

Were a sign of invitation,
Were a sign of guests assembling ;
Bloody hands with palms uplifted
Were a symbol of destruction,
Were a hostile sign and symbol.

All these things did Hiawatha
Show unto his wondering people,
And interpreted their meaning,
And he said : " Behold, your grave-posts
Have no mark, no sign, nor symbol.
Go and paint them all with figures ;
Each one with its household symbol,
With its own ancestral Totem ;
So that those who follow after
May distinguish them and know them."

And they painted on the grave-posts
Of the graves yet unforgotten,
Each his own ancestral Totem,
Each the symbol of his household ;
Figures of the Bear and Reindeer,
Of the Turtle, Crane, and Beaver,
Each inverted as a token
That the owner was departed,
That the chief who bore the symbol
Lay beneath in dust and ashes.

And the Jossakeeds, the Prophets,
The Wabenos, the Magicians,
And the Medicine-men, the Medas,
Painted upon bark and deer-skin
Figures for the songs they chanted,
For each song a separate symbol,
Figures mystical and awful,
Figures strange and brightly coloured ;
And each figure had its meaning,
Each some magic song suggested.

The Great Spirit, the Creator,
Flashing light through all the heaven ;
The Great Serpent, the Kenabeek,
With his bloody crest erected,
Creeping, looking into heaven ;
In the sky the sun, that listens,
And the moon eclipsed and dying ;
Owl and eagle, crane and hen-hawk,
And the cormorant, bird of magic ;
Headless men, that walk the heavens,
Bodies lying pierced with arrows,
Bloody hands of death uplifted,
Flags on graves, and great war-captains
Grasping both the earth and heaven !

Such as these the shapes they painted
 On the birch-bark and the deer-skin ;
 Songs of war, and songs of hunting,
 Songs of medicine and of magic,
 All were written in these figures,
 For each figure had its meaning,
 Each its separate song recorded.

Nor forgotten was the Love-Song,
 The most subtle of all medicines,
 The most potent spell of magic,
 Dangerous more than war or hunting !
 Thus the Love-Song was recorded,
 Symbol and interpretation.

First a human figure standing,
 Painted in the brightest scarlet ;
 'Tis the lover, the musician,
 And the meaning is, " My painting
 Makes me powerful over others."

Then the figure seated, singing,
 Playing on a drum of magic,
 And the interpretation, " Listen !
 'Tis my voice you hear, my singing ! "

Then the same red figure seated
 In the shelter of a wigwam,
 And the meaning of the symbol,
 " I will come and sit beside you
 In the mystery of my passion ! "

Then two figures, man and woman,
 Standing hand in hand together,
 With their hands so clasped together
 That they seem in one united,
 And the words thus represented
 Are, " I see your heart within you,
 And your cheeks are red with blushes ! "

Next the maiden on an island
 In the centre of an island ;
 And the song this shape suggested
 Was, " Though you were at a distance,
 Were upon some far-off island,
 Such the spell I cast upon you,
 Such the magic power of passion,
 I could straightway draw you to me ! "

Then the figure of the maiden
 Sleeping, and the lover near her,
 Whispering to her in her slumbers,
 Saying, " Though you were far from me
 In the land of Sleep and Silence,
 Still the voice of love would reach you ! "

And the last of all the figures

Was a heart within a circle,
 Drawn within a magic circle ;
 And the image had this meaning :
 " Naked lies your heart before me,
 To your naked heart I whisper ! "

Thus it was that Hiawatha,
 In his wisdom, taught the people
 All the mysteries of painting,
 All the art of Picture-Writing,
 On the smooth bark of the birch-tree,
 On the white skin of the rein-deer,
 On the grave-posts of the village.

15

HIAWATHA'S LAMENTATION

In those days the Evil Spirits,
 All the Manitos of mischief,
 Fearing Hiawatha's wisdom,
 And his love for Chibiabos,
 Jealous of their faithful friendship,
 And their noble words and actions,
 Made at length a league against them,
 To molest them and destroy them.

Hiawatha, wise and wary,
 Often said to Chibiabos,
 " O my brother ! do not leave me,
 Lest the Evil Spirits harm you ! "
 Chibiabos, young and heedless,
 Laughing shook his coal-black tresses,
 Answered ever sweet and childlike,
 " Do not fear for me, O brother !
 Harm and evil come not near me ! "

Once when Peboan, the Winter,
 Roofed with ice the Big-Sea-Water,
 When the snow-flakes, whirling downward,
 Hissed among the withered oak-leaves,
 Changed the pine-trees into wigwams,
 Covered all the earth with silence,—
 Armed with arrows, shod with snow-shoes,
 Heeding not his brother's warning,
 Fearing not the Evil Spirits,
 Forth to hunt the deer with antlers
 All alone went Chibiabos.

Right across the Big-Sea-Water

Sprang with speed the deer before him.
 With the wind and snow he followed,
 O'er the treacherous ice he followed,
 Wild with all the fierce commotion
 And the rapture of the hunting.

But beneath, the Evil Spirits
 Lay in ambush, waiting for him,
 Broke the treacherous ice beneath him,
 Dragged him downward to the bottom,
 Buried in the sand his body.
 Unktahee, the god of water,
 He the god of the Dacotahs,
 Drowned him in the deep abysses
 Of the lake of Gitche Gumee.

From the headlands Hiawatha
 Sent forth such a wail of anguish,
 Such a fearful lamentation,
 That the bison paused to listen,
 And the wolves howled from the prairies,
 And the thunder in the distance
 Starting answered, "Baim-wawa!"

Then his face with black he painted,
 With his robe his head he covered,
 In his wigwam sat lamenting,
 Seven long weeks he sat lamenting,
 Uttering still this moan of sorrow:—

"He is dead, the sweet musician!
 He the sweetest of all singers!
 He has gone from us for ever,
 He has moved a little nearer
 To the Master of all music,
 To the Master of all singing!
 O my brother, Chibiabos!"

And the melancholy fir-trees
 Waved their dark green fans above him,
 Waved their purple cones above him,
 Sighing with him to console him,
 Mingling with his lamentation
 Their complaining, their lamenting.

Came the Spring, and all the forest
 Looked in vain for Chibiabos;
 Sighed the rivulet, Sebowisha,
 Sighed the rushes in the meadow.

From the tree-tops sang the blue-bird,
 Sang the blue-bird, the Owaissa,
 "Chibiabos! Chibiabos!
 He is dead, the sweet musician!"

From the wigwam sang the robin,
 Sang the robin, the Opechee,

" Chibiabos ! Chibiabos !
He is dead, the sweetest singer ! "

And at night through all the forest
Went the whippoorwill complaining,
Wailing went the Wawonaissa,

" Chibiabos ! Chibiabos !
He is dead, the sweet musician !
He the sweetest of all singers ! "

Then the medicine-men, the Medas,
The magicians, the Wabenos,
And the Jossakeeds, the prophets,
Came to visit Hiawatha ;
Built a Sacred Lodge beside him,
To appease him, to console him,
Walked in silent, grave procession,
Bearing each a pouch of healing,
Skin of beaver, lynx, or otter,
Filled with magic roots and simples,
Filled with very potent medicines.

When he heard their steps approaching,
Hiawatha ceased lamenting,
Called no more on Chibiabos ;
Naught he questioned, naught he answered,
But his mournful head uncovered,
From his face the mourning colours
Washed he slowly and in silence,
Slowly and in silence followed
Onward to the Sacred Wigwam.

There a magic drink they gave him,
Made of Nahma-wusk, the spearmint,
And Wabeno-wusk, the yarrow,
Roots of power, and herbs of healing ;
Beat their drums, and shook their rattles ;
Chanted singly and in chorus,
Mystic songs like these, they chanted :

" I myself, myself ! behold me !
'Tis the great Grey Eagle talking ;
Come, ye white crows, come and hear him !
The loud-speaking thunder helps me ;
All the unseen spirits help me ;
I can hear their voices calling,
All around the sky I hear them !
I can blow you strong, my brother,
I can heal you, Hiawatha ! "

" Hi-au-ha ! " replied the chorus,

" Way-ha-way ! " the mystic chorus.
" Friends of mine are all the serpents !
Hear me shake my skin of hen-hawk !
Mahng, the white loon, I can kill him ;

I can shoot your heart and kill it !
I can blow you strong, my brother,
I can heal you, Hiawatha ! ”

“ Hi-au-ha ! ” replied the chorus,

“ Way-ha-way ! ” the mystic chorus.

“ I myself, myself ! the prophet !

When I speak the wigwam trembles,
Shakes the Sacred Lodge with terror,
Hands unseen begin to shake it !

When I walk, the sky I tread on
Bends and makes a noise beneath me !

I can blow you strong, my brother !
Rise and speak, O Hiawatha ! ”

“ Hi-au-ha ! ” replied the chorus,

“ Way-ha-way ! ” the mystic chorus.

Then they shook their medicine-pouches

O'er the head of Hiawatha,

Danced their medicine-dance around him ;

And upstarting wild and haggard,

Like a man from dreams awakened,

He was healed of all his madness.

As the clouds are swept from heaven,

Straightway from his brain departed

All his moody melancholy ;

As the ice is swept from rivers,

Straightway from his heart departed

All his sorrow and affliction.

Then they summoned Chibiabos

From his grave beneath the waters,

From the sands of Gitche Gumeé

Summoned Hiawatha's brother.

And so mighty was the magic

Of that cry and invocation,

That he heard it as he lay there

Underneath the Big-Sea-Water ;

From the sand he rose and listened,

Heard the music and the singing,

Came, obedient to the summons,

To the doorway of the wigwam,

But to enter they forbade him.

Through a chink a coal they gave him,

Through the door a burning fire-brand ;

Ruler in the Land of Spirits,

Ruler o'er the dead, they made him,

Telling him a fire to kindle

For all those that died thereafter,

Camp-fires for their night encampments

On their solitary journey

To the kingdom of Ponemah,

To the land of the Hereafter,
From the village of his childhood,
From the homes of those who knew him,
Passing silent through the forest,
Like a smoke-wreath wafted sideways,
Slowly vanished Chibiabos !
Where he passed, the branches moved not ;
Where he trod, the grasses bent not,
And the fallen leaves of last year
Made no sound beneath his footsteps.

Four whole days he journeyed onward
Down the pathway of the dead men ;
On the dead man's strawberry feasted,
Crossed the melancholy river,
On the swinging log he crossed it,
Came unto the Lake of Silver,
In the Stone Canoe was carried
To the Islands of the Blessed,
To the land of ghosts and shadows.

On that journey, moving slowly,
Many weary spirits saw he,
Panting under heavy burdens,
Laden with war-clubs, bows and arrows,
Robes of fur, and pots and kettles,
And with food that friends had given
For that solitary journey.

" Ah ! why do the living," said they,
" Lay such heavy burdens on us !
Better were it to go naked,
Better were it to go fasting,
Than to bear such heavy burdens
On our long and weary journey ! "

Forth then issued Hiawatha,
Wandered eastward, wandered westward,
Teaching men the use of simples
And the antidotes for poisons,
And the cure of all diseases.
Thus was first made known to mortals
All the mystery of Medamin,
All the sacred art of healing.

PAU-PUK-KEEWIS

You shall hear how Pau-Puk-Keewis,
He, the handsome Yenadizze,
Whom the people called the Storm-Fool,
Vexed the village with disturbance ;
You shall hear of all his mischief,
And his flight from Hiawatha,
And his wondrous transmigrations,
And the end of his adventures.

On the shores of Gitche Gumee,
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water
Stood the lodge of Pau-Puk-Keewis.
It was he who in his frenzy
Whirled these drifting sands together,
On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo,
When, among the guests assembled,
He so merrily and madly
Danced at Hiawatha's wedding,
Danced the Beggar's Dance to please them.

Now, in search of new adventures,
From his lodge went Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Came with speed into the village,
Found the young men all assembled
In the lodge of old Iagoo,
Listening to his monstrous stories,
To his wonderful adventures.

He was telling them the story
Of Ojeeg, the Summer-Maker,
How he made a hole in heaven,
How he climbed up into heaven,
And let out the Summer-weather,
The perpetual, pleasant Summer ;
How the Otter first essayed it ;
How the Beaver, Lynx, and Badger
Fried in turn the great achievement,
From the summit of the mountain
Smote their fists against the heavens,
Smote against the sky their foreheads,
Cracked the sky, but could not break it ;
How the Wolverine, uprising,
Made him ready for the encounter,
Bent his knees down, like a squirrel,
Drew his arms back, like a cricket.

" Once he leaped," said old Iagoo,

" Once he leaped, and lo ! above him
 Bent the sky, as ice in rivers
 When the waters rise beneath it ;
 Twice he leaped, and lo ! above him
 Cracked the sky, as ice in rivers
 When the freshet is at highest !
 Thrice he leaped, and lo ! above him
 Broke the shattered sky asunder,
 And he disappeared within it,
 And Ojeeg, the Fisher Weasel,
 With a bound went in behind him ! "

" Hark you ! " shouted Pau-Puk-Keewis
 As he entered at the doorway ;
 " I am tired of all this talking,
 Tired of old Iagoo's stories,
 Tired of Hiawatha's wisdom.
 Here is something to amuse you,
 Better than this endless talking."

Then from out his pouch of wolf-skin
 Forth he drew, with solemn manner,
 All the game of Bowl and Counters,
 Pugasaing, with thirteen pieces.*
 White on one side were they painted,
 And vermilion on the other ;
 Two Kenabeeks or great serpents,
 Two Ininewug or wedge-men,
 One great war-club, Pugamaugun,
 And one slender fish, the Keego,
 Four round pieces, Ozawabeeks,
 And three Sheshebwig or ducklings.
 All were made of bone and painted,
 All except the Ozawabeeks ;
 These were brass on one side burnished,
 And were black upon the other.

In a wooden bowl he placed them,
 Shook and jostled them together,
 Threw them on the ground before him,
 Thus exclaiming and explaining :
 " Red side up are all the pieces,
 And one great Kenabeek standing
 On the bright side of a brass piece,
 On a burnished Ozawabeek ;
 Thirteen tens and eight are counted."

Then again he shook the pieces,
 Shook and jostled them together,
 Threw them on the ground before him,
 Still exclaiming and explaining :

" White are both the great Kenabeeks,
 White the Ininewug, the wedge-men,

Red are all the other pieces ;
 Five tens and an eight are counted."

Thus he taught the game of hazard,
 Thus displayed it and explained it,
 Running through its various chances,
 Various changes, various meanings :
 Twenty curious eyes stared at him,
 Full of eagerness stared at him.

" Many games," said old Iagoo,
 " Many games of skill and hazard
 Have I seen in different nations,
 Have I played in different countries.
 He who plays with old Iagoo
 Must have very nimble fingers ;
 Though you think yourself so skilful
 I can beat you, Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 I can even give you lessons
 In your game of Bowl and Counters ! "

So they sat and played together,
 All the old men and the young men,
 Played for dresses, weapons, wampum,
 Played till midnight, played till morning,
 Played until the Yenadizze,
 Till the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Of their treasures had despoiled them,
 Of the best of all their dresses,
 Shirts of deer-skin, robes of ermine,
 Belts of wampum, crests of feathers,
 Warlike weapons, pipes and pouches.
 Twenty eyes glared wildly at him,
 Like the eyes of wolves glared at him.

Said the lucky Pau-Puk-Keewis :
 " In my wigwam I am lonely,
 In my wanderings and adventures
 I have need of a companion,
 Fain would have a Meshinauwa,
 An attendant and pipe-bearer.
 I will venture all these winnings,
 All these garments heaped about me,
 All this wampum, all these feathers,
 On a single throw will venture
 All against the young man yonder ! "
 'Twas a youth of sixteen summers,
 'Twas a nephew of Iagoo ;
 Face-in-a-Mist, the people called him.

As the fire burns in a pipe-head
 Dusky red beneath the ashes,
 So beneath his shaggy eyebrows
 Glowed the eyes of old Iagoo.

" Ugh ! " he answered very fiercely ;
 " Ugh ! " they answered all and each one.

Seized the wooden bowl the old man,
 Closely in his bony fingers
 Clutched the fatal bowl, Onagon,
 Shook it fiercely and with fury,
 Made the pieces ring together
 As he threw them down before him.

Red were both the great Kenabeeks,
 Red the Ininewug, the wedge-men,
 Red the Sheshebwug, the ducklings,
 Black the four brass Ozawabeeks,
 White alone the fish, the Keego ;
 Only five the pieces counted !

Then the smiling Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Shook the bowl and threw the pieces ;
 Lightly in the air he tossed them,
 And they fell about him scattered ;
 Dark and bright the Ozawabeeks,
 Red and white the other pieces,
 And upright among the others
 One Ininewug was standing,
 Even as crafty Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Stood alone among the players,
 Saying, " Five tens ! mine the game is ! "

Twenty eyes glared at him fiercely,
 Like the eyes of wolves glared at him,
 As he turned and left the wigwam,
 Followed by his Meshinauwa,
 By the nephew of Iagoo,
 By the tall and graceful stripling,
 Bearing in his arms the winnings,
 Shirts of deer-skin, robes of ermine,
 Belts of wampum, pipes, and weapons.

" Carry them," said Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Pointing with his fan of feathers,
 " To my wigwam far to eastward,
 On the dunes of Nagow Wudjoo ! "

Hot and red with smoke and gambling
 Were the eyes of Pau-Puk-Keewis
 As he came forth to the freshness
 Of the pleasant Summer morning.
 All the birds were singing gaily,
 All the streamlets flowing swiftly,
 And the heart of Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Sang with pleasure as the birds sing,
 Beat with triumph like the streamlets,
 As he wandered through the village,
 In the early grey of morning,

With his fan of turkey-feathers,
With his plumes and tufts of swan's down,
Till he reached the farthest wigwam,
Reached the lodge of Hiawatha.

Silent was it and deserted ;
No one met him at the doorway,
No one came to bid him welcome ;
But the birds were singing round it,
In and out and round the doorway,
Hopping, singing, fluttering, feeding,
And aloft upon the ridge-pole
Kahgahgee, the King of Ravens,
Sat with fiery eyes, and, screaming,
Flapped his wings at Pau-Puk-Keewis.

" All are gone ! the lodge is empty ! "
Thus it was spake Pau-Puk-Keewis,
In his heart resolving mischief ;
" Gone is wary Hiawatha,
Gone the silly laughing Water,
Gone Nokomis, the old woman,
And the lodge is left unguarded ! "

By the neck he seized the raven,
Whirled it round him like a rattle,
Like a medicine-pouch he shook it,
Strangled Kahgahgee, the raven,
From the ridge-pole of the wigwam
Left its lifeless body hanging,
As an insult to its master,
As a taunt to Hiawatha.

With a stealthy step he entered,
Round the lodge in wild disorder
Threw the household things about him,
Piled together in confusion
Bowls of wood and earthen kettles,
Robes of buffalo and beaver,
Skins of otter, lynx, and ermine,
As an insult to Nokomis,
As a taunt to Minnehaha.

Then departed Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Whistling, singing through the forest,
Whistling gaily to the squirrels,
Who from hollow boughs above him
Dropped their acorn-shells upon him,
Singing gaily to the wood-birds,
Who from out the leafy darkness
Answered with a song as merry.

Then he climbed the rocky headlands,
Looking o'er the Gitche Gumeé,
Perched himself upon their summit.

Waiting full of mirth and mischief
The return of Hiawatha.

Stretched upon his back he lay there ;
Far below him plashed the waters,
Plashed and washed the dreamy waters ;
Far above him swam the heavens,
Swam the dizzy, dreamy heavens ;
Round him hovered, fluttered, rustled,
Hiawatha's mountain chickens,
Flock-wise swept and wheeled about him,
Almost brushed him with their pinions.

And he killed them as he lay there,
Slaughtered them by tens and twenties,
Threw their bodies down the headland,
Threw them on the beach below him,
Till at length Kayoshk, the sea-gull,
Perched upon a crag above them,
Shouted : " It is Pau-Puk-Keewis !
He is slaying us by hundreds !
Send a message to our brother,
Tidings send to Hiawatha ! "

17

THE HUNTING OF PAU-PUK-KEEWIS

FULL of wrath was Hiawatha
When he came into the village,
Found the people in confusion,
Heard of all the misdemeanours,
All the malice and the mischief,
Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis.

Hard his breath came through his nostrils,
Through his teeth he buzzed and muttered
Words of anger and resentment,
Hot and humming, like a hornet.
" I will slay this Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Slay this mischief-maker ! " said he.
" Not so long and wide the world is,
Not so rude and rough the way is,
That my wrath shall not attain him,
That my vengeance shall not reach him ! "

Then in swift pursuit departed
Hiawatha and the hunters
On the trail of Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Through the forest, where he passed it,
To the headlands where he rested ;
But they found not Pau-Puk-Keewis,

Only in the trampled grasses,
 In the whortleberry-bushes,
 Found the couch where he had rested,
 Found the impress of his body.

From the lowlands far beneath them,
 From the Muskoday, the meadow,
 Pau-Puk-Keewis, turning backward,
 Made a gesture of defiance,
 Made a gesture of derision ;
 And aloud cried Hiawatha,
 From the summit of the mountain :
 " Not so long and wide the world is,
 Not so rude and rough the way is,
 But my wrath shall overtake you,
 And my vengeance shall attain you ! "

Over rock and over river,
 Thorough bush, and brake, and forest,
 Ran the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis ;
 Like an antelope he bounded,
 Till he came unto a streamlet
 In the middle of the forest,
 To a streamlet still and tranquil,
 That had overflowed its margin,
 To a dam made by the beavers,
 To a pond of quiet water,
 Where knee-deep the trees were standing,
 Where the water-lilies floated,
 Where the rushes waved and whispered.

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 On the dam of trunks and branches,
 Through whose chinks the water spouted,
 O'er whose summit flowed the streamlet,
 From the bottom rose a beaver,
 Looked with two great eyes of wonder,
 Eyes that seemed to ask a question,
 At the stranger, Pau-Puk-Keewis.

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet,
 Flowed the bright and silvery water,
 And he spake unto the beaver,
 With a smile he spake in this wise :

" O my friend Ahmeek, the beaver,
 Cool and pleasant is the water ;
 Let me dive into the water,
 Let me rest there in your lodges ;
 Change me, too, into a beaver ! "

Cautiously replied the beaver,
 With reserve he thus made answer :
 " Let me first consult the others,

Let me ask the other beavers."
 Down he sank into the water,
 Heavily sank he, as a stone sinks,
 Down among the leaves and branches,
 Brown and matted at the bottom.

On the dam stood Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 O'er his ankles flowed the streamlet,
 Spouted through the chinks below him,
 Dashed upon the stones beneath him,
 Spread serene and calm before him,
 And the sunshine and the shadows
 Fell in flecks and gleams upon him,
 Fell in little shining patches,
 Through the waving, rustling branches.

From the bottom rose the beavers,
 Silently above the surface
 Rose one head and then another,
 Till the pond seemed full of beavers,
 Full of black and shining faces.

To the beavers Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Spake entreating, said in this wise :
 " Very pleasant is your dwelling,
 O my friends ! and safe from danger ;
 Can you not with all your cunning,
 All your wisdom and contrivance,
 Change me, too, into a beaver ? "

" Yes ! " replied Ahmeek, the beaver,
 He the King of all the beavers,
 " Let yourself slide down among us,
 Down into the tranquil water. "

Down into the pond among them
 Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis ;
 Black became his shirt of deer-skin,
 Black his moccasins and leggings,
 In a broad black tail behind him
 Spread his fox-tails and his fringes ;
 He was changed into a beaver.

" Make me large, " said Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 " Make me large and make me larger,
 Larger than the other beavers. "

" Yes, " the beaver chief responded,
 " When our lodge below you enter,
 In our wigwam we will make you
 Ten times larger than the others. "

Thus into the clear, brown water
 Silently sank Pau-Puk-Keewis ;
 Found the bottom covered over
 With the trunks of trees and branches,
 Hoards of food against the winter,

Piles and heaps against the famine,
 Found the lodge with arching doorway,
 Leading into spacious chambers.

Here they made him large and larger,
 Made him largest of the beavers,
 Ten times larger than the others.
 "You shall be our ruler," said they;
 "Chief and king of all the beavers."

But not long had Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Sat in state among the beavers,
 When there came a voice of warning
 From the watchman at his station
 In the water-flags and lilies,
 Saying, "Here is Hiawatha!
 Hiawatha with his hunters!"

Then they heard a cry above them,
 Heard a shouting and a tramping,
 Heard a crashing and a rushing,
 And the water round and o'er them
 Sank and sucked away in eddies,
 And they knew their dam was broken.

On the lodge's roof the hunters
 Leaped, and broke it all asunder;
 Streamed the sunshine through the crevice,
 Sprang the beavers through the doorway,
 Hid themselves in deeper water,
 In the channel of the streamlet;
 But the mighty Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Could not pass beneath the doorway:
 He was puffed with pride and feeding,
 He was swollen like a bladder.

Through the roof looked Hiawatha,
 Cried aloud, "O Pau-Puk-Keewis!
 Vain are all your craft and cunning,
 Vain your manifold disguises!
 Well I know you, Pau-Puk-Keewis!"

With their clubs they beat and bruised him,
 Beat to death poor Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Pounded him as maize is pounded,
 Till his skull was crushed to pieces.

Six tall hunters, lithe and limber,
 Bore him home on poles and branches,
 Bore the body of the beaver;
 But the ghost, the Jeebi in him,
 Thought and felt as Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Still lived on as Pau-Puk-Keewis.

And it fluttered, strove, and struggled,
 Waving hither, waving thither,
 As the curtains of a wigwam

Struggle with their thongs of deer-skin,
 When the wintry wind is blowing ;
 Till it drew itself together,
 Till it rose up from the body,
 Till it took the form and features
 Of the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Vanishing into the forest.

But the wary Hiawatha
 Saw the figure ere it vanished,
 Saw the form of Pau-Puk-Keewis
 Glide into the soft blue shadow
 Of the pine-trees of the forest ;
 Toward the squares of white beyond it,
 Toward an opening in the forest,
 Like a wind it rushed and panted,
 Bending all the boughs before it,
 And behind it, as the rain comes,
 Came the steps of Hiawatha.

To a lake with many islands
 Came the breathless Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 Where among the water-lilies
 Pishnekuh, the brant, were sailing ;
 Through the tufts of rushes floating,
 Steering through the reedy islands.
 Now their broad black beaks they lifted,
 Now they plunged beneath the water,
 Now they darkened in the shadow,
 Now they brightened in the sunshine.

" Pishnekuh ! " cried Pau-Puk-Keewis,
 " Pishnekuh ! my brothers ! " said he,
 " Change me to a brant with plumage,
 With a shining neck and feathers,
 Make me large, and make me larger,
 Ten times larger than the others."

Straightway to a brant they changed him,
 With two huge and dusky pinions,
 With a bosom smooth and rounded,
 With a bill like two great paddles,
 Made him larger than the others,
 Ten times larger than the largest,
 Just as, shouting from the forest,
 On the shore stood Hiawatha.

Up they rose with cry and clamour,
 With a whirr and beat of pinions,
 Rose up from the reedy islands,
 From the water flags and lilies.
 And they said to Pau-Puk-Keewis :
 " In your flying, look not downward,
 Take good heed, and look not downward,

Lest some strange mischance should happen,
Lest some great mishap befall you ! ”

Fast and far they fled to northward,
Fast and far through mist and sunshine,
Fed among the moors and fen-lands,
Slept among the reeds and rushes.

On the morrow as they journeyed,
Buoyed and lifted by the South-wind,
Wafted onward by the South-wind,
Blowing fresh and strong behind them,
Rose a sound of human voices,
Rose a clamour from beneath them,
From the lodges of a village,
From the people miles beneath them.

For the people of the village
Saw the flock of brant with wonder,
Saw the wings of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Flapping far up in the ether,
Broader than two doorway curtains.

Pau-Puk-Keewis heard the shouting,
Knew the voice of Hiawatha,
Knew the outcry of Iagoo,
And, forgetful of the warning,
Drew his neck in, and looked downward,
And the wind that blew behind him
Caught his mighty fan of feathers,
Sent him wheeling, whirling, downward !

All in vain did Pau-Puk-Keewis
Struggle to regain his balance !
Whirling round and round and downward,
He beheld in turn the village
And in turn the flock above him,
Saw the village coming nearer,
And the flock receding farther,
Heard the voices growing louder,
Heard the shouting and the laughter ;
Saw no more the flock above him,
Only saw the earth beneath him ;
Dead out of the empty heaven,
Dead among the shouting people,
With a heavy sound and sullen,
Fell the brant with broken pinions.

But his soul, his ghost, his shadow,
Still survived as Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Took again the form and features
Of the handsome Yenadizze,
And again went rushing onward,
Followed fast by Hiawatha,
Crying : “ Not so wide the world is.

Not so long and rough the way is,
But my wrath shall overtake you,
But my vengeance shall attain you ! ”

And so near he came, so near him,
That his hand was stretched to seize him,
His right hand to seize and hold him,
When the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis
Whirled and spun about in circles,
Fanned the air into a whirlwind,
Danced the dust and leaves about him,
And amid the whirling eddies
Sprang into a hollow oak-tree,
Changed himself into a serpent,
Gliding out through root and rubbish.

With his right hand Hiawatha
Smote amain the hollow oak-tree,
Rent it into shreds and splinters,
Left it lying there in fragments.
But in vain ; for Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Once again in human figure,
Full in sight ran on before him,
Sped away in gust and whirlwind,
On the shores of Gitche Gumees,
Westward by the Big-Sea-Water,
Came unto the rocky headlands,
To the Pictured Rocks of sandstone,*
Looking over lake and landscape.

And the Old Man of the Mountain,
He the Manito of Mountains,
Opened wide his rocky doorways,
Opened wide his deep abysses,
Giving Pau-Puk-Keewis shelter
In his caverns dark and dreary,
Bidding Pau-Puk-Keewis welcome
To his gloomy lodge of sandstone.

There without stood Hiawatha,
Found the doorways closed against him,
With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
Smote great caverns in the sandstone,
Cried aloud in tones of thunder,
“ Open ! I am Hiawatha ! ”

But the Old Man of the Mountain
Opened not, and made no answer
From the silent crags of sandstone,
From the gloomy rock abysses.

Then he raised his hands to heaven,
Called imploring on the tempest,
Called Waywassimo, the lightning,
And the thunder, Annemeekie ;

And they came with night and darkness,
Sweeping down the Big-Sea-Water
From the distant Thunder Mountains ;
And the trembling Pau-Puk-Keewis
Heard the footsteps of the thunder,
Saw the red eyes of the lightning,
Was afraid, and crouched and trembled.

Then Waywassimo, the lightning,
Smote the doorways of the caverns,
With his war-club smote the doorways,
Smote the jutting crags of sandstone,
And the thunder, Annemeekee,
Shouted down into the caverns,
Saying, " Where is Pau-Puk-Keewis ? "
And the crags fell, and beneath them
Dead among the rocky ruins
Lay the cunning Pau-Puk-Keewis,
Lay the handsome Yenadizze,
Slain in his own human figure.

Ended were his wild adventures,
Ended were his tricks and gambols,
Ended all his craft and cunning,
Ended all his mischief-making,
All his gambling and his dancing,
All his wooing of the maidens.

Then the noble Hiawatha
Took his soul, his ghost, his shadow,
Spake and said : " O Pau-Puk-Keewis !
Never more in human figure
Shall you search for new adventures ;
Never more with jest and laughter
Dance the dust and leaves in whirlwinds ;
But above there in the heavens
You shall soar and sail in circles :
I will change you to an eagle,
To Keneu, the great war-eagle,
Chief of all the fowls with feathers,
Chief of Hiawatha's chickens."

And the name of Pau-Puk-Keewis
Lingers still among the people,
Lingers still among the singers,
And among the story-tellers ;
And in Winter, when the snow-flakes
Whirl in eddies round the lodges,
When the wind in gusty tumult
O'er the smoke-flue pipes and whistles,
" There," they cry, " comes Pau-Puk-Keewis ;
He is dancing through the village,
He is gathering in his harvest ! "

THE DEATH OF KWASIND

FAR and wide among the nations
Spread the name and fame of Kwasind ;
No man dared to strive with Kwasind,
No man could compete with Kwasind.
But the mischievous Puk-Wudjies,
They the envious Little People,
They the fairies and the pigmies,
Plotted and conspired against him.

“ If this hateful Kwasind,” said they,
“ If this great, outrageous fellow
Goes on thus a little longer,
Tearing everything he touches,
Rending everything to pieces,
Filling all the world with wonder,
What becomes of the Puk-Wudjies ?
Who will care for the Puk-Wudjies ?
He will tread us down like mushrooms,
Drive us all into the water,
Give our bodies to be eaten
By the wicked Nee-ba-naw-baigs,
By the Spirits of the Water ! ”

So the angry Little People
All conspired against the Strong Man,
All conspired to murder Kwasind,
Yes, to rid the world of Kwasind,
The audacious, overbearing,
Heartless, haughty, dangerous Kwasind !

Now this wondrous strength of Kwasind
In his crown alone was seated ;
In his crown too was his weakness ;
There alone could he be wounded,
Nowhere else could weapon pierce him,
Nowhere else could weapon harm him.

Even there the only weapon
That could wound him, that could slay him,
Was the seed-cone of the pine-tree,
Was the blue cone of the fir-tree.
This was Kwasind's fatal secret,
Known to no man among mortals ;
But the cunning Little People,
The Puk-Wudjies, knew the secret,
Knew the only way to kill him.

So they gathered cones together,
Gathered seed-cones of the pine-tree,

Gathered blue cones of the fir-tree,
In the woods by Taquamenaw,
Brought them to the river's margin,
Heaped them in great piles together,
Where the red rocks from the margin
Jutting overhang the river.

There they lay in wait for Kwasind,
The malicious Little People.

'Twas an afternoon in Summer ;
Very hot and still the air was,
Very smooth the gliding river,
Motionless the sleeping shadows :
Insects glistened in the sunshine,
Insects skated on the water,
Filled the drowsy air with buzzing,
With a far-resounding war-cry.

Down the river came the Strong Man,
In his birch canoe came Kwasind,
Floating slowly down the current
Of the sluggish Taquamenaw,
Very languid with the weather,
Very sleepy with the silence.

From the overhanging branches,
From the tassels of the birch-trees,
Soft the Spirit of Sleep descended ;
By his airy hosts surrounded,
His invisible attendants,
Came the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin ;
Like the burnished Dush-kwo-ne-she,
Like a dragon-fly, he hovered
O'er the drowsy head of Kwasind.

To his ear there came a murmur
As of waves upon a sea-shore,
As of far-off tumbling waters,
As of winds among the pine-trees ;
And he felt upon his forehead
Blows of little airy war-clubs,
Wielded by the slumbrous legions
Of the Spirit of Sleep, Nepahwin,
As of some one breathing on him.

At the first blow of their war-clubs
Fell a drowsiness on Kwasind ;
At the second blow they smote him,
Motionless his paddle rested ;
At the third, before his vision
Reeled the landscape into darkness,
Very sound asleep was Kwasind.

So he floated down the river,
Like a blind man seated upright,

Was it the wind above the smoke-flue,
 Muttering down into the wigwam ?
 Was it the owl, the Koko-koho,
 Hooting from the dismal forest ?
 Sure a voice said in the silence :
 " These are corpses clad in garments,
 These are ghosts that come to haunt you,
 From the kingdom of Ponemah,
 From the land of the Hereafter ! "

Homeward now came Hiawatha
 From his hunting in the forest,
 With the snow upon his tresses,
 And the red deer on his shoulders.
 At the feet of Laughing Water
 Down he threw his lifeless burden ;
 Nobler, handsomer she thought him,
 Than when first he came to woo her ;
 First threw down the deer before her,
 As a token of his wishes,
 As a promise of the future.

Then he turned and saw the strangers,
 Cowering, crouching with the shadows ;
 Said within himself, " Who are they ?
 What strange guests has Minnehaha ? "
 But he questioned not the strangers,
 Only spake to bid them welcome
 To his lodge, his food, his fireside.

When the evening meal was ready,
 And the deer had been divided,
 Both the pallid guests, the strangers,
 Springing from among the shadows,
 Seized upon the choicest portions,
 Seized the white fat of the roebuck,
 Set apart for Laughing Water,
 For the wife of Hiawatha ;
 Without asking, without thanking,
 Eagerly devoured the morsels,
 Flitted back among the shadows
 In the corner of the wigwam.

Not a word spake Hiawatha,
 Not a motion made Nokomis,
 Not a gesture Laughing Water ;
 Not a change came o'er their features :
 Only Minnehaha softly
 Whispered, saying, " They are famished ;
 Let them do what best delights them ;
 Let them eat, for they are famished."

Many a daylight dawned and darkened,
 Many a night shook off the daylight

As the pine shakes off the snow-flakes
From the midnight of its branches ;
Day by day the guests unmoving
Sat there silent in the wigwam ;
But by night, in storm or starlight,
Forth they went into the forest,
Bringing fire-wood to the wigwam,
Bringing pine-cones for the burning,
Always sad and always silent.

And whenever Hiawatha
Came from fishing or from hunting,
When the evening meal was ready,
And the food had been divided,
Gliding from their darksome corner,
Came the pallid guests, the strangers,
Seized upon the choicest portions
Set aside for Laughing Water,
And without rebuke or question
Flitted back among the shadows.

Never once had Hiawatha
By a word or look reproved them ;
Never once had old Nokomis
Made a gesture of impatience ;
Never once had Laughing Water
Shown resentment at the outrage.
All had they endured in silence,
That the rights of guest and stranger,
That the virtue of free-giving,
By a look might not be lessened,
By a word might not be broken.

Once at midnight Hiawatha,
Ever wakeful, ever watchful,
In the wigwam, dimly lighted
By the brands that still were burning,
By the glimmering, flickering fire-light,
Heard a sighing, oft repeated,
Heard a sobbing, as of sorrow.

From his couch rose Hiawatha,
From his shaggy hides of bison,
Thrust aside the deer-skin curtain,
Saw the pallid guests, the shadows,
Sitting upright on their couches,
Weeping in the silent midnight.

And he said : " O guests ! why is it
That your hearts are so afflicted,
That you sob so in the midnight ?
Has perchance the old Nokomis,
Has my wife, my Minnehaha,
Wronged or grieved you by unkindness.

Failed in hospitable duties ? ”

Then the shadows ceased from weeping,
Ceased from sobbing and lamenting,
And they said, with gentle voices :
“ We are ghosts of the departed,
Souls of those who once were with you,
From the realms of Chibiabos
Hither have we come to try you,
Hither have we come to warn you.

“ Cries of grief and lamentation
Reach us in the Blessed Islands ;
Cries of anguish from the living,
Calling back their friends departed,
Sadden us with useless sorrow.
Therefore have we come to try you ;
No one knows us, no one heeds us.
We are but a burden to you,
And we see that the departed
Have no place among the living.

“ Think of this, O Hiawatha !
Speak of it to all the people,
That henceforward and for ever
They no more with lamentations
Sadden the souls of the departed
In the Islands of the Blessed.

“ Do not lay such heavy burdens
In the graves of those you bury,
Not such weight of furs and wampum,
Not such weight of pots and kettles,
For the spirits faint beneath them.
Only give them food to carry,
Only give them fire to light them.

“ Four days is the spirit's journey
To the land of ghosts and shadows,
Four its lonely night encampments ;
Four times must their fires be lighted.
Therefore, when the dead are buried,
Let a fire, as night approaches,
Four times on the grave be kindled,
That the soul upon its journey
May not lack the cheerful fire-light,
May not grope about in darkness.

“ Farewell, noble Hiawatha !
We have put you to the trial,
To the proof have put your patience,
By the insult of our presence,
By the outrage of our actions.
We have found you great and noble.
Fail not in the greater trial,

Faint not in the harder struggle."

When they ceased, a sudden darkness
 Fell and filled the silent wigwam.
 Hiawatha heard a rustle
 As of garments trailing by him,
 Heard the curtain of the doorway
 Lifted by a hand he saw not.
 Felt the cold breath of the night air,
 For a moment saw the starlight ;
 But he saw the ghosts no longer,
 Saw no more the wandering spirits
 From the kingdom of Ponemah,
 From the land of the Hereafter.

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THE FAMINE

O THE long and dreary Winter !
 O the cold and cruel Winter !
 Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
 Froze the ice on lake and river,
 Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
 Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
 Fell the covering snow, and drifted
 Through the forest, round the village.

Hardly from his buried wigwam
 Could the hunter force a passage ;
 With his mittens and his snow-shoes
 Vainly walked he through the forest,
 Sought for bird or beast and found none,
 Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
 In the snow beheld no footprints,
 In the ghastly, gleaming forest
 Fell, and could not rise from weakness,
 Perished there from cold and hunger.

O the famine and the fever !
 O the wasting of the famine !
 O the blasting of the fever !
 O the wailing of the children,
 O the anguish of the women !

All the earth was sick and famished ;
 Hungry was the air around them,
 Hungry was the sky above them,
 And the hungry stars in heaven
 Like the eyes of wolves glared at them !
 Into Hiawatha's wigwam

Came two other guests, as silent
 As the ghosts were, and as gloomy,
 Waited not to be invited,
 Did not parley at the doorway,
 Sat there without word of welcome
 In the seat of Laughing Water;
 Looked with haggard eyes and hollow
 At the face of Laughing Water.

And the foremost said: "Behold me!
 I am Famine, Bukadawin!"

And the other said: "Behold me!
 I am Fever, Ahkosewin!"

And the lovely Minnehaha
 Shuddered as they looked upon her,
 Shuddered at the words they uttered,
 Lay down on her bed in silence,
 Hid her face, but made no answer;
 Lay there trembling, freezing, burning
 At the looks they cast upon her,
 At the fearful words they uttered.

Forth into the empty forest
 Rushed the maddened Hiawatha;
 In his heart was deadly sorrow,
 In his face a stony firmness;
 On his brow the sweat of anguish
 Started, but it froze and fell not.

Wrapped in furs and armed for hunting,
 With his mighty bow of ash-tree,
 With his quiver full of arrows,
 With his mittens, Minjekahwun,
 Into the vast and vacant forest
 On his snow-shoes strode he forward.

"Gitche Manito, the Mighty!"
 Cried he with his face uplifted
 In that bitter hour of anguish,
 "Give your children food, O father!
 Give us food, or we must perish!
 Give me food for Minnehaha,
 For my dying Minnehaha!"

Through the far-resounding forest,
 Through the forest vast and vacant
 Rang that cry of desolation,
 But there came no other answer
 Than the echo of his crying,
 Than the echo of the woodlands,
 "Minnehaha! Minnehaha!"

All day long roved Hiawatha
 In that melancholy forest,
 Through the shadow of whose thickets,

In the pleasant days of Summer,
Of that ne'er forgotten Summer,
He had brought his young wife homeward
From the land of the Dacotahs ;
When the birds sang in the thickets,
And the streamlets laughed and glistened,
And the air was full of fragrance,
And the lovely Laughing Water
Said with voice that did not tremble
" I will follow you, my husband ! "

In the wigwam with Nokomis,
With those gloomy guests, that watched her,
With the Famine and the Fever,
She was lying, the Beloved,
She the dying Minnehaha !

" Hark ! " she said ; " I hear a rushing,
Hear a roaring and a rushing,
Hear the Falls of Minnehaha
Calling to me from a distance ! "

" No, my child, " said old Nokomis,
" 'T is the night-wind in the pine-trees ! "

" Look, " she said ; " I see my father
Standing lonely at his doorway,
Beckoning to me from his wigwam
In the land of the Dacotahs ! "

" No, my child ! " said old Nokomis,
" 'T is the smoke, that waves and beckons ! "

" Ah ! " she said, " the eyes of Pauguk
Glare upon me in the darkness,
I can feel his icy fingers
Clasping mine amid the darkness !
Hiawatha ! Hiawatha ! "

And the desolate Hiawatha,
Far away amid the forest,
Miles away among the mountains,
Heard that sudden cry of anguish,
Heard the voice of Minnehaha
Calling to him in the darkness,
" Hiawatha ! Hiawatha ! "

Over snow-fields waste and pathless,
Under snow-encumbered branches,
Homeward hurried Hiawatha,
Empty-handed, heavy-hearted,
Heard Nokomis moaning, wailing :
" Wahonowin ! Wahonowin ! "

Would that I had perished for you,
Would that I were dead as you are !
Wahonowin ! Wahonowin ! "

And he rushed into the wigwam,

Saw the old Nokomis slowly
 Rocking to and fro and moaning,
 Saw his lovely Minnehaha
 Lying dead and cold before him,
 And his bursting heart within him
 Uttered such a cry of anguish,
 That the forest moaned and shuddered,
 That the very stars in heaven
 Shook and trembled with his anguish.

Then he sat down, still and speechless,
 On the bed of Minnehaha,
 At the feet of Laughing Water,
 At those willing feet, that never
 More would lightly run to meet him,
 Never more would lightly follow.

With both hands his face he covered,
 Seven long days and nights he sat there,
 As if in a swoon he sat there
 Speechless, motionless, unconscious
 Of the daylight or the darkness.

Then they buried Minnehaha ;
 In the snow a grave they made her,
 In the forest deep and darksome,
 Underneath the moaning hemlocks ;
 Clothed her in her richest garments,
 Wrapped her in her robes of ermine,
 Covered her with snow, like ermine ;
 Thus they buried Minnehaha.

And at night a fire was lighted,
 On her grave four times was kindled,
 For her soul upon its journey
 To the Islands of the Blessed.
 From his doorway Hiawatha
 Saw it burning in the forest,
 Lighting up the gloomy hemlocks ;
 From his sleepless bed uprising,
 From the bed of Minnehaha,
 Stood and watched it at the doorway,
 That it might not be extinguished,
 Might not leave her in the darkness.

" Farewell ! " said he, " Minnehaha !
 Farewell, O my Laughing Water !
 All my heart is buried with you,
 All my thoughts go onward with you !
 Come not back again to labour,
 Come not back again to suffer,
 Where the Famine and the Fever
 Wear the heart and waste the body,
 Soon my task will be completed,

Soon your footsteps I shall follow
 To the Islands of the Blessed,
 To the Kingdom of Ponemah,
 To the Land of the Hereafter ! ”

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THE WHITE MAN'S FOOT

IN his lodge beside a river,
 Close beside a frozen river,
 Sat an old man, sad and lonely.
 White his hair was as a snow-drift ;
 Dull and low his fire was burning,
 And the old man shook and trembled,
 Folded in his Waubewyon,
 In his tattered white-skin wrapper,
 Hearing nothing but the tempest
 As it roared along the forest,
 Seeing nothing but the snow-storm,
 As it whirled and hissed and drifted.

All the coals were white with ashes,
 And the fire was slowly dying,
 As a young man, walking lightly,
 At the open doorway entered.
 Red with blood of youth his cheeks were,
 Soft his eyes, as stars in Spring-time,
 Bound his forehead was with grasses ;
 Bound and plumed with scented grasses,
 On his lips a smile of beauty,
 Filling all the lodge with sunshine.
 In his hand a bunch of blossoms
 Filling all the lodge with sweetness.
 “ Ah, my son ! ” exclaimed the old man,
 “ Happy are my eyes to see you.
 Sit here on the mat beside me,
 Sit here by the dying embers,
 Let us pass the night together.
 Tell me of your strange adventures,
 Of the lands where you have travelled ;
 I will tell you of my prowess,
 Of my many deeds of wonder.”

From his pouch he drew his peace-pipe,
 Very old and strangely fashioned
 Made of red stone was the pipe-head,
 And the stem a reed with feathers ;
 Filled the pipe with bark of willow,

Placed a burning coal upon it,
 Gave it to his guest, the stranger,
 And began to speak in this wise :

“ When I blow my breath about me,
 When I breathe upon the landscape,
 Motionless are all the rivers,
 Hard as stone becomes the water ! ”

And the young man answered, smiling :
 “ When I blow my breath about me,
 When I breathe upon the landscape,
 Flowers spring up o'er all the meadows.
 Singing, onward rush the rivers ! ”

“ When I shake my hoary tresses,”
 Said the old man darkly frowning,

“ All the land with snow is covered ;
 All the leaves from all the branches
 Fall and fade and die and wither,
 For I breathe, and lo ! they are not.

From the waters and the marshes
 Rise the wild goose and the heron,
 Fly away to distant regions,

For I speak, and lo ! they are not.

And where'er my footsteps wander,
 All the wild beasts of the forest

Hide themselves in holes and caverns,
 And the earth becomes as flintstone ! ”

“ When I shake my flowing ringlets,”

Said the young man, softly laughing,
 “ Showers of rain fall warm and welcome,

Plants lift up their heads rejoicing,
 Back unto their lakes and marshes

Come the wild goose and the heron,
 Homeward shoots the arrowy swallow,

Sing the blue-bird and the robin,

And where'er my footsteps wander,

All the meadows wave with blossoms,

All the woodlands ring with music,

All the trees are dark with foliage ! ”

While they spake the night departed ;

From the distant realms of Wabun,

From his shining lodge of silver,

Like a warrior robed and painted,

Came the sun, and said, “ Behold me !

Gheezis, the great sun, behold me ! ”

Then the old man's tongue was speechless,

And the air grew warm and pleasant,

And upon the wigwam sweetly

Sang the blue-bird and the robin,

And the stream began to murmur,

And a scent of growing grasses
Through the lodge was gently wafted.

And Segwun, the youthful stranger,
More distinctly in the daylight
Saw the icy face before him ;
It was Peboan, the Winter !

From his eyes the tears were flowing,
As from melting lakes the streamlets,
And his body shrunk and dwindled
As the shouting sun ascended,
Till into the air it faded,
Till into the ground it vanished,
And the young man saw before him,
On the hearth-stone of the wigwam,
Where the fire had smoked and smouldered,
Saw the earliest flower of Spring-time,
Saw the Beauty of the Spring-time,
Saw the Miskodeed in blossom.

Thus it was that in the Northland
After that unheard-of coldness,
That intolerable Winter,
Came the Spring with all its splendour,
All its birds and all its blossoms,
All its flowers and leaves and grasses.

Sailing on the wind to northward,
Flying in great flocks, like arrows,
Like huge arrows shot through heaven,
Passed the swan, the Mahnahbezee,
Speaking almost as a man speaks ;
And in long lines waving, bending
Like a bow-string snapped asunder,
Came the white goose, Waw-be-wawa ;
And in pairs, or singly flying,
Mahng the loon, with clangorous pinions,
The blue heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
And the grouse, the Mushkodasa.

In the thickets and the meadows
Piped the blue-bird, the Owaissa,
On the summit of the lodges
Sang the robin, the Opechee,
In the covert of the pine-trees
Cooed the pigeon, the Omeme,
And the sorrowing Hiawatha,
Speechless in his infinite sorrow,
Heard their voices calling to him,
Went forth from his gloomy doorway,
Stood and gazed into the heaven,
Gazed upon the earth and waters.

From his wanderings far to eastward,

From the regions of the morning,
 From the shining land of Wabun,
 Homeward now returned Iagoo,
 The great traveller, the great boaster,
 Full of new and strange adventures,
 Marvels many and many wonders.

And the people of the village
 Listened to him as he told them
 Of his marvellous adventures,
 Laughing answered him in this wise :
 " Ugh ! it is indeed Iagoo !
 No one else beholds such wonders ! "

He had seen, he said, a water
 Bigger than the Big-Sea-Water,
 Broader than the Gitche Gumee,
 Bitter so that none could drink it !
 At each other looked the warriors,
 Looked the women at each other,
 Smiled, and said, " It cannot be so !
 Kaw ! " they said, " it cannot be so ! "

O'er it, said he, o'er this water
 Came a great canoe with pinions,
 A canoe with wings came flying,
 Bigger than a grove of pine-trees,
 Taller than the tallest tree-tops !
 And the old men and the women
 Looked and tittered at each other ;
 " Kaw ! " they said, " we don't believe it ! "

From its mouth, he said, to greet him,
 Came Waywassimo, the lightning,
 Came the thunder, Annemeekee !
 And the warriors and the women
 Laughed aloud at poor Iagoo ;
 " Kaw ! " they said, " what tales you tell us ! "

In it, said he, came a people,
 In the great canoe with pinions
 Came, he said, a hundred warriors ;
 Painted white were all their faces,
 And with hair their chins were covered !
 And the warriors and the women
 Laughed and shouted in derision,
 Like the ravens on the tree-tops,
 Like the crows upon the hemlocks.
 " Kaw ! " they said, " what lies you tell us !
 Do not think that we believe them ! "

Only Hiawatha laughed not,
 But he gravely spake and answered
 To their jeering and their jesting :
 " True is all Iagoo tells us ;

I have seen it in a vision,
Seen the great canoe with pinions,
Seen the people with white faces,
Seen the coming of this bearded
People of the wooden vessel
From the regions of the morning,
From the shining land of Wabun.

" Gitche Manito, the Mighty,
The Great Spirit, the Creator,
Sends them hither on his errand,
Sends them to us with his message.
Wheresoe'er they move, before them
Swarms the stinging fly, the Ahmo,
Swarms the bee, the honey-maker ;
Wheresoe'er they tread, beneath them
Springs a flower unknown among us,
Springs the White-man's Foot in blossom.

" Let us welcome, then, the strangers,
Hail them as our friends and brothers,
And the heart's right hand of friendship
Give them when they come to see us.
Gitche Manito, the Mighty,
Said this to me in my vision.

" I beheld, too, in that vision,
All the secrets of the future,
Of the distant days that shall be.
I beheld the westward marches
Of the unknown, crowded nations.
All the land was full of people,
Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
In the woodlands rang their axes,
Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Over all the lakes and rivers
Rushed their great canoes of thunder.

" Then a darker, drearier vision,
Passed before me, vague and cloud-like,
I beheld our nations scattered,
All forgetful of my counsels,
Weakened, warring with each other ;
Saw the remnants of our people
Sweeping westward, wild and woful,
Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Like the withered leaves of autumn ! "

HIAWATHA'S DEPARTURE

By the shore of Gitche Gumee,
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
 At the doorway of his wigwam,
 In the pleasant Summer morning,
 Hiawatha stood and waited.

All the air was full of freshness,
 All the earth was bright and joyous,
 And before him, through the sunshine,
 Westward toward the neighbouring forest
 Passed in golden swarms the Ahmo,
 Passed the bees, the honey-makers,
 Burning, singing in the sunshine.

Bright above him shone the heavens,
 Level spread the lake before him ;
 From its bosom leaped the sturgeon,
 Sparkling, flashing in the sunshine ;
 On its margin the great forest
 Stood reflected in the water,
 Every tree-top had its shadow,
 Motionless beneath the water.

From the brow of Hiawatha
 Gone was every trace of sorrow,
 As the fog from off the water,
 As the mist from off the meadow.
 With a smile of joy and triumph,
 With a look of exultation,
 As of one who in a vision
 Sees what is to be, but is not,
 Stood and waited Hiawatha.

Towards the sun his hands were lifted,*
 Both the palms spread out against it,
 And between the parted fingers
 Fell the sunshine on his features,
 Flecked with light his naked shoulders,
 As it falls and flecks an oak-tree
 Through the rifted leaves and branches.

O'er the water floating, flying,
 Something in the hazy distance,
 Something in the mists of morning,
 Loomed and lifted from the water,
 Now seemed floating, now seemed flying,
 Coming nearer, nearer, nearer.

Was it Shingebis the diver ?
 Was it the pelican, the Shada ?

Or the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah ?
Or the white goose, Wah-be-wawa,
With the water dripping, flashing
From its glossy neck and feathers ?

It was neither goose nor diver,
Neither pelican nor heron,
O'er the water floating, flying,
Through the shining mist of morning,
But a birch canoe with paddles,
Rising, sinking on the water,
Dripping, flashing in the sunshine,
And within it came a people
From the distant land of Wabun,
From the farthest realms of morning
Came the Black-Robe chief, the Prophet,
He the Priest of Prayer, the Pale-face,
With his guides and his companions.

And the noble Hiawatha,
With his hands aloft extended,
Held aloft in sign of welcome,
Waited, full of exultation,
Till the birch canoe with paddles
Grated on the shining pebbles,
Stranded on the sandy margin,
Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,
With the cross upon his bosom,
Landed on the sandy margin.

Then the joyous Hiawatha
Cried aloud and spake in this wise :
" Beautiful is the sun, O strangers,
When you come so far to see us !
All our town in peace awaits you,
All our doors stand open for you ;
You shall enter all our wigwams,
For the heart's right hand we give you.

" Never bloomed the earth so gaily,
Never shone the sun so brightly,
As to-day they shine and blossom
When you come so far to see us !
Never was our lake so tranquil,
Nor so free from rocks and sand-bars,
For your birch canoe in passing
Has removed both rock and sand-bar !

" Never before had our tobacco
Such a sweet and pleasant flavour,
Never the broad leaves of our corn-fields
Were so beautiful to look on,
As they seem to us this morning,
When you come so far to see us ! "

And the Black-Robe chief made answer,
 Stammered in his speech a little,
 Speaking words yet unfamiliar :
 " Peace be with you, Hiawatha,
 Peace be with you and your people,
 Peace of prayer, and peace of pardon,
 Peace of Christ, and joy of Mary ! "

Then the generous Hiawatha
 Led the strangers to his wigwam,
 Seated them on skins of bison,
 Seated them on skins of ermine,
 And the careful, old Nokomis
 Brought them food in bowls of bass-wood,
 Water brought in birchen dippers,
 And the calumet, the peace-pipe,
 Filled and lighted for their smoking.

All the old men of the village,
 All the warriors of the nation,
 All the Jossakeeds, the prophets,
 The magicians, the Wabenos,
 And the medicine-men, the Medas,
 Came to bid the strangers welcome ;
 " It is well," they said, " O brothers,
 That you come so far to see us ! "

In a circle round the doorway,
 With their pipes they sat in silence,
 Waiting to behold the strangers,
 Waiting to receive their message ;
 Till the Black-Robe chief, the Pale-face,
 From the wigwam came to greet them,
 Stammering in his speech a little,
 Speaking words yet unfamiliar ;
 " It is well," they said, " O brother,
 That you come so far to see us ! "

Then the Black-Robe chief, the prophet,
 Told his message to the people,
 Told the purport of his mission,
 Told them of the Virgin Mary,
 And her blessed Son, the Saviour,
 How in distant lands and ages
 He had lived on earth as we do ;
 How he fasted, prayed, and laboured ;
 How the Jews, the tribe accursed,
 Mocked him, scourged him, crucified him ;
 How he rose from where they laid him,
 Walked again with his disciples,
 And ascended into heaven.

And the chiefs made answer, saying :
 " We have listened to your message,

We have heard your words of wisdom,
We will think on what you tell us.
It is well for us, O brothers,
That you come so far to see us!"

Then they rose up and departed
Each one homeward to his wigwam,
To the young men and the women
Told the story of the strangers
Whom the Master of Life had sent them
From the shining land of Wabun.

Heavy with the heat and silence
Grew the afternoon of Summer;
With a drowsy sound the forest
Whispered round the sultry wigwam,
With a sound of sleep the water
Rippled on the beach below it;
From the corn-fields shrill and ceaseless
Sang the grasshopper, Pah-puk-keena;
And the guests of Hiawatha,
Weary with the heat of Summer,
Slumbered in the sultry wigwam.

Slowly o'er the simmering landscape
Fell the evening's dusk and coolness,
And the long and level sunbeams
Shot their spears into the forest,
Breaking through its shields of shadow,
Rushed into each secret ambush,
Searched each thicket, dingle, hollow;
Still the guests of Hiawatha
Slumbered in the silent wigwam.

From his place rose Hiawatha,
Bade farewell to old Nokomis,
Spake in whispers, spake in this wise,
Did not wake the guests, that slumbered:

"I am going, O Nokomis,
On a long and distant journey,
To the portals of the Sunset,
To the regions of the home-wind,
Of the Northwest wind, Keewaydin.
But these guests I leave behind me,
In your watch and ward I leave them;
See that never harm comes near them,
See that never fear molests them,
Never danger nor suspicion,
Never want of food or shelter,
In the lodge of Hiawatha!"

Forth into the village went he,
Bade farewell to all the warriors,
Bade farewell to all the young men,

Spake persuading, spake in this wise :

“ I am going, O my people,
On a long and distant journey ;
Many moons and many winters
Will have come, and will have vanished,
Ere I come again to see you.
But my guests I leave behind me ;
Listen to their words of wisdom,
Listen to the truth they tell you,
For the Master of Life has sent them
From the land of light and morning ! ”

On the shore stood Hiawatha,
Turned and waved his hand at parting ;
On the clear and luminous water
Launched his birch canoe for sailing,
From the pebbles of the margin
Shoved it forth into the water ;
Whispered to it, “ Westward ! westward ! ”
And with speed it darted forward.

And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendour,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,
Sailed into the purple vapours,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.

And the people from the margin
Watched him floating, rising, sinking,
Till the birch canoe seemed lifted
High into that sea of splendour,
Till it sank into the vapours
Like the new moon slowly, slowly
Sinking in the purple distance.

And they said, “ Farewell for ever ! ”
Said, “ Farewell, O Hiawatha ! ”
And the forests, dark and lonely,
Moved through all their depths of darkness,
Sighed, “ Farewell, O Hiawatha ! ”
And the waves upon the margin
Rising, rippling on the pebbles,
Sobbed, “ Farewell, O Hiawatha ! ”
And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her haunts among the fen-lands,
Screamed, “ Farewell, O Hiawatha ! ”

Thus departed Hiawatha,
Hiawatha the Beloved.

VOCABULARY

TO

THE SONG OF HIAWATHA

- Adjidau'mo**, *the red squirrel.*
Ahdeek', *the reindeer.*
Ahkose'win, *fever.*
Ahmeek', *the beaver.*
Algon'quin, *Ojibway.*
Annemee'kee, *the thunder.*
Apuk'wa, *a bulrush.*
Baim-wa'wa, *the sound of the thunder.*
Bemah'gut, *the grape-vine.*
Be'na, *the pheasant.*
Big-Sea-Water, *Lake Superior.*
Bukada'win, *jamine.*
Cheemaun', *a birch canoe.*
Chetowaik', *the plover.*
Chibia'bos, *a musician; friend of Hiawatha; ruler in the Land of Spirits.*
Dahin'da, *the bull-frog.*
Dush-kwo-ne'-she, *or Kwo-ne'-she, the dragon-fly.*
Esa, *shame upon you.*
Ewa-yea', *lullaby.*
Ghee'zis, *the sun.*
Gitche Gu'mee, *the Big-Sea-Water, Lake Superior.*
Gitche Man'ito, *the Great Spirit, the Master of Life.*
Gushkewau', *the darkness.*
Hiawa'tha, *the Wise Man, the Teacher; son of Mudjekeewis, the West-Wind, and Wenonah, daughter of Nokomis.*
Ia'goo, *a great boaster and story-teller.*
Inin'ewug, *men, or pawns in the Game of the Bowl.*
Ishkoodah', *fire; a comet.*
Jee'bi, *a ghost, a spirit.*
Joss'akeed, *a prophet.*
Kabibonok'ka, *the North-Wind.*
Kagh, *the hedgehog.*
Ka'go, *do not.*
Kahgahgee', *the raven.*
Kaw, *no.*
Kaween', *no indeed.*
Kayoshk', *the sea-gull.*
Kee'go, *a fish.*
Keeway'din, *the Northwest Wind, the Home-wind.*
Kena'beek, *a serpent.*
Keneu', *the great war-eagle.*
Keno'zha, *the pickerel.*
Ko'ko-ko'ho, *the owl.*
Kuntasoo', *the Game of Plum-stones.*
Kwa'sind, *the Strong Man.*
Kwo-ne'-she, *or Dush-kwo-ne'-she, the dragon-fly.*
Mahnahbe'zee, *the swan.*
Mahng, *the loon.*
Mahn-go-tay'see, *loon-hearted, brave.*
Mahnomo'nee, *wild rice.*
Ma'ma, *the woodpecker.*
Maskeno'zha, *the pike.*
Me'da, *a medicine-man.*
Meenah'ga, *the blueberry.*
Megissog'won, *the great Pearl-Feather, a magician, and the Manito of Wealth.*
Meshinau'wa, *a pipe-bearer.*
Minjekah'wun, *Hiawatha's mittens.*
Minneha'ha, *Laughing Water; a waterfall on a stream running into the Mississippi, between Fort Snelling and the Falls of St. Anthony.*
Minneha'ha, *Laughing Water; wife of Hiawatha.*
Minne-wa'wa, *a pleasant sound, as of the wind in the trees.*
Mishe-Mo'kwa, *the Great Bear.*

- Mische-Nah'ma, *the Great Sturgeon*.
 Miskodeed', *the Spring-Beauty, the Claytonia Virginica*.
 Monda'min, *Indian corn*.
 Moon of Bright Nights, *April*.
 Moon of Leaves, *May*.
 Moon of Strawberries, *June*.
 Moon of the Falling Leaves, *September*.
 Moon of Snow-Shoes, *November*.
 Mudjeekeewis, *the West-Wind; father of Hiawatha*.
 Mudway-aush'ka, *sound of waves on a shore*.
 Mushkoda'sa, *the grouse*.
 Nah'ma, *the sturgeon*.
 Nah'ma-wusk, *spearmint*.
 Na'gow Wudj'oo, *the Sand Dunes of Lake Superior*.
 Nee-ba-naw'baigs, *water-spirits*.
 Nenemoo'sha, *sweetheart*.
 Nepah'win, *sleep*.
 Noko'mis, *a grandmother; mother of Wenonah*.
 No'sa, *my father*.
 Nush'ka, *look! look!*
 Odah'min, *the strawberry*.
 Okahah'wis, *the fresh-water herring*.
 Ome'me, *the pigeon*.
 Ona'gon, *a bowl*.
 Onaway', *awake*.
 Ope'chee, *the robin*.
 Osse'oo, *Son of the Evening Star*.
 Owais'sa, *the blue-bird*.
 Oweenee', *wife of Osseo*.
 Ozawa'beek, *a round piece of brass or copper in the Game of the Bowl*.
 Pah-puk-kee'na, *the grasshopper*.
 Pau-guk, *death*.
 Pau-Puk-Kee'wis, *the handsome Yenadizze, the Storm Fool*.
 Pauwa'ting, *Saut Sainte Marie*.
 Pe'boan, *Winter*.
 Pemi'can, *meat of the deer or buffalo dried and pounded*.
 Pezhekee', *the bison*.
 Pishnekuh', *the brant*.
 Pone'mah, *hereafter*.
 Pugasaing', *Game of the Bowl*.
 Puggawau'gun, *a war-club*.
 Puk-Wudj'ies, *little wild men of the woods; pigmies*.
 Sah-sah-je'-wun, *rapids*.
 Sah'wa, *the perch*.
 Segwun', *Spring*.
 Sha'da, *the pelican*.
 Shahbo'min, *the gooseberry*.
 Shah-shah, *long ago*.
 Shaugoda'ya, *a coward*.
 Shawgashee, *the craw-fish*.
 Shawonda'see, *the South-Wind*.
 Shaw-shaw, *the swallow*.
 Shesh-ebwug, *ducks; pieces in the Game of the Bowl*.
 Shin'gebis, *the diver, or grebe*.
 Showain' neme'shin, *pity me*.
 Shuh-shuh'gah, *the blue heron*.
 Soan-ge-ta'ha, *strong-hearted*.
 Subbeka'she, *the spider*.
 Sugge'ma, *the mosquito*.
 To'tem, *family coat-of-arms*.
 Ugh, *yes*.
 Ugdwash', *the sun-fish*.
 Unktahee', *the God of Water*.
 Wabas'so, *the rabbit; the North*.
 Wabe'no, *a magician, a juggler*.
 Wabe'no-wusk, *yarrow*.
 Wa'bun, *the East-Wind*.
 Wa'bun An'nung, *the Star of the East, the Morning Star*.
 Wahono'win, *a cry of lamentation*.
 Wah-wah-tay'see, *the fire-fly*.
 Wam'pum, *beads of shell*.
 Waubewy'on, *a white skin wrapper*.
 Wa'wa, *the wild-goose*.
 Waw'beek, *a rock*.
 Waw-be-wa'wa, *the white goose*.
 Wawonais'sa, *the whippoorwill*.
 Way-muk-kwa'na, *the caterpillar*.
 Wen'digoes, *giants*.
 Weno'nah, *Hiawatha's mother, daughter of Nokomis*.
 Yenadiz'ze, *an idler and gambler; an Indian dandy*.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

ALBERT THOMAS

Author of "The Birds of the West"

1858

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

1858

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

FLIGHT THE FIRST

. . come i gru van cantando lor lai,
Facendo in aer di sè lunga riga.

DANTE.

LXX

PROMETHEUS

OR THE POET'S FORETHOUGHT

OF Prometheus, how undaunted
On Olympus' shining bastions
His audacious foot he planted,
Myths are told and songs are chaunted,
Full of promptings and suggestions.

Beautiful is the tradition
Of that flight through heavenly portals,
The old classic superstition
Of the theft and the transmission
Of the fire of the Immortals !

First the deed of noble daring,
Born of heavenward aspiration,
Then the fire with mortals sharing,
Then the vulture,—the despairing
Cry of pain on crags Caucasian.

All is but a symbol painted
Of the Poet, Prophet, Seer ;
Only those are crowned and sainted
Who with grief have been acquainted,
Making nations nobler, freer.

In their feverish exultations,
In their triumph and their yearning,
In their passionate pulsations,
In their words among the nations,
The Promethean fire is burning.

Shall it, then, be unavailing,
 All this toil for human culture ?
 Through the cloud-rack, dark and trailing,
 Must they see above them sailing
 O'er life's barren crags the vulture ?

Such a fate as this was Dante's,
 By defeat and exile maddened ;
 Thus were Milton and Cervantes,
 Nature's priests and Corybantes,
 By affliction touched and saddened.

But the glories so transcendent
 That around their memories cluster,
 And, on all their steps attendant,
 Make their darkened lives resplendent
 With such gleams of inward lustre !

All the melodies mysterious,
 Through the dreary darkness chaunted ;
 Thoughts in attitudes imperious,
 Voices soft, and deep, and serious,
 Words that whispered, songs that haunted

All the soul in rapt suspension,
 All the quivering, palpitating
 Chords of life in utmost tension,
 With the fervour of invention,
 With the rapture of creating !

Ah, Prometheus ! heaven-scaling !
 In such hours of exultation
 Even the faintest heart, unquailing,
 Might behold the vulture sailing
 Round the cloudy crags Caucasian !

Though to all there is not given
 Strength for such sublime endeavour,
 Thus to scale the walls of heaven,
 And to leaven with fiery leaven
 All the hearts of men for ever ;

Yet all bards, whose hearts unblighted
 Honour and believe the presage,
 Hold aloft their torches lighted,
 Gleaming through the realms benighted,
 As they onward bear the message !

LXXI

THE LADDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE

SAINT AUGUSTINE ! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder,* if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame !

All common things, each day's events,
That with the hour begin and end,
Our pleasures and our discontents,
Are rounds by which we may ascend.

The low desire, the base design,
That makes another's virtues less ;
The revel of the ruddy wine,
And all occasions of excess ;

The longing for ignoble things ;
The strife for triumph more than truth ;
The hardening of the heart, that brings
Irreverence for the dreams of youth ;

All thoughts of ill ; all evil deeds,
That have their root in thoughts of ill ;
Whatever hinders or impedes
The action of the nobler will ;—

All these must first be trampled down
Beneath our feet, if we would gain
In the bright fields of fair renown
The right of eminent domain.

We have not wings, we cannot soar ;
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees, by more and more,
The cloudy summits of our time.

The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen, and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs.

The distant mountains, that uprear
 Their solid bastions to the skies,
 Are crossed by pathways, that appear
 As we to higher levels rise.

The heights by great men reached and kept
 Were not attained by sudden flight,
 But they, while their companions slept,
 Were toiling upward in the night.

Standing on what too long we bore
 With shoulders bent and downcast eyes,
 We may discern—unseen before—
 A path to higher destinies.

Nor deem the irrevocable Past,
 As wholly wasted, wholly vain,
 If, rising on its wrecks, at last
 To something nobler we attain.

LXXII

THE PHANTOM SHIP*

In Mather's Magnalia Christi,
 Of the old colonial time,
 May be found in prose the legend
 That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,
 And the keen and frosty airs,
 That filled her sails at parting,
 Were heavy with good men's prayers.

"O Lord! if it be thy pleasure"—
 Thus prayed the old divine—
 "To bury our friends in the ocean,
 Take them, for they are thine!"

But Master Lamberton muttered,
 And under his breath said he,
 "This ship is so crank and walty
 I fear our grave she will be!"

And the ships that came from England,
When the winter months were gone,
Brought no tidings of this vessel,
Nor of Master Lamberton.

This put the people to praying
That the Lord would let them hear
What in His greater wisdom
He had done with friends so dear.

And at last their prayers were answered :—
It was in the month of June,
An hour before the sunset
Of a windy afternoon,

When, steadily steering landward,
A ship was seen below,
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,
Who sailed so long ago.

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,
Right against the wind that blew,
Until the eye could distinguish
The faces of the crew.

Then fell her straining topmasts,
Hanging tangled in the shrouds,
And her sails were loosened and lifted,
And blown away like clouds.

And the masts, with all their rigging,
Fell slowly, one by one,
And the hulk dilated and vanished,
As a sea-mist in the sun !

And the people who saw this marvel
Each said unto his friend,
That this was the mould of their vessel,
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village
Gave thanks to God in prayer,
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,
He had sent this Ship of Air.

LXXIII

THE WARDEN OF THE CINQUE PORTS

A MIST was driving down the British Channel,
 The day was just begun,
 And through the window-panes, on floor and panel,
 Streamed the red autumn sun.

It glanced on flowing flag and rippling pennon,
 And the white sails of ships ;
 And, from the frowning rampart, the black cannon
 Hailed it with feverish lips.

Sandwich and Romney, Hastings, Hithe, and Dover,
 Were all alert that day,
 To see the French war-steamers speeding over,
 When the fog cleared away.

Sullen and silent, and like couchant lions,
 Their cannon through the night,
 Holding their breath, had watched, in grim defiance,
 The sea-coast opposite.

And now they roared at drum-beat from their stations
 On every citadel ;
 Each answering each, with morning salutations,
 That all was well.

And down the coast, all taking up the burden,
 Replied the distant forts,
 As if to summon from his sleep the Warden
 And Lord of the Cinque Ports.

Him shall no sunshine from the fields of azure,
 No drum-beat from the wall,
 No morning gun from the black fort's embrasure
 Awaken with its call !

No more, surveying with an eye impartial
 The long line of the coast,
 Shall the gaunt figure of the old Field-Marshal
 Be seen upon his post !

For in the night, unseen, a single warrior,
 In sombre harness mailed,
 Dreaded of man, and surnamed the Destroyer,
 The rampart wall has scaled.

He passed into the chamber of the sleeper,
 The dark and silent room,
 And as he entered, darker grew, and deeper,
 The silence and the gloom.

He did not pause to parley or dissemble,
 But smote the Warden hoar ;
 Ah ! what a blow ! that made all England tremble,
 And groan from shore to shore.

Meanwhile, without, the surly cannon waited,
 The sun rose bright o'erhead :
 Nothing in Nature's aspect intimated
 That a great man was dead.

LXXIV

HAUNTED HOUSES

ALL houses wherein men have lived and died
 Are haunted houses. Through the open doors
 The harmless phantoms on their errands glide,
 With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

We meet them at the door-way, on the stair,
 Along the passages they come and go,
 Impalpable impressions on the air,
 A sense of something moving to and fro.

There are more guests at table than the hosts
 Invited ; the illuminated hall
 Is thronged with quiet, inoffensive ghosts,
 As silent as the pictures on the wall.

The stranger at my fireside cannot see
 The forms I see, nor hear the sounds I hear ;
 He but perceives what is ; while unto me
 All that has been is visible and clear.

We have no title-deeds to house or lands ;
 Owners and occupants of earlier dates
 From graves forgotten stretch their dusty hands,
 And hold in mortmain still their old estates.

The spirit-world around this world of sense
 Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere
 Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense
 A vital breath of more ethereal air.

Our little lives are kept in equipoise
 By opposite attractions and desires ;
 The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,
 And the more noble instinct that aspires.

These perturbations, this perpetual jar
 Of earthly wants and aspirations high,
 Come from the influence of an unseen star,
 An undiscovered planet in our sky.

And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud
 Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,
 Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd
 Into the realm of mystery and night,—

So from the world of spirits there descends
 A bridge of light, connecting it with this,
 O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,
 Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.

LXXV

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE

IN the village churchyard she lies,
 Dust is in her beautiful eyes,
 No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs ;
 At her feet and at her head
 Lies a slave to attend the dead,
 But their dust is white as hers.

Was she a lady of high degree,
 So much in love with the vanity
 And foolish pomp of this world of ours ;
 Or was it Christian charity,
 And lowliness and humility,
 The richest and rarest of all dowers ?

Who shall tell us ? No one speaks ;
 No colour shoots into those cheeks,
 Either of anger or of pride,
 At the rude question we have asked ;
 Nor will the mystery be unmasked
 By those who are sleeping at her side.

Hereafter ?—And do you think to look
 On the terrible pages of that Book
 To find her failings, faults, and errors ?
 Ah, you will then have other cares,
 In your own shortcomings and despairs,
 In your own secret sins and terrors !

LXXVI

THE EMPEROR'S BIRD'S-NEST

ONCE the Emperor Charles of Spain
 With his swarthy, grave commanders,
 I forget in what campaign,
 Long besieged, in mud and rain,
 Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,
 In great boots of Spanish leather,
 Striding with a measured tramp,
 These Hidalgos, dull and damp,
 Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,
 Over upland and through hollow,
 Giving their impatience vent,
 Perched upon the Emperor's tent,
 In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes, it was a swallow's nest,
 Built of clay and hair of horses,
 Mane or tail, or dragoon's crest,
 Found on hedge-rows east and west,
 After skirmish of the forces.

Then an old Hidalgo said,
 As he twirled his grey mustachio,
 " Sure this swallow overhead
 Thinks the Emperor's tent a shed,
 And the Emperor but a Macho ! " *

* *Macho* is Spanish for a mule.

Hearing his imperial name
 Coupled with those words of malice,
 Half in anger, half in shame,
 Forth the great campaigner came
 Slowly from his canvas palace.

"Let no hand the bird molest,"
 Said he solemnly, "nor hurt her!"
 Adding then, by way of jest,
 "Golondrina * is my guest,
 'Tis the wife of some deserter!"

Swift as bow-string speeds a shaft,
 Through the camp was spread the rumour,
 And the soldiers, as they quaffed
 Flemish beer at dinner, laughed
 At the Emperor's pleasant humour.

So unarmed and unafraid
 Sat the swallow still and brooded,
 Till the constant cannonade
 Through the walls a breach had made
 And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,
 Struck its tents as if disbanding,
 Only not the Emperor's tent,
 For he ordered, ere he went,
 Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,
 Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,
 Till the brood was fledged and flown,
 Singing o'er those walls of stone
 Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

LXXVII

THE TWO ANGELS

Two angels, one of Life and one of Death,
 Passed o'er our village as the morning broke;
 The dawn was on their faces, and beneath,
 The sombre houses hearsed with plumes of smoke.

* *Golondrino*, a swallow, is also a cant word for a deserter.

Their attitude and aspect were the same,
Alike their features and their robes of white ;
But one was crowned with amaranth, as with flame,
And one with asphodels, like flakes of light.

I saw them pause on their celestial way ;
Then said I, with deep fear and doubt oppressed,
" Beat not so loud, my heart, lest thou betray
The place where thy beloved are at rest ! "

And he who wore the crown of asphodels,
Descending, at my door began to knock,
And my soul sank within me, as in wells
The waters sink before an earthquake's shock.

I recognised the nameless agony,
The terror and the tremor and the pain,
That oft before had filled or haunted me,
And now returned with threefold strength again.

The door I opened to my heavenly guest,
And listened, for I thought I heard God's voice ;
And, knowing whatsoe'er he sent was best,
Dared neither to lament nor to rejoice.

Then with a smile, that filled the house with light,
" My errand is not Death, but Life," he said ;
And, ere I answered, passing out of sight,
On his celestial embassy he sped.

'Twas at thy door, O friend ! and not at mine,
The angel with the amaranthine wreath,
Pausing, descended, and with voice divine,
Whispered a word that had a sound like Death.

Then fell upon the house a sudden gloom,
A shadow on those features, fair and thin ;
And softly, from that hushed and darkened room,
Two angels issued, where but one went in.

All is of God ! If he but wave his hand,
The mists collect, the rain falls thick and loud,
Till, with a smile of light on sea and land,
Lo ! he looks back from the departing cloud.

Angels of Life and Death alike are his ;
Without his leave they pass no threshold o'er ;
Who, then, would wish or dare, believing this,
Against his messengers to shut the door ?

LXXVIII

DAYLIGHT AND MOONLIGHT

In broad daylight, and at noon,
 Yesterday I saw the moon
 Sailing high, but faint and white,
 As a schoolboy's paper kite.

In broad daylight yesterday,
 I read a Poet's mystic lay ;
 And it seemed to me at most
 As a phantom, or a ghost.

But at length the feverish day
 Like a passion died away,
 And the night, serene and still,
 Fell on village, vale, and hill.

Then the moon, in all her pride,
 Like a spirit glorified,
 Filled and overflowed the night
 With revelations of her light.

And the Poet's song again
 Passed like music through my brain ;
 Night interpreted to me
 All its grace and mystery.

LXXIX

THE JEWISH CEMETERY AT NEWPORT

How strange it seems ! These Hebrews in their graves,
 Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
 Silent beside the never-silent waves,
 At rest in all this moving up and down !

The trees are white with dust, that o'er their sleep
 Wave their broad curtains in the south wind's breath,
 While underneath such leafy tents they keep
 The long mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain's base.

The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent, and of different climes ;
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

" Blessed be God ! for he created Death ! "
The mourner said, " and Death is rest and peace ; "
Then added, in the certainty of faith,
" And giveth Life that never more shall cease. "

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected ; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty, like a summer-rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.

How came they here ? What burst of Christian hate,
What persecution, merciless and blind,
Drove o'er the sea—that desert desolate—
These Ishmaels and Hagers of mankind ?

They lived in narrow streets and lanes obscure,
Ghetto and Judenstrass, in mirk and mire ;
Taught in the school of patience to endure
The life of anguish and the death of fire.

All their lives long, with the unleavened bread
And bitter herbs of exile and its fears,
The wasting famine of the heart they fed,
And slaked its thirst with Marah of their tears.

Anathema maranatha ! was the cry
That rang from town to town, from street to street ;
At every gate the accursed Mordecai
Was mocked and jeered, and spurned by Christian feet.

Pride and humiliation hand in hand
Walked with them through the world where'er they went ;
Trampled and beaten were they as the sand,
And yet unshaken as the continent.

For in the background figures vague and vast
 Of patriarchs and of prophets rose sublime,
 And all the great traditions of the Past
 They saw reflected in the coming time.

And thus for ever with reverted look
 The mystic volume of the world they read,
 Spelling it backward, like a Hebrew book,
 Till life became a Legend of the Dead.

But ah! what once has been shall be no more!
 The groaning earth in travail and in pain
 Brings forth its races, but does not restore,
 And the dead nations never rise again.

LXXX

OLIVER BASSELIN*

IN the Valley of the Vire
 Still is seen an ancient mill,
 With its gables quaint and queer,
 And beneath the window-sill,
 On the stone,
 These words alone :
 " Oliver Basselin lived here."

Far above it, on the steep,
 Ruined stands the old Château ;
 Nothing but the donjon-keep
 Left for shelter or for show.
 Its vacant eyes
 Stare at the skies,
 Stare at the valley green and deep.

Once a convent, old and brown,
 Looked, but ah! it looks no more,
 From the neighbouring hill-side down
 On the rushing and the roar
 Of the stream
 Whose sunny gleam
 Cheers the little Norman town.

In that darksome mill of stone,
To the water's dash and din,
Careless, humble, and unknown,
Sang the poet Basselin
Songs that fill
That ancient mill
With a splendour of its own.

Never feeling of unrest
Broke the pleasant dream he dreamed ;
Only made to be his nest,
All the lovely valley seemed ;
No desire
Of soaring higher
Stirred or fluttered in his breast.

True, his songs were not divine ;
Were not songs of that high art,
Which, as winds do in the pine,
Find an answer in each heart ;
But the mirth
Of this green earth
Laughed and revelled in his line.

From the alehouse and the inn,
Opening on the narrow street,
Came the loud, convivial din,
Singing and applause of feet,
The laughing lays
That in those days
Sang the poet Basselin.

In the castle, cased in steel,
Knights, who fought at Agincourt,
Watched and waited, spur on heel ;
But the poet sang for sport
Songs that rang
Another clang,
Songs that lowlier hearts could feel.

In the convent, clad in grey,
Sat the monks in lonely cells,
Paced the cloisters, knelt to pray,
And the poet heard their bells ;
But his rhymes
Found other chimes,
Nearer to the earth than they.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

Gone are all the barons bold,
 Gone are all the knights and squires,
 Gone the abbot stern and cold,
 And the brotherhood of friars ;
 Not a name
 Remains to fame,
 From those mouldering days of old !

But the poet's memory here
 Of the landscape makes a part ;
 Like the river, swift and clear,
 Flows his song through many a heart ;
 Haunting still
 That ancient mill,
 In the Valley of the Vire.

LXXXI

VICTOR GALBRAITH*

UNDER the walls of Monterey
 At daybreak the bugles began to play,
 Victor Galbraith !
 In the mist of the morning damp and grey,
 These were the words they seemed to say :
 " Come forth to thy death,
 Victor Galbraith ! "

Forth he came, with a martial tread ;
 Firm was his step, erect his head ;
 Victor Galbraith,
 He who so well the bugle played,
 Could not mistake the words it said :
 " Come forth to thy death,
 Victor Galbraith ! "

He looked at the earth, he looked at the sky,
 He looked at the files of musketry,
 Victor Galbraith !
 And he said, with a steady voice and eye,
 " Take good aim ; I am ready to die ! "
 Thus challenges death
 Victor Galbraith.

Twelve fiery tongues flashed straight and red,
 Six leaden balls on their errand sped ;
 Victor Galbraith

Falls to the ground, but he is not dead ;
 His name was not stamped on those balls of lead
 And they only scath
 Victor Galbraith.

Three balls are in his breast and brain,
 But he rises out of the dust again,
 Victor Galbraith !
 The water he drinks has a bloody stain ;
 " O kill me, and put me out of my pain ! "
 In his agony prayeth
 Victor Galbraith.

Forth dart once more those tongues of flame,
 And the bugler has died a death of shame,
 Victor Galbraith !
 His soul has gone back to whence it came,
 And no one answers to the name,
 When the Sergeant saith,
 " Victor Galbraith ! "

Under the walls of Monterey
 By night a bugle is heard to play,
 Victor Galbraith !
 Through the mist of the valley damp and grey
 The sentinels hear the sound, and say,
 " That is the wraith
 Of Victor Galbraith ! "

LXXXII

MY LOST YOUTH

OFTEN I think of the beautiful town
 That is seated by the sea ;
 Often in thought go up and down
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,
 And my youth comes back to me.
 And a verse of a Lapland song
 Is haunting my memory still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees,
 And catch, in sudden gleams,
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,
 And islands that were the Hesperides
 Of all my boyish dreams.

And the burden of that old song,
 It murmurs and whispers still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,
 And the sea-tides tossing free ;
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
 And the magic of the sea.
 And the voice of that wayward song
 Is singing and saying still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,
 And the fort upon the hill ;
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar,
 The drum-beat repeated o'er and o'er,
 And the bugle wild and shrill.
 And the music of that old song
 Throbs in my memory still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the sea-fight far away,*
 How it thundered o'er the tide !
 And the dead captains, as they lay
 In their graves o'erlooking the tranquil bay,
 Where they in battle died.
 And the sound of that mournful song
 Goes through me with a thrill :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the breezy dome of groves,
 The shadows of Deering's Woods ;
 And the friendships old and the early loves
 Come back with a sabbath sound, as of doves
 In quiet neighbourhoods.
 And the verse of that sweet old song,
 It flutters and murmurs still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart
 Across the schoolboy's brain ;
 The song and the silence in the heart,
 That in part are prophecies, and in part
 Are longings wild and vain.

And the voice of that fitful song
 Sings on, and is never still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak ;
 There are dreams that cannot die ;
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,
 And a mist before the eye.
 And the words of that fatal song
 Come over me like a chill :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Strange to me now are the forms I meet
 When I visit the dear old town ;
 But the native air is pure and sweet,
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,
 As they balance up and down,
 Are singing the beautiful song,
 Are sighing and whispering still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,
 And with joy that is almost pain
 My heart goes back to wander there,
 And among the dreams of the days that were,
 I find my lost youth again.
 And the strange and beautiful song,
 The groves are repeating it still :
 " A boy's will is the wind's will,
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

LXXXIII

THE ROPEWALK

IN that building, long and low,
 With its windows all a-row,
 Like the port-holes of a hulk,
 Human spiders spin and spin,
 Backward down their threads so thin,
 Dropping, each a hempen bulk.

At the end, an open door ;
 Squares of sunshine on the floor
 Light the long and dusky lane ;
 And the whirring of a wheel,
 Dull and drowsy, makes me feel
 All its spokes are in my brain.

As the spinners to the end
 Downward go and reascend,
 Glean the long threads in the sun ;
 While within this brain of mine
 Cobwebs brighter and more fine
 By the busy wheel are spun.

Two fair maidens in a swing,
 Like white doves upon the wing,
 First before my vision pass ;
 Laughing, as their gentle hands
 Closely clasp the twisted strands,
 At their shadow on the grass.

Then a booth of mountebanks,
 With its smell of tan and planks,
 And a girl poised high in air
 On a cord, in spangled dress,
 With a faded loveliness,
 And a weary look of care.

Then a homestead among farms,
 And a woman with bare arms
 Drawing water from a well ;
 As the bucket mounts apace,
 With it mounts her own fair face,
 As at some magician's spell.

Then an old man in a tower,
 Ringing loud the noontide hour,
 While the rope coils round and round,
 Like a serpent at his feet,
 And again, in swift retreat,
 Nearly lifts him from the ground.

Then within a prison-yard,
 Faces fixed, and stern, and hard,
 Laughter and indecent mirth ;
 Ah ! it is the gallows-tree ;
 Breath of Christian charity,
 Blow, and sweep it from the earth

Then a schoolboy, with his kite
 Gleaming in a sky of light,
 And an eager, upward look ;
 Steeds pursued through lane and field ;
 Fowlers with their snares concealed ;
 And an angler by a brook.

Ships rejoicing in the breeze,
 Wrecks that float o'er unknown seas,
 Anchors dragged through faithless sand ;
 Sea-fog drifting overhead,
 And, with lessening line and lead,
 Sailors feeling for the land.

All these scenes do I behold,
 These, and many left untold,
 In that building long and low ;
 While the wheel goes round and round,
 With a drowsy, dreamy sound,
 And the spinners backward go.

LXXXIV

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE

LEAFLESS are the trees ; their purple branches
 Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral,
 Rising silent
 In the Red Sea of the Winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,
 Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,
 Smoky columns
 Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light ;
 Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,
 Social watch-fires
 Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,
 And like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree
 For its freedom
 Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,
 Asking sadly
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.

By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair, with stately stairways,
 Asking blindly
Of the Future what it cannot give them.

By the fireside tragedies are acted
In whose scenes appear two actors only,
 Wife and husband,
And above them God the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,
Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,
 Waiting, watching
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-stone ;
Is the central point from which he measures
 Every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it ;
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,
 As he heard them
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,
 Drives an exile
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead.

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
 But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations !

LXXXV

CATAWBA WINE

THIS song of mine
Is a Song of the Vine,
To be sung by the glowing embers
Of wayside inns,
When the rain begins
To darken the drear Novembers.

It is not a song
Of the Scuppernong,
From warm Carolinian valleys,
Nor the Isabel
And the Muscadel
That bask in our garden alleys.

Nor the red Mustang,
Whose clusters hang
O'er the waves of the Colorado,
And the fiery flood
Of whose purple blood
Has a dash of Spanish bravado.

For richest and best
Is the wine of the West,
That grows by the Beautiful River ;
Whose sweet perfume
Fills all the room
With a benison on the giver.

And as hollow trees
Are the haunts of bees,
For ever going and coming ;
So this crystal hive
Is all alive
With a swarming and buzzing and humming.

Very good in its way
Is the Verzenay,
Or the Sillery soft and creamy ;
But Catawba wine
Has a taste more divine,
More dulcet, delicious, and dreamy.

There grows no vine
 By the haunted Rhine,
 By Danube or Guadalquivir,
 Nor on island or cape,
 That bears such a grape
 As grows by the Beautiful River.

Drugged is their juice
 For foreign use,
 When shipped o'er the reeling Atlan
 To rack our brains
 With the fever pains,
 That have driven the Old World frantic.

To the sewers and sinks
 With all such drinks,
 And after them tumble the mixer ;
 For a poison malign
 Is such Borgia wine,
 Or at best but a Devil's Elixir.

While pure as a spring
 Is the wine I sing,
 And to praise it, one needs but name it ;
 For Catawba wine
 Has need of no sign,
 No tavern-bush to proclaim it.

And this Song of the Vine,
 This greeting of mine,
 The winds and the birds shall deliver
 To the Queen of the West,
 In her garlands dressed,
 On the banks of the Beautiful River.

LXXXVI

SANTA FILOMENA *

WHENE'ER a noble deed is wrought,
 Whene'er is spoken a noble thought,
 Our hearts, in glad surprise
 To higher levels rise.

The tidal wave of deeper souls
 Into our inmost being rolls,
 And lifts us unawares
 Out of all meaner cares.

Honour to those whose words or deeds
Thus help us in our daily needs,
And by their overflow
Raise us from what is low !

Thus thought I, as by night I read
Of the great army of the dead,
The trenches cold and damp,
The starved and frozen camp,—

The wounded from the battle-plain,
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors,
The cold and stony floors.

Lo ! in that house of misery
A lady with a lamp I see
Pass through the glimmering gloom,
And flit from room to room.

And slow, as in a dream of bliss,
The speechless sufferer turns to kiss
Her shadow, as it falls
Upon the darkening walls.

As if a door in heaven should be
Opened and then closed suddenly,
The vision came and went,
The light shone and was spent.

On England's annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
From portals of the past.

A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good,
Heroic womanhood.

Nor even shall be wanting here
The palm, the lily, and the spear,
The symbols that of yore
Saint Filomena bore.

LXXXVII

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS

OTHERE, the old sea-captain,
 Who dwelt in Helgoland,
 To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,
 Brought a snow-white walrus-tooth,
 Which he held in his brown right hand.

His figure was tall and stately,
 Like a boy's his eye appeared ;
 His hair was yellow as hay,
 But threads of a silvery grey
 Gleamed in his tawny beard.

Hearty and hale was Othere,
 His cheek had the colour of oak ;
 With a kind of laugh in his speech,
 Like the sea-tide on a beach,
 As unto the king he spoke.

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,
 Had a book upon his knees,
 And wrote down the wondrous tale
 Of him who was first to sail
 Into the Arctic seas.

" So far I live to the northward,
 No man lives north of me ;
 To the east are wild mountain-chains,
 And beyond them meres and plains ;
 To the westward all is sea.

" So far I live to the northward,
 From the harbour of Skeringes-hale,
 If you only sailed by day,
 With a fair wind all the way,
 More than a month would you sail.

" I own six hundred reindeer,
 With sheep and swine beside ;
 I have tribute from the Finns,
 Whalebone and reindeer-skins,
 And ropes of walrus-hide.

“ I ploughed the land with horses,
 But my heart was ill at ease,
 For the old seafaring men
 Came to me now and then,
 With their sagas of the seas ;—

“ Of Iceland and of Greenland,
 And the stormy Hebrides,
 And the undiscovered deep ;—
 I could not eat nor sleep
 For thinking of those seas.

“ To the northward stretched the desert,
 How far I fain would know ;
 So at last I sallied forth,
 And three days sailed due north,
 As far as the whale-ships go.

“ To the west of me was the ocean,
 To the right the desolate shore,
 But I did not slacken sail
 For the walrus or the whale,
 Till after three days more.

“ The days grew longer and longer,
 Till they became as one,
 And southward through the haze
 I saw the sullen blaze
 Of the red midnight sun.

“ And then uprose before me,
 Upon the water's edge,
 The huge and haggard shape
 Of that unknown North Cape,
 Whose form is like a wedge.

“ The sea was rough and stormy,
 The tempest howled and wailed,
 And the sea-fog, like a ghost,
 Haunted that dreary coast,
 But onward still I sailed.

“ Four days I steered to eastward,
 Four days without a night :
 Round in a fiery ring
 Went the great sun, O King,
 With red and lurid light.”

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,
Ceased writing for a while ;
And raised his eyes from his book,
With a strange and puzzled look,
And an incredulous smile.

But Othere, the old sea-captain,
He neither paused nor stirred
Till the King listened, and then
Once more took up his pen,
And wrote down every word.

“ And now the land,” said Othere,
“ Bent southward suddenly,
And I followed the curving shore,
And ever southward bore
Into a nameless sea.

“ And there we hunted the walrus,
The narwhale, and the seal ;
Ha ! 'twas a noble game !
And like the lightning's flame
Flew our harpoons of steel.

“ There were six of us all together,
Norsemen of Helgoland ;
In two days and no more
We killed of them threescore,
And dragged them to the strand ! ”

Here Alfred, the Truth-Teller,
Suddenly closed his book,
And lifted his blue eyes,
With doubt and strange surmise
Depicted in their look.

And Othere the old sea-captain
Stared at him wild and weird,
Then smiled, till his shining teeth
Gleamed white from underneath
His tawny, quivering beard.

And to the King of the Saxons,
In witness of the truth,
Raising his noble head,
He stretched his brown hand, and said,
“ Behold this walrus-tooth ! ”

LXXXVIII

DAYBREAK

A WIND came up out of the sea,
And said, "O mists, make room for me."

It hailed the ships, and cried, "Sail on,
Ye mariners, the night is gone."

And hurried landward far away,
Crying, "Awake! it is the day."

It said unto the forest, "Shout!
Hang all your leafy banners out!"

It touched the wood-bird's folded wing,
And said, "O bird, awake and sing."

And o'er the farms, "O chanticleer,
Your clarion blow; the day is near."

It whispered to the fields of corn,
"Bow down, and hail the coming morn."

It shouted through the belfry-tower,
"Awake, O bell! proclaim the hour."

It crossed the churchyard with a sigh,
And said, "Not yet! in quiet lie."

LXXXIX

THE FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY OF AGASSIZ

MAY 28, 1857

It was fifty years ago
In the pleasant month of May,
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: "Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee."

"Come, wander with me," she said,
 "Into regions yet untrod ;
 And read what is still unread
 In the manuscripts of God."

And he wandered away and away
 With Nature, the dear old nurse,
 Who sang to him night and day
 The rhymes of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long,
 Or his heart began to fail,
 She would sing a more wonderful song,
 Or tell a more marvellous tale.

So she keeps him still a child,
 And will not let him go,
 Though at times his heart beats wild
 For the beautiful Pays de Vaud ;

Though at times he hears in his dreams
 The Ranz des Vaches of old,
 And the rush of mountain streams
 From glaciers clear and cold ;

And the mother at home says, " Hark !
 For his voice I listen and yearn ;
 It is growing late and dark,
 And my boy does not return ! "

xc

CHILDREN

COME to me, O ye children !
 For I hear you at your play,
 And the questions that perplexed me
 Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
 That look towards the sun,
 Where thoughts are singing swallows,
 And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,
But in mine is the wind of Autumn
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah ! what would the world be to us,
If the children were no more ?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children ;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children !
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks ?

Ye are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said ;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

XCI

SANDALPHON

HAVE you read in the Talmud of old,
In the Legends the Rabbins have told
Of the limitless realms of the air,—
Have you read it,—the marvellous story
Of Sandalphon, the Angel of Glory,
Sandalphon, the Angel of Prayer ?

How, erect, at the outermost gates
 Of the City Celestial he waits,
 With his feet on the ladder of light,
 That, crowded with angels unnumbered,
 By Jacob was seen, as he slumbered
 Alone in the desert at night ?

The Angels of Wind and of Fire
 Chant only one hymn, and expire
 With the song's irresistible stress ;
 Expire in their rapture and wonder,
 As harp-strings are broken asunder
 By music they throb to express.

But serene in the rapturous throng,
 Unmoved by the rush of the song,
 With eyes unimpassioned and slow,
 Among the dead angels, the deathless
 Sandalphon stands listening breathless
 To sounds that ascend from below ;—

From the spirits on earth that adore,
 From the souls that entreat and implore
 In the fervour and passion of prayer ;
 From the hearts that are broken with losses,
 And weary with dragging the crosses
 Too heavy for mortals to bear.

And he gathers the prayers as he stands,
 And they change into flowers in his hands,
 Into garlands of purple and red ;
 And beneath the great arch of the portal,
 Through the streets of the City Immortal
 Is wafted the fragrance they shed.

It is but a legend, I know,—
 A fable, a phantom, a show,
 Of the ancient Rabbinical lore ;
 Yet the old mediæval tradition,
 The beautiful, strange superstition,
 But haunts me and holds me the more.

When I look from my window at night,
 And the welkin above is all white,
 All throbbing and panting with stars,
 Among them majestic is standing
 Sandalphon the angel, expanding
 His pinions in nebulous bars.

And the legend, I feel, is a part
 Of the hunger and thirst of the heart,
 The frenzy and fire of the brain,
 That grasps at the fruitage forbidden ;
 The golden pomegranates of Eden,
 To quiet its fever and pain.

XCII

EPIMETHEUS

OR, THE POET'S AFTERTHOUGHT

HAVE I dreamed ? or was it real,
 What I saw as in a vision,
 When to marches hymeneal
 In the land of the Ideal
 Moved my thoughts o'er Fields Elysian ?

What ! are these the guests whose glances
 Seemed like sunshine gleaming round me ?
 These the wild, bewildering fancies,
 That with dithyrambic dances,
 As with magic circles, bound me ?

Ah ! how cold are their caresses !
 Pallid cheeks, and haggard bosoms !
 Spectral gleam their snow-white dresses,
 And from loose, dishevelled tresses
 Fall the hyacinthine blossoms !

O my songs ! whose winsome measures
 Filled my heart with secret rapture !
 Children of my golden leisures !
 Must even your delights and pleasures
 Fade and perish with the capture ?

Fair they seemed, those songs sonorous,
 When they came to me unbidden ;
 Voices single, and in chorus,
 Like the wild birds singing o'er us
 In the dark of branches hidden.

Disenchantment ! Disillusion !
 Must each noble aspiration
 Come at last to this conclusion,
 Jarring discord, wild confusion,
 Lassitude, renunciation ?

Not with steeper fall nor faster,
 From the sun's serene dominions,
 Not through brighter realms nor vaster,
 In swift ruin and disaster,
 Icarus fell with shattered pinions !

Sweet Pandora ! dear Pandora !
 Why did mighty Jove create thee
 Coy as Thetis, fair as Flora,
 Beautiful as young Aurora,
 If to win thee is to hate thee ?

No, not hate thee ! for this feeling
 Of unrest and long resistance
 Is but passionate appealing,
 A prophetic whisper stealing
 O'er the chords of our existence.

Him whom thou dost once enamour,
 Thou, beloved, never leavest ;
 In life's discord, strife, and clamour,
 Still he feels thy spell of glamour ;
 Him of Hope thou ne'er bereavest.

Weary hearts by thee are lifted,
 Struggling souls by thee are strengthened,
 Clouds of fear asunder rifted,
 Truth from falsehood cleansed and sifted,
 Lives, like days in summer, lengthened !

Therefore art thou ever dearer,
 O my Sibyl, my deceiver !
 For thou makest each mystery clearer,
 And the unattained seems nearer,
 When thou fillest my heart with fever !

Muse of all the Gifts and Graces !
 Though the fields around us wither,
 There are ampler realms and spaces,
 Where no foot has left its traces :
 Let us turn and wander thither !

FLIGHT THE SECOND

XCIII

THE CHILDREN'S HOUR

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper and then a silence ;
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway
A sudden raid from the hall !
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall !

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and back of my chair ;
If I try to escape they surround me ;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse Tower on the Rhine !

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all !

I have you fast in my fortress,
 And will not let you depart,
 But put you down into the dungeon
 In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you for ever,
 Yes, for ever and a day,
 Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
 And moulder in dust away !

XCIV

ENCELADUS

UNDER Mount Etna he lies,
 It is slumber, it is not death ;
 For he struggles at times to arise,
 And above him the lurid skies
 Are hot with his fiery breath.

The crags are piled on his breast,
 The earth is heaped on his head ;
 But the groans of his wild unrest,
 Though smothered and half suppressed,
 Are heard, and he is not dead.

And the nations far away
 Are watching with eager eyes ;
 They talk together and say,
 " To-morrow, perhaps to-day,
 Enceladus will arise ! "

And the old gods, the austere
 Oppressors in their strength,
 Stand aghast and white with fear
 At the ominous sounds they hear,
 And tremble, and mutter, " At length ! "

Ah me ! for the land that is sown
 With the harvest of despair,
 Where the burning cinders, blown
 From the lips of the overthrown
 Enceladus, fill the air

Where ashes are heaped in drifts
Over vineyard and field and town,
Whenever he starts and lifts
His head through the blackened rifts
Of the crags that keep him down.

See, see ! the red light shines !
'Tis the glare of his awful eyes !
And the storm-wind shouts through the pines
Of Alps and of Apennines,
" Enceladus, arise ! "

XCV

THE CUMBERLAND

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,
On board of the Cumberland, sloop of war ;
And at times from the fortress across the bay
The alarum of drums swept past,
Or a bugle blast
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the south uprose
A little feather of snow-white smoke,
And we knew that the iron ship of our foe
Was steadily steering its course
To try the force
Of our ribs of oak.

Down upon us heavily runs
Silent and sullen, the floating fort ;
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,
And leaps the terrible death,
With fiery breath,
From each open port.

We are not idle, but send her straight
Defiance back in a full broadside !
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate,
Rebounds our heavier hail
From each iron scale
Of the monster's hide.

“ Strike your flag ! ” the rebel cries,
 In his arrogant old plantation strain.
 “ Never ! ” our gallant Morris replies ;
 “ It is better to sink than to yield ! ”
 And the whole air pealed
 With the cheers of our men.

Then, like a kraken huge and black,
 She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp !
 Down went the Cumberland all a wrack,
 With a sudden shudder of death,
 And the cannon's breath
 For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,
 Still floated our flag at the mainmast head.
 Lord, how beautiful was thy day !
 Every waft of the air
 Was a whisper of prayer,
 Or a dirge for the dead.

Ho ! brave hearts that went down in the seas !
 Ye are at peace in the troubled stream,
 Ho ! brave land ! with hearts like these,
 Thy flag, that is rent in twain,
 Shall be one again,
 And without a seam !

XCVI

SNOW-FLAKES

Out of the bosom of the Air,
 Out of the cloud-folds of her garments shaken,
 Over the woodlands brown and bare,
 Over the harvest-fields forsaken,
 Silent, and soft, and slow
 Descends the snow.

Even as our cloudy fancies take
 Suddenly shape in some divine expression,
 Even as the troubled heart doth make
 In the white countenance confession,
 The troubled sky reveals
 The grief it feels.

This is the poem of the Air,
 Slowly in silent syllables recorded ;
 This is the secret of despair,
 Long in its cloudy bosom hoarded,
 Now whispered and revealed
 To wood and field.

XCVII

A DAY OF SUNSHINE

O GIFT of God ! O perfect day :
 Whereon shall no man work, but play ;
 Whereon it is enough for me,
 Not to be doing, but to be !

Through every fibre of my brain,
 Through every nerve, through every vein,
 I feel the electric thrill, the touch
 Of life, that seems almost too much.

I hear the wind among the trees
 Playing celestial symphonies ;
 I see the branches downward bent,
 Like keys of some great instrument.

And over me unrolls on high
 The splendid scenery of the sky,
 Where through a sapphire sea the sun
 Sails like a golden galleon,

Towards yonder cloud-land in the West,
 Towards yonder Islands of the Blest,
 Whose steep sierra far uplifts
 Its craggy summits white with drifts.

Blow, winds ! and waft through all the rooms
 The snow-flakes of the cherry-blooms !
 Blow, winds ! and bend within my reach
 The fiery blossoms of the peach !

O Life and Love ! O happy throng
 Of thoughts, whose only speech is song !
 O heart of man ! canst thou not be
 Blithe as the air is, and as free ?

XCVIII

SOMETHING LEFT UNDONE

LABOUR with what zeal we will,
 Something still remains undone,
 Something uncompleted still
 Waits the rising of the sun.

By the bedside, on the stair,
 At the threshold, near the gates,
 With its menace or its prayer,
 Like a mendicant it waits ;

Waits, and will not go away ;
 Waits, and will not be gainsaid ;
 By the cares of yesterday
 Each to-day is heavier made ;

Till at length the burden seems
 Greater than our strength can bear ;
 Heavy as the weight of dreams,
 Pressing on us everywhere.

And we stand from day to day,
 Like the dwarfs of times gone by,
 Who, as Northern legends say,
 On their shoulders held the sky.

XCIX

WEARINESS

O LITTLE feet ! that such long years
 Must wander on through hopes and fears,
 Must ache and bleed beneath your load ;
 I, nearer to the Wayside Inn
 Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
 Am weary, thinking of your road !

O little hands ! that, weak or strong,
 Have still to serve or rule so long,
 Have still so long to give or ask ;
 I, who so much with book and pen
 Have toiled among my fellow-men,
 Am weary, thinking of your task.

O little hearts ! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
Such limitless and strong desires ;
Mine that so long has glowed and burned,
With passions into ashes turned
Now covers and conceals its fires.

O little souls ! as pure and white
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from Heaven, their source divine ;
Refracted through the mist of years,
How red my setting sun appears,
How lurid looks this soul of mine !

THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

1864

THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

1858

C

THE

COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

1

MILES STANDISH

IN the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of the
Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive
dwelling,
Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the Puritan
Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him,
and pausing
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of war-
fare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber,—
Cutlass and corslet of steel, and his trusty sword of
Damascus,
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic
sentence,
While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket,
and matchlock.
Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic,
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles and
sinews of iron ;
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard was
already
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes in
November.
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend, and household
companion,
Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the
window ;
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion,
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof, as the
captives

Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not Angles
but Angels."

Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the May
Flower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe inter-
rupting,

Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish the Captain
of Plymouth.

"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike weapons that
hang here

Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspec-
tion!

This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders;
this breastplate,

Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skirmish;
Here in front you can see the very dent of the bullet

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.

Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles
Standish

Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the
Flemish morasses."

Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from
his writing:

"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of
the bullet;

He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our
weapon!"

Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of the
stripling:

"See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal
hanging;

That is because I have done it myself, and not left it to
others.

Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent
adage;

So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your
inkhorn.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great invincible army,
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his

matchlock,

Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pillage
And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my soldiers!"

This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes, as the
sunbeams

Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in a moment.
Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain continued:

"Look! you can see from this window my brazen howitzer
planted

High on the roof of the church, a preacher who speaks to
the purpose,
Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic,
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the
heathen.

Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the Indians ;
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they try it the
better,—
Let them come, if they like, be it sagamore, sachem, or
pow-wow,
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon ! ”

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the
landscape,
Washed with a cold grey mist, the vapoury breath of the
east wind,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of the
ocean,

Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on the
landscape,

Gloom intermingled with light ; and his voice was subdued
with emotion,

Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded :
“ Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose
Standish ;

Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside !
She was the first to die of all who came in the May Flower !
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown
there,

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our
people,

Lest they should count them and see how many already have
perished ! ”

Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down, and was
thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and
among them

Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for
binding ;

Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Cæsar,
Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of London,
And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing
the Bible.

Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish paused, as
if doubtful

Which of the three he should choose for his consolation and
comfort,

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous campaigns
of the Romans,
Or the Artillery practice designed for belligerent Christians.
Finally down from its shelf he dragged the ponderous
Roman,
Seated himself at the window, and opened the book, and in
silence
Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks thick
on the margin,
Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was hottest.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the
stripling,
Busily writing epistles important, to go by the May Flower,
Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God
willing !
Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible winter,
Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of Priscilla,
Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden
Priscilla !

2

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

NOTHING was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the
stripling,
Or an occasional sigh from the labouring heart of the
Captain,
Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius
Cæsar.
After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm
downwards,
Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar !
You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow
Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally
skilful !"
Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely,
the youthful:
" Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and
his weapons.
Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could dictate
Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs."
" Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the
other,
" Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar !
Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,
Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he
said it.

Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times
after ;
Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he
conquered ;
He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded ;
Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus !
Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in
Flanders,
When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving
way too,
And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely
together
There was no room for their swords ? Why, he seized a
shield from a soldier,
Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and
commanded the captains,
Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns ;
Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their
weapons ;
So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.
That's what I always say ; if you wish a thing to be well
done,
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others ! ”

All was silent again ; the Captain continued his reading.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the
stripling
Writing epistles important to go next day by the May
Flower,
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden
Priscilla ;
Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,
Strove to betray it, by singing and shouting the name of
Priscilla !
Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,
Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his
musket,
Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain
of Plymouth :
“ When you have finished your work, I have something
important to tell you.
Be not however in haste ; I can wait ; I shall not be im-
patient ! ”
Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his
letters,
Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention :
“ Speak ; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to
listen,

Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish." Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling his phrases :

" 'Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures. This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it ; Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.

Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary ;

Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship. Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.

She is alone in the world ; her father and mother and brother Died in the winter together ; I saw her going and coming, Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the dying,

Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself, that if ever

There were angels on earth, as there are angels in heaven, Two have I seen and known ; and the angel whose name is Priscilla

Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.

Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to reveal it,

Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the most part.

Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth, Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of actions,

Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of a soldier.

Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my meaning ;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases.

You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant language, Such as you read in your books of the pleadings and wooings of lovers,

Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired, taciturn stripling,

All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered, Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with lightness,

Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his bosom,

Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by lightning,

Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than answered :

“ Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it ;

If you would have it well done,—I am only repeating your maxim,—

You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others ! ”

But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his purpose,

Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plymouth :

“ Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it ; But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.

Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.

I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to surrender,

But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not. I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,

But of a thundering ‘ No ! ’ point-blank from the mouth of a woman,

That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it ! So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,

Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases.”

Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and doubtful,

Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added : “ Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts me ;

Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship ! ”

Then made answer John Alden : “ The name of friendship is sacred ;

What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you ! ”

So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding the gentler,

Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his errand.

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his
 errand,
 Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the
 forest,
 Into the tranquil woods, where blue-birds and robins were
 building
 Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of
 verdure,
 Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and freedom.
 All around him was calm, but within him commotion and
 conflict,
 Love contending with friendship, and self with each gener-
 ous impulse.
 To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and
 dashing,
 As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,
 Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean!
 "Must I relinquish it all," he cried with a wild lamentation,
 "Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion?
 Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped
 in silence?
 Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the
 shadow
 Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England?
 Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of
 corruption
 Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion;
 Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
 All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!
 This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
 For I have followed too much the heart's desires and
 devices,
 Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.
 This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift
 retribution."
 So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his
 errand;
 Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over
 pebble and shallow,
 Gathering still, as he went, the May-flowers blooming
 around him,
 Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful
 sweetness,

Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their
slumber.
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of Puritan
maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla!
So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the May-flower
of Plymouth,
Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take
them;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither
and perish,
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the giver."
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his
errand;
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean,
Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath of
the east wind;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of
Priscilla
Singing the Hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan
anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the
Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting
many.
Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the
maiden
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-
drift
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous
spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in
its motion.
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of
Ainsworth,
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a
churchyard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.
Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old
Puritan anthem,
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of home-
spun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of
her being!
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and
relentless,

Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and
 woe of his errand ;
 All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had
 vanished,
 All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,
 Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.
 Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,
 "Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look
 backwards ;
 Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to
 its fountains,
 Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the hearts
 of the living,
 It is the will of the Lord ; and his mercy endureth for
 ever !"

So he entered the house : and the hum of the wheel and
 the singing
 Suddenly ceased ; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the
 threshold,
 Rose as he entered, and gave him her hand, in signal of
 welcome,
 Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard your step in
 the passage ;
 For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and
 spinning."
 Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him
 had been mingled
 Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the
 maiden,
 Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an
 answer,
 Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that
 day in the winter,
 After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the
 village,
 Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that en-
 cumbered the doorway,
 Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house,
 and Priscilla
 Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the
 fireside,
 Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the
 snow-storm.
 Had he but spoken then ! perhaps not in vain had he
 spoken ;
 Now it was all too late ; the golden moment had vanished !
 So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an
 answer

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the
beautiful Spring-time,
Talked of their friends at home, and the May Flower that
sailed on the morrow.
"I have been thinking all day," said gently the Puritan
maiden,
"Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-
rows of England,—
They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a
garden;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and
the linnet,
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbours
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the
ivy
Climbing the old grey tower, and the quiet graves in the
churchyard.
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my
religion;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old
England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it: I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and
wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth: "Indeed I do not con-
demn you;
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quail'd in this terrible
winter.
Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean
on;
So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of
marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Captain
of Plymouth!"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of
letters,—
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful
phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a
schoolboy;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more
bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puritan
maiden
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with wonder,

Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered her speechless;

Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous silence:

“ If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me?

If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the winning!”

Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter,

Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy,—

Had no time for such things;—such things! the words grating harshly

Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a flash she made answer:

“ Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is married,

Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding?

That is the way with you men; you don't understand us, you cannot.

When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,

Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another, Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,

And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected, Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.

This is not right nor just: for surely a woman's affection Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking.

When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.

Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved me,

Even this Captain of yours—who knows?—at last might have won me,

Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen.”

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,

Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding;

Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in
Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer
affliction,
How, in return for his zeal they had made him Captain of
Plymouth;
He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire,
England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston
de Standish;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock
argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
He was a man of honour, of noble and generous nature;
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how
during the winter
He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and head-
strong,
Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable
always,
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of
stature;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly,
courageous;
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles
Standish!

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent
language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and with eyes overrunning with
laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for
yourself, John?"

4

JOHN ALDEN

INTO the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by the
sea-side;
Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head to the
east wind,

Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever within
 him.
 Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptic
 splendours,
 Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
 So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,
 Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
 Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the
 city.

“ Welcome, O wind of the East ! ” he exclaimed in his
 wild exultation,
 “ Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty
 Atlantic !
 Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of
 sea-grass,
 Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottoes and gardens
 of ocean !
 Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead and wrap
 me
 Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever within me ! ”

Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and
 tossing,
 Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of the sea-
 shore.
 Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions
 contending ;
 Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded
 and bleeding,
 Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of
 duty !
 “ Is it my fault,” he said, “ that the maiden has chosen
 between us ?
 Is it my fault that he failed,—my fault that I am the
 victor ? ”
 Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of
 the Prophet :
 “ It hath displeased the Lord ! ”—and he thought of David's
 transgression,
 Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the
 battle !
 Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-
 condemnation,
 Overwhelmed him at once ; and he cried in the deepest
 contrition :
 “ It hath displeased the Lord ! It is the temptation of
 Satan ! ”

Then uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld
 there
 Dimly the shadowy form of the May Flower riding at
 anchor,
 Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow ;
 Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of
 cordage
 Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors'
 " Ay, ay, Sir !"
 Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the
 twilight.
 Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the
 vessel,
 Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,
 Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning
 shadow.
 " Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured ; " the hand of
 the Lord is
 Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,
 Through the sea that shall lift the walls of its waters around
 me,
 Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that
 pursue me.
 Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,
 Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has
 offended.
 Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in
 England,
 Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my
 kindred ;
 Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and
 dishonour !
 Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the narrow
 chamber
 With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers
 Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence
 and darkness,—
 Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter !"
 Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong
 resolution,
 Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the
 twilight,
 Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,
 Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,
 Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.
 Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable
 Captain
 Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,

Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or Flanders.

"Long have you been on your errand," he said with a cheery demeanour,

Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the issue.

"Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us ;

But you have lingered so long, that while you were going and coming

I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city. Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has happened."

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous adventure,

From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened ;

How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his courtship,

Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.

But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,

Words so tender and cruel: "Why don't you speak for yourself, John ?"

Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the floor, till his armour

Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister omen.

All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion, Even as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.

Wildly he shouted, and loud: "John Alden! you have betrayed me!

Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted, defrauded, betrayed me!

One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of Wat Tyler ;

Who shall prevent me from running my own through the heart of a traitor ?

Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to friendship!

You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved as a brother ;

You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup, to whose keeping

I have intrusted my honour, my thoughts the most sacred and secret,—

You, too, Brutus! ah woe to the name of friendship hereafter!

Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine, but hence-
forward
Let there be nothing between us save war, and implacable
hatred ! ”

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode about in
the chamber,
Chafing and choking with rage ; like cords were the veins
on his temples.

But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at the doorway,
Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance,
Rumours of danger and war and hostile incursions of
Indians !

Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further
question or parley,

Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its scabbard
of iron,

Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely,
departed.

Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scabbard
Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the distance.
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into the
darkness,

Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot with the
insult,

Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his hands as in
childhood,

Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who seeth in
secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful away to
the council,

Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his coming ;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deportment,
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of
Plymouth.

God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this
planting,

Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation ;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of the people !
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and
defiant,

Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect ;
While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed in
Holland,

And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake glittered,

Filled, like a quiver, with arrows ; a signal and challenge of warfare,
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy tongues of defiance.

This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and heard them debating

What were an answer befitting the hostile message and menace,

Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, objecting ;

One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the Elder, Judging it wise and well that some at least were converted, Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian behaviour !

Then outspake Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain of Plymouth,

Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was husky with anger,

" What ! do you mean to make war with milk and the water of roses ?

Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils ?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of the cannon ! "

Thereupon answered and said the excellent Elder of Plymouth,

Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language : " Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles ; Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire they spake with ! "

But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain, Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued discouraging :

" Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it pertaineth.

War is a terrible trade ; but in the cause that is righteous, Sweet is the smell of powder ; and thus I answer the challenge ! "

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a sudden, contemptuous gesture,

Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder and bullets

Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the savage, Saying, in thundering tones : " Here, take it ! this is your answer ! "

Silently out of the room then glided the glistening savage,

Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself like a
serpent,
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths of the
forest.

5

THE SAILING OF THE MAY FLOWER

Just in the grey of the dawn, as the mists uprose from the
meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering village of
Plymouth ;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative,
" Forward ! "

Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his valorous army,
Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of the white
men,

Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of the savage.
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men of King
David ;

Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the
Bible,—

Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines.
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning ;
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,
Fired along the line, and in regular order retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the
village of Plymouth

Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labours.
Sweet was the air and soft ; and slowly the smoke from the
chimneys

Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward ;
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the
weather,

Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the
May Flower ;

Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers
that menaced,

He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his
absence.

Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women
Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his
coming ;

Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains ;
 Beautiful on the sails of the May Flower riding at anchor,
 Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the
 winter.

Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her
 canvas,

Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the
 sailors.

Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,
 Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward ; anon rang
 Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the echoes
 Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of departure !
 Ah ! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people !
 Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the
 Bible,

Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent entreaty !
 Then from their houses in haste came forth the Pilgrims of
 Plymouth,

Men and women and children, all hurrying down to the
 sea-shore,

Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the May Flower,
 Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them here in the
 desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he had lain
 without slumber,

Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest of his
 fever.

He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late from the
 council,

Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and murmur,
 Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it sounded
 like swearing.

Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a moment in
 silence ;

Then he had turned away, and said : " I will not awake him ;
 Let him sleep on, it is best ; for what is the use of more
 talking ! "

Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself down on
 his pallet,

Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the
 morning,—

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his campaigns
 in Flanders,—

Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for action.

But with the dawn he arose ; in the twilight Alden beheld
 him

Put on his corslet of steel, and all the rest of his armour,
 Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damascus,

Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out of the
 chamber.
 Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned to
 embrace him,
 Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for pardon ;
 All the old friendship came back, with its tender and grateful
 emotions ;
 But his pride overmastered the noble nature within him,—
 Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning fire of
 the insult.
 So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but spake not,
 Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and he spake
 not !
 Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the people were
 saying,
 Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and Richard
 and Gilbert,
 Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,
 And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down to the
 sea-shore,
 Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet
 as a door-step
 Into a world unknown,—the corner-stone of a nation !

There with his boat was the Master, already a little
 impatient
 Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might shift to the
 eastward,
 Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odour of ocean
 about him,
 Speaking with this one and that, and cramming letters and
 parcels
 Into his pocket capacious, and messages mingled together
 Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewildered.
 Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on the
 gunwale,
 One still firm on the rock, and talking at times with the
 sailors,
 Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for starting.
 He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his anguish,
 Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel is or
 canvas,
 Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would rise and
 pursue him.
 But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form of
 Priscilla
 Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all that was
 passing.
 Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his intention,

Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring, and
patient,

That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its
purpose,

As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is
destruction.

Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious
instincts!

Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall ada-
mantine!

"Here I remain!" he exclaimed, as he looked at the
heavens above him,

Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist
and the madness,

Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering head-
long.

"Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above
me,

Seems like a hand that is pointing and beckoning over the
ocean.

There is another hand, that is not so spectral and ghost-like,
Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for
protection.

Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether!

Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me; I heed
not

Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil!

There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,
As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her
footsteps.

Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence
Hover around her for ever, protecting, supporting her
weakness;

Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock
at the landing,

So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the
leaving!"

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and
important,

Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the
weather,

Walked about on the sands; and the people crowded
around him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remem-
brance.

Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,
Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,

Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,
 Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
 Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but
 Gospel!

Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the
 Pilgrims.

O strong hearts and true! not one went back in the May
 Flower!

No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this
 ploughing!

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the
 sailors

Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous
 anchor.

Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west-
 wind,

Blowing steady and strong; and the May Flower sailed
 from the harbour,

Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the
 southward

Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First En-
 counter,

Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open
 Atlantic,

Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts of the
 Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the
 vessel,

Much endeared to them all, as something living and human;
 Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a vision

prophetic,
 Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth

Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and thanked the
 Lord and took courage.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and
 above them

Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and
 their kindred

Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer
 that they uttered.

Sun-illuminated and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean
 Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a grave-
 yard;

Buried beneath it lay for ever all hope of escaping.

Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an
 Indian,

Watching them from the hill ; but while they spake with
 each other,
 Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying, " Look !"
 he had vanished.
 So they returned to their homes ; but Alden lingered a
 little,
 Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash of the
 billows
 Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and flash of the
 sunshine,
 Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the waters.

6

PRISCILLA

THUS for a while he stood, and mused by the shore of the
 ocean,
 Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla ;
 And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like the
 loadstone,
 Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its nature,
 Lo ! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing beside
 him.

" Are you so much offended, you will not speak to me ?"
 said she.

" Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were
 pleading
 Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and way-
 ward,
 Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of
 decorum ?
 Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for
 saying
 What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never unsay it ;
 For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of
 emotion,
 That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a
 pebble
 Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,
 Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered
 together.
 Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles
 Standish,
 Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into
 virtues,

Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in
 Flanders,
 As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,
 Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting your
 hero.
 Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse.
 You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friendship
 between us,
 Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken ! ”
 Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the friend of
 Miles Standish :
 “ I was not angry with you, with myself alone I was
 angry,
 Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my keep-
 ing.”
 “ No ! ” interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt and
 decisive ;
 “ No ; you were angry with me, for speaking so frankly
 and freely.
 It was wrong, I acknowledge ; for it is the fate of a woman
 Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is
 speechless,
 Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.
 Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women
 Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers
 Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, unseen, and
 unfruitful,
 Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profitless
 murmurs.”
 Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man, the
 lover of women :
 “ Heaven forbid it, Priscilla ; and truly they seem to me
 always
 More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of
 Eden,
 More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah
 flowing,
 Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the
 garden ! ”
 “ Ah, by these words, I can see,” again interrupted the
 maiden,
 “ How very little you prize me, or care for what I am
 saying.
 When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret
 misgiving,
 Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and
 kindness,
 Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and
 direct and in earnest,

Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with
flattering phrases.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in
you ;

For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is
noble,

Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.

Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the
more keenly

If you say aught that implies I am only as one among
many,

If you make use of those common and complimentary
phrases

Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking with
women,

But which women reject as insipid, if not as insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden ; and listened and looked at
Priscilla,

Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more divine in her
beauty.

He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause of
another,

Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in vain for
an answer.

So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined

What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward
and speechless.

" Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and
in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of
friendship.

It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it :
I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you
always.

So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear
you

Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain
Miles Standish,

For I must tell you the truth : much more to me is your
friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice the hero you
think him."

Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly
grasped it,

Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleed-
ing so sorely,

Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice
full of feeling,

" Yes, we must ever be friends ; and of all who offer you
friendship
Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and
dearest!"

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of the May
Flower,
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,
Homeward together they walked, with a strange, indefinite
feeling,
That all the rest had departed and left them alone in the
desert.
But, as they went through the fields in the blessing and
smile of the sunshine,
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very archly,
" Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit of the
Indians,
Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a
household,
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened
between you,
When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you
found me."
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole
of the story,—
Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles
Standish.
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between laughing and
earnest,
" He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment !"
But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how much he had
suffered,—
How he had even determined to sail that day in the May
Flower,
And had remained for her sake, on hearing the dangers that
threatened,—
All her manner was changed, and she said with a faltering
accent,
" Truly I thank you for this : how good you have been to
me always !

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem
journeys,
Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly back-
ward,
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of
contrition ;
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,

Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his longings,
 Urged by the fervour of love, and withheld by remorseful misgivings.

7

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

MEANWHILE the stalwart Miles Standish was marching steadily northward,
 Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of the sea-shore,
 All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger
 Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odour of powder
 Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the forest.

Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort ;

He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,
 Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden,

Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most he had trusted !

Ah ! 'twas too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed in his armour !

" I alone am to blame," he muttered, " for mine was the folly.

What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and grey in the harness,

Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing of maidens ?

'Twas but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like so many others !

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is worthless ;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away, and henceforward

Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of dangers ! "

Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,

While he was marching by day or lying at night in the forest,

Looking up at the trees, and the constellations beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian encampment
 Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the forest ;
 Women at work by the tents, and the warriors, horrid with war-paint,
 Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together ; -
 Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the white men,
 Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and musket,
 Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them advancing,
 Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present ;
 Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.
 Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers gigantic in stature,
 Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan ;
 One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.
 Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,
 Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.
 Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.
 " Welcome, English ! " they said,—these words they had learned from the traders
 Touching at times on the coast, to barter and chaffer for peltries.
 Then in their native tongue they began to parley with Standish,
 Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,
 Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for muskets and powder,
 Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with the plague, in his cellars,
 Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the red man !
 But when Standish refused, and said he would give them the Bible,
 Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast and to bluster.
 Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front of the other,
 And, with a lofty demeanour, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain :
 " Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of the Captain,

Angry is he in his heart ; but the heart of the brave Watta-
wamat

Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman,
But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree riven by
lightning,

Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him,
Shouting, ' Who is there here to fight with the brave Watta-
wamat ? ' "

Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his
left hand,

Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the handle,
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning :

" I have another at home, with the face of a man on the
handle ;

By and by they shall marry ; and there will be plenty of
children ! "

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles
Standish :

While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his
bosom,

Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he
muttered,

" By and by it shall see ; it shall eat ; ah, ha ! but shall
speak not !

This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to
destroy us !

He is a little man ; let him go and work with the women ! "

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of
Indians

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-
strings,

Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of their
ambush.

But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them
smoothly ;

So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days of the
fathers.

But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the taunt, and
the insult,

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston
de Standish,

Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his
temples.

Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and, snatching his knife
from its scabbard,

Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage

Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness upon it.
Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the
war-whoop,

And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,
Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.
Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud came the
lightning,

Out of the lightning thunder ; and death unseen ran before
it.

Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp and in
thicket,

Hotly pursued and beset ; but their sachem, the brave
Wattawamat,

Fled not ; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had a
bullet

Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands
clutching the greensward,

Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his
fathers.

There, on the flowers of the meadow the warriors lay, and
above them,

Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the white
man.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of
Plymouth :

“ Pecksuot bragged very loud of his courage, his strength,
and his stature,—

Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man ; but
I see now

Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before
you ! ”

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the stalwart
Miles Standish.

When the tidings thereof were brought to the village of
Plymouth,

And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once was a
church and a fortress,

All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took
courage.

Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror,
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles
Standish ;

Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his
battles,

He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of
his valour.

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

MONTH after month passed away, and in Autumn the ships
of the merchants
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and corn for the
Pilgrims.
All in the village was peace ; the men were intent on their
labours,
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and with
merestead,
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass in the
meadows,
Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in the
forest.
All in the village was peace ; but at times the rumour of
warfare
Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of danger.
Bravely the stalwart Miles Standish was scouring the land
with his forces,
Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien armies,
Till his name had become a sound of fear to the nations.
Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse and
contrition
Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate out-
break,
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of a river,
Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and brackish.
Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habitation,
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the first of
the forest.
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was covered with
rushes ;
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes were of
paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were excluded.
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an orchard ;
Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well and the
orchard.
Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and secure from
annoyance,
Raghorn, the snow-white bull, that had fallen to Alden's
allotment
In the division of cattle, might ruminant in the night-time
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by sweet
pennyroyal.

Oft when his labour was finished, with eager feet would
 the dreamer
 Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the
 house of Priscilla,
 Led by illusions romantic and subtle deceptions of fancy,
 Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the semblance of
 friendship.
 Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the walls of his
 dwelling ;
 Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil in his
 garden ;
 Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible on Sunday
 Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described in the
 Proverbs,—
 How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her always,
 How all the days of her life she will do him good, and not
 evil,
 How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh with
 gladness,
 How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth the
 distaff,
 How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her household,
 Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet cloth of
 her weaving !

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the Autumn,
 Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous
 fingers,
 As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and
 his fortune,
 After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the
 spindle.
 “ Truly, Priscilla,” he said, “ when I see you spinning and
 spinning,
 Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others,
 Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a
 moment ;
 You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful
 Spinner.”
 Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter ;
 the spindle
 Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in
 her fingers ;
 While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mischief,
 continued :
 “ You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen of
 Helvetia ;
 She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of South-
 ampton,

Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er valley and meadow
and mountain,
Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to her
saddle.

She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed into a
proverb.

So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-wheel shall
no longer

Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its chambers with
music.

Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it was in their
childhood,

Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the
spinner!"

Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,
Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise
was the sweetest,

Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spinning,
Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases of
Alden:

"Come, you must not be idle; if I am a pattern for house-
wives,

Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands.
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for
knitting;

Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed
and the manners,

Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John
Alden!"

Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she
adjusted,

He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before
him,

She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread from
his fingers,

Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,

Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly
Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares—for how could she
help it?—

Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body.

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger
entered,

Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the
village.

Yes; Miles Standish was dead!—an Indian had brought
them the tidings,—

Slain by a poisoned arrow shot down in the front of the
battle.

Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of his
 forces ;
 All the town would be burned, and all the people be
 murdered !
 Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the hearts of
 the hearers.
 Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face looking
 backward
 Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in horror ;
 But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the arrow
 Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own, and
 had sundered
 Once and for ever the bonds that held him bound as a
 captive,
 Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his
 freedom,
 Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what he was
 doing,
 Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form of
 Priscilla,
 Pressing her close to his heart, as for ever his own, and
 exclaiming :
 " Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them
 asunder ! "

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,
 Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and
 pursuing
 Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,
 Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest ;
 So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,
 Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing
 asunder,
 Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,
 Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.

THE WEDDING-DAY

FORTH from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple
 and scarlet,
 Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his garments
 resplendent,
 " Holiness unto the Lord," in letters of light, on his forehead,
 Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pome-
 granates.

Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapour beneath
 him
 Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his feet was a
 laver !

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan
 maiden.

Friends were assembled together ; the Elder and Magistrate
 also

Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the
 Law and the Gospel,

One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing
 of heaven.

Simple and brief was the wedding, as that of Ruth and of
 Boaz.

Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of
 betrothal,

Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's
 presence,

After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.
 Fervently then, and devoutly, the excellent Elder of
 Plymouth

Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were founded that
 day in affection,

Speaking of life and of death, and imploring divine bene-
 dictions.

Lo ! when the service was ended, a form appeared on the
 threshold,

Clad in armour of steel, a sombre and sorrowful figure !

Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the strange
 apparition ?

Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on his
 shoulder ?

Is it a phantom of air,—a bodiless, spectral illusion ?

Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the
 betrothal ?

Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, unwel-
 comed ;

Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an expression
 Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart hidden
 beneath them,

As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain-cloud
 Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by its
 brightness.

Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lip, but was silent,
 As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention.

But when were ended the troth and the prayer and the last
 benediction,

Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amazement
Bodily there in his armour Miles Standish, the Captain of
Plymouth !
Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion,
" Forgive me !
I have been angry and hurt,—too long have I cherished the
feeling ;
I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God ! it is
ended.
Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh
Standish,
Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for
error.
Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of
John Alden."
Thereupon answered the bridegroom : " Let all be forgotten
between us,—
All save the dear, old friendship, and that shall grow older
and dearer ! "
Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted Priscilla,
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned gentry in
England,
Something of camp and of court, of town and of country,
commingled,
Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding her
husband.
Then he said with a smile : " I should have remembered
the adage,—
If you would be well served, you must serve yourself ; and
moreover,
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of
Christmas ! "
Great was the people's amazement, and greater yet their
rejoicing,
Thus to behold once more the sun-burnt face of their
Captain,
Whom they had mourned as dead ; and they gathered and
crowded about him,
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride and of
bridegroom,
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each interrupting the
other,
Till the good Captain declared, being quite overpowered and
bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment,
Then come again to a wedding to which he had not been
invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood with the
bride at the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beautiful
morning.

Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in the
sunshine,

Lay extended before them the land of toil and privation ;
There were the graves of the dead, and the barren waste of
the sea-shore,

There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the
meadows ;

But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of
Eden,

Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound
of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and stir of
departure,

Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient of
longer delaying,

Each with his plan for the day, and the work that was left
uncompleted.

Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of
wonder,

Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of
Priscilla,

Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying the hand of its
master,

Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a
saddle.

She should not walk, he said, through the dust and heat
of the noonday ;

Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along like a
peasant.

Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the others,
Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the hand of her
husband,

Gaily, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.
" Nothing is wanting now," he said with a smile, " but the
distaff ;

Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful
Bertha ! "

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their new
habitation,

Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing together.
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the ford
in the forest,

Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of love
through its bosom,
Tremulous, floating in air, o'er the depths of the azure
abysses.
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pouring his
splendours,
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches above them
suspended,
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the pine and
the fir-tree,
Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of
Eschol.
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral ages,
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca and
Isaac,
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,
Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.
So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the bridal
procession.

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

1867

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

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PRELUDE

THE WAYSIDE INN

ONE Autumn night, in Sudbury town,
Across the meadows bare and brown,
The windows of the wayside inn
Gleamed red with fire-light through the leaves
Of woodbine, hanging from the eaves
Their crimson curtains rent and thin.

As ancient is this hostelry
As any in the land may be,
Built in the old Colonial day,
When men lived in a grander way,
With ampler hospitality ;
A kind of old Hobgoblin Hall,
Now somewhat fallen to decay,
With weather-stains upon the wall,
And stairways worn, and crazy doors,
And creaking and uneven floors,
And chimneys huge, and tiled and tall.

A region of repose it seems,
A place of slumber and of dreams,
Remote among the wooded hills !
For there no noisy railway speeds,
Its torch-race scattering smoke and gleeds ;
But noon and night, the panting teams
Stop under the great oaks, that throw
Tangles of light and shade below,
On roofs and doors and window-sills.
Across the road the barns display
Their lines of stalls, their mows of hay,
Through the wide doors the breezes blow,
The wattled cocks strut to and fro,
And, half effaced by rain and shine,
The Red Horse prances on the sign.

Round this old-fashioned, quaint abode
 Deep silence reigned, save when a gust
 Went rushing down the county road,
 And skeletons of leaves, and dust,
 A moment quickened by its breath,
 Shuddered and danced their dance of death,
 And through the ancient oaks o'erhead
 Mysterious voices moaned and fled.

But from the parlour of the inn
 A pleasant murmur smote the ear,
 Like water rushing through a weir ;
 Oft interrupted by the din
 Of laughter and of loud applause,
 And, in each intervening pause,
 The music of a violin.
 The fire-light, shedding over all
 The splendour of its ruddy glow,
 Filled the whole parlour large and low ;
 It gleamed on wainscot and on wall,
 It touched with more than wonted grace
 Fair Princess Mary's pictured face ;
 It bronzed the rafters overhead,
 On the old spinet's ivory keys
 It played inaudible melodies,
 It crowned the sombre clock with flame,
 The hands, the hours, the maker's name,
 And painted with a livelier red
 The Landlord's coat-of-arms again ;
 And, flashing on the window-pane,
 Emblazoned with its light and shade
 The jovial rhymes, that still remain,
 Writ near a century ago,
 By the great Major Molineaux,
 Whom Hawthorne has immortal made.

Before the blazing fire of wood
 Erect the rapt musician stood ;
 And ever and anon he bent
 His head upon his instrument,
 And seemed to listen, till he caught
 Confessions of its secret thought,—
 The joy, the triumph, the lament,
 The exultation and the pain ;
 Then, by the magic of his art,
 He soothed the throbbings of its heart,
 And lulled it into peace again.

Around the fireside at their ease
There sat a group of friends, entranced
With the delicious melodies ;
Who from the far-off noisy town
Had to the wayside inn come down,
To rest beneath its old oak-trees.
The fire-light on their faces glanced,
Their shadows on the wainscot danced,
And, though of different lands and speech,
Each had his tale to tell, and each
Was anxious to be pleased and please.
And while the sweet musician plays,
Let me in outline sketch them all,
Perchance uncouthly as the blaze
With its uncertain touch portrays
Their shadowy semblance on the wall.

But first the Landlord will I trace ;
Grave in his aspect and attire ;
A man of ancient pedigree,
A Justice of the Peace was he,
Known in all Sudbury as " The Squire."
Proud was he of his name and race,
Of old Sir William and Sir Hugh,
And in the parlour, full in view,
His coat-of-arms, well framed and glazed,
Upon the wall in colours blazed ;
He beareth gules upon his shield,
A chevron argent in the field,
With three wolves' heads, and for the crest
A Wyvern part-per-pale addressed
Upon a helmet barred ; below
The scroll reads, " By the name of Howe."
And over this, no longer bright,
Though glimmering with a latent light,
Was hung the sword his grandsire bore,
In the rebellious days of yore,
Down there at Concord in the fight.

A youth was there, of quiet ways,
A Student of old books and days,
To whom all tongues and lands were known,
And yet a lover of his own ;
With many a social virtue graced,
And yet a friend of solitude ;
A man of such a genial mood,
The heart of all things he embraced,
And yet of such fastidious taste,
He never found the best too good.

Books were his passion and delight,
 And in his upper room at home
 Stood many a rare and sumptuous tome,
 In vellum bound, with gold bedight,
 Great volumes garmented in white,
 Recalling Florence, Pisa, Rome.
 He loved the twilight that surrounds
 The border land of old romance ;
 Where glitter hauberck, helm, and lance,
 And banner waves, and trumpet sounds,
 And ladies ride with hawk on wrist,
 And mighty warriors sweep along,
 Magnified by the purple mist,
 The dusk of centuries and of song.
 The chronicles of Charlemagne,
 Of Merlin and the Mort d'Arthure,
 Mingled together in his brain
 With tales of Flores and Blanchefleur,
 Sir Ferumbras, Sir Eglamour,
 Sir Launcelot, Sir Morgadour,
 Sir Guy, Sir Bevis, Sir Gawain.

A young Sicilian, too, was there ;—
 In sight of Etna born and bred,
 Some breath of its volcanic air
 Was glowing in his heart and brain,
 And, being rebellious to his liege,
 After Palermo's fatal siege,
 Across the western seas he fled,
 In good King Bomba's happy reign.
 His face was like a summer night,
 All flooded with a dusky light ;
 His hands were small ; his teeth shone white
 As sea-shells, when he smiled or spoke ;
 His sinews supple and strong as oak ;
 Clean shaven was he as a priest,
 Who at the mass on Sunday sings,
 Save that upon his upper lip
 His beard, a good palm's length at least,
 Level and pointed at the tip,
 Shot sideways, like a swallow's wings.
 The poets read he, o'er and o'er,
 And most of all the Immortal Four
 Of Italy ; and next to those,
 The story-telling bard of prose,
 Who wrote the joyous Tuscan tales
 Of the Decameron, that make
 Fiesole's green hills and vales
 Remembered for Boccaccio's sake.

Much too of music was his thought ;
The melodies and measures fraught
With sunshine and the open air,
Of vineyards and the singing sea
Of his beloved Sicily ;
And much it pleased him to peruse
The songs of the Sicilian muse,—
Bucolic songs by Meli sung
In the familiar peasant tongue,
That made men say, " Behold ! once more
The pitying gods to earth restore
Theocritus of Syracuse ! "

A Spanish Jew from Alicant,
With aspect grand and grave, was there ;
Vender of silks and fabrics rare,
And attar of rose from the Levant.
Like an old Patriarch he appeared,
Abraham or Isaac, or at least
Some later Prophet or High-Priest ;
With lustrous eyes, and olive skin,
And, wildly tossed from cheeks and chin,
The tumbling cataract of his beard.
His garments breathed a spicy scent
Of cinnamon and sandal blent,
Like the soft aromatic gales
That meet the mariner, who sails
Through the Moluccas, and the seas
That wash the shores of Celebes.
All stories that recorded are
By Pierre Alphonse he knew by heart,
And it was rumoured he could say
The Parables of Sandabar,
And all the Fables of Pilpay,
Or if not all, the greater part.
Well versed was he in Hebrew books,
Talmud and Targum, and the lore
Of Kabala ; and evermore
There was a mystery in his looks ;
His eyes seemed gazing far away,
As if in vision or in trance
He heard the solemn sackbut play,
And saw the Jewish maidens dance.

A Theologian, from the school
Of Cambridge on the Charles, was there ;
Skilful alike with tongue and pen,
He preached to all men everywhere
The Gospel of the Golden Rule,

The New Commandment given to men,
 Thinking the deed, and not the creed,
 Would help us in our utmost need.
 With reverent feet the earth he trod,
 Nor banished nature from his plan,
 But studied still with deep research
 To build the Universal Church,
 Lofty as is the love of God,
 And ample as the wants of man.

A Poet, too, was there, whose verse
 Was tender, musical, and terse ;
 The inspiration, the delight,
 The gleam, the glory, the swift flight,
 Of thoughts so sudden, that they seem
 The revelations of a dream,
 All these were his ; but with them came
 No envy of another's fame ;
 He did not find his sleep less sweet
 For music in some neighbouring street,
 Nor rustling hear in every breeze
 The laurels of Miltiades.
 Honour and blessings on his head
 While living, good report when dead,
 Who, not too eager for renown,
 Accepts, but does not clutch, the crown !

Last the Musician, as he stood
 Illumined by that fire of wood ;
 Fair-haired, blue-eyed, his aspect blithe,
 His figure tall and straight and lithe,
 And every feature of his face
 Revealing his Norwegian race ;
 A radiance, streaming from within,
 Around his eyes and forehead beamed,
 The Angel with the violin,
 Painted by Raphael, he seemed.
 He lived in that ideal world
 Whose language is not speech, but song ;
 Around him evermore the throng
 Of elves and sprites their dances whirled ;
 The Strömkarl sang, the cataract hurled
 Its headlong waters from the height ;
 And mingled in the wild delight
 The scream of sea-birds in their flight,
 The rumour of the forest-trees,
 The plunge of the implacable seas,
 The tumult of the wind at night,
 Voices of eld, like trumpets blowing,

Old ballads, and wild melodies
Through mist and darkness pouring forth,
Like Elivagar's river flowing
Out of the glaciers of the North.

The instrument on which he played
Was in Cremona's workshops made,
By a great master of the past,
Ere yet was lost the art divine ;
Fashioned of maple and of pine,
That in Tyrolian forests vast
Had rocked and wrestled with the blast :
Exquisite was it in design,
A marvel of the lutist's art,
Perfect in each minutest part ;
And in its hollow chamber, thus,
The maker from whose hands it came
Had written his unrivalled name,—
"Antonius Stradivarius."

And when he played, the atmosphere
Was filled with magic, and the ear
Caught echoes of that Harp of Gold,
Whose music had so weird a sound,
The hunted stag forgot to bound,
The leaping rivulet backward rolled,
The birds came down from bush and tree,
The dead came from beneath the sea,
The maiden to the harper's knee !
The music ceased ; the applause was loud,
The pleased musician smiled and bowed ;
The wood-fire clapped its hands of flame,
The shadows on the wainscot stirred,
And from the harpsichord there came
A ghostly murmur of acclaim,
A sound like that sent down at night
By birds of passage in their flight,
From the remotest distance heard.

Then silence followed ; then began
A clamour for the Landlord's tale,—
The story promised them of old,
They said, but always left untold ;
And he, although a bashful man,
And all his courage seemed to fail,
Finding excuse of no avail,
Yielded ; and thus the story ran.

CII

THE LANDLORD'S TALE

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

LISTEN, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five ;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, " If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry-arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea ;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, " Good night ! " and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war ;
A phantom-ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison-bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack-door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,—
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,

Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went,
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,—
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,

Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides ;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the field to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere ;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,—
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo for evermore !
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,

In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

INTERLUDE

THE Landlord ended thus his tale,
Then rising took down from its nail
The sword that hung there, dim with dust,
And cleaving to its sheath with rust,
And said, " This sword was in the fight."
The Poet seized it, and exclaimed,
" It is the sword of a good knight,
Though homespun was his coat-of-mail:
What matter if it be not named
Joyeuse, Colada, Durindale,
Excalibar, or Aroundight,
Or other name the books record ?
Your ancestor, who bore this sword
As Colonel of the Volunteers,
Mounted upon his old grey mare,
Seen here and there and everywhere,
To me a grander shape appears
Than old Sir William, or what not,
Clinking about in foreign lands
With iron gauntlets on his hands,
And on his head an iron pot ! "

All laughed ; the Landlord's face grew red
As his escutcheon on the wall ;
He could not comprehend at all
The drift of what the Poet said ;
For those who had been longest dead
Were always greatest in his eyes ;
And he was speechless with surprise
To see Sir William's plumed head
Brought to a level with the rest,
And made the subject of a jest.

And this perceiving, to appease
The Landlord's wrath, the others' fears,
The Student said, with careless ease,
" The ladies and the cavaliers,
The arms, the loves, the courtesies,

The deeds of high emprise, I sing !
 Thus Ariosto says, in words
 That have the stately stride and ring
 Of armèd knights and clashing swords.
 Now listen to the tale I bring ;
 Listen ! though not to me belong
 The flowing draperies of his song,
 The words that rouse, the voice that charms.
 The Landlord's tale was one of arms,
 Only a tale of love is mine,
 Blending the human and divine,
 A tale of the Decameron, told
 In Palmieri's garden old,
 By Fiametta, laurel-crowned,
 While her companions lay around,
 And heard the intermingled sound
 Of airs that on their errands sped,
 And wild birds gossiping overhead,
 And lisp of leaves and fountain's fall,
 And her own voice more sweet than all,
 Telling the tale, which, wanting these,
 Perchance may lose its power to please."

CIII

THE STUDENT'S TALE

THE FALCON OF SER FEDERIGO

ONE summer morning when the sun was hot,
 Weary with labour in his garden plot,
 On a rude bench beneath his cottage eaves,
 Ser Federigo sat among the leaves
 Of a huge vine, that with its arms outspread,
 Hung its delicious clusters overhead.
 Below him, through the lovely valley, flowed
 The river Arno, like a winding road,
 And from its banks were lifted high in air
 The spires and roofs of Florence called the Fair ;
 To him a marble tomb, that rose above
 His wasted fortunes and his buried love.
 For there, in banquet and in tournament,
 His wealth had lavished been, his substance spent,
 To woo and lose, since ill his wooing sped,
 Monna Giovanna, who his rival wed,
 Yet ever in his fancy reigned supreme,
 The ideal woman of a young man's dream.

Then he withdrew, in poverty and pain,
To this small farm, the last of his domain,
His only comfort and his only care
To prune his vines, and plant the fig and pear ;
His only forester and only guest
His falcon, faithful to him, when the rest,
Whose willing hands had found so light of yore
The brazen knocker of his palace door,
Had now no strength to lift the wooden latch,
That entrance gave beneath a roof of thatch.
Companion of his solitary ways,
Purveyor of his feasts on holidays,
On him this melancholy man bestowed
The love with which his nature overflowed.

And so the empty-handed years went round,
Vacant, though voiceful with prophetic sound ;
And so, that summer morn, he sat and mused
With folded, patient hands, as he was used,
And dreamily before his half-closed sight
Floated the vision of his lost delight.
Beside him, motionless, the drowsy bird
Dreamed of the chase, and in his slumber heard
The sudden scythe-like sweep of wings, that dare
The headlong plunge through eddying gulfs of air,
Then, starting broad awake upon his perch,
Tinkled his bells, like mass-bells in a church,
And, looking at his master, seemed to say,
" Ser Federigo, shall we hunt to-day ? "

Ser Federigo thought not of the chase ;
The tender vision of her lovely face
I will not say he seems to see, he sees
In the leaf-shadows of the trellises,
Herself, yet not herself ; a lovely child
With flowing tresses, and eyes wide and wild,
Coming undaunted up the garden walk,
And looking not at him, but at the hawk.
" Beautiful falcon ! " said he, " would that I
Might hold thee on my wrist, or see thee fly ! "

The voice was hers, and made strange echoes start
Through all the haunted chambers of his heart,
As an Æolian harp through gusty doors
Of some old ruin its wild music pours.
" Who is thy mother, my fair boy ? " he said,
His hand laid softly on that shining head.
" Monna Giovanna.—Will you let me stay
A little while, and with your falcon play ? "

We live there, just beyond your garden wall,
In the great house behind the poplars tall."

So he spake on ; and Federigo heard
As from afar each softly uttered word,
And drifted onward through the golden gleams
And shadows of the misty sea of dreams,
As mariners becalmed through vapours drift,
And feel the sea beneath them sink and lift,
And hear far off the mournful breakers roar,
And voices calling faintly from the shore !
Then, waking from his painful reveries,
He took the little boy upon his knees,
And told him stories of his gallant bird,
Till in their friendship he became a third.

Monna Giovanna, widowed in her prime,
Had come with friends to pass the summer time
In her grand villa, half-way up the hill,
O'erlooking Florence, but retired and still ;
With iron gates, that opened through long lines
Of sacred ilex and centennial pines,
And terraced gardens, and broad steps of stone,
And sylvan deities, with moss o'ergrown,
And fountains palpitating in the heat,
And all Val d'Arno stretched beneath its feet.
Here in seclusion, as a widow may,
The lovely lady wiled the hours away,
Pacing in sable robes the statued hall,
Herself the stateliest statue among all,
And seeing more and more, with secret joy,
Her husband risen and living in her boy,
Till the lost sense of life returned again,
Not as delight, but as relief from pain.

Meanwhile the boy, rejoicing in his strength,
Stormed down the terraces from length to length ;
The screaming peacock chased in hot pursuit,
And climbed the garden trellises for fruit.
But his chief pastime was to watch the flight
Of a gerfalcon, soaring into sight,
Beyond the trees that fringed the garden wall,
Then downward stooping at some distant call ;
And as he gazed full often wondered he
Who might the master of the falcon be,
Until that happy morning, when he found
Master and falcon in the cottage ground.

And now a shadow and a terror fell
On the great house, as if a passing-bell
Tolled from the tower, and filled each spacious room
With secret awe, and preternatural gloom ;
The petted boy grew ill, and day by day
Pined with mysterious malady away.
The mother's heart would not be comforted ;
Her darling seemed to her already dead,
And often, sitting by the sufferer's side,
" What can I do to comfort thee ? " she cried.
At first the silent lips made no reply,
But, moved at length by her importunate cry,
" Give me," he answered, with imploring tone,
" Ser Federigo's falcon for my own ! "

No answer could the astonished mother make ;
How could she ask, e'en for her darling's sake,
Such favour at a luckless lover's hand,
Well knowing that to ask was to command ?
Well knowing, what all falconers confessed,
In all the land that falcon was the best,
The master's pride and passion and delight,
And the sole pursuivant of this poor knight.
But yet, for her child's sake, she could no less
Than give assent, to soothe his restlessness,
So promised, and then promising to keep
Her promise sacred, saw him fall asleep.

The morrow was a bright September morn ;
The earth was beautiful as if new-born ;
There was that nameless splendour everywhere,
That wild exhilaration in the air,
Which makes the passers in the city street
Congratulate each other as they meet.
Two lovely ladies, clothed in cloak and hood,
Passed through the garden gate into the wood,
Under the lustrous leaves, and through the sheen
Of dewy sunshine showering down between.
The one, close-hooded, had the attractive grace
Which sorrow sometimes lends a woman's face ;
Her dark eyes moistened with the mists that roll
From the gulf-stream of passion in the soul ;
The other with her hood thrown back, her hair
Making a golden glory in the air,
Her cheeks suffused with an auroral blush,
Her young heart singing louder than the thrush,
So walked, that morn, through mingled light and shade,
Each by the other's presence lovelier made,

Monna Giovanna and her bosom friend,
Intent upon their errand and its end.

They found Ser Federigo at his toil,
Like banished Adam, delving in the soil ;
And when he looked and these fair women spied,
The garden suddenly was glorified ;
His long-lost Eden was restored again,
And the strange river winding through the plain
No longer was the Arno to his eyes,
But the Euphrates watering Paradise !

Monna Giovanna raised her stately head,
And with fair words of salutation said :
“ Ser Federigo, we come here as friends,
Hoping in this to make some poor amends
For past unkindness. I who ne'er before
Would even cross the threshold of your door,
I who in happier days such pride maintained,
Refused your banquets, and your gifts disdained,
This morning come, a self-invited guest,
To put your generous nature to the test,
And breakfast with you under your own vine.”
To which he answered : “ Poor desert of mine,
Not your unkindness call it, for if aught
Is good in me of feeling or of thought,
From you it comes, and this last grace outweighs
All sorrows, all regrets of other days.”

And after further compliment and talk,
Among the dahlias in the garden walk
He left his guests ; and to his cottage turned,
And as he entered for a moment yearned
For the lost splendours of the days of old,
The ruby glass, the silver, and the gold,
And felt how piercing is the sting of pride,
By want embittered and intensified.
He looked about him for some means or way
To keep this unexpected holiday ;
Searched every cupboard, and then searched again,
Summoned the maid, who came, but came in vain ;
“ The Signor did not hunt to-day,” she said,
“ There's nothing in the house but wine and bread.”

Then suddenly the drowsy falcon shook
His little bells with that sagacious look,
Which said, as plain as language to the ear,
“ If anything is wanting, I am here ! ”

Yes, everything is wanting, gallant bird !
The master seized thee without further word,
Like thine own lure, he whirled thee round ; ah me !
The pomp and flutter of brave falconry,
The bells, the jesses, the bright scarlet hood,
The flight and the pursuit o'er field and wood,
All these for evermore are ended now ;
No longer victor, but the victim thou !

Then on the board a snow-white cloth he spread,
Laid on its wooden dish the loaf of bread,
Brought purple grapes with autumn sunshine hot,
The fragrant peach, the juicy bergamot ;
Then in the midst a flask of wine he placed,
And with autumnal flowers the banquet graced.
Ser Federigo, would not these suffice
Without thy falcon stuffed with cloves and spice ?

When all was ready, and the courtly dame
With her companion to the cottage came,
Upon Ser Federigo's brain there fell
The wild enchantment of a magic spell ;
The room they entered, mean and low and small,
Was changed into a sumptuous banquet-hall,
With fanfares by aerial trumpets blown ;
The rustic chair she sat on was a throne ;
He ate celestial food, and a divine
Flavour was given to his country wine,
And the poor falcon, fragrant with his spice,
A peacock was, or bird of paradise !

When the repast was ended, they arose
And passed again into the garden-close.
Then said the Lady, " Far too well I know,
Remembering still the days of long ago,
Though you betray it not, with what surprise
You see me here in this familiar wise.
You have no children, and you cannot guess
What anguish, what unspeakable distress
A mother feels, whose child is lying ill,
Nor how her heart anticipates his will.
And yet for this you see me lay aside
All womanly reserve and check of pride,
And ask the thing most precious in your sight,
Your falcon, your sole comfort and delight,
Which, if you find it in your heart to give,
My poor, unhappy boy perchance may live."

Ser Federigo listens, and replies,
With tears of love and pity in his eyes :
“ Alas, dear lady ! there can be no task
So sweet to me, as giving when you ask.
One little hour ago, if I had known
This wish of yours, it would have been my own.
But thinking in what manner I could best
Do honour to the presence of my guest,
I deemed that nothing worthier could be
Than what most dear and precious was to me,
And so my gallant falcon breathed his last
To furnish forth this morning our repast.”

In mute contrition, mingled with dismay,
The gentle lady turned her eyes away,
Grieving that he such sacrifice should make,
And kill his falcon for a woman's sake,
Yet feeling in her heart a woman's pride,
That nothing she could ask for was denied ;
Then took her leave, and passed out at the gate
With footsteps slow, and soul disconsolate.

Three days went by, and lo ! a passing-bell
Tolled from the little chapel in the dell ;
Ten strokes Ser Federigo heard, and said,
Breathing a prayer, “ Alas ! her child is dead ! ”

Three months went by, and lo ! a merrier chime
Rang from the chapel bells at Christmas time ;
The cottage was deserted, and no more
Ser Federigo sat beside its door,
But now, with servitors to do his will,
In the grand villa, half-way up the hill,
Sat at the Christmas feast, and at his side
Monna Giovanna, his beloved bride,
Never so beautiful, so kind, so fair,
Enthroned once more in the old rustic chair,
High-perched upon the back of which there stood
The image of a falcon carved in wood,
And underneath the inscription, with a date,
“ All things come round to him who will but wait.”

INTERLUDE

Soon as the story reached its end,
One, over eager to commend,
Crowned it with injudicious praise ;
And then the voice of blame found vent,
And fanned the embers of dissent
Into a somewhat lively blaze.

The Theologian shook his head ;
" These old Italian tales," he said,
" From the much-praised Decameron down
Through all the rabble of the rest,
Are either trifling, dull, or lewd ;
The gossip of a neighbourhood
In some remote provincial town,
A scandalous chronicle at best !
They seem to me a stagnant fen,
Grown rank with rushes and with reeds,
Where a white lily now and then,
Blooms in the midst of noxious weeds
And deadly nightshade on its banks."
To this the Student straight replied :
" For the white lily, many thanks !
One should not say, with too much pride,
Fountain, I will not drink of thee !
Nor were it grateful to forget,
That from these reservoirs and tanks
Even imperial Shakspeare drew
His Moor of Venice and the Jew,
And Romeo and Juliet,
And many a famous comedy."

Then a long pause ; till some one said,
" An angel is flying overhead !"
At these words spake the Spanish Jew,
And murmured with an inward breath :
" God grant, if what you say is true,
It may not be the Angel of Death !"

And then another pause ; and then,
Stroking his beard, he said again :
" This brings back to my memory
A story in the Talmud told,
That book of gems, that book of gold,
Of wonders many and manifold,

A tale that often comes to me,
 And fills my heart, and haunts my brain ;
 And never wearies nor grows old."

CIV

THE SPANISH JEW'S TALE

THE LEGEND OF RABBI BEN LEVI

RABBI BEN LEVI, on the Sabbath, read
 A volume of the Law, in which it said,
 " No man shall look upon my face and live."
 And as he read, he prayed that God would give
 His faithful servant grace with mortal eye
 To look upon His face and yet not die.

Then fell a sudden shadow on the page,
 And, lifting up his eyes, grown dim with age,
 He saw the Angel of Death before him stand,
 Holding a naked sword in his right hand.

Rabbi Ben Levi was a righteous man,
 Yet through his veins a chill of terror ran.
 With trembling voice he said, " What wilt thou here ? "
 The Angel answered, " Lo ! the time draws near
 When thou must die ; yet first, by God's decree,
 Whate'er thou askest shall be granted thee."
 Replied the Rabbi, " Let these living eyes
 First look upon my place in Paradise."
 Then said the Angel, " Come with me and look."
 Rabbi Ben Levi closed the sacred book,
 And rising, and uplifting his grey head,
 " Give me thy sword," he to the Angel said,
 " Lest thou should'st fall upon me by the way."
 The Angel smiled and hastened to obey,
 Then led him forth to the Celestial Town,
 And set him on the wall, whence, gazing down,
 Rabbi Ben Levi, with his living eyes,
 Might look upon his place in Paradise.

Then straight into the city of the Lord
 The Rabbi leaped with the Death-Angel's sword,
 And through the streets there swept a sudden breath
 Of something there unknown, which men call death.
 Meanwhile the Angel stayed without, and cried,
 " Come back ! " To which the Rabbi's voice replied,

"No! in the name of God, whom I adore,
I swear that hence I will depart no more!"

Then all the Angels cried, "O Holy One,
See what the son of Levi here has done!
The Kingdom of Heaven he takes by violence,
And in Thy name refuses to go hence!"
The Lord replied, "My Angels, be not wroth;
Did e'er the son of Levi break his oath?
Let him remain; for he with mortal eye
Shall look upon my face and yet not die."

Beyond the outer wall the Angel of Death
Heard the great voice, and said, with panting breath,
"Give back the sword, and let me go my way."
Whereat the Rabbi paused, and answered, "Nay!
Anguish enough already has it caused
Among the sons of men." And while he paused
He heard the awful mandate of the Lord
Resounding through the air, "Give back the sword!"

The Rabbi bowed his head in silent prayer;
Then said he to the dreadful Angel, "Swear,
No human eye shall look on it again;
But when thou takest away the souls of men,
Thyself unseen, and with an unseen sword,
Thou wilt perform the bidding of the Lord."

The Angel took the sword again, and swore,
And walks on earth unseen for evermore.

INTERLUDE

HE ended: and a kind of spell
Upon the silent listeners fell.
His solemn manner and his words
Had touched the deep, mysterious chords,
That vibrate in each human breast
Alike, but not alike confessed.
The spiritual world seemed near;
And close above them, full of fear,
Its awful adumbration passed,
A luminous shadow, vague and vast.
They almost feared to look, lest there,
Embodied from the impalpable air,
They might behold the Angel stand,
Holding the sword in his right hand.

At last, but in a voice subdued,
 Not to disturb their dreamy mood,
 Said the Sicilian : " While you spoke,
 Telling your legend marvellous,
 Suddenly in my memory woke
 The thought of one, now gone from us,—
 An old Abate, meek and mild,
 My friend and teacher, when a child,
 Who sometimes in those days of old
 The legend of an Angel told,
 Which ran, if I remember, thus."

THE SICILIAN'S TALE

KING ROBERT OF SICILY

ROBERT of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
 And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
 Apparelled in magnificent attire,
 With retinue of many a knight and squire,
 On St. John's Eve, at vespers, proudly sat
 And heard the priests chant the Magnificat.
 And as he listened, o'er and o'er again
 Repeated, like a burden or refrain,
 He caught the words, "*Deposit potentes
 De sede, et exaltavit humiles ;*"
 And slowly lifting up his kingly head,
 He to a learned clerk beside him said,
 " What mean these words ? " The clerk made answer meek,
 " He has put down the mighty from their seat,
 And has exalted them of low degree."
 Thereat King Robert muttered scornfully,
 " 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung
 Only by priests and in the Latin tongue :
 For unto priests and people be it known,
 There is no power can push me from my throne ! "
 And leaning back, he yawned and fell asleep,
 Lulled by the chant monotonous and deep.

When he awoke, it was already night ;
 The church was empty, and there was no light,
 Save where the lamps, that glimmered few and faint,
 Lighted a little space before some saint.
 He started from his seat and gazed around,
 But saw no living thing and heard no sound.

He groped towards the door, but it was locked ;
He cried aloud, and listened, and then knocked,
And uttered awful threatenings and complaints,
And imprecations upon men and saints.
The sounds re-echoed from the roof and walls
As if dead priests were laughing in their stalls !

At length the sexton, hearing from without
The tumult of the knocking and the shout,
And thinking thieves were in the house of prayer,
Came with his lantern, asking, " Who is there ? "
Half-choked with rage, King Robert fiercely said,
" Open : 'tis I, the King ! Art thou afraid ? "
The frightened sexton, muttering, with a curse,
" This is some drunken vagabond, or worse ! "
Turned the great key and flung the portal wide ;
A man rushed by him at a single stride,
Haggard, half-naked, without hat or cloak,
Who neither turned, nor looked at him, nor spoke,
But leaped into the blackness of the night,
And vanished like a spectre from his sight.

Robert of Sicily, brother of Pope Urbane
And Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Despoiled of his magnificent attire,
Bare-headed, breathless, and besprent with mire,
With sense of wrong and outrage desperate,
Strode on and thundered at the palace gate ;
Rushed through the court-yard, thrusting in his rage
To right and left each seneschal and page,
And hurried up the broad and sounding stair,
His white face ghastly in the torches' glare.
From hall to hall he passed with breathless speed ;
Voices and cries he heard, but did not heed,
Until at last he reached the banquet-room,
Blazing with light, and breathing with perfume.
There on the daïs sat another king,
Wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring,
King Robert's self in features, form, and height,
But all transfigured with angelic light !
It was an Angel ; and his presence there
With a divine effulgence filled the air,
An exaltation, piercing the disguise,
Though none the hidden Angel recognise.

A moment speechless, motionless, amazed,
The throneless monarch on the Angel gazed,
Who met his looks of anger and surprise
With the divine compassion of his eyes ;

Then said, "Who art thou? and why com'st thou here?"
 To which King Robert answered, with a sneer,
 "I am the King, and come to claim my own
 From an impostor, who usurps my throne!"
 And suddenly, at these audacious words,
 Up sprang the angry guests, and drew their swords;
 The Angel answered, with unruffled brow,
 "Nay, not the King, but the King's Jester; thou
 Henceforth shalt wear the bells and scalloped cape,
 And for thy counsellor shalt lead an ape;
 Thou shalt obey my servants when they call,
 And wait upon my henchmen in the hall!"

Deaf to King Robert's threats and cries and prayers,
 They thrust him from the hall and down the stairs;
 A group of tittering pages ran before,
 And as they opened wide the folding-door,
 His heart failed, for he heard, with strange alarms,
 The boisterous laughter of the men-at-arms,
 And all the vaulted chamber roar and ring
 With the mock plaudits of "Long live the King!"

Next morning, waking with the day's first beam,
 He said within himself, "It was a dream!"
 But the straw rustled as he turned his head,
 There were the cap and bells beside his bed,
 Around him rose the bare, discoloured walls,
 Close by, the steeds were champing in their stalls,
 And in the corner, a revolting shape,
 Shivering and chattering sat the wretched ape.
 It was no dream; the world he loved so much
 Had turned to dust and ashes at his touch!

Days came and went; and now returned again
 To Sicily the old Saturnian reign;
 Under the Angel's governance benign
 The happy island danced with corn and wine,
 And deep within the mountain's burning breast
 Enceladus, the giant, was at rest.
 Meanwhile King Robert yielded to his fate,
 Sullen and silent and disconsolate.
 Dressed in the motley garb that Jesters wear,
 With looks bewildered and a vacant stare,
 Close shaven above the ears, as monks are shorn,
 By courtiers mocked, by pages laughed to scorn,
 His only friend the ape, his only food
 What others left,—he still was unsubdued.
 And when the Angel met him on his way,
 And half in earnest, half in jest, would say,

Sternly, though tenderly, that he might feel
The velvet scabbard held a sword of steel,
" Art thou the King ? " the passion of his woe
Burst from him in resistless overflow,
And, lifting high his forehead, he would fling
The haughty answer back, " I am, I am the King ! "

Almost three years were ended ; when there came
Ambassadors of great repute and name
From Valmond, Emperor of Allemaine,
Unto King Robert, saying that Pope Urbane
By letter summoned them forthwith to come
On Holy Thursday to his city of Rome.
The Angel with great joy received his guests,
And gave them presents of embroidered vests,
And velvet mantles with rich ermine lined,
And rings and jewels of the rarest kind.
Then he departed with them o'er the sea
Into the lovely land of Italy,
Whose loveliness was more resplendent made
By the mere passing of that cavalcade,
With plumes, and cloaks, and housings, and the stir
Of jewelled bridle and of golden spur.

And lo ! among the menials, in mock state,
Upon a piebald steed, with shambling gait,
His cloak of fox-tails flapping in the wind,
The solemn ape demurely perched behind,
King Robert rode, making huge merriment
In all the country towns through which they went.

The Pope received them with great pomp, and blare
Of bannered trumpets, in Saint Peter's square,
Giving his benediction and embrace,
Fervent, and full of apostolic grace.
While with congratulations and with prayers
He entertained the Angel unawares,
Robert, the Jester, bursting through the crowd,
Into their presence rushed, and cried aloud,
" I am the King ! Look, and behold in me
Robert, your brother, King of Sicily !
This man, who wears my semblance to your eyes,
Is an impostor in a king's disguise.
Do you not know me ? does no voice within
Answer my cry, and say we are akin ? "
The Pope in silence, but with troubled mien,
Gazed at the Angel's countenance serene ;
The Emperor, laughing, said, " It is strange sport
To keep a madman for thy Fool at court ! "

And the poor, baffled Jester in disgrace
Was hustled back among the populace.

In solemn state the Holy Week went by,
And Easter Sunday gleamed upon the sky ;
The presence of the Angel, with its light,
Before the sun rose, made the city bright,
And with new fervour filled the hearts of men,
Who felt that Christ indeed had risen again.
Even the Jester, on his bed of straw,
With haggard eyes the unwonted splendour saw,
He felt within a power unfelt before,
And, kneeling humbly on his chamber floor,
He heard the rushing garments of the Lord
Sweep through the silent air, ascending heavenward.

And now the visit ending, and once more
Valmond returning to the Danube's shore,
Homeward the Angel journeyed, and again
The land was made resplendent with his train,
Flashing along the towns of Italy
Unto Salerno, and from there by sea.
And when once more within Palermo's wall,
And, seated on the throne in his great hall,
He heard the Angelus from convent towers,
As if the better world conversed with ours,
He beckoned to King Robert to draw nigher,
And with a gesture bade the rest retire ;
And when they were alone, the Angel said,
" Art thou the King ? " Then bowing down his head,
King Robert crossed both hands upon his breast,
And meekly answered him : " Thou knowest best !
My sins as scarlet are ; let me go hence,
And in some cloister's school of penitence,
Across those stones, that pave the way to heaven,
Walk barefoot, till my guilty soul is shriven ! "
The Angel smiled, and from his radiant face
A holy light illumined all the place,
And through the open window, loud and clear,
They heard the monks chant in the chapel near,
Above the stir and tumult of the street :
" He has put down the mighty from their seat,
And has exalted them of low degree ! "
And through the chant a second melody
Rose like the throbbing of a single string :
" I am an Angel, and thou art the King ! "

King Robert, who was standing near the throne,
Lifted his eyes, and lo ! he was alone !

But all appalled as in days of old,
With ermined mantle and with cloth of gold ;
And when his courtiers came, they found him there
Kneeling upon the floor, absorbed in silent prayer.

INTERLUDE

AND then the blue-eyed Norseman told
A Saga of the days of old.
" There is," said he, " a wondrous book
Of Legends in the old Norse tongue
Of the dead kings of Norroway,—
Legends that once were told or sung
In many a smoky fireside nook
Of Iceland, in the ancient day,
By wandering Saga-man or Scald ;
Heimskringla is the volume called ;
And he who looks may find therein
The story that I now begin."
And in each pause the story made
Upon his violin he played,
As an appropriate interlude,
Fragments of old Norwegian tunes
That bound in one the separate runes,
And held the mind in perfect mood,
Entwining and encircling all
The strange and antiquated rhymes
With melodies of olden times ;
As over some half-ruined wall,
Disjointed and about to fall,
Fresh woodbines climb and interlace,
And keep the loosened stones in place.

CVI

THE MUSICIAN'S TALE

THE SAGA OF KING OLAF

1

THE CHALLENGE OF THOR

I AM the God Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer !

Here in my Northland,
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I for ever !

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations ;
This is my hammer,
Mjölner the mighty ;
Giants and sorcerers
Cannot withstand it !

These are the gauntlets,
Wherewith I wield it,
And hurl it afar off ;
This is my girdle ;
Whenever I brace it,
Strength is redoubled !

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my red beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations !

Jove is my brother ;
Mine eyes are the lightning ;
The wheels of my chariot
Roll in the thunder,
The blows of my hammer
Ring in the earthquake !

Force rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it ;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant.
Over the whole earth
Still is it Thor's-Day !

Thou art a God too,
O Galilean !
And thus single-handed
Unto the combat,
Gauntlet or Gospel,
Here I defy thee !

2

KING OLAF'S RETURN

AND King Olaf heard the cry,
Saw the red light in the sky,
Laid his hand upon his sword,
As he leaned upon the railing,
And his ship went sailing, sailing
Northward into Drontheim fiord.

There he stood as one who dreamed ;
And the red light glanced and gleamed
On the armour that he wore ;
And he shouted, as the rifted
Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
" I accept thy challenge, Thor ! "

To avenge his father slain,
And reconquer realm and reign,
Came the youthful Olaf home,
Through the midnight sailing, sailing,
Listening to the wild wind's wailing,
And the dashing of the foam.

To his thoughts the sacred name
Of his mother Astrid came,
And the tale she oft had told
Of her flight by secret passes
Through the mountains and morasses,
To the home of Hakon old.

Then strange memories crowded back
Of Queen Gunhild's wrath and wrack,
And a hurried flight by sea ;
Of grim Vikings, and their rapture
In the sea-fight, and the capture,
And the life of slavery.

How a stranger watched his face
In the Esthonian market-place,
Scanned his features one by one,
Saying, " We should know each other ;
I am Sigurd, Astrid's brother,
Thou art Olaf, Astrid's son ! "

Then as Queen Allogia's page,
 Old in honours, young in age,
 Chief of all her men-at-arms ;
 Till vague whispers, and mysterious,
 Reached King Valdemar, the imperious,
 Filling him with strange alarms.

Then his cruisings o'er the seas,
 Westward to the Hebrides,
 And to Scilly's rocky shore ;
 And the hermit's cavern dismal,
 Christ's great name and rites baptismal,
 In the ocean's rush and roar.

All these thoughts of love and strife
 Glimmered through his lurid life,
 As the star's intenser light
 Through the red flames o'er him trailing,
 As his ships went sailing, sailing,
 Northward in the summer night.

Trained for either camp or court,
 Skilful in each manly sport,
 Young and beautiful and tall :
 Art of warfare, craft of chases,
 Swimming, skating, snow-shoe races,
 Excellent alike in all.

When at sea, with all his rowers,
 He along the bending oars
 Outside of his ship could run.
 He the Smalsor Horn ascended,
 And his shining shield suspended
 On its summit, like a sun.

On the ship-rails he could stand,
 Wield his sword with either hand,
 And at once two javelins throw ;
 At all feasts where ale was strongest
 Sat the merry monarch longest,
 First to come and last to go.

Norway never yet had seen
 One so beautiful of mien,
 One so royal in attire,
 When in arms completely furnished,
 Harness gold-inlaid and burnished,
 Mantle like a flame of fire.

Thus came Olaf to his own,
 When upon the night-wind blown
 Passed that cry along the shore ;
 And he answered, while the rifted
 Streamers o'er him shook and shifted,
 " I accept thy challenge, Thor ! "

3

THORA OF RIMOL

" THORA of Rimol ! hide me ! hide me !
 Danger and shame and death betide me !
 For Olaf the King is hunting me down
 Through field and forest, through thorp and town ! "

Thus cried Jarl Hakon
 To Thora, the fairest of women.

" Hakon Jarl ! for the love I bear thee
 Neither shall shame nor death come near thee !
 But the hiding-place wherein thou must lie
 Is the cave underneath the swine in the sty. "

Thus to Jarl Hakon
 Said Thora, the fairest of women.

So Hakon Jarl and his base thrall Karker
 Crouched in the cave, than a dungeon darker,
 As Olaf came riding, with men in mail,
 Through the forest roads into Orkadale,
 Demanding Jarl Hakon
 Of Thora, the fairest of women.

" Rich and honoured shall be whoever
 The head of Hakon Jarl shall dissever ! "

Hakon heard him, and Karker the slave,
 Through the breathing-holes of the darksome cave.
 Alone in her chamber
 Wept Thora, the fairest of women.

Said Karker, the crafty, " I will not slay thee !
 For all the King's gold I will never betray thee ! "

" Then why dost thou turn so pale, O churl,
 And then again black as the earth ? " said the Earl.
 More pale and more faithful
 Was Thora, the fairest of women.

From a dream in the night the thrall started, saying,
 "Round my neck a gold ring King Olaf was laying!"
 And Hakon answered, "Beware of the king!
 He will lay round thy neck a blood-red ring."
 At the ring on her finger
 Gazed Thora, the fairest of women.

At daybreak slept Hakon, with sorrows encumbered,
 But screamed and drew up his feet as he slumbered;
 The thrall in the darkness plunged with his knife,
 And the Earl awakened no more in this life.
 But wakeful and weeping
 Sat Thora, the fairest of women.

At Nidarholm the priests are all singing,
 Two ghastly heads on the gibbet are swinging;
 One is Jarl Hakon's and one is his thrall's,
 And the people are shouting from windows and walls;
 While alone in her chamber
 Swoons Thora, the fairest of women.

4

QUEEN SIGRID THE HAUGHTY

QUEEN SIGRID the Haughty sat proud and aloft
 In her chamber, that looked over meadow and croft.
 Heart's dearest,
 Why dost thou sorrow so?

The floor with tassels of fir was besprent,
 Filling the room with their fragrant scent.

She heard the birds sing, she saw the sun shine,
 The air of summer was sweeter than wine.

Like a sword without scabbard the bright river lay
 Between her own kingdom and Norrøway.

But Olaf the King had sued for her hand,
 The sword would be sheathed, the river be spanned.

Her maidens were seated around her knee,
 Working bright figures in tapestry.

And one was singing the ancient rune
 Of Brynhilda's love and the wrath of Gudrun.

And through it, and round it, and over it all
Sounded incessant the waterfall.

The Queen in her hand held a ring of gold,
From the door of Ladé's Temple old.

King Olaf had sent her this wedding gift,
But her thoughts as arrows were keen and swift.

She had given the ring to her goldsmiths twain,
Who smiled as they handed it back again.

And Sigrid the Queen in her haughty way,
Said, "Why do you smile, my goldsmiths, say?"

And they answered: "O Queen! if the truth must be told,
The ring is of copper, and not of gold!"

The lightning flashed o'er her forehead and cheek,
She only murmured, she did not speak:

"If in his gifts he can faithless be,
There will be no gold in his love to me."

A footstep was heard on the outer stair,
And in strode King Olaf with royal air.

He kissed the Queen's hand, and he whispered of love,
And swore to be true as the stars are above.

But she smiled with contempt as she answered: "O King,
Will you swear it, as Odin once swore, on the ring?"

And the King: "O speak not of Odin to me,
The wife of King Olaf a Christian must be."

Looking straight at the King, with her level brows,
She said, "I keep true to my faith and my vows."

Then the face of King Olaf was darkened with gloom,
He rose in his anger and strode through the room.

"Why then should I care to have thee?" he said,—
"A faded old woman, a heathenish jade!"

His zeal was stronger than fear or love,
And he struck the Queen in the face with his glove.

Then forth from the chamber in anger he fled,
And the wooden stairway shook with his tread.

Queen Sigrid the Haughty said under her breath,
" This insult, King Olaf, shall be thy death ! "

Heart's dearest,
Why dost thou sorrow so ?

5

THE SKERRY OF SHRIEKS

Now from all King Olaf's farms
His men-at-arms
Gathered on the Eve of Easter ;
To his house at Angvalds-ness
Fast they press,
Drinking with the royal feaster.

Loudly through the wide-flung door,
Came the roar
Of the sea upon the Skerry ;
And its thunder loud and near
Reached the ear,
Mingling with their voices merry.

" Hark ! " said Olaf to his Scald,
Halfred the Bald,
" Listen to that song, and learn it !
Half my kingdom would I give,
As I live,
If by such songs you would earn it !

" For of all the runes and rhymes
Of all times,
Best I like the ocean's dirges,
When the old harper heaves and rocks,
His hoary locks
Flowing and flashing in the surges ! "

Halfred answered : " I am called
The Unappalled !
Nothing hinders me or daunts me.
Hearken to me, then, O King,
While I sing
The great Ocean song that haunts me. "

" I will hear your song sublime
Some other time,"
Says the drowsy monarch, yawning,
And retires ; each laughing guest
Applauds the jest ;
Then they sleep till day is dawning.

Pacing up and down the yard,
King Olaf's guard
Saw the sea-mist slowly creeping
O'er the sands, and up the hill,
Gathering still
Round the house where they were sleeping.

It was not the fog he saw,
Nor misty flaw,
That above the landscape brooded ;
It was Eyvind Kallda's crew
Of warlocks blue,
With their caps of darkness hooded !

Round and round the house they go,
Weaving slow
Magic circles to encumber
And imprison in their ring
Olaf the King,
As he helpless lies in slumber.

Then athwart the vapours dun
The Easter sun
Streamed with one broad track of splendour !
In their real forms appeared
The warlocks weird,
Awful as the Witch of Endor.

Blinded by the light that glared,
They groped and stared
Round about with steps unsteady ;
From his window Olaf gazed,
And, amazed,
" Who are these strange people ? " said he.

" Eyvind Kallda and his men ! "
Answered then
From the yard a sturdy farmer ;
While the men-at-arms apace
Filled the place,
Busily buckling on their armour.

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

From the gates they sallied forth,
 South and north;
 Scoured the island coasts around them,
 Seizing all the warlock band
 Foot and hand
 On the Skerry's rocks they bound them.

And at eve the King again
 Called his train,
 And, with all the candles burning,
 Silent sat and heard once more
 The sullen roar
 Of the ocean tides returning.

Shrieks and cries of wild despair
 Filled the air,
 Growing fainter as they listened;
 Then the bursting surge alone
 Sounded on;—
 Thus the sorcerers were christened!

“Sing, O Scald, your song sublime,
 Your ocean-rhyme,”
 Cried King Olaf: “it will cheer me!”
 Said the Scald, with pallid cheeks,
 “The Skerry of Shrieks
 Sings too loud for you to hear me!”

6

THE WRAITH OF ODIN

THE guests were loud, the ale was strong,
 King Olaf feasted late and long;
 The hoary Scalds together sang;
 O'erhead the smoky rafters rang.
 Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The door swung wide, with creak and din;
 A blast of cold night-air came in,
 And on the threshold shivering stood
 A one-eyed guest, with cloak and hood.
 Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The King exclaimed, “O greybeard pale!
 Come warm thee with this cup of ale.”

The foaming draught the old man quaffed,
The noisy guests looked on and laughed.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then spake the King : " Be not afraid ;
Sit here by me." The guest obeyed,
And, seated at the table, told
Tales of the sea, and Sagas old.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

And ever, when the tale was o'er,
The King demanded yet one more ;
Till Sigurd the Bishop smiling said,
" 'Tis late, O King, and time for bed."
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The King retired ; the stranger-guest
Followed and entered with the rest ;
The lights were out, the pages gone,
But still the garrulous guest spake on.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

As one who from a volume reads,
He spake of heroes and their deeds,
Of lands and cities he had seen,
And stormy gulfs that tossed between.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Then from his lips in music rolled
The Havamal of Odin old,
With sounds mysterious as the roar
Of billows on a distant shore.
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

" Do we not learn from runes and rhymes
Made by the gods in elder times,
And do not still the great Scalds teach
That silence better is than speech ? "
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

Smiling at this, the King replied,
" Thy lore is by thy tongue belied ;
For never was I so enthralled
Either by Saga-man or Scald."
Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

The Bishop said, " Late hours we keep !
Night wanes, O King ! 'tis time for sleep ! "

Then slept the King, and when he woke
 The guest was gone, the morning broke.
 Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

They found the doors securely barred,
 They found the watch-dog in the yard,
 There was no foot-print in the grass,
 And none had seen the stranger pass.
 Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

King Olaf crossed himself and said :
 " I know that Odin the Great is dead ;
 Sure is the triumph of our Faith,
 The one-eyed stranger was his wraith."
 Dead rides Sir Morten of Fogelsang.

7

IRON-BEARD

OLAF the King, one summer morn,
 Blew a blast on his bugle-horn,
 Sending his signal through the land of Drontheim.

And to the Hus-Ting held at Mere
 Gathered the farmers far and near,
 With their war weapons ready to confront him.

Ploughing under the morning star,
 Old Iron-Beard in Yriar
 Heard the summons, chuckling with a low laugh.

He wiped the sweat-drops from his brow,
 Unharnessed his horses from the plough,
 And clattering came on horseback to King Olaf.

He was the churliest of the churls ;
 Little he cared for king or earls ;
 Bitter as home-brewed ale were his foaming passions.

Hodden-grey was the garb he wore,
 And by the Hammer of Thor he swore ;
 He hated the narrow town, and all its fashions.

But he loved the freedom of his farm,
 His ale at night, by the fireside warm,
 Gudrun his daughter, with her flaxen tresses.

He loved his horses and his herds,
The smell of the earth, and the song of birds,
His well-filled barns, his brook with its watercresses.

Huge and cumbersome was his frame ;
His beard, from which he took his name,
Frosty and fierce, like that of Hymer the Giant.

So at the Hus-Ting he appeared,
The farmer of Yriar, Iron-Beard,
On horseback, with an attitude defiant.

And to King Olaf he cried aloud,
Out of the middle of the crowd,
That tossed about him like a stormy ocean :

“ Such sacrifices shalt thou bring,
To Odin and to Thor, O King,
As other kings have done in their devotion ! ”

King Olaf answered : “ I command
This land to be a Christian land ;
Here is my Bishop who the folk baptizes !

“ But if you ask me to restore
Your sacrifices, stained with gore,
Then will I offer human sacrifices !

“ Not slaves and peasants shall they be,
But men of note and high degree,
Such men as Orm of Lyra and Kar of Gryting ! ”

Then to the Temple strode he in,
And loud behind him heard the din
Of his men-at-arms and the peasants fiercely fighting.

There in their Temple, carved in wood,
The image of great Odin stood,
And other gods, with Thor supreme among them.

King Olaf smote them with the blade
Of his huge war-axe, gold-inlaid,
And downward shattered to the pavement flung them.

At the same moment rose without,
From the contending crowd, a shout,
A mingled sound of triumph and of wailing.

And there upon the trampled plain
The farmer Iron-Beard lay slain,
Midway between the assailed and the assailing.

King Olaf from the doorway spoke :
" Choose ye between two things, my folk,
To be baptized or given up to slaughter ! "

And seeing their leader stark and dead,
The people with a murmur said,
" O King, baptize us with thy holy water ! "

So all the Drontheim land became
A Christian land in name and fame,
In the old gods no more believing and trusting.

And as a blood-atonement, soon
King Olaf wed the fair Gudrun ;
And thus in peace ended the Drontheim Hus-Ting !

8

GUDRUN

ON King Olaf's bridal night
Shines the moon with tender light,
And across the chamber streams
Its tide of dreams.

At the fatal midnight hour,
When all evil things have power,
In the glimmer of the moon
Stands Gudrun.

Close against her heaving breast,
Something in her hand is pressed ;
Like an icicle, its sheen
Is cold and keen,

On the cairn are fixed her eyes
Where her murdered father lies,
And a voice remote and drear
She seems to hear.

What a bridal night is this ?
Cold will be the dagger's kiss ;

Laden with the chill of death
Is its breath.

Like the drifting snow she sweeps
To the couch where Olaf sleeps ;
Suddenly he wakes and stirs,
His eyes meet hers.

"What is that," King Olaf said,
"Gleams so bright above thy head ?
Wherefore standest thou so white
In pale moonlight ?"

"'Tis the bodkin that I wear
When at night I bind my hair ;
It woke me falling on the floor ;
'Tis nothing more."

"Forests have ears, and fields have eyes ;
Often treachery lurking lies
Underneath the fairest hair !
Gudrun beware !"

Ere the earliest peep of morn
Blew King Olaf's bugle-horn ;
And for ever Sundered ride
Bridegroom and bride !

9

THANGBRAND THE PRIEST

SHORT of stature, large of limb,
Burly face and russet beard,
All the women stared at him,
When in Iceland he appeared.
"Look !" they said,
With nodding head,
"There goes Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

All the prayers he knew by rote,
He could preach like Chrysostome,
From the fathers he could quote,
He had even been at Rome.
A learned clerk,
A man of mark,
Was this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

He was quarrelsome and loud,
 And impatient of control,
 Boisterous in the market crowd,
 Boisterous at the wassail-bowl,
 Everywhere
 Would drink and swear,
 Swaggering Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

In his house this malecontent
 Could the King no longer bear,
 So to Iceland he was sent
 To convert the heathen there,
 And away
 One summer day
 Sailed this Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

There in Iceland, o'er their books
 Pored the people day and night,
 But he did not like their looks,
 Nor the songs they used to write.
 "All this rhyme
 Is waste of time!"
 Grumbled Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

To the alehouse, where he sat,
 Came the Scalds and Saga-men;
 Is it to be wondered at,
 That they quarrelled now and then,
 When o'er his beer
 Began to leer
 Drunken Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest?

All the folk in Alftafjord
 Boasted of their island grand;
 Saying in a single word,
 "Iceland is the finest land
 That the sun
 Doth shine upon!"
 Loud laughed Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

And he answered: "What's the use
 Of this bragging up and down,
 When three women and one goose
 Make a market in your town!"
 Every Scald
 Satires scrawled
 On poor Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

Something worse they did than that ;
 And what vexed him most of all
 Was a figure in shovel hat,
 Drawn in charcoal on the wall ;
 With words that go
 Sprawling below,
 " This is Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest."

Hardly knowing what he did,
 Then he smote them might and main,
 Thorvald Veile and Veterlid
 Lay there in the alehouse slain.
 " To-day we are gold,
 To-morrow mould !"
 Muttered Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

Much in fear of axe and rope,
 Back to Norway sailed he then.
 " O, King Olaf ! little hope
 Is there of these Iceland men !"
 Meekly said,
 With bending head,
 Pious Thangbrand, Olaf's Priest.

10

RAUD THE STRONG

" ALL the old gods are dead,
 All the wild warlocks fled ;
 But the White Christ lives and reigns,
 And through my wide domains
 His Gospel shall be spread !"
 On the Evangelists
 Thus swore King Olaf.

But till in dreams of the night
 Beheld he the crimson light,
 And heard the voice that defied
 Him who was crucified,
 And challenged him to the fight.
 To Sigurd the Bishop
 King Olaf confessed it.

And Sigurd the Bishop said,
 " The old gods are not dead,

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

For the great Thor still reigns,
 And among the Jarls and Thanes
 The old witchcraft still is spread."
 Thus to King Olaf
 Said Sigurd the Bishop.

"Far north in the Salten Fiord,
 By rapine, fire, and sword,
 Lives the Viking, Raud the Strong;
 All the Godoe Isles belong
 To him and his heathen horde."
 Thus went on speaking
 Sigurd the Bishop.

"A warlock, a wizard is he,
 And lord of the wind and the sea;
 And whichever way he sails,
 He has ever favouring gales,
 By his craft in sorcery."
 Here the sign of the cross made
 Devoutly King Olaf.

"With rites that we both abhor,
 He worships Odin and Thor;
 So it cannot yet be said,
 That all the old gods are dead,
 And the warlocks are no more,"
 Flushing with anger
 Said Sigurd the Bishop.

Then King Olaf cried aloud:
 "I will talk with this mighty Raud,
 And along the Salten Fiord
 Preach the Gospel with my sword
 Or be brought back in my shroud!"
 So northward from Drontheim
 Sailed King Olaf.

11

BISHOP SIGURD AT SALTEN FIORD

LOUD the angry wind was wailing
 As King Olaf's ships came sailing
 Northward out of Drontheim haven
 To the mouth of Salten Fiord.

Though the flying sea-spray drenches,
Fore and aft the rowers' benches,
Not a single heart is craven
Of the champions there on board,

All without the Fiord was quiet,
But within it storm and riot,
Such as on his Viking cruises
Raud the Strong was wont to ride.

And the sea through all its tide-ways
Swept the reeling vessels sideways,
As the leaves are swept through sluices,
When the flood-gates open wide.

"'Tis the warlock! 'tis the demon
Raud!" cried Sigurd to the seamen;
"But the Lord is not affrighted
By the witchcraft of his foes."

To the ship's bow he ascended,
By his choristers attended,
Round him were the tapers lighted,
And the sacred incense rose.

On the bow stood Bishop Sigurd,
In his robes, as one transfigured,
And the Crucifix he planted
High amid the rain and mist.

Then with holy water sprinkled
All the ship; the mass-bells tinkled;
Loud the monks around him chanted,
Loud he read the Evangelist.

As unto the Fiord they darted,
On each side the water parted;
Down a path like silver molten
Steadily rowed King Olaf's ships;

Steadily burned all night the tapers,
And the White Christ through the vapours
Gleamed across the Fiord of Salten,
As through John's Apocalypse,—

Till at last they reached Raud's dwelling
On the little isle of Gelling;
Not a guard was at the doorway,
Not a glimmer of light was seen.

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

But at anchor, carved and gilded,
Lay the dragon ship he builded ;
'Twas the grandest ship in Norway,
With its crest and scales of green.

Up the stairway, softly creeping,
To the loft where Raud was sleeping,
With their fists they burst asunder
Bolt and bar that held the door.

Drunken with sleep and ale they found him,
Dragged him from his bed and bound him,
While he stared with stupid wonder,
At the look and garb they wore.

Then King Olaf said : " O Sea-King !
Little time have we for speaking,
Choose between the good and evil ;
Be baptized, or thou shalt die ! "

But in scorn the heathen scoffer
Answered : " I disdain thine offer ;
Neither fear I God nor devil ;
Thee and thy Gospel I defy ! "

Then between his jaws distended,
When his frantic struggles ended,
Through King Olaf's horn an adder,
Touched by fire, they forced to glide.

Sharp his tooth was as an arrow,
As he gnawed through bone and marrow ;
But without a groan or shudder,
Raud the Strong blaspheming died.

Then baptized they all that region,
Swarthy Lap and fair Norwegian,
Far as swims the salmon, leaping,
Up the streams of Salten Fiord.

In their temples Thor and Odin
Lay in dust and ashes trodden,
As King Olaf, onward sweeping,
Preached the Gospel with his sword.

Then he took the carved and gilded
Dragon-ship that Raud had builded,
And the tiller single-handed,
Grasping, steered into the main.

Southward sailed the sea-gulls o'er him,
 Southward sailed the ship that bore him,
 Till at Drontheim haven landed
 Olaf and his crew again.

12

KING OLAF'S CHRISTMAS

At Drontheim, Olaf the King
 Heard the bells of Yule-tide ring,
 As he sat in his banquet-hall,
 Drinking the nut-brown ale,
 With his bearded Berserks hale
 And tall.

Three days his Yule-tide feasts
 He held with Bishops and Priests,
 And his horn filled up to the brim,
 But the ale was never too strong,
 Nor the Saga-man's tale too long,
 For him.

O'er his drinking horn, the sign
 He made of the Cross divine,
 As he drank, and muttered his prayers;
 But the Berserks evermore
 Made the sign of the Hammer of Thor
 Over theirs.

The gleams of the fire-light dance
 Upon helmet and hauberk and lance,
 And laugh in the eyes of the King;
 And he cries to Halfred the Scald,
 Grey-bearded, wrinkled, and bald,
 "Sing!

"Sing me a song divine,
 With a sword in every line,
 And this shall be thy reward."
 And he loosened the belt at his waist,
 And in front of the singer placed
 His sword.

TALES OF A WAYSIDE INN

“Quern-biter of Hakon the Good,
 Wherewith at a stroke he hewed
 The millstone through and through,
 And Foot-breadth of Thoralf the Strong,
 Were neither so broad nor so long,
 Nor so true.”

Then the Scald took his harp and sang,
 And loud through the music rang
 The sound of that shining word ;
 And the harp-strings a clangour made,
 As if they were struck with the blade
 Of a sword.

And the Berserks round about
 Broke forth into a shout
 That made the rafters ring ;
 They smote with their fists on the board,
 And shouted, “ Long live the Sword,
 And the King ! ”

But the King said, “ O my son,
 I miss the bright word in one
 Of thy measures and thy rhymes.”
 And Halfred the Scald replied,
 “ In another ’twas multiplied
 Three times.”

Then King Olaf raised the hilt
 Of iron, cross-shaped and gilt,
 And said, “ Do not refuse ;
 Count well the gain and the loss,
 Thor’s hammer or Christ’s cross ;
 Choose ! ”

And Halfred the Scald said, “ This
 In the name of the Lord I kiss,
 Who on it was crucified ! ”
 And a shout went round the board,
 “ In the name of Christ the Lord,
 Who died ! ”

Then over the waste of snows
 The noonday sun uprose,
 Through the driving mists revealed,
 Like the lifting of the Host,
 By incense-clouds almost
 Concealed.

On the shining wall a vast
And shadowy cross was cast
From the hilt of the lifted sword,
And in foaming cups of ale
The Berserks drank "Was-hael!
To the Lord!"

13

THE BUILDING OF THE LONG SERPENT

THORBERG SKAFTING, master-builder,
In his shipyard by the sea,
Whistled, saying, "'Twould bewilder
Any man but Thorberg Skafting,
Any man but me!"

Near him lay the Dragon stranded,
Built of old by Raud the Strong,
And King Olaf had commanded
He should build another Dragon,
Twice as large and long.

Therefore whistled Thorberg Skafting,
As he sat with half-closed eyes,
And his head turned sideways, drafting
That new vessel for King Olaf
Twice the Dragon's size.

Round him busily hewed and hammered
Mallet huge and heavy axe;
Workmen laughed and sang and clamoured,
Whirred the wheels that into rigging
Spun the shining flax!

All this tumult heard the master,—
It was music to his ear;
Fancy whispered all the faster,
"Men shall hear of Thorberg Skafting
For a hundred year!"

Workmen sweating at the forges
Fashioned iron bolt and bar
Like a warlock's midnight orgies
Smoked and bubbled the black cauldron
With the boiling tar.

Did the warlocks mingle in it,
 Thorberg Skafting, any curse?
 Could you not be gone a minute
 But some mischief must be doing,
 Turning bad to worse?

'Twas an ill wind that came wafting
 From his homestead words of woe;
 To his farm went Thorberg Skafting,
 Oft repeating to his workmen,
 Build ye thus and so.

After long delays returning
 Came the master back by night;
 To his shipyard longing, yearning,
 Hurried he, and did not leave it
 Till the morning's light.

"Come and see my ship, my darling!"
 On the morrow said the King;
 "Finished now from keel to carling;
 Never yet was seen in Norway
 Such a wondrous thing!"

In the shipyard, idly talking,
 At the ship the workmen stared:
 Some one, all their labour balking,
 Down her sides had cut deep gashes,
 Not a plank was spared!

"Death be to the evil-doer!"
 With an oath King Olaf spoke;
 "But rewards to his pursuer!"
 And with wrath his face grew redder
 Than his scarlet cloak.

Straight the master-builder, smiling,
 Answered thus the angry King:
 "Cease blaspheming and reviling,
 Olaf, it was Thorberg Skafting
 Who has done this thing!"

Then he chipped and smoothed the planking,
 Till the King, delighted, swore,
 With much lauding and much thanking,
 "Handsome is now my Dragon
 Than she was before!"

Seventy ells and four extended
 On the grass the vessel's keel ;
 High above it, gilt and splendid,
 Rose the figure-head ferocious,
 With its crest of steel.

Then they launched her from the tressels,
 In the shipyard by the sea ;
 She was the grandest of all vessels,
 Never ship was built in Norway
 Half so fine as she !

The Long Serpent was she christened,
 'Mid the roar of cheer on cheer !
 They who to the Saga listened
 Heard the name of Thorberg Skaffing
 For a hundred year !

14

THE CREW OF THE LONG SERPENT

SAFE at anchor in Drontheim Bay
 King Olaf's fleet assembled lay,
 And, striped with white and blue,
 Downward fluttered sail and banner,
 As alights the screaming lanner ;
 Lustily cheered, in their wild manner,
 The long Serpent's crew.

Her forecastle man was Ulf the Red ;
 Like a wolf's was his shaggy head,
 His teeth as large and white ;
 His beard of grey and russet blended,
 Round as a swallow's nest descended ;
 As standard-bearer he defended
 Olaf's flag in the fight.

Near him Kolbiorn had his place,
 Like the King in garb and face,
 So gallant and so hale ;
 Every cabin-boy and varlet
 Wondered at his cloak of scarlet ;
 Like a river frozen and star-lit,
 Gleamed his coat of mail.

By the bulkhead, tall and dark,
 Stood Thrand Rame of Thelemark,
 A figure gaunt and grand ;
 On his hairy arm imprinted
 Was an anchor, azure-tinted ;
 Like Thor's hammer, huge and dinted
 Was his brawny hand.

Einar Tamberskelver, bare
 To the winds his golden hair,
 By the mainmast stood ;
 Graceful was his form, and slender
 And his eyes were deep and tender
 As a woman's, in the splendour
 Of her maidenhood.

In the fore-hold Biorn and Bork
 Watched the sailors at their work :
 Heavens ! how they swore !
 Thirty men they each commanded,
 Iron-sinewed, horny-handed,
 Shoulders broad and chests expanded,
 Tugging at the oar.

These, and many more like these,
 With King Olaf sailed the seas,
 Till the waters vast
 Filled them with a vague devotion,
 With the freedom and the motion,
 With the roll and roar of ocean
 And the sounding blast.

When they landed from the fleet,
 How they roared through Drontheim's street,
 Boisterous as the gale !
 How they laughed and stamped and pounded,
 Till the tavern roof resounded,
 And the host looked on astounded
 As they drank the ale !

Never saw the wild North Sea
 Such a gallant company
 Sail its billows blue !
 Never, while they cruised and quarrelled,
 Old King Gorm, or Blue-Tooth Harald,
 Owned a ship so well apparelled,
 Boasted such a crew !

15

A LITTLE BIRD IN THE AIR

A LITTLE bird in the air
 Is singing of Thyri the fair,
 The sister of Svend the Dane ;
 And the song of the garrulous bird
 In the streets of the town is heard,
 And repeated again and again.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

To King Burislaf, it is said,
 Was the beautiful Thyri wed,
 And a sorrowful bride went she ;
 And after a week and a day,
 She has fled away and away,
 From his town by the stormy sea.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

They say that through heat and through cold,
 Through weald, they say, and through wold,
 By day and by night, they say,
 She has fled ; and the gossips report
 She has come to King Olaf's court,
 And the town is all in dismay.
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

It is whispered King Olaf has seen,
 Has talked with the beautiful Queen ;
 And they wonder how it will end ;
 For surely, if here she remain,
 It is war with King Svend the Dane,
 And King Burislaf the Vend !
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

O, greatest wonder of all !
 It is published in hamlet and hall,
 It roars like a flame that is fanned !
 The King—yes, Olaf the king—
 Has wedded her with his ring,
 And Thyri is Queen in the land !
 Hoist up your sails of silk,
 And flee away from each other.

QUEEN THYRI AND THE ANGELICA-STALKS

NORTHWARD over Drontheim
 Flew the clamorous sea-gulls,
 Sang the lark and linnet,
 From the meadows green ;

Weeping in her chamber,
 Lonely and unhappy,
 Sat the Drottning Thyri,
 Sat King Olaf's Queen.

In at all the windows
 Streamed the pleasant sunshine,
 On the roof above her
 Softly cooed the dove ;

But the sound she heard not,
 Nor the sunshine heeded,
 For the thoughts of Thyri
 Were not thoughts of love.

Then King Olaf entered,
 Beautiful as morning,
 Like the sun at Easter
 Shone his happy face ;

In his hand he carried
 Angelicas uprooted,
 With delicious fragrance
 Filling all the place.

Like a rainy midnight
 Sat the Drottning Thyri,
 Even the smile of Olaf
 Could not cheer her gloom ;

Nor the stalks he gave her
 With a gracious gesture,
 And with words as pleasant
 As their own perfume.

In her hands he placed them,
 And her jewelled fingers
 Through the green leaves glistened
 Like the dews of morn ;

But she cast them from her,
Haughty and indignant,
On the floor she threw them
With a look of scorn.

“ Richer presents,” said she,
“ Gave King Harald Gormson
To the Queen, my mother,
Than such worthless weeds ;

“ When he ravaged Norway
Laying waste the kingdom,
Seizing scatt and treasure
For her royal needs.

“ But thou darest not venture
Through the Sound to Vendland,
My domains to rescue
From King Burislaf ;

“ Lest King Svend of Denmark,
Forkèd Beard, my brother,
Scatter all thy vessels
As the wind the chaff.”

Then up sprang King Olaf,
Like a reindeer bounding,
With an oath he answered
Thus the luckless Queen :

“ Never yet did Olaf
Fear King Svend of Denmark ;
This right hand shall hale him
By his forkèd chin ! ”

Then he left the chamber,
Thundering through the doorway,
Loud his steps resounded
Down the outer stair.

Smarting with the insult,
Through the streets of Drontheim
Strode he red and wrathful,
With his stately air.

All his ships he gathered,
Summoned all his forces,
Making his war levy
In the region round ;

Down the coast of Norway,
 Like a flock of sea-gulls,
 Sailed the fleet of Olaf
 Through the Danish Sound.

With his own hand fearless,
 Steered he the Long Serpent,
 Strained the creaking cordage,
 Bent each boom and gaff ;

Till in Vendland landing,
 The domains of Thyri
 He redeemed and rescued
 From King Burislaf.

Then said Olaf, laughing,
 " Not ten yoke of oxen
 Have the power to draw us
 Like a woman's hair !

" Now will I confess it,
 Better things are jewels
 Than angelica-stalks are
 For a Queen to wear."

17

KING SVEND OF THE FORKED BEARD

LOUDLY the sailors cheered
 Svend of the Forked Beard,
 As with his fleet he steered
 Southward to Vendland ;
 Where with their courses hauled
 All were together called,
 Under the Isle of Svald
 Near to the mainland.

After Queen Gunhild's death,
 So the old Saga saith,
 Plighted King Svend his faith
 To Sigrid the Haughty ;
 And to avenge his bride,
 Soothing her wounded pride,
 Over the waters wide
 King Olaf sought he.

Still on her scornful face,
Blushing with deep disgrace,
Bore she the crimson trace
Of Olaf's gauntlet ;
Like a malignant star,
Blazing in heaven afar,
Red shone the angry scar
Under her frontlet.

Off to King Svend she spake,
" For thine own honour's sake
Shalt thou swift vengeance take
On the vile coward ! "
Until the King at last,
Gusty and overcast,
Like a tempestuous blast
Threatened and lowered.

Soon as the Spring appeared,
Svend of the Forkèd Beard
High his red standard reared,
Eager for battle ;
While every warlike Dane,
Seizing his arms again,
Left all unsown the grain,
Unhoused the cattle.

Likewise the Swedish King
Summoned in haste a Thing,
Weapons and men to bring
In aid of Denmark ;
Eric the Norseman, too,
As the war-tidings flew,
Sailed with a chosen crew
From Lapland and Finmark.

So upon Easter day
Sailed the three kings away,
Out of the sheltered bay,
In the bright season ;
With them Earl Sigvald came,
Eager for spoil and fame ;
Pity that such a name
Stooped to such treason !

Safe under Svald at last,
Now were their anchors cast,
Safe from the sea and blast,
Plotted the three kings ;

While, with a base intent,
 Southward Earl Sigvald went,
 On a foul errand bent,
 Unto the Sea-kings,

Thence to hold on his course,
 Unto King Olaf's force,
 Lying within the hoarse
 Mouths of Stet-haven ;
 Him to ensnare and bring
 Unto the Danish King,
 Who his dead corse would fling
 Forth to the raven !

18

KING OLAF AND EARL SIGVALD.

ON the grey sea-sands
 King Olaf stands,
 Northward and seaward
 He points with his hands.

With eddy and whirl
 The sea-tides curl,
 Washing the sandals
 Of Sigvald the Earl.

The mariners shout,
 The ships swing about,
 The yards are all hoisted,
 The sails flutter out.

The war-horns are played,
 The anchors are weighed,
 Like moths in the distance
 The sails flit and fade.

The sea is like lead,
 The harbour lies dead,
 As a corse on the sea-shore,
 Whose spirit has fled !

On that fatal day,
 The histories say,
 Seventy vessels
 Sailed out of the bay.

But soon scattered wide
O'er the billows they ride,
While Sigvald and Olaf
Sail side by side.

Cried the Earl: "Follow me!
I your pilot will be,
For I know all the channels
Where flows the deep sea!"

So into the strait
Where his foes lie in wait,
Gallant King Olaf
Sails to his fate!

Then the sea-fog veils
The ships and their sails;
Queen Sigrid the Haughty,
Thy vengeance prevails!

19

KING OLAF'S WAR-HORNS

"STRIKE the sails!" King Olaf said;
Never shall men of mine take flight;
Never away from battle I fled,
Never away from my foes!
Let God dispose
Of my life in the fight!"

"Sound the horns!" said Olaf the King;
And suddenly through the drifting brume
The blare of the horns began to ring,
Like the terrible trumpet shock
Of Regnarock,
On the Day of Doom!

Louder and louder the war-horns sang
Over the level floor of the flood;
All the sails came down with a clang,
And there in the mist overhead
The sun hung red
As a drop of blood.

Drifting down on the Danish fleet
 Three together the ships were lashed,
 So that neither should turn and retreat;
 In the midst, but in front of the rest,
 The burnished crest
 Of the Serpent flashed.

King Olaf stood on the quarter-deck,
 With bow of ash and arrows of oak,
 His gilded shield was without a fleck,
 His helmet inlaid with gold,
 And in many a fold
 Hung his crimson cloak.

On the forecastle Ulf the Red
 Watched the lashing of the ships;
 "If the Serpent lie so far ahead,
 We shall have hard work of it here,"
 Said he with a sneer
 On his bearded lips.

King Olaf laid an arrow on string,
 "Have I a coward on board?" said he.
 "Shoot it another way, O King!"
 Sullenly answered Ulf,
 The old sea-wolf;
 "You have need of me!"

In front came Svend, the King of the Danes,
 Sweeping down with his fifty rowers;
 To the right, the Swedish king with his thanes;
 And on board of the Iron-Beard
 Earl Eric steered
 On the left with his oars.

"These soft Danes and Swedes," said the King,
 "At home with their wives had better stay,
 Than come within reach of my Serpent's sting.
 But where Eric the Norseman leads
 Heroic deeds
 Will be done to-day!"

Then as together the vessels crashed,
 Eric severed the cables of hide
 With which King Olaf's ships were lashed,
 And left them to drive and drift
 With the currents swift
 Of the outward tide.

Louder the war-horns growl and snarl,
Sharper the dragons bite and sting!
Eric the son of Hakon Jarl
A death-drink salt as the sea
Pledges to thee,
Olaf the King!

20

EINAR TAMBERSKELVER

It was Einar Tamberskelver
Stood beside the mast;
From his yew-bow, tipped with silver,
Flew the arrows fast;
Aimed at Eric unavailing,
As he sat concealed,
Half behind the quarter-railing,
Half behind his shield.

First an arrow struck the tiller,
Just above his head;
"Sing, O Eyvind Skaldaspiller,"
Then Earl Eric said,
"Sing the song of Hakon dying,
Sing his funeral wail!"
And another arrow flying
Grazed his coat of mail.

Turning to a Lapland yeoman,
As the arrow passed,
Said Earl Eric, "Shoot that bowman
Standing by the mast."
Sooner than the word was spoken
Flew the yeoman's shaft;
Einar's bow in twain was broken,
Einar only laughed.

"What was that?" said Olaf, standing
On the quarter-deck.
"Something heard I like the stranding
Of a shattered wreck."
Einar then, the arrow taking
From the loosened string,
Answered, "That was Norway breaking
From thy hand, O King!"

"Thou art but a poor diviner,"
 Straightway Olaf said;
 "Take my bow, and swifter, Einar,
 Let thy shafts be sped."
 Of his bows the fairest choosing,
 Reached he from above;
 Einar saw the blood-drops oozing
 Through his iron glove.

But the bow was thin and narrow;
 At the first assay,
 O'er its head he drew the arrow,
 Flung the bow away;
 Said, with hot and angry temper
 Flushing in his cheek,
 "Olaf! for so great a Kämper
 Are thy bows too weak!"

Then, with smile of joy defiant
 On his beardless lip,
 Scaled he, light and self-reliant,
 Eric's dragon-ship.
 Loose his golden locks were flowing,
 Bright his armour gleamed;
 Like Saint Michael overthrowing
 Lucifer he seemed.

21

KING OLAF'S DEATH-DRINK

ALL day has the battle raged,
 All day have the ships engaged,
 But not yet is assuaged
 The vengeance of Eric the Earl.

The decks with blood are red,
 The arrows of death are sped,
 The ships are filled with the dead,
 And the spears the champions hurl.

They drift as wrecks on the tide,
 The grappling-irons are plied,
 The boarders climb up the side,
 The shouts are feeble and few.

Ah! never shall Norway again
See her sailors come back o'er the main;
They all lie wounded or slain,
Or asleep in the billows blue!

On the deck stands Olaf the King,
Around him whistle and sing
The spears that the foemen fling,
And the stones they hurl with their hands.

In the midst of the stones and the spears,
Kolbiorn, the marshal, appears,
His shield in the air he uprears,
By the side of King Olaf he stands.

Over the slippery wreck
Of the Long Serpent's deck
Sweeps Eric with hardly a check,
His lips with anger are pale;

He hews with his axe at the mast,
Till it falls, with the sails overcast,
Like a snow-covered pine in the vast
Dim forests of Orkadale.

Seeking King Olaf then,
He rushes aft with his men,
As a hunter into the den
Of the bear, when he stands at bay.

"Remember Jarl Hakon!" he cries;
When lo! on his wondering eyes,
Two kingly figures arise,
Two Olafs in warlike array!

Then Kolbiorn speaks in the ear
Of King Olaf a word of cheer,
In a whisper that none may hear,
With a smile on his tremulous lip;

Two shields raised high in the air,
Two flashes of golden hair,
Two scarlet meteors' glare,
And both have leaped from the ship.

Earl Eric's men in the boats
Seize Kolbiorn's shield as it floats,
And cry, from their hairy throats,
"See! it is Olaf the King!"

While far on the opposite side
 Floats another shield on the tide,
 Like a jewel set in the wide
 Sea-current's eddying ring.

There is told a wonderful tale,
 How the King stripped off his mail,
 Like leaves of the brown sea-kale,
 As he swam beneath the main ;

But the young grew old and grey,
 And never, by night or by day,
 In his kingdom of Norraway
 Was King Olaf seen again !

22

THE NUN OF NIDAROS

IN the convent of Drontheim,
 Alone in her chamber
 Knelt Astrid the Abbess,
 At midnight, adoring,
 Beseeching, entreating
 The Virgin and Mother.

She heard in the silence
 The voice of one speaking,
 Without in the darkness,
 In gusts of the night-wind,
 Now louder, now nearer,
 Now lost in the distance.

The voice of a stranger
 It seemed as she listened,
 Of some one who answered,
 Beseeching, imploring,
 A cry from afar off
 She could not distinguish.

The voice of Saint John,
 The belovèd disciple,
 Who wandered and waited
 The Master's appearance,
 Alone in the darkness,
 Unsheltered and friendless.

“ It is accepted,
The angry defiance,
The challenge of battle !
It is accepted,
But not with the weapons
Of war that thou wieldest !

“ Cross against corslet,
Love against hatred,
Peace-cry for war-cry !
Patience is powerful ;
He that o’ercometh
Hath power o’er the nations !

“ As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling
Far off at their fountains ;

“ So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o’erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not
That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining !

“ Stronger than steel
Is the sword of the Spirit ;
Swifter than arrows
The light of the truth is ;
Greater than anger
Is love, and subdueth !

“ Thou art a phantom,
A shape of the sea-mist,
A shape of the brumal
Rain, and the darkness
Fearful and formless ;
Day dawns and thou art not !

“ The dawn is not distant,
Nor is the night starless ;
Love is eternal !
God is still God, and
His faith shall not fail us ;
Christ is eternal !”

INTERLUDE

A STRAIN of music closed the tale,
 A low, monotonous, funeral wail,
 That with its cadence, wild and sweet,
 Made the long Saga more complete.

“ Thank God ! ” the Theologian said,
 “ The reign of violence is dead,
 Or dying surely from the world ;
 While Love triumphant reigns instead,
 And in a brighter sky o’erhead
 His blessed banners are unfurled.
 And most of all thank God for this ;
 The war and waste of clashing creeds
 Now end in words, and not in deeds,
 And no one suffers loss or bleeds
 For thoughts that men call heresies.

“ I stand without here in the porch,
 I hear the bell’s melodious din,
 I hear the organ peal within,
 I hear the prayer, with words that scorch
 Like sparks from an inverted torch,
 I hear the sermon upon sin,
 With threatenings of the last account,
 And all, translated in the air,
 Reach me but as our dear Lord’s Prayer,
 And as the Sermon on the Mount.

“ Must it be Calvin, and not Christ ?
 Must it be Athanasian creeds,
 Or holy water, books, and beads ?
 Must struggling souls remain content
 With councils and decrees of Trent ?
 And can it be enough for these
 The Christian Church the year embalms
 With evergreens and boughs of palms,
 And fills the air with litanies ?

“ I know that yonder Pharisee
 Thanks God that he is not like me ;
 In my humiliation dressed,
 I only stand and beat my breast,
 And pray for human charity.

"Not to one church alone, but seven,
 The voice prophetic spake from heaven;
 And unto each the promise came,
 Diversified, but still the same;
 For him that overcometh are
 The new name written on the stone,
 The raiment white, the crown, the throne,
 And I will give him the Morning Star!"

"Ah! to how many Faith has been
 No evidence of things unseen,
 But a dim shadow, that recasts
 The creed of the Phantasiasts,
 For whom no Man of Sorrows died,
 For whom the Tragedy Divine
 Was but a symbol and a sign,
 And Christ a phantom crucified!"

"For others a diviner creed
 Is living in the life they lead.
 The passing of their beautiful feet
 Blesses the pavement of the street,
 And all their looks and words repeat
 Old Fuller's saying, wise and sweet,
 Not as a vulture, but a dove,
 The Holy Ghost came from above."

"And this brings back to me a tale
 So sad the hearer well may quail,
 And question if such things can be;
 Yet in the chronicles of Spain
 Down the dark pages runs this stain,
 And nought can wash them white again,
 So fearful is the tragedy."

CVII

THE THEOLOGIAN'S TALE

TORQUEMADA

In the heroic days when Ferdinand
 And Isabella ruled the Spanish land,
 And Torquemada, with his subtle brain,
 Ruled them, as Grand Inquisitor of Spain,
 In a great castle near Valladolid,
 Moated and high and by fair woodlands hid,

There dwelt, as from the chronicles we learn,
 An old Hidalgo, proud and taciturn,
 Whose name has perished with his towers of stone,
 And all his actions, save this one alone;
 This one so terrible, perhaps 'twere best
 If it, too, were forgotten with the rest;
 Unless, perchance, our eyes can see therein
 The martyrdom triumphant o'er the sin;
 A double picture, with its gloom and glow,
 The splendour overhead, the death below.

This sombre man counted each day as lost
 On which his feet no sacred threshold crossed;
 And when he chanced the passing Host to meet,
 He knelt and prayed devoutly in the street;
 Oft he confessed; and with each mutinous thought,
 As with wild beasts at Ephesus, he fought.
 In deep contrition scourged himself in Lent,
 Walked in processions with his head down bent;
 At plays of Corpus Christi oft was seen,
 And on Palm Sunday bore his bough of green.
 His only pastime was to hunt the boar,
 Through tangled thickets of the forest hoar,
 Or with his jingling mules to hurry down
 To some grand bull-fight in the neighbouring town,
 Or in the crowd with lighted taper stand,
 When Jews were burned, or banished from the land.
 Then stirred within him a tumultuous joy;
 The demon whose delight is to destroy
 Shook him, and shouted with a trumpet tone,
 "Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"

And now, in that old castle in the wood,
 His daughters in the dawn of womanhood,
 Returning from their convent school, had made
 Resplendent with their bloom the forest shade,
 Reminding him of their dead mother's face,
 When first she came into that gloomy place,—
 A memory in his heart as dim and sweet
 As moonlight in a solitary street,
 Where the same rays, that lift the sea, are thrown
 Lovely but powerless upon walls of stone.
 These two fair daughters of a mother dead
 Were all the dream had left him as it fled.
 A joy at first, and then a growing care,
 As if a voice within him cried, "Beware!"
 A vague presentiment of impending doom,
 Like ghostly footsteps in a vacant room,

Haunted him day and night; a formless fear
That death to some one of his house was near,
With dark surmises of a hidden crime,
Made life itself a death before its time.
Jealous, suspicious, with no sense of shame,
A spy upon his daughters he became;
With velvet slippers, noiseless on the floors,
He glided softly through half-open doors;
Now in the room, and now upon the stair,
He stood beside them ere they were aware;
He listened in the passage when they talked,
He watched them from the casement when they walked,
He saw the gipsy haunt the river's side,
He saw the monk among the cork-trees glide;
And tortured by the mystery and the doubt
Of some dark secret, past his finding out,
Baffled he paused; then reassured again
Pursued the flying phantom of his brain.
He watched them even when they knelt in church;
And then, descending lower in his search,
Questioned the servants, and with eager eyes
Listened incredulous to their replies;
The gipsy? none had seen her in the wood!
The monk? a mendicant in search of food!

At length the awful revelation came,
Crushing at once his pride of birth and name,
The hopes his yearning bosom forward cast,
And the ancestral glories of the past;
All fell together crumbling in disgrace,
A turret rent from battlement to base.
His daughters talking in the dead of night
In their own chamber, and without a light,
Listening, as he was wont, he overheard,
And learned the dreadful secret, word by word;
And hurrying from his castle, with a cry
He raised his hands to the unpitying sky,
Repeating one dread word, till bush and tree
Caught it, and shuddering answered, "Heresy!"

Wrapped in his cloak, his hat drawn o'er his face,
Now hurrying forward, now with lingering pace,
He walked all night the alleys of his park,
With one unseen companion in the dark,
The demon who within him lay in wait,
And by his presence turned his love to hate,
For ever muttering in an undertone,
"Kill! kill! and let the Lord find out his own!"

Upon the morrow, after early Mass,
 While yet the dew was glistening on the grass,
 And all the woods were musical with birds,
 The old Hidalgo, uttering fearful words,
 Walked homeward with the priest, and in his room
 Summoned his trembling daughters to their doom.
 When questioned, with brief answers they replied,
 Nor when accused evaded or denied;
 Expostulations, passionate appeals,
 All that the human heart most fears or feels,
 In vain the Priest with earnest voice essayed,
 In vain the father threatened, wept, and prayed;
 Until at last he said, with haughty mien,
 "The Holy Office, then, must intervene!"

And now the Grand Inquisitor of Spain,
 With all the fifty horsemen of his train,
 His awful name resounding, like the blast
 Of funeral trumpets, as he onward passed,
 Came to Valladolid, and there began
 To harry the rich Jews with fire and ban.
 To him the Hidalgo went, and at the gate
 Demanded audience on affairs of state,
 And in a secret chamber stood before
 A venerable greybeard of fourscore,
 Dressed in the hood and habit of a friar;
 Out of his eyes flashed a consuming fire,
 And in his hand the mystic horn he held,
 Which poison and all noxious charms dispelled.
 He heard in silence the Hidalgo's tale,
 Then answered in a voice that made him quail:
 "Son of the Church! when Abraham of old
 To sacrifice his only son was told,
 He did not pause to parley nor protest,
 But hastened to obey the Lord's behest.
 In him it was accounted righteousness;
 The Holy Church expects of thee no less!"

A sacred frenzy seized the father's brain,
 And Mercy from that hour implored in vain.
 Ah! who will e'er believe the words I say?
 His daughters he accused, and the same day
 They both were cast into the dungeon's gloom,
 That dismal ante-chamber of the tomb,
 Arraigned, condemned, and sentenced to the flame,
 The secret torture and the public shame.

Then to the Grand Inquisitor once more
 The Hidalgo went, more eager than before,

And said: "When Abraham offered up his son,
He clave the wood wherewith it might be done.
By his example taught, let me too bring
Wood from the forest for my offering!"
And the deep voice, without a pause, replied:
"Son of the Church! by faith now justified,
Complete thy sacrifice, even as thou wilt;
The Church absolves thy conscience from all guilt!"

Then this most wretched father went his way
Into the woods, that round his castle lay,
Where once his daughters in their childhood played
With their young mother in the sun and shade.
Now all the leaves had fallen; the branches bare
Made a perpetual moaning in the air,
And screaming from their eyries overhead
The ravens sailed athwart the sky of lead.
With his own hands he lopped the boughs and bound
Fagots, that crackled with foreboding sound,
And on his mules, caparisoned and gay
With bells and tassels, sent them on their way.

Then with his mind on one dark purpose bent,
Again to the Inquisitor he went,
And said: "Behold, the fagots I have brought,
And now, lest my atonement be as nought,
Grant me one more request, one last desire,—
With my own hand to light the funeral fire!"
And Torquemada answered from his seat,
"Son of the Church! thine offering is complete;
Her servants through all ages shall not cease
To magnify thy deed. Depart in peace!"

Upon the market-place, builded of stone
The scaffold rose, whereon Death claimed his own,
At the four corners, in stern attitude,
Four statues of the Hebrew Prophets stood,
Gazing with calm indifference in their eyes
Upon this place of human sacrifice,
Round which was gathering fast the eager crowd,
With clamour of voices dissonant and loud,
And every roof and window was alive
With restless gazers, swarming like a hive.

The church-bells tolled, the chant of monks drew near,
Loud trumpets stammered forth their notes of fear,
A line of torches smoked along the street,
There was a stir, a rush, a tramp of feet.

And, with its banners floating in the air,
 Slowly the long procession crossed the square,
 And, to the statues of the Prophets bound,
 The victims stood, with fagots piled around.
 Then all the air a blast of trumpets shook,
 And louder sang the monks with bell and book,
 And the Hidalgo, lofty, stern, and proud,
 Lifted his torch, and, bursting through the crowd,
 Lighted in haste the fagots, and then fled,
 Lest those imploring eyes should strike him dead !
 O pitiless skies ! why did your clouds retain
 For peasants' fields their floods of hoarded rain ?
 O pitiless earth ! why opened no abyss
 To bury in its chasm a crime like this ?
 That night, a mingled column of fire and smoke
 From the dark thickets of the forest broke,
 And, glaring o'er the landscape leagues away,
 Made all the fields and hamlets bright as day.

Wrapped in a sheet of flame the castle blazed,
 And as the villagers in terror gazed,
 They saw the figure of that cruel knight
 Lean from a window in the turret's height,
 His ghastly face illumined with the glare,
 His hands upraised above his head in prayer,
 Till the floor sank beneath him, and he fell
 Down the black hollow of that burning well.

Three centuries and more above his bones
 Have piled the oblivious years like funeral stones ;
 His name has perished with him, and no trace
 Remains on earth of his afflicted race ;
 But Torquemada's name, with clouds o'er-cast,
 Looms in the distant landscape of the Past,
 Like a burnt tower upon a blackened heath,
 Lit by the fires of burning woods beneath !

INTERLUDE

THUS closed the tale of guilt and gloom,
 That cast upon each listener's face
 Its shadow, and for some brief space
 Unbroken silence filled the room.
 The Jew was thoughtful and distressed ;
 Upon his memory thronged and pressed
 The persecution of his race,

Their wrongs and sufferings and disgrace;
 His head was sunk upon his breast,
 And from his eyes alternate came
 Flashes of wrath and tears of shame.

The Student first the silence broke,
 As one who long has lain in wait,
 With purpose to retaliate,
 And thus he dealt the avenging stroke.
 "In such a company as this,
 A tale so tragic seems amiss,
 That by its terrible control
 O'ermasters and drags down the soul
 Into a fathomless abyss.
 The Italian Tales that you disdain,
 Some merry Night of Straparole,
 Or Machiavelli's Belphagor,
 Would cheer us and delight us more,
 Give greater pleasure and less pain
 Than your grim tragedies of Spain!"

And here the Poet raised his hand,
 With such entreaty and command,
 It stopped discussion at its birth,
 And said: "The story I shall tell
 Has meaning in it, if not mirth;
 Listen, and hear what once befell
 The merry birds of Killingworth!"

CVIII

THE POET'S TALE

THE BIRDS OF KILLINGWORTH

It was the season, when through all the land
 The merle and mavis build, and building sing
 Those lovely lyrics, written by His hand,
 Whom Saxon Cædmon calls the Blithe-heart King.
 When on the boughs the purple buds expand,
 The banners of the vanguard of the Spring,
 And rivulets, rejoicing, rush and leap,
 And wave their fluttering signals from the steep.

The robin and the blue-bird, piping loud,
 Filled all the blossoming orchards with their glee;
 The sparrows chirped as if they still were proud
 Their race in Holy Writ should mentioned be;
 And hungry crows assembled in a crowd,
 Clamoured their piteous prayer incessantly,
 Knowing who hears the ravens cry, and said:
 "Give us, O Lord, this day our daily bread!"

Across the Sound the birds of passage sailed,
 Speaking some unknown language strange and sweet
 Of tropic isle remote, and passing hailed
 The village with the cheers of all their fleet;
 Or quarrelling together, laughed and railed
 Like foreign sailors, landed in the street
 Of seaport town, and with outlandish noise
 Of oaths and gibberish frightening girls and boys.

Thus came the jocund Spring in Killingworth,
 In fabulous days, some hundred years ago;
 And thrifty farmers as they tilled the earth,
 Heard with alarm the cawing of the crow,
 That mingled with the universal mirth,
 Cassandra-like, prognosticating woe;
 They shook their heads, and doomed with dreadful words
 To swift destruction the whole race of birds.

And a town-meeting was convened straightway
 To set a price upon the guilty heads
 Of these marauders, who, in lieu of pay,
 Levied black-mail upon the garden beds
 And cornfields, and beheld without dismay
 The awful scarecrow, with his fluttering shreds;
 The skeleton that waited at their feast,
 Whereby their sinful pleasure was increased.

Then from his house, a temple painted white,
 With fluted columns and a roof of red,
 The Squire came forth, august and splendid sight!
 Slowly descending, with majestic tread,
 Three flights of steps, nor looking left nor right,
 Down the long street he walked, as one who said,
 "A town that boasts inhabitants like me
 Can have no lack of good society!"

The Parson, too, appeared, a man austere,
 The instinct of whose nature was to kill;
 The wrath of God he preached from year to year,
 And read, with fervour, Edwards on the Will;

His favourite pastime was to slay the deer
In Summer on some Adirondac hill ;
E'en now, while walking down the rural lane
He lopped the wayside lilies with his cane.

From the Academy, whose belfry crowned
The hill of Science with its vane of brass,
Came the Preceptor, gazing idly round,
Now at the clouds, and now at the green grass,
And all absorbed in reveries profound
Of fair Almira in the upper class,
Who was, as in a sonnet he had said,
As pure as water, and as good as bread.

And next the Deacon issued from his door,
In his voluminous neck-cloth, white as snow ;
A suit of sable bombazine he wore ;
His form was ponderous, and his step was slow ;
There never was so wise a man before ;
He seemed the incarnate, " Well, I told you so !"
And to perpetuate his great renown
There was a street named after him in town.

These came together in the new town-hall,
With sundry farmers from the region round.
The Squire presided, dignified and tall,
His air impressive and his reasoning sound.
Ill fared it with the birds, both great and small ;
Hardly a friend in all that crowd they found,
But enemies enough, who every one
Charged them with all the crimes beneath the sun.

When they had ended, from his place apart,
Rose the Preceptor, to redress the wrong,
And, trembling like a steed before the start,
Looked round bewildered on the expectant throng ;
Then thought of fair Almira, and took heart
To speak out what was in him, clear and strong,
Alike regardless of their smile or frown,
And quite determined not to be laughed down.

" Plato, anticipating the Reviewers,
From his Republic banished without pity
The Poets ; in this little town of yours,
You put to death, by means of a Committee,
The ballad-singers and the Troubadours,
The street-musicians of the heavenly city,
The birds, who make sweet music for us all
In our dark hours, as David did for Saul.

- " The thrush that carols at the dawn of day
 From the green steeples of the piny wood ;
 The oriole in the elm ; the noisy jay,
 Jargoning like a foreigner at his food ;
 The blue-bird balanced on some topmost spray,
 Flooding with melody the neighbourhood ;
 Linnet and meadow-lark, and all the throng
 That dwell in nests and have the gift of song.
- " You slay them all ! and wherefore ? for the gain
 Of a scant handful more or less of wheat,
 Or rye, or barley, or some other grain,
 Scratched up at random by industrious feet,
 Searching for worm or weevil after rain !
 Or a few cherries, that are not so sweet
 As are the songs these uninvited guests
 Sing at their feast with comfortable breasts.
- " Do you ne'er think what wondrous beings these ?
 Do you ne'er think who made them, and who taught
 The dialect they speak, where melodies
 Alone are the interpreters of thought ?
 Whose household words are songs in many keys,
 Sweeter than instrument of man e'er caught !
 Whose habitations in the tree-tops even
 Are half-way houses on the road to heaven !
- " Think, every morning when the sun peeps through
 The dim, leaf-latticed windows of the grove
 How jubilant the happy birds renew
 Their old, melodious madrigals of love !
 And when you think of this, remember too
 'Tis always morning somewhere, and above
 The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
 Somewhere the birds are singing evermore.
- " Think of your woods and orchards without birds !
 Of empty nests that cling to boughs and beams
 As in an idiot's brain remembered words
 Hang empty 'mid the cobwebs of his dreams !
 Will bleat of flocks or bellowing of herds
 Make up for the lost music, when your teams
 Drag home the stingy harvest, and no more
 The feathered gleaners follow to your door ?
- " What ! would you rather see the incessant stir
 Of insects in the winrows of the hay,
 And hear the locust and the grasshopper
 Their melancholy hurdy-gurdies play ?

Is this more pleasant to you than the whirr
Of meadow-lark, and its sweet roundelay,
Or twitter of little field-fares, as you take
Your nooning in the shade of bush and brake ?

“ You call them thieves and pillagers ; but know
They are the wingèd wardens of your farms,
Who from the cornfields drive the insidious foe,
And from your harvests keep a hundred harms ;
Even the blackest of them all, the crow,
Renders good service as your man-at-arms,
Crushing the beetle in his coat of mail,
And crying havoc on the slug and snail.

“ How can I teach your children gentleness,
And mercy to the weak, and reverence
For Life, which, in its weakness or excess,
Is still a gleam of God's omnipotence,
Or Death, which, seeming darkness, is no less
The selfsame light, although averted hence,
When by your laws, your actions, and your speech,
You contradict the very things I teach ? ”

With this he closed ; and through the audience went
A murmur, like the rustle of dead leaves ;
The farmers laughed and nodded, and some bent
Their yellow heads together like their sheaves ;
Men have no faith in fine-spun sentiment
Who put their trust in bullocks and in beeves.
The birds were doomed ; and, as the record shows,
A bounty offered for the heads of crows.

There was another audience out of reach,
Who had no voice nor vote in making laws,
But in the papers read his little speech,
And crowned his modest temples with applause ;
They made him conscious, each one more than each,
He still was victor, vanquished in their cause.
Sweetest of all the applause he won from thee,
O fair Almira at the Academy !

And so the dreadful massacre began ;
O'er fields and orchards, and o'er woodland crests,
The ceaseless fusillade of terror ran,
Dead fell the birds, with blood-stains on their breasts,
Or wounded crept away from sight of man,
While the young died of famine in their nests ;
A slaughter to be told in groans, not words,
The very St. Bartholomew of Birds !

The Summer came, and all the birds were dead ;
 The days were like hot coals ; the very ground
 Was burned to ashes ; in the orchards fed
 Myriads of caterpillars, and around
 The cultivated fields and garden beds
 Hosts of devouring insects crawled, and found
 No foe to check their march, till they had made
 The land a desert without leaf or shade.

Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,
 Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly
 Slaughtered the Innocents. From the trees spun down
 The canker-worms upon the passers-by,
 Upon each woman's bonnet, shawl, and gown,
 Who shook them off with just a little cry ;
 They were the terror of each favourite walk,
 The endless theme of all the village talk.

The farmers grew impatient, but a few
 Confessed their error, and would not complain,
 For after all, the best thing one can do
 When it is raining, is to let it rain.
 Then they repealed the law, although they knew
 It would not call the dead to life again ;
 As school-boys, finding their mistake too late,
 Draw a wet sponge across the accusing slate.

That year in Killingworth the Autumn came
 Without the light of his majestic look,
 The wonder of the falling tongues of flame,
 The illumined pages of his Doomsday-Book.
 A few lost leaves blushed crimson with their shame,
 And drowned themselves despairing in the brook,
 While the wild wind went moaning everywhere,
 Lamenting the dead children of the air !

But the next Spring a stranger sight was seen,
 A sight that never yet by bard was sung,
 As great a wonder as it would have been
 If some dumb animal had found a tongue !
 A wagon, overarched with evergreen,
 Upon whose boughs were wicker cages hung,
 All full of singing birds, came down the street,
 Filling the air with music wild and sweet.

From all the country round these birds were brought,
 By order of the town, with anxious quest,
 And, loosened from their wicker prisons, sought
 In woods and fields the places they loved best,

Singing loud canticles, which many thought
Were satires to the authorities addressed,
While others, listening in green lanes, averred
Such lovely music never had been heard!

But blither still and louder carolled they
Upon the morrow, for they seemed to know
It was the fair Almira's wedding-day,
And everywhere, around, above, below,
When the Preceptor bore his bride away,
Their songs burst forth in joyous overflow,
And a new heaven bent over a new earth
Amid the sunny farms of Killingworth.

CIX

FINALE

THE hour was late; the fire burned low,
The landlord's eyes were closed in sleep,
And near the story's end a deep
Sonorous sound at times was heard,
As when the distant bagpipes blow.
At this all laughed; the Landlord stirred,
As one awakening from a swoond,
And, gazing anxiously around,
Protested that he had not slept,
But only shut his eyes, and kept
His ears attentive to each word.

Then all arose, and said "Good Night."
Alone remained the drowsy Squire
To rake the embers of the fire,
And quench the waning parlour light:
While from the windows, here and there,
The scattered lamps a moment gleamed,
And the illumined hostel seemed
The constellation of the Bear,
Downward, athwart the misty air,
Sinking and setting toward the sun.
Far off the village clock struck one.

FLOWER-DE-LUCE

1867

FLOWER-DE-LUCE

CX

FLOWER-DE-LUCE

BEAUTIFUL lily, dwelling by still rivers,
Or solitary mere,
Or where the sluggish meadow-brook delivers
Its waters to the weir!

Thou laughest at the mill, the whirr and worry
Of spindle and of loom,
And the great wheel that toils amid the hurry
And rushing of the flume.

Born to the purple, born to joy and pleasance,
Thou dost not toil nor spin,
But makest glad and radiant with thy presence
The meadow and the lin.

The wind blows, and uplifts thy drooping banner,
And round thee throng and run
The rushes, the green yeomen of thy manor,
The outlaws of the sun.

The burnished dragon-fly is thine attendant,
And tilts against the field,
And down the listed sunbeam rides resplendent
With steel-blue mail and shield.

Thou art the Iris, fair among the fairest,
Who, armed with golden rod
And winged with the celestial azure, bearest
The message of some god.

Thou art the Muse, who far from crowded cities
Hauntest the sylvan streams,
Playing on pipes of reed the artless dittles
That come to us as dreams.

O flower-de-luce, bloom on, and let the river
 Linger to kiss thy feet !
 O flower of song, bloom on, and make for ever
 The world more fair and sweet.

CXI

PALINGENESIS

I LAY upon the headland height, and listened
 To the incessant sobbing of the sea
 In caverns under me,
 And watched the waves, that tossed and fled and glistened,
 Until the rolling meadows of amethyst
 Melted away in mist.

Then suddenly, as one from sleep, I started ;
 For round about me all the sunny capes
 Seemed peopled with the shapes
 Of those whom I had known in days departed,
 Apparelled in the loveliness which gleams
 On faces seen in dreams.

A moment only, and the light and glory
 Faded away, and the disconsolate shore
 Stood lonely as before ;
 And the wild roses of the promontory
 Around me shuddered in the wind, and shed
 Their petals of pale red.

There was an old belief that in the embers
 Of all things their primordial form exists
 And cunning alchemists
 Could re-create the rose with all its members
 From its own ashes, but without the bloom,
 Without the lost perfume.

Ah, me ! what wonder-working, occult science
 Can from the ashes in our hearts once more
 The Rose of Youth restore ?
 What craft of alchemy can bid defiance
 To Time and Change, and for a single hour
 Renew this phantom flower ?

" Oh, give me back," I cried, " the vanished splendours,
 The breath of morn, and the exultant strife,
 When the swift Stream of Life

Bounds over its rocky channel, and surrenders
The pond, with all its lilies, for the leap
Into the unknown deep ! ”

And the sea answered, with a lamentation,
Like some old prophet wailing, and it said,
“ Alas ! thy youth is dead !
It breathes no more, its heart has no pulsation,
In the dark places with the dead of old,
It lies for ever cold ! ”

Then said I, “ From its consecrated cerements
I will not drag this sacred dust again,
Only to give me pain ;
But, still remembering all the lost endearments,
Go on my way, like one who looks before,
And turns to weep no more. ”

Into what land of harvests, what plantations
Bright with autumnal foliage and the glow
Of sunsets burning low ;
Beneath what midnight skies, whose constellations
Light up the spacious avenues between
This world and the unseen !

Amid what friendly greetings and caresses,
What households, though not alien, yet not mine,
What bowers of rest divine ;
To what temptations in lone wildernesses,
What famine of the heart, what pain and loss,
The bearing of what cross !

I do not know ; nor will I vainly question
Those pages of the mystic book which hold
The story still untold,
But without rash conjecture or suggestion
Turn its last leaves in reverence and good heed,
Until “ The End ” I read.

CXII

THE BRIDGE OF CLOUD

BURN, O evening hearth, and waken
Pleasant visions, as of old !
Though the house by winds be shaken,
Safe I keep this room of gold.

Ah, no longer wizard Fancy
Builds its castles in the air,
Luring me by necromancy
Up the never-ending stair.

But, instead, it builds me bridges
Over many a dark ravine,
Where beneath the gusty ridges,
Cataracts dash and roar unseen.

And I cross them, little heeding
Blast of wind, or torrent's roar,
As I follow the receding
Footsteps that have gone before.

Nought avails the imploring gesture,
Nought avails the cry of pain!
When I touch the flying vesture,
'Tis the grey robe of the rain.

Baffled I return, and leaning
O'er the parapets of cloud,
Watch the mist that intervening
Wraps the valley in its shroud.

And the sounds of life ascending
Feebly, vaguely, meet the ear,
Murmur of bells and voices blending
With the rush of waters near.

Well I know what there lies hidden,
Every tower, and town, and farm,
And again the land forbidden
Reassumes its vanished charm.

Well I know the secret places,
And the nests in hedge and tree;
At what doors are friendly faces,
In what hearts a thought of me.

Through the mist and darkness sinking,
Blown by wind, and beaten by shower,
Down I fling the thought I'm thinking,
Down I toss this Alpine flower.

CXIII

HAWTHORNE

MAY 23, 1864

How beautiful it was, that one bright day
In the long week of rain!
Though all its splendour could not chase away
The omnipresent pain.

The lovely town was white with apple-blooms,
And the great elms o'erhead,
Dark shadows wove on their aerial looms,
Shot through with golden thread.

Across the meadows, by the grey old manse,
The historic river flowed ;—
I was as one who wanders in a trance,
Unconscious of his road.

The faces of familiar friends seemed strange ;
Their voices I could hear,
And yet the words they uttered seemed to change
Their meaning to the ear.

For the one face I looked for was not there,
The one low voice was mute ;
Only an unseen presence filled the air,
And baffled my pursuit.

Now I look back, and meadow, manse, and stream,
Dimly my thought defines ;
I only see—a dream within a dream—
The hill-top hearsed with pines.

I only hear above his place of rest
Their tender undertone,
The infinite longings of a troubled breast,
The voice so like his own.

There in seclusion and remote from men
The wizard hand lies cold,
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,
And left the tale half told.

Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
 And the lost clue regain?
 The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower,
 Unfinished must remain!

CXIV

CHRISTMAS BELLS

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day
 Their old, familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet
 The words repeat
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
 The belfries of all Christendom
 Had rolled along
 The unbroken song
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
 The world revolved from night to day,
 A voice, a chime,
 A chant sublime
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
 The cannon thundered in the South,
 And with the sound
 The carols drowned
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
 The hearthstones of a continent,
 And made forlorn
 The households born
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
 "There is no peace on earth," I said;
 "For hate is strong,
 And mocks the song
 Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep :
 " God is not dead ! nor doth he sleep !
 The Wrong shall fail,
 The Right prevail,
 With peace on earth, good-will to men ! "

CXV

THE KALIF OF BALDACCA

INTO the city of Kambalu,
 By the road that leadeth to Ispahan,
 At the head of his dusty caravan,
 Laden with treasure from realms afar,
 Baldacca, and Kelat, and Kandahar,
 Rode the great captain Alaù.

The Khan from his palace window gazed :
 He saw in the thronging street beneath,
 In the light of the setting sun, that blazed
 Through the clouds of dust by the caravan raised,
 The flash of harness and jewelled sheath,
 And the shining scymitars of the guard,
 And the weary camels, that bared their teeth,
 As they passed and passed, through the gates unbarred
 Into the shade of the palace yard.

Thus into the city of Kambalu
 Rode the great captain Alaù ;
 And he stood before the Khan, and said,—
 " The enemies of my lord are dead ;
 All the Kalifs of all the West
 Bow and obey his least behest ;
 The plains are dark with the mulberry-trees,
 The weavers are busy in Samarcand,
 The miners are sifting the golden sand,
 The divers are plunging for pearls in the seas,
 And peace and plenty are in the land.

" Only Baldacca's Kalif alone
 Rose in rebellion against thy throne ;
 His treasures are at thy palace door,
 With the swords, and the shawls, and the jewels he wore ;
 His body is dust o'er the Desert blown.

“ A mile outside of Baldacca's gate
I left my forces to lie in wait,
Concealed by forests and hillocks of sand,
And forward dashed with a handful of men
To lure the old tiger from his den
Into the ambush I had planned.
Ere we reached the town the alarm was spread,
For we heard the sound of gongs from within ;
With clash of cymbals and warlike din
The gates swung wide ; we turned and fled,
And the garrison sallied forth and pursued,
With the grey old Kalif at their head,
And above them the banner of Mahomed :
Thus we snared them all, and the town was subdued.

“ As in at the gate we rode, behold,
A tower that was called the Tower of Gold !
For there the Kalif had hidden his wealth,
Heaped, and hoarded, and piled on high,
Like sacks of wheat in a granary,
And there the old miser crept by stealth
To feel of the gold that gave him health,
To gaze, and gloat with his hungry eye
On jewels that gleamed like a glowworm's spark,
Or the eyes of a panther in the dark.

“ I said to the Kalif, ‘ Thou art old,
Thou hast no need of so much gold.
Thou shouldst not have heaped and hidden it here,
Till the breath of battle was hot and near,
But have sown through the land these useless hoards,
To spring into shining blades of swords,
And keep thine honour sweet and clear.
These grains of gold are not grains of wheat ;
These bars of silver thou canst not eat ;
These jewels and pearls and precious stones
Cannot cure the aches in thy bones,
Nor keep the feet of Death one hour
From climbing the stairways of thy tower !

“ Then into this dungeon I locked the drone,
And left him to feed there all alone
In the honey-cells of his golden hive :
Never a prayer, nor a cry, nor a groan,
Was heard from those massive walls of stone,
Nor again was the Kalif seen alive !

“ When at last we unlocked the door,
 We found him dead upon the floor ;
 The rings had dropped from his withered hands,
 His teeth were like bones in the desert sands ;
 Still clutching his treasures he had died ;
 And as he lay there, he appeared
 A statue of gold with a silver beard,
 His arms outstretched as if crucified.”

This is the story, strange and true,
 That the great captain Alaù
 Told to his brother the Tartar Khan,
 When he rode that day into Kambalu,
 By the road that leadeth to Ispahan.

CXVI

THE WIND OVER THE CHIMNEY

SEE, the fire is sinking low,
 Dusky red the embers glow,
 While above them still I cower,—
 While a moment more I linger,
 Though the clock, with lifted finger,
 Points beyond the midnight hour.

Sings the blackened log a tune
 Learned in some forgotten June
 From a schoolboy in his play,
 When they both were young together,
 Heart of youth and summer weather
 Making all their holiday.

And the night-wind rising, hark !
 How above there in the dark,
 In the midnight and the snow,
 Ever wilder, fiercer, grander,
 Like the trumpets of Iskander,
 All the noisy chimneys blow !

Every quivering tongue of flame
 Seems to murmur some great name,
 Seems to say to me, “ Aspire ! ”
 But the night-wind answers,—“ Hollow
 Are the visions that you follow ;
 Into darkness sinks your fire ! ”

Then the flicker of the blaze
 Gleams on volumes of old days,
 Written by masters of the art,
 Loud through those majestic pages
 Rolls the melody of ages,
 Throb the harp-strings of the heart.

And again the tongues of flame
 Start exulting and exclaim,—
 “These are prophets, bards, and seers;
 In the horoscope of nations,
 Like ascendant constellations,
 They control the coming years.”

But the night-wind cries,—“ Despair !
 Those who walk with feet of air
 Leave no long-enduring marks ;
 At God’s forges incandescent
 Mighty hammers beat incessant,
 These are but the flying sparks.

“Dust are all the hands that wrought ;
 Books are sepulchres of thought ;
 The dead laurels of the dead
 Rustle for a moment only,
 Like the withered leaves in lonely
 Churchyards at some passing tread.”

Suddenly the flame sinks down ;
 Sink the rumours of renown ;
 And alone the night-wind drear
 Clamours louder, wilder, vaguer,
 “ ’Tis the brand of Meleager
 Dying on the hearth-stone here ! ”

And I answer,—“ Though it be,
 Why should that discomfort me ?
 No endeavour is in vain ;
 Its reward is in the doing,
 And the rapture of pursuing
 Is the prize the vanquished gain.”

CXVII

THE BELLS OF LYNN,

HEARD AT NAHANT

O CURFEW of the setting sun ! O bells of Lynn !
O requiem of the dying day ! O bells of Lynn !

From the dark belfries of yon cloud-cathedral wafted,
Your sounds ærial seem to float, O bells of Lynn !

Borne on the evening wind across the crimson twilight,
O'er land and sea they rise and fall, O bells of Lynn !

The fisherman in his boat, far out beyond the headland,
Listens and leisurely rows ashore, O bells of Lynn !

Over the shining sands, the wandering cattle homeward
Follow each other to your call, O bells of Lynn !

The distant lighthouse hears, and with his flaming signal,
Answers you, passing the watchword on, O bells of Lynn !

And down the darkening coast run the tumultuous surges,
And clap their hands, and shout to you, O bells of Lynn !

Till from the shuddering sea, with your wild incantation,
Ye summon up the spectral moon, O bells of Lynn !

And startled at the sight, like the weird woman of Endor,
Ye cry aloud, and then are still, O bells of Lynn !

CXVIII

KILLED AT THE FORD

HE is dead, the beautiful youth,
The heart of honour, the tongue of truth,—
He, the life and light of us all,
Whose voice was as blithe as a bugle call,
Whom all eyes followed with one consent,
The cheer of whose laugh, and whose pleasant word,
Hushed all murmurs of discontent.

Only last night, as we rode along,
 Down the dark of the mountain gap,
 To visit the picquet-guard at the ford,
 Little dreaming of any mishap,
 He was humming the words of some old song:
 "Two red roses he had on his cap,
 And another he bore at the point of his sword."

Sudden and swift a whistling ball
 Came out of a wood, and the voice was still;
 Something I heard in the darkness fall,
 And for a moment my blood grew chill;
 I spake in a whisper, as he who speaks
 In a room when some one is lying dead;
 But he made no answer to what I said.

We lifted him on his saddle again,
 And through the mire, and the mist, and the rain
 Carried him back to the silent camp,
 And laid him as if asleep on his bed;
 And I saw by the light of the surgeon's lamp;
 Two white roses upon his cheeks,
 And one just over his heart blood-red!

And I saw in a vision how far and fleet
 That fatal bullet went speeding forth,
 Till it reached a town in the distant North,
 Till it reached a house in a sunny street,
 Till it reached a heart that ceased to beat
 Without a murmur, without a cry;
 And a bell was tolled in that far-off town,
 For one who had passed from cross to crown,—
 And the neighbours wondered that she should die.

CXIX

GIOTTO'S TOWER

How many lives, made beautiful and sweet
 By self-devotion and by self-restraint,—
 Whose pleasure is to run without complaint
 On unknown errands of the Paraclete,—
 Wanting the reverence of unshodden feet,
 Fail of the nimbus which the artists paint
 Around the shining forehead of the saint,
 And are in their completeness incomplete.

In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,
 The lily of Florence blossoming in stone,—
 A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
 The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
 That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
 But wanting still the glory of the spire.

CXX

TO-MORROW

'Tis late at night, and in the realm of sleep
 My little lambs are folded like the flocks;
 From room to room I hear the wakeful clocks
 Challenge the passing hour, like guards that keep
 Their solitary watch on tower and steep;
 Far off I hear the crowing of the cocks,
 And through the opening door that time unlocks
 Feel the fresh breathing of To-morrow creep.
 To-morrow! the mysterious, unknown guest,
 Who cries to me: "Remember Barmecide,
 And tremble to be happy with the rest."
 And I make answer: "I am satisfied;
 I dare not ask; I know not what is best;
 God hath already said what shall betide."

CXXI

DIVINA COMMEDIA

1

OfT have I seen at some cathedral door
 A labourer, pausing in the dust and heat,
 Lay down his burden, and with reverent feet
 Enter, and cross himself, and on the floor
 Kneel to repeat his paternoster o'er;
 Far off the noises of the world retreat;
 The loud vociferations of the street
 Become an undistinguishable roar.
 So, as I enter here from day to day,
 And leave my burden at this minster gate,

Kneeling in prayer, and not ashamed to pray,
 The tumult of the time disconsolate
 To inarticulate murmurs dies away,
 While the eternal ages watch and wait.

2

How strange the sculptures that adorn these towers!
 This crowd of statues, in whose folded sleeves
 Birds build their nests; while canopied with leaves
 Parvis and portal bloom like trellised bowers,
 And the vast minster seems a cross of flowers!
 But fiends and dragons on the gargoyled eaves
 Watch the dead Christ between the living thieves,
 And, underneath, the traitor Judas lowers!
 Ah! from what agonies of heart and brain,
 What exultations trampling on despair,
 What tenderness, what tears, what hate of wrong,
 What passionate outcry of a soul in pain,
 Uprose this poem of the earth and air,
 This mediæval miracle of song!

3

I enter, and I see thee in the gloom
 Of the long aisles, O poet saturnine!
 And strive to make my steps keep pace with thine.
 The air is filled with some unknown perfume;
 The congregation of the dead make room
 For thee to pass; the votive tapers shine;
 Like rooks that haunt Ravenna's groves of pine
 The hovering echoes fly from tomb to tomb.
 From the confessionals I hear arise
 Rehearsals of forgotten tragedies,
 And lamentations from the crypts below;
 And then a voice celestial, that begins
 With the pathetic words, "Although your sins
 As scarlet be," and ends with "as the snow."

4

I lift mine eyes, and all the windows blaze
 With forms of saints and holy men who died,
 Here martyred and hereafter glorified;
 And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
 Christ's Triumph, and the angelic roundelays,
 With splendour upon splendour multiplied;
 And Beatrice again at Dante's side
 No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise.

And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs
 Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love,
 And benedictions of the Holy Ghost ;
 And the melodious bells among the spires
 O'er all the house-tops and through heaven above
 Proclaim the elevation of the Host !

O star of morning and of liberty !
 O bringer of the light, whose splendour shines
 Above the darkness of the Apennines,
 Forerunner of the day that is to be !
 The voices of the city and the sea,
 The voices of the mountains and the pines,
 Repeat thy song, till the familiar lines
 Are footpaths for the thought of Italy !
 Thy fame is blown abroad from all the heights,
 Through all the nations, and a sound is heard,
 As of a mighty wind, and men devout,
 Strangers of Rome, and the new proselytes,
 In their own language hear thy wondrous word,
 And many are amazed and many doubt.

CXXII

NOËL *

L'Académie en respect,
 Nonobstant l'incorrection,
 À la faveur du sujet,
 Ture-lure,
 N'y fera point de rature ;
 Noël ! ture-lure-lure.

GUI-BARÔZAL.

QUAND les astres de Noël
 Brillaient, palpitaient au ciel,
 Six gaillards, et chacun ivre,
 Chantaient gaïment dans le givre,
 “ Bons amis,
 Allons donc chez Agassiz ! ”

* Sent to Mr. Agassiz, on Christmas Eve, 1864, with a basket of various wines.

Ces illustres Pélerins
 D'Outre Mer, adroits et fins,
 Se donnant des airs de prêtre,
 À l'envi se vantaient d'être
 " Bons amis,
 De Jean Rudolphe Agassiz."

Œil-de-Perdrix, grand farceur,
 Sans reproche et sans pudeur,
 Dans son patois de Bourgogne,
 Bredouillait comme un ivrogne,
 " Bons amis,
 J'ai dansé chez Agassiz ! "

Verzenay le Champenois,
 Bon Français, point New-Yorquois,
 Mais des environs d'Avize,
 Fredonne, à maintes reprises,
 " Bons amis,
 J'ai chanté chez Agassiz ! "

A côté marchait un vieux
 Hidalgo, mais non mousseux ;
 Dans le temps de Charlemagne,
 Fut son père Grand d'Espagne !
 " Bons amis,
 J'ai diné chez Agassiz ! "

Dérrière eux un Bordelais,
 Gascon, s'il en fût jamais,
 Parfumé de poésie
 Riait, chantait plein de vie,
 " Bons amis,
 J'ai soupé chez Agassiz ! "

Avec ce beau cadet roux,
 Bras dessus et bras dessous,
 Mine altière et couleur terne,
 Vint le Sire de Sauterne ;
 " Bons amis,
 J'ai couché chez Agassiz ! "

Mais le dernier de ces preux
 Était un pauvre Chartreux,
 Qui disait, d'un ton robuste,
 " Bénédiction sur le Juste !
 Bons amis,
 Bénissons Père Agassiz ! "

Ils arrivent trois à trois,
Montent l'escalier de bois
Clopin-clopant ! quel gendarme
Peut permettre ce vacarme,
Bons amis,
À la porte d'Agassiz !

“ Ouvrez donc, mon bon seigneur,
Ouvrez vite et n'ayez peur ;
Ouvrez, ouvrez, car nous sommes
Gens de bien et gentilshommes,
Bons amis,
De la famille Agassiz.”

Chut, ganaches ! taisez-vous !
C'en est trop de vos glouglous
Épargnez aux Philosophes
Vos abominables strophes !
Bons amis,
Respectez mon Agassiz.

TRANSLATIONS

TRANSLATIONS

AND

GUY DE MAURIAC

FROM THE FRENCH

BY
THE
LONDON
TRANSLATION
SOCIETY

TRANSLATIONS

TRANSLATIONS

CXXIII

COPLAS DE MANRIQUE*

FROM THE SPANISH

O LET the soul her slumbers break,
Let thought be quickened, and awake;
Awake to see
How soon this life is past and gone,
And death comes softly stealing on,
How silently!

Swiftly our pleasures glide away,
Our hearts recall the distant day
With many sighs;
The moments that are speeding fast
We heed not, but the past,—the past,—
More highly prize.

Onward its course the present keeps,
Onward the constant current sweeps,
Till life is done;
And, did we judge of time aright,
The past and future in their flight
Would be as one.

Let no one fondly dream again,
That Hope and all her shadowy train
Will not decay;
Fleeting as were the dreams of old,
Remembered like a tale that's told,
They pass away.

Our lives are rivers, gliding free
To that unfathomed, boundless sea,
The silent grave!
Thither all earthly pomp and boast
Roll, to be swallowed up and lost
In one dark wave.

Thither the mighty torrents stray,
Thither the brook pursues its way,
And tinkling rill.
There all are equal. Side by side
The poor man and the son of pride
Lie calm and still.

I will not here invoke the throng
Of orators and sons of song,
The deathless few ;
Fiction entices and deceives,
And, sprinkled o'er her fragrant leaves,
Lies poisonous dew.

To One alone my thoughts arise,
The Eternal Truth,—the Good and Wise,—
To Him I cry,
Who shared on earth our common lot,
But the world comprehended not
His deity.

This world is but the rugged road
Which leads us to the bright abode
Of peace above ;
So let us choose that narrow way,
Which leads no traveller's foot astray
From realms of love.

Our cradle is the starting-place,
In life we run the onward race,
And reach the goal ;
When, in the mansions of the blest,
Death leaves to its eternal rest
The weary soul.

Did we but use it as we ought,
This world would school each wandering thought
To its high state.
Faith wings the soul beyond the sky,
Up to that better world on high,
For which we wait.

Yes,—the glad messenger of love,
To guide us to our home above,
The Saviour came ;
Born amid mortal cares and fears,
He suffered in this vale of tears
A death of shame.

Behold of what delusive worth
The bubbles we pursue on earth,
The shapes we chase;
Amid a world of treachery !
They vanish ere death shuts the eye,
And leave no trace.

Time steals them from us,—chances strange,
Disastrous accidents, and change,
That come to all ;
Even in the most exalted state,
Relentless sweeps the stroke of fate ;
The strongest fall.

Tell me,—the charms that lovers seek
In the clear eye and blushing cheek,
The hues that play
O'er rosy lip and brow of snow,
When hoary age approaches slow,
Ah, where are they ?

The cunning skill, the curious arts,
The glorious strength that youth imparts
In life's first stage ;
These shall become a heavy weight,
When Time swings wide his outward gate
To weary age.

The noble blood of Gothic name,
Heroes emblazoned high to fame,
In long array ;
How, in the onward course of time,
The landmarks of that race sublime
Were swept away !

Some, the degraded slaves of lust,
Prostrate and trampled in the dust,
Shall rise no more ;
Others, by guilt and crime, maintain
The scutcheon, that, without a stain,
Their fathers bore.

Wealth and high estate of pride,
With what untimely speed they glide,
How soon depart !
Bid not the shadowy phantoms stay,
The vassals of a mistress they,
Of fickle heart.

These gifts in Fortune's hands are found ;
Her swift revolving wheel turns round,
And they are gone !
No rest the inconstant goddess knows,
But changing, and without repose,
Still hurries on.

Even could the hand of avarice save
Its gilded baubles, till the grave
Reclaimed its prey,
Let none on such poor hopes rely ;
Life, like an empty dream, flits by,
And where are they ?

Earthly desires and sensual lust
Are passions springing from the dust,—
They fade and die ;
But, in the life beyond the tomb,
They seal the immortal spirit's doom
Eternally !

The pleasures and delights, which mask
In treacherous smiles life's serious task,
What are they, all,
But the fleet coursers of the chase,
And death an ambush in the race,
Wherein we fall ?

No foe, no dangerous pass, we heed,
Brook no delay,—but onward speed
With loosened rein ;
And, when the fatal snare is near,
We strive to check our mad career,
But strive in vain.

Could we new charms to age impart,
And fashion with a cunning art
The human face,
As we can clothe the soul with light,
And make the glorious spirit bright
With heavenly grace,—

How busily each passing hour,
Should we exert that magic power !
What ardour show,
To deck the sensual slave of sin,
Yet leave the freeborn soul within,
In weeds of woe !

Monarchs, the powerful and the strong,
Famous in history and in song
Of olden time,
Saw, by the stern decrees of fate,
Their kingdoms lost, and desolate
Their race sublime.

Who is the champion? who the strong?
Pontiff and priest, and sceptred throng?
On these shall fall
As heavily the hand of Death,
As when it stays the shepherd's breath
Beside his stall.

I speak not of the Trojan name,
Neither its glory nor its shame
Has met our eyes;
Nor of Rome's great and glorious dead,
Though we have heard so oft, and read,
Their histories.

Little avails it now to know
Of ages passed so long ago,
Nor how they rolled;
Our theme shall be of yesterday,
Which to oblivion sweeps away
Like days of old.

Where is the King, Don Juan? Where
Each royal prince and noble heir
Of Aragon?
Where are the courtly gallantries?
The deeds of love and high emprise,
In battle done?

Tourney and joust, that charmed the eye,
And scarf, and gorgeous panoply,
And nodding plume,—
What were they but a pageant scene?
What but the garlands, gay and green,
That deck the tomb?

Where are the high-born dames, and where
Their gay attire, and jewelled hair,
And odours sweet?
Where are the gentle knights that came
To kneel and breathe love's ardent flame,
Low at their feet?

Where is the song of Troubadour?
 Where are the lute and gay tambour
 They loved of yore?
 Where is the mazy dance of old,
 The flowing robes, inwrought with gold,
 The dancers wore?

And he who next the sceptre swayed,
 Henry, whose royal court displayed
 Such power and pride;
 O, in what winning smiles arrayed,
 The world its various pleasures laid
 His throne beside!

But O, how false and full of guile
 That world which wore so soft a smile
 But to betray!
 She, that had been his friend before,
 Now from the fated monarch tore
 Her charms away.

The countless gifts,—the stately walls,
 The royal palaces, and halls
 All filled with gold;
 Plate with armorial bearings wrought,
 Chambers with ample treasures fraught
 Of wealth untold;

The noble steeds and harness bright,
 And gallant lord, and stalwart knight,
 In rich array,—
 Where shall we seek them now? Alas!
 Like the bright dewdrops on the grass,
 They passed away.

His brother, too, whose factious zeal
 Usurped the sceptre of Castile,
 Unskilled to reign;—
 What a gay, brilliant court had he,
 When all the flower of chivalry
 Was in his train!

But he was mortal; and the breath,
 That flamed from the hot forge of Death,
 Blasted his years;
 Judgment of God! that flame by thee,
 When raging fierce and fearfully,
 Was quenched in tears!

Spain's haughty Constable,—the true
 And gallant Master, whom we knew
 Most loved of all.
 Breathe not a whisper of his pride,—
 He on the gloomy scaffold died,
 Ignoble fall!

The countless treasures of his care,
 His hamlets green and cities fair,
 His mighty power,—
 What where they all but grief and shame,
 Tears and a broken heart, when came
 The parting hour?

His other brothers, proud and high,
 Masters, who, in prosperity,
 Might rival kings;
 Who made the bravest and the best
 The bondsmen of their high behest,
 Their underlings;

What was their prosperous estate,
 When high exalted and elate
 With power and pride?
 What, but a transient gleam of light,
 A flame, which, glaring at its height,
 Grew dim and died?

So many a duke of royal name,
 Marquis and count of spotless fame,
 And baron brave,
 That might the sword of empire wield,
 All these, O Death, hast thou concealed
 In the dark grave!

Their deeds of mercy and of arms,
 In peaceful days, or war's alarms,
 When thou dost show,
 O Death, thy stern and angry face,
 One stroke of thy all-powerful mace
 Can overthrow.

Unnumbered hosts, that threaten nigh,
 Pennon and standard flaunting high,
 And flag displayed;
 High battlements intrenched around,
 Bastion, and moated wall, and mound,
 And palisade,

And covered trench, secure and deep,—
 All these cannot one victim keep,
 O Death, from thee,
 When thou dost battle in thy wrath,
 And thy strong shafts pursue their path
 Unerringly.

O World! so few the years we live,
 Would that the life which thou dost give
 Were life indeed!
 Alas! thy sorrows fall so fast,
 Our happiest hour is when at last
 The soul is freed.

Our days are covered o'er with grief,
 And sorrows neither few nor brief
 Veil all in gloom;
 Left desolate of real good,
 Within this cheerless solitude
 No pleasures bloom.

Thy pilgrimage begins in tears,
 And ends in bitter doubts and fears,
 Or dark despair;
 Midway so many toils appear,
 That he who lingers longest here
 Knows most of care.

Thy goods are bought with many a groan,
 By the hot sweat of toil alone,
 And weary hearts;
 Fleet-footed is the approach of woe,
 But with a lingering step and slow
 Its form departs.

And he, the good man's shield and shade,
 To whom all hearts their homage paid,
 As Virtue's son,—
 Roderic Manrique,—he whose name
 Is written on the scroll of Fame,
 Spain's champion;

His signal deeds and prowess high
 Demand no pompous eulogy,—
 Ye saw his deeds!
 Why should their praise in verse be sung?
 The name, that dwells on every tongue,
 No minstrel needs.

To friends a friend ;—how kind to all
 The vassals of this ancient hall
 And feudal fief !
 To foes how stern a foe was he !
 And to the valiant and the free
 How brave a chief !

What prudence with the old and wise ;
 What grace in youthful gaieties ;
 In all how sage !
 Benignant to the serf and slave,
 He showed the base and falsely brave
 A lion's rage.

His was Octavian's prosperous star,
 The rush of Cæsar's conquering car
 At battle's call ;
 His, Scipio's virtue ; his, the skill
 And the indomitable will
 Of Hannibal.

His was a Trajan's goodness,—his
 A Titus' noble charities
 And righteous law ;
 The arm of Hector, and the might
 Of Tully, to maintain the right
 In truth's just cause :

The clemency of Antonine,
 Aurelius' countenance divine,
 Firm, gentle, still ;
 The eloquence of Adrian,
 And Theodosius' love to man,
 And generous will :

In tented field and bloody fray,
 An Alexander's vigorous sway
 And stern command ;
 The faith of Constantine ; ay, more,
 The fervent love Camillus bore
 His native land.

He left no well-filled treasury,
 He heaped no pile of riches high,
 Nor massive plate ;
 He fought the moors,—and, in their fall,
 City and tower and castle wall
 Were his estate.

Upon the hard-fought battle-ground,
 Brave steeds and gallant riders found
 A common grave;
 And there the warrior's hand did gain
 The rents, and the long vassal train,
 That conquest gave.

And if, of old, his halls displayed
 The honoured and exalted grade
 His worth had gained,
 So, in the dark, disastrous hour,
 Brothers and bondsmen of his power
 His hand sustained.

After high deeds, not left untold,
 In the stern warfare, which of old
 'Twas his to share,
 Such noble leagues he made, that more
 And fairer regions, than before,
 His guerdon were.

These are the records, half effaced,
 Which, with the hand of youth, he traced
 On history's page;
 But with fresh victories he drew
 Each fading character anew
 In his old age.

By his unrivalled skill, by great,
 And veteran service to the state,
 By worth adored,
 He stood, in his high dignity,
 The proudest knight of chivalry
 Knight of the Sword.

He found his cities and domains
 Beneath a tyrant's galling chains
 And cruel power;
 But by fierce battle and blockade
 Soon his own banner was displayed
 From every tower.

By the tried valour of his hand,
 His monarch and his native land
 Were nobly served;—
 Let Portugal repeat the story,
 And proud Castile, who shared the glory
 His arms deserved.

And when so oft, for weal or woe,
His life upon the fatal throw
Had been cast down ;
When he had served with patriot zeal
Beneath the banner of Castile,
His sovereign's crown ;

And done such deeds of valour strong
That neither history nor song
Can count them all ;
Then, on Ocaña's castled rock,
Death at his portal came to knock,
With sudden call,—

Saying, " Good Cavalier, prepare
To leave this world of toil and care
With joyful mien ;
Let thy strong heart of steel this day
Put on its armour for the fray,—
The closing scene.

" Since thou hast been in battle-strife,
So prodigal of health and life,
For earthly fame,
Let virtue nerve thy heart again ;
Loud on the last stern battle-plain
They call thy name.

" Think not the struggle that draws near
Too terrible for man,—nor fear
To meet the foe ;
Nor let thy noble spirit grieve,
Its life of glorious fame to leave
On earth below.

" A life of honour and of worth
Has no eternity on earth,—
'Tis but a name ;
And yet its glory far exceeds
That base and sensual life, which leads
To want and shame.

" The eternal life, beyond the sky,
Wealth cannot purchase, nor the high
And proud estate ;
The soul in dalliance laid,—the spirit
Corrupt with sin,—shall not inherit
A joy so great.

" But the good monk, in cloistered cell;
 Shall gain it by his book and bell,
 His prayers and tears ;
 And the brave knight, whose arm endures
 Fierce battle, and against the Moors
 His standard rears.

" And thou, brave knight, whose hand has poured
 The life-blood of the Pagan horde
 O'er all the land,
 In heaven shalt thou receive, at length
 The guerdon of thine earthly strength
 And dauntless hand.

" Cheered onward by this promise sure,
 Strong in the faith entire and pure
 Thou dost profess,
 Depart,—thy hope is certainty,—
 The third—the better life on high
 Shalt thou possess."

" O Death, no more, no more delay ;
 My spirit longs to flee away,
 And be at rest ;
 The will of heaven my will shall be,—
 I bow to the divine decree,
 To God's behest.

" My soul is ready to depart,
 No thought rebels, the obedient heart
 Breathes forth no sigh ;
 The wish on earth to linger still
 Were vain, when 'tis God's sovereign will
 That we shall die.

" O Thou, that for our sins didst take
 A human form, and humbly make
 Thy home on earth ;
 Thou, that to thy divinity
 A human nature didst ally
 By mortal birth,

" And in that form didst suffer here
 Torment, and agony, and fear,
 So patiently ;
 By thy redeeming grace alone,
 And not for merits of my own,
 O, pardon me !"

As thus the dying warrior prayed,
 Without one gathering mist or shade
 Upon his mind ;
 Encircled by his family,
 Watched by affection's gentle eye
 So soft and kind ;

His soul to Him, who gave it, rose ;
 God lead it to its long repose,
 Its glorious rest !
 And though the warrior's sun has set,
 Its light shall linger round us yet,
 Bright, radiant, blest.

CXXIV

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA

SHEPHERD ! that with thine amorous, sylvan song
 Hast broken the slumber which encompassed me,—
 That mad'st thy crook from the accursed tree,
 On which thy powerful arms were stretched so long !
 Lead me to mercy's ever-flowing fountains ;
 For thou my shepherd, guard, and guide shalt be ;
 I will obey thy voice, and wait to see
 Thy feet all beautiful upon the mountains.
 Hear, Shepherd !—Thou who for thy flock art dying,
 O, wash away these scarlet sins, for thou
 Rejoicest at the contrite sinner's vow.
 O, wait !—to thee my weary soul is crying,—
 Wait for me !—Yet why ask it when I see,
 With feet nailed to the cross, thou'rt waiting still for me !

CXXV

TO-MORROW

FROM THE SPANISH OF LOPE DE VEGA

LORD, what am I, that, with unceasing care,
 Thou didst seek after me,—that thou didst wait,
 Wet with unhealthy dews, before my gate,
 And pass the gloomy nights of winter there ?

O strange delusion!—that I did not greet
 Thy blest approach, and O, to Heaven how lost,
 If my ingratitude's unkindly frost
 Has chilled the bleeding wounds upon thy feet.
 How oft my guardian angel gently cried,
 "Soul, from thy casement look, and thou shalt see
 How he persists to knock and wait for thee!"
 And, O! how often to that voice of sorrow
 "To-morrow we will open," I replied,
 And when the morrow came I answered still, "To-morrow."

CXXVI

THE NATIVE LAND

FROM THE SPANISH OF FRANCISCO DE ALDANA

CLEAR fount of light! my native land on high,
 Bright with a glory that shall never fade!
 Mansion of truth! without a veil or shade,
 Thy holy quiet meets the spirit's eye.
 There dwells the soul in its ethereal essence,
 Gasping no longer for life's feeble breath;
 But sentinel'd in heaven, its glorious presence
 With pitying eye beholds, yet fears not, death.
 Belovéd country! banished from thy shore,
 A stranger in this prison-house of clay,
 The exiled spirit weeps and sighs for thee!
 Heavenward the bright perfections I adore
 Direct, and the sure promise cheers the way,
 That, whither love aspires, there shall my dwelling be.

CXXVII

THE IMAGE OF GOD

FROM THE SPANISH OF FRANCISCO DE ALDANA

O LORD! that seest, from yon starry height,
 Centred in one the future and the past,
 Fashioned in thine own image, see how fast
 The world obscures in me what once was bright!
 Eternal Sun! the warmth which thou hast given
 To cheer life's flowery April, fast decays;
 Yet, in the hoary winter of my days,
 For ever green shall be my trust in Heaven.