
While life lasts I will be strong,
But I shall not struggle long.

Listen, listen! everywhere
   A low voice is calling me,
And a step is on the stair,
   And one comes ye do not see.
Listen, listen! evermore
A dim hand knocks at the door.

Hear me: he is come again;
   My own dearest is come back.
Bring him in from the cold rain;

Bring wine, and let nothing lack.
Thou and I will rest together,
Love, until the sunny weather.

I will shelter thee from harm,
Hide thee from all heaviness;
Come to me, and keep thee warm
By my side in quietness.
I will lull thee to thy sleep
With sweet songs; we will not weep.

Who hath talked of weeping? yet
There is something at my heart
Gnawing, I would fain forget,
And an aching and a smart —
Ah my Mother, ‘tis in vain,
For he is not come again.

HEART'S CHILL BETWEEN

I did not chide him, tho' I knew
    That he was false to me:
Chide the exhaling of the dew,
    The ebbing of the sea,
The fading of a rosy hue,
    But not inconstancy.

Why strive for love when love is o'er?
    Why bind a restive heart?
He never knew the pain I bore
    In saying: "We must part;
Let us be friends, and nothing more": —
    Oh woman's shallow art!

But it is over, it is done;
    I hardly heed it now;
So many weary years have run
    Since then, I think not how
Things might have been; but greet each one
    With an unruffled brow.

What time I am where others be
    My heart seems very calm,
Stone calm; but if all go from me
    There comes a vague alarm,
A shrinking in the memory
    From some forgotten harm.

And often thro' the long long night
    Waking when none are near,
I feel my heart beat fast with fright,

Yet know not what I fear.
Oh how I long to see the light
And the sweet birds to hear!

To have the sun upon my face,
To look up through the trees,
To walk forth in the open space,
And listen to the breeze,
And not to dream the burial place
Is clogging my weak knees.

Sometimes I can nor weep nor pray,
But am half stupefied;
And then all those who see me say
Mine eyes are opened wide,
And that my wits seem gone away: —
Ah would that I had died!

Would I could die and be at peace,
Or living could forget;
My grief nor grows nor doth decrease,
But ever is: — and yet
Methinks now that all this shall cease
Before the sun shall set.

REPINING

She sat alway thro' the long day
Spinning the weary thread away;
And ever said in undertone:
"Come; that I be no more alone."
From early dawn to set of sun
Working, her task was still undone;
And the long thread seemed to increase
Even while she spun and did not cease.
She heard the gentle turtle dove
Tell to its mate a tale of love;
She saw the glancing swallows fly,
Ever a social company;
She knew each bird upon its nest
Had cheering songs to bring it rest;
None lived alone, save only she;
The wheel went round more wearily;
She wept, and said in undertone:
"Come; that I be no more alone."

Day followed day; and still she sighed
For love, and was not satisfied;
Until one night, when the moon-light
Turned all the trees to silver white,
She heard, what ne'er she heard before,
A steady hand undo the door.
The nightingale since set of sun
Her throbbing music had not done,
And she had listened silently;
But now the wind had changed, and she
Heard the sweet song no more, but heard
Beside her bed a whispered word:
"Damsel, rise up; be not afraid,
"For I am come at last;" it said.

She trembled tho' the voice was mild,
She trembled like a frightened child,
Till she looked up, and then she saw
The unknown speaker without awe.
He seemed a fair young man, his eyes
Beaming with serious charities;
His cheek was white, but hardly pale;
And a dim glory, like a veil,
Hovered about his head, and shone

Thro' the whole room, till night was gone.

So her fear fled; and then she said,
Leaning upon her quiet bed:
"Now thou art come I prithee stay,
"That I may see thee in the day,
"And learn to know thy voice, and hear
"It evermore calling me near."
He answered: "Rise, and follow me."
But she looked upwards wonderingly:
"And whither would'st thou go friend? stay
"Until the dawning of the day."
But he said: "The wind ceaseth, Maid;
"Of chill nor damp be thou afraid."
She bound her hair up from the floor,
And passed in silence from the door.

So they went forth together, he
Helping her forward tenderly.
The hedges bowed beneath his hand;
Forth from the streams came the dry land
As they passed over; evermore
The pallid moonbeams shone before,
And the wind hushed, and nothing stirred;
Not even a solitary bird
Scared by their footsteps fluttered by,
Where aspen trees stood steadily.

As they went on, at length a sound
Came trembling on the air around;
The undistinguishable hum
Of life; voices that go and come
Of busy men and the child's sweet
High laugh, and noise of trampling feet.

Then he said: "Wilt thou go and see?"
And she made answer joyfully:
"The noise of life, of human life,
"Of dear communion without strife,
"Of converse held 'twixt friend and friend;
"Is it not here our path shall end?"
He led her on a little way
Until they reached a hillock: "Stay."

It was a village in a plain.
High mountains screened it from the rain
And stormy wind; and nigh at hand
A bubbling streamlet flowed, o'er sand
Pebbly and fine; and sent life up
Green succous stalk and flower cup.

Gradually, day's harbinger,
A chilly wind began to stir.
It seemed a gentle powerless breeze
That scarcely rustled thro' the trees;
And yet it touched the mountain's head,
And the paths man might never tread.
But hearken! in the quiet weather
Do all the streams flow down together?
No, 'tis a sound more terrible
Than tho' a thousand rivers fell.
The everlasting ice and snow
Were loosened then, but not to flow;
With a loud crash like solid thunder

The avalanche came, burying under
The village; turning life and breath
And rest and joy and plans to death.

“Oh let us fly, for pity fly,
“Let us go hence friend, thou and I.
“There must be many regions yet
“Where these things make not desolate.”

He looked upon her seriously;
Then said: “Arise, and follow me.”
The path that lay before them was
Nigh covered over with long grass,
And many slimy things and slow
Trailed on between the roots below.
The moon looked dimmer than before;
And shadowy cloudlets floating o’er
Its face, sometimes quite hid its light,
And filled the skies with deeper night.

At last, as they went on, the noise
Was heard of the sea’s mighty voice;
And soon the ocean could be seen
In its long restlessness serene.
Upon its breast a vessel rode
That drowsily appeared to nod
As the great billows rose and fell,
And swelled to sink, and sank to swell.

Meanwhile the strong wind had come forth
From the chill regions of the North;
The mighty wind invisible.
And the low waves began to swell;
And the sky darkened overhead;
And the moon once looked forth, then fled
Behind dark clouds; while here and there

The lightning shone out in the air;
And the approaching thunder rolled
With angry pealings manifold.
How many vows were made; and prayers
That in safe times were cold and scarce.
Still all availed not; and at length
The waves arose in all their strength,
And fought against the ship, and filled
The ship; then were the clouds unsealed,
And the rains hurried forth and beat
On every side and over it.

Some clung together; and some kept
A long stern silence; and some wept.
Many, half crazed, looked on in wonder
As the strong timbers rent asunder;
Friends forgot friends; foes fled to foes;
And still the water rose and rose.

“Ah woe is me! whom I have seen
“Are now as tho’ they had not been.
“In the earth there is room for birth,
“And there are graves enough in earth;
“Why should the cold sea, tempest torn,
“Bury those whom it hath not borne?”

He answered not, and they went on.
The glory of the heavens was gone;
The moon gleamed not, nor any Star;
Cold winds were rustling near and far;
And from the trees the dry leaves fell
With a sad sound unspeakable.

The air was cold; till from the South
A gust blew hot like sudden drouth
Into their faces, and a light

Glowing and red shone thro' the night.

A mighty city full of flame,
And death, and sounds without a name!
Amid the black and blinding smoke
The people, as one man, awoke.
Oh happy they who yesterday
On the long journey went away;
Whose pallid lips, smiling and chill,
While the flames scorch them smile on still;
Who murmur not, who tremble not
When the bier crackles fiery hot;
Who dying said in love's increase:
"Lord, let Thy servant part in peace."

Those in the town could see and hear
A shaded river flowing near.
The broad deep bed could hardly hold
Its plenteous waters calm and cold.
Was flame wrapped all the city wall,
The city gates were flame wrapped all.

What was man's strength, what puissance then?
Women were mighty as strong men.
Some knelt in prayer believing still,
Resigned unto a righteous will,
Bowing beneath the chastening rod,
Lost to the world, but found of God.
Some prayed for friend, for child, for wife;
Some prayed for faith; some prayed for life;
While some, proud even in death, hope gone,
Steadfast and still stood looking on.

"Death, death! oh let us fly from death,
"Where'er we go it followeth.
"All these are dead; and we alone

“Remain to weep for what is gone.
“What is this thing, thus hurriedly
“To pass into eternity?
“To leave the earth so full of mirth?
“To lose the profit of our birth?
“To die and be no more? to cease,
“Having numbness that is not peace?
“Let us go hence: and even if thus
“Death everywhere must go with us,
“Let us not see the change, but see
“Those who have been or still shall be.”

He sighed, and they went on together.
Beneath their feet did the grass wither;
Across the heaven, high overhead,
Dark misty clouds floated and fled;
And in their bosom was the thunder;
And angry lightnings flashed out under,
Forkèd and red and menacing;
Far off the wind was muttering;
It seemed to tell, not understood,
Strange secrets to the listening wood.

Upon its wings it bore the scent
Of blood of a great armament;
Then saw they how on either side
Fields were downtrodden far and wide;
That morning at the break of day,
Two nations had gone forth to slay.

As a man soweth, so he reaps.
The field was full of bleeding heaps;
Ghastly corpses of men and horses
That met death at a thousand sources;
Cold limbs and putrifying flesh;
Long love-locks clotted to a mesh
That stifled; stiffened mouths beneath

Staring eyes that had looked on death.

But these were dead; these felt no more
The anguish of the wounds they bore.
Behold; they shall not sigh again,
Nor justly fear, nor hope in vain.
What if none wept above them; is
The sleeper less at rest for this?
Is not the young child's slumber sweet
When no man watcheth over it?

These had deep calm: but all around
There was a deadly smothered sound,
The choking cry of agony
From wounded men who could not die.
Who watched the black wing of the raven
Rise like a cloud 'twixt them and heaven,
And in the distance, flying fast,
Beheld the eagle come at last.

She knelt down in her agony:
"O Lord, it is enough;" said she:
"My heart's prayer putteth me to shame;
"Let me return to whence I came.
"Thou, Who for love's sake didst reprove,
"Forgive me, for the sake of love."

NEW ENIGMAS

Name any gentleman you spy,
And there's a chance that he is I;
Go out to angle, and you may
Catch me on a propitious day:
Booted and spurred, their journey ended,
The weary are by me befriended:
If roasted meat should be your wish,
I am more needful than a dish:
I am acknowledgedly poor:
Yet my resources are no fewer
Than all the trades; there is not one
But I profess, beneath the sun:
I bear a part in many a game;
My worth may change, I am the same.
Sometimes, by you expelled, I roam
Forth from the sanctuary of home.

CHARADES

My *first* is no proof of my *second*,
   Though my second's a proof of my first:
If I were my *whole* I should tell you
   Quite freely my best and my worst.

One clue more: if you fail to discover
   My meaning, you're blind as a mole;
But if you will frankly confess it,
   You show yourself clearly my *whole*.

THE ROSE

O Rose, thou flower of flowers, thou fragrant wonder,
Who shall describe thee in thy ruddy prime;
Thy perfect fulness in the summer time;
When the pale leaves blushingly part asunder
And show the warm red heart lies glowing under?
Thou shouldst bloom surely in some sunny clime,
Untouched by blights and chilly Winter's rime,
Where lightnings never flash, nor peals the thunder.
And yet in happier spheres they cannot need thee
So much as we do with our weight of woe;
Perhaps they would not tend, perhaps not heed thee,
And thou wouldst lonely and neglected grow;
And He Who is All-Wise, He hath decreed thee
To gladden earth and cheer all hearts below.

THE TREES' COUNSELING

I was strolling sorrowfully
   Thro' the corn fields and the meadows;
The stream sounded melancholy,
   And I walked among the shadows;
While the ancient forest trees
Talked together in the breeze;
In the breeze that waved and blew them,
With a strange weird rustle thro' them.

Said the oak unto the others
   In a leafy voice and pleasant:
"Here we all are equal brothers,
   "Here we have nor lord nor peasant.
"Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring,
"Pass in happy following.
"Little winds may whistle by us,
"Little birds may overfly us;

"But the sun still waits in heaven
   "To look down on us in splendour;
"When he goes the moon is given,
   "Full of rays that he doth lend her:
"And tho' sometimes in the night
"Mists may hide her from our sight,
"She comes out in the calm weather,
"With the glorious stars together."

From the fruitage, from the blossom,
   From the trees came no denying;
Then my heart said in my bosom:
   "Wherefore art thou sad and sighing?
"Learn contentment from this wood
"That proclaimeth all states good;

“Go not from it as it found thee;
“Turn thyself and gaze around thee.”

And I turned: behold the shading
   But showed forth the light more clearly;
The wild bees were honey-lading;
   The stream sounded hushing merely,
And the wind not murmuring
Seemed, but gently whispering:
“Get thee patience; and thy spirit
“Shall discern in all things merit.”

BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK

Who standeth at the gate? — A woman old,
   A widow from the husband of her love:
"O Lady, stay; this wind is piercing cold,
   Oh look at the keen frosty moon above;
I have no home, am hungry, feeble, poor:" —
   "I'm really very sorry, but I can
   Do nothing for you, there's the clergyman," —
The Lady said, and shivering closed the door.

Who standeth at the gate? — Way-worn and pale,
   A grey-haired man asks charity again:
"Kind Lady, I have journeyed far, and fail
   Thro' weariness; for I have begged in vain
Some shelter, and can find no lodging-place:" —
   She answered: "There's the Workhouse very near,
   Go, for they'll certainly receive you there:" —
Then shut the door against his pleading face.

Who standeth at the gate? — a stunted child,
   Her sunk eyes sharpened with precocious care:
"O Lady, save me from a home defiled,
   From shameful sights and sounds that taint the air.
Take pity on me, teach me something good;" —
   "For shame, why don't you work instead of cry? —
   I keep no young impostors here, not I;" —
She slammed the door, indignant where she stood.

Who standeth at the gate, and will be heard? —
   Arise, O woman, from thy comforts now:
Go forth again to speak the careless word,
   The cruel word unjust, with hardened brow.
But Who is This, That standeth not to pray

As once, but terrible to judge thy sin?
This, Whom thou wouldst not succour, nor take in,
Nor teach, but leave to perish by the way? —

"Thou didst it not unto the least of these,
And in them hast not done it unto Me.
Thou wast as a princess, rich and at ease,
Now sit in dust and howl for poverty.
Three times I stood beseeching at thy gate,
Three times I came to bless thy soul and save:
But now I come to judge for what I gave,
And now at length thy sorrow is too late."

GIANNI MY FRIEND AND I BOTH STROVE TO EXCEL

Gianni my friend and I both strove to excel,
But, missing better, settled down in well.
Both fail, indeed; but not alike we fail —
My forte being Venus' face, and his a dragon's tail.

THE OFFERING OF THE NEW LAW, THE ONE OBLATION ONCE OFFERED

The Offering of the New Law, the One Oblation once Offered.

"Sacrifice and Offering Thou wouldest not, but a BODY hast Thou prepared Me."

Once I thought to sit so high
In the Palace of the sky;
Now I thank God for His Grace,
If I may fill the lowest place.

Once I thought to scale so soon
Heights above the changing moon;
Now I thank God for delay —
Today, it yet is called today.

While I stumble, halt and blind,
Lo! He waiteth to be kind;
Bless me soon, or bless me slow,
Except He bless, I let not go.

Once for earth I laid my plan,
Once I leaned on strength of man,
When my hope was swept aside,
I stayed my broken heart on pride:

Broken reed hath pierced my hand;
Fell my house I built on sand;
Roofless, wounded, maimed by sin,
Fightings without, and fears within:

Yet, a tree, He feeds my root;
Yet, a branch, He prunes for fruit;
Yet, a sheep, these eves and morns,
He seeks for me among the thorns.

With Thine Image stamped of old,
Find Thy coin more choice than gold;
Known to Thee by name, recall
To Thee Thy home-sick prodigal.

Sacrifice and Offering
None there is that I can bring;
None, save what is Thine alone:
I bring Thee, Lord, but of Thine Own —

Broken Body, Blood Outpoured,
These I bring, my God, my Lord;
Wine of Life, and Living Bread,
With these for me Thy Board is spread.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR

Faint and worn and aged
   One stands knocking at a gate,
Tho' no light shines in the casement,
   Knocking tho' so late.
It has struck eleven
In the courts of Heaven,
   Yet he still doth knock and wait.

While no answer cometh
   From the heavenly hill,
Blessed Angels wonder
   At his earnest will.
Hope and fear but quicken
While the shadows thicken;
   He is knocking knocking still.

Grim the gate unopened
   Stands with bar and lock,
Yet within the unseen Porter
   Hearkens to the knock.
Doing and undoing,
Faint and yet pursuing,
   This man's feet are on the Rock.

With a cry unceasing
   Knocketh prayeth he: —
"Lord, have mercy on me
   "When I cry to Thee." —
With a knock unceasing
And a cry increasing: —
   "O my Lord, remember me."

Still the Porter standeth,
   Love-constrained He standeth near,
While the cry increaseth
   Of that love and fear: —
“Jesus look upon me;
“Christ hast Thou foregone me?
   “If I must, I perish here.” —

Faint the knocking ceases,
   Faint the cry and call:
Is he lost indeed forever,
   Shut without the wall? —
Mighty Arms surround him,
Arms that sought and found him,
   Held withheld and bore thro’ all. —

O celestial mansion
   Open wide the door:
Crown and robes of whiteness,
   Stone inscribed before,
Flocking Angels bear them;
Stretch thy hand and wear them,
   Sit thou down for evermore.

I KNOW YOU NOT

O Christ the Vine with living Fruit,
The twelvefold fruited Tree of Life,
The Balm in Gilead after strife,
The valley Lily and the Rose:
Stronger than Lebanon, Thou Root,
Sweeter than clustered grapes, Thou Vine;
Oh Best, Thou Vineyard of red Wine
Keeping Thy best Wine till the close.

Pearl of great price Thyself alone
And ruddier than the ruby Thou,
Most precious lightening Jasper Stone,
Head of the corner spurned before;
Fair Gate of pearl, Thyself the Door,
Clear golden Street, Thyself the Way,
By Thee we journey toward Thee now
Thro' Thee shall enter Heaven one day.

I thirst for Thee, full Fount and Flood,
My heart calls Thine as deep to deep:
Dost Thou forget Thy sweat and pain,
Thy provocation on the Cross?
Heart pierced for me, vouchsafe to keep
The purchase of Thy lavished Blood;
The gain is Thine Lord if I gain,
Or if I lose Thine Own the loss.

At midnight, saith the parable,
A cry was made, the Bridegroom came:
Those who were ready entered in;
The rest shut out in death and shame
Strove all too late that feast to win

Their die was cast and fixed their lot,
A gulph divided heaven from hell,
The Bridegroom said, ‘I know you not.’

But Who is This That shuts the door
And saith ‘I know you not’ to them?
I see the wounded Hands and Side,
The Brow thorn-tortured long ago:
Yea, This Who grieved and bled and died,
This Same is He Who must condemn;
He called, but they refused to know,
So now He hears their cry no more.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Before the paling of the stars
   Before the winter morn
Before the earliest cockcrow
   Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable
   Cradled in a manger,
In the world His Hands had made
   Born a Stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
   In Jerusalem,
Young and Old lay fast asleep
   In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and Angel Ox and Ass
   Kept a watch together
Before the Christmas daybreak
   In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast
   In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He
   Shepherd of the Fold:
Let us kneel with Mary Maid
   With Joseph bent and hoary
With Saint and Angel Ox and Ass
   To hail the King of Glory.

EASTER EVEN

There is nothing more that they can do
   For all their rage and boast;
Caiaphas with his blaspheming crew,
   Herod with his host,

Pontius Pilate in his judgment hall
   Judging their Judge and his,
Or he who led them all and passed them all
   Arch-Judas with his kiss.

The sepulchre made sure with ponderous stone
   Seal that same stone, O priest;
It may be thou shalt block the Holy One
   From rising in the east:

Set a watch about the sepulchre
   To watch on pain of death;
They must hold fast the stone if One should stir
   And shake it from beneath.

God Almighty He can break a seal,
   And roll away a stone;
Can grind the proud in dust who would not kneel,
   And crush the mighty one.

There is nothing more that they can do
   For all their passionate care,
Those who sit in dust, the blessed few,
   And weep and rend their hair.

Peter, Thomas, Mary Magdalen,
    The Virgin unreproved,
Joseph with Nicodemus foremost men,
    And John the well-beloved.

Bring your finest linen and your spice,
    Swathe the Sacred Dead,
Bind with careful hands and piteous eyes
    The napkin round His Head;

Lay Him in the garden rock to rest;
    Rest you the Sabbath length:
The Sun That went down crimson in the west
    Shall rise renewed in strength.

God Almighty shall give joy for pain,
    Shall comfort him who grieves:
Lo, He with joy shall doubtless come again
    And with Him bring His sheaves.

COME UNTO ME

Oh for the time gone by when thought of Christ
Made His yoke easy and His burden light;
When my heart stirred within me at the sight
Of Altar spread for awful Eucharist;
When all my hopes His promises sufficed;
When my soul watched for Him by day by night;
When my lamp lightened, and my robe was white,
And all seemed loss except the Pearl unpriced.
Yet since He calls me still with tender call,
Since He remembers Whom I half forgot,
I even will run my race and bear my lot:
For Faith the walls of Jericho cast down,
And Hope to whoso runs holds forth a crown,
And Love is Christ, and Christ is All in all.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Jesus, do I love Thee?
Thou art far above me,
Seated out of sight
Hid in heavenly light
Of most highest height.
Martyred hosts implore Thee,
Seraphs fall before Thee,
Angels and Archangels,
Cherub throngs adore Thee;
Blessed she that bore Thee! —
All the Saints approve Thee,
All the Virgins love Thee.
I show as a blot
Blood hath cleansed not,
As a barren spot
In Thy fruitful lot.
I, figtree fruit-unbearing,
Thou, Righteous Judge unsparing:
What canst Thou do more to me
That shall not more undo me?
Thy Justice hath a sound:
"Why cumbereth it the ground?"
Thy Love with stirrings stronger
Pleads: "Give it one year longer."
Thou giv'st me time: but who
Save Thou, shall give me dew,
Shall feed my root with Blood
And stir my sap for good? —
Oh by Thy gifts that shame me
Give more lest they condemn me:
Good Lord, I ask much of Thee,
But most I ask to love Thee:
Kind Lord, be mindful of me,
Love me and make me love Thee.

SPRING FANCIES

I.

Gone were but the Winter,
    Come were but the Spring,
I would go to a covert
    Where the birds sing
    Ding ding, ding a ding.

Where in the whitethorn
    Singeth the thrush,
And the robin sings
    In a holly bush
    With his breast ablush.

Full of fresh scents
    Are the budding boughs,
Arching high over
    A cool green house
    Where doves coo the arouse.

There the sun shineth
    Most shadily;
There sounds an echo
    Of the far sea,
    Tho' far off it be.

II.

All the world is out in leaf,

Half the world in flower,
Faint the rainbow comes and goes
In a sunny shower;
Earth has waited weeks and weeks
For this special hour.

All the world is making love;
Bird to bird in bushes,
Beast to beast in glades, and frog
To frog among the rushes:
Wake, O south wind sweet with spice
Wake the rose to blushes.

All the world is full of change;
Tomorrow may be dreary:
Life breaks forth, to right and left
Pipe the woodnotes cheery —
Nevertheless there lie the dead
Fast asleep and weary —

III.

If it's weary work to live,
It will rest us to lie dead,
With a stone at the tired feet
And a stone at the tired head.

In the waxing April days
Half the world will stir and sing,
But half the world will slug and rot
For all the sap of spring.

LAST NIGHT

Where were you last night? I watched at the gate;
I went down early, I stayed down late.
    Were you snug at home, I should like to know,
Or were you in the coppice wheedling Kate?

She's a fine girl, with a fine clear skin;
Easy to woo, perhaps not hard to win.
    Speak up like a man and tell me the truth:
I'm not one to grow downhearted and thin.

If you love her best speak up like a man;
It's not I will stand in the light of your plan:
    Some girls might cry and scold you a bit
And say they couldn't bear it; but I can.

Love was pleasant enough, and the days went fast;
Pleasant while it lasted, but it needn't last;
    Awhile on the wax and awhile on the wane,
Now dropped away into the past.

Was it pleasant to you? to me it was;
Now clean gone as an image from glass,
    As a goodly rainbow that fades away,
As dew that steams upwards from the grass,

As the first spring day, or the last summer day,
As the sunset flush that leaves heaven grey,
    As a flame burnt out for lack of oil
Which no pains relight or ever may.

Good luck to Kate and good luck to you,
I guess she'll be kind when you come to woo;
   I wish her a pretty face that will last,
I wish her a husband steady and true.

Hate you? not I, my very good friend;
All things begin and all have an end.
   But let broken be broken; I put no faith
In quacks who set up to patch and mend.

Just my love and one word to Kate:
Not to let time slip if she means to mate; —
   For even such a thing has been known
As to miss the chance while we weigh and wait.

PETER GRUMP / FORSS

peter grump

If underneath the water
   You comb your golden hair
With a golden comb, my daughter,
   Oh, would that I were there.
If underneath the wave
You fill a slimy grave,
Would that I, who could not save,
      Might share.

forss

If my love Hero queens it
   In summer Fairyland,
What would I be
   But the ring on her hand?
Her cheek when she leans it
   Would lean on me: —
Or sweet, bitter-sweet,
   The flower that she wore
When we parted, to meet
   On the hither shore
   Anymore? nevermore.

Helen Grey.

Because one loves you, Helen Grey,
   Is that a reason you should pout
   And like a March wind veer about
And frown and say your shrewish say?

Don’t strain the cord until it snaps,
   Don’t split the sound heart with your wedge,
   Don’t cut your fingers with the edge
Of your keen wit: you may perhaps.

Because you’re handsome, Helen Grey,
   Is that a reason to be proud?
   Your eyes are bold, your laugh is loud,
Your steps go mincing on their way:
But so you miss that modest charm
   Which is the surest charm of all;
   Take heed; you yet may trip and fall,
And no man care to stretch his arm.

Stoop from your cold height, Helen Grey,
   Come down and take a lowlier place;
   Come down to fill it now with grace;
Come down you must perforce some day:
For years cannot be kept at bay,
   And fading years will make you old;
   Then in their turn will men seem cold,
When you yourself are nipped and grey.

IF

If he would come today today today,
   Oh what a day today would be;
But now he's away, miles and miles away
   From me across the sea.

O little bird flying flying flying
   To your nest in the warm west,
Tell him as you pass that I am dying,
   As you pass home to your nest.

I have a sister, I have a brother,
   A faithful hound, a tame white dove;
But I had another, once I had another,
   And I miss him my love, my love.

In this weary world it is so cold so cold
   While I sit here all alone
I would not like to wait and to grow old
   But just to be dead and gone.

Make me fair when I lie dead on my bed,
   Fair where I am lying;
Perhaps he may come and look upon me dead
   He for whom I am dying.

Dig my grave for two with a stone to show it
   And on the stone write my name:
If he never comes I shall never know it
   But sleep on all the same.

SEASONS

Oh the cheerful budding-time
   When thorn-hedges turn to green;
When new leaves of elm and lime
   Cleave and shed their winter screen:
Tender lambs are born and baa,
   North wind finds no snow to bring,
Vigorous nature laughs Haha
   In the miracle of spring.

Oh the gorgeous blossom-days
   When broad flag-flowers drink and blow;
In and out in summer blaze
   Dragonflies flash to and fro:
Ashen branches hang out keys,
   Oaks put forth the rosy shoot,
Wandering herds wax sleek at ease,
   Lovely blossoms end in fruit.

Oh the shouting harvest-weeks:
   Mother Earth grown fat with sheaves;
Thrifty gleaner finds who seeks:
   Russet golden pomp of leaves
Crowns the woods, to fall at length;
   Bracing winds are felt to stir,
Ocean gathers up her strength,
   Beasts renew their dwindled fur.

Oh the starving winter-lapse,
   Ice-bound, hunger-pinched and dim:
Dormant roots recall their saps,
   Empty nests show black and grim,
Short-lived sunshine gives no heat,

Undue buds are nipped by frost,
Snow sets forth a windingsheet
And all hope of life seems lost.

HENRY HARDIMAN

Aged 55.

Affliction sore long time he bore,
Physicians were in vain,
Till God did please his soul release,
And ease him of his pain.

WITHIN THE VEIL

She holds a lily in her hand,
Where long ranks of Angels stand;
A silver lily for her wand.

All her hair falls sweeping down,
Her hair that is a golden brown;
A crown beneath her golden crown.

Blooms a rose-bush at her knee,
Good to smell and good to see;
It bears a rose for her, for me:

Her rose a blossom richly grown,
My rose a bud not fully blown
But sure one day to be mine own.

PARADISE: IN A SYMBOL

Golden-winged, silver-winged,
   Winged with flashing flame,
Such a flight of birds I saw,
   Birds without a name:
Singing songs in their own tongue
   (Song of songs) they came.

One to another calling,
   Each answering each,
One to another calling
   In their proper speech:
High above my head they wheeled,
   Far out of reach.

On wings of flame they went and came
   With a cadenced clang,
Their silver wings tinkled,
   Their golden wings rang,
The wind it whistled thro' their wings
   Where in heaven they sang.

They flashed and they darted
   Awhile before mine eyes,
Mounting mounting mounting still
   In haste to scale the skies,
Birds without a nest on earth,
   Birds of Paradise.

Where the moon riseth not
   Nor sun seeks the west,
There to sing their glory

Which they sing at rest,
There to sing their love-song
When they sing their best:

Not in any garden
That mortal foot hath trod,
Not in any flowering tree
That springs from earthly sod,
But in the garden where they dwell
The Paradise of God.

IN JULY

In July
No goodbye;
In Augùst
Part we must.

LOVE HATH A NAME OF DEATH

Love hath a name of Death:
He gives a breath
And takes away.
Lo we beneath his sway
Grow like a flower;
To bloom an hour,
To droop a day,
And fade away.

TU SCENDI DALE STELE, O RE DEL CIELO

Tu scendi dale stele, O Re del Cielo,
E vieni in una grotto al fredo al gelo:
O Bambino mio divino
Io Ti voglio sempre amar!
O Dio beato
E quanto Ti costò l'avermi amato.

ALAS MY LORD

Alas my Lord,
How should I wrestle all the livelong night
With Thee my God, my Strength and my Delight?

How can it need
So agonized an effort and a strain
To make Thy Face of Mercy shine again?

How can it need
Such wringing out of breathless prayer to move
Thee to Thy wonted Love, when Thou art Love?

Yet Abraham
So hung about Thine Arm outstretched and bared,
That for ten righteous Sodom had been spared.

Yet Jacob did
So hold Thee by the clenched hand of prayer
That he prevailed, and Thou didst bless him there.

Elias prayed,
And sealed the founts of Heaven; he prayed again
And lo, Thy Blessing fell in showers of rain.

Gulped by the fish,
As by the pit, lost Jonah made his moan;
And Thou forgavest, waiting to atone.

All Nineveh

Fasting and girt in sackcloth raised a cry,
Which moved Thee ere the day of grace went by.

Thy Church prayed on
And on for blessed Peter in his strait,
Till opened of its own accord the gate.

Yea, Thou my God
Hast prayed all night, and in the garden prayed
Even while, like melting wax, Thy strength was made.

Alas for him
Who faints, despite Thy Pattern, King of Saints:
Alas, alas, for me, the one that faints.

Lord, give us strength
To hold Thee fast, until we hear Thy Voice
Which Thine own know, who hearing It rejoice.

Lord, give us strength
To hold Thee fast until we see Thy Face,
Full Fountain of all Rapture and all Grace.

But when our strength
Shall be made weakness, and our bodies clay,
Hold Thou us fast, and give us sleep till day.

AN ALPHABET

A is the Alphabet, A at its head;
   A is an Antelope, agile to run.
B is the Baker Boy bringing the bread,
   Or black Bear and brown Bear, both begging for bun.

C is a Cornflower come with the corn;
   C is a Cat with a comical look.
D is a dinner which Dahlias adorn;
   D is a Duchess who dines with a Duke.

E is an elegant eloquent Earl;
   E is an Egg whence an Eaglet emerges.
F is a Falcon, with feathers to furl;
   F is a Fountain of full foaming surges.

G is the Gander, the Gosling, the Goose;
   G is a Garnet in girdle of gold.
H is a Heartsease, harmonious of hues;
   H is a huge Hammer, heavy to hold.

I is an Idler who idles on ice;
   I am I — who will say I am not I?
J is a Jacinth, a jewel of price;
   J is a Jay, full of joy in July.

K is a King, or a Kaiser still higher;
   K is a Kitten, or quaint Kangaroo.
L is a Lute or a lovely-toned Lyre;
   L is a Lily all laden with dew.

M is a Meadow where Meadowsweet blows;
M is a Mountain made dim by a mist.
N is a Nut — in a nutshell it grows —
Or a Nest full of Nightingales singing — oh list!

O is an Opal, with only one spark;
O is an Olive, with oil on its skin.
P is a Pony, a pet in a park;
P is the Point of a Pen or a Pin.

Q is a Quail, quick-chirping at morn;
Q is a Quince quite ripe and near dropping.
R is a Rose, rosy red on a thorn;
R is a red-breasted Robin come hopping.

S is a Snow-storm that sweeps o'er the Sea;
S is the Song that the swift Swallows sing.
T is the Tea-table set out for tea;
T is a Tiger with terrible spring.

U, the Umbrella, went up in a shower;
Or Unit is useful with ten to unite.
V is a Violet veined in the flower;
V is a Viper of venomous bite.

W stands for the water-bred Whale;
Stands for the wonderful Wax-work so gay.
X, or XX, or XXX is ale,
Or Policeman X, exercised day after day.

Y is a yellow Yacht, yellow its boat;
Y is the Yucca, the Yam, or the Yew.
Z is a Zebra, zigzagged his coat,
Or Zebu, or Zoöphyte, seen at the Zoo.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

"Oh kiss me once before I go,
  "To make amends for sorrow;
"Oh kiss me once before we part
  "Who shall not meet tomorrow.

"And I was wrong to urge your will,
  "And wrong to mar your life;
"But kiss me once before we part,
  "Because you are my wife."

She turned her head and tossed her head
  And puckered up her brow:
"I never kissed you yet," said she,
  "And I'll not kiss you now.

"Tho' I'm your wife by might and right
  "And forsworn marriage vow,
"I never loved you yet," said she,
  "And I don't love you now."

So he went sailing on the sea,
  And she sat crossed and dumb
While he went sailing on the sea
  Where the storm winds come.

He'd been away a month and day
  Counting from morn to morn:
And many buds had turned to leaves
  And many lambs were born

And many buds had turned to flowers
  For Spring was in a glow,

When she was laid upon her bed
As white and cold as snow.

“Oh let me kiss my baby once,
“Once before I die;
“And bring it sometimes to my grave
“To teach it where I lie.

“And tell my husband when he comes
“Safe home from sea,
“To love the baby that I leave
“If ever he loved me:

“And tell him, not for might or right
“Or forsworn marriage vow
“But for the helpless baby’s sake,
“I would have kissed him now.”

MICHAEL F. M. ROSSETTI

Born April 22nd, 1881; Died January 24th, 1883.

A holy Innocent gone home
Without so much as one sharp wounding word:
A blessed Michael in heaven's lofty dome
Without a sword.

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Brief dawn and noon and setting time!
Our rapid-rounding moon has fled:
A black eclipse before the prime
Has swallowed up that shining head.
Eternity holds up her lookingglass: —
The eclipse of Time will pass,
And all that lovely light return to sight.

==========

I watch the showers and think of flowers:
Alas, my flower that shows no fruit!
My snowdrop plucked, my daisy shoot
Plucked from the root.

Soon Spring will shower, the world will flower,
A world of buds will promise fruit,
Pear trees will shoot and apples shoot
Sound at the root.

Bud of an hour, far off you flower;
My bud, far off you ripen fruit;
My prettiest bud, my straightest shoot
Sweet at the root.

==========

The youngest bud of five,
The least lamb of the fold, —
Bud not to blossom, yet to thrive
Away from cold.

Lamb which we shall not see
Leap at its pretty pranks,
Our lamb at rest and full of glee
On heavenly banks.

A SICK CHILD'S MEDITATION

Pain and weariness, aching eyes and head,
   Pain and weariness all the day and night:
Yet the pillow's soft on my smooth soft bed,
   And fresh air blows in, and mother shades the light.

Thou, O Lord, in pain hadst no pillow soft,
   In Thy weary pain, in Thine agony:
But a cross of shame held Thee up aloft
   Where Thy very mother could do nought for Thee.

I would gaze on Thee, on Thy patient face;
   Make me like Thyself, patient, sweet, at peace;
Make my days all love, and my nights all praise,
   Till all days and nights and patient sufferings cease.

LOVE IS ALL HAPPINESS, LOVE IS ALL BEAUTY

Love is all happiness, love is all beauty,
Love is the crown of flaxen heads and hoary,
Love is the only everlasting duty,
And love is chronicled in endless story
And kindles endless glory.

A HANDY MOLE WHO PLIED NO SHOVEL

A handy Mole who plied no shovel
To excavate his vaulted hovel,
While hard at work met in mid-furrow
An Earthworm boring out his burrow.
Our Mole had dined and must grow thinner
Before he gulped a second dinner,
And on no other terms cared he
To meet a worm of low degree.
The Mole turned on his blindest eye
Passing that base mechanic by;
The Worm entrenched in actual blindness
Ignored or kindness or unkindness;
Each wrought his own exclusive tunnel
To reach his own exclusive funnel.

A plough its flawless track pursuing
Involved them in one common ruin.
Where now the mine and countermine,
The dined-on and the one to dine?
The impartial ploughshare of extinction
Annulled them all without distinction.

ONE SWALLOW DOES NOT MAKE A SUMMER

A Rose which spied one swallow
Made haste to blush and blow:
Others are sure to follow:
Ah no, not so!
The wandering clouds still owe
A few fresh flakes of snow,
Chill fog must fill the hollow,
Before the bird-stream flow
In flood across the main
And winter's woe
End in glad summer come again.
Then thousand flowers may blossom by the shore,
But that Rose never more.

CONTEMPTUOUS OF HIS HOME BEYOND

Contemptuous of his home beyond
The village and the village pond,
A large-souled Frog who spurned each byeway,
Hopped along the imperial highway.

Nor grunting pig nor barking dog
Could disconcert so great a frog.
The morning dew was lingering yet
His sides to cool, his tongue to wet;
The night dew when the night should come
A travelled frog would send him home.

Not so, alas! the wayside grass
Sees him no more: — not so, alas!

A broadwheeled waggon unawares
Ran him down, his joys, his cares.
From dying choke one feeble croak
The Frog's perpetual silence broke:
"Ye buoyant Frogs, ye great and small,
Even I am mortal after all.
My road to Fame turns out a wry way:
I perish on this hideous highway, —
Oh for my old familiar byeway!"

The choking Frog sobbed and was gone:
The wagoner strode whistling on.

Unconscious of the carnage done,
Whistling that wagoner strode on,
Whistling (it may have happened so)

“A Froggy would a-wooing go:”
A hypothetic frog trolled he
Obtuse to a reality.

O rich and poor, O great and small,
Such oversights beset us all:
The mangled frog abides incog,
The uninteresting actual frog;
The hypothetic frog alone
Is the one frog we dwell upon.

A WORD FOR THE DUMB

Pity the sorrows of a poor old Dog
   Who wags his tail a-begging in his need:
Despise not even the sorrows of a Frog,
   God's creature too, and that's enough to plead:
Spare Puss who trusts us purring on our hearth:
   Spare Bunny once so frisky and so free:
Spare all the harmless tenants of the earth:
   Spare, and be spared: — or who shall plead for thee?

CARDINAL NEWMAN

"In the grave, whither thou goest."

O weary Champion of the Cross, lie still:
   Sleep thou at length the all-embracing sleep:
   Long was thy sowing day, rest now and reap:
Thy fast was long, feast now thy spirit's fill.
Yea, take thy fill of love, because thy will
   Chose love not in the shallows but the deep:
   Thy tides were springtides, set against the neap
Of calmer souls: thy flood rebuked their rill.
Now night has come to thee — please God, of rest:
   So some time must it come to every man;
      To first and last, where many last are first.
   Now fixed and finished thine eternal plan,
      Thy best has done its best, thy worst its worst:
Thy best its best, please God, thy best its best.

AN ECHO FROM WILLOWWOOD

"O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood."

D. G. Rossetti.

Two gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,
As on the brink of parting which must be.
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.
Lilies upon the surface, deep below
Two wistful faces craving each for each,
Resolute and reluctant without speech: —
A sudden ripple made the faces flow
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so.

YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE

My vineyard that is mine I have to keep,
   Pruning for fruit the pleasant twigs and leaves.
Tend thou thy cornfield: one day thou shalt reap
   In joy thy ripened sheaves.

Or if thine be an orchard, graft and prop
   Food-bearing trees each watered in its place:
Or if a garden, let it yield for crop
   Sweet herbs and herb of grace.

But if my lot be sand where nothing grows? —
   Nay, who hath said it? Tune a thankful psalm:
For tho' thy desert bloom not as the rose,
   It yet can rear thy palm.

A DEATH OF A FIRST-BORN

January 14th, 1892.

One young life lost, two happy young lives blighted,
With earthward eyes we see:
With eyes uplifted, keener, farther-sighted,
We look, O Lord, to Thee.

Grief hears a funeral knell: hope hears the ringing
Of birthday bells on high;
Faith, hope, and love make answer with soft singing,
Half carol and half cry.

Stoop to console us, Christ, Sole Consolation,
While dust returns to dust;
Until that blessed day when all Thy Nation
Shall rise up of the Just.

FAINT, YET PURSUING

1.

Beyond this shadow and this turbulent sea,
   Shadow of death and turbulent sea of death,
Lies all we long to have or long to be: —
   Take heart, tired man, toil on with lessening breath,
Lay violent hands on heaven's high treasury,
   Be what you long to be thro' life-long scathe:
A little while hope leans on charity,
   A little while charity heartens faith.
A little while: and then what further while?
   One while that ends not and that wearies not,
      For ever new whilst evermore the same:
      All things made new bear each a sweet new name;
   Man's lot of death has turned to life his lot,
And tearful charity to love's own smile.

2.

Press onward, quickened souls, who mounting move,
   Press onward, upward, fire with mounting fire;
   Gathering volume of untold desire
Press upward, homeward, dove with mounting dove.
Point me the excellent way that leads above;
   Woo me with sequent will, me too to aspire;
   With sequent heart to follow higher and higher,
To follow all who follow on to love.
Up the high steep, across the golden sill,
   Up out of shadows into very light,

Up out of dwindling life to life aglow,
I watch you, my beloved, out of sight; —
Sight fails me, and my heart is watching still:
My heart fails, yet I follow on to know.

WHAT WILL IT BE, O MY SOUL, WHAT WILL IT BE

What will it be, O my soul, what will it be
To touch the long-raced-for goal, to handle and see,
To rest in the joy of joys, in the joy of the blest,
To rest and revive and rejoice, to rejoice and to rest!

LORD, THOU ART FULNESS, I AM EMPTINESS

Lord, Thou art fulness, I am emptiness:
Yet hear my heart speak in its speechlessness
Extolling Thine unuttered loveliness.

O LORD, I CANNOT PLEAD MY LOVE OF THEE

O Lord, I cannot plead my love of Thee:
I plead Thy love of me; —
The shallow conduit hails the unfathomed sea.

FAITH AND HOPE ARE WINGS TO LOVE

Faith and Hope are wings to Love,
Silver wings to golden dove.

A SORROWFUL SIGH OF A PRISONER

Lord, comest Thou to me?
    My heart is cold and dead:
Alas that such a heart should be
    The place to lay Thy head!

I SIT A QUEEN, AND AM NO WIDOW, AND SHALL SEE NO SORROW

“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow” —
Yea, scarlet woman, today: but not yea at all tomorrow.
Scarlet queen on a scarlet throne all today without sorrow,
Bethink thee: today must end; there is no end of tomorrow.

PASSING AWAY THE BLISS

Passing away the bliss,
   The anguish passing away:
Thus it is
      Today.

Clean past away the sorrow,
   The pleasure brought back to stay:
Thus and this
      Tomorrow.

LOVE BUILDS A NEST ON EARTH AND WAITS FOR REST

Love builds a nest on earth and waits for rest,
Love sends to heaven the warm heart from its breast,
Looks to be blest and is already blest,
And testifies: “God’s Will is alway best.”

JESUS ALONE: — IF THUS IT WERE TO ME

Jesus alone: — if thus it were to me;
Yet thus it cannot be;
Lord, I have all things if I have but Thee.

Jesus and all: — precious His bounties are,
Yet He more precious far;
Day's-eyes are many, one the Morning Star.

Jesus my all: — so let me rest in love,
Thy peaceable poor dove,
Some time below till timeless time above.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

A boat that sails upon the sea;
   Sails far and far and far away:
Who sail in her sing songs of glee,
         Or watch and pray.

A boat that drifts upon the sea
   Silent and void to sun and air:
Who sailed in her have ended glee
         And watch and prayer.

BOOKS IN THE RUNNING BROOKS

"It is enough, enough," one said,
At play among the flowers:
"I spy a rose upon the thorn,
A rainbow in the showers;
I hear a merry chime of bells
Ring out the passing hours." —
Soft springs the fountain
From the daisied ground:
Softly falling on the moss
Without a sound.

"It is enough," she said, and fixed
Calm eyes upon the sky:
"I watch a flitting tender cloud
Just like a dove go by;
A lark is rising from the grass;
A wren is building nigh." —
Softly the fountain
Threads its silver way,
Screened by the scented bloom
Of whitest may.

"Enough?" she whispered to herself,
As doubting: "Is it so?
Enough to wear the roses fair?
Oh sweetest flowers that blow: —
Oh yes, it surely is enough,
My happy home below." —
A shadow stretcheth
From the hither shore:
Those waters darken
More and more and more.

“It is enough,” she says; but with
A listless, weary moan:
“Enough,” if mixing with her friends;
“Enough,” if left alone.
But to herself: “Not yet enough,
This suffering, to atone?” —
The cold black waters
Seem to stagnate there;
Without a single wave,
Or breath of air.

And now she says: “It is enough,”
Half languid and half stirred:
“Enough,” to silence and to sound,
Thorn, blossom, soaring bird:
“Enough,” she says; but with a lack
Of something in the word. —
Defiled and turbid
See the waters pass;
Half light, half shadow,
Struggling thro’ the grass.

Ah, will it ever dawn, that day
When calm for good or ill
Her heart shall say: “It is enough,
For Thou art with me still;
It is enough, O Lord my God,
Thine only blessed Will.” —
Then shall the fountain sing
And flow to rest;
Clear as the sun track
To the purple West.

GONE BEFORE

She was most like a rose, when it flushes rarest;
She was most like a lily, when it blows fairest;
She was most like a violet, sweetest on the bank:
Now she's only like the snow cold and blank
    After the sun sank.

She left us in the early days, she would not linger
For orange blossoms in her hair, or ring on finger:
Did she deem windy grass more good than these?
Now the turf that's between us and the hedging trees
    Might as well be seas.

I had trained a branch she shelters not under,
I had reared a flower she snapped asunder:
In the bush and on the stately bough
Birds sing; she who watched them track the plough
    Cannot hear them now.

Every bird has a nest hidden somewhere
For itself and its mate and joys that come there,
Tho' it soar to the clouds, finding there its rest:
You sang in the height, but no more with eager breast
    Stoop to your own nest.

If I could win you back from heaven-gate lofty,
Perhaps you would but grieve returning softly:
Surely they would miss you in the blessed throng,
Miss your sweet voice in their sweetest song,
    Reckon time too long.

Earth is not good enough for you, my sweet, my sweetest;
Life on earth seemed long to you tho' to me fleetest.
I would not wish you back if a wish would do:
Only love I long for heaven with you
    Heart-pierced thro' and thro'.

THE DEAD CITY

Once I rambled in a wood
With a careless hardihood,
Heeding not the tangled way;
Labyrinths around me lay,
But for them I never stood.

On, still on, I wandered on,
And the sun above me shone;
And the birds around me winging
With their everlasting singing
Made me feel not quite alone.

In the branches of the trees,
Murmured like the hum of bees
The low sound of happy breezes,
Whose sweet voice that never ceases
Lulls the heart to perfect ease.

Streamlets bubbled all around
On the green and fertile ground,
Thro' the rushes and the grass,
Like a sheet of liquid glass,
With a soft and trickling sound.

And I went, I went on faster,
Contemplating no disaster;
And I plucked ripe blackberries,
But the birds with envious eyes
Came and stole them from their master:

For the birds here were all tame;
Some with bodies like a flame,
Some that glanced the branches thro'
Pure and colourless as dew;
Fearlessly to me they came.

Before me no mortal stood
In the mazes of that wood;
Before me the birds had never
Seen a man, but dwelt for ever
In a happy solitude;

Happy solitude, and blest
With beatitude of rest;
Where the woods are ever vernal,
And the life and joy eternal,
Without Death's or Sorrow's test.

Oh most blessed solitude!
Oh most full beatitude!
Where are quiet without strife,
And imperishable life,
Nothing marred, and all things good.

And the bright sun, life begetting,
Never rising, never setting,
Shining warmly overhead,
Nor too pallid, nor too red,
Lulled me to a sweet forgetting,

Sweet forgetting of the time:
And I listened for no chime
Which might warn me to begone;
But I wandered on, still on,
'Neath the boughs of oak and lime.

Know I not how long I strayed
In the pleasant leafy shade;
But the trees had gradually
Grown more rare, the air more free,
The sun hotter overhead.

Soon the birds no more were seen
Glancing thro' the living green;
And a blight had passed upon
All the trees; and the pale sun
Shone with a strange lurid sheen.

Then a darkness spread around:
I saw nought, I heard no sound;
Solid darkness overhead,
With a trembling cautious tread
Passed I o'er the unseen ground.

But at length a pallid light
Broke upon my searching sight;
A pale solitary ray,
Like a star at dawn of day
Ere the sun is hot and bright.

Towards its faintly glimmering beam
I went on as in a dream;
A strange dream of hope and fear!
And I saw as I drew near
'Twas in truth no planet's gleam;

But a lamp above a gate
Shone in solitary state
O'er a desert drear and cold,
O'er a heap of ruins old,
O'er a scene most desolate.

By that gate I entered lone
A fair city of white stone;
And a lovely light to see
Dawned, and spread most gradually
Till the air grew warm and shone.

Thro' the splendid streets I strayed
In that radiance without shade,
Yet I heard no human sound;
All was still and silent round
As a city of the dead.

All the doors were open wide;
Lattices on every side
In the wind swung to and fro;
Wind that whispered very low:
Go and see the end of pride.

With a fixed determination
Entered I each habitation,
But they all were tenantless;
All was utter loneliness,
All was deathless desolation.

In the noiseless market-place
Was no care-worn busy face;
There were none to buy or sell,
None to listen or to tell,
In this silent emptiness.

Thro' the city on I went
Full of awe and wonderment;
Still the light around me shone,

And I wandered on, still on,
In my great astonishment,

Till at length I reached a place
Where amid an ample space
Rose a palace for a king;
Golden was the turreting,
And of solid gold the base.

The great porch was ivory,
And the steps were ebony;
Diamond and chrysoprase
Set the pillars in a blaze,
Capitalled with jewelry.

None was there to bar my way —
And the breezes seemed to say:
Touch not these, but pass them by,
Pressing onwards: therefore I
Entered in and made no stay.

All around was desolate:
I went on; a silent state
Reigned in each deserted room,
And I hastened thro' the gloom
Till I reached an outer gate.

Soon a shady avenue
Blossom-perfumed, met my view.
Here and there the sun-beams fell
On pure founts, whose sudden swell
Up from marble basins flew.

Every tree was fresh and green;

Not a withered leaf was seen
Thro' the veil of flowers and fruit;
Strong and sapful were the root,
The top boughs, and all between.

Vines were climbing everywhere
Full of purple grapes and fair:
And far off I saw the corn
With its heavy head down borne,
By the odour-laden air.

Who shall strip the bending vine?
Who shall tread the press for wine?
Who shall bring the harvest in
When the pallid ears begin
In the sun to glow and shine?

On I went, alone, alone,
Till I saw a tent that shone
With each bright and lustrous hue;
It was trimmed with jewels too,
And with flowers; not one was gone.

Then the breezes whispered me:
Enter in, and look, and see
How for luxury and pride
A great multitude have died: —
And I entered tremblingly.

Lo, a splendid banquet laid
In the cool and pleasant shade.
Mighty tables, every thing
Of sweet Nature's furnishing
That was rich and rare, displayed;

And each strange and luscious cate
Practised Art makes delicate;
With a thousand fair devices
Full of odors and of spices;
And a warm voluptuous state.

All the vessels were of gold
Set with gems of worth untold.
In the midst a fountain rose
Of pure milk, whose rippling flows
In a silver basin rolled.

In green emerald baskets were
Sun-red apples, streaked, and fair;
Here the nectarine and peach
And ripe plum lay, and on each
The bloom rested everywhere.

Grapes were hanging overhead,
Purple, pale, and ruby-red;
And in panniers all around
Yellow melons shone, fresh found,
With the dew upon them spread.

And the apricot and pear
And the pulpy fig were there;
Cherries and dark mulberries,
Bunchy currants, strawberries,
And the lemon wan and fair.

And unnumbered others too,
Fruits of every size and hue,
Juicy in their ripe perfection,
Cool beneath the cool reflection
Of the curtains' skyey blue.

All the floor was strewn with flowers
Fresh from sunshine and from showers,
Roses, lilies, jessamine;
And the ivy ran between
Like a thought in happy hours.

And this feast too lacked no guest
With its warm delicious rest;
With its couches softly sinking,
And its glow, not made for thinking,
But for careless joy at best.

Many banqueters were there,
Wrinkled age, the young, the fair;
In the splendid revelry
Flushing cheek and kindling eye
Told of gladness without care.

Yet no laughter rang around,
Yet they uttered forth no sound;
With the smile upon his face
Each sat moveless in his place,
Silently, as if spell-bound.

The low whispering voice was gone,
And I felt awed and alone.
In my great astonishment
To the feasters up I went —
Lo, they all were turned to stone.

Yea they all were statue-cold,
Men and women, young and old;
With the life-like look and smile

And the flush; and all the while
The hard fingers kept their hold.

Here a little child was sitting
With a merry glance, befitting
Happy age and heedless heart;
There a young man sat apart
With a forward look unweeting.

Nigh them was a maiden fair;
And the ringlets of her hair
Round her slender fingers twined;
And she blushed as she reclined,
Knowing that her love was there.

Here a dead man sat to sup,
In his hand a drinking cup;
Wine cup of the heavy gold,
Human hand stony and cold,
And no life-breath struggling up.

There a mother lay, and smiled
Down upon her infant child;
Happy child and happy mother
Laughing back to one another
With a gladness undefiled.

Here an old man slept, worn out
With the revelry and rout;
Here a strong man sat and gazed
On a girl, whose eyes upraised
No more wandered round about.

And none broke the stillness, none;

I was the sole living one.
And methought that silently
Many seemed to look on me
With strange steadfast eyes that shone.

Full of fear I would have fled;
Full of fear I bent my head,
Shutting out each stony guest: —
When I looked again the feast
And the tent had vanished.

Yes, once more I stood alone
Where the happy sunlight shone
And a gentle wind was sighing,
And the little birds were flying,
And the dreariness was gone.

All these things that I have said
Awed me, and made me afraid.
What was I that I should see
So much hidden mystery?
And I straightway knelt and prayed.

THE WATER SPIRIT'S SONG

In the silent hour of even,
When the stars are in the heaven,
When in the azure cloudless sky
The moon beams forth all lustrously,
When over hill and over vale
Is wafted the sweet-scented gale,
When murmurs thro' the forest trees
The cool, refreshing, evening breeze,
When the nightingale's wild melody
Is waking herb and flower and tree,
From their perfumed and soft repose,
To list the praises of the rose;
When the ocean sleeps deceitfully,
When the waves are resting quietly,
I spread my bright wings, and fly far away
To my beautiful sister's mansion gay:
I leave behind me rock and mountain,
I leave behind me rill and fountain,
And I dive far down in the murmuring sea,
Where my fair sister welcomes me joyously;
For she's Queen of Ocean forever and ever,
And I of each fountain and still lake and river.

She dwells in a palace of coral
  Of diamond and pearl;
And in each jeweled chamber the fishes
  Their scaly length unfurl;
And the sun can dart no light
  On the depths beneath the sea;
But the ruby there shines bright
  And sparkles brilliantly;
No mortal e'er trod on the surface
  Of the adamantine floor;
No human being e'er passed the bound

Of the pearl-encrusted door.
But the mermaidens sing plaintively
Beneath the deep blue ocean,
And to their song the green fishes dance
With undulating motion.
And the cold bright moon looks down on us
With her fixed unchanging smile;
'Neath her chilly glance the mermaids dance
Upon each coral isle;
And her beams she laves in the briny waves
With loving constancy;
And she never ceases with light caresses
To soothe the swelling sea;
All night on us she softly shines
With a fond and tender gaze,
Till the sun blushes red from his ocean bed
And sends forth his warming rays.
And then she flies to other skies
Till the sun has run his race,
And again the day to the night's soft sway
To the moon and stars gives place.

And when the bright sun doth arise,
To tinge with gold the vaulted skies,
When the nightingale no longer sings,
And the blush rose forth its odour flings,
When the breath of morn is rustling through
The trees, and kissing away the dew,
When the sea casts up its foam and spray,
And greets the fresh gale that speeds away,
I fly back to my home in the rushing cascade —
By the silvery streamlet my dark hair I braid,
And then when the sun once more sinks in the ocean,
I glide with a floating and passionless motion,
To my sister 'neath the boundless sea
And with her till morn dwell joyously.

THE SONG OF THE STAR

I am a star dwelling on high
In the azure of the vaulted sky.
I shine on the land and I shine on the sea,
And the little breezes talk to me.
The waves rise towards me every one
And forget the brightness of the sun:
The growing grass springs up towards me
And forgets the day's fertility.
My face is light, and my beam is life,
And my passionless being hath no strife.
In me no love is turned to hate,
No fulness is made desolate;
Here is no hope, no fear, no grief,
Here is no pain and no relief;
Nor birth nor death hath part in me,
But a profound tranquillity.
The blossoms that bloomed yesterday
Unaltered shall bloom on today,
And on the morrow shall not fade.
Within the everlasting shade
The fountain gushing up for ever
Flows on to the eternal river,
That, running by a reedy shore,
Bubbles, bubbles evermore.
The happy birds sing in the trees
To the music of the southern breeze;
And they fear no lack of food,
Chirping in the underwood;
For ripe seeds and berried bushes
Serve the finches and the thrushes,
And all feathered fowls that dwell
In that shade majestical.
Beyond all clouds and all mistiness
I float in the strength of my loveliness;

And I move round the sun with a measured motion
In the blue expanse of the skyey ocean;
And I hear the song of the Angel throng
In a river of extasy flow along,
Without a pausing, without a hushing,
Like an everlasting fountain's gushing
That of its own will bubbles up
From a white untainted cup.
Countless planets float round me
Differing all in majesty;
Smaller some, and some more great,
Amethystine, roseate,
Golden, silvery, glowing blue,
Hueless, and of every hue.
Each and all, both great and small,
With a cadence musical,
Shoot out rays of glowing praise,
Never ending, but always
Hymning the Creator's might
Who hath filled them full of light.
Pealing through eternity,
Filling out immensity,
Sun and moon and stars together,
In heights where is no cloudy weather;
Where is nor storm, nor mist, nor rain;
Where night goeth not to come again.
On, and on, and on forever,
Never ceasing, sinking never,
Voiceless adorations rise
To the Heaven above the skies.
We all chant with a holy harmony,
No discord marreth our melody;
Here are no strifes nor envyings,
But each with love joyously sings,
Forever and ever floating free
In the azure light of infinity.

SUMMER

Hark to the song of greeting! the tall trees
Murmur their welcome in the southern breeze.
Amid the thickest foliage many a bird
Sits singing, their shrill matins scarcely heard
One by one, but all together
Welcoming the sunny weather.
In every bower hums a bee
Fluttering melodiously.
Murmurs joy in every brook,
Rippling with a pleasant look.
What greet they with their guileless bliss?
What welcome with a song like this?

See in the south a radiant form,
  Her fair head crowned with roses;
From her bright foot-path flies the storm;
  Upon her breast reposes
Many an unconfinèd tress,
Golden, glossy, motionless.
Face and form are love and light,
Soft ineffably, yet bright.
All her path is strewn with flowers,
Round her float the laughing Hours,
Heaven and earth make joyful din,
Welcoming sweet Summer in.

And now she alights on the Earth
  To play with her children the flowers;
She touches the stems, and the buds have birth,
  And gently she trains them in bowers.
And the bees and the birds are glad,
  And the wind catches warmth from her breath,
And around her is nothing sad,

Nor any traces of death.
See now she lays her down
With roses for her crown,
With jessamine and myrtle
Forming her fragrant kirtle;
Conquered by softest slumbers
No more the hours she numbers,
The hours that intervene
Ere she may wing her flight
Far from this smiling scene
With all her love and light,
And leave the flowers and the summer bowers
To wither in autumn and winter hours.

And must they wither then ?
Their life and their perfume
Sinking so soon again
Into their earthy tomb.
Let us bind her as she lies
Ere the fleeting moment flies,
Hand and foot and arm and bosom,
With a chain of bud and blossom ;
Twine red roses round her hands ;
Round her feet twine myrtle bands.
Heap up flowers, higher, higher, —
Tulips like a glowing fire.
Clematis of milky whiteness,
Sweet geraniums' varied brightness,
Honeysuckle, commeline,
Roses, myrtles, jessamine ;
Heap them higher, bloom on bloom,
Bury her as in. a tomb.

But alas they are withered all.
And how can dead flowers bind her?
She pushes away her pall.
And she leaves the dead behind her :
And she flies across the seas.

To gladden for a time
The blossoms and the bees
Of some far-distant clime.

TO MY MOTHER ON HER BIRTHDAY

Today's your natal day,
Sweet flowers I bring;
Mother, accept, I pray,
My offering.

And may you happy live,
And long us bless;
Receiving as you give
Great happiness.

THE RUINED CROSS

She wreathed bright flower-wreaths in her hair,
   And all men smiled as she passed by:
And she smiled too, for now she knew
      That her last hour was nigh.

Soft radiance shone upon her path,
   Her step was fearless, free and light;
Her cheek was flushed with burning red.
      Her azure eye was bright

On, on, still on, she hurried on,
   For in the wind she heard a knell,
And to her ear the water's splash
      Was as a dying bell.

And in the flowers she saw decay,
   And saw decay in every tree;
And change was written on the sun,
      And change upon the sea.

She might not pause upon the road,
   Lest Death should claim his promised bride.
Ere yet her longing was fulfilled,
      Her young heart satisfied.

The sun arose, the sun went down,
   The moonbeams on the waters shone
How many times! yet passed she not,
      But ever journeyed on.

And still, tho' toilsome was the way,
The color flushed her sunken cheek;
Nor dimmed the azure of her eye,
Nor waxed her purpose weak.

At length she reached a lonely spot, …
Why trembled she? why turned she pale?
A ruined Cross stood in the midst
Of a most quiet vale.

A Cross o'ergrown with moss and flowers,
A cross fast sinking to decay;
The Cross she knew, the Cross she loved
In childhood's happy day.

And she had journeyed many miles,
Morning and eve untiringly,
To look again upon that Cross,
To look again and die.

She knelt within its sacred shade,
And hung her garland on the stone;
Her azure eyes were bright with tears
Of love and joy unknown.

And there she knelt, and there she prayed
Until her heart was satisfied; —
The ancient Cross is standing yet,
The youthful wanderer died.

EVA

(From Maturin's "Woman.")

Yes, I loved him all too well,
   And my punishment is just,
But its greatness who can tell?
   Still I have a steadfast trust
That the sorrow shall not last,
And the trial shall be past,
And my faith shall anchor fast.

Lord, Thou knowest, I have said,
   All is good that comes from Thee;
Unto Thee I bow my head.
   I have not repented me.
Still, oh! still 'tis bitter ill;
Still I have a stubborn will,
And my heart is haughty still:

Haughty in its humbleness;
   Proud in its idolatry;
Let the loved heel gall and press
   On my neck: so it should be.
'Twas in madness that I spake it:
Let him leave my heart or take it,
Let him heal my heart or break it;

But it still shall be for him,
   It shall love him only still. —
Nay, it was no passing whim,
   But a woman's steadfast will.
And this word is aye returning:
And I cannot quell the yearning

That in breast and brain is burning.

Tears of mine may quench it never,
   Bitter tears shed all alone;
Dropping, dropping, dropping ever
   For the thought of him that's gone:
Dropping when none see or know.
Woe is me! they only flow
For the joys of long ago.

Foolish one, were it not fitter
   For thyself to mourn and pray?
Tho' thy Father's cup be bitter,
   Put it not from thee away.
It is good and meet and right.
Yea, if darksome be the night,
The day dawn shall be more bright.

Hast thou too much time, in sooth,
   For the work of penitence,
That thou wastest tears and youth
   Mourning one who is gone hence?
For thyself cry out and weep
Ere that thou lie down and sleep,
And for ever silence keep.

Humbly strive to enter in
   By the strait and narrow gate;
Strive the courts of Heaven to win,
   Where nought maketh desolate;
Where are none to come and go;
Where no tears may ever flow;
Where nor death may be, nor woe.

And in prayer think thou of him

Who hath left thee sad and lone.
Pray that earth's light may grow dim,
So to him Heaven's light be shown.
Pray that, all thy sins forgiven,
Pray that, from his errors shriven,
Ye may meet at length in Heaven.

LOVE EPHEMERAL

Love is sweet, and so are flowers
Blooming in bright summer bowers;
So are waters, clear and pure,
In some hidden fountain's store;
So is the soft southern breeze
Sighing low among the trees;
So is the bright queen of heaven,
Reigning in the quiet even:
Yet the pallid moon may breed
Madness in man's feeble seed;
And the wind's soft influence
Often breathes the pestilence;
And the waves may sullied be
As they hurry to the sea;
Flowers soon must fade away —
Love endures but for a day.

BURIAL ANTHEM

Flesh of our flesh — bone of our bone —
(For thou and we in Christ are one)
Thy soul unto its rest hath flown,
And thou has left us all alone
Our weary race to run
In doubt, and want, and sin, and pain,
Whilst thou wilt never sin again.
For us remaineth heaviness;
Thou never more shalt feel distress,
For thou hast found repose
Beside the bright eternal river
That clear and pure flows on forever,
And sings as on it flows.
And it is better far for thee
To reach at once thy rest,
Than share with us earth's misery,
Or tainted joy at best;
Brother, we will not mourn for thee,
Although our hearts be weary
Of struggling with our enemy,
When all around is dreary.
But we will pray that still we may
Press onward in the narrow way
With a calm thankful resignation,
And joy in this our desolation.
And we will hope at length to be
With our Great Head, and, friend! with thee
Beside that river blest.

SAPPHO

I sigh at day-dawn, and I sigh
When the dull day is passing by.
I sigh at evening, and again
I sigh when night brings sleep to men.
Oh! it were better far to die
Than thus for ever mourn and sigh,
And in death's dreamless sleep to be
Unconscious that none weep for me;
Eased from my weight of heaviness,
Forgetful of forgetfulness,
Resting from pain and care and sorrow
Thro' the long night that knows no morrow;
Living unloved, to die unknown,
Unwept, untended and alone.

TASSO AND LEONORA

A glorious vision hovers o’er his soul,
   Gilding the prison and the weary bed
   Though hard the pillow placed beneath his head;
Though brackish be the water in the bowl
Beside him; he can see the planets roll
   In glowing adoration, without dread;
   Knowing how, by unerring wisdom led,
They struggle not against the strong control.
When suddenly a star shoots from the skies,
   Than all the other stars more purely bright,
Replete with heavenly loves and harmonies;
   He starts: — what meets his full awakening sight?
Lo! Leonora with large humid eyes,
   Gazing upon him in the misty light.

ON THE DEATH OF A CAT

A Friend of Mine, Aged Ten Years and a Half.

Who shall tell the lady's grief
When her Cat was past relief?
Who shall number the hot tears
Shed o'er her, beloved for years?
Who shall say the dark dismay
Which her dying caused that day?

Come, ye Muses, one and all,
Come obedient to my call.
Come and mourn, with tuneful breath,
Each one for a separate death;
And while you in numbers sigh,
I will sing her elegy.

Of a noble race she came,
And Grimalkin was her name.
Young and old full many a mouse
Felt the prowess of her house:
Weak and strong full many a rat
Cowered beneath her crushing pat:
And the birds around the place
Shrank from her too close embrace.
But one night, reft of her strength,
She laid down and died at length:
Lay a kitten by her side,
In whose life the mother died.
Spare her line and lineage,
Guard her kitten's tender age,
And that kitten's name as wide
Shall be known as her's that died.

And whoever passes by
The poor grave where Puss doth lie,
Softly, softly let him tread,
Nor disturb her narrow bed.

MOTHER AND CHILD

"What art thou thinking of," said the Mother,
"What art thou thinking of my child?"
"I was thinking of Heaven," he answered her,
And looked up in her face and smiled.

"And what didst thou think of Heaven?" she said;
"Tell me, my little one!"
"Oh . . , I thought that there the flowers never fade,
That there never sets the sun."

"And wouldst thou love to go thither, my child?
Thither wouldst thou love to go?
And leave the pretty flowers that wither,
And the sun that sets below?"

"Oh, I would be glad to go there, mother,
To go and live there now;
And I would pray for thy coming, mother,
My mother, wouldst not thou?"

FAIR MARGARET

"Fair Margaret sat in her bower window,
Combing her yellow hair;
There she spied sweet William and his bride
As they were a riding near." — *Old Ballad*.

The faith of years is broken,
The fate of years is spoken,
Years past, and years to come;
I pity and I scorn thee,
I would not now adorn me
For thy false bridal home.

Yet thou, perfidious wooer,
Thou yet mayst be the ruer,
For thou mayst meet with one
Who will not love thee really,
But cast kind glances merely
That thou mayst be undone.

Soft eyes, and dark, and flashing,
Thy hopes may yet be dashing,
Thou yet mayst be deceived;
And then think on her sadly,
Whom once thou grievedst gladly,
Ere thou thyself wast grieved.

And if despair should seize thee,
And urge thee to release thee
From weariness and life,
Oh! think on her who'll languish,
Bearing the bitter anguish

Of a heart's bitter strife.

For, though I may not love thee,
Though calm as heaven above me,
My thoughts of thee must be,
I cannot break so lightly
The chain that bound me tightly,
Once bound my soul to thee.

EARTH AND HEAVEN

Water calmly flowing,
Sun-light deeply glowing,
Swans some river riding,
That is gently gliding
By the fresh green rushes;
The sweet rose that blushes,
Hyacinths whose dow'r
Is both scent and flow'r,
Skylark's soaring motion,
Sun-rise from the ocean,
Jewels that lie sparkling
'Neath the waters darkling,
Sea-weed, coral, amber,
Flow'rs that climb and clamber,
Or more lowly flourish
Where the earth may nourish;
All these are beautiful,
Of beauty Earth is full: —
Say, to our promised Heaven
Can greater charms be given?
Yes; for aye in Heav'n doth dwell
Glowing, indestructible,
What here below finds tainted birth
In the corrupted sons of Earth;
For, filling there and satisfying
Man's soul unchanging and undying,
Earth's fleeting joys and beauties far above,
In Heaven is Love.

LOVE ATTACKED

Love is more sweet than flowers,
   But sooner dying;
Warmer than sunny hours,
   But faster flying;

Softer than music's whispers
   Springing with day
To murmur till the vespers,
   Then die away;

More kind than friendship's greeting,
   But as untrue,
Brighter than hope, but fleeting
   More swiftly too;

Like breath of summer breezes
   Gently it sighs,
But soon, alas! one ceases,
   The other dies;

And like an inundation
   It leaves behind
An utter desolation
   Of heart and mind.

Who then would court Love's presence,
   If here below
It can but be the essence
   Of restless woe?

Returned or unrequited

‘Tis still the same;
The flame was never lighted,
Or sinks the flame.

Yet all, both fools and sages,
Have felt its power,
In distant lands and ages,
Here, at this hour.

Then what from fear and weeping
Shall give me rest?
Oh tell me, ye who sleeping
At length are blest!

In answer to my crying
Sounds like incense
Rose from the earth, replying,
Indifference.

LOVE DEFENDED

Who extols a wilderness?
   Who hath praised indifference?
Foolish one, thy words are sweet,
      But devoid of sense.

As the man who ne'er hath seen,
   Or as he who cannot hear,
Is the heart that hath no part
      In Love's hope and fear.

True, the blind do not perceive
   The unsightly things around;
True, the deaf man trembleth not
      At an awful sound.

But the face of Heaven and Earth,
   And the murmur of the main,
Surely are a recompense
      For a little pain.

So, tho' Love may not be free
   Always from a taint of grief,
If its sting is very sharp,
      Great is its relief.

DIVINE AND HUMAN PLEADING

"I would the saints could hear our prayers!
   If such a thing might be,
O blessed Mary Magdalene,
   I would appeal to thee!

"For once in lowly penitence
   Thy head was bowed with shame;
But now thou hast a glorious place,
   And hast an unknown name."

So mused a trembling contrite man,
   So mused he wearily;
By angels borne his thoughts appeared
   Before the Throne on high.

The calm, still night was at its noon,
   And all men were at rest,
When came before the sleeper's eyes
   A vision of the blest.

A woman stood beside his bed,
   Her breath was fragrance all;
Round her the light was very bright,
   The air was musical.

Her footsteps shone upon the stars,
   Her robe was spotless white;
Her breast was radiant with the Cross,
   Her head with living light.

Her eyes beamed with a sacred fire;
    And on her shoulders fair,
From underneath her golden crown
    Clustered her golden hair.

Yet on her bosom her white hands
    Were folded quietly;
Yet was her glorious head bowed low
    In deep humility.

Long time she looked upon the ground;
    Then raising her bright eyes
Her voice came forth as sweet and soft
    As music when it dies.

"O thou who in thy secret hour
    Hast dared to think that aught
Is faulty in God's perfect plan,
    And perfect in thy thought!

"Thou who the pleadings would'st prefer
    Of one sin-stained like me
To His Who is the Lord of Life,
    To His Who died for thee!

"In mercy I am sent from Heaven:
    Be timely wise, and learn
To seek His love Who waits for thee,
    Inviting thy return.

"Well know I His long-suffering
    And intercession's worth;
My guilt was as a heavy chain
    That bound me to the earth.

“It was a clog upon my feet,
    To keep me from Life’s path;
It was a stain upon my hands,
    A curse upon my hearth.

“But there is mighty Power and Grace
    Can loose the heavy chain,
Can free the feet, can cleanse the hands,
    Can purge the hearth again.

“Weeping I sought the Lord of Life,
    Bowed with my shame and sin;
And then unto my wondering heart
    Love’s searching fire came in.

“It was with deep repentance,
    I knelt down at His Feet
Who can change the sorrow into joy,
    The bitter into sweet.

“I had cast away my jewels
    And my rich attire;
And my breast was filled with a holy flame,
    And my heart with a holy fire.

“My tears were more precious
    Than my precious pearls; —
My tears that fell upon His Feet
    As I wiped Them with my curls.

“My youth and my beauty
    Were budding to their prime;

But I wept for the great transgression,
    The sin of other time.

“Trembling betwixt hope and fear,
    I sought the King of Heaven;
Forsook the evil of my ways,
    Loved much, and was forgiven.

“In hope and fear I went to Him,
    He broke and healed my heart;
No man was there to intercede;
    As I was, so thou art.”

TO MY FRIEND ELIZABETH

with some Postage Stamps towards a collection.

Sweetest Elizabeth, accept I pray
These lowly stamps I send in homage true;
One hundred humble servants in their way
Are not to be despised, though poor to view.
Their livery of red and black, nor gay,
Nor sober all, is typical of you,
In whom are gravity and gladness mixed.
Thought here, smiles there; perfection lies betwixt.

AMORE E DOVERE

Chiami il mio core
Crudele, altero,
No non è vero,
Crudel non è:
T' amo, t' amai —
E tu lo sai —
Men del dovere.
Ma più di me.

O ruscelletto,
Dì al Dio d'Amore
Che questo petto,
Che questo core,
A lui ricetto
Più non darà.
L'alme tradisce
Senza rimorso ;
Non compatisce,
Non dà soccorso,
E si nudrisce
Di crudeltà.

T'intendo, ti lagni,
Mio povero core ;
T'intendo, l'amore
Si lagna di me.
Deh! placati alfine;
Mi pungon le spine
Che vengon da te.

AMORE E DISPETTO

O grande Amor possente
Che reggi la mia mente,
Odi l'umíl preghiera
D'un tristo tuo fedel:
Deh f ache Lisa altiera
Più non mi sia crudel.

Un giorno essendo stanco
Posai sull' erba il fianco;
Mesto pensando a quella
Che questo cor ferì,
Oh quanto sembò bella,
Guardommi e poi fuggì,

Quindì la vidiandare
Con lievi passi al mare;
E parve sì pietosa
Che dissi alfin: Chi sa!
Forse, non più sdegnosa,
Verso di me sarà.

Timido allora io sorsi,
E ad incontrarla corsi;
Mi vide, e gli occhi lenti
Chinando, si arrossì;
Ed io sclamai: Deh senti,
Lisa, pietà — così

Volea seguir; ma intanto
Mi venne al ciglio il pianto;
E mi confuse i detti
Un tenero sospir;
Poi muto alquano stetti,

Ed ella prese a dir:

Amar non voglio alcuno,
E s'io volessi, l'uno
Tu non saresti. E poi
Tacendo, se ne andò. —
Se servo più mi vuoi,
Amor, tu dei far ciò;

Spirar le devi in core
Sensi d'un puro amore;
Chè se ciò far non puoi,
O se non vuoi ciò far,
Io spreaao i lacci tuoi,
E più non voglio amar.

LOVE AND HOPE

Love for ever dwells in Heaven,
   Hope entereth not there.
To despairing man Love's given,
   Hope dwells not with despair.
Love reigneth high, and reigneth low, and reigneth everywhere.

In the inmost heart Love dwelleth,
   It may not quenchèd be;
E'en when the life-blood welleth
   Its fond effects we see.
In the name that leaves the lips the last, fades last from memory.

And when we shall awaken
   Ascending to the sky,
Tho' Hope shall have forsaken,
   Sweet Love shall never die.
For perfect Love, and perfect bliss, shall be our lot on high.

SERENADE

Come, wander forth with me! the orange flowers
Breathe faintest perfume from the summer bowers.
Come, wander forth with me! the moon on high
Shines proudly in a flood of brilliancy.
Around her car each burning star
Gleams like a beacon from afar;
The night-wind scarce disturbs the sea
As it sighs forth so languidly,
Laden with sweetness like a bee;
And all is still, below, above,
Save murmurs of the turtle dove,
That murmurs ever of its love:
For now ‘tis the hour, the balmy hour
When the strains of love have chiefly power;
When the maid looks forth from her latticed bower,
With a gentle yielding smile,
Donning her mantle all the while.
Now the moon beams down on high
From her halo brilliantly;
By the dark clouds unencumbered
That once o’er her pale face slumbered.
Far from her mild rays flutters Folly,
For on them floats calm Melancholy.
A passionless sadness without dread,
Like the thought of those we loved long dead,
Full of hope and chastened joy,
Heavenly without earth’s alloy.
Listen, dearest! all is quiet,
Slumb’ring the world’s toil and riot,
And all is fair in earth and sky and sea,
Come, wander forth with me!

THE ROSE

Gentle, gentle river
   Hurrying along
With a sparkle ever,
   And a murmured song,
Pause in thine onward motion,
   Fast flowing toward the ocean,
   And give this rose from me
   To haughty Coralie.

Tell her that love's symbol,
   The deep blushing rose,
Doth in all resemble
   That it would disclose.
Untended, shortly thriving
   There'll soon be no reviving;
   But nursed with kindliness
   'T will cheer life's wilderness.

PRESENT AND FUTURE

What is life that we should love it,
   Cherishing it evermore,
Never prizing aught above it,
   Ever loath to give it o'er?
Is it goodness? Is it gladness?
Nay, 'tis more of sin and sadness,
   Nay, of weariness 'tis more.

Earthly joys are very fleeting —
   Earthly sorrows very long; —
Parting ever follows meeting,
   Night succeeds to even-song.
Storms may darken in the morning,
And eclipse the sun's bright dawning,
   And the chilly gloom prolong.

But though clouds may screen and hide it
   The sun shines for evermore;
Then bear grief in hope: abide it,
   Knowing that it must give o'er:
And the darkness shall flee from us,
And the sun beam down upon us
   Ever glowing more and more.

WILL THESE HANDS NE'ER BE CLEAN?

And who is this lies prostrate at thy feet?
And is he dead, thou man of wrath and pride?
    Yes, now thy vengeance is complete,
        Thy hate is satisfied.
What had he done to merit this of thee?
Who gave thee power to take away his life?
Oh deeply-rooted direful enmity
    That ended in long strife!
See where he grasped thy mantle as he fell,
Staining it with his blood; how terrible
Must be the payment due for this in hell!

And dost thou think to go and see no more
Thy bleeding victim, now the struggle's o'er?
To find out peace in other lands,
And wash the red mark from thy hands?
It shall not be; for everywhere
He shall be with thee; and the air
Shall smell of blood, and on the wind
His groans pursue thee close behind.
When waking he shall stand before thee;
And when at length sleep shall come o'er thee,
Powerless to move, alive to dream,
So dreadful shall thy visions seem
That thou shalt own them even to be
More hateful than reality
What time thou stoopest down to drink
Of limpid waters, thou shalt think
It is thy foe's blood bubbles up
From the polluted fountain's cup,
That stains thy lip, that cries to Heaven
For vengeance — and it shall be given.

And when thy friends shall question thee,
“Why art thou changed so heavily?”
Trembling and fearful thou shalt say
“I am not changed,” and turn away;
For such an outcast shalt thou be
Thou wilt not dare ask sympathy.

And so thy life will pass, and day by day
The current of existence flow away;
And though to thee earth shall be hell, and breath
Vengeance, yet thou shalt tremble more at death.
And one by one thy friends will learn to fear thee,
And thou shalt live without a hope to cheer thee;
Lonely amid a thousand, chained though free,
The curse of memory shall cling to thee:
Ages may pass away, worlds rise and set —
    But thou shalt not forget.

SIR EUSTACE GREY

See Crabbe.

When I die, oh lay me low
Where the greenest grasses grow;
Where the happy stream meanders;
Where the deer securely wanders;
Where the sweet birds sit and sing
In the branches quivering;
Where the violets spring to die,
And the breezes passing by,
Laden with their fragrant breath,
Scarcely seem to tell of death;
Where the sun can dart no ray
In the noon-tide of his day;
Where upon the fertile ground
   Broods an everlasting shade,
And a strange, mysterious sound
   By the rustling boughs is made,
And all's quiet, meet for one
Whose long, toilsome race is run.
O'er my grave the turf extend,
But beside me lay no friend,
And above me place no stone;
I would lie there all alone,
Unremembered or unknown.
Soon forgotten, none will taunt me;
Soon forgetting, none will haunt me
Of the ghosts of former pleasures
Meted out with scanty measures.
Resting from all human passion,
From earth's hate and its compassion,
From its hope and fear, from love
Steadfast as the stars above,
That shine clearly down for ever

On some cold, unglowing river;
By my faith and hope sure lighted
    Through the darkness of the tomb;
And by Heavenly Love requited
For whatever love was slighted,
And whatever joy was blighted
    By earth's coldness and its gloom,
In the grave I'll rest secure
Till the appointed time is o'er,
And the work of love is done,
And the great sin; and the sun
Sets in night to rise no more.
What is life but toil and riot?
What is death but rest and quiet?
Life is but a dream of trouble,
    Death calm sleep from visions free;
Life is but a bursting bubble,
    Death is immortality.

THE TIME OF WAITING

Life is fleeting, joy is fleeting,
Coldness follows love and greeting,
Parting still succeeds to meeting.

If I say, “Rejoice today,”
Sorrow meets me in the way,
I cannot my will obey.

If I say, “My grief shall cease;
Now then I will live in peace:”
My cares instantly increase.

When I look up to the sky,
Thinking to see light on high,
Clouds my searching glance defy.

When I look upon the earth
For the flowers that should have birth,
I find dreariness and dearth.

And the wind sighs on forever,
Murmurs still the flowing river,
On the graves the sun-beams quiver.

And destruction waxes bold,
And the earth is growing old,
And I tremble in the cold.

And my weariness increases

To an ache that never ceases,
And a pain that ne'er decreases.

And the times are turbulent,
And the Holy Church is rent,
And who tremble or repent?

And loud cries do ever rise
To the portals of the skies
From our earthly miseries;

From love slighted, not requited;
From high hope that should have lighted
All our path up, now benighted;

From the woes of human kind;
From the darkness of the mind;
From all anguish undefined;

From the heart that's crushed and sinking;
From the brain grown blank with thinking;
From the spirit sorrow drinking.

All cry out with pleading strong:
"Vengeance, Lord; how long, how long
Shall we suffer this great wrong?"

And the pleading and the cry
Of earth's sons are heard on high,
And are noted verily.

When this world shall be no more,
The Oppressors shall endure
The great Vengeance, which is sure.

And the sinful shall remain
To an endless death and pain;
But the good shall live again,

Never more to be oppressed;
Balm shall heal the bleeding breast,
And the weary be at rest.

All shall vanish of dejection,
Grief, and fear, and imperfection,
In that glorious Resurrection.

Heed not then a night of sorrow,
If the dawning of the morrow
From past grief fresh beams shall borrow.

Thankful for whate'er is given,
Strive we, as we ne'er have striven,
For love's sake to be forgiven.

Then, the dark clouds opening,
Ev'n to us the sun shall bring
Gladness; and sweet flowers shall spring.

For Christ's guiding Love alway,
For the everlasting Day,
For meek patience, let us pray.

CHARITY

I praised the myrtle and the rose,
   At sunrise in their beauty vying;
I passed them at the short day's close,
   And both were dying.

The summer sun his rays was throwing
   Brightly; yet ere I sought my rest,
His last cold ray, more deeply glowing,
   Died in the west.

After this bleak world's stormy weather,
   All, all, save Love alone, shall die;
For Faith and Hope shall merge together
   In Charity.

THE DEAD BRIDE

There she lay so still and pale,
With her bridal robes around her:
Joy is fleeting — life is frail —
Death had found her.

Gone forever: gone away
From the love and light of earth;
Gone forever: who shall say
Where her second birth?

Had her life been good and kind?
Had her heart been meek and pure?
Was she of a lowly mind,
Ready to endure?

Did she still console the sad,
Soothe the widow's anguish wild,
Make the poor and needy glad,
Tend the orphan child?

Who shall say what hope and fear
Crowded in her short life's span?
If the love of God was dear,
Or the love of man?

Happy bride if single-hearted
Her first love to God was given;
If from this world she departed
But to dwell in Heaven;

If her faith on Heaven was fixed,
   And her hope; if love's pure worth
Made her rich indeed, unmixed
      With the dross of earth.

But alas! if tainted pleasure
   Won her heart and held it here,
Where is now her failing treasure,
      All her gladness where? … . .

Hush, too curious questioner;
   Hush and think thine own sins o'er:
Little canst thou learn from her;
      For we know no more

Than that there she lies all pale
   With her bridal robes around her:
Joy is fleeting — life is frail —
      Death hath found her.

LIFE OUT OF DEATH

"Now I've said all I would, mother;
   My head is on thy breast,
And I feel I can die without a sigh,
   And sink into my rest.

"And if ever you weep o'er my grave, mother,
   Weep not for doubt or sadness;
I shall fall asleep in pain and in grief,
   But wake to perfect gladness."

Mourn not, thou mother of the dead,
   That in her youth she died;
for He was with her then Who said:
   "Ye that in me abide,
Ask what ye will, it shall be given;
Faith, hope, and love on earth, and Love and Joy in Heaven."

THE SOLITARY ROSE

O happy Rose, red Rose, that bloomest lonely
   Where there are none to gather while they love thee;
That art perfumed by thine own fragrance only,
   Resting like incense round thee and above thee; —
Thou hearest nought save some pure stream that flows,
            O happy Rose.

What tho' for thee no nightingales are singing?
   They chant one eve, but hush them in the morning.
Near thee no little moths and bees are winging
   To steal thy honey when the day is dawning; —
Thou keep'st thy sweetness till the twilight's close,
            O happy Rose.

Then rest in peace, thou lone and lovely flower;
   Yea be thou glad, knowing that none are near thee
To mar thy beauty in a wanton hour,
   And scatter all thy leaves, nor deign to wear thee.
Securely in thy solitude repose,
            O happy Rose.

LADY ISABELLA

Lady Isabella,
   Thou art gone away,
Leaving earth's darksome trouble,
   To rest until the Day.

From thy youth and beauty,
   From each loving friend,
Thou art gone to the land of sure repose,
   Where fears and sorrows end.

Thou wert pure whilst with us;
   Now, we trust, in Heaven,
All thy tears are wiped away,
   All thy sins forgiven.

Who would wish thee back again
   But to share our sorrow?
Who would grudge thine hour of rest,
   Ere the coming morrow?

Let us rejoice the rather
   That thou hast reached that shore,
Whilst yet thy soul was spotless,
   And thy young spirit pure.

And if thy crown be brighter
   By but one little ray,
Why wish to dim its lustre? . .
   Oh! rather let us pray
That when we are most fitted

We too may pass away.

THE DREAM

Rest, rest; the troubled breast
Panteth evermore for rest: —
Be it sleep, or be it death,
Rest is all it coveteth.

Tell me, dost thou remember the old time
   We sat together by that sunny stream,
And dreamed our happiness was too sublime
   Only to be a dream?

Gazing, till steadfast gazing made us blind,
   We watched the fishes leaping at their play;
Thinking our love too tender and too kind
   Ever to pass away.

And some of all our thoughts were true at least
   What time we thought together by that stream;
THY happiness has evermore increased, —
   MY love was not a dream.

And now that thou art gone, I often sit
   On its green margin, for thou once wert there;
And see the clouds that, floating over it,
   Darken the quiet air.

Yes, oftentimes I sit beside it now,
   Harkning the wavelets ripple o'er the sands;
Until again I hear thy whispered vow
   And feel thy pressing hands.

Then the bright sun seems to stand still in heaven,
   The stream sings gladly as it onward flows,
The rushes grow more green, the grass more even,
   Blossoms the budding rose.

I say: “It is a joy-dream; I will take it;
   He is not gone; he will return to me.”
What found’st thou in my heart that thou should’st break it? —
   How have I injured thee?

Oh! I am weary of life’s passing show, —
   Its pageant and its pain.
I would I could lie down lone in my woe,
   Ne’er to rise up again;
I would I could lie down where none might know;
   For truly love is vain.
Truly love’s vain; but oh! how vainer still
   Is that which is not love, but seems;
Concealed indifference, a covered ill,
   A very dream of dreams.

THE DYING MAN TO HIS BETROTHED

One word — ’tis all I ask of thee;
   One word — and that is little now
That I have learned thy wrong of me;
   And thou too art unfaithful — thou! —
O thou sweet poison, sweetest death,
O honey between serpent’s teeth,
Breathe on me with thy scorching breath!

The last poor hope is fleeting now,
   And with it life is ebbing fast;
I gaze upon thy cold white brow,
   And loathe and love thee to the last.
And still thou keepest silence — still
Thou look’st on me — for good or ill
Speak out, that I may know thy will.

Thou weepest, woman, and art pale!
   Weep not, for thou shalt soon be free;
My life is ending like a tale
   That was — but never more shall be.
O blessed moments, ye fleet fast,
And soon the latest shall be past,
And she will be content at last.

Nay, tremble not — I have not cursed
   Thy house or mine, or thee or me;
The moment that I saw thee first,
   The moment that I first loved thee,
Curse them! alas! — I can but bless,
In this mine hour of heaviness; —
Nay, sob not so in thy distress!

I have been harsh, thou sayst of me; —
   God knows my heart was never so;
It never could be so to thee —
   And now it is too late — I know
Thy grief — forgive me, love! ‘tis o’er,
For I shall never trouble more
Thy life that was so calm before.

I pardon thee — mayst thou be blest!
   Say, wilt thou sometimes think of me?
Oh may I, from my happy rest,
   Still look with love on thine and thee,
And may I pray for thee alway,
And for thy Love still may I pray,
Waiting the everlasting Day.

Stoop over me — ah! this is death!
   I scarce can see thee at my side;
Stoop lower — let me feel thy breath,
   O thou, mine own, my promised bride!
Pardon me, love — I pardon thee,
And may our pardon sealèd be
Throughout the long eternity.

The pains of death my senses cover: —
   Oh! for His Sake Who died for men,
Be thou more true to this thy lover
   Than thou hast been to me — Amen!
And if he chide thee wrongfully,
One little moment think on me,
And thou wilt bear it patiently.

And now, O God, I turn to Thee:
   Thou Only, Father, canst not fail;
Lord, Thou hast tried and broken me,

And yet Thy Mercy shall prevail.
Saviour, through Thee I am forgiven —
Do Thou receive my soul, blood-shriven,
O Christ, Who art the Gate of Heaven!

THE MARTYR

See, the sun hath risen!
Lead her from the prison;
She is young and tender, lead her tenderly:
May no fear subdue her,
Lest the Saints be fewer,
Lest her place in Heaven be lost eternally.

Forth she came, not trembling,
No, nor yet dissembling
An o'erwhelming terror weighing her down — down;
Little, little heeding
Earth, but inly pleading
For the strength to triumph and to win a crown.

All her might was rallied
To her heart; not pallid
Was her cheek, but glowing with a glorious red,
Glorious red and saintly,
Never paling faintly,
But still flushing, kindling still, without thought of dread.

On she went, on faster,
Trusting in her Master,
Feeling that His Eye watched o'er her lovingly;
He would prove and try her,
But would not deny her,
When her soul had pass'd, for His sake, patiently.

"Christ," she said, "receive me,
Let no terrors grieve me,
Take my soul and guard it with Thy heavenly cares:
Take my soul and guard it,

Take it and reward it
With the Love Thou bearest for the love it bears."

Quickened with a fire
Of sublime desire,
She looked up to Heaven, and she cried aloud,
"Death, I do entreat thee,
Come! I go to meet thee;
Wrap me in the whiteness of a virgin shroud."

On she went, hope-laden;
Happy, happy maiden!
Never more to tremble, and to weep no more:
All her sins forgiven,
Straight the path to Heaven
Through the glowing fire lay her feet before.

On she went, on quickly,
And her breath came thickly,
With the longing to see God coming pantingly:
Now the fire is kindled,
And her flesh has dwindled
Unto dust; — her soul is mounting up on high:

Higher, higher mounting,
The swift moments counting,
Fear is left beneath her, and the chastening rod:
Tears no more shall blind her,
Trouble lies behind her,
Satisfied with hopeful rest, and replete with God.

THE END OF TIME

Thou who art dreary
   With a cureless woe,
Thou who art weary
   Of all things below,
Thou who art weeping
   By the loved sick-bed,
Thou who art keeping
   Watches o'er the dead,
   Hope, hope! old Time flies fast upon his way,
And soon will cease the night, and soon will dawn the day.

The rose blooms brightly,
   But it fades ere night;
And youth flies lightly,
   Yet how sure its flight!
And still the river
   Merges in the sea,
And death reigns ever
   Whilst old Time shall be;
   Yet hope! old Time flies fast upon his way,
And soon will cease the night, and soon will dawn the day.

All we most cherish
   In this world below,
What tho' it perish?
   It has aye been so.
So thro' all ages
   It has ever been
To fools and sages,
   Noble men and mean:
   Yet hope, still hope! for Time flies on his way,
And soon will end the night, and soon will dawn the day.

All of each nation
   Shall that morning see
With exultation
   Or with misery:
From watery slumbers,
   From the opening sod,
Shall rise up numbers
   To be judged by God.
   Then hope and fear, for Time speeds on his way,
And soon must end the night, and soon must dawn the day.

RESURRECTION EVE

He resteth: weep not!
The living sleep not
With so much calm:
He hears no chiding
And no deriding,
Hath joy for sorrow,
For night hath morrow,
For wounds hath balm,
For life's strange riot
Hath death and quiet.
Who would recall him
Of those that love him?
No fears appal him,
No ills befal him;
There's nought above him
Save turf and flowers
And pleasant grass.
Pass the swift hours,
How swiftly pass!
The hours of slumber
He doth not number;
Grey hours of morning
Ere the day's dawning:
Brightened by gleams
Of the sun-beams,
By the foreseeing
Of Resurrection,
Of glorious being,
Of full perfection,
Of sins forgiven
Before the face
Of men and spirits;
Of God in Heaven,
The Resting Place

That he inherits.

ZARA

See Maturin's "Women."

Now the pain beginneth and the word is spoken; —
   Hark unto the tolling of the churchyard chime! —
Once my heart was gladsome, now my heart is broken, —
   Once my love was noble, now it is a crime.

But the fear is over; yea, what now shall pain me?
   Arm thee in thy sorrow, O most Desolate!
Weariness and weakness, these shall now sustain me, —
   Pride and bitter grieving, burning love and hate.

Yea, the fear is over, the strong fear and trembling;
   I can doubt no longer, he is gone indeed.
Rend thy hair, lost woman, weep without dissembling;
   The heart torn forth from it, shall the breast not bleed?

Happy she who looketh on his beauty's glory!
   Happy she who listeneth to his gentle word!
Yet, O happy maiden, sorrow lies before thee;
   Greeting hath been given, parting must be heard.

He shall leave thee also, he who now hath left me,
   With a weary spirit and an aching heart;
Thou shalt be bereaved by him who hath bereft me;
   Thou hast sucked the honey, — feel the stinging's smart.

Let the cold gaze on him, let the heartless hear him,
   For he shall not hurt them, they are safe in sooth:

But let loving women shun that man and fear him,
   Full of cruel kindness and devoid of ruth.

When ye call upon him, hope for no replying;
   When ye gaze upon him, think not he will look;
Hope not for his pity when your heart is sighing;
   Such another, waiting, weeping, he forsook.

Hath the Heaven no thunder wherewith to denounce him?
   Hath the Heaven no lightning wherewith to chastise?
O my heart and spirit, O my soul, renounce him
   Who hath called for vengeance from the distant skies.

Vengeance which pursues thee, vengeance which shall find thee,
   Crushing thy false spirit, scathing thy fair limb: —
O ye thunders deafen, O ye lightnings blind me,
   Winds and storms from heaven, strike me but spare him.

I forgive thee, dearest, cruel, I forgive thee; —
   May thy cup of sorrow be poured out for me;
Though the dregs be bitter yet they shall not grieve me,
   Knowing that I drink them, O my love, for thee.

VERSI

Figli, la madre disse:
Guardati dall' Amore;
È crudo, è traditore, —
Che vuoi saper di più?
Non fargli mai sperare
D'entrare nel tuo petto;
Chè chi gli diè ricetto
Sempre tradito fu.

Colla sua benda al ciglio
È un bel fanciullo, è vero:
Ma sempre è menzognero;
Ma sempre tradirà.
Semplice tu se fidi
Nel riso suo fallace;
Tu perderai la pace
Nè mai ritornerà.

Ma vedo: già sei stanca
Del mio parlar prudente;
Già volgi nella mente
Il quando, il come, e il chi.
Odimi: i detti miei
Già sai se son sincere;
E se son falsi o very
Saprai per prova un dì.

L’INCOGNITA

Nobil rosa ancor non crebbe
Senza spine in sullo stelo :
Se vi fosse, allor sarebbe
Atta immagine di te.
È la luna in mezzo al cielo
Bella è ver ma passeggiera:
Passa ancor la Primavera:
Ah! l’immagin tua dov’ è?

PURPUREA ROSA

Purpurea rosa
Dolce, odorosa,
È molto bella,
Ma pur non è,
O mia Nigella,
Rival di te.

Donna nel velo,
Fior sullo stelo,
Ciascun l'amore
Reclama a se:
Ma pass ail fiore,
Tu resti a me.

SOUL RUDDERLESS, UNBRACED

Soul rudderless, unbraced,
The Body's friend and guest,
Whither away today?
Unsuppled, pale, discased,
Dumb to thy wonted jest.

ANIMUCCIA, VAGANTUCCIA, MORBIDUCCIA

Animuccia, vagantuccia, morbiduccia,
Oste del corpo e suora,
Ove or farai dimora?
Palliduccia, irrigidita, svestituccia,
Non più scherzante or ora.

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IL ROSSEGGIAR DELL' ORIENTE CANZONIERE

AMOR DORMENTE?
AMOR SI SVEGLIA?
SI RIMANDA LA TOCCA-CALDAJA
BLUMINE" RISPONDE
LASSÙ FIA CARO IL RIVEDERCI
NON SON IO LA ROSA MA VI STETTI APPRESSO
LASSUSO IL CARO FIORE
SAPESSI PURE!
IDDIO C'ILLUMINI!
AMICIZIA
LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL
OH FORZA IRRESISTIBILE
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PER PREFERENZA
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SE FOSSI ANDATA A HASTINGS
RIPETIZIONE
AMICO E PIÙ CHE AMICO MIO
NOSTRE VOLUNTÀ QUIETI VIRTÙ DI CARITI
SE COSÌ FOSSE

BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBER, IF I CLAIM TOO MUCH OF YOU
WILL YOU BE THERE? MY YEARNING HEART HAS CRIED
IN RESURRECTION IS IT AWFULLER

I LOVE YOU AND YOU KNOW IT — THIS AT LEAST

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FAIRER THAN YOUNGER BEAUTIES, MORE BELOVED
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AH WELLADAY AND WHEREFORE AM I HERE?
ALONG THE HIGHROAD THE WAY IS TOO LONG
AND IS THIS AUGUST WEATHER? NAY NOT SO
FROM EARLY DAWN UNTIL THE FLUSH OF NOON
I SEEK AMONG THE LIVING & I SEEK
O GLORIOUS SEA THAT IN EACH CLIMBING WAVE
OH THOU WHO TELL'ST ME THAT ALL HOPE IS OVER
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YOU WHO LOOK ON PASSED AGES AS A GLASS
ANGELI AL CAPO, AL PIEDE
AMAMI, T'AMO
E BABBO E MAMMA HA IL NOSTRO FIGLIOLINO
S'ADDORMENTÒ LA NOSTRA FIGLIOLINA
CUCCURUCÙ! CUCCURUCÙ!
OIBÒ, PICCINA
OTTO ORE SUONANO
NEL VERNO ACCANTO AL FUOCO
GRAN FREDDO È INFUORI, E DENTRO È FREDDO UN POCO
SCAVAI LA NEVE, — SÌ CHE SCAVAI!
SÌ CHE IL FRATELLO S'HA UN FALCONCELLO
UDITE, SI DOLGONO MESTI FRINGUELLI
AHI CULLA VUOTA! ED AHI SEPOLCRO PIENO
LUGUBRE E VAGABONDO IN TERRA E IN MARE

AURA DOLCISSIMA, MA DONDO SIETE?
FOSS'IO REGINA
PESANO RENA E PENA
BASTA UNA NOTTE A MATURARE IL FUNGO
PORCO LA ZUCCA
SALTA, RANOCCHIO, E MOSTRATI
SPUNTA LA MARGHERITA
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AMICO PESCE, PLOVER VORRÀ
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ARROSSICE LA ROSA: E PERCHÈ MAI?
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MY MOUSE
HAD FORTUNE PARTED US
COUNTERBLAST ON PENNY TRUMPET
A ROUNDEL SEEMS TO FIT A ROUND OF DAYS
HEAVEN OVERARCHES EARTH AND SEA
SLEEPING AT LAST, THE TROUBLE & TUMULT OVER
4TH MAY MORNING
QUANTO A LEI GRATA IO SONO
THE CHINAMAN
COME CHEER UP, MY LADS, 'TIS TO GLORY WE STEER!

THE PLAGUE
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ME YOU OFTEN MEET
SO I BEGAN MY WALK OF LIFE; NO STOP
SO I GREW HALF DELIRIOUS AND QUITE SICK
ON THE NOTE YOU DO NOT SEND ME
CHARON
FROM METASTASIO
CHIESA E SIGNORE
GOLDEN HOLLY
COR MIO
MY OLD ADMIRATION BEFORE I WAS TWENTY
TO MARY ROSSETTI
NE' SOGNI TI VEGGO
TO MY FIOR-DI-LISA
HAIL, NOBLE FACE OF NOBLE FRIEND!
HYMN

HEAVEN

1.

What is heaven? ‘tis a country
   Far away from mortal ken;
‘Tis a land, where, by God’s bounty,
   After death live righteous men.

2.

That that blest land I may enter,
   Is my humble, earnest cry;
Lord! admit me to Thy presence,
   Lord! admit me, or I die.

HYMN

To the God Who reigns on high,
To th'Eternal Majesty,
To the Blessed Trinity
    Glory on earth be giv'n;
In the sea, and in the sky,
    And in the highest heav'n.

CORYDON’S LAMENT AND RESOLUTION

1.

I have wept and I have sighed;
    Chloe will not be my bride.
I have sighed and I have wept,
She hath not her promise kept.

2.

I have grieved and I have mourned;
She hath not my love returned.
I have mourned and I have grieved;
She hath not my pains relieved.

3.

But her pride I’ll mortify,
For her love I will not die.
Amaryllis fair I’ll wed,
Nor one tear for Chloe shed.

ROSALIND

She sat upon a mountain,
   And gazed upon the sea;
Beside her crouched a stag-hound,
   A boy stood at her knee.

She fixed upon the ocean
   An agonizèd stare —
The ship is fast receding —
   Her husband off they bear.

“Oh, robbers! take some pity
   Upon my helpless state:
Restore him to my fond arms!
   Leave me not desolate!”

They heed not her entreaties,
   They list not to her prayer;
The ship is fast receding —
   Her husband off they bear.

“Oh Captain! take these jewels
   That grace my hair of jet;
And ne’er in my devotion
   To bless thee I’ll forget.”

Then sudden cried the pirate,
   “Lady, your prayers are vain;
When as my bride I sought you,
   You heeded not my pain.

“Now for the grief I suffered

I'll compensated be" —
He said; and hurled her husband
Into the raging sea.

Upon her snow-white bosom
Sank down that Lady's head; —
"I join thee, dearest Arthur" —
Fair Rosalind is dead.

PITIA A DAMONE

Ah non chiamarlo pena,
È gioia quel ch'io sento;
Io morirò content
Se morirò per te.
È fervido diletto
Quel che mi sta nel petto;
Per te la morte istessa
Terribile non è.

THE FAITHLESS SHEPHERDESS

1.

There once was a time when I loved,
    ‘Tis gone to return never more;
My shepherdess faithless has proved,
    The maiden I once did adore.

2.

And now we are parted forever,
    And gone are my hopes and my fears,
To forget Phillis false I’ll endeavour,
    And arrest all these fast-flowing tears.

3.

Yet wherever I turn I must think
    Of her who is faithless to me;
I stand by the rivulet’s brink,
    And the play of its waters I see.

4.

‘Twas there I first told her my love,

And she blushingly bade me hope still,
And the moon looking down from above
Seemed to smile on the murmuring rill;

5.

On the rill that was murm'ring of love
To its beautiful mistress in heaven,
The moon seeming to speak far above
Of the rays that in token she'd given;

6.

In token of love never-ending,
And pure as when first 'twas avowed,
As long as that stream should be sending
Soft sighs to its Queen in the cloud.

7.

And false Phillis swore that she'd ever
Keep faithful her pure heart to me,
That she'd think of another love never,
So long as the rill true should be.

8.

The rill to its love true remains,

The moon still smiles on it from heaven,
But from you I've experienced sharp pains,
That the rill to the moon ne'er has given.

9.

And now we are parted forever,
And gone are my hopes and my fears;
To forget Phillis false I'll endeavour,
And arrest all these fast-flowing tears.

ARIADNE TO THESEUS

1.

Sunlight to the river,
   Moonlight to the sea,
As false and as fleeting
   Thou hast been to me.

2.

And I've been like the lily
   That to the summer clings,
Or like the nightingale
   That to the sweet rose sings:

3.

That wooing never ceases
   For her indifference,
And never his beloved flower
   Reproaching will incense.

4.

But thou more cruel than the rose

Hast left me faithlessly,
To mourn forever and alone
Over thy perfidy.

5.

Soft breezes! waft him not
Across the wide wide sea;
Ingulph, just waves of Ocean!
The wretch who flies from me.

6.

Ah no! ‘tis vain! Affection
For my false love still remains:
Blow, breezes! Peace, ye waters!
Revenge not ye my pains!

7.

May happiness attend thee,
Who hast ta’en from me all joy!
Be thine unmixèd pleasure;
Be mine the sad alloy!

ON ALBINA

The roses lingered in her cheeks,
    When fair Albina fainted;
Oh! gentle Reader, could it be
    That fair Albina painted?

A HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

The Shepherds watch their flocks by night,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
All around is calm and still,
Save the murm'ring of the rill:
When lo! a form of light appears,
And on the awe-struck Shepherds' ears
Are words, of peace and comfort flowing
From lips with love celestial glowing.
Spiritual forms are breaking
Through the gloom, their voices taking
Part in the adoring song
Of the bright angelic throng.
Wondering the Shepherds bend
Their steps to Bethlehem, and wend
To a poor and crowded inn: —
Tremblingly their way they win
To the stable, where they find
The Redeemer of mankind,
Just born into this world of danger,
Lying in an humble manger.
And they spread abroad each word
Which that joyful night they'd heard,
And they glorified the name
Of their gracious God, Who came
Himself to save from endless woe
The offspring of this world below.

LOVE AND DEATH

"Our bark's on the water; come down, come down,
I'll weave for thy fair head a leafy crown,
And in it I'll blend the roses bright,
With asphodel woven of faint sunlight.
But more precious than these I'll twine the pearls
In the flowing locks of thy chestnut curls;
And the gem and the flow'r from wave and from tree
Shall form a bright diadem, Bianca, for thee.
The sea is calm, and I will guard thee;
Oh what, sweet love, should thus retard thee?
Descend, fairest maiden, descend to the sea,
And sail o'er the motionless waters with me."
The sound of his last words was scarcely o'er,
When beside him she stood on the ocean shore.
Lightly she entered the gondola,
And gaily her lover followed her —
But for them it had been happier
Had they quietly lain in their beds all night,
Nor sailed forth 'neath the moonbeam's deceitful light.
Smoothly, swiftly the gondolier rowed along,
The splash of his oars keeping time to his song;
'Twas an old tale of hope and of fear and of danger,
Of the loves of a noble princess and a stranger;
How they fled, and were married one fine summer night,
And their days glided on in one stream of delight.
But oh! wherefore trembles that lady fair?
The lightning gleams forth through the heavy air;
The thunder peals loudly, the low wind is wailing,
And the heart of the lady for terror is failing.
But Gonsalvo around her his left arm clasped tightly,
And he fought with the sea that was foaming so whitely;
All vain are his struggles — the billows rise higher,
The thunder is pealing, the sky seems on fire,
The wild wind is howling, the lightning ne'er ceases —

He still clasps his love, but his strength fast decreases —
Fair Bianca has fainted; she hears not the wind,
Nor the splash of the rain; to the lightning she's blind —
She knows not that down to the depths of the sea
She's dragging her love irresistibly:
Gonsalvo's efforts have fainter grown,
And she hangs on his arm like a heavy stone; —
And now o'er them rolls each mighty wave —
In the sea they have found a common grave.

DESPAIR

1.

Up rose the moon in glory,
   And glittered on the sea;
Up rose the stars around her,
   Making the darkness flee.

2.

The nightingale's wild warbling
   Rang in the far-off wood;
When in his Father's castle
   A mournful figure stood.

3.

His heart was almost bursting,
   He madly beat his breast;
As, in low plaintive accents,
   His grief he thus exprest.

4.

"Stars, shroud yourselves in darkness!

Pale moon, withdraw thy light!
Let darkness hide the ocean
For ever from my sight;

5.

“Hide cottage, town and city; —
Appear no more, thou Sun!
But let in foreign countries
Thy cheering race be run.

6.

“For I have lost my loved one!
Low lies she in her grave!
Speak not to me of pleasure,
For her I could not save.

7.

“Hark to the distant murmur
As waves break on the shore” —
When lo! a light came flashing
Along the corridor.

8.

The mystic form that bore it

He scarcely could discern;
Its flowing robe was blackness —
Higher the flame doth burn —

9.

He cried, “What art thou, Spirit
So luminous and bright?”
A voice said, “I’m the maid, Sir,
A bringing in the light.”

FORGET ME NOT

1.

“Forget me not! Forget me not!”
   The maiden once did say,
When to some far-off battle-field
   Her lover sped away.

2.

“Forget me not! Forget me not!”
   Says now the chamber-maid
When the traveller on his journey
   No more will be delayed.

EASTER MORNING

1.

The sun arises from the sea,
   And all around his rays is flinging,
The flowers are opening on the lea,
   The merry birds are singing.

2.

The summer breeze is rustling past,
   Sweet scents are gathering around it,
The rivulet is flowing fast,
   Beside the banks that bound it.

3.

All nature seemeth to rejoice,
   In the returning summer weather;
Let us with nature raise our voice,
   And harmonize together.

4.

But not alone for summer skies

Shall praise unto our God be given:
This day our Saviour did arise,
And oped the gate of heaven.

5.

To sinful man, if only he
His errings will confess with sorrow,
Then, after earth's night-misery,
Shall dawn a glorious morrow:

6.

A blissful bright eternity
Bought by the rising of the Giver,
To Whom all praise, all honor be,
For ever and forever.

A TIRSI

Chiami il mio core
Crudele, altero;
No, non è vero.
   Crudel non è.
T’amo, t’amai,
E tu lo sai,
Men del dovere,
   Ma più di me.

THE LAST WORDS OF ST. TELEMACHUS

There is a sound of weeping; wherefore weep
  That I should sleep?
Oh! wherefore mourn that I at last should be
  At liberty?
One only grief yet lingers at my heart —
  That we must part:
Part — ! and perchance we never more may meet
  In converse sweet!
The memory of all thy gentle ways,
  Kind without praise —
And of thy loving acts, scarce seen before,
  Now numbered o'er,
Weigh me to earth clinging about my heart —
  And must we part?
Yet still my trust in God shall steadfast be —
  By faith I see
Through the long vista of eternal years,
  Free from all fears,
Thee by my side in calm unchanging rest,
  For ever blest!

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR MARGARET

1.

Fair Marg'ret sat in her bower,
   Unbraiding of her hair,
When entered in Lord Thomas' ghost,
   And gave her greeting fair.

2.

"Oh how pale thou art, my love," she said,
   "Oh how pale thou art to see!
Once thine eye was bright, and thy cheek was red;
   Why comest thou so to me?"

3.

"Oh fair Marg'ret, oh sweet Marg'ret,
   I murderèd have been —
They have ta'en my body for love of thee,
   And cast it in a stream.

4.

"Oh fair Marg'ret, oh sweet Marg'ret,

We aye maun parted be,
If thou wilt not bind up thy yellow hair,
And quickly follow me."

5.

Up and ris fair Marg'ret,
And quickly followed him;
As the moon was the colour of his face,
And the colour of his limb.

6.

The ghost he fled, the ghost he sped,
The ghost he ran and glided,
And still fair Margaret pursued,
Though never to be brided.

7.

The ghost he sped, the ghost he fled,
Ploughed land and hillocks over,
And still fair Margaret pursued.
After her flying lover.

8.

Away, away "without stop or stay,"

Till they came to waters running,
“I canna stay, I maun away,
For fast the day is coming.

9.

“Oh fair Marg’ret, oh sweet Marg’ret,
We now maun parted be,
If in the last trail thou shalt go through
Thy heart should fail in thee.”

10.

On glided the ghost, while the starry host
Glittered down on the sleeping stream;
O’er the waves glided he impalpably,
Then vanished like a dream.

11.

Fair Margaret still followed him,
Till she sank amid the wave;
Thus died for each other these lovers true,
And were joinèd in the grave.

LINES TO MY GRANDFATHER

Dear Grandpapa,
To be obedient,
   I'll try and write a letter;
Which (as I hope you'll deem expedient)
   Must serve for lack of better.

My muse of late was not prolific,
   And sometimes I must feel
To make a verse a task terrific
   Rather of woe than weal.

As I have met with no adventure
   Of wonder and refulgence,
I must write plain things at a venture
   And trust to your indulgence.

The apple-tree is showing
   Its blossom of bright red
With a soft colour glowing
   Upon its leafy bed.

The pear-tree's pure white blossom
   Like stainless snow is seen;
And all earth's genial bosom
   Is clothed with varied green.

The fragrant may is blooming,
   The yellow cowslip blows;
Among its leaves entombing
   Peeps forth the pale primrose.

The kingcup flowers and daisies
    Are opening hard by;
And many another raises
    Its head, to please and die.

I love the gay wild flowers
    Waving in fresh spring air;
Give me uncultured bowers
    Before the bright parterre!

And now my letter is concluded,
    To do well I have striven;
And though news is well-nigh excluded,
    I hope to be forgiven.

With love to all the beautiful,
    And those who cannot slaughter,
I sign myself,
your dutiful,
Affectionate Granddaughter.

CHARADE

My first may be the firstborn,
   The second child may be;
My second is a texture light
   And elegant to see:
My whole do those too often write
   Who are from talent free.

HOPE IN GRIEF

Tell me not that death of grief
Is the only sure relief.
Tell me not that hope when dead
Leaves a void that nought can fill,
Gnawings that may not be fed.
Tell me not there is no skill
That can bind the breaking heart,
That can soothe the bitter smart,
When we find ourselves betrayed,
When we find ourselves forsaken,
By those for whom we would have laid
Our young lives down, nor wished to waken.
Say not that life is to all
But a gaily coloured pall,
Hiding with its deceitful glow
The hearts that break beneath it,
Engulphing as they anguished flow
The scalding tears that seethe it.
Say not, vain this world's turmoil,
Vain its trouble and its toil,
All its hopes and fears are vain,
Long, unmitigated pain.
What though we should be deceived
By the friend that we love best?
All in this world have been grieved,
Yet many have found rest.
Our present life is as the night,
Our future as the morning light:
Surely the night will pass away,
And surely will uprise the day.

LISETTA ALL' AMANTE

Perdona al primo eccesso
D'un tenero dolore;
A te promisi il core,
E vo' serbarlo a te.
Ma dimmi, e mi consola:
M'ami tu ancor, cor mio?
Se a te fedel son io,
Sarao fedele a me?

Chè se nell' alma ingrate
Pensi ad abbandonarmi,
Anch'io saprò scordarmi
D'un amator crudel.
Ma crederlo non voglio;
Ma non lo vo' pensare;
Chè nol potrei lasciare,
Chè gli sarei fedel.

SONG

I saw her; she was lovely,
   And bright her eyes of blue,
Whilst merrily her white white hands
   Over the harp-strings flew.
I saw her and I loved her,
   I loved her for my pain,
For her heart was given to another
   Not to return again.

Again I saw her pacing
   Down the cathedral aisle;
The bridal wreath was in her hair,
   And on her lips a smile;
A quiet smile and holy,
   Meet for a holy place,
A smile of certain happiness
   That lighted up her face.

And once, once more I saw her,
   Kneeling beside a bed;
The bright sun's rays were shining there,
   And shone upon the dead;
From the body of her husband
   Earth's gloom they chased away,
And she gazed on him without a tear,
   And hailed the coming day.

PRAISE OF LOVE

And shall Love cease? Ask thine own heart, O Woman,
Thy heart that beats restlessly on forever!
All earthly things shall pass away and human,
But Love's divine: annihilated never,
It binds and nought shall sever.

Oh! it is Love makes the world habitable,
Love is a foretaste of our promised Heaven;
Though sometimes robed in white, sometimes in sable,
It still is Love, and still some joy is given,
Although the heart be riven.

And who would give Love's joy to 'scape its paining?
Yea, who would lose its sorrow and its gladness?
Then let us bear its griefs without complaining: —
This only earthly passion is not madness,
Nor leads to dearth and sadness.

Love is all happiness, Love is all beauty,
Love is the crown of flaxen heads and hoary,
Love is the only everlasting duty,
And Love is chronicled in endless story,
And leads to endless glory.

I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT

“Who art thou that comest with a steadfast face
Thro’ the hushed arena to the burying-place?”
“I am one whose footprints marked upon the sand
Cry in blood for vengeance on a guilty land.”

“How are these thy garments white as whitest snow
Tho’ thy blood hath touched them in its overflow?”
“My blood cannot stain them, nor my tears make white;
One than I more mighty, He hath made them bright.”

“Say, do thy wounds pain thee open every one,
Wounds that now are glowing clearer than the sun?”
“Nay, they are my gladness unalloyed by grief;
Like a desert fountain, or a long relief.”

“When the lion had thee in his deadly clasp,
Was there then no terror in thy stifled gasp?”
“Tho’ I felt the crushing, and the grinding teeth,
He was with me ever, He Who comforteth.”

“Didst thou hear the shouting, as of a great flood,
Crying out for vengeance, crying out for blood?”
“I heard it in silence, and was not afraid,
While for the mad people silently I prayed.”

“Did their hate not move thee? art thou heedless then
Of the fear of children and the curse of men?”
“God looked down upon me from the Heaven above,
And I did not tremble, happy in His Love.”

WISHES

Sonnet.

Oh! would that I were very far away
Among the lanes, with hedges all around,
Happily listening to the dreamy sound
Of distant sheep-bells, smelling the new hay
And all the wild-flowers scattered in my way:
Or would that I were lying on some mound
Where shade and butterflies and thyme abound,
Beneath the trees, upon a sunny day:
Or would I strolled beside the mighty sea,
The sea before, and the tall cliffs behind;
While winds from the warm south might tell to me
How health and joy for all men are designed: —
But be I where I may, would I had thee,
And heard thy gentle voice, my Mother kind.

ELEANOR

Cherry-red her mouth was,
   Morning-blue her eye,
Lady-slim her little waist
   Rounded prettily;
And her sweet smile of gladness
   Made every heart rejoice;
But sweeter even than her smile
   The tones were of her voice.

Sometimes she spoke, sometimes she sang;
   And evermore the sound
Floated, a dreamy melody,
   Upon the air around;
As tho' a wind were singing
   Far up beside the sun,
Till sound and warmth and glory
   Were blended all in one.

Her hair was long and golden,
   And clustered unconfined
Over a forehead high and white
   That spoke a noble mind.
Her little hand, her little foot
   Were ready evermore
To hurry forth to meet a friend;
   She smiling at the door.

But if she sang, or if she spoke,
   'Twas music soft and grand,
As tho' a distant singing sea
   Broke on a tuneful strand;
As tho' a blessed Angel

Were singing a glad song,
Half way between the earth and Heaven
Joyfully borne along.

ISIDORA

See Maturin's "Melmoth."

Love, whom I have loved too well,
   Turn thy face away from me;
For I heed nor Heaven nor Hell
   While mine eyes can look on thee.
Do not answer, do not speak,
For thy voice can make me weak.

I must choose 'twixt God and man,
   And I dare not hesitate:
Oh how little is life's span,
   And Eternity how great!
Go out from me; for I fear
Mine own strength while thou art here.

Husband, leave me; but know this:
   I would gladly give my soul
So that thine might dwell in bliss
   Free from the accursed control,
So that thou mightest go hence
In a hopeful penitence.

Yea, from Hell I would look up,
   And behold thee in thy place,
Drinking of the living cup,
   With the joy-look on thy face,
And the Light that shines alone
From the Glory of the Throne.

But how could my endless loss
   Be thine everlasting gain?
Shall thy palm grow from my cross?
   Shall thine ease be in my pain?
Yea, thine own soul witnesseth
Thy life is not in my death.

It were vain that I should die;
   That we thus should perish both;
Thou would'st gain no peace thereby;
   And in truth I should be loath
By the loss of my salvation
To increase thy condemnation.

Little infant, his and mine,
   Would that I were as thou art;
Nothing breaks that sleep of thine,
   And ah! nothing breaks thy heart;
And thou knowest nought of strife,
The heart's death for the soul's life.

None misdoubt thee; none misdeem
   Of thy wishes and thy will.
All thy thoughts are what they seem,
   Very pure and very still;
And thou fearest not the voice
That once made thy heart rejoice.

Oh how calm thou art, my child!
   I could almost envy thee.
Thou hast neither wept nor smiled,
   Thou that sleepest quietly.
Would I also were at rest
With the one that I love best.

Husband, go. I dare not hearken
    To thy words, or look upon
Those despairing eyes that darken
    Down on me — but he is gone.
Nay, come back; and be my fate
As thou wilt — it is too late.

I have conquered; it is done;
    Yea, the death-struggle is o'er,
And the hopeless quiet won! —
    I shall see his face no more! —
And mine eyes are waxing dim
Now they cannot look on him.

And my heart-pulses are growing
    Very weak; and thro' my whole
Life-blood a slow chill is going: —
    Blessed Saviour, take my soul
To Thy Paradise and care; —
Paradise, will he be there?

THE NOVICE

I love one, and he loveth me:
Who sayeth this? who deemeth this?
And is this thought a cause of bliss,
   Or source of misery?

The loved may die, or he may change:
And if he die thou art bereft;
Or if he alter, nought is left
   Save life that seemeth strange.

A weary life, a hopeless life,
Full of all ill and fear-oppressed;
A weary life that looks for rest
   Alone after death's strife.

And love's joy hath no quiet even;
It evermore is variable.
Its gladness is like war in Hell,
   More than repose in Heaven.

Yea, it is as a poison cup
That holds one quick fire-draught within;
For when the life seems to begin
   The slow death looketh up.

Then bring me to a solitude
Where love may neither come nor go;
Where very peaceful waters flow,
   And roots are found for food;

Where the wild honey-bee booms by;
And trees and bushes freely give
Ripe fruit and nuts; there I would live,
    And there I fain would die.

There Autumn leaves may make my grave,
And little birds sing over it;
And there cool twilight winds may flit
    And shadowy branches wave.

IMMALEE

See Maturin's "Melmoth."

Sonnet.

I gather thyme upon the sunny hills,
   And its pure fragrance ever gladdens me,
   And in my mind having tranquillity
I smile to see how my green basket fills.
And by clear streams I gather daffodils;
   And in dim woods find out the cherry-tree,
   And take its fruit, and the wild strawberry,
And nuts, and honey; and live free from ills.
I dwell on the green earth, 'neath the blue sky,
   Birds are my friends, and leaves my rustling roof;
The deer are not afraid of me, and I
   Hear the wild goat, and hail its hastening hoof;
The squirrels sit perked as I pass them by,
   And even the watchful hare stands not aloof.

LADY ISABELLA

Heart warm as Summer, fresh as Spring,
Gracious as Autumn's harvesting,
Pure as the Winter snows; as white
A hand as lilies in sun-light;
Eyes glorious as a midnight star;
Hair shining as the chestnuts are;
A step firm and majestical;
A voice singing and musical;
A soft expression, kind address;
Tears for another's heaviness;
Bright looks; an action full of grace;
A perfect form, a perfect face;
All these become a woman well,
And these had Lady Isabelle.

NIGHT AND DEATH

Now the sun-lit hours are o’er,
Rise up from thy shadowy shore,
Happy Night, whom Chaos bore.

Better is the peaceful treasure
Of thy musings without measure,
Than the day’s unquiet pleasure.

Bring the holy moon; so pale
She herself seems but a veil
For the sun, where no clouds sail.

Bring the stars, thy progeny;
Each a little lamp on high
To light up an azure sky.

Sounds incomprehensible
In the shining planets dwell
Of thy sister Queen to tell.

Of that sister Nature saith,
She hath power o’er life and breath;
And her name is written Death.

She is fairer far than thou;
Grief her head can never bow,
Joy is stamped upon her brow.

She is full of gentleness,

And of faith and hope; distress
Finds in her forgetfulness.

In her arms who lieth down
Never more is seen to frown,
Tho' he wore a thorny crown.

Whoso sigheth in unrest
If his head lean on her breast
Witnesseth she is the best.

All the riches of the earth
Weighed by her are nothing worth;
She is the eternal birth.

In her treasure-house are found
Stored abundantly around
Almsdeeds done without a sound;

Long forbearance; patient will;
Fortitude in midst of ill;
Hope, when even fear grew still;

Kindness given again for hate;
Hearts resigned tho' desolate;
Meekness, which is truly great;

Bitter tears of penitence;
Changeless love's omnipotence: —
And nought lacketh recompense.

In her house no tainted thing
Winneth any entering;
There the poor have comforting.

There they wait a little time
Till the angel-uttered chime
Sound the eternal matin-prime.

Then, upraised in joyfulness,
They shall know her; and confess
She is blessed and doth bless.

When earth's fleeting day is flown
All created things shall own,
Death is Life, and Death alone.

YOUNG MEN AYE WERE FICKLE FOUND SINCE SUMMER TREES WERE LEAFY

Go in peace my Beloved; tho' never again
Shall I feel in thy presence strange joy and sweet pain;
Go in peace my Beloved; perhaps thou may'st yet
Find a young heart to love thee that need not forget.

In glory and beauty and smiles thou shalt go,
And I shall remain in my wearisome woe.
Oh! thine is the rose on a bright summer morn
Full of perfume and blushes; — and mine is the thorn.

And thine is the sun-light, and mine is the cloud;
And thine is the feasting, and mine is the shroud.
And thou shalt have gladness and honor's increase;
And I in my cool silent grave shall have peace.

But so it is fitting, and so let it be;
The praise be thy portion, the shame be for me.
Ah! why should I chide thee and struggle in vain?
For love, once recalled, is not given again.

Thy word is forgotten, and broken thy vow;
If I pray or reproach thee thou heedest not now.
I would I could hate thee, false love; but in truth
How can I abhor the delight of my youth?

Oh! happy the maiden whose beautiful strength
Shall win thy proud heart and subdue it at length!
Yet tho' she be true, what hath she more than I?
She may live but for thee, and for thee I shall die.

The faith which endures and is mighty in death
Is more real, to my thinking, than words which are breath.
There are many fair women will court thee and live;
But who, broken-hearted, will die and forgive?

By the love that I bear thee, the hopes that are flown,
The heart that lies bleeding, the life left alone, —
Remember, remember the dear vanished time,
In thy far-distant country and sun-gladdened clime.

THE LOTUS-EATERS

Ulysses to Penelope.

In a far-distant land they dwell,
   Incomprehensible,
Who love the shadow more than light,
   More than the sun the moon,
   Cool evening more than noon,
Pale silver more than gold that glitters bright.
A dark cloud overhangs their land
   Like a mighty hand,
Never moving from above it;
A cool shade and moist and dim,
With a twilight-purple rim,
   And they love it.
And sometimes it giveth rain,
But soon it ceaseth as before,
And earth drieth up again;
Then the dews rise more and more,
Till it filleth, dropping o'er;
But no forked lightnings flit,
And no thunders roll in it.
Thro' the land a river flows;
With a sleepy sound it goes;
Such a drowsy noise, in sooth,
Those who will not listen, hear not;
But if one is wakeful, fear not;
It shall lull him to repose,
Bringing back the dream's of youth.
Hemlock groweth, poppy bloweth
In the fields where no man moweth;
And the vine is full of wine
And are full of milk the kine,
And the hares are all secure,
And the birds are wild no more,

And the forest-trees wax old,
And winds stir, or hot, or cold,
And yet no man taketh care,
All things resting everywhere.

SONNET: FROM THE PSALMS

All thro' the livelong night I lay awake
   Watering my couch with tears of heaviness.
   None stood beside me in my sore distress; —
Then cried I to my heart: If thou wilt, break,
But be thou still; no moaning will I make,
   Nor ask man's help, nor kneel that he may bless.
   So I kept silence in my haughtiness,
Till lo! the fire was kindled, and I spake
Saying: Oh that I had wings like to a dove,
   Then would I flee away and be at rest:
I would not pray for friends, or hope, or love,
   But still the weary throbbing of my breast;
And, gazing on the changeless heavens above,
   Witness that such a quietness is best.

SONG: THE STREAM MOANETH AS IT FLOWETH

The stream moaneth as it floweth,
The wind sigheth as it bloweth,
Leaves are falling, Autumn goeth,
    Winter cometh back again;
And the air is very chilly,
And the country rough and hilly,
    And I shiver in the rain.
Who will help me? Who will love me?
Heaven sets forth no light above me;
Ancient memories reprove me,
Long-forgotten feelings move me,
    I am full of heaviness.
Earth is cold, too cold the sea;
Whither shall I turn and flee?
Is there any hope for me?
Any ease for my heart-aching?
Any sleep that hath no waking?
Any night without day-breaking?
    Any rest from weariness?
Hark! the wind is answering:
    Hark! the running stream replieth:
    There is rest for him that dieth;
    In the grave whoever lieth
Nevermore hath sorrowing.
Holy slumber, holy quiet,
Close the eyes and still the riot;
And the brain forgets its thought,
    And the heart forgets its beating. —
    Earth and earthly things are fleeting,
There is what all men have sought;
Long, unchangeable repose,
Lulling us from many woes.

A COUNSEL

Oh weep for the glory departed
  That comes not again;
And weep for the friends hollow-hearted
  Ye cared for in vain;
And weep for the roses that perished
  Ere Summer had fled;
For hopes that ye vainly have cherished; —
  But not for the dead.
Nay mourn not for them: they have ended
  All labors and woes;
Their hopes now of glory are blended
  With perfect repose.
And tell me, this thing that is given,
  Shall it not suffice?
They wait for the gladness of Heaven,
  And have Paradise.

THE WORLD'S HARMONIES

Oh listen, listen; for the Earth
   Hath silent melody;
Green grasses are her lively chords,
   And blossoms; and each tree,
Chestnut and oak and sycamore,
   Makes solemn harmony.

Oh listen, listen; for the Sea
   Is calling unto us;
Her notes are the broad liquid waves
   Mighty and glorious.
Lo, the first man and the last man
   Hath heard, shall hearken thus.

The Sun on which men cannot look
   Its splendor is so strong;
Which wakeneth life and giveth life
   Rolling in light along,
From day-dawn to dim eventide
   Sings the eternal song.

And the Moon taketh up the hymn,
   And the Stars answer all;
And all the Clouds and all the Winds
   And all the Dews that fall
And Frost and fertilizing Rain
   Are mutely musical.

Fishes and Beasts and feathered Fowl
   Swell the eternal chant,
That riseth through the lower air,

Over the rainbow slant,
Up through the unseen palace-gates,
Fearlessly jubilant.

Before the everlasting Throne
It is acceptable;
It hath no pause or faltering;
The Angels know it well;
Yea, in the highest heaven of heavens
Its sound is audible.

Yet than the voice of the whole World
There is a sweeter voice,
That maketh all the Cherubim
And Seraphim rejoice;
That all the blessèd Spirits hail
With undivided choice;

That crieth at the golden door
And gaineth entrance in;
That the palm-branch and radiant crown
And glorious throne may win; —
The lowly prayer of a poor man
Who turneth from his sin.

LINES: GIVEN WITH A PENWIPER

I have compassion on the carpeting,
   And on your back I have compassion too.
The splendid Brussels web is suffering
   In the dimmed lustre of each glowing hue;
And you the everlasting altering
   Of your position with strange aches must rue.
Behold, I come the carpet to preserve,
And save your spine from a continual curve.

THE LAST ANSWER

She turned round to me with her steadfast eyes:
    “I tell you I have looked upon the dead;
    “Have kissed the brow and the cold lips;” she said;
“Have called upon the sleeper to arise;
“He loved me, yet he stirred not; on this wise,
    “Not bowing in weak agony my head,
    “But all too sure of what life is, to dread,
“Learned I that love and hope are fallacies.”
She gazed quite calmly on me; and I felt
    Awed and astonished and almost afraid:
        For what was I to have admonished her?
Then, being full of doubt and fear, I knelt,
    And tears came to my eyes even as I prayed:
        But she, meanwhile, only grew statelier.

ONE OF THE DEAD

Paler, not quite so fair as in her life,
   She lies upon the bed, perfectly still;
   Her little hands clasped with a patient will
Upon her bosom, swelling without strife;
An honored virgin, a most blameless wife.
   The roses lean upon the window sill,
   That she trained once; their sweets the hot air fill,
And make the death-apartment odour-rife.
Her meek white hands folded upon her breast,
   Her gentle eyes closed in the long last sleep,
She lieth down in her unbroken rest;
   Her kin, kneeling around, a vigil keep,
Venting their grief in low sobs unrepressed: —
   Friends, she but slumbers, wherefore do ye weep?

THE WHOLE HEAD IS SICK, AND THE WHOLE HEART FAINT

Woe for the young who say that life is long,
   Who turn from the sun-rising to the west,
   Who feel no pleasure and can find no rest,
Who in the morning sigh for evensong.
Their hearts weary because of this world's wrong,
   Yearn with a thousand longings unexpressed;
   They have a wound no mortal ever drest,
An ill than all earth's remedies more strong.
For them the fount of gladness hath run dry,
   And in all nature is no pleasant thing;
For them there is no glory in the sky,
   No sweetness in the breezes' murmuring;
They say: The peace of heaven is placed too high,
   And this earth changeth and is perishing.

I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD

The roses bloom too late for me;
The violets I shall not see;
Even the snowdrops will not come
Till I have passed from home to home;
From home on earth to home in heaven,
Here penitent and there forgiven.

Mourn not, my Father, that I seek
One Who is strong when I am weak.
Through the dark passage, verily,
His rod and staff shall comfort me;
He shall support me in the strife
Of death, that dieth into life;
He shall support me; He receive
My soul when I begin to live,
And more than I can ask for give.

He from the heaven-gates built above
Hath looked on me in perfect love.
From the heaven-walls to me He calls
To come and dwell within those walls;
With Cherubim and Seraphim
And Angels; yea, beholding Him.
His care for me is more than mine,
Father; His love is more than thine.
Sickness and death I have from thee,
From Him have immortality.
He giveth gladness where He will,
Yet chasteneth His belovèd still.

Then tell me; is it not enough
To feel that when the path is rough,

And the sky dark, and the rain cold,
His promise standeth as of old?
When heaven and earth have passed away,
Only His righteous word shall stay,
And we shall know His will is best.
Behold; He is a Haven Rest,
A Sheltering Rock, a Hiding Place,
For runners steadfast in the race;
Who, toiling for a little space,
Had light through faith when sight grew dim,
And offered all their world to Him.

O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?

She sleepeth: would ye wake her if ye could?
   Is her face sad that ye should pity her?
   Did Death come to her like a messenger
From a far land where is not any good?
I tell ye nay: but, having understood
   That God is Love, Death was her harbinger

[The rest of the manuscript is missing from the notebook.]

UNDINE

She did not answer him again
   But walked straight to the door;
Her hand nor trembled on the lock,
   Nor her foot on the floor,
But as she stood up steadily
   She turned, and looked once more.

She turned, and looked on him once more:
   Her face was very pale;
And from her forehead her long hair
   Fell back like a thick veil;
But, though her lips grew white, the fire
   Of her eyes did not fail.

Then as she fixed her eyes on him
   Old thoughts came back again
Of the dear rambles long ago
   Through meadow-land and lane,
When all the woods were full of flowers,
   And all the fields of grain.

When all the birds were full of song
   Except the turtle dove;
And that sat cooing tenderly
   In the green boughs above;
When they hoped the same hopes, and when
   He told her of his love.

Old memories came back to her
   Of what once made her glad,
Till her heart seemed to stand quite still,

And every pulse she had:
Then the blood rose up to her brain
And she was almost mad.

Yet still she stood there steadily
And looked him in the face;
There was no tear upon her cheek;
Upon her brow no trace
Of the agonizing strife within,
The shame and the disgrace.

And so she stayed a little while
Until she turned once more,
Without a single sob or sigh;
But her heart felt quite sore:
The spirit had been broken, and
The hope of life was o'er.

LADY MONTREVOR

(See Maturin's "Wild Irish Boy.")

I do not look for love that is a dream:
   I only seek for courage to be still;
   To bear my grief with an unbending will,
And when I am a-weary not to seem.
Let the round world roll on; let the sun beam;
   Let the wind blow, and let the rivers fill
   The everlasting sea; and on the hill
The palms almost touch heaven, as children deem.
And though young Spring and Summer pass away,
   And Autumn and cold Winter come again;
   And though my soul, being tired of its pain,
Pass from the ancient earth; and though my clay
   Return to dust; my tongue shall not complain:
No man shall mock me after this my day.

FLORAL TEACHING

O ye red-blushing summer roses, ye
Who are like queens, crowned with a rich perfume,
In whose deep heart there is no shade of gloom,
Who are a pasture for the honey-bee;
Surely your days and nights pass happily:
And when the earth, your mother, doth resume
Your little lives, do ye not think the tomb
Is full of soft leaves and looks pleasantly?
So be it with me: through life so may I deem
That this world's course is ordered well, and give
My help to others and my loving heed.
Then when the day comes that it is decreed
I am to die, may I not cease to live,
But rest awhile waiting the morning beam.

DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY

"Tell me: doth it not grieve thee to lie here,
And see the cornfields waving not for thee,
Just in the waxing Summer of the year?"

"I fade from earth; and lo! along with me
The season that I love will fade away:
How should I look for Autumn longingly?"

"Yet Autumn beareth fruit whilst day by day
The leaves grow browner with a mellow hue,
Declining to a beautiful decay."

"Decay is death, with which I have to do,
And see it near; behold, it is more good
Than length of days and length of sorrow too."

"But thy heart hath not dwelt in solitude:
Many have loved and love thee; dost not heed
Free love, for which in vain have others sued?"

"I thirst for love, love is mine only need,
Love such as none hath borne me, nor can bear,
True love that prompteth thought and word and deed."

"Here it is not: why seek it otherwhere?
Nay, bow thy head, and own that on this earth
Are many goodly things, and sweet, and fair."

"There are tears in man's laughter; in his mirth
There is a fearful forward look; and lo!
An infant's cry gives token of its birth."

“I mark the ocean of Time ebb and flow:
He who hath care one day, and is perplext
Tomorrow may have joy in place of woe.”

“Evil becomes good; and to this annext
Good becomes evil; speak of it no more;
My heart is wearied and my spirit vext.”

“Is there no place it grieves thee to give o’er?
Is there no home thou lov’st, and so wouldst fain
Tarry a little longer at the door?”

“I must go hence and not return again;
But the friends whom I have shall come to me,
And dwell together with me safe from pain.”

“Where is that mansion mortals cannot see?
Behold the tombs are full of worms; shalt thou
Rise thence and soar up skywards gloriously?”

“Even as the planets shine we know not how,
We shall be raised then; changed, yet still the same;
Being made like Christ; yea, being as He is now.”

“Thither thou goest whence no man ever came:
Death’s voyagers return not; and in Death
There is no room for speech or sigh or fame.”

“There is room for repose that comforteth;
There weariness is not; and there content
Broodeth forever, and hope hovereth.”

“When the stars fall, and when the graves are rent,
Shalt thou have safety? shalt thou look for life

When the great light of the broad sun is spent?”

“These elements shall consummate their strife,
This heaven and earth shall shrivel like a scroll
And then be re-created, beauty-rife.”

“Who shall abide it when from pole to pole
The world’s foundations shall be overthrown?
Who shall abide to scan the perfect whole?”

“He who hath strength given to him, not his own;
He who hath faith in that which is not seen,
And patient hope; who trusts in love alone.”

“Yet thou! the death-struggle must intervene
Ere thou win rest; think better of it; think
Of all that is and shall be, and hath been.”

“The cup my Father giveth me to drink,
Shall I not take it meekly? though my heart
Tremble a moment, it shall never shrink.”

“Satan will wrestle with thee, when thou art
In the last agony; and Death will bring
Sins to remembrance ere thy spirit part.”

“In that great hour of unknown suffering
God shall be with me, and His arm made bare
Shall fight for me: yea, underneath His wing
I shall lie safe at rest and freed from care.”

DEATH

"The grave-worm revels now"
Upon the pure white brow,
And on the eyes so dead and dim,
And on each putrifying limb,
And on the neck 'neath the long hair;
Now from the rosy lips
He damp corruption sips,
Banqueting everywhere.
Creeping up and down through the silken tresses
That once were smoothed by her husband's caresses,
In her mouth, and on her breast
Where the babe might never rest
In giving birth to whom she lost her life;
She gave all and she gave in vain,
Nor saw the purchase of her pain,
Poor mother and poor wife.

Was she too young to die?
Nay, young in sorrow and in years,
Her heart was old in faith and love;
Her eyes were ever fixed above,
They were not dimmed by tears.
And as the time went swiftly by
She was even as a stately palm
Beside still waters, where a dove
Broodeth in perfect calm.
Yea, she was as a gentle breeze
To which a thousand tones are given;
To tell of freshness to the trees,
Of roses to the honey-bees,
Of Summer to the distant seas,
And unto all of Heaven.

They rest together in one grave,
The mother and her infant child,
The holy and the undefiled:
Let none weep that ye could not save
So much of beauty from the earth;
It is not death ye see, though they
Pass into foulness and decay;
It is the second birth.

A HOPELESS CASE

(Nydia.)

All night I dream of that which cannot be:
  And early in the morning I awake
  My whole heart saddened for a vision's sake.
I in my sleep have joy; but woe is me!
Thro' the long day the shadowy pleasures flee
  And are not: wherefore I would gladly take
  Some warm and poppied potion that might make
My slumbers long which pass so pleasantly.
And if I slept and never woke again,
  But dreamed on with a happy consciousness
Of grass and flowers and perfect rest from pain,
I would leave hope a thousand times found vain,
  And own a twilight solitude doth bless
Shut in from cold and wind and storm of rain.

ELLEN MIDDLETON

Raise me; undraw the curtain; that is well.
   Put up the casement; I would see once more
   The golden sun-set flooding sea and shore;
And hearken to the solemn evening-bell
That ringeth out my spirit like a knell.
   The tree of love a bitter fruitage bore,
   Sweet at the rind but rotten at the core,
Pointing to heaven and bringing down to hell.
I will not name His name, lest the young life
   That dieth at my heart should live again;
Strengthening me to renew the weary strife
   That ceaseth, — is this death? It is not pain.
Write on my grave: Here lieth a lone wife
   Whose faith was hidden and whose love was vain.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH

I listen to the holy antheming
That riseth in thy walls continually,
What while the organ pealeth solemnly
And white-robed men and boys stand up to sing.
I ask my heart with a sad questioning:
"What lov'st thou here?" and my heart answers me:
"Within the shadows of this sanctuary
To watch and pray is a most blessed thing."
To watch and pray, false heart? it is not so:
Vanity enters with thee, and thy love
Soars not to Heaven, but grovelleth below.
Vanity keepeth guard, lest good should reach
Thy hardness; not the echoes from above
Can rule thy stubborn feelings or can teach.

GROWN COLD.: SONNET

An old man asked me: What is Love? I turned
   In mirth away, and would not answer him;
   He filled a cup of wine up to the brim,
And yet no sparkling in its depths discerned.
Methought a death fire in his weak eyes burned
   While he beholding brightness called it dim;
   He sat and chuckled: ‘twas a ghastly whim
In one whose spirit had so little learned.
So shall it be with me; but so not I
   Shall question: certainly the blessèd thought
Of Love shall linger, when itself is gone.
Oh nest of thorns for dove to brood upon!
   Oh painful throbbings of a heart untaught
To rest when all its gladness goeth by!

ZARA

(see Maturin's "Women.")

The pale sad face of her I wronged
   Upbraids and follows me forever:
The silent mouth grows many-tongued
   To chide me; like some solemn river
Whose every wave hath found a tone
To reason of one truth alone.

She loved and was beloved again:
   Why did I spoil her paradise?
Oh fleeting joy and lasting pain!
   Oh folly of the heart and eyes!
I loved him more than all; and he,
He also hath forsaken me.

How have I wearied thee false friend?
   Answer me, wherein have I erred
That so our happy loves should end?
   Was it in thought, or deed, or word?
My soul lay bare to thee; disclose
The hidden fountain of my woes.

The Lady Moon is all too bright
   Loftily seated in the skies.
They say that love once dimmed her light,
   But surely such are poets' lies.
Who knoweth that she ever shone
On rosy cheeked Endymion?

Narcissus looked on his own shade,
   And sickened for its loveliness.
Grasping, he saw its beauties fade
   And stretch out into nothingness.
He died, rejecting his own good,
And Echo mourned in solitude.

But wherefore am I left alone?
   What was my sin, to merit this?
Of all my friends there is not one
   I slighted in my happiness,
My joyful days — oh, very white
One face pursues me day and night.

She loved him even as I love,
   For she is dying for his sake.
Oh happy hope that looks above!
   Oh happy heart that still can break!
I cannot die, though hope is dead;
He spurned me, and my heart but bled.

Therefore because she did not speak,
   Being strong to die and make no sign;
Because her courage waxed not weak,
   Strengthened with love as with new wine;
Because she stooped not while she bore,
He will return to her once more.

Perhaps he still may bring her health,
   May call her colour back again;
While I shall pine in fame and wealth,
   Owning that such as these are vain,
And envying her happier fate: —
And yet methinks it is too late.

Thou doubly false to her and me,
   Boast of her death and my despair.
Boast if thou canst: on land, on sea,
   I will be with thee everywhere;
My soul, let loose by mine own deed,
Shall make thee fear who would’st not heed.

Come, thou glad hour of vengeance, come,
   When I may dog him evermore,
May track him to his distant home:
   Yea, though he flee from shore to shore
I will be there, the pallid ghost
Of love and hope for ever lost.

Old memories shall make him sad,
   And thin his hair and change his mien;
He shall remember what he had,
   And dream of what he might have been,
Till he shall long for death; yet shrink
From the cold cup that I shall drink.

Who drinketh of that potent draught
   May never set it down again.
What matter if one wept or laughed?
   It killeth joy and numbeth pain:
It hath sleep for the sorrowful,
And for the sick a perfect lull.

A drowsy lull, a heavy sleep:
   Haply it may give such to me:
And if my grave place were dug deep
   Beneath the cold earth, verily
Such quietness I would not break,
Not for my cherished vengeance’ sake.

Bring me the cup: behold, I choose
   For all my portion nothingness.
Bring me the cup: I would not lose
   One drop of its forgetfulness.
On the grave brink I turn and think
Of thee, before I stoop to drink.

When the glad Summer time is past
   Shalt thou not weary of thy life
And turn to seek that home at last
   Where never enters fear nor strife?
Yea, at length, in the Autumn weather,
Shall not we twain repose together?

RUIN

Amid the shade of a deserted hall
   I stand and think on much that hath been lost.
   How long it is since other step has cross'd
This time-worn floor; that tapestry is all
Worm-eaten; and those columns rise up tall
   Yet crumbling to decay; where banners toss'd
   Thin spiders' webs hang now; and bitter frost
Has even killed the flowers upon the wall.
Yet once this was a home brim full of life,
   Full of the hopes and fears and love of youth,
      Full of love's language speaking without sound:
Here honor was enshrined and kindly truth;
   Hither the young lord brought his blushing wife,
      And here her bridal garlands were unbound.

I SIT AMONG GREEN SHADY VALLEYS OFT

I sit among green shady valleys oft
   Listening to echo-winds sighing of woe;
   The grass and flowers are strong and sweet below,
Yea, I am tired and the smooth turf is soft.
I sit and think and never look aloft
   Save to the tops of a tall poplar row
   That glisten in the wind, whispering low
Of sudden sorrow reaching those who laughed.
A very drowsy fountain bubbles near
   Catching pale sunbeams o’er it wandering;
Its waters are so clear the stones look through: —
Then sitting by its lazy stream I hear
   Silence more loud than any other thing,
What time the trees weep o’er me honeydew.

LISTEN, AND I WILL TELL YOU OF A FACE

Listen, and I will tell you of a face
   Not lovely, but made beautiful by mind;
   Lighted up with dark eyes in which you find
All womanly affections have their place;
Upon her even brow there is no trace
   Of passion; many fragrant blossoms bind
   Her hair glossy and golden; like a blind
It shadows her round cheeks blush full of grace.
I know now how it *is*, but it *was* so:
   And when I think upon her bosom heaving,
And her full glistening eyes looking on me
When the poor bird was struggling; I still see
The throbbing tenderness, the virgin glow,
   And dream on, not at rest and yet believing.

WOULDST THOU GIVE ME A HEAVY JEWELED CROWN

Wouldst thou give me a heavy jeweled crown
    And purple mantle and embroidered vest?
    Dear Child, the colours of the glorious west
Are far more gorgeous when the sun sinks down.
The diadem would only make me frown
    With its own weight; nay, give me for my crest
    Pale violets dreaming in perfect rest,
Or rather leaves withered to Autumn brown.
A purple flowing mantle would but hinder
    My careless walk, and an embroidered robe
Would shame me: what is the best man who stepped
On earth, more than the naked worm that crept
Over its surface? Earth shall be a cinder;
    Where shall be then the beauty of the globe?

I SAID WITHIN MYSELF: I AM A FOOL

I said within myself: I am a fool
   To sigh ever for that which being gone
   Cannot return: the sun shines as it shone;
Rejoice: — but who can be made glad by rule?
My heart and soul and spirit are no tool
   To play with and direct; my cheek is wan
   With memory; and ever and anon
I weep feeling life is a weary school.
There is much noise and bustle in the street;
   It used to be so, and it is so now;
All are the same, and will be many a year.
   Spirit, that canst not break and wilt not bow,
Fear not the cold, thou who hast borne the heat; —
Die if thou wilt; but what hast thou to fear?

METHINKS THE ILLS OF LIFE I FAIN WOULD SHUN

Methinks the ills of life I fain would shun;
   But then I must shun life which is a blank:
   Even in my childhood oft my spirit sank
Thinking of all that had still to be done.
Among my many friends there is not one
   Like her with whom I sat upon the bank
   Willow-o'er-shadowed; from whose lips I drank
A love more pure than streams that sing and run.
But many times that joy has cost a sigh;
   And many times I in my heart have sought
For the old comfort, and not found it yet:
Surely in that calm day when I shall die
   The painful thought will be a blessed thought,
And I shall sorrow that I must forget.

STRANGE VOICES SING AMONG THE PLANETS WHICH

Strange voices sing among the planets which
   Move on forever; in the old sea's foam
   There is a prophecy; in Heaven's blue dome
Great beacon fires are lighted; black as pitch
Is night, and yet star jewels make it rich;
   And if the moon lights up her cloudy home
   The darkness flees, and forth strange gleamings roam
Lighting up hill and vale and mound and ditch.
Earth is full of all questions that all ask;
   And she alone of heavy silence full
Answereth not: what is it severeth
Us from the spirits that we would be with?
   Or is it that our fleshly ear is dull,
And our own shadow hides light with a mask?

SLEEP, SLEEP, HAPPY CHILD

“All creation slept and smiled.” — Blake.

Sleep, sleep, happy one;
Thy night is but just begun.
Sleep in peace; still angels keep
Holy watches o’er thy sleep.

Softest breasts are pillowing,
Softest wings are shadowing
Thy calm slumber; little child,
Sleep in thy white robes undefiled.

There is no more aching now
In thy heart or in thy brow.
The red blood upon thy breast
Cannot scare away thy rest.

Though thy hands are clasped as when
A man thou prayedst among men,
Thy pains are lulled, thy tears are dried,
And thy wants are satisfied.

Sleep, sleep; what quietness
After the world’s noise is this!
Sleep on, where the hush and shade
Like a veil are round thee laid.

At thy head a cross is hewn
Whereon shines the Advent moon:

Through all the hours of the night
Its shadow rests on thee aright.

In temptation thou wert firm;
Now have patience with the worm.
Yet a little while, and he
And death and sin shall bow to thee.

Yet a little while, and thou
Shalt have a crown upon thy brow,
And a palm branch in thy hand
Where the holy angels stand.

Sleep, sleep, till the chime
Sound of the last matin prime:
Sleep on until the morn
Of another Advent dawn.

WHAT SAPPHO WOULD HAVE SAID HAD HER LEAP CURED INSTEAD OF KILLING HER

Love, Love, that having found a heart
   And left it, leav'st it desolate; —
   Love, Love, that art more strong than Hate,
More lasting and more full of art; —
O blessèd Love, return, return,
Brighten the flame that needs must burn.

Among the stately lilies pale,
   Among the roses flushing red,
   I seek a flower meet for my head,
A wreath wherewith to bind my veil:
I seek in vain; a shadow-pain
Lies on my heart; and all in vain.

The rose hath too much life in it;
   The lily is too much at rest.
   Surely a blighted rose were best,
Or cankered lily flower more fit;
Or purple violet, withering
While yet the year is in its spring.

I walk down by the river side
   Where the low willows touch the stream;
   Beneath the ripple and sun-gleam
The slippery cold fishes glide,
Where flags and reeds and rushes lave
Their roots in the unsullied wave.

Methinks this is a drowsy place:
   Disturb me not; I fain would sleep:

The very winds and waters keep
Their voices under; and the race
Of Time seems to stand still, for here
Is night or twilight all the year.

A very holy hushedness
Broods here forever: like a dove
That, having built its nest above
A quiet place, feels the excess
Of calm sufficient, and would fain
Not wake, but drowse on without pain.

And slumbering on its mossy nest
Haply hath dreams of pleasant Spring;
And in its vision prunes its wing
And takes swift flight, yet is at rest.
Yea, is at rest: and still the calm
Is wrapped around it like a charm.

I would have quiet too in truth,
And here will sojourn for a while.
Lo; I have wandered many a mile,
Till I am foot-sore in my youth.
I will lie down; and quite forget
The doubts and fears that haunt me yet.

My pillow underneath my head
Shall be green grass; thick fragrant leaves
My canopy; the spider weaves
Meet curtains for my narrow bed;
And the dew can but cool my brow
That is so dry and burning now.

Ah, would that it could reach my heart,
And fill the void that is so dry

And aches and aches; — but what am I
To shrink from my self-purchased part?
It is in vain; is all in vain;
I must go forth and bear my pain.

Must bear my pain, till Love shall turn
To me in pity and come back.
His footsteps left a smouldering track
When he went forth, that still doth burn.
Oh come again, thou pain divine,
Fill me and make me wholly thine.

ON KEATS

A garden in a garden: a green spot
  Where all is green: most fitting slumber-place
  For the strong man grown weary of a race
Soon over. Unto him a goodly lot
Hath fallen in fertile ground; there thorns are not,
  But his own daisies: silence, full of grace,
  Surely hath shed a quiet on his face:
His earth is but sweet leaves that fall and rot.
What was his record of himself, ere he
  Went from us? *Here lies one whose name was writ*
  In water: while the chilly shadows flit
    Of sweet Saint Agnes' Eve; while basil springs,
    His name, in every humble heart that sings,
Shall be a fountain of love, verily.

HAVE PATIENCE

The goblets all are broken,
   The pleasant wine is spilt,
   The songs cease; if thou wilt,
Listen, and hear truth spoken.
We take thought for the morrow,
   And know not we shall see it;
We look on death with sorrow,
      And cannot flee it.
Youth passes like the lightning,
   Not to return again;
Just for a little bright'ning
   The confines of a plain;
Gilding the spires, and whitening
   The grave-stones and the slain.
Youth passes like the odour
   From the white rose's cup,
   When the hot sun drinks up
The dew that overflowed her:
Then life forsakes the petals
   That had been very fair;
   No beauty lingers there,
      And no bee settles.
But when the rose is dead,
   And the leaves fallen;
And when the earth has spread
   A snow-white pall on;
The thorn remains, once hidden
   By the green growth above it;
A darksome guest unbidden,
      With none to love it.
Manhood is turbulent,
      And old age tires;
That, hath no still content,
This, no desires.

The present hath even less
    Joy than the past,
        And more cares fret it: —
Life is a weariness
    From first to last: —
        Let us forget it.
Fill high and deep: — but how?
    The goblets all are broken.
Nay then, have patience now:
    For this is but a token
We soon shall have no need
    Of such to cheer us:
The palm-branches, decreed,
And crowns, to be our meed,
    Are very near us.

TO LALLA, READING MY VERSES TOPSY-TURVY

Darling little Cousin,
    With your thoughtful look
Reading topsy-turvy
    From a printed book

English hieroglyphics,
    More mysterious
To you, than Egyptian
    Ones would be to us; —

Leave off for a minute
    Studying, and say
What is the impression
    That those marks convey?

Only solemn silence,
    And a wondering smile:
But your eyes are lifted
    Unto mine the while.

In their gaze so steady
    I can surely trace
That a happy spirit
    Lighteth up your face.

Tender, happy spirit,
    Innocent and pure;
Teaching more than science,
    And than learning more.

How should I give answer
    To that asking look?
Darling little Cousin
    Go back to your book.

Read on: if you knew it,
    You have cause to boast: —
You are much the wisest,
    Though I know the most.

SONNET: SOME SAY THAT LOVE AND JOY ARE ONE: AND SO

Some say that love and joy are one: and so
They are indeed in heaven, but not on earth.
Our hearts are made too narrow for the girth
Of love, which is infinity; below
The portion we can compass may bring woe;
Of this the Church bears witness from her birth:
And though a throne in heaven be more than worth
Tears, it *is* pain that makes them overflow.
Think of the utter grief that fell on them
Who knew that they should see his face no more,
When, strong in faith and love, he went before,
Bound in the spirit, to Jerusalem,
And yet the bitter parting scarcely bore,
Though burning for a martyr's diadem.

THE LAST COMPLAINT

Woe is me! an old man said
Stretched upon his dying bed:
Woe is me! for life is short;
And one hour cannot be bought
With great treasure or long thought.
What have all my days been worth?
Weary labor without gain,
Pleasure ending in much pain,
Planting that brought forth no fruit,
Tree of life struck at the root,
Were my portion from my birth:
But my cold heart sickeneth
Shrinking from the touch of death;
And I fain would have again
Toil and weariness and pain
For a short time more on earth.
Yet the time was troublesome,
And the days lagged slowly on;
Surely it is better so:
And I cannot grieve to go
Hence. How fast the shadows come: —
Light and darkness both grow wan: —
Is that fire? it is not heat.
Cover up my face and feet;
Stand back; do not speak to me:
I would think how it will be
When the sun is blotted from
My existence, and the worm
Dwells with me as friend with friend
For a certain measured term.
But his term will have an end:
Then I shall be quite alone,
Quite alone without a sound;
For no wind beneath the ground

Can come jarring bone with bone.
Without eyes I shall behold
Darkness, and shall feel the cold
Without nerves, or brain, or flesh; —
Oh sweet air that blowest fresh;
Oh sweet stars that glimmer through
The dim casement; — I shall soon
Have a sod instead of you.
Draw the curtains, while I wake
Who shall sleep; and let me lie
In the blackness, till I die;
For I cannot bear to take
My last look of the clear moon.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

Have you forgotten how one Summer night
    We wandered forth together with the moon,
    While warm winds hummed to us a sleepy tune?
Have you forgotten how you praised both light
And darkness; not embarrassed yet not quite
    At ease? and how you said the glare of noon
    Less pleased you than the stars? but very soon
You blushed, and seemed to doubt if you were right.
We wandered far and took no note of time;
    Till on the air there came the distant call
Of church bells: we turned hastily, and yet
Ere we reached home sounded a second chime.
    But what; have you indeed forgotten all?
Ah how then is it I cannot forget?

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, (ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT.)

Thank God, thank God, we do believe,
Thank God that this is Christmas Eve.
Even as we kneel upon this day,
Even so the ancient legends say
Nearly two thousand years ago
The stalled ox knelt, and even so
The ass knelt full of praise which they
Could not express, while we can pray.
Thank God, thank God, for Christ was born
Ages ago, as on this morn:
In the snow-season undefiled
God came to earth a little Child;
He put His ancient glory by
To live for us, and then to die.

How shall we thank God? how shall we
Thank Him and praise Him worthily?
What will He have Who loved us thus,
What presents will He take from us?
Will He take gold, or precious heap
Of gems, or shall we rather steep
The air with incense, or bring myrrh?
What man will be our messenger
To go to Him and ask His Will?
Which having learned we will fulfil
Tho' He choose all we most prefer: —
What man will be our messenger?

Thank God, thank God, the Man is found,
Sure-footed, knowing well the ground:
He knows the road, for this the way
He travelled once, as on this day.
He is our Messenger; beside,

He is our Door, and Path, and Guide;
He also is our Offering,
He is the Gift that we must bring.
Let us kneel down with one accord
And render thanks unto the Lord:
For unto us a Child is born
Upon this happy Christmas morn;
For unto us a Son is given,
Firstborn of God and Heir of Heaven.

FOR ADVENT

Sweet sweet sound of distant waters falling
On a parched and thirsty plain;
Sweet sweet song of soaring skylark, calling
On the sun to shine again;
Perfume of the rose, only the fresher
For past fertilizing rain;
Pearls amid the sea, a hidden treasure
For some daring hand to gain; —
Better, dearer than all these
Is the earth beneath the trees:
Of a much more priceless worth
Is the old, brown, common earth.

Little snow-white lamb piteously bleating
For thy mother far away;
Saddest, sweetest nightingale retreating
With thy sorrow from the day;
Weary fawn whom night has overtaken,
From the herd gone quite astray;
Dove whose nest was rifled and forsaken
In the budding month of May; —
Roost upon the leafy trees;
Lie on earth and take your ease:
Death is better far than birth,
You shall turn again to earth.

Listen to the never pausing murmur
Of the waves that fret the shore:
See the ancient pine that stands the firmer
For the storm-shock that it bore;
And the moon her silver chalice filling
With light from the great sun's store;
And the stars which deck our temple's ceiling

As the flowers deck its floor;
Look and hearken while you may,
For these things shall pass away:
All these things shall fail and cease;
Let us wait the end in peace.

Let us wait the end in peace; for truly
That shall cease which was before:
Let us see our lamps are lighted, duly
Fed with oil, nor wanting more:
Let us pray while yet the Lord will hear us,
For the time is almost o'er;
Yea, the end of all is very near us;
Yea, the Judge is at the door.
Let us pray now while we may;
It will be too late to pray
When the quick and dead shall all
Rise at the last trumpet call.

TWO PURSUITS

A voice said: “Follow, follow:” and I rose
   And followed far into the dreamy night,
   Turning my back upon the pleasant light.
It led me where the bluest water flows,
And would not let me drink; where the corn grows
   I dared not pause, but went uncheered by sight
   Or touch; until at length in evil plight
It left me, wearied out with many woes.
Some time I sat as one bereft of sense:
   But soon another voice from very far
Called: “Follow, follow:” and I rose again.
   Now on my night has dawned a blessèd star;
Kind, steady hands my sinking steps sustain,
And will not leave me till I shall go hence.

LOOKING FORWARD

Sleep, let me sleep, for I am sick of care;
Sleep, let me sleep, for my pain wearies me.
Shut out the light; thicken the heavy air
With drowsy incense; let a distant stream
Of music lull me, languid as a dream,
Soft as the whisper of a Summer sea.

Pluck me no rose that groweth on a thorn,
Nor myrtle white and cold as snow in June,
Fit for a virgin on her marriage morn:
But bring me poppies brimmed with sleepy death,
And ivy choking what it garlandeth,
And primroses that open to the moon.

Listen, the music swells into a song,
A simple song I loved in days of yore;
The echoes take it up and up along
The hills, and the wind blows it back again. —
Peace, peace, there is a memory in that strain
Of happy days that shall return no more.

Oh peace, your music wakeneth old thought,
But not old hope that made my life so sweet,
Only the longing that must end in nought.
Have patience with me, friends, a little while:
For soon where you shall dance and sing and smile,
My quickened dust may blossom at your feet.

Sweet thought that I may yet live and grow green,
That leaves may yet spring from the withered root,
And buds and flowers and berries half unseen;

Then if you haply muse upon the past,
Say this: Poor child, she hath her wish at last;
Barren through life, but in death bearing fruit.

LIFE HIDDEN

Roses and lilies grow above the place
  Where she sleeps the long sleep that doth not dream.
If we could look upon her hidden face
  Nor shadow would be there nor garish gleam
  Of light: her life is lapsing like a stream
That makes no noise but floweth on apace
  Seawards; while many a shade and shady beam
Vary the ripples in their gliding chase.
She doth not see, but knows: she doth not feel,
  And yet is sensible: she hears no sound,
Yet counts the flight of time and doth not err.
Peace far and near; peace to ourselves and her:
  Her body is at peace in holy ground,
Her spirit is at peace where Angels kneel.

QUEEN ROSE

The jessamine shows like a star;
   The lilies sway like scepters slim;
Fair clematis from near and far
   Sets forth its wayward tangled whim;
   Curved meadowsweet blooms rich and dim; —
But yet a rose is fairer far.

The jessamine is odorous; so
   Maid lilies are, and clematis;
And where tall meadowsweet flowers grow
   A rare and subtle perfume is; —
   What can there be more choice than these? —
A rose when it doth bud and blow.

Let others choose sweet jessamine,
   Or weave their lily crown aright,
And let who love it pluck and twine
   Loose clematis; or draw delight
   From meadowsweet's clustery downy white; —
The rose, the perfect rose be mine.

HOW ONE CHOSE

"Beyond the sea, in a green land
   Where only rivers are; —
Beyond the clouds, in the clear sky
   Close by some quiet star; —
Could you not fancy there might be
A home Beloved for you and me?"

"If there were such a home my Friend
   Truly prepared for us
Full of palm branches or of crowns
   Sun-gemmed and glorious,
How should we reach it? let us cease
From longing; let us be at peace."

"The nightingale sang yestereve;
   A sweet song singeth she:
Most sad and without any hope
   And full of memory;
But still methought it seemed to speak
To me of home, and bid me seek."

"The nightingale ceased ere the morn:
   Her heart could not contain
The passion of her song, but burst
   With the loud throbbing pain.
Now she hath rest which is the best,
And now I too would be at rest."

"Last night I watched the mounting moon:
   Her glory was too pale
To shine thro' the black heavy clouds
   That wrapped her like a veil;
And yet with patience she passed thro'

The mists and reached the depths of blue.”

“And when the road was travelled o’er
   And when the goal was won
A little while and all her light
   Was swallowed by the sun:
The weary moon must seek again;
Even so our search would be in vain.”

“Yet seek with me. And if our way
   Be long and troublesome,
And if our noon be hot until
   The chilly shadows come
Of evening; — till those shadows flee
In dawn, think Love it is with me.”

“Nay seek alone: I am no mate
   For such as you, in truth:
My heart is old before its time;
   Yours yet is in its youth:
This home with pleasures girt about
Seek you, for I am wearied out.”

SEEKING REST

My Mother said: The child is changed
    That used to be so still;
All the day long she sings, and sings,
    And seems to think no ill;
She laughs as if some inward joy
    Her heart would overfill.

My Sisters said: Now prithee tell
    Thy secret unto us:
Let us rejoice with thee; for all
    Is surely prosperous,
Thou art so merry: tell us Sweet:
    We had not used thee thus.

My Mother says: What ails the child
    Lately so blythe of cheer?
Art sick or sorry? nay, it is
    The Winter of the year;
Wait till the Spring time comes again
    And the sweet flowers appear.

My Sisters say: Come, sit with us,
    That we may weep with thee:
Show us thy grief that we may grieve:
    Yea, haply, if we see
Thy sorrow, we may ease it; but
    Shall share it certainly.

How should I share my pain, who kept
    My pleasure all my own?
My Spring will never come again;

My pretty flowers have blown
For the last time; I can but sit
And think and weep alone.

A YEAR AFTERWARDS

Things are so changed since last we met:
Come; I will show you where she lies.
Doubtless the old look fills her eyes,
And the old patient smile is set
Upon her mouth: it was even so
When last I saw her stretched and still,
So pale and calm I could not weep:
The steady sweetness did not go
Thro' the long week she lay asleep,
Until the dust was heaped on her.
Now many-feathered grasses grow
Above her bosom: come; I will
Show you all this, and we can talk
Going; it is a pleasant walk
And the wind makes it pleasanter.

This is the very path that she
So often trod with eager feet
Tho' weary. The dusk branches meet
Above, making green fretted work,
The screen between my saint and me.
There, where the softest sunbeams lurk,
Cannot you fancy she may be
Leaning down to me from her rest;
And shaking her long golden hair
Thro' the thick branches to my face,
That I may feel she still is mine? —
Is not this wood a pleasant place?
To me the faintest breath of air
Seems here to whisper tenderly
That she, mine own, will not forget.
It may be selfishness; and yet
I like to think her joy may not
Be perfected, although divine

In all the glory of the blest,
Without me: that the greenest spot
And shadiest, would not suffice,
Without me, even in Paradise.

But we must leave the wood to go
Across the sunny fields of wheat;
I used to fancy that the grass
And daisies loved to touch her feet.
This was the way we used to pass
Together; rain nor wind nor snow
Could hinder her, until her strength
Failed utterly; and when at length
She was too weak, they put her bed
Close to the window; there she lay
Counting the Church chimes one by one
For many weeks: at last a day
Came when her patient watch was done,
And someone told me she was dead.

Now we can see the Church tower; look,
Where the old flaky yew trees stand.
There is a certain shady nook
Among them, where she used to sit
When weary: I have held her hand
So often there: one day she said
That sometimes, when we sat so, she
Could fancy what being dead must be,
And long for it if shared by me: —
She had no cause for dreading it,
And never once conceived my dread.

This path leads to the Western door
Where the sun casts his latest beam,
And hard beside it is her grave.
I sowed those grasses there that wave

Like down, but would sow nothing more,
No flowers, as if her resting place
Could want for sweetness; where she is
Is sweetest of all sweetnesses.
If you look closely, you can trace
A Cross formed by the grass, above
Her head: and sometimes I could dream
She sees the Cross, and feels the love
That planted it; and prays that I
May come and share her hidden rest;
May even lie where she doth lie,
With the same turf above my breast,
And the same stars and silent sky.

TWO THOUGHTS OF DEATH

1.

Her heart that loved me once is rottenness
   Now and corruption; and her life is dead
   That was to have been one with mine she said.
The earth must lie with such a cruel stress
On her eyes where the white lids used to press;
   Foul worms fill up her mouth so sweet and red;
   Foul worms are underneath her graceful head.
Yet these, being born of her from nothingness
These worms are certainly flesh of her flesh. —
   How is it that the grass is rank and green,
And the dew dropping rose is brave and fresh
Above what was so sweeter far than they?
Even as her beauty hath passed quite away
   Their's too shall be as tho' it had not been.

2.

So I said underneath the dusky trees:
   But because I still loved her memory
   I stooped to pluck a pale anemone
And lo! my hand lighted upon heartsease
Not fully blown: while with new life from these
   Fluttered a starry moth that rapidly
   Rose toward the sun: sunlighted flashed on me
Its wings that seemed to throb like heart pulses.
Far far away it flew far out of sight,
   From earth and flowers of earth it passed away

As tho’ it flew straight up into the light.
Then my heart answered me: Thou fool to say
That she is dead whose night is turned to day,
And whose day shall no more turn back to night.

THREE MOMENTS

The Child said: “Pretty bird
“Come back and play with me.”
The bird said: “It is in vain,
“For I am free.
“I am free, I will not stay,
“But will fly far away,
“In the woods to sing and play,
“Far away, far away.”
The Child sought her Mother:
“I have lost my bird;” said she
Weeping bitterly:
But the Mother made her answer,
Half sighing pityingly,
Half smiling cheerily:
“Tho’ thy bird come nevermore
“Do not weep;
“Find another playfellow
“Child, and keep
“Tears for future pain more deep.”

“Sweet rose do not wither,”
The Girl said.
But a blight had touched its heart
And it drooped its crimson head.
In the morning it had opened
Full of life and bloom,
But the leaves fell one by one
Till the twilight gloom.
One by one the leaves fell
By summer winds blown from their stem;
They fell upon the dewy earth
Which nourished once now tainted them.
Again the young Girl wept
And sought her Mother’s ear:

“My rose is dead so full of grace,
“The very rose I meant to place
“In the wreath that I wear.”
“Nay, never weep for such as this;”
The Mother answered her:
“But weave another crown, less fair
“Perhaps, but fitter for thy hair.
“And keep thy tears,” the Mother said:
“For something heavier.”

The Woman knelt; but did not pray
Nor weep nor cry; she only said:
“Not this, not this:” and clasped her hands
Against her heart and bowed her head
While the great struggle shook the bed.
“Not this, not this:” tears did not fall:
“Not this:” it was all
She could say; no sobs would come;
The mortal grief was almost dumb. —
At length when it was over, when
She knew it was and would be so,
She cried: “Oh Mother, where are they,
“The tears that used to flow
“So easily? one single drop
“Might save my reason now, or stop
“My heart from breaking. Blessed tears
“Wasted in former years!”
Then the grave Mother made reply:
“Oh Daughter mine be of good cheer,
“Rejoicing thou canst shed no tear.
“Thy pain is almost over now.
“Once more thy heart shall throb with pain,
“But then shall never throb again.
“Oh happy thou who canst not weep,
“Oh happy thou!”

ONCE

She was whiter than the ermine
   That half shadowed neck and hand,
And her tresses were more golden
      Than their golden band;
Snowy ostrich plumes she wore
Yet I almost loved her more
In the simple time before.

Then she plucked the stately lilies
   Knowing not she was more fair,
And she listened to the skylark
      In the morning air.
Then, a kerchief all her crown,
She looked for the acorns brown,
Bent their bough and shook them down.

Then she thought of Christmas holly
   And of maybloom in sweet May;
Then she loved to pick the cherries
      And to turn the hay.
She was humble then and meek,
And the blush upon her cheek
Told of much she could not speak.

Now she is a noble lady,
   With calm voice not overloud;
Very courteous in her action,
      Yet you think her proud;
Much too haughty to affect;
Too indifferent to direct,
Or be angry, or suspect;
Doing all from self-respect.

THREE NUNS

1.

"Sospira questo core
E non so dir perchè."

Shadow, shadow on the wall
Spread thy shelter over me;
Wrap me with a heavy pall,
With the dark that none may see.
Fold thyself around me; come:
Shut out all the troublesome
Noise of life; I would be dumb.

Shadow thou hast reached my feet,
Rise and cover up my head;
Be my stainless winding sheet,
Buried before I am dead.
Lay thy cool upon my breast:
Once I thought that joy was best,
Now I only care for rest.

By the grating of my cell
Sings a solitary bird;
Sweeter than the vesper bell,
Sweetest song was ever heard.
Sing upon thy living tree:
Happy echoes answer thee,
Happy songster, sing to me.

When my yellow hair was curled

Though men saw and called me fair,
I was weary in the world
Full of vanity and care.
Gold was left behind, curls shorn
When I came here; that same morn
Made a bride no gems adorn.

Here wrapped in my spotless veil,
Curtained from intruding eyes,
I whom prayers and fasts turn pale
Wait the flush of Paradise.
But the vigil is so long
My heart sickens: — sing thy song,
Blithe bird that canst do no wrong.

Sing on, making me forget
Present sorrow and past sin.
Sing a little longer yet:
Soon the matins will begin;
And I must turn back again
To that aching worse than pain
I must bear and not complain.

Sing, that in thy song I may
Dream myself once more a child
In the green woods far away
Plucking clematis and wild
Hyacinths, till pleasure grew
Tired, yet so was pleasure too,
Resting with no work to do.

In the thickest of the wood,
I remember, long ago
How a stately oak tree stood,
With a sluggish pool below

Almost shadowed out of sight.
On the waters dark as night,
Water-lilies lay like light.

There, while yet a child, I thought
I could live as in a dream,
Secret, neither found nor sought:
Till the lilies on the stream,
Pure as virgin purity,
Would seem scarce too pure for me: —
Ah, but that can never be.

2.

"Sospirerà d'amore,
Ma non lo dice a me."

I loved him, yes, where was the sin?
I loved him with my heart and soul.
But I pressed forward to no goal,
There was no prize I strove to win.
Show me my sin that I may see: —
Throw the first stone, thou Pharisee.

I loved him, but I never sought
That he should know that I was fair.
I prayed for him; was my sin prayer?
I sacrificed, he never bought.
He nothing gave, he nothing took;
We never bartered look for look.

My voice rose in the sacred choir,
The choir of Nuns; do you condemn

Even if, when kneeling among them,
Faith, zeal and love kindled a fire
And I prayed for his happiness
Who knew not? was my error this?

I only prayed that in the end
His trust and hope may not be vain.
I prayed not we may meet again:
I would not let our names ascend,
No, not to Heaven, in the same breath;
Nor will I join the two in death.

Oh sweet is death; for I am weak
And weary, and it giveth rest.
The Crucifix lies on my breast,
And all night long it seems to speak
Of rest; I hear it through my sleep,
And the great comfort makes me weep.

Oh sweet is death that bindeth up
The broken and the bleeding heart.
The draught chilled, but a cordial part
Lurked at the bottom of the cup;
And for my patience will my Lord
Give an exceeding great reward.

Yea, the reward is almost won,
A crown of glory and a palm.
Soon I shall sing the unknown psalm;
Soon gaze on light, not on the sun;
And soon, with surer faith, shall pray
For him, and cease not night nor day.

My life is breaking like a cloud;
God judgeth not as man doth judge. —

Nay, bear with me; you need not grudge
This peace; the vows that I have vowed
Have all been kept: Eternal Strength
Holds me, though mine own fails at length.

Bury me in the Convent ground
Among the flowers that are so sweet;
And lay a green turf at my feet,
Where thick trees cast a gloom around.
At my head let a Cross be, white
Through the long blackness of the night.

Now kneel and pray beside my bed
That I may sleep being free from pain:
And pray that I may wake again
After His Likeness, Who hath said
(Faithful is He Who promiseth,)
We shall be satisfied Therewith.

3.

"Rispondimi, cor mio,
Perchè sospiri tu?
Risponde: Voglio Iddio,
Sospiro per Gesù."

My heart is as a freeborn bird
Caged in my cruel breast,
That flutters, flutters evermore,
Nor sings, nor is at rest.
But beats against the prison bars,
As knowing its own nest
Far off beyond the clouded West.

My soul is as a hidden fount
Shut in by clammy clay,
That struggles with an upward moan;
Striving to force its way
Up through the turf, over the grass,
Up, up into the day,
Where twilight no more turneth grey.

Oh for the grapes of the True Vine
Growing in Paradise,
Whose tendrils join the Tree of Life
To that which maketh wise.
Growing beside the Living Well
Whose sweetest waters rise
Where tears are wiped from tearful eyes.

Oh for the waters of that Well
Round which the Angels stand.
Oh for the Shadow of the Rock
On my heart's weary land.
Oh for the Voice to guide me when
I turn to either hand,
Guiding me till I reach Heaven's strand.

Thou World from which I am come out,
Keep all thy gems and gold;
Keep thy delights and precious things,
Thou that art waxing old.
My heart shall beat with a new life,
When thine is dead and cold:
When thou dost fear I shall be bold.

When Earth shall pass away with all
Her pride and pomp of sin,
The City builded without hands

Shall safely shut me in.
All the rest is but vanity
Which others strive to win:
Where their hopes end my joys begin.

I will not look upon a rose
Though it is fair to see:
The flowers planted in Paradise
Are budding now for me.
Red roses like love visible
Are blowing on their tree,
Or white like virgin purity.

I will not look unto the sun
Which setteth night by night:
In the untrodden courts of Heaven
My crown shall be more bright.
Lo, in the New Jerusalem
Founded and built aright
My very feet shall tread on light.

With foolish riches of this World
I have bought treasure, where
Nought perisheth: for this white veil
I gave my golden hair;
I gave the beauty of my face
For vigils, fasts and prayer;
I gave all for this Cross I bear.

My heart trembled when first I took
The vows which must be kept;
At first it was a weariness
To watch when once I slept.
The path was rough and sharp with thorns;
My feet bled as I stepped;

The Cross was heavy and I wept.

While still the names rang in mine ears
Of daughter, sister, wife;
The outside world still looked so fair
To my weak eyes, and rife
With beauty; my heart almost failed;
Then in the desperate strife
I prayed, as one who prays for life,

Until I grew to love what once
Had been so burdensome.
So now when I am faint, because
Hope deferred seems to numb
My heart, I yet can plead; and say
Although my lips are dumb:
"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

SONG: WE BURIED HER AMONG THE FLOWERS

We buried her among the flowers
   At falling of the leaf,
And choked back all our tears; her joy
   Could never be our grief.

She lies among the living flowers
   And grass, the only thing
That perishes; — or is it that
   Our Autumn was her Spring?

Doubtless, if we could see her face,
   The smile is settled there
Which almost broke our hearts, when last
   We knelt by her in prayer.

When with tired eyes and failing breath
   And hands crossed on her breast
Perhaps she saw her Guardian spread
   His wings above her rest.

So she sleeps hidden in the flowers:
   But yet a little while
And we shall see her wake, and rise
   Fair, with the selfsame smile.

THE WATCHERS

She fell asleep among the flowers
In the sober Autumn hours.

Three there are about her bed,
At her side and feet and head.

At her head standeth the Cross
For which all else she counted loss:

Still and steadfast at her feet
Doth her Guardian Angel sit:

Prayers of truest love abide
Wrapping her on every side.

The Holy Cross standeth alone,
Beneath the white moon, whitest stone.

Evil spirits come not near
Its shadow, shielding from all fear;

Once she bore it in her breast,
Now it certifies her rest.

Humble violets grow around
Its base, sweetening the grassy ground,

Leaf-hidden; so she hid from praise
Of men her pious holy ways.

Higher about it, twining close,
Clingeth a crimson thorny rose;

So from her heart's good seed of love
Thorns sprang below, flowers spring above.

Tho' yet his vigil doth not cease,
Her Angel sits in perfect peace,

With white folded wings; for she
He watches, now is pure as he.

He watches with his loving eyes
For the day when she shall rise;

When full of glory and of grace
She shall behold him face to face.

Tho' she is safe for ever, yet
Human love doth not forget;

But prays that in her deep
Grave she may sleep a blessed sleep,

Till when time and the world are past
She may find mercy at the last.

So these three do hedge her in
From sorrow as death does from sin.

So freed from earthly taint and pain
May they all meet in Heaven. Amen.

ANNIE

Annie is fairer than her kith
   And kinder than her kin;
Her eyes are like the open heaven
   Holy and pure from sin;
Her heart is like an ordered house
   Good fairies harbour in;
Oh happy he who wins the love
   That I can never win.

Her sisters stand as hyacinths
   Around the perfect rose:
They bloom and open to the full,
   My bud will scarce unclose;
They are for every butterfly
   That comes and sips and goes,
My bud hides in the tender green
   Most sweet and hardly shows.

Oh cruel kindness in soft eyes
   That are no more than kind,
On which I gaze my heart away
   Till the tears make me blind.
How is it others find the way
   That I can never find
To make her laugh that sweetest laugh
   Which leaves all else behind?

Her hair is like the golden corn
   A low wind breathes upon;
Or like the golden harvest moon
   When all the mists are gone;
Or like a stream with golden sands

On which the sun has shone
Day after day in summer time
Ere autumn leaves are wan.

I will not tell her that I love
Lest she should turn away
With sorrow in her tender heart
Which now is light and gay.
I will not tell her that I love
Lest she should turn and say
That we must meet no more again
For many a weary day.

A DIRGE

She was as sweet as violets in the Spring,
  As fair as any rose in Summer time:
    But frail are roses in their prime
  And violets in their blossoming.
Even so was she:
  And now she lies,
  The earth upon her fast closed eyes,
Dead in the darkness silently.

The sweet Spring violets never bud again,
  The roses bloom and perish in a morn:
    They see no second quickening lying lorn;
  Their beauty dies as tho' in vain.
Must she die so
  For evermore,
  Cold as the sand upon the shore,
As passionless for joy and woe? —

Nay, she is worth much more than flowers that fade
  And yet shall be made fair with purple fruit;
    Branch of the Living Vine, Whose Root
  From all eternity is laid.
Another Sun
  Than this of our's,
  Has withered up indeed her flowers
But ripened her grapes every one.

SONG: IT IS NOT FOR HER EVEN BROW

It is not for her even brow
   And shining yellow hair,
But it is for her tender eyes
   I think my love so fair;
Her telltale eyes that smile and weep
As frankly as they wake and sleep.

It is not for her rounded cheek
   I love and fain would win,
But it is for the blush that comes
   Straight from the heart within;
The honest blush of maiden shame
That blushes without thought of blame.

So in my dreams I never hear
   Her song, although she sings
As if a choir of spirits swept
   From earth with throbbing wings;
I only hear the simple voice
Whose love makes many hearts rejoice.

A DREAM

Oh for my love, my only love,
   Oh for my lost love far away! —
Oh that the grass were green above
   Her head or mine this weary day: —
   The grass green in the morning grey.

She lies down in a foreign land
   And in a foreign land doth rise.
I cannot hold her by the hand;
   I cannot read her speaking eyes
   That turned mere spoken words to lies.

This is the bough she leaned upon
   And watched the rose deep western sky,
For the last sun rays almost gone:
   I did not hear the wind pass by,
   Nor stream; I only heard her sigh.

I saw the tears that did not fall,
   I saw the blush upon her cheek,
The trembling hand so white and small:
   She did not speak, I could not speak: —
   Oh that strong love should make us weak.

Therefore we parted as we met,
   She on her way, and I on mine.
I think her tender heart was set
   On holier things and more Divine: —
   We parted thus and gave no sign.

Oh that the grass were green above
    Her head or mine; so I could pray
In certain faith for her my love,
    Unchanging, all the night and day:
    Most near altho' most far away.

A FAIR WORLD THO' A FALLEN

You tell me that the world is fair, in spite
  Of the old fall; and that I should not turn
  So to the grave, and let my spirit yearn
After the quiet of the long last night.
Have I then shut mine eyes against the light,
  Grief-deafened lest my spirit should discern?
  Yet how could I keep silence when I burn?
And who can give me comfort? — hear the right.
Have patience with the weak and sick at heart:
  Bind up the wounded with a tender touch.
    Comfort the sad, tear-blinded as they go: —
For tho' I failed to choose the better part,
    Were it a less unutterable woe
If we should come to love this world too much? —

ADVENT: “COME,” THOU DOST SAY TO ANGELS

“Come,” thou dost say to Angels,
   To blessed Spirits, “Come”;
“Come,” to the Lambs of Thine Own flock,
   Thy little Ones, “Come home.”

“Come,” from the many-mansioned house
   The gracious word is sent,
“Come,” from the ivory palaces
   Unto the Penitent.

O Lord, restore us deaf and blind,
   Unclose our lips tho’ dumb;
Then say to us, I come with speed,
   And we will answer, Come.

ALL SAINTS

They have brought gold and spices to my King,
   Incense and precious stuffs and ivory;
O holy Mother mine, what can I bring
   That so my Lord may deign to look on me?
They sing a sweeter song than I can sing,
   All crowned and glorified exceedingly;
I, bound on earth, weep for my trespassing,
   They sing the song of love in Heaven, set free.
Then answered me my Mother, and her voice,
   Spake to my heart, yea, answered in my heart:
Sing, saith He, to the Heavens, to Earth, rejoice;
Thou, also, lift thy heart to Him above;
   He seeks not thine, but thee, such as thou art,
For lo! His banner over thee is Love.

EYE HATH NOT SEEN

Our feet shall tread upon the stars
   Less bright than we.
The everlasting shore shall bound
   A fairer sea
   Than that which cold
Now glitters in the sun like gold.

Oh good, oh blest: but who shall say
   How fair, how fair,
Is the Light-region where no cloud
   Darkens the air,
   Where weary eyes
Rest on the green of Paradise?

There cometh not the wind, nor rain,
   Nor sun, nor snow;
The trees of Knowledge and of Life
   Bud there and blow,
   Their leaves and fruit
Fed from an undecaying root.

There Angels flying to and fro
   Are not more white
Than Penitents some while ago,
   Now Saints in Light:
   Once soiled and sad;
Cleansed now and crowned, fulfilled and glad.

Now yearning thro' the perfect rest
   Perhaps they gaze
Earthwards upon their best beloved

In all earth's ways:
Longing, but not
With pain, as used to be their lot.

The hush of that beatitude
Is ages long,
Sufficing Virgins, Prophets, Saints,
Till the new song
Shall be sent up
From lips which drained the bitter cup.

If but the thought of Paradise
Gives joy on earth,
What shall it be to enter there
Thro' second birth?
To find once more
Our dearest treasure gone before?

To find the Shepherd of the Sheep,
The Lamb once slain,
Who leads His Own by living streams.
Never again
To thirst, or need
Aught in green pastures where they feed.

But from the Altar comes a cry
Awful and strong
From martyred Saints: How long, they say,
O Lord, how long
Holy and True,
Shall vengeance for our blood be due?

Then the Lord gives them robes of white;
And bids them stay
In patience till the time be full

For the last day:
The day of dread
When the last sentence shall be said.

When heaven and earth shall flee away;
And the great deep
Shall render up her dead, and earth
Her sons that sleep;
And day of grace
Be hid for ever from Thy Face.

Oh hide us till Thy wrath be past,
Our grief, our shame,
With Peter and with Magdalene
And him whose name
No record tells
Who by Thy promise with Thee dwells.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

When if ever life is sweet,
   Save in heart in all a child,
   A fair virgin undefiled
Knelt she at her Saviour's feet;
While she laid her royal crown,
   Thinking it too mean a thing
   For a solemn offering,
Careless on the cushions down.

Fair she was as any rose,
   But more pale than lilies white,
   Her eyes full of deep repose
Seemed to see beyond our sight.
Hush, she is a holy thing:
   Hush, her soul is in her eyes
   Seeking far in Paradise
For her Light, her Love, her King.

MOONSHINE

Fair the sun riseth,
   Bright as bright can be,
Fair the sun shineth
   On a fair fair sea.

“Across the water
   “Wilt thou come with me,
“Miles and long miles, love,
   “Over the salt sea?” —

“If thou wilt hold me
   “Truly by the hand,
“I will go with thee
   “Over sea and sand.

“If thou wilt hold me
   “That I shall not fall,
“I will go with thee,
   “Love, in spite of all.”

Fair the moon riseth
   On her heavenly way
Making the waters
   Fairer than by day.

A little vessel
   Rocks upon the sea,
Where stands a maiden
   Fair as fair can be.

Her smile rejoices

Though her mouth is mute,
She treads the vessel
With her little foot.

Truly he holds her
Faithful to his pledge,
Guiding the vessel
From the water's edge.

Fair the moon saileth
With her pale fair light,
Fair the girl gazeth
Out into the night.

Saith she: "Like silver
"Shines thy hair, not gold;" —
Saith she: "I shiver
"In thy steady hold.

"Love," she saith weeping,
"Loose thy hold awhile,
"My heart is freezing
"In thy freezing smile."

The moon is hidden
By a silver cloud,
Fair as a halo
Or a maiden's shroud.

No more beseeching,
Ever on they go:
The vessel rocketh
Softly to and fro;

And still he holds her

That she shall not fall,
Till pale mists whiten
Dimly over all.

Onward and onward,
Far across the sea;
Onward and onward,
Pale as pale can be;

Onward and onward,
Ever hand in hand,
From sun and moon light
To another land.

THE SUMMER IS ENDED

Wreathe no more lilies in my hair,
For I am dying, Sister sweet:
Or if you will for the last time
    Indeed, why make me fair
    Once for my windingsheet.

Pluck no more roses for my breast,
For I like them fade in my prime:
Or if you will, why pluck them still
    That they may share my rest
    Once more, for the last time.

Weep not for me when I am gone,
Dear tender one, but hope and smile:
Or if you cannot choose but weep
    A little while, weep on
    Only a little while.

I LOOK FOR THE LORD

Our wealth has wasted all away,
   Our pleasures have found wings;
The night is long until the day,
   Lord, give us better things:
A ray of light in thirsty night
   And secret water springs.

Our love is dead, or sleeps, or else
   Is hidden from our eyes:
Our silent love, while no man tells
   Or if it lives or dies.
Oh give us love, O Lord, above
   In changeless Paradise.

Our house is left us desolate,
   Even as Thy word hath said.
Before our face the way is great,
   Around us are the dead:
Oh guide us, save us from the grave,
   As Thou Thy saints hast led.

Lead us where pleasures evermore
   And wealth indeed are placed,
And home on an eternal shore,
   And love that cannot waste;
Where Joy Thou art unto the heart,
   And Sweetness to the taste.

SONG: I HAVE LOVED YOU FOR LONG LONG YEARS ELLEN

I have loved you for long long years Ellen,
   On you has my heart been set;
I have loved you for long patient years,
   But you do not love me yet.

Oh that the sun that rose that day
   Had never and never set,
When I wooed and you did not turn away,
   Tho' you could not love me yet.

I lay lands and gold at your feet Ellen,
   At your feet a coronet,
I lay a true heart at your feet Ellen,
   But you do not love me yet.

Oh when I too lie dead at your feet,
   And in death my heart is set,
Will you love me then, cold proud Ellen,
   Tho' you will not love me yet? —

A DISCOVERY

"I thought your search was over." — "So I thought." —
"But you are seeking still." — "Yes, even so:
Still seeking in mine own despite below
That which in Heaven alone is found unsought;
Still spending for that thing which is not bought." —
"Then chase no more this shifting empty show." —
"Amen: so bid a drowning man forego
The straw he clutches; will he so be taught?
You have a home where peace broods like a dove
Screened from the weary world's loud discontent,
You have home here, you wait for home above:
I must unlearn the pleasant ways I went,
Must learn another hope, another love,
And sigh indeed for home in banishment." —

FROM THE ANTIQUE

The wind shall lull us yet,
   The flowers shall spring above us;
And those who hate forget,
   And those forget who love us.

The pulse of hope shall cease,
   Of joy and of regretting:
We twain shall sleep in peace,
   Forgotten and forgetting.

For us no sun shall rise,
   Nor wind rejoice, nor river,
Where we with fast closed eyes
   Shall sleep and sleep for ever.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

Weep yet a while
Weep till that day shall dawn when thou shalt smile
Watch till the day
When all save only Love shall pass away.

Weep, sick and lonely,
    Bow thy heart to tears,
For none shall guess the secret
    Of thy griefs and fears.
Weep, till the day dawn,
Refreshing dew:
Weep till the spring;
For genial showers
Bring up the flowers,
And thou shalt sing
In summer time of blossoming.

Heart sick and silent,
    Weep and watch in pain.
Weep for hope perished,
    Not to live again;
Weep for love's hope and fear
    And passion vain.
Watch till the day
When all save only love shall pass away.

Then love rejoicing
    Shall forget to weep;
Shall hope or fear no more,
    Or watch, or sleep,
But only love and cease not,
    Deep beyond deep.

Now we sow love in tears,
    But then shall reap:
Have patience as the Lord's Own flock of sheep:
Have patience with His Love,
Who died below, Who lives for thee above.

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?

A windy shell singing upon the shore:
A lily budding in a desert place;
Blooming alone
With no companion
To praise its perfect perfume and its grace:
A rose crimson and blushing at the core,
Hedged in with thorns behind it and before:
A fountain in the grass,
Whose shadowy waters pass
Only to nourish birds and furnish food
For squirrels of the wood:
An oak deep in the forest's heart, the house
Of black-eyed tiny mouse;
Its strong roots fit for fuel roofing in
The hoarded nuts, acorns and grains of wheat;
Shutting them from the wind and scorching heat,
And sheltering them when the rains begin:

A precious pearl deep buried in the sea
Where none save fishes be:
The fullest merriest note
For which the skylark strains his silver throat,
Heard only in the sky
By other birds that fitfully
Chase one another as they fly:
The ripest plum down tumbled to the ground
By southern winds most musical of sound,
But by no thirsty traveller found:
Honey of wild bees in their ordered cells
Stored, not for human mouths to taste: —
I said, smiling superior down: What waste
Of good, where no man dwells.

This I said on a pleasant day in June
Before the sun had set, tho' a white moon
Already flaked the quiet blue
Which not a star looked thro.'
But still the air was warm, and drowsily
It blew into my face:
So since that same day I had wandered deep
Into the country, I sought out a place
For rest beneath a tree,
And very soon forgot myself in sleep:
Not so mine own words had forgotten me.
Mine eyes were opened to behold
All hidden things,
And mine ears heard all secret whisperings:
So my proud tongue that had been bold
To carp and to reprove,
Was silenced by the force of utter Love.

All voices of all things inanimate
Join with the song of Angels and the song
Of blessed Spirits, chiming with
Their Hallelujahs. One wind wakeneth
Across the sleeping sea, crisping along
The waves, and brushes thro' the great
Forests and tangled hedges, and calls out
Of rivers a clear sound,
And makes the ripe corn rustle on the ground,
And murmurs in a shell;
Till all their voices swell
Above the clouds in one loud hymn
Joining the song of Seraphim,
Or like pure incense circle round about
The walls of Heaven, or like a well-spring rise
In shady Paradise.

A lily blossoming unseen
Holds honey in its silver cup

Whereon a bee may sup,
Till being full she takes the rest
And stores it in her waxen nest:
While the fair blossom lifted up
On its one stately stem of green
Is type of her, the Undefiled,
Arrayed in white, whose eyes are mild
As a white dove's, whose garment is
Blood-cleansed from all impurities
And earthly taints,
Her robe the righteousness of Saints.

And other eyes than our's
Were made to look on flowers,
Eyes of small birds and insects small:
The deep sun-blushing rose
Round which the prickles close
Opens her bosom to them all.
The tiniest living thing
That soars on feathered wing,
Or crawls among the long grass out of sight,
Has just as good a right
To its appointed portion of delight
As any King.

Why should we grudge a hidden water stream
To birds and squirrels while we have enough?
As if a nightingale should cease to sing
Lest we should hear, or finch leafed out of sight
Warbling its fill in summer light;
As if sweet violets in the spring
Should cease to blow, for fear our path should seem
Less weary or less rough.

So every oak that stands a house
For skilful mouse,
And year by year renews its strength,

Shakes acorns from a hundred boughs
Which shall be oaks at length.

Who hath weighed the waters and shall say
What is hidden in the depths from day?
Pearls and precious stones and golden sands,
Wondrous weeds and blossoms rare,
Kept back from human hands,
But good and fair,
A silent praise as pain is silent prayer.
A hymn, an incense rising toward the skies,
As our whole life should rise;
An offering without stint from earth below,
Which Love accepteth so.

Thus is it with a warbling bird,
With fruit bloom-ripe and full of seed,
With honey which the wild bees draw
From flowers, and store for future need
By a perpetual law.
We want the faith that hath not seen
Indeed, but hath believed His truth
Who witnessed that His work was good:
So we pass cold to age from youth.
Alas for us: for we have heard
And known, but have not understood.

O earth, earth, earth, thou yet shalt bow
Who art so fair and lifted up,
Thou yet shalt drain the bitter cup.
Men's eyes that wait upon thee now,
All eyes shall see thee lost and mean,
Exposed and valued at thy worth,
While thou shalt stand ashamed and dumb. —
Ah, when the Son of Man shall come,
Shall He find faith upon the earth? —

NEXT OF KIN

The shadows gather round me, while you are in the sun;
My day is almost ended, but yours is just begun:
The winds are singing to us both and the streams are singing still,
And they fill your heart with music, but mine they cannot fill.

Your home is built in sunlight, mine in another day;
Your home is close at hand, sweet friend, but mine is far away:
Your bark is in the haven where you fain would be;
I must launch out into the deep, across the unknown sea.

You, white as dove or lily or spirit of the light;
I, stained and cold and glad to hide in the cold dark night:
You, joy to many a loving heart and light to many eyes;
I, lonely in the knowledge earth is full of vanities.

Yet when your day is over, as mine is nearly done,
And when your race is finished, as mine is almost run,
You, like me, shall cross your hands and bow your graceful head;
Yea, we twain shall sleep together in an equal bed.

LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS

The winds sing to us where we lie,
They sing to us a pleasant song;
Sweeter than song of mortal mouth,
Spice laden from the sunny south.
They say: This is not death you die;
This slumber shall not hold you long.

The north winds stir around our rest,
Their whispers speak to us and say:
Sleep yet awhile secure and deep,
A little while the blessed sleep;
For your inheritance is best,
And night shall yet bring forth the day.

The western winds are whispering too
Of love, with faith and hope as yet,
Of consummation that shall be,
Of fulness as the unfathomed sea,
When all creation shall be new
And day arise that shall not set.

But from the east a word is sent
To which all other words are dumb:
Lo, I come quickly, saith the Lord,
Myself thy exceeding great Reward: —
While we with thirsty hearts intent
Answer: Yea, come, Lord Jesus, come.

PORTRAITS

An easy lazy length of limb,
   Dark eyes and features from the south,
A short-legged meditative pipe
   Set in a supercilious mouth;
Ink and a pen and papers laid
   Down on a table for the night,
Beside a semi-dozing man
   Who wakes to go to bed by light.

A pair of brothers brotherly,
   Unlike and yet how much the same
In heart and high-toned intellect,
   In face and bearing, hope and aim:
Friends of the selfsame treasured friends
   And of one home the dear delight,
Beloved of many a loving heart
   And cherished both in mine, good night.

WHITSUN EVE

The white dove cooeth in her downy nest,
Keeping her young ones warm beneath her breast:
The white moon saileth thro' the cool clear sky,
Screened by a tender mist in passing by:
The white rose buds, with thorns upon its stem,
All the more precious and more dear for them:
The stream shines silver in the tufted grass,
The white clouds scarcely dim it as they pass:
Deep in the valleys lily cups are white,
They send up incense all the holy night:
Our souls are white, made clean in Blood once shed:
White blessed Angels watch around our bed: —
O spotless Lamb of God, still keep us so,
Thou Who wert born for us in time of snow.

WHAT?

Strengthening as secret manna,
Fostering as clouds above,
Kind as a hovering dove,
Full as a plenteous river,
Our glory and our banner
For ever and forever.

Dear as a dying cadence
Of music in the drowsy night;
Fair as the flowers which maidens
Pluck for an hour's delight,
And then forget them quite.

Gay as a cowslip meadow
Fresh opening to the sun
When new day is begun;
Soft as a sunny shadow
When day is almost done.

Glorious as purple twilight,
Pleasant as budding tree,
Untouched as any islet
Shrined in an unknown sea;
Sweet as a fragrant rose amid the dew; —
As sweet, as fruitless too.

A bitter dream to wake from,
But oh how pleasant while we dream;
A poisoned fount to take from,
But oh how sweet the stream.

A PAUSE

They made the chamber sweet with flowers and leaves,
  And the bed sweet with flowers on which I lay;
  While my soul, love-bound, loitered on its way.
I did not hear the birds about the eaves,
Nor hear the reapers talk among the sheaves:
  Only my soul kept watch from day to day,
  My thirsty soul kept watch for one away: —
Perhaps he loves, I thought, remembers, grieves.
At length there came the step upon the stair,
  Upon the lock the old familiar hand:
Then first my spirit seemed to scent the air
  Of Paradise; then first the tardy sand
Of time ran golden; and I felt my hair
  Put on a glory, and my soul expand.

HOLY INNOCENTS

Sleep, little Baby, sleep,
   The holy Angels love thee,
And guard thy bed and keep
   A blessed watch above thee.
No spirit can come near
   Nor evil beast to harm thee;
Sleep, Sweet, devoid of fear
   Where nothing need alarm thee.

The Love Which doth not sleep,
   The eternal Arms surround thee;
The Shepherd of the sheep
   In perfect love hath found thee.
Sleep thro' the holy night
   Christ-kept from snare and sorrow
Until thou wake to light
   And love and warmth tomorrow.

THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1.

"Ye have forgotten the exhortation" —

Come blessed sleep, most full, most perfect, come;
   Come sleep, if so I may forget the whole;
   Forget my body and forget my soul,
Forget how long life is and troublesome.
Come happy sleep to soothe my heart or numb,
   Arrest my weary spirit or control;
   Till light be dark to me from pole to pole,
And winds and echoes and low songs be dumb.
Come sleep and lap me into perfect calm,
   Lap me from all the world and weariness:
Come secret sleep that hidest us from harm,
   Safe sheltered in a hidden cool recess:
   Come heavy dreamless sleep, and close and press
Upon mine eyes thy fingers dropping balm.

2.

"Which speaketh unto you as unto children."

Art thou so weary then, poor thirsty soul?
   Have patience, in due season thou shalt sleep.
   Mount yet a little while, the path is steep;
Strain yet a little while to reach the goal;

Do battle with thyself, achieve, control:
Till night come down with blessed slumber, deep
As love, and seal thine eyes no more to weep
Thro' long tired vigils while the planets roll.
Have patience, for thou too shalt sleep at length,
Lapped in the pleasant shade of Paradise.
My Hands That bled for thee shall close thine eyes,
My Heart That bled for thee shall be thy Rest:
I will sustain with everlasting Strength,
And thou, with John, shalt lie upon my Breast.

ANNIE: IT'S NOT FOR EARTHLY BREAD

Annie It's not for earthly bread, Annie,
   And it's not for earthly wine,
And it's not for all thou art, Annie,
   Nor for any gift of thine:
It's for other food and other love
   And other gifts I pine.

I long all night and day, Annie,
   In this glorious month of June,
Tho' the roses all are blossoming
   And the birds are all in tune:
I dream and long all night, Annie,
   Beneath the tender moon.

There is a dearer home than this
   In a land that's far away,
And a better crown than cankered gold,
   Or withering leaves of bay:
There's a richer love than thine, Annie,
   Must fill an endless day.

I long to be alone indeed,
   I long to sleep at last;
To know the lifelong fever
   And sick weariness are past;
To feel the night is come indeed,
   And the gate secure and fast.

Oh gate of death, of the blessed night,
   That shall open not again
On this world of shame and sorrow,

Where slow ages wax and wane,
Where are signs and seasons, days and nights,
And mighty winds and rain.

I long to dwell in silence,
In twilight cool and dim:
It may be sometimes seeing
Soft gleams of Seraphim;
It may be sometimes catching
Faint echoes of their hymn.

I am tired of all the shows
And of all the songs of earth;
I am sick of the cold sky overhead,
And the cold land of my birth;
I am sick for the home-land of delight
And love and endless worth.

Is the day wearing toward the west? —
Far off cool shadows pass,
A visible refreshment
Across the sultry grass;
Far off low mists are mustering,
A broken shifting mass.

I know there comes a struggle
Before the utter calm,
And a searching pain like fire
Before the healing balm; —
But the pain shall cease, and the struggle cease,
And we shall take no harm.

Doubtless the Angels wonder
That we can live at ease
While all around is full of change,

Yea, full of vanities:
They wonder we can think to fill
Our hearts with such as these.

Still in the deepest knowledge
Some depth is left unknown;
Still in the merriest music lurks
A plaintive undertone;
Still with the closest friend some throb
Of life is felt alone.

But vain it were to linger
On the race we have to run,
For that which was must be again
Till time itself is done;
Yea, there is nothing new we know
At all beneath the sun.

I am sick for love, and moan
Like a solitary dove:
Love is as deep as hell, Annie,
And as high as heaven above;
There's nothing in all the world, Annie,
That can compete with love.

Time's summer breath is sweet, his sands
Ebb sparkling as they flow,
Yet some are sick that this should end
Which is from long ago: —
Are not the fields already white
To harvest in the glow? —

God puts the sickle to the corn
And reaps it when He will
From every watered valley

And from every fruitful hill:
He holdeth time in His Right Hand,
To check or to fulfil.

There shall come another harvest
Than was in days of yore:
The reapers shall be Angels,
Our God shall purge the floor: —
No more seed-time, no more harvest,
Then for evermore.

Come, let us kneel together
Once again love, I and thou;
We have prayed apart and wept apart,
But may weep together now:
Once we looked back together
With our hands upon the plough.

A little while, and we must part
Again, as on that day:
My spirit shall go forth alone
To tread the untried way;
Then thou shalt watch alone once more,
And kneel alone to pray.

When the shadows thicken round me
And the silence grows apace,
And I cannot hear thy voice, Annie,
Nor look upon thy face,
Wilt thou kneel for me and plead for me
Before the Throne of Grace? —

So surely if my spirit
Hath knowledge while it lies
In the outer courts of Heaven,
It shall watch with longing eyes

And pray that thou mayest also come
To dwell in Paradise.

SEASONS

In spring time when the leaves are young,
Clear dewdrops gleam like jewels, hung
On boughs the fair birds roost among.

When summer comes with sweet unrest,
Birds weary of their mother's breast,
And look abroad and leave the nest.

In autumn ere the waters freeze,
The swallows fly across the seas: —
If we could fly away with these! —

In winter when the birds are gone,
The sun himself looks starved and wan,
And starved the snow he shines upon.

THOU SLEEPEST WHERE THE LILIES FADE

Thou sleepest where the lilies fade,
   Thou dwellest where the lilies fade not;
Sweet, when thine earthly part decayed
      Thy heavenly part decayed not.

Thou dwellest where the roses blow,
   The crimson roses bud and blossom;
While on thine eyes is heaped the snow,
      The snow upon thy bosom.

I WISH I WERE A LITTLE BIRD

I wish I were a little bird
    That out of sight doth soar,
I wish I were a song once heard
    But often pondered o'er,
Or shadow of a lily stirred
    By wind upon the floor,
Or echo of a loving word
    Worth all that went before,
Or memory of a hope deferred
    That springs again no more.

TWO PARTED

“Sing of a love lost and forgotten,
“Sing of a joy finished and o’er,
“Sing of a heart core-cold and rotten,
“Sing of a hope springing no more.” —
— ”Sigh for a heart aching and sore.” —

“I was most true and my own love betrayed me,
“I was most true and she would none of me.
“Was it the cry of the world that dismayed thee?
“Love, I had bearded the wide world for thee.”
— ”Hark to the sorrowful sound of the sea.” —

“Still in my dreams she comes tender and gracious,
“Still in my dreams love looks out of her eyes:
“Oh that the love of a dream were veracious,
“Or that thus dreaming I might not arise!”
— ”Oh for the silence that stilleth all sighs.” —

ALL NIGHT I DREAM YOU LOVE ME WELL

All night I dream you love me well,
   All day I dream that you are cold:
Which is the dream? ah, who can tell,
      Ah would that it were told.

So I should know my certain doom,
   Know all the gladness or the pain;
So pass into the dreamless tomb,
      Or never doubt again.

FOR ROSALINE'S ALBUM

Do you hear the low winds singing,
   And streams singing on their bed? —
Very distant bells are ringing
   In a chapel for the dead: —
   Death-pale better than life-red.

Mother, come to me in rest,
   And bring little May to see. —
Shall I bid no other guest? —
Seven slow nights have passed away
Over my forgotten clay:
   None must come save you and she.

CARE FLIETH

Care flieth,
   Hope and fear together,
Love dieth
In the Autumn weather.

For a friend
   Even care is pleasant;
When fear doth end
   Hope is no more present:
Autumn silences the turtle dove; —
In blank Autumn who could speak of love?

EPITAPH

A slave yet wearing on my head a crown,
A captive from whose eyes no tears ran down,
Bound with no chain, compelled to do no work,
I fell a victim to the jealous Turk.

THE P. R. B

The P. R. B. is in its decadence: —
for Woolner in Australia cooks his chops;
And Hunt is yearning for the land of Cheops;
D. G. Rossetti shuns the vulgar optic;
While William M. Rossetti merely lops
His B.s in English disesteemed as Coptic;
Calm Stephens in the twilight smokes his pipe
But long the dawning of his public day;
And he at last, the champion, great Millais
Attaining academic opulence
Winds up his signature with A. R. A.: —
So rivers merge in the perpetual sea,
So luscious fruit must fall when over ripe,
And so the consummated P. R. B.

SEASONS: CROCUSES AND SNOWDROPS WITHER

Crocuses and snowdrops wither,
Violets primroses together,
Fading with the fading spring
Before a fuller blossoming.

O sweet summer pass not soon,
Stay awhile the harvest moon;
O sweetest summer do not go,
For autumn's next and next the snow.

When autumn comes the days are drear,
It is the downfall of the year:
We heed the wind and falling leaf
More than the withered harvest sheaf.

Dreary winter come at last,
Come quickly, so be quickly past;
Dusk and sluggish winter wane
Till spring and sunlight dawn again.

WHO HAVE A FORM OF GODLINESS

When I am sick and tired it is God's will;
  Also, God's will alone is sure and best: —
  So in my weariness I find my rest,
And so in poverty I take my fill:
Therefore I see my good in midst of ill,
  Therefore in loneliness I build my nest;
  And thro' hot noon pant toward the shady west,
And hope in sickening disappointment still.
So when the times of restitution come,
  The sweet times of refreshing come at last,
My God shall fill my longings to the brim:
Therefore I wait and look and long for Him;
Not wearied tho' the work is wearisome,
  Nor fainting tho' the time be almost past.

BALLAD

Soft white lamb in the daisy meadow,
   Come hither and play with me,
For I am lonesome and I am tired
   Underneath the apple tree.

There's your husband if you're lonesome, lady,
   And your bed if you want for rest,
And your baby for a playfellow
   With a soft hand for your breast.

Fair white dove in the sunshine,
   Perched on the ashen bough,
Come and perch by me and coo to me
   While the buds are blowing now.

I must keep my nestlings warm, lady,
   Underneath my downy breast;
There's your baby to coo and crow to you
   While I brood upon my nest.

Faint white rose come lie on my heart,
   Come lie there with your thorn;
For I'll be dead at the vesper bell
   And buried the morrow morn.

There's blood on your lily breast, lady,
   Like roses when they blow,
And there's blood upon your little hand
   That should be white as snow;
I will stay amid my fellows

Where the lilies grow.

But its oh my own own little babe
That I had you here to kiss,
And to comfort me in the strange next world
Tho' I slighted you so in this.

You shall kiss both cheek and chin, mother,
And kiss me between the eyes,
Or ever the moon is on her way
And the pleasant stars arise;
You shall kiss and kiss your fill, mother,
In the nest of Paradise.

A STUDY. (A SOUL.)

She stands as pale as Parian statues stand;
  Like Cleopatra when she turned at bay,
  And felt her strength above the Roman sway,
And felt the aspic writhing in her hand.
Her face is steadfast toward the shadowy land,
  For dim beyond it looms the land of day;
  Her feet are steadfast; all the arduous way
That foot-track hath not wavered on the sand.
She stands there like a beacon thro' the night,
  A pale clear beacon where the storm-drift is;
She stands alone, a wonder deathly white;
She stands there patient, nerved with inner might,
  Indomitable in her feebleness,
Her face and will athirst against the light.

THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST

Very cool that bed must be
   Where our last sleep shall be slept:
   There for weary vigils kept,
   There for tears that we have wept,
Is our guerdon certainly.

Underneath the growing grass,
   Underneath the living flowers,
   Deeper than the sound of showers; —
   There we shall not count the hours
By the shadows as they pass.

No more struggling then at length,
   Only slumber everywhere;
   Nothing more to do or bear:
   We shall rest, and resting there
Eagle-like renew our strength.

In the grave will be no space
   For the purple of the proud,
   They must mingle with the crowd;
   In the wrappings of a shroud
Jewels would be out of place.

Youth and health will be but vain,
   Courage reckoned of no worth;
   There a very little girth
   Shall hold round what once the earth
Seemed too narrow to contain.

High and low and rich and poor,
All will fare alike at last:
The old promise standeth fast:
None shall care then if the past
Held more joys for him or fewer.

There no laughter shall be heard,
Nor the heavy sound of sighs;
Sleep shall seal the aching eyes;
All the ancient and the wise
There shall utter not a word.

Yet it may be we shall hear
How the mounting skylark sings
And the bell for matins rings;
Or perhaps the whisperings
Of white Angels sweet and clear.

Sun or moon hath never shone
In that hidden depth of night;
But the souls there washed and white
Are more fair than fairest light
Mortal eye hath looked upon.

The die cast whose throw is life —
Rest complete; not one in seven —
Souls love-perfected and shriven
Waiting at the door of heaven,
Perfected from fear of strife.

What a calm when all is done,
Wearing vigil, prayer and fast: —
All fulfilled from first to last: —
All the length of time gone past

And eternity begun.

Fear and hope and chastening rod
    Urge us on the narrow way:
    Bear we still as best we may
    Heat and burden of the day,
Struggling panting up to God.

YE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXHORTATION

Angel

Bury thy dead, dear friend,
Between the night and day;
Where depths of summer shade are cool,
And murmurs of a summer pool
And windy murmurs stray: —

Soul

Ah, gone away,
Ah, dear and lost delight,
Gone from me and forever out of sight.

Angel

Bury thy dead, dear love,
And make his bed most fair above;
The latest buds shall still
Blow there, and the first violets too,
And there a turtle dove
Shall brood and coo: —

Soul

I cannot make the nest
So warm, but he may find it chill
In solitary rest.

Angel

Bury thy dead heart-deep;
Take patience till the sun be set;
There are no tears for him to weep,
No doubts to haunt him yet:
Take comfort, he will not forget: —

Soul

Then I will watch beside his sleep;
Will watch alone,
And make my moan
Because the harvest is so long to reap.

Angel

The fields are white to harvest, look and see,
Are white abundantly.
The harvest moon shines full and clear,
The harvest time is near,
Be of good cheer: —

Soul

Ah, woe is me;
I have no heart for harvest time,
Grown sick with hope deferred from chime to chime.

Angel

But One can give thee heart, thy Lord and his,
Can raise both thee and him
To shine with Seraphim
And pasture where the eternal fountain is.
Can give thee of that tree
Whose leaves are health for thee;
Can give thee robes made clean and white,

And love, and all delight,
And beauty where the day turns not to night.
Who knocketh at His door
And presseth in, goes out no more.
Kneel as thou hast not knelt before —
The time is short — and smite
Upon thy breast and pray with all thy might: —

Soul

O Lord, my heart is broken for my sin:
Yet hasten Thine Own day
And come away.
Is not time full? Oh put the sickle in,
O Lord, begin.

GUESSES

Was it a chance that made her pause
   One moment at the opened door,
   Pale where she stood so flushed before
As one a spirit overawes: —
Or might it rather be because
She felt the grave was at our feet,
And felt that we should no more meet
   Upon its hither side no more?

Was it a chance that made her turn
   Once toward the window passing by,
   One moment with a shrinking eye
Wherein her spirit seemed to yearn: —
Or did her soul then first discern
How long and rough the pathway is
That leads us home from vanities,
   And how it will be good to die?

There was a hill she had to pass;
   And while I watched her up the hill
   She stooped one moment hurrying still,
But left a rose upon the grass:
Was it mere idleness: — or was
Herself with her own self at strife
Till while she chose the better life
   She felt this life has power to kill?

Perhaps she did it carelessly,
   Perhaps it was an idle thought;
   Or else it was the grace unbought,
A pledge to all eternity:
I know not yet how this may be;

But I shall know when face to face
In Paradise we find a place
    And love with love that endeth not.

FROM THE ANTIQUE

It's a weary life, it is; she said: —
   Doubly blank in a woman's lot:
I wish and I wish I were a man;
   Or, better than any being, were not:

Were nothing at all in all the world,
   Not a body and not a soul;
Not so much as a grain of dust
   Or drop of water from pole to pole.

Still the world would wag on the same,
   Still the seasons go and come;
Blossoms bloom as in days of old,
   Cherries ripen and wild bees hum.

None would miss me in all the world,
   How much less would care or weep:
I should be nothing; while all the rest
   Would wake and weary and fall asleep.

THREE STAGES

1.

I looked for that which is not, nor can be,
And hope deferred made my heart sick in truth;
But years must pass before a hope of youth
Is resigned utterly.

I watched and waited with a steadfast will:
And though the object seemed to flee away
That I so longed for; ever, day by day,
I watched and waited still.

Sometimes I said: This thing shall be no more:
My expectation wearies and shall cease;
I will resign it now and be at peace: —
Yet never gave it o'er.

Sometimes I said: It is an empty name
I long for; to a name why should I give
The peace of all the days I have to live? —
Yet gave it all the same.

Alas, thou foolish one! alike unfit
For healthy joy and salutary pain;
Thou knowest the chase useless, and again
Turnest to follow it.

2.

My happy happy dream is finished with,
   My dream in which alone I lived so long.
My heart slept — woe is me, it wakeneth;
      Was weak — I thought it strong.

Oh weary wakening from a life-true dream:
   Oh pleasant dream from which I wake in pain:
I rested all my trust on things that seem,
      And all my trust is vain.

I must pull down my palace that I built,
   Dig up the pleasure-gardens of my soul;
Must change my laughter to sad tears for guilt,
      My freedom to control.

Now all the cherished secrets of my heart,
   Now all my hidden hopes are turned to sin:
Part of my life is dead, part sick, and part
      Is all on fire within.

The fruitless thought of what I might have been
   Haunting me ever will not let me rest:
A cold north wind has withered all my green,
      My sun is in the west.

But where my palace stood, with the same stone,
   I will uprear a shady hermitage;
And there my spirit shall keep house alone,
      Accomplishing its age:

There other garden beds shall lie around
   Full of sweet-briar and incense-bearing thyme;
There I will sit, and listen for the sound
      Of the last lingering chime.

3.

I thought to deal the death-stroke at a blow,
   To give all, once for all, but nevermore; —
   Then sit to hear the low waves fret the shore,
      Or watch the silent snow.

"Oh rest," I thought, "in silence and the dark;
   Oh rest, if nothing else, from head to feet:
   Though I may see no more the poppied wheat,
      Or sunny soaring lark.

"These chimes are slow, but surely strike at last;
   This sand is slow, but surely droppeth thro';
   And much there is to suffer, much to do,
      Before the time be past.

"So will I labor, but will not rejoice:
   Will do and bear, but will not hope again;
   Gone dead alike to pulses of quick pain,
      And pleasure's counterpoise:"

I said so in my heart, and so I thought
   My life would lapse, a tedious monotone:
   I thought to shut myself, and dwell alone
      Unseeking and unsought.

But first I tired, and then my care grew slack;

Till my heart slumbered, may-be wandered too: —
I felt the sunshine glow again, and knew
The swallow on its track;

All birds awoke to building in the leaves,
All buds awoke to fulness and sweet scent,
Ah, too, my heart woke unawares, intent
On fruitful harvest sheaves.

Full pulse of life, that I had deemed was dead,
Full throb of youth, that I had deemed at rest, —
Alas, I cannot build myself a nest,
I cannot crown my head

With royal purple blossoms for the feast,
Nor flush with laughter, nor exult in song; —
These joys may drift, as time now drifts along;
And cease, as once they ceased.

I may pursue, and yet may not attain,
Athirst and panting all the days I live:
Or seem to hold, yet nerve myself to give
What once I gave, again.

LONG LOOKED FOR

When the eye hardly sees,
    And the pulse hardly stirs,
And the heart would scarcely quicken
    Though the voice were hers:
Then the longing wasting fever
    Will be almost past;
Sleep indeed come back again,
    And peace at last.

Not till then, dear friends,
    Not till then, most like, most dear,
The dove will fold its wings
    To settle here.
Then to all her coldness
    I also shall be cold,
Then I also have forgotten
    Our happy love of old.

Close mine eyes with care,
    Cross my hands upon my breast,
Let shadows and full silence
    Tell of rest:
For she yet may look upon me
    Too proud to speak, but know
One heart less loves her in the world
    Than loved her long ago.

Strew flowers upon the bed
    And flowers upon the floor,
Let all be sweet and comely
    When she stands at the door:
Fair as a bridal chamber

For her to come into,
When the sunny day is over
At falling of the dew.

If she comes, watch her not
But careless turn aside;
She may weep if left alone
With her beauty and her pride:
She may pluck a leaf perhaps
Or a languid violet
When life and love are finished
And even I forget.

LISTENING

She listened like a cushat dove
    That listens to its mate alone;
She listened like a cushat dove
    That loves but only one.

Not fair as men would reckon fair,
    Nor noble as they count the line;
Only as graceful as a bough
    And tendrils of the vine;
Only as noble as sweet Eve
    Your ancestress and mine.

And downcast were her dovelike eyes,
    And downcast was her tender cheek,
Her pulses fluttered like a dove
    To hear him speak.

ZARA

(see Maturin's *Women*.)

I dreamed that loving me he would love on
   Thro' life and death into eternity:
   I dreamed that love would be and be and be
As surely as the sun shines that once shone.
Now even that my dream is killed and gone,
   It sometimes even now returns to me;
   Not what it was, but half being memory,
And half the pain that wears my cheek so wan.
Oh bitter pain, what drug will lull the pain?
   Oh lying memory, when shall I forget?
For why should I remember him in vain
Who hath forgotten and rejoiceth still?
   Oh bitter memory, while my heart is set
Oh love that gnaws and gnaws and cannot kill.

THE LAST LOOK

Her face was like an opening rose,
   So bright to look upon;
But now it is like fallen snows,
   As cold, as dead, as wan.
Heaven lit with stars is more like her
   Than is this empty crust;
Deaf, dumb and blind it cannot stir
   But crumbles back to dust.

No flower be taken from her bed
   For me, no lock be shorn;
I give her up, the early dead,
   The dead, the newly born:
If I remember her, no need
   Of formal tokens set;
Of hollow token lies, indeed,
   No need, if I forget.

I HAVE A MESSAGE UNTO THEE

(written in sickness.)

Green sprout the grasses,
   Red blooms the mossy rose,
Blue nods the harebell
   Where purple heather blows;
The water lily, silver white,
Is living — fair as light;
   Sweet jasmine branches trail
   A dusky starry veil:
Each goodly is to see,
Comely in its degree;
I, only I, alas that this should be,
   Am ruinously pale.

New year renews the grasses,
   The crimson rose renews,
Brings up the breezy bluebell,
   Refreshes heath with dews;
Then water lilies ever
Bud fresh upon the river;
   Then jasmine lights its star
   And spreads its arms afar:
I only in my spring
Can neither bud nor sing;
I find not honey but a sting
   Though fair the blossoms are.

For me no downy grasses,
   For me no blossoms pluck;
But leave them for the breezes,
   For honey bees to suck,

For childish hands to pull
And pile their baskets full:
    I will not have a crown
    That soon must be laid down;
Trust me: I cannot care
A withering crown to wear,
I who may be immortally made fair
    Where autumn turns not brown.

Spring, summer, autumn,
    Winter, all will pass,
With tender blossoms
    And with fruitful grass.
Sweet days of yore
Will pass to come no more,
    Sweet perfumes fly,
    Buds languish and go by:
Oh bloom that cannot last,
Oh blossoms quite gone past,
I yet shall feast when you shall fast,
    And live when you shall die.

Your workday fully ended,
    Your pleasant task being done,
You shall finish with the stars,
    The moon and setting sun.
You and these and time
Shall end with the last chime;
For earthly solace given,
But needed not in heaven.
    Needed not perhaps
    Thro' the eternal lapse:
Or else, all signs fulfilled,
What you foreshow may yield
Delights thro' heaven's own harvest field
    With undecaying saps.

Young girls wear flowers,
   Young brides a flowery wreath;
But next we plant them
   In garden plots of death.
Whose sleep is best? —
The maiden's curtained rest,
   Or bride's whose hoped for sweet
   May yet outstrip her feet? —
Ah, what are such as these
To death's sufficing ease —
How long and deep that slumber is
   Where night and morning meet.

Dear are the blossoms
   For bride's or maiden's head,
But dearer planted
   Around our happy dead.
Those mind us of decay
And joys that slip away;
   These preach to us perfection
   And endless resurrection.
We make our graveyards fair
For spirit-like birds of air;
For Angels, may be, finding there
   Lost Eden's own delection.

A blessing on the flowers
   That God has made so good,
From crops of jealous gardens
   To wildlings of a wood.
They show us symbols deep
Of how to sow and reap;
   They teach us lessons plain
   Of patient harvest gain.
They still are telling of
God's unimagined love: —
"Oh gift," they say, "all gifts above,

“Shall it be given in vain? —

“Better you had not seen us
“But shared the blind man’s night,
“Better you had not scented
“Our incense of delight,
“Than only plucked to scorn
“The rosebud for its thorn:
“Not so the instinctive thrush
“Hymns in a holly bush.
“Be wise betimes, and with the bee
“Suck sweets from prickly tree
“To last when earth’s are flown;
“So God well pleased will own
“Your work, and bless not time alone
“But ripe eternity.”

COBWEBS

It is a land with neither night nor day,
   Nor heat nor cold, nor any wind, nor rain,
   Nor hills nor valleys; but one even plain
Stretches thro' long unbroken miles away:
While thro' the sluggish air a twilight grey
   Broodeth; no moons or seasons wax and wane,
   No ebb and flow are there along the main,
No bud-time no leaf-falling there for aye,
No ripple on the sea, no shifting sand,
   No beat of wings to stir the stagnant space,
No pulse of life thro' all the loveless land:
And loveless sea; no trace of days before,
   No guarded home, no toil-won restingplace
No future hope no fear for evermore.

UNFORGOTTEN

Oh unforgotten!
How long ago? one spirit saith:
As long as life even unto death,
The passage of a poor frail breath.

Oh unforgotten:
An unforgotten load of love,
A load of grief all griefs above,
A blank blank nest without its dove.

As long as time is —
No longer? time is but a span
The dalliance space of empty man;
And is this all immortals can? —

Ever and ever,
Beyond all time, beyond all space; —
Now, shadow darkening heart and face, —
Then, glory in a glorious place.

Sad heart and spirit
Bowed now yea broken for a while,
Lagging and toiling mile by mile
Yet pressing toward the eternal smile.

Oh joy eternal! —
Oh youth eternal without flaw! —
Thee not the blessed angels saw
Rapt in august adoring awe.

Not the dead have thee,

Not yet O all surpassing peace;
Not till this veiling world shall cease
And harvest yield its whole increase.

Not the dead know thee,
Not dead nor living nor unborn:
Who in the new sown field at morn
Can measure out the harvest corn? —

Yet they shall know thee;
And we with them, and unborn men
With us, shall know and have thee when
The single grain shall wax to ten.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

Oh lost garden Paradise: —
Were the roses redder there
Than they blossom otherwhere?
Was the night's delicious shade
More intensely star inlaid?
Who can tell what memories
Of lost beloved Paradise
Saddened Eve with sleepless eyes? —

Fair first mother lulled to rest
In a choicer garden nest,
Curtained with a softer shading
Than thy tenderest child is laid in,
Was the sundawn brighter far
Than our daily sundawns are?
Was that love, first love of all
Warmer, deeper, better worth
Than has warmed poor hearts of earth
Since the utter ruinous fall? —

Ah supremely happy once,
Ah supremely broken hearted
When her tender feet departed
From the accustomed paths of peace:
Catching Angel orisons
For the last last time of all,
Shedding tears that would not cease
For the bitter bitter fall.

Yet the accustomed hand for leading,
Yet the accustomed heart for love;
Sure she kept one part of Eden
Angels could not strip her of.

Sure the fiery messenger
Kindling for his outraged Lord,
Willing with the perfect Will,
Yet rejoiced the flaming sword
Chastening sore but sparing still
Shut her treasure out with her.

What became of Paradise?
Did the cedars droop at all
(Springtide hastening to the fall)
Missing the beloved hand —
Or did their green perfection stand
Unmoved beneath the perfect skies? —
Paradise was rapt on high,
It lies before the gate of Heaven: —
Eve now slumbers there forgiven,
Slumbers Rachel comforted,
Slumber all the blessed dead
Of days and months and years gone by,
A solemn swelling company.

They wait for us beneath the trees
Of Paradise that lap of ease:
They wait for us, till God shall please.
Oh come the day of death, that day
Of rest which cannot pass away:
When the last work is wrought, the last
Pang of pain is felt and past
And the blessed door made fast.

TO THE END

There are lilies for her sisters —
    (Who so cold as they?) —
And heartsease for one I must not name
    When I am far away.
I shall pluck the lady lilies
    And fancy all the rest;
I shall pluck the bright eyed heartsease
    For her sake I love the best,
As I wander on with weary feet
    Toward the twilight shadowy west.

Oh bird that fliest eastward
    Unto that sunny land
Oh wilt thou 'light on lilies white
    Beside her whiter hand?
Soft summer wind that breathest
    Of perfumes and sweet spice,
Ah tell her what I dare not tell
    Of watchful waiting eyes
Of love that yet may meet again
    In distant Paradise.

I go from earth to Heaven
    A dim uncertain road,
A houseless pilgrim thro' the world
    Unto a sure abode:
While evermore an Angel
    Goes with me day and night,
A ministering spirit
    From the land of light,
My holy fellow servant sent
    To guide my steps aright.

I wonder if the Angels
   Love with such love as our's,
If for each other's sake they pluck
   And keep eternal flowers.
Alone I am and weary,
   Alone yet not alone:
Her soul talks with me by the way
   From tedious stone to stone,
A blessed Angel treads with me
   The awful paths unknown.

When will the long road end in rest,
   The sick bird perch and brood?
When will my Guardian fold his wings
   At rest in the finished good? —
Lulling lulling me off to sleep:
   While death's strong hand doth roll
My sins behind His back,
   And my life up like a scroll,
Till thro' sleep I hear kind Angels
   Rejoicing at the goal.

If her spirit went before me
   Up from night to day,
It would pass me like the lightning
   That kindles on its way.
I should feel it like the lightning
   Flashing fresh from Heaven:
I should long for Heaven sevenfold more,
   Yea and sevenfold seven;
Should pray as I have not prayed before,
   And strive as I have not striven.

She will learn new love in Heaven
   Who is so full of love,
She will learn new depths of tenderness

Who is tender like a dove.
Her heart will no more sorrow,
Her eyes will weep no more:
Yet it may be she will yearn
And look back from far before:
Lingering on the golden threshold
And leaning from the door.

ZION SAID

O Slain for love of me, canst Thou be cold,
   Be cold and far away in my distress:
   Is Thy love also changed growing less and less
That carried me thro' all the days of old? —
O Slain for love of me, O Love untold,
   See how I flag and fail thro' weariness:
   I flag, while sleepless foes dog me and press
On me; behold O Lord, O Love behold.
I am sick for home, the home of love indeed;
   I am sick for Love, that dearest name for Thee:
Thou Who hast bled, see how my heart doth bleed;
Open Thy bleeding Side and let me in;
Oh hide me in Thy Heart from doubt and sin,
   Oh take me to Thyself and comfort me.

MAY

Sweet Life is dead. —
Not so:
   I meet him day by day,
Where bluest fountains flow
And trees are white as snow
   For it is time of May.
Even now from long ago
   He will not say me nay;
   He is most fair to see;
And if I wander forth, I know
   He wanders forth with me.

But Life is dead to me;
   The worn-out year was failing
   West winds took up a wailing
To watch his funeral:
Bare poplars shivered tall
And lank vines stretched to see;
   'Twixt him and me a wall
Was frozen of earth like stone
With brambles overgrown;
   Chill darkness wrapped him like a pall
And I am left alone.

How can you call him dead?
   He buds out everywhere:
In every hedgerow rank,
On every mossgrown bank
   I find him here and there.
He crowns my willing head
With may flowers white and red,
He rears my tender heartsease bed;
   He makes my branch to bud and bear,

And blossoms where I tread.

RIVER THAMES (?)

There are rivers lapsing down
   Lily-laden to the sea;
Every lily is a boat
   For bees, one, two, or three:
I wish there were a fairy boat
   For you, my friend, and me.

We would rock upon the river,
   Scarcely floating by;
Rocking rocking like the lilies,
   You, my friend, and I;
Rocking like the stately lilies
   Beneath the statelier sky.

But ah, where is that river
   Whose hyacinth banks descend
Down to the sweeter lilies,
   Till soft their shadows blend
Into a watery twilight? —
   And ah, where is my friend? —

A CHILLY NIGHT

I rose at the dead of night
   And went to the lattice alone
To look for my Mother's ghost
   Where the ghostly moonlight shone.

My friends had failed one by one,
   Middleaged, young, and old,
Till the ghosts were warmer to me
   Than my friends that had grown cold.

I looked and I saw the ghosts
   Dotting plain and mound:
They stood in the blank moonlight
   But no shadow lay on the ground;
They spoke without a voice
   And they leapt without a sound.

I called: "O my Mother dear," —
   I sobbed: "O my Mother kind,
Make a lonely bed for me
   And shelter it from the wind:

"Tell the others not to come
   To see me night or day;
But I need not tell my friends
   To be sure to keep away."

My Mother raised her eyes,
   They were blank and could not see;
Yet they held me with their stare
   While they seemed to look at me.

She opened her mouth and spoke,
   I could not hear a word
While my flesh crept on my bones
   And every hair was stirred.

She knew that I could not hear
   The message that she told
Whether I had long to wait
   Or soon should sleep in the mould:
I saw her toss her shadowless hair
   And wring her hands in the cold.

I strained to catch her words
   And she strained to make me hear,
But never a sound of words
   Fell on my straining ear.

From midnight to the cockcrow
   I kept my watch in pain
While the subtle ghosts grew subtler
   In the sad night on the wane.

From midnight to the cockcrow
   I watched till all were gone,
Some to sleep in the shifting sea
   And some under turf and stone:
Living had failed and dead had failed
   And I was indeed alone.

LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK

I saw a bird alone,
In its nest it sat alone,
For its mate was dead or flown
    Tho' it was early spring.
Hard by were buds half blown,
With cornfields freshly sown;
It could only perch and moan
    That used to sing:
Droop in sorrow left alone
    A sad sad thing.

I saw a star alone,
In blue heaven it hung alone,
A solitary throne
    In the waste of space:
Where no moon glories are,
Where not a second star
Beams thro' night from near or far
    To that lone place.
Its beauties all unknown,
Its glories all alone
    Sad in heaven's face.

Doth the bird desire a mate,
Pine for a second mate
Whose first joy was so great
    With its own dove?
Doth the star supreme in night
Desire a second light
To make it seem less bright
In the shrine of heavenly height
    That is above? —
Ah, better wait alone,

In nest or heaven alone,
Forsaken or unknown;
Till time being past and gone
Full eternity rolls on,
While patience reaps what it has sown
    In the harvest land of love.

A MARTYR

It is over the horrible pain,
   All is over the struggle and doubt,
She's asleep tho' her friends stand and weep,
   She's asleep while the multitudes shout,
Not to wake to her anguish again
   Not to wake until death is cast out.

Stoop, look at the beautiful face,
   See the smile on the satisfied mouth,
The hands crost — she hath conquered not lost,
   She hath drunk who was fevered with drouth.
She shall sleep in her safe restingplace
   While the hawk spreads her wings toward the south.

She shall sleep while slow seasons are given,
   While daylight and darkness go round;
Her heart is at rest in its nest;
   Her body at rest in the ground:
She has travelled the long road to heaven,
   She sought it and now she has found.

Will you follow the track that she trod,
   Will you tread in her footsteps, my friend?
That pathway is rough but enough
   Are the light and the balm that attend.
Do I tread in her steps, O my God,
   Shall I joy with her joy in the end?

IN THE LANE

When my love came home to me
   Pleasant Summer bringing
Every tree was out in leaf
   Every bird was singing
Every red rose burst the bud
   On its bramble springing.

There I met her in the lane
   By those waters gleamy,
Met her toward the fall of day
   Warm and dear and dreamy;
Did I loiter in the lane?
   None was there to see me.

Only roses in the hedge
   Lilies on the river
Saw our greeting fast and fond,
   Counted gift and giver,
Saw me take her to my home
   Take her home for ever.

ACME

Sleep, unforgotten sorrow, sleep awhile;
   Make even awhile as tho' I might forget,
   Let the wound staunch thy tedious fingers fret
Till once again I look abroad and smile
Warmed in the sunlight: let no tears defile
   This hour's content, no conscious thorns beset
   My path; O sorrow slumber, slumber yet
A moment, rouse not yet the smouldering pile.
So shalt thou wake again with added strength
   O unforgotten sorrow, stir again
   The slackening fire, refine the lulling pain
   To quickened torture and a subtler edge:
   The wrung cord snaps at last; beneath the wedge
The toughest oak groans long but rends at length.

A BED OF FORGET-ME-NOTS

Is love so prone to change and rot
We are fain to rear forget-me-not
By measure in a garden plot? —

I love its growth at large and free
By untrod path and unlopped tree,
Or nodding by the unpruned hedge,
Or on the water's dangerous edge
Where flags and meadowsweet blow rank
With rushes on the quaking bank.

Love is not taught in learning's school,
Love is not parceled out by rule;
Hath curb or call an answer got? —
So free must be forget-me-not.
Give me the flame no dampness dulls,
The passion of the instinctive pulse,
Love steadfast as a fixèd star,
Tender as doves with nestlings are,
More large than time, more strong than death:
This all creation travails of —
She groans not for a passing breath —
This is forget-me-not and love.

THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND

When sick of life and all the world,
How sick of all the earth but Thee,
I lift mine eyes up to the hills,
Eyes of my heart that truly see:
I see beyond all death and ills
Refreshing green for heart and eyes;
The golden streets and gateways pearled,
The living trees of paradise.

Oh that a dove's white wings I had
To flee away from this distress
For Thou art in the wilderness
Drawing and leading Thine Own love:
Wherefore it blossoms like a rose,
The solitary place is glad;
There sounds the soft voice of the dove
And there the spicy south wind blows.

Draw us, we will run after Thee;
Call us by name, the name we know;
Call her beloved who was not so,
Beulah and blessed Hephzibah:
That where Thou art I too may be
Bride of the Bridegroom heart to heart;
Thou God, my Love, the Fairest art
Where all things fair and lovely are.

From north and south from east and west
Thy sons and daughters all shall flock
Who built their house upon the Rock
And eagle-like renew their strength:
How glad and glorious is their rest

Whom Thou hast purged from fleshly scum, —
The long-desired is come at length,
The fulness of the time is come.

Then the new heavens and earth shall be
Where righteousness shall dwell indeed:
There shall be no more blight nor need
Nor barrier of the tossing sea;
No sun and moon alternating
For God shall be the Light thereof,
No sorrow more no death no sting
For God shall reign and God is Love.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE AND ON THIS

I wish we once were wedded, — then I must be true;
You should hold my will in yours to do or to undo:
But now I hate myself Eva when I look at you.

You have seen her hazel eyes, her warm dark skin,
Dark hair — but oh those hazel eyes a devil is dancing in: —
You my saint lead up to heaven she lures down to sin.

Listen Eva I repent, indeed I do my love:
How should I choose a peacock and leave and grieve a dove? —
If I could turn my back on her and follow you above.

No it's not her beauty bloomed like an autumn peach,
Not her pomp of beauty too high for me to reach;
It's her eyes, her witching manner — ah the lore they teach

You are winning, well I know it, who should know but I?
You constrain me, I must yield or else must hasten by: —
But she, she fascinates me, I can neither fight nor fly.

She's so redundant, stately; — in truth now have you seen
Ever anywhere such beauty, such a stature, such a mien?
She may be queen of devils but she's every inch a queen.

If you sing to me, I hear her subtler sweeter still
Whispering in each tender cadence strangely sweet to fill
All that lacks in music all my soul and sense and will.

If you dance, tho' mine eyes follow where my hand I gave
I only see her presence like a sunny wave

I only feel her presence like a wind too strong to rave.

If we talk: I love you, do you love me again? —
Tho' your lips speak it's her voice I flush to hear so plain
Say: Love you? yes I love you, love can neither change nor wane.

But, you ask, "why struggle? I have given you up:
Take again your pledges, snap the cord and break the cup:
Feast you with your temptation for I in heaven will sup." —

Can I bear to think upon you strong to break not bend,
Pale with inner intense passion silent to the end,
Bear to leave you, bear to grieve you, O my dove my friend?

One short pang and you would rise a light in heaven
While we grovelled in the darkness mean and unforgiven
Tho' our cup of love brimmed sevenfold crowns of love were seven.

What shall I choose, what can I for you and her and me;
With you the haven of rest, with her the tossing miry sea;
Time's love with her, or choose with you love's all eternity. —

Nay, you answer coldly yet with a quivering voice:
That is over, doubt and struggle, we have sealed our choice;
Leave me to my contentment vivid with fresh hopes and joys.

Listening so, I hide mine eyes and fancy years to come:
You cherished in another home with no cares burdensome;
You straitened in a windingsheet pulseless at peace and dumb.

So I fancy — The new love has driven the old away;
She has found a dearer shelter a dearer stronger stay;
Perhaps now she would thank me for the freedom of that day.

Open house and heart barred to me alone the door;
Children bound to meet her, babies crow before; —
Blessed wife and blessed mother whom I may see no more.

Or I fancy — In the grave her comely body lies;
She is ‘tiring for the Bridegroom till the morning star shall rise,
Then to shine a glory in the nuptials of the skies.

No more yearning tenderness, no more pale regret,
She will not look for me when the marriage guests are set,
She joys with joy eternal as we had never met.

I would that one of us were dead, were gone no more to meet,
Or she and I were dead together stretched here at your feet,
That she and I were strained together in one winding sheet:

Hidden away from all the world upon this bitter morn;
Hidden from all the scornful world, from all your keener scorn;
Secure and secret in the dark as blessed babe unborn.

A pitiless fiend is in your eyes to tempt me and to taunt:
If you were dead I verily believe that you would haunt
The home you loved, the man you loved, you said you loved — avaunt.

Why do you face me with those eyes so calm they drive me mad,
Too proud to droop before me and own that you are sad?
Why have you a lofty angel made me mean and cursed and bad?

How have you the heart to face me with that passion in your stare
Deathly silent? weep before me, rave at me in your despair —
If you keep patience wings will spring and a halo from your hair.

Yet what matters — yea what matters? your frenzy can but mock:
You do not hold my heart's life key to lock and to unlock,
The door will not unclose to you tho' long you wait and knock.

Have I wronged you? nay not I nor she in deed or will:
You it is alone that mingle the venomous cup and fill;
Why are you so little lovely that I cannot love you still? —

One pulse, one tone, one ringlet of her's outweighs the whole
Of you, your puny graces puny body puny soul:
You but a taste of sweetness, she an overrunning bowl.

Did I make you, that you blame me because you are not the best?
Not so, be wise, take patience, turn away and be at rest:
Shall I not know her lovelier who is far loveliest? —

See now how proud you are, like us after all, no saint;
Not so upright but that you are bowed with the old bent;
White at white-heat, tainted with the devil's special taint.

Sit you still and wring the cup drop after loathsome drop:
You have let loose a torrent it is not you can stop;
You have sowed a noisome field-ful, now reap the stinging crop.

Did you think to sit in safety, to watch me torn and tost
Struggling like a mad dog, watch her tempting doubly lost?
Howl you, you wretched woman, for your flimsy hopes are crost.

Be still, tho' you may writhe you shall hear the branding truth:
You who thought to sit in judgment on our souls forsooth,
To sit in frigid judgment on our ripe luxuriant youth.

Did I love you? never from the first cold day to this;
You are not sufficient for my aim of life, my bliss;
You are not sufficient, but I found the one that is.

The wine of love that warms me from this life's mortal chill:
Drunk with love I drink again, a thirst I drink my fill;
Lapped in love I care not doth it make alive or kill.

Then did I never love you? — ah the sting struck home at last;
You are drooping, fainting, dying — the worst of death is past;
A light is on your face from the nearing heaven forecast.

Never? — yes I loved you then; I loved: the word still charms: —
For the first time last time lie here in my heart my arms,
For the first last time as if I shielded you from harms.

I trampled you, poor dove, to death; you clung to me, I spurned;
I taunted you, I tortured you, while you sat still and yearned: —
Oh lesson taught in anguish but in double anguish learned.

For after all I loved you, loved you then, I love you yet.
Listen love I love you: see, the seal of truth is set
On my face in tears — you cannot see? then feel them wet.

Pause at heaven's dear gate, look back, one moment back to grieve;
You go home thro' death to life; but I, I still must live:
On the threshold of heaven's love, O love can you forgive? —

Fully freely fondly, with heart truth above an oath,
With eager utter pardon given unasked and nothing loth,
Heaping coals of fire upon our heads forgiving both.

One word more — not one: one look more — too late too late: —

Lapped in love she sleeps who was lashed with scorn and hate;
Nestling in the lap of love the dove has found a mate.

Night has come, the night of rest; day will come, that day:
To her glad dawn of glory kindled from the deathless ray;
To us a searching fire and strict balances to weigh.

The tearless tender eyes are closed, the tender lips are dumb:
I shall not see or hear them more until that day shall come:
Then they must speak, what will they say — what then will be the sum? —

Shall we stand upon the left and she upon the right —
We smirched with endless death and shame, she glorified in white:
Will she sound our accusation in intolerable light?

Be open-armed to us in love — type of another Love —
As she forgave us once below will she forgive above,
Enthroned to all eternity our sister friend and dove? —

NOW THEY DESIRE

There is a sleep we have not slept
   Safe in a bed unknown;
There hearts are staunched that long have wept
   Alone, or bled alone:
Sweet sleep that dreams not, or whose dream
   Is foretaste of the truth;
Sweet sleep whose sweets are what they seem
   Refreshing more than youth.

There is a sea whose waters clear
   Are never tempest tost;
There is a home whose children dear
   Are saved, not one is lost:
There Cherubim and Seraphim
   And Angels dwell with Saints,
Whose lustre no more dwindleth dim,
   Whose ardour never faints.

There is a Love Which fills desire
   And can our love requite;
Like fire It draws our lesser fire,
   Like greater light our light:
For It we agonize in strife
   We yearn we famish thus —
Lo, in the far off land of life
   Doth It not yearn for us? —

"Oh fair oh fair Jerusalem,"
   How fair how far away,
When shall we see thy Jasper Gem
   That gives thee light for day?
Thy sea of glass like fire, thy streets
   Of glass like virgin gold,

Thy royal Elders on their seats,
   Thy four Beasts manifold? —

Fair city of delights, the bride
   In raiment white and clean,
When shall we see thee loving eyed,
   Sun girdled, happy Queen?
Without a wrinkle or a spot,
   Blood cleansed, blood purchased once:
In how fair ground is fallen the lot
   Of all thy happy sons.

Dove's eyes beneath thy parted lock,
   A dove's soft voice is thine;
Thy nest is safe within the Rock,
   Safe in the Very Vine;
Thy walls salvation buildeth them
   And all thy gates are praise
Oh fair oh fair Jerusalem
   In sevenfold day of days.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL, FOR MY GODCHILDREN

The shepherds had an angel,
   The wise men had a star,
But what have I, a little child,
   To guide me home from far,
Where glad stars sing together
   And singing angels are? —

Lord Jesus is my Guardian,
   So I can nothing lack:
The lambs lie in His Bosom
   Along life's dangerous track;
The wilful lambs that go astray
   He bleeding fetches back.

Lord Jesus is my Guiding Star,
   My Beacon Light in heaven:
He leads me step by step along
   The path of life uneven;
He, True Light, leads me to that land
   Whose day shall be as seven.

Those shepherds thro' the lonely night
   Sat watching by their sheep,
Until they saw the heavenly host
   Who neither tire nor sleep
All singing 'Glory glory'
   In festival they keep.

Christ watches me His little lamb,
   Cares for me day and night,
That I may be His Own in heaven:

So angels clad in white
Shall sing their ‘Glory, glory’
For my sake in the height.

The wise men left their country
To journey morn by morn
With gold and frankincense and myrrh
Because the Lord was born:
God sent a star to guide them
And sent a dream to warn.

My life is like their journey,
Their star is like God’s Book,
I must be like those good wise men
With heavenward heart and look:
But shall I give no gifts to God? —
What precious gifts they took.

Lord I will give my love to Thee,
Than gold much costlier,
Sweeter to Thee than frankincense,
More prized than choicest myrrh:
Lord make me dearer day by day,
Day by day holier.

Nearer and dearer day by day:
Till I my voice unite
And sing my ‘Glory, glory’
With angels clad in white,
All ‘Glory, glory’ given to Thee
Thro’ all the heavenly height.

NOT YOURS BUT YOU

He died for me: what can I offer Him?
   Toward Him swells incense of perpetual prayer;
   His court wear crowns and aureoles round their hair;
His ministers are subtle cherubim,
Ring within ring, white intense seraphim
   Leap like immortal lightnings thro' the air:
   What shall I offer Him? defiled and bare
My spirit broken and my brightness dim. —
Give Me thy youth; — I yield it to Thy rod
   As Thou didst yield Thy prime of youth for me: —
Give Me thy life; — I give it breath by breath
   As Thou didst give Thy life so give I Thee: —
Give Me thy love; — So be it, my God, my God,
As Thou hast loved me even to bitter death.

AN ANSWER

[The first page of the MS is missing from the notebook.]

To make it glad with a goodly crop:
   Even so One Wiser deals with me: —
Amen, say I: if He choose to lop
   Branch after branch of my leafèd tree,
   In its own ripe season more fruit shall be.

Tenfold fruit in the time of fruit,
   In the time of corn and wine and oil,
Sound at the core, firm at the root;
   Repaying the years and years of toil,
   Repaying the blood that fed the soil.

SIR WINTER

Sir Winter is coming across the wide sea,
With his blustering companions, so wild and so free:
He speeds on his way, like some bold buccaneer,
And Day flies before him with faltering and fear.

In the front of the battle new trophies to reap,
Mid the howl of the tempest, the roar of the deep,
Lo, he comes with his noiseless-shod legions of snow
And nips the last buds that were lingering to blow.

Sweet blackbird is silenced with chaffinch and thrush,
Only waistcoated robin still chirps in the bush:
Soft sun-loving swallows have mustered in force
And winged to the spice-teaming southlands their course.

Plump housekeeper dormouse has tucked himself neat,
Just a brown ball in moss with a morsel to eat;
Armed hedgehog has huddled him into the hedge
While frogs miss freezing deep down in the sedge.

So sturdy Sir Winter has conquered us quite,
He has ravaged our country to left and to right:
Since we must bear his yoke for a season, we'd best
Try to lighten its weight on ourselves and the rest.

Soft swallows have left us alone in the lurch,
But robin sits whistling to us from his perch:
If I were red robin, I'd pipe you a tune
Would make you despise all the beauties of June.

But since that cannot be, let us draw round the fire,
Munch chestnuts, tell stories, and stir the blaze higher:
We'll comfort pinched robin with crumbs, little man,
Till he sings us the very best song that he can.

IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO

One face looks out from all his canvasses,
   One selfsame figure sits or walks or leans;
   We found her hidden just behind those screens,
That mirror gave back all her loveliness.
A queen in opal or in ruby dress,
   A nameless girl in freshest summer greens,
   A saint, an angel; — every canvass means
The same one meaning, neither more nor less.
He feeds upon her face by day and night,
   And she with true kind eyes looks back on him
Fair as the moon and joyful as the light:
   Not wan with waiting, not with sorrow dim;
Not as she is, but was when hope shone bright;
   Not as she is, but as she fills his dream.

INTROSPECTIVE

I wish it were over the terrible pain,
Pang after pang again and again;
First the shattering ruining blow,
Then the probing steady and slow.

Did I wince? I did not faint:
My soul broke but was not bent;
Up I stand like a blasted tree
By the shore of the shivering sea.

On my boughs neither leaf nor fruit,
No sap in my uttermost root,
Brooding in an anguish dumb
On the short past and the long to come.

Dumb I was when the ruin fell,
Dumb I remain and will never tell:
O my soul I talk with thee
But not another the sight must see.

I did not start when the torture stung,
I did not faint when the torture wrung;
Let it come tenfold if come it must
But I will not groan when I bite the dust.

THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS

When all the over-work of life
   Is finished once, and fast asleep
We swerve no more beneath the knife
   But taste that silence cool and deep;
Forgetful of the highways rough,
   Forgetful of the thorny scourge,
   Forgetful of the tossing surge,
Then shall we find it is enough? —

How can we say 'enough' on earth;
   'Enough' with such a craving heart:
I have not found it since my birth
   But still have bartered part for part.
I have not held and hugged the whole,
   But paid the old to gain the new;
   Much have I paid, yet much is due,
Till I am beggared sense and soul.

I used to labor, used to strive
   For pleasure with a restless will:
Now if I save my soul alive
   All else what matters, good or ill?
I used to dream alone, to plan
   Unspoken hopes and days to come: —
   Of all my past this is the sum:
I will not lean on child of man.

To give, to give, not to receive,
   I long to pour myself, my soul,
Not to keep back or count or leave
   But king with king to give the whole:
I long for one to stir my deep —

I have had enough of help and gift —
I long for one to search and sift
Myself, to take myself and keep.

You scratch my surface with your pin;
You stroke me smooth with hushing breath; —
Nay pierce, nay probe, nay dig within,
Probe my quick core and sound my depth.
You call me with a puny call,
You talk, you smile, you nothing do;
How should I spend my heart on you,
My heart that so outweighs you all?

Your vessels are by much too strait;
Were I to pour you could not hold,
Bear with me: I must bear to wait
A fountain sealed thro' heat and cold.
Bear with me days or months or years;
Deep must call deep until the end
When friend shall no more envy friend
Nor vex his friend at unawares.

Not in this world of hope deferred,
This world of perishable stuff; —
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Nor heart conceived that full 'enough':
Here moans the separating sea,
Here harvests fail, here breaks the heart;
There God shall join and no man part,
I full of Christ and Christ of me.

REFLECTION

Gazing thro' her chamber window
   Sits my soul's dear soul;
Looking northward, looking southward,
   Looking to the goal,
   Looking back without control. —

I have strewn thy path, beloved,
   With plumed meadowsweet,
Iris and pale perfumed lilies,
   Roses most complete:
   Wherefore pause on listless feet? —

But she sits and never answers;
   Gazing gazing still
On swift fountain, shadowed valley,
   Cedared sunlit hill:
   Who can guess or read her will?

Who can guess or read the spirit
   Shrined within her eyes,
Part a longing, part a languor,
   Part a mere surprize,
   While slow mists do rise and rise? —

Is it love she looks and longs for;
   Is it rest or peace;
Is it slumber self-forgetful
   In its utter ease;
   Is it one or all of these?

So she sits and doth not answer
   With her dreaming eyes,

With her languid look delicious
    Almost Paradise,
    Less than happy, over wise.

Answer me, O self-forgetful —
    Or of what beside? —
Is it day dream of a maiden,
    Vision of a bride,
    Is it knowledge, love, or pride?

Cold she sits thro' all my kindling,
    Deaf to all I pray:
I have wasted might and wisdom,
    Wasted night and day:
    Deaf she dreams to all I say.

Now if I could guess her secret
    Were it worth the guess? —
Time is lessening, hope is lessening,
    Love grows less and less:
    What care I for no or yes? —

I will give her stately burial,
    Tho', when she lies dead:
For dear memory of the past time,
    Of her royal head,
    Of the much I strove and said.

I will give her stately burial,
    Willow branches bent;
Have her carved in alabaster,
    As she dreamed and leant
    While I wondered what she meant.

A COAST-NIGHTMARE

I have a friend in ghostland —
   Early found, ah me, how early lost! —
Blood-red seaweeds drip along that coastland
   By the strong sea wrenched and tossed.
In every creek there slopes a dead man's islet,
   And such an one in every bay;
All unripened in the unended twilight:
   For there comes neither night nor day.

Unripe harvest there hath none to reap it
   From the watery misty place;
Unripe vineyard there hath none to keep it
   In unprofitable space.
Living flocks and herds are nowhere found there;
   Only ghosts in flocks and shoals:
Indistinguished hazy ghosts surround there
   Meteors whirling on their poles;
Indistinguished hazy ghosts abound there;
   Troops, yea swarms, of dead men's souls. —

Have they towns to live in? —
   They have towers and towns from sea to sea;
Of each town the gates are seven;
   Of one of these each ghost is free.
Civilians, soldiers, seamen,
   Of one town each ghost is free:
They are ghastly men those ghostly freemen:
Such a sight may you not see. —

How know you that your lover
   Of death's tideless waters stoops to drink? —
Me by night doth mouldy darkness cover,
   It makes me quake to think:

All night long I feel his presence hover
    Thro' the darkness black as ink.

Without a voice he tells me
    The wordless secrets of death's deep:
If I sleep, his trumpet voice compels me
    To stalk forth in my sleep:
If I wake, he hunts me like a nightmare;
    I feel my hair stand up, my body creep:
Without light I see a blasting sight there,
    See a secret I must keep.

FOR ONE SAKE

One passed me like a flash of lightning by
    To ring clear bells of heaven beyond the stars:
    Then said I: Wars and rumours of your wars
Are dull with din of what and where and why;
My heart is where these troubles draw not nigh:
    Let me alone till heaven shall burst its bars,
    Break up its fountains, roll its flashing cars

Earthwards with fire to test and purify.

Let me alone tonight, and one night more
    Of which I shall not count the eventide;
Its morrow will not be as days before:
Let me alone to dream, perhaps to weep;
    To dream of her the imperishable bride,
Dream while I wake and dream on while I sleep.

MY OLD FRIENDS

They lie at rest asleep and dead,
The dew drops cool above their head,
They knew not when past summer fled —
Amen.

They lie at rest and quite forget
The hopes and fears that wring us yet;
Their eyes are set, their heart is set —
Amen.

They lie with us, yet gone away
Hear nothing that we sob or say
Beneath the thorn of wintry may —
Miserere.

Together all yet each alone,
Each laid at rest beneath his own
Smooth turf or white appointed stone —
Amen.

When shall our slumbers be so deep,
And bleeding heart and eyes that weep
Lie lapped in the sufficient sleep? —
Miserere.

We dream of them: and who shall say
They never dream while far away
Of us between the night and day? —
Sursum corda.

Gone far away: or it may be
They lean toward us and hear and see

Yea and remember more than we —
Amen.

For wherefore should we deem them far
Who know not where those spirits are
That shall outshine both moon and star? —
Hallelujah.

Where check or change can never rise
Deep in recovered Paradise
They rest world-wearied heart and eyes —
Jubilate.

We hope and love with throbbing breast,
They hope and love and are at rest:
And yet we question which is best —
Miserere.

Oh what is earth, that we should build
Brief houses here, and seek concealed
Poor treasure, and add field to field

And heap to heap and store to store,
Still grasping, ever grasping more,
While death stands knocking at our door? —
Cui bono?

But one will answer: Changed and pale
And starved at heart, I thirst I fail
For love, I thirst without avail —
Miserrima.

Sweet love, a fountain sealed to me:
Mere love, the sole sufficiency
For every longing that can be —
Amen.

Oh happy those alone whose lot
Is love: I search from spot to spot;
In life, in death, I find it not —
Miserrima.

Not found in life: nay, verily.
I too have sought: come sit with me
And grief for grief shall answer thee —
Miserrima.

Sit with me where the sapless leaves
Are fallen and sere: to one who grieves
What cheer have last year's harvest sheaves? —
Cui bono?

Not found in life: yet found in death.
I sought life as but a breath
There is a nest of love beneath

The sod, a home prepared before;
Our brethren whom one mother bore
Live there, and toil and ache no more —
Hallelujah.

Dear friends and kinsfolk great and small;
Not lost but saved both one and all:
They watch across the parting wall

(Do they not watch?) and count the creep
Of time, and sound the shallowing deep,
Till we in port shall also sleep —
Hallelujah, Amen.

YET A LITTLE WHILE

These days are long before I die:
   To sit alone upon a thorn
   Is what the nightingale forlorn
Does night by night continually;
She swells her heart to extasy
Until it bursts and she can die.

These days are long that wane and wax:
   Waxeth and wanes the ghostly moon
   Achill and pale in cordial June;
What is it that she wandering lacks?
She seems as one that aches and aches
Most sick to wane most sick to wax.

Of all the sad sights in the world
   The downfall of an Autumn leaf
   Is grievous and suggesteth grief:
Who thought when Spring was fresh unfurled
Of this? when Spring twigs gleamed impearled
Who thought of frost that nips the world?

There are a hundred subtle stings
   To prick us in our daily walk:
   A young fruit cankered on its stalk,
A strong bird snared for all his wings,
A nest that sang but never sings;
Yea sight and sound and silence stings.

There is a lack in solitude,
   There is a load in throng of life;
   One with another genders strife,

To be alone yet is not good:
I know but of one neighbourhood
At peace and full; death's solitude.

Sleep soundly, dears, who lulled at last
   Forget the bird and all her pains,
   Forget the moon that waxes, wanes,
The leaf, the sting, the frostful blast;
Forget the troublous years that past
In strife or ache did end at last.

We have clear call of daily bells,
   A dimness where the anthems are,
   A chancel vault of sky and star,
A thunder if the organ swells:
Alas our daily life — what else? —
Is not in tune with daily bells.

You have deep pause betwixt the chimes
   Of earth and heaven, a patient pause
   Yet glad with rest by certain laws:
You look and long; while oftentimes
Precursive flush of morning climbs
And air vibrates with coming chimes.

ONLY BELIEVE

I stood by weeping
Yet a sorrowful silence keeping
While an Angel smote my love
As she lay sleeping. —

Is there a bed above
More fragrant than these violets
That are white like death?

White like a dove
Flowers in the blessed islets
Breathe sweeter breath
All fair morns and twilights.

Is the gold there
More golden than these tresses?

There heads are aureoled
And crowned like gold
With light most rare.

Are the bowers of Heaven
More choice than these?

To them are given
All odorous shady trees.
Earth's bowers are wildernesses
Compared with the recesses
Made soft there now

Nest-like twixt bough and bough.

Who shall live in such a nest?

Heart with heart at rest:
All they whose troubles cease
In peace:
Souls that wrestled
Now are nestled
There at ease:
Throng from east and west
From north and south
To plenty from the land of drouth.

How long must they wait?

There is a certain term
For their bodies to the worm
And their souls at Heaven-gate.
Dust to dust, clod to clod
These precious things of God;
Trampled underfoot by man
And beast the appointed years.

Their longest life was but a span
For birth, death, laughter, tears:
Is it worthwhile to live,
Rejoice and grieve,
Hope, fear and die?
Man with man, lie with lie,
The slow show dwindles by:
At last what shall we have
Besides a grave?

Lies and shows no more,
No fear, no pain,
But after hope and sleep
Dear joys again.
Those who sowed shall reap:
Those who bore
The cross shall wear the crown:
Those who clomb the steep
There shall sit down.
The Shepherd of the sheep
Feeds His flock there;

[The rest of the poem is missing from the notebook.]

RIVALS

A Shadow of Saint Dorothea.

“Golden haired, lily white,
    “Will you pluck me lilies;
“Or will you show me where they grow,
    “Show where the summer rill is?
“But is your hair of gold or light,
    “And is your foot of flake or fire,
“And have you wings rolled up from sight,
    “And joy to slake desire?” —

“I pluck young flowers of Paradise,
    “Lilies and roses red;
“A sceptre for my hand,
    “A crown to crown my golden head.
“Love makes me wise:
“I sing, I stand,
“I pluck palm branches in the sheltered land.” —

“Is there a path to Heaven
    “My heavy foot may tread;
“And will you show that way to go,
    “That rose and lily bed?
“Which day of all these seven
    “Will lighten my heart of lead,
“Will purge mine eyes and make me wise
    “Alive or dead?” —

“There is a Heavenward stair —
    “Mount, strain upwards, strain and strain —
“Each step will crumble to your foot
    “That never shall descend again.
“There grows a tree from ancient root,

“With healing leaves and twelvefold fruit,
“In musical Heaven air:
“Feast with me there.” —

“I have a home on earth I cannot leave,
“I have a friend on earth I cannot grieve:
    “Come down to me, I cannot mount to you.” —
“Nay choose between us both,
“Choose as you are lief or loath:
    “You cannot keep these things and have me too.” —

A YAWN

I grow so weary: is it death
   This awful woful weariness?
It is a weight to heave my breath,
   A weight to wake, a weight to sleep;
   I have no heart to work or weep.

The sunshine teases and the dark;
   Only the twilight dulls my grief:
Is this the Ark, the strong safe Ark,
   Or the tempestuous drowning sea
   Whose crested coursers foam for me?

Why does the sea moan evermore?
   Shut out from Heaven it makes its moan,
It frets against the boundary shore:
   All earth's full rivers cannot fill
   The sea, that drinking thirsteth still.

Sheer miracles of loveliness
   Lie hid in its unlooked-on bed:
Salt passionless anemones
   Blow flower-like; just enough alive
   To blow and propagate and thrive.

Shells quaint with curve or spot or spike,
   Encrusted live things argus-eyed,
All fair alike yet all unlike,
   Are born without a pang and die
   Without a pang and so pass by.

I would I lived without a pang:
    Oh happy they who day by day
Quiescent neither sobbed nor sang;
    Unburdened with a what or why
    They live and die and so pass by.

FOR H. P

On the land and on the sea,
Jesus keep both you and me:

Going out and coming in,
Christ keep us both from shame and sin:

In this world, in the world to come,
Keep us safe and lead us home:

Today in toil, tonight in rest,
Be Best Beloved and love us best.

THEN THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER

Friend I commend to thee the narrow way:
Not because I, please God, will walk therein,
But rather for the love-feast of that day
The exceeding prize which whoso will may win.
This world is old and rotting at the core
Here death's heads mock us with a toothless grin
Here heartiest laughter leaves us spent and sore.
We heap up treasures for the fretting moth,
Our children heap our fathers heaped before,
But what shall profit us the cumbrous growth?
It cannot journey with us, cannot save,
Stripped in that darkness be we lief or loth
Stripped bare to what we are from all we have,
Naked we came, naked we must return
To one obscure inevitable grave.
If this the lesson is which we must learn
Taught by God's discipline of love or wrath
(To brand or purify His fire must burn) —
Friend I commend to thee the narrow path
That thou and I, please God, may walk therein,
May taste and see how good is God Who hath
Loved us while hating even to death our sin.

WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?

No hope in life; yet is there hope
In death, the threshold of man's scope:
Man yearneth (as the heliotrope

For ever seeks the sun) thro' light
Thro' dark for Love: all read aright
Is Love for Love is infinite.

Shall not this infinite Love suffice
To feed thy dearth? Lift heart and eyes
Up to the hills, grow glad and wise.

The hills are glad because the sun
Kisses their round tops every one
Where silver fountains laugh and run:

Smooth pebbles shine beneath; beside
The grass, mere green, grows myriad-eyed
With pomp of blossoms veined or pied.

So every nest is glad whereon
The sun in tender strength has shone;
So every fruit he glows upon;

So every valley depth, whose herds
At pasture praise him without words;
So the winged ecstasies of birds.

If there be any such thing, what
Is there by sunlight betters not? —

Nothing except dead things that rot.

Thou then who art not dead and fit
Like blasted tree beside the pit
But for the axe that levels it,

Living show life of Love, whereof
The force wields earth and heaven above:
Who knows not Love begetteth Love? —

Love in the gracious rain distils;
Love moves the subtle fountain rills
To fertilize uplifted hills

And seedful vallies fertilize;
Love stills the hungry lion's cries
And the young raven satisfies;

Love hangs this earth in space; Love rolls
Fair worlds rejoicing on their poles
And girds them round with aureoles;

Love lights the sun; Love thro' the dark
Lights the moon's evanescent arc;
Same Love lights up the glow-worm's spark;

Love rears the great; Love tends the small;
Breaks off the yoke, breaks down the wall;
Accepteth all, fulfilleth all.

O ye who taste that Love is sweet,
Set waymarks for the doubtful feet
That stumble on in search of it.

Sing hymns of Love, that those who hear
Far off in pain may lend an ear
Rise up and wonder and draw near.

Lead lives of Love, that others who
Behold your lives may kindle too
With Love and cast their lots with you.

THE MASSACRE OF PERUGIA

A trumpet pealed thro' France. Then Italy
Stirred, shook, from sea to sea.
Then many cities broke

Their lawful yoke.
Then in an evil hour
Perugia on her fort-crowned hill

[The rest of the poem is missing from the notebook.]

I HAVE DONE WITH HOPE

I have done with hope;
Have done with lies from sea to sea:
How should I lie beneath the cope
Of Heaven's star-blazoned verity?

I will not wear your crown tonight,
But mine own crown tomorrow morn:

[The lines of the poem preceding and following

the above are missing from the notebook.]

PROMISES LIKE PIECRUST

Promise me no promises,
   So will I not promise you;
Keep we both our liberties,
   Never false and never true:
Let us hold the die uncast,
   Free to come as free to go;
For I cannot know your past,
   And of mine what can you know?

You, so warm, may once have been
   Warmer towards another one;
I, so cold, may once have seen
   Sunlight, once have felt the sun:
Who shall show us if it was
   Thus indeed in time of old?
Fades the image from the glass
   And the fortune is not told.

If you promised, you might grieve
   For lost liberty again;
If I promised, I believe
   I should fret to break the chain:
Let us be the friends we were,
   Nothing more but nothing less;
Many thrive on frugal fare
   Who would perish of excess.

BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON

By the waters of Babylon
   We sit down and weep,
Far from the pleasant land
   Where our fathers sleep;
Far from our Holy Place
   From which the Glory is gone;
We sit in dust and weep
   By the waters of Babylon.

By the waters of Babylon
   The willow trees grow rank:
We hang our harps thereon
   Silent upon the bank.
Before us the days are dark,
   And dark the days that are gone;
We grope in the very dark
   By the waters of Babylon.

By the waters of Babylon
   We thirst for Jordan yet,
We pine for Jerusalem
   Whereon our hearts are set:
Our priests defiled and slain,
   Our princes ashamed and gone,
Oh how should we forget
   By the waters of Babylon?

By the waters of Babylon
   Tho' the wicked grind the just,
Our seed shall yet strike root
   And shall shoot up from the dust:
The captive shall lead captive,

The slave rise up and begone,
And thou too shalt sit in dust
O daughter of Babylon.

BETTER SO

Fast asleep, mine own familiar friend,
    Fast asleep at last:
        Tho' the pain was strong,
        Tho' the struggle long,
    It is past;
All thy pangs are at an end.

Whilst I weep, whilst death bells toll,
    Thou art fast asleep,
        With idle hands upon thy breast
        And heart at rest:
    Whilst I weep
Angels sing around thy singing soul.

Who would wish thee back upon the rough
    Wearisome dangerous road?
        Wish back thy toil-spent soul
        Just at the goal?
    My soul, praise God
For one dear soul which hath enough.

I would not fetch thee back to hope with me
    A sickening hope deferred,
        To taste the cup that slips
        From thirsty lips:
    Hast thou not heard
What was to hear, and seen what was to see?

I would not speak the word if I could raise
    My dead to life:
        I would not speak

If I could flush thy cheek
And rouse thy pulses' strife
And send thy feet on the once-trodden ways.

How could I meet the dear rebuke
If thou should'st say:
"O friend of little faith,
Good was my lot of death,
And good my day
Of rest, and good the sleep I took" — ?

OUR WIDOWED QUEEN

The Husband of the widow care for her,
   The Father of the fatherless:
The faithful Friend, the abiding Comforter,
      Watch over her to bless.

Full twenty years of blameless married faith,
   Of love and honor questioned not,
Joys, griefs imparted: for the first time Death
      Sunders the common lot.

Christ help the desolate Queen upon her throne,
   Strengthen her hands, confirm her heart:
For she henceforth must bear a load alone
      Borne until now in part.

Christ help the desolate Woman in her home,
   Broken of heart, indeed bereft;
Shrinking from solitary days to come,
      Beggared tho' much is left.

Rise up, O Sons and Daughters of the Dead,
   Weep with your Mother where she weeps;
Yet not as sorrowing without hope be shed
      Your tears: he only sleeps.

Rise up, O Sons and Daughters of the realm,
   In pale reflected sorrow move;
Revere the widowed hand that holds the helm,
      Love her with double love.

In royal patience of her soul possess'd
May she fulfill her length of days:
Then may her children rise and call her bless'd,
Then may her husband praise.

IN PROGRESS

Ten years ago it seemed impossible
  That she should ever grow so calm as this,
  With self-remembrance in her warmest kiss
And dim dried eyes like an exhausted well.
Slow-speaking when she has some fact to tell,
  Silent with long-unbroken silences,
  Centred in self yet not unpleased to please,
Gravely monotonous like a passing bell.
Mindful of drudging daily common things,
  Patient at pastime, patient at her work,
Wearied perhaps but strenuous certainly.
Sometimes I fancy we may one day see
  Her head shoot forth seven stars from where they lurk
And her eyes lightnings and her shoulders wings.

OUT OF THE DEEP

Have mercy, Thou my God; mercy, my God;
   For I can hardly bear life day by day:
   Be I here or there I fret myself away:
Lo for Thy staff I have but felt Thy rod
Along this tedious desert path long trod.
   When will Thy judgement judge me, Yea or Nay?
   I pray for grace; but then my sins unpray
My prayer: on holy ground I fool stand shod.
While still Thou haunts't me, faint upon the cross,
   A sorrow beyond sorrow in Thy look,
Unutterable craving for my soul.
All faithful Thou, Lord: I, not Thou, forsook
   Myself; I traitor slunk back from the goal:
Lord, I repent; help Thou my helpless loss.

FOR A MERCY RECEIVED

Thank God Who spared me what I feared!
   Once more I gird myself to run.
   Thy promise stands, Thou Faithful One.
Horror of darkness disappeared
   At length; once more I see the sun,

And dare to wait in hope for Spring,
   To face and bear the Winter's cold:
   The dead cocoon shall yet unfold
And give to light the living wing;
   There's hidden sap beneath the mould.

My God, how could my courage flag
   So long as Thou art still the same?
   For what were labor, failure, shame,
Whilst Thy sure promise doth not lag
   And Thou dost shield me with Thy Name?

Yet am I weak, my faith is weak,
   My heart is weak that pleads with Thee:
   O Thou That art not far to seek
Turn to me, hearken when I speak,
   Stretch forth Thy Hand to succour me.

Thro' many perils have I pass'd,
   Deaths, plagues, and wonders, have I seen:
   Till now Thy Hand hath held me fast:
Lord help me, hold me, to the last;
   Still be what Thou hast always been.

Open Thy Heart of Love to me,
    Give me Thyself, keep nothing back
    Even as I give myself to Thee.
Love paid by Love doth nothing lack,
    And Love to pay Love is not slack.

Love doth so grace and dignify
    That beggars sue as King with King
    Before the Throne of Grace on high:
My God, be gracious to my cry;
    My God, accept what gift I bring:

A heart that loves; tho' soiled and bruised,
    Yet chosen by Thee in time of yore:
    Who ever came and was refused
By Thee? Do, Lord, as Thou art used
    To do, and make me love Thee more.

SUMMER

Come, cuckoo, come;
   Come again, swift swallow;
Come and welcome; where you come
   Summer's sure to follow.
June, the month of months,
   Flowers and fruitage brings too;
When green trees spread shadiest boughs,
   When each wild bird sings too.

May is scant and crude,
   Generous June is riper;
Birds fall silent in July,
   June has its woodland piper:
Rocks upon the maple-top
   Homely-hearted linnet,
Full in hearing of his nest
   And the dear ones in it.

If the year would stand
   Still at June for ever,
With no further growth on land
   Nor further flow of river,
If all nights were shortest nights
   And longest days were all the seven, —
This might be a merrier world
   To my mind to live in.

A DUMB FRIEND

I planted a young tree when I was young;
But now the tree is grown and I am old:
There wintry robin shelters from the cold
And tunes his silver tongue.

A green and living tree I planted it,
A glossy-foliaged tree of evergreen:
All thro' the noontide heat it spread a screen
Whereunder I might sit.

But now I only watch it where it towers:
I, sitting at my window, watch it tossed
By rattling gale, or silvered by the frost;
Or, when sweet summer flowers,

Wagging its round green head with stately grace
In tender winds that kiss it and go by:
It shows a green full age; and what show I?
A faded wrinkled face.

So often have I watched it, till mine eyes
Have filled with tears and I have ceased to see;
That now it seems a very friend to me
In all my secrets wise.

A faithful pleasant friend, who year by year
Grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength,
But whose green lifetime shows a longer length:
When I shall not sit here

It still will bud in spring, and shed rare leaves

In autumn, and in summer heat give shade,
And warmth in winter; when my bed is made
    In shade the cypress weaves.

MARGERY

What shall we do with Margery?
   She lies and cries upon her bed,
   All lily-pale from foot to head,
Her heart is sore as sore can be;
Poor guileless shamefaced Margery.

A foolish girl, to love a man
   And let him know she loved him so!
She should have tried a different plan;
   Have loved, but not have let him know:
   Then he perhaps had loved her so.

What can we do with Margery
   Who has no relish for her food?
We'd take her with us to the sea —
   Across the sea — but where's the good?
She'd fret alike on land and sea.

Yes, what the neighbours say is true:
   Girls should not make themselves so cheap.
But now it's done what can we do?
   I hear her moaning in her sleep,
   Moaning and sobbing in her sleep.

I think — and I'm of flesh and blood —
   Were I that man for whom she cares
   I would not cost her tears and prayers
To leave her just alone like mud,
   Fretting her simple heart with cares.

A year ago she was a child,
   Now she's a woman in her grief;
   The year's now at the falling leaf,
At budding of the leaves she smiled;
Poor foolish harmless foolish child.

It was her own fault? so it was.
   If every own fault found us out
   Dogged us and snared us round about,
What comfort should we take because
   Not half our due we thus wrung out?

At any rate the question stands:
   What now to do with Margery,
A weak poor creature on our hands?
   Something we must do: I'll not see
   Her blossom fade, sweet Margery.

Perhaps a change may after all
   Prove best for her: to leave behind
   Those home-sights seen time out of mind;
To get beyond the narrow wall
Of home, and learn home is not all.

Perhaps this way she may forget,
   Not all at once, but in a while;
May come to wonder how she set
   Her heart on this slight thing, and smile
   At her own folly, in a while.

Yet this I say and I maintain:
   Were I the man she's fretting for
   I should my very self abhor
If I could leave her to her pain,

Uncomforted to tears and pain.

IN PATIENCE

I will not faint, but trust in God
   Who this my lot hath given;
He leads me by the thorny road
   Which is the road to heaven.
Tho' sad my day that lasts so long,
At evening I shall have a song;
Tho' dim my day until the night,
At evening time there shall be light.

My life is but a working day
   Whose tasks are set aright:
A while to work, a while to pray,
   And then a quiet night.
And then, please God, a quiet night
Where Saints and Angels walk in white:
One dreamless sleep from work and sorrow,
But re-awakening on the morrow.

SUNSHINE

“There’s little sunshine in my heart
   Slack to spring, lead to sink;
There’s little sunshine in the world
            I think.” —

“There’s glow of sunshine in my heart
   (Cool wind, cool the glow);
There’s flood of sunshine in the world
            I know.” —

Now if of these one spoke the truth,
   One spoke more or less:
But which was which I will not tell; —
            You, guess.

MEETING

If we shall live, we live;
   If we shall die, we die;
If we live, we shall meet again;
   But tonight, good bye.
One word, let but one be heard —
What, not one word?

If we sleep, we shall wake again
   And see tomorrow's light;
If we wake, we shall meet again;
   But tonight, good night.
Good night, my lost and found —
Still not a sound?

If we live, we must part;
   If we die, we part in pain;
If we die, we shall part
   Only to meet again.
By those tears on either cheek,
Tomorrow you will speak.

To meet, worth living for;
   Worth dying for, to meet;
To meet, worth parting for;
   Bitter forgot in sweet.
To meet, worth parting before
Never to part more.

NONE WITH HIM

My God, to live: how didst Thou bear to live
   Preaching and teaching, toiling to and fro;
Few men accepting what Thou hadst to give,
      Few men prepared to know
   Thy Face, to see the truth Thou camest to show?

My God, to die: how didst Thou bear to die
   That long slow death in weariness of pain;
A curse and an astonishment, passed by,
      Pointed at, mocked again,
   By men for whom Thy Blood was shed in vain?

Whilst I do hardly bear my easy life,
   And hardly face my easy-coming death:
I turn to flee before the tug of strife;
      And shrink with troubled breath
   From sleep, that is not death Thy Spirit saith.

UNDER WILLOWS

Under willows among the graves
   One was walking, ah welladay!
Where each willow her green boughs waves
   Come April prime, come May.
Under willows among the graves
   She met her lost love, ah welladay!
Where in Autumn each wild wind raves
   And whirls sere leaves away.

He looked at her with a smile,
   She looked at him with a sigh,
Both paused to look awhile;
   Then he passed by,
Passed by and whistled a tune;
   She stood silent and still:
It was the sunniest day in June,
   Yet one felt a chill.

Under willows among the graves
   I know a certain black black pool
Scarce wrinkled when Autumn raves;
   Under the turf is cool;
Under the water it must be cold;
   Winter comes cold when Summer's past;
Though she live to be old, so old,
   She shall die at last.

A SKETCH

The blindest buzzard that I know
   Does not wear wings to spread and stir,
   Nor does my special mole wear fur
And grub among the roots below;
   He sports a tail indeed, but then
   It's to a coat; he's man with men;
      His quill is cut to a pen.

In other points our friend's a mole,
   A buzzard, beyond scope of speech:
   He sees not what's within his reach,
Misreads the part, ignores the whole.
   Misreads the part so reads in vain,
   Ignores the whole tho' patent plain,
      Misreads both parts again.

My blindest buzzard that I know,
   My special mole, when will you see?
   Oh no, you must not look at me,
There's nothing hid for me to show.
   I might show facts as plain as day;
   But since your eyes are blind, you'd say:
      Where? What? and turn away.

IF I HAD WORDS

If I had words, if I had words
   At least to vent my misery: —
But muter than the speechless herds
   I have no voice wherewith to cry.
I have no strength to life my hands,
   I have no heart to lift mine eye,
My soul is bound with brazen bands,
   My soul is crushed and like to die.
My thoughts that wander here and there,
   That wander wander listlessly,
Bring nothing back to cheer my care,
   Nothing that I may live thereby.
My heart is broken in my breast,
   My breath is but a broken sigh —
Oh if there be a land of rest
   It is far off, it is not nigh.
If I had wings as hath a dove,
   If I had wings that I might fly,
I yet would seek the land of love
   Where fountains run which run not dry;
Tho' there be none that road to tell,
   And long that road is verily:
Then if I lived I should do well,
   And if I died I should but die.
If I had wings as hath a dove
   I would not sift the what and why,
I would make haste to find out love,
   If not to find at least to try.
I would make haste to love, my rest;
   To love, my truth that doth not lie:
Then if I lived it might be best,
   Or if I died I could but die.

WHAT TO DO?

Oh my love and my own own deary!
What shall I do? my love is weary.
Sleep, O friend, on soft downy pillow,
Pass, O friend, as wind or as billow,
And I'll wear the willow.

No stone at his head be set,
A swelling turf be his coverlet
Bound round with a graveyard wattle;
Hedged round from the trampling cattle
And the children's prattle.

I myself, instead of a stone,
Will sit by him to dwindle and moan;
Sit and weep with a bitter weeping,
Sit and weep where my love lies sleeping
While my life goes creeping.

YOUNG DEATH

Lying adying —
Such sweet things untasted,
Such rare beauties wasted:
Her hair a hidden treasure,
Her voice a lost pleasure;
Her soul made void of passion;
Her body going to nothing
Though long it took to fashion,
Soon to be a loathing:
Her road hath no turning,
Her light is burning burning
With last feeble flashes;
Dying from the birth:
Dust to dust, earth to earth,
Ashes to ashes.

Lying adying —
Have done with vain sighing:
Life not lost but treasured,
God Almighty pleasured,
God's daughter fetched and carried,
Christ's bride betrothed and married.
Lo, in the Room, the Upper,
She shall sit down to supper,
New bathed from head to feet
And on Christ gazing;
Her mouth kept clean and sweet
Shall laugh and sing, God praising:
Then shall be no more weeping,
Or fear, or sorrow,
Or waking more, or sleeping,
Or night, or morrow,
Or cadence in the song
Of songs, or thirst, or hunger;

The strong shall rise more strong
And the young younger.
Our tender little dove
Meek-eyed and simple,
Our love goes home to Love;
There shall she walk in white
Where God shall be the Light
And God the Temple.

IN A CERTAIN PLACE

I found Love in a certain place
Asleep and cold — or cold and dead? —
All ivory-white upon his bed
All ivory-white his face.
His hands were folded
On his quiet breast,
To his figure laid at rest
Chilly bed was moulded.

His hair hung lax about his brow,
I had not seen his face before;
Or if I saw it once, it wore
Another aspect now.
No trace of last night's sorrow,
No shadow of tomorrow;
All at peace (thus all sorrows cease),
All at peace.

I wondered: Were his eyes
Soft or falcon-clear?
I wondered: As he lies
Does he feel me near?
In silence my heart spoke
And wondered: If he woke
And found me sitting nigh him
And felt me sitting by him,
If life flushed to his cheek,
He living man with men,
Then if I heard him speak
Oh should I know him then?

CANNOT SWEETEN

If that's water you wash your hands in
   Why is it black as ink is black? —
Because my hands are foul with my folly:
   Oh the lost time that comes not back! —

If that's water you bathe your feet in
   Why is it red as wine is red? —
Because my feet sought blood in their goings;
   Red red is the track they tread. —

Slew you mother or slew you father
   That your foulness passeth not by? —
Not father and oh not mother:
   I slew my love with an evil eye. —

Slew you sister or slew you brother
   That in peace you have not a part? —
Not brother and oh not sister:
   I slew my love with a hardened heart.

He loved me because he loved me,
   Not for grace or beauty I had;
He loved me because he loved me;
   For his loving me I was glad.

Yet I loved him not for his loving
   While I played with his love and truth,
Not loving him for his loving,
   Wasting his joy, wasting his youth.

I ate his life as a banquet,
    I drank his life as new wine,
I fattened upon his leanness,
    Mine to flourish and his to pine.

So his life fled as running water,
    So it perished as water spilt:
If black my hands and my feet as scarlet,
    Blacker redder my heart of guilt.

Cold as a stone, as hard, as heavy;
    All my sighs ease it no whit,
All my tears make it no cleaner
    Dropping dropping dropping on it.

OF MY LIFE

I weary of my life
Thro' the long sultry day,
While happy creatures play
Their harmless lives away: —
What is my life?

I weary of my life
Thro' the slow tedious night,
While earth and heaven's delight
The moon walks forth in white: —
What is my life?

If I might I would die;
My soul should flee away
To day that is not day
Where sweet souls sing and say. —
If I might die!

If I might I would die;
My body out of sight,
All night that is not night
My soul should walk in white —
If I might die!

YES, I TOO COULD FACE DEATH AND NEVER SHRINK

Yes, I too could face death and never shrink:
But it is harder to bear hated life;
To strive with hands and knees weary of strife;
    To drag the heavy chain whose every link
    Galls to the bone; to stand upon the brink
Of the deep grave, nor drowse, though it be rife
With sleep; to hold with steady hand the knife
    Nor strike home: this is courage as I think.
Surely to suffer is more than to do:
    To do is quickly done; to suffer is
    Longer and fuller of heart-sicknesses:
    Each day's experience testifies of this:
Good deeds are many, but good lives are few;
    Thousands taste the full cup; who drains the lees? —

WOULD THAT I WERE A TURNIP WHITE

Would that I were a turnip white,
Or raven black,
Or miserable hack
    Dragging a cab from left to right;
    Or would I were the showman of a sight,
Or weary donkey with a laden back,
Or racer in a sack,
    Or freezing traveller on an Alpine height;
Or would I were straw catching as I drown,
    (A wretched landsman I who cannot swim,)
  Or watching a lone vessel sink,
  Rather than writing: I would change my pink
Gauze for a hideous yellow satin gown
    With deep-cut scolloped edges and a rim.

I FANCY THE GOOD FAIRIES DRESSED IN WHITE

I fancy the good fairies dressed in white,
Glancing like moon-beams through the shadows black;
Without much work to do for king or hack.
Training perhaps some twisted branch aright;
Or sweeping faded Autumn leaves from sight
To foster embryo life; or binding back
Stray tendrils; or in ample bean-pod sack
Bringing wild honey from the rocky height;
Or fishing for a fly lest it should drown;
Or teaching water-lily heads to swim,
Fearful that sudden rain might make them sink;
Or dyeing the pale rose a warmer pink;
Or wrapping lilies in their leafy gown,
Yet letting the white peep beyond the rim. —

SOME LADIES DRESS IN MUSLIN FULL AND WHITE

Some ladies dress in muslin full and white,
Some gentlemen in cloth succinct and black;
Some patronise a dog-cart, some a hack,
    Some think a painted clarence only right.
    Youth is not always such a pleasing sight,
Witness a man with tassels on his back;
Or woman in a great-coat like a sack
    Towering above her sex with horrid height.
If all the world were water fit to drown
    There are some whom you would not teach to swim,
  Rather enjoying if you saw them sink;
  Certain old ladies dressed in girlish pink,
With roses and geraniums on their gown: —
    Go to the Bason, poke them o'er the rim. —

AUTUMN

Fade tender lily,
   Fade O crimson rose,
Fade every flower
   Sweetest flower that blows.

Go chilly Autumn,
   Come O Winter cold;
Let the green things die away
   Into common mould.

Birth follows hard on death,
   Life on withering:
Hasten, we shall come the sooner
   Back to pleasant Spring.

IL ROSSEGGIAR DELL’ ORIENTE CANZONIERE

‘All’ Amico Contano. —

1.

AMOR DORMENTE?

Addio, diletto amico;
A me non lece amore,
Chè già m’uccise il core
Amato amante.
Eppur per l’altra vita
Consacro a te speranze;
Per questa, rimembranze
Tante e poi tante.

2.

AMOR SI SVEGLIA?

In nuova primavera
   Rinasce il genio antico;
Amor t' insinua "Spera" —
      Pur io nol dico.

S' "Ama" — ti dice Amore,
   S'ei t'incoraggia, amico,
Giurando "È tuo quel core" —
      Pur io nol dico.

Anzi quel cor davvero
   Chi sa se valga un fico?
Lo credo, almen lo spero:
      Ma pur nol dico.

3.

SI RIMANDA LA TOCCA-CALDAJA

Lungi da me il pensiere
D’ereditar l’oggetto
Ch’ una fiata in petto
Destar ti seppe amor.
Se più l’usar non vuoi,
Se pur fumar nol puoi,
Dolce ti sia dovere
Il conservarlo ognor.

4.

BLUMINE" RISPONDE

S'io t'incontrassi nell'eterna pace,
   Pace non più, per me saria diletto;
   S'io t'incontrassi in cerchio maledetto
Te più di me lamenterei verace.
Per te mia vita mezzo morta giace,
   Per te le notti veglio e bagno il letto:
   Eppur di rivederti un di m'aspetto
In secol che riman, non che in fugace.
E perciò "Fuggi" io dico al tempo; e omai
   "Passa pur" dico al vanitoso mondo:
Mentre mi sogno quel che dici e fai
   Ripeto in me, "Doman sarà giocondo,
"Doman sarem" — ma s'ami tu lo sai,
   E se non ami a che mostrarti il fondo? —

5.

LASSÙ FIA CARO IL RIVEDERCI

Dolce cor mio perduto e non perduto,
   Dolce mia vita che mi lasci in morte,
   Amico e più che amico, ti saluto.
Ricordati di me; che cieche e corte
   Fur le speranze mie, ma furon tue:
   Non disprezzar questa mia dura sorte.
Lascia ch'io dica, "Le speranze sue
   "Come le mie languiro in questo inverno" —
   Pur mi rassegnerò, quel che fue fue.
Lascia ch'io dica ancor, "Con lui discerno
   "Giorno che spunta da gelata sera,
   "Lungo cielo al di là di breve inferno,
"Al di là dell'inverno primavera."

6.

NON SON IO LA ROSA MA VI STETTI APPRESSO

Casa felice ove più volte omai
   Siede il mio ben parlando e ancor ridendo,
   Donna felice che con lui sedendo
Lo allegri pur con quanto dici e fai,
Giardin felice dove passeggiai
   Pensando a lui, pensando e non dicendo,
   Giorno felice fia quand' io mi rendo
Laddove passeggiando a lui pensai.
Ma s'egli vi sarà quand' io vi torno,
   S'egli m'accoglie col suo dolce riso,
Ogni uccelletto canterà dintorno,
   La rosa arrossirà nel vago viso: —
Iddio ci dia in eternità quel giorno,
   Ci dia per quel giardino il paradiso.

7.

LASSUSO IL CARO FIORE

Se t'insegnasse Iddio
   Il proprio Amor così,
Ti cederei, cor mio,
   Al caro Fiore.
Il caro Fior ti chiama,
   "Fammi felice un dì" —
II caro Fior che t'ama
   Ti chiede amore.

Quel Fiore in paradiso
   Fiorisce ognor per te;
Sì, rivedrai quel viso,
      Sarai contento:
Intorno al duol ch'è stato
   Domanderai "Dov'è?" —
Che passerà il passato
      In un momento.

Ed io per tanta vista
   In tutta eternità,
Io qual Giovan Battista
      Loderò Dio:
L' Amata tanto amata
   Tuo guiderdon sarà,
E l'alma tua salvata
      Sarammi il mio.

8.

SAPESSI PURE!

Che fai lontan da me,
   Che fai, cor mio?
   Quel che facc'io
E eh' ognor penso a te.

Pensando, a te sorrido,
   Sospiro a te:
   E tu lontan da me
Tu pur sei fido?

9.

IDDIO C'ILLUMINI!

Quando il tempo avverrà che partiremo
   Ciascun di noi per separata via,
Momento che verrà, momento estremo
      Quando che fia:

Calcando l'uno inusitata traccia,
   Seguendo l'altro il solito suo corso,
Non ci nasca in quel dì vergogna in faccia
      Nè in sen rimorso.

Sia che tu vada pria forte soletto,
   O sia ch' io ti preceda in quel sentiero,
Deh ricordiamo allor d'averci detto
      Pur sempre il vero.

Quanto t'amavo e quanto! e non dovea
   Esprimer quell' amor che ti portavo:
Più ma assai più di quel che non dicea
      Nel cuor ti amavo.

Più di felicità, più di speranza;
   Di vita non dirò, chè è poca cosa:
Dolce-amaro tu fosti in rimembranza
      A me gelosa.

Ma a me tu preferisti la virtude,
   La veritade, amico: e non saprai

Chi amasti alfin? Soltanto il fior si schiude
D’un sole ai rai.

Se più di me la Veritade amasti,
Gesù fu quel tuo sconosciuto Amore: —
Gesù, che sconosciuto a lui parlasti,
Vincigli il core.

10.

AMICIZIA

“Sirocchia son d’Amor” —

Venga Amicizia e sia la benvenuta,
   Venga, ma non perciò sen parta Amore:
   Abitan l’uno e l’altra in gentil core
Che albergo ai pellegrini non rifiuta.
Ancella questa docile e compiuta,
   E quei tiranno no ma pio signore:
   Regni egli occulto nè si mostri fuore,
Essa si sveli in umiltà dovuta.
Oggi ed ancor doman per l’amicizia,
   E posdomani ancor se pur si vuole,
      Chè dolci cose apporta e non amare:
   E venga poi, ma non con luna o sole,
Giorno d’amor, giorno di gran delizia,
      Giorno che spunta non per tramontare.

11.

LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL

Uccello-delle rose e del dolore,
   Uccel d'amore,
Felice ed infelice, quel tuo canto
   È riso o pianto?
Fido all'infido, tieni in freddo lido
   Spina per nido.

12.

OH FORZA IRRESISTIBILE

Dell’umile preghiera” — .

Che Ti darò, Gesù Signor mio buono?
Ah quello ch1 amo più, quello Ti dono:
Accettalo, Signor Gesù mio Dio,
Il sol mio dolce amor, anzi il cor mio;
Accettalo per Te, siati prezioso;
Accettalo per me, salva il mio sposo.
Non ho che lui, Signor, nol disprezzare,
Caro tienlo nel cor fra cose care.
Ricordati del dì che sulla croce
Pregavi Iddio così, con flebil voce,
Con anelante cor: “Questo che fanno,
“Padre, perdona lor, ch’essi non sanno.” —
Ei pur, Signor, non sa Quello che sdegna,
Ei pure T’amerà s’uno gl’insegna.
Se tutto quanto appar, che a Te non piace,
Fugace spuma in mar, nebbia fugace:
Successo o avversità, contento o duolo,
Se tutto è vanita fuorchè Tu solo;
Se chi non prega Te nel vuoto chiama;
Se amore amor non è che Te non ama; —
Dona Te stesso a noi, ricchi saremo;
Poi nega quanto vuoi, che tutto avremo:
Di mei più dolce Tu, che ben ci basti;
D’ amore amabil più, Tu che ci amasti.

13.

FINESTRA MIA ORIENTALE

[In Malattia]

Volgo la faccia verso l' oriente,
   Verso il meriggio, ove colui dimora: —
   Ben fai che vivi ai lati dell' aurora;
Chi teco vive par felice gente.
Volgo verso di te l'occhio languente,
   Lo spirito che teme e spera ancora;
   Volgiti verso quella che ti onora,
T'ama, ti brama, in core e colla mente.
Debole e stanca verso te mi volgo:
   Che sarà mai questo che sento, amico?
Ogni cara memoria tua raccolgo,
   Quanto dirti vorrei! ma pur nol dico.
Lungi da te dei giorni me ne dolgo:
   Fossimo insieme in bel paese aprico!

Fossimo insieme!
   Che importerebbe
U'si facesse
   Il nostro nido?
Cielo sarebbe
   Quasi quel lido.

Ah fossi teco,
   Col cor ben certo
D'essere amato
   Come vorrebbe!
Sì che il deserto
   S'infierirebbe.

14.

EPPURE ALLORA VENIVI

O Tempo tardo e amaro! —
Quando verrai, cor mio,
Quando, ma quando?
Siccome a me sei caro
Se cara a te foss'io,
Ti andrei cercando?

15.

PER PREFERENZA

Felice la tua madre,
Le suore tue felici,
Che senton quanto dici,
Che vivono con te,
Che t'amano di dritto
D'amor contento e saggio:
Pur questo lor vantaggio
Non lo vorrei per me.

Quel grave aspetto tuo
Veder di quando in quando,
Frattanto andar pensando
"Un giorno riverrà";
Ripeter nel mio core
(Qual rosa è senza spine?)
"Ei sa che l'amo alfine —
M'ama egli ancor?" Chi sa!

È questo assai più dolce
Dell'altro, al parer mio:
Essere in ver desio
O tutto o nulla a te;
Nè troppo vo'lagnarmi
Ch'or stai da me diviso,
Se un giorno in Paradiso
Festeggerai con me.

Ma no; se non amante siimi amico:
Quel eh' io sarò per te non tei predico.

16.

OGGI

Possibil non sarebbe
   Ch'io non t'amassi, o caro:
Chi mai si scorderebbe
      Del proprio core?
Se amaro il dolce fai,
   Dolce mi fai l'amaro;
Se qualche amor mi dai,
      Ti do l'amore.

17.

SE FOSSI ANDATA A HASTINGS

Ti do l’addio,
Amico mio,
Per settimane
    Che paion lunghe:
Ti raccomando
Di quando in quando
Circoli quadri,
    Idee bislunghe.

18.

RIPETIZIONE

Credea di rivederti e ancor ti aspetto;
   Di giorno in giorno ognor ti vo bramando:
Quando ti rivedrò, co. mio diletto,
      Quando ma quando?

Dissi e ridissi con perenne sete,
   E lo ridico e vo'ridirlo ancora,
Qual usignol che canta e si ripete
      Fino all'aurora.

19.

AMICO E PIÙ CHE AMICO MIO

Cor mio a cui si volge l'altro mio core
   Qual calamita al polo, e non ti trova,
   La nascita della mia vita nuova
Con pianto fu, con grida, e con dolore.
Ma l' aspro duolo fummi precursore
   Di speranza gentil che canta e cova;
   Sì, chi non prosa pena amor non prova,
E quei non vive che non prova amore.
O tu che in Dio mi sci, ma dopo Iddio,
   Tutta la terra mia ed assai del cielo,
   Pensa se non m'è duol disotto a un velo
      Parlarti e non ti dir mai che ti bramo: —
Dillo tu stesso a te, dolce cor mio,
      Se pur tu m' ami dillo a te ch'io t'amo.

20.

NOSTRE VOLUNTÀ QUIETI VIRTÙ DI CARITI

Vento gentil che verso il mezzodì
   Soffiando vai, deh porta un mio sospir,
   Dicendo ad Un quel che non debbo dir,
Con un sospir dicendogli così:
Quella che diede un ‘No’ volendo un ‘Sì’
   (Volendo e non volendo — a che ridir?)
   Quella ti manda: È vanità il fiorir
Di questa vita che meniam costì.
Odi che dice e piange: È vanità
   Questo che nasce e muore amor mondan;
      Deh leva gli occhi, io gli occhi vo’levar,
   Verso il reame dove non in van
      Amasi Iddio quanto ognun possa amar
Ed il creato tutto in carità.

21.

SE COSÌ FOSSE

Io più ti amai che non mi amasti tu: —
Amen, se così volle Iddio Signor;
Amen, quantunque mi si spezzi il cor,
Signor Gesù.

Ma Tu che Ti ricordi e tutto sai,
Tu che moristi per virtù d'amor,
Nell'altro mondo donami quel cor
Che tanto amai.

BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBER, IF I CLAIM TOO MUCH OF YOU

Remember, if I claim too much of you,
   I claim it of my brother and my friend:
   Have patience with me till the hidden end,
Bitter or sweet, in mercy shut from view.
Pay me my due; though I to pay your due
   Am all too poor and past what will can mend:
   Thus of your bounty you must give and lend
Still unrepaid by aught I look to do.
Still unrepaid by aught of mine on earth:
   But overpaid, please God, when recompense
Beyond the mystic Jordan and new birth
   Is dealt to virtue as to innocence;
When Angels singing praises in their mirth
   Have borne you in their arms and fetched you hence.

WILL YOU BE THERE? MY YEARNING HEART HAS CRIED

Will you be there? my yearning heart has cried:
Ah me, my love, my love, shall I be there,
To sit down in your glory and to share
Your gladness, glowing as a virgin bride?
Or will another dearer, fairer-eyed,
Sit nigher to you in your jubilee;
And mindful one of other will you be
Borne higher and higher on joy's ebbless tide?
— Yea, if I love I will not grudge you this:
I too shall float upon that heavenly sea
And sing my joyful praises without ache;
Your overflow of joy shall gladden me,
My whole heart shall sing praises for your sake
And find its own fulfilment in your bliss.

IN RESURRECTION IS IT AWFULLER

In resurrection is it awfuller
    That rising of the All or of the Each:
    Of all kins of all nations of all speech,
Or one by one of him and him and her?
When dust reanimate begins to stir
    Here, there, beyond, beyond, reach beyond reach;
    While every wave disgorges on its beach
Alive or dead-in-life some seafarer.
In resurrection, on the day of days,
    That day of mourning throughout all the earth,
        In resurrection may we meet again:
        No more with stricken hearts to part in twain;
    As once in sorrow one, now one in mirth,
One in our resurrection songs of praise.

I LOVE YOU AND YOU KNOW IT — THIS AT LEAST

I love you and you know it — this at least,
    This comfort is mine own in all my pain:
    You know it and can never doubt again,
And love's mere self is a continual feast.
Not oath of mine nor blessing-word of priest
    Could make my love more certain or more plain: —
    Life as a rolling moon doth wax and wane
O weary moon, still rounding, still decreased!
Life wanes: and when love folds his wings above
    Tired joy, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
        Let us go fall asleep, dear Friend, in peace; —
        A little while, and age and sorrow cease;
    A little while, and love reborn annuls
Loss and decay and death — and all is love.

VALENTINES FROM C.G.R

FAIRER THAN YOUNGER BEAUTIES, MORE BELOVED

Fairer than younger beauties, more beloved
   Than many a wife, —
By stress of Time's vicissitudes unmoved
   From settled calm of life, —

Endearing rectitude to those who watch
   The verdict of your face,
Raising & making gracious those who catch
   A semblance of your grace: —

With kindly lips of welcome, & with pleased
   Propitious eyes benign,
Accept a kiss of homage from your least
   Last Valentine.

A VALENTINE, 1877

Own Mother dear,
We all rejoicing here
Wait for each other,
Daughter for Mother,
Sister for Brother,
Till each dear face appear
Transfigured by Love's flame
Yet still the same, —
The same yet new, —
My face to you,
Your face to me,
Made lovelier by Love's flame
But still the same;
Most dear to see
In halo of Love's flame,
Because the same.

A VALENTINE, 1878

Blessed Dear & heart's Delight,
Companion, Friend, & Mother mine
Round whom my fears & love entwine, —
With whom I hope to stand & sing
Where Angels form the outer ring
Round singing Saints who, clad in white,
Know no more of day or night
Or death or any changeful thing,
Or anything that is not love,
Human love & love Divine, —
Bid me to that tryst above,
Bless your Valentine.

A VALENTINE, 1879

Mother mine
Whom every year
Doth endear,
Before sweet Spring
(That sweetest thing
Brimfull of bliss)
Sets all the throng
Of birds a-wooing
Billing & cooing, —
Your Valentine
Sings you a song,
Gives you a kiss.

A VALENTINE, 1880

More shower than shine
Brings sweet St. Valentine;
Warm shine, warm shower,
Bring up sweet flower on flower:
Thro' shower & shine
Loves you your Valentine,
Thro' shine, thro' shower,
Thro' summer's flush, thro' Autumn's fading hour.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1881

Too cold almost for hope of Spring
   Or firstfruits from the realm of flowers,
Your dauntless Valentine, I bring
   One sprig of love, and sing
   "Love has no Winter hours". —

If even in this world love is love
   (This wintry world which felt the Fall),
What must it be in Heaven above
   Where love to great and small
   Is all in all?

A VALENTINE 1882

My blessed Mother dozing in her chair
   On Christmas Day seemed an embodied Love,
A comfortable Love with soft brown hair
   Softened and silvered to a tint of dove,
A better sort of Venus with an air
   Angelical from thoughts that dwell above,
A wiser Pallas in whose body fair
   Enshrined a blessed soul looks out thereof.
Winter brought Holly then; now Spring has brought
   Paler and frailer Snowdrops shivering;
And I have brought a simple humble thought
   — I her devoted duteous Valentine — ,
A lifelong thought which thrills this song I sing,
   A lifelong love to this dear Saint of mine.

FEBRUARY 14. 1883

A world of change & loss, a world of death,
Of heart & eyes that fail, of laboring breath,
Of pains to bear & painful deeds to do: —
Nevertheless a world of life to come
And love; where you're at home, while in our home
Your Valentine rejoices having you.

A VALENTINE, 1884

Another year of joy & grief,
   Another year of hope & fear:
O Mother, is life long or brief?
   We hasten while we linger here.

But since we linger, love me still
   And bless me still, O Mother mine,
While hand in hand we scale life's hill,
   You Guide, & I your Valentine.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1885

All the Robin Redbreasts
   Have lived the winter thro',
Jenny Wrens have pecked their fill
   And found a work to do,
Families of Sparrows
   Have weathered wind & storm
With Rabbit on the stony hill
   And Hare upon her form.

You & I, my Mother,
   Have lived the winter thro',
And still we play our daily parts
   And still find work to do:
And still the cornfields flourish,
   The olive & the vine,
And still you reign my Queen of Hearts
   And I'm your Valentine.

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1886

Winter's latest snowflake is the snowdrop flower,
   Yellow crocus kindles the first flame of the Spring,
At that time appointed, at that day and hour
   When life reawakens and hope in everything.
Such a tender snowflake in the wintry weather,
   Such a feeble flamelet for chilled St. Valentine, —
But blest be any weather which finds us still together,
   My pleasure and my treasure O blessed Mother mine.

AH WELLADAY AND WHEREFORE AM I HERE?

Ah welladay and wherefore am I here?
I sit alone all day I sit & think —
I watch the sun arise, I watch it sink
And feel no soul-light tho the day is clear
Surely it is a folly; it is mere
Madness to stand for ever on the brink
Of dark despair & yet not break the link
That makes me scorned who cannot be held dear.
I will have done with it; I will not stand
And fear on without hope & tremble thus
Look for the break of day & miss it ever
Although my heart be broken they shall never
Say: She was glad to sojourn among us
Thankful if one would take her by the hand.

ALONG THE HIGHROAD THE WAY IS TOO LONG

Along the highroad the way is too long
Let us walk where the oak trees rise up thick
I take a crab-, you take a cherry stick
Let us go from among men to the throng
Of belted bees: the wild roses smell strong
And sweet; & my old dog is fain to lick
My hand: best so in good truth I am sick
Of the world; & hear silence as a song
And you I think are changed friend you who once
Would dance thro' the long night; a something called
From your heart; into your hid brain it sunk;
Oh listen silence maketh the air drunk
I would not give these shades that have not palled
On me, for the broad light of many suns.

AND IS THIS AUGUST WEATHER? NAY NOT SO

And is this August weather? nay not so
With the long rain the cornfield waxeth dark.
How the cold rain comes pouring down & hark
To the chill wind whose measured pace & slow
Seems still to linger being loth to go.
I cannot stand beside the sea and mark
Its grandeur; it's too wet for that: no lark
In this drear season cares to sing or show.
And since its name is August all men find
Fire not allowable; Winter foregone
Had more of sunlight & of glad warmth more
I shall be fain to run upon the shore
And mark the rain. Hath the sun ever shone
Cheer up there can be nothing worse to mind.

FROM EARLY DAWN UNTIL THE FLUSH OF NOON

From early dawn until the flush of noon
And from hot noon unto the hushèd night
I look around beholding all things bright
From the deep sun unto the silver moon
My heart & soul & spirit are in tune.
My sense is gladdened with an inward light.
The very clouds above my head are white
And glorious radiance shall disperse them soon.
All trees & bushes fruits & flowers bear,
The sea is full of life & beauty, how
The grand waves leap up — as tho' full of sense,
A better day was not I think & ne'er
Was I so full of joy as I am now.
Surely a chill shall come & this go hence

I SEEK AMONG THE LIVING & I SEEK

I seek among the living & I seek
Among the dead for some to love; but few
I find at last & these have quite run through
Their store of love & friendship is too weak
And cold for me; yet will I never speak
Telling my heart want to cold listeners who
Will wonder smiling; I can bear & do
No tears shall sully my unfurrowed cheek
So when my dust shall mix with other dust
When I shall have found quiet in decay
And lie at ease & cease to be & rot
Those whom I love thinking of me shall not
Grieve with a measure, saying: Now we must
Weep for a little ere we go & play.

O GLORIOUS SEA THAT IN EACH CLIMBING WAVE

O glorious sea that in each climbing wave
Bearest great thoughts as in a wondrous book
The ends of earth oft at thy presence shook
And not denied when thou hast stooped to crave.
Sometimes the mighty winds have dared to brave
Thy potency; but with a single look
Raising thy head forth from its ancient nook
Thou hast recalled the quiet thou wouldst have.
What is a ship save many a fragile stick?
How should it brave thy terrors when they wear
The lightning crest that maketh substance wither
Yea though the planks be seasoned well & thick
Thine anger is too hard a thing to bear: —
Thou sayest to men: go back & come not hither.

OH THOU WHO TELL'ST ME THAT ALL HOPE IS OVER

Oh thou who tell'st me that all hope is over
With lazy limbs that heavily recline
On the soft cushions; flushed & fair with wine
Scarce seeming conscious of the scents that hover
Round & above thee: can thy heart recover
So soon its quiet, while mine own shall pine?
Thou who canst love & not o'erstep the line
Of comfort, art thou in good truth a lover
O take away from me those chill calm glances
As thou hast ta'en thy heart away; & give
My heart again that must forget to wander
Thy words were worse than silence they were lances
To poison all the life I have to live
Stagnate the streams of life that should meander

SURELY THERE IS AN ACHING VOID WITHIN

Surely there is an aching void within
Man's spirit unto other men unknown
And which were it unveiled and freely shown
Would open to the sight so much of sin
And folly & a cry that at the din
His overbearing pride & overblown
Would quite shrink down & seem as it had grown
Humble, content to lose & not to win.
Oh that we so could hide the grief of years
From our own selves yea the whole guilt & trouble
And in our secret spirit look on grace;
Yet death for ever sendeth messengers
Before it conscience pricks, & were these double
They were not equal to our sin-stained face.

THE SPRING IS COME AGAIN NOT AS AT FIRST

The spring is come again not as at first
For then it was my spring; & now a brood
Of bitter memories haunt me, & my mood
Is much changed from the time when I was nursed
In the still country. Oh! my heart could burst
Thinking upon the long ago: the crude
Hopes all unrealised; the flowers that strewed
My path, now changed to painful thorns & curst.
And though I know the kingcups are as fine
As they were then, my spirit cannot soar
As it did once: when shadows of a wood
Or thinking of a blossom that soon should
Unfold & fill the air with scent, would pour
Peace on my brow now marked with many a line.

WHO SHALL MY WANDERING THOUGHTS STEADY & FIX

Who shall my wandering thoughts steady & fix
When I go forth into the world and gaze
Around me, thinking on mens evil ways
I wonder in myself to see how mix
Evil & good; beyond the Sleepy Styx
All things shall be unravelled whoso lays
These things to heart after the settled days
Shall know all. Even as a dog that licks
Your hand whom tears chide not away nor laughter
So to your souls clingeth the taint of crime
Shall it be ever so? & if not why?
The river bed is full of filthy slime
And so our heart is lined with wonder: die
And having died thou shalt see all things after.

YOU WHO LOOK ON PASSED AGES AS A GLASS

You who look on passed ages as a glass
To shadow forth the future, in your home
Peacefully dwelling little heeding some
But loving many; as the visions pass
Turn from them for a moment to the grass
And solemn sun & blue o'erarching dome
And in the hush of nature think on Rome
Not as it is now but as it once was.
As of the mighty dead think without hope
But if you will indulge a hopeful pile
Yea if you will write about it in rhyme
For if it once had a too mighty scope
To be all as the sun fails not to smile
It shall be nothing to the end of time.

ANGELI AL CAPO, AL PIEDE

Angeli al capo, al piede:
   E qual ricciuto agnello
Dormir fra lor si vede
   Il bel mio bambinello.

AMAMI, T’AMO

Amami, t’amo,
   Figliolin mio:
Cantisi, suonisi,
   Con tintinnio.
Mamma t’abbraccia,
   Cor suo ti chiama:
Suonisi, cantisi,
   Ama chi t’ama.

E BABBO E MAMMA HA IL NOSTRO FIGLIOLINO

E babbo e mamma ha il nostro figliolino,
Ricco bambino:
Ma ne conosco un altro senza padre
E senza madre —
Il Poverino!

S’ADDORMENTÒ LA NOSTRA FIGLIOLINA

S’addormentò la nostra figliolina;
Nè si risveglierà
Per giorni e giorni assai sera o mattina:
Ma poi si sveglierà
E con cara ridente bocchettina
Ribacerà Mammà.

CUCCURUCÙ! CUCCURUCÙ!

Cuccurucù! cuccurucù!
All’alba il gallo canta:
Chiccherichì! chiccherichì!
Di rose il ciel si ammanta.
Cuccurucù! cuccurucù!
Comincia un gorgheggiare.
Cuccurucù! cuccurucù!
Risalta il sol dal mare.

OIBÒ, PICCINA

Oibò, piccina
    Tutto atterrita;
La medicina
    Bever si de’: —
Uno, due, tre, —
    Ed è finite!

OTTO ORE SUONANO

Otto ore suonano
Picchia il postino!
Ben cinque lettere
Son per Papà;
Una per te,
Nulla per me;
E un bigliettino
V’è per Mammà.

NEL VERNO ACCANTO AL FUOCO

Nel verno accanto al fuoco
   Mangio la mia minestra;
   E al pettirosso schiudo la finestra,
Ch’ei pur ne voule un poco.

ovvero: —
S’affaccia un pettirosso alla finestra: —
Vieni, vieni a gustar la mia minestra!
Lana ben foderata io porto addosso,
Ma tu non porti che un corpetto rosso.

GRAN FREDDO È INFUORI, E DENTRO È FREDDO UN POCO

Gran freddo è infuori, e dentro è freddo un poco
Quanto è grata una zuppa accanto al fuoco!
Mi vesto di buon panno —
Ma i poveri non hanno
Zuppa da bere, e fuoco a cui sedere,
O tetto, o panni, in questo freddo intense:
Ah mi si stringe il cor mentr'io ci penso!

SCAVAI LA NEVE, — SÌ CHE SCAVAI!

Scavai la neve, — sì che scavai!
Ma fior nè foglia spuntava mai:
Scavai la rena con ansia lena,
Ma fior nè foglia spicca da rena.

O vento aprico, con fiato lieve
Sveglia i fioretti, sgela la neve!
Ma non soffiare su quella rena:
Chi soffia in rena perde la lena.

SÌ CHE IL FRATELLO S’HA UN FALCONCELLO

Sì che il fratello s’ha un falconcello,
   E tiene un fior la suora;
Ma che, ma che riman per te,
   Il neonato or ora?
Vo’ farti cocchio del mio ginocchio,
   Minor mio figliolino;
Da capo a piè ti stringo a me,
   Minimo piccino.

UDITE, SI DOLGONO MESTI FRINGUELLI

Udite, si dolgono mesti fringuelli:
Bel nido facemmo per cari gemelli,
Ma tre ragazzacci lo misero in stracci.
Fuggì primavera, s'imbruna la sera,
E tempo ci manca da fare un secondo
Niduncolo tondo.

AHI CULLA VUOTA! ED AHI SEPOLCRO PIENO

Ahi culla vuota! ed ahi sepolcro pieno
Ove le smunte foglie autunno getta!
Lo spirto aspetta in Paradiso ameno,
Il corpo in terra aspetta.

LUGUBRE E VAGABONDO IN TERRA E IN MARE

Lugubre e vagabondo in terra e in mare,
O vento, O vento, a che non ti posare?
Ci trai la pioggia fin dall'occidente,
E la neve ci trai dal nord fremente.

AURA DOLCISSIMA, MA DONDO SIETE?

Aura dolcissima, ma dondo siete? —
Dinfra le mammole: non lo sapete?
Abbassi il viso ad adocchiar l'erbetta
Chi vuol trovar l'ascosa mammoletta.
La madreselva il dolce caldo aspetta:
Tu addolci un freddo mondo, O mammoletta.

FOSS'IO REGINA

Foss'io regina
Tu re saresti:
Davanti a te
M'inchinerei.

Ah foss'io re!
Tu lo vedresti:
Sì, che regina
Mi ti farei.

PESANO RENA E PENA

Pesano rena e pena:
Oggi e doman son brevi:
La gioventude e un fior son cose lievi:
Ed han profondità
Mar magno e magna verità.

BASTA UNA NOTTE A MATURARE IL FUNGO

Basta una notte a maturare il fungo;
Un secol vuol la quercia, e non par lungo:
Anzi il secolo breve e il vesprolungo,
Chè quercia è quercia, e fungo è sempre fungo.

PORCO LA ZUCCA

Porco la zucca
Fitta in parrucca! . .
Che gli diresti mai?
M'inchinerei, l'ossequierei
"Ser Porco, come stai?"

Ahi! guai! per caso mai
Se la coda andasse a male? …
Sta tranquillo:
Buon legale
Gli farebbe un codicillo.

SALTA, RANOCCHIO, E MOSTRATI

Salta, ranocchio, e mostrati;
   Non celo pietra in mano:
Merletto in testa e verde vesta,
   Vattene salvo e sano.

Rospo lordo, deh non celarti:
Tutto il mondo può disprezzarti,
Ma mal non fai nè mal vo'farti.

SPUNTA LA MARGHERITA

Spunta la margherita
Qual astro in sullo stelo,
E l’erbetta infiorita
Rassembra un verde cielo.

AGNELLINA ORFANELLINA

Agnellina orfanellina
Giace in cima alia collina,
Fredda, sola, senza madre, —
Senza madre ohimè!
Io sarotti e madre e padre,
Io sarò tua pastorella;
Non tremar, diletta agnella,
Io ci penso a te.

AMICO PESCE, PLOVER VORRÀ

Amico pesce, plover vorrà;
Prendi l'ombrella se vuoi star secco.
Ed ecco!
Domani senza fallo si vedrà
Lucertolon "zerbino"
Ripararsi dal sol coll'ombrellino.

SPOSA VELATA

Sposa velata,
Inanellata,
Mite e sommessa:
Sposo rapito,
Insuperbito,
Accanto ad essa: —
Amici, amori,
Cantando a coro,
Davanti a loro
Sparge te fiori!

CAVALLI MARITTIMI

Cavalli marittimi
   Urtansi in guerra,
E meglio ci servono
   Quelli di terra.
Quest! pacific!
Corrono o stanno:
Quei rotolandosi
Spumando vanno.

O MARINARO, CHE MI APPORTI TU?

O marinaro, che mi apporti tu?
Coralli rossi e bianchi tratti in su
Dal mar profondo.
Pianti non son nè si scavar da mina:
Minime creature in salsa brina
    Fecerne mondo.

ARROSSICE LA ROSA: E PERCHÈ MAI?

Arrossice la rosa: e perchè mai?
A cagione del sol: ma Sol, che fai?
E tu, Rosa, che t'hai
Che ti fai rosea sì se bene stai?

LA ROSA CHINA IL VOLTO ROSSEGGIATO

La rosa china il volto rosseggiato,
    E bene fa:
Il giglio innalza il viso immacolato,
    E ben gli sta.

O CILIEGIA INFIORITA

O ciliegia infiorita,
La bianco rivestita,
Dall'Aprile gradita,
Bella sei tu!
O ciliegia infruttata,
La verde inghirlandata,
La rosso incoronata,
Bella sei tu!

IN TEMA E IN PENA ADDIO

“In tema e in pena addio;
   Addio ma in van, tu sai;
Per sempre addio, cor mio” —
   “E poi più mai.”
“Oggi e domani addio,
   Nel secolo de’guai
A tutto tempo addio” —
   “E poi più mai.”

D’UN SONNO PROFONDISSIMO

D’un sonno profondissimo
   Dorme la suora mia:
Gli angeli bianchi aligeri
   Verranno a trarla via?
In sonno profondissimo
   Calma e contenta giace:
Un fiore in man lasciamole,
   Un bacio in fronte — e pace!

NINNA NANNA, NINNA NANNA!

Ninna nanna, ninna nanna!
Giace e dorme l'agnellina:
Ninna nanna, ninna nanna!
Monna Luna s' incammina:
Ninna nanna, ninna nanna!
Tace e dorme l'uccellino:
Ninna nanna, ninna nanna!
Dormi, dormi, O figliolino:
Ninna nanna, ninna nanna!

CAPO CHE CHINASI

Capo che chinasi, —
Occhi che chiudonsi, —
A letto, a letto,
Sonnacchiosetto!
    Dormi, carino,
Fino al mattino,
    Dormi, carino.

THE SUCCESSION OF KINGS

William the Norman was brave in the field;
And *Rufus*, his Son, in the chase was killed.
Henry the first early lost his dear Son;
And *Stephen's* battles were bravely won.
Henry the second his kingdom increased.
Richard the first led Crusades in the East.
John signed Magna Charta at Runnymede.
Henry the third put his seal to the deed.
Brave *Edward the first* the Welsh did subdue.
Weak *Edward the second* had foes not a few.
Edward the third to France did aspire,
Whose Son, the Black Prince, died before his Sire.
Richard the second to weakness was prone;
And *Henry the fourth* was placed on his throne.
Fifth Henry at Agincourt won the field.
Meek *Henry the sixth* was forced to yield,
To *Edward the fourth* who abused his power.
Edward the fifth found a grave in the Tower.
Richard the third was a treacherous friend;
By *Henry the seventh* he came to his end.
Henry the eighth had six wives in succession.
Edward the sixth was the hope of the nation;
For ten days reigned his Cousin the Lady Jane.
Queen Mary espoused King Philip of Spain.
A reign glorious and long was *Elizabeth's* lot.
James the first shrewdly guessed at the Gunpowder Plot.
Charles the first on a scaffold lost his head;
The Protector Cromwell ruled in his stead.
Richard Cromwell from ruling with joy did retire.
Charles the second beheld both the Plague and Fire.
For his faith *James the second* the crown did lose;
Which *third William and Mary* did not refuse.
Marlborough fought under good *Queen Anne.*
The Hanover Line with *first George* began.

Second George overcame the second Pretender.
In the reign of *third George* did Napoleon surrender.
George the fourth was long Regent, but King at last.
Under *William the fourth* the Reform Bill passed.
Good *Queen Victoria*, the last King's Niece,
Reigns over England beloved and at peace.

A TRUE STORY(CONTINUED.)

In this great city now the haunt,
Of priest and friar and monk
Where reason sees her ill-starr'd bark,
By superstition sunk;

Where nature's voice by force repress'd,
Its energy declares,
In demon deeds of wickedness,
When fear its dagger bares;

In Rome itself there lately dwelt
Two sister-maidens fair,
Affianced both to noble youths,
Of form and virtue rare.

Preparing now for that great step,
Of weal or woe the seal,
Before they joyful give their hands,
Where purest love they feel;
(To be continued)

THE TWO ROSSETTIS (BROTHERS THEY)

The two Rossettis (brothers they)
And Holman Hunt and John Millais,
With Stephens chivalrous and bland,
And Woolner in a distant land,
In these six men I awestruck see
Embodied the great P.R.B.
D. G. Rossetti offered two
Good pictures to the public view:
Unnumbered ones great John Millais,
And Holman more than I can say

*

William Rossetti calm and solemn
Cuts up his brethren by the column.

*

IMITATED FROM THE ARPA EVANGELICA: PAGE 121

My Lord, my Love! in pleasant pain
   How often have I said:
Blessed that John, who on Thy Breast
      Laid down his head.
It was that contact all Divine
   Transformed him from above,
And made him amongst men the man
   To show forth holy love.

Yet shall I envy blessed John?
   Nay, not so verily,
Now that Thou, Lord, both Man & God
      Dost dwell in me:
Upbuilding with Thy Manhood's might
   My frail humanity;
Yea, Thy Divinehood pouring forth
   In fulness filling me.

Me, Lord, Thy temple consecrate,
   Even me to Thee alone;
Lord reign upon my willing heart
      Which is Thy throne:
To Thee the Seraphim fall down
   Adoring round Thy house;
For which of them hath tasted Thee,
   My Manna & my Spouse?

Now that Thy Life lives in my soul
   And sways & warms it thro',
I scarce seem lesser than the world,
      Thy temple too.
O God Who dwellest in my heart,

My God Who fillest me,
The broad immensity itself
Hath not encompassed Thee.

“T’amo; e fra dolci affanni” — . p. 121. —

My Lord, my Love! — in love’s unrest
How often have I said:
“Blessed that John who on Thy Breast
Reclined his head.”
Thy touch it was, Love’s Pelican,
Transformed him from above,
And made him amongst men the man
To show forth holy love!

Yet shall I envy blessèd John?
Nay, not so verily,
While Thou indwellest as Thine own
Me, even me:
Upbuilding with Thy Manhood’s worth
My frail humanity;
Yea, Thy Divinehood pouring forth,
In fulness filling me.

Me, Lord, Thy temple consecrate,
Me unto Thee alone;
Within my heart set up Thy state
And mount Thy throne:
The Seraphim in ecstasy
Fall prone around Thy house,
For which of them hath tasted Thee
My Manna and my Spouse?

Now Thou dost wear me for a robe
And sway and warm me thro’,

I scarce seem lesser than the globe, —
Thy temple too:
O God Who for Thy dwelling place
Dost take delight in me,
The ungirt immensity of space
Hath not encompassed Thee.

MR. AND MRS. SCOTT, AND I

Mr. and Mrs. Scott, and I,
With Mr. Manson, Editor,
And of the social Proctors four,
Agreed the season to defy.

We mustered forces at the Rail,
Struck hands and made our interests one:
Alas for absent Annie Hayle
Who should have shared the fare and fun.

Not neighbour Humble and her child
— Tho' well-disposed of doubtful force —
But Annie Hayle my verse deplores,
Behatted plump alert and mild.

From Newcastle to Sunderland
Upon a misty morn in June
We took the train: on either hand
Grimed streets were changed for meadows soon.

Umbrellas, tarts and sandwiches
Sustained our spirits' temperate flow,
With potted jam, and cold as snow
Rough-coated sun-burnt oranges.

1.

GONE TO HIS REST

Gone to his rest
   Bright little Bouby!
Build green his nest
   Where sun and dew be,
Nor snails molest

2.

A cheerful sage,
   Simple, light-hearted:
In ripe old age
   He had departed
And ta'en his wage.

3.

Dear for himself;
   Dear for another
Past price of pelf;
   — (Ah, dearest Mother!) —
Song-singing elf.

4.

O daisies, grow
   Lightly above him,

Strike root, and blow:
    For some who love him
Would have it so.

O UOMMIBATTO

Agil, giocondo,
Che ti sei fatto
Irsuto e tondo!
Deh non fuggire
Qual vagabondo,
Non disparire
Forando il mondo:
Pesa davvero
D’un emisfero
Non lieve il pondo.

COR MIO, COR MIO

Cor mio, cor mio,
Più non ti veggo, ma mi rammento
Del giorno spento,
    Cor mio.
Pur ti ricordi del lungo amore,
Cor del mio core,
    Cor mio?

I SAID “ALL’S OVER” — & I MADE MY

I said “All’s over” — & I made my
Thenceforward to keep silence &
From any hope or enterprise aga
But as one certain day the sap
Sun warmed & solaced in its f
So something stirred in me th
And all my hardness broke [illegible fragment]
And hope once more tended [illegible fragment]

I SAID GOOD BYE IN HOPE

I said good bye in hope:
But now we meet again
I have no hope at all
Of anything but pain,
Our parting & our meeting
Alike in vain.

Hope on thro' all your life
Until the end, dear Friend.
Live thro' your noble life
Where joy & promise blend:
I too will live my life
Until the end.

Long may your vine entwine,
Long may your figtree spread
Their paradise of shade
Above your cherished head:
My shelter was a gourd,
And it is dead.

Yet when out of a grave
We are gathered home at last,
Then may we own life spilt
No good worth holding fast: —
Death had its bitterness
But it is past.

MY MOUSE

A Venus seems my Mouse
Come safe ashore from foaming seas,
Which in a small way & at ease
Keeps house.

An Iris seems my Mouse,
Bright bow of that exhausted shower
Which made a world of sweet-herbs flower
And boughs.

A darling Mouse it is: —
Part hope not likely to take wing,
Part memory, part anything
You please.

Venus-cum-Iris Mouse
From shifting tides set safe apart,
In no mere bottle, in my heart
Keep house.

HAD FORTUNE PARTED US

Had Fortune parted us
   Fortune is blind,
Had Anger parted us
   Anger unkind —
But since God parts us
   Let us part humbly
Bearing our burden
   Bravely & dumbly.

And since there is but one
   Heaven, not another,
Let us not close that door
   Against each other.
God's Love is higher than mine,
   Christ's tenfold proved,
Yet even I would die
   For thee Beloved.

COUNTERBLAST ON PENNY TRUMPET

"When raged the conflict, fierce & hot."

If Mr. Bright retiring does not please
   And Mr. Gladstone staying gives offence,
What can man do which is not one of these?
      Use your own common sense.

Yet he's a brave man who abjures his cause
   For conscience' sake: let byegones be byegones:
Not *this* among the makers of our laws
      The least & and last of Johns.

If all our byegones could be piled on shelves
   High out of reach of penny-line Tyrtaeus!
If only all of us could see ourselves
      As others see us!

A ROUNDEL SEEMS TO FIT A ROUND OF DAYS

A roundel seems to fit a round of days
   Be they the days of upright man or scoundrel:
Allow me to construct then in your praise
   A roundel.
   [This flower of wit turns out a weed like groundsel:
Yet deign to welcome it, as loftiest bays
   Grown on the shore of Girvan's ocean groundswell.]
Accept the love that underlies the lays;
   Condone the barbarous rhymes that will not sound well
In building up, all Poets to amaze,
   A roundel.

HEAVEN OVERARCHES EARTH AND SEA

Heaven overarches earth and sea,
   Earth-sadness and sea-bitterness;
Heaven overarches you and me:
A little while, and we shall be
(Please God) where there is no more sea
      Or barren wilderness.

Heaven overarches you and me
   And all earth's gardens and her graves:
Look up with me, until we see
The day break and the shadows flee;
What tho' tonight wrecks you and me,
      If so tomorrow saves?

SLEEPING AT LAST, THE TROUBLE & TUMULT OVER

Sleeping at last, the trouble & tumult over,
Sleeping at last, the struggle & horror past,
Cold & white out of sight of friend & of lover
Sleeping at last.

No more a tired heart downcast or overcast,
No more pangs that wring or shifting fears that hover,
Sleeping at last in a dreamless sleep locked fast.

Fast asleep. Singing birds in their leafy cover
Cannot wake her, nor shake her the gusty blast.
Under the purple thyme & the purple clover
Sleeping at last.

4TH MAY MORNING

My carrier pigeon is a “fancy” pigeon,
Less tangible than widgeon;
A sympathetic love, — yet not a Cupid,
Nor pert nor stupid,
Heart-warm & snug tho’ May Day deal in zeroes,
A well-known Eros.
On windless wings by flight untired for ever
Outspeed the speeding river,
From Torrington remote to utmost Chelsea
(— Do what I tells ye! —)
Carry a heart of love & thanks & blisses,
A beak of kisses,
Past Piccadilly’s hills & populous valleys,
Past every human head that more or less is
Begirt with tawny tresses,
Past every house, to sumptuous Bellevue Palace;
There greet the courteous Courtneys with politeness,
And the dear Scotts with an affectionate brightness,
And give a kiss to dark-locked Alice.

QUANTO A LEI GRATA IO SONO

“Quanto a Lei grata io sono
L’unmil dirà semplicità del dono.”

THE CHINAMAN

‘Centre of Earth!’ a Chinaman he said,
And bent over a map his pig-tailed head, —
That map in which, portrayed in colours bright,
China, all dazzling, burst upon the sight:
‘Centre of Earth!’ repeatedly he cries,
‘Land of the brave, the beautiful, the wise!’
Thus he exclaimed; when lo his words arrested
Showed what sharp agony his head had tested.
He feels a tug — another, and another —
And quick exclaims, ‘Hallo! what’s now the bother?’
But soon alas perceives. And, ‘Why, false night,
Why not from men shut out the hateful sight?
The faithless English have cut off my tail,
And left me my sad fortunes to bewail.
Now in the streets I can no more appear,
For all the other men a pig-tail wear.’
He said, and furious cast into the fire
His tail: those flames became its funeral-pyre.

COME CHEER UP, MY LADS, ‘TIS TO GLORY WE STEER!

‘Come cheer up, my lads, ‘tis to glory we steer!’
As the soldier remarked whose post lay in the rear.

THE PLAGUE

"Listen, the last stroke of death's noon has struck —
The plague is come," a gnashing Madman said,
And laid him down straightway upon his bed.
His writhèd hands did at the linen pluck;
Then all is over. With a careless chuck
Among his fellows he is cast. How sped
His spirit matters little: many dead
Make men hard-hearted. — "Place him on the truck.
Go forth into the burial-ground and find
Room at so much a pitful for so many.

One thing is to be done; one thing is clear:
Keep thou back from the hot unwholesome wind,
That it infect not thee." Say, is there any
Who mourneth for the multitude dead here?

HOW MANY AUTHORS ARE MY FIRST!

How many authors are my first!
   And I shall be so too
Unless I finish speedily
   That which I have to do.

My second is a lofty tree
   And a delicious fruit;
This in the hot-house flourishes —
   That amid rocks takes root.

My whole is an immortal queen
   Renowned in classic lore:
Her a god won without her will,
   And her a goddess bore.

ME YOU OFTEN MEET

Me you often meet
In London's crowded street,
And merry children's voices my resting-place proclaim.
Pictures and prose and verse
Compose me — I rehearse
Evil and good and folly, and call each by its name.
I make men glad, and I
Can bid their senses fly,
And festive echoes know me of Isis and of Cam.
But give me to a friend,
And amity will end,
Though he may have the temper and meekness of a lamb.

SO I BEGAN MY WALK OF LIFE; NO STOP

So I began my walk of life; no stop
Was possible; or else my will was frail;
Or is it that the first stumblings entail
Weakness no after strength has power to prop?
The heart puts forth her boughs; and these we lop
For very wantonness; until the gale
Is rank with blood; then our life-portions fail
And we are fain to share another's sop.
At first my heart was true and my soul true,
And then the outside world believed me false.
Therefore my sweets grew bitter, and I thrust
Life back, till it stood still and turned to must.
Yet sometimes through the great stagnation calls
Of spirits reach me: is it so with you?

SO I GREW HALF DELIRIOUS AND QUITE SICK

So I grew half delirious and quite sick,
And thro' the darkness saw strange faces grin
Of Monsters at me. One put forth a fin,
And touched me clammily: I could not pick
A quarrel with it: it began to lick
My hand, making meanwhile a piteous din
And shedding human tears: it would begin
To near me, then retreat. I heard the quick
Pulsation of my heart, I marked the fight
Of life and death within me; then sleep threw
Her veil around me; but this thing is true:
When I awoke the sun was at his height,
And I wept sadly, knowing that one new
Creature had love for me, and others spite.

ON THE NOTE YOU DO NOT SEND ME

On the note you do not send me
I have thought too long: adieu.
Hope and fear no longer rend me: —
Home is near: not news of you.

CHARON

In my cottage near the Styx
Co. and Charon still combine
Us to ferry o'er like bricks
In a boat of chaste design.
Cerberus, thou triple fair,
Distance doth thy charms impair:
Let the passage give to us
Charon, Co., and Cerberus.

chorus

Now the passage gives us to
Charon, Cerberus, and Co.

FROM METASTASIO

First, last, and dearest,
   My love, mine own,
Thee best beloved,
   Thee love alone,
Once and for ever
   So love I thee.

First as a suppliant
   Love makes his moan,
Then as a monarch
   Sets up his throne:
Once and for ever —
   So love I thee.

CHIESA E SIGNORE

la chiesa

Vola, preghiera, e digli
   Perchè Ti stai lontano?
Passeggi Tu frai gigli
   Portando rosa in mano?
Non Ti fui giglio e rosa
   Quando mi amasti Tu?
Rivolgiti alla sposa,
   O mio Signor Gesu.

il signore

Di te non mi scordai
   Sposa mia dolce e mesta:
Se Mi sei ros il sai,
   Che porto spine in testa.
Ti diedi e core e vita,
   Me tutto Io diedi a te,
Ed or ti porgo aita:
   Abbi fidanza in Me.

la chiesa

Vola, preghiera, a Lui,
   E grida: Ahi pazienza!
Te voglio e non altrui,
   Te senza e tutto senza.
Fragrante piu di giglio
   E rosa a me sei Tu,
Di Dio l' Eterno Figlio,
   O mio Signor Gesu.

GOLDEN HOLLY

Common Holly bears a berry
To make Christmas Robins merry: —
Golden Holly bears a rose,
Unfolding at October's close
To cheer an old Friend's eyes and nose.

I toiled on, but thou
Wast weary of the way,
And so we parted: now
Who shall say
Which is happier — I or thou?

I am weary now
On the solitary way:
But art thou rested, thou?
Who shall say
Which of us is calmer now?

Still my heart's love, thou,
In thy secret way,
Art still remembered now:
Who shall say —
Still rememberest thou?

COR MIO

Still sometimes in my secret heart of hearts
   I say “Cor mio” when I remember you,
   And thus I yield us both one tender due,
Welding one whole of two divided parts.
Ah Friend, too wise or unwise for such arts,
   Ah noble Friend, silent and strong and true,
   Would you have given me roses for the rue
For which I bartered roses in love’s marts?
So late in autumn one forgets the spring,
   Forgets the summer with its opulence,
The callow birds that long have found a wing,
   The swallows that more lately got them hence:
Will anything like spring, will anything
   Like summer, rouse one day the slumbering sense?

MY OLD ADMIRATION BEFORE I WAS TWENTY

My old admiration before I was twenty, —
Is predilect still, now promoted to se'enty!
My own demi-century plus an odd one
    Some weight to my judgment may fairly impart.
Accept this faint flash of a smouldering fun,
    The fun of a heavy old heart.

TO MARY ROSSETTI

You were born in the Spring
When the pretty birds sing
    In sunbeamy bowers:
Then dress like a Fairy,
Dear dumpling my Mary,
    In green and in flowers.

NE’ SOGNI TI VEGGO

Ne’ sogni ti veggo,
Amante ed amico;
Ai piedi ti seggo,
Ti tngo tutor.
Nè chiedi nè chieggo,
Nè dici nè dico,
L’ amore ab antico
Che scaldaci il cor.
Ah voce se avessi
Me stessa a scoprire —
Ah esprimer sapessi
L’ angoscia e l’ amor!
Ah almen se potessi
A lungo dormire,
Nè pianger nè dire,
Mirandoti ognor!

TO MY FIOR-DI-LISA

The Rose is Love's own flower, and Love's no less
    The Lily's tenderness.
Then half their dignity must Roses yield
    To Lilies of the field?
Nay, diverse notes make up true harmony,
    All-fashioned loves agree:
Love wears the Lily's whiteness, and Love glows
    In the deep-hearted Rose.

HAIL, NOBLE FACE OF NOBLE FRIEND!

Hail, noble face of noble friend! —
   Hail, honored master hand and dear! —
On you may Christmas good descend
   And blessings of the unknown year
   So soon to overtake us here.
Unknown, yet well known: I portend
Love starts the course, love seals the end.

HYMN

O the bitter shame and sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I let the Saviour's pity
Plead in vain, and proudly answered
"All of Self, and none of Thee."

Yet He found me; I beheld Him
Bleeding on the accursed Tree;
Heard Him pray "Forgive them, Father!"
And my wistful heart said faintly
"Some of Self, and some of Thee."

Day by day, His tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full and free,
Sweet and strong, and ah! so patient,
Brought me lower, while I whispered
"Less of Self, and more of Thee."

Higher than the highest Heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
"Lord, Thy love at last hath conquered,
Grant me now my soul's desire
None of Self, and all of Thee."

The Poems

Regent's Park, London — a frequent haunt of the young poet.

LIST OF POEMS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

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A BETTER RESURRECTION
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SWEET DEATH
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LONG BARREN
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A TRIAD
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MAUDE CLARE
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WINTER: MY SECRET
ANOTHER SPRING
A PEAL OF BELLS
FATA MORGANA
NO, THANK YOU, JOHN
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A PAUSE OF THOUGHT
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WIFE TO HUSBAND
THREE SEASONS
MIRAGE
SHUT OUT
SOUND SLEEP
SONG: SHE SAT AND SANG ALWAY
SONG: WHEN I AM DEAD, MY DEAREST
DEAD BEFORE DEATH
BITTER FOR SWEET
SISTER MAUDE
REST
THE FIRST SPRING DAY
THE CONVENT THRESHOLD
UP-HILL
THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS
MAIDEN-SONG

JESSIE CAMERON
SPRING QUIET
THE POOR GHOST
A PORTRAIT
DREAM-LOVE
TWICE
SONGS IN A CORNFIELD
A YEAR'S WINDFALLS
THE QUEEN OF HEARTS
ONE DAY
A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
LIGHT LOVE
ON THE WING
A RING POSY
BEAUTY IS VAIN
MAGGIE A LADY
WHAT WOULD I GIVE?
THE BOURNE
SUMMER
AUTUMN
THE GHOST'S PETITION
MEMORY
A ROYAL PRINCESS
SHALL I FORGET?
VANITY OF VANITIES: AH, WOE IS ME FOR PLEASURE THAT IS VAIN
L. E. L
LIFE AND DEATH
BIRD OR BEAST?
EVE
GROWN AND FLOWN
A FARM WALK
SOMEWHERE OR OTHER
A CHILL
CHILD'S TALK IN APRIL
GONE FOR EVER
THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN
BY THE SEA
FROM SUNSET TO STAR RISE
DAYS OF VANITY

ONCE FOR ALL
ENRICA, 1865
AUTUMN VIOLETS
A DIRGE
THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY
A GREEN CORNFIELD
A BRIDE SONG
CONFLUENTS
THE LOWEST ROOM
DEAD HOPE
A DAUGHTER OF EVE
SONG: OH WHAT COMES OVER THE SEA
VENUS' LOOKING-GLASS
LOVE LIES BLEEDING
BIRD RAPTURES
MY FRIEND
TWILIGHT NIGHT
A BIRD SONG
A SMILE AND A SIGH
AMOR MUNDI
THE GERMAN-FRENCH CAMPAIGN 1870-1871
THY BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIETH
TODAY FOR ME
A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER
CONSIDER
BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON B.C. 570
PARADISE
MOTHER COUNTRY
I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS
THE MASTER IS COME, AND CALLETH FOR THEE
WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?
WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED, I WILL COMPLAIN
AFTER COMMUNION
SAINTS AND ANGELS
A ROSE PLANT IN JERICHO
ANGELS AT THE FOOT
LOVE ME, — I LOVE YOU
MY BABY HAS A FATHER AND A MOTHER
OUR LITTLE BABY FELL ASLEEP

KOOKOOROOKOO! KOOKOOROOKOO!
BABY CRY
EIGHT O'CLOCK
BREAD AND MILK FOR BREAKFAST
THERE'S SNOW ON THE FIELDS
DEAD IN THE COLD, A SONG-SINGING THRUSH
I DUG AND DUG AMONGST THE SNOW
A CITY PLUM IS NOT A PLUM
YOUR BROTHER HAS A FALCON
HEAR WHAT THE MOURNFUL LINNETS SAY
A BABY'S CRADLE WITH NO BABY IN IT
HOP-O'-MY-THUMB AND LITTLE JACK HORNER
HOPE IS LIKE A HAREBELL TREMBLING FROM ITS BIRTH
O WIND, WHY DO YOU NEVER REST
CRYING, MY LITTLE ONE, FOOTSORE AND WEARY?
GROWING IN THE VALE
A LINNET IN A GILDED CAGE
WRENS AND ROBINS IN THE HEDGE
MY BABY HAS A MOTTLED FIST
WHY DID BABY DIE
IF ALL WERE RAIN AND NEVER SUN
O WIND, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN
ON THE GRASSY BANKS
RUSHES IN A WATERY PLACE
MINNIE AND MATTIE
HEARTSEASE IN MY GARDEN BED
IF I WERE A QUEEN
WHAT ARE HEAVY? SEA-SAND AND SORROW
THERE IS BUT ONE MAY IN THE YEAR
THE SUMMER NIGHTS ARE SHORT
THE DAYS ARE CLEAR
TWIST ME A CROWN OF WIND-FLOWERS
BROWN AND FURRY
A TOADSTOOL COMES UP IN A NIGHT
A POCKET HANDKERCHIEF TO HEM
IF A PIG WORE A WIG
SELDOM "CAN'T,"
1 AND 1 ARE 2
HOW MANY SECONDS IN A MINUTE?

WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR MY POUND?
JANUARY COLD DESOLATE
WHAT IS PINK? A ROSE IS PINK
MOTHER SHAKE THE CHERRY-TREE
A PIN HAS A HEAD, BUT HAS NO HAIR
HOPPING FROG, HOP HERE AND BE SEEN
WHERE INNOCENT BRIGHT-EYED DAISIES ARE
THE CITY MOUSE LIVES IN A HOUSE
WHAT DOES THE DONKEY BRAY ABOUT
THREE PLUM BUNS
A MOTHERLESS SOFT LAMBKIN
DANCING ON THE HILL-TOPS
WHEN FISHES SET UMBRELLAS UP
THE PEACOCK HAS A SCORE OF EYES
PUSSY HAS A WHISKERED FACE
THE DOG LIES IN HIS KENNEL
IF HOPE GREW ON A BUSH
I PLANTED A HAND
UNDER THE IVY BUSH
THERE IS ONE THAT HAS A HEAD WITHOUT AN EYE
IF A MOUSE COULD FLY
SING ME A SONG
THE LILY HAS AN AIR
MARGARET HAS A MILKING-PAIL
IN THE MEADOW — WHAT IN THE MEADOW?
A FRISKY LAMB
MIX A PANCAKE
THE WIND HAS SUCH A RAINY SOUND
THREE LITTLE CHILDREN
FLY AWAY, FLY AWAY OVER THE SEA
MINNIE BAKES OATEN CAKES
A WHITE HEN SITTING
CURRANTS ON A BUSH
I HAVE BUT ONE ROSE IN THE WORLD
ROSY MAIDEN WINIFRED
WHEN THE COWS COME HOME THE MILK IS COMING
ROSES BLUSHING RED AND WHITE
DING A DING
A RING UPON HER FINGER

FERRY ME ACROSS THE WATER
WHEN A MOUNTING SKYLARK SINGS
WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?
THE HORSES OF THE SEA
O SAILOR, COME ASHORE
A DIAMOND OR A COAL?
AN EMERALD IS AS GREEN AS GRASS
BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS
THE LILY HAS A SMOOTH STALK
HURT NO LIVING THING
I CAUGHT A LITTLE LADYBIRD
ALL THE BELLS WERE RINGING
WEE WEE HUSBAND
I HAVE A LITTLE HUSBAND
THE DEAR OLD WOMAN IN THE LANE
SWIFT AND SURE THE SWALLOW
I DREAMT I CAUGHT A LITTLE OWL
WHAT DOES THE BEE DO?
I HAVE A POLL PARROT
A HOUSE OF CARDS
THE ROSE WITH SUCH A BONNY BLUSH
THE ROSE THAT BLUSHES ROSY RED
OH, FAIR TO SEE
CLEVER LITTLE WILLIE WEE
THE PEACH TREE ON THE SOUTHERN WALL
A ROSE HAS THORNS AS WELL AS HONEY
IS THE MOON TIRED? SHE LOOKS SO PALE
IF STARS DROPPED OUT OF HEAVEN
GOODBYE IN FEAR, GOODBYE IN SORROW
IF THE SUN COULD TELL US HALF
IF THE MOON CAME FROM HEAVEN
O LADY MOON, YOUR HORNS POINT TOWARD THE EAST
WHAT DO THE STARS DO
MOTHERLESS BABY AND BABYLESS MOTHER
CRIMSON CURTAINS ROUND MY MOTHER'S BED
BABY LIES SO FAST ASLEEP
I KNOW A BABY, SUCH A BABY
LULLABY, OH, LULLABY!
LIE A-BED

BROWNIE, BROWNIE, LET DOWN YOUR MILK
STROKE A FLINT, AND THERE IS NOTHING TO ADMIRE
I AM A KING
PLAYING AT BOB CHERRY
BLIND FROM MY BIRTH
SONNETS ARE FULL OF LOVE, AND THIS MY TOME
THE KEY-NOTE
PASTIME
ITALIA, IO TI SALUTO!
MIRRORS OF LIFE AND DEATH
A BALLAD OF BODING
YET A LITTLE WHILE
HE AND SHE
MONNA INNOMINATA
LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL
DE PROFUNDIS
TEMPUS FUGIT
GOLDEN GLORIES
JOHNNY
HOLLOW-SOUNDING AND MYSTERIOUS
MAIDEN MAY
TILL TOMORROW
DEATH-WATCHES
TOUCHING NEVER
BRANDONS BOTH
A LIFE'S PARALLELS
AT LAST
GOLDEN SILENCES
IN THE WILLOW SHADE
FLUTTERED WINGS
A FISHER-WIFE
WHAT'S IN A NAME?
MARIANA
MEMENTO MORI
ONE FOOT ON SEA, AND ONE ON SHORE
BUDS AND BABIES
BOY JOHNNY
FREAKS OF FASHION
AN OCTOBER GARDEN

SUMMER IS ENDED
PASSING AND GLASSING
I WILL ARISE
A PRODIGAL SON
SOEUR LOUISE DE LA MISÉRICORDE
AN IMMURATA SISTER
IF THOU SAYEST, BEHOLD, WE KNEW IT NOT
THE THREAD OF LIFE
AN OLD-WORLD THICKET
ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE, O LORD
LATER LIFE: A DOUBLE SONNET OF SONNETS
FOR THINE OWN SAKE, O MY GOD
UNTIL THE DAY BREAK
OF HIM THAT WAS READY TO PERISH
BEHOLD THE MAN!
THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS
IT IS FINISHED
AN EASTER CAROL
BEHOLD A SHAKING
ALL SAINTS
TAKE CARE OF HIM
A MARTYR
WHY?
LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH
BIRCHINGTON CHURCHYARD
ONE SEA-SIDE GRAVE
BROTHER BRUIN
A HELPMEET FOR HIM
A SONG OF FLIGHT
A WINTRY SONNET
RESURGAM
TODAY'S BURDEN
THERE IS A BUDDING MORROW IN MIDNIGHT
EXULTATE DEO
A HOPE CAROL
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
WHOSO HEARS A CHIMING FOR CHRISTMAS AT THE NIGHEST
A HOLY, HEAVENLY CHIME
LO! NEWBORN JESUS

A CANDLEMAS DIALOGUE
MARY MAGDALENE AND THE OTHER MARY
PATIENCE OF HOPE
ALONE LORD GOD, IN WHOM OUR TRUST AND PEACE
SEVEN VIALS HOLD THY WRATH: BUT WHAT CAN HOLD
WHERE NEITHER RUST NOR MOTH DOTH CORRUPT
AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARDS
LORD, MAKE US ALL LOVE ALL: THAT WHEN WE MEET
O LORD, I AM ASHAMED TO SEEK THY FACE
IT IS NOT DEATH, O CHRIST, TO DIE FOR THEE
LORD, GRANT US EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR
CRIED OUT WITH TEARS
O LORD, ON WHOM WE GAZE AND DARE NOT GAZE
I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM
AH LORD, LORD, IF MY HEART WERE RIGHT WITH THINE
THE GOLD OF THAT LAND IS GOOD
WEIGH ALL MY FAULTS AND FOLLIES RIGHTEOUSLY
LORD, GRANT ME GRACE TO LOVE THEE IN MY PAIN
LIGHT OF LIGHT
THE RANSOMED OF THE LORD
LORD, WE ARE RIVERS RUNNING TO THY SEA
AN EXCEEDING BITTER CRY
O LORD, WHEN THOU DIDST CALL ME, DIDST THOU KNOW
THOU, GOD, SEEST ME
LORD JESUS, WHO WOULD THINK THAT I AM THINE?
THE NAME OF JESUS
LORD GOD OF HOSTS, MOST HOLY AND MOST HIGH
LORD, WHAT HAVE I THAT I MAY OFFER THEE?
IF I SHOULD SAY “MY HEART IS IN MY HOME
LEAF FROM LEAF CHRIST KNOWS
LORD, CARRY ME. — NAY, BUT I GRANT THEE STRENGTH
LORD, I AM HERE. — BUT, CHILD, I LOOK FOR THEE
NEW CREATURES; THE CREATOR STILL THE SAME
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS
THY NAME, O CHRIST, AS INCENSE STREAMING FORTH
THE GOOD SHEPHERD
REJOICE WITH ME
SHALL NOT THE JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH DO RIGHT?
ME AND MY GIFT: KIND LORD, BEHOLD

HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF
SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD
LORD JESU, THOU ART SWEETNESS TO MY SOUL
I, LORD, THY FOOLISH SINNER LOW AND SMALL
BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US
LORD, HAST THOU SO LOVED US, AND WILL NOT WE
AS THE DOVE WHICH FOUND NO REST
THOU ART FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN
AS THE APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD
NONE OTHER LAMB, NONE OTHER NAME
THY FRIEND AND THY FATHER'S FRIEND FORGET NOT
SURELY HE HATH BORNE OUR GRIEFS
THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN
DARKNESS AND LIGHT ARE BOTH ALIKE TO THEE
AND NOW WHY TARRIEST THOU?
HAVE I NOT STRIVEN, MY GOD, AND WATCHED AND PRAYED?
GOD IS OUR HOPE AND STRENGTH
DAY AND NIGHT THE ACCUSER MAKES NO PAUSE
O MINE ENEMY
LORD, DOST THOU LOOK ON ME, AND WILL NOT I
PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU
O CHRIST OUR ALL IN EACH, OUR ALL IN ALL!
BECAUSE THY LOVE HATH SOUGHT ME
THY FAINTING SPOUSE, YET STILL THY SPOUSE
LIKE AS THE HART DESIRETH THE WATER BROOKS
THAT WHERE I AM, THERE YE MAY BE ALSO
JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE
MY GOD, WILT THOU ACCEPT, AND WILL NOT WE
A CHILL BLANK WORLD. YET OVER THE UTMOST SEA
THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND
ADVENT SUNDAY
ADVENT
SOONER OR LATER: YET AT LAST
CHRISTMAS EVE
CHRISTMAS DAY
CHRISTMASTIDE
ST. JOHN, APOSTLE
BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, SAYS ST. JOHN
HOLY INNOCENTS

UNSPOTTED LAMBS TO FOLLOW THE ONE LAMB
EPIPHANY
EPIPHANYTIDE
SEPTUAGESIMA
SEXAGESIMA
THAT EDEN OF EARTH'S SUNRISE CANNOT VIE
QUINQUAGESIMA
PITEOUS MY RHYME IS
ASH WEDNESDAY
GOOD LORD, TODAY
LENT
EMBERTIDE
MID-LENT
PASSIONTIDE
PALM SUNDAY
MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK
TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK
WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK
MAUNDY THURSDAY
GOOD FRIDAY MORNING
GOOD FRIDAY
GOOD FRIDAY EVENING
A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY WELL-BELOVED UNTO ME
EASTER EVEN
OUR CHURCH PALMS ARE BUDDING WILLOW TWIGS
EASTER DAY
EASTER MONDAY
EASTER TUESDAY
ROGATIONTIDE
ASCENSION EVE
ASCENSION DAY
WHITSUN EVE
WHITSUN DAY
WHITSUN MONDAY
WHITSUN TUESDAY
TRINITY SUNDAY
CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
IN WEARINESS AND PAINFULNESS ST. PAUL
VIGIL OF THE PRESENTATION

FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION
THE PURIFICATION OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN
VIGIL OF THE ANNUNCIATION
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
HERSELF A ROSE, WHO BORE THE ROSE
ST. MARK
ST. BARNABAS
VIGIL OF ST. PETER
ST. PETER
ST. PETER ONCE: “LORD, DOST THOU WASH MY FEET?”
I FOLLOWED THEE, MY GOD, I FOLLOWED THEE
VIGIL OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW
ST. BARTHOLOMEW
ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
VIGIL OF ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS: MARTYRS
I GAVE A SWEET SMELL
HARK! THE ALLELUIAS OF THE GREAT SALVATION
A SONG FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS
SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT
LOVE LOVETH THEE, AND WISDOM LOVETH THEE
LORD, GIVE ME LOVE THAT I MAY LOVE THEE MUCH
AS A KING, … . UNTO THE KING
O YE WHO LOVE TODAY
LIFE THAT WAS BORN TODAY
PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR
HOPE IS THE COUNTERPOISE OF FEAR
SUBJECT TO LIKE PASSIONS AS WE ARE
EXPERIENCE BOWS A SWEET CONTENTED FACE
CHARITY NEVER FAILETH
THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY
ALL BENEATH THE SUN HASTETH
IF THOU BE DEAD, FORGIVE AND THOU SHALT LIVE
LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK
PATIENCE MUST DWELL WITH LOVE, FOR LOVE AND SORROW
LET EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD
WHAT IS THE BEGINNING? LOVE. WHAT THE COURSE? LOVE STILL
LORD, MAKE ME PURE

LOVE, TO BE LOVE, MUST WALK THY WAY
LORD, I AM FEEBLE AND OF MEAN ACCOUNT
TUNE ME, O LORD, INTO ONE HARMONY
THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW
THY LILIES DRINK THE DEW
WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE I CALLED UPON THE LORD
GRANT US SUCH GRACE THAT WE MAY WORK THY WILL
WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?
DO THIS, AND HE DOETH IT
THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN
YE ARE COME UNTO MOUNT SION
SIT DOWN IN THE LOWEST ROOM
LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE
LORD, GRANT US GRACE TO REST UPON THY WORD
A VAIN SHADOW
LORD, SAVE US, WE PERISH
WHAT IS THIS ABOVE THY HEAD
BABYLON THE GREAT
STANDING AFAR OFF FOR THE FEAR OF HER TORMENT
O LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING!
ALAS, ALAS! FOR THE SELF-DESTROYED
AS FROTH ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP
WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED
TOLL, BELL, TOLL. FOR HOPE IS FLYING
EARTH HAS CLEAR CALL OF DAILY BELLS
ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN
I LIFT MINE EYES TO SEE: EARTH VANISHETH
YET A LITTLE WHILE
BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD
WHATSOEVER IS RIGHT, THAT SHALL YE RECEIVE
THIS NEAR-AT-HAND LAND BREEDS PAIN BY MEASURE
WAS THY WRATH AGAINST THE SEA?
AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA
ROSES ON A BRIER
WE ARE THOSE WHO TREMBLE AT THY WORD
AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST
WE KNOW NOT WHEN, WE KNOW NOT WHERE
I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS
THEN WHOSE SHALL THOSE THINGS BE?

HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE
BELOVED, YIELD THY TIME TO GOD, FOR HE
TIME SEEMS NOT SHORT

THE HALF MOON SHOWS A FACE OF PLAINTIVE SWEETNESS
AS THE DOVES TO THEIR WINDOWS
OH KNELL OF A PASSING TIME
TIME PASSETH AWAY WITH ITS PLEASURE AND PAIN
THE EARTH SHALL TREMBLE AT THE LOOK OF HIM
TIME LENGTHENING, IN THE LENGTHENING SEEMETH LONG
ALL FLESH IS GRASS
HEAVEN'S CHIMES ARE SLOW, BUT SURE TO STRIKE AT LAST
THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD
PARTING AFTER PARTING
THEY PUT THEIR TRUST IN THEE, AND WERE NOT CONFOUNDED
SHORT IS TIME, AND ONLY TIME IS BLEAK
FOR EACH
FOR ALL
THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM
WHEN WICKEDNESS IS BROKEN AS A TREE
JERUSALEM OF FIRE
SHE SHALL BE BROUGHT UNTO THE KING
WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH UP NOT ALONE
WHO SITS WITH THE KING IN HIS THRONE? NOT A SLAVE BUT A BRIDE
ANTIPAS
BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION
LORD, BY WHAT INCONCEIVABLE DIM ROAD
AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY
CAST DOWN BUT NOT DESTROYED, CHASTENED NOT SLAIN
LIFT UP THINE EYES TO SEEK THE INVISIBLE
LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH
LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS
SLAIN IN THEIR HIGH PLACES: FALLEN ON REST
WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!
BEFORE THE THRONE, AND BEFORE THE LAMB
HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT
YEA, BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE THAT HATH PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION!
THE JOY OF SAINTS, LIKE INCENSE TURNED TO FIRE
WHAT ARE THESE LOVELY ONES, YEA, WHAT ARE THESE?
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

EVERY ONE THAT IS PERFECT SHALL BE AS HIS MASTER
AS DYING, AND BEHOLD WE LIVE!
SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES
OUR MOTHERS, LOVELY WOMEN PITIFUL
SAFE WHERE I CANNOT LIE YET
IS IT WELL WITH THE CHILD?
DEAR ANGELS AND DEAR DISEMBODIED SAINTS
TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY
WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?
HER SEED; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD
JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME
HOW GREAT IS LITTLE MAN!
MAN'S LIFE IS BUT A WORKING DAY
THE DAY IS AT HAND
ENDURE HARDNESS
WHITHER THE TRIBES GO UP, EVEN THE TRIBES OF THE LORD
WHERE NEVER TEMPEST HEAVETH
MARVEL OF MARVELS, IF I MYSELF SHALL BEHOLD
WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME
WORSHIP GOD
AFTERWARD HE REPENTED, AND WENT
ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS?
OUR LIFE IS LONG. NOT SO, WISE ANGELS SAY
LORD, WHAT HAVE I TO OFFER? SICKENING FEAR
JOY IS BUT SORROW
CAN I KNOW IT? — NAY
WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED I WILL COMPLAIN
PRAYING ALWAYS
AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE
A HEAVY HEART, IF EVER HEART WAS HEAVY
IF LOVE IS NOT WORTH LOVING, THEN LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING
WHAT IS IT JESUS SAITH UNTO THE SOUL?
THEY LIE AT REST, OUR BLESSED DEAD
YE THAT FEAR HIM, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT
CALLED TO BE SAINTS
THE SINNER'S OWN FAULT? SO IT WAS
WHO CARES FOR EARTHLY BREAD THO' WHITE?
LAUGHING LIFE CRIES AT THE FEAST
THE END IS NOT YET

WHO WOULD WISH BACK THE SAINTS UPON OUR ROUGH
THAT WHICH HATH BEEN IS NAMED ALREADY, AND IT IS KNOWN THAT IT IS MAN
OF EACH SAD WORD WHICH IS MORE SORROWFUL
I SEE THAT ALL THINGS COME TO AN END
BUT THY COMMANDMENT IS EXCEEDING BROAD
SURSAM CORDA
O YE, WHO ARE NOT DEAD AND FIT
WHERE SHALL I FIND A WHITE ROSE BLOWING?
REDEEMING THE TIME
NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY
A CASTLE-BUILDER'S WORLD
THESE ALL WAIT UPON THEE
DOETH WELL … DOETH BETTER
OUR HEAVEN MUST BE WITHIN OURSELVES
VANITY OF VANITIES
THE HILLS ARE TIPPED WITH SUNSHINE, WHILE I WALK
SCARCE TOLERABLE LIFE, WHICH ALL LIFE LONG
ALL HEAVEN IS BLAZING YET
BALM IN GILEAD
IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS
SHE CAME FROM THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH
ALLELUIA! OR ALAS! MY HEART IS CRYING
THE PASSION FLOWER HATH SPRUNG UP TALL
GOD'S ACRE
THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH
THOU KNEWEST … THOU OUGHTEST THEREFORE
GO IN PEACE
HALF DEAD
ONE OF THE SOLDIERS WITH A SPEAR PIERCED HIS SIDE
WHERE LOVE IS, THERE COMES SORROW
BURY HOPE OUT OF SIGHT
A CHURCHYARD SONG OF PATIENT HOPE
ONE WOE IS PAST. COME WHAT COME WILL
TAKE NO THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW
CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD
SON, REMEMBER
HEAVINESS MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE
LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN
WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH
THEN SHALL YE SHOUT
EVERYTHING THAT IS BORN MUST DIE
LORD, GRANT US CALM, IF CALM CAN SET FORTH THEE
CHANGING CHIMES
THY SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT WITH THIS PHILISTINE
THRO' BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY
THEN I COMMENDED MIRTH
SORROW HATH A DOUBLE VOICE
SHADOWS TODAY, WHILE SHADOWS SHOW GOD'S WILL
TRULY THE LIGHT IS SWEET
ARE YE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEY?
YEA, THE SPARROW HATH FOUND HER AN HOUSE
I AM SMALL AND OF NO REPUTATION
O CHRIST MY GOD WHO SEEST THE UNSEEN
YEA, IF THOU WILT, THOU CANST PUT UP THY SWORD
SWEETNESS OF REST WHEN THOU SHEDDEST REST
O FOOLISH SOUL! TO MAKE THY COUNT
BEFORE THE BEGINNING THOU HAST FOREKNOWN THE END
THE GOAL IN SIGHT! LOOK UP AND SING
LOOKING BACK ALONG LIFE'S TRODDEN WAY
DEATH'S CHILL BETWEEN
HEART'S CHILL BETWEEN
REPINING
NEW ENIGMAS
CHARADES
THE ROSE
THE TREES' COUNSELING
BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK
GIANNI MY FRIEND AND I BOTH STROVE TO EXCEL
THE OFFERING OF THE NEW LAW, THE ONE OBLATION ONCE OFFERED
THE ELEVENTH HOUR
I KNOW YOU NOT
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
EASTER EVEN
COME UNTO ME

ASH WEDNESDAY
SPRING FANCIES
LAST NIGHT
PETER GRUMP / FORSS
IF
SEASONS
HENRY HARDIMAN
WITHIN THE VEIL
PARADISE: IN A SYMBOL
IN JULY
LOVE HATH A NAME OF DEATH
TU SCENDI DALE STELE, O RE DEL CIELO
ALAS MY LORD
AN ALPHABET
HUSBAND AND WIFE
MICHAEL F. M. ROSSETTI
A SICK CHILD'S MEDITATION
LOVE IS ALL HAPPINESS, LOVE IS ALL BEAUTY
A HANDY MOLE WHO PLIED NO SHOVEL
ONE SWALLOW DOES NOT MAKE A SUMMER
CONTEMPTUOUS OF HIS HOME BEYOND
A WORD FOR THE DUMB
CARDINAL NEWMAN
AN ECHO FROM WILLOWWOOD
YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE
A DEATH OF A FIRSTBORN
FAINT, YET PURSUING
WHAT WILL IT BE, O MY SOUL, WHAT WILL IT BE
LORD, THOU ART FULNESS, I AM EMPTINESS
O LORD, I CANNOT PLEAD MY LOVE OF THEE
FAITH AND HOPE ARE WINGS TO LOVE
A SORROWFUL SIGH OF A PRISONER
I SIT A QUEEN, AND AM NO WIDOW, AND SHALL SEE NO SORROW
PASSING AWAY THE BLISS
LOVE BUILDS A NEST ON EARTH AND WAITS FOR REST
JESUS ALONE: — IF THUS IT WERE TO ME
THE WAY OF THE WORLD
BOOKS IN THE RUNNING BROOKS
GONE BEFORE

THE DEAD CITY
THE WATER SPIRIT'S SONG
THE SONG OF THE STAR
SUMMER
TO MY MOTHER ON HER BIRTHDAY
THE RUINED CROSS
EVA
LOVE EPHEMERAL
BURIAL ANTHEM
SAPPHO
TASSO AND LEONORA
ON THE DEATH OF A CAT
MOTHER AND CHILD
FAIR MARGARET
EARTH AND HEAVEN
LOVE ATTACKED
LOVE DEFENDED
DIVINE AND HUMAN PLEADING
TO MY FRIEND ELIZABETH
AMORE E DOVERE
AMORE E DISPETTO
LOVE AND HOPE
SERENADE
THE ROSE
PRESENT AND FUTURE
WILL THESE HANDS NE'ER BE CLEAN?
SIR EUSTACE GREY
THE TIME OF WAITING
CHARITY
THE DEAD BRIDE
LIFE OUT OF DEATH
THE SOLITARY ROSE
LADY ISABELLA
THE DREAM
THE DYING MAN TO HIS BETROTHED
THE MARTYR
THE END OF TIME
RESURRECTION EVE
ZARA

VERSI
L'INCOGNITA
PURPUREA ROSA
SOUL RUDDERLESS, UNBRACED
ANIMUCCIA, VAGANTUCCIA, MORBIDUCCIA
HEAVEN
HYMN
CORYDON'S LAMENT AND RESOLUTION
ROSALIND
PITIA A DAMONE
THE FAITHLESS SHEPHERDESS
ARIADNE TO THESEUS
ON ALBINA
A HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY
LOVE AND DEATH
DESPAIR
FORGET ME NOT
EASTER MORNING
A TIRSI
THE LAST WORDS OF ST. TELEMACHUS
LORD THOMAS AND FAIR MARGARET
LINES TO MY GRANDFATHER
CHARADE
HOPE IN GRIEF
LISETTA ALL' AMANTE
SONG
PRAISE OF LOVE
I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT
WISHES
ELEANOR
ISIDORA
THE NOVICE
IMMALEE
LADY ISABELLA
NIGHT AND DEATH
YOUNG MEN AYE WERE FICKLE FOUND SINCE SUMMER TREES WERE LEAFY
THE LOTUS-EATERS
SONNET: FROM THE PSALMS

SONG: THE STREAM MOANETH AS IT FLOWETH
A COUNSEL
THE WORLD'S HARMONIES
LINES: GIVEN WITH A PENWIPER
THE LAST ANSWER
ONE OF THE DEAD
THE WHOLE HEAD IS SICK, AND THE WHOLE HEART FAINT
I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD
O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?
UNDINE
LADY MONTREVOR
FLORAL TEACHING
DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY
DEATH
A HOPELESS CASE
ELLEN MIDDLETON
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH
GROWN COLD.: SONNET
ZARA
RUIN
I SIT AMONG GREEN SHADY VALLEYS OFT
LISTEN, AND I WILL TELL YOU OF A FACE
WOULDST THOU GIVE ME A HEAVY JEWELED CROWN
I SAID WITHIN MYSELF: I AM A FOOL
METHINKS THE ILLS OF LIFE I FAIN WOULD SHUN
STRANGE VOICES SING AMONG THE PLANETS WHICH
SLEEP, SLEEP, HAPPY CHILD
WHAT SAPPHO WOULD HAVE SAID HAD HER LEAP CURED INSTEAD OF KILLING HER
ON KEATS
HAVE PATIENCE
TO LALLA, READING MY VERSES TOPSY-TURVY
SONNET: SOME SAY THAT LOVE AND JOY ARE ONE: AND SO
THE LAST COMPLAINT
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
A CHRISTMAS CAROL, (ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT.)
FOR ADVENT
TWO PURSUITS
LOOKING FORWARD

LIFE HIDDEN
QUEEN ROSE
HOW ONE CHOSE
SEEKING REST
A YEAR AFTERWARDS
TWO THOUGHTS OF DEATH
THREE MOMENTS
ONCE
THREE NUNS
SONG: WE BURIED HER AMONG THE FLOWERS
THE WATCHERS
ANNIE
A DIRGE
SONG: IT IS NOT FOR HER EVEN BROW
A DREAM
A FAIR WORLD THO' A FALLEN
ADVENT: "COME," THOU DOST SAY TO ANGELS
ALL SAINTS
EYE HATH NOT SEEN
ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY
MOONSHINE
THE SUMMER IS ENDED
I LOOK FOR THE LORD
SONG: I HAVE LOVED YOU FOR LONG LONG YEARS ELLEN
A DISCOVERY
FROM THE ANTIQUE
THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS
TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?
NEXT OF KIN
LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS
PORTRAITS
WHITSUN EVE
WHAT?
A PAUSE
HOLY INNOCENTS
THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD
ANNIE: IT'S NOT FOR EARTHLY BREAD
SEASONS
THOU SLEEPEST WHERE THE LILIES FADE

I WISH I WERE A LITTLE BIRD
TWO PARTED
ALL NIGHT I DREAM YOU LOVE ME WELL
FOR ROSALINE'S ALBUM
CARE FLIETH
EPITAPH
THE P. R. B
SEASONS: CROCUSES AND SNOWDROPS WITHER
WHO HAVE A FORM OF GODLINESS
BALLAD
A STUDY. (A SOUL.)
THERE REMAINETH THEREFORE A REST
YE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXHORTATION
GUESSES
FROM THE ANTIQUE
THREE STAGES
LONG LOOKED FOR
LISTENING
ZARA
THE LAST LOOK
I HAVE A MESSAGE UNTO THEE
COBWEBS
UNFORGOTTEN
AN AFTERTHOUGHT
TO THE END
ZION SAID
MAY
RIVER THAMES (?)
A CHILLY NIGHT
LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK
A MARTYR
IN THE LANE
ACME
A BED OF FORGET-ME-NOTS
THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND
LOOK ON THIS PICTURE AND ON THIS
NOW THEY DESIRE
A CHRISTMAS CAROL, FOR MY GODCHILDREN
NOT YOURS BUT YOU

AN ANSWER
SIR WINTER
IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO
INTROSPECTIVE
THE HEART KNOWETH ITS OWN BITTERNESS
REFLECTION
A COAST-NIGHTMARE
FOR ONE SAKE
MY OLD FRIENDS
YET A LITTLE WHILE
ONLY BELIEVE
RIVALS
A YAWN
FOR H. P
THEN THEY THAT FEARED THE LORD SPAKE OFTEN ONE TO ANOTHER
WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?
THE MASSACRE OF PERUGIA
I HAVE DONE WITH HOPE
PROMISES LIKE PIECRUST
BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON
BETTER SO
OUR WIDOWED QUEEN
IN PROGRESS
OUT OF THE DEEP
FOR A MERCY RECEIVED
SUMMER
A DUMB FRIEND
MARGERY
IN PATIENCE
SUNSHINE
MEETING
NONE WITH HIM
UNDER WILLOWS
A SKETCH
IF I HAD WORDS
WHAT TO DO?
YOUNG DEATH
IN A CERTAIN PLACE

CANNOT SWEETEN
OF MY LIFE
YES, I TOO COULD FACE DEATH AND NEVER SHRINK
WOULD THAT I WERE A TURNIP WHITE
I FANCY THE GOOD FAIRIES DRESSED IN WHITE
SOME LADIES DRESS IN MUSLIN FULL AND WHITE
AUTUMN
AMOR DORMENTE?
AMOR SI SVEGLIA?
SI RIMANDA LA TOCCA-CALDAJA
BLUMINE" RISPONDE
LASSÙ FIA CARO IL RIVEDERCI
NON SON IO LA ROSA MA VI STETTI APPRESSO
LASSUSO IL CARO FIORE
SAPESSI PURE!
IDDIO C'ILLUMINI!
AMICIZIA
LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL
OH FORZA IRRESISTIBILE
FINESTRA MIA ORIENTALE
EPPURE ALLORA VENIVI
PER PREFERENZA
OGGI
SE FOSSI ANDATA A HASTINGS
RIPETIZIONE
AMICO E PIÙ CHE AMICO MIO
NOSTRE VOLUNTÀ QUIETI VIRTÙ DI CARITI
SE COSÌ FOSSE
REMEMBER, IF I CLAIM TOO MUCH OF YOU
WILL YOU BE THERE? MY YEARNING HEART HAS CRIED
IN RESURRECTION IS IT AWFULLER
I LOVE YOU AND YOU KNOW IT — THIS AT LEAST
FAIRER THAN YOUNGER BEAUTIES, MORE BELOVED
A VALENTINE, 1877
A VALENTINE, 1878
A VALENTINE, 1879
A VALENTINE, 1880
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1881
A VALENTINE 1882

FEBRUARY 14. 1883
A VALENTINE, 1884
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1885
ST. VALENTINE'S DAY, 1886
AH WELLADAY AND WHEREFORE AM I HERE?
ALONG THE HIGHROAD THE WAY IS TOO LONG
AND IS THIS AUGUST WEATHER? NAY NOT SO
FROM EARLY DAWN UNTIL THE FLUSH OF NOON
I SEEK AMONG THE LIVING & I SEEK
O GLORIOUS SEA THAT IN EACH CLIMBING WAVE
OH THOU WHO TELL'ST ME THAT ALL HOPE IS OVER
SURELY THERE IS AN ACHING VOID WITHIN
THE SPRING IS COME AGAIN NOT AS AT FIRST
WHO SHALL MY WANDERING THOUGHTS STEADY & FIX
YOU WHO LOOK ON PASSED AGES AS A GLASS
ANGELI AL CAPO, AL PIEDE
AMAMI, T'AMO
E BABBO E MAMMA HA IL NOSTRO FIGLIOLINO
S'ADDORMENTÒ LA NOSTRA FIGLIOLINA
CUCCURUCÙ! CUCCURUCÙ!
OIBÒ, PICCINA
OTTO ORE SUONANO
NEL VERNO ACCANTO AL FUOCO
GRAN FREDDO È INFUORI, E DENTRO È FREDDO UN POCO
SCAVAI LA NEVE, — SÌ CHE SCAVAI!
SÌ CHE IL FRATELLO S'HA UN FALCONCELLO
UDITE, SI DOLGONO MESTI FRINGUELLI
AHI CULLA VUOTA! ED AHI SEPOLCRO PIENO
LUGUBRE E VAGABONDO IN TERRA E IN MARE
AURA DOLCISSIMA, MA DONDO SIETE?
FOSS'IO REGINA
PESANO RENA E PENA
BASTA UNA NOTTE A MATURARE IL FUNGO
PORCO LA ZUCCA
SALTA, RANOCCHIO, E MOSTRATI
SPUNTA LA MARGHERITA
AGNELLINA ORFANELLINA
AMICO PESCE, PLOVER VORRÀ
SPOSA VELATA

CAVALLI MARITTIMI
O MARINARO, CHE MI APPORTI TU?
ARROSSICE LA ROSA: E PERCHÈ MAI?
LA ROSA CHINA IL VOLTO ROSSEGGIATO
O CILIEGIA INFIORITA
IN TEMA E IN PENA ADDIO
D'UN SONNO PROFONDISSIMO
NINNA NANNA, NINNA NANNA!
CAPO CHE CHINASI
THE SUCCESSION OF KINGS
A TRUE STORY(CONTINUED.)
THE TWO ROSSETTIS (BROTHERS THEY)
IMITATED FROM THE ARPA EVANGELICA: PAGE 121
MR. AND MRS. SCOTT, AND I
GONE TO HIS REST
O UOMMIBATTO
COR MIO, COR MIO
I SAID "ALL'S OVER" — & I MADE MY
I SAID GOOD BYE IN HOPE
MY MOUSE
HAD FORTUNE PARTED US
COUNTERBLAST ON PENNY TRUMPET
A ROUNDEL SEEMS TO FIT A ROUND OF DAYS
HEAVEN OVERARCHES EARTH AND SEA
SLEEPING AT LAST, THE TROUBLE & TUMULT OVER
4TH MAY MORNING
QUANTO A LEI GRATA IO SONO
THE CHINAMAN
COME CHEER UP, MY LADS, 'TIS TO GLORY WE STEER!
THE PLAGUE
HOW MANY AUTHORS ARE MY FIRST!
ME YOU OFTEN MEET
SO I BEGAN MY WALK OF LIFE; NO STOP
SO I GREW HALF DELIRIOUS AND QUITE SICK
ON THE NOTE YOU DO NOT SEND ME
CHARON
FROM METASTASIO
CHIESA E SIGNORE
GOLDEN HOLLY

COR MIO
MY OLD ADMIRATION BEFORE I WAS TWENTY
TO MARY ROSSETTI
NE' SOGNI TI VEGGO
TO MY FIOR-DI-LISA
HAIL, NOBLE FACE OF NOBLE FRIEND!
HYMN

LIST OF POEMS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

A-D E-H I-L M-O P-S T-V W-Z

1 AND 1 ARE 2
4TH MAY MORNING
A BABY'S CRADLE WITH NO BABY IN IT
A BALLAD OF BODING
A BED OF FORGET-ME-NOTS
A BETTER RESURRECTION
A BIRD SONG
A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
A BIRTHDAY
A BRIDE SONG
A BRUISED REED SHALL HE NOT BREAK
A BUNDLE OF MYRRH IS MY WELL-BELOVED UNTO ME
A CANDLEMAS DIALOGUE
A CASTLE-BUILDER'S WORLD
A CHILL
A CHILL BLANK WORLD. YET OVER THE UTMOST SEA
A CHILLY NIGHT
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
A CHRISTMAS CAROL, (ON THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT.)
A CHRISTMAS CAROL, FOR MY GODCHILDREN
A CHRISTMAS CAROL: IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER
A CHURCHYARD SONG OF PATIENT HOPE
A CITY PLUM IS NOT A PLUM
A COAST-NIGHTMARE
A COUNSEL
A DAUGHTER OF EVE
A DEATH OF A FIRST-BORN
A DIAMOND OR A COAL?
A DIRGE
A DIRGE

A DISCOVERY
A DREAM
A DUMB FRIEND
A FAIR WORLD THO' A FALLEN
A FARM WALK
A FISHER-WIFE
A FRISKY LAMB
A GREEN CORNFIELD
A HANDY MOLE WHO PLIED NO SHOVEL
A HEAVY HEART, IF EVER HEART WAS HEAVY
A HELPMEET FOR HIM
A HOLY, HEAVENLY CHIME
A HOPE CAROL
A HOPELESS CASE
A HOUSE OF CARDS
A HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY
A LIFE'S PARALLELS
A LINNET IN A GILDED CAGE
A MARTYR
A MARTYR
A MOTHERLESS SOFT LAMBKIN
A PAUSE
A PAUSE OF THOUGHT
A PEAL OF BELLS
A PIN HAS A HEAD, BUT HAS NO HAIR
A POCKET HANDKERCHIEF TO HEM
A PORTRAIT
A PRODIGAL SON
A RING POSY
A RING UPON HER FINGER
A ROSE HAS THORNS AS WELL AS HONEY
A ROSE PLANT IN JERICHO
A ROUNDEL SEEMS TO FIT A ROUND OF DAYS
A ROYAL PRINCESS
A SICK CHILD'S MEDITATION
A SKETCH
A SMILE AND A SIGH
A SONG FOR THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS
A SONG OF FLIGHT

A SORROWFUL SIGH OF A PRISONER
A STUDY. (A SOUL.)
A SUMMER WISH
A TESTIMONY
A TIRSI
A TOADSTOOL COMES UP IN A NIGHT
A TRIAD
A TRUE STORY(CONTINUED.)
A VAIN SHADOW
A VALENTINE 1882
A VALENTINE, 1877
A VALENTINE, 1878
A VALENTINE, 1879
A VALENTINE, 1880
A VALENTINE, 1884
A WHITE HEN SITTING
A WINTRY SONNET
A WORD FOR THE DUMB
A YAWN
A YEAR AFTERWARDS
A YEAR'S WINDFALLS
ACME
ADVENT
ADVENT SUNDAY
ADVENT: "COME," THOU DOST SAY TO ANGELS
ADVENT: THIS ADVENT MOON SHINES COLD AND CLEAR
AFTER COMMUNION
AFTER DEATH
AFTER THIS THE JUDGEMENT
AFTERWARD HE REPENTED, AND WENT
AGNELLINA ORFANELLINA
AH LORD, LORD, IF MY HEART WERE RIGHT WITH THINE
AH WELLADAY AND WHEREFORE AM I HERE?
AHI CULLA VUOTA! ED AHI SEPOLCRO PIENO
ALAS MY LORD
ALAS, ALAS! FOR THE SELF-DESTROYED
ALL BENEATH THE SUN HASTETH
ALL FLESH IS GRASS
ALL HEAVEN IS BLAZING YET

ALL NIGHT I DREAM YOU LOVE ME WELL
ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS
ALL SAINTS: MARTYRS
ALL THE BELLS WERE RINGING
ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE, O LORD
ALLELUIA! OR ALAS! MY HEART IS CRYING
ALONE LORD GOD, IN WHOM OUR TRUST AND PEACE
ALONG THE HIGHROAD THE WAY IS TOO LONG
AMAMI, T'AMO
AMEN
AMICIZIA
AMICO E PIÙ CHE AMICO MIO
AMICO PESCE, PLOVER VORRÀ
AMOR DORMENTE?
AMOR MUNDI
AMOR SI SVEGLIA?
AMORE E DISPETTO
AMORE E DOVERE
AN AFTERTHOUGHT
AN ALPHABET
AN ANSWER
AN APPLE GATHERING
AN EASTER CAROL
AN ECHO FROM WILLOWWOOD
AN EMERALD IS AS GREEN AS GRASS
AN END
AN EXCEEDING BITTER CRY
AN IMMURATA SISTER
AN OCTOBER GARDEN
AN OLD-WORLD THICKET
AND IS THIS AUGUST WEATHER? NAY NOT SO
AND NOW WHY TARRIEST THOU?
AND THERE WAS NO MORE SEA
ANGELI AL CAPO, AL PIEDE
ANGELS AT THE FOOT
ANIMUCCIA, VAGANTUCCIA, MORBIDUCCIA
ANNIE

ANNIE: IT'S NOT FOR EARTHLY BREAD
ANOTHER SPRING
ANTIPAS
ARE THEY NOT ALL MINISTERING SPIRITS?
ARE YE NOT MUCH BETTER THAN THEY?
ARIADNE TO THESEUS
ARROSSICE LA ROSA: E PERCHÈ MAI?
AS A KING, … . UNTO THE KING
AS COLD WATERS TO A THIRSTY SOUL, SO IS GOOD NEWS FROM A FAR COUNTRY
AS DYING, AND BEHOLD WE LIVE!
AS FROTH ON THE FACE OF THE DEEP
AS THE APPLE TREE AMONG THE TREES OF THE WOOD
AS THE DOVE WHICH FOUND NO REST
AS THE DOVES TO THEIR WINDOWS
AS THE SPARKS FLY UPWARDS
AS THY DAYS, SO SHALL THY STRENGTH BE
ASCENSION DAY
ASCENSION EVE
ASH WEDNESDAY
ASH WEDNESDAY
AT HOME
AT LAST
AURA DOLCISSIMA, MA DONDO SIETE?
AUTUMN
AUTUMN
AUTUMN VIOLETS
AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST
BABY CRY
BABY LIES SO FAST ASLEEP
BABYLON THE GREAT
BALLAD
BALM IN GILEAD
BASTA UNA NOTTE A MATURARE IL FUNGO
BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION
BEAUTY IS VAIN
BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US
BECAUSE THY LOVE HATH SOUGHT ME
BEFORE THE BEGINNING THOU HAST FOREKNOWN THE END

BEFORE THE THRONE, AND BEFORE THE LAMB
BEHOLD A SHAKING
BEHOLD THE MAN!
BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK
BEHOLD, IT WAS VERY GOOD
BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, SAYS ST. JOHN
BELOVED, YIELD THY TIME TO GOD, FOR HE
BETTER SO
BIRCHINGTON CHURCHYARD
BIRD OR BEAST?
BIRD RAPTURES
BITTER FOR SWEET
BLIND FROM MY BIRTH
BLUMINE" RISPONDE
BOATS SAIL ON THE RIVERS
BOOKS IN THE RUNNING BROOKS
BOY JOHNNY
BRANDONS BOTH
BREAD AND MILK FOR BREAKFAST
BROTHER BRUIN
BROWN AND FURRY
BROWNIE, BROWNIE, LET DOWN YOUR MILK
BUDS AND BABIES
BURIAL ANTHEM
BURY HOPE OUT OF SIGHT
BUT THY COMMANDMENT IS EXCEEDING BROAD
BY THE SEA
BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON
BY THE WATERS OF BABYLON B.C. 570
CALLED TO BE SAINTS
CAN I KNOW IT? — NAY
CANNOT SWEETEN
CAPO CHE CHINASI
CARDINAL NEWMAN
CARE FLIETH
CAST DOWN BUT NOT DESTROYED, CHASTENED NOT SLAIN
CAVALLI MARITTIMI
CHANGING CHIMES
CHARADE

CHARADES
CHARITY
CHARITY NEVER FAILETH
CHARON
CHIESA E SIGNORE
CHILD'S TALK IN APRIL
CHRISTIAN AND JEW: A DIALOGUE
CHRISTMAS CAROLS
CHRISTMAS DAY
CHRISTMAS EVE
CHRISTMASTIDE
CLEVER LITTLE WILLIE WEE
COBWEBS
COME CHEER UP, MY LADS, 'TIS TO GLORY WE STEER!
COME UNTO ME
CONFLUENTS
CONSIDER
CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD
CONSIDER THE LILIES OF THE FIELD
CONTEMPTUOUS OF HIS HOME BEYOND
CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL
COR MIO
COR MIO, COR MIO
CORYDON'S LAMENT AND RESOLUTION
COUNTERBLAST ON PENNY TRUMPET
COUSIN KATE
CRIED OUT WITH TEARS
CRIMSON CURTAINS ROUND MY MOTHER'S BED
CRYING, MY LITTLE ONE, FOOTSORE AND WEARY?
CUCCURUCÙ! CUCCURUCÙ!
CURRANTS ON A BUSH
D'UN SONNO PROFONDISSIMO
DANCING ON THE HILL-TOPS
DARKNESS AND LIGHT ARE BOTH ALIKE TO THEE
DAY AND NIGHT THE ACCUSER MAKES NO PAUSE
DAYS OF VANITY
DE PROFUNDIS
DEAD BEFORE DEATH
DEAD HOPE

DEAD IN THE COLD, A SONG-SINGING THRUSH
DEAR ANGELS AND DEAR DISEMBODIED SAINTS
DEATH
DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY
DEATH'S CHILL BETWEEN
DEATH-WATCHES
DESPAIR
DESPISED AND REJECTED
DING A DING
DIVINE AND HUMAN PLEADING
DO THIS, AND HE DOETH IT
DOETH WELL … DOETH BETTER
DOST THOU NOT CARE?
DREAM LAND
DREAM-LOVE
E BABBO E MAMMA HA IL NOSTRO FIGLIOLINO
EARTH AND HEAVEN
EARTH HAS CLEAR CALL OF DAILY BELLS
EASTER DAY
EASTER EVEN
EASTER EVEN
EASTER MONDAY
EASTER MORNING
EASTER TUESDAY
ECHO
EIGHT O'CLOCK
ELEANOR
ELLEN MIDDLETON
EMBERTIDE
ENDURE HARDNESS
ENRICA, 1865
EPIPHANY
EPIPHANYTIDE
EPITAPH
EPPURE ALLORA VENIVI
ESCAPE TO THE MOUNTAIN
EVA
EVE
EVERY ONE THAT IS PERFECT SHALL BE AS HIS MASTER

EVERYTHING THAT IS BORN MUST DIE
EXPERIENCE BOWS A SWEET CONTENTED FACE
EXULTATE DEO
EYE HATH NOT SEEN
FAINT, YET PURSUING
FAIR MARGARET
FAIRER THAN YOUNGER BEAUTIES, MORE BELOVED
FAITH AND HOPE ARE WINGS TO LOVE
FATA MORGANA
FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION
FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION
FEBRUARY 14. 1883
FERRY ME ACROSS THE WATER
FINESTRA MIA ORIENTALE
FLORAL TEACHING
FLUTTERED WINGS
FLY AWAY, FLY AWAY OVER THE SEA
FOR A MERCY RECEIVED
FOR ADVENT
FOR ALL
FOR EACH
FOR H. P
FOR ONE SAKE
FOR ROSALINE'S ALBUM
FOR THINE OWN SAKE, O MY GOD
FORGET ME NOT
FOSS'IO REGINA
FREAKS OF FASHION
FROM EARLY DAWN UNTIL THE FLUSH OF NOON
FROM HOUSE TO HOME
FROM METASTASIO
FROM SUNSET TO STAR RISE
FROM THE ANTIQUE
FROM THE ANTIQUE
GIANNI MY FRIEND AND I BOTH STROVE TO EXCEL
GO IN PEACE
GOBLIN MARKET
GOD IS OUR HOPE AND STRENGTH
GOD'S ACRE

GOLDEN GLORIES
GOLDEN HOLLY
GOLDEN SILENCES
GONE BEFORE
GONE FOR EVER
GONE TO HIS REST
GOOD FRIDAY
GOOD FRIDAY
GOOD FRIDAY EVENING
GOOD FRIDAY MORNING
GOOD LORD, TODAY
GOODBYE IN FEAR, GOODBYE IN SORROW
GRAN FREDDO È INFUORI, E DENTRO È FREDDO UN POCO
GRANT US SUCH GRACE THAT WE MAY WORK THY WILL
GROWING IN THE VALE
GROWN AND FLOWN
GROWN COLD.: SONNET
GUESSES
HAD FORTUNE PARTED US
HAIL, NOBLE FACE OF NOBLE FRIEND!
HALF DEAD
HARK! THE ALLELUIAS OF THE GREAT SALVATION
HAVE I NOT STRIVEN, MY GOD, AND WATCHED AND PRAYED?
HAVE PATIENCE
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
HE AND SHE
HE CANNOT DENY HIMSELF
HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT
HEAR WHAT THE MOURNFUL LINNETS SAY
HEART'S CHILL BETWEEN
HEARTSEASE IN MY GARDEN BED
HEAVEN
HEAVEN OVERARCHES EARTH AND SEA
HEAVEN'S CHIMES ARE SLOW, BUT SURE TO STRIKE AT LAST
HEAVINESS MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING
HENRY HARDIMAN
HER SEED; IT SHALL BRUISE THY HEAD
HERSELF A ROSE, WHO BORE THE ROSE

HIS BANNER OVER ME WAS LOVE
HOLLOW-SOUNDING AND MYSTERIOUS
HOLY INNOCENTS
HOLY INNOCENTS
HOPE IN GRIEF
HOPE IS LIKE A HAREBELL TREMBLING FROM ITS BIRTH
HOPE IS THE COUNTERPOISE OF FEAR
HOP-O'-MY-THUMB AND LITTLE JACK HORNER
HOPPING FROG, HOP HERE AND BE SEEN
HOW GREAT IS LITTLE MAN!
HOW MANY AUTHORS ARE MY FIRST!
HOW MANY SECONDS IN A MINUTE?
HOW ONE CHOSE
HURT NO LIVING THING
HUSBAND AND WIFE
HYMN
HYMN
I AM A KING
I AM SMALL AND OF NO REPUTATION
I CAUGHT A LITTLE LADYBIRD
I DO SET MY BOW IN THE CLOUD
I DREAMT I CAUGHT A LITTLE OWL
I DUG AND DUG AMONGST THE SNOW
I FANCY THE GOOD FAIRIES DRESSED IN WHITE
I FOLLOWED THEE, MY GOD, I FOLLOWED THEE
I GAVE A SWEET SMELL
I HAVE A LITTLE HUSBAND
I HAVE A MESSAGE UNTO THEE
I HAVE A POLL PARROT
I HAVE BUT ONE ROSE IN THE WORLD
I HAVE DONE WITH HOPE
I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT
I KNOW A BABY, SUCH A BABY
I KNOW YOU NOT
I LIFT MINE EYES TO SEE: EARTH VANISHETH
I LOOK FOR THE LORD
I LOVE YOU AND YOU KNOW IT — THIS AT LEAST
I PLANTED A HAND
I SAID "ALL'S OVER" — & I MADE MY

I SAID GOOD BYE IN HOPE
I SAID WITHIN MYSELF: I AM A FOOL
I SEE THAT ALL THINGS COME TO AN END
I SEEK AMONG THE LIVING & I SEEK
I SIT A QUEEN, AND AM NO WIDOW, AND SHALL SEE NO SORROW
I SIT AMONG GREEN SHADY VALLEYS OFT
I WILL ARISE
I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM
I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS
I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS
I WISH I WERE A LITTLE BIRD
I, LORD, THY FOOLISH SINNER LOW AND SMALL
IDDIO C'ILLUMINI!
IF
IF A MOUSE COULD FLY
IF A PIG WORE A WIG
IF ALL WERE RAIN AND NEVER SUN
IF HOPE GREW ON A BUSH
IF I HAD WORDS
IF I SHOULD SAY "MY HEART IS IN MY HOME
IF I WERE A QUEEN
IF LOVE IS NOT WORTH LOVING, THEN LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING
IF ONLY
IF STARS DROPPED OUT OF HEAVEN
IF THE MOON CAME FROM HEAVEN
IF THE SUN COULD TELL US HALF
IF THOU BE DEAD, FORGIVE AND THOU SHALT LIVE
IF THOU SAYEST, BEHOLD, WE KNEW IT NOT
IMITATED FROM THE ARPA EVANGELICA: PAGE 121
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IN A CERTAIN PLACE
IN AN ARTIST'S STUDIO
IN JULY
IN PATIENCE
IN PROGRESS
IN RESURRECTION IS IT AWFULLER
IN TEMA E IN PENA ADDIO
IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS
IN THE LANE

IN THE MEADOW — WHAT IN THE MEADOW?
IN THE ROUND TOWER AT JHANSI, JUNE 8, 1857
IN THE WILLOW SHADE
IN WEARINESS AND PAINFULNESS ST. PAUL
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IS THE MOON TIRED? SHE LOOKS SO PALE
ISIDORA
IT IS FINISHED
IT IS NOT DEATH, O CHRIST, TO DIE FOR THEE
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JANUARY COLD DESOLATE
JERUSALEM OF FIRE
JESSIE CAMERON
JESUS ALONE: — IF THUS IT WERE TO ME
JOHNNY
JOY IS BUT SORROW
JUDGE NOT ACCORDING TO THE APPEARANCE
JUDGE NOTHING BEFORE THE TIME
KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS
KOOKOOROOKOO! KOOKOOROOKOO!
L. E. L
L'INCOGNITA
LA ROSA CHINA IL VOLTO ROSSEGGIATO
LADY ISABELLA
LADY ISABELLA
LADY MONTREVOR
LASSÙ FIA CARO IL RIVEDERCI
LASSUSO IL CARO FIORE
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LATER LIFE: A DOUBLE SONNET OF SONNETS
LAUGHING LIFE CRIES AT THE FEAST
LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN
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LET EVERYTHING THAT HATH BREATH PRAISE THE LORD
LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK
LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK
LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS

LET THEM REJOICE IN THEIR BEDS
LIE A-BED
LIFE AND DEATH
LIFE HIDDEN
LIFE OUT OF DEATH
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LIFT UP THINE EYES TO SEEK THE INVISIBLE
LIGHT LOVE
LIGHT OF LIGHT
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LINES: GIVEN WITH A PENWIPER
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LISTEN, AND I WILL TELL YOU OF A FACE
LISTENING
LO! NEWBORN JESUS
LONG BARREN
LONG LOOKED FOR
LOOK ON THIS PICTURE AND ON THIS
LOOKING BACK ALONG LIFE'S TRODDEN WAY
LOOKING FORWARD
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LORD JESU, THOU ART SWEETNESS TO MY SOUL
LORD JESUS, WHO WOULD THINK THAT I AM THINE?
LORD THOMAS AND FAIR MARGARET
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LORD, CARRY ME. — NAY, BUT I GRANT THEE STRENGTH
LORD, DOST THOU LOOK ON ME, AND WILL NOT I
LORD, GIVE ME LOVE THAT I MAY LOVE THEE MUCH
LORD, GRANT ME GRACE TO LOVE THEE IN MY PAIN
LORD, GRANT US CALM, IF CALM CAN SET FORTH THEE
LORD, GRANT US EYES TO SEE AND EARS TO HEAR
LORD, GRANT US GRACE TO REST UPON THY WORD
LORD, HAST THOU SO LOVED US, AND WILL NOT WE
LORD, I AM FEEBLE AND OF MEAN ACCOUNT
LORD, I AM HERE. — BUT, CHILD, I LOOK FOR THEE
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LORD, MAKE ME PURE
LORD, MAKE US ALL LOVE ALL: THAT WHEN WE MEET

LORD, SAVE US, WE PERISH
LORD, THOU ART FULNESS, I AM EMPTINESS
LORD, WE ARE RIVERS RUNNING TO THY SEA
LORD, WHAT HAVE I THAT I MAY OFFER THEE?
LORD, WHAT HAVE I TO OFFER? SICKENING FEAR
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LOVE AND HOPE
LOVE ATTACKED

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LOVE DEFENDED
LOVE EPHEMERAL
LOVE FROM THE NORTH
LOVE HATH A NAME OF DEATH
LOVE IS ALL HAPPINESS, LOVE IS ALL BEAUTY
LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH
LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH
LOVE LIES BLEEDING
LOVE LOVETH THEE, AND WISDOM LOVETH THEE
LOVE ME, — I LOVE YOU
LOVE, TO BE LOVE, MUST WALK THY WAY
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LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL
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MARIANA
MARTYRS' SONG
MARVEL OF MARVELS, IF I MYSELF SHALL BEHOLD
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MAUDE CLARE
MAUNDY THURSDAY
MAY
MAY: I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW IT WAS
ME AND MY GIFT: KIND LORD, BEHOLD
ME YOU OFTEN MEET
MEETING
MEMENTO MORI
MEMORY
METHINKS THE ILLS OF LIFE I FAIN WOULD SHUN
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MID-LENT
MINNIE AND MATTIE

MINNIE BAKES OATEN CAKES
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MIRRORS OF LIFE AND DEATH
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MONNA INNOMINATA
MOONSHINE
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MOTHER COUNTRY
MOTHER SHAKE THE CHERRY-TREE
MOTHERLESS BABY AND BABYLESS MOTHER
MR. AND MRS. SCOTT, AND I
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MY BABY HAS A MOTTLED FIST
MY DREAM
MY FRIEND
MY GOD, WILT THOU ACCEPT, AND WILL NOT WE
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NEL VERNO ACCANTO AL FUOCO
NEW CREATURES; THE CREATOR STILL THE SAME
NEW ENIGMAS
NEXT OF KIN
NIGHT AND DEATH
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NO, THANK YOU, JOHN
NOBLE SISTERS
NON SON IO LA ROSA MA VI STETTI APPRESSO
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NOW THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY
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O CHRIST OUR ALL IN EACH, OUR ALL IN ALL!
O CILIEGIA INFIORITA

O DEATH WHERE IS THY STING?
O FOOLISH SOUL! TO MAKE THY COUNT
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OGGI
OH FORZA IRRESISTIBILE
OH KNELL OF A PASSING TIME
OH THOU WHO TELL'ST ME THAT ALL HOPE IS OVER
OH, FAIR TO SEE
OIBÒ, PICCINA
OLD AND NEW YEAR DITTIES
ON ALBINA
ON KEATS
ON THE DEATH OF A CAT
ON THE GRASSY BANKS
ON THE NOTE YOU DO NOT SEND ME
ON THE WING
ONCE
ONCE FOR ALL
ONE CERTAINTY
ONE DAY
ONE FOOT ON SEA, AND ONE ON SHORE
ONE OF THE DEAD

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PETER GRUMP / FORSS
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PORTRAITS
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PURPUREA ROSA
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SHORT IS TIME, AND ONLY TIME IS BLEAK
SHUT OUT
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SIR WINTER
SISTER MAUDE
SIT DOWN IN THE LOWEST ROOM
SLAIN FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD
SLAIN IN THEIR HIGH PLACES: FALLEN ON REST
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SLEEP, SLEEP, HAPPY CHILD
SLEEPING AT LAST, THE TROUBLE & TUMULT OVER
SO GREAT A CLOUD OF WITNESSES
SO I BEGAN MY WALK OF LIFE; NO STOP
SO I GREW HALF DELIRIOUS AND QUITE SICK
SOEUR LOUISE DE LA MISÉRICORDE
SOME LADIES DRESS IN MUSLIN FULL AND WHITE
SOMEWHERE OR OTHER
SON, REMEMBER
SONG
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SUMMER
SUMMER
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THEY DESIRE A BETTER COUNTRY

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THEY SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW
THEY TOIL NOT, NEITHER DO THEY SPIN
THIS NEAR-AT-HAND LAND BREEDS PAIN BY MEASURE
THOU ART FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN
THOU KNEWEST … THOU OUGHTEST THEREFORE
THOU SLEEPEST WHERE THE LILIES FADE
THOU, GOD, SEEST ME
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THRO' BURDEN AND HEAT OF THE DAY
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THY FAINTING SPOUSE, YET STILL THY SPOUSE
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THY LILIES DRINK THE DEW
THY NAME, O CHRIST, AS INCENSE STREAMING FORTH
THY SERVANT WILL GO AND FIGHT WITH THIS PHILISTINE
TILL TOMORROW
TIME LENGTHENING, IN THE LENGTHENING SEEMETH LONG
TIME PASSETH AWAY WITH ITS PLEASURE AND PAIN
TIME SEEMS NOT SHORT
TO EVERY SEED HIS OWN BODY
TO LALLA, READING MY VERSES TOPSY-TURVY
TO MARY ROSSETTI
TO MY FIOR-DI-LISA
TO MY FRIEND ELIZABETH
TO MY MOTHER ON HER BIRTHDAY
TO THE END
TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?
TODAY FOR ME
TODAY'S BURDEN
TOLL, BELL, TOLL. FOR HOPE IS FLYING
TOUCHING NEVER
TRINITY SUNDAY

TRULY THE LIGHT IS SWEET
TU SCENDI DALE STELE, O RE DEL CIELO
TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK
TUNE ME, O LORD, INTO ONE HARMONY
TWICE
TWILIGHT CALM
TWILIGHT NIGHT
TWIST ME A CROWN OF WIND-FLOWERS
TWO PARTED
TWO PURSUITS
TWO THOUGHTS OF DEATH
UDITE, SI DOLGONO MESTI FRINGUELLI
UNDER THE IVY BUSH
UNDER WILLOWS
UNDINE
UNFORGOTTEN
UNSPOTTED LAMBS TO FOLLOW THE ONE LAMB
UNTIL THE DAY BREAK
UP-HILL
VANITY OF VANITIES
VANITY OF VANITIES: AH, WOE IS ME FOR PLEASURE THAT IS VAIN
VENUS' LOOKING-GLASS
VERSI
VIGIL OF ALL SAINTS
VIGIL OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW
VIGIL OF ST. PETER
VIGIL OF THE ANNUNCIATION
VIGIL OF THE PRESENTATION
WAS THY WRATH AGAINST THE SEA?
WE ARE THOSE WHO TREMBLE AT THY WORD
WE KNOW NOT WHEN, WE KNOW NOT WHERE
WEARY IN WELL-DOING
WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK
WEE WEE HUSBAND
WEIGH ALL MY FAULTS AND FOLLIES RIGHTEOUSLY
WHAT ARE HEAVY? SEA-SAND AND SORROW
WHAT ARE THESE LOVELY ONES, YEA, WHAT ARE THESE?
WHAT DO THE STARS DO
WHAT DOES THE BEE DO?

WHAT DOES THE DONKEY BRAY ABOUT
WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?
WHAT GOOD SHALL MY LIFE DO ME?
WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!
WHAT IS IT JESUS SAITH UNTO THE SOUL?
WHAT IS PINK? A ROSE IS PINK
WHAT IS THAT TO THEE? FOLLOW THOU ME
WHAT IS THE BEGINNING? LOVE. WHAT THE COURSE? LOVE STILL
WHAT IS THIS ABOVE THY HEAD
WHAT SAPPHO WOULD HAVE SAID HAD HER LEAP CURED INSTEAD OF KILLING HER
WHAT TO DO?
WHAT WILL IT BE, O MY SOUL, WHAT WILL IT BE
WHAT WILL YOU GIVE ME FOR MY POUND?
WHAT WOULD I GIVE?
WHAT?
WHAT'S IN A NAME?
WHATSOEVER IS RIGHT, THAT SHALL YE RECEIVE
WHEN A MOUNTING SKYLARK SINGS
WHEN FISHES SET UMBRELLAS UP
WHEN I WAS IN TROUBLE I CALLED UPON THE LORD
WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED I WILL COMPLAIN
WHEN MY HEART IS VEXED, I WILL COMPLAIN
WHEN THE COWS COME HOME THE MILK IS COMING
WHEN WICKEDNESS IS BROKEN AS A TREE
WHERE INNOCENT BRIGHT-EYED DAISIES ARE
WHERE LOVE IS, THERE COMES SORROW
WHERE NEITHER RUST NOR MOTH DOTH CORRUPT
WHERE NEVER TEMPEST HEAVETH
WHERE SHALL I FIND A WHITE ROSE BLOWING?
WHERE THEIR WORM DIETH NOT, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED
WHITHER THE TRIBES GO UP, EVEN THE TRIBES OF THE LORD
WHITSUN DAY
WHITSUN EVE
WHITSUN EVE
WHITSUN MONDAY
WHITSUN TUESDAY
WHO CARES FOR EARTHLY BREAD THO' WHITE?
WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

WHO HATH DESPISED THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS?
WHO HAVE A FORM OF GODLINESS
WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH UP NOT ALONE
WHO SHALL DELIVER ME?
WHO SHALL MY WANDERING THOUGHTS STEADY & FIX
WHO SITS WITH THE KING IN HIS THRONE? NOT A SLAVE BUT A BRIDE
WHO WOULD WISH BACK THE SAINTS UPON OUR ROUGH
WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH
WHOSO HEARS A CHIMING FOR CHRISTMAS AT THE NIGHEST
WHY DID BABY DIE
WHY?
WIFE TO HUSBAND
WILL THESE HANDS NE'ER BE CLEAN?
WILL YOU BE THERE? MY YEARNING HEART HAS CRIED
WINTER RAIN
WINTER: MY SECRET
WISHES
WITHIN THE VEIL
WORSHIP GOD
WOULD THAT I WERE A TURNIP WHITE
WOULDST THOU GIVE ME A HEAVY JEWELED CROWN
WRENS AND ROBINS IN THE HEDGE
YE ARE COME UNTO MOUNT SION
YE HAVE FORGOTTEN THE EXHORTATION
YE THAT FEAR HIM, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT
YEA, BLESSED AND HOLY IS HE THAT HATH PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION!
YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE
YEA, IF THOU WILT, THOU CANST PUT UP THY SWORD
YEA, THE SPARROW HATH FOUND HER AN HOUSE
YES, I TOO COULD FACE DEATH AND NEVER SHRINK
YET A LITTLE WHILE
YET A LITTLE WHILE
YET A LITTLE WHILE
YOU WHO LOOK ON PASSED AGES AS A GLASS
YOUNG DEATH
YOUNG MEN AYE WERE FICKLE FOUND SINCE SUMMER TREES WERE LEAFY

YOUR BROTHER HAS A FALCON
ZARA
ZARA
ZARA
ZION SAID

The Fiction

Rossetti, painted by her brother in 1877

COMMONPLACE AND OTHER STORIES

This short story collection was originally published in 1870, when Rossetti was forty years old. The title story concerns the three Charlmont sisters, Catherine, Lucy and Jane, who live in Brompton-on-Sea. When their father is lost at sea, his devoted wife lies dying in childbirth, and charges Catherine, the eldest daughter, to await his return. Years later, and now in her thirties, Catherine remains loyal to her promise, resigning herself to a life of spinsterhood.

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THE LOST TITIAN.

NICK.

HERO.

VANNA'S TWINS.

A SAFE INVESTMENT.

PROS AND CONS.

THE WAVES OF THIS TROUBLESOME WORLD.
PART I.
PART II.

COMMONPLACE AND OTHER STORIES

'From sea to sea.'

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE earliest of these tales dates back to 1852, the latest was finished int 1870: a lapse of years sufficient to account for modifications of tone and style.

'Pros and Cons,' and 'The Waves of this Troublesome World,' were written each with a special object; which special object will, I hope, be accepted as my apology if the latter tale is judged too childish.

Not one of the stories is founded on fact. This might not seem worth stating, had I not reason to fear that one or two of my kindest friends have viewed 'The Lost Titian' somewhat in the light of an imposture. I therefore take this opportunity of putting on record that I am not conversant with any tradition which points to the existence of a lost picture by that great master with whose name I have made free.

C. G. R.

April 1870.

COMMONPLACE.

CHAPTER I.

BROMPTON-ON-SEA — any name not in ‘Bradshaw’ will do — Brompton-on-Sea in April.

The air keen and sunny; the sea blue and rippling, not rolling; everything green, in sight and out of sight, coming on merrily. Birds active over straws and fluff; a hardy butterfly abroad for a change; a second hardy butterfly dancing through mid-air, in and out, and round about the first. A row of houses all alike stands facing the sea — all alike so far as stucco fronts and symmetrical doors and windows could make them so: but one house in the monotonous row was worth looking at, for the sake of more numerous hyacinths and early roses in its slip of front garden, and on several of its window-sills. Judging by appearances, and for once judging rightly, this must be a private residence on an esplanade full of lodging-houses.

A pretty house inside too, snug in winter, fresh in summer; now in mid-spring sunny enough for an open window, and cool enough for a bright fire in the breakfast-room.

Three ladies sat at the breakfast-table, three maiden ladies, obviously sisters by strong family likeness, yet with individual differences strong also. The eldest, Catherine, Miss Charlmont, having entered her thirty-third year, had taken on all occasions to appearing in some sort of cap. She began the custom at thirty, when also she gave up dancing, and adopted lace over her neck and arms in evening dress. “Her manner was formal and kindly, savouring of the provinces rather than of the capital; but of the provinces in their towns, not in their old country seats. Yet she was a well-bred gentlewoman in all essentials, tall and fair, a handsome member of a handsome family. She presided over the tea and coffee, and, despite modern usage, retained a tea-tray.

Opposite her sat Lucy, less striking in features and complexion, but with an expression of quicker sensibility. Rather pretty and very sweet-looking, not turned thirty as yet, and on some points treated by Catherine as still a young thing. She had charge of the loaf and ham, and, like her elder sister, never indulged in opening letters till every one at table had been served.

The third, Jane, free of meat-and-drink responsibilities, opened letters or turned over the newspaper as she pleased. She was youngest by many years, and came near to being very beautiful. Her profile was almost Grecian, her eyes were large, and her fair hair grew in wavy abundance. At first sight she threw Catherine and Lucy completely into the shade; afterwards, in spite of their

additional years, they sometimes were preferred, for her face only of the three could be thought insipid. Pleasure and displeasure readily showed themselves in it, but the pleasure would be frivolous and the displeasure often unreasonable. A man might fall in love with Jane, but no one could make a friend of her; Catherine and Lucy were sure to have friends, however they might lack lovers.

On the morning when our story commences the elders were busied with their respective charges, whilst Jane already sipped her tea and glanced up and down the Births, Marriages, and Deaths, in the 'Times' Supplement. There she sat, with one elbow on the table and her long lashes showing to advantage over downcast eyes. Dress was with her a matter for deep study, and her pink-and-white breakfast suit looked as fresh and blooming as April's self. Her hair fell long and loose over her shoulders, in becoming freedom; and Catherine gazing at her felt a motherly pride in the pretty creature to whom, for years, she had performed a mother's duty; and Lucy felt how young and fresh Jane was, and remembered that she herself was turned twenty-nine: but if the thought implied regret it was untinctured by envy.

Jane read aloud: '"Halbert to Jane;" I wish I were Jane. And here, positively, are two more Janes, and not me. "Catherine" — that's a death. Lucy, I don't see you anywhere. Catherine was eighty-nine, and much respected. "Mrs. Anstruther of a son and heir." I wonder if those are the Anstruthers I met in Scotland: she was very ugly, and short. "Everilda Stella," — how can anybody be Everilda?' Then, with a sudden accession of interest, 'Why, Lucy, Everilda Stella has actually married your Mr. Hartley!'

Lucy started, but no one noticed her. Catherine said, 'Don't say "your" Mr. Hartley, Jane: that is not a proper way of speaking about a married gentleman to an unmarried lady. Say "the Mr. Hartley you know," or, "the Mr. Hartley you have met in London." Besides, I am acquainted with him also; and very likely it is a different person. Hartley is not an uncommon name.'

'Oh, but it is that Mr. Hartley, sister,' retorted Jane, and she read:

'"On Monday the 13th, at the parish-church, Fenton, by the Rev. James Durham, uncle of the bride, Alan Hartley, Esq. of the Woodlands, Gloucestershire, to Everilda Stella, only child and presumptive heiress of George Durham, Esq. of Orpingham Place, in the same county."'

CHAPTER II.

FORTY years before the commencement of this story, William Charlmont, an Indian army-surgeon, penniless, except for his pay, had come unexpectedly into some hundreds a year, left him by a maiden great-aunt, who had seen him but once, and that when he was five years old, on which occasion she boxed his ears for misspelling' elephant.' His stoicism under punishment, for he neither roared nor whined, may have won her heart; at any rate, from whatever motive, she, years afterwards, disappointed three nephews and a female first cousin by leaving every penny she was worth to him. This moderate accession of fortune justified him in consulting both health and inclination by exchanging regimental practice in India for general practice in England: and a combination of apparently trifling circumstances led him, soon after his return home, to settle at the then infant watering-place of Brompton-on-Sea, of which the reputation had just been made by a royal duke's visit; and the tide of fashion was setting to its shore.

The house in which our story opens then stood alone, and' belonged to a clergyman's widow. As she possessed, besides, an only daughter, and but a small life annuity — nothing more — she sought for a lodger, and was glad to find one in the new medical practitioner. The widow, Mrs. Turner, was, and felt herself to be, no less a gentlewoman when she let lodgings than when with her husband and child she had occupied the same house alone; no less so when after breakfast she donned a holland apron and helped Martha, the maid, to make Mr. Charlmont's bed, than when in old days she had devoted her mornings to visiting and relieving her poorer neighbours.

Her daughter, Kate, felt their altered fortunes more painfully; and showed, sometimes by uncomfortable bashfulness, sometimes by anxious self-assertion, how much importance she attached to the verdict of Mrs. Grundy. Her mother's holland apron was to her a daily humiliation, and single-handed Martha an irritating shortcoming. She chilled old friends by declining invitations, because her wardrobe lacked variety, and shunned new acquaintances lest they should call at some moment when herself or her mother might have to answer the door. A continual aim at false appearances made her constrained and affected; and persons who would never have dwelt upon the fact that Mrs. Turner let lodgings, were certain to have it recalled to mind by Miss Turner's uneasiness.

But Kate owned a pretty face, adorned by a pink-and-white complexion, most refreshing to eyes that had ached under an Indian sun. At first Mr. Charlmont set

her down as merely affected and silly; then he began to dwell on the fact that, however silly and affected, she was indisputably pretty; next he reflected that reverses of fortune deserve pity and demand every gentleman's most courteous consideration. In himself such consideration at once took the form of books lent from his library; of flowers for the drawing-room, and fruit for dessert. Kate, to do her justice, was no flirt, and saw without seeing his attentions; but her more experienced mother seeing, pondered, and seized, or made, an opportunity for checking her lodger's intimacy. Mr. Charlmont, however, was not to be rebuffed; opposition made him earnest, whilst the necessity of expressing his feelings gave them definiteness: and not many months later Kate, with the house for her dowry, became Mrs. William Charlmont, the obnoxious lodger developed into an attached and dear husband, and Mrs. Turner retired on the life annuity to finish her days in independence.

A few years passed in hopes and disappointments. When hope had dwindled to despondency a little girl came — Catherine; after another few years a second girl, named Lucy in memory of her grandmother Turner, who had not lived to see her namesake. Then more years passed without a baby; and in due course the sisters were sent to Miss Drum's school as day-boarders, their mother having become ailing and indolent.

Time went on, and the girls grew wiser and prettier — Catherine very pretty. When she was nearly twelve years old, Mr. Charlmont said one evening to his wife, 'I have made my will, Kate, and left everything to you in the first instance, and between the children after you.' And she answered, blushing — she was still comely, and a blush became her: — 'O William, but suppose another baby should come?"Well, I should make my will over again,' he replied: but he did not guess why his wife blushed and spoke eagerly; he had quite given up such hopes.

Mr. Charlmont was fond of boating, and one day, when the girls were at home for the Easter holidays, he offered to take them both for a row; but Catherine had a bad cold, and as Lucy was not a good sailor, he did not care to take charge of her without her sister. His wife never had liked boating. Thus it was that he went alone. The morning'was dull and chilly; but there was no wind, and the sea was almost smooth. He took dinner and fishing tackle in the boat with him, and gave notice that he should not be at home till the evening.

No wind, no sun; the day grew duller and duller, dimmer and dimmer. A smoke-like fog, beginning on land, spread from the cliffs to the beach, from the beach over the water's edge; further and further it spread, beyond sight; it might be for miles over the sea. No wind blew to shift the dense fog which hid seamarks and landmarks alike. As day waned towards evening, and darkness

deepened, all the fisher-folk gathered on the beach in pain and fear for those at sea. They lit a bonfire, they shouted, they fired off an old gun or two, such as they could get together, and still they watched, and feared, and hoped. Now one boat came in, now another; some guided by the glare, some by the sound of the firing: at last, by midnight, every boat had come in safe, except Mr. Charlmont's.

As concerned him, that night was only like all nights and all days afterwards; for neither man, nor boat, nor waif, nor stray from either, ever drifted ashore.

Mrs. Charlmont took the news of her husband's disappearance very quietly indeed. She did not cry or fret, or propose any measures for finding him; but she bade Catherine be sure to have tea ready when he came in. This she repeated every day, and often in the day; and would herself sit by a window looking out towards the sea, smiling and cheerful. If any one spoke to her she would answer at random, but quite cheerfully. She rose or went to bed when her old nurse called her, she ate and drank when food was set before her; but she originated nothing, and seemed indifferent to everything except the one anxiety, that tea should be ready for her husband on his return.

The holidays over, Lucy went back to Miss Drum's, trudging to and fro daily; but Catherine stayed at home to keep house and sit with her poor dazed mother.

A few months and the end came. One night nurse insisted with unusual determination on the girls going to bed early; but before daybreak Catherine was roused out of her sleep to see a new little sister and her dying mother.

Life was almost gone, and with the approach of death a sort of consciousness had returned. Mrs. Charlmont looked hard at Catherine, who was crying bitterly, and taking her hand said distinctly: 'Catherine, promise to stay here ready for your father when he comes on shore — promise some of you to stay here: don't let him come on shore and find me gone and no one — don't let the body come on shore and find us all gone and no one — promise me, Catherine!'

And Catherine promised.

Mr. Charlmont died a wealthy man. He had enjoyed a large lucrative practice, and had invested his savings profitably: by his will, and on their mother's death, an ample provision remained for his daughters. Strictly speaking, it remained for Catherine and Lucy: the baby, Jane, was unavoidably left dependent on her sisters; but on sisters who, in after-life, never felt that their own right to their father's property was more obvious or more valid than hers.

Mr. Charlmont had appointed but one trustee for his daughters — Mr. Drum, only brother of their schoolmistress, a thoroughly honest lawyer, practising and thriving in Brompton-on-Sea; a man somewhat younger than himself, who had speculated adroitly both with him and for him. On Mrs. Charlmont's death, Mr.

Drum proposed sending the two elder girls to a fashionable boarding-school near London, and letting nurse, with a wet-nurse under her, keep house in the old home with baby: but Catherine set her face against this plan, urging her promise to her dying mother as a reason for not going away; and so held to her point that Mr. Drum yielded, and agreed that the girls, who could not bear to be parted, should continue on the same terms as before at his sister's school. Miss Drum, an intimate friend of their mother's, engaged to take them into such suitable society as might offer until Catherine should come of age; and as she resided within two minutes' walk of their house, this presented no difficulty. At twenty-one, under their peculiar circumstances, Catherine was to be considered old enough to chaperone her sisters. Nurse, a respectable elderly woman, was to remain as housekeeper and personal attendant on the children; and a wet-nurse, to be succeeded by a nursery-girl, with two other maids, completed the household.

Catherine, though only in her thirteenth year, already looked grave, staid, and tall enough for a girl of sixteen, when these arrangements were entered into. The sense of responsibility waxed strong within her, and with the motherly position came something of the motherly instinct of self-postponement to her children.

CHAPTER III.

THE last chapter was parenthetical, this takes up the broken thread of the story. Breakfast over, and her sisters gone their several ways, Lucy Charlmont seized the 'Times' Supplement and read the Hartley-Durham paragraph over to herself: — 'On Monday the 13th, at the. parish church, Fenton, by the Rev. James Durham, uncle of the bride, Alan Hartley, Esq., of the Woodlands, Gloucestershire, to Everilda Stella, only child and presumptive heiress of George Durham, Esq., of Orpingham Place, in the same county.'

There remained no lurking-place for doubt. Mr. Hartley, — ' her 'Mr. Hartley, as Jane dubbed him, — had married Everilda Stella, a presumptive heiress. Thus concluded Lucy's one romance.

Poor Lucy! the romance had been no fault of hers, perhaps not even a folly: it had arisen thus. When Miss Charlmont was twenty-one Lucy was eighteen, and had formally come out under her sister's wing; thenceforward going with her to balls and parties from time to time, and staying with her at friends' houses in town or country. This paying visits had entailed the necessity of Jane's having a governess. Miss Drum had by that time 'relinquished tuition,' as she herself phrased it, and retired on a comfortable competence earned by her own exertions; therefore, to Miss Drum's school Jane could not go. Lucy, when the subject was started, declared, with affectionate impulsiveness, that she would not pay visits at all, or else that she and Catherine might pay them separately; but Catherine, who considered herself in the place of mother to both her sisters, and whose standard of justice to both alike was inflexible, answered, 'My dear' — when Miss Charlmont said 'my dear' it ended a discussion — ' My dear, Jane must have a governess. She shall always be with us in the holidays, and shall leave the schoolroom for good when she is eighteen, and old enough to enter society; but at present I must think of you and your prospects.' So Jane had a fashionable governess, fresh from a titled family, and versed in accomplishments and the art of dress, whilst Catherine commenced her duties as chaperone. Lucy thought that her sister, handsomer than herself and not much older, might have prospects too, and tried hard to discover chances for her; but Catherine nursed no such fancies on her own account. Her promise to her dying mother, that some one of them should always be on the spot at Brompton-on-Sea, literally meant at the moment, she resolved as literally to fulfil, even whilst she felt that only by one not fully in her right mind could such a promise have been exacted. Grave and formal in manner, dignified in person, and in disposition reserved, though

amiable, she never seemed to notice, or to return, attentions paid her by any man of her acquaintance; and if one of these ever committed himself so far as to hazard an offer, she kept his secret and her own.

Lucy, meanwhile, indulged on her own account the usual hopes and fears of a young woman. At first all parties and visits were delightful, one not much less so than another then a difference made itself felt between them; some parties turned out dull, and some visits tedious. The last year of Lucy's going everywhere with Catherine, before, that is, she began dividing engagements with Jane, — for until Lucy should be turned thirty, self-chaperoning was an inadmissible enormity in Miss Charlmont's eyes, in spite of what she had herself done; as she said, her own had been an exceptional case, — in that last year the two sisters had together spent a month with Dr. Tyke, whose wife had been before marriage another Lucy Charlmont, and a favourite cousin of their father's: concerning her, tradition even hinted that, in bygone years, she had refused the penniless army surgeon.

Be this as it may, at Mrs. Tyke's house in London, the sisters spent one certain June, and then and there Lucy 'met her fate,' as with a touch of sentiment, bordering on sentimentality, she recorded in her diary one momentous first meeting. Alan Hartley was a nephew of Dr.

Tyke's — handsome, and clever on the surface, if not deep within. He had just succeeded his father at the Woodlands, had plenty of money, no profession, and no hindrance to idling away any amount of time with any pretty woman who was pleasant company. Such a woman was Lucy Charlmont. He harboured no present thoughts of marriage, but she did; he really did pay just as much attention to a dozen girls elsewhere, but she judged by his manner to herself, and drew from it a false conclusion. That delightful June came to an end, and he had not spoken; but two years later occurred a second visit, as pleasant and as full of misunderstanding as the first. Meanwhile, she had refused more than one offer. Poor Lucy Charlmont: her folly, even if it was folly, had not been very blameable.

The disenchantment came no less painfully than unexpectedly: and Lucy, ready to cry, but ashamed of crying for such a cause, thrust the Supplement out of sight, and sitting down, forced herself to face the inevitable future. One thing was certain, she could not meet Alan — in her thoughts he had long been Alan, and now it cost her an effort of recollection to stiffen him back into Mr. Hartley — she must not meet Mr. Hartley till she could reckon on seeing him and his wife with friendly composure. Oh! why — why — why had she all along misunderstood him, and he never understood her? Not to meet him, it would be necessary, to decline the invitation from Mrs. Tyke, which she had looked

forward to and longed for during weeks past, and which, in the impartial judgment of Miss Charlmont, it was her turn, not Jane's, to accept; which, moreover, might arrive 'by any post. Jane she knew would be ready enough to pay a visit out of turn, but Catherine would want a reason; and what reason could she give? On one point, however, she was determined, that, with or without her reasons being accepted as reasonable, go she would not. Then came the recollection of a cracker she had pulled with him, and kept in her pocket-book ever since; and of a card he had left for her and her sister, or, as she had fondly fancied, mainly for herself, before the last return from Mrs. Tyke's to Brompton-on-Sea. Treasures no longer to be treasured, despoiled treasures, — she denied herself the luxury of a sigh, as she thrust them between the bars of the grate and watched them burn.

CHAPTER IV.

‘LUCY, Jane,’ said Miss Charlmont, some days afterwards, addressing her sisters, and holding up an open letter, — ’ Mrs. Tyke has sent a very kind invitation, asking me, with one of you, to stay a month at her house, and to fix the day. It is your turn, Lucy; so, if you have no objection, I shall write, naming next Thursday for our journey to London. Jane, I shall ask Miss Drum to stay with you during our absence; I think she will be all the better for a change, and there is no person more fit to have the charge of you. So don’t be ‘dull, dear, till we come back.’

But Jane pouted, and said in a cross tone, ‘Really, sister, you need not settle everything now for me, as if I were a baby. I don’t want Miss Drum, who is as old as the hills and as solemn. Can’t you write to Mrs. Tyke and say, that I cannot be left alone here? What difference could it make in her large house?’

For once Catherine answered her favourite sister with severity, ‘Jane, you know why it is impossible for us all to leave home together. This is the last year you will be called upon to remain behind, for after Lucy’s next birthday it is agreed between us that she will take turns with me in chaperoning you. Do not make what may be our last excursion together unpleasant by your unkindness.’

Still Jane was not silenced. ‘At any rate, it need not be Miss Drum. I will stay here alone, or I will have somebody more amusing than Miss Drum.’

Before Catherine could reply, Lucy with an effort struck into the dispute. ‘Jane,, don’t speak like that to our sister; I should be ashamed to speak to her so. Still, Catherine,’ she continued, without noticing a muttered retort from the other, ‘after all, I am going to sidè with Jane on the main point, and ask you to take her to Notting Hill, and leave me at home to keep house with dear old Miss Drum. This really was my own wish before Jane spoke, so pray let us not say another word on the subject.’

But Catherine saw how pale and languid she looked, and stood firm. ‘No, Lucy, that would be unreasonable; Jane ought not to have made any difficulty. You have lost your colour lately and your appetite, and need a change more than either of us.’ I shall write to Mrs. Tyke, promising her and the doctor your company next Thursday; Jane will make up her mind like a good girl, and I am sure you, my dear, will oblige me by not withholding your assent.’

For the first time ‘my dear’ did not close the debate. ‘Catherine,’ said Lucy, earnestly, whilst, do what she would, tears gathered in her eyes, ‘I am certain you will not press me further, when I assure you that I do not feel equal to

paying this visit. I have felt weak lately,' she went on hurriedly, 'and I cannot tell you how much I long-for-the quiet of a month at home rather than in that perpetual bustle. Merely for my own sake, Jane must go.'

Catherine said no more just then; but later, alone with Lucy, resumed the subject so far as to ask whether she continued in the same mind, and answered her flurried 'yes' by no word of remonstrance, but by an affectionate kiss. This was all which passed between them; neither then nor afterwards did the younger sister feel certain whether Catherine had or had not guessed her secret.

Miss Drum was invited to stay with Lucy in her solitude, and gladly accepted the invitation. Lucy was her favourite, and when they were together, they petted each other very tenderly.

Jane, having gained her point, recovered her good humour, and lost no time in exposing the deficiencies of her wardrobe. 'Sister,' she said, smiling her prettiest and most coaxing smile, 'you can't think how poor I am, and how few clothes I've got.'

Catherine, trying to appear serenely unconscious of the drift of this speech, replied, 'Let us look over your wardrobe, dear, and we will bring it into order. Lucy will help, I know, and we can have Miss Smith to work here too, if necessary.'

'Oh dear, no!' cried Jane; 'there is no looking over what does not exist. If it comes to furbishing up old tags and rags, here I stay. Why, you're as rich as Jews, you and Lucy, and could give me five pounds a-piece without ever missing it; and not so much of a gift either, for I'm sure poor papa would never have left me such a beggar if he had known about me.'

This argument had been used more than once before. Catherine looked hurt. Lucy said, 'You should remember that you have exactly the same allowance for dress and pocket-money that we have ourselves, and we both make it do.'

'Of course,' retorted Jane, with latent spitefulness; 'and when I'm as old and wise as you two, I may manage as well; but at present it is different. Besides, if I spend most on dress, you spend most on books and music, and dress is a great deal more amusing. And if I dressed like an old fright, I should like to know who'd look at me. You don't want me to be another old maid, I suppose.'

Lucy flushed up, and tried to keep her temper in silence: her sore point had been touched. Catherine, accustomed in such cases to protest first and yield afterwards, but half ashamed that Lucy's eye should mark the process from beginning to end, drew Jane out of the room, and with scarcely a word more wrote her a cheque for ten pounds, and dropped the subject of looking over her wardrobe.

An hour after the sisters had started for London, Miss Drum arrived to take

their place.

Miss Drum was tall in figure, rather slim and well preserved, with pale complexion, hair, and eyes, and an unvarying tone of voice. She was mainly describable by negatives. She was neither unladylike, nor clever, nor deficient in education. She was old, but not very infirm; and neither an altogether obsolete nor a youthful dresser, though with some tendency towards the former style. Propriety was the most salient of her attributes, and was just too salient to be perfect. She was not at all amusing; in fact, rather tiresome, with an unflagging intention of being agreeable. From her Catherine acquired a somewhat old-fashioned formality; from her, also, high principles, and the instinct of self-denial. And because unselfishness, itself a negative, was Miss Drum's characteristic virtue, and because her sympathy, however prosy in expression, was sterling in quality, therefore Lucy, sore with unavowed heart-sorrow, could bear her companionship, and run down to welcome her at the door with affectionate cordiality.

CHAPTER V.

LONDON-BRIDGE STATION, with its whirl of traffic, seems no bad emblem of London itself: vast, confused, busy, orderly, more or less dirty; implying enormous wealth in some quarter or other; providing luxuries for the rich, necessaries for the poor; thronged by rich and poor alike, idle and industrious, young and old, men and women.

London-Bridge Station at its cleanest is soiled by thousands of feet passing to and fro: on a drizzling day each foot deposits mud in its passage, takes and gives mud, leaves its impress in mud; on such a day the Station is not attractive to persons fresh from the unfailing cleanliness of sea coast and inland country; and on such a day, when, by the late afternoon, the drizzle had done, and the platform had suffered each its worst, — on such a day Miss Charlmont and her pretty sister, fresh and fastidious from sea salt and country sweetness, arrived at the Station.

Dr. Tyke's carriage was there to meet the train. Dr. Tyke's coachman, footman, and horses were fat, as befitted a fat master, whose circumstances and whose temperament might be defined as fat also; for ease, good-nature, and fat have an obvious affinity.

'Should the hood be up or down?' The rain had ceased, and Miss Charlmont, who always described London as stifling, answered, 'Up.' Jane, leaning back with an elegant ease, which nature had given and art perfected, felt secretly ashamed of Catherine, who sat bolt upright, according to her wont, and would no more have lolled in an open carriage than on the high-backed, scant-seated chair of her schooldays.

The City looked at once dingy and glaring; dingy with unconsumed smoke, and glaring here and there with early-lighted gas. When Waterloo Bridge had been crossed matters brightened somewhat, and Oxford Street showed not amiss. Along the Edgware Road dirt and dinginess re-asserted their sway; but when the carriage finally turned into Notting Hill, and drove amongst the Crescents, Roads, and Gardens of that cleanly suburb, a winding-up shower, brisk and brief, not drizzly, cleared the way for the sun, and finished off the afternoon with a rainbow.

Dr. Tyke's abode was named Appletrees House, though the orchard whence the name was derived had disappeared before the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The carriage drew up, the door swung open: down the staircase came

flying a little, slim woman, with outstretched hands and words of welcome; auburn-haired, though she had outlived the last of the fifties, and cheerful, though the want of children had not ceased to be felt as a hopeless disappointment: a pale-complexioned, high-voiced, little woman, all that remained of that fair cousin Lucy of bygone years and William Charlmont.

Behind her, and more deliberately, descended her husband, elastic of step, rotund of figure, bright-eyed, rosy, white-headed, not altogether unlike a robin redbreast that had been caught in the snow. Mrs. Tyke had a habit of running on with long-winded, perfectly harmless commonplaces; but notwithstanding her garrulity, she never uttered an ill-natured word or a false one. Dr. Tyke, burdened with an insatiable love. of fun, and a ready, if not a witty, wit, was addicted to venting jokes, repartees, and so-called anecdotes; the last not always unimpeachably authentic.

Such were the hosts. The house was large and light, with a laboratory for the Doctor, who dabbled in chemistry, and an aviary for his wife, who doted on pets. The walls of the sitting-rooms were hung with engravings, not with family portraits, real or sham: in fact, no sham was admitted within doors, unless imaginary anecdotes and quotations must be stigmatized as shams; and as to these, when taxed with invention, the Doctor would only reply by his favourite Italian phrase: '*Se non è vero è ben trovato.'*

'Jane,' said Mrs. Tyke, as the three ladies sat over a late breakfast, the Doctor having already retreated to the laboratory and his newspaper: — 'Jane, I think you have made a conquest.'

Jane looked down in silence, with a conscious simper. Catherine spoke rather anxiously: 'Indeed, Cousin Lucy, I have noticed what you allude to, and I have spoken to Jane about not encouraging Mr. Durham. He is not at all a man she can really like, and she ought to be most careful not to let herself be misunderstood. Jane, you ought indeed.'

But Jane struck merrily in: 'Mr. Durham is old enough and — ahem! — handsome enough to take care of himself, sister. And, besides,' with a touch of mimicry, which recalled his pompous manner, 'Orpingham Place, my dear madam, Orpingham Place is a very fine place, a very fine place indeed. Our pineapples can really hardly be got rid of, and our prize pigs can't see out of their eyes; they can't indeed, my dear young lady, though it's not pretty talk for a pretty young lady to listen to. — Very well, if the pines and the pigs are smitten, why shouldn't I marry the pigs and the pines?'

'Why not?' cried Mrs. Tyke with a laugh; but Miss Charlmont, looking disturbed, rejoined: 'Why not, certainly, if you like Mr. Durham; but do you like Mr. Durham? And, whether or not, you ought not to laugh at him.'

Jane pouted: ‘Really one would think I was a child still! As to Mr. Durham, when he knows his own mind and speaks, you may be, quite sure I shall know my own mind and give him his answer. — Orpingham Place, my dear Miss Catherine, the finest place in the county; the finest place in three counties, whatever my friend the Duke may say. A charming neighbourhood, Miss Catherine; her Grace the Duchess, the most affable woman you can imagine, and my lady the Marchioness, a fine woman — a very fine woman. But they can’t raise such pines as my pines; they can’t do it, you know; they haven’t the means, you know. — Come now, sister, don’t look cross; when I’m Mrs. Durham you shall have your slice off the pigs and the pines.’

CHAPTER VI.

EVERILDA STELLA, poor Lucy's unconscious rival, had married out of the schoolroom. Pretty she was not, but with much piquancy of face and manner, and a talent for private theatricals. These advantages, gilded, perhaps, by her reputation as presumptive heiress, attracted, to her a suitor, to Whose twenty years' seniority she felt no objection. Mr. Hartley wooed and won her in the brief space of an Easter holiday; and bore her, nothing loth, to London, to enjoy the gaieties of the season. Somewhat to the bridegroom's annoyance, Mr. Durham accompanied the newly-married couple to town, and shared their pretty house at Kensington.

Alan Hartley, a favourite nephew of Dr. Tyke, had, as we know, been very intimate at his house in old days. Now he was proud to present his little wife of sixteen to his uncle and aunt, though 'somewhat mortified at having also to introduce his father-in-law, whose pompous manners, and habit of dragging titled personages into his discourse, put him to the blush. Alan had dropped Everilda, and called his wife simply Stella; her father dubbed her Pug; Everilda she was named, in accordance with the taste of her peerage-studious mother. This lady was accustomed to describe herself as of a north-country family — a Leigh of the Leazes; which conveyed an old-manorial notion to persons unacquainted with Newcastle-on-Tyne. But this by the way: Mrs. Durham had died before the opening of our tale.

At their first visit they were shown into the drawing-room by a smiling maid-servant, and requested to wait, as Dr. and Mrs. Tyke were expected home every moment. Stella looked very winning in her smart hat and feather and jaunty jacket, and Alan would have abandoned himself to all the genial glow of a bridegroom, but for Mr. Durham's behaviour. That gentleman began by placing his hat on the floor between his feet, and flicking his boots with a crimson silk pocket-handkerchief. This done, he commenced a survey of the apartment, accompanied by an apt running comment, — 'Hem, no pictures — cheap engravings; a four-and-sixpenny Brussels carpet; a smallish mirror, wants regilding.. Pug, my pet, that's a neat antimacassar: see if you can't carry off the stitch in your eye. A piano — a harp; fiddlestick!'

When Dr. and Mrs. Tyke entered, they found the Hartleys looking uncomfortable, and Mr. Durham red and pompous after his wont; also, in opening the door, they caught the sound of 'fiddlestick!' All these symptoms, with the tact of kindness, they ignored. The. bride was kissed, the father-in-law

taken for granted, and Alan welcomed as if no one in the room had looked guilty.

‘Come to lunch and take a hunch,’ said the Doctor, offering his arm to Stella. ‘Mother Bunch is rhyme, but not reason; you shall munch and I will scrunch — that’s both. “Ah!

you may well look surprised,” as the foreign ambassador admitted when the ancient Britons noticed that he had no tail. But you won’t mind when you know us better; I’m no worse than a barrel-organ.’ — .

Yet with all Dr. Tyke’s endeavour to be funny, and this time it cost him an effort, and with all his wife’s facile commonplaces, two of the guests seemed ill at ease. Alan felt, as it were with every nerve, the impression his father-in-law must produce, while Stella, less sensitive for herself, was out of countenance for her husband’s sake. Mr. Durham, indeed, was pompous and unabashed as ever; but whilst he answered commonplace remarks by remarks no less commonplace, he appeared to be, as in fact he was, occupied in scrutinizing, and mentally valuing, the plate and china.

‘Charming weather,’ said Mrs. Tyke, with an air of intelligent originality.

‘Yes, ma’am; fine weather, indeed; billing and cooing weather; ha! ha! ‘with a glance across the table.’ Now I dare say your young ladies know what to do in this weather.’

‘We have no children,’ and Mrs. Tyke whispered, lest her husband should hear. Then, after a pause, ‘I dare say Orpingham Place was just coming into beauty when you left.’

Mr. Durham thrust his thumbs into his waistcoat-pockets, and leaned back for conversation. ‘Well, I don’t know what to say to that, — I don’t indeed; I don’t know which the season is when Orpingham Place is *not* in beauty. Its conservatories were quite a local lion last winter — quite a local lion, as my friefid the Duke remarked to me; and he said he must bring the Duchess over to see them, and he did bring her Grace over; and I gave them a luncheon in the largest conservatory, such as I don’t suppose they sit down to every day. For the nobility have blood, if you please, and the literary beggars are welcome to all the brains they’ve got ‘(the Doctor smiled, Alan winced visibly);’ but you’ll find it’s us city men who’ve got backbone, and backbone’s the best to wear, as I observed to the Duke that very day when I gave him such a glass of port as he hasn’t got in his cellar. I said it to him, just as I say it to you, ma’am, and he didn’t contradict me; in fact, you know, he couldn’t.’

After this it might have been difficult to start conversation afresh, when, happily, Jane entered, late for luncheon, and with an apology for her sister, who was detained elsewhere. She went through the necessary introductions, and took

her seat between Dr. Tyke and Mr. Durham, thus commanding an advantageous view of the bride, whom she mentally set down as nothing particular in any way.

Alan had never met Jane before. He asked her after Miss Charlmont and Lucy, after Lucy especially, who was ‘a very charming old friend’ of his, as he explained to Stella. For some minutes Mr. Durham sat silent, much impressed by Jane’s beauty and grace; this gave people breathing-time for the recovery of ease and good humour; and it was not till Dr. Tyke had uttered three successive jokes, and every one, except Mr. Durham, had laughed at them, that the master of Orpingham Place could think of any remark worthy of his attractive neighbour; and then, with much originality, he too observed, — ’ Charming weather, Miss Jane.’

And Jane answered with a smile; for was not this the widower of Orpingham Place?

That Mr. Durham’s conversation on subsequent occasions gained in range of subject, is clear from Jane’s quotations in the last chapter. And that Mr. Durham was alive to Jane’s fascinations appeared pretty evident, as he not only called frequently at Appletrees House, but made up parties, to which Dr. and Mrs. Tyke, and the Miss Charlmonts, were invariably asked.

CHAPTER VII.

GAIETY in London, sadness by the sea.

Lucy did her very best to entertain Miss Drum with the cheerfulness of former visits; in none of which had she shown herself more considerate of the old lady's tastes than now. She made breakfast half-an-hour earlier than usual; she culled for her interesting scraps from the newspaper; she gave her an arm up and down the Esplanade on sunny days; she reclaimed the most unpromising strayed stitches in her knitting; she sang her old-fashioned favourite ballads for an hour or so before tea-time, and after tea till bed-time played energetically at backgammon: yet Miss Drum was sensible of a change. All Lucy's efforts could not make her cheeks rosy and plump, and her laugh spontaneous; could not make her step elastic or her eyes bright.

'It is easy to ridicule a woman nearly thirty years old for fancying herself beloved without a word said, and suffering deeply under disappointment: yet Lucy Charlmont was no contemptible person. However at one time deluded, she had never let a hint of her false hopes reach Mr. Hartley's observation; and however now disappointed, she fought bravely against a betrayal of her plight. Alone in her own room she might suffer visibly and keenly, but with any eye upon her she would not give way. Sometimes it felt as if the next moment the strain on her nerves might wax unendurable; but such a next moment never came, and she endured still. Only, who is there strong enough, day after day, to strain strength to the utmost, and yet give no sign?

'My dear,' said Miss Drum, contemplating Lucy over her spectacles and across the backgammon-board one evening when the eyes looked more sunken than ever, and the whole face more haggard, 'I am sure you do not take exercise enough. You really must do more than give me an arm on the Esplanade; all your bloom is gone, and you are much too thin. Promise me that' you will take at least one long walk in the day whenever the weather is not unfavourable.'

Lucy stroked her old friend's hand fondly: 'I will take walks when my sisters are at home again; but I have not you here always.'

Miss Drum insisted: 'Do not say so, my dear, or I shall feel bound to go home again; and that I should not like at all, as we both know. Pray oblige me by promising.'

Thus urged, Lucy promised, and in secret rejoiced that for at least an hour or two of the day she should thenceforward be alone, relieved from the scrutiny of those dim, affectionate eyes. And truly she needed some relief. By day she could

forbid her thoughts to shape themselves, even mentally, into words, although no effort could banish the vague, dull sorrow which was all that might now remain to her of remembrance. But by night, when sleep paralysed self-restraint, then her dreams were haunted by distorted spectres of the past; never alluring or endearing — for this she was thankful — but sometimes monstrous, and always impossible to escape from. Night after night she would awake from such dreams', struggling and sobbing, with less and less conscious strength to resume daily warfare.

Soon she allowed no weather to keep her indoors at the hour for walking, and Miss Drum, who was a hardy disciple of the old school, encouraged her activity. She always sought the sea, not the smooth, civilised esplanade, but the rough, irreclaimable shingle; — to stray to and fro till the last moment of her freedom; to and fro, to and fro, at once listless and unresting, with wide, absent eyes fixed on the monotonous waves, which they did not see. Gradually a morbid fancy grew upon her that one day she should behold her father's body washed ashore, and that she should know the face: from a waking fancy, this began to haunt her dreams with images unutterably loathsome. Then she walked no more on the shingle, but took to wandering along green lanes and country roads.

But no one struggling persistently against weakness falls to overcome: also, however prosaic the statement may sound, air and exercise *will* take effect on persons of sound constitution. Something of Lucy's lost colour showed itself, by fits and starts at first, next steadily; her appetite came back, however vexed she might feel at its return; at last fatigue brought sounder sleep, and the hollow eyes grew less sunken. This refreshing sleep was the turning-point in her case; it supplied strength for the day, whilst each day in its turn brought with it fewer and fewer demands upon her strength. Seven weeks after Miss Drum exacted the promise, Lucy, though graver of aspect, and at heart sadder than before Alan Hartley's wedding, had recovered in a measure her look of health and her interest in the details of daily life. She no longer greatly dreaded meeting her sisters when at length their much-prolonged absence should terminate; and in spite of some nervousness in the anticipation, felt confident that even a sight of Mr. and Mrs. Hartley would not upset the outward composure of her decorum.

Miss Drum triumphed in the success of her prescription, and brought forward parallel instances within her own experience. 'That is right,' she would say, 'my dear; take another slice of the mutton where it is not overdone. There is nothing like exercise for giving an appetite, only the mutton should not be overdone. You cannot remember Sarah Smith, who was with me before your dear mother entrusted you to my care; but I assure you three doctors had given her over as a confirmed invalid when I prescribed for her;' and the old lady laughed gently at

her own wit. ‘I made her take a walk every day, let the weather be what it might; and gave her nice, juicy mutton to eat, with a change to beef, or a chicken, now and then for variety; and very soon you would not have known her for the same girl; and Dr. Grey remarked, in his funny way, that I ought to be an M.D. myself.’ Or, again: ‘Lucy, my dear, you recollect my French assistant, Mademoiselle Leclerc, what a fine, strong young woman she was when you knew her. Now when she first came to me she was pale and peaking, afraid of wet feet or an open window; afraid of this, that, and the other, always tired, and with no appetite except for sweets. Mutton and exercise made her what you remember; and before she went home to France to marry an old admirer, she thanked me with tears in her eyes for having made her love mutton. She said “love” when she should have said “like;” but I was too proud and pleased to correct her English then, I only answered, “Ah, dear Mademoiselle, always love your husband and love your mutton.”‘

Lucy had a sweet, plaintive voice, to which her own secret sorrow now added a certain simple pathos; and when in the twilight she sang’ Alice Grey,’ or ‘She wore a wreath of roses,’ or some other old favourite, good Miss Drum would sit and listen till the tears gathered behind her spectacles. Were tears in the singer’s eyes also? She thought now with more tenderness than ever before of the suitors she had rejected in her hopeful, happy youth, especially of a certain Mr. Tresham, who had wished her all happiness as he turned to leave her in his dignified regret. She had always had a great liking for Mr. Tresham, and now she could feel for him.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON the 28th of June, four letters came to Lucy by the first delivery: —

I.
My dear Lucy, Pray do not think me thoughtless if I once more ask whether you will sanction an extension of our holiday. Mrs. Tyke presses us to remain with her through July, and Dr.' Tyke is no less urgent. When I hinted that their hospitality had already been trespassed upon, the Doctor quoted Hone (as he said: I doubt if it is there): —

'In July
No good-bye;
In August
Part we must.'

I then suggested that you may be feeling moped at home, and in want of change; but, of course, the Doctor had still an answer ready: — Tell Lucy from me, that if she takes you away I shall take it very ill, as the homoeopath said when his learned brother substituted cocoa-nibs for champagne.' And all the time Cousin Lucy was begging us to stay, and Jane was looking at me so earnestly: in short, dear Lucy, if 'No' must be said, pray will you say it; for I have been well-nigh talked over.

And, indeed, we must make allowances for Jane, if she seems a little selfish; for, to let you into a secret, I believe she means to accept Mr. Durham if he makes her the offer we all are expecting from him. At first I was much displeased at her giving him any encouragement, for it appeared to me impossible that she could view his attentions with serious approbation: but I have since become convinced that she knows her own mind, and is not trifling with him. How it is possible for her to contemplate union with one so unrefined and ostentatious I cannot conceive, but I have no power to restrain her; and when I endeavoured to exert my influence against him, she told me in the plainest terms that she preferred luxury with Mr. Durham to dependence without him. Oh, Lucy, Lucy! have we ever given her cause to resent hef position so bitterly? Were she my own child, I do not think I could love her more or care for her more anxiously: but she has never understood me, never done me justice. I speak of myself only, not of you also, because I shall never marry, and all I have has

been held simply in trust for her: with you it is, and ought to be, different.

But you must not suffer for Jane's wilfulness. If you are weary of our absence I really must leave her under Cousin Lucy's, care — for she positively declines to accompany me home at present — and return to every-day duties. I am sick enough of pleasuring, I do assure you, as it is; though, were Mr. Durham a different man, I should only rejoice, as you may suppose.

Well, as to news, there is not much worth transmitting. Jane has been to the Opera three times, and to the English play once. Mr. Durham sends the boxes, and Dr. and Mrs. Tyke never tire of the theatre. The last time they went to the Opera they brought home with them to supper Mr. Tresham, whom you may recollect our meeting here more than once, and who has lately returned to England from the East. Through some misunderstanding he expected to see you instead of me, and looked out of countenance for a moment: then he asked after you, and begged me to remember him to you when I wrote. He appeared much interested in hearing our home news, and concerned when I mentioned that you have seemed less strong lately. Pray send compliments for him when next you write, in case we should see him again.

Mr. Hartley I always liked, and now I like his wife also: she is an engaging little thing, and gets us all to call her Stella. You, I am sure, will be fond of her when you know her. How I wish her father resembled her! She is as simple and as merry as a bird, and witnesses Mr. Durham's attentions to Jane with perfect equanimity. As to Mr. Hartley, he seems as much amused as if the bulk of his wife's enormous fortune were not at stake; yet any one must see the other man is in earnest. Stella is reckoned a clever actress, and private theatricals of some sort are impending. I say 'of some sort,' because Jane, who is indisputably the beauty of our circle, would prefer *tableaux vivants;* and I know not which will carry her point.

My love, to Miss Drum. Don't think me selfish for proposing to remain longer away from you; but, indeed, I am being drawn in two opposite directions by two dear sisters, of whom I only wish that one had as much good sense and good taste as the other.

Your affectionate sister, CATHERINE CHARLMONT.

II.

My dear Lucy,

I know Catherine is writing, and will make the worst of everything, just as if I was cut out to be an old maid.

Surely at my age one may know one's own mind; and, though I'm not going to say before I am asked whether I like Mr. Durham, we are all very well aware,

my dear Lucy, that I like money and comforts. It's one thing for Catherine and you, who have enough and to spare, to split hairs as to likes and dislikes; but it's quite another for me who have not a penny of my own, thanks to poor dear papa's blindness. Now do be a dear, and tell sister she is welcome to stay this one month more; for, to confess the truth, if I remain here alone I may find myself at my wit's end for a pound or two one of these days. Dress is so dear, and I had rather never go out again than be seen a dowdy; and if we are to have *tableaux* I shall want all sorts of things. I don't hold at all with charades and such nonsense, in which people are supposed to be witty; give me a piece in which one's arms are of some use; but of course, Stella, who has no more arm than a pump-handle, votes for theatricals.

The Hartleys are coming to-day, and, of course, Mr. Durham, to take us after luncheon to the Crystal Palace. There is a grand concert coming off, and a flower-show, which would all be yawny enough but for the toilettes. I dare say I shall see something to set me raving; just as last time I was at the Botanic Gardens, I pointed out the loveliest suit of Brussels lace over white silk; but I might as well ask Catherine for wings to fly with.

Good-bye, my dear Lucy. Don't be cross this once, and when I have a house of my own, I 'll do you a good turn.

Your affectionate sister,

JANE.

P.S. I enclose Mr. Durham's photograph, which he fished and fished to make me ask for, so at last I begged it to gratify the poor man. Don't you see all Orpingham Place in his speaking countenance?

III.

My dearest Lucy,

You owe me a kindness to balance my disappointment at missing your visit. So please let Catherine know that she and Jane may give us a month more. Dr. Tyke wishes it no iess than I do, and Mr. Durham perhaps more than either of us; but a word to the wise.

Your affectionate cousin,

LUCY C. TYKE.

P.S. The Doctor won't send regards, because he means to write to you himself.

IV.

Dear Lucy,

If you agree with the snail, you find your house just the size for one; and lest bestial example should possess less force than human, I further remind you of what Realmah the Great affirms, — ' I met two blockheads, but the one sage kept himself to himself.' All which sets forth to you the charms of solitude, which, as you are such a proper young lady, is, of course, the only anybody you can be in love with, and of whose society I am bent on affording you prolonged enjoyment.

This can be effected, if your sisters stay here another month, and indeed you must not say us nay; for on your 'yes' hangs a tale which your 'no' may for ever forbid to wag. Miss Catherine looks glummish, but Jenny is all sparkle and roses, like this same month of June; and never is she more sparkling or rosier than when the master of Orpingham Place hails her with that ever fresh remark, 'Fine day, Miss Jane.' Don't nip the summer crops of Orpingham Place in the bud, or, rather, don't retard them by unseasonable frost; for I can't fancy my friend will be put off with anything less than a distinct 'no;' and when it comes; to that, I think Miss Jane, in her trepidation, will say 'yes.' And if you are a good girl, and let the little one play out her play, when she has come into the sugar and spice and all that's nice, you shall come to Notting Hill this very next May, and while the sun shines make your hay.

Your venerable cousin's husband (by which I merely mean), Your cousin's venerable husband,

FRANCIS TYKE, M.D.

N.B. I append M.D. to remind you of my professional status, and so quell you by the weight of my advice.

Lucy examined the photograph of Mr. Durham with a double curiosity, for he was Mr. Hartley's father-in-law as well as Jane's presumptive suitor. She looked, and saw a face not badly featured, but vulgar in expression; a figure not amiss, but ill at ease in its studied attitude and superfine clothes. Assuredly it was not George Durham, but the master of Orpingham Place who possessed attractions for Jane; and Lucy felt, for a sister who could be thus attracted, the sting of a humiliation such as her own baseless hopes had never cost her.

Each of her correspondents was answered with judicious variation in the turn of the sentences. To Jane she wrote dryly, returning Mr. Durham's portrait wrapped in a ten-pound note; an arrangement which, in her eyes, showed a symbolic appropriateness, lost for the moment on her sister. Catherine she

answered far more affectionately, begging her on no account to curtail a visit which might be of importance to Jane's prospects; and on the flap of the envelope, she added compliments to Mr. Tresham.

CHAPTER IX.

Mr. TRESHAM had loved Lucy Charlmont sincerely, and until she refused him had entertained a good hope of success. Even at the moment of refusal she avowed the liking for him which all through their acquaintance had been obvious; and then, and not till then, it dawned upon him that her indifference towards himself had its root in preference for another. But he was far too honourable a man either to betray or to aim at verifying his suspicion; and though he continued to visit at Dr. Tyke's, where Alan Hartley was so often to be seen idling away time under the comfortable conviction that he was doing no harm to himself or to any one else, it was neither at once, nor of set purpose, that Arthur Tresham penetrated Lucy's secret. Alan and himself had been College friends; he understood him thoroughly; his ready good-nature, which seemed to make every one a principal person in his regard; his open hand" that liked spending; his want of deep or definite purpose; his unconcern as to possible consequences. Then Lucy, — in whom Mr. Tresham had been on one. point wofully mistaken, — she was so composed and so cordial to all her friends; there was about her such womanly sweetness, such unpretentious, dignified reserve towards all: her face would light up so brightly when he, or any other, spoke what interested her, not seldom, certainly, when *he* spoke: — even after a sort of clue had come into his hands, it was some time before he felt sure of any difference between her manner to Alan and to others. When the conviction forced itself upon him, he grieved more for her than for himself; he knew his friend too intimately to mistake his pleasure in being amused for any anxiety to make himself beloved; he knew about Alan much that Lucy did not and could not guess, and from the beginning inferred the end.

In -the middle of that London season Catherine and Lucy returned to Brompton-on-Sea; and before August had started the main stream of tourists from England to the continent, Mr. Tresham packed up his knapsack, and, staff in hand, set off on a solitary expedition, of undetermined length, to the East. He was neither a rich nor a poor man; had been called to the bar, but without pursuing his profession, and was not tied to any given spot; he went away to recruit his spirits, and, having recovered them, stayed on out of sheer enjoyment. Yet, when one morning his eye lighted on the Hartley-Durham marriage in the 'Times' Supplement, home feeling stirred within him; and he who, twenty-four hours earlier, knew not whether he might not end his days beside the blue Bosphorus, on the evening of that same day had started westward.

He felt curious, he would not own to himself that he felt specially interested, to know how Lucy fared; and he felt curious, in a minor degree, to inspect her successful rival.

With himself Lucy had not yet had a rival; not yet, perhaps she might one day, he repeated to himself, only it had not happened yet. And then the sweet, dignified face rose before him kind and cheerful; cheerful still in his memory, though he guessed that now it must look saddened. He had never yet seen it with a settled expression of sadness, and he knew not how to picture it so.

Mr. Drum — or Mr. Gawkins Drum, as he scrupulously called himself, on account of a' certain Mr. Drum, who lived somewhere and went nowhere, and was held by all outsiders to be in his dotage — Miss Drum's brother, Mr. Gawkins Drum, had for several years stood as a gay young bachelor of sixty. Not that, strictly speaking, any man (or, alas! any woman) can settle down at sixty and there remain; but at the last of a long series of avowed birthday parties, Mr. Drum had drunk his own health as being sixty that very day; this was now some years ago, and still, in neighbourly parlance, Mr. Drum was no more than sixty. At sixty-something-indefinite Gawkins brought home a bride, who confessed to sixty; and all Brompton-on-Sea indulged in a laugh at their expense, till it oozed out that the kindly old couple had gone through all the hopes and disappointments of a many years' engagement, begun at a reasonable age for such matters, and now terminated only because the bedridden brother, to whom the bride had devoted herself during an ordinary lifetime, had at last ended his days in peace. Mr. and Mrs. Gawkins Drum forestalled their neighbours' laugh by their own, and soon the laugh against them died out, and every one accepted their house as amongst the pleasantest resorts in Brompton-on-Sea.

Miss Drum, however, felt less leniently towards her brother and sister-in-law, and deliberately regarded them from a shocked point of view. The wedding took place at Richmond, where the bride resided; and the honeymoon came to an end whilst Lucy entertained her old friend, during that long visit at Notting Hill, which promised to colour all Jane's future.

'My dear,' said Miss Drum to her deferential listener; 'My dear, Sarah,' — and Lucy felt that that offending Sarah could only be the bride, — 'Sarah' shall not suffer for Gawkins' folly and her own. I will not fail to visit her in her new home, and to notice her on all proper occasions, but I cannot save her from being ridiculous. I did not wait till I was sixty to make up my mind against wedlock, though perhaps' — and the old lady bridled — 'I also may have endured the

preference of some infatuated man. Lucy, my dear, take an old woman's advice: marry, if you mean to marry, before you are sixty, or else remain like myself; otherwise, you make yourself simply ridiculous.'

And Lucy, smiling, assured her that she would either marry before sixty or not at all; and added, with some earnestness, that she did not think she should ever marry. To which Miss Drum answered with stateliness: 'Very well; do one thing or do the other, only do not become ridiculous.'

Yet the old lady softened that evening, when she found herself, as it were, within the radius of the contemned bride. Despite her sixty years, and in truth she looked less than her age, Mrs. Gawkins Drum was a personable little woman, with plump red cheeks, gentle eyes, and hair of which the soft brown was threaded, but not overpowered, by grey. There was no affectation of youthfulness in her gown, which was of slate-coloured silk; nor in her cap, which came well on her head; nor in her manner to her guests, which was cordial; nor in her manner to her husband, which was affectionate, with the undemonstrative affectionateness that might now have been appropriate had they married forty years earlier.

Her kiss of welcome was returned frostily by Miss Drum, warmly by Lucy. Mr. Drum at first looked a little sheepish under his sister's severe salutation. Soon all were seated at tea.

'Do you take cream and sugar?' asked the bride, looking at her new sister.

'No sugar, I thank you,' was the formal reply. 'And it will be better, Sarah, that you should call me Elizabeth. Though I am an old woman your years do not render it unsuitable, and I wish to be sisterly.'

'Thank you, dear Elizabeth,' answered Mrs. Gawkins, cheerily; 'I hope, indeed, we shall be sisterly. It would be sad times with me if I found I had brought coldness into my new home.'

But Miss Drum would not thaw yet. 'Yes, I have always maintained, and I maintain still, that there must be faults on both sides if a marriage, if any marriage whatever, introduces dissension into a family circle. And I will do my part, Sarah.'

'Yes, indeed;' but Sarah knew not what more to say.

Mr. Drum struck in, — 'Lucy, my dear' — she had been a little girl perched on his knee when her father asked him years before to be trustee, — 'Lucy, my dear, you're not in full bloom. Look at my old lady, and guess: what's a recipe for roses?'

'For shame, Gawkins!' cried both old ladies; one with a smile, the other with a frown.

Still, as the evening wore on, Miss Drum slowly thawed. Having, as it were

once for all, placed her hosts in the position of culprits at the moral bar, having sat in judgment on them, and convicted them in the ears of all men (represented by Lucy), she admitted them to mercy, and dismissed them with a qualified pardon. What most softened her towards the offending couple was their unequivocal profession of rheumatism. When she unbendingly declined to remain seated at the supper-table one minute beyond half-past ten, she alleged rheumatism as her impelling motive; and Gawkins and Sarah immediately proclaimed their own rheumatic experience and sympathies. As Miss Drum observed to Lucy on their way home, 'Old people don't confess to rheumatism if they wish to appear young.'

Thus the feud subsided, though Miss Drum to the end of her life occasionally spoke of her sister-in-law as 'that poor silly thing,' and of her brother as of one who should have known better.

Whilst, on her side, Mrs. Gawkins Drum remarked to her husband, 'What a very old-looking woman that Miss Charlmont is, if she's not thirty, as you say. I never saw such an old, faded-looking woman of her age.'

CHAPTER X.

PARTIES ran high at Kensington and Notting Hill. Stella stood up for charades, Jane for tableaux. Mr. Hartley naturally sided with his wife, Miss Charlmont held back from volunteering any opinion, Mrs. Tyke voted for the last speaker, Dr. Tyke ridiculed each alternative; at last Mr. Durham ingeniously threw his weight into both scales, and won for both parties a partial triumph. 'Why not,' asked he, — 'why not let Pug speak, and Miss Jane be silent?'

This pacific suggestion once adopted, Dr. Tyke proposed that a charade word should be fixed upon, and performed by speech or spectacle, as might suit the rival stars; for instance, Love-apple.

But who was to be Love?

Everybody agreed in rejecting little boys; and Jane, when directly appealed to, refused to represent the Mother of love and laughter; 'for,' as she truly observed, 'that would not be Love, after all.' Mr. Durham, looking laboriously gallant, aimed at saying something neat and pointed; he failed, yet Jane beamed a smile upon his failure. Then Dr. Tyke proposed a plaster Cupid; this, after some disputing, was adopted, with vague accessories of processional Greek girls, to be definitely worked out afterwards. For 'Apple' Alan suggested Paris and the rival goddesses, volunteering himself as Paris: Jane should be Venus, and Catherine would make a capital Juno. Jane accepted her own part as a matter of course, but doubted about her sister. 'Yes,' put in Miss Charlmont, decisively, 'I will be Juno, or anything else which will help us forward a little.' So that was settled; but who should be Minerva? Stella declined to figure as the patroness of wisdom, and Jane drily observed, that they ought all to be tall, or all to be short, in her idea. At last a handsome, not too handsome, friend, Lady Everett, was thought of to take the part. The last scene Dr. Tyke protested he should settle himself with Stella, and not be worried any more about it. So those two went into committee together, and Alan edged in ere long for consultation; finally, Miss Charlmont was appealed to, and the matter was arranged amongst them without being divulged to the rest.

But all was peace and plenty, smiles and wax-candles, at Kensington, when at last the evening came for the performance. Mrs. Hartley's drawing-rooms being much more spacious than Mrs. Tyke's, had been chosen for convenience, and about two hundred guests assembled to hear Stella declaim and see Jane attitudinize, as either faction expressed it. Good-natured Mrs. Tyke played the hostess, whilst Mrs. Hartley remained occult in the greenroom. Dr. Tyke was

manager and prompter. Mr. Durham, vice Paris - Hartley, welcomed people in a cordial, fussy manner, apologising for the smallness of London rooms, and regretfully alluding to the vast scale of Orpingham Place, ‘where a man can be civil to his friends without treading on their toes or their tails — ha! ha!’

But there is a limit to all things, even fussiness has an end. At last every one worth waiting for had arrived, been received, been refreshed. Orpingham Place died out of the conversation. People exchanged commonplaces, and took their seats; having taken their seats they exchanged more commonplaces. ‘What’s the word?’ — ’ It’s such a bore guessing: I never guess anything.’ — ’ People ought to tell the word beforehand.’ — ’ What a horrible man! Is that Mr. Hartley?’ — ’No, old Durham; backbone Durham.’ — ’ Why backbone?’ — ’Don’t know; hear him called so.’ — ‘Isn’t there a Beauty somewhere?’ — ’ Don’t know; there’s the Beast,’ — and the hackneyed joke received the tribute of a hackneyed laugh.

The manager’s bell rang, the curtain drew up.

A plaster cast of Cupid, with fillet, bow, and quiver, on an upholstery pedestal, stood revealed. Music, commencing behind the scenes, approached; a file of English-Grecian maidens, singing and carrying garlands, passed across the stage towards a pasteboard temple, presumably their desired goal, although they glanced at their audience, and seemed very independent of Cupid on his pedestal. There were only six young ladies; but they moved slowly, with a tolerable space interposed between each and each, thus producing a processional effect. They sang, in time and in tune, words by Dr. Tyke; music (not in harmony, but in unison, to ensure correct execution) by Arthur Tresham

‘Love hath a name of Death:

He gives a breath
And takes away.
Lo we, beneath his sway,
Grow like a flower
To bloom an hour,
To droop a day,
And fade away.’

The first Anglo-Greek had been chosen for her straight nose, the last for her elegant foot; the intermediate four, possessing good voices, bore the burden of the singing. They all moved and sang with self-complacent ease, but without much dramatic sentiment, except the plainest of the six, who assumed an air of languishment.

Some one suggested ‘cupid-ditty,’ but without universal acceptance. Some one else, on no obvious grounds, hazarded ‘Bore, Wild Boar:’ a remark which stung Dr. Tyke, as playwright, into retorting, ‘Boreas.’

The second scene was dumb show. Alan Hartley as Paris, looking very handsome in a tunic and sandals, and flanked by the largest-sized, woolly toy lambs, sat, apple in hand, awaiting the rival goddesses. A flourish of trumpets announced the entrance of Miss Charlmont, a stately crowned Juno, robed in amber-coloured cashmere, and leading in a leash a peacock, with train displayed, and ingeniously mounted on noiseless wheels. She swept grandly in, and held out one arm, with a studied gesture, for the apple; which, doubtless, would have been handed to her then and there, had not warning notes on a harp ushered in Lady Everett: a modest, sensible-looking Minerva, robed and stockinged in blue, with a funny Athenian owl perched on her shoulder, and a becoming helmet on her head. Paris hesitated visibly, and seemed debating whether or not to split the apple and the difference together, when a hubbub, as of birds singing, chirping, calling, cleverly imitated by Dr. Tyke and Stella on water-whistles, heralded the approach of Venus. In she came, beautiful Jane Charlmont, with a steady, gliding step, her eyes kindling with victory, both her small hands outstretched for the apple so indisputably hers, her lips parted in a triumphant smile. Her long, white robe flowed classically to the floor; two doves, seeming to nestle in her hair, billed and almost cooed; but her face eclipsed all beside it; and when Paris, on one knee, deposited the apple within her slim, white fingers, Juno forgot to look indignant and Minerva scornful.

After this the final scene fell dead and flat. In vain did Stella whisk about as the most coquettish of market-girls of an undefined epoch and country, balancing a fruit-basket on her head, and crying, ‘Grapes, melons, peaches, love-apples,’ with the most natural inflections. In vain did Arthur Tresham beat down the price of peaches, and Alan Hartley bid for love-apples: — Jane had attained one of her objects, and eclipsed her little friend for that evening.

The *corps dramatique* was to sit down to supper in costume; a point arranged ostensibly for convenience, secretly it may be for vanity’s sake: only Stella laid her fruit-basket aside, and Miss Charlmont released her peacock. Lady Everett continued to wear the helmet, which did not conceal her magnificent black hair (she had been a Miss Moss before marriage, Clara Lyon Moss), and Jane retained her pair of. doves.

But during the winding up of the charade, more of moment had occurred off the stage than upon it. Jane, her part over, left the other performers to their own devices, and quietly made her way into a conservatory which opened out of the room devoted for that evening to ‘cloaks and hoods. If she expected to be

followed she was not disappointed. A heavy step, and an embarrassed clearance of throat, announced Mr. Durham. He bustled up to her, where she sat fanning herself and showing white and brilliant against a background of flowers and leaves, whilst he looked at once sheepish and pompous, awkward and self-satisfied; not a lady's man assuredly.

'Hem — haw — Miss Jane, you surpassed yourself. I shall always think of you now as Venus; I shall, indeed.' Jane smiled benignantly. 'Poor Pug's nose is quite out of joint; it is, indeed. But the chit has got a husband, and can snap her fingers at all of us.' Jane surveyed him with grave interrogation, then cast down her lustrous eyes, and slightly turned her shoulder in his direction. Abashed, he resumed: 'But really, Miss Jane, now wasn't Venus a married lady too? and couldn't we—?' Jane interrupted him: 'Pray give me your arm, Mr. Durham;' she rose: 'let us go back to the company. I don't know what you are talking about, unless you mean to be rude and very unkind:' the voice broke, the large, clear eyes softened to tears; she drew back as he drew nearer. Then Mr. Durham, ill-bred, but neither scheming nor cold-hearted, pompous and fussy, but a not ungenerous man for all that, — then Mr. Durham spoke: 'Don't draw back from me, Miss Jane, but take my arm for once to lead you back to the company, and take my hand for good. For I love and admire you, Miss Jane; and if you will take an oldish man for your husband, you shall never want for money or for pleasure while my name is good in the City.'

Thus in one evening Jane Charlmont attained both her objects.

Supper was a very gay meal, as brilliant as lights, glass, and plate could make it. People were pleased with the night's entertainment, with themselves, and with each other. Mr. Durham, with an obtrusive air of festivity, sat down beside Jane, and begged his neighbours not to inconvenience themselves, as they did not mind squeezing. Jane coloured, but judged it too early to frown. Mr. Durham, being somewhat old-fashioned, proposed healths: the fair actresses were toasted, the Anglo-Greeks in a bevy, the distinguished stars one by one. Mr. Tresham returned thanks for the processional six; Dr. Tyke for Miss Charlmont, Sir James Everett and Mr. Hartley for their respective wives.

Then Jane's health was drunk: who would rise to return thanks? Mr. Durham rose: 'Hem — haw — ' said he: 'haw — hem — ladies and gentlemen, allow me to return thanks for the Venus of the evening — I mean for the Venus altogether, whose health you have done me the honour to drink' — knowing smiles circled round the table. 'Done us, I should say: not that I unsay what I said; quite the contrary, and I'm not ashamed to have said it. I will only say one word more in thanking you for the honour you have done her and all of us: the champagne

corks pop, and suggest popping; but after popping mum's the word. Ladies and gentlemen, my very good friends, I drink your very good health.'

And the master of Orpingham Place sat down.

CHAPTER XI.

LUCY received the news of Jane's engagement with genuine vexation, and then grew vexed with herself for feeling vexed. Conscience took alarm, and pronounced that envy and pride had a share in her vexation. Self retorted: It is not envy to see that Jane is mercenary, nor pride to dislike vulgarity. Conscience insisted: It is envy to be annoyed by Jane's getting married before you, and it is pride to brand Mr. Durham as vulgar, and then taboo him as beyond the pale. Self pleaded: No one likes growing old and being made to feel it; and who would not deprecate a connection who will put one out of countenance at every turn? But Conscience secured the last word: If you were younger than Jane, you would make more allowances for her; and if Mr. Durham were engaged to any one except your sister, you would think it fair not to condemn him as destitute of every virtue because he is underbred.

Thus did Conscience get the better of Self. And Lucy gulped down dignity and disappointment together when, in reply to Miss Drum's, 'My dear, I hope your sisters are well, and enjoying their little gaieties,' she said, cheerfully: 'Now, really, you should give me something for such wonderful news: Jane is engaged to be married.'

There was nothing Miss Drum relished more than a wedding 'between persons suited to each other, and not ridiculous on the score of age and appearance,' as she would herself pointedly have defined it. Now Jane was obviously young enough and pretty enough to become a bride; so Miss Drum was delighted, and full of interest and of inquiries, which Lucy found it rather difficult to answer satisfactorily.

'And who is the favoured gentleman, my dear?'

'Mr. Durham, of Orpingham Place, in Gloucestershire. Very rich it seems, and a widower. His only daughter,' Lucy hurried on with an imperceptible effort, 'married that Mr. Hartley Catherine and I used to meet so often at Notting Hill. She was thought to be a great heiress; but I suppose this will make some difference.'

'Then he is rather old for Jane?'

'He is not yet fifty it seems, though of course that is full old. By what he says, Orpingham Place must be a very fine country-seat; and Jane appears cut out for wealth and pleasure, she has such a power of enjoying herself;' and Lucy paused.

Miss Drum, dropping the point of age, resumed: 'Now what Durham will this

be, my dear? I used to know a Sir Marcus Durham — a gay, hunting Baronet. He was of a north-country family; but this may be a branch of the same stock. He married an Earl's daughter, Lady Mary; and she used to take precedence, let who would be in the room, which was not thought to be in very good taste when the dowager Lady Durham was present. Still an Earl's daughter ought to understand good breeding, and that was how she acted; I do not wish to express any opinion. Perhaps Mr. Durham may have a chance of the Baronetcy, for Sir Marcus left no children, but was succeeded by a bachelor brother; and then Jane will be "my lady" some day.'

'No,' replied Lucy; 'I don't think that likely. Mr. Durham is enormously wealthy, by what I hear; but not of a county family. He made his fortune in the City.'

Miss Drum persisted: 'The cadets of even noble families have made money by commerce over and over again. It is no disgrace to make a fortune; and I see no reason why Mr. Durham should not be a baronet some day. Many a City man has been as fine a gentleman as any idler at court. Very likely Mr. Durham is an elegant man of talent, and well connected; if so, a fortune is no drawback, and the question of age may be left to the lady's decision.'

Lucy said no more: only she foresaw and shrank from that approaching day of undeceiving which should bring Mr. Durham to Brompton-on-Sea.

Once set off on the subject of family, there was no stopping Miss Drum, who, having had no proveable great-grandfather, was sensitive on the score of pedigree.

'You might not suppose it now, Lucy, but it is well known that our family name of Drum, though less euphonious than that of Durham, is in fact the same. I made the observation once to Sir Marcus, and he laughed with pleasure, and often afterwards addressed me as cousin. Lady Mary did not like the suggestion; but no one's fancies can alter a fact:' and the old lady looked stately, and as if the Drum-Durham theory had been adopted and emblazoned by the College of Heralds; whereas, in truth, no one besides herself, not even the easy-tempered Gawkins, held it.

Meanwhile, all went merrily and smoothly at Notting Hill. As Jane had said, she was old enough to know her own mind, and apparently she knew it. When Mr. Durham presented her with a set of fine diamonds, she dropped naturally into calling him George; and when he pressed her to name the day, she answered, with an assumption of girlishness, that he must talk over all those dreadful things with Catherine.

To Miss Charlmont he had already opened his mind on the subject of settlements: Jane should have everything handsome and ample, but Pug must not

lose her fortune either. This Catherine, deeming it right and reasonable, undertook to explain to Jane. Jane sulked a little to her sister, but displayed only a smiling aspect to her lover, feeling in her secret heart that her own nest was being particularly well feathered: for not only were Mr. Durham's new marriage settlements most liberal, in spite of Stella's prospective twenty thousand pounds on coming of age, and twenty thousand at her father's demise; but Catherine, of her own accord, provided that at her death all her share of their father's property should descend to Jane, for her own separate use, and at her own absolute disposal. The younger sister, indeed, observed with safe generosity: 'Suppose you should marry, too, some day?' But Catherine, grateful for any gleam of unselfishness in her favourite sister, answered warmly and decisively: 'I never meant to marry, and I always meant what fortune I had to be yours at last: only, dear, do not again think hardly of our poor father's oversight.'

Mr. Durham was urgent to have the wedding-day fixed, and Jane reluctant merely and barely for form's sake. A day in August was named, and the honeymoon pre-devoted to Paris and Switzerland. Then Miss Charlmont pronounced it time to return home; and was resolute that the wedding should take place at Brompton-on-Sea, not at Notting Hill as the hospitable Tykes proposed.

Jane was now nothing loth to quit town; Mr. Durham unwilling to lose her, yet willing as recognising the step for an unavoidable preliminary. Nevertheless, he felt hurt at Jane's indifference to the short separation; whilst Jane, in her turn, felt worried at his expecting any show of sentiment from her, though, having once fathomed his feelings, she kept the worry to herself and produced the sentiment. He looked genuinely concerned when they parted at London-

Bridge Station; but Jane never in her life had experienced a greater relief than now, when the starting train left him behind on the platform. A few more days, and it would be too late to leave him behind: but she consoled herself by reflecting that without him she might despair of ever seeing Paris; Switzerland was secondary in her eyes.

Miss Drum had often set as a copy, 'Manners make the Man,' and explained to her deferential pupils how in that particular phrase 1 Man 'includes' Woman.' Catherine in later life reflected that 'Morals make the Man' (including Woman) conveys a not inferior truth. Jane might have modified the sentence a trifle further, in employing it as an M copy, and have written, 'Money makes the Man.'

CHAPTER XII.

LUCY welcomed her sisters home, after an absence of unprecedented duration, with warmhearted pleasure, but Jane went far to extinguish the feeling.
In the heyday of her blooming youth and satisfaction, she was not likely to acquire any tender tact lacking at other times; and an elder sister, mentally set down in her catalogué of old maids, was fair game.

‘Why, Lucy,’ she cried, as they sat together the first evening, herself the only idler of the three, ‘you look as old as George, and about as lively: Miss Drum must be catching.’

‘Do leave Miss Drum alone,’ Lucy answered, speaking hastily from a double annoyance. ‘And if,’ — she forced a laugh, — ’ surely if my looks recall George to your mind they ought to.please you.’

But Jane was incorrigible. ‘My dear, George is Orpingham Place, and Orpingham Place is George; but your looks suggest some distinction between the two. Only think, he expected me to grow dismal at leaving him behind, and I did positively see his red pockethandker-chief fluttering in the breeze as we screamed out of the station. And he actually flattered himself I should not go out much till the wedding is over; catch me staying at home if I can help it! By-the-bye, did you mean a joke by wrapping his photograph up in the ten-pound note? it struck me afterwards as really neat in its way.’

‘Oh, Jane!’ put in Catherine, and more she might have added in reproof; but at that instant the door opened, and Mr. Ballantyne was announced.

Mr. Ballantyne was a solicitor, related to Mrs. Gawkins Drum, and taken into partnership by that lady’s husband shortly before their marriage. Judging by looks, Mr. Ballantyne might have been own nephew to Miss Drum rather than to her sister-in-law, so neutral was he in aspect and manner; if ever anyone liked him at first sight, it was because there was nothing on the surface to stir a contrary feeling; and if any one volunteered a confidence to him, it was justified by his habitual taciturnity, which suggested a mechanical aptitude at keeping a secret; yet, however appearances were against him, he was a shrewd man of business, and not deficient in determination of character.

He arrived by appointment to show Miss Charlmont the draft of her settlement on her sister, and take, if need be, further instructions. She was one to see with her own eyes rather than merely to hear with her own ears, and, therefore, retired with the papers to the solitude of her own room, leaving her sisters to entertain the visitor.

Thus left, Mr. Ballantyne took a respectful look at Jane, whose good luck in securjng the master of Orpingham Place he considered rare indeed. Looking at her he arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Durham also had been lucky. Jane just glanced at Mr. Ballantyne, mentally appraising him as a nonentity; but in that glance she saw his admiration; admiration always propitiated her, and she deigned to be gracious. — , Various maiden ladies in Brompton-on-Sea would have been gracious to Mr. Ballantyne from a different motive. Though still a youngish man he was a widowèr, already in easy circumstances, and with a prospect of growing rich. His regard for his late wife's memory was most decorous, but not such as to keep him inconsolable; and his only child, Frank, being no more than five years old and healthy, need scarcely be viewed as a domestic drawback; indeed, certain spinsters treated the boy with a somewhat demonstrative affection, but these ladies were obviously not in their teens.

Mr. Ballantyne meanwhile, though mildly courteous to all, had not singled out any one for avowed preference. Possibly he liked Miss Edith Sims, a doctor's daughter, a bold equestrian, a first-rate croquet player; she hoped so sincerely, for she had unbecoming carroty hair and freckles; possibly he liked Lucy Charlmont, but she had never given the chance a thought. Of Miss Charlmont, whom he had seen twice, and both times exclusively on business, he stood in perceptible awe.

Catherine, finding nothing to object to in the draft, returned it to Mr. Ballantyne with her full assent. Then tea was brought in, and Mr. Ballantyne was asked to stay. His aptitude for carrying cups and plates, recognised and admired in other circles, here remained in abeyance; Miss Charlmont adhering to the old fashion of people sitting round the tea-table at tea no less formally than round the dining-table at dinner.

A plan for a picnic having been set on foot by the Gawkins Drums, Lucy had been invited, and had accepted before Jane's engagement was announced. So now Mr. Ballantyne mentioned the picnic, taking for granted that Lucy would join, and empowered by the projectors to ask her sisters also; Jane brightened at the proposal, being secretly charmed at a prospect of appearing amongst her familiar associates as mistress elect of Orpingham Place; but Catherine demurred, —

'Thank you, Mr. Ballantyne; I will call myself and thank Mrs. Drum, but Mr. Durham might object, and I will stay at home with my sister. No doubt we shall find future opportunities of all meeting.'

'Dear me!' cried Jane; 'Mr. Durham isn't Bluebeard; or, if he is, I had better get a little fun first. My compliments, please, and I shall be too glad to come.'

'Oh, Jane!' remonstrated Miss Charlmont; but it was a hopeless remonstrance.

Jane, once bent on amusement, was not to be deterred by doubtful questions of propriety; and the elder sister, mortified, but more anxious for the offender's credit than for her own dignity, changed her mind perforce, and, with a sigh, accepted the invitation. If Jane was determined to go, she had better go under a middle-aged sister's eye; but the party promised to be a large one, including various strange gentlemen, and Catherine honestly judged it objectionable.

Jane, however, was overflowing with glee, and questioned Mr. Ballantyne energetically as to who were coming. When he was gone she held forth to her sisters, —

'That hideous Edith Sims, of course she will ride over on Brunette, to show her figure and her bridle hand. I shall wear pink, and sit next her to bring out her freckles. I've not forgotten her telling people I had no fortune. Don't you see she's trying to hook Mr. Ballantyne? you heard him say she has been consulting him about something or other. Let's drive Mr. Ballantyne over in our carriage, and the baby can perch on the box.'

Lucy said, 'Nonsense, Jane; Mr. Ballantyne has his own dog-cart, and he is tiresome enough without keeping him all to ourselves.'

And Catherine added, this time peremptorily, 'My dear, that is not to be thought of; I could not justify it to Mr. Durham. Either you will drive over with Lucy and me, and any other person I may select, or you must find a carriage for yourself, as I shall not go to the picnic.'

CHAPTER XIII.

THE environs of Brompton-on-Sea were rich in spots adapted to picnics, and the Gawkins Drums had chosen the very prettiest of these eligible spots. Rocky Drumble, a green glen of the floweriest, but with fragments of rock showing here and there, possessed an echo point and a dripping well: it was, moreover, accredited by popular tradition with a love-legend, and, on the same authority, with a ghost for moonlight nights. Rocky Drumble was threaded from end to end by a stream which nourished water-cresses; at one season its banks produced wild strawberries, at another nuts, sometimes mushrooms. All the year round the glen was frequented by song-birds; not seldom a squirrel would scamper up a tree, or a rabbit sit upright on the turf, winking his nose. Rocky Drumble on a sunny summer-day was a bower of cool shade, and of a silence heightened, not broken, by sounds of birds and of water, the stream at hand, the sea not far off; a bower of sun-chequered shade, breaths of wind every moment shifting the shadows, and the sun making its way in, now here, now there, with an endless, monotonous changeableness.

On such a day the Charlmonts drove to their rendezvous in Rocky Drumble. The carriage held four inside; Miss Drum and Catherine sitting forward, with Lucy and Jane opposite. On the box beside the driver perched little Frank Ballantyne, very chatty and merry at first; but to be taken inside and let fall asleep when, as was foreseen, he should grow tired. The child had set his heart on going to the picnic, and good Miss Drum had promised to take care of him — Miss Drum nominally, Lucy by secret understanding, for the relief of her old friend.

Miss Drum wore a drawn silk bonnet, which had much in common with the awning of a bathing-machine. Catherine surmounted her inevitable cap by a broad-brimmed brown straw hat. Lucy wore a similar hat without any cap under it, but looked, in fact, the elder of the two. Jane, who never sacrificed complexion to fashion, also appeared in a shady hat, dove-coloured, trimmed with green leaves, under which she produced a sort of apple-blossom effect, in a cloud of pink muslin over white, and white *appliquée* again over the pink. Catherine had wished her to dress soberly, but Jane had no notion of obscuring her beauties. She had bargained with Mr. Durham that he was not to come down to Brompton-on-Sea till the afternoon before the wedding; and when he looked hurt at her urgency, had assumed an air at once affectionate and reserved, assuring him that this course seemed to her due to the delicacy of their mutual

relations. Five days were still wanting to the wedding-day, George was not yet inalienably at her elbow, and no moment could appear more favourable for enjoyment. Surely if a skeleton promised to preside at the next banquet, this present feast was all the more to be relished: for though, according to Jane's definition, George was Orpingham Place, she would certainly have entered upon Orpingham Place with added zest had it not entailed George.

Miss Charlmont had delayed starting till the very last moment, not wishing to make more of the picnic than could be helped; and when she with her party reached the Drumble, they found their friends already on the spot. The last comers were welcomed with a good deal of friendly bustle, and half-a-dozen gentlemen, in scarcely more than as many minutes, were presented to Jane by genial little Mrs. Drum, who had never seen her before, and was charmed at first sight. Jane, happily for Catherine's peace of mind, assumed an air of dignity in unison with her distinguished prospects: she was gracious rather than coquettish — gracious to all, but flattering to none; a change from former days, when her manner used to savour of coaxing. Edith Sims had ridden over on Brunette, and Jane, keeping her word as to sitting next her, produced the desired effect.

The Charlmonts coming late, every one was ready for luncheon on their arrival, and no strolling was permitted before the meal. As to the luncheon, it included everything usual and nothing unusual, and most of the company consuming it displayed fine, healthy appetites. Great attention was paid to Jane, who was beyond all comparison the best-looking woman present; whilst two or three individuals made mistakes between Catherine and Lucy, as to which was Miss Charlmont.

Poor Lucy! she had seldom felt more heavy-hearted than now, as she sat talking and laughing. She felt herself getting more and more worn-looking as she talked and laughed on, getting visibly older and more faded. How she wished that Frank, who had fallen asleep on a plaid after stuffing unknown sweets into his system — how she wished that Frank would wake and become troublesome, to give her some occupation less intolerable than 'grinning and bearing!'

Luncheon over, the party broke up, splitting into twos and threes, and scattering themselves here and there through the Drumble. Miss Charlmont attaching herself doggedly to Jane, found herself clambering up and down banks and stony excrescences in company with a very young Viscount and his tutor: as she clambered exasperation waxed within her at the futility of the young men's conversation and the complacency of Jane's rejoinders; certainly, had any one been studying Catherine's face (which nobody was), he would have beheld an unwonted aspect at a picnic.

Miss Drum, ostentatiously aged because in company with her brother and his

bride, had chosen before luncheon was well over to wrap herself up very warmly, and ensconce herself for an avowed nap inside one of the flys. ‘You can call me for tea,’ she observed to Lucy; ‘and when Frank tires you, you can leave him in the carriage with me.’ But Frank was Lucy’s one resource: minding him served as an excuse for not joining Mr. Drum, who joked, or Mr. Ballantyne, who covertly stared at her, or Edith Sims, who lingering near Mr. Ballantyne talked of horses, or any other person whose conversation was more tedious than silence.

When Frank woke, he recollected that nurse had told him strawberries grew in the Drumble; a fact grasped by him without the drawback of any particular season. Off he started in quest of strawberries, and Lucy zealously started in his wake, not deeming it necessary to undeceive him. The little fellow wandered and peered about diligently awhile after imaginary strawberries; failing these, he suddenly clamoured for a game at hide-and-seek: he would hide, and Lucy must not look.

They were now among the main fragments of rock found in the Drumble, out of sight of their companions. Lucy had scarcely shut her eyes as desired, when a shout of delight made her open them still more quickly, in time to see Frank scampering, as fast as his short legs would carry him, after a scampering rabbit. He was running — she recollected it in an instant — headlong towards the stream, and was already some yards from her. She called after him, but he did not ‘turn, only cried out some unintelligible answer in his babyish treble. Fear lent her speed; she bounded after him, clearing huge stones and brushwood with instinctive accuracy. She caught at his frock — missed it — caught at it again — barely grasped it — and fell, throwing1 him also down in her fall. She fell on stones and brambles, bruising and scratching herself severely: but the child was safe, and she knew it, before she fainted away, whilst even in fainting her hand remained tightly clenched on his frock.

Frank’s frightened cries soon brought friends to their assistance. Lucy, still insensible, was lifted on to smooth turf, and then sprinkled with water till she came to herself. In few words, for she felt giddy and hysterical but was resolute not to give way, she accounted for the accident, blaming herself for having carelessly let the child run into danger. It was impossible for any carriage to drive so far along the Drumble, so she had to take some one’s arm to steady her in walking to meet the fly. Mr. Ballantyne, as pale as a sheet, offered his arm; but she preferred Mr. Drum’s, and leaned heavily on it for support.

Lucy was soon safe in the fly by Miss Drum’s side, whose nap was brought to a sudden end, and who, waking scared and fidgety, was disposed to lay blame on every one impartially, beginning with herself, and ending, in a tempered form,

with Lucy. The sufferer thus disposed of, and packed for transmission home, the remaining picnickers, influenced by Mrs. Drum's obvious bias, declined to linger for rustic tea or other pleasures, and elected then and there to return to their several destinations. The party mustered round the carriages ready to take their seats: but where were Catherine and Jane, Viscount and tutor? Shouting was tried, whistling was tried, 'Cooee' was tried by amateur Australians for the nonce: all in vain. At last Dr. Sims stepped into the fly with Lucy, promising to see her safe home; Miss Drum, smelling-bottle in hand, sat sternly beside her; Frank, after undergoing a paternal box on the ear, was degraded from the coachman's box to the back seat, opposite the old lady, who turned towards him the aspect as of an ogress: and thus the first carriage started, with Edith reining in Brunette beside it. The others followed without much delay, one carriage being left for the truants; and its driver charged to explain, if possible without alarming the sisters, what had happened to cut short the picnic.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE day before the wedding Lucy announced that she still felt too much bruised and shaken ‘to make one of the party, either at church or at breakfast. Neither sister contradicted her: Catherine, because she thought the excuse valid; Jane, because Lucy, not having yet lost the traces of her accident, must have made but a sorry bridesmaid: and, as Jane truly observed, there were enough without her, for her defection still left a bevy of eight bridesmaids in capital working order.

Brompton-on-Sea possessed only one hotel of any pretensions, — ’ The Duke’s Head,’ so designated in memory of that solitary Royal Duke who had once made brief sojourn beneath its roof. He found it a simple inn, bearing the name and sign of ‘The Three Mermaids;’ the mermaids appearing in paint as young persons, with yellow hair and combs, and faces of a type which failed to account for their uninterrupted self-ogling in hand-mirrors; tails were shadowily indicated beneath waves of deepest blue. After the august visit this signboard was superseded by one representing the Duke as a gentleman of inane aspect, pointing towards nothing discoverable; and this work of art, in its turn, gave place to a simple inscription, ‘The Duke’s Head Hotel.’

Call it by what name you would, it was as snug a house of entertainment as rational man or reasonable beast need desire, with odd little rooms opening out of larger rooms and off staircases; the only trace now visible of the Royal Duke’s sojourn (beyond the bare inscription of his title) being Royal Sentries in coloured pasteboard effigy, the size of life, posted on certain landings and at certain entrances. All the windowsills bore green boxes of flowering plants, whence a sweet smell, mostly of mignonette, made its way within doors. The best apartments looked into a square courtyard, turfed along three sides, and frequented by pigeons; and the pigeon-house, standing in a turfy corner, was topped by a bright silvered ball.

The landlord of the ‘Duke’s Head,’ a thin, tallowy-complexioned man, with a manner which might also be described as unpleasantly oily or tallowy, was in a bustle that same day, and all his household was bustling around him: for not merely had the ‘Duke’s Head ‘undertaken to furnish the Durham-Charlmont wedding-breakfast with richness and elegance, but the bridegroom elect, whom report endowed with a pocketful of plums, the great Mr. Durham himself, with sundry fashionable friends, was coming down to Brompton-on-Sea by the 5.30 train, and would put up for one night at the’ Duke’s Head.’ The waiters donned their whitest neckcloths, the waitresses their pinkest caps; the landlady, in

crimson gown and gold chain, loomed like a local Mayor; the landlord shone, as it were, snuffed and trimmed: never, since the era of that actual Royal Duke, had the 'Duke's Head 'smiled such a welcome.

Mr. Durham, stepping out of the carriage on to the railway platform, and followed by Alan Hartley, Stella, and Arthur Tresham, indulged hopes that Jane might be there to meet him, and was disappointed. Not that the matter had undergone no discussion. Miss Charlmont, that unavoidable drive home from the picnic with a young Viscount and a tutor for *vis-à-vis* still rankling in her mind, had said,' My dear, there would be no impropriety in our meeting George at the Station, and he would certainly be gratified.' But Jane had answered, 'Dear me, sister! George will keep, and I've not a moment to spare; only don't stay at home for me.'

So no one met Mr. Durham. But when he presented himself at the private house on the Esplanade, Jane showed herself all smiling welcome, and made him quite happy by her pretty ways. True, she insisted on his not spending the evening with her; but she hinted so tenderly at such restrictions vanishing on the morrow, and so modestly at remarks people might make if he did stay, that he was compelled to yield the point and depart in great admiration of her reserve, though he could not help recollecting that his first wooing had progressed and prospered without any such amazing proprieties. But then the mother of Everilda Stella had seen the light in a second-floor back room at Gateshead, and had married out of a circle where polite forms were not in the ascendant; whereas Jane Charlmont looked like a Duchess, or an Angel, or Queen Venus herself, and was altogether a different person. So Mr. Durham, discomfited, but acquiescent, retreated to the 'Duke's Head,' and there consoled himself with more turtle-soup and crusty old port [than Dr. Tyke would have sanctioned. Unfortunately Dr. and Mrs. Tyke were not coming down till the latest train that night from London, so Mr. Durham gorged unrebuked. He had seen Lucy, and taken rather a fancy to her, in spite of her blemished face, and had pressed her to visit Orpingham Place as soon as ever he and Jane should have returned from the Continent. He preferred Lucy to Catherine, with whom he never felt quite at ease; she was so decided and self-possessed, and so much better bred than himself. Not that Backbone Durham admitted this last point of superiority; he did not acknowledge, but he winced under it. Lucy on her side had found him better than his photograph; and that was something.

After tea she was lying alone on the drawing-room sofa in the pleasant summer twilight; alone, because her sisters were busy over Jane's matters upstairs; alone with her own thoughts. She was thinking of very old days, and of days not so old and much more full of interest. She tried to think of Jane and her

prospects; but against her will Alan Hartley's image intruded itself on her reverie, and she could not banish it. She knew from Mr. Durham that he had come down for the wedding; she foresaw that they must meet, and shrank from the ordeal, even whilst she wondered how he would behave and how, she herself should behave. Alone, and in the half darkness, she burned with shamefaced dread of her own possible weakness, and mortified self-love wrung tears from her eyes as she inwardly prayed for help.

The door opened, the maid announced Mr. and Mrs. Hartley.

Lucy, startled, would have risen to receive them, but Stella was too quick for her, and seizing both her hands, pressed her gently backwards on the sofa. 'Dear Miss Charlmont, you must not make a stranger of me, and my husband is an old friend. Mayn't I call you Lucy?'

So this was Alan's wife, this little, winning woman, still almost a child; this winning woman, who had won the only man Lucy ever cared for. It cost Lucy an effort to answer, and to make her welcome by her name of Stella.

Then Alan came forward and shook hands, looking cordial and handsome, with that kind tone of voice and tenderness of manner which had deceived poor Lucy once, but must never deceive her again. He began talking of their pleasant acquaintanceship in days of yore, of amusements they had shared, of things done together, and things spoken and not forgotten; it required the proof positive of Stella seated there smiling in her hat and scarlet feather, and with the wedding-ring on her small hand, to show even now that Alan only meant friendliness, when he might seem to mean so much more.

Lucy revolted under the fascination of his manner; feeling angry with herself that he still could wield power over her fancy, and angry a little with him for having made himself so much to her and no more. She insisted on leaving the sofa, rang the bell for a second edition of tea, andsent up the visitors' names to her sisters. When they came down she turned as much shoulder as good breeding tolerated towards Alan, and devoted all the attention she could command to Stella. Soon the two were laughing together over some feminine little bit of fun; then Lucy brought out an intricate piece of tatting, which, when completed, was to find its way to Notting Hill — the antimacassar of Mr. Durham's first visit there being, in fact, her handiwork; and, lastly, Lucy, once more for the moment with pretty pink cheeks and brightened eyes, convoyed her new friend upstairs to inspect Jane's bridal dress, white satin, under Honiton lace.

When the visit was over, and Lucy safe in the privacy of her own room, a sigh of relief escaped her, followed by a sentiment of deep thankfulness; she had met Alan again, and he had disappointed her. Yes, the spectre which had haunted her for weeks past had, at length, been brought face to face and had vanished.

Perhaps surprise at his marriage had magnified her apparent disappointment, perhaps dread of continuing to love another woman's husband had imparted a morbid and unreal sensitiveness to her feelings; be this as it might, she had now seen Alan again, and had felt irritated by the very manner that used to charm. In the revulsion of her feelings she was almost ready to deem herself fortunate and Stella pitiable.

She felt excited, exalted, triumphant rather than happy; a little pained, and, withal, very glad. Life seemed to glow within her, her blood to course faster and fuller, her heart to throb, lightened of a load. Recollections which she had not dared face alone, Mr. Hartley, by recalling, had stripped of their dangerous charm; had stripped of the tenderness she had dreaded, and the sting under which she had writhed; for he was the same, yet not the same. Now, for the first time, she suspected him not indeed of hollowness, but of shallowness.

She threw open her window to the glorious August moon and stars, and, leaning out, drank deep of the cool night air. She ceased to think of persons, of events, of feelings; her whole heart swelled, and became uplifted with a thankfulness altogether new to her, profound, transporting. When at length she slept, it was with moist eyes and smiling lips.

CHAPTER XV.

THE wedding was over. Jane might have looked still prettier but for an unmistakable expression of gratified vanity; Mr. Durham might have borne himself still more pompously but for a deep-seated, wordless conviction, that his bride and her family looked down upon him. Months of scheming and weeks of fuss had ended in a marriage, to which the one party brought neither refinement nor tact, and the other neither respect nor affection.

Wedding guests, however, do not assemble to witness exhibitions of respect or affection, and may well dispense with tact and refinement when delicacies not in season are provided; therefore, the party on the Esplanade waxed gay as befitted the occasion, and expressed itself in toasts of highly improbable import.

The going off was, perhaps, the least successful point of the show. Catherine viewed flinging shoes as superstitious, Jane as vulgar; therefore no shoes were to be flung. Mr. Durham might have made head against 'superstitious,' but dared not brave 'vulgar;' so he kept to himself the fact that he should hardly feel thoroughly married without a tributary shoe, and meanly echoed Jane's scorn. But Stella, who knew her father's genuine sentiment, chose to ignore 'superstition' and 'vulgarity' alike; so, at the last moment, she snatched off her own slipper, and dexterously hurled it over the carriage, to Jane's disgust (no love was lost between the two young ladies), and to Mr. Durham's inward satisfaction.

Lucy had not joined the wedding party, not caring overmuch to see Jane marry the man who served her as a butt; but she peeped wistfully at the going off, with forebodings in her heart, which turned naturally into prayers, for the ill-matched couple. In the evening, however, when many of the party had returned to London, the few real friends and familiar acquaintances who reassembled as Miss Charlmont's guests found Lucy in the drawing-room, wrapped up in something gauzily becoming to indicate that she had been ill, and looking thin under her wraps.

In Miss Charlmont's idea a wedding-party should be at once mirthful and grave, neither dull nor frivolous. Dancing and cards were frivolous, conversation might prove dull; games were all frivolous except chess, which, being exclusive, favoured general dulness. These points she had impressed several times on Lucy, who was suspected of an inopportune hankering after bagatelle; and who now sat in the snuggest corner of the sofa, feeling shy, and at a loss what topic to start that should appear neither dull nor frivolous.

Dr. Tyke relieved her by turning her embarrassment into a fresh channel: what had she been doing to make herself 'look like a turnip-ghost before its candle is lighted?'

'My dear Lucy!' cried Mrs. Tyke, loud enough for everybody to hear her, 'you really do look dreadful, as if you were moped to death. You had much better come with the Doctor and me to the Lakes. Now I beg you to say yes, and come.'

Alan heard with good-natured concern; Arthur Tresham heard as if he heard not. But the first greeting had been very cordial between him and Lucy, and he had not seemed to remark her faded face.

'Yes,' resumed Dr. Tyke. 'Now that's settled. You pack up to-night and start with us to-morrow, and you shall be doctored with the cream of drugs for nothing.'

But Lucy said the plan was preposterous, and she felt old and lazy.

Mrs. Tyke caught her up: 'Old? my dear child! and I feeling young to this day!'

And the Doctor added: 'Why not be preposterous and happy? "*Quel che piace giova"* as our sunny neighbours say. Besides, your excuses are incredible: "Not at home," as the snail answered to the woodpecker's rap.'

Lucy laughed, but stood firm; Catherine protesting that she should please herself. At last a compromise was struck: Lucy, on her cousins' return from their tour, should go to Notting Hill, and winter there if the change did her good. 'If not,' said she, wearily, 'I shall come home again, to be nursed by Catherine.'

'If not,' said Dr. Tyke, gravely for once, 'we may think about our all seeing Naples together.'

Edith Sims, her hair and complexion toned down by candlelight, sat wishing Mr. Ballantyne would come and talk to her; and Mr. Ballantyne, unmindful of Edith at the other end of the room, sat making up his mind. Before the accident in the Drumble he had thought of Lucy with a certain distinction, since that accident he had felt uncomfortably in her debt, and now he sat reflecting that, once gone for the winter, she might be gone for good so far as himself was concerned. She was nice - looking and amiable; she was tender towards little motherless Frank; her fortune stood above rather than below what he had proposed to himself in a second wife: — if Edith could have read his thoughts, she would have smiled less complacently when at last he crossed over to talk to her of Brunette and investments, and when later still he handed her in to supper. As it was, candlelight and content became her, and she looked, her best.

Mrs. Gawkins Drum, beaming with good will, and harmonious in silver-grey moire under old point lace, contrasted favourably with her angular sister-in-law,

whose strict truthfulness forbade her looking congratulatory: for now that she had seen the ‘elegant man of talent’ of her previsions, she could not but think that Jane had married his money-bags rather than himself: therefore Miss Drum looked severe, and when viewed in the light of a wedding guest, ominous.

Catherine, no less conscientious than her old friend, took an opposite line, and laboured her very utmost to hide mortification and misgivings, and to show forth that cheerful hospitality which befitted the occasion when contemplated from an ideal point of view; but ease was not amongst her natural gifts, and she failed to acquire it on the spur of an uneasy moment.

Manners make the Man,”Morals make the Man,’ kept running obstinately in her head, and she could not fit Mr. Durham to either sentence. In all Brompton-on-Sea there was no heavier heart that night than Catherine Charlmont’s.

CHAPTER XVI.

NOVEMBER had come, the Tykes were settled at home again, and Lucy Charlmont sat in a railway-carriage on her way from Brompton-on-Sea to Notting Hill. Wrapped up in furs, and with a novel open on her lap, she looked very snug in her corner; she looked, moreover, plumper and brighter than at Jane's wedding-party. But her expression of unmistakable amusement was not derived from the novel lying unread in her lap: it had its source in recollections of Mr. Ballantyne, who had made-her an offer the day before, and who had obviously been taken aback when she rejected his suit. All her proneness to bring herself in in the wrong could not make her fear that she had even for one moment said or done, looked or thought, what ought to have misled him:

therefore conscience felt at ease, and the comic side of his demeanour remained to amuse her, despite a.decorous wish to feel sorry for him. He had looked so particularly unimpulsive in the act of proposing, and then had appeared so much more disconcerted than grieved at her positive 'No,' and had hinted so broadly that he hoped she would not talk about his offer, that she could not imagine the matter very serious to him: and if not to him assuredly to nobody else. 'I dare say it will be Edith Sims at last,' mused she, and wished them both well.

A year earlier his offer might have been a matter of mere indifference to her, but not now; for her birthday was just over, and it was gratifying to find herself not obsolete even at thirty. This birthday had loomed before her threateningly for months past, but now it was over; and it became a sensible relief to feel and look at thirty very much as she had felt and looked at twenty-nine. Her mirror bore witness to no glaring accession of age having come upon her in a single night. 'After all,' she mused, 'life isn't over at thirty.' Her thoughts flew before her to Notting Hill; if they dwelt on any one in especial, it was not on Alan Hartley.

Not on Alan Hartley, though she foresaw that they must meet frequently; for he and Stella were at Kensington again, planning to stay there over Christmas. Stella she rather liked than disliked; and as she no longer deemed her lot enviable, to see more of her would be no grievance. Mr. Tresham also was in London, and likely to remain there; for since his return from the East he had taken himself to task for idleness, and had joined a band of good men in an effort to visit and relieve the East-end poor in their squalid homes. His hobby happened to be emigration, but he did not ride his hobby rough-shod over his destitute neighbours. He was in London hard at work, and by no means faring

sumptuously every day; but glad sometimes to get a mouthful of pure night air and of something more substantial at Notting Hill. He and Lucy had not merely renewed acquaintance at the wedding-party, but had met more than once afterwards during a week's holiday he gave himself at the seaside; had met on the beach, or in country lanes, or down in some of the many drumbles. They had botanised in company; and one day had captured a cuttle-fish together, which Lucy insisted on putting safe back into the sea before they turned homewards. They had talked of what grew at their feet or lay before their eyes; but neither of them had alluded to those old days when first they had known and liked each other, though they obviously liked each other still.

Lucy, her thoughts running on some one who was not Alan, would have made a very pretty picture. A sort of latent smile pervaded her features without deranging them, and her eyes, gazing out at the dreary autumn branches, looked absent and soft; soft, tender, and pleased, though with a wistful expression through all.

The short, winter-like day had darkened by the time London Bridge was reached. Lucy stepped on to the platform in hopes ot being claimed by Dr. Tyke's man; but no such functionary appeared, neither was the fat coachman discernible along the line of vehicles awaiting occupants. It was the first time Lucy had arrived in London without being either accompanied or met at the Station, and the novel position made her feel shy and a little nervous; so she was glad to stand unobtrusively against a wall, whilst more enterprising individuals found or missed their luggage. She preferred waiting, and she had to wait whilst passengers craned their necks, elbowed their neighbours, blundered, bawled, worried the Company's servants, and found everything correct after all. At last the huge mass of luggage dwindled to three boxes, one carpet-bag, and one hamper, which were Lucy's own; and which, with herself, a porter consigned to a cab. Thus ended her anxieties.

From London Bridge to Notting Hill the cabman of course knew his way, but in the mazes of Notting Hill he appealed to his fare for guidance. Lucy informed him that Apple-trees House stood in its own large garden, and was sure to be well lighted up; and that it lay somewhere to the left, up a steepish hill. A few wrong turnings first made and next retrieved, a few lucky guesses, brought them to a garden-wall, which a passing postman told them belonged to Dr. Tyke's premises. Lucy thrust her head out, and thought it all looked very like, except that the house itself stood enveloped in grim darkness; she had never noticed it look so dark before: could it be that she had been forgotten and every one had gone out?

They drove round the little sweep and knocked; waited, and knocked again. It

was not till the grumbling cabman had knocked loud and long a third time that the door was opened by a crying maid-servant, who admitted Lucy into the unlighted hall with the explanation: ‘O Miss, Miss, master has had a fit, and mistress is taking on so you can hear her all over the place.’ At the same instant a peal of screaming, hysterical laughter rang through the house.

Without waiting for a candle, Lucy ran stumbling up the broad staircase, guided at once by her familiarity with the house and by her cousin’s screams. On (he second-floor landing one door stood open revealing light at last, and Lucy ran straight in amongst the lights and the people. For a moment she was dazzled, and distinguished nothing clearly: in another moment she saw and understood all. Arthur Tresham and a strange gentleman were standing pale and silent at the fireplace, an old servant, stooping over the pillows, was busied in some noiseless way, and Mrs. Tyke had flung herself face downwards on the bed beside her husband.

Her husband? No, not her husband any longer, for she was a widow.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WEEK of darkened windows, of condolence-cards and hushed inquiries, of voices and faces saddened, of footsteps treading softly on one landing. A week of many tears and quiet sorrow; of many words, for in some persons grief speaks; and of half-silent sympathy, for in some even sympathy is silent. A week wherein to weigh this world and find it wanting, wherein also to realise the far more exceeding weight of the other. A week begun with the hope whose blossom goes up as dust, and ending with the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.

In goods and chattels, Mrs. Tyke remained none the poorer for her husband's death. He had left almost everything to her and absolutely at her disposal well knowing that their old faithful servants were no less dear to her than to himself, and having on his side no poor relations to provide for. 'His nephew Alan Hartley, and Mr. Tresham, were appointed his executors. Alan the good-natured, addicted to shirking trouble in general, consistently shirked this official trouble in particular. Arthur Tresham did, what little work there was to do, and did it in such a way as veiled his friend's shortcomings. Mrs. Tyke, with a life-long habit of leaning on some one, came, as a matter of course, to lean on him, and appealed to him as to all sorts of details, without once considering whether the time he devoted to her service was reclaimed out of his work, or leisure, or rest; he best knew, and the knowledge remained with him. Alan, though sincerely sorry for his uncle's death, cut private jokes with Stella about his co-executor's frequent visits to Appletrees House, and ignored the shortcomings which entailed their necessity.

Mrs. Tyke, in her. bereavement, clung to Lucy, and was thoroughly amiable and helpless. She would sit for hours over the fire, talking and crying her eyes and her nose red, whilst Lucy wrote her letters, or grappled with her bills. Then they would both grow sleepy, and doze off in opposite chimney-corners. So the maid might find them when she brought up tea, or so Arthur when he dropped in on business, or possibly on pleasure. Mrs. Tyke would sometimes merely open sleepy eyes, shake hands, and doze off again; but Lucy would sit up wide awake in a moment, ready to listen to all his long stories about his poor people. Soon she took to making things for them, which he carried away in his pocket, or, when too bulky for his pocket, in a parcel under his arm. At last it happened, that they began talking of old days, before he went to the East, and then each found that the other remembered a great deal about those old days. So gradually it

came to pass that, from looking back together, they took also to looking forward together.

Lucy's courtship was most prosaic. Old.women's flannel and old men's rheumatism alternated with some -more usual details of love-making, and the exchange of rings was avowedly an exchange of old rings. Arthur presented Lucy with his mother's wedding-guard; but Lucy gave him a fine diamond solitaire which had been her father's, and the romantic corner of her heart was gratified by the inequality of the gifts. She would have preferred a little more romance certainly on his side; if not less sense, at least more sentiment; something reasonable enough to be relied upon, yet unreasonable enough to be flattering. 'But one cannot have everything,' she reflected, meekly remembering her own thirty years; and she felt what a deep resting-place she had found in Arthur's trusty heart, and how shallow a grace had been the flattering charm of Alan's manner. Till, weighing her second love against her first, tears, at once proud and humble, filled her eyes, and 'one cannot have everything' was forgotten in 'I can never give him back half enough.'

After the exchange of rings, she announced her engagement to Catherine and Mrs. Tyke; to Jane also and Mr. Durham in few words; and as all business connected with Dr. Tyke's will was already satisfactorily settled, and Appletrees House about to pass into fresh hands, she prepared to return home. Mrs. Tyke, too purposeless to be abandoned to her own resources, begged an invitation to Brompton-on-Sea, and received a cordial welcome down from both sisters. Arthur was to remain at work in London till after Easter; and then to join his friends at the seaside, claim his bride, and take her away to spend their honeymoon beside that beautiful blue Bosphorus which had not made him forget her.

If there was a romantic moment in their courtship, it was the moment of parting at the noisy, dirty, crowded railway-station, when Arthur terrified Lucy, to her great delight, by standing on the carriage-step, and holding her hand locked fast in his own, an instant after the train had started.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SHORT chapter makes fitting close to a short story.

In mid May, on a morning which set forth the perfection either of sunny spring warmth or of breezy summer freshness, Arthur Tresham and Lucy Charlmont took each other for better for worse, till death should them part. Mr. Gawkins Drum gave away the bride; Miss Drum appeared auspicious as a rainbow; Catherine glowed and expanded with unselfish happiness; Mrs. Gawkins Drum pronounced the bride graceful, elegant, but old-looking; Mr. Durham contributed a costly wedding present, accompanied by a speech both ostentatious and affectionate; Jane displayed herself a little disdainful, a little cross, and supremely handsome; Alan and Stella — there was a young Alan now, a comical little fright, more like mother than father — Alan and Stella seemed to enjoy their friend's wedding as light-heartedly as they had enjoyed their own. No tears were shed, no stereotyped hypocrisies uttered, no shoes flung; this time a true man and a true woman who loved and honoured each other, and whom no man should put asunder, were joined together; and thus the case did not lend itself to any tribute of lies, miscalled white.

Four months after their marriage Mr. Tresham was hard at work again in London among his East-end poor; while Lucy, taking a day's holiday at Brompton-on Sea, sat in the old familiar drawing-room, Catherine's exclusively now. She had returned from the East blooming vigorous, full of gentle fun and kindly happiness: so happy, that she would not have exchanged her present lot for aught except her own future; so happy, that it saddened her to believe Catherine less happy than herself.

The two sisters sat at the open window, alike yet unlike: the elder handsome, resolute, composed; the younger with the old wistful expression in her tender beautiful eyes. They had talked of Jane, who, though not dissatisfied with her lot, too obviously despised her husband; once lately, she had written of him as the 'habitation-tax' paid for Orpingham Place: of Jane, who was too worldly either to keep right in the spirit, or go wrong in the letter. They had talked, and they had fallen silent; for Catherine, who loved no one on earth as she loved her frivolous sister, could best bear in silence the sting of shame and grief for her sake.

Full in view of the drawing-room windows spread the sea, beautiful, strong, resistless, murmuring; the sea which had cast a burden on Catherine's life, and from which she now never meant to absent herself; the sea from which Lucy had

fled in the paroxysm of her nervous misery.

At last Lucy spoke again very earnestly, — ‘Oh, Catherine, I cannot bear to be so happy when I think of you! If only you, too, had a future.’

Catherine leaned over her happy sister and gave her one kiss, a rare sign with her of affectionate emotion. Then she turned to face the open sky and sea. — ’My dear,’ she answered, whilst her eyes gazed beyond clouds and waves, and rested on one narrow streak of sunlight which glowed at the horizon, — ’My dear, my future seems further off than yours; but I certainly have a future, and I can wait.’

THE LOST TITIAN.

‘A lie with a circumstance.’
WALTER SCOTT.

THE last touch was laid on. The great painter stood opposite the masterpiece of the period; the masterpiece of his life.

Nothing remained to be added. The orange drapery was perfect in its fruit-like intensity of hue; each vine-leaf was curved, each tendril twisted, as if fanned by the soft south wind; the sunshine brooded drowsily upon every dell and swelling upland: but a tenfold drowsiness slept in the cedar shadows. Look a moment, and those cymbals must clash, that panther bound forward; draw nearer, and the songs of those ripe, winy lips must become audible.

The achievement of his life glowed upon the easel, and Titian was satisfied.

Beside him, witnesses of his triumph, stood his two friends — Gianni the successful, and Giannuccione the universal disappointment.

Gianni ranked second in Venice; second in most things, but in nothing first. His *colorito* paled only before that of his illustrious rival, whose supremacy, however, he ostentatiously asserted. So in other matters. Only the renowned Messer Cecchino was a more sonorous singer; only fire-eating Prince Barbuto a better swordsman; only Arrigo il Biondo a finer dancer or more sculpturesque beauty; even Caterina Suprema, in that contest of gallantry which has been celebrated by so many pens and pencils, though she awarded the rose of honour to Matteo Grande, the wit, yet plucked off a leaf for the all but victor Gianni.

A step behind him lounged Giannuccione, who had promised everything and fulfilled nothing. At the appearance of his first picture — ‘Venus whipping Cupid with feathers plucked from his own wing’ — Venice rang with his praises, and Titian foreboded a rival: but when, year after year, his works appeared still lazily imperfect, though always all but perfect, Venice subsided into apathetic silence, and Titian felt that no successor to his throne had as yet achieved the purple.

So these two stood with the great master in the hour of his triumph: Gianni loud, and Giannuccione hearty, in his applauses.

Only these two stood with him: as yet Venice at large knew not what her favourite had produced. It was, indeed, rumoured, that Titian had long been at work on a painting which he himself accounted his masterpiece, but its subject was a secret; and while some spoke of it as an undoubted *Vintage of red grapes,*

others maintained it to be a *Dance of wood-nymphs;* while one old gossip whispered that, whatever else the painting might contain, she knew whose sunset-coloured tresses and white brow would figure in the foreground. But the general ignorance mattered little; for, though words might have named the theme, no words could have described a picture which combined the softness of a dove's breast with the intensity of an October sunset: a picture of which the light almost warmed, and the fruit actually bloomed and tempted.

Titian gazed upon his work, and was satisfied: Giannuccione gazed upon his friend's work, and was satisfied: only Gianni gazed upon his friend and upon his work, and was enviously dissatisfied.

'Tomorrow,' said Titian, — 'tomorrow Venice shall behold what she has long honoured by her curiosity. Tomorrow, with music and festivity, the unknown shall be unveiled; and you, my friends, shall withdraw the curtain.'

The two friends assented.

'Tomorrow,' he continued, half amused, half thoughtful, 'I know whose white brows will be knit, and whose red lips will pout. Well, they shall have their turn: but blue eyes are not always in season; hazel eyes, like hazel nuts, have their season also.'

'True,' chimed the chorus.

'But to-night,' he pursued, 'let us devote the hours to sacred friendship. Let us with songs and bumpers rehearse tomorrow's festivities, and let your congratulations forestall its triumphs.'

'Yes, *evviva!'* returned the chorus, briskly; and again *'evviva!'*

So, with smiles and embraces, they parted. So they met again at the welcome coming of Argus-eyed night.

The studio was elegant with clusters of flowers, sumptuousfwith crimson, gold-bordered hangings, and luxurious with cushions and perfumes. From the walls peeped pictured fruit and fruit-like faces, between the curtains and in the corners gleamed moonlight-tinted statues; whilst on the easel reposed the beauty of the evening, overhung by budding boughs, and illuminated by an alabaster lamp burning scented oil. Strewn about the apartment lay musical, instruments and packs of cards. On the table were silver dishes, filled with leaves and choice fruits; wonderful vessels of Venetian glass, containing rare wines and iced waters; and footless goblets, which allowed the guest no choice but to drain his bumper.

That night the bumpers brimmed. Toast after toast was quaffed to the success of tomorrow, the exaltation of the unveiled beauty, the triumph of its author.

At last Giannuccione, flushed and sparkling, rose: 'Let us drink,' he cried, 'to our host's success tomorrow: may it be greater than the past, and less than the

future!'

'Not so,' answered Titian, suddenly; 'not so: I feel my star culminate.'

He said it gravely, pushing back his seat, and rising from table. His spirits seemed in a moment to flag, and he looked pale in the moonlight. It was as though the blight of the evil eye had fallen upon him.

Gianni saw his disquiet, and laboured to remove it. He took a lute from the floor, and tuning it, exerted his skill in music. He wrung from the strings cries of passion, desolate sobs, a wail as of one abandoned, plaintive, most tender tones as of the *solitario passero.* The charm worked: vague uneasiness was melting into delicious melancholy. He redoubled his efforts; he drew out tinkling notes joyful as the feet of dancers; he struck notes like fire, and, uniting his voice to the instrument, sang the glories of Venice and of Titian. His voice, full, mellow, exultant, vibrated through the room; and, when it ceased, the bravos of his friends rang out an enthusiastic chorus.

Then, more stirring than the snap of castanets on dexterous fingers; more fascinating, more ominous, than a snake's rattle, sounded the music of the dice-box.

The stakes were high, waxing higher, and higher; the tide of fortune set steadily towards Titian. Giannuccione laughed and played, played and laughed with reckless good-nature, doubling and redoubling his bets apparently quite at random. At length, however, he paused, yawned, laid down the dice, observing that it would cost him a good six months' toil to pay off his losses — a remark which elicited a peculiar smile of intelligence from his companions — and, lounging back upon the cushions, fell fast asleep.

Gianni also had been a loser: Gianni the imperturbable, who won and.lost alike with steady hand and unvarying colour. Rumour stated that one evening he lost, won back, lost once more, and finally regained his whole property unmoved: at last only relinquishing the game, which fascinated, but could not excite him, for lack of an adversary.

In like manner he now threw his possessions, as coolly as if they been another's, piecemeal into the gulph. First his money went, then his collection of choice sketches; his gondola followed, his plate, his jewelry. These gone, for the first time he laughed.

'Come,' he said, '*amico mio,* let us throw the crowning cast. I stake thereon myself; if you win, you may sell me to the Moor tomorrow, with the remnant of my patrimony; to wit, one house, containing various articles of furniture and apparel; yea, if aught else remains to me, that also do I. stake: against these set you your newborn beauty, and let us throw for the last time; lest it be said cogged dice are used in Venice, and I be taunted with the true proverb, — *" Save*

me from my friends, and I will take care of my enemies”‘

‘So be it,’ mused Titian, ‘even so. If I gain, my friend shall not suffer; if I lose, I can but buy back my treasure with this night’s winnings. His whole fortune will stand Gianni in more stead than my picture; moreover, luck favours me. Besides, it can only be that my friend jests, and would try my confidence.’

So argued Titian, heated by success, by wine and play. But for these, he would freely have restored his adversary’s fortune, though it had been multiplied tenfold, and again tenfold, rather than have risked his life’s labour on the hazard of the dice.

They threw.

Luck had turned, and Gianni was successful.

Titian, nothing doubting, laughed as he looked up from the table into his companion’s face; but no shadow of jesting lingered there. Their eyes met, and read each other’s heart at a glance.

One, discerned the gnawing envy of a life satiated: a thousand mortifications, a thousand inferiorities, compensated in a moment.

The other, read an indignation that even yet scarcely realised the treachery which kindled it; a noble indignation, that more upbraided the false friend than the destroyer of a life’s hope.

It was a nine-days’ wonder in Venice what had become of Titian’s masterpiece; who had spirited it away, — why, when, and where. Some explained the mystery by hinting that Clementina Beneplacida, having gained secret access to the great. master’s studio, had there, by dint of scissors, avenged her slighted beauty, and in effigy defaced her nut-brown rival. Others said that Giannuccione, paying tipsy homage to his friend’s performance, had marred its yet moist surface. Others again averred, that in a moment of impatience, Titian’s own sponge flung against the canvas, had irremediably blurred the principal figure. None knew, none guessed the truth. Wonder fulfilled its little day, and then, subsiding, was forgotten: having, it may be, after all, as truly amused Venice the volatile as any work of art could have done, though it had robbed sunset of its glow, its glory, and its fire.

But why was the infamy of that night kept secret?

By Titian, because in blazoning abroad his companion’s treachery, he would subject himself to the pity of those from whom he scarcely accepted homage; and, in branding Gianni as a traitor, he would expose himself as a dupe.

By Gianni, because had the truth got wind, his iniquitous prize might have been wrested from him, and his malice frustrated in the moment of triumph; not to mention that vengeance had a subtler relish when it kept back a successful

rival from the pinnacle of fame, than when it merely exposed a friend to humiliation. As artists, they might possibly have been accounted rivals; as astute men of the world, never.

Giannuccione had not witnessed all the transactions of that night. Thanks to his drunken sleep, he knew little; and what he guessed, Titian's urgency induced him to suppress. It was, indeed, noticed how, from that time forward, two of the three inseparables appeared in a measure, estranged from the third; yet all outward observances of courtesy were continued, and, if embraces had ceased, bows and doffings never failed.

For weeks, even for months, Gianni restrained his love for play, and, painting diligently, laboured to rebuild his shattered fortune. All prospered in his hands. His sketches sold with unprecedented readiness, his epigrams charmed the noblest dinner-givers, his verses and piquant little airs won him admission into the most exclusive circles. Withal, he seemed to be steadying. His name no more pointed stories of drunken frolics in the purlieus of the city, of mad wagers in the meanest company, of reckless duels with nameless adversaries. If now he committed follies, they were committed in the best society; if he sinned, it was, at any rate, in a patrician *casa;* and, though his morals might not yet be flawless, his taste was unimpeachable. His boon companions grumbled, yet could not afford to dispense with him; his warmest friends revived hopes which long ago had died away into despair. It was the heyday of his life: fortune and Venice alike courted him; he had but to sun himself in their smiles, and accept their favours.

So, nothing loth, he did, and for,a while prospered. But, as the extraordinary stimulus flagged, the extraordinary energy flagged with it. Leisure returned, and with leisure the allurements of old pursuits. In proportion as his expenditure increased, his gains lessened; and, just when all his property, in fact, belonged to his creditors, he put the finishing stroke to his obvious ruin, by staking and losing at the gambling-table what was no longer his own.

That night beheld Gianni grave, dignified, imperturbable, and a beggar. Next day, his creditors, princely and plebeian, would be upon him: everything must go; not a scrap, not a fragment, could be held back. Even Titian's masterpiece would be claimed; that prize for which he had played away his soul, by which, it may be, he had hoped to acquire a worldwide fame, when its mighty author should be silenced for ever in the dust.

Yet tomorrow, not to-night, would be the day of reckoning; to-night, therefore, was his own. With a cool head he conceived, with a steady hand he executed, his purpose. Taking coarse pigments, such as, when he pleased, might easily be removed, he daubed over those figures which seemed to live, and that

wonderful background, which not Titian himself could reproduce; then, on the blank surface, he painted a dragon, flaming, clawed, preposterous. One day he would recover his dragon, recover his Titian under the dragon, and the world should see.

Next morning the crisis came.

After all, Gianni's effects were worth more than had been supposed. They included Giannuccione's *Venus whipping Cupid* — how obtained, who knows? — a curiously wrought cup, by a Florentine goldsmith, just then rising into notice; within the hollow of the foot was engraved *Benvenuto Cellini,* surmounted by an outstretched hand, symbolic of welcome, and quaintly allusive to the name; a dab by Giorgione, a scribble of the brush by Titian, and two feet square of genuine Tintoret. The creditors brightened; there was not enough for honesty, but there was ample for the production of a most decorous bankrupt.

His wardrobe was a study of colour; his trinkets, few but choice, were of priceless good taste. Moreover, his demeanour was unimpeachable and his delinquencies came to light with the best grace imaginable. Some called him a defaulter, but all admitted he was a thorough gentleman.

Foremost in the hostile ranks stood Titian; Titian, who now, for the first time since that fatal evening, crossed his rival's threshold. His eye searched eagerly among the heap of nameless canvasses for one unforgotten beauty, who had occasioned him such sore heartache; but he sought in vain; only in the forefront sprawled a dragon, flaming, clawed, preposterous; grinned, twinkled, erected his tail, and flouted him.

'Yes,' said Gianni, answering his looks, not words, yet seeming to address the whole circle, *'Signori miei,* these compose all my gallery. An immortal sketch, by Messer Tiziano' — here a complimentary bow — 'a veritable Giorgione; your own work, Messer Robusti, which needs no comment of mine to fix its value. A few productions by feebler hands, yet not devoid of merit. These are all. The most precious part of my collection was destroyed (I need not state, accidentally), three days ago by fire. That dragon, yet moist, was designed for mine host, Bevilacqua Mangiaruva; but this morning, I hear, with deep concern, of his sudden demise.'

Here Lupo Vorace of the *Oreo decapitato* stepped forward. He, as he explained at length, was a man of few words (this, doubtless, in theory); but to make a long story short, so charmed was he by the scaly monster that he would change his sign, accept the ownerless dragon, and thereby wipe out a voluminous score which stood against his debtor. Gianni, with courteous thanks, explained that the dragon, still moist, was unfit for immediate transport; that it should remain in the studio for a short time longer; and that, as soon as its safety

permitted, he would himself convey it to the inn of his liberal creditor. But on this point Lupo was inflexible. In diffuse but unvarying terms he claimed instant possession of Gianni's masterstroke. He seized it, reared it face upwards on to his head, and by his exit broke up the conclave of creditors. What remains can be briefly told. Titian, his last hope in this direction wrecked, returned to achieve, indeed, fresh greatnesses: but not the less returned to the tedium of straining after an ideal once achieved, but now lost for ever. Giannuccionè, half amused, half mortified, at the slighting mention made of his performances, revenged himself in an epigram, of which the following is a free translation: —

'Gianni my friend and I both strove to excel,
But, missing better, settled down in well.
Both fail, indeed; but not alike we fail —
My forte being Venus' face, and his a dragon's tail.'

Gianni, in his ruin, took refuge with a former friend; and there, treated almost on the footing of a friend, employed his superabundant leisure in concocting a dragon superior in all points to its predecessor; but, when this was almost comM pleted, this which was to ransom his unsuspected treasure from the clutches of Lupo, the more relentless clutches of death fastened upon himself.

His secret died with him.

An oral tradition of a somewhere extant lost Titian having survived all historical accuracy, and so descended to another age, misled the learned Dr. Landau into purchasing a spurious work for the Gallery of Lunenberg; and even more recently induced Dr. Dreieck to expend a large sum on a nominal Titian, which he afterwards bequeathed to the National Museum of Saxe Eulenstein. The subject of this latter painting is a *Vintage of red grapes,* full of life and vigour, exhibiting marked talent, but clearly assignable to the commencement of a later century.

There remains, however, a hope that some happy accident may yet restore to the world the masterpiece of one of her most brilliant sons.

Reader, should you chance to discern over wayside inn or metropolitan hotel a dragon pendent, or should you find such an effigy amid the lumber of a broker's shop, whether it be red, green, or piebald, demand it importunately, pay for it liberally, and in the privacy of home scrub it. It *may* be that from behind the dragon will emerge a fair one, fairer than Andromeda, and that to you will appertain the honour of yet further exalting Titian's greatness in the eyes of a world.

NICK.

THERE dwelt in a small village, not a thousand miles from Fairyland, a poor man, who had no family to labour for or friend to assist. When I call him poor, you must not suppose he was a homeless wanderer, trusting to charity for a night's lodging; on the contrary, his stone house, with its green verandah and flower-garden, was the prettiest and snuggest in all the place, the doctor's only excepted. Neither was his store of provisions running low: his farm supplied - him with milk, eggs, mutton, butter, poultry, and cheese in abundance; his fields with hops and barley for beer, and wheat for bread; his orchard with fruit and cider; and his kitchen-garden with vegetables and wholesome herbs. He had, moreover, health, an appetite to enjoy all these good things, and strength to walk about his possessions. No, I call him poor because, with all these, he was discontented and envious. It was in vain that his apples were the largest for miles around, if his neighbour's vines were the most productive by a single bunch; it was in vain that his lambs were fat and thriving, if some one else's sheep bore twins: so, instead of enjoying his own prosperity, and being glad when his neighbours prospered too, he would sit grumbling and bemoaning himself as if every other man's riches were his poverty. And thus it was that one day our friend Nick leaned over Giles Hodge's gate, counting his cherries.

'Yes,' he muttered, 'I wish I were sparrows to eat them up, or a blight to kill your fine trees altogether.'

The words were scarcely uttered when he felt a tap on his shoulder, and looking round, perceived a little rosy woman, no bigger than a butterfly, who held her tiny fist clenched in a menacing attitude. She looked scornfully at him, and said: 'Now listen, you churl, you!

henceforward you shall straightway become everything you wish; only mind, you must remain under one form for at least an hour.' Then she gave him a slap in the face, which made his cheek tingle as if a bee had stung him, and disappeared with just so much sound as a dewdrop makes in falling.

Nick rubbed his cheek in a pet, pulling wry faces and showing his teeth. He was boiling over with vexation, but dared not vent it in words lest some unlucky wish should escape him. Just then the sun seemed to shine brighter than ever, the wind blew spicy from the south; all Giles's roses looked redder and larger than before, while his cherries seemed to multiply, swell, ripen. He could refrain no longer, but, heedless of the fairy-gift he had just received, exclaimed, 'I wish I were sparrows eating — '

No sooner said than done: in a moment he found himself a whole flight of hungry birds, pecking, devouring, and bidding fair to devastate the envied cherry-trees. But honest Giles was on the watch hard by; for that very morning it had struck him he must make nets for the protection of his fine fruit. Forthwith he ran home, and speedily returned with a revolver furnished with quite a marvellous array of barrels. Pop, bang — pop, bang! he made short work of the sparrows, and soon reduced the enemy to one crestfallen biped with broken leg and wing, who limped to hide himself under a holly-bush. But though the fun was over, the hour was not; so Nick must needs sit out his allotted time. Next a pelting shower came down, which soaked him through his torn, ruffled feathers; and then, exactly as the last drops fell and the sun came out with a beautiful rainbow, a tabby cat pounced upon him. Giving himself up for lost, he chirped in desperation, 'O, I wish I were a dog to worry you!' Instantly — for the hour was just passed — in the grip of his horrified adversary, he turned at bay, a savage bull-dog. A shake, a deep bite, and poor puss was out of her pain. Nick, with immense satisfaction, tore her fur to bits, wishing he could in like manner exterminate all her progeny. At last, glutted with vengeance, he lay down beside his victim, relaxed his ears and tail, and fell asleep.

Now that tabby-cat was the property and special pet of no less a personage than the doctor's lady; so when dinner-time came, and not the cat, a general consternation pervaded the household. The kitchens were searched, the cellars, the attics; every apartment was ransacked; even the watch-dog's kennel was visited. Next the stable was rummaged, then the hay-loft; lastly, the bereaved lady wandered disconsolately through her own private garden into the shrubbery, calling 'Puss, puss,' and looking so intently up the trees as not to perceive what lay close before her feet. Thus it was that, unawares, she stumbled over Nick, and trod upon his tail.

Up jumped our hero, snarling, biting, and rushing at her with such blind fury as to miss his aim. She ran, he ran. Gathering up his strength, he took a flying-leap after his victim; her foot caught in the spreading root of an oak-tree, she fell, and he went over her head, clear over, into a bed of stinging-nettles. Then she found breath to raise that fatal cry, 'Mad dog!' Nick's blood curdled in his veins; he would have slunk away if he could; but already a stout labouring - man, to whom he had done many an ill turn in the time of his humanity, had spied him, and, bludgeon in hand, was preparing to give chase. However, Nick had the start of him, and used it too; while the lady, far behind, went on vociferating, 'Mad dog, mad dog!' inciting doctor, servants, and vagabonds to the pursuit. Finally, the whole village came pouring out to swell the hue and cry.

The dog kept ahead gallantly, distancing more and more the asthmatic doctor,

fat Giles, and, in fact, all his pursuers except the bludgeon-bearing labourer, who was just near enough to persecute his tail. Nick knew the magic hour must be almost over, and so kept forming wish ‘after wish as he ran, — that he were a viper only to get trodden on, a thorn to run into some one’s foot, a man-trap in the path, even the detested bludgeon to miss its aim and break. This wish crossed his mind at the propitious moment; the bull-dog vanished, and the labourer, overreaching himself, fell flat on his face, while his weapon struck deep into the earth, and snapped.

A strict search was instituted after the missing dog, but without success. During two whole days the village children were exhorted to keep indoors and beware of dogs; on the third an inoffensive bull pup was hanged, and the panic subsided.

Meanwhile the labourer, with his shattered stick, walked home in silent wonder, pondering on the mysterious disappearance. But the puzzle was beyond his solution; so he only made up his mind not to tell his wife the whole story till after tea. He found her preparing for that meal, the bread and cheese set out, and the kettle singing softly on the fire. ‘Here’s something to make the kettle boil, mother,’ said he, thrusting our hero between the bars and seating himself; ‘for I’m mortal tired and thirsty.’

Nick crackled and blazed away cheerfully, throwing out bright sparks, and lighting up every corner of the little room. He toasted the cheese to a nicety, made the kettle boil without spilling a drop, set the cat purring with comfort, and illuminated the pots and pans into splendour. It was provocation enough to be burned; but to contribute by his misfortune to the well-being of his tormentors was still more aggravating. He heard, too, all their remarks and wonderment about the supposed mad-dog, and saw the doctor’s lady’s own maid bring the. labourer five shillings as a reward for his exertions. Then followed a discussion as to what should be purchased with the gift, till at last it was resolved to have their best window glazed with real glass. The prospect of their grandeur put the finishing-stroke to Nick’s indignation. Sending up a sudden flare, he wished with all his might that he were fire to burn the cottage.

Forthwith the flame leaped higher than ever, flame leaped before. It played for a moment about a ham, and. smoked it to a nicety; then, fastening on the woodwork above the chimney-corner, flashed full into a blaze. The labourer ran for help, while his wife, a timid woman, with three small children, overturned two pails of water on the floor, and set the beer-tap running.

This done, she hurried, wringing her hands, to the door, and threw it wide open. The sudden draught of air did more mischief than all Nick’s malice, and fanned him into quite a conflagration. He danced upon the rafters, melted a

pewter-pot and a pat of butter, licked up the beer, and was just making his way towards the bedroom, when through the thatch and down the chimney came a rush of water. This arrested his progress for the moment; and before he could recover himself, a second and a third discharge from the enemy completed his discomfiture. Reduced ere long to one blue flame, and entirely surrounded by a wall of wet ashes, Nick sat and smouldered; while the good-natured neighbours did their best to remedy the mishap, — saved a small remnant of beer, assured the labourer that his landlord was certain to do the repairs, and observed that the ham would eat 'beautiful.'

Our hero now had leisure for reflection. His situation precluded all hope of doing further mischief; and the disagreeable conviction kept forcing itself upon his mind that, after all, he had caused more injury to himself than to any of his neighbours. Remembering, too, how contemptuously the fairy woman had looked and spoken, he began to wonder how he could ever have expected to enjoy her gift. Then it occurred to him, that if he merely studied his own advantage without trying to annoy other people, perhaps his persecutor might be propitiated; so he fell to thinking over all his acquaintances, their fortunes and misfortunes; and, having weighed well their several claims on his preference, ended by wishing himself the rich old man who lived in a handsome house just beyond the turnpike. In this wish he burned out.

The last glimmer had scarcely died away, when Nick found himself in a bed hung round with faded curtains, and occupying the centre of a large room. A night-lamp, burning on the chimney-piece, just enabled him to discern a few shabby old articles of furniture, a scanty carpet, and some writing materials on a table. These objects looked somewhat dreary; but for his comfort he felt an inward consciousness of a goodly money-chest stowed away under his bed, and of sundry precious documents hidden in a secret cupboard in the wall.

So he lay very cosily, and listened to the clock ticking, the mice squeaking, and the housedog barking down below. This was, however, but a drowsy occupation; and he soon bore witness to its somniferous influence by sinking into a fantastic dream about his money-chest. First, it was broken open, then shipwrecked, then burned; lastly, some men in masks, whom he knew instinctively to be his own servants, began dragging it away. Nick started up, clutched hold of something in the dark, found his last dream true, and the next moment was stretched on the floor — lifeless, yet not insensible — by a heavy blow from a crowbar.

The men now proceeded to secure their booty, leaving our hero wh'ere he fell. They carried off the chest, broke open and ransacked the secret closet, overturned the furniture, to make sure that no hiding-place of treasure escaped

them, and at length, whispering together, left the room. Nick felt quite discouraged by his ill success, and now entertained only one wish — that he were himself again. Yet even this wish gave him some anxiety; for he feared that if the servants returned and found him in his original shape they might take him for a spy, and murder him in downright earnest. While he lay thus cogitating two of the men reappeared, bearing a shutter and some tools. They lifted him up, laid him on the shutter, and carried him out of the room, down the back-stairs, through a long vaulted passage, into the open air. No word was spoken; but Nick knew they were going to bury him.

An utter horror seized him, while, at the same time, he felt a strange consciousness that his hair would not stand on end because he was dead. The men set him down, and began in silence to dig his grave. It was soon ready to receive him; they threw the body roughly in, and cast upon it the first shovelful of earth.

But the moment of deliverance had arrived. His wish suddenly found vent in a prolonged unearthly yell. Damp with night dew, pale as death, and shivering from head to foot, he sat bolt upright, with starting, staring eyes and chattering teeth. The murderers, in mortal fear, cast down their tools, plunged deep into a wood hard by, and were never heard of more.

Under cover of night Nick made the best of his way home, silent and pondering. Next morning he gave Giles Hodge a rare tulip-root, with full directions for rearing it; he sent the doctor's wife a Persian cat twice the size of her lost pet; the labourer's cottage was repaired, his window glazed, and his beer-barrel replaced by unknown agency; and when a vague rumour reached the village that the miser was dead, that his ghost had been heard bemoaning itself, and that all his treasures had been carried off, our hero was one of the few persons who did not say, 'And served him right, too.'

Finally, Nick was never again heard to utter a wish.

HERO.

‘Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us!’
BURNS.

IF you consult the authentic map of Fairyland (recently published by Messrs. Moon, Shine, and Co.) you will notice that the emerald-green line which indicates its territorial limit, is washed towards the south by a bold expanse of sea, undotted by either rocks or islands. To the north-west it touches the work-a-day world, yet is effectually barricaded against intruders by an impassable chain of mountains; which, enriched throughout with mines of gems and metals, presents on Manside a leaden sameness of hue, but on Elfside glitters with diamonds and opals as with ten thousand fire-flies. The greater portion of the west frontier is, however, bounded, not by these mountains, but by an arm of the sea, which forms a natural barrier between the two countries; its eastern shore peopled by good folks and canny neighbours, gay sprites, graceful fairies, and sportive elves; its western by a bold tribe of semi-barbarous fishermen.

Nor was it without reason that the first settlers selected this fishing-field, and continued to occupy it, though generation after generation they lived and died almost isolated. Their swift, white-sailed boats ever bore the most delicate freights of fish to the markets of Outerworld — and not of fish only; many a waif and stray from Fairyland washed ashore amongst them. Now a fiery carbuncle blazed upon the sand; now a curiously-wrought ball of gold or ivory was found imbedded amongst the pebbles. Sometimes a sunny wave threw up a rose-coloured winged shell or jewelled starfish; sometimes a branch of unfading seaweed, exquisitely perfumed. But though these treasures, when once secured, could be offered for sale and purchased by all alike, they were never, in the first instance, discovered except by children or innocent young maidens; indeed, this fact was of such invariable occurrence, and children were so fortunate in treasure-finding, that a bluff mariner would often, on returning home empty-handed from his day’s toil, despatch his little son or daughter to a certain sheltered stretch of shingle, which went by the name of the children’s harvest-field;’ hoping by such means to repair his failure.

Amongst this race of fishermen was none more courageous, hospitable, and free-spoken than Peter Grump the widower; amongst their daughters was none more graceful and pure than his only child Hero, beautiful, lively, tender-hearted, and fifteen; the pet of her father, the pride of her neighbours, and the

true love of Forss, as sturdy a young fellow as ever cast a net in deep water, or rowed against wind and tide for dear life.

One afternoon Hero, rosy through the splashing spray and sea-wind, ran home full-handed from the harvest-field.

'See here, father!' she cried, eagerly depositing a string of sparkling red beads upon the table: 'see, are they not beautiful?'

Peter Grump examined them carefully, holding each bead up to the light, and weighing them in his hand.

'Beautiful indeed!' echoed Forss, who unnoticed, at least by the elder, had followed Hero into the cottage. 'Ah, if I had a sister to find me fairy treasures, I would take the three months' long journey to the best market of Outerworld, and make my fortune there.'

'Then you would rather go the three months' journey into Outerworld than come every evening to my father's cottage?' said Hero, shyly.

'Truly I would go to Outerworld first, and come to you afterwards,' her lover answered, with a smile; for he thought how speedily on his return he would have a tight house of his own, and a fair young wife, too.

'Father,' said Hero presently, 'if, instead of gifts coming now and then to us, I could go to Giftland and grow rich there, would you fret after me?'

'Truly,' answered honest Peter, 'if you can go and be Queen of Fairyland, I will not keep you back from such eminence for he thought,' my darling jests; no one ever traversed those mountains or that inland sea, and how should her little feet cross over?'

But Hero, who could not read their hearts, said within herself, 'They do not love me as I love them. Father should not leave me to be fifty kings; and I would not leave Forss to go to Fairyland, much less Outerworld.'

Yet from that day forward Hero was changed; their love no longer seemed sufficient for her; she sought after other love and other admiration. Once a lily was ample head-dress, now she would heighten her complexion with a wreath of gorgeous blossoms; once it was enough that Peter and Forss should be pleased with her, now she grudged any man's notice to her fellow-maidens. Stung by supposed indifference, she suffered disappointment to make her selfish. Her face, always beautiful, lost its expression of gay sweetness; her temper became capricious, and instead of cheerful airs she would sing snatches of plaintive or bitter songs. Her father looked anxious, her lover sad; both endeavoured, by the most patient tenderness, to win her back to her former self; but a weight lay on their hearts when they noticed that she no longer brought home fairy treasures, and remembered that such could be found only by the innocent.

One evening Hero, sick alike of herself and of others, slipped unnoticed from

the cottage, and wandered seawards. Though the moon had not yet risen, she could see her way distinctly, for all Fairycoast flashed one blaze of splendour. A soft wind bore to Hero the hum of distant instruments and songs, mingled with ringing laughter; and she thought, full of curiosity, that some festival must be going on amongst the little people; perhaps a wedding.

Suddenly the music ceased, the lights danced up and down, ran to and fro, clambered here and there, skurried round and round with irregular precipitate haste, while the laughter was succeeded by fitful sounds of lamentation and fear. Hero fancied some precious thing must have been lost, and that a minute search was going on. For hours the commotion continued, then gradually, spark by spark, the blaze died out, and all seemed once more quiet; yet still the low wail of sorrow was audible.

Weary at length of watching, Hero arose; and was just about to turn homewards, when a noisy, vigorous wave leaped ashore, and deposited something shining at her feet.

She stooped. What could it be?

It was a broad, luminous shell, fitted up with pillows and an awning. On the pillows and under the scented canopy lay fast asleep a little creature, butterfly-winged and coloured like a rose-leaf. The fish who should have piloted her had apparently perished at his post, some portion of his pulp still cleaving to the shell's fluted lip; while unconscious of her faithful adherent's fate, rocked by wind and wave, the Princess Royal of Fairyland had floated fast asleep to Manside. Her disappearance it was which had occasioned such painful commotion amongst her family and affectionate lieges; but all their lamentations failed to rouse her; and not till the motion of the water ceased did she awake to find herself, vessel and all, cradled in the hands of Hero.

During some moments the two stared at each other in silent amazement; then a suspicion of the truth flashing across her mind, Princess Fay sat upright on her couch and spoke, —

'What gift shall I give you that so I may return to my home in peace?'

For an instant Hero would have answered, 'Give me the love of Forss;' but pride checked the words, and she said, 'Grant me, wherever I am, to become the supreme object of admiration.'

Princess Fay smiled, 'As you will,' said she; 'but to effect this you must come with me to my country.'

Then, whilst Hero looked round for some road which mortal feet might traverse, Fay uttered a low, bird-like call. A slight frothing ensued, at the water's edge, close to the shingle, whilst one by one mild, scaly faces peered above the surface, and vigorous tails propelled their owners. Next, three strong fishes

combining themselves into a raft, Hero seated herself on the centre back, and holding fast her little captive, launched out upon the water.

Soon they passed beyond where mortal sailor had ever navigated, and explored the unknown sea. Strange forms of seals and porpoises, marine snails and unicorns contemplated them with surprise, followed reverentially in their wake, and watched them safe ashore.

But on Hero their curious ways were lost, so absorbed was she by ambitious longings. Even after landing, to her it seemed nothing that her feet trod on sapphires, and that both birds and fairies made their nests in the adjacent trees. Blinded, deafened, stultified by self, she passed unmoved through crystal streets, between fountains of rainbow, along corridors carpeted with butterflies' wings, up a staircase formed from a single tusk, into the opal presence-chamber, even to the foot of the carnelian dormouse on which sat enthroned Queen Fairy.

Till the Queen said, 'What gift shall I give you, that so my child may be free from you and we at peace?'

Then again Hero answered, 'Grant me, wherever I am, to become the supreme object of admiration.'

Thereat a hum and buzz of conflicting voices ran through the apartment. The immutable statutes of Fairycourt enacted that no captured fairy could be set free except at the price named by the captor; from this necessity not even the blood-royal was exempt, so that the case was very urgent; on the other hand, the beauty of Hero, her extreme youth, and a certain indignant sorrow which spoke in her every look and tone, had enlisted such sympathy on her side as made the pigmy nation loth to endow her with the perilous preeminence she demanded.

'Clear the court,' shrilled the usher of the golden rod, an alert elf, green like a grasshopper.

Amid the crowd of non-voters Hero, bearing her august prisoner, retired from the throneroom.

When recalled to the assembly an imposing silence reigned, which was almost instantly broken by the Queen. 'Maiden,' she said, 'it cannot be but that the dear ransom of my daughter's liberty must be paid. I grant you, wherever you may appear, to become the supreme object of admiration. In you every man shall find his taste satisfied. In you one shall recognise his ideal of loveliness, another shall bow before the impersonation of dignity. One shall be thrilled by your voice, another fascinated by your wit and inimitable grace. He who prefers colour shall dwell upon your complexion, hair, eyes; he who worships intellect shall find in you his superior; he who is ambitious shall feel you to be a prize more august than an empire. I cannot ennoble the taste of those who look upon you: I can but cause that in you all desire shall be gratified. If sometimes you chafe under a

trivial homage, if sometimes you are admired rather for what you have than for what you are, accuse your votaries, — accuse, if you will, yourself, but accuse not me. In consideration, however, of your utter inexperience, I and my trusty counsellors have agreed for one year to retain your body here, whilst in spirit you at will become one with the reigning object of admiration. If at the end of the year you return to claim this preeminence as your own proper attribute, it shall then be unconditionally granted: if, on the contrary, you then or even sooner desire to be released from a gift whose sweetness is alloyed by you know not how much of bitter shortcoming and disappointment, return, and you shall at once be relieved of a burden you cannot yet estimate.'

So Hero quitted the presence, led by spirits to a pleasance screened off into a perpetual twilight. Here, on a rippling lake, blossomed lilies. She lay down among their broad leaves and cups, cradled by their interlaced stems, rocked by warm winds on the rocking water; she lay till the splash of fountains, and the chirp of nestlings, and the whisper of spiced breezes, and the chanted monotone of an innumerable choir, lulled to sleep her, soul, lulled to rest her tumultuous heart, charmed her conscious spirit into a heavy blazing diamond, — a glory by day, a lamp by night, and a world's wonder at all times.

Let us leave the fair body at rest, and crowned with lilies, to follow the restless spirit, shrined in a jewel, and cast ashore on Manside.

No sooner was this incomparable diamond picked up and carried home than Hero's darling wish was gratified. She outshone every beauty, she eclipsed the most brilliant eyes of the colony. For a moment the choicest friend was superseded, the dearest mistress overlooked. For a moment — and this outstripped her desire — Peter Grump forgot his lost daughter and Forss his lost love. Soon greedy admiration developed into greedy strife: her spark kindled a conflagration. This gem, in itself an unprecedented fortune, should this gem remain the property of a defenceless orphan to whom mere chance had assigned it? From her it was torn in a moment: then the stronger wrested it from the strong, blows revenged blows, until, as the last contender bit the dust in convulsive death, the victor, feared throughout the settlement for his brute strength and brutal habits, bore off the prize toward the best market of Outerworld.

It irked Hero to nestle in that polluted bosom and count the beatings of that sordid heart; but when, at the end of the three months' long journey, she found herself in a guarded booth, enthroned on a cushion of black velvet, by day blazing even in the full sunshine, by night needing no lamp save her own lustre; when she heard the sums running up from thousands into millions which whole guilds of jewellers, whole caravans of merchant princes, whole royal families

clubbed their resources to offer for her purchase, it outweighed all she had undergone of disgust and tedium. Finally, two empires, between which a marriage was about to be contracted and a peace ratified, outbid all rivals and secured the prize.

Princess Lily, the august bride-elect, was celebrated far and near for courteous manners and delicate beauty. Her refusal was more gracious, her reserve more winning, than the acquiescence or frankness of another. She might have been more admired, or even envied, had she been less loved. If she sang, her hearers loved her; if she danced, the lookers-on loved her; thus love forestalled admiration, and happy in the one she never missed the other.

Only on her wedding-day, for the first time, she excited envy; for in her coronet appeared the inestimable jewel, encircling her sweet face with a halo of splendour. Hero eclipsed the bride, dazzled the bridegroom, distracted the queen-mother, and thrilled the whole assembly. Through all the public solemnities of the day Hero reigned supreme: and when, the state parade being at length over, Lily unclasped her gems and laid aside her cumbrous coronet, Hero was handled with more reverential tenderness than her mistress.

The bride leaned over her casket of treasures and gazed at the inestimable diamond. ‘Is it not magnificent?’ whispered she.

‘What?’ said the bridegroom: ‘I was look at you.’

So Lily flushed up with delight, and Hero experienced a shock. Next the diamond shot up one ray of dazzling momentary lustre; then lost its supernatural brilliancy, as Hero quitted the gem for the heart of Lily.

Etiquette required that the young couple should for some days remain in strict retirement. Hero now found herself in a secluded palace, screened by the growth of many centuries. She was waited on by twenty bridesmaids only less noble than their princess; she was worshipped by her bridegroom and reflected by a hundred mirrors. In Lily’s pure heart she almost found rest: and when the young prince, at dawn, or lazy noon, or mysterious twilight — for indeed the process went on every day and all day — praised his love’s eyes, or hair, or voice, or movements, Hero thought with proud eagerness of the moment when, in her own proper person, she might claim undisputed preeminence.

The prescribed seclusion, however, drew to a close, and the royal pair must make their entrance on public life. Their entrance coincided with another’s exit.

Melice Rapta had for three successive seasons thrilled the world by her voice, and subdued it by her loveliness. She possessed the demeanour of an empress, and the winning simplicity of a child, genius and modesty, tenderness and indomitable will. Her early years had passed in obscurity, subject to neglect, if not unkindness; it was only when approaching womanhood developed and

matured her gifts that she met with wealthy protectors and assumed their name: for Melice was a foundling.

No sooner, however, did her world-wide fame place large resources at her command, than she anxiously sought to trace her unknown parentage; and, at length, discovered that her high-born father and plebeian mother — herself sole fruit of their concealed marriage — were dead. Once made known to her kindred, she was eagerly acknowledged by them; but rejecting more brilliant offers, she chose to withdraw into a private sphere, and fix her residence with a maternal uncle, who, long past the meridian of life, devoted his energies to botanical research and culture.

So, on the same evening, Lily and her husband entered on their public duties, and Melice took leave for ever of a nation of admirers.

When the prince and princess appeared in the theatre, the whole house stood up, answering their smiles and blushes by acclamations of welcome. They took their places on chairs of state under an emblazoned canopy, and the performance commenced.

A moonless night: three transparent ghosts flit across the scene, bearing in their bosoms unborn souls. They leave behind tracks of light from which are generated arums. Day breaks — Melice enters; she washes her hands in a fountain, singing to the splash of the water; she plucks arums, and begins weaving them into a garland, still singing.

Lily bent forward to whisper something to her husband; but he raised his hand, enforcing 'Hush!' as through eyes and ears his soul drank deep of beauty. The young wife leaned back with good-humoured acquiescence; but Hero?

In another moment Hero was singing in the unrivalled songstress, charming and subduing every heart. The play proceeded; its incidents, its characters developed. Melice outshone, out-sang herself; warbling like a bird, thrilling with entreaty, pouring forth her soul in passion. Her voice commanded an enthusiastic silence, her silence drew down thunders of enthusiastic applause. She acknowledged the honour with majestic courtesy; then, for the first time, trembled, changed colour: would have swept from the presence like a queen, but merely wept like a woman.

It was her hour of supreme triumph.

Next day she set out for her uncle's residence, her own selected home.

Many a long day's journey separated her from her mother's village, and her transit thither assumed the aspect of a ceremonial progress. At every town on her route orations and emblems awaited her; whilst from the capital she was quitting, came, pursuing her, messages of farewell, congratulation, entreaty. Often an unknown cavalier rode beside her carriage some stage of the journey;

often a high-born lady met her on the road, and, taking a last view of her countenance, obtained a few more last words from the most musical mouth in the world.

At length the goal was reached. The small cottage, surrounded by its disproportionately extensive garden, was there; the complex forcing-houses, pits, refrigerators, were there; Uncle Treeh was there, standing at the open door to receive his newly-found relative.

Uncle Treeh was rather old, rather short, not handsome; with an acute eye, a sensitive mouth, and spectacles. With his complexion of sere brown, and his scattered threads of white hair, he strikingly resembled certain plants of the cactus tribe, which, in their turn, resemble withered old men.

All his kind face brightened with welcome as he kissed his fair niece, and led her into his sitting-room. On the table were spread for her refreshment the choicest products of his gardens: ponderous pine-apples, hundred-berried vine clusters, currants large as grapes and sweet as honey. For a moment his eyes dwelt on a human countenance with more admiration than on a vegetable; for a moment, on comparing Melice's complexion with an oleander, he awarded the palm to the former.

But a week afterwards, when Melice, leaning over his shoulder, threatened to read what he was writing, Treeh looked good-naturedly conscious, and, abandoning the letter to her mercy, made his escape into a neighbouring conservatory.

She read as follows: —

My Friend, —

You will doubtless have learned how my solitude has been invaded by my sister's long-lost daughter, a peach-coloured damsel, with commeline eyes, and hair darker than chestnuts. For one whole evening I suspended my beloved toils and devoted myself to her: alas! next day, on revisiting Lime Alley, house B, pot 37, I found that during my absence a surreptitious slug had devoured three shoots of a tea-rose. Thus nipped in the bud, my cherished nursling seemed to upbraid me with neglect; and so great was my vexation, that, on returning to company, I could scarcely conceal it. From that hour I resolved that no mistaken notions of hospitality should ever again seduce me from the true aim of my existence. Nerved by this resolution, I once more take courage; and now write to inform you that I am in hourly expectation of beholding pierce the soil (loam, drenched with liquid manure) the first sprout from that unnamed alien seed, which was brought to our market, three months ago, by a seafaring man of semi-

barbarous aspect. I break off to visit my hoped-for seedling.

At this moment the door, hastily flung open, startled Melice, who, looking up, beheld Treeh, radiant and rejoicing, a flowerpot in his hand. He hurried up to her, and, setting his load on the table, sank upon his knees. ‘Look!’ he cried.

‘Why, uncle,’ rejoined Melice, when curious examination revealed to her eyes a minute living point of green, ‘this marvel quite eclipses me!’

A pang of humiliation shot through Hero, an instantaneous sharp pang; the next moment she was burrowing beneath the soil in the thirsty sucking roots of a plant not one-eighth of an inch high.

Day by day she grew, watched by an eye unwearied as that of a lover. The green sheath expanded fold after fold, till from it emerged a crumpled leaf, downy and notched. How was this first-born of an unknown race tended; how did fumigations rout its infinitesimal foes, whilst circles of quicklime barricaded it against the invasion of snails! It throve vigorously, adding leaf to leaf and shoot to shoot: at length, a minute furry-bud appeared.

Uncle Treeh, the most devoted of foster-fathers, revelled in ecstasy; yet it seemed to Hero that his step was becoming feebler, and his hand more tremulous. One morning he waited on her as usual, but appeared out of breath and unsteady: gradually he bent more and more forward, till, without removing his eyes from the cherished plant, he sank huddled on the conservatory floor.

Three hours afterwards hurried steps and anxious faces sought the old man. There, on the accustomed spot, he lay, shrunk together, cold, dead; his glazed eyes still riveted on his favourite nursling.

They carried away the corpse — could Treeh have spoken he would have begged to lie where a delicate vine might suck nourishment from his remains — and buried it a mile away from the familiar garden; but no one had the heart to crush him beneath a stone. The earth lay lightly upon him; and though his bed was unvisited by one who would have tended it — for Melice, now a wife, had crossed ‘the sea to a distant home — generations of unbidden flowers, planted by winds and birds, blossomed there.

During one whole week Hero and her peers dwelt in solitude, uncared for save by a mournful gardener, who loved and cherished the’vegetable family for their old master’s sake. But on the eighth day came a change: all things were furbished up, and assumed their most festive aspect; for the new owners were hourly expected.

The door opened. A magnificently attired lady, followed by two children and a secondary husband, sailed into the narrow passage, casting down with her robe several flowerpots. She glanced around with a superior air, and was about to quit the scene without a word, when the gardener ventured to remark, ‘Several very

rare plants, madam.'.

'Yes, yes,' she cried, 'we knew his eccentric tastes, poor dear old man!' and stepped doorwards.

One more effort: 'This madam,' indicating Hero, 'is a specimen quite unique.'

'Really,' said she; and observed to her husband as she left the house, 'These useless buildings must be cleared away. This will be the exact spot for a ruin: I adore a ruin!'

A ruin? — Hero's spirit died in the slighted plant. Was it to such taste as this she must condescend? such admiration as this she must court? Merely to receive it would be humiliation. A passionate longing for the old lost life, the old beloved love, seized her; she grew tremulous, numbed: 'Ah,' she thought, 'this is death!'

A hum, a buzz, voices singing and speaking, the splash of fountains, airy laughter, rustling wings, the noise of a thousand leaves and flower-cups in commotion. Sparks dancing in the twilight, dancing feet, joy and triumph; unseen hands loosing succous, interlacing stalks from their roots beneath the water; towing a lily-raft across the lake, down a tortuous inland creek, through Fairy-harbour, out into the open sea.

On the lily-raft lay Hero, crowned with lilies, at rest. A swift tide was running from Fairycoast to Manside: every wave heaving her to its silver crest bore her homewards; every wind whistling from the shore urged her homewards. Seals and unicorns dived on either hand, unnoticed. All the tumbling porpoises in the ocean could not have caught her eye.

At length, the moon-track crossed, she entered the navigable sea. There all was cold, tedious, dark; not a vessel in sight, not a living sound audible. She floated farther: something black loomed through the obscurity; could it be a boat? yes, it was certainly a distant boat; then she perceived a net lowered into the water; then saw two fishermen kindle a fire, and prepare themselves to wait, it might be for hours. Their forms thrown out against the glare struck Hero as familiar: that old man, stooping more than his former wont; that other strong and active figure, not so broad as in days of yore; — Hero's heart beat painfully: did they remember yet? did they love yet? was it yet time?

Nearer and nearer she floated, nearer and nearer. The men were wakeful, restless; they stirred the embers into a blaze, and sat waiting. Then softly and sadly arose the sound of a boat-song: —

PETER GRUMP.

If underneath the water

You comb your golden hair
With a golden comb, my daughter,
Oh, would that I were there.
If underneath the wave
You fill a slimy grave,
Would that I, who could not save,
Might share.

FORSS.
If my love Hero queens it
In summer Fairyland,
What would I be
But the ring on her hand?
Her cheek when she leans it
Would lean on me: —
Or sweet, bitter-sweet,
The flower that she wore
When we parted, to meet
On the hither shore
Anymore? nevermore.

Something caught Forss's eye; he tried the nets, and finding them heavily burdened began to haul them in, saying, 'It is a shoal of white fish; no, a drift of white seaweed — but suddenly he cried out:' Help, old father! it is a corpse, as white as snow!'

Peter ran to the nets, and with the younger man's aid rapidly drew them in. Hero lay quite still, while very gently they lifted the body over the boat-side, whispering one to another: 'It is a woman — she is dead!' They laid her down where the fire-light shone full upon her face — her familiar face.

Not a corpse, O Peter Grump: not a corpse, O true Forss, staggering as from a death-blow. The eyes opened, the face dimpled into a happy smile; with tears, and clinging arms, and clinging kisses, Hero begged forgiveness of her father and her lover.

I will not tell you of the questions asked and answered, the return home, the wonder and joy which spread like wildfire through the colony. Nor how in the moonlight Forss wooed and won his fair love; nor even how at the wedding danced a band of strangers, gay and agile, recognised by none save the bride. I

will merely tell you how in after years, sitting by her husband's fireside, or watching on the shingle for his return, Hero would speak to her children of her own early days. And when their eyes kindled while she told of the marvellous splendour of Fairyland, she would assure them, with a convincing smile, that only home is happy: and when, with flushed cheeks and quickened breath, they followed the story of her brief preeminence, she would add, that though admiration seems sweet at first, only love is sweet first, and last, and always.

VANNA'S TWINS.

THERE I stood on the platform at H — , girt by my three boxes, one carpet-bag, strapful of shawls and bundle of umbrellas; there I stood, with a courteous station-master and two civil porters assuring me that not one lodging was vacant throughout H — . At another time such an announcement might not have greatly signified, for London, whence I came, was less than three hours off; but on this particular occasion it did matter because I was weakened by recent illness, the journey down had shaken me, I was hungry and thirsty for my tea, and, through fear of catching cold, I had wrapped up overmuch; so that when those polite officials stated that they could not point out a lodging for me I felt more inclined to cry than I hope anybody suspected. One of the porters, noticing how pale and weak I looked, good-naturedly volunteered to go to the three best hotels, and see whether in one of them, I could be housed for the moment; and though the expensiveness of such a plan secretly dismayed me, I saw nothing better than to accept his offer. Meanwhile, I retreated into the waiting-room wishing him success; but wondering, should he not succeed, what would become of me for the night.

Happily for me, my troubles were not aggravated by imaginary difficulties. I was turned forty-five, and looked not a day younger; an age at which there is nothing alarming in finding oneself alone in a strange place, or compelled to take a night journey by rail. So I sat on the waiting-room sofa, shut my eyes to ease, if possible, a racking headache, and made up my mind that, at the worst, I could always take the mail-train back to London.

After all, I had not long to wait. Within ten minutes of leaving me., my porter returned with the news that, if I did not mind a very unfashionable, but quite respectable, quarter of H — , he had just heard of a first floor vacated half-an-hour before my arrival, and ready, if I pleased, to receive me. I merely asked, was it clean? and being assured that there was not a tidier young woman in all H — than 'Fanny,' that her husband was a decent optician and stone-cutter, and that for cleanliness any of their floors might be eaten off, I felt only too thankful to step into a fly, and accompany my boxes to an abiding place. Before starting, I happened to ask the name of my landlord, and was answered, somewhat vaguely, by my porter, 'We call them Cole.'

The report of a coming lodger had travelled before me, and I found Mr. Cole and his Fanny awaiting me at their shop-door. But what a Mr. Cole and what a Fanny. He was a tall, stout foreigner, about thirty years Of age, ready with

tucked-up shirt-sleeves and athletic arms to bear my boxes aloft; she was the comeliest of young matrons, her whole face one smile, her ears adorned by weighty gold pendents, and with an obvious twin baby borne in each arm. Husband and wife alike addressed me as 'Meess,' and displayed teeth of an enviable regularity and whiteness as they smiled or spoke. Thus much I saw at a first glance.

Too tired for curiosity, I toiled up the narrow staircase after my boxes, washed my dusty face and hot hands, and stepped into my little sitting-room, intending to lie down on the sofa, and wait as patiently as might be whilst tea, which I had already ordered, was got ready. A pleasant surprise met me. I suppose the good-natured porter may have forewarned Mr. Cole of my weakness and wants; be this as it may, there stood the tea ready brewed, and flanked by pats of butter, small rolls, a rasher, and three eggs wrapped up in a clean napkin. After this, my crowning pleasure for the day was to step into a bed soft as down could make it, and drop to sleep between sheets fragrant of lavender.

A few days' convalescence at H — did more for me than as many weeks' convalescence in London had effected. Soon I strolled about the beach without numbering the breakwaters, or along the country roads, taking no count of the milestones; and went home to meals as hungry as a school-girl, and slept at nights like a baby. One of my earliest street-discoveries was that my landlord's name, as inscribed over his window, was not Cole, but Cola (Nicola) Piccirillo; and a very brief sojourn under his roof instructed me that the Fanny of my friend the porter was called Vanna (Giovanna) by her husband. They were both Neapolitans of the ex-kingdom, though not of the city, of Naples; whenever I asked either of them after the name of their native place, they invariably answered me in a tone of endearment, by what sounded more like 'Vascitammô' than aught else I know how to spell; but when my English tongue uttered 'Vascitammô' after them, they would shake their heads and repeat the uncatchable word; at last it grew to be a standing joke between us that when I became a millionnaire my courier Cola and my maid Vanna should take the twins and me to see Vascitammô.

I never thought of changing my lodgings, though, as time went on, it would have been easy to do so, and certainly the quarter we inhabited was not fashionable. A laborious, not an idle, community environed our doors and furnished customers to the shop: it was some time before I discovered that *l'amico* Piccirillo held a store for polished stones and marine curiosities in the bazaar of H — .

He liked to be styled an optician; but whilst he sold and repaired spectacles, driving a prosperous trade amongst the fishing population who surrounded us,

and supplying them with cheap telescopes, compasses, and an occasional magic-lantern, he was not too proud to eke out his gains by picking up and preparing marine oddities, pebbles, or weeds. After we became intimate I more than once rose at three or four in the morning, as the turn of the tide dictated, and accompanied him on a ramble of exploration. He scrambled about slippery, jagged rocks as sure-footed as a wild goat; and if ever my climbing powers failed at some critical pass, thought nothing of lifting me over the difficulty, with that courteous familiarity which, in an Italian, does not cease to be respectful. I was rather lucky in spying eligible stones, which I contributed to his basket; and then, when we got home, he would point out to his wife what '*la Signora'* had found *'per noi due e per li piccini*.' I understood a little Italian and they a little English, so we generally, in spite of the Neapolitan blurring accent, made out each other's meaning.

Vanna was one of the prettiest women I ever saw, if indeed I ought to term merely pretty a face which, with good features, contained eyes softer and more lustrous than any others I remember; their colour I never made out, but when she lowered the large eyelids, their long black lashes seemed to throw half her face into shadow. I don't know that she was clever except as a housewife, but in this capacity she excelled, and was a dainty cook over her shining pots and pans: her husband's *'due maccheroni*' often set me hankering, as I spied them done to a turn and smoking hot; though I confess that when Cola brought home a cuttle-fish and I saw it dished up as a '*calamarello*' my English prejudice asserted' itself.

'Mr. and Mrs. Cole' were unique in my small experience of people, but surely the twins must have remained unique in anybody's experience. What other babies were ever so fat or so merry? To see their creased arms was enough till one saw their creased legs, and then their arms grew commonplace. I never once heard them cry: a clothes-basket formed their primitive bassinette, and there they would sprawl, tickling each other and chuckling. They chuckled at their father, mother, myself, or any stranger who - would toss them, or poke a finger into their cushions of fat. They crowed over their own teething, and before they could speak seemed to bandy intuitive jokes, and chuckled in concert. Well were they named Felice Maria and Maria Gioconda. At first sight, they were utterly indistinguishable apart; but experiment proved that Felice, was a trifle heavier than his sister, and that fingers could go a hair's-breadth farther round her fat waist than round his. When I made their acquaintance their heads were thickly plaistered with that scurf which apparently an Italian custom leaves undisturbed; but as this wore off, curly black down took its place, and balanced the large, dark eyes and silky eyebrows and lashes, which both inherited from their mother.

What we, in our insularity, term the English love of soap and water was shared by Vanna, and it was one of my amusements to see the twins in their tub. Often, if hastily summoned to serve behind the counter, Vanna would leave them in the tub to splash about, and throw each other down and pick each other up, for a quarter of an hour together; and if I hinted that this might not be perfectly safe for them, she invariably assured me that in her '*paese'* all the babies toddled about the shore, and into the sea and out again so soon as ever they could toddle. *'E che male vi potrebV esseref non vi son coccodrilli:'* an argument no less apposite to the tub than to the sea.

As I possessed a small competence and no near home-ties, I felt under no constraint to leave H — sooner than suited my humour; so, though I had originally intended to remain there no longer than seven or eight weeks, month after month slipped away till a whole year had elapsed, and found me there still. In a year one becomes thoroughly acquainted with daily associates, and from being prepossessed by their engaging aspect, I had come to love and respect Piccirillo and his wife. Both were good Catholics, and evinced their orthodoxy as well by regularity at mass and confession as by strict uprightness towards customers and kindliness towards neighbours. Once when a fishing-boat was lost at sea, and its owner, Ned Gough, left well-nigh penniless, Cola, who was ingenious in preparing marine oddities, arranged a group of young skate in their quaint hoods and mantles, and mounted them on a green board amongst seaweed bushes as a party of gipsies; this would have been raffled for, and the proceeds given to the ruined boatman, had I not taken a fancy to the group, and purchased it. And the first time the twins walked out alone was when they crossed over the road hand in hand, each holding an orange as a present to a little sick girl opposite. Both parents watched them safe over, and I heard one remark to the other, that '*Nossignore*' would bless them.

It was mid-May when I arrived at H — , and about mid-May of the year following I returned to London. A legal question had meanwhile arisen touching my small property; and this took so long to settle, that during many and many months I remained in doubt whether I should continue adequately provided for, or be reduced to work in some department or other for my living. The point was ultimately decided in my favour, but not before much vexation and expense had been incurred on both sides. At the end of three years from quitting H — I made up my mind to return and settle there for good: no special ties bound me to London, and I knew of no people under whose roof I would so gladly make my solitary home as with Piccirillo and his wife; besides, the twins were an attraction. As to the optician's shop being in an out-of-the-way quarter, that I cared nothing for, having neither the tastes nor the income for fashionable

society: so, after a preliminary letter or two had passed between us, I found myself one glowing afternoon in June standing once again on the H — platform, not in the forlorn position I so vividly remembered, but met by Cola, broader than ever in figure, and smiling his broadest, who whipped up my trunks with his own hands on to the fly, and took his place by the driver.

Vanna came running out to meet me at the carriage door, seizing and kissing both my hands; and before I even alighted two sturdy urchins had been made to kiss '*la Signora's* hand. Ten minutes more and I was seated at tea, chatting to Vanna, and renewing acquaintance with my old friends Felice and Gioconda. This was effected by the presentation to them of a lump of sugar apiece, for which each again kissed my hand, fortunately before their mouths had become sticky by suction.

They were the funniest little creatures imaginable, and two of the prettiest. Felice was still just ahead of Gioconda in bulk, but so much like her that (as I found afterwards) if for fun they exchanged hats I got into a complete mental muddle as to which was which, confused by the. discrepant hats and frocks. There was no paid Roman Catholic school in H — , but the good nuns of St. L — taught the little boys and girls of their congregation; and morning after morning I used to see the twins start for school hand in hand, with dinner as well as books in their bags; for St. L —

was too far from their home to admit of going and returning twice in one day. All the neighbours were fond of them; and often before their destination was reached a hunch of cake from some good-natured rough hand had found its way into one or other bag, to be shared in due course.

At their books they were *'proprio maravi-gliosi*,' as Vanna phrased it; whilst Cola, swelling with paternal pride under a veil of humility, would observe, '*Non c'è male, nè lui nè lei!* I believe they really were clever children and fond of their books: at any rate, one Holy Innocents' Day they brought home a prize, a little story in two volumes, one volume apiece; for, as the kind nuns had remarked, they were like one work in two volumes themselves, and should have one book between them. That night they went to bed and fell asleep hand in hand as usual, but each holding in the other hand a scarlet-bound volume, so proud were they. They were but seven years old, and had never yet slept apart: never yet, and, as it turned out, never at all.

The Christmas when this happened was one of the brightest and pleasantest I recollect; night after night slight frost visited us, but day after day it melted away, whilst sea and sky spread clear and blue in the sunshine. In other countries much snow had fallen and was still falling, but snow had not yet reached our shores.

Christmas, as usual, brought a few bills to me, and likewise to my friends. Of theirs the heaviest was the doctor's bill, for the twins had caught scarlatina in the summer, and had got well on a variety of pills and draughts. Then Cola bethought himself of certain money due to him at a coast-guard station not many miles from H — , and which would just suffice to pay the doctor; and one Saturday, a day or two after Twelfth Day, he took the first afternoon train to E — , this being the nearest point on the line to his destination, and went to look after his debtor, telling Vanna that he might not be back before the latest train came into H — .

So Vanna took her seat behind the counter, and looked up the road towards St. L — , watching for her little ones to come racing home from school, for school broke up early on Saturdays. As she sat, she knitted something warm and useful, for she was never idle, and hummed in her low, sweet voice the first words of a Christmas carol. I only know those first words, so pathetic in their devout simplicity: —

'Tu scendi dalle stelle,
O Re del Cielo,
E vieni in una grotta al freddo al gelo;
O Bambino mio divino
Io Ti voglio sempre amar!
O Dio beato
E quanto Ti costô l'avermi amato.'

She was thus occupied as I crossed the shop on my way upstairs, and whilst I paused to say a word in passing, a young woman, her face swollen with crying, came up, who, almost without stopping, called out: 'O Fanny, Fanny, my three are down with the fever, and I'm running for the doctor!' and in speaking she was gone.

Sympathetic tears had gathered in Vanna's kind eyes when I looked at her. '*Non hanno padre',* she said, half apologetically; and I then recollected who the young woman was, and that her children were worse than fatherless. Poor Maggie Crowe! deserted by a good-for-nothing husband she worked hard to keep her little ones out of the workhouse; did charing, took in needlework, went out nursing when she could get a job, and now her three children were 'down with the fever,' and she had had to leave them alone in her wretched hovel on,the east cliff to run a mile and more into H— to fetch the parish doctor. We soon saw her tearing back as she had come, not stopping now to speak.

I went to my room, and looking into my charity-purse found that I could

afford five shillings out of it for this poor family, and settled mentally that I would take them round next day after church. At the moment I was feeling tired and disinclined to stir, and I concluded the parish doctor, who bore a character for kindness, would certainly for that night supply his patients with necessaries.

Just after the clock struck three I heard a bustle below; the twins had come home and were talking eagerly to their mother in their loud, childish voices. I heard Vanna answer them once or twice; then she spoke continuously, seeming to tell them something, and I heard both reply, '*Mamma si.'* A few minutes later I was surprised to see them from my window trotting along the street, but not in the direction from which they had just come, and bearing between them a market-basket, each of them holding it by one handle.

A suspicion of their errand crossed my mind, and I hurried downstairs to warn Vanna that a few snowflakes had already fallen and more hung floating about in the still air. She had noticed this of herself, but replied that they knew their way quite well, and it was not far to go; indeed, she could not feel easy without sending up a few oranges left from Twelfth Day for the sick children. Her own had had the fever, they had promised her to go straight and return straight without loitering, and though she looked somewhat anxious, she concluded bravely: '*Nossignore avrà cura di loro'*

I went back to my room thoroughly mortified at the rebuke which her alacrity administered to my laziness. How much less would it not have cost me to set off at once with my five shillings than it cost poor Vanna to send her little ones, tired as perhaps they were, to what, for such short legs, was a considerable distance. From my window, moreover, I soon could not help perceiving that not only the snow, rare at first, had begun to fall rapidly and in large flakes, but that the sky lowered dense and ominous over the east cliff. I felt sure that there, and thither it was that the twins were bound, it must already be snowing heavily.

Four o'clock struck, but Felice and Gioconda had not come back. I heard Vanna closing the shop. In another five minutes she came up to me dressed in bonnet and shawl, with a pale face that told its own story of alarm. Still she would not acknowledge herself frightened, but tried to laugh, as she apologized for leaving me alone in the house, assured me that no one could possibly be calling at that hour, and protested that she would not be out long. If the twins arrived in her absence she was sure I would kindly let them sit by my fire till her return; then, fairly breaking down and crying, she left me, repeating, '*Non son die piccini, poveri piccini, poveri piccini miei.'*

A couple of men with lighted lanterns stood waiting for her in the street; one of them made her take his arm, and I knew by the voice that it was Ned Gough. Hour after hour struck, and they did not return.

About seven o'clock I heard a loud knocking; and running down to open the door, for being left alone in the house I had locked up and made all safe, I found Piccirillo, who on account of the snow had hastened home by an earlier train than he had mentioned, and was now much amazed at finding the house closed and no light burning below. When he understood what had happened he seemed beside himself with agitation and terror. Flinging up his arms he rushed from the house, calling out, '*Vanna, Vanna mial dove sei? rispondimi: figli miei, rispondetemi*.' Neighbours came about him, offering what comfort they could think of: but what comfort could there be? He, too, must set off in the snow to seek his poor lost babies and their mother; and soon he started, lantern and stick in hand, ejaculating, and making vows as he went. *'Dio mio, Dio mio, abbi pietà di noi.'*

All through the long night it snowed and snowed: at daybreak it was snowing still. Soon after daybreak the seekers returned, cold, silent, haggard; Piccirillo carrying his wife, who lay insensible in his arms. After hours of wandering they had met somewhere out towards the east cliff, and Vanna, at sight of her husband, had dropped down utterly spent. She had gone straight to Maggie Crowe's cottage, and found that the twins had safely left the oranges there and started homewards; Felice tired but manful, poor little Gioconda trudging wearily along, and clinging to her brother. Maggie had tried to keep them at the cottage as it was already snowing heavily, and the little girl had cried and wanted to stay and warm herself; but her brother said 'No;' they had promised not to loiter, his sister would be good and not cry, he would take care of her; so whilst Maggie was busy with her own sick children, the twins had started. Beyond this, not one of the searching party could trace them; the small footmarks must have been effaced almost as soon as imprinted on the snow; and any one of the surface inequalities of that snow-waste, which now stretched right and left for miles, might be the mound to cover two such feeble wayfarers.

For three days the frost held and our suspense lasted; then the wind veered from north round to west, a rapid thaw set in, and a few hours ended hope and fear alike. The twins were found huddled together in a chalky hollow close to the edge of the cliff, and almost within sight of Maggie's hovel: Gioconda with her head thrust into the market-basket, Felice with one arm holding the basket over his sister, and with the other clasping her close to him. Her fat hands met round his waist, and clasped between them was a small silver cross I had given her at Christmas, and which she had worn round her neck.

Lovely and pleasant in their lives, in their death they were not divided; but as they had always shared one bed, they now shared one coffin and one grave.

After a while Piccirillo and his wife recovered from their passionate grief; but

Vanna drooped more and more as spring came on, and clothed the small grave with greenness. They had no other child, and the house was silent indeed and desolate. Once I heard them talking to each other of 'Vascitammô:' Vanna said something I did not catch, and then Cola answered her, '*Si, Vanna mia, ritorneremo; tolga Iddio cite io perda te ancora.'*

So I knew that we should soon have to part. They came upstairs together to me one evening, and with real kindliness explained that all their plans were altered on account of Vanna's failing health, and that they must go home to their own country lest she should die. Vanna cried and I cried, and poor Cola fairly cried too. I promised them that the little grave shall never fall into neglect whilst I live, and in thanking me they managed to say through their tears, — '*Nossignore è buono, e certo li avrà benedetti!*

The business was easily disposed of, for; though small, it was a thriving concern, and capable of extension. Other affairs did not take long to settle; and one morning I saw my kind friends off by an early train, on their 'road through London to' Vascitammô,' which now neither the twins nor I shall ever see.

A SAFE INVESTMENT.

IT was a pitchy dark night. Not the oldest inhabitant remembered so black a night, so moonless, so utterly starless; and whispering one to another, men said with a shiver that longer still, not for a hundred years back — ay, or for a thousand years — ay, or even since the world was — had such gross darkness covered the land. Yet those who counted the time protested that morning must now be at hand, ready to break, even while East and West were massed in one common indistinguishable blot of blackness; and those who discerned the signs of the times, those who waited for the morning, looked often towards one house which could not be hid, for it was set upon a hill, nor overturned, for it was founded upon a rock, and from which a light streamed pure and steady, shaming the flickering gas-lamps of the town, the dim glare of shops and private dwellings, and the flaring, smoking torches of such wayfarers as thought, by compassing themselves about with sparks, to find safety in their transit to and fro.

On this cheerless night a solitary traveller entered the town by the eastern gate. He rode a white horse: about both the beast and his rider there was something foreign, or if not foreign, at any rate unusual. The man was keen and military of aspect, and had the air of one bound on some mission of importance. The horse seemed to know his road without guidance, to turn hither or thither by instinct, not to loiter, yet not to make haste. They passed through the eastern gate, which was opened wide before them: without let or hindrance they entered in, and the horse's hoofs struck once on the paved road.

In an instant, at the western outskirts of the city a flare of red light shot up. Out came houses into view from the night darkness; to right and left they flashed out for a moment: for a moment you could spy through the windows people sitting at table, reading, working, dancing, as the case might be: you could note a bird's cage hanging here or there, a cat or two creeping along the gutter, a few foot-passengers arrested by the unexpected glare looking round them in all directions for its source, a single carriage threading its way cautiously along the dangerous streets: for a moment — then a cry went up, then there came the crash and crush of a tremendous explosion, and then darkness settled once more over its own dominion; whilst through the darkness those who could not see each other's faces heard each other's groans, cries for help, shrieks of terror or of agonizing pain. All the gas-lamps of the city had gone out as though at a single whiff, for it was an explosion of the great central gasworks which had taken

place. And the darkness deepened.

To the south of the city lay the sea. Day and night its surges were never still nor silent; day and night ships heaved on its bosom, passing in or out of harbour, laden with passengers, with gold, silks, provisions, merchandise of all sorts. On this night, if any one had had owl's eyes to peer with, he might have discerned that the deep boiled like a pot of ointment; he would have seen in a score, yea, in a hundred vessels, the sailors at their wits' end reeling to and fro, and staggering like drunken men; whilst the strong masts snapped like straws, and the tough, hollow ship-sides stove in as though they had been of paper — till captains, crews, and passengers, were fain to cast overboard freights and treasures, rarities from the ends of the earth, corn, and wine, and oil — to cast these overboard, and at length, abandoning the ship, to flee for their lives in boats, on planks, on pieces of the vessel, too happy if with bare life they escaped to land, beggared but alive. Meanwhile those on the quays could guess, though they could not see, the ruin, as wretch after poor wretch struggled to shore; but for one who came, a score at least were seen no more for ever.

In a central quarter of the town stood the old-established county bank, concerning which the townspeople had long boasted that not the national bank itself was safer. In panic years it had remained unaffected by the surrounding pressure; it had stood firm, and stand it would whilst the town was a town: so said its directors, its shareholders, the public voice in unison. But on this certain night of all nights in the year, when ship after ship went down with entire costly cargoes, and scores and hundreds of hands on board; when the gasworks exploded, to the obvious utter ruin of the shareholders; when a report spread that the treasurer of the chief railway company had absconded with all the funds in his hands, a report confirmed as night wore, and soon established as a fact; on this night of all nights, the dismayed citizens turned in thought to their bank. Every man beheld an enemy in his neighbour, an enemy who would forestall others and save himself at all costs; and in the panic of accumulated losses man after man bent his steps towards the bank. The doors were besieged; with loud cries the men — and the women too, for many of these had flocked thither impelled by the instinct of self-preservation — men and women beset the doors, demanding instant admittance, and clamouring for their money deposits to be restored to them then and there. The pressure waxed irresistible; the doors yielded; a terrified clerk or two strove vainly with plausible words to appease the foremost applicants; then desperately discharged claim after claim in notes, sovereigns, silver, till the last sixpence — down to the last penny — was disbursed. When it became known that the old-established secure bank had stopped payment before it had met a tithe of its liabilities, it was as much as the

clerks could do to escape with whole skins from the infuriated, disappointed populace.

But more troubles were to come. At the railway station a telegram had been received early in the evening intimating that a branch bank in an adjacent town had been constrained by sudden pressure to stop payment, though, as it was hoped, only momentarily. This disastrous news had been studiously confined to one or two parties, who hoped to profit by being in advance of their, neighbours; but soon a second telegram of like import came in from another quarter; then a third; and it became impossible any longer to suppress the facts. A terrible commotion ensued on 'Change; there was scarcely a house in all the town where ruin, or at the least reverse, had not entered.

But what, after all, were these partial local failures? Before the night was over another telegram arrived, and it transpired that the main national bank itself had broken.

Then a cry went up through the length and breadth of the land.

When our wayfarer reached the Exchange it was crowded by persons of all ranks and ages, brought together by the bond of a common disaster. He dismounted, tethered his white horse to the railings outside, and entering joined the concourse within, apparently with no further object than to observe and listen, passing from group to group, pausing sometimes a longer, sometimes a shorter period, here or there as the case might demand. Most of the persons present — of those at least who were not simply paralysed and struck dumb by their misfortunes — stood disputing in loud, excited tones, as to the causes and details of the present public calamities; — whose carelessness it was which had occasioned the gas explosion; how many vessels and lives, and what value of cargo, had perished in the storm, some rating the probable loss at millions and some at tens of millions; what hope there might still be of a dividend from the local bank; whether any of the reported failures had been without fraud; what head the country could make against the vast smash of the national bank. But here and there some one man or woman seemed, in the hubbub of rage and dismay, to be wrapped in private, personal grief, alien from the general cares.

One such, a half-frantic elderly woman, huddled in a corner, was tearing her hair and crying out in broken, half-articulate speech. The strange traveller approached her, and in a voice of great sympathy inquired into the source of her passionate sorrow. Then, weeping and gnashing her teeth, she shrieked her answer:' My son, my son, he has been cashiered to-day from his regiment! His commission was all we had in the world, and he was all I loved in the world.' An old sullen man, accosted by the traveller, replied shortly that his strong-box had been broken open and rifled by thieves, and that as he was removing a small

remnant of money left to him from his own house to a place of security, the few precious coins had slipped through a hole in the bag and been lost. Another man, being questioned, seemed to find some relief in complaint, and answered readily that he had embarked enormous capital in constructing a reservoir for water, on a scale amply sufficient for the supply of the whole town, but that, at the very moment when he hoped to realise cent per cent upon his original outlay, a flaw had been discovered in the main aqueduct, and it was then perceived, too late, that all the cisterns were broken and could hold no water. Every tale was diverse, yet, in fact, every one was the same. Each speaker had sunk all that he had in some plausible investment, the investment had burst like a bubble, and now one and all in desperate sorrow could but bewail their ruin as without remedy. They had no eyes, no thought, no sympathy, save each man for himself; none stretched a helping hand to his neighbour, or spoke a word of comfort, or cared who sank or who swam in this desolation which had come like a flood.

From such as these it was vain to demand hospitality. The traveller went out from amongst them, remounted his horse, and pursued his way along the darkened, deserted streets, between rows of tall houses, in which the voice of mirth and music seemed silenced for ever. Now at one door, now at another, he knocked to ask for refreshment, but always without success. Sometimes no answer was vouchsafed to his summons; sometimes he was turned away with churlish indifference, or even with abuse for having ventured to disturb the household in its night of distress.

At last he observed one cottage, which, detached from other residences, stood alone in its trim garden-plot. In this only, amongst all the dwellings he had passed, there shone a light.

He dismounted once more, tethered his horse to the wicket-gate, followed the gravel-path, and knocked gently at the house-door. A calm, cheerful-looking woman opened to him, and seeing a stranger at that late hour, conceived at once that he was a wayfarer in quest of repose and refreshment, and bade him enter and be welcome. Then, while he sat down by the fire, she hastened to set before him milk and bread, meat, wine, and butter. This done, she ran out and led the horse under an open shed (she had no stable), and there provided it with clean straw and fodder.

Now when the traveller had eaten and drunk and sat awhile, he began to question her concerning her prosperity and cheerfulness in that night of ruin; and she, as the others had done, answered him all that he would know.

‘My money,’ said she, ‘is not invested as so many in this town have invested theirs. When I was yet young, One told me that riches do certainly make to themselves wings and fly away; and that gold perisheth, though it be purified

seven times in the fire. Nevertheless He added that, if I chose, there could with my gold and silver be made ready for me an everlasting habitation, to receive me when the present fashion shall have passed away; and that I might lay up for myself treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal. So, when I was willing, He further informed me by what means I should send my deposits to that secure house whereof the Owner will be no man's debtor. On the first day of the week I was to go up to the branch-house upon the hill — you see it, sir, out to the East yonder; there, where a light shines to lighten every one that goeth into the house; and according as I had been prospered, I was to drop somewhat into the money-chest kept there. All such sums would, be placed to my account, and would bear interest. But besides this, I was apprised that the Owner of the house employs many collectors, who may call at any moment, often at the most unlikely moments, for deposits. From these I was to take heed never to turn away my face, but I was to give to them freely, being well assured that they would carry all entrusted to them safely to my account. Thus, sometimes a fatherless child calls on me, sometimes a distressed widow; sometimes a sick case comes before me; sometimes a stranger, sir, as you have done this very night, demands my hospitality. And as I know whom I have trusted, and am persuaded that He will keep that which I commit to Him, I gladly spend and am spent, being a succourer of many, and looking for the recompense of the reward.'

So when the strange traveller had rested awhile, his horse also having been refreshed, he rose before daybreak, mounted, and rode away. Whence he came and whither he went I know not, but he rode as one that carries back tidings to Him that sent him. Also this I know, that some, being mindful to entertain strangers, have entertained angels unawares.

PROS AND CONS.

‘BUT, my dear doctor,’ cried Mrs. Plume, ‘you never can seriously mean it.’

The scene was the Rectory drawing-room — tea-time; some dozen parishioners drinking tea with their Rector and his wife. Mrs. Goodman looked down; her husband, the Rector, looked up.

‘I really did mean it,’ said he, courteously; and, with your permission, I mean it still. Let us consider the matter calmly, my dear Mrs. Plume, calmly and fairly; and to start us fairly I will restate my proposal, which is that we should all combine to do our best towards bringing about the abolition of pews from our parish church.’

‘Then I,’ returned Mrs. Plume, shaking her head airily, ‘must really restate my protest. You never seriously can mean it.’

‘Nay,’ resumed the Rector, ‘don’t think that I am unmindful of your feelings on this point; and he glanced round the circle. ‘If I spoke hastily I ask your pardon and patience; but this matter of pews and pew-rents is on my conscience, and *that* I must lighten at all costs; even, Mr. Sale,’ — for Mr. Sale frowned — ’at the cost of my income. However, why should we conclude ourselves to be at variance before we have ventilated the matter in hand? I for one will never take for granted that any good Christian is against the acknowledgment of our absolute equality before God.’

‘Sir,’ interposed Mr. Blackman, ‘we are equals, whatever may be our colour or our country. But whilst the Zenana counts its victims by thousands, whilst the Japanese make boast of their happy despatch, whilst the Bushman, dwindling before our face, lives and dies as the beasts that perish, shall we divert our attention from such matters of life and death to fix it on a petty question of appearance? Pardon me if tears for our benighted brethren blind me to such a matter as this.’

‘Our benighted brethren,’ said the Rector, gravely, ‘have my pity, have my prayers, have my money in some measure. Of your larger gifts in these several kinds I will not ask you to divert one throb, or one word, or one penny in favour of our poor fellow-parishioners. No, dear friend, help us by your good example to enlarge our field of charitable labour; to stretch full handed towards remote spots; but not meanwhile to fail in breaking up our own fallow ground at home. We all know that if at this moment either our foreign or our native ragged brother were to present himself in church, however open our hearts may be to him, our pew-doors would infallibly be shut against him, and he would find

himself looked down upon both literally and figuratively. This, I own to you, were I he, would discomfit me, and put a stumbling-block in my way as a worshipper.'

'Pooh! pooh!' broke in Mr. Wood, testily: 'My dear fellow, I really thought you a wiser man. What hardship is it for a flunky or a clodhopper to sit in a seat without a door?'

'Ah!' rejoined the Rector quietly, 'for a servant, as you say, or for a mere sower of our fields, or (why not?) for a carpenter's son either? But allow me to name two points which strike me forcibly, — two very solemn points; and Dr. Goodman spoke with solemnity, and bowed his head. 'First, that if our adorable Lord were now walking this world as once He walked it, and if He had gone into our parish church last Sunday, as long ago He used to frequent the synagogue of Nazareth, He would certainly not have waited long to be ushered into a pew, but would, at least as willingly, have sat down amongst His own "blessed" poor; and, secondly, that we should all have left Him to do so unmolested; for I cannot suppose that His were the gold ring and goodly apparel which would have challenged attention.'

There was a pause, broken by Mrs. Plume, who, turning to her hostess, observed: 'Ah, dear Mrs. Goodman, we know and revere the zeal of our dear good apostle. But you and I are old housekeepers, old birds not to be caught with chaff and she shook a fascinating finger at her pastor; and we know that the poor are not nice neighbours; quite infectious, in fact. They do very well together all in a clump, but one really couldn't risk sitting amongst them, on various grounds, you know.'

'Well,' resumed the Rector, 'I plead guilty to being but a tough man, thick-skinned, and lacking certain subtler members, entitled nerves. But what will you? You must make allowances for me, and even put up with me as I am. With docility, and all the imagination of which I am master, I throw myself into your position, and shudder with you at these repulsively infectious poor. I even seek to deepen my first impression: of horror by questioning myself in detail, and I dwell on the word "infectious." This brings before me small-pox, typhus fever, and other dreadful ailments; and I hasten (in spirit) to slam to, if only I could to bolt and bar, my pew-door. Safely ensconced within, I peer over my necessary barrier, and, relieved from the pressure of instant peril, gaze with pity on the crowd without, all alike typhus-stricken, all alike redolent of small-pox. A new terror thrills me. Are' all alike' infectious? or have we grouped together sound and unsound, sick and healthy? Ah, you hint, that amount of risk cannot be helped if they are to come to church at all. I am corrected, and carrying out the lesson of my Teacher I echo: That amount of risk cannot be helped if we are to

come to church at all.'

'These men! these men!' cried Mrs. Plume, gaily. And Miss Crabb observed, from behind her blue spectacles, 'Well, I suppose a woman of my age may allude to anything she pleases; so I make bold to tell you, Dr. Goodman, that small-pox may be all nonsense; but that nobody would like to sit amongst smells, and cheek-by-jowl with more heads than one in a bonnet.'

'Smells,' rejoined the Rector, 'I do strongly object to; including scents, my dear Mrs. Plume; but that is a matter of taste. The other detail, which I know not how to express more pointedly than in the striking words of Miss Crabb, is yet more to be deprecated: but let us consider whether pews fairly meet the difficulty. Fairly? I ask; and then unhesitatingly answer, No. For all the poor, both clean and dirty, occupy our free seats together; and surely to sit next a dirty neighbour is, at the least, as great a hardship on the cleanly poor as it would be on the rich, who are so far better able to have their clothes cleansed, or even, in case of need, to discard them. If, indeed, all dirty individuals would have the good feeling to compact themselves into one body it might be reassuring to their fellows, but this it were invidious to propose; and besides, we are at present mooting pews or no pews, not any third possible — or shall we say impossible? — alternative. I confess to you,' he resumed, very seriously, 'when I remember the little stress laid by Christ on clean hands, and the paramount importance in His eyes of a clean heart; when I reflect on the dirt of all kinds which must have touched Him in the crowds He taught and healed; when I realise that every one of my parishioners, poor as well as rich, will confront me at His judgment-bar, I tremble lest any should be deterred from coming to Him because I am too fine a gentlemen to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel to come in those actual poor — foul of body, it may be, as well as of soul — whom yet He has numbered to me as my flock.'

Silence ensued — an uncomfortable silence; broken by Mrs. Goodman's nervous proffer of tea to Mr. Sale, who declined it.

Mr. Home resumed the attack. 'Doctor,' observed he, 'all other objections to open seats might perhaps be overruled; but consider the sacredness of family affection, and do not ask us to scatter ourselves forlornly through the church, here a husband, there a wife;' and he interchanged a smile with Mrs. Home; 'there, again, a practical orphan. I for one could not possibly say my prayers without my little woman at my elbow.'

'Here,' cried the Rector, 'I joyfully meet you halfway. The division of the sexes in distinct aisles is a question by itself, and one which I am not now discussing. Only go betimes to church' — at this a glance of intelligence passed round the circle, whilst Mrs. Home coloured, — 'and I stake my credit that you

will hardly ever fail to find six contiguous seats for your party.'

Then Mr. Stone spoke up — Mr. Stone, the warmest man in the parish. He spoke with his fat hands in his fat pockets.

'Dr. Goodman, sir,' — the courteous Rector bowed, — ' my attachment to the Church and my respect for your cloth must not prevent my doing my duty by my fellow-parishioners, whose mouthpiece on the present occasion I claim to be.' A general movement of relief accepted him as the lay champion. 'We acknowledge, sir, and appreciate your zeal amongst us, but we protest against your innovations. We have borne with chants, with a surpliced choir, with daily services, but we will not bear to see all our rights trampled under foot, and all our time-hallowed usages set at nought. The tendency of the day is to level social distinctions and to elevate unduly the lower orders. In this parish at least let us combine to keep up wise barriers between class and class, and to maintain that fundamental principle practically bowed to all over our happy England, that what you can pay for you can purchase. This, sir, has been our first dissension' — a statement not quite correct, — 'let it be our last; and in token that we are at one again, here is my hand.'

Dr. Goodman grasped the proffered hand, looking rather pale as he did so.

'Let this betoken,' rejoined he, 'that whatever is discarded amongst us, it shall not be Christian charity. And now it grows late. I must not selfishly prolong our discussion; yet, as your pastor, with a sacred duty to discharge towards all my flock, suffer me to add one word. What Mr. Stone has alleged may be the system of worldly England; though many a man professing far less than we do would repudiate so monstrous a principle; but as Churchmen we can have nothing to do with it. God's gifts are bought without money and without price: "Ho, every one," cries His invitation. I, therefore, as His most unworthy ambassador, protest that in His house I will no longer buy and sell as in a market. I confess myself in fault that I have so long tolerated this monstrous abuse; and I avow that you, my brethren, have this evening furnished me with the only plausible argument in favour of pews which has ever been suggested to me, for it *is* hard upon our open-hearted poor that they should be compelled to sit by persons who, instead of viewing them as brethren beloved, despise the poor.'

THE WAVES OF THIS TROUBLESOME WORLD.

A TALE OF HASTINGS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.

PART I.

PERHAPS there is no pleasanter watering-place in England where to spend the fine summer months than Hastings, on the Sussex coast. The old town, nestling in a long, narrow valley, flanked by the East and West Hills, looks down upon the sea. At the valley mouth, on the shingly beach, stands the fish-market, where boatmen disembark the fruit of daily toil; where traffic is briskly plied, and maybe haggling rages; where bare-legged children dodge in and out between the stalls; where now and then a travelling show — dwarf, giant, or what not — arrests for brief days its wanderings.

Hard by the market, on the beach, stands the fishermen's chapel — plain, but comely, with, near the door, its small chest for offerings. I know not whether chanted psalms and hymns rise within its walls; but if they do, the windy sea must sound an accompaniment exceeding in solemn harmony any played upon earthly organs, to such words as, 'One deep calleth another, because of the noise of the water-pipes: all Thy waves and storms are gone over me;' or, 'They are carried up to the heaven, and down again to the deep: their soul melteth away because of the trouble;' or, 'Let not the waterflood drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up.'

It is a pretty sight in brilliant holiday weather to watch the many parties of health or pleasure-seekers which throng the beach. Boys and girls picking up shells, pebbles, and star-fishes, or raising with hands and wooden spades a sand fortress, encircled by a moat full of sea-water, and crowned by a twig of seaweed as a flag; mothers and elder sisters reading or working beneath shady hats, whilst after bathing their long hair dries in the sun and wind. Hard by rock at their moorings bannered pleasure-boats, with blue-jerseyed oarsmen or white sails; and if the weather is oppressively hot and sunny, a gaily-coloured canopy is reared on light poles, for the protection of voyagers. When tide is high, a plank or a long step suffices; but at low water, as the shore is flat, boatmen have frequently to carry children, and even women, across the broad stretch of wet sands to and from the vessels.

Very different from such seafarers in sport are their near neighbours, the seafarers in earnest; who neither hoist canopies for fair weather, nor tarry at

home for foul; who might say with the patriarch Jacob, ‘In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night whose vigils often see the moon rise and set; who sometimes buffet with the winds and tug against the tide for very life.

It is with one of these that my tale has to do: let us peep into his cottage.

An accident to his boat, only just now, after hours of diligent labour, repaired, has kept Frank Hardiman on shore all day. Within another hour the tide will be favourable, and he must put to sea; till then he stays with his wife and two children, Jane and Henry. They are seated at tea, discussing the contents of a letter received that afternoon. Let us look at the faces and listen to the conversation.

Frank Hardiman is thirty-one years old, tall, stout, tanned by the sun, with a deep, jolly voice, bright eyes, and the merriest of laughs. His wife, Emma, is slim and rather pretty, dressed with considerable taste and uncommon neatness; for before her marriage she was upper nurse in a gentleman’s family, and, indeed, made acquaintance with her good man when loitering along the beach after her little charges. Jane is nine years old, quiet and shy, with a mild expression, redeemed from insipidity by lines of unusual firmness about the mouth: when she speaks it is mostly in a slow, apathetic manner; but now and then a flash of feeling reveals that there are strength and depth in her character. Harry has scarcely entered his seventh year, and is a miniature likeness of his father, only less sunburned.

The letter under discussion ran as follows: —

Dear Brother and Sister,

My husband died ten days ago in the hope of a blessed resurrection. Moreover God, Who does all things well, has been pleased to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son. I am alone indeed now; not in debt, having just enough in hand to pay my way till Thursday, and then come down to you. Will you receive me? We parted in anger, but perhaps you will forgive me when you know how much I have lost, and guess with how sore a longing I desire to lay my bones amongst my own people. If I do not hear from you by Thursday, I shall understand that you cannot forgive: nevertheless remember, in the next world if not in this, we must meet again.

Your sorrowful, affectionate sister, SARAH LANE.

‘How can she fancy we’d bear malice after all her troubles?’ said Frank; ‘and when it was for her own good, too. Write at once, my dear, and make her welcome to all we’ve got, such as it is, and the best of it.’

‘Yes,’ replied Emma, dryly. She was jealously alive to her husband’s fondness

for his sister, and by no means relished the prospect of her returning to live with them.

'How old is Aunt Sarah?' inquired Jane.

'Twenty-five last March; and five years ago she was the prettiest girl in Hastings. You must furbish up your room a bit, Jenny, and make your aunt as comfortable as you can. She's got rather high notions, naturally; but I guess they must have come down by this time, poor thing! only don't let us make her feel strange coming back to what used to be her home — and shall be her home again, please God, if she'll come and share it. Well, I'm off, Emma,' continued Frank, rising and shaking himself: 'you'll write a kind welcome, I know, for you 're the scholar; and you needn't say a word about me, except that I'm just the same as five years ago. Good night.' — ' Good night.' So he left the cottage.

Then Jane busied herself with washing the tea-things and 'tidying up;' Harry, at the imminent risk of his fingers, began hacking a small bit of wood, to produce what he dubbed a boat, and Emma sat down to write the letter of invitation — I cannot say welcome: —

My dear Sister,

Your letter came to hand this afternoon, and Frank and I are very sorry for your troubles; but if you come here I dare say you will mind less. Frank says, 'Come and welcome, and be as all was five years ago:' only ours is but a poor place for such as you, and you must not mind having Jenny in bed with you; and you cannot expect me to do nothing but wait on you, as I have a good handful with Frank and the children, I tell you plainly.

So next Thursday we shall expect you, and no more at present from Your affectionate sister,

EMMA HARDIMAN.

Whilst Emma wrote her letter, Jane, I say, washed the tea-things. There was brisk thoroughness in her manner of washing; no great handiness, but concentrated energy: she was evidently conscientious. Next she coaxed Harry to forego his hacking and be put to bed, showing tact and good nature with firmness in the transaction. Then, returning with her bonnet on her head and a basket on her arm, she asked her mother whether she should not take her letter to the post.

'Yes,' answered Emma; 'and you must make haste, too, or it won't be in time. Here's a penny for a stamp; and,' putting a crown-piece into the little girl's hand, 'you must bring me in some butter, and sugar, and treacle, and a loaf, and some tea; and call at Mrs. Smith's for my bonnet, and get a reel of black cotton and a

paper of needles. And you must run, too; you'll have running enough, I reckon, when madam comes.'

Away ran Jane with all her might, reaching the post-office in much more than time to catch the evening mail. 'Well, my little woman, is it a love-letter you're carrying?' said the postmaster; to which she answered demurely, 'No, sir, please; it's to my aunt in London.' Seeing he was busy she added no more, but set off on her next errand. This took her to a various-smelling shop in one of the back streets, where she ran glibly through the accustomed list of articles: 'Half a pound of butter, a pound of sugar, two pennyworth of treacle (for Harry), a quartern loaf, a quarter of a pound of three-and-fourpenny tea, and two rashers of bacon,' supplying the last item from her knowledge of what must be wanted, though her mother had forgotten to name it. She packed all carefully in her little basket, counted the change from her crown-piece, chirped to a poor imprisoned lark, which could catch not one glimpse of sky from his nail in the shop, stroked her old friend the black cat,"and started for Mrs. Smith's smart establishment in the High Street.

Mrs. Smith, in a false front and staring flowers, presiding behind her millinery counter, looked somewhat formidable. Jane preferred asking the young woman on the other side for the black cotton and needles. These were supplied and paid for; then Mrs. Smith called out to know if she wanted anything else. 'Please, ma'am,' began Jane, 'is mother's bonnet — '

'Oh!' cried Mrs. Smith, shortly, 'tell your mother that her bonnet isn't done yet, and she needn't keep bothering after it; for when it's done I'll send it home, and not before. Good evening!' This bonnet was a bone of contention between the two women: it was to be trimmed in return for certain errands already executed by Jane; and the milliner's hands being filled just now with more lucrative orders, great delay ensued in its completion.

When Jane reached home, she found her mother seated hard at work making a black-and-white muslin dress with flounces — Emma loved to be smart on Sunday — for her own wear. Jane put away the purchases, handed what change remained to Mrs. Hardiman, and sat down to write a copy and work an addition sum for Mrs. Grey, the curate's wife, who gave her an hour's instruction two or three times a-week. The little girl laboured to do her very best, and had just produced a particularly correct capital B when her mother shook the table. Not a word said poor Jane, though a great blot was jerked out of the pen on to the B. She tried again and again for six lines more, but without equalling the defaced B; then, that page finished, turned her mind to the sum. '4 and 4 are 8, and 1 are 9, and 7 — "Jane,' cried her mother, 'there's nothing for supper; run out and fetch two rashers."I got them, mother, when I was out, because I knew they were

wanted,' was the cheerful answer, and reckoning recommenced." and 4 are 8, and 1 are 9, and 7 are sixt — "Jane."Yes, mother."Was the letter in time?"Oh, much more than time. 4 and 4 — " I shall never get through these flounces to-night: put away your books, child, and help me. I'm sure your schooling isn't worth much if it doesn't teach you to mind me.'

Jane jumped up, though she could have cried, laid by her book and slate, and sat down close to her mother. In another minute two pairs of hands were hemming as fast as they could hem at the flounces. Why was Emma in such a hurry to finish making her dress? It could not be out of regard to her sisterrin-law's feelings, as she and her daughter were already in black for the death of an old relation who had left them a few pounds; neither could it be with an exclusive eye to Sunday, for this was only Tuesday evening: no, she was bent on receiving poor, sad Sarah in this fine gown, because she felt jealous of her good looks, and wanted to outshine her in Frank's eyes.

Jane, who had no idea of this state of things, asked, 'What was Uncle Lane?'

'Don't call him uncle,' returned Emma, sharply; 'he was no kith or kin to us, but a Methodist fografer [photographer], and but a poor body at best. I dare say his widow hasn't a pound that she can call her own, though she is so ready to invite herself to live with them who work hard for their bread. However, your father must please himself. [Thread snaps.] Mrs. Smith's cotton is mere rubbish; you go to Widow Wright's next time, and see if you can't get an honest penn'orth; do you hear?'

'Yes, mother. I shall like to have Aunt Sarah in my bed: is she like father?'

'No — yes — I don't know; don't bother me. You'll have enough and to spare of Aunt Sarah, I can tell you.'

Silence once more, except for the click, click, of thimble and needle; Jane wondering what she had said amiss, for her mother was not usually cross.

At last the flounces were finished. 'There, that will do,' observed Emma, more complacently, for they looked puffy and well. 'I declare it's supper-time; make haste, child, and toast the bacon whilst I clear away.'

On Wednesday, Jane having, under her mother's direction, scrubbed her own bed-room floor, added a blue bason and jug to its furniture, and an extra chair. The window looked into Frank's garden, very bright just now with nasturtiums; and though it did not command a sea view, the murmur, or tumult, or roar of the great deep, could always, except in very still weather, be distinctly heard from it.

The room made ready, let us glance at its future occupant.

Sarah Lane, now so mournful, had years ago been not only the prettiest, but almost the merriest girl in Hastings. True, she was a child of sorrow to her

mother, who died without even kissing her new-born baby; but, bequeathed to the guardianship of father and brother, she never missed a mother's care. Often might Henry Hardiman be seen loitering up and down the parade, or lounging by the sun-dial, holding in his arms his little girl; or, as she grew older, putting his finger into her chubby fist to help her in toddling. Sometimes, in pleasant weather, he took her in the boat with him for a row; sometimes left her on shore under the care of Frank, who lugged her unweariedly about the beach, where she served as plaything to her father's rugged mates.

When the time arrived for Frank to go out with his father and share his labours, a change ensued for little Sarah. She was sfent to a superior school — for Henry Hardiman drove a flourishing trade — and only went home on a Saturday to stay till the Monday; the Hardimans, from father to son, observing Sunday, and frequenting St. Clement's Church. Henry and Frank were not a little proud of their girl as she walked beside them, rosy and good-humoured, or, with a pretty childish voice, joined in the hymns of the congregation; and before long she, too, learned to be proud of her sturdy, weather-beaten father in his Sunday blue coat, and of her handsome, merry brother, and to give them back warm love for the life-long love which they gave her.

At fifteen, grown tall and womanly, Sarah came home to keep her father's house. Her school-education included several useful items: she was quick and clever with her needle, read with fluency and expression, wrote a clear hand, was a capital accountant, had a fair knowledge of geography, history, and spelling, could express herself well in a letter; moreover, she knew a little music and a little dancing, and, thanks to natural voice and ear, sang sweetly and tuneably. Very soon the cottage bore witness to her good taste. The old-fashioned furniture was rubbed up; a few geraniums and fuchsias screened the parlour window; a Virginia creeper, scarlet-coloured in autumn, clambered up the outer wall; and carefully tended plants rendered her garden the prettiest in the Tackle way. She liked and wore bright colours; and when she watered her window - flowers, or gathered a nosegay in the garden, or sat among the Pier Rocks watching for her father's boat to come across the intense blue, sunny sea, often and often passers-by lingered to admire her noble beauty and untaught grace.

When her skill as a needlewoman became known, first neighbours, then ladies, engaged her to work for them. By this means she amassed a little sum of money, carefully stored amongst her treasures, but never spent. Sometimes Henry, coming home, found her sewing and singing, whilst puss purred at her feet, and the kettle sang on the fire. Then he would say, 'Bless you, Sally; there's no need for you to wear out your plump bits of fingers. Ain't Frank and I big enough to work for you?' And she would answer, 'Ah, but some day when you'

re a dear old father, and stay at home in the chimney-corner, Frank mustn't have all the pleasure of working for you, and my earnings will come in handy, you'll see.'

Several young men courted her for her fair' face, or clever ways, or kind heart; but to all of them she answered a civil 'No,' till it came to be said among the fisher-folk that Sarah Hardiman must be waiting for a lord. Even John Archer, a well-to-do, God-fearing young boatman, who followed her for many an anxious month, only at last elicited her gentle, firm 'No,' though her father pitied the poor lad, and Frank spoke warmly in his favour. Soon after Sarah left school, Frank married and brought home his Emma; but Sarah continued mistress of the house, her father's darling, and very dear to her brother, which, with her good looks and many suitors, made Emma sore and jealous. The two young women were not over cordial together, though they never spoke of their coolness, and Frank was long before he even suspected it.

So four years passed.

One Saturday night, as the little family sat round the fire, over which spluttered eggs and bacon for supper, — as Henry dozed, Frank netted, Emma worked for her baby, and Sarah turned the rashers, a noise of quarrelling outside roused the two men. They started up, but before they could reach the door a loud crash was heard of something falling and breaking on the pavement; then three or four voices cried 'Shame!' They ran out, and the women were left alone in some anxiety.

After a few minutes old Hardiman returned. 'Sally,' explained he, 'here's a poor travelling showman whose box of things has just been smashed by big Ben, because he said the sun would take his likeness. Ben, I reckon, has had a glass too much. So I think it will be but Christian-like to take him in for to-night, as he's quite a stranger here, and seems a decent body, if you'll shake him down a bed, my darling.'

'Yes, father,' answered the girl; and just then Frank and a young man entered, bearing between them the wrecks of a portable photographic apparatus.

'Sit down and be kindly welcome,' Sarah said, blushing like a rose; she set a chair for the stranger, and, with practical hospitality, broke three more eggs, and put three more rashers into the frying-pan. Then she placed those already cooked on the table, with cheese, butter, home-made bread, and strong beer.

At supper the guest warmly thanked his entertainers, and proceeded to gratify their curiosity about himself. His name was John Lane; both his parents were dead, and, indeed, he had no near relation in the world. His business was to take photographs, at sixpence and upwards; for this purpose he travelled from town to town, seldom remaining in one place for more than a few weeks: 'Till to-night,'

he continued, somewhat bitterly, ‘I never met with an ignorant brute.’ He then drew from his pocket a small case containing specimens of his art, both portraits and landscapes.

Frank looked at them in silent admiration; but Sarah observed, pointing to a coloured head, ‘I like that best; I always want to know what eyes and hair people have.’ John Lane glanced up at her: ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘the sun can’t paint eyes and hair.”Well, Mr. Lane,’ interposed Emma, ‘I must get you to do Jenny’s portrait. When will you be able?”I will come as soon as I possibly can,’ he answered, eagerly. So that evening concluded.

Next morning, while they sat at breakfast, Sarah said to the guest, ‘Our old church is worth seeing: I think when you’ve been there with us, you’ll want to take its likeness too.’ But John Lane, flushing crimson, replied, without looking up, ‘I can’t go there, thank you: I’m what you call a Methodist.’

Certainly John Lane by no means exaggerated in his own favour when he told his story. He might have said that during some years he had been the sole support of a bedridden mother, for her sake often denying himself all save bare necessaries; that by perseverance and ingenuity he had attained proficiency in his art; that he had laid up a. sum of money, and was in the way to add to it. Any one who knew him well could have related these facts and more. Two years before this period, about the time of his mother’s death, he stopped one Sunday afternoon to hear an itinerant preacher, who, bareheaded, Bible in hand, went out — to use his own phrase — into the highways and hedges, to compel men to come in. John stopped to kill time; but the rough, zealous words pricked his conscience to the quick: before he went his way he had resolved to redeem the time. From that day he was an altered man: he read his Bible with fervent, persistent prayer, and at the first opportunity introduced himself to the preacher whose words had convinced him of sin. These two men, both honest, both zealous, both uninstructed, provoked each other to good works; but, utterly alien from church unity, ignored many vital doctrines. The elder man, constrained by the love of Christ, sailed as a missionary to India: John Lane then believed that he was called to fill the gap; to lift up his voice like a trumpet, and proclaim the gospel to souls perishing for lack of knowledge. Therefore he gave up his fixed quarters in London, and wandering from town to town, endeavoured to speak a word in season to persons who came to him in the way of business; and on Sundays, after attending one service in the Methodist chapel, devoted his afternoon to out-of-door preaching.

This was the man whom what we call accident, but what is in fact the appointment or permission of God, brought to the fisherman’s cottage; to

Hardiman and Frank, staunch churchgoers; to Emma, not over partial to her sister-in-law; to beautiful Sarah, with her winning ways and disengaged heart.

Of course John Lane deemed himself in duty bound to bear witness for the truth here as elsewhere. Hardiman listened to him, but shook his head when he spoke of the love of the Establishment having waxed cold, of experience, and professors. 'I like practisers,' said Henry Hardiman; and trudged to St. Clement's as heretofore. Emma went once to the Methodist chapel, but was mightily offended when the preacher, looking, as she declared, full at her light blue bonnet, observed, 'It might have been better for Dives in hell if he had not dressed so finely.' Sarah, who would not grieve her father, continued a regular attendant at the old parish church once every Sunday; but if, as frequently happened, in her afternoon stroll she caught sight of John Lane surrounded by a group of listeners, too often idlers, she was sure to join his audience and add her sweet voice to their hymns. Then followed the walk together home; the earnest communings by the way, of God, and Jesus, and heaven, of the everlasting burnings to be fled from, and the everlasting prize to be run for.

So these two came to love each other: Henry only saw that the young man loved his beautiful daughter.

'John Lane,' said he one day, 'you love Sarah, and mean well by her; but I tell you plainly she's not for such as you. She's said "No" to many a man already, and she'll say "No'' to you when you ask her: for she shall never have my blessing on her marrying a Methodist, and gadding from place to place making mischief. Take my advice, my lad, and keep away from Sarah, and she won't run after you.'

So John kept away from the cottage; and if Sarah fretted, she said not a word of her troubles to any one.

About a week had elapsed since they last saw each other, when she, having finished some work for a lady at Halton, set off to carry it home. A long round led her to the field-path, beset by fence and gates: on the right, where the West Hill slopes towards the town, haymaking was going on with a pleasant smell. Scarcely a breath of wind stirred: and when for a few minutes she sat on a wayside bench to cool herself, she noticed how a subtle exhalation rising from the heated ground became perceptible where it slightly altered the appearance of objects seen through it.

Her business at Halton was quickly transacted; and with lightened hands, if not a lightened heart, she was turning homewards, when straight before her, pack on back, stood John Lane.

Sarah looked very tall and stately: 'Goodbye, Mr. Lane,' said she, 'since I see you' re on your travels again; and I hope you'll find a kinder welcome where

you ‘re going than you got at Hastings.’

‘Goodbye, indeed;’ he answered, gravely, ‘if you call me Mr. Lane; and I hope I shall never find such another kind welcome, if it’s only to break my heart afterwards.’

It was not in human nature to part so: no wonder Sarah’s look softened; no wonder John forgot his pack and his migration, and turned back towards Hastings with her. He told her all: how her father had called him a mischief-making Methodist; had said lie had no chance, and had better keep away; how he had prayed and wrestled against temptation; ‘because,’ added he, simply, ‘I wasn’t sure, Sarah, that you would say” No.” But God gave me grace to esteem the reproach of Christ better than all the — ah, better than much more than all the treasures of Egypt.’ Again he said, ‘Goodbye;’ but Sarah said, ‘Stuff! you know, John, I can’t answer “Yes” or “No” till you ask me something.’

So in the field-path John asked, and she answered. Then from gate to gate along the steaming fields, whilst haymakers rested and birds sat silent in the noon heat, they two walked, talking earnestly. At the last gate they parted, Sarah saying, ‘Very well, now that’s settled. John, I do believe my soul is at stake in this matter, for it’s only you in all the world who have taught me to love God; and though father won’t bless my marrying a Methodist, he’ll bless me when I am married.’

They were married secretly one Sunday morning at the Methodist chapel — not without keen stings of conscience, which neither owned to the other. When that same day Henry Hardiman heard from them what was done, he uttered no angry words, but took the blow stoutly. To his daughter’s eager expressions of affection he merely answered, ‘Maybe, maybe, Sally;’ and when a week later she and her husband set off for Eastbourne, he blessed her gravely before she went, But that one trouble had made an old man of him. Soon Frank went alone to fish, while Henry sat at home in the chimney-corner, holding Emma’s youngest bom on his knee, or crept along the Tackle Way, with a finger in Jane’s chubby fist to help her in toddling. Next, days came when he could only sit moping in the chimney-corner: the doctor, looking at him, shook his head; and Frank wrote Sarah word that if she cared for her father’s pardon she must come now and ask it. She came: was received coldly by her brother and sister-in-law, kindly by her father; only when she hung about him with tears and fond words, he answered patiently, ‘Maybe, maybe, Sally.’ So he died.

A few more months, and Sarah became mother of a small, weak baby — a little Henry. A few more years, and still wearing black for her dead only son, she sat beside her husband’s death-bed: her kind husband, who never once had spoken a harsh word to her. Long ago they had repented of the cruel wrong done

to the old man; had confessed their fault one to the other, exchanged forgiveness, and prayed together for pardon. Their store of money wasted during John's tedious illness; and Sarah, watching him as he lay dying, felt a sort of satisfaction in the thought that she had just enough left to bury her dead out of sight before asking help of her relations.

His last look was at her; his last words were, 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

PART II.

THURSDAY afternoon arrived. Frank, Jane, and little Harry, went down to the station to meet Sarah Lane; whilst Emma stayed at home in the puffy new muslin, preparing tea and making ready for her sister-in-law's reception. She was in high good humour; for Frank before setting off had praised her pretty face, and observed, 'Poor Sally won't look like that, I fancy, when she comes home again.'

She came. Just the old stately grace and fine features, but none of the old bloom; her eyes were dim and sunken, her cheeks hollow; instead of bright colours she wore widow's weeds. She came back to the familiar home, the fond warm-hearted brother, the sister-in-law who had never loved her; only the dear old man was wanting, whose grey hairs she had brought down with sorrow to the grave.

Frank kissed his sister when she crossed the threshold, but could not utter one word of welcome, struck dumb by her changed face: it was Emma, who, really touched, came forward and welcomed her cordially. Not much was said that evening. Sarah held little Henry — so like his grandfather — on her lap till he fell fast asleep there, and Frank carried him upstairs for Jane to put to bed. Then Sarah, left alone with her sister-in-law, rose, and holding out her hand said, 'Emma, I promised John to ask your pardon for the ill-will there has been between us, and I do ask it. Please God, I shall not stand in your way any more to vex you, nor eat the bread of idleness for long. Good-night.' To judge by her wasted form and frequent hacking cough, she would not for long eat the bread of men at all.

The next day, and the next, Sarah went amongst her neighbours seeking for needlework, but without success. Many old friends greeted her coldly, for Henry Hardiman's death was generally laid at her door. Some promised to employ her, but had no work just then. She called at several houses from which she used to receive orders, but her richer customers had not yet left London for the sea-side:

she trudged to Halton, and found that the young lady who employed her there had married long ago, and gone away to the Lake country.

Poor Sarah! she was a widow indeed, and desolate, trusting in God.

On Sunday morning, before setting out for chapel, she said, 'Don't wait dinner for me, as I dare say I shan't be back much before tea-time.' Emma tossed her head in its flowered crape bonnet, and wondered to Frank 'which of her Methodist friends will give her a dinner?'

Sarah Lane sat down to no dinner that day; but when she felt pretty certain that the congregation must have dispersed from St. Clement's, she went into the churchyard and sat down on her father's grave. There, motionless, silent, past crying, she remained for hours. Will, mental powers, life itself, seemed at a standstill; whilst, as if of their own accord, old days came back before her eyes. She remembered toddling along, helped by the unwearied finger; being rowed out to sea in pleasant weather, till, grown tired, she nestled to sleep under the rough greatcoat; changing once a-week from lessons and school discipline to snug home; walking hand in hand to church. She remembered being installed mistress of the cottage; altering, renewing, embellishing, just as she pleased; being fondled, cared for, scarcely allowed to work for him who toiled night and day for her; continuing first and dearest even after Frank brought a wife to live with them. She remembered the new love that hardened her against the old; the tacit deceit; the short parting, with its blessing, grave and sorrowful; the long, long parting, with its patient, unvaried 'Maybe, maybe, Sally.' Over and over again her eye mechanically read, —

'HENRY HARDIMAN,
AGED 55.
Affliction sore long time he bore,
Physicians were in vain,
Till God did please his soul release,
And ease him of his pain.'

She did not perceive that these lines are doggrel; she only felt that they were true. Her baby, her dear John, — their loss seemed light while she sat by her dead father whom she had killed, and heard his feeble voice saying in her ears, 'Maybe, maybe, Sally.'

'My!' cried Emma, when, as the kettle sang on the fire, and Jane knelt on the hearth toasting huge slices for tea, Sarah crept into the cottage with a few daisies and blades of grass in her hand: 'you startled me just like a ghost, and I declare you're as white as one.'

It cost Sarah's pride a severe struggle before she could bring herself to apply for work to Mrs. Grey, the curate's wife: she feared some harsh word might be dropped concerning her own conduct years ago; and John blamed for what, as she persisted in saying, she led him into. But no employment offered elsewhere; and the words of Holy Scripture, 'If any would not work, neither should he eat,' kept goading her; till one afternoon, by a great effort, she set off towards the curate's old-fashioned house in the Croft. A strange servant opened the door, and perceiving a decent-looking widow; led her straight into the sitting-room. Mrs. Grey heard some one enter, but not catching the name, looked up from her writing, and seeing as she supposed a stranger, rose and inquired civilly to whom she had the pleasure of speaking.

'You don't recollect me, ma'am,' began Sarah; but at the sound of that familiar voice Mrs. Grey started forward, and cordially pressing her hand, exclaimed, 'Oh, Sarah Hardiman — Mrs. Lane — how glad I am to see you! I heard you were come home, and thought it would not be long before you paid me a visit. Sit down, and let me help you off with your bonnet and shawl; for now that you are here I shall not let you go so easily.'

This kindness quite overcame the poor widow. A great flow of tears relieved her; and when Mrs. Grey spoke soothing words, she answered, 'Let be, ma'am, let be: it's the first time since I buried John, and it does me good.'

So the curate's wife, who had known her from a baby, seated herself by her; and drawing the bowed-down head to her bosom, let her sob there; not attempting to check her grief, but only whispering that she understood the lightest part of it, having lost her own youngest boy five months ago. When the sobs grew less choking, she poured out a glass of wine and made her eat some cake — little guessing how sorely her guest stood in need of food; since Sarah grudged herself every morsel she ate whilst she earned nothing and was a burden to Frank and Emma.

At length the purpose of her visit was told: 'I came to ask,' said Sarah, 'whether you would give me some needlework. I have been trying ever since I came back to find employment, and no one wants my services. Will you let me work for you?'

Mrs. Grey replied directly, 'I have plenty of things to make just now, and you shall have them all if you. like to begin to-morrow.' Then, remembering that in days of yore there was not much cordiality between the sisters-in-law, she added, 'If you don't mind, I should prefer your not taking them home, at least not at first, but working here with me. Perhaps some day it may comfort you to tell me about your troubles: you don't know how often, I thought of you and felt for you

whilst you were away.'

Just then little Jane Hardiman, whose course of study had undergone temporary suspension on account of the extra bustle at home, came in for her hour's lesson. Sarah rose to go; but Mrs. Grey begged her to sit down if she was not in a hurry, and wait till her niece was ready to walk home with her. Then business commenced.

The addition sum was produced, worked at last without one blunder; the blotted B elicited a mild rebuke; a flower-pot added to the sampler was inspected and approved. Next Jane, who had, in preparation, read it over by herself, was questioned on the parable of the lost sheep (Luke, xv. 4).

'Where was the shepherd pasturing his flock?'

'In the wilderness.'

'What is a wilderness?'

'A barren place, without houses, or trees, or grass, or water.'

'But what then were the sheep to eat?'

Some moments spent in thought. 'Did they have manna, ma'am?'

'No, I do not suppose they had manna. In a wilderness there are certain spots where water springs out of the ground; and round about this water or fountain the ground is fertile, fruit-bearing and other shady trees grow, and grass springs up. I recollect once reading of a traveller who found a single most beautiful lily blooming by such a fountain. Doubtless the good shepherd fed his flock on a fruitful spot of the wilderness, as the Psalm says, — " He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort." How many sheep were there?'

'A hundred.'

'Who took care of them?'

'Their shepherd.'

'Did the shepherd fall asleep at night and let the wolf come and catch them?'

'No.'

'No, certainly. He kept watch over his flock by night: if he saw a roaring lion or a great heavy bear coming to tear them, he rose and killed it or drove it away. Well, ninety-nine sheep followed him wherever he went: but what did one do?'

'It got away.'

'Where did it go?'

'Did it go into thé other part of the wilderness?'

'Yes; quite away from the grass and water, where there was nothing but sand. It couldn't eat sand or drink sand, could it?'

'No, ma'am.'

'So it must have died very soon of hunger and thirst, even if no wild beast had

devoured it. Did it die?'

'No; because the shepherd went and fetched it.'

'And when he found it, did he drive it before him, striking it and using angry words?'

'No; he laid it on his shoulders rejoicing, and all his neighbours rejoiced with him when it came safely back.'

'Very well. But this is not merely a beautiful tale about a shepherd and his flock; it is one of the sacred parables spoken by our blessed Saviour. What do I mean by a parable?' asked Mrs. Grey.

A long pause: at last, — 'Stories that tell about other things.'

'Really that will not do for an explanation,' said the teacher; 'because, though I understand what you mean, a person who knew nothing of what a parable is would be none the wiser. Perhaps your aunt will kindly help us.' Then, turning to her, 'Mrs. Lane, will you inform your niece what a parable is?'

Sarah, who, as we know, had been well taught in her childhood, and who had greatly increased her religious knowledge during the years of her married life, replied readily, 'A spoken emblem; just as holly in a window tells us of Christmas.'

'Thank you, yes; or as the cross brings before our eyes Him Who hung thereon. And since all our blessed Saviour's parables teach us something concerning God, or heaven, or our own duty, we must spare no pains to understand them. Now then, Jane, tell me the hidden meaning of this parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd is — ?'

'Jesus Christ, who calls Himself the Good Shepherd' (John, X. 11).

'The flock are — ?'

'Every one.'

'Not every one. He has "other sheep" (John, X. 16). The wilderness where they lived is this world. What was the fruitful spot where he pastured them?'

No answer. 'It is the Church,' continued Mrs. Grey; 'the fold or pen if we speak under an emblem, the Church if we speak plainly. So this flock is not all people, but — ?'

'Christian people.'

'Yes; in those days every one who was a Christian at all belonged to the fold, or Church. What, then, did the sheep do who went wandering away?'

'It committed a sin.'

'And if the good shepherd had not gone to seek and to save that which was lost, what must have happened to it?'

'It must have died,' answered Jane, earnestly.

'But he went and looked about for it, and brought it back, and called all his

friends and neighbours to rejoice with him.'

'Quite right. A verse which follows tells us who the friends and neighbours are: which verse is that?'

The child considered a moment, and then repeated, 'I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance' (Luke, xv. 7).

'Or,' resumed the teacher, 'it is explained still more clearly at the end of the next parable (ver. 10): "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."'

Now Mrs. Grey, much as she loved Sarah Lane, and admired her many good qualities, could not doubt that she fell into grievous error when she turned her back on the church of her baptism, and followed ever so dear a person into schism; neither could she judge how eager the widow might be to lead her family after her. Therefore she added, trying not to look conscious, —

'This sheep by sin wandered, as it supposed, quite away from its kind shepherd's eye and care; but if, instead of going far, it had just crept through the paling and sat down outside the fold, and when its master called it back, had answered, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest: but the grass outside the fold is more nourishing than that which grows inside, and the sheep whom I lived with there do not love and follow thee as entirely as I wish to do," — would its master have been pleased with it?'

'Oh no!'

'Yet this, Jane, is just what many people do now. They fancy they can find better food for their souls out of the Church than in it, and so join the Dissenters; refusing to return, though they see written in the Bible that God added to the Church daily such as should be saved. That will do for the present: next time we will talk about the parable of the lost piece of money.'

Then Jane drew from her basket a large bunch of rose-coloured seaweed, the dock-leaved fucus, neatly smoothed on white cardboard, and said timidly, 'Please, ma'am, father desires his respects; and will you accept this, as you seem to fancy such things? It came up in the net last week, and he says he never found such a handsome piece of the sort before.'

Mrs. Grey looked delighted: 'Oh, how lovely! I have nothing like it. Do thank your father very much for his kind present, and tell him it will be the beauty of my collection.'

So day by day Sarah Lane went to the Croft; and when it was not convenient for her to sit with Mrs. Grey, took her needlework up into the nursery: for nurse, as her mistress knew, was a good steady person, much more likely to lead the

young widow right than to be led wrong by her. Or sometimes she carried her work home, because Emma complained of being left always alone. Or sometimes, if the day was fine, and the material one that could not fade, she sat amongst the Pier Rocks sewing, much as she had sat years ago watching for her father's boat.

Native air, bracing sea-breezes, a mind at rest as to the supply of daily bread, — under the influence of these blessings her health rallied, her wasted figure became plumper, and her step more elastic. By little and little, old friends warmed towards her, and old customers came back; soon she had as many orders as she could execute.

Mrs. Grey remarked, 'Why, Sarah, you' re growing quite stout and rosy: I do believe, after all, you may get as strong and live as long as any of us.'

The widow turned a little pale, but answered cheerfully, 'Please God, ma'am, I shall, if it is His will.' Only the cough continued, hack, hack, and scarcely seemed to get better.

One day the curate's wife came into her nursery, carrying a basin full of whitish jelly. 'Do try this for your cough, Mrs. Lane,' said she; and if it does you good, I will tell you how to make some more.' Sarah tried it: the taste was rather pleasant, and in a day or two that extreme irritation at her chest abated. Then she learned that this soothing jelly was made by boiling down a whitish seaweed (the carrageen, or Irish Moss), which washes up in abundance on the Hastings coast, and adding a little sugar and lemon-juice to render it palatable.

Jane and Harry, when they walked on the shingle, used to fill their baskets with white weed for poor sick Aunt Sarah. Sometimes Harry 'got lazy, and would not take any pains to find the carrageen moss; but conscientious Jane looked carefully for it, and seldom failed to collect a little store, which was dried in the sun, and then laid by against cold wet weather, when she might not be able to go out seeking it. Her kind teacher had once made her learn the text,' Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward' (Mark, ix. 41); explaining that any act of kindness done to any person for the sake of pleasing our Lord Jesus Christ, will be remembered by Him and rewarded at the last day. This it was which made Jane so diligent; and often, when she felt inclined for a run in the lanes and green fields to gather hyacinths, or pink lychnis, or bunches of fiery poppies, she coaxed Harry to come down on the shingle instead, and look for pretty stones and shells and star-fishes, whilst she picked up seaweed.

One certain Wednesday morning symptoms of extraordinary bustle became evident in the snug cottage on the Tackle Way. To judge by appearances, a birth,

marriage, or death at the least, must have been impending: no, it was only Emma Hardiman's quarterly cleaning-day, which, having come round, occasioned such commotion. Frank was packed off from a quick breakfast to his fishing; Sarah received a broad hint that the sooner she vacated the sitting-room the better it would be; Harry was sent into the garden with his knife and bits of wood; and Jane was bid 'put away her nonsense [a prize picture-book received only the day previously for good conduct], and turn her hand to something useful.'

Now, as Emma on cleaning-days was fretted and snappish, Sarah pitied the poor child; so instead of starting for the Croft, she said to her sister-in-law, 'Indeed, I would rather not stir out to-day, or do needlework either; only that dress ought to go back at once to Ecclesbourne, as Mrs. Bright said she wanted it in a hurry. Will you let the children carry it home for me? They can take their dinner with them, and keep out of our way all day, whilst I remain to help you. We shall get through the work twice as fast, and do it twice as well. Don't you remember the hand that I am at scrubbing and tidying?'

So the dress was neatly pinned up in a handkerchief for Jane to carry, and a basket stocked with two hunches of bread and two blocks of cold bacon was given to little Henry. Sarah sent also the bill, and showed Jane where to sign her name when she took the money; for Mrs. Bright liked to pay at once for whatever she had.

It was a fine warm morning when the children started along the East Cliff towards Ecclesbourne, trudging amongst all sorts of pleasant sights, sounds, and smells. There was the scent of a hayfield, the sweetness of dog-roses and honeysuckle, the fragrance of thyme beneath their feet; there were chirpings in the hedges, scattered skylarks in the air, a murmur of waves; there was blue sky above their heads, bright living green and golden sunshine around them, glittering sea far down below the cliff, flowers in the grass and about the hedges, butterflies here, there, and everywhere.

Cap in hand, shouting and jumping, away ran Harry after the butterflies; whilst elder Jane, precious parcel in hand, plodded steadily forward, sometimes calling her truant brother, sometimes waiting for him to come up with her. This walk over the glorious East Hill was doubly delightful after those many strolls along the shingle.

Mrs. Bright lived in a pretty house that stood in its own neat garden. The children felt quite shy as they opened the wicket-gate and proceeded soberly along the gravel walk up to the house-door. Perhaps Mrs. Bright would see them out of window, and wonder what they wanted. Harry got behind Jane, and looked as if he had never run in his life, much less after a butterfly; Jane put the best face she could on the matter, and rang the bell.

But when a maid-servant, having opened the door and asked their business, showed them into the parlour, Mrs. Bright's good-natured smile and manner gave them courage. She had spied them as they came along the garden — not treading on the borders or meddling with the flowers, — and wondered in her own mind who that neat little girl and boy might be. When she found they were Mrs. Lane's niece and nephew come with her new dress, saw Jane write her name readily at the foot of the bill, and noticed her civil 'Thank you, ma'am,' and curtsey, she was quite pleased, and showed them. several pretty things. First of all, they watched a large white cockatoo crack a nut, and heard him say, 'Pretty Poll,' and 'Pretty cockatoo;' next they saw a glass bowl full of water, in which swam gold and silver fishes, much handsomer than those their father brought ashore in his boat. Mrs. Bright showed them some coloured pictures — amongst which Jane recognised the good shepherd seeking his lost sheep — in a handsome old clasped Bible, and gave a story-book to the girl, but shook her head when she heard the boy could not say his letters. Then, handing each of the children a cup of milk, which they drank at once, and a hunch of sweet cake to serve as pudding after their bread and bacon, she sent them away very well pleased.

Down the steep cliff steps they scrambled to the rocky beach below, to sit on a huge stone which was hollowed 'something,' as Harry said, 'like father's arm-chair,' and eat their dinner. By this time the beauty of the day was gone; clouds which in the early morning had been ranged along the horizon were spread over a great portion of the sky, and the air felt much cooler. The children, however, were hungry and happy enough not to notice these changes, but held their feast with great glee. Then they had a long game at hide-and-seek in and out amongst the rocky fragments, Jane hunting for Harry, and tickling him well when she found him. At last she proposed setting off homewards; but Harry by this time was tired and sleepy, so she sat down in the 'arm-chair' with his curly head in her lap, and soon both the little ones were fast asleep.

When Jane woke it was with a start, and a loud sound roaring in her ears. She felt chilled and cramped, but could not at first remember where she was; when she did remember, she shook up Harry in a great fright, and bade him keep fast hold of her hand and come straight back to the cliff path. During their sleep a thick brown fog had risen from the ground like smoke; it hid the cliff, and even the rocks and shingle at a very few yards' distance: only Jane could make out the sea distinctly, because the tide was rising; waves were foaming, breaking, roaring, close at hand amongst the huge stones; not a moment must be lost in escaping for their lives.

They scrambled as fast as they could from the terrible advancing sea; but that

was slowly, for the fog thickened and thickened, and many a fall they got slipping on the slimy tangle.

Hand in hand they kept on stoutly, but in the darkness turned to one side, being quite unable to make out the cliff. Suddenly a shower of foam fell on them. Harry stood stock-still, hiding his face against his sister, and trembling all over; he did not cry or utter a word, but he could not move one step further. 'Come on, dear,' said Jane, trying not to seem frightened; 'perhaps we shall see the steps directly.' But Harry could not stir; he clung to his sister, utterly unable to move a foot forward. Louder and louder the tumult, thicker and thicker the foam, closer and closer came the strong, broken, irresistible sweep of sea.

Jane felt ready to sit do\yn and cry; but she remembered the Good Shepherd seeking His lost sheep, and in her heart prayed Him now to seek and save His little lambs. Next — there was no help for it — she caught up Harry in her arms, and stumbled as well as she could guess towards the cliff.

At last they dimly discerned it, not so high as at the spot where they descended, stretching sheer," rugged, upwards; but no trace of steps was on its precipitous face. This was a different point of the East Hill, and at high tide the sea dashed against its foot.

A little above the ground a narrow shelf jutted out of the rock. This they succeeded in gaining, but further ascent was impossible. Jane made Harry kneel by her side, and together they repeated the Lord's Prayer in small, sad voices: then, sitting down, she took her brother on her lap, and, rocking backwards and forwards, tried to sing him to sleep before the dreadful death came; praying in her heart all the while as well as she was able; not even starting, lest she should wake the little one, when the first cold touch of water reached her feet.

But it was not God's will that the waterflood should drown them, and the deep swallow them up; at that very moment lights flashed above their heads, and loud shouts reached them. Jane screamed in answer, bidding Harry scream too, lest they should not be heard; and scream he did with all his might. Then a man secured to a stout rope was swung over the cliff by his companions, and took both children in his strong arms; then all three were drawn up into safety, just as a foaming wave swept over the rocky shelf.

'O that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness, and declare the wonders that He doeth for the children of men!'

Next Sunday morning —

'Frank Hardiman and his family desire to return thanks to Almighty God for great mercies received,' — gave out Mr. Grey, before reading the 'General Thanksgiving at which announcement half the congregation turned their heads in

one direction.

There knelt Frank, his handsome, sunburnt face full of emotion: on his right hand was Emma, on his left Jane, holding Harry almost as tightly as when they clung together on the terrible rock. But who could that be with bowed head, kneeling next to the boy, and sobbing in her prayers? There was no mistaking the close widow's bonnet and heavy black dress, though the patient widowed face remained hidden; once more Sarah Lane was kneeling where so often she had knelt by her father's side: if that day her sweet voice could not be heard joining in the hymns, doubtless in her heart she praised God.

Jane had said, 'Please do come, Aunt Sarah;' so she yielded to one longing of her divided heart, and worshipped once more in the familiar holy house; yet the next Sunday found her again amongst the Methodists. 'John,' she pleaded, 'seemed upbraiding me all through the service for deserting him in his cold grave.'

'Oh, Mrs. Grey,' she said, earnestly, 'he may have been right or wrong, I can't tell; but it's not for me to sit in judgment on him who loved Christ and spent himself to save souls. J led him into sin, but he led me to repentance: if I'm patient, he showed me first the way; and if I'm humble, he prayed without ceasing that I might become so.'

'God forbid,' replied Mrs. Grey, tenderly, 'that either you or myself should sit in judgment on any man, least of all on one who loved our blessed Lord, and laboured to do Him service. This I know' — and the wife coloured — 'your husband taught my husband a living lesson of boldness, self-denial, and trampling false shame underfoot. Often when I see him earnest in the pulpit, or zealous in his schools, or energetic amongst his poor, I remember John Lane, and thank God for his example. Do not let us dwell on the worn, suffering body, at rest now in its dust; let us lift our minds towards the free soul, resting, we both hope, in Paradise. Oh, dear Sarah, if he now sees that there was a more excellent way than he himself trod, can you imagine he would grudge you the knowledge of it? Would he not rather say, "Be very jealous for the unity of Christ's fold, even whilst you open a wide heart of love to all who love the Lord Jesus?" It is not my part to exhort you; only recollect, if ever you allow my husband to teach you anything which you need to learn, he will but be repaying to you some part of all he owes John Lane.'

From that day forward one great barrier between the widow and the Church was removed: she no longer fancied that Church people were criticising and branding her dead John; she no longer felt as if, by continuing a Methodist, she stood by one whose excellences were unappreciated, and whose errors, if such she admitted them to have been, were triumphantly condemned. Often before

this, when she sat at work listening to the earnest, simple words in which Mrs. Grey expounded parable or miracle to Jane, and drew out its lesson of mercy or warning, — sometimes dwelling on the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, sometimes on the yearning Divine compassion which sought and saved that which was lost, sometimes on the many mansions, sometimes on the one fold under one Shepherd, — conscience had spoken; now at length she listened to its voice only to answer, 'Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth.'

'Line upon line, precept upon precept; here a little, and there a little:' so the message was revealed to her as she was able to receive it. First she opened to her tried friend the curate's wife, stating her difficulties, willing, if it might be, to have them removed; next she took courage, spoke to Mr. Grey himself, and found in him a patient listener, a faithful guide, and one who felt and professed deep obligation to John Lane.

Back from meeting-house to church, through church up to the blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the grace of God led her.

Another five years of patient progress passed away; let us take a parting glance at Sarah Lane.

Sarah Lane still? Yes, though faithful John Archer tried once and again to win a kind answer. She continues to wear black for her dear husband's sake, and at least once in the year journeys up to London to see and tend his grave. Though she cannot preach on the highways, his example stirs her up to energy in the Sunday-school, and tenderness in visiting sufferers. Many a time has she stinted her own meal to feed the hungry; many a time has she curtailed her night's rest to nurse the sick. She teaches Jane her business, calls her her right hand and little forewoman, yet feels perhaps a secret preference for Harry, so like his grandfather.

Though very diligent at her work, and frequently in the season hurried by her employers, she is seldom absent from the Wednesday and Friday morning service, held alternately at St. Clement's and All Saints' Churches. Sunday she strictly and thankfully observes; partaking, whenever an opportunity offers, of the comfortable Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

Certainly now neither the prettiest nor the merriest woman in Hastings, but I truly believe this widow is one of the happiest: having chosen that good part which shall not be taken from her; thankful that her idol was removed for a season, if so she might receive him for ever; able to say at last, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

THE END.

MAUDE: A STORY FOR GIRLS

Composed of prose and verse, this novella was written when Rossetti was nineteen years old, although it was not published until several years after her death. The work is autobiographical in nature, exploring a heroine's struggle to resist the notion that modesty, virtue and domesticity comprise the fundamental duties of women. In Maude's struggles we can appreciate Rossetti's own endeavors to express an independent authorial voice, in spite of the gender prejudices of the time. *Maude* also reveals the author's anxieties about literary achievement within the confines of Victorian values and family restrictions.

The first edition

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Prefatory Note

THIS "Tale for Girls" (as I should be disposed to call it) was written out by Christina Rossetti, with her usual excessive neatness of caligraphy, in 1850. I suppose it may have been composed in that year, or a year or two earlier. In 1850, up to the 5th December, she was nineteen years of age. Of the rather numerous poems interspersed in the tale, all save two have, I think, been published ere now. They were all written without any intention of inserting them in any tale — except only the first two in the trio buuts-rimés sonnets. The MS. of the tale presents a few slight revisions, made at some much later date — perhaps about 1870, or 1875.

I daresay that Christina may, towards 1850, have offered the tale here or there for publication, but have no particular recollection as to that point. In now at last publishing it, I am not under any misapprehension regarding the degree of merit which it possesses. I allow it to be in all senses a juvenile performance; but I think it is agreeably written, and not without touches of genuine perception and discernment. Most of the poems I rate high. The literary reputation of Christina Rossetti is now sufficiently established to make what she wrote interesting to many persons — if not for the writing's own sake, then for the writer's. As such, I feel no qualms in giving publicity to *Maude.*

It appears to me that my sister's main object in delineating Maude was to exhibit what she regarded as defects in her own character, and in her attitude towards her social circle and her religious obligations. Maude's constantly weak health is also susceptible of a personal reference, no doubt intentional: even so minor a point as her designing the pattern of a sofa-pillow might apply to Christina herself. Maude is made the subject of many unfavourable comments, from herself and from her strict-minded authoress. The worst harm she appears to have done is, that when she had written a good poem, she felt it to be good. She was also guilty of the grave sin of preferring to forego the receiving of the eucharist when she supposed herself to be unworthy of it; and further, of attending the musical services at St. Andrew's Church (Wells Street, Oxford Street), instead of invariably frequenting her parish church. If some readers opine that all this shows Christina Rossetti's mind to have been at that date overburdened with conscientious scruples of an extreme and even a wire-drawn kind, I share their opinion. One can trace in this tale that she was already an adherent of the advanced High Church party in the Anglican communion, including conventual sisterhoods. So far as my own views of right and wrong go,

I cannot see that the much-reprehended Maude commits a single serious fault from title-page to finis.

I fancy that Agnes and Mary Clifton may be, to some extent, limned from two young ladies, Alicia and Priscilla Townsend, whom my sister knew and liked in those years. The whole family emigrated — perhaps a year or two prior to 1850 — to Canterbury Settlement, New Zealand. Some surnames introduced into the tale — such as Hunt, Deverall, and Potter — were highly familiar in our household. Towards the close is a sentence, "The locked book she never opened, but had it placed in Maude's coffin"; which is curious, as an unconscious pre-figurement of a well-known and much-discussed incident in the life of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

With these few remarks I commit *Maude* to the reader. For its prose the "indulgent reader" (as our greatgrandfathers used to phrase it) may be in requisition; for its verse the "discreet" reader will suffice.

W. M. ROSSETTI.
LONDON, November, 1896.
Maude

Part I

I

"A PENNY for your thoughts," said Mrs. Foster, one bright July morning, as she entered the sitting-room, with a bunch of roses in her hand, and an open letter: "A penny for your thoughts," said she, addressing her daughter, who, surrounded by a chaos of stationery, was slipping out of sight some scrawled paper. This observation remaining unanswered, the mother, only too much accustomed to inattention, continued; "Here is a note from your Aunt Letty; she wants us to go and pass a few days with them. You know, Tuesday is Mary's birthday, so they mean to have some young people, and cannot dispense with your company."

"Do you think of going?" said Maude at last, having locked her writing-book.

"Yes, dear; even a short stay in the country may do you good, you have looked so pale lately. Don't you feel quite well? tell me."

"Oh yes; there is not much the matter, only I am tired and have a headache. Indeed there is nothing at all the matter; besides, the country may work wonders."

Half satisfied, half uneasy, Mrs. Foster asked a few more questions, to have them all answered in the same style: vain questions, put to one who, without telling lies, was determined not to tell the truth.

When once more alone, Maude resumed the occupation which her mother's entrance had interrupted. Her writing-book was neither commonplace-book, album, scrap-book, nor diary; it was a compound of all these, and contained original compositions not intended for the public eye, pet extracts, extraordinary little sketches, and occasional tracts of journal. This choice collection she now proceeded to enrich with the following sonnet:

Yes, I too could face death and never shrink:
But it is harder to bear hated life;
To strive with hands and knees weary of strife;
To drag the heavy chain whose every link
Galls to the bone; to stand upon the brink
Of the deep grave, nor drowse, though it be rife
With sleep; to hold with steady hand the knife,
Nor strike home: this is courage, as I think.
Surely to suffer is more than to do:
To do is quickly done; to suffer is
Longer and fuller of heart-sicknesses;

Each day's experience testifies of this:
Good deeds are many, but good lives are few;
Thousands taste the full cup; who drains the lees?

having done which she yawned, leaned back in her chair, and wondered how she should fill the time till dinner.

Maude Foster was just fifteen. Small, though not positively short, she might easily be overlooked, but would not easily be forgotten. Her figure was slight and well-made, but appeared almost high-shouldered through a habitual shrugging stoop. Her features were regular and pleasing; as a child she had been very pretty, and might have continued so but for a fixed paleness, and an expression, not exactly of pain, but languid and preoccupied to a painful degree. Yet even now if at any time she became thoroughly aroused and interested, her sleepy eyes would light up with wonderful brilliancy, her cheeks glow with warm colour, her manner become animated, and drawing herself up to her full height, she would look more beautiful than ever she did as a child. So Mrs. Foster said, and so unhappily Maude knew. She also knew that people thought her clever, and that her little copies of verses were handed about and admired. Touching these same verses, it was the amazement of every one what could make her poetry so broken-hearted, as was mostly the case. Some pronounced that she wrote very foolishly about things she could not possibly understand; some wondered if she really had any secret source of uneasiness; while some simply set her down as affected. Perhaps there was a degree of truth in all these opinions. But I have said enough: the following pages will enable my readers to form their own estimate of Maude's character. Meanwhile let me transport them to another sitting-room; but this time it will be in the country, with a delightful garden look-out.

Mary Clifton was arranging her mother's special nosegay when that lady entered.

"Here, my dear, I will finish doing the flowers. It is time for you to go and meet your aunt and cousin; indeed, if you do not make haste, you will be too late."

"Thank you, mamma; the flowers are nearly done"; and Mary ran out of the room.

Before long she and her sister were hurrying beneath a burning sun towards the railway station. Through having delayed their start to the very last moment, neither had found time to lay hands on a parasol; but this was little heeded by two healthy girls, full of life and spirits, and longing moreover to spy out their friends. Mary wanted one day of fifteen; Agnes was almost a year older: both

were well-grown and well-made, with fair hair, blue eyes, and fresh complexions. So far they were alike: what differences existed in other respects remains to be seen.

"How do you do, aunt? How do you do, Maude?" cried Mary, making a sudden dart forward as she discovered our friends, who, having left the station, had already made some progress along the dusty road. Then relinquishing her aunt to Agnes, she seized upon her cousin, and was soon deep in the description of all the pleasures planned for the auspicious morrow.

"We are to do what we like in the morning: I mean, nothing particular is arranged; so I shall initiate you into all the mysteries of the place; all the cats, dogs, rabbits, pigeons, etc.; above all I must introduce you to a pig, a special protégé of mine: that is, if you are inclined, for you look wretchedly pale; are n't you well, dear?"

"Oh yes, quite well, and you must show me everything. But what are we to do afterwards?"

"Oh! afterwards we are to be intensely grand. All our young friends are coming and we are to play at round games (you were always clever at round games), and I expect to have great fun. Besides, I have stipulated for unlimited strawberries and cream; also, sundry tarts are in course of preparation. By the way, I count on your introducing some new games among us benighted rustics; you who come from dissipated London."

"I fear I know nothing new, but will do my best. At any rate I can preside at your toilet and assist in making you irresistible."

Mary coloured and laughed; then thought no more of the pretty speech, which sounded as if carefully prepared by her polite cousin. The two made a strong contrast: one was occupied by a thousand shifting thoughts of herself, her friends, her plans, what she must do, what she would do; the other, whatever might employ her tongue, and to a certain extent her mind, had always an undercurrent of thought intent upon herself.

Arrived at the house, greetings were duly and cordially performed; also an introduction to a new and very fat baby, who received Maude's advances with a howl of intense dismay. The first day of a visit is often no very lively affair; so perhaps all parties heard the clock announce bedtime without much regret,

II

THE young people were assembled in Mary's room, deep in the mysteries of the toilet.

"Here is your wreath, Maude; you must wear it for my sake, and forgive a surreptitious sprig of bay which I have introduced," said Agnes, adjusting the last white rose, and looking affectionately at her sister and cousin.

Maude was arranging Mary's long fair hair with good-natured anxiety to display it to the utmost advantage. "One more spray of fuchsia; I was always sure fuchsia would make a beautiful head-dress. There; now you are perfection: only look; look Agnes. Oh, I beg your pardon; thank you; my wreath is very nice, only I have not earned the bay." Still she did not remove it; and when placed on her hair it well became the really intellectual character of her face. Her dress was entirely white; simple and elegant. Neither she nor Agnes would wear ornaments, but left them to Mary, in whose honour the entertainment was given, and who in all other respects was arrayed like her sister.

In the drawing-room Mary proceeded to set in order the presents received that morning; a handsomely bound Bible from her father, and a small prayer-book with cross and clasp from her mother; a bracelet of Maude's hair from her aunt; a cornelian heart from Agnes, and a pocket-bonbonnière from her cousin, besides pretty trifles from her little brothers. In the midst of arrangements and re-arrangements, the servant entered with a large bunch of lilies from the village school-children, and the announcement that Mr. and Mrs. Savage were just arrived with their six daughters.

Gradually the guests assembled, young and old, pretty and plain; all alike seemingly bent on enjoying themselves; some with gifts, and all with cordial greetings for Mary; for she was a general favourite. There was slim Rosanna Hunt, her scarf arranged with artful negligence to hide a slight protrusion of one shoulder; and sweet Magdalen Ellis habited as usual in quiet colours. Then came Jane and Alice Deverall, twins so much alike that few besides their parents knew them apart with any certainty; and their fair brother Alexis, who, had he been a girl, would have increased the confusion. There was little Ellen Potter, with a round rosy face like an apple, looking as natural and good-humoured as if, instead of a grand French governess, she had had her own parents with her like most of the other children; and then came three rather haughty-looking Miss Stantons; and pale Hannah Lindley, the orphan; and Harriet Eyre, a thought too showy in her dress.

Mary, all life and spirits, hastened to introduce the new-comers to Maude; who, perfectly unembarrassed, bowed and uttered little speeches with the manner of a practised woman of the world; while the genuine, unobstrusive courtesy of Agnes did more towards making their guests comfortable than the eager good nature of her sister, or the correct breeding of her cousin.

At length the preliminaries were all accomplished, every one having found a seat, or being otherwise satisfactorily disposed of. The elders of the party were grouped here and there talking and looking on: the very small children were accommodated in an adjoining apartment with a gigantic Noah's ark: and the rest of the young people being at liberty to amuse themselves as fancy might prompt, a general appeal was made to Miss Foster for some game, novel, entertaining, and ingenious; or, as some of the more diffident hinted, easy.

"I really know nothing new," said Maude: "you must have played at Proverbs, What's my thought like? How do you like it? and Magic music: — or stay, there is one thing we can try: — bouts-rimés."

"What?" asked Mary.

u Bouts-rimes it is very easy. Some one gives rhymes, mamma can do that, and then every one fills them up as they think fit. A sonnet is the best form to select; but, if you wish, we could try eight, or even four lines."

"But I am certain I could not make a couplet," said Mary, laughing. "Of course you would get on capitally, and Agnes might manage very well, and Magdalen can do anything; but it is quite beyond me: do pray think of something more suited to my capacity."

"Indeed I have nothing else to propose. This is very much better than mere common games; but if you will not try it, that ends the matter" : and Maude leaned back in her chair.

"I hope" — began Mary; but Agnes interposed:

"Suppose some of us attempt bouts-rimés, and you meanwhile can settle what we shall do afterwards. Who is ready to test her poetical powers? — What, no one? — Oh, Magdalen, pray join Maude and me."

This proposal met with universal approbation, and the three girls retreated to a side table; Mary, who supplied the rhymes, exacting a promise that only one sonnet should be composed. Before the next game was fixed upon, the three following productions were submitted for judgment to the discerning public. The first was by Agnes.

Would that I were a turnip white,
Or raven black,
Or miserable hack Dragging a cab from left to right;

Or would I were the showman of a sight, Or weary donkey with a laden back,
Or racer in a sack,
Or freezing traveller on an Alpine' height;
Or would I were straw-catching as I drown,
(A wretched landsman I, who cannot swim),
Or watching a lone vessel sink,
Rather than writing:
I would change my pink
Gauze for a hideous yellow satin gown
With deep-cut scolloped edges and a rim.

"Indeed I had no idea of the sacrifice you were making," observed Maude; you did it with such heroic equanimity. Might I, however, venture to hint that my sympathy with your sorrows would have been greater, had they been expressed in metre?"

"There's gratitude for you," cried Agnes gaily: "What have you to expect, Magdalen?" and she went on to read her friend's sonnet:

I fancy the good fairies dressed in white,
Glancing like moonbeams through the shadows black;
Without much work to do for king or hack.
Training perhaps some twisted branch aright;
Or sweeping faded autumn leaves from sight,
To foster embryo life; or binding back
Stray tendrils; or in ample bean-pod sack
Bringing wild honey from the rocky height;
Or fishing for a fly lest it should drown;
Or teaching water-lily heads to swim,
Fearful that sudden rain might make them sink;
Or dyeing the pale rose a warmer pink;
Or wrapping lilies in their leafy gown,
Yet letting the white peep beyond the rim. —

"Well, Maude?"

"Well, Agnes; Miss Ellis is too kind to feel gratified at hearing that her verses make me tremble for my own: but such as they are, listen:

"Some ladies dress in muslin full and white,
Some gentlemen in cloth succinct and black;

Some patronise a dog-cart, some a hack,
Some think a painted clarence only right.
Youth is not always such a pleasing sight,
Witness a man with tassels on his back;
Or woman in a great-coat like a sack
Towering above her sex with horrid height.
If all the world were water fit to drown
There are some whom you would not
teach to swim, Rather enjoying if you saw them sink;
Certain old ladies dressed in girlish pink,
With roses and geraniums on their gowns: —
Go to the Basin, poke them o'er the rim.

"What a very odd sonnet said Mary after a slight pause: but surely men don't wear tassels."

Her cousin smiled: "You must allow for poetical licence; and I have literally seen a man in Regent Street wearing a sort of hooded cloak with one tassel. Of course every one will understand the basin to mean the one in St. James's Park."

"With these explanations your, sonnet is comprehensible," said Mary: and Magdalen added with unaffected pleasure: "And without them it was by far the best of the three."

Maude now exerted herself to amuse the party; and soon proved that ability was not lacking. Game after game was proposed and played at; and her fund seemed inexhaustible, for nothing was thought too nonsensical or too noisy for the occasion. Her good humour and animation were infectious. Miss Stanton incurred forfeits with the blandest smile; Hannah Lindley blushed and dimpled as she had not done for many months; Rosanna never perceived the derangement of her scarf; little Ellen exulted in freedom from schoolroom trammels; the twins guessed each other's thoughts with marvellous facility; Magdalen laughed aloud; and even Harriet Eyre's dress looked scarcely too gay for such an entertainment. Well was it for Mrs. Clifton that the strawberries, cream, and tarts had been supplied with no niggard hand: and very meagre was the remnant left when the party broke up at a late hour.

III

AGNES and Mary were discussing the pleasures of the preceeding evening as they sat over the unusually late, breakfast, when Maude joined them. Salutations being exchanged and refreshments supplied to the last comer, the conversation was renewed.

"Who did you think was the prettiest girl in the room last night? our charming selves, of course, excepted," asked Mary; "Agnes and I cannot agree on this point."

"Yes," said her sister, "we quite agree as to mere prettiness, only I maintain that Magdalen is infinitely more attractive than half the handsome people one sees. There is so much sense in her face, and such sweetness. Besides, her eyes are really beautiful."

"Miss Ellis has a characteristic countenance, but she appeared to me very far from the belle of the evening. Rosanna Hunt has much more regular features."

"Surely you do n't think Rosanna prettier than Jane and Alice," interrupted Mary; "I suppose I never look at those two without fresh pleasure."

"They have good fair complexions, eyes, and hair, certainly" ; and Maude glanced rather pointedly at her unconscious cousin: "but to me they have a wax-dollish air which is quite unpleasant. I think one of the handsomest faces in the room was Miss Stanton's."

"But she has such a disagreeable expression," rejoined Mary hastily: then colouring she half turned tow-, ards her sister, who looked grave, but did not speak.

A pause ensued; and then Agnes said, "I remember how prejudiced I felt against Miss Stanton when first she came to live here, for her appearance and manners are certainly unattractive: and how ashamed of myself I was when we heard that last year, through all the bitterly cold weather, she rose at six, though she never has a fire in her room, that she might have time before breakfast to make clothes for some of the poorest people in the village. And in the spring, when the scarlet fever was about, her mother would not let her go near the sick children for fear of contagion; so she saved up all her pocket-money to buy wine and soup and such things for them as they recovered."

"I daresay she is very good"; said Maude: "but that does not make her pleasing. Besides, the whole family have that disagreeable expression, and I suppose they are not all paragons. But you have both finished breakfast, and make me ashamed by your diligence. What is that beautiful piece of work?"

The sisters looked delighted. “I am so glad you like it, dear Maude.

Mary and I are embroidering a cover for the lectern in our church; but we feared you might think the ground dull.”

“Not at all; I prefer those quiet shades. Why, how well you do it: is it not very difficult? — Let me see if I understand the devices. There is the cross and the crown of thorns; and those must be the keys of St. Peter, with, of course, the sword of St. Paul. Do the flowers mean anything?”

“I am the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley,” answered Agnes pointing: “That is balm of Gilead, at least it is what we call so; there are myrrh and hyssop, and that is a palm-branch. The border is to be vine-leaves and grapes; with fig-leaves at the corners, thanks to Mary’s suggestions. Would you like to help us? there is plenty of room at the frame.”

“No, I should not do it well enough, and have not time to learn, as we go home to-morrow. How I envy you” ; she continued in a low voice, as if speaking rather to herself than to her hearers: “you who live in the country, and are exactly what you appear, and never wish for what you do not possess. I am sick of display and poetry and acting.”

“You do not act,” replied Agnes warmly; “I never knew a more sincere person. One difference between us is that you are less healthy and far more clever than I am. And this reminds me. Miss Savage begged me to ask you for some verses to put in her album. Would you be so very obliging? Any that you have by you would do.”

“She can have the sonnet I wrote ‘last night.”

Agnes hesitated: “I could not well offer her that, because — ”

“Why, she does not tower. Oh! I suppose she has some reprehensible old lady in her family, and so might feel hurt at my Lynch law. I will find you something else then, before I go.”

And that evening, when Agnes went to her cousin’s room to help her in packing, Maude consigned to her a neat copy of the following lines:

She sat and sang alway
By the green margin of a stream,
Watching the fishes leap and play
Beneath the glad sunbeam.
I sat and wept alway
Beneath the moon’s most shadowy beam,
Watching the blossoms of the
May Weep leaves into the stream.
I wept for memory;

She sang for hope that is so fair; —
My tears were swallowed by the sea;
Her songs died on the air.

Part II

I

RATHER more than a year had elapsed since Maude parted from her cousins; and now she was expecting their arrival in London every minute: for Mrs. Clifton, unable to leave her young family, had gratefully availed herself of Mrs. Foster's offer to receive Agnes and Mary during the early winter months, that they might take music and dancing lessons with their cousin.

At length the rumbling of an approaching cab was heard; then a loud knock and ring. Maude started up; but instead of running out to meet her guests, began poking vigorously at the fire, which soon sent a warm, cheerful light through the apartment, enabling her, when they entered, to discern that Agnes had a more womanly air than at their last meeting, that Mary had outgrown her sister, and that both were remarkably good-looking.

"First let me show you your room, and then you can settle comfortably to tea; we are not to wait for mamma. She thought you would not mind sleeping together, as our house is so small; and I have done my best to arrange things to your taste, for I know of old you have only one taste between you. Look, my room is next yours, so we can help each other very cosily: only pray do n't think of unpacking now: there will be plenty of time this evening, and you must be famished: come."

But Agnes lingered still, eager to thank her cousin for the good-natured forethought which had robbed her own apartment of flower-vases, and inkstand for the accommodation of her guests. The calls of Mary's appetite were, however, imperious; and very soon the sisters were snugly settled on a sofa by the fire, while Maude in a neighbouring armchair made tea.

"How long it seems since my birthday party," said Mary, as soon as the eatables had in some measure restored her social powers. "Why, Maude, you are grown quite a woman, but you look more delicate than ever, and very thin; do you still write verses?" Then without waiting for a reply: "Those which you gave Miss Savage for her album were very much admired; and Magdalen Ellis wished at the time for an autograph copy, only she had not the courage to trouble you. But perhaps you are not aware that poor Magdalen has done with albums and such like, at least for the present: she has entered on her novitiate in the Sisterhood of Mercy established near our house."

"Why poor?" said Maude. "I think she is very happy."

"Surely you would not like such a life," rejoined her cousin: "they have not

proper clothes on their beds, and never go out without a thick veil, which must half blind them. All day long they are at prayers, or teaching children, or attending the sick, or making poor things, or something. Is that to your taste?"

Maude half sighed, and then answered: "You cannot imagine me either fit or inclined for such a life; still, I can perceive that those are very happy who are. When I was preparing for confirmation Mr. Paulson offered me a district; but I did not like the trouble, and mamma thought me too unwell for regularity. I have regretted it since, though: yet I do n't fancy I ever could have talked to the poor people or done the slightest good. Yes, I continue to write now and then as the humour seizes me; and if Miss Ellis — "

"Sister Magdalen," whispered Agnes.

"If Sister Magdalen will accept it, I will try and find her something admissible even within convent walls. But let us change the subject. On Thursday we are engaged to tea at Mrs. Strawdy's. There will be no sort of party, so we need not dress or take any trouble."

"Will my aunt go with us?" asked Agnes.

"No. Poor mamma has been ailing for some time and is by no means strong; so as Mrs. Strawdy is an old schoolfellow of hers, and a most estimable person, she thinks herself justified in consigning you to my guardianship. On Saturday we must go shopping, as Aunt Letty says you are to get your winter things in London; and I can get mine at the same time. On Sunday — or does either of you dislike, cathedral services?"

Agnes declared they were her delight; and Mary, who had never attended any, expressed great pleasure at the prospect of hearing what her sister preferred to all secular music.

"Very well," continued Maude; "we will go to St. Andrew's then, and you shall be introduced to a perfect service; or at any rate to perhaps the nearest English approach to vocal perfection. But you know you are to be quite at home here; so we have not arranged any particular plans of amusement, but mean to treat you like ourselves. And now it is high time for you to retire. Here, Agnes," handing to her cousin a folded paper, the result of a rummage in her desk; "will you enclose this to Sister Magdalen, and assure her that my verses are honoured even in my own eyes by her acceptance. You can read them if you like, and Mary too, of course; only please not in my presence."

They were as follows:

Sweet, sweet sound of distant waters falling
On a parched and thirsty plain;
Sweet, sweet song of soaring skylark, calling

On the sun to shine again;
Perfume of the rose, only the fresher
For past fertilizing rain;
Pearls amid the sea, a hidden treasure
For some daring hand to gain: —
Better, dearer than all these
Is the earth beneath the trees.
Of a much more priceless worth
Is the old, brown, common earth.
Little snow-white lamb, piteously bleating
For thy mother far away;
Saddest, sweetest nightingale retreating
With thy sorrow from the day;
Weary fawn whom night has overtaken,
From the herd gone quite astray;
Dove whose nest was rifled and forsaken
In the budding month of May: —
Roost upon the leafy trees,
Lie on earth and take your ease:
Death is better far than birth,
You shall turn again to earth.

Listen to the never-pausing murmur
Of the waves that fret the shore;
See the ancient pine that stands the firmer
For the storm-shock that it bore;
And the moon her silver chalice filling
With light from the great sun's store;
And the stars which deck our temple's ceiling
As the flowers deck its floor;
Look and hearken while you may,
For these things shall pass away:
All these things shall fail and cease;
Let us wait the end in peace.

Let us wait the end in peace; for truly
That shall cease which was before:
Let us see our lamps are lighted, duly
Fed with oil, nor wanting more:

Let us pray while yet the Lord will hear us,
For the time is almost o'er;
Yea, the end of all is very near us;
Yea, the Judge is at the door.
Let us pray now, while we may;
It will be too late to pray
When the quick and dead shall all
Rise at the last trumpet-call.

II

WHEN Thursday arrived Agnes and Mary were indisposed with colds; so Mrs. Foster insisted on her daughter's making their excuses to Mrs. Strawdy. In a dismal frame of mind, Maude, assisted by her sympathizing cousins, performed her slight preliminary toilet.

"You have no notion of the utter dreariness of this kind of invitation: I counted on your helping me through the evening, and now you fail me. Thank you, Mary; I shall not waste eau de Cologne on my handkerchief.

Good-night, both, mind you go to bed early, and get up quite well, tomorrow. Good-night."

The weather was foggy and raw as Maude stepped into the street; and proved anything but soothing to a temper already fretted; so by the time that she had arrived at her destination, removed her walking-things, saluted her hostess, and apologised for her cousins, her countenance had assumed an expression neither pleased nor pleasing.

"Let me present my nieces to you, my dear," said Mrs. Strawdy, taking her young friend by the hand and leading her towards the fire: "This is Miss Mowbray; or, as you must call her, Annie; that is Caroline, and that Sophy. They have heard so much of you that any farther introduction is needless here Maude bowed rather stiffly:" but as we are early people you will excuse our commencing with tea, after which we shall have leisure for amusement."

There was something so genuinely kind and simple in Mrs. Strawdy's manner, that even Maude felt mollified, and resolved on doing her best not only towards suppressing all appearance of yawns, but also towards bearing her part in the conversation.

"My cousins will regret their indisposition more than ever, when they learn of how much pleasure it has deprived them," said she, civilly addressing Miss Mowbray.

A polite bend, smile, and murmur formed the sole response, and once more a subject had to be started.

"Have you been very gay lately? I begin to acquire the reputation of an invalid, and so my privacy is respected."

Annie coloured, and looked excessively embarrassed; at last she answered in a low, hesitating voice: "We go out extremely little, partly because we never dance."

tc Nor I, either; it really is too fatiguing; yet a ball-room is no bad place for a mere spectator. Perhaps, though, you prefer the theatre?"

"We never go to the play," rejoined Miss Mowbray looking more and more uncomfortable.

Maude ran on: "Oh, I beg your pardon, you do not approve of such entertainments. I never go, but only for want of some one to take me." Then addressing Mrs. Mowbray: "I think you know my aunt, Mrs. Clifton?"

"I visited her years ago with your mamma," was the answer: "when you were quite a little child. I hope she continues in good health. Pray remember me to her and to Mr. Clifton when you write."

"With pleasure. She has a large family now, eight children."

"That is indeed a large family," rejoined Mrs. Strawdy, intent meanwhile on dissecting a cake with mathematical precision. "You must try a piece; it is Sophy's own manufacture."

Despairing of success in this quarter, Maude now directed her attention to Caroline, whose voice she had not heard once in the course of the evening.

"I hope you will favour us with some music after tea; in fact, I can 'take no denial. You look too blooming to plead a cold, and I feel certain you will not refuse to indulge my love for sweet sounds. Of your ability to do so, I have heard elsewhere."

"I shall be most happy, only you must favour us in return."

"I will do my best," answered Maude somewhat encouraged; "but my own performances are very poor. Are you fond of German songs? they form my chief resource."

"Yes, I like them much."

Baffled in this quarter also, Miss Foster wanted courage to attack Sophy, whose countenance promised more cake than conversation. The meal seemed endless; she fidgetted under the table with her fingers; pushed about a stool on the noiselessly soft carpet until it came in contact with some one's foot; and at last fairly deprived Caroline of her third cup of coffee, by opening the piano and claiming the fulfillment of her promise.

The young lady complied with obliging readiness. She sang some simple airs, mostly religious, not indeed with much expression, but in a voice clear and warbling as a bird's. Maude felt consoled for all the contrarieties of the day; and was bargaining for one more song before taking Caroline's place at the instrument when the door opened to admit Mrs. and Miss Savage; who, having only just reached town, and hearing from Mrs. Foster that her daughter was at the house of a mutual friend, resolved on begging the hospitality of Mrs. Strawdy, and renewing their acquaintance.

Poor Maude's misfortunes now came thick and fast. Seated between Miss Savage and Sophia Mowbray she was attacked on either hand with questions concerning her verses. In the first place, did she continue to write? Yes. A flood of ecstatic compliments followed this admission; she was so young, so much admired, and, poor thing, looked so delicate. It was quite affecting to think of her lying awake at night meditating those sweet verses — ("I sleep like a top," Maude put in dryly) — which so delighted her friends, and would so charm the public, if only Miss Foster could be induced to publish. At last the bystanders were called upon to intercede for a recitation.

Maude coloured with displeasure; a hasty answer was rising to her lips when the absurdity of her position flashed across her mind so forcibly that, almost unable to check a laugh in the midst of her annoyance, she put her handkerchief to her mouth. Miss Savage, impressed with a notion that her request was about to be complied with, raised her hand, imploring silence, and settled herself in a listening attitude.

"You will excuse me," Maude at 'last said very coldly. "I could not think of monopolising every one's attention. Indeed you are extremely good, but you must excuse me." And here Mrs. Savage interposed, desiring her daughter not to tease Miss Foster; and Mrs. Strawdy seconded her friend's arguments by a hint that supper would make its appearance in a few minutes.

Finally the maid announced that Miss Foster was fetched; and Maude, shortening her adieus and turning a deaf ear to Annie's suggestion that their acquaintance should not terminate with the first meeting, returned home dissatisfied with her circumstances, her friends, and herself.

III

IT was Christmas Eve. All day long Maude and her cousins were hard at work putting up holly and mistletoe in wreaths, festoons, or bunches, wherever the arrangement of the rooms admitted of such embellishment. The picture-frames were hidden behind foliage and bright berries; the birdcages were stuck as full of green as though it had been summer. A fine sprig of holly was set apart as a centre-bit for the pudding of next day: scratched hands and injured gowns were disregarded: hour after hour the noisy bustle raged until Mrs. Foster, hunted from place to place by her yOung relatives, heard, with inward satisfaction, that the decorations were completed.

After tea Mary set the backgammon board in array and challenged her aunt to their customary evening game: Maude, complaining of a headache, and promising either to wrap herself in a warm shawl or to go to bed, went to her room: and Agnes, listening to the rattle of the dice, at last came to the conclusion that her presence was not needed downstairs, and resolved to visit the upper regions. Thinking that her cousin was lying down tired and might have fallen asleep, she forebore knocking, but opened the door softly and peeped in.

Maude was seated at a table, surrounded by the old chaos of stationery; before her lay the locking manuscript book, into which she had just copied something. That day she had appeared more than usually animated, and now supporting her forehead upon her hand, her eyes cast down till the long lashes nearly rested upon her cheeks, she looked pale, languid, almost in pain. She did not move, but let her visitor come close to her without speaking. Agnes thought she was crying.

“Dear Maude, you have overtired yourself. Indeed, for all our sakes, you should be more careful”: here Agnes passed her arm affectionately round her friend’s neck: “I hoped to find you fast asleep, and instead of this you have been writing in the cold. Still, I did not come to lecture; and am even ready to show my forgiving disposition by reading your new poem: may I?”

Maude glanced quickly up at her cousin’s kind face, then answered: “Yes, if you like” ; and Agnes read as follows:

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith,
All things are vanity. The eye and ear
Cannot be filled with what they see and hear:

Like early dew, or like the sudden breath
Of wind, or like the grass that withereth,
Is man, tossed to and fro by hope and fear.

So little joy hath he, so little cheer,
Till all things end in the long dust of death.
To-day is still the same as yesterday,
Tomorrow also even as one of them;
And there is nothing new under the sun.
Until the ancient race of time be run,
The old thorns shall grow out of the old stem;
And morning shall be cold and twilight grey.

This sonnet was followed by another, written like a postscript.

I listen to the holy antheming
That riseth in thy walls continually,
What while the organ pealeth solemnly
And white-robed men and boys standup to sing.
I ask my heart with a sad questioning:
"What lov'st thou here?" and my heart answers me:
"Within the shadows of this sanctuary
To watch and pray is a most blessed thing."

To watch and pray, false heart? it is not so:
Vanity enters with thee, and thy love
Soars not to heaven, but grovelleth below.

Vanity keepeth guard, lest good should reach
Thy hardness; not the echoes from above
Can rule thy stubborn feelings or can teach —

"Was this composed after going to St. Andrew's?"

"No; I wrote it just now, but I was thinking of St. Andrew's. It is horrible to feel such a hypocrite as I do."

"Oh! Maude, I only wish I were as sensible of my faults as you are of yours. But a hypocrite you are not: don't you see that every line of these sonnets attests your sincerity?"

"You will stay to Communion tomorrow?" asked Maude after a short silence,

and without replying to her cousin's speech; even these few words seemed to cost her an effort.

"Of course I shall: why, it is Christmas day: — at least I trust to do so. Mary and I have been thinking how nice it will be for us all to receive together: so I want you to promise that you will pray for us at the altar, as I shall for you. Will you?"

"I shall not receive tomorrow," answered Maude; then hurrying on as if to prevent the other from remonstrating: "No: at least I will not profane holy things; I will not add this to all the rest. J have gone over and over again, thinking I should come right in time, and I do not come right: I will go no more."

Agnes turned quite pale: "Stop," she said, interrupting her cousin: "Stop; you cannot mean — you do not know what you are saying. You will go no more? Only think, if the struggle is so hard now, what it will be when you reject all help."

"I do not struggle."

"You are ill to-night," rejoined Agnes very gently, "you are tired and over-excited. Take my advice, dear; say your prayers and get to bed. But do not be very long; if there is anything you miss and will tell me of, I will say it in your stead. Do n't think me unfeeling. I was once on the very point of acting as you propose. I was perfectly-wretched: harassed and discouraged on all sides. But then it struck me — you won't be angry? — that it was so ungrateful to follow my own fancies, instead of at least endeavouring to do God's will; and so foolish, too; for if our safety is not in obedience, where is it?"

Maude shook her head: "Your case is different. Whatever your faults may be (not that I perceive any), you are trying to correct them; your own conscience tells you that. But I am not trying. No one will say that I cannot avoid putting myself forward and displaying my verses. Agnes, you must admit so much."

Deep-rooted, indeed, was that vanity which made Maude take pleasure on such an occasion in proving the force of arguments directed against herself. Still Agnes would not yield, but resolutely did battle for the truth.

"If hitherto it has been so, let it be so no more. It is not too late:

besides, think for one moment what will be the end of this. We must all die: what if you keep to your resolution, and do as you have said, and receive the Blessed Sacrament no more?" Her eyes filled with tears.

Maude's answer came in a subdued tone: "I do not mean never to communicate again. You remember Mr. Paulson told us last Sunday that sickness and suffering are sent for our correction. I suffer very much. Perhaps a time will come when these will have done their work on me also; when I shall be purified indeed and weaned from the world. Who knows? the lost have been

found, the dead quickened." She paused as if in thought; then continued: "You partake of the Blessed Sacrament in peace, Agnes, for you are good; and Mary, for she is harmless: but your conduct cannot serve to direct mine, because I am neither the one nor the other. Some day I may be fit again to approach the Holy Altar, but till then I will at least refrain from dishonouring it."

Agnes felt almost indignant. "Maude, how can you talk so? this is not reverence. You cannot mean that for the present you will indulge vanity and display; that you will court admiration and applause; that you will take your fill of pleasure until sickness, or it may be death, strips you of temptation and sin together. Forgive me; I am sure you never meant this: yet what else does a deliberate resolution to put off doing right come to? — and if you are determined at once to do your best, why deprive yourself of the appointed means of grace? Dear Maude, think better of it" ; and Agnes knelt beside her cousin, and laid her head against her bosom.

But still Maude, with a sort of desperate wilfulness, kept saying: "It is of no use; I cannot go tomorrow; it is of no use." She hid her face, leaning upon the table and weeping bitterly; while Agnes, almost discouraged, quitted the room.

Maude, once more alone, sat for some time just as her cousin left her. Gradually the thick, low sobs became more rare; she was beginning to feel sleepy. At last she roused herself with an effort and commenced undressing; then it struck her that her prayers had still to be said. The idea of beginning them frightened her; yet she could not settle to sleep without saying something. Strange prayers they must have been, offered with a divided heart and a reproachful conscience. Still they were said at length; and Maude lay down harassed, wretched, remorseful, everything but penitent. She was nearly asleep, nearly unconscious of her troubles, when the first strokes of midnight sounded.

Immediately a party of Christmas waits and carollers burst forth with their glad music. The first part was sung in full chorus:

"Thank God, thank God, we do believe,
Thank God that this is Christmas Eve.
Even as we kneel upon this day,
Even so the ancient legends say,
Nearly two thousand years ago
The stalled ox knelt, and even so
The ass knelt, full of praise, which they.
Could not repress, while we can pray.
Thank God, thank God, for Christ was born
Ages ago, as on this morn.

In the snow-season undefiled
Christ came to earth a Little Child:
He put His ancient Glory by
To live for us and then to die."

Then half the voices sang the following stanza:

"How shall we thank God? how shall we
Thank Him and praise Him worthily?
What will He have Who loved us thus?
What presents will He take from us?
Will He take Gold? or precious heap
Of gems? or shall we rather steep
The air with incense? or bring myrrh?
What man will be our messenger
To go to Him and ask His Will?

Which having learned, we will fulfil,
Though He choose all we most prefer:
What man will be our messenger?"

This was answered by the other half:

"Thank God, thank God, the Man is found,
Sure-footed, knowing well the ground.
He knows the road, for this the way He travelled once, as on this day.
He is our Messenger; beside,
He is our Door and Path and Guide;
He also is our Offering;
He is the Gift. That we must bring —

Finally all the singers joined in the conclusion:

"Let us kneel down with one accord
And render thanks unto the Lord.

For unto us a Child is born
Upon this happy Christmas morn;
For unto us a Son is given,

First-born of God and Heir of Heaven.”

As the echoes died away, Maude fell asleep.

Part III

I

Agnes Clifton to Maude Foster.

12th June, 18 — .
My Dear Maude, —

MAMMA has written to my aunt that Mary's marriage is fixed for the 4th of next month: but as I fear we cannot expect you both so many days before the time, I also write, hoping that you at least will come without delay. At any rate, I shall be at the station to-morrow afternoon with a chaise for your luggage, so pray take pity on my desolate condition, and avail yourself of the three-o'clock train. A.s we are both bridesmaids - elect, I thought it would be very nice for us to be dressed alike, so have procured double quantity of everything; thus you will perceive no pretence remains for your lingering in smoky London.

You will be amused when you see Mary: I have already lost my companion. Mr. Herbert calls at least once a day, but sometimes oftener; so all day long Mary is on the alert. She takes much more interest in the roses over the porch than was formerly the case; the creepers outside the windows require continual training, not to say hourly care. I tell her the constitution of the garden must have become seriously weakened lately. One morning I caught her before the glass, trying the effect of syringa (the English orange-blossom, you know) in her hair. She looked such a darling. I hinted how flattered Mr. Herbert would feel when I told him; which provoked her to offer a few remarks on old maids. Was it not a shame?

Last Thursday Magdalen Ellis was finally received into the Sisterhood of Mercy. I wished much to be present, but could not, as the whole affair was conducted quite privately; only her parents were admitted of the world. However, I made interest for a lock of her beautiful hair, which I prize highly. It makes me sad to look at it; yet I know she has chosen well, and will, if she perseveres, receive hereafter an abundant recompense for all she has foregone here. Sometimes I think whether such a life can be suited to me; but then I could not bear to leave mamma: indeed that is just what Magdalen felt so much. I met her yesterday walking with some poor children. Her veil was down, nearly hiding her face; still I fancy she looked thoughtful, but very calm and happy. She says she always prays for me, and asked my prayers; so I begged her to

remember you and Mary. Then she enquired how you are, desiring her kindest love to you, and assuring me she makes no doubt your name will be known at some future period; but checking herself almost immediately, she added that she could fancy you very different as pale Sister Maude. This surprised me; I can fancy nothing of the sort. At last she mentioned the verses you gave her months ago, which she knows by heart and values extremely: then, having nearly reached my home, we parted.

What a document I have composed; I, who have not one minute to spare from Mary's trousseau. Will you give my love to my aunt, and request her from me to permit your immediately coming to Your affectionate cousin,

AGNES M. CLIFTON.

P.S. — Mary would doubtless send a message were she in the room; I conjecture her to be lurking about somewhere on the watch. Goodbye: or rather, come.

Maude handed the letter to her mother: "Can you spare me, mamma? I should like to go, but not if it is to inconvenience you."

"Certainly, you shall go, my dear. It is a real pleasure to hear you express interest on some point, and you cannot be with any one I approve of more than Agnes. But you must make haste with the packing now: I will come and help you in a few minutes."

Still Maude lingered.

"Did you see about Magdalen?

I wonder what made her think of me as a sister. It is very nice of her; but then she is so good she never can conceive what I am like. Mamma, should you mind my being a nun?"

"Yes, my dear, it would make me miserable. But for the present take my advice and hurry a little, or the train will leave without you."

Thus urged, Maude proceeded to bundle various miscellaneous goods into a trunk; the only article on the safety of which she bestowed much thought being the present destined for Mary; a sofa-pillow worked in glowing shades of wool and silk. This she wrapped carefully in a cloth and laid at the bottom; then over it all else was heaped without much ceremony. Many were the delays occasioned by things mislaid, which must be looked for; ill-secured, which must be re-arranged; or remembered too late, which yet could not be dispensed with, and so must be crammed in somewhere. At length, however, the tardy preparations were completed; and Maude, enveloped in two shawls, though it was the height of summer, stepped into a cab, promising strict conformity to her mother's

injunction that both windows should be kept closed.

Half an hour had not elapsed when another cab drove up to the door, and out of it Maude was lifted perfectly insensible. She had been overturned, and though no limb was broken, had neither stirred nor spoken since the accident.

II

Maude Foster to Agnes Clifton.

2nd July, 18 —
My Dear Agnes, —

YOU have heard of my mishap? it keeps me, not bedridden, but sofa-ridden. My side is dreadfully hurt; I looked at it this morning for the first time, but hope never again to see so shocking a sight. The pain now and then is extreme, though not always so; sometimes, in fact, I am unconscious of any injury.

Will you convey my best love and wishes to Mary, and tell her how much I regret being away from her at such a time, especially as mamma will not hear of leaving me. A day or two ago I tried to compose an epithalamium for our fair fiancée; which effort resulted in my present enclosure: not much to the purpose, we must admit. You may read it when no better employment offers. The first Nun no one can suspect of being myself, partly because my hair is far from yellow and I do not wear curls, partly because I never did anything half so good as profess. The second might be Mary, had she mistaken her vocation. The third is Magdalen, of course. But whatever you miss, pray read the mottoes. Put together, they form a most exquisite little song which the nuns sing in Italy. One can fancy Sister Magdalen repeating it with her whole heart.

The surgeon comes twice a day to dress my wounds; still all the burden of nursing falls on poor mamma. How I wish you were here to help us both; we should find plenty to say.

But perhaps ere many months are passed I shall be up and about, when we may go together on a visit to Mary; a most delightful possibility. By the way, how I should love a baby of hers, and what a pretty little creature it ought to be. Do you think Mr. Herbert handsome? hitherto I have only heard a partial opinion.

Uh, my side! it gives an awful twinge now and then. You need not read my letter; but I must write it, for I am unable to do anything else. Did the pillow reach safely? It gave me so much pleasure to work it for Mary, who, T hope, likes it. At all events, if not to her taste, she may console herself with the reflection that it is unique; for the pattern was my own designing.

Here comes dinner; good-bye. When will anything so welcome as your kind

face gladden the eyes of Your affectionate
MAUDE FOSTER?

P.S. — I have turned tippler lately on port wine, three times a day. “To keep you up,” says my doctor: while I obstinately refuse to be kept up, but insist on becoming weaker and weaker. Mind you write me a full history of your grand doings on a certain occasion; not omitting a detailed account of the lovely bride, her appearance, deportment, and toilet. Good-bye once more: when shall I see you all again?

THREE NUNS

I

> “*Sospira questo core*
> *E non sadir perché.”*

Shadow, shadow on the wall,
Spread thy shelter over me;
Wrap me with a heavy pall,
With the dark that none may see.
Fold thyself around me; come:

Shut out all the troublesome
Noise of life; I would be dumb.

Shadow, thou hast reached my feet,
Rise and cover up my head;
Be my stainless winding-sheet, Buried before I am dead.
Lay thy cool upon my breast:
Once I thought that joy was best,
Now I only care for rest.
By the grating of my cell

Sings a solitary bird:
Sweeter than the vesper bell,
Sweetest song was ever heard.
(" Sweetest eyes were ever seen.'* — E. B. Browning.)*
Sing upon thy living tree:
Happy echoes answer thee,
Happy songster, sing to me.
When my yellow hair was curled
Though men saw and called me fair,
I was weary in the world,
Full of vanity and care.

Gold was left behind, curls shorn
When I came here; that same morn
Made a bride no gems adorn.
Here wrapped in my spotless veil,
Curtained from intruding eyes,
I whom prayers and fasts turn pale
Wait the flush of Paradise.
But the vigil is so long
My heart sickens — sing thy song,
Blithe bird that canst do no wrong.

Sing on, making me forget
Present sorrow and past sin;
Sing a little longer yet:
Soon the matins will begin:
And I must turn back again
To that aching worse than pain
I must bear and not complain.
Sing, that in thy song I may
Dream myself once more a child
In the green woods far away
Plucking clematis and wild Hyacinths, till pleasure grew
Tired, yet so was pleasure too,
Resting with no work to do.

In the thickest of the wood I remember, long ago
How a stately oak-tree stood

With a sluggish pool below,
Almost shadowed out of sight.
On the waters dark as night,
Water-lilies lay like light.

There, while yet a child I thought
I could live as in a dream,
Secret, neither found nor sought:
Till the lilies on the stream,
Pure as virgin purity,
Would seem scarce too pure for me:
Ah, but that can never be.

II

"Sospirera d' amort
Ma non lodice a me."

I loved him, yes, where was the sin?
I loved him with my heart and soul,
But I pressed forward to no goal,
There was no prize I strove to win.
Show me my sin that I may see: —
Throw the first stone, thou Pharisee.
I loved him, but I never sought
That he should know that I was fair.
I prayed for him; was my sin prayer?
I sacrificed, he never bought.
He nothing gave, he nothing took;
We never bartered look for look.
My voice rose in the sacred choir,
The choir of Nuns; do you condemn
Even if, when kneeling among them,
Faith, zeal, and love kindled a fire,
And I prayed for his happiness

Who knew not? was my error this?

I only prayed that in the end,
His trust and hope may not be vain.
I prayed not we may meet again:
I would not let our names ascend,
No, not to Heaven, in the same breath;
Nor will I join the two in death.

Oh sweet is death, for I am weak
And weary, and it giveth rest.
The Crucifix lies on my breast,
And all night long" it seems to speak
Of rest; I hear it through my sleep,
And the great comfort makes me weep.

Oh sweet is death that bindeth up
The broken and the bleeding heart.
The draught chilled but a cordial part
Lurked at the bottom of the cup,
And for my patience will my
Lord Give an exceeding great reward.

Yea, the reward is almost won,
A crown of glory and a palm.
Soon I shall sing the unknown psalm;
Soon gaze on light, not on the sun;
And soon, with surer faith, shall pray
For him, and cease not night nor day.

My life is breaking like a cloud;
God judgeth not as man doth judge —
Nay, bear with me; you need not grudge
This peace; the vows that I have vowed
Have all been kept; Eternal Strength
Holds me, though mine own fails at length.

Bury me in the Convent ground
Among the flowers that are so sweet;

And lay a green turf at my feet
Where thick trees cast a gloom around.
At my head let a Cross be, white
Through the long blackness of the night.

Now kneel and pray beside my bed
That I may sleep being free from pain:
And pray that I may wake again
After His Likeness,
Who hath said (Faithful is He Who promiseth),
We shall be satisfied Therewith.

III

"*Rispondimi, cor mio,*
Perché sospiri tu?
Risponde: Voglio Iddio,
Sospiro perGesu."

My heart is as a free-born bird
Caged in my cruel breast,
That flutters, flutters evermore,
Nor sings, nor is at rest.

But beats against the prison bars,
As knowing its own nest
Far off beyond the clouded West.

My soul is as a hidden fount
Shut in by clammy clay,
That struggles with an upward moan;
Striving to force its way
Up through the turf, over the grass,
Up, up into the day,
Where twilight no more turneth grey.

Oh for the grapes of the True Vine
Growing in Paradise,
Whose tendrils join the Tree of Life
To that which maketh wise.
Growing beside the Living Well,
Whose sweetest waters rise,
Where tears are wiped from tearful eyes.

Oh for the waters of that
Well Round which the Angels stand;
Oh for the Shadow of the Rock
On my heart's weary land.

Oh for the Voice to guide me when I turn to either hand,
Guiding me till I reach Heaven's strand.

Thou World from which I am come out,
Keep all thy gems and gold;
Keep thy delights and precious things
Thou that art waxing old, My heart shall beat with a new life,
When thine is dead and cold;
When thou dost fear I shall be bold.
When Earth shall pass away with all
Her pride and pomp of sin,
The City builded without hands
Shall safely shut me in.

All the rest is but vanity
Which others strive to win:
Where their hopes end my joys begin.

I will not look upon a rose,
Though it is fair to see,
The flowers planted in Paradise
Are budding now for me.

Red roses like love visible
Are blowing on their tree,

Or white like virgin purity.

I will not look unto the sun
Which setteth night by night,
In the untrodden courts of Heaven
My crown shall be more bright.

So, in the New Jerusalem,
Founded and built aright,
My very feet shall tread on light.
With foolish riches of this world
I have bought treasure, where
Naught perisheth: for this white veil
I gave my golden hair,
I gave the beauty of my face
For vigils, fasts, and prayer;
I gave all for this Cross I bear.

My heart trembled when first I took
The vows which must be kept;
At first it was a weariness
To watch when once I slept.

The path was rough and sharp with thorns;
My feet bled as I stepped;
The Cross was heavy and I wept.

While still the names rang in mine ears
Of daughter, sister, wife,
The outside world still looked so fair
To my weak eyes and rife
With beauty, my heart almost failed;
Then in the desperate strife
I prayed, as one who prays for life,
Until I grew to love what once
Had been so burdensome.
So now when I am faint, because
Hope deferred seems to numb
My heart, I yet can plead; and say

Although my lips are dumb:
“The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.”

III

THREE weeks had passed away. A burning sun seemed baking the very dust in the streets, and sucking the last remnant of moisture from the straw spread in front of Mrs. Foster's house, when the sound of a low, muffled ring was heard in the sickroom; and Maude, now entirely confined to her bed, raising herself on one arm, looked eagerly towards the door; which opened to admit a servant with the welcome announcement that Agnes had arrived.

After tea Mrs. Foster, almost worn out with fatigue, went to bed; leaving her daughter under the care of their guest. The first greetings between the cousins had passed sadly enough. Agnes perceived at a glance that Maude was, as her last letter hinted, in a most alarming state: while the sick girl, well aware of her condition, received her friend with an emotion which showed she felt it might be for the last time. But soon her spirits rallied.

"I shall enjoy our evening together so much, Agnes" ; said she, speaking now quite cheerfully: "You must tell me all the news. Have you heard from Mary since your last despatch to me?"

"Mamma received a letter this morning before I set off; and she sent it, hoping to amuse you. Shall I read it aloud?"

"No, let me have it myself." Her eye travelled rapidly down the well-filled pages, comprehending at a glance all the tale of happiness. Mr. and Mrs. Herbert were at Scarborough; they would thence proceed to the Lakes; and thence, most probably, homewards, though a prolonged tour was mentioned as just possible. But both plans seemed alike pleasing to Mary, for she was full of her husband, and both were equally connected with him.

Maude smiled as paragraph after paragraph enlarged on the same topic. At last she said: "Agnes, if you could not be yourself, but must become one of us three: I do n't mean as to goodness, of course, but merely as regards circumstances, — would you change with Sister Magdalen, with Mary, or with me?"

"Not with Mary, certainly. Neither should I have courage to change with you; I never should bear pain so well: nor yet with Sister Magdalen, for I want her fervour of devotion. So at present I' fear you must even put up with me as I am. Will that do?"

There was a pause. A fresh wind had sprung up and the sun was setting.

At length Maude resumed: "Do you recollect last Christmas Eve when I was so wretched, what shocking things I said? How I rejoice that my next

Communion was not, indeed, delayed till sickness had stripped me of temptation and sin together."

"Did I say that? It was very harsh."

"Not harsh: it was just and right as far as it went, only something more was required. But I never told you what altered me. The truth is, for a time I avoided as much as possible frequenting our parish church, for fear of remark. Mamma, knowing how I love St. Andrew's, let me go there very often by myself, because the walk is too long for her. I wanted resolution to do right, yet believe me I was very miserable: how I could say my prayers at that period is a mystery. So matters went on; till one day as I was returning from a shop, I met Mr, Paulson. He enquired immediately whether I had been staying in the country? Of course I answered, No. Had I been ill? again, No. Then gradually the whole story came out. I never shall forget the shame of my admissions, each word seemed forced from me, yet at last all was told. I will not repeat all we said then, and on a subsequent occasion when he saw me at church, the end was that I partook of the Holy Communion on Easter Sunday. That was indeed a feast. I felt as if I never could do wrong again, and yet — well, after my next impatient fit, I wrote this." Here she took a paper from the table: "Do you care to see it? I will rest a little, for talking is almost too much for me."

I watched a rosebud very long
Brought on by dew and sun and shower,
Waiting to see the perfect flower:
Then when I thought it should be strong,
It opened at the matin hour
And fell at evensong.

I watched a nest from day to day,
A green nest, full of pleasant shade,
Wherein three little eggs were laid:

But when they should have hatched in May,
The two old birds had grown afraid,
Or tired, and flew away.

Then in my wrath I broke the bough
That I had tended with such care,
Hoping its scent should fill the air:
I crushed the eggs, not heeding how

Their ancient promise had been fair: —
I would have vengeance now.

But the dead branch spoke from the sod,
And the eggs answered me again:
Because we failed dost thou complain?
Is thy wrath just? And what if God,
Who waiteth for thy fruits in vain,
Should also take the rod?

"You can keep it if you like," continued Maude, when her cousin had finished reading: "Only don't let any one else know why it was written. And, Agnes, it would only pain mamma to look over everything if I die; will you examine the verses, and destroy what I evidently never intended to be seen. They might all be thrown away together, only mamma is so fond of them. What will she do?" and the poor girl hid her face in the pillows.

"But is there no hope, then?"

"Not the slightest, if you mean of recovery; and she does not know it. Do n't go away when all's over, but do what you can to comfort her. I have been her misery from my birth, till now there is no time to do better. But you must leave me, please; for I feel completely exhausted. Or stay one moment: I saw Mr. Paulson again this morning, and he promised to come to-morrow to administer the Blessed Sacrament to me; so I count on you and mamma receiving with me, for the last time perhaps: will you?"

"Yes, dear Maude. But you are so young, do n't give up hope. And now would you like me to remain here during the night? I can establish myself quite comfortably on your sofa."

"Thank you, but it could only make me restless. Good-night, my own dear Agnes."

"Good-night, dear Maude. I trust to rise early to-morrow, that I may be with you all the sooner." So they parted.

Agnes proceeded to perform the task imposed upon her, with scrupulous anxiety to carry out her friend's wishes. The locked book she never opened, but had it placed on Maude's coffin, with all its records of folly, sin, vanity, and, she humbly trusted, of true penitence also. She next collected the scraps of paper found in her cousin's desk and portfolio, or lying loose upon the table, and proceeded to examine them. Many of these were mere fragments, many half-effaced pencil scrawls, and some written on torn backs of letters, and some full of incomprehensible abbreviations. Agnes was astonished at the variety of

Maude's compositions. Piece after piece she committed to the flames, fearful lest any should be preserved which were not intended for general perusal: but it cost her a pang to do so; and to see how small a number remained for Mrs. Foster. Of three only she took copies for herself. The first was dated ten days after Maude's accident:

Sleep, let me sleep, for I am sick of care;
Sleep, let me sleep, for my pain wearies me.
Shut out the light; thicken the heavy air
With drowsy incense; let a distant stream
Of music lull me, languid as a dream
Soft as the whisper of a Summer sea.

Pluck me no rose that groweth on a thorn,
No myrtle white and cold as snow in June,
Fit for a virgin on her marriage morn:
But bring me poppies brimmed with sleepy death,
And ivy choking what it garlandeth,
And primroses that open to the moon.
Listen, the music swells into a song,
A simple song I loved in days of yore;
The echoes take it up and up along
The hills, and the wind blows it back again: —
Peace, peace, there is a memory in that strain
Of happy days that shall return no more.

Oh peace, your music wakeneth old thought,
But not old hope that made my life so sweet,
Only the longing that must end in naught.
Have patience with me, friends, a little while:
For soon where you shall dance and sing and smile,
My quickened dust may blossom at your feet.

Sweet thought that I may yet live and grow green,
That leaves may yet spring from the withered root,
And birds and flowers and berries half unseen;
Then if you haply muse upon the past,
Say this: Poor child, she hath her wish at last;
Barren through life, but in death bearing fruit.

The second, though written on the same paper, was evidently composed at a subsequent period:

Fade, tender lily,
Fade, Oh crimson rose,
Fade every flower,
Sweetest flower that blows.

Go, chilly Autumn,
Come, Oh Winter cold;
Let the green stalks die away
Into common mould.

Birth follows hard on death,
Life on withering.
Hasten, we shall come the sooner
Back to pleasant Spring.

The last was a sonnet, dated the morning before her death:

What is it Jesus saith unto the soul? —
"Take up the Cross and come, and follow Me.
"This word he saith to all; no man may be
Without the Cross, wishing to win the goal.
Then take it bravely up, setting thy whole
Body to bear; it will not weigh on thee
Beyond thy utmost strength: take it, for He
Knoweth when thou art weak, and will control
The powers of darkness that thou needst not fear.

He will be with thee, helping, strengthening,
Until it is enough: for lo, the day
Cometh when He shall call thee: thou shall hear
His voice that says:" Winter is past, and Spring
Is come; arise, My Love, and come away."

Agnes cut one long tress from Maude's head; and on her return home laid it in the same paper with the lock of Magdalen's hair. These she treasured greatly,

and, gazing on them, would long and pray for the hastening of that eternal morning, which shall reunite in God those who in Him, or for His Sake, have parted here.

Amen for us all.

THE END.

The Biography

Rossetti, 1877

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI by Theodore Watts-Dunton

Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832-1914) was a critic and poet, who is most remembered as being the friend that rescued the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne from alcoholism. He was originally educated as a naturalist, which he gave up for the law, when he qualified as a solicitor. Watts-Dunton went to London, where he practised for some years, giving his spare time to his chosen pursuit of literature and one of his clients was Swinburne, whom he befriended in 1872.

Watts-Dunton contributed regularly to *The Examiner* from 1874 and to *The Athenaeum* from 1875 until 1898, being for more than twenty years the principal critic of poetry in *The Athenaeum*. He wrote widely for other publications and contributed several articles to the Encyclopædia Britannica, of which the most significant was on Poetry in the ninth edition.

Watts-Dunton had considerable influence as the friend of many of the leading men of letters of his time and he especially enjoyed the confidence of Tennyson. In later years, Dante Gabriel Rossetti was his most intimate friend and Rossetti made a portrait of Watts in pastel in 1874. In 1916 Watts-Dunton published the biographical book *Old Familiar Faces*, which details many reminiscences of the pre-Raphaelite circle, including the following chapter on the life and poetry of Christina Rossetti.

Theodore Watts-Dunton

CHRISTINA GEORGINA ROSSETTI. 1830–1894.

I.

Although the noble poet and high-souled woman we have just lost had been ill and suffering from grievous pain for a long time, Death came at last with a soft hand which could but make him welcome. Since early in August, when she took to her bed, she was so extremely weak and otherwise ill that one scarcely expected her (at any time) to live more than a month or so, and for the last six weeks or thereabouts — say from the 15th of November — one expected her to die almost from day to day. My dear friend William Rossetti, who used to go to Torrington Square every afternoon, saw her on the afternoon of December 28th . He did not, he told me, much expect to find her alive in the afternoon of the 29th, and intended, therefore, to make his next call earlier. She died at half-past seven in the morning of the 29th, in the presence only of her faithful nurse Mrs. Read. It was through her sudden collapse that she missed at her side, when she passed away, that brother whose whole life has been one of devotion to his family, and whose tireless affection for the last of them was one of the few links that bound Christina's sympathy to the earth.

Her illness was of a most complicated kind: two years and a half ago she was operated on for cancer: functional malady of the heart, accompanied by dropsy in the left arm and hand, followed. Although on Friday the serious symptoms of her case became, as I have said, accentuated, she was throughout the day and night entirely conscious; and so peaceful and apparently so free from pain was she that neither the medical man nor the nurse supposed the end to be quite so near as it was. During all this time, up to the moment of actual dissolution, her lips seemed to be moving in prayer, but, of course, this with her was no uncommon sign: duty and prayer ordered her life. Her sufferings, I say, had been great, but they had been encountered by a fortitude that was greater still. Throughout all her life, indeed, she was the most notable example that our time has produced of the masterful power of man's spiritual nature when at its highest to conquer in its warfare with earthly conditions, as her brother Gabriel's life was the most notable example of the struggle of the spiritual nature with the bodily when the two are equally equipped. It is the conviction of one whose high privilege it was to know her in many a passage of sorrow and trial that of all the poets who have lived and died within our time, Christina Rossetti must have had the noblest soul.

A certain irritability of temper, which was, perhaps, natural to her, had, when I

first became acquainted with her family (about 1872), been overcome, or at least greatly chastened, by religion (which with her was a passion) and by a large acquaintance with grief, resulting in a long meditation over the mystery of pain. In wordly matters her generosity may be described as boundless; but perhaps it is not difficult for a poet to be generous in a worldly sense — to be free in parting with that which can be precious only to commonplace souls. What, however, is not so easy is for one holding such strong religious convictions as Christina Rossetti held to cherish such generous thoughts and feelings as were hers about those to whom her shibboleths meant nothing. This was what made her life so beautiful and such a blessing to all. The indurating effects of a selfish religiosity never withered her soul nor narrowed it. With her, indeed, religion was very love —

A largess universal like the sun.

It is always futile to make guesses as to what might have been the development of a poet's genius and character had the education of circumstances been different from what it was, and perhaps it is specially futile to guess what would have been the development under other circumstances of her, the poet of whom her friends used to speak with affection and reverence as "Christina."

On the death of her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti (or as his friends used to call him Gabriel) in 1882, I gave that sketch of the family story which has formed the basis of most of the biographical notices of him and his family; it would, therefore, be superfluous to reiterate what I said and what is now matter of familiar knowledge. It may, however, be as well to remind the reader that, owing to the peculiar position in London of the father Gabriele Rossetti, the family were during childhood and partly during youth as much isolated from the outer English world as were the family between whom and themselves there were many points of resemblance — the Brontës. The two among them who were not in youth of a retiring disposition were he who afterwards became the most retiring of all, Gabriel, and Maria, the latter of whom was in one sense retiring, and in another expansive. In her dark brown, or, as some called them, black eyes, there would suddenly come up and shine an enthusiasm, a capacity of poetic and romantic fire, to the quelling of which there must have gone an immensity of religious force. As to Gabriel, during a large portion of his splendid youth he exhibited a genial breadth of front that affined him to Shakespeare and Walter Scott. The English strain in the family found expression in him, and in him alone. There was a something in the hearty ring of his voice that drew Englishmen to him as by a magnet.

While it was but little that the others drew from the rich soil of merry England, he drew from it half at least of his radiant personality — half at least of his

incomparable genius. Though he was in every way part and parcel of that marvellous little family circle of children of genius in Charlotte Street, he had also the power of looking at it from the outside. It would be strange, indeed, if this or any other power should be found lacking in him. I have often heard Rossetti — by the red flicker of the studio fire, when the gas was turned down to save his eyesight — give the most graphic and fascinating descriptions of the little group and the way in which they grew up to be what they were under the tuition of a father whose career can only be called romantic, and a mother whose intellectual gifts were so remarkable that, had they not been in some great degree stifled by the exercise of an entire self-abnegation on behalf of her family, she, too, must have become an important figure in literature.

The father died in 1854, many years before I knew the family; but Gabriel's description of him; his conversations with his brother-refugees and others who visited the house — conversations in which the dreamy and the matter-of-fact were oddly blent; his striking skill as an improvisatore of Italian poetry, and also as a master of pen-and-ink drawing; his great musical gift — a gift which none of his family seemed to have inherited; his fine tenor voice; his unflinching courage and independence of character (qualities which made him refuse, in a

Protestant country, to make open abjuration of the creed in which the Rossettis had been reared, though he detested the Pope and all his works, and was, if not an actual freethinker, thoroughly latitudinarian) — Gabriel's pictures of this poet and father of poets were so vivid — so amazingly and incredibly vivid — that I find it difficult to think I never met the father in the flesh: not unfrequently I find myself talking of him as if I had known him. What higher tribute than this can be made to a narrator's dramatic power? Those who have seen the elder Rossetti's pen-and-ink drawings (the work of a child) will agree with me that Gabriel did not over-estimate them in the least degree. All the Rossettis inherited from their father voices so musical that they could be recognized among other voices in any gathering, and no doubt that clear-cut method of syllabification which was so marked a characteristic of Christina's conversation, but which gave it a sort of foreign tone, was inherited from the father. Her affinity to the other two members of the family was seen in that intense sense of duty of which Gabriel, with all his generosity, had but little. There was no martyrdom she would not have undertaken if she thought that duty called upon her to undertake it, and this may be said of the other two.

In most things, however, Christina Rossetti seemed to stand midway between Gabriel and the other two members of her family, and it was the same in physical matters. She had Gabriel's eyes, in which hazel and blue-grey were marvellously blent, one hue shifting into the other, answering to the movements of the thoughts — eyes like the mother's. And her brown hair, though less warm in colour than his during his boyhood, was still like it. When a young girl, at the time that she sat for the Virgin in the picture now in the National Gallery, she was, as both her mother and Gabriel have told me, really lovely, with an extraordinary expression of pensive sweetness. She used to have in the little back parlour a portrait of herself at eighteen by Gabriel, which gives all these qualities. Even then, however, the fullness in the eyes was somewhat excessive. Afterwards her ill health took a peculiar form, the effect of which was that the eyes were, in a manner of speaking, pushed forward, and although this protuberance was never disagreeable, it certainly took a good deal of beauty from her face.

Dominant, however, as was the father's personality among his friends, the mother's influence upon the children was stronger than his; and no wonder, for I think there was no beautiful charm of woman that Mrs. Rossetti lacked. She did not seem at all aware that she was a woman of exceptional gifts, yet her intellectual penetration and the curious exactitude of her knowledge were so remarkable that Gabriel accepted her dicta as oracles not to be challenged. One of her specialities was the pronunciation of English words, in which she was an

authority. I cannot resist giving one little instance, as it illustrates a sweet feature of Gabriel's character. It occurred on a lovely summer's day in the old Kelmscott manor house in 1873, when Mrs. Rossetti, Christina, and myself were watching Gabriel at work upon 'Proserpine.' I had pronounced the word *aspirant* with the accent upon the middle syllable. "Pardon me, my dear fellow," said he, without looking from his work, "that word should be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, as a purist like you ought to know." On my challenging this, he said, in a tone which was meant to show that he was saying the last word upon the subject, "My mother always says *áspirant*, and she is always right upon matters of pronunciation." "Then I shall always say *áspirant*," I replied. And I may add that I now do say *áspirant*, and, right or wrong, intend to say *áspirant* so long as this breath of mine enables me to say *áspirant* at all. Afterwards Christina, as we were strolling by the weir, watching Gabriel and George Hake pounding across the meadows at the rate of five miles an hour, said to me, "I think you were right about *aspírant*." "No," I said, "it is a dear, old-fashioned way. Your mother says *áspirant*; I now remember that my own mother said *áspirant*. I shall stick to *áspirant* till the end of the chapter." And Christina said, "Then so will I."

Among Mrs. Rossetti's accomplishments was reading aloud, mainly from imaginative writers, and I cannot recall without a thrill of mingled emotions a delightful stay of mine at Kelmscott in the summer of '73, when she, whose age then was seventy-three, used to read out to us all sorts of things. And writing these words makes me hear those readings again — makes me hear, through the open casement of the quaint old house, the blackbirds from the home field trying in vain to rival the music of that half-Italian, half-English voice. To have been admitted into such a charmed circle I look upon as one of the greatest privileges of my life. It is something for a man to have lived within touch of Christina Rossetti and her mother. From her father, however, Christina took, either by the operation of some law of heredity or from early association with the author of 'Il Mistero dell' Amor Platonico del Medio Evo' and 'La Beatrice di Dante,' that passion for symbolism which is one of the chief features of her poetry. There is, perhaps, no more striking instance of the inscrutable lines in which ancestral characteristics descend than the way in which the passion for symbolism was inherited by Christina and Gabriel Rossetti from their father.

While Christina's poetical work may be described as being all symbolical, she was not much given, like her brother, to read symbols into the every-day incidents of life. Gabriel, on the contrary, though using symbolism in his poetry in only a moderate degree, allowed his instinct for symbolizing his own life to pass into positive superstition. When a party of us — including Mrs. Rossetti,

Christina, the two aunts, Dr. Hake, with four of his sons, and myself — were staying for Christmas with Gabriel near Bognor, a tree fell in the garden during a storm. While Gabriel seemed inclined to take it as a sign of future disaster, Christina, whose poetry is so full of symbolism, would smile at such a notion. Yet Gabriel could speak of his father's symbolizing (as in 'La Beatrice di Dante') as being absolutely and hopelessly eccentric and worthless. This is remarkable, for one would have thought that it was impossible to read those extraordinary works of the elder Rossetti's without being impressed by the rare intellectual subtlety of the Italian scholar.

Of course the opportunities of brother and sister of studying Nature were identical. Both were born in London, and during childhood saw Nature only as a holiday scene. Christina would talk with delight of her grandfather's cottage retreat about thirty miles from London, to which she used to go for a holiday in a stage coach, and of the beauty of the country around. But these expeditions were not numerous, and came to an end when she was a child of seven or eight, and it was very little that she saw outside London before girlhood was past. I have myself heard her speak of what she has somewhere written about — the rapture of the sight of some primroses growing in a railway cutting. It is, of course, a great disadvantage to any poet not to have been born in the country; learned in Nature the city-born poet can never be, as we see in the case of Milton, who loved Nature without knowing her. It is here that Jean Ingelow has such an advantage over Christina Rossetti. Her love of flowers, and birds, and trees, and all that makes the earth so beautiful, is not one whit stronger than Christina's own, but it is a love born of an exhaustive detailed knowledge of Nature's life.

On a certain occasion when walking with a friend at Hunter's Forestall, near Herne Bay, where she and her mother were nursing Gabriel through one of his illnesses, the talk ran upon Shelley's 'Skylark,' a poem which she adored. She was literally bewildered because the friend showed that he was able to tell, from a certain change of sound in the note of a skylark that had risen over the lane, the moment when the bird had made up its mind to cease singing and return to the earth. It seemed to her an almost supernatural gift, and yet an ignorant ploughman will often be able to do the same thing. This kind of intimacy with Nature she coveted. With the lower animals, nevertheless, she had a strange kind of sympathy of her own. Young creatures especially understood the playful humour of her approach. A delightful fantastic whim was the bond between her and puppies and kittens and birds. Her intimacy with Nature — of a different kind altogether from that of Wordsworth and Tennyson — was of the kind that I have described on a previous occasion as Sufeyistic: she loved the beauty of this world, but not entirely for itself; she loved it on account of its symbols of

another world beyond. And yet she was no slave to the ascetic side of Christianity. No doubt there was mixed with her spiritualism, or perhaps underlying it, a rich sensuousness that under other circumstances of life would have made itself manifest, and also a rare potentiality of deep passion. It is this, indeed, which makes the study of her great and noble nature so absorbing.

Perhaps for strength both of subject and of treatment, Christina Rossetti's masterpiece is 'Amor Mundi.' Here we get a lesson of human life expressed, not didactically, but in a concrete form of unsurpassable strength, harmony, and concision. Indeed, it may be said of her work generally that her strength as an artist is seen not so much in mastery over the rhythm, or even over the verbal texture of poetry, as in the skill with which she expresses an allegorical intent by subtle suggestion instead of direct preachment. Herein 'An Apple Gathering' is quite perfect. It is, however, if I may venture to say so, a mistake to speak of Christina Rossetti as being a great poetic artist. Exquisite as her best things are, no one had a more uncertain hand than she when at work. Here, as in so many things, she was like Blake, whose influence upon her was very great.

Of self-criticism she had almost nothing. On one occasion, many years ago now, she expressed a wish to have some of her verses printed in *The Athenæum*, and I suggested her sending them to 16, Cheyne Walk, her brother's house, where I then used to spend much time in a study that I occupied there. I said that her brother and I would read them together and submit them to the editor. She sent several poems (I think about six), not one of which was in the least degree worthy of her. This naturally embarrassed me, but Gabriel, who entirely shared my opinion of the poems, wrote at once to her and told her that the verses sent were, both in his own judgment and mine, unworthy of her, and that she "had better buckle to at once and write another poem." She did so, and the result was an exquisite lyric which appeared in *The Athenæum*. Here is where she was wonderfully unlike Gabriel, whose power of self-criticism in poetry was almost as great as Tennyson's own. But in the matter of inspiration she was, I must think, above Gabriel — above almost everybody.

If English rhymed metres had been as easy to work in as Italian rhymed metres, her imagination was so vivid, her poetic impulse was so strong, and, indeed, her poetic wealth so inexhaustible, that she would have stood in the front rank of English poets. But the writer of English rhymed measures is in a very different position as regards improvisatorial efforts from the Italian who writes in rhymed measures. He has to grapple with the metrical structure — to seize the form by the throat, as it were, and force it to take in the enormous wealth at the English poet's command. Fine as is the 'Prince's Progress,' for instance (and it would be hard to find its superior in regard to poetic material in the whole

compass of Victorian poetry), the number of rugged lines the reader has to encounter weighs upon and distresses him until, indeed, the conclusion is reached: then the passion and the pathos of the subject cause the poem to rise upon billows of true rhythm. On the other hand, however, it may be said that a special quality of her verse is a *curiosa felicitas* which makes a metrical blemish tell as a kind of suggestive grace. But I must stop; I must bear in mind that he who has walked and talked with Christina Rossetti, burdened with a wealth of remembered beauty from earth and heaven, runs the risk of becoming garrulous.

II.

In regard to unpublished manuscripts which a writer has left behind him, the responsibilities of his legal representatives are far more grave than seems to be generally supposed. In deciding what posthumous writings an executor is justified in giving to the public it is important, of course, to take into account the character, the idiosyncrasy of the writer in regard to all his relations towards what may be called the mechanism of every-day life. Some poets are so methodical that the mere fact of anything having been left by them in manuscript unaccompanied by directions as to its disposal is *primâ facie* evidence that it was intended to be withheld from the public, either temporarily for revision or finally and absolutely. And, of course, the representative, especially if he is also a relative or a friend, has to consider primarily the intentions of the dead. If loyalty to living friends is a duty, what shall be said of loyalty to friends who are dead? This, indeed, has a sanction of the deepest religious kind.

No doubt, in the philosophical sense, the aspiration of the dead artist for perfect work and the honour it brings is a delusion, a sweet mockery of the fancy. But then so is every other aspiration which soars above the warm circle of the human affections, and if this delusion of the dead artist was held worthy of respect during the artist's life, it is worthy of respect — nay, it is worthy of reverence — after he is dead. Now every true artist when at work has before him an ideal which he would fain reach, or at least approach, and if he does not himself know whether in any given exercise he has reached that ideal or neared it, we may be pretty sure that no one else does. Hence, whenever there is apparent in the circumstances under which the MS. has been found the slightest indication that the writer did not wish it to be given to the public, the representative who ignores this indication sins against that reverence for the dead which in all forms of civilization declares itself to be one of the deepest instincts of man.

That the instinct we are speaking of is really one of the primal instincts is the very first fact that archæology vouches for. Of many lost races, such as the Aztecs and Toltecs, for instance, we have no historical traces save those which are furnished by testimonials of their reverence for the dead. But that this fine instinct is now dying out in the Western world — that it will soon be eliminated from the human constitution of races that are generally considered to be the most advanced — is made manifest by the present attitude of England and America towards their illustrious dead. In the literary arena of both countries, indeed, so entire is the abrogation of this most beautiful of all feelings — so recklessly and so shamefully are not only raw manuscripts, but private letters, put up to auction for publication — that at last the great writers of our time, confronted by this new terror, are wisely beginning to take care of themselves and their friends by a holocaust of every scrap of paper lying in their desks.

So demoralized has the literary world become by the present craze for notoriety and for personal details of prominent men that an executor who in regard to the disposal of his testator's money would act with the most rigid scrupulousness will, in regard to the MSS. he finds in his testator's desk, commit, "for the benefit of the public," an outrage that would have made the men of a less vulgar period shudder. The "benefit of the public," indeed! Who is this "public," and what are its rights as against the rights of the dead poet, whose heartstrings are woven into "copy" by the disloyal friend he trusted? The inherent callousness of man's nature is never so painfully seen as in the relation of this ogre, "the public," to dead genius. Without the smallest real reverence for genius — without the smallest capacity of distinguishing the poetaster it always adores from the true poet it always ignores — the public can still fall down before the pedestal upon which genius has been placed by the select few — fall down with its long ears wide open for gossip about genius, or anything else that is talked about.

It was with such thoughts as these that we opened the present somewhat bulky volume — not, however, with many misgivings; for Christina Rossetti, before she made her brother executor, knew what were his views as to the rights of the public as against the rights of genius. And if he has printed here every poem he could lay hands upon, he may fairly be assumed to have done so with the consent of a sister whom he loved so dearly and by whom he was so dearly loved. Fortunately there are not many of these relics that are devoid of a deep interest, some from the biographical point of view, some from the poetical.

Again, what is to be said about such part of a dead author's writing as, having appeared in print, has afterwards passed through the author's crucible of artistic revision? What about the executor's duty here, where the case between the

author and the public stands on a different footing? At the present time, when newspapers and novels alone are read, it is not the poet's verses which most people read, but paragraphs about what the author and his wife and children "eat and drink and avoid": a time when, if the poet's verses are read at all, it is the accidents rather than the essentials of the work that seem primarily to concern the public. At such a time an editor is not entirely master of his actions. Doubtless, there is much reason in the wrath of Tennyson and other great poets against the "literary resurrection man," who, though incapable of understanding the beauties of a beautiful work, can take a very great interest in poring over the various stages through which that work has passed on its way to perfection. These poets, however, are apt to forget that, after a poem or line has once passed into print, its final suppression is impossible. And perhaps there are other reasons why, in this matter, an editor should be allowed some indulgence.

Here, for instance, is a puzzling case to be tried *in foro conscientiæ*. In the first edition of 'Goblin Market,' published in 1862, appeared three poems of more breadth of treatment than any of the others: 'Cousin Kate,' a ballad, 'Sister Maude,' a ballad, and 'A Triad,' a sonnet. In subsequent issues of the book these were all omitted. Mr. W. M. Rossetti, speaking of 'Sister Maude,' says: "I presume that my sister, with overstrained scrupulosity, considered its moral tone to be somewhat open to exception. In such a view I by no means agree, and I therefore reproduce it." If Christina's objection was valid when she raised it, it is, of course, valid now, when the beloved poet is in the "country beyond Orion," and knows what sanctions are of man's imagining, and what sanctions are more eternal than the movements of the stars.

The question here is, What were Christina Rossetti's wishes? not whether her brother "agrees" with them. Hence, if it were not certain that some one would soon have restored them, would Mr. W. M. Rossetti have hesitated before doing so? For they are among the most powerful things Christina Rossetti ever wrote, and it was a subject of deep regret to her friends that she suppressed them. Yet she withdrew them from conscientious motives. In 'Sister Maude' she showed how great was her power in the most difficult of all forms of poetic art — the romantic ballad. Splendid as are Gabriel Rossetti's 'Sister Helen' and 'Rose Mary,' the literary *aura* surrounding them prevents them from seeming — as the best of the Border ballads seem — Nature's very voice muttering in her dreams of the pathos and the mystery of the human story. It was not, perhaps, given even to Rossetti to get very near to that supreme old poet (not forgotten, because never known) who wrote "May Margaret's" appeal to the ghost of her lover Clerk Saunders: —

Is there ony room at your head, Saunders?
  Is there ony room at your feet?
Is there ony room at your side, Saunders,
  Where fain, fain I wad sleep?

where the very imperfections of the rhymes seem somehow to add to the pathos and the mystery of the chant. But if, indeed, it has been given to any modern poet to get into this atmosphere, it has been given to Christina Rossetti. And so with the ballad of simple human passion no modern writer has quite done what Christina Rossetti has done in one of the poems here restored: —

SISTER MAUDE.

Who told my mother of my shame,
  Who told my father of my dear?
Oh who but Maude, my sister Maude,
  Who lurked to spy and peer.

Cold he lies, as cold as stone,
  With his clotted curls about his face:
The comeliest corpse in all the world,
  And worthy of a queen's embrace.

You might have spared his soul, sister,
  Have spared my soul, your own soul too:
Though I had not been born at all,
  He'd never have looked at you.

My father may sleep in Paradise,
  My mother at Heaven-gate:
But sister Maude shall get no sleep
  Either early or late.

My father may wear a golden gown,
  My mother a crown may win;

If my dear and I knocked at Heaven-gate
  Perhaps they'd let us in:
But sister Maude, O sister Maude,
  Bide *you* with death and sin.

But it is for the personal poems that this volume will be prized most dearly by certain readers.

Mr. W. M. Rossetti speaks of "the very wide and exceedingly strong outburst of eulogy" of his sister which appeared in the public press after her death. Yet that outburst was far from giving adequate expression to what was felt by some of her readers — those between whom and herself there was a bond of sympathy so sacred and so deep as to be something like a religion. It is not merely that she was the acknowledged queen in that world (outside the arena called "the literary world") where poetry is "its own exceeding great reward," but to other readers of a different kind altogether — readers who, drawing the deepest delight from such poetry as specially appeals to them, never read any other, and have but small knowledge of poetry as a fine art — her verse was, perhaps, more precious still. They feel that at every page of her writing the beautiful poetry is only the outcome of a life whose almost unexampled beauty fascinates them.

Although Christina Rossetti had more of what is called the unconsciousness of poetic inspiration than any other poet of her time, the writing of poetry was not by any means the chief business of her life. She was too thorough a poet for that. No one felt so deeply as she that poetic art is only at the best the imperfect body in which dwells the poetic soul. No one felt so deeply as she that as the notes of the nightingale are but the involuntary expression of the bird's emotion, and, again, as the perfume of the violet is but the flower's natural breath, so it is and must be with the song of the very poet, and that, therefore, to write beautifully is in a deep and true sense to live beautifully. In the volume before us, as in all her previously published writings, we see at its best what Christianity is as the motive power of poetry. The Christian idea is essentially feminine, and of this feminine quality Christina Rossetti's poetry is full.

In motive power the difference between classic and Christian poetry must needs be very great. But whatever may be said in favour of one as against the other, this at least cannot be controverted, that the history of literature shows no human development so beautiful as the ideal Christian woman of our own day. She is unique, indeed. Men of science tell us that among all the fossilized plants we find none of the lovely family of the rose, and in the same way we should search in vain through the entire human record for anything so beautiful as that kind of Christian lady to whom self-abnegation is not only the first of duties, but

the first of joys. Yet, no doubt, the Christian idea must needs be more or less flavoured by each personality through which it is expressed. With regard to Christina Rossetti, while upon herself Christian dogma imposed infinite obligations — obligations which could never be evaded by her without the risk of all the penalties fulminated by all believers — there was in the order of things a sort of ether of universal charity for all others. She would lament, of course, the lapses of every soul, but for these there was a forgiveness which her own lapses could never claim. There was, to be sure, a sweet egotism in this. It was very fascinating, however. This feeling explains what seems somewhat to puzzle the editor, especially in the poem called 'The End of the First Part,' written April 18th, 1849, of which he says, "'Tears for guilt' is in reference to Christina a very exaggerated phrase": —

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

My happy dream is finished with,
  My dream in which alone I lived so long.
My heart slept — woe is me, it wakeneth;
  Was weak — I thought it strong.

Oh, weary wakening from a life-true dream!
  Oh pleasant dream from which I wake in pain!
I rested all my trust on things that seem,
  And all my trust is vain.

I must pull down my palace that I built,
  Dig up the pleasure-gardens of my soul;
Must change my laughter to sad tears for guilt,
  My freedom to control.

Now all the cherished secrets of my heart,
  Now all my hidden hopes, are turned to sin.
Part of my life is dead, part sick, and part
  Is all on fire within.

The fruitless thought of what I might have been,
  Haunting me ever, will not let me rest.
A cold North wind has withered all my green,
  My sun is in the West.

But, where my palace stood, with the same stone
  I will uprear a shady hermitage;
And there my spirit shall keep house alone,
  Accomplishing its age.

There other garden beds shall lie around,
  Full of sweet-briar and incense-bearing thyme:
There I will sit, and listen for the sound
  Of the last lingering chime.

It was the beauty of her life that made her personal influence so great, and upon no one was that influence exercised with more strength than upon her illustrious brother Gabriel, who in many ways was so much unlike her. In spite of his deep religious instinct and his intense sympathy with mysticism, Gabriel remained what is called a free thinker in the true meaning of that much-abused phrase. In religion as in politics he thought for himself, and yet when Mr. W. M. Rossetti affirms that the poet was never drawn towards free thinking women, he says what is perfectly true. And this arose from the extraordinary influence, scarcely recognized by himself, that the beauty of Christina's life and her religious system had upon him.

This, of course, is not the place in which to say much about him; nor need much at any time and in any place be said, for has he not written his own biography — depicted himself more faithfully than Lockhart could depict Walter Scott, more faithfully than Boswell could depict Dr. Johnson? Has he not done this in the immortal sonnet-sequence called 'The House of Life'? What poet of the nineteenth century do we know so intimately as we know the author of 'The House of Life'?

Christina Rossetti's peculiar form of the Christian sentiment she inherited from her mother, the sweetness of whose nature was never disturbed by that exercise of the egoism of the artist in which Christina indulged and without whose influence it is difficult to imagine what the Rossetti family would have been. The father was a poet and a mystic of the cryptographic kind, and it is by

no means unlikely that had he studied Shakespeare as he studied Dante he would in these days have been a disciple of the Baconians, and, of course, his influence on the family in the matter of literary activity and of mysticism must have been very great. And yet all that is noblest in Christina's poetry, an ever-present sense of the beauty and power of goodness, must surely have come from the mother, from whom also came that other charm of Christina's, to which Gabriel was peculiarly sensitive, her youthfulness of temperament.

Among the many differences which exist between the sexes this might, perhaps, be mentioned, that while it is beautiful for a man to grow old — grow old with the passage of years — a woman to retain her charm must always remain young. In a deep sense woman may be said to have but one paramount charm, youth, and when this is gone all is gone. The youthfulness of the body, of course, soon vanishes, but with any woman who can really win and retain the love of man this is not nearly so important as at first it seems. It is the youthfulness of the soul that, in the truly adorable woman, is invulnerable. It is one of the deep misfortunes of the very poor of cities that as a rule the terrible struggle with the wolf at the door is apt to sour the nature of women and turn them into crones at the age when in the more fortunate classes the true beauty of woman often begins; and even where the environment is not that of poverty, but of straitened means, it is as a rule impossible for a woman to retain this youthfulness.

In the case of the Rossettis, in the early period they were in a position of straitened means. Nor was this all: the children, Gabriel alone excepted, felt themselves to be by nationality aliens. Christina, though she made only one visit to Italy, felt herself to be an Italian, and would smile when any one talked to her of the John Bullism of her brother Gabriel, and yet, with these powerful causes working against their natural elasticity of temperament, both mother and daughter retained that juvenility which Gabriel Rossetti felt to be so refreshing. So strong was it in the mother that it had a strange effect upon the mere physique, and at eighty the expression in the eyes, and, indeed, on the face throughout, retained so much of the winsomeness of youth that she was more beautiful than most young women: —

1882.

My blessed mother dozing in her chair
  On Christmas Day seemed an embodied Love,
A comfortable Love with soft brown hair

Softened and silvered to a tint of dove;
A better sort of Venus with an air
Angelical from thoughts that dwell above;
A wiser Pallas in whose body fair
Enshrined a blessed soul looks out thereof.
Winter brought holly then, now Spring has brought
Paler and frailer snowdrops shivering;
And I have brought a simple humble thought —
I her devoted duteous Valentine —
A lifelong thought which thrills this song I sing,
A lifelong love to this dear saint of mine.

Although this was not so with Christina, upon whose face ill-health worked its ravages, her temperament, as we say, remained as young as ever. The lovely relations — sometimes staid and sometimes playful — between mother and daughter, are seen throughout the book before us. But especially are they seen in one little group of poems — ”The Valentines to her Mother” — in regard to which Christina left the following pencilled note: —

“These Valentines had their origin from my dearest mother’s remarking that she had never received one. I, her C. G. R., ever after supplied one on the day; and (so far as I recollect) it was a surprise every time, she having forgotten all about it in the interim.”

Mrs. Rossetti’s first valentine was received when she was nearly seventy-six years of age, and she continued every year to receive a valentine until 1886, when she died. Surely there is not in the history of English poetry anything more fascinating than these valentines.

It is pleasing to see the book open with the following dedication by Mr. W. M. Rossetti: —

“To Algernon Charles Swinburne, a generous eulogist of Christina Rossetti, who hailed his genius and prized himself the greatest of living British poets, my old and constant friend, I dedicate this book.”

Highgate Cemetery, London — Rossetti's final resting place

Rossetti's grave