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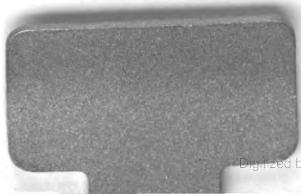
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A PAGEANT

AND

OTHER POEMS



A PAGEANT

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

London

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1881

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SONNETS are full of love, and this my tome
 Has many sonnets : so here now shall be
 One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
 To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,
 To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee
 I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome ;
 Whose service is my special dignity,
 And she my loadstar while I go and come.
 And so because you love me, and because
 I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
 Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honoured
 name :
 In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
 Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
 Of time and change and mortal life and death.

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THE KEY-NOTE.

WHERE are the songs I used to know,
Where are the notes I used to sing?
I have forgotten everything
I used to know so long ago ;
Summer has followed after Spring ;
Now Autumn is so shrunk and sere,
I scarcely think a sadder thing
Can be the Winter of my year.

Yet Robin sings through Winter's rest,
When bushes put their berries on ;
While they their ruddy jewels don,
He sings out of a ruddy breast ;
The hips and haws and ruddy breast
Make one spot warm where snowflakes lie,
They break and cheer the unlovely rest
Of Winter's pause—and why not I ?

THE MONTHS :

A Pageant.

PERSONIFICATIONS.

<i>Boys.</i>	<i>Girls.</i>
JANUARY.	FEBRUARY.
MARCH.	APRIL.
JULY.	MAY.
AUGUST.	JUNE.
OCTOBER.	SEPTEMBER.
DECEMBER.	NOVEMBER.

ROBIN REDBREASTS; LAMBS AND SHEEP; NIGHTINGALE AND
NESTLINGS.

Various Flowers, Fruits, etc.

Scene: A COTTAGE WITH ITS GROUNDS.

[A room in a large comfortable cottage; a fire burning on the hearth; a table on which the breakfast things have been left standing. January discovered seated by the fire.]

JANUARY.

COLD the day and cold the drifted snow,
Dim the day until the cold dark night.

[Stirs the fire.]

THE MONTHS :

Crackle, sparkle, faggot ; embers glow :
Some one may be plodding through the snow
Longing for a light,
For the light that you and I can show.
If no one else should come,
Here Robin Redbreast's welcome to a crumb,
And never troublesome :
Robin, why don't you come and fetch your crumb ?

Here's butter for my hunch of bread,
And sugar for your crumb ;
Here's room upon the hearthrug,
If you'll only come.

In your scarlet waistcoat,
With your keen bright eye,
Where are you loitering ?
Wings were made to fly !

Make haste to breakfast,
Come and fetch your crumb,
For I'm as glad to see you
As you are glad to come.

[Two Robin Redbreasts are seen tapping with their beaks at the lattice, which January opens. The birds flutter in, hop about the floor, and peck up the crumbs and sugar

thrown to them. They have scarcely finished their meal, when a knock is heard at the door. January hangs a guard in front of the fire, and opens to February, who appears with a bunch of snowdrops in her hand.]

JANUARY.

Good-morrow, sister.

FEBRUARY.

Brother, joy to you!

I've brought some snowdrops ; only just a few,
But quite enough to prove the world awake,
Cheerful and hopeful in the frosty dew
And for the pale sun's sake.

[She hands a few of her snowdrops to January, who retires into the background. While February stands arranging the remaining snowdrops in a glass of water on the window-sill, a soft butting and bleating are heard outside. She opens the door, and sees one foremost lamb, with other sheep and lambs bleating and crowding towards her.]

FEBRUARY.

O you, you little wonder, come—come in,
You wonderful, you woolly soft white lamb :
You panting mother ewe, come too,

And lead that tottering twin
 Safe in :
 Bring all your bleating kith and kin,
 Except the horny ram.

[February opens a second door in the background, and the little flock files through into a warm and sheltered compartment out of sight.]

The lambkin tottering in its walk
 With just a fleece to wear ;
 The snowdrop drooping on its stalk
 So slender,—
 Snowdrop and lamb, a pretty pair,
 Braving the cold for our delight,
 Both white,
 Both tender.

[A rattling of doors and windows ; branches seen without, tossing violently to and fro.]

How the doors rattle, and the branches sway !
 Here's brother March comes whirling on his way
 With winds that eddy and sing :—

[She turns the handle of the door, which bursts open, and discloses March hastening up, both hands full of violets and anemones.]

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FEBRUARY.

Come, show me what you bring ;
For I have said my say, fulfilled my day,
And must away.

MARCH.

[Stopping short on the threshold.]

I blow an arouse
Through the world's wide house
To quicken the torpid earth :
Grappling I fling
Each feeble thing,
But bring strong life to the birth.
I wrestle and frown,
And topple down ;
I wrench, I rend, I uproot ;
Yet the violet
Is born where I set
The sole of my flying foot,

[Hands violets and anemones to February, who retires into
the background.]

And in my wake
Frail wind-flowers quake,
And the catkins promise fruit.

THE MONTHS :

I drive ocean ashore
 With rush and roar,
 And he cannot say me nay :
 My harpstrings all
 Are the forests tall,
 Making music when I play.
 And as others perforce,
 So I on my course
 Run and needs must run,
 With sap on the mount
 And buds past count
 And rivers and clouds and sun,
 With seasons and breath
 And time and death
 And all that has yet begun.

[Before March has done speaking, a voice is heard approaching accompanied by a twittering of birds. April comes along singing, and stands outside and out of sight to finish her song.]

APRIL.

[Outside.]

Pretty little three
 Sparrows in a tree,
 Light upon the wing ;
 Though you cannot sing
 You can chirp of Spring :

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Chirp of Spring to me,
Sparrows, from your tree.

Never mind the showers,
Chirp about the flowers
 While you build a nest :
 Straws from east and west,
 Feathers from your breast,
Make the snuggest bowers
In a world of flowers.

You must dart away
From the chosen spray,
 You intrusive third
 Extra little bird ;
 Join the unwedded herd !
These have done with play,
And must work to-day.

APRIL.

[Appearing at the open door.]

Good-morrow and good-bye : if others fly,
Of all the flying months you're the most flying.

MARCH.

You're hope and sweetness, April.

THE MONTHS :

APRIL.

Birth means dying,

As wings and wind mean flying ;
 So you and I and all things fly or die ;
 And sometimes I sit sighing to think of dying.
 But meanwhile I've a rainbow in my showers,
 And a lapful of flowers,
 And these dear nestlings aged three hours ;
 And here's their mother sitting,
 Their father's merely flitting
 To find their breakfast somewhere in my bowers.

[As she speaks April shows March her apron full of flowers
 and nest full of birds. March wanders away into the
 grounds. April, without entering the cottage, hangs over
 the hungry nestlings watching them.]

APRIL.

What beaks you have, you funny things,
 What voices shrill and weak ;
 Who'd think that anything that sings
 Could sing through such a beak ?
 Yet you'll be nightingales one day,
 And charm the country side,
 When I'm away and far away
 And May is queen and bride.

[May arrives unperceived by April, and gives her a kiss.
April starts and looks round.]

APRIL.

Ah May, good-morrow May, and so good-bye.

MAY.

That's just your way, sweet April, smile and sigh :
Your sorrow's half in fun,
Begun and done
And turned to joy while twenty seconds run.
I've gathered flowers all as I came along,
At every step a flower
Fed by your last bright shower,—

[She divides an armful of all sorts of flowers with April, who
strolls away through the garden.]

MAY.

And gathering flowers I listened to the song
Of every bird in bower.

The world and I are far too full of bliss
To think or plan or toil or care ;
The sun is waxing strong,
The days are waxing long,
And all that is,
Is fair.

THE MONTHS :

Here are my buds of lily and of rose,
 And here's my namesake blossom may ;
 And from a watery spot
 See here forget-me-not,
 With all that blows
 To-day.

Hark to my linnets from the hedges green,
 Blackbird and lark and thrush and dove,
 And every nightingale
 And cuckoo tells its tale,
 And all they mean
 Is love.

[June appears at the further end of the garden, coming slowly
 towards May, who, seeing her, exclaims]

MAY.

Surely you're come too early, sister June.

JUNE.

Indeed I feel as if I came too soon
 To round your young May moon
 And set the world a-gasping at my noon.
 Yet come I must. So here are strawberries
 Sun-flushed and sweet, as many as you please ;

And here are full-blown roses by the score,
More roses, and yet more.

[May, eating strawberries, withdraws among the flower beds.]

JUNE.

The sun does all my long day's work for me,
Raises and ripens everything ;
I need but sit beneath a leafy tree
And watch and sing.

[Seats herself in the shadow of a laburnum.]

Or if I'm lulled by note of bird and bee,
Or lulled by noontide's silence deep,
I need but nestle down beneath my tree
And drop asleep.

[June falls asleep ; and is not awakened by the voice of July,
who behind the scenes is heard half singing, half calling.]

JULY.

[Behind the scenes.]

Blue flags, yellow flags, flags all freckled,
Which will you take ? yellow, blue, speckled !
Take which you will, speckled, blue, yellow,
Each in its way has not a fellow.

The sky is purple and fire,
 Blackness and noise and unrest ;
The earth, parched with desire,
 Opens her mouth to drink.

Send forth thy thunder and fire,
 Turn over thy brimming cup,
O sky, appease the desire
 Of earth in her parched unrest ;
Pour out drink to her thirst,
 Her famishing life lift up ;
Make thyself fair as at first,
 With a rainbow for thy crest.

Have done with thunder and fire,
 O sky with the rainbow crest ;
O earth, have done with desire,
 Drink, and drink deep, and rest.

[Enter August, carrying a sheaf made up of different kinds of grain.]

JULY.

Hail, brother August, flushed and warm
And scatheless from my storm.
Your hands are full of corn, I see,
As full as hands can be :

And earth and air both smell as sweet as balm
 In their recovered calm,
 And that they owe to me.

[July retires into a shrubbery.]

AUGUST.

Wheat sways heavy, oats are airy,
 Barley bows a graceful head,
 Short and small shoots up canary,
 Each of these is some one's bread ;
 Bread for man or bread for beast,
 Or at very least
 A bird's savoury feast.

Men are brethren of each other,
 One in flesh and one in food ;
 And a sort of foster brother
 Is the litter, or the brood,
 Of that folk in fur or feather,
 Who, with men together,
 Breast the wind and weather.

[August descries September toiling across the lawn.]

AUGUST.

My harvest home is ended ; and I spy
 September drawing nigh

With the first thought of Autumn in her eye,
And the first sigh
Of Autumn wind among her locks that fly.

[September arrives, carrying upon her head a basket heaped
high with fruit.]

SEPTEMBER.

Unload me, brother. I have brought a few
Plums and these pears for you,
A dozen kinds of apples, one or two
Melons, some figs all bursting through
Their skins, and pearly with dew
These damsons violet-blue.

[While September is speaking, August lifts the basket to the
ground, selects various fruits, and withdraws slowly along
the gravel walk, eating a pear as he goes.]

SEPTEMBER.

My song is half a sigh
Because my green leaves die ;
Sweet are my fruits, but all my leaves are dying ;
And well may Autumn sigh,
And well may I
Who watch the sere leaves flying.

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My leaves that fade and fall,
 I note you one and all ;
 I call you, and the Autumn wind is calling,
 Lamenting for your fall,
 And for the pall
 You spread on earth in falling.

And here's a song of flowers to suit such hours :
 A song of the last lilies, the last flowers,
 Amid my withering bowers.

In the sunny garden bed
 Lilies look so pale,
 Lilies droop the head
 In the shady grassy vale ;
 If all alike they pine
 In shade and in shine,
 If everywhere they grieve,
 Where will lilies live ?

[October enters briskly, some leafy twigs bearing different sorts of nuts in one hand, and a long ripe hop-bine trailing after him from the other. A dahlia is stuck in his buttonhole.]

OCTOBER.

Nay, cheer up sister. Life is not quite over,
 Even if the year has done with corn and clover,

With flowers and leaves ; besides, in fact it's true,
Some leaves remain and some flowers too,
For me and you.
Now see my crops :

[Offering his produce to September.
I've brought you nuts and hops ;
And when the leaf drops, why, the walnut drops.

[October wreaths the hop-bine about September's neck, and gives her the nut twigs. They enter the cottage together, but without shutting the door. She steps into the back-ground : he advances to the hearth, removes the guard, stirs up the smouldering fire, and arranges several chest-nuts ready to roast.]

OCTOBER.

Crack your first nut and light your first fire,
Roast your first chestnut crisp on the bar ;
Make the logs sparkle, stir the blaze higher,
Logs are cheery as sun or as star,
Logs we can find wherever we are.

Spring one soft day will open the leaves,
Spring one bright day will lure back the flowers ;
Never fancy my whistling wind grieves,
Never fancy I've tears in my showers ;
Dance, nights and days! and dance on, my hours!

[Sees November approaching.

THE MONTHS:

OCTOBER.

Here comes my youngest sister, looking dim
 And grim,
 With dismal ways.
 What cheer, November?

NOVEMBER.

[Entering and shutting the door.]

Nought have I to bring
 Tramping a-chill and shivering,
 Except these pine-cones for a blaze,—
 Except a fog which follows,
 And stuffs up all the hollows,—
 Except a hoar frost here and there,—
 Except some shooting stars
 Which dart their luminous cars
 Trackless and noiseless through the keen night air.

[October, shrugging his shoulders, withdraws into the back-ground, while November throws her pine cones on the fire, and sits down listlessly.]

NOVEMBER.

The earth lies fast asleep, grown tired
 Of all that's high or deep ;
 There's nought desired and nought required
 Save a sleep.

I rock the cradle of the earth,
I lull her with a sigh ;
And know that she will wake to mirth
By and by.

[Through the window December is seen running and leaping in the direction of the door. He knocks.]

NOVEMBER.

[Calls out without rising.]

Ah, here's my youngest brother come at last :
Come in, December.

[He opens the door and enters, loaded with evergreens in berry, etc.]

NOVEMBER.

Come, and shut the door,
For now it's snowing fast ;
It snows, and will snow more and more ;
Don't let it drift in on the floor.
But you, you're all aglow ; how can you be
Rosy and warm and smiling in the cold ?

DECEMBER.

Nay, no closed doors for me,
But open doors and open hearts and glee
To welcome young and old.

Dimmest and brightest month am I ;
My short days end, my lengthening days begin ;
What matters more or less sun in the sky,
When all is sun within ?

[He begins making a wreath as he sings.

Ivy and privet dark as night,
I weave with hips and haws a cheerful show,
And holly for a beauty and delight,
And milky mistletoe.

While high above them all I set
Yew twigs and Christmas roses pure and pale ;
Then Spring her snowdrop and her violet
May keep, so sweet and frail ;

May keep each merry singing bird,
Of all her happy birds that singing build :
For I've a carol which some shepherds heard
Once in a wintry field.

[While December concludes his song all the other Months
troop in from the garden, or advance out of the back-
ground. The Twelve join hands in a circle, and begin
dancing round to a stately measure as the Curtain falls.]

PASTIME.

A BOAT amid the ripples, drifting, rocking,
Two idle people, without pause or aim ;
While in the ominous west there gathers darkness
Flushed with flame.

A haycock in a hayfield backing, lapping,
Two drowsy people pillowed round about ;
While in the ominous west across the darkness
Flame leaps out.

Better a wrecked life than a life so aimless,
Better a wrecked life than a life so soft ;
The ominous west glooms thundering, with its fire
Lit aloft.

“ITALIA, IO TI SALUTO!”

TO come back from the sweet South, to the North
Where I was born, bred, look to die;
Come back to do my day's work in its day,
Play out my play—
Amen, amen, say I.

To see no more the country half my own,
Nor hear the half familiar speech,
Amen, I say; I turn to that bleak North
Whence I came forth—
The South lies out of reach.

But when our swallows fly back to the South,
To the sweet South, to the sweet South,
The tears may come again into my eyes
On the old wise,
And the sweet name to my mouth.

MIRRORS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

THE mystery of Life, the mystery
Of Death, I see
Darkly as in a glass ;
Their shadows pass,
And talk with me.

As the flush of a Morning Sky,
As a Morning Sky colourless—
Each yields its measure of light
To a wet world or a dry ;
Each fares through day to night
With equal pace,
And then each one
Is done.

As the Sun with glory and grace
In his face,
Benignantly hot,

Graciously radiant and keen,
Ready to rise and to run,—
Not without spot,
Not even the Sun.

As the Moon
On the wax, on the wane,
With night for her noon ;
Vanishing soon,
To appear again.

As Roses that droop
Half warm, half chill, in the languid May,
And breathe out a scent
Sweet and faint ;
Till the wind gives one swoop
To scatter their beauty away.

As Lilies a multitude,
One dipping, one rising, one sinking,
On rippling waters, clear blue
And pure for their drinking ;
One new dead, and one opened anew,
And all good.

As a cankered pale Flower,
With death for a dower,

Each hour of its life half dead ;
With death for a crown
Weighing down
Its head.

As an Eagle, half strength and half grace,
Most potent to face
Unwinking the splendour of light ;
Harrying the East and the West,
Soaring aloft from our sight ;
Yet one day or one night dropped to rest,
On the low common earth
Of his birth.

As a Dove,
Not alone,
In a world of her own
Full of fluttering soft noises
And tender sweet voices
Of love.

As a Mouse
Keeping house
In the fork of a tree,
With nuts in a crevice,
And an acorn or two ;

What cares he
For blossoming boughs,
Or the song-singing beves
Of birds in their glee,
Scarlet, or golden, or blue ?

As a Mole grubbing underground ;
When it comes to the light
It grubs its way back again,
Feeling no bias of fur
To hamper it in its stir,
Scant of pleasure and pain,
Sinking itself out of sight
Without sound.

As Waters that drop and drop,
Weariness without end,
That drop and never stop,
Wear that nothing can mend,
Till one day they drop—
Stop—
And there's an end,
And matters mend.

As Trees, beneath whose skin
We mark not the sap begin

To swell and rise,
Till the whole bursts out in green :
We mark the falling leaves
When the wide world grieves
And sighs.

As a Forest on fire,
Where maddened creatures desire
Wet mud or wings
Beyond all those things
Which could assuage desire
On this side the flaming fire.

As Wind with a sob and sigh
To which there comes no reply
But a rustle and shiver
From rushes of the river ;
As Wind with a desolate moan,
Moaning on alone.

As a Desert all sand,
Blank, neither water nor land
For solace, or dwelling, or culture,
Where the storms and the wild creatures howl ;
Given over to lion and vulture,
To ostrich, and jackal, and owl :

Yet somewhere an oasis lies ;
There waters arise
To nourish one seedling of balm,
Perhaps, or one palm.

As the Sea,
Murmuring, shifting, swaying ;
One time sunnily playing,
One time wrecking and slaying ;
In whichever mood it be,
Worst or best,
Never at rest.

As still Waters and deep,
As shallow Waters that brawl,
As rapid Waters that leap
To their fall.

As Music, as Colour, as Shape,
Keys of rapture and pain
Turning in vain
In a lock which turns not again,
While breaths and moments escape.

As Spring, all bloom and desire ;
As Summer, all gift and fire ;

As Autumn, a dying glow ;
As Winter, with nought to show :

Winter which lays its dead all out of sight,
All clothed in white,
All waiting for the long-awaited light.

A BALLAD OF BODING.

THERE are sleeping dreams and waking dreams ;
What seems is not always as it seems.

I looked out of my window in the sweet new morning,
And there I saw three barges of manifold adorning
Went sailing toward the East :
The first had sails like fire,
The next like glittering wire,
But sackcloth were the sails of the least ;
And all the crews made music, and two had spread a
feast.

The first choir breathed in flutes,
And fingered soft guitars ;
The second won from lutes
Harmonious chords and jars,
With drums for stormy bars :
But the third was all of harpers and scarlet trumpeters ;
Notes of triumph, then
An alarm again,

As for onset, as for victory, rallies, stirs,
Peace at last and glory to the vanquishers.

The first bargeshowed for figurehead a Lovewith wings;
The second showed for figurehead a Worm with stings;
The third, a Lily tangled to a Rose which clings.
The first bore for freight gold and spice and down;
The second bore a sword, a sceptre, and a crown;
The third, a heap of earth gone to dust and brown.
Winged Love meseemed like Folly in the face;
Stinged Worm meseemed loathly in his place;
Lily and Rose were flowers of grace.

Merry went the revel of the fire-sailed crew,
Singing, feasting, dancing to and fro:
Pleasures ever changing, ever graceful, ever new;
Sighs, but scarce of woe;
All the sighing
Wooed such sweet replying;
All the sighing, sweet and low,
Used to come and go
For more pleasure, merely so.
Yet at intervals some one grew tired
Of everything desired,
And sank, I knew not whither, in sorry plight,
Out of sight.

D

The second crew seemed ever
Wider-visioned, graver,
More distinct of purpose, more sustained of will ;
With heads erect and proud,
And voices sometimes loud ;
With endless tacking, counter-tacking,
All things grasping, all things lacking,
It would seem ;
Ever shifting helm, or sail, or shroud,
Drifting on as in a dream.
Hoarding to their utmost bent,
Feasting to their fill,
Yet gnawed by discontent,
Envy, hatred, malice, on their road they went.
Their freight was not a treasure,
Their music not a pleasure ;
The sword flashed, cleaving through their bands,
Sceptre and crown changed hands.

The third crew as they went
Seemed mostly different ;
They toiled in rowing, for to them the wind was
contrary,
As all the world might see.
They laboured at the oar,
While on their heads they bore

The fiery stress of sunshine more and more.
They laboured at the oar hand-sore,
Till rain went splashing,
And spray went dashing,
Down on them, and up on them, more and
more.

Their sails were patched and rent,
Their masts were bent,
In peril of their lives they worked and went.
For them no feast was spread,
No soft luxurious bed
Scented and white,
No crown or sceptre hung in sight ;
In weariness and painfulness,
In thirst and sore distress,
They rowed and steered from left to right
With all their might.

Their trumpeters and harpers round about
Incessantly played out,
And sometimes they made answer with a shout ;
But oftener they groaned or wept,
And seldom paused to eat, and seldom slept.
I wept for pity watching them, but more
I wept heart-sore
Once and again to see
Some weary man plunge overboard, and swim

To Love or Worm ship floating buoyantly :
And there all welcomed him.

The ships steered each apart and seemed to scorn
each other,

Yet all the crews were interchangeable ;

Now one man, now another,

—Like bloodless spectres some, some flushed by
health,—

Changed openly, or changed by stealth,
Scaling a slippery side, and scaled it well.

The most left Love ship, hauling wealth

Up Worm ship's side ;

While some few hollow-eyed

Left either for the sack-sailed boat ;

But this, though not remote,

Was worst to mount, and whoso left it once

Scarce ever came again,

But seemed to loathe his erst companions,

And wish and work them bane.

Then I knew (I know not how) there lurked quick-
sands full of dread,

Rocks and reefs and whirlpools in the water bed,

Whence a waterspout

Instantaneously leaped out,

Roaring as it reared its head.

Soon I spied a something dim,
Many-handed, grim,
That went flitting to and fro the first and second ship;
It puffed their sails full out
With puffs of smoky breath
From a smouldering lip,
And cleared the waterspout
Which reeled roaring round about
Threatening death.
With a horny hand it steered,
And a horn appeared
On its sneering head upreared
Haughty and high
Against the blackening lowering sky.
With a hoof it swayed the waves;
They opened here and there,
Till I spied deep ocean graves
Full of skeletons
That were men and women once
Foul or fair;
Full of things that creep
And fester in the deep
And never breathe the clean life-nurturing air.

The third bark held aloof
From the Monster with the hoof,

Despite his urgent beck,
And fraught with guile
Abominable his smile ;
Till I saw him take a flying leap on to that deck.
Then full of awe,
With these same eyes I saw
His head incredible retract its horn
Rounding like babe's new born,
While silvery phosphorescence played
About his dis-horned head.
The sneer smoothed from his lip,
He beamed blandly on the ship ;
All winds sank to a moan,
All waves to a monotone
(For all these seemed his realm),
While he laid a strong caressing hand upon the helm.

Then a cry well nigh of despair
Shrieked to heaven, a clamour of desperate prayer.
The harpers harped no more,
While the trumpeters sounded sore,
An alarm to wake the dead from their bed :
To the rescue, to the rescue, now or never,
To the rescue, O ye living, O ye dead,
Or no more help or hope for ever !—
The planks strained as though they must part asunder,

The masts bent as though they must dip under,
And the winds and the waves at length
Girt up their strength,
And the depths were laid bare,
And heaven flashed fire and volleyed thunder
Through the rain-choked air,
And sea and sky seemed to kiss
In the horror and the hiss
Of the whole world shuddering everywhere.

Lo ! a Flyer swooping down
With wings to span the globe,
And splendour for his robe
And splendour for his crown.
He lighted on the helm with a foot of fire,
And spun the Monster overboard :
And that monstrous thing abhorred,
Gnashing with balked desire,
Wriggled like a worm infirm
Up the Worm
Of the loathly figurehead.
There he crouched and gnashed ;
And his head re-horned, and gashed
From the other's grapple, dripped bloody red.
I saw that thing accurst
Wreak his worst

On the first and second crew :
Some with baited hook
He angled for and took,
Some dragged overboard in a net he threw,
Some he did to death
With hoof or horn or blasting breath.

I heard a voice of wailing
Where the ships went sailing,
A sorrowful voice prevailing
Above the sound of the sea,
Above the singers' voices,
And musical merry noises ;
All songs had turned to sighing,
The light was failing,
The day was dying—
Ah me,
That such a sorrow should be !

There was sorrow on the sea and sorrow on the land
When Love ship went down by the bottomless quick-
sand
To its grave in the bitter wave.
There was sorrow on the sea and sorrow on the land
When Worm ship went to pieces on the rock-bound
strand,
And the bitter wave was its grave.

But land and sea waxed hoary
In whiteness of a glory
Never told in story
Nor seen by mortal eye,
When the third ship crossed the bar
Where whirls and breakers are,
And steered into the splendours of the sky ;
That third bark and that least
Which had never seemed to feast,
Yet kept high festival above sun and moon and star.

YET A LITTLE WHILE.

I DREAMED and did not seek : to-day I seek
Who can no longer dream ;
But now am all behindhand, waxen weak,
And dazed amid so many things that gleam
Yet are not what they seem.

I dreamed and did not work : to-day I work
Kept wide awake by care
And loss, and perils dimly guessed to lurk ;
I work and reap not, while my life goes bare
And void in wintry air.

I hope indeed ; but hope itself is fear
Viewed on the sunny side ;
I hope, and disregard the world that's here,
The prizes drawn, the sweet things that betide ;
I hope, and I abide.

HE AND SHE.

“**S**HOULD one of us remember,
And one of us forget,
I wish I knew what each will do—
But who can tell as yet?”

“Should one of us remember,
And one of us forget,
I promise you what I will do—
And I’m content to wait for you,
And not be sure as yet.”

MONNA INNOMINATA.

A SONNET OF SONNETS.

BEATRICE, immortalized by "altissimo poeta . . . cotanto amante"; Laura, celebrated by a great though an inferior bard,—have alike paid the exceptional penalty of exceptional honour, and have come down to us resplendent with charms, but (at least, to my apprehension) scant of attractiveness.

These heroines of world-wide fame were preceded by a bevy of unnamed ladies "donne innominate" sung by a school of less conspicuous poets; and in that land and that period which gave simultaneous birth to Catholics, to Albigenses, and to Troubadours, one can imagine many a lady as sharing her lover's poetic aptitude, while the barrier between them might be one held sacred by both, yet not such as to render mutual love incompatible with mutual honour.

Had such a lady spoken for herself, the portrait left us might have appeared more tender, if less dignified, than any drawn even by a devoted friend. Or had the Great Poetess of our own day and nation only been unhappy instead of happy, her circumstances would have invited her to bequeath to us, in lieu of the "Portuguese Sonnets," an inimitable "donna innominata" drawn not from fancy but from feeling, and worthy to occupy a niche beside Beatrice and Laura.

I.

“ Lo di che han detto a’ dolci amici addio.”—DANTE.

“ Amor, con quanto sforzo oggi mi vinci !”—PETRARCA.

COME back to me, who wait and watch for you :—

Or come not yet, for it is over then,
 And long it is before you come again,
 So far between my pleasures are and few.
 While, when you come not, what I do I do
 Thinking “ Now when he comes,” my sweetest
 “ when :”

For one man is my world of all the men
 This wide world holds ; O love, my world is you.
 Howbeit, to meet you grows almost a pang
 Because the pang of parting comes so soon ;
 My hope hangs waning, waxing, like a moon
 Between the heavenly days on which we meet :
 Ah me, but where are now the songs I sang
 When life was sweet because you called them
 sweet ?

2.

“ Era già l’ora che volge il desio.”—DANTE.

“ Ricorro al tempo ch’ io vi vidi prima.”—PETRARCA.

I wish I could remember that first day,
First hour, first moment of your meeting me,
If bright or dim the season, it might be
Summer or Winter for aught I can say ;
So unrecorded did it slip away,
So blind was I to see and to foresee,
So dull to mark the budding of my tree
That would not blossom yet for many a May.
If only I could recollect it, such
A day of days ! I let it come and go
As traceless as a thaw of bygone snow ;
It seemed to mean so little, meant so much ;
If only now I could recall that touch,
First touch of hand in hand—Did one but know !

3.

“ O ombre vane, fuor che ne l'aspetto !”—DANTE.

“ Immaginata guida la conduce.”—PETRARCA.

I dream of you to wake : would that I might
Dream of you and not wake but slumber on ;
Nor find with dreams the dear companion gone,
As Summer ended Summer birds take flight.
In happy dreams I hold you full in sight,
I blush again who waking look so wan ;
Brighter than sunniest day that ever shone,
In happy dreams your smile makes day of night.
Thus only in a dream we are at one,
Thus only in a dream we give and take
The faith that maketh rich who take or give ;
If thus to sleep is sweeter than to wake,
To die were surely sweeter than to live,
Though there be nothing new beneath the sun.

4.

“ Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda.”—DANTE.

“ Ogni altra cosa, ogni pensier va fore, ·

E sol ivi con voi rimansi amore.”—PETRARCA.

I loved you first : but afterwards your love
 Outsoaring mine, sang such a loftier song
 As drowned the friendly cooings of my dove.
 Which owes the other most ? my love was long,
 And yours one moment seemed to wax more strong ;
 I loved and guessed at you, you construed me
 And loved me for what might or might not be—
 Nay, weights and measures do us both a wrong.
 For verily love knows not “ mine ” or “ thine ; ”
 With separate “ I ” and “ thou ” free love has done,
 For one is both and both are one in love :
 Rich love knows nought of “ thine that is not mine ; ”
 Both have the strength and both the length thereof,
 Both of us, of the love which makes us one.

5.

“ Amor che a nulla amato amar perdona.”—DANTE.

“ Amor m’addusse in sl gioiosa spene.”—PETRARCA.

O my heart’s heart, and you who are to me
More than myself myself, God be with you,
Keep you in strong obedience leal and true
To Him whose noble service setteth free,
Give you all good we see or can foresee,
Make your joys many and your sorrows few,
Bless you in what you bear and what you do,
Yea, perfect you as He would have you be.
So much for you ; but what for me, dear friend ?
To love you without stint and all I can
To-day, to-morrow, world without an end ;
To love you much and yet to love you more,
As Jordan at his flood sweeps either shore ;
Since woman is the helpmeet made for man.

6.

“Or puoi la quantitate
Comprender de l'amor che a te mi scalda.”—DANTE.

“Non vo' che da tal nodo amor mi scioglia.”—PETRARCA.

Trust me, I have not earned your dear rebuke,
I love, as you would have me, God the most ;
Would lose not Him, but you, must one be lost,
Nor with Lot's wife cast back a faithless look
Unready to forego what I forsook ;
This say I, having counted up the cost,
This, though I be the feeblest of God's host,
The sorriest sheep Christ shepherds with His crook.
Yet while I love my God the most, I deem
That I can never love you overmuch ;
I love Him more, so let me love you too ;
Yea, as I apprehend it, love is such
I cannot love you if I love not Him,
I cannot love Him if I love not you.

7.

“ Qui primavera sempre ed ogni frutto.”—DANTE.

“ Ragionando con meco ed io con lui.”—PETRARCA.

“ Love me, for I love you ”—and answer me,
 “ Love me, for I love you ”—so shall we stand
 As happy equals in the flowering land
 Of love, that knows not a dividing sea.
 Love builds the house on rock and not on sand,
 Love laughs what while the winds rave desperately ;
 And who hath found love’s citadel unmanned ?
 And who hath held in bonds love’s liberty ?
 My heart’s a coward though my words are brave—
 We meet so seldom, yet we surely part
 So often ; there’s a problem for your art !
 Still I find comfort in his Book, who saith,
 Though jealousy be cruel as the grave,
 And death be strong, yet love is strong as death.

8.

“ Come dicesse a Dio : D'altro non calme.”—DANTE.

“ Spero trovar pietà non che perdono.”—PETRARCA.

“ I, if I perish, perish ”—Esther spake :
And bride of life or death she made her fair
In all the lustre of her perfumed hair
And smiles that kindle longing but to slake.
She put on pomp of loveliness, to take
Her husband through his eyes at unaware ;
She spread abroad her beauty for a snare,
Harmless as doves and subtle as a snake.
She trapped him with one mesh of silken hair,
She vanquished him by wisdom of her wit,
And built her people's house that it should
stand :—
If I might take my life so in my hand,
And for my love to Love put up my prayer,
And for love's sake by Love be granted it !

9.

“ O dignitosa coscienza e netta !”—DANTE.

“ Spirto più acceso di virtuti ardenti.”—PETRARCA.

Thinking of you, and all that was, and all
 That might have been and now can never be,
 I feel your honoured excellence, and see
 Myself unworthy of the happier call :
 For woe is me who walk so apt to fall,
 So apt to shrink afraid, so apt to flee,
 Apt to lie down and die (ah, woe is me !)
 Faithless and hopeless turning to the wall.
 And yet not hopeless quite nor faithless quite,
 Because not loveless ; love may toil all night,
 But take at morning ; wrestle till the break
 Of day, but then wield power with God and man :—
 So take I heart of grace as best I can,
 Ready to spend and be spent for your sake.

10.

“ Con miglior corso e con migliore stella.”—DANTE.

“ La vita fugge e non s'arresta un' ora.”—PETRARCA.

Time flies, hope flags, life plies a wearied wing ;
 Death following hard on life gains ground apace ;
 Faith runs with each and rears an eager face,
 Outruns the rest, makes light of everything,
 Spurns earth, and still finds breath to pray and sing ;
 While love ahead of all uplifts his praise,
 Still asks for grace and still gives thanks for grace,
 Content with all day brings and night will bring.
 Life wanes ; and when love folds his wings above
 Tired hope, and less we feel his conscious pulse,
 Let us go fall asleep, dear friend, in peace :
 A little while, and age and sorrow cease ;
 A little while, and life reborn annuls
 Loss and decay and death, and all is love.

I I.

“ Vien dietro a me e lascia dir le genti.”—DANTE.

“ Contando i casi della vita nostra.”—PETRARCA.

Many in aftertimes will say of you
“ He loved her ”—while of me what will they say?
Not that I loved you more than just in play,
For fashion's sake as idle women do.
Even let them prate ; who know not what we knew
Of love and parting in exceeding pain,
Of parting hopeless here to meet again,
Hopeless on earth, and heaven is out of view.
But by my heart of love laid bare to you,
My love that you can make not void nor vain,
Love that foregoes you but to claim anew
Beyond this passage of the gate of death,
I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
My love of you was life and not a breath.

12.

“ Amor, che ne la mente mi ragiona.”—DANTE.

“ Amor vien nel bel viso di costei.”—PETRARCA.

If there be any one can take my place
And make you happy whom I grieve to grieve,
Think not that I can grudge it, but believe
I do commend you to that nobler grace,
That readier wit than mine, that sweeter face ;
Yea, since your riches make me rich, conceive
I too am crowned, while bridal crowns I weave,
And thread the bridal dance with jocund pace.
For if I did not love you, it might be
That I should grudge you some one dear delight ;
But since the heart is yours that was mine own,
Your pleasure 'is my pleasure, right my right,
Your honourable freedom makes me free,
And you companioned I am not alone.

13.

“ E drizzeremo gli occhi al Primo Amore.”—DANTE.

“ Ma trovo peso non da le mie braccia.”—PETRARCA.

If I could trust mine own self with your fate,
Shall I not rather trust it in God's hand?
Without Whose Will one lily doth not stand,
Nor sparrow fall at his appointed date;
Who numbereth the innumerable sand,
Who weighs the wind and water with a weight,
To Whom the world is neither small nor great,
Whose knowledge foreknew every plan we planned.
Searching my heart for all that touches you,
I find there only love and love's goodwill
Helpless to help and impotent to do,
Of understanding dull, of sight most dim;
And therefore I commend you back to Him
Whose love your love's capacity can fill.

14.

“ E la Sua Volontade è nostra pace.”—DANTE.

“ Sol con questi pensier, con altre chiome.”—PETRARCA.

Youth gone, and beauty gone if ever there
 Dwelt beauty in so poor a face as this ;
 Youth gone and beauty, what remains of bliss ?
 I will not bind fresh roses in my hair,
 To shame a cheek at best but little fair,—
 Leave youth his roses, who can bear a thorn,—
 I will not seek for blossoms anywhere,
 Except such common flowers as blow with corn.
 Youth gone and beauty gone, what doth remain ?
 The longing of a heart pent up forlorn,
 A silent heart whose silence loves and longs ;
 The silence of a heart which sang its songs
 While youth and beauty made a summer morn,
 Silence of love that cannot sing again.

"LUSCIOUS AND SORROWFUL."

BEAUTIFUL, tender, wasting away for sorrow ;
Thus to-day ; and how shall it be with thee to-
morrow ?
Beautiful, tender—what else ?
A hope tells.

Beautiful, tender, keeping the jubilee
In the land of home together, past death and sea ;
No more change or death, no more
Salt sea-shore.

DE PROFUNDIS.

OH why is heaven built so far,
Oh why is earth set so remote?
I cannot reach the nearest star
That hangs afloat.

I would not care to reach the moon,
One round monotonous of change ;
Yet even she repeats her tune
Beyond my range.

I never watch the scattered fire
Of stars, or sun's far-trailing train,
But all my heart is one desire,
And all in vain :

For I am bound with fleshly bands,
Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope ;
I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,
And catch at hope.

TEMPUS FUGIT.

LOVELY Spring,
A brief sweet thing,
Is swift on the wing ;
Gracious Summer,
A slow sweet comer,
Hastens past ;
Autumn while sweet
Is all incomplete
With a moaning blast,—
Nothing can last,
Can be cleaved unto,
Can be dwelt upon ;
It is hurried through,
It is come and gone,
Undone it cannot be done,
It is ever to do,
Ever old, ever new,
Ever waxing old
And lapsing to Winter cold.

GOLDEN GLORIES.

THE buttercup is like a golden cup,
The marigold is like a golden frill,
The daisy with a golden eye looks up,
And golden spreads the flag beside the rill,
And gay and golden nods the daffodil,
The gorsey common swells a golden sea,
The cowslip hangs a head of golden tips,
And golden drips the honey which the bee
Sucks from sweet hearts of flowers and stores
and sips.

JOHNNY.

FOUNDED ON AN ANECDOTE OF THE FIRST FRENCH
REVOLUTION.

JOHNNY had a golden head
Like a golden mop in blow,
Right and left his curls would spread
In a glory and a glow,
And they framed his honest face
Like stray sunbeams out of place.

Long and thick, they half could hide
How threadbare his patched jacket hung ;
They used to be his Mother's pride ;
She praised them with a tender tongue,
And stroked them with a loving finger
That smoothed and stroked and loved to linger.

On a doorstep Johnny sat,
Up and down the street looked he ;
Johnny did not own a hat,
Hot or cold tho' days might be ;
Johnny did not own a boot
To cover up his muddy foot.

Johnny's face was pale and thin,
Pale with hunger and with crying ;
For his Mother lay within,
Talked and tossed and seemed a-dying,
While Johnny racked his brains to think
How to get her help and drink,
Get her physic, get her tea,
Get her bread and something nice ;
Not a penny piece had he,
And scarce a shilling might suffice ;
No wonder that his soul was sad,
When not one penny piece he had.

As he sat there thinking, moping,
Because his Mother's wants were many,
Wishing much but scarcely hoping
To earn a shilling or a penny,
A friendly neighbour passed him by
And questioned him : Why did he cry ?

Alas ! his trouble soon was told :
He did not cry for cold or hunger,
Though he was hungry both and cold ;
He only felt more weak and younger,
Because he wished so to be old
And apt at earning pence or gold.

Kindly that neighbour was, but poor,
Scant coin had he to give or lend ;
And well he guessed there needed more
Than pence or shillings to befriend
The helpless woman in her strait,
So much loved, yet so desolate.

One way he saw, and only one :
He would—he could not—give the advice,
And yet he must : the widow's son
Had curls of gold would fetch their price ;
Long curls which might be clipped, and sold
For silver, or perhaps for gold.

Our Johnny, when he understood
Which shop it was that purchased hair,
Ran off as briskly as he could,
And in a trice stood cropped and bare,
Too short of hair to fill a locket,
But jingling money in his pocket.

Precious money—tea and bread,
Physic, ease, for Mother dear,
Better than a golden head :
Yet our hero dropped one tear
When he spied himself close shorn,
Barer much than lamb new born.

His Mother throve upon the money,
Ate and revived and kissed her son :
But oh ! when she perceived her Johnny,
And understood what he had done
All and only for her sake,
She sobbed as if her heart must break.

"HOLLOW-SOUNDING AND MYSTERIOUS."

THERE'S no replying
 To the Wind's sighing,
Telling, foretelling,
Dying, undying,
Dwindling and swelling,
Complaining, droning,
Whistling and moaning,
Ever beginning,
Ending, repeating,
Hinting and dinning,
Lagging and fleeting—
We've no replying
Living or dying
To the Wind's sighing.

What are you telling,
Variable Wind-tone?
What would be teaching,
O sinking, swelling,
Desolate Wind-moan?
Ever for ever

Teaching and preaching,
Never, ah never
Making us wiser—
The earliest riser
Catches no meaning,
The last who hearkens
Garners no gleaning
Of wisdom's treasure,
While the world darkens :—
Living or dying,
In pain, in pleasure,
We've no replying
To wordless flying
Wind's sighing.

MAIDEN MAY.

MAIDEN May sat in her bower,
In her blush rose bower in flower,
Sweet of scent ;
Sat and dreamed away an hour,
Half content, half discontent.

“ Why should rose blossoms be born,
Tender blossoms, on a thorn
Though so sweet ?
Never a thorn besets the corn
Scentless in its strength complete.

“ Why are roses all so frail,
At the mercy of a gale,
Of a breath ?
Yet so sweet and perfect pale,
Still so sweet in life and death.”

Maiden May sat in her bower,
In her blush rose bower in flower,
 Where a linnet
Made one bristling branch the tower
 For her nest and young ones in it.

“ Gay and clear the linnet trills ;
 Yet the skylark only, thrills
 Heaven and earth
When he breasts the height, and fills
 Height and depth with song and mirth.

“ Nightingales which yield to night
 Solitary strange delight,
 Reign alone :
But the lark for all his height
 Fills no solitary throne ;

“ While he sings, a hundred sing ;
 Wing their flight below his wing
 Yet in flight ;
Each a lovely joyful thing
 To the measure of its delight.

“ Why then should a lark be reckoned
One alone, without a second
Near his throne?
He in skyward flight unslackened,
In his music, not alone.”

Maiden May sat in her bower ;
Her own face was like a flower
Of the prime,
Half in sunshine, half in shower,
In the year's most tender time.

Her own thoughts in silent song
Musically flowed along,
Wise, unwise,
Wistful, wondering, weak or strong :
As brook shallows sink or rise.

Other thoughts another day,
Maiden May, will surge and sway
Round your heart ;
Wake, and plead, and turn at bay,
Wisdom part, and folly part.

Time not far remote will borrow
Other joys, another sorrow,
 All for you ;
Not to-day, and yet to-morrow
 Reasoning false and reasoning true.

Wherefore greatest ? Wherefore least ?
Hearts that starve and hearts that feast ?
 You and I ?
Stammering Oracles have ceased,
 And the whole earth stands at " why ? "

Underneath all things that be
Lies an unsolved mystery ;
 Over all
Spreads a veil impenetrably,
 Spreads a dense unlifted pall.

Mystery of mysteries :
This creation hears and sees
 High and low—
Vanity of vanities :
 This we test and *this* we know.

Maiden May, the days of flowering
Nurse you now in sweet embowering,
 Sunny days ;
Bright with rainbows all the showering,
 Bright with blossoms all the ways.

Close the inlet of your bower,
Close it close with thorn and flower,
 Maiden May ;
Lengthen out the shortening hour,—
 Morrrows are not as to-day.

Stay to-day which wanes too soon,
Stay the sun and stay the moon,
 Stay your youth ;
Bask you in the actual noon,
 Rest you in the present truth.

Let to-day suffice to-day :
For itself to-morrow may
 Fetch its loss,
Aim and stumble, say its say,
 Watch and pray and bear its cross.

TILL TO-MORROW.

LONG have I longed, till I am tired
Of longing and desire ;
Farewell my points in vain desired,
My dying fire ;
Farewell all things that die and fail and tire.

Springtide and youth and useless pleasure
And all my useless scheming,
My hopes of unattainable treasure,
Dreams not worth dreaming,
Glow-worms that gleam but yield no warmth in
gleaming,

Farewell all shows that fade in showing :
My wish and joy stand over
Until to-morrow ; Heaven is glowing
Through cloudy cover,
Beyond all clouds loves me my Heavenly Lover.

DEATH-WATCHES.

THE Spring spreads one green lap of flowers
Which Autumn buries at the fall,
No chilling showers of Autumn hours
Can stay them or recall ;
Winds sing a dirge, while earth lays out of sight
Her garment of delight.

The cloven East brings forth the sun,
The cloven West doth bury him
What time his gorgeous race is run
And all the world grows dim ;
A funeral moon is lit in heaven's hollow,
And pale the star-lights follow.

TOUCHING "NEVER."

BECAUSE you never yet have loved me, dear,
Think you you never can nor ever will?
Surely while life remains hope lingers still,
Hope the last blossom of life's dying year.
Because the season and mine age grow sere,
Shall never Spring bring forth her daffodil,
Shall never sweeter Summer feast her fill
Of roses with the nightingales they hear?
If you had loved me, I not loving you,
If you had urged me with the tender plea
Of what our unknown years to come might do
(Eternal years, if Time should count too few),
I would have owned the point you pressed on me,
Was possible, or probable, or true.

BRANDONS BOTH.

O H fair Milly Brandon, a young maid, a fair maid !
All her curls are yellow and her eyes are blue,
And her cheeks were rosy red till a secret care made
Hollow whiteness of their brightness as a care will do.

Still she tends her flowers, but not as in the old days,
Still she sings her songs, but not the songs of old :
If now it be high Summer her days seem brief and
cold days,
If now it be high Summer her nights are long and
cold.

If you have a secret keep it, pure maid Milly ;
Life is filled with troubles and the world with scorn ;
And pity without love is at best times hard and chilly,
Chilling sore and stinging sore a heart forlorn.

Walter Brandon, do you guess Milly Brandon's secret ?
Many things you know, but not everything,
With your locks like raven's plumage, and eyes like
an egret,
And a laugh that is music, and such a voice to sing.

Nelly Knollys, she is fair, but she is not fairer
Than fairest Milly Brandon was before she turned
so pale :

Oh, but Nelly's dearer if she be not rarer,
She need not keep a secret or blush behind a veil.

Beyond the first green hills, beyond the nearest valleys,
Nelly dwells at home beneath her mother's eyes :
Her home is neat and homely, not a cot and not a
palace,
Just the home where love sets up his happiest
memories.

Milly has no mother ; and sad beyond another
Is she whose blessed mother is vanished out of call :
Truly comfort beyond comfort is stored up in a Mother
Who bears with all, and hopes through all, and loves
us all.

Where peacocks nod and flaunt up and down the
terrace,
Furling and unfurling their scores of sightless eyes,
To and fro among the leaves and buds and flowers
and berries
Maiden Milly strolls and pauses, smiles and sighs.

On the hedged-in terrace of her father's palace

She may stroll and muse alone, may smile or sigh
alone,

Letting thoughts and eyes go wandering over hills and
valleys

To-day her father's, and one day to be all her
own.

If her thoughts go coursing down lowlands and up
highlands,

It is because the startled game are leaping from
their lair ;

If her thoughts dart homeward to the reedy river
islands,

It is because the waterfowl rise startled here or
there.

At length a footfall on the steps : she turns, composed
and steady,

All the long-descended greatness of her father's
house

Lifting up her head ; and there stands Walter keen
and ready

For hunting or for hawking, a flush upon his
brows.

“ Good-morrow, fair cousin.” “ Good-morrow, fairest
cousin :

The sun has started on his course, and I must start
to-day.

If you have done me one good turn you’ve done me
many a dozen,

And I shall often think of you, think of you away.”

“ Over hill and hollow what quarry will you follow,
Or what fish will you angle for beside the river’s edge?
There’s cloud upon the hill-top and there’s mist deep
down the hollow,
And fog among the rushes and the rustling sedge.”

“ I shall speed well enough be it hunting or hawking,
Or casting a bait toward the shyest daintiest fin.
But I kiss your hands, my cousin ; I must not loiter
talking,
For nothing comes of nothing, and I’m fain to seek
and win.”

“ Here’s a thorny rose : will you wear it an hour,
Till the petals drop apart still fresh and pink and
sweet ?
Till the petals drop from the drooping perished flower,
And only the graceless thorns are left of it.”

“ Nay, I have another rose sprung in another garden,
Another rose which sweetens all the world for me.
Be you a tenderer mistress and be you a warier warden
Of your rose, as sweet as mine, and full as fair to
see.”

“ Nay, a bud once plucked there is no reviving,
Nor is it worth your wearing now, nor worth indeed
my own ;
The dead to the dead, and the living to the living.
It's time I go within, for it's time now you were gone.”

“ Good-bye, Milly Brandon, I shall not forget you,
Though it be good-bye between us for ever from
to-day ;
I could almost wish to-day that I had never met you,
And I'm true to you in this one word that I say.”

“ Good-bye, Walter. I can guess which thornless rose
you covet ;
Long may it bloom and prolong its sunny morn :
Yet as for my one thorny rose, I do not cease to love it,
And if it is no more a flower I love it as a thorn.”

A LIFE'S PARALLELS.

NEVER on this side of the grave again,
On this side of the river,
On this side of the garner of the grain,
Never,—

Ever while time flows on and on and on,
That narrow noiseless river,
Ever while corn bows heavy-headed, wan,
Ever,—

Never despairing, often fainting, rueing,
But looking back, ah never !
Faint yet pursuing, faint yet still pursuing
Ever.

AT LAST.

MANY have sung of love a root of bane :
While to my mind a root of balm it is,
For love at length breeds love ; sufficient bliss
For life and death and rising up again.
Surely when light of Heaven makes all things plain,
Love will grow plain with all its mysteries ;
Nor shall we need to fetch from over seas
Wisdom or wealth or pleasure safe from pain.
Love in our borders, love within our heart,
Love all in all, we then shall bide at rest,
Ended for ever life's unending quest,
Ended for ever effort, change and fear :
Love all in all ;—no more that better part
Purchased, but at the cost of all things here.

GOLDEN SILENCES.

THERE is silence that saith, " Ah me !"
 There is silence that nothing saith ;
 One the silence of life forlorn,
 One the silence of death ;
One is, and the other shall be.

One we know and have known for long,
 One we know not, but we shall know,
 All we who have ever been born ;
 Even so, be it so,—
There is silence, despite a song.

Sowing day is a silent day,
 Resting night is a silent night ;
 But whoso reaps the ripened corn
 Shall shout in his delight,
While silences vanish away.

IN THE WILLOW SHADE.

I SAT beneath a willow tree,
Where water falls and calls ;
While fancies upon fancies solaced me,
Some true, and some were false.

Who set their heart upon a hope
That never comes to pass,
Droop in the end like fading heliotrope
The sun's wan looking-glass.

Who set their will upon a whim
Clung to through good and ill,
Are wrecked alike whether they sink or swim,
Or hit or miss their will.

All things are vain that wax and wane,
For which we waste our breath ;
Love only doth not wane and is not vain,
Love only outlives death.

A singing lark rose toward the sky,
Circling he sang amain ;
He sang, a speck scarce visible sky-high,
And then he sank again.

A second like a sunlit spark
Flashed singing up his track ;
But never overtook that foremost lark,
And songless fluttered back.

A hovering melody of birds
Haunted the air above ;
They clearly sang contentment without words,
And youth and joy and love.

O silvery weeping willow tree
With all leaves shivering,
Have you no purpose but to shadow me
Beside this rippled spring ?

On this first fleeting day of Spring,
For Winter is gone by,
And every bird on every quivering wing
Floats in a sunny sky ;

On this first Summer-like soft day,
While sunshine steeps the air,
And every cloud has gat itself away,
And birds sing everywhere.

Have you no purpose in the world
But thus to shadow me
With all your tender drooping twigs unfurled,
O weeping willow tree?

With all your tremulous leaves outspread
Betwixt me and the sun,
While here I loiter on a mossy bed
With half my work undone;

My work undone, that should be done
At once with all my might;
For after the long day and lingering sun
Comes the unworking night.

This day is lapsing on its way,
Is lapsing out of sight;
And after all the chances of the day
Comes the resourceless night.

The weeping willow shook its head
And stretched its shadow long ;
The west grew crimson, the sun smouldered red,
The birds forbore a song.

Slow wind sighed through the willow leaves,
The ripple made a moan,
The world drooped murmuring like a thing that
grieves ;
And then I felt alone.

I rose to go, and felt the chill,
And shivered as I went ;
Yet shivering wondered, and I wonder still,
What more that willow meant ;

That silvery weeping willow tree
With all leaves shivering,
Which spent one long day overshadowing me
Beside a spring in Spring.

FLUTTERED WINGS.

THE splendour of the kindling day,
The splendour of the setting sun,
These move my soul to wend its way,
And have done
With all we grasp and toil amongst and say.

The paling roses of a cloud,
The fading bow that arches space,
These woo my fancy toward my shroud ;
Toward the place
Of faces veiled, and heads discrowned and bowed.

The nation of the awful stars,
The wandering star whose blaze is brief,
These make me beat against the bars
Of my grief ;
My tedious grief, twin to the life it mars.

O fretted heart tossed to and fro,
So fain to flee, so fain to rest !
All glories that are high or low,
East or west,
Grow dim to thee who art so fain to go.

A FISHER-WIFE.

THE soonest mended, nothing said ;
 And help may rise from east or west ;
But my two hands are lumps of lead,
 My heart sits leaden in my breast.

O north wind swoop not from the north,
 O south wind linger in the south,
Oh come not raving raging forth,
 To bring my heart into my mouth ;

For I've a husband out at sea,
 Afloat on feeble planks of wood ;
He does not know what fear may be ;
 I would have told him if I could.

I would have locked him in my arms,
 I would have hid him in my heart ;
For oh ! the waves are fraught with harms,
 And he and I so far apart.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

WHY has Spring one syllable less
Than any its fellow season?
There may be some other reason,
And I'm merely making a guess;
But surely it hoards such wealth
Of happiness, hope and health,
Sunshine and musical sound,
It may spare a foot from its name
Yet all the same
Superabound.

Soft-named Summer,
Most welcome comer,
Brings almost everything
Over which we dream or sing
Or sigh;
But then summer wends its way,
To-morrow,—to-day,—
Good-bye!

WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

Autumn,—the slow name lingers,
While we likewise flag ;
It silences many singers ;
Its slow days drag,
Yet hasten at speed
To leave us in chilly need
For Winter to strip indeed.

In all-lack Winter,
Dull of sense and of sound,
We huddle and shiver
Beside our splinter
Of crackling pine,
Snow in sky and snow on ground.
Winter and cold
Can't last for ever !
To-day, to-morrow, the sun will shine ;
When we are old,
But some still are young,
Singing the song
Which others have sung,
Ringing the bells
Which others have rung,—
Even so !
We ourselves, who else ?
We ourselves long
Long ago.

MARIANA.

NOT for me marring or making,
Not for me giving or taking ;
I love my Love and he loves not me,
I love my Love and my heart is breaking.

Sweet is Spring in its lovely showing,
Sweet the violet veiled in blowing,
Sweet it is to love and be loved ;
Ah, sweet knowledge beyond my knowing !

Who sighs for love sighs but for pleasure,
Who wastes for love hoards up a treasure ;
Sweet to be loved and take no count,
Sweet it is to love without measure.

Sweet my Love whom I loved to try for,
Sweet my Love whom I love and sigh for,
Will you once love me and sigh for me,
You my Love whom I love and die for ?

MEMENTO MORI.

POOR the pleasure
Doled out by measure,
Sweet though it be, while brief
As falling of the leaf ;
Poor is pleasure
By weight and measure.

Sweet the sorrow
Which ends to-morrow ;
Sharp though it be and sore,
It ends for evermore :
Zest of sorrow,
What ends to-morrow.

“ONE FOOT ON SEA, AND ONE ON
SHORE.”

“O H tell me once and tell me twice
And tell me thrice to make it plain,
When we who part this weary day,
When we who part shall meet again.”

“When windflowers blossom on the sea
And fishes skim along the plain,
Then we who part this weary day,
Then you and I shall meet again.”

“Yet tell me once before we part,
Why need we part who part in pain?
If flowers must blossom on the sea,
Why, we shall never meet again.

“My cheeks are paler than a rose,
My tears are saltier than the main,
My heart is like a lump of ice
If we must never meet again.”

" Oh weep or laugh, but let me be,
And live or die, for all's in vain ;
For life's in vain since we must part,
And parting must not meet again

" Till windflowers blossom on the sea
And fishes skim along the plain ;
Pale rose of roses let me be,
Your breaking heart breaks mine again."

BUDS AND BABIES.

A MILLION buds are born that never blow,
That sweet with promise lift a pretty head
To blush and wither on a barren bed
And leave no fruit to show.

Sweet, unfulfilled. Yet have I understood
One joy, by their fragility made plain :
Nothing was ever beautiful in vain,
Or all in vain was good.

BOY JOHNNY.

“IF you’ll busk you as a bride
And make ready,
It’s I will wed you with a ring,
O fair lady.”

“Shall I busk me as a bride,
I so bonny,
For you to wed me with a ring,
O boy Johnny?”

“When you’ve busked you as a bride
And made ready,
Who else is there to marry you,
O fair lady?”

“I will find my lover out,
I so bonny,
And you shall bear my wedding-train,
O boy Johnny.”

FREAKS OF FASHION.

SUCH a hubbub in the nests,
Such a bustle and squeak !
Nestlings, guiltless of a feather,
Learning just to speak,
Ask—" And how about the fashions ?"
From a cavernous beak.

Perched on bushes, perched on hedges,
Perched on firm hahas,
Perched on anything that holds them,
Gay papas and grave mammas
Teach the knowledge-thirsty nestlings :
Hear the gay papas.

Robin says : " A scarlet waistcoat
Will be all the wear,
Snug, and also cheerful-looking
For the frostiest air,
Comfortable for the chest too
When one comes to plume and pair."

“ Neat gray hoods will be in vogue,”
 Quoth a Jackdaw : “ Glossy gray,
 Setting close, yet setting easy,
 Nothing fly-away ;
 Suited to our misty mornings,
À la negligée.”

Flushing salmon, flushing sulphur,
 Haughty Cockatoos
 Answer—“ Hoods may do for mornings,
 But for evenings choose
 High head-dresses, curved like crescents,
 Such as well-bred persons use.”

“ Top-knots, yes ; yet more essential
 Still, a train or tail,”
 Screamed the Peacock : “ Gemmed and lustrous,
 Not too stiff, and not too frail ;
 Those are best which rearrange as
 Fans, and spread or trail.”

Spoke the Swan, entrenched behind
 An inimitable neck :
 “ After all, there’s nothing sweeter
 For the lawn or lake
 Than simple white, if fine and flaky
 And absolutely free from speck.”

“ Yellow,” hinted a Canary,
 “ Warmer, not less *distingué*.”
“ Peach colour,” put in a Lory,
 “ Cannot look *outré*.”
“ All the colours are in fashion,
 And are right,” the Parrots say.

“ Very well. But do contrast
 Tints harmonious,”
Piped a Blackbird, justly proud
 Of bill auriferous ;
“ Half the world may learn a lesson
 As to that from us.”

Then a Stork took up the word :
 “ Aim at height and *chic* :
Not high heels, they're common ; somehow,
 Stilted legs, not thick,
Nor yet thin :” he just glanced downward
 And snapped to his beak.

Here a rustling and a whirring,
 As of fans outspread,
Hinted that mammas felt anxious
 Lest the next thing said
Might prove less than quite judicious,
 Or even underbred.

So a mother Auk resumed
The broken thread of speech :
“ Let colours sort themselves, my dears,
Yellow, or red, or peach ;
The main points, as it seems to me,
We mothers have to teach,

“ Are form and texture, elegance,
An air reserved, sublime ;
The mode of wearing what we wear
With due regard to month and clime
But now, let's all compose ourselves,
It's almost breakfast-time.”

A hubbub, a squeak, a bustle !
Who cares to chatter or sing
With delightful breakfast coming ?
Yet they whisper under the wing :
“ So we may wear whatever we like,
Anything, everything !”

AN OCTOBER GARDEN.

I N my Autumn garden I was fain
To mourn among my scattered roses ;
Alas for that last rosebud which uncloses
To Autumn's languid sun and rain
When all the world is on the wane !
Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,
Nor heard the nightingale in tune.

Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,
You are but coarse compared with roses :
More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses
Faint-scented, pinched, upon its stalk,
That least and last which cold winds balk ;
A rose it is though least and last of all,
A rose to me though at the fall.

"SUMMER IS ENDED."

TO think that this meaningless thing was ever a rose,
Scentless, colourless, *this* !
Will it ever be thus (who knows ?)
Thus with our bliss,
If we wait till the close ?

Though we care not to wait for the end, there comes
the end
Sooner, later, at last,
Which nothing can mar, nothing mend :
An end locked fast,
Bent we cannot re-bend.

PASSING AND GLASSING.

ALL things that pass
Are woman's looking-glass ;
They show her how her bloom must fade,
And she herself be laid
With withered roses in the shade ;
With withered roses and the fallen peach,
Unlovely, out of reach
Of summer joy that was.

All things that pass
Are woman's tiring-glass ;
The faded lavender is sweet,
Sweet the dead violet
Culled and laid by and cared for yet ;
The dried-up violets and dried lavender
Still sweet, may comfort her,
Nor need she cry Alas !

All things that pass
Are wisdom's looking-glass ;

Being full of hope and fear, and still
Brimful of good or ill,
According to our work and will ;
 For there is nothing new beneath the sun ;
Our doings have been done,
 And that which shall be was.

" I WILL ARISE."

WEARY and weak,—accept my weariness ;
 Weary and weak and downcast in my soul,
With hope growing less and less,
 And with the goal
Distant and dim,—accept my sore distress.
I thought to reach the goal so long ago,
 At outset of the race I dreamed of rest,
Not knowing what now I know
 Of breathless haste,
 Of long-drawn straining effort across the waste.

One only thing I knew, Thy love of me ;
 One only thing I know, Thy sacred same
Love of me full and free,
 A craving flame
Of selfless love of me which burns in Thee.
How can I think of Thee, and yet grow chill ;
 Of Thee, and yet grow cold and nigh to death ?
Re-energize my will,
 Rebuild my faith ;
 I will arise and run, Thou giving me breath.

"I WILL ARISE."

I will arise, repenting and in pain ;
 I will arise, and smite upon my breast
And turn to Thee again ;
 Thou choosest best,
Lead me along the road Thou makest plain.
Lead me a little way, and carry me
 A little way, and listen to my sighs,
And store my tears with Thee,
 And deign replies
 To feeble prayers ;—O Lord, I will arise.

A PRODIGAL SON.

DOES that lamp still burn in my Father's house,
Which he kindled the night I went away?

I turned once beneath the cedar boughs,
And marked it gleam with a golden ray ;
Did he think to light me home some day?

Hungry here with the crunching swine,
Hungry harvest have I to reap ;
In a dream I count my Father's kine,
I hear the tinkling bells of his sheep,
I watch his lambs that browse and leap.

There is plenty of bread at home,
His servants have bread enough and to spare ;
The purple wine-fat froths with foam,
Oil and spices make sweet the air,
While I perish hungry and bare.

Rich and blessed those servants, rather
Than I who see not my Father's face !
I will arise and go to my Father :—
“ Fallen from sonship, beggared of grace,
Grant me, Father, a servant's place.”

SŒUR LOUISE DE LA MISÉRICORDE.

(1674.)

I HAVE desired, and I have been desired ;
But now the days are over of desire,
Now dust and dying embers mock my fire ;
Where is the hire for which my life was hired ?
Oh vanity of vanities, desire !

Longing and love, pangs of a perished pleasure,
Longing and love, a disenkindled fire,
And memory a bottomless gulf of mire,
And love a fount of tears outrunning measure ;
Oh vanity of vanities, desire !

Now from my heart, love's deathbed, trickles, trickles,
Drop by drop slowly, drop by drop of fire,
The dross of life, of love, of spent desire ;
Alas, my rose of life gone all to prickles,—
Oh vanity of vanities, desire !

Oh vanity of vanities, desire ;
 Stunting my hope which might have strained up
 higher,
 Turning my garden plot to barren mire ;
Oh death-struck love, oh disenkindled fire,
 Oh vanity of vanities, desire !

AN "IMMURATA" SISTER.

LIFE flows down to death ; we cannot bind
 That current that it should not flee :
 Life flows down to death, as rivers find
 The inevitable sea.

Men work and think, but women feel ;
 And so (for I'm a woman, I)
 And so I should be glad to die
 And cease from impotence of zeal,
 And cease from hope, and cease from dread,
 And cease from yearnings without gain,
 And cease from all this world of pain,
 And be at peace among the dead.

Hearts that die, by death renew their youth,
 Lightened of this life that doubts and dies ;
 Silent and contented, while the Truth
 Unveiled makes them wise.

Why should I seek and never find
 That something which I have not had ?
 Fair and unutterably sad

The world hath sought time out of mind ;
The world hath sought and I have sought,—
 Ah, empty world and empty I !
 For we have spent our strength for nought,
And soon it will be time to die.

Sparks fly upward toward their fount of fire,
 Kindling, flashing, hovering :—
Kindle, flash, my soul ; mount higher and higher,
 Thou whole burnt-offering !

"IF THOU SAYEST, BEHOLD, WE KNEW
IT NOT."—PROVERBS XXIV. 11, 12.

I.

I HAVE done I know not what,—what have I done?
 My brother's blood, my brother's soul, doth cry :
 And I find no defence, find no reply,
 No courage more to run this race I run
 Not knowing what I have done, have left undone ;
 Ah me, these awful unknown hours that fly
 Fruitless it may be, fleeting fruitless by
 Rank with death-savour underneath the sun.
 For what avails it that I did not know
 The deed I did? what profits me the plea
 That had I known I had not wronged him so?
 Lord Jesus Christ, my God, him pity Thou ;
 Lord, if it may be, pity also me :
 In judgment pity, and in death, and now.

2.

Thou Who hast borne all burdens, bear our load,
Bear Thou our load whatever load it be ;
Our guilt, our shame, our helpless misery,
Bear Thou Who only canst, O God my God.

Seek us and find us, for we cannot Thee
Or seek or find or hold or cleave unto :
We cannot do or undo ; Lord, undo

Our self-undoing, for Thine is the key
Of all we are not though we might have been.

Dear Lord, if ever mercy moved Thy mind,
If so be love of us can move Thee yet,
If still the nail-prints in Thy Hands are seen,
Remember us,—yea, how shouldst Thou forget ?
Remember us for good, and seek, and find.

3.

Each soul I might have succoured, may have slain,
All souls shall face me at the last Appeal,
That great last moment poised for woe or weal,
That final moment for man's bliss or bane.
Vanity of vanities, yea all is vain
Which then will not avail or help or heal :
Disfeatured faces, worn-out knees that kneel,
Will more avail than strength or beauty then.
Lord, by Thy Passion,—when Thy Face was marred
In sight of earth and hell tumultuous,
And Thy heart failed in Thee like melting wax,
And Thy Blood dropped more precious than the
nard,—
Lord, for Thy sake, not our's, supply our lacks,
For Thine own sake, not our's, Christ, pity us.

THE THREAD OF LIFE.

I.

THE irresponsive silence of the land,
The irresponsive sounding of the sea,
Speak both one message of one sense to me :—
Aloof, aloof, we stand aloof, so stand
Thou too aloof bound with the flawless band
Of inner solitude ; we bind not thee ;
But who from thy self-chain shall set thee free ?
What heart shall touch thy heart ? what hand thy
hand ?—
And I am sometimes proud and sometimes meek,
And sometimes I remember days of old
When fellowship seemed not so far to seek
And all the world and I seemed much less cold,
And at the rainbow's foot lay surely gold,
And hope felt strong and life itself not weak.

2.

Thus am I mine own prison. Everything
 Around me free and sunny and at ease :
 Or if in shadow, in a shade of trees
Which the sun kisses, where the gay birds sing
And where all winds make various murmuring ;
 Where bees are found, with honey for the bees ;
 Where sounds are music, and where silences
Are music of an unlike fashioning.
Then gaze I at the merrymaking crew,
 And smile a moment and a moment sigh
Thinking : Why can I not rejoice with you ?
 But soon I put the foolish fancy by :
I am not what I have nor what I do ;
 But what I was I am, I am even I.

3.

Therefore myself is that one only thing
I hold to use or waste, to keep or give ;
My sole possession every day I live,
And still mine own despite Time's winnowing.
Ever mine own, while moons and seasons bring
From crudeness ripeness mellow and sanative ;
Ever mine own, till Death shall ply his sieve ;
And still mine own, when saints break grave and sing.
And this myself as king unto my King
I give, to Him Who gave Himself for me ;
Who gives Himself to me, and bids me sing
A sweet new song of His redeemed set free ;
He bids me sing : O death, where is thy sting ?
And sing : O grave, where is thy victory ?

AN OLD-WORLD THICKET.

. . . "Una selva oscura."—DANTE.

A WAKE or sleeping (for I know not which)
I was or was not mazed within a wood
Where every mother-bird brought up her brood
Safe in some leafy niche
Of oak or ash, of cypress or of beech,

Of silvery aspen trembling delicately,
Of plane or warmer-tinted sycamore,
Of elm that dies in secret from the core,
Of ivy weak and free,
Of pines, of all green lofty things that be.

Such birds they seemed as challenged each desire ;
Like spots of azure heaven upon the wing,
Like downy emeralds that alight and sing,
Like actual coals on fire,
Like anything they seemed, and everything.

Such mirth they made, such warblings and such chat
With tongue of music in a well-tuned beak,
They seemed to speak more wisdom than we speak,
To make our music flat
And all our subtlest reasonings wild or weak.

Their meat was nought but flowers like butterflies,
With berries coral-coloured or like gold ;
Their drink was only dew, which blossoms hold
Deep where the honey lies ;
Their wings and tails were lit by sparkling eyes.

The shade wherein they revelled was a shade
That danced and twinkled to the unseen sun ;
Branches and leaves cast shadows one by one,
And all their shadows swayed
In breaths of air that rustled and that played.

A sound of waters neither rose nor sank,
And spread a sense of freshness through the air ;
It seemed not here or there, but everywhere,
As if the whole earth drank,
Root fathom deep and strawberry on its bank.

But I who saw such things as I have said,
Was overdone with utter weariness ;
And walked in care, as one whom fears oppress
Because above his head
Death hangs, or damage, or the dearth of bread.

Each sore defeat of my defeated life
Faced and outfaced me in that bitter hour ;
And turned to yearning palsy all my power,
And all my peace to strife,
Self stabbing self with keen lack-pity knife.

Sweetness of beauty moved me to despair,
Stung me to anger by its mere content,
Made me all lonely on that way I went,
Piled care upon my care,
Brimmed full my cup, and stripped me empty and bare :

For all that was but showed what all was not,
But gave clear proof of what might never be ;
Making more destitute my poverty,
And yet more blank my lot,
And me much sadder by its jubilee.

Therefore I sat me down : for wherefore walk ?
And closed mine eyes : for wherefore see or hear ?
Alas, I had no shutter to mine ear,
And could not shun the talk
Of all rejoicing creatures far or near.

Without my will I hearkened and I heard
(Asleep or waking, for I know not which),
Till note by note the music changed its pitch ;
Bird ceased to answer bird,
And every wind sighed softly if it stirred.

The drip of widening waters seemed to weep,
All fountains sobbed and gurgled as they sprang,
Somewhere a cataract cried out in its leap
Sheer down a headlong steep ;
High over all cloud-thunders gave a clang.

Such universal sound of lamentation
I heard and felt, fain not to feel or hear ;
Nought else there seemed but anguish far and near ;
Nought else but all creation
Moaning and groaning wrung by pain or fear,

Shuddering in the misery of its doom :

My heart then rose a rebel against light,
Scouring all earth and heaven and depth and height,
 Ingathering wrath and gloom,
Ingathering wrath to wrath and night to night.

Ah me, the bitterness of such revolt,

 All impotent, all hateful, and all hate,
That kicks and breaks itself against the bolt
 Of an imprisoning fate,
And vainly shakes, and cannot shake the gate.

Agony to agony, deep called to deep,

 Out of the deep I called of my desire ;
My strength was weakness and my heart was fire ;
 Mine eyes that would not weep
Or sleep, scaled height and depth, and could not sleep ;

The eyes, I mean, of my rebellious soul,

 For still my bodily eyes were closed and dark :
A random thing I seemed without a mark,
 Racing without a goal,
Adrift upon life's sea without an ark.

More leaden than the actual self of lead
Outer and inner darkness weighed on me.
The tide of anger ebbed. Then fierce and free
Surged full above my head
The moaning tide of helpless misery.

Why should I breathe, whose breath was but a sigh?
Why should I live, who drew such painful breath?
Oh weary work, the unanswerable why!—
Yet I, why should I die,
Who had no hope in life, no hope in death?

Grasses and mosses and the fallen leaf
Make peaceful bed for an indefinite term;
But underneath the grass there gnaws a worm—
Haply, there gnaws a grief—
Both, haply always; not, as now, so brief.

The pleasure I remember, it is past;
The pain I feel, is passing passing by;
Thus all the world is passing, and thus I:
All things that cannot last
Have grown familiar, and are born to die.

And being familiar, have so long been borne
That habit trains us not to break but bend :
Mourning grows natural to us who mourn
In foresight of an end,
But that which ends not who shall brave or mend ?

Surely the ripe fruits tremble on their bough,
They cling and linger trembling till they drop :
I, trembling, cling to dying life ; for how
Face the perpetual Now ?
Birthless and deathless, void of start or stop,

Void of repentance, void of hope and fear,
Of possibility, alternative,
Of all that ever made us bear to live
From night to morning here,
Of promise éven which has no gift to give.

The wood, and every creature of the wood,
Seemed mourning with me in an undertone ;
Soft scattered chirpings and a windy moan,
Trees rustling where they stood
And shivered, showed compassion for my mood.

Rage to despair ; and now despair had turned
Back to self-pity and mere weariness,
With yearnings like a smouldering fire that burned,
And might grow more or less,
And might die out or wax to white excess.

Without, within me, music seemed to be ;
Something not music, yet most musical,
Silence and sound in heavenly harmony ;
At length a pattering fall
Of feet, a bell, and bleatings, broke through all.

Then I looked up. The wood lay in a glow
From golden sunset and from ruddy sky ;
The sun had stooped to earth though once so high ;
Had stooped to earth, in slow
Warm dying loveliness brought near and low.

Each water drop made answer to the light,
Lit up a spark and showed the sun his face ;
Soft purple shadows paved the grassy space
And crept from height to height,
From height to loftier height crept up apace.

While opposite the sun a gazing moon
Put on his glory for her coronet,
Kindling her luminous coldness to its noon,
As his great splendour set ;
One only star made up her train as yet.

Each twig was tipped with gold, each leaf was edged
And veined with gold from the gold-flooded west ;
Each mother-bird, and mate-bird, and unfledged
Nestling, and curious nest,
Displayed a gilded moss or beak or breast.

And filing peacefully between the trees,
Having the moon behind them, and the sun
Full in their meek mild faces, walked at ease
A homeward flock, at peace
With one another and with every one.

A patriarchal ram with tinkling bell
Led all his kin ; sometimes one browsing sheep
Hung back a moment, or one lamb would leap
And frolic in a dell ;
Yet still they kept together, journeying well,

And bleating, one or other, many or few,
Journeying together toward the sunlit west ;
Mild face by face, and woolly breast by breast,
Patient, sun-brightened too,
Still journeying toward the sunset and their rest.

"ALL THY WORKS PRAISE THEE,
O LORD."

A PROCESSIONAL OF CREATION.

ALL.

I ALL-CREATION sing my song of praise
To God Who made me and vouchsafes my days,
And sends me forth by multitudinous ways.

SERAPH.

I, like my Brethren, burn eternally
With love of Him Who is Love, and loveth me ;
The Holy, Holy, Holy Unity.

CHERUB.

I, with my Brethren, gaze eternally
On Him Who is Wisdom, and Who knoweth me ;
The Holy, Holy, Holy Trinity.

ALL ANGELS.

We rule, we serve, we work, we store His treasure,
Whose vessels are we brimmed with strength and
pleasure ;
Our joys fulfil, yea, overflow our measure.

HEAVENS.

We float before the Presence Infinite,
We cluster round the Throne in our delight,
Revolving and rejoicing in God's sight.

FIRMAMENT.

I, blue and beautiful, and framed of air,
At sunrise and at sunset grow most fair ;
His glory by my glories I declare.

POWERS.

We Powers are powers because He makes us strong ;
Wherefore we roll all rolling orbs along,
We move all moving things, and sing our song.

SUN.

I blaze to Him in mine engarlanding
Of rays, I flame His whole burnt-offering,
While as a bridegroom I rejoice and sing.

MOON.

I follow, and am fair, and do His Will ;
Through all my changes I am faithful still,
Full-orbed or strait His mandate to fulfil.

STARS.

We Star-hosts numerous, innumeros,
Throng space with energy untumultuous,
And work His Will Whose eye beholdeth us.

GALAXIES AND NEBULÆ.

No thing is far or near ; and therefore we
Float neither far nor near ; but where we be
Weave dances round the Throne perpetually.

COMETS AND METEORS.

Our lights dart here and there, whirl to and fro,
We flash and vanish, we die down and glow ;
All doing His Will Who bids us do it so.

SHOWERS.

We give ourselves ; and be we great or small,
Thus are we made like Him Who giveth all,
Like Him Whose gracious pleasure bids us fall.

DEWS.

We give ourselves in silent secret ways,
Spending and spent in silence full of grace ;
And thus are made like God, and show His praise.

WINDS.

We sift the air and winnow all the earth ;
And God Who poised our weights and weighs our
 worth
Accepts the worship of our solemn mirth.

FIRE.

My power and strength are His Who fashioned me,
Ordained me image of His Jealousy,
Forged me His weapon fierce exceedingly.

HEAT.

I glow unto His glory, and do good :
I glow, and bring to life both bud and brood ;
I glow, and ripen harvest-crops for food.

WINTER AND SUMMER.

Our wealth and joys and beauties celebrate
His wealth of beauty Who sustains our state,
Before Whose changelessness we alternate.

SPRING AND AUTUMN.

I hope,—
 And I remember,—

We give place
Either to other with contented grace,
Acceptable and lovely all our days.

FROST.

I make the unstable stable, binding fast
The world of waters prone to ripple past :
Thus praise I God, Whose mercies I forecast.

COLD.

I rouse and goad the slothful apt to nod,
I stir and urge the laggards with my rod :
My praise is not of men, yet I praise God.

SNOW.

My whiteness shadoweth Him Who is most fair,
All spotless : yea, my whiteness which I wear
Exalts His Purity beyond compare.

VAPOURS.

We darken sun and moon, and blot the day,
The good Will of our Maker to obey :
Till to the glory of God we pass away.

CLOUDS.

Sweet is our store, exhaled from sea or river :
We wear a rainbow, praising God the Giver
Because His mercy is for ever and ever.

EARTH.

I rest in Him rejoicing : resting so
And so rejoicing, in that I am low ;
Yet known of Him, and following on to know.

MOUNTAINS.

Our heights which laud Him, sink abased before
Him higher than the highest evermore :
God higher than the highest we adore.

HILLS.

We green-tops praise Him, and we fruitful heads,
Whereon the sunshine and the dew He sheds :
We green-tops praise Him, rising from our beds.

GREEN THINGS.

We all green things, we blossoms bright or dim,
Trees, bushes, brushwood, corn and grasses slim,
We lift our many-favoured lauds to Him.

A SPRING.

Clear my pure fountain, clear and pure my rill,
My fountain and mine outflow deep and still,
I set His semblance forth and do His Will.

SEA.

To-day I praise God with a sparkling face,
My thousand thousand waves all uttering praise :
To-morrow I commit me to His Grace.

FLOODS.

We spring and swell meandering to and fro,
From height to depth, from depth to depth we flow,
We fertilize the world, and praise Him so.

WHALES AND SEA MAMMALS.

We Whales and Monsters gambol in His sight
Rejoicing every day and every night,
Safe in the tender keeping of His Might.

FISHES.

Our fashions and our colours and our speeds
Set forth His praise Who framed us and Who feeds,
Who knows our number and regards our needs.

LAMB.

I praise my loving Lord, Who maketh me
His type by harmless sweet simplicity :
Yet He the Lamb of lambs incomparably.

LION.

I praise the Lion of the Royal Race,
Strongest in fight and swiftest in the chase :
With all my might I leap and lavish praise.

ALL MEN.

All creatures sing around us, and we sing :
We bring our own selves as our offering,
Our very selves we render to our King.

ISRAEL.

Flock of our Shepherd's pasture and His fold,
Purchased and well-beloved from days of old,
We tell His praise which still remains untold.

PRIESTS.

We free-will Shepherds tend His sheep and feed ;
We follow Him while caring for their need ;
We follow praising Him, and them we lead.

SERVANTS OF GOD.

We love God, for He loves us ; we are free
In serving Him, who serve Him willingly :
As kings we reign, and praise His Majesty.

HOLY AND HUMBLE PERSONS.

All humble souls He calls and sanctifies ;
All holy souls He calls to make them wise ;
Accepting all, His free-will sacrifice.

BABES.

He maketh me,—
 And me,—
 And me,—
 To be
His blessed little ones around His knee,
Who praise Him by mere love confidingly.

WOMEN.

God makes our service love, and makes our wage
Love : so we wend on patient pilgrimage,
Extolling Him by love from age to age.

MEN.

God gives us power to rule : He gives us power
To rule ourselves, and prune the exuberant flower
Of youth, and worship Him hour after hour.

SPIRITS AND SOULS—

Lo, in the hidden world we chant our chant
To Him Who fills us that we nothing want,
To Him Whose bounty leaves our craving scant.

OF BABES—

With milky mouths we praise God, from the breast
Called home betimes to rest the perfect rest,
By love and joy fulfilling His behest.

OF WOMEN—

We praise His Will which made us what He would,
His Will which fashioned us and called us good,
His Will our plenary beatitude.

OF MEN.

We praise His Will Who bore with us so long,
Who out of weakness wrought us swift and strong,
Champions of right and putters-down of wrong.

ALL.

Let everything that hath or hath not breath,
Let days and endless days, let life and death,
Praise God, praise God, praise God, His creature
saith.

LATER LIFE: A DOUBLE SONNET
OF SONNETS.

I.

BEFORE the mountains were brought forth, before
Earth and the world were made, then God was
God :

And God will still be God, when flames shall roar
Round earth and heaven dissolving at His nod :
And this God is our God, even while His rod
Of righteous wrath falls on us smiting sore :
And this God is our God for evermore
Through life, through death, while clod returns to
clod.

For though He slay us we will trust in Him ;
We will flock home to Him by divers ways :
Yea, though He slay us we will vaunt His praise,
Serving and loving with the Cherubim,
Watching and loving with the Seraphim,
Our very selves His praise through endless days.

2.

Rend hearts and rend not garments for our sins ;
Gird sackcloth not on body but on soul ;
Grovel in dust with faces toward the goal
Nor won, nor neared : he only laughs who wins.
Not neared the goal, the race too late begins ;
All left undone, we have yet to do the whole ;
The sun is hurrying west and toward the pole
Where darkness waits for earth with all her kins.
Let us to-day while it is called to-day
Set out, if utmost speed may yet avail—
The shadows lengthen and the light grows pale :
For who through darkness and the shadow of
 death,
Darkness that may be felt, shall find a way,
Blind-eyed, deaf-eared, and choked with failing
 breath ?

3.

Thou Who didst make and knowest whereof we are
made,

Oh bear in mind our dust and nothingness,
Our wordless tearless dumbness of distress :
Bear Thou in mind the burden Thou hast laid
Upon us, and our feebleness unstayed
Except Thou stay us : for the long long race
Which stretches far and far before our face
Thou knowest,—remember Thou whereof we are
made.

If making makes us Thine then Thine we are,
And if redemption we are twice Thine own :
If once Thou didst come down from heaven afar
To seek us and to find us, how not save ?
Comfort us, save us, leave us not alone,
Thou Who didst die our death and fill our grave.

4.

So tired am I, so weary of to-day,
So unrefreshed from foregone weariness,
So overburdened by foreseen distress,
So lagging and so stumbling on my way,
I scarce can rouse myself to watch or pray,
To hope, or aim, or toil for more or less,—
Ah, always less and less, even while I press
Forward and toil and aim as best I may.
Half-starved of soul and heartsick utterly,
Yet lift I up my heart and soul and eyes
(Which fail in looking upward) toward the prize :
Me, Lord, Thou seest though I see not Thee ;
Me now, as once the Thief in Paradise,
Even me, O Lord my Lord, remember me.

5.

Lord, Thou Thyself art Love and only Thou ;
Yet I who am not love would fain love Thee ;
But Thou alone being Love canst furnish me
With that same love my heart is craving now.
Allow my plea ! for if Thou disallow,
No second fountain can I find but Thee ;
No second hope or help is left to me,
No second anything, but only Thou.
O Love accept, according my request ;
O Love exhaust, fulfilling my desire :
Uphold me with the strength that cannot tire,
Nerve me to labour till Thou bid me rest,
Kindle my fire from Thine unkindled fire,
And charm the willing heart from out my breast.

6.

We lack, yet cannot fix upon the lack :
Not this, nor that ; yet somewhat, certainly.
We see the things we do not yearn to see
Around us : and what see we glancing back ?
Lost hopes that leave our hearts upon the rack,
Hopes that were never ours yet seemed to be,
For which we steered on life's salt stormy sea
Braving the sunstroke and the frozen pack.
If thus to look behind is all in vain,
And all in vain to look to left or right,
Why face we not our future once again,
Launching with hardier hearts across the main,
Straining dim eyes to catch the invisible sight,
And strong to bear ourselves in patient pain ?

7.

To love and to remember ; that is good :
 To love and to forget ; that is not well :
 To lapse from love to hatred ; that is hell
And death and torment, rightly understood.
Soul dazed by love and sorrow, cheer thy mood ;
 More blest art thou than mortal tongue can tell :
 Ring not thy funeral but thy marriage bell,
And salt with hope thy life's insipid food.
Love is the goal, love is the way we wend,
 Love is our parallel unending line
 Whose only perfect Parallel is Christ,
Beginning not begun, End without end :
 For He Who hath the Heart of God sufficed,
 Can satisfy all hearts,—yea, thine and mine.

8.

We feel and see with different hearts and eyes :—

Ah Christ, if all our hearts could meet in Thee

How well it were for them and well for me,

Our hearts Thy dear accepted sacrifice.

Thou, only Life of hearts and Light of eyes,

Our life, our light, if once we turn to Thee,

So be it, O Lord, to them and so to me ;

Be all alike Thine own dear sacrifice.

Thou Who by death hast ransomed us from death,

Thyself God's sole well-pleasing Sacrifice,

Thine only sacred Self I plead with Thee :

Make Thou it well for them and well for me

That Thou hast given us souls and wills and breath,

And hearts to love Thee, and to see Thee eyes.

9.

Star Sirius and the Pole Star dwell afar
Beyond the drawings each of other's strength :
One blazes through the brief bright summer's length
Lavishing life-heat from a flaming car ;
While one unchangeable upon a throne
Broods o'er the frozen heart of earth alone,
Content to reign the bright particular star
Of some who wander or of some who groan.
They own no drawings each of other's strength,
Nor vibrate in a visible sympathy,
Nor veer along their courses each toward each :
Yet are their orbits pitched in harmony
Of one dear heaven, across whose depth and length
Mayhap they talk together without speech.

10.

Tread softly ! all the earth is holy ground.

It may be, could we look with seeing eyes,

This spot we stand on is a Paradise

Where dead have come to life and lost been found,

Where Faith has triumphed, Martyrdom been crowned,

Where fools have foiled the wisdom of the wise ;

From this same spot the dust of saints may rise,

And the King's prisoners come to light unbound.

O earth, earth, earth, hear thou thy Maker's Word :

“Thy dead thou shalt give up, nor hide thy slain”—

Some who went weeping forth shall come again

Rejoicing from the east or from the west,

As doves fly to their windows, love's own bird

Contented and desirous to the nest.¹

¹ “Quali colombe dal disio chiamate
 Con l'ali aperte e ferme al dolce nido
 Volan per l'aer dal voler portate.”

DANTE.

11.

✓
Lifelong our stumbles, lifelong our regret,
Lifelong our efforts failing and renewed,
While lifelong is our witness, "God is good :"
Who bore with us till now, bears with us yet,
Who still remembers and will not forget,
Who gives us light and warmth and daily food ;
And gracious promises half understood,
And glories half unveiled, whereon to set
Our heart of hearts and eyes of our desire ;
Uplifting us to longing and to love,
Luring us upward from this world of mire,
Urging us to press on and mount above
Ourselves and all we have had experience of,
Mounting to Him in love's perpetual fire.

12.

A dream there is wherein we are fain to scream,
While struggling with ourselves we cannot speak :
And much of all our waking life, as weak
And misconceived, eludes us like the dream.
For half life's seemings are not what they seem,
And vain the laughs we laugh, the shrieks we shriek ;
Yea, all is vain that mars the settled meek
Contented quiet of our daily theme.
When I was young I deemed that sweets are sweet :
But now I deem some searching bitters are
Sweeter than sweets, and more refreshing far,
And to be relished more, and more desired,
And more to be pursued on eager feet,
On feet untired, and still on feet though tired.

13.

Shame is a shadow cast by sin : yet shame
 Itself may be a glory and a grace,
 Refashioning the sin-disfashioned face ;
A nobler bruit than hollow-sounded fame,
A new-lit lustre on a tarnished name,
 One virtue pent within an evil place,
 Strength for the fight, and swiftness for the race,
A stinging salve, a life-requickening flame.
A salve so searching we may scarcely live,
 A flame so fierce it seems that we must die,
 An actual cautery thrust into the heart :
 Nevertheless, men die not of such smart ;
And shame gives back what nothing else can give,
 Man to himself,—then sets him up on high.

14.

When Adam and when Eve left Paradise
Did they love on and cling together still,
Forgiving one another all that ill
The twain had wrought on such a different wise?
She propped upon his strength, and he in guise
Of lover though of lord, girt to fulfil
Their term of life and die when God should will;
Lie down and sleep, and having slept arise.
Boast not against us, O our enemy!
To-day we fall, but we shall rise again;
We grope to-day, to-morrow we shall see:
What is to-day that we should fear to-day?
A morrow cometh which shall sweep away
Thee and thy realm of change and death and pain.

15.

Let woman fear to teach and bear to learn,
 Remembering the first woman's first mistake.
 Eve had for pupil the inquiring snake,
Whose doubts she answered on a great concern ;
But he the tables so contrived to turn,
 It next was his to give, and her's to take ;
 Till man deemed poison sweet for her sweet sake,
And fired a train by which the world must burn.
X Did Adam love his Eve from first to last ?
 I think so ; as we love who works us ill,
 And wounds us to the quick, yet loves us still.
Love pardons the unpardonable past :
Love in a dominant embrace holds fast
 His frailer self, and saves without her will.

16.

Our teachers teach that one and one make two :
 Later, Love rules that one and one make one :
 Abstruse the problems ! neither need we shun,
But skilfully to each should yield its due.
The narrower total seems to suit the few,
 The wider total suits the common run ;
 Each obvious in its sphere like moon or sun ;
Both provable by me, and both by you.
Befogged and witless, in a wordy maze
 A groping stroll perhaps may do us good ;
 If cloyed we are with much we have understood,
If tired of half our dusty world and ways,
 If sick of fasting, and if sick of food ;—
And how about these long still-lengthening days ?

17.

Something this foggy day, a something which
Is neither of this fog nor of to-day,
Has set me dreaming of the winds that play
Past certain cliffs, along one certain beach,
And turn the topmost edge of waves to spray :
Ah pleasant pebbly strand so far away,
So out of reach while quite within my reach,
As out of reach as India or Cathay !
I am sick of where I am and where I am not,
I am sick of foresight and of memory,
I am sick of all I have and all I see,
I am sick of self, and there is nothing new ;
Oh weary impatient patience of my lot !—
Thus with myself: how fares it, Friends, with you?

18.

So late in Autumn half the world's asleep,
And half the wakeful world looks pinched and pale ;
For dampness now, not freshness, rides the gale ;
And cold and colourless comes ashore the deep
With tides that bluster or with tides that creep ;
Now veiled uncouthness wears an uncouth veil
Of fog, not sultry haze ; and blight and bale
Have done their worst, and leaves rot on the heap.
So late in Autumn one forgets the Spring,
Forgets the Summer with its opulence,
The callow birds that long have found a wing,
The swallows that more lately gat them hence :
Will anything like Spring, will anything
Like Summer, rouse one day the slumbering sense ?

M

19.

Here now is Winter. Winter, after all,
Is not so drear as was my boding dream
While Autumn gleamed its latest watery gleam
On sapless leafage too inert to fall.
Still leaves and berries clothe my garden wall
Where ivy thrives on scantiest sunny beam ;
Still here a bud and there a blossom seem
Hopeful, and robin still is musical.
Leaves, flowers and fruit and one delightful song
Remain ; these days are short, but now the nights
Intense and long, hang out their utmost lights ;
Such starry nights are long, yet not too long ;
Frost nips the weak, while strengthening still the strong
Against that day when Spring sets all to rights.

20.

A hundred thousand birds salute the day :—

One solitary bird salutes the night :

Its mellow grieving wiles our grief away,

And tunes our weary watches to delight ;

It seems to sing the thoughts we cannot say,

To know and sing them, and to set them right ;

Until we feel once more that May is May,

And hope some buds may bloom without a blight.

This solitary bird outweighs, outvies,

The hundred thousand merry-making birds

Whose innocent warblings yet might make us wise

Would we but follow when they bid us rise,

Would we but set their notes of praise to words

And launch our hearts up with them to the skies.

21.

A host of things I take on trust : I take
The nightingales on trust, for few and far
Between those actual summer moments are
When I have heard what melody they make.
So chanced it once at Como on the Lake :
But all things, then, waxed musical ; each star
Sang on its course, each breeze sang on its car,
All harmonies sang to senses wide awake.
All things in tune, myself not out of tune,
Those nightingales were nightingales indeed :
Yet truly an owl had satisfied my need,
And wrought a rapture underneath that moon,
Or simple sparrow chirping from a reed ;
For June that night glowed like a doubled June.

22.

The mountains in their overwhelming might
Moved me to sadness when I saw them first,
And afterwards they moved me to delight ;
Struck harmonies from silent chords which burst
Out into song, a song by memory nursed ;
For ever unrenewed by touch or sight
Sleeps the keen magic of each day or night,
In pleasure and in wonder then immersed.
All Switzerland behind us on the ascent,
All Italy before us we plunged down
St. Gothard, garden of forget-me-not :
Yet why should such a flower choose such a spot ?
Could we forget that way which once we went
Though not one flower had bloomed to weave its
crown ?

23.

Beyond the seas we know, stretch seas unknown
Blue and bright-coloured for our dim and green ;
Beyond the lands we see, stretch lands unseen
With many-tinted tangle overgrown ;
And icebound seas there are like seas of stone,
Serenely stormless as death lies serene ;
And lifeless tracts of sand, which intervene
Betwixt the lands where living flowers are blown.
This dead and living world befits our case
Who live and die : we live in wearied hope,
We die in hope not dead ; we run a race
To-day, and find no present halting-place ;
All things we see lie far within our scope,
And still we peer beyond with craving face.

24.

The wise do send their hearts before them to
 Dear blessed Heaven, despite the veil between ;
 The foolish nurse their hearts within the screen
Of this familiar world, where all we do
Or have is old, for there is nothing new :
 Yet elder far that world we have not seen ;
 God's Presence antedates what else hath been :
Many the foolish seem, the wise seem few.
Oh foolishest fond folly of a heart
 Divided, neither here nor there at rest !
 That hankers after Heaven, but clings to earth ;
 That neither here nor there knows thorough mirth,
Half-choosing, wholly missing, the good part :—
 Oh fool among the foolish, in thy quest.

25.

When we consider what this life we lead
Is not, and is : how full of toil and pain,
How blank of rest and of substantial gain,
Beset by hunger earth can never feed,
And propping half our hearts upon a reed ;
We cease to mourn lost treasures, mourned in vain,
Lost treasures we are fain and yet not fain
To fetch back for a solace of our need.
For who that feel this burden and this strain,
This wide vacuity of hope and heart,
Would bring their cherished well-beloved again :
To bleed with them and wince beneath the smart,
To have with stinted bliss such lavish bane,
To hold in lieu of all so poor a part ?

26.

This Life is full of numbness and of balk,
Of haltingness and baffled short-coming,
Of promise unfulfilled, of everything
That is puffed vanity and empty talk :
Its very bud hangs cankered on the stalk,
Its very song-bird trails a broken wing,
Its very Spring is not indeed like Spring,
But sighs like Autumn round an aimless walk.
This Life we live is dead for all its breath ;
Death's self it is, set off on pilgrimage,
Travelling with tottering steps the first short stage :
The second stage is one mere desert dust
Where Death sits veiled amid creation's rust :—
Unveil thy face, O Death who art not Death.

27.

I have dreamed of Death :—what will it be to die

Not in a dream, but in the literal truth

With all Death's adjuncts ghastly and uncouth,

The pang that is the last and the last sigh?

Too dulled, it may be, for a last good-bye,

Too comfortless for any one to soothe,

A helpless charmless spectacle of ruth

Through long last hours, so long while yet they fly.

So long to those who hopeless in their fear,

Watch the slow breath and look for what they
dread :

While I supine with ears that cease to hear,

With eyes that glaze, with heart pulse running
down

(Alas ! no saint rejoicing on her bed),

May miss the goal at last, may miss a crown.

28.

In life our absent friend is far away :
But death may bring our friend exceeding near,
Show him familiar faces long so dear
And lead him back in reach of words we say.
He only cannot utter yea or nay
In any voice accustomed to our ear ;
He only cannot make his face appear
And turn the sun back on our shadowed day.
The dead may be around us, dear and dead ;
The unforgotten dearest dead may be
Watching us with unslumbering eyes and heart :
Brimful of words which cannot yet be said,
Brimful of knowledge they may not impart, .
Brimful of love for you and love for me.

"FOR THINE OWN SAKE, O MY GOD."

WEARIED of sinning, wearied of repentance,
Wearied of self, I turn, my God, to Thee ;
To Thee, my Judge, on Whose all-righteous sentence
Hangs mine eternity :
I turn to Thee, I plead Thyself with Thee,—
Be pitiful to me.

Wearied I loathe myself, I loathe my sinning,
My stains, my festering sores, my misery :
Thou the Beginning, Thou ere my beginning
Didst see and didst foresee
Me miserable, me sinful, ruined me,—
I plead Thyself with Thee.

I plead Thyself with Thee Who art my Maker,
Regard Thy handiwork that cries to Thee ;
I plead Thyself with Thee Who wast partaker
Of mine infirmity,
Love made Thee what Thou art, the love of me,—
I plead Thyself with Thee.

UNTIL THE DAY BREAK.

WHEN will the day bring its pleasure?
When will the night bring its rest?
Reaper and gleaner and thresher
Peer toward the east and the west:—
The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

Meteors flash forth and expire,
Northern lights kindle and pale;
These are the days of desire,
Of eyes looking upward that fail;
Vanishing days as a finishing tale.

Bows down the crop in its glory
Tenfold, fiftyfold, hundredfold;
The millet is ripened and hoary,
The wheat ears are ripened to gold:—
Why keep us waiting in dimness and cold?

The Lord of the harvest, He knoweth
Who knoweth the first and the last :
The Sower Who patiently soweth,
He scanneth the present and past :
He saith, " What thou hast, what remaineth, hold
fast."

Yet, Lord, o'er Thy toil-wearied weepers
The storm-clouds hang muttering and frown :
On threshers and gleaners and reapers,
O Lord of the harvest, look down ;
Oh for the harvest, the shout, and the crown !

" Not so," saith the Lord of the reapers,
The Lord of the first and the last :
" O My toilers, My weary, My weepers,
What ye have, what remaineth, hold fast.
Hide in My heart till the vengeance be past."

"OF HIM THAT WAS READY TO PERISH."

LORD, I am waiting, weeping, watching for Thee :
My youth and hope lie by me buried and dead,
My wandering love hath not where to lay its head
Except Thou say "Come to Me."

My noon is ended, abolished from life and light,
My noon is ended, ended and done away,
My sun went down in the hours that still were day,
And my lingering day is night.

How long, O Lord, how long in my desperate pain
Shall I weep and watch, shall I weep and long for
Thee ?

Is Thy grace ended, Thy love cut off from me ?
How long shall I long in vain ?

O God Who before the beginning hast seen the end,
Who hast made me flesh and blood, not frost and
not fire,
Who hast filled me full of needs and love and
desire
And a heart that craves a friend,

Who hast said "Come to Me and I will give thee rest,"
Who hast said "Take on thee My yoke and learn
of Me,"

Who calledst a little child to come to Thee,
And pillowedst John on Thy breast ;

Who spak'st to women that followed Thee sorrowing,
Bidding them weep for themselves and weep for
their own ;

Who didst welcome the outlaw adoring Thee all
alone,
And plight Thy word as a King,—

By Thy love of these and of all that ever shall be,
By Thy love of these and of all the born and
unborn,

Turn Thy gracious eyes on me and think no scorn
Of me, not even of me.

Beside Thy Cross I hang on my cross in shame,
My wounds, weakness, extremity cry to Thee :
Bid me also to Paradise, also me
For the glory of Thy Name.

“BEHOLD THE MAN!”

SHALL Christ hang on the Cross, and we not look ?
Heaven, earth and hell stood gazing at the first,
While Christ for long-cursed man was counted
cursed ;
Christ, God and Man, Whom God the Father strook
And shamed and sifted and one while forsook :—
Cry shame upon our bodies we have nursed
In sweets, our souls in pride, our spirits immersed
In wilfulness, our steps run all acrook.
Cry shame upon us ! for He bore our shame
In agony, and we look on at ease
With neither hearts on flame nor cheeks on flame :
What hast thou, what have I, to do with peace ?
Not to send peace but send a sword He came,
And fire and fests and tearful night-watches.

THE DESCENT FROM THE CROSS.

IS this the Face that thrills with awe
Seraphs who veil their face above?
Is this the Face without a flaw,
The Face that is the Face of Love?
Yea, this defaced, a lifeless clod,
Hath all creation's love sufficed,
Hath satisfied the love of God,
This Face the Face of Jesus Christ.

"IT IS FINISHED."

DEAR Lord, let me recount to Thee
Some of the great things Thou hast
done
For me, even me
Thy little one.

It was not I that cared for Thee,—
But Thou didst set Thy heart upon
Me, even me
Thy little one.

And therefore was it sweet to Thee
To leave Thy Majesty and Throne,
And grow like me
A Little One,

A swaddled Baby on the knee
Of a dear Mother of Thine own,
Quite weak like me
Thy little one.

Thou didst assume my misery,
And reap the harvest I had sown,
 Comforting me
 Thy little one.

Jerusalem and Galilee,—
Thy love embraced not those alone,
 But also me
 Thy little one.

Thy unblemished Body on the Tree
Was bared and broken to atone
 For me, for me
 Thy little one.

Thou lovedst me upon the Tree,—
Still me, hid by the ponderous stone,—
 Me always,—me
 Thy little one.

And love of me arose with Thee
When death and hell lay overthrown :
 Thou lovedst me
 Thy little one.

And love of me went up with Thee
To sit upon Thy Father's Throne :
 Thou lovest me
 Thy little one.

Lord, as Thou me, so would I Thee
Love in pure love's communion,
 For Thou lov'st me
 Thy little one :

Which love of me bring back with Thee
To Judgment when the Trump is blown,
 Still loving me
 Thy little one.

AN EASTER CAROL.

SPRING bursts to-day,
For Christ is risen and all the earth's
at play.

Flash forth, thou Sun,
The rain is over and gone, its work is done.

Winter is past,
Sweet Spring is come at last, is come at last.

Bud, Fig and Vine,
Bud, Olive, fat with fruit and oil and wine.

Break forth this morn
In roses, thou but yesterday a Thorn.

Uplift thy head,
O pure white Lily through the Winter dead.

Beside your dams
Leap and rejoice, you merry-making Lambs.

All Herds and Flocks
Rejoice, all Beasts of thickets and of rocks.

Sing, Creatures, sing,
Angels and Men and Birds and everything.

All notes of Doves
Fill all our world : this is the time of loves.

"BEHOLD A SHAKING."

I.

MAN rising to the doom that shall not err,—
 Which hath most dread : the arouse of all or
 each ;
 All kindreds of all nations of all speech,
 Or one by one of *him* and *him* and *her* ?
 While dust reanimate begins to stir
 Here, there, beyond, beyond, reach beyond reach ;
 While every wave refashions on the beach
 Alive or dead-in-life some seafarer.
 Now meeting doth not join or parting part ;
 True meeting and true parting wait till then,
 When whoso meet are joined for evermore,
 Face answering face and heart at rest in heart :—
 God bring us all rejoicing to the shore
 Of happy Heaven, His sheep home to the pen.

2.

Blessed that flock safe penned in Paradise ;
Blessed this flock which tramps in weary ways ;
All form one flock, God's flock ; all yield Him
praise
By joy or pain, still tending toward the prize.
Joy speaks in praises there, and sings and flies
Where no night is, exulting all its days ;
Here, pain finds solace, for, behold, it prays ;
In both love lives the life that never dies.
Here life is the beginning of our death,
And death the starting-point whence life ensues ;
Surely our life is death, our death is life :
Nor need we lay to heart our peace or strife,
But calm in faith and patience breathe the breath
God gave, to take again when He shall choose.

ALL SAINTS.

THEY are flocking from the East
And the West,
They are flocking from the North
And the South,
Every moment setting forth
From realm of snake or lion,
Swamp or sand,
Ice or burning ;
Greatest and least,
Palm in hand
And praise in mouth,
They are flocking up the path
To their rest,
Up the path that hath
No returning.

Up the steeps of Zion
They are mounting,
Coming, coming,
Throngs beyond man's counting ;

With a sound
Like innumerable bees
Swarming, humming
Where flowering trees
Many tinted,
Many scented,
All alike abound
With honey,—
With a swell
Like a blast upswaying unrestrainable
From a shadowed dell
To the hill-tops sunny,—
With a thunder
Like the ocean when in strength
Breadth and length
It sets to shore ;
More and more
Waves on waves redoubled pour
Leaping flashing to the shore
(Unlike the under
Drain of ebb that loseth ground
For all its roar).

They are thronging
From the East and West,
From the North and South,

ALL SAINTS.

Saints are thronging, loving, longing,
To their land
Of rest,
Palm in hand
And praise in mouth.

"TAKE CARE OF HIM."

THOU whom I love, for whom I died,
 Lovest thou Me, My bride?"—
Low on my knees I love Thee, Lord,
 Believed in and adored.

"That I love thee the proof is plain :
 How dost thou love again?"—
In prayer, in toil, in earthly loss,
 In a long-carried cross.

"Yea, thou dost love : yet one adept
 Brings more for Me to accept."—
I mould my will to match with Thine,
 My wishes I resign.

"Thou givest much : then give the whole
 For solace of My soul."—
More would I give, if I could get :
 But, Lord, what lack I yet?

" In Me thou lovest Me : I call
Thee to love Me in all."—
Brim full my heart, dear Lord, that so
My love may overflow.

" Love Me in sinners and in saints,
In each who needs or faints."—
Lord, I will love Thee as I can
In every brother man.

" All sore, all crippled, all who ache,
Tend all for My dear sake."—
All for Thy sake, Lord : I will see
In every sufferer Thee.

" So I at last, upon My Throne
Of glory, Judge alone,
So I at last will say to thee :
Thou diddest it to Me."

A MARTYR.

THE VIGIL OF THE FEAST.

I
INNER not outer, without gnash of teeth
Or weeping, save quiet sobs of some who pray
And feel the Everlasting Arms beneath,—
Blackness of darkness this, but not for aye ;
Darkness that even in gathering fleeteth fast,
Blackness of blackest darkness close to day.
Lord Jesus, through Thy darkened pillar cast,
Thy gracious eyes all-seeing cast on me
Until this tyranny be overpast.
Me, Lord, remember who remember Thee,
And cleave to Thee, and see Thee without sight,
And choose Thee still in dire extremity,
And in this darkness worship Thee my Light,
And Thee my Life adore in shadow of death,
Thee loved by day, and still beloved by night.
It is the Voice of my Beloved that saith :
“ I am the Way, the Truth, the Life, I go
Whither that soul knows well that followeth”—

O Lord, I follow, little as I know ;
 At this eleventh hour I rise and take
 My life into my hand, and follow so,
 With tears and heart-misgivings and heart-ache ;
 Thy feeblest follower, yet Thy follower
 Indomitable for Thine only sake.
 To-night I gird my will afresh, and stir
 My strength, and brace my heart to do and dare,
 Marvelling : Will to-morrow wake the whirr
 Of the great rending wheel, or from his lair
 Startle the jubilant lion in his rage,
 Or clench the headsman's hand within my hair,
 Or kindle fire to speed my pilgrimage,
 Chariot of fire and horses of sheer fire
 Whirling me home to heaven by one fierce stage?—
 Thy Will I will, I Thy desire desire ;
 Let not the waters close above my head,
 Uphold me that I sink not in this mire :
 For flesh and blood are frail and sore afraid ;
 And young I am, unsatisfied and young,
 With memories, hopes, with cravings all unfed,
 My song half sung, its sweetest notes unsung,
 All plans cut short, all possibilities,
 Because my cord of life is soon unstrung.
 Was I a careless woman set at ease
 That this so bitter cup is brimmed for me ?

Had mine own vintage settled on the lees ?
 A word, a puff of smoke, would set me free ;
 A word, a puff of smoke, over and gone : . . .
 Howbeit, whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee ?
 Yea, only Thee my choice is fixed upon
 In heaven or earth, eternity or time :—
 Lord, hold me fast, Lord, leave me not alone,
 Thy silly heartless dove that sees the lime
 Yet almost flutters to the tempting bough :
 Cover me, hide me, pluck me from this crime.
 A word, a puff of smoke, would save me now : . . .
 But who, my God, would save me in the day
 Of Thy fierce anger ? only Saviour Thou.
 Preoccupy my heart, and turn away
 And cover up mine eyes from frantic fear,
 And stop mine ears lest I be driven astray :
 For one stands ever dinning in mine ear
 How my gray Father withers in the blight
 Of love for me, who cruel am and dear ;
 And how my Mother through this lingering night
 Until the day, sits tearless in her woe,
 Loathing for love of me the happy light
 Which brings to pass a concourse and a show
 To glut the hungry faces merciless,
 The thousand faces swaying to and fro,
 Feasting on me unveiled in helplessness

Alone,—yet not alone : Lord, stand by me
 As once by lonely Paul in his distress.
 As blossoms to the sun I turn to Thee ;
 Thy dove turns to her window, think no scorn ;
 As one dove to an ark on shoreless sea,
 To Thee I turn mine eyes, my heart forlorn ;
 Put forth Thy scarred right Hand, kind Lord, take
 hold

Of me Thine all-forsaken dove who mourn :
 For Thou hast loved me since the days of old,
 And I love Thee Whom loving I will love
 Through life's short fever-fits of heat and cold ;
 Thy Name will I extol and sing thereof,
 Will flee for refuge to Thy Blessed Name.
 Lord, look upon me from Thy bliss above ;
 Look down on me, who shrink from all the shame
 And pangs and desolation of my death,
 Wrenched piecemeal or devoured or set on flame,
 While all the world around me holds its breath
 With eyes glued on me for a gazing-stock,
 Pitiless eyes, while no man pitieth.
 The floods are risen, I stagger in their shock,
 My heart reels and is faint, I fail, I faint :
 My God, set Thou me up upon the rock,
 Thou Who didst long ago Thyself acquaint
 With death, our death ; Thou Who didst long ago

Pour forth Thy soul for sinner and for saint.
Bear me in mind, whom no one else will know ;
Thou Whom Thy friends forsook, take Thou my
part,
Of all forsaken in mine overthrow ;
Carry me in Thy bosom, in Thy heart,
Carry me out of darkness into light,
To-morrow make me see Thee as Thou art.
Lover and friend Thou hidest from my sight :—
Alas, alas, mine earthly love, alas,
For whom I thought to don the garments white
And white wreath of a bride, this rugged pass
Hath utterly divorced me from thy care ;
Yea, I am to thee as a shattered glass
Worthless, with no more beauty lodging there,
Abhorred, lest I involve thee in my doom :
For sweet are sunshine and this upper air,
And life and youth are sweet, and give us room
For all most sweetest sweetnesses we taste :
Dear, what hast thou in common with a tomb ?
I bow my head in silence, I make haste
Alone, I make haste out into the dark,
My life and youth and hope all run to waste.
Is this my body cold and stiff and stark,
Ashes made ashes, earth becoming earth,
Is this a prize for man to make his mark ?

Am I that very I who laughed in mirth
A while ago, a little little while,
Yet all the while a-dying since my birth?
Now am I tired, too tired to strive or smile;
I sit alone, my mouth is in the dust:
Look Thou upon me, Lord, for I am vile.
In Thee is all my hope, is all my trust,
On Thee I centre all my self that dies,
And self that dies not with its mortal crust,
But sleeps and wakes, and in the end will rise
With hymns and hallelujahs on its lips,
Thee loving with the love that satisfies.
As once in Thine unutterable eclipse
The sun and moon grew dark for sympathy,
And earth cowered quaking underneath the drips
Of Thy slow Blood priceless exceedingly,
So now a little spare me, and show forth
Some pity, O my God, some pity of me.
If trouble comes not from the south or north,
But meted to us by Thy tender hand,
Let me not in Thine eyes be nothing worth:
Behold me where in agony I stand,
Behold me no man caring for my soul,
And take me to Thee in the far-off land,
Shorten the race and lift me to the goal.

WHY?

LORD, if I love Thee and Thou lovest me,
Why need I any more these toilsome days ;
Why should I not run singing up Thy ways
Straight into heaven, to rest myself with Thee ?
What need remains of death-pang yet to be,
If all my soul is quickened in Thy praise ;
If all my heart loves Thee, what need the amaze,
Struggle and dimness of an agony ?—
Bride whom I love, if thou too lovest Me,
Thou needs must choose My Likeness for thy dower :
So wilt thou toil in patience, and abide
Hungering and thirsting for that blessed hour
When I My Likeness shall behold in thee,
And thou therein shalt waken satisfied.

"LOVE IS STRONG AS DEATH."

I HAVE not sought Thee, I have not found Thee,
I have not thirsted for Thee :
And now cold billows of death surround me,
Buffeting billows of death astound me,—
Wilt Thou look upon, wilt Thou see
Thy perishing me?"

Yea, I have sought thee, yea, I have found thee,
Yea, I have thirsted for thee,
Yea, long ago with love's bands I bound thee :
Now the Everlasting Arms surround thee,—
Through death's darkness I look and see
And clasp thee to Me."

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