

# **The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning**



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Browning, by Elizabeth Barrett Browning

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*Mayou. Pinxt.*

*J. Brown. sc.*

***Elizabeth Barrett Moulton-Barrett,  
in early youth.***

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**THE POETICAL WORKS**  
**OF**  
**ELIZABETH BARRETT**  
**BROWNING**

*In Six Volumes*

VOL. II.

LONDON  
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1890

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# POEMS



# ***THE ROMAUNT OF MARGRET.***

Can my affections find out  
nothing best,  
But still and still  
remove?

Quarles.

I.

I plant a tree whose  
leaf  
The yew-tree leaf  
will suit:  
But when its shade is o'er  
you laid,  
Turn round and  
pluck the  
fruit.  
Now reach my harp from off  
the wall  
Where shines the  
sun aslant;  
The sun may shine and we  
be cold!  
O hearken, loving hearts  
and bold,  
Unto my wild  
romaunt.

Margret,  
Margret.

II.

Sitteth the fair ladye  
Close to the river  
side  
Which runneth on with a  
merry tone  
Her merry  
thoughts to  
guide:  
It runneth through the  
trees,  
It runneth by the  
hill,  
Nathless the lady's thoughts  
have found  
A way more  
pleasant  
still

Margret,  
Margret.

III.

The night is in her hair  
And giveth shade  
to shade,  
And the pale moonlight on  
her forehead white  
Like a spirit's  
hand is  
laid;  
Her lips part with a  
smile  
Instead of  
speaking  
done:  
I ween, she thinketh of a  
voice,

Albeit uttering  
none.

Margret,  
Margret.

IV.

All little birds do sit  
With heads  
beneath  
their wings:  
Nature doth seem in a  
mystic dream,  
Absorbed from  
her living  
things:  
That dream by that  
ladye  
Is certes  
unpartook,  
For she looketh to the high  
cold stars  
With a tender  
human look

Margret,  
Margret.

V.

The lady's shadow lies  
Upon the running  
river;  
It lieth no less in its  
quietness,  
For that which  
resteth  
never:

Most like a trusting  
heart  
Upon a passing  
faith,  
Or as upon the course of  
life  
The steadfast  
doom of  
death.

Margret,  
Margret.

VI.

The lady doth not  
move,  
The lady doth not  
dream,  
Yet she seeth her shade no  
longer laid  
In rest upon the  
stream:  
It shaketh without wind,  
It parteth from the  
tide,  
It standeth upright in the  
cleft moonlight,  
It sitteth at her  
side.

Margret,  
Margret.

VII.

Look in its face, ladye,  
And keep thee  
from thy



The light and  
breath may  
draw.

Margret,  
Margret.

IX.

"My lips do need thy  
breath,  
My lips do need  
thy smile,  
And my pallid eyne, that  
light in thine  
Which met the  
stars  
erewhile:  
Yet go with light and  
life  
If that thou lovest  
one  
In all the earth who loveth  
thee  
As truly as the  
sun,

Margret,  
Margret."

X.

Her cheek had waxèd  
white  
Like cloud at fall  
of snow;  
Then like to one at set of  
sun,  
It waxèd red alsò;

For love's name  
maketh bold  
As if the loved  
were near:  
And then she sighed the  
deep long sigh  
Which cometh  
after fear.

Margret,  
Margret.

XI.

"Now, sooth, I fear thee  
not—  
Shall never fear  
thee now!"  
(And a noble sight was the  
sudden light  
Which lit her lifted  
brow.)  
"Can earth be dry of  
streams,  
Or hearts of  
love?" she  
said;  
"Who doubteth love, can  
know not love:  
He is already  
dead."

Margret,  
Margret.

XII.

"I have" ... and here her  
lips

Some word in  
    pause did  
    keep,  
And gave the while a quiet  
    smile  
    As if they paused  
    in sleep,—  
"I have ... a brother  
    dear,  
    A knight of  
    knightly  
    fame!  
I broidered him a knightly  
    scarf  
    With letters of my  
    name

Margret,  
Margret.

XIII.

"I fed his grey  
    goshawk,  
    I kissed his fierce  
    bloodhound,  
I sate at home when he  
    might come  
    And caught his  
    horn's far  
    sound:  
I sang him hunter's  
    songs,  
    I poured him the  
    red wine,  
He looked across the cup  
    and said,  
    *I love thee, sister*



*mine."*

Margret,  
Margret.

XIV.

IT trembled on the  
grass  
With a low,  
shadowy  
laughter;  
The sounding river which  
rolled, for ever  
Stood dumb and  
stagnant  
after:  
"Brave knight thy  
brother is!  
But better loveth  
he  
Thy chalice wine than thy  
chaunted song,  
And better both  
than thee,

Margret,  
Margret."

XV.

The lady did not heed  
The river's silence  
while  
Her own thoughts still ran at  
their will,  
And calm was still  
her smile.  
"My little sister wears

The look our  
mother  
wore:  
I smooth her locks with a  
golden comb,  
I bless her  
evermore."

Margret,  
Margret.

XVI.

"I gave her my first bird  
When first my  
voice it  
knew;  
I made her share my posies  
rare  
And told her  
where they  
grew:  
I taught her God's dear  
name  
With prayer and  
praise to  
tell,  
She looked from heaven  
into my face  
And said, *I love  
thee well.*"

Margret,  
Margret.

XVII.

It trembled on the  
grass

With a low,  
shadowy  
laughter;  
You could see each bird as  
it woke and stared  
Through the  
shrivelled  
foliage  
after.

"Fair child thy sister is!  
But better loveth  
she  
Thy golden comb than thy  
gathered flowers,  
And better both  
than thee,

Margret,  
Margret."

XVIII.

Thy lady did not heed  
The withering on  
the bough;  
Still calm her smile albeit  
the while  
A little pale her  
brow:  
"I have a father old,  
The lord of ancient  
halls;  
An hundred friends are in  
his court  
Yet only me he  
calls.

Margret,  
Margret.

XIX.

"An hundred knights  
are in his court  
Yet read I by his  
knee;  
And when forth they go to  
the tourney-show  
I rise not up to  
see:  
'T is a weary book to  
read,  
My tryst's at set of  
sun,  
But loving and dear  
beneath the stars  
Is his blessing  
when I've  
done."

Margret,  
Margret.

XX.

IT trembled on the  
grass  
With a low,  
shadowy  
laughter;  
And moon and star though  
bright and far  
Did shrink and  
darken  
after.  
"High lord thy father is!  
But better loveth

he  
His ancient halls than his  
hundred friends,  
His ancient halls,  
than thee,

Margret,  
Margret."

XXI.

The lady did not heed  
That the far stars  
did fail;  
Still calm her smile, albeit  
the while ...  
Nay, but she is not  
pale!  
"I have more than a  
friend  
Across the  
mountains  
dim:  
No other's voice is soft to  
me,  
Unless it nameth  
*him*."

Margret,  
Margret.

XXII.

"Though louder beats  
my heart,  
I know his tread  
again,  
And his fair plume aye,  
unless turned away,

For the tears do  
blind me  
then:  
We brake no gold, a  
sign  
Of stronger faith to  
be,  
But I wear his last look in  
my soul,  
Which said, *I love*  
*but thee!"*

Margret,  
Margret.

XXIII.

It trembled on the  
grass  
With a low,  
shadowy  
laughter;  
And the wind did toll, as a  
passing soul  
Were sped by  
church-bell  
after;  
And shadows, 'stead  
of light,  
Fell from the stars  
above,  
In flakes of darkness on her  
face  
Still bright with  
trusting  
love.

Margret,  
Margret.

XXIV.

"He *loved* but only  
thee!

*That* love is  
transient  
too.

The wild hawk's bill doth  
dabble still

I' the mouth that  
vowed thee  
true:

Will he open his dull  
eyes

When tears fall on  
his brow?

Behold, the death-worm to  
his heart

Is a nearer thing  
than *thou*,

Margret,  
Margret."

XXV.

Her face was on the  
ground—

None saw the  
agony;

But the men at sea did that  
night agree

They heard a  
drowning  
cry:

And when the morning  
brake,

Fast rolled the  
river's tide,  
With the green trees waving  
overhead  
And a white corse  
laid  
beside.

Margret,  
Margret.

XXVI.

A knight's bloodhound  
and he  
The funeral watch  
did keep;  
With a thought o' the chase  
he stroked its face  
As it howled to  
see him  
weep.  
A fair child kissed the  
dead,  
But shrank before  
its cold.  
And alone yet proudly in his  
hall  
Did stand a baron  
old.

Margret,  
Margret.

XXVII.

Hang up my harp  
again!  
I have no voice for



song.  
Not song but wail, and  
mourners pale,  
Not bards, to love  
belong.  
O failing human love!  
O light, by  
darkness  
known!  
O false, the while thou  
treadest earth!  
O deaf beneath  
the stone!

Margret,  
Margret.

# ***ISOBEL'S CHILD.***

——so find we  
profit,  
By losing of our prayers.  
Shakespeare.

## **I.**

To rest the weary nurse has  
gone:  
An eight-day watch  
had watchèd  
she,  
Still rocking beneath sun  
and moon  
The baby on her knee,  
Till Isobel its mother said  
"The fever waneth—wend  
to bed,  
For now the watch  
comes round to  
me."

## **II.**

Then wearily the nurse  
did throw  
Her pallet in the  
darkest  
place  
Of that sick room, and slept  
and dreamed:  
For, as the gusty wind

did blow  
The night-lamp's  
                  flare  
                  across her  
                  face,  
She saw or seemed to see,  
                  but dreamed,  
          That the poplars tall on  
                  the opposite  
                  hill,  
The seven tall poplars on  
                  the hill,  
Did clasp the setting sun  
                  until  
His rays dropped from him,  
                  pined and still  
          As blossoms in frost,  
Till he waned and paled, so  
                  weirdly crossed,  
To the colour of moonlight  
                  which doth pass  
Over the dank ridged  
                  churchyard grass.  
The poplars held the sun,  
                  and he  
The eyes of the nurse that  
                  they should not see  
—Not for a moment, the  
                  babe on her knee,  
Though she shuddered to  
                  feel that it grew to be  
Too chill, and lay too  
                  heavily.

III.

She only dreamed; for all

the while  
'T was Lady Isobel that  
kept  
The little baby: and it  
slept  
Fast, warm, as if its  
mother's smile,  
Laden with love's dewy  
weight,  
And red as rose of  
Harpocrate  
Dropt upon its eyelids,  
pressed  
Lashes to cheek in a  
sealed rest.

#### IV.

And more and more smiled  
Isobel  
To see the baby sleep so  
well—  
She knew not that she  
smiled.  
Against the lattice, dull and  
wild  
Drive the heavy droning  
drops,  
Drop by drop, the  
sound being  
one;  
As momentarily time's  
segments fall  
On the ear of God, who  
hears through all  
Eternity's unbroken  
monotone:

And more and more smiled  
Isobel  
To see the baby sleep so  
well—  
She knew not that she  
smiled.  
The wind in intermission  
stops  
Down in the beechen  
forest,  
Then cries aloud  
As one at the sorest,  
Self-stung, self-  
driven,  
And rises up to its very  
tops,  
Stiffening erect the  
branches bowed,  
Dilating with a  
tempest-soul  
The trees that with their  
dark hands break  
Through their own outline,  
and heavy roll  
Shadows as massive  
as clouds in  
heaven  
Across the castle  
lake  
And more and more smiled  
Isobel  
To see the baby sleep so  
well;  
She knew not that she  
smiled;  
She knew not that the storm  
was wild;

Through the uproar drear  
    she could not hear  
The castle clock which  
    struck anear—  
She heard the low, light  
    breathing of her  
    child.

V.

O sight for wondering look!  
While the external nature  
    broke  
Into such abandonment,  
While the very mist, heart-  
    rent  
By the lightning, seemed to  
    eddy  
Against nature, with a din,  
    —  
A sense of silence and of  
    steady  
Natural calm appeared to  
    come  
From things without, and  
    enter in  
The human creature's  
    room.

VI.

So motionless she sate,  
    The babe asleep upon  
        her knees,  
You might have dreamed  
    their souls had gone  
Away to things inanimate,

In such to live, in such to  
moan;  
And that their bodies had  
ta'en back,  
In mystic change, all  
silences  
That cross the sky in cloudy  
rack,  
Or dwell beneath the reedy  
ground  
In waters safe from their  
own sound:  
Only she wore  
The deepening smile I  
named before,  
And *that* a deepening love  
expressed;  
And who at once can love  
and rest?

VII.

In sooth the smile that then  
was keeping  
Watch upon the baby  
sleeping,  
Floated with its tender  
light  
Downward, from the  
drooping eyes,  
Upward, from the lips apart,  
Over cheeks which  
had grown  
white  
With an eight-day weeping:  
All smiles come in such a  
wise

Where tears shall fall  
or have of old—  
Like northern lights that fill  
the heart  
Of heaven in sign of  
cold.

VIII.

Motionless she sate.  
Her hair had fallen by its  
weight  
On each side of her smile  
and lay  
Very blackly on the arm  
Where the baby nestled  
warm,  
Pale as baby carved in  
stone  
Seen by glimpses of the  
moon  
Up a dark cathedral  
aisle:  
But, through the storm, no  
moonbeam fell  
Upon the child of Isobel—  
Perhaps you saw it by the  
ray  
Alone of her still smile.

IX.

A solemn  
thing it  
is to  
me  
To look



upon  
a  
babe  
that  
sleeps

Wearing  
in  
its  
spirit-  
deeps

The  
undeveloped  
mystery

Of our  
Adam's  
taint  
and  
woe,

Which, when  
they  
developed  
be,

Will not  
let  
it  
slumber  
so;

Lying new in  
life  
beneath

The shadow  
of the  
coming  
death,

With that soft,  
low,  
quiet

breath,  
As if it  
felt  
the  
sun;

Knowing all  
things  
by  
their  
blooms,

Not their  
roots,  
yea,  
sun  
and  
sky

Only by the  
warmth  
that  
comes

Out of each,  
earth  
only by

The  
pleasant  
hues  
that  
o'er  
it  
run,

And human  
love  
by  
drops  
of  
sweet  
White

nourishment  
still  
hanging  
round

The little  
mouth  
so  
slumber-  
bound:

All which  
broken  
sentiency

And  
conclusion  
incomplete,  
Will

gather  
and  
unite  
and  
climb

To an  
immortality  
Good or  
evil,  
each  
sublime,

Through life  
and  
death  
to life  
again.

O little  
lids,  
now  
folded  
fast,

Must ye  
learn  
to  
drop  
at  
last

Our  
large  
and  
burning  
tears?

O warm quick  
body,  
must  
thou  
lie,

When the  
time  
comes  
round  
to die,  
Still

from  
all  
the  
whirl  
of  
years,

Bare of all the  
joy  
and  
pain?

O small frail  
being,  
wilt  
thou  
stand

At God's right  
hand,  
Lifting up  
those  
sleeping  
eyes  
Dilated by  
great  
destinies,  
To an endless waking?  
thrones and  
seraphim.  
Through the long ranks of  
their solemnities,  
Sunning thee with calm  
looks of Heaven's  
surprise,  
But thine  
alone  
on  
Him?  
Or else, self-willed, to tread  
the Godless place,  
(God keep thy will!) feel  
thine own energies  
Cold, strong, objectless,  
like a dead man's  
clasp,  
The sleepless deathless life  
within thee grasp,—  
While myriad faces, like  
one changeless  
face,  
With woe *not love's*, shall  
glass thee  
everywhere  
And overcome thee with

thine own despair?

X.

More soft, less solemn  
images  
Drifted o'er the lady's heart  
Silently as snow.  
She had seen eight days  
depart  
Hour by hour, on bended  
knees,  
With pale-wrung hands  
and prayings  
low  
And broken, through which  
came the sound  
Of tears that fell against the  
ground,  
Making sad stops.—"Dear  
Lord, dear Lord!"  
She still had prayed, (the  
heavenly word  
Broken by an earthly sigh)  
—"Thou who didst not erst  
deny  
The mother-joy to Mary  
mild,  
Blessèd in the blessèd  
child  
Which hearkened in meek  
babyhood  
Her cradle-hymn, albeit  
used  
To all that music interfused  
In breasts of angels high  
and good!

Oh, take not, Lord, my babe  
away—

Oh, take not to thy songful  
heaven

The pretty baby thou hast  
given,

Or ere that I have seen him  
play

Around his father's knees  
and known

That *he* knew how my love  
has gone

From all the world to him.

Think, God among the  
cherubim,

How I shall shiver every day  
In thy June sunshine,  
knowing where

The grave-grass keeps it  
from his fair

Still cheeks: and feel, at  
every tread,

His little body, which is  
dead

And hidden in thy turfy fold,  
Doth make thy whole warm  
earth a-cold!

O God, I am so young, so  
young—

I am not used to tears  
at nights

Instead of slumber—not to  
prayer

With sobbing lips and  
hands out-wrung!

Thou knowest all my  
prayings were

'I bless thee, God, for  
past delights—  
Thank God!' I am not used  
to bear  
Hard thoughts of death; the  
earth doth cover  
No face from me of friend  
or lover:  
And must the first who  
teaches me  
The form of shrouds and  
funerals, be  
Mine own first-born  
belovèd? he  
Who taught me first this  
mother-love?  
Dear Lord who spreadest  
out above  
Thy loving, transpierced  
hands to meet  
All lifted hearts with  
blessing sweet,—  
Pierce not my heart, my  
tender heart  
Thou madest tender! Thou  
who art  
So happy in thy heaven  
always,  
Take not mine only bliss  
away!"

XI.

She so had prayed: and  
God, who hears  
Through seraph-songs the  
sound of tears



From that beloved babe  
    had ta'en  
The fever and the beating  
    pain.  
And more and more smiled  
    Isobel  
To see the baby sleep so  
    well,  
    (She knew not that she  
        smiled, I wis)  
Until the pleasant gradual  
    thought  
Which near her heart the  
    smile enwrought,  
Now soft and slow, itself did  
    seem  
To float along a happy  
    dream,  
    Beyond it into speech  
        like this.

XII.

"I prayed for thee, my little  
    child,  
    And God has heard my  
        prayer!  
And when thy babyhood is  
    gone,  
We two together undefiled  
By men's repinings, will  
    kneel down  
    Upon His earth which  
        will be fair  
(Not covering thee, sweet!)  
    to us twain,  
And give Him thankful

praise."

XIII.

Dully and wildly drives the  
rain:  
Against the lattices drives  
the rain.

XIV.

"I thank Him now, that I can  
think  
Of those same future  
days,  
Nor from the harmless  
image shrink  
Of what I there might  
see—  
Strange babies on their  
mothers' knee,  
Whose innocent soft faces  
might  
From off mine eyelids strike  
the light,  
With looks not meant  
for me!"

XV.

Gustily blows the wind  
through the rain,  
As against the lattices  
drives the rain.

XVI.

"But now, O baby mine,  
together,  
We turn this hope of  
ours again  
To many an hour of summer  
weather,  
When we shall sit and  
intertwine  
Our spirits, and instruct  
each other  
In the pure loves of  
child and  
mother!  
Two human loves make  
one divine."

XVII.

The thunder tears through  
the wind and the  
rain,  
As full on the lattices drives  
the rain.

XVIII.

"My little child, what wilt  
thou choose?  
Now let me look at  
thee and  
ponder.  
What gladness, from the  
gladnesses  
Futurity is spreading  
under  
Thy gladsome sight?

Beneath the trees  
Wilt thou lean all day, and  
lose  
Thy spirit with the river seen  
Intermittently between  
The winding beechen  
alleys,—  
Half in labour, half repose,  
Like a shepherd  
keeping sheep,  
Thou, with only  
thoughts to  
keep  
Which never a bound will  
overpass,  
And which are innocent as  
those  
That feed among  
Arcadian  
valleys  
Upon the  
dewy  
grass?"

XIX.

The large white owl that  
with age is blind,  
That hath sate for  
years in the old  
tree hollow,  
Is carried away in a gust of  
wind;  
His wings could beat him  
not as fast  
As he goeth now the lattice  
past;

He is borne by the  
winds, the rains  
do follow  
His white wings to the blast  
outflowing,  
He hooteth in  
going,  
And still, in the lightnings,  
coldly glitter  
His round  
unblinking  
eyes

XX.

"Or, baby, wilt thou think it  
fitter  
To be eloquent and  
wise,  
One upon whose lips the air  
Turns to solemn  
verities  
For men to breathe anew,  
and win  
A deeper-seated life  
within?  
Wilt be a philosopher,  
By whose voice the  
earth and skies  
Shall speak to the unborn?  
Or a poet, broadly  
spreading  
The golden  
immortalities  
Of thy soul on natures lorn  
And poor of such, them  
all to guard

From their decay,—  
    beneath thy  
    treading,  
Earth's flowers recovering  
    hues of Eden,—  
And stars, drawn downward  
    by thy looks,  
To shine ascendant in thy  
    books?"

XXI.

    The tame hawk in the  
        castle-yard,  
How it screams to the  
        lightning, with its wet  
Jagged plumes  
        overhanging the  
        parapet!  
And at the lady's door the  
    hound  
Scratches with a crying  
    sound.

XXII.

"But, O my babe, thy lids  
    are laid  
    Close, fast upon thy  
        cheek,  
And not a dream of power  
    and sheen  
Can make a passage up  
    between;  
Thy heart is of thy mother's  
    made,  
Thy looks are very

meek,  
And it will be their chosen  
place  
To rest on some beloved  
face,  
As these on thine, and  
let the noise  
Of the whole world go on  
nor drown  
The tender silence of  
thy joys:  
Or when that silence shall  
have grown  
Too tender for itself,  
the same  
Yearning for sound,—to  
look above  
And utter its one meaning,  
LOVE,  
That *He* may hear His  
name."

XXIII.

No wind, no rain, no  
thunder!  
The waters had trickled not  
slowly,  
The thunder was not spent  
Nor the wind near finishing;  
Who would have said that  
the storm was  
diminishing?  
No wind, no rain, no  
thunder!  
Their noises dropped  
asunder

From the earth and the  
firmament,  
From the towers and the  
lattices,  
Abrupt and echoless  
As ripe fruits on the ground  
unshaken wholly  
As life in death.  
And sudden and solemn  
the silence fell,  
Startling the heart of Isobel  
As the tempest could  
not:  
Against the door went  
panting the breath  
Of the lady's hound whose  
cry was still,  
And she, constrained  
howe'er she  
would not,  
Lifted her eyes and saw the  
moon  
Looking out of heaven  
alone  
Upon the poplared hill,  
—  
A calm of God, made  
visible  
That men might bless it  
at their will.

XXIV.



The moonshine on the  
    baby's face  
    Falleth clear and cold:  
The mother's looks have  
    fallen back  
    To the same place:  
Because no moon with  
    silver rack,  
Nor broad sunrise in jasper  
    skies  
        Has power to hold  
        Our loving eyes,  
Which still revert, as ever  
    must  
Wonder and Hope, to gaze  
    on the dust.

XXV.

The moonshine on the  
    baby's face  
    Cold and clear  
        remaineth;  
The mother's looks do  
    shrink away,—  
The mother's looks return to  
    stay,  
    As charmed by what  
        paineth:  
Is any glamour in the case?  
    Is it dream, or is it  
        sight?  
Hath the change upon the  
    wild

Elements that sign the  
night,  
Passed upon the child?  
It is not dream, but  
sight.

XXVI.

The babe has awakened  
from sleep  
And unto the gaze of  
its mother,  
Bent over it, lifted  
another—  
Not the baby-looks that  
go  
Unaimingly to and fro,  
But an earnest gazing deep  
Such as soul gives soul at  
length  
When by work and wail  
of years  
It winneth a solemn strength  
And mourneth as it  
wears.  
A strong man could not  
brook,  
With pulse unhurried  
by fears,  
To meet that baby's look  
O'erglazed by  
manhood's  
tears,  
The tears of a man full

grown,  
With a power to wring our  
own,  
In the eyes all undefiled  
Of a little three-months'  
child—  
To see that babe-brow  
wrought  
By the witnessing of thought  
To judgment's prodigy,  
And the small soft mouth  
unweaned,  
By mother's kiss  
o'erleaned,  
(Putting the sound of loving  
Where no sound else was  
moving  
Except the speechless  
cry)  
Quickened to mind's  
expression,  
Shaped to articulation,  
Yea, uttering words, yea,  
naming woe,  
In tones that with it  
strangely went  
Because so baby-  
innocent,  
As the child spake out to  
the mother, so:—

XXVII.

"O mother, mother, loose

thy prayer!  
Christ's name hath  
made it strong.  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me  
With its most loving cruelty,  
From floating my new  
soul along  
The happy heavenly  
air.  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me  
In all this dark, upon  
this dull  
Low earth, by only weepers  
trod.  
It bindeth me, it holdeth me!  
Mine angel looketh  
sorrowful  
Upon the face of God.[\[1\]](#)

### XXVIII.

"Mother, mother, can I  
dream  
Beneath your earthly  
trees?  
I had a vision and a gleam,  
I heard a sound more  
sweet than  
these  
When rippled by the wind:  
Did you see the Dove  
with wings  
Bathed in golden  
glisterings

From a sunless light  
    behind,  
    Dropping on me from  
        the sky,  
Soft as mother's kiss, until  
I seemed to leap and yet  
    was still?  
    Saw you how His love-  
        large eye  
Looked upon me mystic  
    calms,  
    Till the power of His  
        divine  
Vision was indrawn to  
    mine?

XXIX.

"Oh, the dream within the  
    dream!  
    I saw celestial places  
        even.  
Oh, the vistas of high palms  
    Making finites of  
        delight  
    Through the heavenly  
        infinite,  
Lifting up their green still  
    tops  
    To the heaven of  
        heaven!  
Oh, the sweet life-tree that  
    drops  
Shade like light across the

river  
Glorified in its for-ever  
Flowing from the  
Throne!  
Oh, the shining holinesses  
Of the thousand, thousand  
faces  
God-sunned by the  
thronèd One,  
And made intense with  
such a love  
That, though I saw them  
turned above,  
Each loving seemed for  
also me!  
And, oh, the Unspeakable,  
the He,  
The manifest in secrecies  
Yet of mine own heart  
partaker  
With the overcoming look  
Of One who hath been once  
forsook  
And blesseth the  
forsaker!  
Mother, mother, let me go  
Toward the Face that  
looketh so!  
Through the mystic  
wingèd Four  
Whose are inward, outward  
eyes  
Dark with light of mysteries  
And the restless

evermore  
'Holy, holy, holy,'—through  
The sevenfold Lamps that  
                                burn in view  
                                Of cherubim and  
  seraphim,—  
Through the four-and-twenty  
                                crowned  
Stately elders white around,  
                                Suffer me to go to  
  Him!

XXX.

"Is your wisdom very wise,  
                                Mother, on the narrow  
  earth,  
                                Very happy, very worth  
That I should stay to learn?  
Are these air-corrupting  
                                sighs  
                                Fashioned by  
  unlearnèd  
  breath?  
Do the students' lamps that  
                                burn  
                                All night, illumine  
  death?  
Mother, albeit this be so,  
Loose thy prayer and let me  
                                go  
Where that bright chief  
  angel stands  
Apart from all his brother

bands,  
Too glad for smiling, having  
bent  
In angelic wilderment  
O'er the depths of God, and  
brought  
Reeling thence one only  
thought  
To fill his own eternity.  
He the teacher is for me—  
He can teach what I would  
know—  
Mother, mother, let me go!

XXXI.

"Can your poet make an  
Eden  
No winter will undo,  
And light a starry fire while  
heeding  
His hearth's is burning  
too?  
Drown in music the earth's  
din,  
And keep his own wild soul  
within  
The law of his own  
harmony?  
Mother, albeit this be so,  
Let me to my heaven go!  
A little harp me waits  
thereby,  
A harp whose strings are



golden all  
And tuned to music  
spherical,  
Hanging on the green life-  
tree  
Where no willows ever be.  
Shall I miss that harp of  
mine?  
Mother, no!—the Eye divine  
Turned upon it, makes it  
shine;  
And when I touch it, poems  
sweet  
Like separate souls shall fly  
from it,  
Each to the immortal fytte.  
We shall all be poets there,  
Gazing on the chiefest Fair.

XXXII.

"Love! earth's love! and  
*can* we love  
Fixedly where all things  
move?  
Can the sinning love each  
other?  
Mother, mother,  
I tremble in thy close  
embrace,  
I feel thy tears adown my  
face,  
Thy prayers do keep  
me out of bliss

—  
O dreary earthly love!  
Loose thy prayer and let me  
go  
To the place which  
loving is  
Yet not sad; and when is  
given  
Escape to *thee* from this  
below,  
Thou shalt behold me that I  
wait  
For thee beside the happy  
Gate,  
And silence shall be up in  
heaven  
To hear our greeting  
kiss."

XXXIII.

The nurse awakes in  
the morning  
sun,  
And starts to see  
beside her  
bed  
The lady with a  
grandeur  
spread  
Like pathos o'er her  
face, as one  
God-satisfied and  
earth-undone;

The babe upon  
her arm  
was dead:  
And the nurse could utter  
forth no cry,—  
She was awed by the calm  
in the mother's eye.

XXXIV.

"Wake, nurse!" the lady  
said;  
"We are waking—he  
and I—  
I, on earth, and he, in  
sky:  
And thou must help me to  
o'erlay  
With garment white this little  
clay  
Which needs no more  
our lullaby.

XXXV.

"I changed the cruel prayer I  
made,  
And bowed my meekened  
face, and prayed  
That God would do His will;  
and thus  
He did it, nurse! He parted  
us:

And His sun shows  
victorious  
The dead calm face,—and /  
am calm,  
And Heaven is hearkening  
a new psalm.

XXXVI.

"This earthly noise is too anear,  
Too loud, and will not let me hear  
The little harp. My death will soon  
Make silence."

And a sense of tune,  
A satisfied love meanwhile  
Which nothing earthly could despoil,  
Sang on within her soul.

XXXVII.

Oh you,  
Earth's tender and  
impassioned few,  
Take courage to entrust  
your love  
To Him so named who  
guards above  
Its ends and shall fulfil!  
Breaking the narrow  
prayers that may  
Befit your narrow hearts,  
away

In His broad, loving  
will.

## FOOTNOTES:

[\[1\]](#) For I say unto you that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven—*Matt.* xviii, 10.

# ***THE ROMAUNT OF THE PAGE.***

## **I.**

A knight of gallant deeds  
And a young page at  
his side,  
From the holy war in  
Palestine  
Did slow and thoughtful  
ride,  
As each were a palmer and  
told for beads  
The dews of the  
eventide.

## **II.**

"O young page," said the  
knight,  
"A noble page art thou!  
Thou fearest not to steep in  
blood  
The curls upon thy  
brow;  
And once in the tent, and  
twice in the fight,  
Didst ward me a  
mortal blow."

III.

"O brave knight," said the  
page,  
"Or ere we hither  
came,  
We talked in tent, we talked  
in field,  
Of the bloody battle-  
game;  
But here, below this  
greenwood bough,  
I cannot speak the  
same.

IV.

"Our troop is far behind,  
The woodland calm is  
new;  
Our steeds, with slow  
grass-muffled hoofs,  
Tread deep the  
shadows  
through;  
And, in my mind, some  
blessing kind  
Is dropping with the  
dew.

V.

"The woodland calm is pure

---

I cannot choose but  
have  
A thought from these, o' the  
beechen-trees,  
Which in our England  
wave,  
And of the little finches fine  
Which sang there while in  
Palestine  
The warrior-hilt we  
drave.

VI.

"Methinks, a moment gone,  
I heard my mother  
pray!  
I heard, sir knight, the  
prayer for me  
Wherein she passed  
away;  
And I know the heavens are  
leaning down  
To hear what I shall  
say."

VII.

The page spake calm and  
high,  
As of no mean degree;  
Perhaps he felt in nature's  
broad



Full heart, his own was  
free:  
And the knight looked up to  
his lifted eye,  
Then answered  
smilingly—

VIII.

"Sir page, I pray your  
grace!  
Certes, I meant not so  
To cross your pastoral  
mood, sir page,  
With the crook of the  
battle-bow;  
But a knight may speak of a  
lady's face,  
I ween, in any mood or  
place,  
If the grasses die or  
grow.

IX.

"And this I meant to say—  
My lady's face shall  
shine  
As ladies' faces use, to  
greet  
My page from  
Palestine;  
Or, speak she fair or prank

she gay,  
She is no lady of mine.

X.

"And this I meant to fear—  
Her bower may suit  
thee ill;  
For, sooth, in that same  
field and tent,  
Thy *talk* was  
somewhat still:  
And fitter thy hand for my  
knightly spear  
Than thy tongue for my  
lady's will!"

XI.

Slowly and thankfully  
The young page  
bowed his  
head;  
His large eyes seemed to  
muse a smile,  
Until he blushed  
instead,  
And no lady in her bower,  
pardie,  
Could blush more  
sudden red:  
"Sir Knight,—thy lady's  
bower to me

Is suited well," he said.

XII.

*Beati,*  
*beati,*  
*mortui!*  
From the  
convent  
on  
the  
sea,  
One mile  
off,  
or  
scarce  
so  
nigh,  
Swells  
the  
dirge  
as  
clear  
and  
high  
As if  
that,  
over  
brake  
and  
lea,  
Bodily  
the  
wind

did  
carry  
The  
great  
altar  
of  
Saint  
Mary,  
And the  
fifty  
tapers  
burning  
o'er  
it,  
And the  
lady  
Abbess  
dead  
before  
it,  
And the  
chanting  
nuns  
whom  
yesterweek  
Her  
voice  
did  
charge  
and  
bless,  
—  
Chanting  
steady,

chanting  
meek,  
Chanting  
with  
a  
solemn  
breath,

Because  
that  
they  
are  
thinking  
less

Upon the  
dead  
than  
upon  
death.

*Beati,*  
*beati,*  
*mortui!*

Now the  
vision  
in  
the  
sound

Wheeeth  
on  
the  
wind  
around;

Now it  
sweepeth  
back,

away

—

The

uplands  
will  
not  
let  
it  
stay

To dark

the  
western  
sun:

*Mortui!*—

away  
at  
last,  
—

Or ere

the  
page's  
blush  
is  
past!

And the knight heard all,  
and the page heard  
none.

XIII.

"A boon,

thou  
noble  
knight,

If ever I  
served  
thee!

Though thou art a knight  
and I am a page,  
Now

grant  
a  
boon  
to  
me;

And tell me sooth, if dark or  
bright,  
If little loved or loved aright  
Be the face of thy  
ladye."

#### XIV.

Gloomily looked the knight  
—  
"As a son thou hast  
served me,  
And would to none I had  
granted boon  
Except to only thee!  
For haply then I should love  
aright,  
For then I should know if  
dark or bright  
Were the face of my  
ladye.

XV.

"Yet it ill suits my knightly  
tongue  
To grudge that granted  
boon,  
That heavy price from heart  
and life  
I paid in silence down;  
The hand that claimed it,  
cleared in fine  
My father's fame: I swear by  
mine,  
That price was nobly  
won!

XVI.

"Earl Walter was a brave  
old earl,  
He was my father's  
friend,  
And while I rode the lists at  
court  
And little guessed the  
end,  
My noble father in his  
shroud  
Against a slanderer lying  
loud,  
He rose up to defend.

XVII.



"Oh, calm below the marble  
grey  
My father's dust was  
strown!  
Oh, meek above the marble  
grey  
His image prayed  
alone!  
The slanderer lied: the  
wretch was brave—  
For, looking up the minster-  
nave,  
He saw my father's knightly  
glaive  
Was changed from  
steel to stone.

XVIII.

"Earl Walter's glaive was  
steel,  
With a brave old hand  
to wear it,  
And dashed the lie back in  
the mouth  
Which lied against the  
godly truth  
And against the  
knightly merit  
The slanderer, 'neath the  
avenger's heel,  
Struck up the dagger in  
appeal  
From stealthy lie to brutal

force—  
And out upon the traitor's  
corse  
Was yielded the true  
spirit.

XIX.

"I would mine hand had  
fought that fight  
And justified my father!  
I would mine heart had  
caught that wound  
And slept beside him  
rather!  
I think it were a better thing  
Than murdered friend and  
marriage-ring  
Forced on my life  
together.

XX.

"Wail shook Earl Walter's  
house;  
His true wife shed no  
tear;  
She lay upon her bed as  
mute  
As the earl did on his  
bier:  
Till—'Ride, ride fast,' she  
said at last,

'And bring the  
avengèd's son  
anear!  
Ride fast, ride free, as a  
dart can flee,  
For white of blee with  
waiting for me  
Is the corse in the next  
chambère.'

XXI.

"I came, I knelt beside her  
bed;  
Her calm was worse  
than strife:  
'My husband, for thy father  
dear,  
Gave freely when thou wast  
not here  
His own and eke my  
life.  
A boon! Of that sweet child  
we make  
An orphan for thy father's  
sake,  
Make thou, for ours, a  
wife.'

XXII.

"I said, 'My steed neighs in  
the court,

My bark rocks on the  
brine,  
And the warrior's vow I am  
under now  
To free the pilgrim's  
shrine;  
But fetch the ring and fetch  
the priest  
And call that daughter  
of thine,  
And rule she wide from my  
castle on Nyde  
While I am in  
Palestine.'

XXIII.

"In the dark chambère, if  
the bride was fair,  
Ye wis, I could not see,  
But the steed thrice  
neighed, and the  
priest fast prayed,  
And wedded fast were  
we.  
Her mother smiled upon her  
bed  
As at its side we knelt to  
wed,  
And the bride rose  
from her knee  
And kissed the smile of her  
mother dead,  
Or ever she kissed

me.

XXIV.

"My page, my page, what  
grieves thee so,  
That the tears run  
down thy  
face?"—

"Alas, alas! mine own sistèr  
Was in thy lady's case:  
But *she* laid down the silks  
she wore  
And followed him she wed  
before,  
Disguised as his true  
servitor,  
To the very battle-  
place."

XXV.

And wept the page, but  
laughed the knight,  
A careless laugh  
laughed he:

"Well done it were for thy  
sistèr,  
But not for my ladye!  
My love, so please you,  
shall requite  
No woman, whether dark or  
bright,

Unwomaned if she  
be."

XXVI.

The page stopped weeping  
and smiled cold—  
"Your wisdom may  
declare  
That womanhood is proved  
the best  
By golden brooch and  
glossy vest  
The mincing ladies  
wear;  
Yet is it proved, and was of  
old,  
A near as well, I dare to  
hold,  
By truth, or by  
despair."

XXVII.

He smiled no more, he  
wept no more,  
But passionate he  
spoke—  
"Oh, womanly she prayed in  
tent,  
When none beside did  
wake!  
Oh, womanly she paled in

fight,  
For one beloved's  
sake!—  
And her little hand, defiled  
with blood,  
Her tender tears of  
womanhood  
Most woman-pure did  
make!"

XXVIII.

—"Well done it were for thy  
sistèr,  
Thou tellest well her  
tale!  
But for my lady, she shall  
pray  
I' the kirk of Nydesdale.  
Not dread for me but love  
for me  
Shall make my lady  
pale;  
No casque shall hide her  
woman's tear—  
It shall have room to trickle  
clear  
Behind her woman's  
veil."

XXIX.

—"But what if she mistook

thy mind  
And followed thee to  
    strife,  
Then kneeling did entreat  
    thy love  
As Paynims ask for  
    life?"  
—"I would forgive, and  
    evermore  
Would love her as my  
    servitor,  
But little as my wife.

XXX.

"Look up—there is a small  
    bright cloud  
Alone amid the skies!  
So high, so pure, and so  
    apart,  
A woman's honour  
    lies."  
The page looked up—the  
    cloud was sheen—  
A sadder cloud did rush, I  
    ween,  
Betwixt it and his eyes.

XXXI.

Then dimly dropped his  
    eyes away  
From welkin unto hill—



Ha! who rides there?—the  
page is 'ware,  
Though the cry at his  
heart is still:  
And the page seeth all and  
the knight seeth  
none,  
Though banner and spear  
do fleck the sun,  
And the Saracens ride  
at will.

XXXII.

He speaketh calm, he  
speaketh low,—  
"Ride fast, my master,  
ride,  
Or ere within the  
broadening dark  
The narrow shadows  
hide."  
"Yea, fast, my page, I will  
do so,  
And keep thou at my  
side."

XXXIII.

"Now nay, now nay, ride on  
thy way,  
Thy faithful page  
precede.

For I must loose on saddle-  
bow  
My battle-casque that galls,  
I trow,  
The shoulder of my  
steed;  
And I must pray, as I did  
vow,  
For one in bitter need.

XXXIV.

"Ere night I shall be near to  
thee,—  
Now ride, my master,  
ride!  
Ere night, as parted spirits  
cleave  
To mortals too beloved to  
leave,  
I shall be at thy side."  
The knight smiled free at  
the fantasy,  
And adown the dell did  
ride.

XXXV.

Had the knight looked up to  
the page's face,  
No smile the word had  
won;  
Had the knight looked up to

the page's face,  
I ween he had never  
gone:  
Had the knight looked back  
to the page's geste,  
I ween he had turned  
anon,  
For dread was the woe in  
the face so young,  
And wild was the silent  
geste that flung  
Casque, sword to earth, as  
the boy down-sprung  
And stood—alone,  
alone.

XXXVI.

He clenched his hands as if  
to hold  
His soul's great agony  
—  
"Have I renounced my  
womanhood,  
For wifehood unto  
*thee*,  
And is this the last, last look  
of thine  
That ever I shall see?

XXXVII.

"Yet God thee save, and

mayst thou have  
A lady to thy mind,  
More woman-proud and  
half as true  
As one thou leav'st  
behind!  
And God me take with Him  
to dwell—  
For Him I cannot love too  
well,  
As I have loved my  
kind."

XXXVIII.

She looketh up, in earth's  
despair,  
The hopeful heavens to  
seek;  
That little cloud still floateth  
there,  
Whereof her loved did  
speak:  
How bright the little cloud  
appears!  
Her eyelids fall upon the  
tears,  
And the tears down  
either cheek.

XXXIX.

The tramp of hoof, the flash

of steel—  
The Paynims round her  
coming!  
The sound and sight have  
made her calm,—  
False page, but truthful  
woman;  
She stands amid them all  
unmoved:  
A heart once broken by the  
loved  
Is strong to meet the  
foeman.

XL.

"Ho, Christian page! art  
keeping sheep,  
From pouring wine-  
cups  
resting?"—  
"I keep my master's noble  
name,  
For warring, not for  
feasting;  
And if that here Sir Hubert  
were,  
My master brave, my  
master dear,  
Ye would not stay the  
questing."

XLI.

"Where is thy master,  
scornful page,  
That we may slay or  
bind him?"—  
"Now search the lea and  
search the wood,  
And see if ye can find  
him!  
Nathless, as hath been  
often tried,  
Your Paynim heroes faster  
ride  
Before him than  
behind him."

XLII.

"Give smoother answers,  
lying page,  
Or perish in the  
lying!"—  
"I trow that if the warrior  
brand  
Beside my foot, were in my  
hand,  
'T were better at  
replying!"  
They cursed her deep, they  
smote her low,  
They cleft her golden  
ringlets through;  
The Loving is the  
Dying.

XLIII.

She felt the scimitar gleam  
down,  
And met it from  
beneath  
With smile more bright in  
victory  
Than any sword from  
sheath,—  
Which flashed across her  
lip serene,  
Most like the spirit-light  
between  
The darks of life and  
death.

XLIV.

*Ingemisco,*  
*ingemisco!*  
From the convent on the  
sea,  
Now it sweepeth solemnly,  
As over wood and over lea  
Bodily the wind did carry  
The great altar of St. Mary,  
And the fifty tapers paling  
o'er it,  
And the Lady Abbess stark  
before it,  
And the weary nuns with  
hearts that faintly

Beat along their voices  
saintly—

*Ingemisco,*

*ingemisco!*

Dirge for abbess laid in  
shroud

Sweepeth o'er the  
shroudless dead,

Page or lady, as we said,  
With the dews upon her  
head,

All as sad if not as loud.

*Ingemisco,*

*ingemisco!*

Is ever a lament begun  
By any mourner under sun,  
Which, ere it endeth, suits  
but *one*?



# ***THE LAY OF THE BROWN ROSARY.***

## **FIRST PART.**

I.

"Onora, Onora,"—her  
    mother is calling,  
She sits at the lattice and  
    hears the dew falling  
Drop after drop from the  
    sycamores laden  
With dew as with blossom,  
    and calls home the  
    maiden,  
        "Night  
            cometh,  
            Onora."

II.

She looks down the  
    garden-walk  
    caverned with trees,  
To the limes at the end  
    where the green  
    arbour is—  
"Some sweet thought or

other may keep  
where it found her,  
While, forgot or unseen in  
the dreamlight  
around her,  
Night cometh  
—  
Onora!"

III.

She looks up the forest  
whose alleys shoot  
on  
Like the mute minster-  
aisles when the  
anthem is done  
And the choristers sitting  
with faces aslant  
Feel the silence to  
consecrate more  
than the chant—  
"Onora,  
Onora!"

IV.

And forward she looketh  
across the brown  
heath—  
"Onora, art coming?"—  
what is it she seeth?  
Nought, nought but the grey

border-stone that is  
wist  
To dilate and assume a  
wild shape in the  
mist—  
"My  
daughter!"  
Then  
over

V.

The casement she leaneth,  
and as she doth so  
She is 'ware of her little son  
playing below:  
"Now where is Onora?" He  
hung down his head  
And spake not, then  
answering blushed  
scarlet-red,—  
"At the tryst  
with  
her  
lover."

VI.

But his mother was wroth:  
in a sternness quoth  
she,  
"As thou play'st at the ball  
art thou playing with

me?  
When we know that her  
lover to battle is  
gone,  
And the saints know above  
that she loveth but  
one  
And will ne'er  
wed  
another?"

VII.

Then the boy wept aloud; 't  
was a fair sight yet  
sad  
To see the tears run down  
the sweet blooms he  
had:  
He stamped with his foot,  
said—"The saints  
know I lied  
Because truth that is  
wicked is fittest to  
hide:  
Must I utter it,  
mother?"

VIII.

In his vehement childhood  
he hurried within  
And knelt at her feet as in

prayer against sin,  
But a child at a prayer  
never sobbeth as he  
—

"Oh! she sits with the nun of  
the brown rosary,  
At nights in  
the  
ruin—

IX.

"The old convent ruin the ivy  
rots off,  
Where the owl hoots by day  
and the toad is sun-  
proof,  
Where no singing-birds  
build and the trees  
gaunt and grey  
As in stormy sea-coasts  
appear blasted one  
way—  
But is *this* the  
wind's  
doing?

X.

"A nun in the east wall was  
buried alive  
Who mocked at the priest  
when he called her

to shrive,  
And shrieked such a curse,  
as the stone took  
her breath,  
The old abbess fell  
backwards and  
swooned unto death  
With an Ave  
half-  
spoken.

XI.

"I tried once to pass it,  
myself and my  
hound,  
Till, as fearing the lash,  
down he shivered to  
ground—  
A brave hound, my mother!  
a brave hound, ye  
wot!  
And the wolf thought the  
same with his fangs  
at her throat  
In the pass of  
the  
Brocken.

XII.

"At dawn and at eve,  
mother, who sitteth

there  
With the brown rosary never  
used for a prayer?  
Stoop low, mother, low! If  
we went there to  
see,  
What an ugly great hole in  
that east wall must  
be  
At dawn and  
at  
even!

XIII.

"Who meet there, my  
mother, at dawn and  
at even?  
Who meet by that wall,  
never looking to  
heaven?  
O sweetest my sister, what  
doeth with *thee*  
The ghost of a nun with a  
brown rosary  
And a face  
turned  
from  
heaven?

XIV.

"Saint Agnes o'erwatcheth

my dreams and  
erewhile  
I have felt through mine  
eyelids the warmth  
of her smile;  
But last night, as a sadness  
like pity came o'er  
her,  
She whispered—"Say *two*  
prayers at dawn for  
Onora:  
The Tempted  
is  
sinning."

XV.



"Onora, Onora!" they heard her  
not coming,  
Not a step on the grass, not a  
voice through the  
gloaming;  
But her mother looked up, and  
she stood on the floor  
Fair and still as the moonlight  
that came there before,  
And a smile just  
beginning:

XVI.

It touches her lips but it dares  
not arise  
To the height of the mystical  
sphere of her eyes,  
And the large musing eyes,  
neither joyous nor sorry  
Sing on like the angels in  
separate glory  
Between clouds of  
amber;

XVII.

For the hair droops in clouds  
amber-coloured till  
stirred  
Into gold by the gesture that  
comes with a word;  
While—O soft!—her speaking is  
so interwound  
Of the dim and the sweet, 't is a  
twilight of sound  
And floats through  
the  
chamber.

XVIII.

"Since thou shrivest my brother,  
fair mother," said she  
"I count on thy priesthood for  
marrying of me,  
And I know by the hills that the  
battle is done.  
That my lover rides on, will be  
here with the sun,  
    'Neath the eyes  
        that behold  
        thee."

XIX.

Her mother sat silent—too  
tender, I wis,  
Of the smile her dead father  
smiled dying to kiss:  
But the boy started up pale with  
tears, passion-wrought—  
"O wicked fair sister, the hills  
utter nought!  
    If he cometh, who  
        told thee?"

XX.

"I know by the hills," she  
resumed calm and clear,  
"By the beauty upon them, that  
HE is anear:  
Did they ever look so since he  
bade me adieu?  
Oh, love in the waking, sweet  
brother, is true,  
    As Saint Agnes in  
        sleeping!"

Half-ashamed and half-softened  
 the boy did not speak,  
 And the blush met the lashes  
 which fell on his cheek:  
 She bowed down to kiss him:  
 dear saints, did he see  
 Or feel on her bosom the  
 BROWN ROSARY,  
 That he shrank  
 away  
 weeping?

## SECOND PART.

*A bed. Onora, sleeping. Angels, but not near.*

*First Angel.*

Must we stand so far, and she  
 So very fair?

*Second Angel.*

As bodies  
 be.

*First Angel.*

And she so mild?

*Second Angel.*

As  
 spirits  
 when

They meeken, not to God, but  
 men.

*First Angel.*

And she so young, that I who  
 bring

Good dreams for saintly  
children, might  
Mistake that small soft face  
to-night,  
And fetch her such a blessed  
thing  
That at her waking she would  
weep  
For childhood lost anew in  
sleep.  
How hath she sinned?

*Second Angel.*

In  
bartering  
love;  
God's love for man's.

*First Angel.*

We may  
reprove  
The world for this, not only her:  
Let me approach to breathe  
away  
This dust o' the heart with holy  
air.

*Second Angel.*

Stand off! She sleeps, and did  
not pray.

*First Angel.*

Did none pray for her?

*Second Angel.*

Ay, a  
child,  
—  
Who never, praying, wept  
before:

While, in a mother undefiled,  
Prayer goeth on in sleep, as true  
And pauseless as the pulses  
do.

*First Angel.*

Then I approach.

*Second Angel.*

It is not  
WILLED.

*First Angel.*

One word: is she redeemed?

*Second Angel.*

No  
more!

The place is filled.

[Angels *vanish*]

*Evil Spirit (in a Nun's garb by the bed).*

Forbear that dream—forbear  
that dream! too near to  
heaven it leaned.

*Onora (in sleep).*

Nay, leave me this—but only  
this! 't is but a dream,  
sweet fiend!

*Evil Spirit.*

It is a *thought*.

*Onora (in sleep).*

A sleeping  
thought  
—  
most

innocent  
of  
good:  
It doth the Devil no harm, sweet  
fiend! it cannot if it would.  
I say in it no holy hymn, I do no  
holy work,  
I scarcely hear the sabbath-bell  
that chimeth from the  
kirk.

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream—forbear  
that dream!

*Onora (in sleep).*

Nay, let me dream  
at least.  
That far-off bell, it may be took  
for viol at a feast:  
I only walk among the fields,  
beneath the autumn-sun,  
With my dead father, hand in  
hand, as I have often  
done.

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream—forbear  
that dream!

*Onora (in sleep).*

Nay, sweet  
fiend,  
let me  
go:  
I never more can walk with *him*,  
oh, never more but so!  
For they have tied my father's  
feet beneath the kirk-yard  
stone,

Oh, deep and straight! oh, very  
straight! they move at  
nights alone:  
And then he calleth through my  
dreams, he calleth  
tenderly,  
"Come forth, my daughter, my  
beloved, and walk the  
fields with me!"

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear that dream, or else  
disprove its pureness by  
a sign.

*Onora (in sleep).*

Speak on, thou shalt be  
satisfied, my word shall  
answer thine.  
I heard a bird which used to sing  
when I a child was  
praying,  
I see the poppies in the corn I  
used to sport away in:  
What shall I do—tread down the  
dew and pull the  
blossoms blowing?  
Or clap my wicked hands to  
fright the finches from the  
rowan?

*Evil Spirit.*

Thou shalt do something harder  
still. Stand up where thou  
dost stand  
Among the fields of Dreamland  
with thy father hand in  
hand,  
And clear and slow repeat the  
vow, declare its cause

and kind,  
Which not to break, in sleep or  
wake thou bearest on thy  
mind.

*Onora (in sleep).*

I bear a vow of sinful kind, a vow  
for mournful cause;  
I vowed it deep, I vowed it  
strong, the spirits  
laughed applause:  
The spirits trailed along the  
pines low laughter like a  
breeze,  
While, high atween their  
swinging tops, the stars  
appeared to freeze.

*Evil Spirit.*

More calm and free, speak out  
to me why such a vow  
was made.

*Onora (in sleep).*

Because that God decreed my  
death and I shrank back  
afraid.  
Have patience, O dead father  
mine! I did not fear to die  
—  
I wish I were a young dead child  
and had thy company!  
I wish I lay beside thy feet, a  
buried three-year child,  
And wearing only a kiss of thine  
upon my lips that smiled!  
The linden-tree that covers thee  
might so have shadowed  
twain,  
For death itself I did not fear—'t



is love that makes the  
pain:  
Love feareth death. I was no  
child, I was betrothed that  
day;  
I wore a troth-kiss on my lips I  
could not give away.  
How could I bear to lie content  
and still beneath a stone,  
And feel mine own betrothed go  
by—alas! no more mine  
own—  
Go leading by in wedding pomp  
some lovely lady brave,  
With cheeks that blushed as red  
as rose, while mine were  
white in grave?  
How could I bear to sit in  
heaven, on e'er so high a  
throne,  
And hear him say to her—to  
*her!* that else he loveth  
none?  
Though e'er so high I sate  
above, though e'er so low  
he spake,  
As clear as thunder I should  
hear the new oath he  
might take,  
That hers, forsooth, were  
heavenly eyes—ah me,  
while very dim  
Some heavenly eyes (indeed of  
heaven!) would darken  
down to *him!*

*Evil Spirit.*

Who told thee thou wast called  
to death?

*Onora (in sleep).*

The grey owl on the ruined wall  
shut both his eyes to hide  
thee,  
And ever he flapped his heavy  
wing all brokenly and  
weak,  
And the long grass waved  
against the sky, around  
his gasping beak.  
I sate beside thee all the night,  
while the moonlight lay  
forlorn  
Strewn round us like a dead  
world's shroud in ghastly  
fragments torn:  
And through the night, and  
through the hush, and  
over the flapping  
wing,  
We heard beside the Heavenly  
Gate the angels  
murmuring:  
We heard them say, "Put day to  
day, and count the days  
to seven,  
And God will draw Onora up the  
golden stairs of heaven.  
And yet the Evil ones have leave  
that purpose to defer,  
For if she has no need of Him,  
He has no need of her."

*Evil Spirit.*

Speak out to me, speak bold  
and free.

*Onora (in sleep).*

And

then  
I  
heard  
thee  
say  
—

"I count upon my rosary brown  
the hours thou hast to  
stay!  
Yet God permits us Evil ones to  
put by that decree,  
Since if thou hast no need of  
Him, He has no need of  
thee:  
And if thou wilt forgo the sight of  
angels, verily  
Thy true love gazing on thy face  
shall guess what angels  
be;  
Nor bride shall pass, save thee"  
... Alas!—my father's  
hand's a-cold,  
The meadows seem ...

*Evil Spirit.*

Forbear the  
dream,  
or let  
the  
vow  
be  
told.

*Onora (in sleep).*

I vowed upon thy rosary brown,  
this string of antique  
beads,  
By charnel lichens overgrown,

and dank among the  
weeds,  
This rosary brown which is thine  
own,—lost soul of buried  
nun!  
Who, lost by vow, wouldst  
render now all souls alike  
undone,—  
I vowed upon thy rosary brown,  
—and, till such vow  
should break,  
A pledge always of living days 't  
was hung around my  
neck—  
I vowed to thee on rosary (dead  
father, look not so!),  
*I would not thank God in my  
weal, nor seek God in  
my woe.*

*Evil Spirit.*

And canst thou prove ...

*Onora (in sleep).*

O love,  
my  
love!  
I  
felt  
him  
near  
again!  
I saw his steed on mountain-  
head, I heard it on the  
plain!  
Was this no weal for me to feel?  
Is greater weal than this?  
Yet when he came, I wept his  
name—and the angels  
heard but *his*.

*Evil Spirit.*

Well done, well done!

*Onora (in sleep).*

Ah me, the sun! the dreamlight 'gins to pine,—  
Ah me, how dread can look the Dead! Aroint thee, father  
mine!

She starteth from slumber, she sitteth upright,  
And her breath comes in sobs, while she stares through  
the night;  
There is nought; the great willow, her lattice before,  
Large-drawn in the moon, lieth calm on the floor:  
But her hands tremble fast as their pulses and, free  
From the death-clasp, close over—the BROWN ROSARY.

### THIRD PART.

I.

'Tis a morn for a bridal; the  
merry bride-bell  
Rings clear through the green-  
wood that skirts the  
chappelle,  
And the priest at the altar  
awaiteth the bride,  
And the sacristans slyly are  
jesting aside  
At the work  
shall  
be  
doing;

II.

While down through the wood  
rides that fair company,  
The youths with the courtship,  
the maids with the glee,



unfitting a child?  
He trembles not, weeps not; the  
passion is done,  
And calmly he kneels in their  
midst, with the sun  
On his head  
like a  
glory.

VI.

"O fair-featured maids, ye are  
many!" he cried,  
"But in fairness and vileness  
who matcheth the bride?  
O brave-hearted youths, ye are  
many! but whom  
For the courage and woe can ye  
match with the groom  
As ye see  
them  
before  
ye?"

VII.

Out spake the bride's mother,  
"The vileness is thine  
If thou shame thine own sister, a  
bride at the shrine!"  
Out spake the bride's lover,  
"The vileness be mine  
If he shame mine own wife at the  
hearth or the shrine  
And the  
charge  
be  
unprovèd.

VIII.

"Bring the charge, prove the  
charge, brother! speak it  
aloud:

Let thy father and hers hear it  
    deep in his shroud!"  
—"O father, thou seest, for dead  
    eyes can see,  
How she wears on her bosom a  
    BROWN ROSARY,  
                    O my father  
                    belovèd!"

IX.

Then outlaughed the  
    bridegroom, and  
    outlaughed withal  
Both maidens and youths by the  
    old chapel-wall:  
"So she weareth no love-gift,  
    kind brother," quoth he,  
"She may wear an she listeth a  
    brown rosary,  
                    Like a pure-  
                    hearted  
                    lady."

X.

Then swept through the chapel  
    the long bridal train;  
Though he spake to the bride  
    she replied not again:  
On, as one in a dream, pale and  
    stately she went  
Where the altar-lights burn o'er  
    the great sacrament,  
                    Faint with  
                    daylight,  
                    but  
                    steady.

XI.

But her brother had passed in  
    between them and her,  
And calmly knelt down on the



high-altar stair—  
Of an infantine aspect so stern  
to the view  
That the priest could not smile  
on the child's eyes of  
blue

As he would  
for  
another.

XII.

He knelt like a child marble-  
sculptured and white  
That seems kneeling to pray on  
the tomb of a knight,  
With a look taken up to each iris  
of stone  
From the greatness and death  
where he kneeleth, but  
none

From the  
face of  
a  
mother.

XIII.

"In your chapel, O priest, ye  
have wedded and  
shriven  
Fair wives for the hearth, and  
fair sinners for heaven;  
But this fairest my sister, ye  
think now to wed,  
Bid her kneel where she  
standeth, and shrive her  
instead:

O shrive her  
and  
wed  
not!"

XIV.

In tears, the bride's mother,  
—"Sir priest, unto thee  
Would he lie, as he lied to this  
fair company."  
In wrath, the bride's lover,— "The  
lie shall be clear!  
Speak it out, boy! the saints in  
their niches shall hear:  
Be the  
charge  
proved  
or  
said  
not!"

XV.

Then serene in his childhood he  
lifted his face,  
And his voice sounded holy and  
fit for the place,—  
"Look down from your niches, ye  
still saints, and see  
How she wears on her bosom a  
BROWN ROSARY!  
Is it used for  
the  
praying?"

XVI.

The youths looked aside—to  
laugh there were a sin—  
And the maidens' lips trembled  
from smiles shut within.  
Quoth the priest, "Thou art wild,  
pretty boy! Blessed she  
Who prefers at her bridal a  
brown rosary  
To a worldly  
arraying."

## XVII.

The bridegroom spake low and  
 led onward the bride  
 And before the high altar they  
 stood side by side:  
 The rite-book is opened, the rite  
 is begun,  
 They have knelt down together  
 to rise up as one.  
 Who laughed  
 by the  
 altar?

## XVIII.

The maidens looked forward,  
 the youths looked  
 around,  
 The bridegroom's eye flashed  
 from his prayer at the  
 sound;  
 And each saw the bride, as if no  
 bride she were,  
 Gazing cold at the priest without  
 gesture of prayer,  
 As he read  
 from  
 the  
 psalter.

## XIX.

The priest never knew that she  
 did so, but still  
 He felt a power on him too  
 strong for his will:  
 And whenever the Great Name  
 was there to be read,  
 His voice sank to silence  
 —THAT could not be  
 said,  
 Or the air

could  
not  
hold it.

XX.

"I have sinnèd," quoth he, "I have  
sinnèd, I wot"—

And the tears ran adown his old  
cheeks at the thought:

They dropped fast on the book,  
but he read on the same,

And aye was the silence where  
should be the Name,—

As the

choristers  
told it.

XXI.

The rite-book is closed, and the  
rite being done

They, who knelt down together,  
arise up as one:

Fair riseth the bride—Oh, a fair  
bride is she,

But, for all (think the maidens)  
that brown rosary,

No saint at

her  
praying!

XXII.

What aileth the bridegroom? He  
glares blank and wide;

Then suddenly turning he kisseth  
the bride;

His lips stung her with cold; she  
glanced upwardly mute:

"Mine own wife," he said, and  
fell stark at her foot

In the word he  
was

## XXIII.

They have lifted him up, but his  
 head sinks away,  
 And his face showeth bleak in  
 the sunshine and grey.  
 Leave him now where he lieth—  
 for oh, never more  
 Will he kneel at an altar or stand  
 on a floor!

Let his bride  
 gaze  
 upon  
 him.

## XXIV.

Long and still was her gaze  
 while they chafed him  
 there  
 And breathed in the mouth  
 whose last life had  
 kissed her,  
 But when they stood up—only  
*they!* with a start  
 The shriek from her soul struck  
 her pale lips apart:

She has  
 lived,  
 and  
 forgone  
 him!

## XXV.

And low on his body she  
 droppeth adown—  
 "Didst call me thine own wife,  
 beloved—thine own?  
 Then take thine own with thee!  
 thy coldness is warm  
 To the world's cold without thee!

Come, keep me from  
harm

In a calm of  
thy  
teaching!"

XXVI.

She looked in his face earnest-  
long, as in sooth

There were hope of an answer,  
and then kissed his  
mouth,

And with head on his bosom,  
wept, wept bitterly,—

"Now, O God, take pity—take  
pity on me!

God, hear my  
beseeching!"

XXVII.

She was 'ware of a shadow that  
crossed where she lay,

She was 'ware of a presence  
that withered the day:

Wild she sprang to her feet,—"  
surrender to *thee*

The broken vow's pledge, the  
accursed rosary,—

I am ready for  
dying!"

XXVIII.

She dashed it in scorn to the  
marble-paved ground

Where it fell mute as snow, and  
a weird music-sound

Crept up, like a chill, up the  
aisles long and dim,—

As the fiends tried to mock at  
the choristers' hymn

And moaned  
in the  
trying.

## FOURTH PART.

Onora looketh listlessly adown the garden walk:  
"I am weary, O my mother, of thy tender talk.  
I am weary of the trees a-waving to and fro,  
Of the steadfast skies above, the running brooks below.  
All things are the same, but I,—only I am dreary,  
And, mother, of my dreariness behold me very weary.

"Mother, brother, pull the flowers I planted in the spring  
And smiled to think I should smile more upon their  
gathering:  
The bees will find out other flowers—oh, pull them,  
dearest mine,  
And carry them and carry me before Saint Agnes'  
shrine."  
—Whereat they pulled the summer flowers she planted  
in the spring,  
And her and them all mournfully to Agnes' shrine did  
bring.

She looked up to the pictured saint and gently shook  
her head—  
"The picture is too calm for *me*—too calm for *me*," she  
said:  
"The little flowers we brought with us, before it we may  
lay,  
For those are used to look at heaven,—but / must turn  
away,  
Because no sinner under sun can dare or bear to gaze  
On God's or angel's holiness, except in Jesu's face."

She spoke with passion after pause—"And were it  
wisely done  
If we who cannot gaze above, should walk the earth  
alone?

If we whose virtue is so weak should have a will so  
strong,  
And stand blind on the rocks to choose the right path  
from the wrong?  
To choose perhaps a love-lit hearth, instead of love and  
heaven,—  
A single rose, for a rose-tree which beareth seven  
times seven?  
A rose that droppeth from the hand, that fadeth in the  
breast,—  
Until, in grieving for the worst, we learn what is the  
best!"

Then breaking into tears,—"Dear God," she cried, "and  
must we see  
All blissful things depart from us or ere we go to Thee?  
We cannot guess Thee in the wood or hear Thee in the  
wind?  
Our cedars must fall round us ere we see the light  
behind?  
Ay sooth, we feel too strong, in weal, to need thee on  
that road,  
But woe being come, the soul is dumb that crieth not on  
'God.'"

Her mother could not speak for tears; she ever mused  
thus,  
"*The bees will find out other flowers*,—but what is left  
for us?"  
But her young brother stayed his sobs and knelt beside  
her knee,  
—"Thou sweetest sister in the world, hast never a word  
for me?"  
She passed her hand across his face, she pressed it  
on his cheek,  
So tenderly, so tenderly—she needed not to speak.

The wreath which lay on shrine that day, at vespers  
bloomed no more.  
The woman fair who placed it there had died an hour  
before.  
Both perished mute for lack of root, earth's nourishment



to reach.

O reader, breathe (the ballad saith) some sweetness  
out of each!

# ***A ROMANCE OF THE GANGES.***

## **I.**

Seven maidens 'neath the  
midnight  
Stand near the river-sea  
Whose water sweepeth white  
around  
The shadow of the tree;  
The moon and earth are face to  
face,  
And earth is slumbering  
deep;  
The wave-voice seems the  
voice of dreams  
That wander through her  
sleep:  
The river  
floweth  
on.

## **II.**

What bring they 'neath the  
midnight,  
Beside the river-sea?  
They bring the human heart  
wherein  
No nightly calm can be,—  
That droppeth never with the  
wind,  
Nor drieth with the dew:  
Oh, calm in God! thy calm is  
broad  
To cover spirits too.  
The river  
floweth  
on.

III.

The maidens lean them over  
 The waters, side by side,  
 And shun each other's  
     deepening eyes,  
 And gaze adown the tide;  
 For each within a little boat  
     A little lamp hath put,  
 And heaped for freight some  
     lily's weight  
     Or scarlet rose half shut.  
                     The river  
                                     floweth  
                                     on.

IV.

Of shell of cocoa carven  
     Each little boat is made;  
 Each carries a lamp, and  
     carries a flower,  
     And carries a hope unsaid;  
 And when the boat hath carried  
     the lamp  
     Unquenched till out of sight,  
 The maiden is sure that love will  
     endure;  
     But love will fail with light.  
                     The river  
                                     floweth  
                                     on.

V.

Why, all the stars are ready  
     To symbolize the soul,  
 The stars untroubled by the  
     wind,  
     Unwearied as they roll;  
 And yet the soul by instinct sad  
     Reverts to symbols low—  
 To that small flame, whose very

name  
Breathed o'er it, shakes it  
so!

The river  
floweth  
on.

VI.

Six boats are on the river,  
Seven maidens on the  
shore,  
While still above them  
steadfastly  
The stars shine evermore.  
Go, little boats, go soft and safe,  
And guard the symbol  
spark!  
The boats aright go safe and  
bright  
Across the waters dark.  
The river  
floweth  
on.

VII.

The maiden Luti watcheth  
Where onwardly they float:  
That look in her dilating eyes  
Might seem to drive her  
boat:  
Her eyes still mark the constant  
fire,  
And kindling unawares  
That hopeful while, she lets a  
smile  
Creep silent through her  
prayers.  
The river  
floweth  
on.

VIII.

The smile—where hath it  
wandered?  
She riseth from her knee,  
She holds her dark, wet locks  
away—  
There is no light to see!  
She cries a quick and bitter cry  
—  
"Nuleeni, launch me thine!  
We must have light abroad to-  
night,  
For all the wreck of mine."  
The river  
floweth  
on.

IX.

"I do remember watching  
Beside this river-bed  
When on my childish knee was  
leaned  
My dying father's head;  
I turned mine own to keep the  
tears  
From falling on his face:  
What doth it prove when Death  
and Love  
Choose out the self-same  
place?"  
The river  
floweth  
on.

X.

"They say the dead are joyful  
The death-change here  
receiving:  
Who say—ah me! who dare to  
say

Where joy comes to the  
living?  
Thy boat, Nuleeni! look not sad  
—  
Light up the waters rather!  
I weep no faithless lover where  
I wept a loving father."  
The river  
floweth  
on.

XI.

"My heart foretold his falsehood  
Ere my little boat grew dim;  
And though I closed mine eyes  
to dream  
That one last dream of *him*,  
They shall not now be wet to see  
The shining vision go:  
From earth's cold love I look  
above  
To the holy house of  
snow."<sup>[2]</sup>  
The river  
floweth  
on.

XII.

"Come thou—thou never  
knewest  
A grief, that thou shouldst  
fear one!  
Thou wearest still the happy look  
That shines beneath a dear  
one:  
Thy humming-bird is in the  
sun,<sup>[3]</sup>  
Thy cuckoo in the grove,  
And all the three broad worlds,  
for thee  
Are full of wandering love."

The river  
floweth  
on.

XIII.

"Why, maiden, dost thou loiter?  
What secret wouldst thou  
cover?

That peepul cannot hide thy  
boat,

And I can guess thy lover;  
I heard thee sob his name in  
sleep,

It was a name I knew:  
Come, little maid, be not afraid,  
But let us prove him true!"

The river  
floweth  
on.

XIV.

The little maiden cometh,  
She cometh shy and slow;  
I ween she seeth through her  
lids

They drop adown so low:  
Her tresses meet her small bare  
feet,

She stands and speaketh  
nought,  
Yet blusheth red as if she said  
The name she only thought.

The river  
floweth  
on.

XV.

She knelt beside the water,  
She lighted up the flame,  
And o'er her youthful forehead's  
calm

The fitful radiance came:—  
"Go, little boat, go soft and safe,  
And guard the symbol  
spark!"  
Soft, safe doth float the little  
boat  
Across the waters dark.  
The river  
floweth  
on.

XVI.

Glad tears her eyes have  
blinded,  
The light they cannot reach;  
She turneth with that sudden  
smile  
She learnt before her  
speech—  
"I do not hear his voice, the  
tears  
Have dimmed my light  
away,  
But the symbol light will last to-  
night,  
The love will last for aye!"  
The river  
floweth  
on.

XVII.

Then Luti spake behind her,  
Outspake she bitterly—  
"By the symbol light that lasts to-  
night,  
Wilt vow a vow to me?"  
Nuleeni gazeth up her face,  
Soft answer maketh she—  
"By loves that last when lights  
are past,  
I vow that vow to thee!"



The river  
floweth  
on.

XVIII.

An earthly look had Luti  
Though her voice was  
deep as prayer  
—

"The rice is gathered from  
the plains  
To cast upon thine  
hair:<sup>[4]</sup>

But when *he* comes his  
marriage-band  
Around thy neck to  
throw,  
Thy bride-smile raise to  
meet his gaze,  
And whisper,—*There is  
one betrays,  
While Luti suffers  
woe.*"

The river  
floweth  
on.

XIX.

"And when in seasons  
after,  
Thy little bright-faced  
son  
Shall lean against thy knee  
and ask  
What deeds his sire  
hath done,—  
Press deeper down thy  
mother-smile  
His glossy curls

among,  
View deep his pretty  
childish eyes,  
And whisper,—*There is*  
*none denies,*  
*While Luti speaks of*  
*wrong."*

The river  
floweth  
on.

XX.

Nuleeni looked in wonder,  
Yet softly answered  
she—

"By loves that last when  
lights are past,  
I vowed that vow to  
thee:

But why glads it thee that a  
bride-day be  
By a word of *woe*  
defiled?

That a word of *wrong* take  
the cradle-song  
From the ear of a  
sinless child?"

"Why?" Luti said, and her  
laugh was dread,  
And her eyes dilated  
wild—

"That the fair new love may  
her bridegroom  
prove,

And the father shame  
the child!"

The river  
floweth  
on.

XXI.

"Thou flowest still, O river,  
Thou flowest 'neath the  
moon;

Thy lily hath not changed a  
leaf, [\[5\]](#)

Thy charmèd lute a  
tune:

*He* mixed his voice with  
thine and *his*  
Was all I heard around;  
But now, beside his chosen  
bride,  
I hear the river's  
sound."

The river  
floweth  
on.

XXII.

"I gaze upon her beauty  
Through the tresses  
that enwreathe  
it;

The light above thy wave, is  
hers—

My rest, alone beneath  
it:

Oh, give me back the dying  
look  
My father gave thy  
water!  
Give back—and let a little  
love  
O'erwatch his weary  
daughter!"  
The river  
floweth  
on.

### XXIII.

"Give back!" she hath  
departed—  
The word is wandering  
with her;  
And the stricken maidens  
hear afar  
The step and cry  
together.  
Frail symbols? None are  
frail enow  
For mortal joys to  
borrow!—  
While bright doth float  
Nuleeni's boat,  
She weepeth dark with  
sorrow.  
The river  
floweth  
on.

## FOOTNOTES:

[2] The Hindoo heaven is localized on the summit of Mount Meru—one of the mountains of Himalaya or Himmaleh, which signifies, I believe, in Sanscrit, the abode of snow, winter, or coldness.

[3] Himadeva, the Indian god of love, is imagined to wander through the three worlds, accompanied by the humming-bird, cuckoo, and gentle breezes.

[4] The casting of rice upon the head, and the fixing of the band or tali about the neck, are parts of the Hindoo marriage ceremonial.

[5] The Ganges is represented as a white woman, with a water-lily in her right hand, and in her left a lute.

# ***RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY.***

I.

To the belfry, one by one,  
went the ringers  
from the sun,

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the oldest ringer said,  
"Ours is music for  
the dead

When the  
rebecks  
are all  
done."

II.

Six abeles i' the churchyard  
grow on the north  
side in a row,

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the shadows of their  
tops rock across the  
little slopes

Of the grassy  
graves  
below.

III.

On the south side and the

west a small river  
runs in haste,

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And, between the river  
flowing and the fair  
green trees a-  
growing,

Do the dead  
lie at  
their  
rest.

IV.

On the east I sate that day,  
up against a willow  
grey:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Through the rain of willow-  
branches I could see  
the low hill-ranges  
And the river  
on its  
way.

V.

There I sate beneath the  
tree, and the bell  
toll'd solemnly,

*Toll*

*slowly.*

While the trees' and river's  
voices flowed



between the solemn  
noises,—

Yet death  
seemed  
more  
loud to  
me.

VI.

There I read this ancient  
rhyme while the bell  
did all the time

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the solemn knell fell in  
with the tale of life  
and sin,

Like a

rhythmic  
fate  
sublime.

## THE RHYME.

I.

Broad the forests stood (I  
read) on the hills of  
Linteged,

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And three hundred years  
had stood mute

adown each hoary  
wood,  
Like a full  
heart  
having  
prayed.

II.

And the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west,  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

And but little thought was  
theirs of the silent  
antique years,  
In the building  
of their  
nest.

III.

Down the sun dropt large  
and red on the  
towers of Linteged,  
—  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

Lance and spear upon the  
height, bristling  
strange in fiery light,  
While the  
castle  
stood  
in

shade.

IV.

There the castle stood up  
black with the red  
sun at its back—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

Like a sullen smouldering  
pyre with a top that  
flickers fire

When the  
wind  
is on  
its  
track.

V.

And five hundred archers  
tall did besiege the  
castle wall—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the castle, seethed in  
blood, fourteen days  
and nights had  
stood

And to-night  
was  
near  
its fall.

VI.

Yet thereunto, blind to

doom, three months  
since, a bride did  
come—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

One who proudly trod the  
floors and softly  
whispered in the  
doors,

"May good  
angels  
bless  
our  
home."

VII.

Oh, a bride of queenly  
eyes, with a front of  
constancies:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Oh, a bride of cordial mouth  
where the untired  
smile of youth

Did light  
outward  
its  
own  
sighs!

VIII.

'T was a Duke's fair  
orphan-girl, and her  
uncle's ward—the

Earl—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Who betrothed her twelve  
years old, for the  
sake of dowry gold,  
To his son  
Lord  
Leigh  
the  
churl.

IX.

But what time she had  
made good all her  
years of  
womanhood—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Unto both these lords of  
Leigh spake she out  
right sovrانly,  
"My will  
runneth  
as my  
blood.

X.

"And while this same blood  
makes red this  
same right hand's  
veins," she said—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

"'T is my will, as lady free,  
not to wed a lord of  
Leigh,

But Sir

Guy  
of  
Linteged."

XI.

The old Earl he smilèd  
smooth, then he  
sighed for wilful  
youth—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Good my niece, that hand  
withal looketh  
somewhat soft and  
small

For so

large  
a  
will,  
in  
sooth."

XII.

She too smiled by that  
same sign, but her  
smile was cold and  
fine—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Little hand clasps muckle

gold, or it were not  
worth the hold

Of thy

son,  
good  
uncle  
mine!"

XIII.

Then the young lord jerked  
his breath, and  
sware thickly in his  
teeth—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

"He would wed his own  
betrothed, an she  
loved him an she  
loathed,

Let the

life  
come  
or  
the  
death."

XIV.

Up she rose with scornful  
eyes, as her father's  
child might rise—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Thy hound's blood, my lord  
of Leigh, stains thy

knightly heel," quoth  
she,

"And he  
moans  
not  
where  
he  
lies:

XV.

"But a woman's will dies  
hard, in the hall or on  
the sward"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"By that grave, my lords,  
which made me  
orphaned girl and  
dowered lady,  
I deny

you  
wife  
and  
ward!"

XVI.

Unto each she bowed her  
head and swept  
past with lofty tread.

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Ere the midnight-bell had  
ceased, in the  
chapel had the



priest

Blessed  
her,  
bride  
of  
Linteged.

XVII.

Fast and fain the bridal  
train along the night-  
storm rode amain—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Hard the steeds of lord and  
serf struck their  
hoofs out on the turf,  
In the

pauses  
of  
the  
rain.

XVIII.

Fast and fain the kinsmen's  
train along the storm  
pursued amain—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Steed on steed-track,  
dashing off,—  
thickening, doubling,  
hoof on hoof,

In the

pauses

of  
the  
rain.

XIX.

And the bridegroom led the  
flight on his red-roan  
steed of might—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the bride lay on his  
arm, still, as if she  
feared no harm,

Smiling

out  
into  
the  
night.

XX.

"Dost thou fear?" he said at  
last. "Nay," she  
answered him in  
haste,—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Not such death as we  
could find—only life  
with one behind.

Ride on

fast  
as  
fear,  
ride

fast!"

XXI.

Up the mountain wheeled  
the steed—girth to  
ground, and fetlocks  
spread—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Headlong bounds, and  
rocking flanks,—  
down he staggered,  
down the banks,

To the

towers  
of

Linteged.

XXII.

High and low the serfs  
looked out, red the  
flambeaus tossed  
about—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

In the courtyard rose the  
cry, "Live the  
Duchess and Sir  
Guy!"

But she

never  
heard  
them  
shout.

XXIII.

On the steed she dropped  
her cheek, kissed  
his mane and kissed  
his neck—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"I had happier died by thee  
than lived on, a Lady  
Leigh,"

Were the  
first  
words  
she  
did  
speak.

XXIV.

But a three months'  
joyaunce lay 'twixt  
that moment and to-  
day—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

When five hundred archers  
tall stand beside the  
castle wall

To

recapture  
Duchess  
May.

XXV.

And the castle standeth  
black with the red  
sun at its back—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And a fortnight's siege is  
done, and, except  
the duchess, none  
Can

misdoubt  
the  
coming  
wrack.

XXVI.

Then the captain, young  
Lord Leigh, with his  
eyes so grey of blee

—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And thin lips that scarcely  
sheath the cold  
white gnashing of  
his teeth,

Gnashed  
in  
smiling,  
absently,

—

XXVII.

Cried aloud, "So goes the  
day, bridegroom fair

of Duchess May!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Look thy last upon that  
sun! if thou seest to-  
morrow's one

'T will be  
through  
a  
foot  
of  
clay.

XXVIII.

"Ha, fair bride! dost hear no  
sound save that  
moaning of the  
hound?"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Thou and I have parted  
troth, yet I keep my  
vengeance-oath,

And the  
other  
may  
come  
round.

XXIX.

"Ha! thy will is brave to  
dare, and thy new  
love past  
compare"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Yet thine old love's falchion  
brave is as strong a  
thing to have,

As the

will  
of  
lady  
fair.

XXX.

"Peck on blindly, netted  
dove! If a wife's  
name thee  
behave"—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

"Thou shalt wear the same  
to-morrow, ere the  
grave has hid the  
sorrow

Of thy

last  
ill-  
mated  
love.

XXXI.

"O'er his fixed and silent  
mouth, thou and I will  
call back troth":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"He shall altar be and  
priest,—and he will  
not cry at least  
    'I forbid  
                                you,  
                                I  
                                am  
                                loth!"

XXXII.

"I will wring thy fingers pale  
in the gauntlet of my  
mail":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"'Little hand and muckle  
gold' close shall lie  
within my hold,

As the

sword  
did,  
to  
prevail."

XXXIII.

Oh, the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Oh, and laughed the  
Duchess May, and  
her soul did put  
away



All his  
boasting,  
for  
a  
jest.

XXXIV.

In her chamber did she sit,  
laughing low to think  
of it,—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Tower is strong and will is  
free: thou canst  
boast, my lord of  
Leigh,

But thou  
boastest  
little  
wit."

XXXV.

In her tire-glass gazèd she,  
and she blushed  
right womanly—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

She blushed half from her  
disdain, half her  
beauty was so plain,  
—"Oath

for  
oath,  
my

lord  
of  
Leigh!"

XXXVI.

Straight she called her  
maidens in—"Since  
ye gave me blame  
herein"—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

"That a bridal such as mine  
should lack gauds to  
make it fine,

Come

and  
shrive  
me  
from  
that  
sin.

XXXVII.

"It is three months gone to-  
day since I gave  
mine hand away":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Bring the gold and bring  
the gem, we will  
keep bride-state in  
them,

While we  
keep

the  
foe  
at  
bay.

XXXVIII.

"On your arms I loose mine  
hair; comb it smooth  
and crown it fair":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"I would look in purple pall  
from this lattice  
down the wall,

And

throw  
scorn  
to  
one  
that's  
there!"

XXXIX.

Oh, the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

On the tower the castle's  
lord leant in silence  
on his sword,

With an

anguish  
in

his  
breast.

XL.

With a spirit-laden weight  
did he lean down  
passionate:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

They have almost sapped  
the wall,—they will  
enter therewithal

With no

knocking  
at  
the  
gate.

XLI.

Then the sword he leant  
upon, shivered,  
snapped upon the  
stone—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Sword," he thought, with  
inward laugh, "ill  
thou servest for a  
staff

When thy

nobler  
use  
is  
done!

XLII.

"Sword, thy nobler use is  
done! tower is lost,  
and shame  
begun!"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"If we met them in the  
breach, hilt to hilt or  
speech to speech,  
We

should  
die  
there,  
each  
for  
one.

XLIII.

"If we met them at the wall,  
we should singly,  
vainly fall"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"But if I die here alone,—  
then I die who am  
but one,

And die

nobly  
for  
them  
all.

XLIV.

"Five true friends lie for my  
sake in the moat  
and in the brake"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Thirteen warriors lie at rest  
with a black wound  
in the breast,

And not

one  
of  
these  
will  
wake.

XLV.

"So, no more of this shall  
be! heart-blood  
weighs too  
heavily"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"And I could not sleep in  
grave, with the  
faithful and the brave

Heaped

around  
and  
over  
me.

XLVI.

"Since young Clare a  
mother hath, and

young Ralph a  
plighted faith"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Since my pale young  
sister's cheeks blush  
like rose when  
Ronald speaks,

Albeit

never  
a  
word  
she  
saith  
—

XLVII.

"These shall never die for  
me: life-blood falls  
too heavily":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"And if / die here apart, o'er  
my dead and silent  
heart

They

shall  
pass  
out  
safe  
and  
free.

XLVIII.

"When the foe hath heard it  
said—"Death holds  
Guy of Linteged"—  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

"That new corse new peace  
shall bring, and a  
blessèd, blessèd  
thing

Shall the  
stone  
be  
at  
its  
head.

XLIX.

"Then my friends shall pass  
out free, and shall  
bear my memory"—  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Then my foes shall sleek  
their pride, soothing  
fair my widowed  
bride

Whose  
sole  
sin  
was  
love  
of  
me:

L.



"With their words all smooth  
and sweet, they will  
front her and  
entreat"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"And their purple pall will  
spread underneath  
her fainting head

While

her  
tears  
drop  
over  
it.

Ll.

"She will weep her  
woman's tears, she  
will pray her  
woman's prayers"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"But her heart is young in  
pain, and her hopes  
will spring again

By the

suntime  
of  
her  
years.

LII.

"Ah, sweet May! ah,

sweetest grief!—  
once I vowed thee  
my belief"—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

"That thy name expressed  
thy sweetness,—  
May of poets, in  
completeness!

Now my

May-  
day  
seemeth  
brief."

LIII.

All these silent thoughts did  
swim o'er his eyes  
grown strange and  
dim—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Till his true men, in the  
place, wished they  
stood there face to  
face

With the

foe  
instead  
of  
him.

LIV.

"One last oath, my friends

that wear faithful  
hearts to do and  
dare!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Tower must fall and bride  
be lost—swear me  
service worth the  
cost!"

**Bold**

they  
stood  
around  
to  
swear.

LV.

"Each man clasp my hand  
and swear by the  
deed we failed in  
there"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Not for vengeance, not for  
right, will ye strike  
one blow to-night!"

**Pale**

they  
stood  
around  
to  
swear.

LVI.

"One last boon, young  
Ralph and Clare!  
faithful hearts to do  
and dare!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Bring that steed up from  
his stall, which she  
kissed before you  
all.

Guide

him  
up  
the  
turret-  
stair.

LVII.

"Ye shall harness him  
aright, and lead  
upward to this  
height:"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Once in love and twice in  
war hath he borne  
me strong and far:

He shall

bear  
me  
far  
to-  
night."

LVIII.

Then his men looked to and  
fro, when they heard  
him speaking so—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"'Las! the noble heart," they  
thought, "he in sooth  
is grief-distraught:

Would

we  
stood  
here  
with  
the  
foe!"

LIX.

But a fire flashed from his  
eye, 'twixt their  
thought and their  
reply—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Have ye so much time to  
waste? We who ride  
here, must ride fast

As we

wish  
our  
foes  
to  
fly."

LX.

They have fetched the  
steed with care, in  
the harness he did  
wear—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Past the court and through  
the doors, across  
the rushes of the  
floors,

But they  
goad  
him  
up  
the  
stair.

LXI.

Then from out her bower  
chambère did the  
Duchess May repair:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Tell me now what is your  
need," said the lady,  
"of this steed,

That ye  
goad  
him  
up  
the  
stair?"

LXII.

Calm she stood;  
unbodkined through,  
fell her dark hair to  
her shoe:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the smile upon her  
face, ere she left the  
tiring-glass,

Had not  
time  
enough  
to  
go.

LXIII.

"Get thee back, sweet  
Duchess May! hope  
is gone like  
yesterday":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

One half-hour completes  
the breach; and thy  
lord grows wild of  
speech—

Get thee  
in,  
sweet  
lady,  
and  
pray!

LXIV.

"In the east tower, high'st of  
all, loud he cries for  
steed from stall":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"'He would ride as far,'  
quoeth he, 'as for love  
and victory,

Though

he  
rides  
the  
castle-  
wall.'

LXV.

"And we fetch the steed  
from stall, up where  
never a hoof did  
fall"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Wifely prayer meets  
deathly need: may  
the sweet Heavens  
hear thee plead

If he

rides  
the  
castle-  
wall!"

LXVI.

Low she dropt her head,



and lower, till her  
hair coiled on the  
floor—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And tear after tear you  
heard fall distinct as  
any word

Which

you  
might  
be  
listening  
for.

LXVII.

"Get thee in, thou soft  
ladye! here is never  
a place for thee!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Braid thine hair and clasp  
thy gown, that thy  
beauty in its moan

May find

grace  
with  
Leigh  
of  
Leigh."

LXVIII.

She stood up in bitter case,  
with a pale yet

steady face:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Like a statue thunderstruck,  
which, though  
quivering, seems to  
look

Right

against  
the  
thunder-  
place.

LXIX.

And her foot trod in, with  
pride, her own tears  
i' the stone beside—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Go to, faithful friends, go  
to! judge no more  
what ladies do,

No, nor

how  
their  
lords  
may  
ride!"

LXX.

Then the good steed's rein  
she took, and his  
neck did kiss and  
stroke:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Soft he neighed to answer  
her, and then  
followed up the stair

For the

love  
of  
her  
sweet  
look:

LXXI.

Oh, and steeply, steeply  
wound up the narrow  
stair around—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Oh, and closely, closely  
speeding, step by  
step beside her  
treading

Did he

follow,  
meek  
as  
hound.

LXXII.

On the east tower, high'st of  
all,—there, where  
never a hoof did fall

—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Out they swept, a vision  
steady, noble steed  
and lovely lady,

Calm as  
if  
in  
bower  
or  
stall.

LXXIII.

Down she knelt at her lord's  
knee, and she  
looked up silently—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And he kissed her twice  
and thrice, for that  
look within her eyes

Which  
he  
could  
not  
bear  
to  
see.

LXXIV.

Quoth he, "Get thee from  
this strife, and the  
sweet saints bless  
thy life!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"In this hour I stand in need  
of my noble red-roan  
steed,

But no  
more  
of  
my  
noble  
wife."

LXXV.

Quoth she, "Meekly have I  
done all thy biddings  
under sun":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"But by all my womanhood,  
which is proved so,  
true and good,

I will

never  
do  
this  
one.

LXXVI.

"Now by womanhood's  
degree and by  
wifehood's verity"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"In this hour if thou hast  
need of thy noble

red-roan steed,

Thou

hast  
also  
need  
of  
*me.*

LXXVII.

"By this golden ring ye see  
on this lifted hand  
pardiè"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"If, this hour, on castle-wall  
can be room for  
steed from stall,

Shall be

also  
room  
for  
*me.*

LXXVIII.

"So the sweet saints with  
me be," (did she  
utter solemnly)—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"If a man, this eventide, on  
this castle wall will  
ride,

He shall

ride

the  
same  
with  
*me.*"

LXXIX.

Oh, he sprang up in the  
selle and he laughed  
out bitter-well—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Wouldst thou ride among  
the leaves, as we  
used on other eves,  
To hear

chime  
a  
vesper-  
bell?"

LXXX.

She clung closer to his  
knee—"Ay, beneath  
the cypress-tree!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Mock me not, for  
otherwhere than  
along the  
greenwood fair

Have I

ridden  
fast  
with

thee.

LXXXI.

"Fast I rode with new-made  
vows from my angry  
kinsman's house":

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"What, and would you men  
should reck that I  
dared more for  
love's sake

As a

bride  
than  
as  
a  
spouse?

LXXXII.

"What, and would you it  
should fall, as a  
proverb, before  
all"—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"That a bride may keep  
your side while  
through castle-gate  
you ride,

Yet

eschew  
the  
castle-



wall?"

LXXXIII.

Ho! the breach yawns into  
ruin and roars up  
against her suing—  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

With the inarticulate din and  
the dreadful falling in  
—

Shrieks  
of  
doing  
and  
undoing!

LXXXIV.

Twice he wrung her hands  
in twain, but the  
small hands closed  
again.  
*Toll*

*slowly.*

Back he reined the steed—  
back, back! but she  
trailed along his  
track

With a  
frantic  
clasp  
and  
strain.

LXXXV.

Evermore the foemen pour  
through the crash of  
window and door—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the shouts of Leigh  
and Leigh, and the  
shrieks of "kill!" and  
"flee!"

Strike up  
clear  
amid  
the  
roar.

LXXXVI.

Thrice he wrung her hands  
in twain, but they  
closed and clung  
again—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

While she clung, as one,  
withstood, clasps a  
Christ upon the  
rood,

In a  
spasm  
of  
deathly  
pain.

LXXXVII.

She clung wild and she  
clung mute with her  
shuddering lips half-  
shut.

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Her head fallen as half in  
swoond, hair and  
knee swept on the  
ground,

She

clung  
wild  
to  
stirrup  
and  
foot.

LXXXVIII.

Back he reined his steed  
back-thrown on the  
slippery coping-  
stone:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Back the iron hoofs did  
grind on the  
battlement behind

Whence

a  
hundred  
feet  
went  
down:

LXXXIX.

And his heel did press and  
goad on the  
quivering flank  
bestrode—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Friends and brothers, save  
my wife! Pardon,  
sweet, in change for  
life,—

But I ride

alone  
to  
God."

XC.

Straight as if the Holy name  
had upbreathed her  
like a flame—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

She upsprang, she rose  
upright, in his selle  
she sate in sight,  
By her

love  
she  
overcame.

XCI.

And her head was on his  
breast where she

smiled as one at  
rest—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

"Ring," she cried, "O  
vesper-bell in the  
beechwood's old  
chappelle—

But the

passing-  
bell  
rings  
best!"

XCII.

They have caught out at the  
rein which Sir Guy  
threw loose—in vain  
—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

For the horse in stark  
despair, with his  
front hoofs poised in  
air,

On the

last  
verge  
rears  
amain.

XCIII.

Now he hangs, he rocks  
between, and his

nostrils curdle in—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Now he shivers head and  
hoof and the flakes  
of foam fall off,

And his

face  
grows  
fierce  
and  
thin:

XCV.

And a look of human woe  
from his staring eyes  
did go:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And a sharp cry uttered he,  
in a foretold agony  
Of the

headlong  
death  
below,  
—

XCV.

And, "Ring, ring, thou  
passing-bell," still  
she cried, "i' the old  
chapelle!"

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Then, back-toppling,  
crashing back—a  
dead weight flung  
out to wrack,

Horse

and  
riders  
overfell.

---

Oh, the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And I read this ancient  
Rhyme, in the  
churchyard, while the  
chime

Slowly

tolled  
for  
one  
at  
rest.

The abeles moved in the  
sun, and the river  
smooth did run—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the ancient Rhyme  
rang strange, with its  
passion and its  
change,

Here,

where  
all  
done  
lay  
undone.

III.

And beneath a willow tree I  
a little grave did see  
—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

Where was graved—Here,  
undefiled, lieth  
Maud, a three-year  
child,

Eighteen

hundred  
forty-  
three.

IV.

Then O spirits, did I say, ye  
who rode so fast that



day—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Did star-wheels and angel  
wings with their holy  
winnowings

Keep

beside  
you  
all  
the  
way?

V.

Though in passion ye would  
dash, with a blind  
and heavy crash—

*Toll*

*slowly—*

Up against the thick-  
bossed shield of  
God's judgment in  
the field,—

Though

your  
heart  
and  
brain  
were  
rash,  
—

VI.

Now, your will is all unwilling;

now, your pulses are  
all stilled:

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Now, ye lie as meek and  
mild (whereso laid)  
as Maud the child

Whose

small  
grave  
was  
lately  
filled.

VII.

Beating heart and burning  
brow, ye are very  
patient now—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And the children might be  
bold to pluck the  
kingcups from your  
mould

Ere a

month  
had  
let  
them  
grow.

VIII.

And you let the goldfinch  
sing in the alder

near in spring—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

Let her build her nest and  
sit all the three  
weeks out on it,

Murmuring  
not  
at  
anything.

IX.

In your patience ye are  
strong, cold and  
heat ye take not  
wrong—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

When the trumpet of the  
angel blows  
eternity's evangel,

Time will  
seem  
to  
you  
not  
long.

X.

Oh, the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west—

*Toll*

*slowly.*

And I said in underbreath,  
—All our life is  
mixed with death,  
And who  
knoweth  
which  
is  
best?

XI.

Oh, the little birds sang  
east, and the little  
birds sang west—  
*Toll*  
*slowly.*

And I smiled to think God's  
greatness flowed  
around our  
incompleteness,—  
Round  
our  
restlessness,  
His  
rest.

# ***THE ROMANCE OF THE SWAN'S NEST.***

So the dreams depart,  
So the fading phantoms  
    flee,  
And the sharp reality  
Now must act its part.

Westwood's   *Beads   from   a*  
*Rosary*

I.

Little Ellie sits alone  
    'Mid the beeches of a  
        meadow,  
        By a stream-side  
            on the  
            grass,  
And the trees are  
    showering down  
Doubles of their leaves  
    in shadow  
    On her shining  
        hair and  
        face.

II.

She has thrown her bonnet  
    by,  
And her feet she has

been dipping  
In the shallow  
water's  
flow:  
Now she holds them  
nakedly  
In her hands, all sleek  
and dripping,  
While she rocketh  
to and fro.

III.

Little Ellie sits alone,  
And the smile she  
softly uses  
Fills the silence  
like a  
speech  
While she thinks what shall  
be done,  
And the sweetest  
pleasure  
chooses  
For her future  
within  
reach.

IV.

Little Ellie in her smile  
Chooses—"I will have  
a lover  
Riding on a steed  
of steeds:  
He shall love me without

guile,  
And to *him* I will  
discover  
The swan's nest  
among the  
reeds.

V.

"And the steed shall be red-  
roan,  
And the lover shall be  
noble,  
With an eye that  
takes the  
breath:  
And the lute he plays upon  
Shall strike ladies into  
trouble,  
As his sword  
strikes  
men to  
death.

VI.

"And the steed it shall be  
shod  
All in silver, housed in  
azure,  
And the mane  
shall swim  
the wind;  
And the hoofs along the  
sod  
Shall flash onward and

keep measure,  
Till the shepherds  
look  
behind.

VII.

"But my lover will not prize  
All the glory that he  
rides in,  
When he gazes in  
my face:  
He will say, 'O Love, thine  
eyes  
Build the shrine my  
soul abides in,  
And I kneel here  
for thy  
grace!'"

VIII.

"Then, ay, then he shall  
kneel low,  
With the red-roan  
steed anear  
him  
Which shall seem  
to  
understand,  
Till I answer, 'Rise and go!  
For the world must love  
and fear him  
Whom I gift with  
heart and  
hand.'"



IX.

"Then he will arise so pale,  
I shall feel my own lips  
tremble  
With a yes I must  
not say,  
Nathless maiden-brave,  
'Farewell,'  
I will utter, and  
dissemble—  
'Light to-morrow  
with to-  
day!"

X.

"Then he'll ride among the  
hills  
To the wide world past  
the river,  
There to put away  
all wrong;  
To make straight distorted  
wills,  
And to empty the  
broad quiver  
Which the wicked  
bear along.

XI.

"Three times shall a young  
foot-page  
Swim the stream and  
climb the  
mountain

And kneel down  
beside my  
feet—  
'Lo, my master sends this  
gage,  
Lady, for thy pity's  
counting!  
What wilt thou  
exchange  
for it?'

XII.

"And the first time I will  
send  
A white rosebud for a  
guerdon,  
And the second  
time, a  
glove;  
But the third time—I may  
bend  
From my pride, and  
answer  
—'Pardon  
If he comes to  
take my  
love.'

XIII.

"Then the young foot-page  
will run,  
Then my lover will ride  
faster,  
Till he kneeleth at

my knee:  
'I am a duke's eldest son,  
Thousand serfs do call  
me master,  
But, O Love, I love  
but *thee*!'

XIV.

"He will kiss me on the  
mouth  
Then, and lead me as  
a lover  
Through the  
crowds that  
praise his  
deeds;  
And, when soul-tied by one  
troth,  
Unto *him* I will discover  
That swan's nest  
among the  
reeds."

XV.

Little Ellie, with her smile  
Not yet ended, rose up  
gaily,  
Tied the bonnet,  
donned the  
shoe,  
And went homeward, round  
a mile,  
Just to see, as she did  
daily,

What more eggs  
were with  
the two.

XVI.

Pushing through the elm-  
tree copse,  
Winding up the stream,  
light-hearted,  
Where the osier  
pathway  
leads,  
Past the boughs she  
stoops—and stops.  
Lo, the wild swan had  
deserted,  
And a rat had  
gnawed  
the reeds!

XVII.

Ellie went home sad and  
slow.  
If she found the lover  
ever,  
With his red-roan  
steed of  
steeds,  
Sooth I know not; but I know  
She could never show  
him—never,  
That swan's nest  
among the  
reeds!



# ***BERTHA IN THE LANE.***

## **I.**

Put the broidery-frame  
    away,  
    For my sewing is all  
        done:  
The last thread is used to-  
    day,  
    And I need not join it  
        on.  
Though the clock stands at  
    the noon  
I am weary. I have sewn,  
Sweet, for thee, a wedding-  
    gown.

## **II.**

Sister, help me to the bed,  
    And stand near me,  
        Dearest-sweet.  
Do not shrink nor be afraid,  
    Blushing with a sudden  
        heat!  
No one standeth in the  
    street?—  
By God's love I go to meet,  
Love I thee with love  
    complete.

## **III.**

Lean thy face down; drop it  
in  
These two hands, that I  
may hold  
'Twixt their palms thy cheek  
and chin,  
Stroking back the curls  
of gold:  
'T is a fair, fair face, in  
sooth—  
Larger eyes and redder  
mouth  
Than mine were in my first  
youth.

IV.

Thou art younger by seven  
years—  
Ah!—so bashful at my  
gaze,  
That the lashes, hung with  
tears,  
Grow too heavy to  
upraise?  
I would wound thee by no  
touch  
Which thy shyness feels as  
such.  
Dost thou mind me, Dear,  
so much?

V.

Have I not been nigh a  
mother

To thy sweetness—tell  
me, Dear?  
Have we not loved one  
another  
Tenderly, from year to  
year,  
Since our dying mother  
mild  
Said with accents  
undefiled,  
"Child, be mother to this  
child"!

VI.

Mother, mother, up in  
heaven,  
Stand up on the jasper  
sea,  
And be witness I have given  
All the gifts required of  
me,—  
Hope that blessed me,  
bliss that crowned,  
Love that left me with a  
wound,  
Life itself that turneth round!

VII.

Thou art standing in  
the room,  
In a molten glory shrined  
That rays off into the  
gloom!  
But thy smile is bright and



bleak  
Like cold waves—I cannot  
speak,  
I sob in it, and grow weak.

VIII.

Ghostly mother, keep aloof  
One hour longer from  
my soul,  
For I still am thinking of  
Earth's warm-beating  
joy and dole!  
On my finger is a ring  
Which I still see glittering  
When the night hides  
everything.

IX.

Little sister, thou art pale!  
Ah, I have a wandering  
brain—  
But I lose that fever-bale,  
And my thoughts grow  
calm again.  
Lean down closer—closer  
still!  
I have words thine ear to fill,  
And would kiss thee at my  
will.

X.

Dear, I heard thee in the  
spring,  
Thee and Robert—

through the  
trees,—  
When we all went gathering  
Boughs of May-bloom  
for the bees.  
Do not start so! think  
instead  
How the sunshine overhead  
Seemed to trickle through  
the shade.

XI.

What a day it was, that day!  
Hills and vales did  
openly  
Seem to heave and throb  
away  
At the sight of the great  
sky:  
And the silence, as it stood  
In the glory's golden flood,  
Audibly did bud, and bud.

XII.

Through the winding  
hedgerows green,  
How we wandered, I  
and you,  
With the bowery tops shut  
in,  
And the gates that  
showed the  
view!  
How we talked there;

thrushes soft  
Sang our praises out, or oft  
Bleatings took them from  
the croft:

XIII.

Till the pleasure grown too  
strong  
Left me muter  
                evermore,  
And, the winding road  
                being long,  
I walked out of sight,  
                before,  
And so, wrapt in musings  
                fond,  
Issued (past the wayside  
                pond)  
On the meadow-lands  
                beyond.

XIV.

I sate down beneath the  
                beech  
Which leans over to  
                the lane,  
And the far sound of your  
                speech  
Did not promise any  
                pain;  
And I blessed you full and  
                free,  
With a smile stooped  
                tenderly

O'er the May-flowers on my  
knee.

XV.

But the sound grew into  
word  
As the speakers drew  
more near—  
Sweet, forgive me that I  
heard  
What you wished me  
not to hear.  
Do not weep so, do not  
shake,  
Oh,—I heard thee, Bertha,  
make  
Good true answers for my  
sake.

XVI.

Yes, and HE too! let him  
stand  
In thy thoughts,  
untouched by  
blame.  
Could he help it, if my hand  
He had claimed with  
hasty claim?  
That was wrong perhaps—  
but then  
Such things be—and will,  
again.  
Women cannot judge for  
men.

XVII.

Had he seen thee when he  
swore  
He would love but me  
alone?  
Thou wast absent, sent  
before  
To our kin in Sidmouth  
town.  
When he saw thee who art  
best  
Past compare, and  
loveliest.  
He but judged thee as the  
rest.

XVIII.

Could we blame him with  
grave words,  
Thou and I, Dear, if we  
might?  
Thy brown eyes have looks  
like birds  
Flying straightway to  
the light:  
Mine are older.—Hush!—  
look out—  
Up the street! Is none  
without?  
How the poplar swings  
about!

XIX.

And that hour—beneath the

beech,  
                  When I listened in a  
                  dream,  
And he said in his deep  
                  speech  
                  That he owed me all  
                  *esteem*,—  
Each word swam in on my  
                  brain  
With a dim, dilating pain,  
Till it burst with that last  
                  strain.

XX.

I fell flooded with a dark,  
                  In the silence of a  
                  swoon.  
When I rose, still cold and  
                  stark,  
                  There was night; I saw  
                  the moon  
And the stars, each in its  
                  place,  
And the May-blooms on the  
                  grass,  
Seemed to wonder what I  
                  was.

XXI.

And I walked as if apart  
                  From myself, when I  
                  could stand,  
And I pitied my own heart,  
                  As if I held it in my

hand—  
Somewhat coldly, with a  
sense  
Of fulfilled benevolence,  
And a "Poor thing"  
negligence.

XXII.

And I answered coldly too,  
When you met me at  
the door;  
And I only *heard* the dew  
Dripping from me to  
the floor:  
And the flowers, I bade you  
see,  
Were too withered for the  
bee,—  
As my life, henceforth, for  
me.

XXIII.

Do not weep so—Dear,—  
heart-warm!  
All was best as it  
befell.  
If I say he did me harm,  
I speak wild,—I am not  
well.  
All his words were kind and  
good—  
*He esteemed me.* Only,  
blood  
Runs so faint in

womanhood!

XXIV.

Then I always was too  
grave,—  
Liked the saddest  
ballad sung,—  
With that look, besides, we  
have  
In our faces, who die  
young.  
I had died, Dear, all the  
same;  
Life's long, joyous, jostling  
game  
Is too loud for my meek  
shame.

XXV.

We are so unlike each  
other,  
Thou and I, that none  
could guess  
We were children of one  
mother,  
But for mutual  
tenderness.  
Thou art rose-lined from the  
cold,  
And meant verily to hold  
Life's pure pleasures  
manifold.

XXVI.



I am pale as crocus grows  
Close beside a rose-  
tree's root;  
Whosoe'er would reach the  
rose,  
Treads the crocus  
underfoot.  
I, like May-bloom on thorn-  
tree,  
Thou, like merry summer-  
bee,—  
Fit that I be plucked for  
thee!

XXVII.

Yet who plucks me?—no  
one mourns,  
I have lived my season  
out,  
And now die of my own  
thorns  
Which I could not live  
without.  
Sweet, be merry! How the  
light  
Comes and goes! If it be  
night,  
Keep the candles in my  
sight.

XXVIII.

Are there footsteps at the  
door?  
Look out quickly. Yea,

or nay?  
Some one might be waiting  
for  
Some last word that I  
might say.  
Nay? So best!—so angels  
would  
Stand off clear from deathly  
road,  
Not to cross the sight of  
God.

XXIX.

Colder grow my hands and  
feet.  
When I wear the  
shroud I made,  
Let the folds lie straight and  
neat,  
And the rosemary be  
spread,  
That if any friend should  
come,  
(To see *thee*, Sweet!) all  
the room  
May be lifted out of gloom.

XXX.

And, dear Bertha, let me  
keep  
On my hand this little  
ring,  
Which at nights, when  
others sleep,

I can still see glittering!  
Let me wear it out of sight,  
In the grave,—where it will  
light  
All the dark up, day and  
night.

XXXI.

On that grave drop not a  
tear!  
Else, though fathom-  
deep the place,  
Through the woollen shroud  
I wear  
I shall feel it on my  
face.  
Rather smile there, blessed  
one,  
Thinking of me in the sun,  
Or forget me—smiling on!

XXXII.

Art thou near me? nearer!  
so—  
Kiss me close upon  
the eyes,  
That the earthly light may go  
Sweetly, as it used to  
rise  
When I watched the  
morning-grey  
Strike, betwixt the hills, the  
way  
He was sure to come that

day.

XXXIII.

So,—no more vain words  
be said!  
The hosannas nearer  
roll.  
Mother, smile now on thy  
Dead,  
I am death-strong in  
my soul.  
Mystic Dove alit on cross,  
Guide the poor bird of the  
snows  
Through the snow-wind  
above loss!

XXXIV.

Jesus, Victim,  
comprehending  
Love's divine self-  
abnegation,  
Cleanse my love in its self-  
spending,  
And absorb the poor  
libation!  
Wind my thread of life up  
higher,  
Up, through angels' hands  
of fire!  
I aspire while I expire.



# ***LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP:***

## **A ROMANCE OF THE AGE.**

*A Poet writes to his Friend. Place—A Room in Wycombe Hall.  
Time—Late in the evening.*

I.

Dear my friend and fellow-  
student, I would lean  
my spirit o'er you!

Down the purple of this  
chamber tears  
should scarcely run  
at will.

I am humbled who was  
humble. Friend, I  
bow my head before  
you:

You should lead me to my  
peasants, but their  
faces are too still.

II.

There's a lady, an earl's  
daughter,—she is  
proud and she is  
noble,

And she treads the crimson  
carpet and she  
breathes the

perfumed air,  
And a kingly blood sends  
glances up, her  
princely eye to  
trouble,  
And the shadow of a  
monarch's crown is  
softened in her hair.

### III.

She has halls among the  
woodlands, she has  
castles by the  
breakers,  
She has farms and she has  
manors, she can  
threaten and  
command:  
And the palpitating engines  
snort in steam  
across her acres,  
As they mark upon the  
blasted heaven the  
measure of the land.

### IV.

There are none of  
England's daughters  
who can show a  
prouder presence;  
Upon princely suitors'  
praying she has  
looked in her  
disdain.

She was sprung of English  
nobles, I was born of  
English peasants;  
What was / that I should  
love her, save for  
competence to  
pain?

V.

I was only a poor poet,  
made for singing at  
her casement,  
As the finches or the  
thrushes, while she  
thought of other  
things.  
Oh, she walked so high  
above me, she  
appeared to my  
abasement,  
In her lovely silken murmur,  
like an angel clad in  
wings!

VI.

Many vassals bow before  
her as her carriage  
sweeps their  
doorways;  
She has blest their little  
children, as a priest  
or queen were she:  
Far too tender, or too cruel  
far, her smile upon



the poor was,  
For I thought it was the  
same smile which  
she used to smile on  
*me*.

VII.

She has voters in the  
Commons, she has  
lovers in the palace,  
And, of all the fair court-  
ladies, few have  
jewels half as fine;  
Oft the Prince has named  
her beauty 'twixt the  
red wine and the  
chalice:  
Oh, and what was / to love  
her? my beloved, my  
Geraldine!

VIII.

Yet I could not choose but  
love her: I was born  
to poet-uses,  
To love all things set above  
me, all of good and  
all of fair.  
Nymphs of mountain, not of  
valley, we are wont  
to call the Muses;  
And in nympholeptic  
climbing, poets pass  
from mount to star.

IX.

And because I was a poet,  
and because the  
public praised me,  
With a critical deduction for  
the modern writer's  
fault,  
I could sit at rich men's  
tables,—though the  
courtesies that  
raised me,  
Still suggested clear  
between us the pale  
spectrum of the salt.

X.

And they praised me in her  
presence—"Will  
your book appear  
this summer?"  
Then returning to each  
other—"Yes, our  
plans are for the  
moors."  
Then with whisper dropped  
behind me—"There  
he is! the latest  
comer.  
Oh, she only likes his  
verses! what is over,  
she endures.

XI.

"Quite low-born, self-

educated!  
somewhat gifted  
though by nature,  
And we make a point of  
asking him,—of  
being very kind.  
You may speak, he does  
not hear you! and,  
besides, he writes  
no satire,—  
All these serpents kept by  
charmners leave the  
natural sting  
behind."

XII.

I grew scornfuller, grew  
colder, as I stood up  
there among them,  
Till as frost intense will burn  
you, the cold  
scorning scorched  
my brow;  
When a sudden silver  
speaking, gravely  
cadenced, over-rung  
them,  
And a sudden silken stirring  
touched my inner  
nature through.

XIII.

I looked upward and beheld  
her: with a calm and

regnant spirit,  
Slowly round she swept her  
eyelids, and said  
clear before them all  
—

"Have you such superfluous  
honour, sir, that able  
to confer it  
You will come down, Mister  
Bertram, as my  
guest to Wycombe  
Hall?"

#### XIV.

Here she paused; she had  
been paler at the  
first word of her  
speaking,  
But, because a silence  
followed it, blushed  
somewhat, as for  
shame:  
Then, as scorning her own  
feeling, resumed  
calmly—"I am  
seeking  
More distinction than these  
gentlemen think  
worthy of my claim.

#### XV.

"Ne'ertheless, you see, I  
seek it—not  
because I am a

woman,"  
(Here her smile sprang like  
a fountain and, so,  
overflowed her  
mouth)  
"But because my woods in  
Sussex have some  
purple shades at  
gloaming  
Which are worthy of a king  
in state, or poet in  
his youth.

XVI.

"I invite you, Mister  
Bertram, to no  
scene for worldly  
speeches—  
Sir, I scarce should dare—  
but only where God  
asked the thrushes  
first:  
And if *you* will sing beside  
them, in the covert of  
my beeches,  
I will thank you for the  
woodlands,—for the  
human world, at  
worst."

XVII.

Then she smiled around  
right childly, then she  
gazed around right

queenly,  
And I bowed—I could not  
answer; alternated  
light and gloom—  
While as one who quells the  
lions, with a steady  
eye serenely,  
She, with level fronting  
eyelids, passed out  
stately from the  
room.

XVIII.

Oh, the blessèd woods of  
Sussex, I can hear  
them still around me,  
With their leafy tide of  
greenery still rippling  
up the wind!  
Oh, the cursèd woods of  
Sussex! where the  
hunter's arrow found  
me,  
When a fair face and a  
tender voice had  
made me mad and  
blind!

XIX.

In that ancient hall of  
Wycombe thronged  
the numerous guests  
invited,  
And the lovely London

ladies trod the floors  
with gliding feet;  
And their voices low with  
fashion, not with  
feeling, softly  
freighted  
All the air about the  
windows with elastic  
laughters sweet.

XX.

For at eve the open  
windows flung their  
light out on the  
terrace  
Which the floating orbs of  
curtains did with  
gradual shadow  
sweep,  
While the swans upon the  
river, fed at morning  
by the heiress,  
Trembled downward  
through their snowy  
wings at music in  
their sleep.

XXI.

And there evermore was  
music, both of  
instrument and  
singing,  
Till the finches of the  
shrubberies grew

restless in the dark;  
But the cedars stood up  
motionless, each in  
a moonlight's  
ringing,  
And the deer, half in the  
glimmer, strewed  
the hollows of the  
park.

XXII.

And though sometimes she  
would bind me with  
her silver-corded  
speeches  
To commix my words and  
laughter with the  
converse and the  
jest,  
Oft I sat apart and, gazing  
on the river through  
the beeches,  
Heard, as pure the swans  
swam down it, her  
pure voice o'erfloat  
the rest.

XXIII.

In the morning, horn of  
hunter, hoof of  
steed and laugh of  
rider,  
Spread out cheery from the  
courtyard till we lost



them in the hills,  
While herself and other  
ladies, and her  
sutors left beside  
her,  
Went a-wandering up the  
gardens through the  
laurels and abeles.

XXIV.

Thus, her foot upon the  
new-mown grass,  
bareheaded, with  
the flowing  
Of the virginal white vesture  
gathered closely to  
her throat,  
And the golden ringlets in  
her neck just  
quickened by her  
going,  
And appearing to breathe  
sun for air, and  
doubting if to float,—

XXV.

With a bunch of dewy  
maple, which her  
right hand held  
above her,  
And which trembled a  
green shadow in  
betwixt her and the  
skies,

As she turned her face in  
going, thus, she  
drew me on to love  
her,

And to worship the  
divineness of the  
smile hid in her  
eyes.

## XXVI.

For her eyes alone smile  
constantly; her lips  
have serious  
sweetness,

And her front is calm, the  
dimple rarely ripples  
on the cheek;

But her deep blue eyes  
smile constantly, as  
if they in  
discreetness

Kept the secret of a happy  
dream she did not  
care to speak.

## XXVII.

Thus she drew me the first  
morning, out across  
into the garden,

And I walked among her  
noble friends and  
could not keep  
behind.

Spake she unto all and unto

me—"Behold, I am  
the warden  
Of the song-birds in these  
lindens, which are  
cages to their mind.

XXVIII.

"But within this swarded  
circle into which the  
lime-walk brings us,  
Whence the beeches,  
rounded greenly,  
stand away in  
reverent fear,  
I will let no music enter,  
saving what the  
fountain sings us  
Which the lilies round the  
basin may seem  
pure enough to hear.

XXIX.

"The live air that waves the  
lilies waves the  
slender jet of water  
Like a holy thought sent  
feebly up from soul  
of fasting saint:  
Whereby lies a marble  
Silence, sleeping  
(Lough the sculptor  
wrought her),  
So asleep she is forgetting  
to say Hush!—a

fancy quaint.

XXX.

"Mark how heavy white her  
eyelids! not a dream  
between them  
lingers;

And the left hand's index  
droppeth from the  
lips upon the cheek:

While the right hand,—with  
the symbol-rose held  
slack within the  
fingers,—

Has fallen backward in the  
basin—yet this  
Silence will not  
speak!

XXXI.

"That the essential meaning  
growing may exceed  
the special symbol,  
Is the thought as I conceive  
it: it applies more  
high and low.

Our true noblemen will often  
through right  
nobleness grow  
humble,

And assert an inward  
honour by denying  
outward show."

XXXII.

"Nay, your Silence," said I,  
"truly, holds her  
symbol-rose but  
slackly,  
Yet *she holds it*, or would  
scarcely be a  
Silence to our ken:  
And your nobles wear their  
ermine on the  
outside, or walk  
blackly  
In the presence of the  
social law as mere  
ignoble men.

XXXIII.

"Let the poets dream such  
dreaming! madam,  
in these British  
islands

'T is the substance that  
wanes ever, 't is the  
symbol that  
exceeds.

Soon we shall have nought  
but symbol: and, for  
statues like this  
Silence,

Shall accept the rose's  
image—in another  
case, the weed's."

#### XXXIV.

"Not so quickly," she  
retorted,—"  
confess, where'er  
you go, you

Find for things, names—  
shows for actions,  
and pure gold for  
honour clear:

But when all is run to  
symbol in the Social,  
I will throw you

The world's book which  
now reads dryly, and  
sit down with  
Silence here."

XXXV.

Half in playfulness she  
spoke, I thought, and  
half in indignation;  
Friends, who listened,  
laughed her words  
off, while her lovers  
deemed her fair:  
A fair woman, flushed with  
feeling, in her noble-  
lighted station  
Near the statue's white  
reposing—and both  
bathed in sunny air!

XXXVI.

With the trees round, not so  
distant but you heard  
their vernal murmur,  
And beheld in light and  
shadow the leaves  
in and outward  
move,  
And the little fountain  
leaping toward the  
sun-heart to be  
warmer,  
Then recoiling in a tremble  
from the too much  
light above.

XXXVII.

'T is a picture for  
remembrance. And  
thus, morning after  
morning,  
Did I follow as she drew me  
by the spirit to her  
feet.  
Why, her greyhound  
followed also! dogs  
—we both were  
dogs for scorning—  
To be sent back when she  
pleased it and her  
path lay through the  
wheat.

XXXVIII.

And thus, morning after  
morning, spite of  
vows and spite of  
sorrow,  
Did I follow at her drawing,  
while the week-days  
passed along,—  
Just to feed the swans this  
noontide, or to see  
the fawns to-morrow,  
Or to teach the hill-side  
echo some sweet  
Tuscan in a song.

XXXIX.



Ay, for sometimes on the  
hill-side, while we  
sate down in the  
gowans,

With the forest green  
behind us and its  
shadow cast before,  
And the river running under,  
and across it from  
the rowans

A brown partridge whirring  
near us till we felt the  
air it bore,—

XL.

There, obedient to her  
praying, did I read  
aloud the poems

Made to Tuscan flutes, or  
instruments more  
various of our own;

Read the pastoral parts of  
Spenser, or the  
subtle interflowings

Found in Petrarch's  
sonnets—here's the  
book, the leaf is  
folded down!

XLI.

Or at times a modern  
volume,

Wordsworth's  
solemn-thoughted  
idyl,  
Howitt's ballad-verse, or  
Tennyson's  
enchanted reverie,  
—

Or from Browning some  
"Pomegranate,"  
which, if cut deep  
down the middle,  
Shows a heart within blood-  
tinctured, of a veined  
humanity.

XLII.

Or at times I read there,  
hoarsely, some new  
poem of my making:  
Poets ever fail in reading  
their own verses to  
their worth,  
For the echo in you breaks  
upon the words  
which you are  
speaking,  
And the chariot wheels jar  
in the gate through  
which you drive them  
forth.

XLIII.

After, when we were grown  
tired of books, the  
silence round us  
flinging

A slow arm of sweet  
compression, felt  
with beatings at the  
breast

She would break out on a  
sudden in a gush of  
woodland singing,

Like a child's emotion in a  
god—a naiad tired  
of rest.

XLIV.

Oh, to see or hear her  
singing! scarce I  
know which is  
divinest,

For her looks sing too—she  
modulates her  
gestures on the tune,

And her mouth stirs with the  
song, like song; and  
when the notes are  
finest,

'T is the eyes that shoot out  
vocal light and seem  
to swell them on.

XLV.

Then we talked—oh, how  
we talked! her voice,  
so cadenced in the  
talking,  
Made another singing—of  
the soul! a music  
without bars:  
While the leafy sounds of  
woodlands,  
humming round  
where we were  
walking,  
Brought interposition  
worthy-sweet,—as  
skies about the  
stars.

XLVI.

And she spake such good  
thoughts natural, as  
if she always thought  
them;  
She had sympathies so  
rapid, open, free as  
bird on branch,  
Just as ready to fly east as  
west, whichever way  
besought them,  
In the birchen-wood a  
chirrup, or a cock-  
crow in the grange.

XLVII.

In her utmost lightness there  
is truth—and often  
she speaks lightly,  
Has a grace in being gay  
which even mournful  
souls approve,  
For the root of some grave  
earnest thought is  
understruck so  
rightly  
As to justify the foliage and  
the waving flowers  
above.

XLVIII.

And she talked on—we  
talked, rather! upon  
all things, substance,  
shadow,  
Of the sheep that browsed  
the grasses, of the  
reapers in the corn,  
Of the little children from the  
schools, seen  
winding through the  
meadow,  
Of the poor rich world  
beyond them, still  
kept poorer by its  
scorn.

XLIX.

So, of men, and so, of  
letters—books are  
men of higher  
stature,  
And the only men that  
speak aloud for  
future times to hear;  
So, of mankind in the  
abstract, which  
grows slowly into  
nature,  
Yet will lift the cry of  
"progress," as it trod  
from sphere to  
sphere.

L.

And her custom was to  
praise me when I  
said,—"The Age  
culls simples,  
With a broad clown's back  
turned broadly to the  
glory of the stars.  
We are gods by our own  
reck'ning, and may  
well shut up the  
temples,  
And wield on, amid the  
incense-steam, the  
thunder of our cars.

LI.

"For we throw out  
acclamations of self-  
thanking, self  
admiring,  
With, at every mile run  
faster,—'O the  
wondrous wondrous  
age!'  
Little thinking if we work our  
SOULS as nobly as  
our iron,  
Or if angels will commend  
us at the goal of  
pilgrimage.

LII.

"Why, what *is* this patient  
entrance into  
nature's deep  
resources  
But the child's most gradual  
learning to walk  
upright without  
bane?  
When we drive out, from the  
cloud of steam,  
majestical white  
horses,  
Are we greater than the first  
men who led black  
ones by the mane?

LIII.

"If we trod the deeps of  
ocean, if we struck  
the stars in rising,  
If we wrapped the globe  
intensely with one  
hot electric breath,  
'T were but power within our  
tether, no new spirit-  
power comprising,  
And in life we were not  
greater men, nor  
bolder men in  
death."

LIV.

She was patient with my  
talking; and I loved  
her, loved her certes  
As I loved all heavenly  
objects, with uplifted  
eyes and hands;  
As I loved pure inspirations,  
loved the graces,  
loved the virtues,  
In a Love content with  
writing his own  
name on desert  
sands.

LV.

Or at least I thought so,  
purely; thought no



idiot Hope was  
raising  
Any crown to crown Love's  
silence, silent Love  
that sate alone:  
Out, alas! the stag is like  
me, he that tries to  
go on grazing  
With the great deep gun-  
wound in his neck,  
then reels with  
sudden moan.

LVI.

It was thus I reeled. I told  
you that her hand  
had many suitors;  
But she smiles them down  
imperiallly as Venus  
did the waves,  
And with such a gracious  
coldness that they  
cannot press their  
futures  
On the present of her  
courtesy, which  
yieldingly enslaves.

LVII.

And this morning as I sat  
alone within the  
inner chamber

With the great saloon  
beyond it, lost in  
pleasant thought  
serene,  
For I had been reading  
Camoëns, that  
poem you  
remember,  
Which his lady's eyes are  
praised in as the  
sweetest ever seen.

LVIII.

And the book lay open, and  
my thought flew from  
it, taking from it  
A vibration and impulsion to  
an end beyond its  
own,  
As the branch of a green  
osier, when a child  
would overcome it,  
Springs up freely from his  
claspings and goes  
swinging in the sun.

LIX.

As I mused I heard a  
murmur; it grew  
deep as it grew  
longer,  
Speakers using earnest

language—"Lady  
Geraldine, you  
*would!*"

And I heard a voice that  
pleaded, ever on in  
accents stronger,  
As a sense of reason gave  
it power to make its  
rhetoric good.

LX.

Well I knew that voice; it  
was an earl's, of soul  
that matched his  
station,  
Soul completed into  
lordship, might and  
right read on his  
brow;  
Very finely courteous; far  
too proud to doubt  
his domination  
Of the common people, he  
atones for grandeur  
by a bow.

LXI.

High straight forehead,  
nose of eagle, cold  
blue eyes of less  
expression  
Than resistance, coldly

casting off the looks  
of other men,  
As steel, arrows; unelastic  
lips which seem to  
taste possession  
And be cautious lest the  
common air should  
injure or distract.

LXII.

For the rest, accomplished,  
upright,—ay, and  
standing by his  
order  
With a bearing not  
ungraceful; fond of  
art and letters too;  
Just a good man made a  
proud man,—as the  
sandy rocks that  
border  
A wild coast, by  
circumstances, in a  
regnant ebb and  
flow.

LXIII.

Thus, I knew that voice, I  
heard it, and I could  
not help the  
hearkening:  
In the room I stood up

blindly, and my  
burning heart within  
Seemed to seethe and fuse  
my senses till they  
ran on all sides  
darkening,  
And scorched, weighed like  
melted metal round  
my feet that stood  
therein.

LXIV.

And that voice, I heard it  
pleading, for love's  
sake, for wealth,  
position,  
For the sake of liberal uses  
and great actions to  
be done:  
And she interrupted gently,  
"Nay, my lord, the  
old tradition  
Of your Normans, by some  
worthier hand than  
mine is, should be  
won."

LXV.

"Ah, that white hand!" he  
said quickly,—and in  
his he either drew it  
Or attempted—for with

gravity and instance  
she replied,  
"Nay, indeed, my lord, this  
talk is vain, and we  
had best eschew it  
And pass on, like friends, to  
other points less  
easy to decide."

LXVI.

What he said again, I know  
not: it is likely that  
his trouble  
Worked his pride up to the  
surface, for she  
answered in slow  
scorn,  
"And your lordship judges  
rightly. Whom I marry  
shall be noble,  
Ay, and wealthy. I shall  
never blush to think  
how he was born."

LXVII.

There, I maddened! her  
words stung me. Life  
swept through me  
into fever,  
And my soul sprang up  
astonished, sprang  
full-statured in an

hour.  
Know you what it is when  
anguish, with  
apocalyptic NEVER,  
To a Pythian height dilates  
you, and despair  
sublimes to power?

LXVIII.

From my brain the soul-  
wings budded,  
waved a flame about  
my body,  
Whence conventions coiled  
to ashes. I felt self-  
drawn out, as man,  
From amalgamate false  
natures, and I saw  
the skies grow ruddy  
With the deepening feet of  
angels, and I knew  
what spirits can.

LXIX.

I was mad, inspired—say  
either! (anguish  
worketh inspiration)  
Was a man or beast—  
perhaps so, for the  
tiger roars when  
speared;  
And I walked on, step by

step along the level  
of my passion—  
Oh my soul! and passed  
the doorway to her  
face, and never  
feared.

LXX.

*He* had left her,  
peradventure, when  
my footstep proved  
my coming,  
But for *her*—she half arose,  
then sate, grew  
scarlet and grew  
pale.  
Oh, she trembled! 't is so  
always with a worldly  
man or woman  
In the presence of true  
spirits; what else  
*can* they do but  
quail?

LXXI.

Oh, she fluttered like a  
tame bird, in among  
its forest-brothers  
Far too strong for it; then  
drooping, bowed her  
face upon her  
hands;



And I spake out wildly,  
fiercely, brutal truths  
of her and others:  
I, she planted in the desert,  
swathed her,  
windlike, with my  
sands.

LXXII.

I plucked up her social  
fictions, bloody-  
rooted though leaf-  
verdant,  
Trod them down with words  
of shaming,—all the  
purple and the gold.  
All the "landed stakes" and  
lordships, all that  
spirits pure and  
ardent  
Are cast out of love and  
honour because  
chancing not to hold.

LXXIII.

"For myself I do not argue,"  
said I, "though I love  
you, madam,  
But for better souls that  
nearer to the height  
of yours have trod:  
And this age shows, to my

thinking, still more  
infidels to Adam  
Than directly, by  
profession, simple  
infidels to God.

LXXIV.

"Yet, O God," I said, "O  
grave," I said, "O  
mother's heart and  
bosom,  
With whom first and last are  
equal, saint and  
corpse and little  
child!  
We are fools to your  
deductions, in these  
figments of heart-  
closing;  
We are traitors to your  
causes, in these  
sympathies defiled.

LXXV.

"Learn more reverence,  
madam, not for rank  
or wealth—*that*  
needs no learning:  
*That* comes quickly, quick  
as sin does, ay, and  
culminates to sin;  
But for Adam's seed, MAN!

Trust me, 't is a clay  
above your scorning,  
With God's image stamped  
upon it, and God's  
kindling breath  
within.

LXXVI.

"What right have you,  
madam, gazing in  
your palace mirror  
daily,  
Getting so by heart your  
beauty which all  
others must adore,  
While you draw the golden  
ringlets down your  
fingers, to vow gaily  
You will wed no man that's  
only good to God,  
and nothing more?

LXXVII.

"Why, what right have you,  
made fair by that  
same God, the  
sweetest woman  
Of all women He has  
fashioned, with your  
lovely spirit-face  
Which would seem too near  
to vanish if its smile

were not so human,  
And your voice of holy  
sweetness, turning  
common words to  
grace,—

LXXVIII.

"What right *can* you have,  
God's other works to  
scorn, despise,  
revile them  
In the gross, as mere men,  
broadly—not as  
*noble* men, forsooth,  
—

As mere Pariahs of the  
outer world,  
forbidden to assoil  
them  
In the hope of living, dying,  
near that sweetness  
of your mouth?

LXXIX.

"Have you any answer,  
madam? If my spirit  
were less earthly,  
If its instrument were gifted  
with a better silver  
string,  
I would kneel down where I  
stand, and say—

Behold me! I am  
worthy  
Of thy loving, for I love thee.  
I am worthy as a  
king.

LXXX.

"As it is—your ermined  
pride, I swear, shall  
feel this stain upon  
her,  
That I, poor, weak, tost with  
passion, scorned by  
me and you again,  
Love you, madam, dare to  
love you, to my grief  
and your dishonour,  
To my endless desolation,  
and your impotent  
disdain!"

LXXXI.

More mad words like these  
—mere madness!  
friend, I need not  
write them fuller,  
For I hear my hot soul  
dropping on the  
lines in showers of  
tears.  
Oh, a woman! friend, a  
woman! why, a

beast had scarce  
been duller  
Than roar bestial loud  
complaints against  
the shining of the  
spheres.

LXXXII.

But at last there came a  
pause. I stood all  
vibrating with  
thunder  
Which my soul had used.  
The silence drew her  
face up like a call.  
Could you guess what word  
she uttered? She  
looked up, as if in  
wonder,  
With tears beaded on her  
lashes, and said  
—"Bertram!"—It  
was all.

LXXXIII.

If she had cursed me, and  
she might have, or if  
even, with queenly  
bearing  
Which at need is used by  
women, she had  
risen up and said,

"Sir, you are my guest, and  
therefore I have  
given you a full  
hearing:

Now, beseech you, choose  
a name exacting  
somewhat less,  
instead!"—

LXXXIV.

I had borne it: but that  
"Bertram"—why, it  
lies there on the  
paper

A mere word, without her  
accent, and you  
cannot judge the  
weight

Of the calm which crushed  
my passion: I  
seemed drowning in  
a vapour;

And her gentleness  
destroyed me whom  
her scorn made  
desolate.

LXXXV.

So, struck backward and  
exhausted by that  
inward flow of  
passion

Which had rushed on,  
sparing nothing, into  
forms of abstract  
truth,

By a logic agonizing  
through unseemly  
demonstration,

And by youth's own anguish  
turning grimly grey  
the hairs of youth,—

LXXXVI.

By the sense accursed and  
instant, that if even I  
spake wisely

I spake basely—using truth,  
if what I spake  
indeed was true,

To avenge wrong on a  
woman—*her*, who  
sate there weighing  
nicely

A poor manhood's worth,  
found guilty of such  
deeds as I could do!

—

LXXXVII.

By such wrong and woe  
exhausted—what I  
suffered and  
occasioned,—



As a wild horse through a  
city runs with  
lightning in his eyes,  
And then dashing at a  
church's cold and  
passive wall,  
impassioned,  
Strikes the death into his  
burning brain, and  
blindly drops and  
dies—

LXXXVIII.

So I fell, struck down before  
her—do you blame  
me, friend, for  
weakness?

'T was my strength of  
passion slew me!—  
fell before her like a  
stone;

Fast the dreadful world  
rolled from me on its  
roaring wheels of  
blackness:

When the light came I was  
lying in this chamber  
and alone.

LXXXIX.

Oh, of course she charged  
her lacqueys to bear

out the sickly  
burden,  
And to cast it from her  
scornful sight, but  
not *beyond* the gate;  
She is too kind to be cruel,  
and too haughty not  
to pardon  
Such a man as I; 't were  
something to be  
level to her hate.

XC.

But for me—you now are  
conscious why, my  
friend, I write this  
letter,  
How my life is read all  
backward, and the  
charm of life undone.  
I shall leave her house at  
dawn; I would to-  
night, if I were better  
—  
And I charge my soul to  
hold my body  
strengthened for the  
sun.

XCI.

When the sun has dyed the  
oriel, I depart, with

no last gazes,  
No weak moanings (one  
word only, left in  
writing for her  
hands),  
Out of reach of all derision,  
and some unavailing  
praises,  
To make front against this  
anguish in the far  
and foreign lands.

## XCII.

Blame me not. I would not  
squander life in grief  
—I am abstemious.  
I but nurse my spirit's falcon  
that its wing may  
soar again.  
There's no room for tears of  
weakness in the  
blind eyes of a  
Phemius:  
Into work the poet kneads  
them, and he does  
not die *till then*.

## CONCLUSION.

Bertram finished the last  
pages, while along  
the silence ever  
Still in hot and heavy  
splashes fell the  
tears on every leaf.  
Having ended, he leans  
backward in his  
chair, with lips that  
quiver  
From the deep unspoken,  
ay, and deep  
unwritten thoughts of  
grief.

II.

Soh! how still the lady  
standeth! 'T is a  
dream—a dream of  
mercies!  
'Twixt the purple lattice-  
curtains how she  
standeth still and  
pale!  
'T is a vision, sure, of  
mercies, sent to  
soften his self  
curses,  
Sent to sweep a patient  
quiet o'er the tossing  
of his wail.

III.

"Eyes," he said, "now  
throbbing through  
me! are ye eyes that  
did undo me?"

Shining eyes, like antique  
jewels set in Parian  
statue-stone!

Underneath that calm white  
forehead are ye ever  
burning torrid

O'er the desolate sand-  
desert of my heart  
and life undone?"

#### IV.

With a murmurous stir  
uncertain, in the air  
the purple curtain

Swelleth in and swelleth out  
around her  
motionless pale  
brows,

While the gliding of the river  
sends a rippling  
noise for ever

Through the open  
casement whitened  
by the moonlight's  
slant repose.

#### V.

Said he—"Vision of a lady!

stand there silent,  
stand there steady!  
Now I see it plainly, plainly  
now I cannot hope or  
doubt—  
There, the brows of mild  
repression—there,  
the lips of silent  
passion,  
Curvèd like an archer's bow  
to send the bitter  
arrows out."

VI.

Ever, evermore the while in  
a slow silence she  
kept smiling,  
And approached him  
slowly, slowly, in a  
gliding measured  
pace;  
With her two white hands  
extended as if  
praying one  
offended,  
And a look of supplication  
gazing earnest in his  
face.

VII.

Said he—"Wake me by no  
gesture,—sound of

breath, or stir of  
vesture!

Let the blessèd apparition  
melt not yet to its  
divine!

No approaching—hush, no  
breathing! or my  
heart must swoon to  
death in

The too utter life thou  
bringest, O thou  
dream of  
Geraldine!"

### VIII.

Ever, evermore the while in  
a slow silence she  
kept smiling,  
But the tears ran over lightly  
from her eyes and  
tenderly:—

"Dost thou, Bertram, truly  
love me? Is no  
woman far above  
me

Found more worthy of thy  
poet-heart than such  
a one as *I*?"

### IX.

Said he—"I would dream  
so ever, like the

flowing of that river,  
Flowing ever in a shadow  
greenly onward to  
the sea!  
So, thou vision of all  
sweetness, princely  
to a full  
completeness  
Would my heart and life  
flow onward,  
deathward, through  
this dream of  
THEE!"

X.

Ever, evermore the while in  
a slow silence she  
kept smiling,  
While the silver tears ran  
faster down the  
blushing of her  
cheeks;  
Then with both her hands  
enfolding both of his,  
she softly told him,  
"Bertram, if I say I love thee,  
... 't is the vision only  
speaks."

XI.

Softened, quickened to  
adore her, on his



knee he fell before  
her,

And she whispered low in  
triumph, "It shall be  
as I have sworn.

Very rich he is in virtues,  
very noble—noble,  
certes;

And I shall not blush in  
knowing that men  
call him lowly born."

# ***THE RUNAWAY SLAVE AT PILGRIM'S POINT.***

I.

I stand on the mark beside  
the shore  
Of the first white  
pilgrim's  
bended knee,  
Where exile turned to  
ancestor,  
And God was thanked  
for liberty.  
I have run through the night,  
my skin is as dark,  
I bend my knee down on  
this mark:  
I look on the sky and  
the sea.

II.

O pilgrim-souls, I speak to  
you!  
I see you come proud  
and slow  
From the land of the spirits  
pale as dew  
And round me and  
round me ye go.

O pilgrims, I have gasped  
and run  
All night long from the whips  
of one  
Who in your names  
works sin and  
woe!

III.

And thus I thought that I  
would come  
And kneel here where  
ye knelt before,  
And feel your souls around  
me hum  
In undertone to the  
ocean's roar;  
And lift my black face, my  
black hand,  
Here, in your names, to  
curse this land  
Ye blessed in  
freedom's,  
evermore.

IV.

I am black, I am black,  
And yet God made  
me, they say:  
But if He did so, smiling  
back  
He must have cast his

work away  
Under the feet of his white  
creatures,  
With a look of scorn, that  
the dusky features  
Might be trodden  
again to clay.

V.

And yet He has made dark  
things  
To be glad and merry  
as light:  
There's a little dark bird sits  
and sings,  
There's a dark stream  
ripples out of  
sight,  
And the dark frogs chant in  
the safe morass,  
And the sweetest stars are  
made to pass  
O'er the face of the  
darkest night.

VI.

But we who are dark, we  
are dark!  
Ah God, we have no  
stars!  
About our souls in care and  
cark

Our blackness shuts  
like prison-bars:  
The poor souls crouch so  
far behind  
That never a comfort can  
they find  
By reaching through  
the prison-bars.

VII.

Indeed we live beneath the  
sky,  
That great smooth  
Hand of God  
stretched out  
On all His children fatherly,  
To save them from the  
dread and  
doubt  
Which would be if, from this  
low place,  
All opened straight up to  
His face  
Into the grand eternity.

VIII.

And still God's sunshine  
and His frost,  
They make us hot, they  
make us cold,  
As if we were not black and  
lost;

And the beasts and  
birds, in wood  
and fold,  
Do fear and take us for very  
men:  
Could the whip-poor-will or  
the cat of the glen  
Look into my eyes and  
be bold?

IX.

I am black, I am black!  
But, once, I laughed in  
girlish glee,  
For one of my colour stood  
in the track  
Where the drivers  
drove, and  
looked at me,  
And tender and full was the  
look he gave—  
Could a slave look so at  
another slave?—  
I look at the sky and  
the sea.

X.

And from that hour our  
spirits grew  
As free as if unsold,  
unbought:  
Oh, strong enough, since

we were two,  
To conquer the world,  
we thought.  
The drivers drove us day by  
day;  
We did not mind, we went  
one way,  
And no better a  
freedom  
sought.

XI.

In the sunny ground  
between the canes,  
He said "I love you" as  
he passed;  
When the shingle-roof rang  
sharp with the rains,  
I heard how he vowed  
it fast:  
While others shook he  
smiled in the hut,  
As he carved me a bowl of  
the cocoa-nut  
Through the roar of the  
hurricanes.

XII.

I sang his name instead of  
a song,  
Over and over I sang  
his name,

Upward and downward I  
drew it along  
My various notes,—the  
same, the  
same!  
I sang it low, that the slave-  
girls near  
Might never guess, from  
aught they could  
hear,  
It was only a name—a  
name.

XIII.

I look on the sky and the  
sea.  
We were two to love,  
and two to pray:  
Yes, two, O God, who cried  
to Thee,  
Though nothing didst  
Thou say!  
Coldly Thou sat'st behind  
the sun:  
And now I cry who am but  
one,  
Thou wilt not speak to-  
day.

XIV.

We were black, we were  
black,



We had no claim to  
love and bliss,  
What marvel if each went to  
wrack?  
They wrung my cold  
hands out of  
his,  
They dragged him—  
where? I crawled to  
touch  
His blood's mark in the dust  
... not much,  
Ye pilgrim-souls,  
though plain as  
*this!*

XV.

Wrong, followed by a  
deeper wrong!  
Mere grief's too good  
for such as I:  
So the white men brought  
the shame ere long  
To strangle the sob of  
my agony.  
They would not leave me for  
my dull  
Wet eyes!—it was too  
merciful  
To let me weep pure  
tears and die.

XVI.

I am black, I am black!  
I wore a child upon my  
breast,  
An amulet that hung too  
slack,  
And, in my unrest,  
could not rest:  
Thus we went moaning,  
child and mother,  
One to another, one to  
another,  
Until all ended for the  
best.

XVII.

For hark! I will tell you low,  
low,  
I am black, you see,—  
And the babe who lay on  
my bosom so,  
Was far too white, too  
white for me;  
As white as the ladies who  
scorned to pray  
Beside me at church but  
yesterday,  
Though my tears had  
washed a place  
for my knee.

XVIII.

My own, own child! I could

not bear  
To look in his face, it  
was so white;  
I covered him up with a  
kerchief there,  
I covered his face in  
close and tight:  
And he moaned and  
struggled, as well  
might be,  
For the white child wanted  
his liberty—  
Ha, ha! he wanted the  
master-right.

XIX.

He moaned and beat with  
his head and feet,  
His little feet that never  
grew;  
He struck them out, as it  
was meet,  
Against my heart to  
break it through:  
I might have sung and  
made him mild,  
But I dared not sing to the  
white-faced child  
The only song I knew.

XX.

I pulled the kerchief very

close:  
He could not see the  
sun, I swear,  
More, then, alive, than now  
he does  
From between the  
roots of the  
mango ...  
where?  
I know where. Close! A  
child and mother  
Do wrong to look at one  
another  
When one is black and  
one is fair.

XXI.

Why, in that single glance I  
had  
Of my child's face, ... I  
tell you all,  
I saw a look that made me  
mad!  
The *master's* look, that  
used to fall  
On my soul like his lash ...  
or worse!  
And so, to save it from my  
curse,  
I twisted it round in my  
shawl.

XXII.

And he moaned and  
trembled from foot to  
head,  
He shivered from head  
to foot;  
Till after a time, he lay  
instead  
Too suddenly still and  
mute.  
I felt, beside, a stiffening  
cold:  
I dared to lift up just a fold,  
As in lifting a leaf of the  
mango-fruit.

XXIII.

But *my* fruit ... ha, ha!—  
there, had been  
(I laugh to think on 't at  
this hour!)

Your fine white angels (who  
have seen  
Nearest the secret of  
God's power)

And plucked my fruit to  
make them wine,  
And sucked the soul of that  
child of mine  
As the humming-bird  
sucks the soul  
of the flower.

XXIV.



Ha, ha, the trick of the  
angels white!  
They freed the white  
child's spirit so.  
I said not a word, but day  
and night  
I carried the body to  
and fro,  
And it lay on my heart like a  
stone, as chill.  
—The sun may shine out as  
much as he will:  
I am cold, though it  
happened a  
month ago.

XXV.

From the white man's  
house, and the black  
man's hut,  
I carried the little body  
on;  
The forest's arms did round  
us shut,  
And silence through  
the trees did  
run:  
They asked no question as  
I went,  
They stood too high for  
astonishment,  
They could see God sit  
on his throne.

XXVI.

My little body, kerchiefed  
fast,  
I bore it on through the  
forest, on;  
And when I felt it was tired  
at last,  
I scooped a hole  
beneath the  
moon:  
Through the forest-tops the  
angels far,  
With a white sharp finger  
from every star,  
Did point and mock at  
what was done.

XXVII.

Yet when it was all done  
aught,—  
Earth, 'twixt me and my  
baby, strewed,  
—  
All, changed to black earth,  
—nothing white,—  
A dark child in the  
dark!—ensued  
Some comfort, and my  
heart grew young;  
I sate down smiling there  
and sung



The song I learnt in my  
maidenhood.

XXVIII.

And thus we two were  
reconciled,  
The white child and  
black mother,  
thus;  
For as I sang it soft and  
wild,  
The same song, more  
melodious,  
Rose from the grave  
whereon I sate  
It was the dead child  
singing that,  
To join the souls of  
both of us.

XXIX.

I look on the sea and the  
sky.  
Where the pilgrims'  
ships first  
anchored lay  
The free sun rideth  
gloriously,  
But the pilgrim-ghosts  
have slid away  
Through the earliest streaks  
of the morn:

My face is black, but it  
glares with a scorn  
Which they dare not  
meet by day.

XXX.

Ha!—in their stead, their  
hunter sons!  
Ha, ha! they are on me  
—they hunt in a  
ring!  
Keep off! I brave you all at  
once,  
I throw off your eyes  
like snakes that  
sting!  
You have killed the black  
eagle at nest, I think:  
Did you ever stand still in  
your triumph, and  
shrink  
From the stroke of her  
wounded wing?

XXXI.

(Man, drop that stone you  
dared to lift!—)  
I wish you who stand  
there five  
abreast.  
Each, for his own wife's joy  
and gift,

A little corpse as safely  
at rest  
As mine in the mangoes!  
Yes, but *she*  
May keep live babies on  
her knee,  
And sing the song she  
likes the best.

XXXII.

I am not mad: I am black.  
I see you staring in my  
face—  
I know you staring,  
shrinking back,  
Ye are born of the  
Washington-  
race,  
And this land is the free  
America,  
And this mark on my wrist  
—(I prove what I say)  
Ropes tied me up here  
to the flogging-  
place.

XXXIII.

You think I shrieked then?  
Not a sound!  
I hung, as a gourd  
hangs in the  
sun;

I only cursed them all  
around  
As softly as I might  
have done  
My very own child: from  
these sands  
Up to the mountains, lift  
your hands,  
O slaves, and end  
what I begun!

XXXIV.

Whips, curses; these must  
answer those!  
For in this Union you  
have set  
Two kinds of men in  
adverse rows,  
Each loathing each;  
and all forget  
The seven wounds in  
Christ's body fair,  
While He sees gaping  
everywhere  
Our countless wounds  
that pay no  
debt.

XXXV.

Our wounds are different.  
Your white men  
Are, after all, not gods

indeed,  
Nor able to make Christs  
again  
Do good with  
bleeding. We  
who bleed  
(Stand off!) we help not in  
our loss!  
We are too heavy for our  
cross,  
And fall and crush you  
and your seed.

XXXVI.

I fall, I swoon! I look at the  
sky.  
The clouds are  
breaking on my  
brain  
I am floated along, as if I  
should die  
Of liberty's exquisite  
pain.  
In the name of the white  
child waiting for me  
In the death-dark where we  
may kiss and agree,  
White men, I leave you all  
curse-free  
In my broken heart's  
disdain!



# ***THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.***

"Φηῦ, φηῦ, τί προσδέρκεσθέ μ' ὄμμασιν, τέκνα;"—Medea.

I.

Do ye hear the children  
weeping, O my  
brothers,  
Ere the sorrow  
comes with  
years?

They are leaning their  
young heads against  
their mothers.  
And *that* cannot  
stop their  
tears.

The young lambs are  
bleating in the  
meadows,  
The young birds are  
chirping in the  
nest,

The young fawns are  
playing with the  
shadows,  
The young flowers are  
blowing toward  
the west—

But the young, young

children, O my  
brothers,  
They are weeping  
bitterly!  
They are weeping in the  
playtime of the  
others,  
In the country of  
the free.

II.

Do you question the young  
children in the  
sorrow  
Why their tears  
are falling  
so?  
The old man may weep for  
his to-morrow  
Which is lost in  
Long Ago;  
The old tree is leafless in  
the forest,  
The old year is ending  
in the frost,  
The old wound, if stricken,  
is the sorest,  
The old hope is  
hardest to be  
lost:  
But the young, young  
children, O my  
brothers,



Do you ask them  
why they  
stand  
Weeping sore before the  
bosoms of their  
mothers,  
In our happy  
Fatherland?

III.

They look up with their pale  
and sunken faces,  
And their looks  
are sad to  
see,  
For the man's hoary  
anguish draws and  
presses  
Down the cheeks  
of infancy;  
"Your old earth," they say,  
"is very dreary,  
Our young feet," they  
say, "are very  
weak;  
Few paces have we taken,  
yet are weary—  
Our grave-rest is very  
far to seek:  
Ask the aged why they  
weep, and not the  
children,  
For the outside

earth is  
cold,  
And we young ones stand  
without, in our  
bewildering,  
And the graves  
are for the  
old."

#### IV.

"True," say the children, "it  
may happen  
That we die  
before our  
time:  
Little Alice died last year,  
her grave is shapen  
Like a snowball, in  
the rime.  
We looked into the pit  
prepared to take  
her:  
Was no room for any  
work in the  
close clay!  
From the sleep wherein she  
lieth none will wake  
her,  
Crying, 'Get up, little  
Alice! it is day.'  
If you listen by that grave, in  
sun and shower,  
With your ear down,

little Alice never  
cries;  
Could we see her face, be  
sure we should not  
know her,  
For the smile has time  
for growing in  
her eyes:  
And merry go her moments,  
lulled and stilled in  
The shroud by the  
kirk-chime.  
It is good when it happens,"  
say the children,  
"That we die  
before our  
time."

V.

Alas, alas, the children!  
they are seeking  
Death in life, as  
best to  
have:  
They are binding up their  
hearts away from  
breaking,  
With a cerement  
from the  
grave.  
Go out, children, from the  
mine and from the  
city,

Sing out, children, as  
the little  
thrushes do;  
Pluck your handfuls of the  
meadow-cowslips  
pretty,  
Laugh aloud, to feel  
your fingers let  
them through!  
But they answer, "Are your  
cowslips of the  
meadows  
Like our weeds  
anear the  
mine?  
Leave us quiet in the dark  
of the coal-shadows,  
From your  
pleasures  
fair and  
fine!

VI.

"For oh," say the children,  
"we are weary,  
And we cannot run  
or leap;  
If we cared for any  
meadows, it were  
merely  
To drop down in  
them and  
sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in  
the stooping,  
We fall upon our faces,  
trying to go;  
And, underneath our heavy  
eyelids drooping,  
The reddest flower  
would look as  
pale as snow.  
For, all day, we drag our  
burden tiring  
Through the coal-  
dark,  
underground;  
Or, all day, we drive the  
wheels of iron  
In the factories,  
round and  
round.

VII.

"For all day the wheels are  
droning, turning;  
Their wind comes  
in our  
faces,  
Till our hearts turn, our  
heads with pulses  
burning,  
And the walls turn  
in their  
places:  
Turns the sky in the high

window, blank and  
reeling,  
Turns the long light that  
drops adown  
the wall,  
Turn the black flies that  
crawl along the  
ceiling:  
All are turning, all the  
day, and we  
with all.  
And all day the iron wheels  
are droning,  
And sometimes  
we could  
pray,  
'O ye wheels' (breaking out  
in a mad moaning),  
'Stop! be silent for  
to-day!'"

VIII.

Ay, be silent! Let them hear  
each other breathing  
For a moment,  
mouth to  
mouth!  
Let them touch each other's  
hands, in a fresh  
wreathing  
Of their tender  
human  
youth!

Let them feel that this cold  
metallic motion  
Is not all the life God  
fashions or  
reveals:  
Let them prove their living  
souls against the  
notion  
That they live in you, or  
under you, O  
wheels!  
Still, all day, the iron wheels  
go onward,  
Grinding life down  
from its  
mark;  
And the children's souls,  
which God is calling  
sunward,  
Spin on blindly in  
the dark.

IX.

Now tell the poor young  
children, O my  
brothers,  
To look up to Him  
and pray;  
So the blessed One who  
blesseth all the  
others,  
Will bless them  
another

day.  
They answer, "Who is God  
that He should hear  
us,

While the rushing of  
the iron wheels  
is stirred?

When we sob aloud, the  
human creatures  
near us

Pass by, hearing not,  
or answer not a  
word.

And we hear not (for the  
wheels in their  
resounding)

Strangers  
speaking  
at the door:

Is it likely God, with angels  
singing round Him,  
Hears our  
weeping  
any more?

X.

"Two words, indeed, of  
praying we  
remember,  
And at midnight's  
hour of  
harm,

'Our Father,' looking



upward in the  
chamber,

We say softly for a  
charm. [\[6\]](#)

We know no other words  
except 'Our Father,'  
And we think that, in  
some pause of  
angels' song,  
God may pluck them with  
the silence sweet to  
gather,  
And hold both within  
His right hand  
which is strong.  
'Our Father!' If He heard us,  
He would surely  
(For they call Him  
good and  
mild)  
Answer, smiling down the  
steep world very  
purely,  
'Come and rest  
with me,  
my child.'

XI.

"But, no!" say the children,  
weeping faster,  
"He is speechless  
as a stone:  
And they tell us, of His

image is the master  
Who commands  
us to work  
on.  
Go to!" say the children,  
—"up in Heaven,  
Dark, wheel-like,  
turning clouds  
are all we find.  
Do not mock us; grief has  
made us  
unbelieving:  
We look up for God,  
but tears have  
made us blind."  
Do you hear the children  
weeping and  
disproving,  
O my brothers,  
what ye  
preach?  
For God's possible is  
taught by His world's  
loving,  
And the children  
doubt of  
each.

XII.

And well may the children  
weep before you!  
They are weary  
ere they

run;  
They have never seen the  
sunshine, nor the  
glory  
Which is brighter  
than the  
sun.  
They know the grief of man,  
without its wisdom;  
They sink in man's  
despair, without  
its calm;  
Are slaves, without the  
liberty in Christdom,  
Are martyrs, by the  
pang without  
the palm:  
Are worn as if with age, yet  
unretrievably  
The harvest of its  
memories  
cannot  
reap,—  
Are orphans of the earthly  
love and heavenly.  
Let them weep! let  
them  
weep!

### XIII.

They look up with their pale  
and sunken faces,  
And their look is

dread to  
see,  
For they mind you of their  
angels in high  
places,  
With eyes turned  
on Deity.  
"How long," they say, "how  
long, O cruel nation,  
Will you stand, to move  
the world, on a  
child's heart,—  
Stifle down with a mailed  
heel its palpitation,  
And tread onward to  
your throne  
amid the mart?  
Our blood splashes  
upward, O gold-  
heaper,  
And your purple  
shows your  
path!  
But the child's sob in the  
silence curses  
deeper  
Than the strong  
man in his  
wrath."

## FOOTNOTES:

[6] A fact rendered pathetically historical by Mr. Home's report of

his Commission. The name of the poet of "Orion" and "Cosmo de' Medici" has, however, a change of associations, and comes in time to remind me that we have some noble poetic heat of literature still,—however open to the reproach of being somewhat gelid in our humanity—1844.

# ***A CHILD ASLEEP.***

## **I.**

How he sleepeth,  
having  
drunken  
Weary  
childhood's  
mandragore!

From its pretty  
eyes have  
sunken  
Pleasures to  
make  
room  
for  
more;

Sleeping near the withered  
nosegay which he  
pulled the day  
before.

## **II.**

Nosegays! leave  
them for  
the waking;  
Throw them  
earthward  
where

they  
grew;  
Dim are such  
beside the  
breaking  
Amaranths  
he  
looks  
unto:  
Folded eyes see brighter  
colours than the  
open ever do.

III.

Heaven-flowers,  
rayed by  
shadows  
golden  
From the  
palms  
they  
sprang  
beneath,  
Now perhaps  
divinely  
holden,  
Swing  
against  
him in  
a  
wreath:  
We may think so from the  
quickenings of his

bloom and of his  
breath.

IV.

Vision unto vision  
calleth  
While the  
young  
child  
dreameth  
on:

Fair, O dreamer,  
thee  
befalleth  
With the glory  
thou  
hast  
won!

Darker wast thou in the  
garden yestermorn  
by summer sun.

V.

We should see  
the spirits  
ringing  
Round thee,  
were  
the  
clouds  
away:

'T is the child-



heart  
draws  
them,  
singing  
In the silent-  
seeming  
clay—

Singing! stars that seem  
the mutest go in  
music all the way.

VI.

As the moths  
around a  
taper,  
As the bees  
around  
a  
rose,  
As the gnats  
around a  
vapour,  
So the spirits  
group  
and  
close

Round about a holy  
childhood as if  
drinking its repose.

VII.

Shapes of

brightness  
overlean  
thee,  
Flash their  
diadems  
of  
youth  
On the ringlets  
which half  
screen  
thee,  
While thou  
smilest  
... not  
in  
sooth  
*Thy* smile, but the overfair  
one, dropt from  
some ethereal  
mouth.

VIII.

Haply it is angels'  
duty,  
During  
slumber,  
shade  
by  
shade  
To fine down this  
childish  
beauty  
To the thing it

must  
be  
made  
Ere the world shall bring it  
praises, or the tomb  
shall see it fade.

IX.

Softly, softly!  
make no  
noises!  
Now he lieth  
dead  
and  
dumb;  
Now he hears the  
angels'  
voices  
Folding  
silence  
in the  
room  
Now he muses deep the  
meaning of the  
Heaven-words as  
they come.

X.

Speak not! he is  
consecrated;  
Breathe no  
breath

across  
his  
eyes:  
Lifted up and  
separated  
On the hand  
of God  
he lies  
In a sweetness beyond  
touching, held in  
cloistral sanctities.

XI.

Could ye bless  
him, father  
—mother,  
Bless the  
dimple  
in his  
cheek?  
Dare ye look at  
one  
another  
And the  
benediction  
speak?  
Would ye not break out in  
weeping and  
confess yourselves  
too weak?

XII.

He is harmless, ye  
are sinful;

Ye are  
troubled,  
he at  
ease;

From his slumber  
virtue winful

Floweth  
outward  
with  
increase.

Dare not bless him! but be  
blessèd by his  
peace, and go in  
peace.

# ***THE FOURFOLD ASPECT.***

## **I.**

When ye stood up in  
the house  
With your little  
childish  
feet,  
And, in touching Life's  
first shows,  
First the touch of  
Love did  
meet,—  
Love and Nearness  
seeming one,  
By the heartlight  
cast  
before,  
And of all Beloveds,  
none  
Standing farther  
than the  
door;  
Not a name being dear  
to thought,  
With its owner  
beyond  
call;  
Not a face, unless it  
brought

Its own shadow to  
the wall;  
When the worst  
recorded  
change  
Was of apple  
dropt from  
bough,  
When love's sorrow  
seemed more  
strange  
Than love's  
treason  
can seem  
now;—  
Then, the Loving took  
you up  
Soft, upon their  
elder  
knees,  
Telling why the statues  
droop  
Underneath the  
churchyard  
trees,  
And how ye must lie  
beneath them  
Through the  
winters  
long and  
deep,  
Till the last trump  
overbreathe





Of the heroes with the  
    laurel,  
    Of the poets with  
        the bay,  
Of the two worlds'  
    earnest quarrel  
For that  
    beauteous  
    Helena;  
How Achilles at the  
    portal  
    Of the tent heard  
        footsteps  
        nigh,  
And his strong heart,  
    half-immortal,  
    Met the *keitai* with  
        a cry;  
How Ulysses left the  
    sunlight  
    For the pale  
        eidola race  
Blank and passive  
    through the dun  
    light,  
    Staring blindly in  
        his face;  
How that true wife said  
    to Poetus,  
    With calm smile  
        and  
        wounded  
        heart,

"Sweet, it hurts not!"

How Admetus  
Saw his blessed  
one depart;

How King Arthur  
proved his  
mission,  
And Sir Roland  
wound his  
horn,

And at Sangreal's  
moony vision  
Swords did bristle  
round like  
corn.

Oh, ye lifted up your head,  
and it seemed, the  
while ye read,  
That this Death,  
then, must  
be found  
A Valhalla for the  
crowned,  
The heroic  
who  
prevail:  
None, be sure can  
enter in  
Far below a  
paladin  
Of a noble  
noble  
tale—

So awfully ye thought  
upon the Dead!

III.

Ay, but soon ye woke  
up shrieking,  
As a child that  
wakes at  
night

From a dream of  
sisters  
speaking  
In a garden's

summer-  
light,—

That wakes, starting up  
and bounding,  
In a lonely lonely  
bed,

With a wall of darkness  
round him,  
Stifling black  
about his  
head!

And the full sense of  
your mortal  
Rushed upon you  
deep and  
loud,

And ye heard the  
thunder hurtle  
From the silence  
of the

cloud.  
Funeral-torches at your  
gateway  
Threw a dreadful  
light within.  
All things changed: you  
rose up  
straightway,  
And saluted  
Death and  
Sin.  
Since, your outward  
man has rallied,  
And your eye and  
voice  
grown  
bold;  
Yet the Sphinx of Life  
stands pallid,  
With her saddest  
secret told.  
Happy places have  
grown holy:  
If ye went where  
once ye  
went,  
Only tears would fall  
down slowly,  
As at solemn  
sacrament.  
Merry books, once  
read for  
pastime,

If ye dared to read  
again,  
Only memories of the  
last time  
Would swim  
darkly up  
the brain.  
Household names,  
which used to  
flutter  
Through your  
laughter  
unawares,

—

God's Divinest ye  
could utter  
With less  
trembling  
in your  
prayers.  
Ye have dropt adown your  
head, and it seems  
as if ye tread  
On your own  
hearts in  
the path  
Ye are called to in  
His wrath,  
And your  
prayers  
go up  
in wail  
—"Dost Thou see,

then, all our  
loss,  
O Thou agonized  
on cross?  
Art thou  
reading  
all its  
tale?"  
So mournfully ye think  
upon the Dead!

#### IV.

Pray, pray, thou who  
also weapest,  
And the drops will  
slacken so.  
Weep, weep, and the  
watch thou  
keepest  
With a quicker  
count will  
go.  
Think: the shadow on  
the dial  
For the nature  
most  
undone,  
Marks the passing of  
the trial,  
Proves the  
presence  
of the sun.  
Look, look up, in starry

passion,  
To the throne  
above the  
spheres:

Learn: the spirit's  
gravitation  
Still must differ  
from the  
tear's.

Hope: with all the  
strength thou  
usest  
In embracing thy  
despair.

Love: the earthly love  
thou lovest  
Shall return to  
thee more  
fair.

Work: make clear the  
forest-tangles  
Of the wildest  
stranger-  
land

Trust: the blessed  
deathly angels  
Whisper,  
"Sabbath  
hours at  
hand!"

By the heart's wound  
when most  
gory,

By the longest  
    agony,  
Smile! Behold in  
    sudden glory  
The Transfigured  
    smiles on  
    *thee!*

And ye lifted up your head,  
and it seemed as if  
He said,

    "My Belovèd, is it  
        so?

    Have ye tasted of  
        my woe?

    Of my

        Heaven

        ye

        shall

        not

        fail!"

He stands brightly

    where the

    shade is,

With the keys of

    Death and

    Hades,

And there,

    ends

    the

    mournful

    tale—

So hopefully ye think  
    upon the Dead!





# ***NIGHT AND THE MERRY MAN.***

NIGHT.

'Neath my moon what doest  
thou,

With a somewhat paler  
brow

Than she giveth to the  
ocean?

He, without a pulse or  
motion,

Muttering low before her  
stands,

Lifting his invoking hands  
Like a seer before a sprite,  
To catch her oracles of  
light:

But thy soul out-trembles  
now

Many pulses on thy brow.  
Where be all thy laughers  
clear,

Others laughed alone to  
hear?

Where thy quaint jests, said  
for fame?

Where thy dances, mixed  
with game?

Where thy festive  
companies,

Moonèd o'er with ladies'  
eyes  
All more bright for thee, I  
trow?  
'Neath my moon what doest  
thou?

### THE MERRY MAN.

I am digging my warm heart  
Till I find its coldest part;  
I am digging wide and low,  
Further than a spade will  
go,  
Till that, when the pit is  
deep  
And large enough, I there  
may heap  
All my present pain and  
past  
Joy, dead things that look  
aghast  
By the daylight: now 't is  
done.  
Throw them in, by one and  
one!  
I must laugh, at rising sun.

---

Memories—of fancy's  
golden  
Treasures which my hands

have holden,  
Till the chillness made them  
ache;  
Of childhood's hopes that  
used to wake  
If birds were in a singing  
strain,  
And for less cause, sleep  
again;  
Of the moss-seat in the  
wood  
Where I trysted solitude;  
Of the hill-top where the  
wind  
Used to follow me behind,  
Then in sudden rush to  
blind  
Both my glad eyes with my  
hair,  
Taken gladly in the snare;  
Of the climbing up the  
rocks,  
Of the playing 'neath the  
oaks  
Which retain beneath them  
now  
Only shadow of the bough;  
Of the lying on the grass  
While the clouds did  
overpass,  
Only they, so lightly driven,  
Seeming betwixt me and  
Heaven;

Of the little prayers serene,  
Murmuring of earth and sin;  
Of large-leaved philosophy  
Leaning from my childish  
knee;  
Of poetic book sublime,  
Soul-kissed for the first  
dear time,  
Greek or English, ere I  
knew  
Life was not a poem too:—  
Throw them in, by one and  
one!  
I must laugh, at rising sun.

---

—Of the glorious ambitions  
Yet unquenched by their  
fruitions  
Of the reading out the  
nights;  
Of the straining at mad  
heights;  
Of achievements, less  
descried  
By a dear few than  
magnified;  
Of praises from the many  
earned  
When praise from love was  
undiscerned;

Of the sweet reflecting  
gladness  
Softened by itself to  
sadness:—  
Throw them in, by one and  
one!  
I must laugh, at rising sun.

---

What are these? more,  
more than these!  
Throw in dearer memories!  
—  
Of voices whereof but to  
speak  
Makes mine own all sunk  
and weak;  
Of smiles the thought of  
which is sweeping  
All my soul to floods of  
weeping;  
Of looks whose absence  
fain would weigh  
My looks to the ground for  
aye;  
Of clasping hands—ah me,  
I wring  
Mine, and in a tremble fling  
Downward, downward all  
this paining!  
Partings with the sting

remaining,  
Meetings with a deeper  
throe  
Since the joy is ruined so,  
Changes with a fiery  
burning,  
(Shadows upon all the  
turning,)  
Thoughts of ... with a storm  
they came,  
*Them* I have not breath to  
name:  
Downward, downward be  
they cast  
In the pit! and now at last  
My work beneath the moon  
is done,  
And I shall laugh, at rising  
sun.

---

But let me pause or ere I  
cover  
All my treasures darkly  
over:  
I will speak not in thine  
ears,  
Only tell my beaded tears  
Silently, most silently.  
When the last is calmly told,  
Let that same moist rosary

With the rest sepulchred  
be,

Finished now! The  
darksome mould  
Sealeth up the darksome  
pit.

I will lay no stone on it,  
Grasses I will sow instead,  
Fit for Queen Titania's  
tread;

Flowers, encoloured with  
the sun,

And a a written upon none;  
Thus, whenever saileth by  
The Lady World of dainty  
eye,

Not a grief shall here  
remain,

Silken shoon to damp or  
stain:

And while she lisps, "I have  
not seen

Any place more smooth  
and clean" ...

Here she cometh!—Ha, ha!  
—who

Laughs as loud as I can  
do?





# ***EARTH AND HER PRAISERS.***

I.

The  
Earth  
is  
old;  
Six thousand winters make  
her heart a-cold;  
The sceptre slanteth from  
her palsied hold.  
She saith, "'Las me! God's  
word that I was  
'good'  
Is taken back  
to  
heaven,  
From whence when any  
sound comes, I am  
riven  
By some sharp bolt; and  
now no angel would  
Descend with sweet dew-  
silence on my  
mountains,  
To glorify the lovely river  
fountains  
That gush  
along  
their

side:  
I see—O weary change!—I  
see instead  
This human  
wrath  
and  
pride,  
These thrones and tombs,  
judicial wrong and  
blood,  
And bitter words are  
poured upon mine  
head—  
'O Earth! thou art a stage  
for tricks unholy,  
A church for most  
remorseful  
melancholy;  
Thou art so spoilt, we  
should forget we had  
An Eden in thee, wert thou  
not so sad!'  
Sweet children, I am old!  
ye, every one,  
Do keep me from a portion  
of my sun.  
Give praise in  
change for  
brightness!  
That I may shake my hills in  
infiniteness  
Of breezy laughter, as in  
youthful mirth,

To hear Earth's sons and  
daughters praising  
Earth."

II.

Whereupon a child began  
With spirit running up to  
man  
As by angels' shining  
ladder,  
(May he find no cloud  
above!)  
Seeming he had ne'er been  
sadder  
All his days than now,  
Sitting in the chestnut  
grove,  
With that joyous overflow  
Of smiling from his mouth  
o'er brow  
And cheek and chin, as if  
the breeze  
Leaning tricky from the  
trees  
To part his golden hairs,  
had blown  
Into an hundred smiles that  
one.

III.

"O rare, rare Earth!" he  
saith,

"I will praise thee  
presently;  
Not to-day; I have no  
breath:  
I have hunted squirrels  
three—  
Two ran down in the furzy  
hollow  
Where I could not see nor  
follow,  
One sits at the top of the  
filbert-tree,  
With a yellow nut and a  
mock at me:  
Presently it shall be  
done!  
When I see which way  
these two have run,  
When the mocking one at  
the filbert-top  
Shall leap a-down and  
beside me stop,  
Then, rare Earth, rare  
Earth,  
Will I pause, having known  
thy worth,  
To say all good of  
thee!"

#### IV.

Next a lover,—with a dream  
'Neath his waking eyelids  
hidden,

And a frequent sigh  
unbidden,  
And an idlesse all the day  
Beside a wandering  
stream,  
And a silence that is made  
Of a word he dares not say,

—

Shakes slow his pensive  
head:

"Earth, Earth!" saith  
he,

"If spirits, like thy roses,  
grew

On one stalk, and winds  
austere

Could but only blow them  
near,

To share each other's  
dew;—

If, when summer rains  
agree

To beautify thy hills, I knew  
Looking off them I might  
see

Some one very  
beauteous too,

—

Then Earth," saith  
he,

"I would praise ... nay, nay  
—not *thee*!"

V.

Will the pedant name her  
next?

Crabbèd with a crabbèd  
text

Sits he in his study nook,  
With his elbow on a book,  
And with stately crossèd  
knees,

And a wrinkle deeply thrid  
Through his lowering brow,  
Caused by making proofs  
enow

That Plato in "Parmenides"  
Meant the same Spinoza  
did,—

Or, that an hundred of the  
groping

Like himself, had made one  
Homer,

*Homer*os being a  
misnomer

What hath *he* to do with  
praise

Of Earth or aught?

Whene'er the  
sloping

Sunbeams through his  
window daze

His eyes off from the  
learned phrase,

Straightway he draws close

the curtain.  
May abstraction keep him  
dumb!  
Were his lips to ope, 't is  
certain  
"*Derivatum est*" would  
come.

VI.



Then a mourner moveth  
pale  
In a silence full of wail,  
Raising not his sunken  
head  
Because he wandered last  
that way  
With that one beneath the  
clay:  
Weeping not, because that  
one,  
The only one who would  
have said  
"Cease to weep, beloved!"  
has gone  
Whence returneth comfort  
none.  
The silence breaketh  
suddenly,—  
"Earth, I praise thee!" crieth  
he,  
"Thou hast a grave for also  
*me.*"

## VII.

Ha, a poet! know him by  
The ecstasy-dilated eye,  
Not uncharged with tears  
that ran  
Upward from his heart of  
man;  
By the cheek, from hour to  
hour,  
Kindled bright or sunken

wan  
With a sense of lonely  
power;  
By the brow uplifted higher  
Than others, for more low  
declining  
By the lip which words of  
fire  
Overboiling have burned  
white  
While they gave the nations  
light:  
Ay, in every time and place  
Ye may know the poet's  
face  
By the shade or  
shining.

VIII.

'Neath a golden cloud he  
stands,  
Spreading his impassioned  
hands.  
"O God's Earth!" he saith,  
"the sign  
From the Father-soul to  
mine  
Of all beauteous mysteries,  
Of all perfect images  
Which, divine in His divine,  
In my human only are  
Very excellent and fair!  
Think not, Earth, that I would  
raise  
Weary forehead in thy

praise,  
(Weary, that I cannot go  
Farther from thy region  
low,)  
If were struck no richer  
meanings  
From thee than thyself. The  
leaning  
Of the close trees o'er the  
brim  
Of a sunshine-haunted  
stream  
Have a sound beneath their  
leaves,  
Not of wind, not of  
wind,  
Which the poet's voice  
achieves:  
The faint mountains,  
heaped behind,  
Have a falling on their tops,  
Not of dew, not of dew,  
Which the poet's fancy  
drops:  
Viewless things his eyes  
can view  
Driftings of his dream do  
light  
All the skies by day and  
night,  
And the seas that deepest  
roll  
Carry murmurs of his soul.  
'Earth, I praise thee! praise  
thou *me*!

God perfecteth his creation  
With this recipient poet-  
passion,  
And makes the beautiful to  
be.  
I praise thee, O belovèd  
sign,  
From the God-soul unto  
mine!  
Praise me, that I cast on  
thee  
The cunning sweet  
interpretation,  
The help and glory and  
dilation  
Of mine immortality!"

IX.

There was silence. None  
did dare  
To use again the spoken  
air  
Of that far-charming voice,  
until  
A Christian resting on the  
hill,  
With a thoughtful smile  
subdued  
(Seeming learnt in solitude)  
Which a weeper might have  
viewed  
Without new tears, did  
softly say,  
And looked up unto heaven  
always

While he praised the Earth

—

"O

Earth,

I count the praises thou art  
worth,

By thy waves that move  
aloud,

By thy hills against the  
cloud,

By thy valleys warm and  
green,

By the copses' elms  
between,

By their birds which, like a  
sprite

Scattered by a strong  
delight

Into fragments musical,  
Stir and sing in every bush;

By thy silver founts that fall,  
As if to entice the stars at  
night

To thine heart; by grass and  
rush,

And little weeds the  
children pull,

Mistook for flowers!

—Oh,

beautiful

Art thou, Earth, albeit worse  
Than in heaven is callèd  
good!

Good to us, that we may  
know

Meekly from thy good to go;  
While the holy, crying Blood  
Puts its music kind and low  
'Twixt such ears as are not  
dull,  
And thine ancient  
curse!

X.

"Praisèd be the mosses  
soft  
In thy forest pathways oft,  
And the thorns, which make  
us think  
Of the thornless river-brink  
Where the ransomed  
tread:  
Praisèd be thy sunny  
gleams,  
And the storm, that worketh  
dreams  
Of calm unfinished:  
Praisèd be thine active  
days,  
And thy night-time's solemn  
need,  
When in God's dear book  
we read  
*No night shall be  
therein:*  
Praisèd be thy dwellings  
warm  
By household faggot's  
cheerful blaze,

Where, to hear of pardoned  
sin,  
Pauseth oft the merry din,  
Save the babe's upon the  
arm  
Who croweth to the  
crackling wood:  
Yea, and, better  
understood,  
Praisèd be thy dwellings  
cold,  
Hid beneath the churchyard  
mould,  
Where the bodies of the  
saints  
Separate from earthly taints  
Lie asleep, in blessing  
bound,  
Waiting for the trumpet's  
sound  
To free them into blessing;  
—none  
Weeping more beneath the  
sun,  
Though dangerous words  
of human love  
Be graven very near,  
above.

XI.

"Earth, we Christians  
praise thee thus,  
Even for the change that  
comes  
With a grief from thee to us:

For thy cradles and thy  
tombs,  
For the pleasant corn and  
wine  
And summer-heat; and also  
for  
The frost upon the  
sycamore  
And hail upon the  
vine!"



# THE VIRGIN MARY TO THE CHILD JESUS.

But see the Virgin blest  
Hath laid her babe to rest.

Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*.

I.

Sleep, sleep,  
mine  
Holy  
One!

My flesh, my Lord!—what  
name? I do not know  
A name that seemeth not  
too high or low,  
Too far from  
me or  
heaven:

My Jesus, *that* is best! that  
word being given  
By the majestic angel  
whose command  
Was softly as a man's  
beseeching said,  
When I and all the earth  
appeared to stand  
In the great  
overflow  
Of light celestial from his

wings and head.  
Sleep, sleep,  
my  
saving  
One!

II.

And art Thou come for  
saving, baby-  
browed  
And speechless Being—art  
Thou come for  
saving?  
The palm that grows beside  
our door is bowed  
By treadings of the low  
wind from the south,  
A restless shadow through  
the chamber waving:  
Upon its bough a bird sings  
in the sun,  
But Thou, with that close  
slumber on Thy  
mouth,  
Dost seem of wind and sun  
already weary.  
Art come for saving, O my  
weary One?

III.

Perchance this sleep that  
shutteth out the  
dreary  
Earth-sounds and motions,

opens on Thy soul  
High dreams on  
fire with  
God;  
High songs that make the  
pathways where they  
roll  
More bright than stars do  
theirs; and visions  
new  
Of Thine eternal Nature's  
old abode.  
Suffer this  
mother's  
kiss,  
Best thing that  
earthly is,  
To glide the music and the  
glory through,  
Nor narrow in Thy dream  
the broad upliftings  
Of any seraph  
wing.  
Thus noiseless, thus.  
Sleep, sleep my  
dreaming One!

#### IV.

The slumber of His lips  
meseems to run  
Through *my* lips to mine  
heart, to all its  
shiftings  
Of sensual life, bringing  
contrariousness

In a great calm. I feel I could  
lie down  
As Moses did, and die, [\[7\]](#)—  
and then live most.  
I am 'ware of you, heavenly  
Presences,  
That stand with your  
peculiar light unlost,  
Each forehead with a high  
thought for a crown,  
Unsunned i' the sunshine! I  
am 'ware. Ye throw  
No shade against the wall!  
How motionless  
Ye round me with your living  
statuary,  
While through your  
whiteness, in and  
outwardly,  
Continual thoughts of God  
appear to go,  
Like light's soul in itself. I  
bear, I bear  
To look upon the dropt lids  
of your eyes,  
Though their external  
shining testifies  
To that beatitude within  
which were  
Enough to blast an eagle at  
his sun:  
I fall not on my sad clay face  
before ye,—  
I look on His. I  
know

My spirit which dilateth with  
the woe

Of His  
mortality,  
May well  
contain  
your  
glory.

Yea, drop  
your  
lids  
more  
low.

Ye are but fellow-  
worshippers with  
me!

Sleep, sleep,  
my  
worshipped  
One!

V.

We sate among the stalls at  
Bethlehem;  
The dumb kine from their  
fodder turning them,  
Softened their  
hornèd  
faces  
To almost human  
gazes  
Toward the newly  
Born:  
The simple shepherds from

the star-lit brooks  
Brought visionary  
looks,  
As yet in their astonished  
hearing rung  
The strange sweet  
angel-  
tongue:  
The magi of the East, in  
sandals worn,  
Knelt reverent,  
sweeping  
round,  
With long pale beards,  
their gifts upon  
the ground,  
The incense,  
myrrh and  
gold  
These baby hands were  
impotent to hold:  
So let all earthlies and  
celestials wait  
Upon Thy royal  
state.  
Sleep, sleep, my  
kingly One!

VI.

I am not proud—meek  
angels, ye invest  
New meeknesses to hear  
such utterance rest  
On mortal lips,—“I am not  
proud”—*not proud!*

Albeit in my flesh God sent  
His Son,  
Albeit over Him my head is  
bowed  
As others bow before Him,  
still mine heart  
Bows lower than their  
knees. O centuries  
That roll in vision your  
futures  
My future  
grave  
athwart,  
—

Whose murmurs seem to  
reach me while I  
keep  
Watch o'er  
this  
sleep,  
—

Say of me as the Heavenly  
said—"Thou art  
The blesseddest of  
women!"—  
blesseddest,  
Not holiest, not noblest, no  
high name  
Whose height misplaced  
may pierce me like  
a shame  
When I sit meek in heaven!  
For

me,  
for

me,

God knows that I am feeble  
like the rest!

I often wandered forth,  
more child than  
maiden

Among the midnight hills of  
Galilee

Whose

summits  
looked  
heaven-  
laden,

Listening to silence as it  
seemed to be

God's voice, so soft yet  
strong, so fain to  
press

Upon my heart as heaven  
did on the height,

And waken up its shadows  
by a light,

And show its vileness by a  
holiness.

Then I knelt down most  
silent like the night,

Too self-

renounced  
for  
fears,

Raising my small face to  
the boundless blue

Whose stars did mix and  
tremble in my tears:

God heard *them* falling



after, with His dew.

VII.

So, seeing my corruption,  
    can I see  
This Incorruptible now born  
    of me,  
This fair new Innocence no  
    sun did chance  
To shine on, (for even  
    Adam was no child,)  
Created from my nature all  
    defiled,  
This mystery, from out mine  
    ignorance,—  
Nor feel the blindness,  
    stain, corruption,  
    more  
Than others do, or I did  
    heretofore?  
Can hands wherein such  
    burden pure has  
    been,  
Not open with the cry  
    "unclean, unclean,"  
More oft than any else  
    beneath the skies?  
        Ah King, ah,  
            Christ,  
            ah  
            son!  
The kine, the shepherds,  
    the abased wise  
        Must all less  
            lowly

wait  
Than I, upon  
Thy  
state.  
Sleep, sleep, my  
kingly One!

VIII.

Art Thou a King, then?  
Come, His universe,  
Come, crown me Him a  
King!  
Pluck rays from all such  
stars as never fling  
Their light where fell a  
curse,  
And make a crowning for  
this kingly brow!—  
What is my word? Each  
empyrean star  
Sits in a  
sphere  
afar  
In shining  
ambuscade:  
The child-  
brow,  
crowned  
by  
none,  
Keeps its  
unchildlike  
shade.  
Sleep, sleep,

my  
crownless  
One!

IX.

Unchildlike shade! No other  
babe doth wear  
An aspect very sorrowful,  
as Thou.

No small babe-smiles my  
watching heart has  
seen

To float like speech the  
speechless lips  
between,

No dovelike cooing in the  
golden air,

No quick short joys of  
leaping babyhood.

Alas, our  
earthly  
good

In heaven thought evil,  
seems too good for  
Thee;

Yet, sleep,  
my  
weary  
One!

X.

And then the drear sharp  
tongue of prophecy,  
With the dread sense of

things which shall be  
done,  
Doth smite me inly, like a  
sword: a sword?  
*That* "smites the  
Shepherd." Then, I  
think aloud  
The words  
"despised,"—"rejected,"—  
every word  
Recoiling into darkness as I  
view  
The Darling  
on my  
knee.  
Bright angels,—move not—  
lest ye stir the cloud  
Betwixt my soul and His  
futurity!  
I must not die, with mother's  
work to do,  
And could not  
live-  
and  
see.

## XI.

It is enough to  
bear  
This image  
still  
and  
fair,  
This holier in  
sleep

Than a saint  
at  
prayer,  
This aspect  
of a  
child  
Who never  
sinned  
or  
smiled;  
This  
Presence  
in an  
infant's  
face;  
This sadness  
most  
like  
love,  
This love than  
love  
more  
deep,  
This  
weakness  
like  
omnipotence  
It is so strong  
to  
move.  
Awful is this  
watching  
place,  
Awful what I  
see

from  
hence  
—

A king,  
without  
regalia,

A God,  
without  
the  
thunder,

A child,  
without  
the  
heart  
for  
play;

Ay, a  
Creator,  
rent  
asunder

From His first  
glory  
and  
cast  
away

On His own  
world,  
for me  
alone

To hold in hands  
created, crying  
—Son!

XII.

That tear fell

not on  
Thee,  
Beloved, yet thou stirrest in  
thy slumber!  
Thou, stirring not for glad  
sounds out of  
number  
Which through the vibratory  
palm-trees run  
From  
summer-  
wind  
and  
bird,  
So quickly  
hast  
thou  
heard  
A tear fall  
silently?  
Wak'st thou,  
O  
loving  
One?  
—

## FOOTNOTES:

[7] It is a Jewish tradition that Moses died of the kisses of God's lips.





# ***AN ISLAND.***

All goeth but Goddis will.—Old Poet.

I.

My dream is of an island-  
place  
Which distant seas  
keep lonely,  
A little island on whose face  
The stars are watchers  
only:  
Those bright still stars! they  
need not seem  
Brighter or stiller in my  
dream.

II.

An island full of hills and  
dells,  
All rumpled and  
uneven  
With green recesses,  
sudden swells,  
And odorous valleys  
driven  
So deep and straight that  
always there  
The wind is cradled to soft  
air.

III.

Hills running up to heaven  
for light  
Through woods that  
half-way ran,  
As if the wild earth  
mimicked right  
The wilder heart of  
man:  
Only it shall be greener far  
And gladder than hearts  
ever are.

IV.

More like, perhaps, that  
mountain piece  
Of Dante's paradise,  
Disrupt to an hundred hills  
like these,  
In falling from the  
skies;  
Bringing within it, all the  
roots  
Of heavenly trees and  
flowers and fruits:

V.

For—saving where the grey  
rocks strike  
Their javelins up the  
azure,  
Or where deep fissures  
miser-like  
Hoard up some  
fountain

treasure,  
(And e'en in them, stoop  
down and hear,  
Leaf sounds with water in  
your ear,—)

VI.

The place is all awave with  
trees,  
Limes, myrtles purple-  
beaded,  
Acacias having drunk the  
lees  
Of the night-dew, faint-  
headed,  
And wan grey olive-woods  
which seem  
The fittest foliage for a  
dream.

VII.

Trees, trees on all sides!  
they combine  
Their plummy shades to  
throw,  
Through whose clear fruit  
and blossom fine  
Whene'er the sun may  
go,  
The ground beneath he  
deeply stains,  
As passing through  
cathedral panes.

VIII.

But little needs this earth of  
ours  
That shining from  
above her,  
When many Pleiades of  
flowers  
(Not one lost) star her  
over,  
The rays of their  
unnumbered hues  
Being all refracted by the  
dews.

IX.

Wide-petalled plants that  
boldly drink  
The Amreeta of the  
sky,  
Shut bells that dull with  
rapture sink,  
And lolling buds, half  
shy;  
I cannot count them, but  
between  
Is room for grass and  
mosses green,

X.

And brooks, that glass in  
different strengths  
All colours in disorder,  
Or, gathering up their silver  
lengths  
Beside their winding

border,  
Sleep, haunted through the  
slumber hidden,  
By lilies white as dreams in  
Eden.

XI.

Nor think each archèd tree  
with each  
Too closely interlaces  
To admit of vistas out of  
reach,  
And broad moon-  
lighted places  
Upon whose sward the  
antlered deer  
May view their double  
image clear.

XII.

For all this island's  
creature-full,  
(Kept happy not by  
halves)  
Mild cows, that at the vine-  
wreaths pull,  
Then low back at their  
calves  
With tender lowings, to  
approve  
The warm mouths milking  
them for love.

XIII.

Free gamesome horses,  
    antelopes,  
    And harmless leaping  
        leopards,  
And buffaloes upon the  
    slopes,  
    And sheep unruled by  
        shepherds:  
Hares, lizards, hedgehogs,  
    badgers, mice,  
Snakes, squirrels, frogs,  
    and butterflies.

XIV.

And birds that live there in a  
    crowd,  
    Horned owls, rapt  
        nightingales,  
Larks bold with heaven,  
    and peacocks  
    proud,  
    Self-sphered in those  
        grand tails;  
All creatures glad and safe,  
    I deem  
No guns nor springes in my  
    dream!

XV.

The island's edges are a-  
    wing  
    With trees that  
        overbranch  
The sea with song-birds

welcoming  
The curlews to green  
change;  
And doves from half-closed  
lids espy  
The red and purple fish go  
by.

XVI.

One dove is answering in  
trust  
The water every  
minute,  
Thinking so soft a murmur  
must  
Have her mate's  
cooing in it:  
So softly doth earth's  
beauty round  
Infuse itself in ocean's  
sound.

XVII.

My sanguine soul bounds  
forwarder  
To meet the bounding  
waves;  
Beside them straightway I  
repair,  
To live within the  
caves:  
And near me two or three  
may dwell  
Whom dreams fantastic

please as well.

XVIII.

Long winding caverns,  
    glittering far  
    Into a crystal distance!  
Through clefts of which shall  
    many a star  
    Shine clear without  
        resistance,  
And carry down its rays the  
    smell  
Of flowers above invisible.

XIX.

I said that two or three  
    might choose  
    Their dwelling near  
        mine own:  
Those who would change  
    man's voice and  
    use,  
    For Nature's way and  
        tone—  
Man's veering heart and  
    careless eyes,  
For Nature's steadfast  
    sympathies.

XX.

Ourselves, to meet her  
    faithfulness,  
    Shall play a faithful  
        part;



Her beautiful shall ne'er  
address  
The monstrous at our  
heart:  
Her musical shall ever  
touch  
Something within us also  
such.

XXI.

Yet shall she not our  
mistress live,  
As doth the moon of  
ocean,  
Though gently as the moon  
she give  
Our thoughts a light  
and motion:  
More like a harp of many  
lays,  
Moving its master while he  
plays.

XXII.

No sod in all that island  
doth  
Yawn open for the  
dead;  
No wind hath borne a  
traitor's oath;  
No earth, a mourner's  
tread;  
We cannot say by stream  
or shade,

"I suffered *here*,—was *here*  
betrayed."

XXIII.

Our only "farewell" we shall  
    laugh  
    To shifting cloud or  
        hour,  
And use our only epitaph  
    To some bud turned a  
        flower:  
Our only tears shall serve to  
    prove  
Excess in pleasure or in  
    love.

XXIV.

Our fancies shall their  
    plumage catch  
    From fairest island-  
        birds,  
Whose eggs let young ones  
    out at hatch,  
    Born singing! then our  
        words  
Unconsciously shall take  
    the dyes  
Of those prodigious  
    fantasies.

XXV.

Yea, soon, no consonant  
    unsmooth  
Our smile-tuned lips

shall reach;  
Sounds sweet as Hellas  
spake in youth  
Shall glide into our  
speech:  
(What music, certes, can  
you find  
As soft as voices which are  
kind?)

XXVI.

And often, by the joy without  
And in us, overcome,  
We, through our musing,  
shall let float  
Such poems,—sitting  
dumb,—  
As Pindar might have writ if  
he  
Had tended sheep in  
Arcady;

XXVII.

Or Æschylus—the pleasant  
fields  
He died in, longer  
knowing;  
Or Homer, had men's sins  
and shields  
Been lost in Meles  
flowing;  
Or Poet Plato, had the  
undim  
Unsetting Godlight broke

on him.

XXVIII.

Choose me the cave most  
worthy choice,  
To make a place for  
prayer,  
And I will choose a praying  
voice  
To pour our spirits  
there:  
How silverly the echoes run!  
*Thy will be done,—thy will  
be done.*

XXIX.

Gently yet strangely uttered  
words!  
They lift me from my  
dream;  
The island fadeth with its  
swords  
That did no more than  
seem:  
The streams are dry, no sun  
could find—  
The fruits are fallen, without  
wind.

XXX.

So oft the doing of God's  
will  
Our foolish wills  
undoeth!

And yet what idle dream  
breaks ill,  
Which morning-light  
subdueth?  
And who would murmur and  
misdoubt,  
When God's great sunrise  
finds him out?

# ***THE SOUL'S TRAVELLING.***

Ἦδη νοερούς  
Πέτασαι παρσούς.

Synesius.

I.

I dwell amid the city ever.  
The great humanity which  
beats  
Its life along the stony  
streets,  
Like a strong and unsunned  
river  
In a self-made course,  
I sit and hearken while it  
rolls.

Very sad and very hoarse  
Certes is the flow of souls;  
Infinittest tendencies  
By the finite prest and pent,  
In the finite, turbulent:  
How we tremble in surprise  
When sometimes, with an  
awful sound,  
God's great plummet  
strikes the ground!

II.

The champ of the steeds on  
the silver bit,

As they whirl the rich man's  
carriage by;  
The beggar's whine as he  
looks at it,—  
But it goes too fast for  
charity;  
The trail on the street of the  
poor man's broom,  
That the lady who walks to  
her palace-home,  
On her silken skirt may  
catch no dust;  
The tread of the business-  
men who must  
Count their per-cents by the  
paces they take;  
The cry of the babe  
unheard of its  
mother  
Though it lie on her breast,  
while she thinks of  
the other  
Laid yesterday where it will  
not wake;  
The flower-girl's prayer to  
buy roses and pinks  
Held out in the smoke, like  
stars by day;  
The gin-door's oath that  
hollowly chinks  
Guilt upon grief and wrong  
upon hate;  
The cabman's cry to get out  
of the way;  
The dustman's call down

the area-grate;  
The young maid's jest, and  
the old wife's scold,  
The haggling talk of the  
boys at a stall,  
The fight in the street which  
is backed for gold,  
The plea of the lawyers in  
Westminster Hall;  
The drop on the stones of  
the blind man's staff  
As he trades in his own  
grief's sacredness,  
The brothel shriek, and the  
Newgate laugh,  
The hum upon 'Change,  
and the organ's  
grinding,  
(The grinder's face being  
nevertheless  
Dry and vacant of even woe  
While the children's hearts  
are leaping so  
At the merry music's  
winding;)  
The black-plumed funeral's  
creeping train,  
Long and slow (and yet they  
will go  
As fast as Life though it  
hurry and strain!)  
Creeping the populous  
houses through  
And nodding their plumes  
at either side,—



At many a house, where an  
    infant, new  
To the sunshiny world, has  
    just struggled and  
    cried,—  
At many a house where  
    sitteth a bride  
Trying to-morrow's coronals  
With a scarlet blush to-day:  
    Slowly creep the  
        funerals,  
As none should hear the  
    noise and say  
"The living, the living must  
    go away  
        To multiply the  
            dead."  
    Hark! an upward shout  
        is sent,  
In grave strong joy from  
    tower to steeple  
        The bells ring out,  
The trumpets sound, the  
    people shout,  
The young queen goes to  
    her Parliament.  
She turneth round her large  
    blue eyes  
More bright with childish  
    memories  
Than royal hopes, upon the  
    people;  
On either side she bows  
    her head  
    Lowly, with a queenly

grace  
And smile most trusting-  
innocent,  
As if she smiled upon her  
mother;  
The thousands press  
before each other  
To bless her to  
her face;  
And booms the deep  
majestic voice  
Through trump and drum,  
—"May the queen  
rejoice  
In the people's  
liberties!"

## III.

I dwell amid the  
city,  
And hear the flow  
of souls in  
act and  
speech,  
For pomp or trade, for  
merrymake or folly:  
I hear the confluence and  
sum of each,  
And that is  
melancholy!  
Thy voice is a complaint, O  
crownèd city,  
The blue sky covering thee  
like God's great pity.

IV.

O blue sky! it mindeth me  
Of places where I used to  
see  
Its vast unbroken circle  
thrown  
From the far pale-peaked  
hill  
Out to the last verge of  
ocean,  
As by God's arm it were  
done  
Then for the first time, with  
the emotion  
Of that first impulse on it  
still.  
Oh, we spirits fly at will  
Faster than the wingèd  
steed  
Whereof in old book we  
read,  
With the sunlight foaming  
back  
From his flanks to a misty  
wrack,  
And his nostril reddening  
proud  
As he breasteth the steep  
thundercloud,—  
Smoother than Sabrina's  
chair  
Gliding up from wave to air,  
While she smileth debonair  
Yet holy, coldly and yet

brightly,  
Like her own mooned  
waters nightly,  
Through her dripping  
hair.

V.

Very fast and smooth we  
fly,  
Spirits, though the flesh be  
by;  
All looks feed not from the  
eye  
Nor all hearings from the  
ear:  
We can hearken and espy  
Without either, we can  
journey  
Bold and gay as knight to  
tourney,  
And, though we wear no  
visor down  
To dark our countenance,  
the foe  
Shall never chafe us as we  
go.

VI.

I am gone from peopled  
town!  
It passeth its street-thunder  
round  
My body which yet hears no  
sound,

For now another sound,  
another  
Vision, my soul's senses  
have—  
O'er a hundred valleys  
deep  
Where the hills' green  
shadows sleep  
Scarce known because the  
valley-trees  
Cross those upland  
images,  
O'er a hundred hills each  
other  
Watching to the western  
wave,  
I have travelled,—I have  
found  
The silent, lone,  
remembered  
ground.

VII.

I have found a grassy niche  
Hollowed in a seaside hill,  
As if the ocean-grandeur  
which  
Is aspectable from the  
place,  
Had struck the hill as with a  
mace  
Sudden and cleaving. You  
might fill  
That little nook with the little  
cloud

Which sometimes lieth by  
the moon  
To beautify a night of June;  
A cavelike nook which,  
opening all  
To the wide sea, is  
disallowed  
From its own earth's sweet  
pastoral:  
Cavelike, but roofless  
overhead  
And made of verdant banks  
instead  
Of any rocks, with flowerets  
spread  
Instead of spar and  
stalactite,  
Cowslips and daisies gold  
and white:  
Such pretty flowers on such  
green sward,  
You think the sea they look  
toward  
Doth serve them for another  
sky  
As warm and blue as that  
on high.

VIII.

And in this hollow is a seat,  
And when you shall have  
crept to it,  
Slipping down the banks  
too steep

To be o'erbrowzèd by the  
sheep,  
Do not think—though at  
your feet  
The cliffs disrupt—you shall  
behold  
The line where earth and  
ocean meet;  
You sit too much above to  
view  
The solemn confluence of  
the two:  
You can hear them as they  
greet,  
You can hear that evermore  
Distance-softened noise  
more old  
Than Nereid's singing, the  
tide spent  
Joining soft issues with the  
shore  
In harmony of discontent,  
And when you hearken to  
the grave  
Lamenting of the  
underwave,  
You must believe in earth's  
communion  
Albeit you witness not the  
union.

IX.

Except that sound, the  
place is full  
Of silences, which when  
you cull  
By any word, it thrills you so  
That presently you let them  
grow  
To meditation's fullest  
length  
Across your soul with a  
soul's strength:  
And as they touch your soul,  
they borrow  
Both of its grandeur and its  
sorrow,  
That deathly odour which  
the clay  
Leaves on its  
deathlessness  
always.

X.

Always! always? must this  
be?  
Rapid Soul from city gone,  
Dost thou carry inwardly  
What doth make the city's  
moan?  
Must this deep sigh of thine  
own  
Haunt thee with humanity?  
Green visioned banks that  
are too steep  
To be o'erbrowzèd by the  
sheep,



May all sad thoughts adown  
    you creep  
Without a shepherd?  
    Mighty sea,  
Can we dwarf thy  
    magnitude  
And fit it to our straitest  
    mood?  
O fair, fair Nature, are we  
    thus  
Impotent and querulous  
Among thy workings  
    glorious,  
Wealth and sanctities, that  
    still  
Leave us vacant and  
    defiled  
And wailing like a soft-  
    kissed child,  
Kissed soft against his will?

XI.

God,  
God!  
With a  
    child's  
    voice  
    I  
    cry,  
Weak,  
    sad,  
    confidingly  
—  
    God,  
God!

Thou knowest, eyelids,  
    raised not always up  
Unto Thy love, (as none of  
    ours are) droop  
    As ours, o'er  
        many a  
        tear;  
Thou knowest, though Thy  
    universe is broad,  
Two little tears suffice to  
    cover all:  
Thou knowest, Thou who art  
    so prodigal  
Of beauty, we are oft but  
    stricken deer  
Expiring in the woods, that  
    care for none  
Of those delightful  
    flowers they die  
    upon.

XII.

O blissful Mouth which  
    breathed the  
    mournful breath  
We name our souls, self-  
    spoilt!—by that  
    strong passion  
Which paled Thee once  
    with sighs, by that  
    strong death  
Which made Thee once  
    unbreathing—from  
    the wrack  
Themselves have called

around them, call  
them back,  
Back to Thee in continuous  
aspiration!  
For here, O Lord,  
For here they travel vainly,  
vainly pass  
From city-pavement to  
untrodden sward  
Where the lark finds her  
deep nest in the  
grass  
Cold with the earth's last  
dew. Yea, very vain  
The greatest speed of all  
these souls of men  
Unless they travel upward  
to the throne  
Where sittest Thou the  
satisfying One,  
With help for sins and holy  
perfectings  
For all requirements: while  
the archangel,  
raising  
Unto Thy face his full  
ecstatic gazing,  
Forgets the rush and  
rapture of his wings.

# ***TO BETTINE,***

## **THE CHILD-FRIEND OF GOETHE.**

"I have the second sight, Goethe!"—*Letters of a Child.*

I.

Bettine, friend of  
Goethe,  
*Hadst* thou the second  
sight—  
Upturning worship and  
delight  
With such a loving duty  
To his grand face, as  
women will,  
The childhood 'neath thine  
eyelids still?

II.

—Before his shrine to  
doom thee,  
Using the same child's  
smile  
That heaven and earth,  
beheld erewhile  
For the first time, won  
from thee  
Ere star and flower grew  
dim and dead  
Save at his feet and o'er his  
head?

III.

—Digging thine heart  
and throwing  
Away its childhood's gold,  
That so its woman-depth  
might hold  
His spirit's  
overflowing?  
(For surging souls, no  
worlds can bound,  
Their channel in the heart  
have found.)

IV.

O child, to change  
appointed,  
Thou hadst not second  
sight!  
What eyes the future view  
aright  
Unless by tears  
anointed?  
Yea, only tears themselves  
can show  
The burning ones that have  
to flow.

V.

O woman, deeply  
loving,  
Thou hadst not second  
sight!  
The star is very high and  
bright,

And none can see it  
moving.  
Love looks around, below,  
above,  
Yet all his prophecy is—  
love.

VI.

The bird thy  
childhood's  
playing  
Sent onward o'er the sea,  
Thy dove of hope came  
back to thee  
Without a leaf: art  
laying  
Its wet cold wing no sun can  
dry,  
Still in thy bosom secretly?

VII.

Our Goethe's friend,  
Bettine,  
I have the second sight!  
The stone upon his grave is  
white,  
The funeral stone  
between ye;  
And in thy mirror thou hast  
viewed  
Some change as hardly  
understood.

VIII.

Where's childhood?

where is  
Goethe?  
The tears are in thine eyes.  
Nay, thou shalt yet  
reorganize  
Thy maidenhood of  
beauty  
In his own glory, which is  
smooth  
Of wrinkles and sublime in  
youth.

IX.

The poet's arms have  
wound thee,  
He breathes upon thy brow,  
He lifts thee upward in the  
glow  
Of his great genius  
round thee,—  
The childlike poet undefiled  
Preserving evermore The  
Child.

# ***MAN AND NATURE.***

A sad man on a summer day  
Did look upon the earth and say—

"Purple cloud the hill-top binding;  
Folded hills the valleys wind in;  
Valleys with fresh streams among you;  
Streams with bosky trees along you;  
Trees with many birds and blossoms;  
Birds with music-trembling bosoms;  
Blossoms dropping dew that wreathes you  
To your fellow flowers beneath you;  
Flowers that constellate on earth;  
Earth that shakest to the mirth  
Of the merry Titan Ocean,  
All his shining hair in motion!  
Why am I thus the only one  
Who can be dark beneath the sun?"

But when the summer day was past,  
He looked to heaven and smiled at last,  
Self-answered so—

"Because, O cloud,  
Pressing with thy crumpled shroud  
Heavily on mountain top,—  
Hills that almost seem to drop  
Stricken with a misty death  
To the valleys underneath,—  
Valleys sighing with the torrent,—  
Waters streaked with branches horrent,—  
Branchless trees that shake your head  
Wildly o'er your blossoms spread



Where the common flowers are found,—  
Flowers with foreheads to the ground,—  
Ground that shrieketh while the sea  
With his iron smiteth thee—  
I am, besides, the only one  
Who can be bright *without* the sun."

# ***A SEA-SIDE WALK.***

I.

We walked  
beside  
the  
sea  
After a day which perished  
silently  
Of its own glory—like the  
princess weird  
Who, combating the  
Genius, scorched  
and seared,  
Uttered with burning breath,  
"Ho! victory!"  
And sank adown, a heap of  
ashes pale:  
So runs the  
Arab  
tale.

II.

The sky  
above  
us  
showed  
A universal and unmoving  
cloud  
On which the cliffs  
permitted us to see  
Only the outline of their

majesty,  
As master-minds when  
gazed at by the  
crowd:  
And shining with a gloom,  
the water grey  
Swang in its  
moon-  
taught  
way.

III.

Nor moon,  
nor  
stars  
were  
out;  
They did not dare to tread  
so soon about,  
Though trembling, in the  
footsteps of the sun:  
The light was neither night's  
nor day's, but one  
Which, life-like, had a  
beauty in its doubt,  
And silence's impassioned  
breathings round  
Seemed  
wandering  
into  
sound.

IV.

O solemn-  
beating

heart  
Of nature! I have knowledge  
that thou art  
Bound unto man's by cords  
he cannot sever;  
And, what time they are  
slackened by him  
ever,  
So to attest his own  
supernal part,  
Still runneth thy vibration  
fast and strong  
The  
slackened  
cord  
along:

V.

For though  
we  
never  
spoke  
Of the grey water and the  
shaded rock,  
Dark wave and stone  
unconsciously were  
fused  
Into the plaintive speaking  
that we used  
Of absent friends and  
memories  
unforsook;  
And, had we seen each  
other's face, we had  
Seen haply

each  
was  
sad.

# ***THE SEA-MEW.***

**AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED TO M. E. H.**

I.

How joyously the young  
    sea-mew  
Lay dreaming on the waters  
    blue  
Whereon our little bark had  
    thrown  
A little shade, the only one,  
But shadows ever man  
    pursue.

II.

Familiar with the waves and  
    free  
As if their own white foam  
    were he,  
His heart upon the heart of  
    ocean  
Lay learning all its mystic  
    motion,  
And throbbing to the  
    throbbing sea.

III.

And such a brightness in  
    his eye  
As if the ocean and the sky

Within him had lit up and  
nurst  
A soul God gave him not at  
first,  
To comprehend their  
majesty.

IV.

We were not cruel, yet did  
sunder  
His white wing from the  
blue waves under,  
And bound it, while his  
fearless eyes  
Shone up to ours in calm  
surprise,  
As deeming us some  
ocean wonder.

V.

We bore our ocean bird  
unto  
A grassy place where he  
might view  
The flowers that curtesy to  
the bees,  
The waving of the tall green  
trees,  
The falling of the silver dew.

VI.

But flowers of earth were  
pale to him  
Who had seen the rainbow  
fishes swim;

And when earth's dew  
    around him lay  
He thought of ocean's  
    wingèd spray,  
And his eye waxèd sad and  
    dim.

VII.

The green trees round him  
    only made  
A prison with their  
    darksome shade;  
And drooped his wing, and  
    mournèd he  
For his own boundless  
    glittering sea—  
Albeit he knew not they  
    could fade.

VIII.

Then One her gladsome  
    face did bring,  
Her gentle voice's  
    murmuring,  
In ocean's stead his heart  
    to move  
And teach him what was  
    human love:  
He thought it a strange,  
    mournful thing.

IX.

He lay down in his grief to  
    die,  
(First looking to the sea-like



sky

That hath no waves)

because, alas!

Our human touch did on

him pass,

And, with our touch, our

agony.

# ***FELICIA HEMANS***

**TO L. E. L.,**

**REFERRING TO HER MONODY ON THE  
POETESS.**

I.

Thou bay-crowned living  
    One that o'er the  
        bay-crowned Dead  
        art bowing,  
And o'er the shadeless  
    moveless brow the  
        vital shadow  
        throwing,  
And o'er the sighless  
    songless lips the  
        wail and music  
        wedding,  
And dropping o'er the  
    tranquil eyes the  
        tears not of their  
        shedding!—

II.

Take music from the silent  
    Dead whose  
        meaning is  
        completer,  
Reserve thy tears for living

brows where all such  
tears are meeter,  
And leave the violets in the  
grass to brighten  
where thou treadest,  
No flowers for her! no need  
of flowers, albeit  
"bring flowers!" thou  
saidest.

III.

Yes, flowers, to crown the  
"cup and lute," since  
both may come to  
breaking,  
Or flowers, to greet the  
"bride"—the heart's  
own beating works  
its aching;  
Or flowers, to soothe the  
"captive's" sight,  
from earth's free  
bosom gathered,  
Reminding of his earthly  
hope, then withering  
as it withered:

IV.

But bring not near the  
solemn corse a type  
of human seeming,  
Lay only dust's stern verity  
upon the dust  
undreaming:  
And while the calm

perpetual stars shall  
look upon it solely,  
Her spherèd soul shall look  
on *them* with eyes  
more bright and  
holy.

V.

Nor mourn, O living One,  
because her part in  
life was mourning:  
Would she have lost the  
poet's fire for  
anguish of the  
burning?  
The minstrel harp, for the  
strained string? the  
tripod, for the  
afflated  
Woe? or the vision, for  
those tears in which  
it shone dilated?

VI.

Perhaps she shuddered  
while the world's  
cold hand her brow  
was wreathing,  
But never wronged that  
mystic breath which  
breathed in all her  
breathing,  
Which drew, from rocky  
earth and man,  
abstractions high

and moving,  
Beauty, if not the beautiful,  
and love, if not the  
loving.

VII.

Such visionings have paled  
in sight; the Saviour  
she descrieth,  
And little recks *who*  
wreathed the brow  
which on His bosom  
lieth:  
The whiteness of His  
innocence o'er all  
her garments,  
flowing,  
There learneth she the  
sweet "new song"  
she will not mourn in  
knowing.

VIII.

Be happy, crowned and  
living One! and as  
thy dust decayeth  
May thine own England say  
for thee what now for  
Her it sayeth—  
"Albeit softly in our ears her  
silver song was  
ringing,  
The foot-fall of her parting  
soul is softer than  
her singing."



# **L. E. L.'S LAST QUESTION.**

"Do you think of me as I think of you?"

*(From her poem written during the voyage to the Cape.)*

## I.

"Do you think of me as I  
think of you,  
My friends, my friends?"—  
She said it from the  
sea,  
The English minstrel in her  
minstrelsy,  
While, under brighter skies  
than erst she knew,  
Her heart grew dark, and  
groped there as the  
blind  
To reach across the waves  
friends left behind—  
"Do you think of me as I  
think of you?"

## II.

It seemed not much to ask  
—"as I of you?"  
We all do ask the same; no  
eyelids cover  
Within the meekest eyes  
that question over:  
And little in the world the  
Loving do

But sit (among the rocks?)  
and listen for  
The echo of their own love  
evermore—  
"Do you think of me as I  
think of you?"

III.

Love-learnèd she had sung  
of love and love,—  
And like a child that,  
sleeping with dropt  
head  
Upon the fairy-book he  
lately read,  
Whatever household noises  
round him move,  
Hears in his dream some  
elfin turbulence,—  
Even so suggestive to her  
inward sense,  
All sounds of life assumed  
one tune of love.

IV.

And when the glory of her  
dream withdrew,  
When knightly gestes and  
courtly pageantries  
Were broken in her  
visionary eyes  
By tears the solemn seas  
attested true,—  
Forgetting that sweet lute  
beside her hand,



She asked not,— "Do you  
praise me, O my  
land?"

But,— "Think ye of me,  
friends, as I of you?"

V.

Hers was the hand that  
played for many a  
year

Love's silver phrase for  
England, smooth  
and well.

Would God her heart's  
more inward oracle

In that lone moment might  
confirm her dear!

For when her questioned  
friends in agony

Made passionate  
response, "We think  
of thee,"

Her place was in the dust,  
too deep to hear.

VI.

Could she not wait to catch  
their answering  
breath?

Was she content, content  
with ocean's sound

Which dashed its mocking  
infinite around

One thirsty for a little love?  
—beneath

Those stars content, where  
last her song had  
gone,—  
They mute and cold in  
radiant life, as soon  
Their singer was to be, in  
darksome death?<sup>[8]</sup>

VII.

Bring your vain answers—  
cry, "We think of  
thee!"  
How think ye of her? warm  
in long ago  
Delights? or crowned with  
budding bays? Not  
so.  
None smile and none are  
crowned where lieth  
she,  
With all her visions  
unfulfilled save one,  
Her childhood's, of the  
palm-trees in the sun  
—  
And lo! their shadow on her  
sepulchre!

VIII.

"Do ye think of me as I think  
of you?"—  
O friends, O kindred, O  
dear brotherhood  
Of all the world! what are  
we that we should

For covenants of long  
affection sue?  
Why press so near each  
other when the touch  
Is barred by graves? Not  
much, and yet too  
much  
Is this "Think of me as I  
think of you."

IX.

But while on mortal lips I  
shape anew  
A sigh to mortal issues,  
verily  
Above the unshaken stars  
that see us die,  
A vocal pathos rolls; and  
He who drew  
All life from dust, and for all  
tasted death,  
By death and life and love  
appealing, saith  
*Do you think of me as I  
think of you?*

## FOOTNOTES:

[8] Her lyric on the Polar Star came home with her latest papers.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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*Transcriber's Notes:* Archaic and variable spelling and hyphenation are preserved. A very few minor printer's errors have been corrected. In "The Romaunt of the Page," single quotation and double quotation marks have been preserved as printed, in spite of their confusing usage; no clearer edition could be found.

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