

IN QUANTITY.

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER.

Hexameters and Pentameters.

THESE lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer !
 No—but a most burlesque barbarous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard, ye Muses, in England ?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon our Helicon ?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Germany gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous hexameters.

MILTON.

Alcaics.

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages ;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armouries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyræan
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset—
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of even.

Hendecasyllabics.

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
 Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
 Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
 All composed in a metre of Catullus,
 All in quantity, careful of my motion,
 Like the skater on ice that hardly bears
 him,
 Lest I fall unawares before the people,
 Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
 Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
 Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
 They should speak to me not without a
 welcome,

All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
 Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to tumble,
 So fantastical is the dainty metre.
 Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
 believe me

Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
 O blatant Magazines, regard me rather—
 Since I blush to belaud myself a moment—

As some rare little rose, a piece of inmost
 Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
 Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE.

So Hector spake ; the Trojans roar'd
 applause ;
 Then loosed their sweating horses from
 the yoke,
 And each beside his chariot bound his
 own ;
 And oxen from the city, and goodly sheep
 In haste they drove, and honey-hearted
 wine
 And bread from out the houses brought,
 and heap'd
 Their firewood, and the winds from off
 the plain
 Roll'd the rich vapour far into the heaven.
 And these all night upon the bridge¹ of
 war
 Sat glorying ; many a fire before them
 blazed :

¹ Or, ridge.

As when in heaven the stars about the
moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds are
laid,
And every height comes out, and jutting
peak
And valley, and the immeasurable heavens
Break open to their highest, and all the
stars
Shine, and the Shepherd gladdens in his
heart :

So many a fire between the ships and
stream
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers of
Troy,
A thousand on the plain; and close by
each
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
And eating hoary grain and pulse the
steeds,
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden
dawn. *Iliad* VIII. 542-561.

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS.

FOUR years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as 'Orpheus with his lute,' and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet, whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan's instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

December, 1870.

A. TENNYSON.

THE WINDOW.

ON THE HILL.

THE lights and shadows fly!
Yonder it brightens and darkens down
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover's eye!
Oh is it the brook, or a pool, or her
window pane,
When the winds are up in the
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,
And winds and lights and shadows that
cannot be still,
All running on one way to the home
of my love,
You are all running on, and I stand on
the slope of the hill,
And the winds are up in the morning!

Follow, follow the chase!
And my thoughts are as quick and as
quick, ever on, on, on.
O lights, are you flying over her sweet
little face?

And my heart is there before you are
come, and gone,
When the winds are up in the
morning!

Follow them down the slope!
And I follow them down to the window-
pane of my dear,
And it brightens and darkens and
brightens like my hope,
And it darkens and brightens and darkens
like my fear,
And the winds are up in the
morning.

AT THE WINDOW.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
Clasp her window, trail and twine!
Rose, rose and clematis,
Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
All of flowers, and drop me a flower,
Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
 Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?
 Rose, rose and clematis,
 Drop me a flower, a flower, to kiss,
 Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower
 All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
 Dropt, a flower.

GONE.

Gone!
 Gone, till the end of the year,
 Gone, and the light gone with her, and
 left me in shadow here!
 Gone—flitted away,
 Taken the stars from the night and the
 sun from the day!
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
 storm in the air!
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted I
 know not where!
 Down in the south is a flash and a groan:
 she is there! she is there!

WINTER.

The frost is here,
 And fuel is dear,
 And woods are sear,
 And fires burn clear,
 And frost is here
 And has bitten the heel of the going year.

Bite, frost, bite!
 You roll up away from the light
 The blue wood-louse, and the plump
 dormouse,
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies are
 kill'd,
 And you bite far into the heart of the
 house,
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!
 The woods are all the searer,
 The fuel is all the dearer,
 The fires are all the clearer,
 My spring is all the nearer,
 You have bitten into the heart of the
 earth,
 But not into mine.

SPRING.

Birds' love and birds' song
 Flying here and there,
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 And you with gold for hair!
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 Passing with the weather,
 Men's song and men's love,
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love,
 And women's love and men's!
 And you my wren with a crown of gold,
 You my queen of the wrens!
 You the queen of the wrens—
 We'll be birds of a feather,
 I'll be King of the Queen of the wrens,
 And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER.

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the shy?
 Fine little hands, fine little feet—
 Dewy blue eye.
 Shall I write to her? shall I go?
 Ask her to marry me by and by?
 Somebody said that she'd say no;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy?
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,
 Fly;
 Fly to the light in the valley below—
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye:
 Somebody said that she'd say no;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

NO ANSWER.

The mist and the rain, the mist and the
 rain!
 Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
 And never a glimpse of her window pane!
 And I may die but the grass will grow,
 And the grass will grow when I am gone,
 And the wet west wind and the world
 will go on.
 Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,

Ay is life for a hundred years,
 No will push me down to the worm,
 And when I am there and dead and gone,
 The wet west wind and the world will
 go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and the
 wet !

Wet west wind how you blow, you
 blow !

And never a line from my lady yet !

Is it ay or no ? is it ay or no ?
 Blow then, blow, and when I am gone,
 The wet west wind and the world may
 go on.

NO ANSWER.

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
 Take my love, for love will come,
 Love will come but once a life.
 Winds are loud and winds will pass !
 Spring is here with leaf and grass :
 Take my love and be my wife.
 After-loves of maids and men
 Are but dainties drest again :
 Love me now, you'll love me then :
 Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER.

Two little hands that meet,
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet !
 Must I take you and break you,
 Two little hands that meet ?
 I must take you, and break you,
 And loving hands must part—
 Take, take—break, break—
 Break—you may break my heart.
 Faint heart never won—
 Break, break, and all's done.

AY.

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
 Be merry on earth as you never were
 merry before,
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far away,
 And merry for ever and ever, and one
 day more.

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.

Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens,
 from out of the pine !
 Look how they tumble the blossom, the
 mad little tits !

'Cuck-oo ! Cuck-oo !' was ever a May
 so fine ?

Why ?

For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 O merry the linnet and dove,
 And swallow and sparrow and throstle,
 and have your desire !
 O merry my heart, you have gotten the
 wings of love,
 And flit like the king of the wrens with
 a crown of fire.

Why ?

For it's ay ay, ay ay.

WHEN.

Sun comes, moon comes,
 Time slips away.
 Sun sets, moon sets,
 Love, fix a day.

'A year hence, a year hence.'
 'We shall both be gray.'
 'A month hence, a month hence.'
 'Far, far away.'

'A week hence, a week hence.'
 'Ah, the long delay.'
 'Wait a little, wait a little,
 You shall fix a day.'

'To-morrow, love, to-morrow,
 And that's an age away.'
 Blaze upon her window, sun,
 And honour all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING.

Light, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 Oh, the woods and the meadows,
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale
 You flash and lighten afar,
 For this is the golden morning of love,
 And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming, I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood,
 Oh, lighten into my eyes and my heart,
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires ?
 O heart, are you great enough for love ?
 I have heard of thorns and briers.
 Over the thorns and briers,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.

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

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

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

Thou seemest human and divine,
 The highest, holiest manhood, thou :
 Our wills are ours, we know not
 how ;

Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day ;
 They have their day and cease to be :
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
 For knowledge is of things we see ;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell ;
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
 We mock thee when we do not fear :
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me ;
 What seem'd my worth since I
 began ;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I.

I HELD it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
 And find in loss a gain to match ?
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears ?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drown'd,
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss :
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
 To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
 The long result of love, and boast,
 'Behold the man that loved and lost,
 But all he was is overworn.'

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
 That name the under-lying dead,
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
 And bring the firstling to the flock;
 And in the dusk of thee, the clock
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who changest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fail from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
 A web is wov'n across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun:

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own,—
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
 My will is bondsman to the dark;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou should'st fail from thy
 desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling
 tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and
 cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the
 cold:
 But that large grief which these
 enfold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that 'Other friends remain,'
 That 'Loss is common to the race'—
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more:
 Too common! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgest now thy gallant son;
 A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is
 bow'd,
 His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
 Drops in his vast and wandering grave.
 Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well ;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something
 thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
 That sittest ranging golden hair ;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest ;
 And thinking 'this will please him
 best,'
 She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;
 And with the thought her colour
 burns ;
 And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future Lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the
 ford,
 Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end ?
 And what to me remains of good ?
 To her, perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors, where my heart was used to
 beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here ; but far away
 The noise of life begins again,
 And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
 On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
 To look on her that loves him well,
 Who 'lights and rings the gateway
 bell,
 And learns her gone and far from home ;

He saddens, all the magic light
 Dies off at once from bower and hall,
 And all the place is dark, and all
 The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber and the street,
 For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
 In those deserted walks, may find
 A flower beat with rain and wind,
 Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
 O my forsaken heart, with thee
 And this poor flower of poesy
 Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain ; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
prow ;

Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run ;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;
I hear the bell struck in the night :
I see the cabin-window bright ;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign lands ;
And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
And hands so often clasp'd in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the
furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn
bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening
towers,

To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in
rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying ; ' Comes he thus, my friend ?
Is this the end of all my care ?'
And circle moaning in the air :
' Is this the end ? Is this the end ?'

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and
feels
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed ;
 And, where warm hands have prest
 and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
 A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
 I do not suffer in a dream ;
 For now so strange do these things
 seem,
 Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
 And glance about the approaching
 sails,
 As tho' they brought but merchants'
 bales,
 And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
 That thou hadst touch'd the land
 to-day,
 And I went down unto the quay,
 And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
 Should see thy passengers in rank
 Come stepping lightly down the
 plank,
 And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
 The man I held as half-divine ;
 Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
 And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
 And how my life had droop'd of late,
 And he should sorrow o'er my state
 And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,
 No hint of death in all his frame,
 But found him all in all the same,
 I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day :
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
 The cattle huddled on the lea ;
 And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
 The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver
 That all thy motions gently pass
 Athwart a plane of molten glass,
 I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;
 And but for fear it is not so,
 The wild unrest that lives in woe
 Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
 And onward drags a labouring breast,
 And topples round the dreary west,
 A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me ?
 Can calm despair and wild unrest
 Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
 The touch of change in calm or storm ;
 But knows no more of transient form
 In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
 Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?
 Or has the shock, so harshly given,
 Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
 And staggers blindly ere she sink ?
 ✓ And stunn'd me from my power to
 think

And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
 Whose fancy fuses old and new,
 And flashes into false and true,
 And mingles all without a plan ?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for : such a breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week : the days go by :
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
 Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;
 And balmy drops in summer dark
 Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
 Such precious relics brought by thee ;
 The dust of him I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may stand
 Where he in English earth is laid,
 And from his ashes may be made
 The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
 As if the quiet bones were blest
 Among familiar names to rest
 And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
 I, falling on his faithful heart,
 Would breathing thro' his lips impart
 The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
 And slowly forms the firmer mind,
 Treasuring the look it cannot find,
 The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
 The darken'd heart that beat no
 more ;

They laid him by the pleasant shore,
 And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
 The salt sea-water passes by,
 And hushes half the babbling Wye,
 And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
 And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
 When fill'd with tears that cannot
 fall,

I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
 Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
 My deeper anguish also falls,
 And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
 That breathe a thousand tender
 vows,

Are but as servants in a house
 Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
 And weep the fulness from the
 mind :
 'It will be hard,' they say, 'to find
 Another service such as this.'

My lighter moods are like to these,
 That out of words a comfort win ;
 But there are other griefs within,
 And tears that at their fountain freeze ;

For by the hearth the children sit
 Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
 And scarce endure to draw the
 breath,

Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse is there none,
 So much the vital spirits sink
 To see the vacant chair, and think,
 'How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.'

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he speak:
 'This fellow would make weakness
 weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people
 throng
 The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her arms
 To feel from world to world, and
 charms
 Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
 Ye never knew the sacred dust:
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
 For now her little ones have ranged;
 And one is sad; her note is changed,
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
 Which led by tracts that pleased us
 well,
 Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
 From flower to flower, from snow to snow:

And we with singing cheer'd the way,
 And, crown'd with all the season
 lent,
 From April on to April went,
 And glad at heart from May to May:

But where the path we walk'd began
 To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
 As we descended following Hope,
 There sat the Shadow fear'd of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and
 cold,
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
 And dull'd the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
 And think, that somewhere in the
 waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
 Or breaking into song by fits,
 Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
 And looking back to whence I came,
 Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it
 ran
 Thro' lands where not a leaf was
 dumb;
 But all the lavish hills would hum
 The murmur of a happy Pan:

When each by turns was guide to each,
 And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
 And Thought leapt out to wed with
 Thought
 Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
 And all was good that Time could
 bring,
 And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
 On Argive heights divinely sang,
 And round us all the thicket rang
 To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say?
 The very source and fount of Day
 Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
 This earth had been the Paradise
 It never look'd to human eyes
 Since our first Sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
 Makes former gladness loom so
 great?

The lowness of the present state,
 That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
 A glory from its being far;
 And orb into the perfect star
 We saw not, when we moved therein?

XXV.

I know that this was Life,—the track
 Whereon with equal feet we fared;
 And then, as now, the day prepared
 The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
 As light as carrier-birds in air;
 I loved the weight I had to bear,
 Because it needed help of Love:

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
 When mighty Love would cleave in
 twain
 The lading of a single pain,
 And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way;
 I with it; for I long to prove
 No lapse of moons can canker Love,
 Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
 And goodness, and hath power to
 see
 Within the green the moulder'd tree,
 And towers fall'n as soon as built—

Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
 Or see (in Him is no before)
 In more of life true life no more
 And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
 Breaks hither over Indian seas,
 That Shadow waiting with the
 keys,
 To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
 The captive void of noble rage,
 The linnet born within the cage,
 That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
 His license in the field of time,
 Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
 To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
 The heart that never plighted troth
 But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
 Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
 I feel it, when I sorrow most;
 'Tis better to have loved and lost
 Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
 The moon is hid; the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and
 moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
 peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wish'd no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
 For they controll'd me when a boy ;
 They bring me sorrow touch'd with
 joy,
 The merry merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
 As daily vexes household peace,
 And chains regret to his decease,
 How dare we keep our Christmas-eve ;
 Which brings no more a welcome guest
 To enrich the threshold of the night
 With shower'd largess of delight
 In dance and song and game and jest ?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
 Entwine the cold baptismal font,
 Make one wreath more for Use and
 Wont,
 That guard the portals of the house ;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
 Gray nurses, loving nothing new ;
 Why should they miss their yearly
 due
 Before their time ? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth ;
 A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
 And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
 We gambol'd, making vain pretence
 Of gladness, with an awful sense
 Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :
 We heard them sweep the winter
 land ;
 And in a circle hand-in-hand
 Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us : surely rest is meet :
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is
 sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
 Once more we sang : 'They do not
 die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change ;

'Rapt from the fickle and the frail
 With gather'd power, yet the same,
 Pierces the keen seraphic flame
 From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from
 night :
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was
 born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
 And home to Mary's house return'd,
 Was this demanded—if he yearn'd
 To hear her weeping by his grave ?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four
 days ?'
 There lives no record of reply,
 Which telling what it is to die
 Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbours met,
 The streets were fill'd with joyful
 sound,
 A solemn gladness even crown'd
 The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ !
 The rest remaineth unreveal'd ;
 He told it not ; or something seal'd
 The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
 Nor other thought her mind admits
 But, he was dead, and there he sits,
 And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
 All other, when her ardent gaze
 Roves from the living brother's face,
 And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
 Borne down by gladness so complete,
 She bows, she bathes the Saviour's
 feet
 With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
 prayers,
 Whose loves in higher love endure ;
 What souls possess themselves so
 pure,
 Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
 Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer
 air,
 Whose faith has centre everywhere,
 Nor cares to fix itself to form,
 Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
 Her early Heaven, her happy views ;
 Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
 A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
 Her hands are quicker unto good :
 Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
 To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
 In holding by the law within,
 Thou fail not in a world of sin,
 And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty ; such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I ?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to
 choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die ;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent
 draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow
 house,
 'The cheeks drop in ; the body bows .
 Man dies : nor is there hope in dust :'

Might I not say ? 'Yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive :'
 But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 The sound of streams that swift or
 slow
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
 The dust of continents to be ;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 'The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and
 more,
 Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
 An idle case ? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
 Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
 Had bruised the herb and crush'd
 the grape,
 And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
 Of Him that made them current coin ;
 For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
 Where truth in closest words shall
 fail,
 When truth embodied in a tale
 Shall enter in at lowly doors.
 And so the Word had breath, and
 wrought
 With human hands the creed of
 creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
 (More strong than all poetic thought ;
 Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the
 wave
 In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darken'd brow :
 'Thou pratest here where thou art
 least ;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.
 'Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill.'
 And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek :
 'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries ;
 'For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues ;
 'But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine,
 (And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said),

T

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
 And loiter'd in the master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
 And answering now my random
 stroke
 With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
 Dark yew, that graspest at the stones
 And dippest toward the dreamless head,
 To thee too comes the golden hour
 When flower is feeling after flower ;
 But Sorrow—fixt upon the dead,
 And darkening the dark graves of men,—
 What whisper'd from her lying lips?
 Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
 And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widow'd hour
 And look on Spirits breathed away,
 As on a maiden in the day
 When first she wears her orange-flower !
 When crown'd with blessing she doth
 rise
 To take her latest leave of home,
 And hopes and light regrets that
 come
 Make April of her tender eyes ;

S

And doubtful joys the father move,
 And tears are on the mother's face,
 As parting with a long embrace
 She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
 The generations each with each ;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In those great offices that suit
 The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !
 How often shall her old fireside
 Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
 How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
 And bring her babe, and make her
 boast,

Till even those that miss'd her most
 Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,
 Till growing winters lay me low ;
 My paths are in the fields I know,
 And thine in undiscover'd lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
 Did ever rise from high to higher ;
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
 As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
 And I have lost the links that bound
 Thy changes ; here upon the ground,
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be—
 That I could wing my will with
 might
 To leap the grades of life and light,
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee.

For tho' my nature rarely yields
 To that vague fear implied in death ;
 Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
 The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
 An inner trouble I behold,
 A spectral doubt which makes me
 cold,

That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
 The wonders that have come to
 thee,

Thro' all the secular to-be,
 But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim :
 He still outstript me in the race ;
 It was but unity of place
 That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
 And he the much-beloved again,
 A lord of large experience, train
 To riper growth the mind and will :

And what delights can equal those
 That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
 When one that loves but knows not,
 reaps
 A truth from one that loves and knows ?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
 And every spirit's folded bloom
 Thro' all its intervital gloom
 In some long trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
 Bare of the body, might it last,
 And silent traces of the past
 Be all the colour of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
 So that still garden of the souls
 In many a figured leaf enrolls
 The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
 As when he loved me here in
 Time,
 And at the spiritual prime
 Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?
 For here the man is more and more;
 But he forgets the days before
 God shut the doorways of his head. ✕

The days have vanish'd, tone and tint,
 And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
 Gives out at times (he knows not
 whence)

A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
 (If Death so taste Lethean springs),
 May some dim touch of earthly
 things

Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
 O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
 My guardian angel will speak out
 In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
 What time his tender palm is prest
 Against the circle of the breast,
 Has never thought that 'this is I:'

But as he grows he gathers much,
 And learns the use of 'I,' and 'me,'
 And finds 'I am not what I see,
 And other than the things I touch.'

So rounds he to a separate mind
 From whence clear memory may
 begin,
 As thro' the frame that binds him in
 His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
 Which else were fruitless of their due,
 Had man to learn himself anew
 Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
 The path we came by, thorn and
 flower,
 Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
 Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
 In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
 But clear from marge to marge shall
 bloom

The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time reveal'd;
 The fruitful hours of still increase;
 Days order'd in a wealthy peace,
 And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
 A bounded field, nor stretching far;
 Look also, Love, a brooding star,
 A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate whole,
 Should move his rounds, and fusing
 all
 The skirts of self again, should fall
 Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet:
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
 And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
 Before the spirits fade away,
 Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
 'Farewell! We lose ourselves in light.'

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here pro-
 posed,
 Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods
 remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may
 flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with
words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Shortswallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that
make

The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the
nerves prick
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is rack'd with pangs that conquer
trust ;

And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
(And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and
sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread ?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden
shame
And I be lessen'd in his love ?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue :
Shall love be blamed for want of
faith ?

There must be wisdom with great
Death :
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall :
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved ;
My words are only words, and moved
(Upon the topmost froth of thought.

'Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,'
The Spirit of true love replied ;
'Thou canst not move me from thy
side,

Nor human frailty do me wrong.

'What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears ?
What record ? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :

'So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dash'd with flecks of sin.
Abide : thy wealth is gather'd in,
When Time hath sunder'd shell from
pearl.'

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
 A sober man, among his boys,
 Whose youth was full of foolish
 noise,
 Who wears his manhood hale and green :
 And dare we to this fancy give,
 That had the wild oat not been
 sown,
 The soil, left barren, scarce had
 grown
 The grain by which a man may live ?
 Or, if we held the doctrine sound
 For life outliving heats of youth,
 Yet who would preach it as a truth
 To those that eddy round and round ?
 Hold thou the good : define it well :
 For fear divine Philosophy
 Should push beyond her mark, and
 be
 Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
 Will be the final goal of ill,
 To pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;
 That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
 That not one life shall be destroy'd,
 Or cast as rubbish to the void,
 When God hath made the pile complete ;
 That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
 That not a moth with vain desire
 Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
 Or but subserves another's gain.
Behold, we know not anything ;
 I can but trust that good shall fall
 At last—far off—at last, to all,
 And every winter change to spring.
 So runs my dream : but what am I ?
 An infant crying in the night :
 An infant crying for the light :
 And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
 The likest God within the soul ?
 Are God and Nature then at strife,
 That Nature lends such evil dreams ?
 So careful of the type she seems,
 So careless of the single life ;
 That I, considering everywhere
 Her secret meaning in her deeds,
 And finding that of fifty seeds
 She often brings but one to bear,
 I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar-stairs
 That slope thro' darkness up to God,
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
 And gather dust and chaff, and call
 To what I feel is Lord of all,
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

'So careful of the type?' but no.
 From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone
 She cries, 'A thousand types are gone:
 I care for nothing, all shall go.
 'Thou makest thine appeal to me :
 I bring to life, I bring to death :
 The spirit does but mean the breath :
 I know no more.' And he, shall he,
 Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
 Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
 Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
 Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,
 Who trusted God was love indeed
 And love Creation's final law—
 Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
 With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—
 Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
 Who battled for the True, the Just,
 Be blown about the desert dust,
 Or seal'd within the iron hills ?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him
wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass; my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu' for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell:
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX.

He past; a soul of nobler tone:
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is
set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbours come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by:
At night she weeps, 'How vain
am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
 How dimly character'd and slight,
 How dwarf'd a growth of cold and
 night,
 How blanch'd with darkness must I grow !

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
 Where thy first form was made a man ;
 I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
 The soul of Shakspeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
 Could make thee somewhat blench
 or fail,

Then be my love an idle tale,
 And fading legend of the past ;

And thou, as one that once declined,
 When he was little more than boy,
 On some unworthy heart with joy,
 But lives to wed an equal mind ;

And breathes a novel world, the while
 His other passion wholly dies,
 Or in the light of deeper eyes
 Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
 And love in which my hound has
 part,
 Can hang no weight upon my heart
 In its assumptions up to heaven ;

And I am so much more than these,
 As thou, perchance, art more than I,
 And yet I spare them sympathy,
 And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
 As, unto vaster motions bound,
 The circuits of thine orbit round
 A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
 As some divinely gifted man,
 Whose life in low estate began
 And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
 And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
 And breasts the blows of circum-
 stance,

And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known
 And lives to clutch the golden keys,
 To mould a mighty state's decrees,
 And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
 Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
 The pillar of a people's hope,
 The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
 When all his active powers are still,
 A distant dearness in the hill,
 A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
 While yet beside its vocal springs
 He play'd at counsellors and kings,
 With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
 And reaps the labour of his hands,
 Or in the furrow musing stands ;
 ' Does my old friend remember me ?'

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;
 I lull a fancy trouble-tost
 With ' Love's too precious to be lost,
 A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
 Till out of painful phases wrought
 There flutters up a happy thought,
 Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,
 And thine effect so lives in me,
 A part of mine may live in thee
 And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased ;
 You wonder when my fancies play
 To find me gay among the gay,
 Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is
free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
my breath ;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows
not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead :

I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with
dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt :

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost :

The streets were black with smoke
and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door :

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs :
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown :

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs :

They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They call'd me fool, they call'd me child:
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was
bright ;

He look'd upon my crown and smiled :

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know ; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning
doors,
And shoals of pucker'd faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong

That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something
strange,

In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar
white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendour of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the
rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Whom might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering,
play'd
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet look'd the same.

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous
crime,
When the dark hand struck down
thro' time,

And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burthen'd brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning
star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly
wreath:

I curse not nature, no, nor death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds:
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out—to some one of his race:

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
 I see thee what thou art, and know
 Thy likeness to the wise below,
 Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
 And what I see I leave unsaid,
 Nor speak it, knowing Death has
 made
 His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
 In verse that brings myself relief,
 And by the measure of my grief
 I leave thy greatness to be guess'd ;

What practice howsoe'er expert
 In fitting aptest words to things,
 Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
 Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
 And round thee with the breeze of
 song
 To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
 And, while we breathe beneath the
 sun,
 The world which credits what is done
 Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
 But somewhere, out of human view,
 Whate'er thy hands are set to do
 Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
 And in a moment set thy face
 Where all the starry heavens of
 space
 Are sharpen'd to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'
 The secular abyss to come,
 And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
 Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
 The darkness of our planet, last,
 Thine own shall wither in the vast,
 Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy
 bowers
 With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;
 And what are they when these remain
 The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
 To him, who turns a musing eye
 On songs, and deeds, and lives, that
 lie
 Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
 May bind a book, may line a box,
 X May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
 Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
 And, passing, turn the page that tells
 A grief, then changed to something
 else,
 Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways
 Shall ring with music all the same ;
 To breathe my loss is more than fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
 The holly round the Christmas
 hearth ;
 The silent snow possess'd the earth,
 And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
 No wing of wind the region swept,
 But over all things brooding slept
 The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
 Again our ancient games had place,
 The mimic picture's breathing grace,
 And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who show'd a token of distress?
 No single tear, no mark of pain :
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
 O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die !
 No—mixt with all this mystic frame,
 Her deep relations are the same,
 But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

'More than my brothers are to me,'—
 Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
 I know thee of what force thou art
 To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
 As moulded like in Nature's mint ;
 And hill and wood and field did print
 The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
 Thro' all his eddying coves ; the same
 All winds that roam the twilight came
 In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
 One lesson from one book we learn'd,
 Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
 To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
 But he was rich where I was poor,
 And he supplied my want the more
 As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
 That holy Death ere Arthur died
 Had moved me kindly from his side,
 And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
 The grief my loss in him had wrought,
 A grief as deep as life or thought,
 But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;
 I hear the sentence that he speaks ;
 He bears the burthen of the weeks
 But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
 And, influence-rich to soothe and
 save,
 Unused example from the grave
 Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
 'My love shall now no further range ;
 There cannot come a mellow
 change,
 For now is love mature in ear.'

Love, then, had hope of richer store :
 What end is here to my complaint?
 This haunting whisper makes me
 faint,
 'More years had made me love thee more.

But Death returns an answer sweet :
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain,
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and
 face ;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks ;
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth :
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart ;
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long ;
 Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown;

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and
kiss,

On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou should'st link thy life
with one

Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honour'd guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labour fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all——

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have
drain'd

My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
 That range above our mortal state,
 In circle round the blessed gate,
 Received and gave him welcome there ;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
 And show'd him in the fountain fresh
 All knowledge that the sons of flesh
 Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little
 worth,
 To wander on a darken'd earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of
 him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
 O heart, with kindest motion warm,
 O sacred essence, other form,
 O solemn ghost, O crowned soul !

Yet none could better know than I,
 How much of act at human hands
 The sense of human will demands
 By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
 I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
 His being working in mine own,
 The footsteps of his life in mine ;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
 With gifts of grace, that might ex-
 press
 All-comprehensive tenderness,
 All-subtilising intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
 To works of weakness, but I find
 An image comforting the mind,
 And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
 That loved to handle spiritual strife,
 Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
 But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
 For other friends that once I met ;
 Nor can it suit me to forget
 The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
 To mourn for any overmuch ;
 I, the divided half of such
 A friendship as had master'd Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
 Eternal, separate from fears :
 The all-assuming months and years
 Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
 And Spring that swells the narrow
 brooks,
 And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
 That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
 A part of stillness, yearns to speak :
 ' Arise, and get thee forth and seek
 A friendship for the years to come.

' I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
 Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
 But in dear words of human speech
 We two communicate no more.'

And I, ' Can clouds of nature stain
 The starry clearness of the free ?
 How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
 Some painless sympathy with pain ?'

And lightly does the whisper fall ;
 ' 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;
 I triumph in conclusive bliss,
 And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
 Or so methinks the dead would
 say ;

Or so shall grief with symbols play
 And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
 That these things pass, and I shall
 prove
 A meeting somewhere, love with love,
 I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
 I, clasping brother-hands, aver
 I could not, if I would, transfer
 The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
 The promise of the golden hours?
 First love, first friendship, equal
 powers,
 That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
 That beats within a lonely place,
 That yet remembers his embrace,
 But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not rest
 Quite in the love of what is gone,
 But seeks to beat in time with one
 That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
 Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
 The primrose of the later year,
 As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous
 gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned
 flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy
 breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt
 and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII.

I past beside the reverend walls
 In which of old I wore the gown;
 I roved at random thro' the town,
 And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs
 make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
 The measured pulse of racing oars
 Among the willows; paced the shores
 And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
 The same, but not the same; and
 last

Up that long walk of limes I past
 To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door:
 I linger'd; all within was noise
 Of songs, and clapping hands, and
 boys

That crash'd the glass and beat the floor;
 Where once we held debate, a band
 Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
 And labour, and the changing mart,
 And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
 But send it slackly from the string;
 And one would pierce an outer ring,
 And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
 Would cleave the mark. A willing
 ear
 We lent him. Who, but hung to
 hear
 The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and
 grace
 And music in the bounds of law,
 To those conclusions when we saw
 The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
 In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
 And over those ethereal eyes
 The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
 Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
 O tell me where the senses mix,
 O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
 I cannot all command the strings ;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright ;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and
 height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawl-
 ing courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the heat :

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning
 dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and
 flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
 And break the livelong summer day
 With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
 theme,
 Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For 'ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge' he said 'in form and
 gloss
 The picturesque of man and man.'
 We talk'd : the stream beneath us
 ran,
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;
 And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
 And buzzings of the honied hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
 Where nighest heaven, who first
 could fling
 This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their
life,

They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,
Behold their brides in other hands ;
The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would
make

Confusion worse than death, and
shake

The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
Whatever change the years have
wrought,

I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush ;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March ;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers ;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange ;

Come : not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,

Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain ;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year ;
And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true.

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

too seasons

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay ?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is
numb ;

Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter ; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name ;

That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold

An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

XCV.

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
 For underfoot the herb was dry ;
 And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky
 The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
 Unwavering : not a cricket chirr'd :
 The brook alone far-off was heard,
 And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
 And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
 That haunt the dusk, with ermine
 capes

And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that peal'd
 From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
 Withdrew themselves from me and
 night,

And in the house light after light
 Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
 Of that glad year which once had
 been,

In those fall'n leaves which kept
 their green,

The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and
 strange

Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the
 past,

And all at once it seem'd at last
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and
 caught

The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time—the shocks of
 Chance—

The blows of Death. At length
 my trance

Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or ev'n for intellect to reach

Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd

The knolls once more where, couch'd
 at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the
 trees

Laid their dark arms about the field :

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
 Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and
 swung

The heavy-folded rose, and flung
 The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away ;
 And East and West, without a
 breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and
 death,
 To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
 blue eyes
 Are tender over drowning flies.
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew
 In many a subtle question versed,
 Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
 But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
 At last he beat his music out.
 There lives more faith in honest
 doubt,
 Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd
 strength,
 He would not make his judgment
 blind,
 He faced the spectres of the mind
 And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;
 And Power was with him in the
 night,
 Which makes the darkness and the
 light,
 And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
 As over Sinai's peaks of old,
 While Israel made their gods of
 gold,
 X Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees ;
 He finds on misty mountain-ground
 His own vast shadow glory-crown'd ;
 He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life—
 I look'd on these and thought of thee
 In vastness and in mystery,
 And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two—they dwelt with eye on eye,
 Their hearts of old have beat in
 tune,
 Their meetings made December June,
 Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away ;
 The days she never can forget
 Are earnest that he loves her yet,
 Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
 He loves her yet, she will not weep,
 Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
 He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
 He reads the secret of the star,
 He seems so near and yet so far,
 He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
 A wither'd violet is her bliss :
 She knows not what his greatness is,
 For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
 Of early faith and plighted vows ;
 She knows but matters of the house,
 And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
 She darkly feels him great and wise,
 She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
 'I cannot understand : I love.'

XCVIII.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,
 And those fair hills I sail'd below,
 When I was there with him ; and go
 By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
 That City. All her splendour seems
 No livelier than the wisp that gleams
 On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
 Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me :
 I have not seen, I will not see
 Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
 The birth, the bridal ; friend from
 friend
 Is oftener parted, fathers bend
 Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
 By each cold hearth, and sadness
 flings
 Her shadow on the blaze of kings :
 And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
 With statelier progress to and fro
 The double tides of chariots flow
 By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; nor more content,
 He told me, lives in any crowd,
 When all is gay with lamps, and
 loud
 With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
 And wheels the circled dance, and
 breaks
 The rocket molten into flakes
 Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
 So loud with voices of the birds,
 So thick with lowings of the herds,
 Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
 On yon swell'd brook that bubbles
 fast
 By meadows breathing of the past,
 And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
 A song that slights the coming care,
 And Autumn laying here and there
 A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
 To myriads on the genial earth,
 Memories of bridal, or of birth,
 And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
 Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
 To-day they count as kindred souls ;
 They know me not, but mourn with me.

C.

I climb the hill : from end to end
 Of all the landscape underneath,
 I find no place that does not breathe
 Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
 Or low morass and whispering
 reed,
 Or simple stile from mead to mead,
 Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
 That hears the latest linnet trill,
 Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
 And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;
 Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
 To left and right thro' meadowy
 curves,
 That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
 And each reflects a kindlier day ;
 And, leaving these, to pass away,
 I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway,
 The tender blossom flutter down,
 Unloved, that beech will gather
 brown,
 This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
 Ray round with flames her disk of
 seed,
 And many a rose-carnation feed
 With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
 The brook shall babble down the
 plain,
 At noon or when the lesser wain
 Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
 And flood the haunts of hern and
 crake ;
 Or into silver arrows break
 The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
 A fresh association blow,
 And year by year the landscape
 grow
 Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the labourer tills
 His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;
 And year by year our memory fades
 From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
 Where first we gazed upon the sky ;
 The roofs, that heard our earliest
 cry,
 Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
 As down the garden-walks I move,
 Two spirits of a diverse love
 Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, ' Here thy boyhood sung
 Long since its matin song, and
 heard
 The low love-language of the bird
 In native hazels tassel-hung.'

The other answers, ' Yea, but here
 Thy feet have stray'd in after hours
 With thy lost friend among the
 bowers,
 And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
 And each prefers his separate claim,
 Poor rivals in a losing game,
 That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go : my feet are set
 To leave the pleasant fields and
 farms ;
 They mix in one another's arms
 To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was bred,
 I dream'd a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
 And maidens with me : distant hills
 From hidden summits fed with rills
 A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
 They sang of what is wise and good
 And graceful. In the centre stood
 A statue veil'd, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
 The shape of him I loved, and love
 For ever : then flew in a dove
 And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learnt that I must go
 They wept and wail'd, but led the
 way
 To where a little shallop lay
 At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
 And shadowing bluff that made the
 banks,
 We glided winding under ranks
 Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore
 And roll'd the floods in grander
 space,
 The maidens gather'd strength and
 grace
 And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
 And watch'd them, wax'd in every
 limb ;
 I felt the thews of Anakim,
 The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
 And one would chant the history
 Of that great race, which is to be,
 And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
 Began to foam, and we to draw
 From deep to deep, to where we saw
 A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
 But thrice as large as man he bent
 To greet us. Up the side I went,
 And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind
 Bewail'd their lot ; I did them wrong :
 'We served thee here,' they said,
 'so long,

And wilt thou leave us now behind ?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
 An answer from my lips, but he
 Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
 And go with us : ' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 Westeer'd her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;
 The moon is hid, the night is still ;
 A single church below the hill
 Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
 That wakens at this hour of rest
 A single murmur in the breast,
 That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
 In lands where not a memory strays,
 Nor landmark breathes of other days,
 But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV.

To-night ungather'd let us leave
 This laurel, let this holly stand :
 We live within the stranger's land,
 And strangely falls our Christmas-eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
 And silent under other snows :
 There in due time the woodbine
 blows,
 The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
 The genial hour with mask and
 mime ;
 For change of place, like growth of
 time,
 Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly
 proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
 Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
 For who would keep an ancient form
 Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
 Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
 blown ;
 No dance, no motion, save alone
 What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
 Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;
 Run out your measured arcs, and
 lead
 The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light :
 The year is dying in the night ;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
 The year is going, let him go ;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
 For those that here we see no more ;
 Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
 Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand ;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapour, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and
clangs

Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,

Arrange the board and brim the glass ;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat ;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by ;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns ?

And on the depths of death there
swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies :
'Tis held that sorrow makes us
wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never
dry ;

The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man ;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom ;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace
 In such a sort, the child would twine
 A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
 And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
 Have look'd on : if they look'd in
 vain,
 My shame is greater who remain,
 Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
 The men of rathe and riper years :
 The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
 Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
 The proud was half disarm'd of
 pride,
 Nor cared the serpent at thy side
 To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
 The flippant put himself to school
 And heard thee, and the brazen fool
 Was soften'd, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
 And felt thy triumph was as mine ;
 And loved them more, that they
 were thine,
 The graceful tact, the Christian art ;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
 But mine the love that will not tire,
 And, born of love, the vague desire
 That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
 Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
 To him who grasps a golden ball,
 By blood a king, at heart a clown ;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
 His want in forms for fashion's
 sake,
 Will let his coltish nature break
 At seasons thro' the gilded pale :

For who can always act ? but he,
 To whom a thousand memories call,
 Not being less but more than all
 The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
 Each office of the social hour
 To noble manners, as the flower
 And native growth of noble mind ;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
 Or villain fancy fleeting by,
 Drew in the expression of an eye,
 Where God and Nature met in light ;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
 Defamed by every charlatan,
 And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
 That I, who gaze with temperate
 eyes
 On glorious insufficiencies,
 Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
 Of all my love, art reason why
 I seem to cast a careless eye
 On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou ? some novel power
 Sprang up for ever at a touch,
 And hope could never hope too
 much,
 In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
 And tracts of calm from tempest
 made,
 And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
 In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise ;
 Yet how much wisdom sleeps with
 thee
 Which not alone had guided me,
 But served the seasons that may rise ;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
 In intellect, with force and skill
 To strive, to fashion, to fulfil—
 I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,
 A soul on highest mission sent,
 A potent voice of Parliament,
 A pillar steadfast in the storm,
 Should licensed boldness gather force,
 Becoming, when the time has birth,
 A lever to uplift the earth
 And roll it in another course,
 With thousand shocks that come and go,
 With agonies, with energies,
 With overthrowings, and with cries,
 And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall
 rail
 Against her beauty? May she mix
 With men and prosper! Who shall
 fix
 Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :
 She sets her forward countenance
 And leaps into the future chance,
 Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain—
 She cannot fight the fear of death.
 What is she, cut from love and faith,
 But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst
 All barriers in her onward race
 For power. Let her know her place ;
 She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
 If all be not in vain ; and guide
 Her footsteps, moving side by side
 With wisdom, like the younger child :

For she is earthly of the mind,
 But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
 O, friend, who camest to thy goal
 So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
 Who grewest not alone in power
 And knowledge, but by year and
 hour
 In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and
 thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drown'd in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea ;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their
 sky

To build and brood ; that live their lives
 From land to land ; and in my breast
 Spring wakens too ; and my regret
 Becomes an April violet,
 And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and
 takes

The colours of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret : the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone ;
 And that dear voice, I once have
 known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead ;
 Less yearning for the friendship
 fled,
 Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this
 To hold me from my proper place,
 A little while from his embrace,
 For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
 Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
 And unto meeting when we meet,
 Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
 And every span of shade that
 steals,
 And every kiss of toothed wheels,
 And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
 The giant labouring in his youth ;
 Nor dream of human love and truth,
 As dying Nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
 Are breathers of an ampler day
 For ever nobler ends. They say,
 The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
 And grew to seeming-random forms,
 The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
 Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branch'd from clime to
 clime,
 The herald of a higher race,
 And of himself in higher place,
 If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more ;
 Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
 Like glories, move his course, and
 show
 That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
 And heated hot with burning fears,
 And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
 And batter'd with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
 The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, not as one that weeps
 I come once more ; the city sleeps ;
 I smell the meadow in the street ;

I hear a chirp of birds ; I see
 Betwixt the black fronts long-with-
 drawn
 A light-blue lane of early dawn,
 And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
 And bright the friendship of thine
 eye ;

And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
 I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath :
 I think we are not wholly brain,
 Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,
 Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
 Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :
 Let Science prove we are, and then
 What matters Science unto men,
 At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
 And ready, thou, to die with him,
 Thou watchest all things ever dim
 And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
 The boat is drawn upon the shore ;
 Thou listenest to the closing door,
 And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
 By thee the world's great work is
 heard

Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;
 Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,
 And voices hail it from the brink ;
 Thou hear'st the village hammer
 clink,

And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
 For what is one, the first, the last,
 Thou, like my present and my
 past,
 Thy place is changed ; thou art the
 same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
 While I rose up against my doorn,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded
 gloom,
 To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
 O earth, what changes hast thou
 seen !

There where the long street roars,
 hath been
 The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
 From form to form, and nothing
 stands ;
 They melt like mist, the solid lands,
 Like clouds they shape themselves and
 go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
 And dream my dream, and hold it
 true ;
 For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
 I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless ;
 Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest
 doubt ;
 He, They, One, All ; within, with-
 out ;

(The Power in darkness whom we guess ;
 I found Him not in world or sun,
 Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
 Nor thro' the questions men may
 try,
 The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
 I heard a voice 'believe no more'
 And heard an ever-breaking shore
 That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt
 The freezing reason's colder part,
 And like a man in wrath the heart
 Stood up and answer'd 'I have felt.'

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
 But that blind clamour made me
 wise ;

Then was I as a child that cries,
 But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands ;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
 Some bitter notes my harp would give,
 Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
 A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
 She did but look through dimmer
 eyes ;
 Or Love but play'd with gracious lies,
 Because he felt so fix'd in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
 He breathed the spirit of the song ;
 And if the words were sweet and
 strong

He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
 To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
 And this electric force, that keeps
 A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my Lord and King,
 And in his presence I attend
 To hear the tidings of my friend,
 Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my King and Lord,
 And will be, tho' as yet I keep
 Within his court on earth, and sleep
 Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
 Who moves about from place to place,
 And whispers to the worlds of space,
 In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
 Be sunder'd in the night of fear ;
 Well roars the storm to those that
 hear
 A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
 And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
 The red fool-fury of the Seine
 Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
 And him, the lazar, in his rags :
 They tremble, the sustaining crags
 The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood ;
 The fortress crashes from on high,
 The brute earth lightens to the sky
 And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell ;
 While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
 O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
 And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
 Unpalsied when he met with Death,
 Is comrade of the lesser faith
 That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
 Of onward time shall yet be made,
 And throned races may degrade ;
 Yet O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
 If all your office had to do
 With old results that look like new ;
 If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
 To fool the crowd with glorious
 lies,

To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
 (To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
 To cramp the student at his desk,
 To make old bareness picturesque
 And tuft with grass a feudal tower ;

Why then my scorn might well descend
 On you and yours. I see in part
 That all, as in some piece of art,
 Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
 So far, so near in woe and weal;
 O loved the most, when most I feel
 There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend that canst not
 die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
 But tho' I seem in star and flower
 To feel thee some diffusive power,
 I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
 My love is vaster passion now;
 Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
 thou,
 I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
 I have thee still, and I rejoice;
 I prosper, circled with thy voice;
 I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer
 shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
 A voice as unto him that hears,
 A cry above the conquer'd years
 To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
 The truths that never can be proved
 Until we close with all we loved,
 And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
 Demand not thou a marriage lay;
 In that it is thy marriage day
 Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
 Since first he told me that he loved
 A daughter of our house; nor proved
 Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
 Some thrice three years: they went
 and came,
 Remade the blood and changed the
 frame,
 And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
 In dying songs a dead regret,
 But like a statue solid-set,
 And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
 Than in the summers that are flown,
 For I myself with these have grown
 To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
 As echoes out of weaker times,
 As half but idle brawling rhymes,
 The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
 That must be made a wife ere noon?
 She enters, glowing like the moon
 Of Eden on its bridal bower:

On me she bends her blissful eyes
 And then on thee; they meet thy look
 And brighten like the star that shook
 Betwixt the palms of paradise.

O when her life was yet in bud,
 He too foretold the perfect rose.
 For thee she grew, for thee she grows
 For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
 As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
 Consistent ; wearing all that weight
 Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
 And I must give away the bride ;
 She fears not, or with thee beside
 And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
 That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
 That shielded all her life from harm
 At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
 Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;
 Their pensive tablets round her head,
 And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
 The ' wilt thou ' answer'd, and again
 The ' wilt thou ' ask'd, till out of
 twain

Her sweet ' I will ' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
 read,

Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
 By village eyes as yet unborn ;
 The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
 The joy to every wandering breeze ;
 The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
 The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
 Await them. Many a merry face
 Salutes them—maidens of the place,
 That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
 With him to whom her hand I gave.
 They leave the porch, they pass the
 grave
 That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
 For them the light of life increased,
 Who stay to share the morning feast,
 Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
 To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
 My drooping memory will not shun
 The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
 And hearts are warm'd and faces
 bloom,
 As drinking health to bride and
 groom
 We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,
 Perchance, perchance, among the
 rest,
 And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
 And those white-favour'd horses
 wait ;
 They rise, but linger ; it is late ;
 Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
 From little cloudlets on the grass,
 But sweeps away as out we pass
 To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought, the
 wealth
 Of words and wit, the double health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ;—till I retire :
 Dumb is that tower which spake so
 loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming
 cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapour sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and
 spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;
 And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the
 wall ;
 And breaking let the splendour fall
 To spangle all the happy shores
 By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds,
 And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge ; under whose com-
 mand
 Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
 hand
 Is Nature like an open book ;
 No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit ;
 Whereof the man, that with me trod
 This planet, was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,
 That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.

MAUD ; A MONODRAMA.

PART I.

I.

I.

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
 Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
 The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
 And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death.'

II.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
 His who had given me life—O father ! O God ! was it well ?—
 Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground :
 There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

III.

Did he fling himself down ? who knows ? for a vast speculation had fail'd,
 And ever he mutter'd and madden'd, and ever wann'd with despair,
 And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,
 And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air.

IV.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
 By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
 And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
 The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

V.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained:
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd.

VI.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

VII.

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

VIII.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age—why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die: who knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hustled together, each sex, like swine.
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard—yes!—but a company forges the wine.

X.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

XI.

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poison'd poison behind his crimson lights.

XII.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

XIII.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

XIV.

What ! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood ?
Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a wretched swindler's lie ?

XV.

Would there be sorrow for *me* ? there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave—
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

XVI.

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay ? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here ?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear ?

XVII.

Workmen up at the Hall !—they are coming back from abroad ;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire :
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud ;
I play'd with the girl when a child ; she promised then to be fair.

XVIII.

Maud with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

XIX.

What is she now ? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
No, there is fatter game on the moor ; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

II.

Long have I sigh'd for a calm : God grant I may find it at last !
It will never be broken by Maud, she has neither savour nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
Perfectly beautiful : let it be granted her : where is the fault ?

All that I saw (for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen)
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
 Dead perfection, no more ; nothing more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

III.

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
 Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drown'd,
 Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound ;
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
 Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
 Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
 Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

IV.

I.

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
 In the little grove where I sit—ah, wherefore cannot I be
 Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
 When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
 Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
 The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land ?

II.

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small !
 And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite ;
 And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar ;
 And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall ;
 And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light ;
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star !

III.

When have I bow'd to her father, the wrinkled head of the race ?
 I met her to-day with her brother, but not to her brother I bow'd :
 I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor ;
 But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face.
 O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud ;
 Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

IV.

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal ;
 I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
 A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way :
 For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal ;
 The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,
 And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

V.

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower ;
 Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
 That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed ?
 Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour ;
 We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame ;
 However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

VI.

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,
 For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
 And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
 As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
 So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man :
 He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too base ?

VII.

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
 An eye well-practised in nature, a spirit bounded and poor ;
 The passionate heart of the poet is whirl'd into folly and vice.
 I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain ;
 For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
 Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

VIII.

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
 Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about ?
 Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall ? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail ?
 Or an infant civilisation be ruled with rod or with knout ?
 I have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

IX.

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
 Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
 Far-off from the clamour of liars belied in the hubbub of lies ;
 From the long-neck'd geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
 Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
 Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X.

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah Maud, you milkwhite fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above ;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will ;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

V.

I.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall !
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call !
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

II.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny
sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English
green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her
grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honour that
cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid
and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

III.

Silence, beautiful voice !
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still ! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a
choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice. •

VI.

I.

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud,
And the budded peaks of the wood are
bow'd
Caught and cuff'd by the gale :
I had fancied it would be fair.

II.

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burn'd
On the blossom'd gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet ?
And she touch'd my hand with a smile
so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III.

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my
dreams,
Ready to burst in a colour'd flame ;
Till at last when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV.

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI

What if tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian Bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd.

VII.

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and
ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII.

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and
good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,

And the shrieking rush of the wainscot
mouse,

And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown

About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown

Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX.

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?

For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,

That made my tongue so stammer and
trip

When I saw the treasured splendour, her
hand,

Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X.

I have play'd with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.

Ah well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.

Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile had all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VII.

I.

Did I hear it half in a doze
Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
When asleep in this arm-chair?

II.

Men were drinking together,
Drinking and talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy,
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

III.

Is it an echo of something
Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
In some Arabian night?

IV.

Strange, that I hear two men,
Somewhere, talking of me;
'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
Will have plenty: so let it be.'

VIII.

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her
eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride, and mused and
sigh'd
'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX.

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun look'd out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand,
There were two at her side,
Something flash'd in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone:
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

X.

I.

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendour
plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poison'd gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turn'd into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor
(Look at it) pricking a cockney ear.

II.

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he:
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
bride.

Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape—
Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III.

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice as
well :

This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy
things,

Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,
and rings

Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war ! can he tell

Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth

Hell !

Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind

The bitter springs of anger and fear ;

Down too, down at your own fireside,

With the evil tongue and the evil ear,

For each is at war with mankind.

IV.

I wish I could hear again

The chivalrous battle-song

That she warbled alone in her joy !

I might persuade myself then

She would not do herself this great wrong,

To take a wanton dissolute boy

For a man and leader of men.

V.

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,

Like some of the simple great ones gone

For ever and ever by,

One still strong man in a blatant land,

Whatever they call him, what care I,

Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—one

Who can rule and dare not lie.

VI.

And ah for a man to arise in me,

That the man I am may cease to be !

XI.

I.

O let the solid ground

Not fail beneath my feet

Before my life has found

What some have found so sweet ;

Then let come what come may,

What matter if I go mad,

I shall have had my day.

II.

Let the sweet heavens endure,

Not close and darken above me

Before I am quite quite sure

That there is one to love me ;

Then let come what come may

To a life that has been so sad,

I shall have had my day.

XII.

I.

Birds in the high Hall-garden

When twilight was falling,

Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,

They were crying and calling.

II.

Where was Maud ? in our wood ;

And I, who else, was with her,

Gathering woodland lilies,

Myriads blow together.

III.

Birds in our wood sang

Ringling thro' the valleys,

Maud is here, here, here

In among the lilies.

IV.

I kiss'd her slender hand,

She took the kiss sedately ;

Maud is not seventeen,

But she is tall and stately.

V.

I to cry out on pride

Who have won her favour !

O Maud were sure of Heaven

If lowliness could save her.

VI.

I know the way she went

Home with her maiden posy,

For her feet have touch'd the meadows

And left the daisies rosy.

VII.

Birds in the high Hall-garden

Were crying and calling to her,

Where is Maud, Maud, Maud ?

One is come to woo her.

VIII.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling,
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XIII.

I.

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vex'd with his pride!
I past him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and
white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turn'd the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his hands.

II.

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I past he was humming an air,
Stopt, and then with a riding whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonised me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III.

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place:
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet:
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.

And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin:
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV.

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

XIV.

I.

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate;
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II.

Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company) looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate:
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as
white

As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my
Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,
to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh Heaven, down
to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

III.

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV.

I heard no sound where I stood
 But the rivulet on from the lawn
 Running down to my own dark wood ;
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it
 swell'd
 Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;
 But I look'd, and round, all round the
 house I beheld
 The death-white curtain drawn ;
 Felt a horror over me creep,
 Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
 Knew that the death-white curtain meant
 but sleep,
 Yet I shudder'd and thought like a fool
 of the sleep of death.

XV.

So dark a mind within me dwells,
 And I make myself such evil cheer,
 That if *I* be dear to some one else,
 Then some one else may have much to
 fear ;
 But if *I* be dear to some one else,
 Then I should be to myself more dear.
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,
 Yea ev'n of wretched meat and drink,
 If I be dear,
 If I be dear to some one else.

XVI.

I.

This lump of earth has left his estate
 The lighter by the loss of his weight ;
 And so that he find what he went to
 seek,
 And fulsome Pleasure clog him, and
 drown
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
 He may stay for a year who has gone for
 a week :
 But this is the day when I must speak,
 And I see my Oread coming down,
 O this is the day !
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way ;
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,

And dream of her beauty with tender
 dread,
 From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
 To the grace that, bright and light as the
 crest
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
 And she knows it not : O, if she knew it,
 To know her beauty might half undo it.
 I know it the one bright thing to save
 My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II.

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool lord,
 Dare I bid her abide by her word ?
 Should I love her so well if she
 Had given her word to a thing so low ?
 Shall I love her as well if she
 Can break her word were it even for me ?
 I trust that it is not so.

III.

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
 For I must tell her before we part,
 I must tell her, or die.

XVII.

Go not, happy day,
 From the shining fields,
 Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth
 When the happy Yes
 Falters from her lips,
 Pass and blush the news
 Over glowing ships ;
 Over blowing seas,
 Over seas at rest,
 Pass the happy news,
 Blush it thro' the West ;
 Till the red man dance
 By his red cedar-tree,
 And the red man's babe
 Leap, beyond the sea.

Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it thro' the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII.

I.

I have led her home, my love, my only
friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised
good.

II.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' patter-
ing talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden
walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes
once more ;
But even then I heard her close the
door,
The gates of Heaven are closed, and she
is gone.

III.

There is none like her, none.
Nor will be when our summers have de-
ceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy
delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here in-
creased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South, and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my
fate,

And made my life a perfumed altar-flame ;
And over whom thy darkness must have
spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy
great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
whom she came.

IV.

Here will I lie, while these long branches
sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn,
As when it seem'd far better to be born
To labour and the mattock-harden'd
hand,
Than nursed at ease and brought to un-
derstand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron
skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and
brand
His nothingness into man.

V.

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a
pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow
sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one
simple girl.

VI.

Would die ; for sullen-seeming Death
may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to
live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass ;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII.

Not die ; but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal
wrongs.

O, why should Love, like men in drink-
ing-songs,

Spice his fair banquet with the dust of
death ?

Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving
kiss,

Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this ?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven
here

With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself
more dear.'

VIII.

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay ?
And hark the clock within, the silver
knell

Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal
white,

And died to live, long as my pulses play ;
But now by this my love has closed her
sight

And given false death her hand, and stol'n
away

To dreamful wastes where footless fancies
dwell

Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace
affright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy
spell.

My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,
farewell ;

It is but for a little space I go :
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the
glow

Of your soft splendours that you look so
bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things
below,

Beat with my heart more blest than heart
can tell,

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent
woe

That seems to draw—but it shall not be
so :

Let all be well, be well.

XIX.

I.

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II.

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and
mine :

For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III.

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk
(For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things)
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin :
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin,
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vext with lawyers and harass'd with
debt :

For how often I caught her with eyes all
wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within !

IV.

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart

From him who had ceased to share her
heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn :

How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed—

That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born ;
Seal'd her mine from her first sweet
breath.

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till
death.

Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn.

V.

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so
sweet :

And none of us thought of a something
beyond,

A desire that awoke in the heart of the
child,

As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be recon-
ciled ;

And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run
wild

While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches—I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled !

VI.

But then what a flint is he !
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before ;
And this was what had redden'd her
cheek

When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII.

Yet Maud, altho' not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII.

Kind ? but the deathbed desire
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar—
Rough but kind ? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud ? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind ; why let it be so :
For shall not Maud have her will ?

IX.

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt,
That I never can hope to pay ;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours ;
O then, what then shall I say ?—
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet !

X.

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry ;
But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX.

I.

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day

To beguile her melancholy ;
 The Sultan, as we name him, —
 She did not wish to blame him —
 But he vexed her and perplexed her
 With his worldly talk and folly :
 Was it gentle to reprove her
 For stealing out of view
 From a little lazy lover
 Who but claims her as his due ?
 Or for chilling his caresses
 By the coldness of her manners,
 Nay, the plainness of her dresses ?
 Now I know her but in two,
 Nor can pronounce upon it
 If one should ask me whether
 The habit, hat, and feather,
 Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
 Be the neater and completer ;
 For nothing can be sweeter
 Than maiden Maud in either.

II.

But to-morrow, if we live,
 Our ponderous squire will give
 A grand political dinner
 To half the squirelings near ;
 And Maud will wear her jewels,
 And the bird of prey will hover,
 And the titmouse hope to win her
 With his chirrup at her ear.

III.

A grand political dinner
 To the men of many acres,
 A gathering of the Tory,
 A dinner and then a dance
 For the maids and marriage-makers,
 And every eye but mine will glance
 At Maud in all her glory.

IV.

For I am not invited,
 But, with the Sultan's pardon,
 I am all as well delighted,
 For I know her own rose-garden,
 And mean to linger in it
 Till the dancing will be over ;
 And then, oh then, come out to me
 For a minute, but for a minute,

Come out to your own true lover,
 That your true lover may see
 Your glory also, and render
 All homage to his own darling,
 Queen Maud in all her splendour.

XXI.

Rivulet crossing my ground,
 And bringing me down from the Hall
 This garden-rose that I found,
 Forgetful of Maud and me,
 And lost in trouble and moving round
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea ;
 O Rivulet, born at the Hall,
 My Maud has sent it by thee
 (If I read her sweet will right)
 On a blushing mission to me,
 Saying in odour and colour, ' Ah, be
 Among the roses to-night.'

XXII.

I.

Come into the garden, Maud,
 For the black bat, night, has flown,
 Come into the garden, Maud,
 I am here at the gate alone ;
 And the woodbine spices are wafted
 abroad,
 And the musk of the rose is blown.

II.

For a breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she
 loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light, and to die.

III.

All night have the roses heard
 The flute, violin, bassoon ;
 All night has the casement jessamine
 stirr'd
 To the dancers dancing in tune ;
 Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
 And a hush with the setting moon.

IV.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone?
 She is weary of dance and play.'
 Now half to the setting moon are gone,
 And half to the rising day;
 Low on the sand and loud on the stone
 The last wheel echoes away.

V.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
 In babble and revel and wine.
 O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
 For one that will never be thine?
 But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the
 rose,
 'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI.

And the soul of the rose went into my
 blood,
 As the music clash'd in the hall;
 And long by the garden lake I stood,
 For I heard your rivulet fall
 From the lake to the meadow and on to
 the wood,
 Our wood, that is dearer than all;

VII.

From the meadow your walks have left
 so sweet
 That whenever a March-wind sighs
 He sets the jewel-print of your feet
 In violets blue as your eyes,
 To the woody hollows in which we meet
 And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII.

The slender acacia would not shake
 One long milk-bloom on the tree;
 The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
 As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
 But the rose was awake all night for your
 sake,
 Knowing your promise to me;
 The lilies and roses were all awake,
 They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
 Come hither, the dances are done,
 In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
 Queen lily and rose in one;
 Shine out, little head, sunning over with
 curls,
 To the flowers, and be their sun.

X.

There has fallen a splendid tear
 From the passion-flower at the gate.
 She is coming, my dove, my dear;
 She is coming, my life, my fate;
 The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is
 near;'
 And the white rose weeps, 'She is
 late;'
 The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
 And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI.

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
 Were it ever so airy a tread,
 My heart would hear her and beat,
 Were it earth in an earthy bed;
 My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead;
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red.

PART II.

I.

I.

'THE fault was mine, the fault was
 mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
 Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the
 hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—

And there rises ever a passionate cry
 From underneath in the darkening land—
 What is it, that has been done?

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
 The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising
 sun,

The fires of Hell and of Hate;

For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a
word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the
gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord ;
Heap'd on her terms of disgrace,
And while she wept, and I strove to be
cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the
face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by :
Struck for himself an evil stroke ;
Wrought for his house an irredeemable
woe ;
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes
broke
From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the
wood,
And thunder'd up into Heaven the Christ-
less code,
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye ?
'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly !'
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know ;
And there rang on a sudden a passionate
cry,
A cry for a brother's blood :
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till
I die, till I die.

II.

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.
It is gone ; and the heavens fall in a
gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with
deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and
lust,
The little hearts that know not how to
forgive :

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold
Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of veno-
mous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust ;
We are not worthy to live.

II.

I.

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design !

II.

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

III.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV.

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

V.

Breton, not Briton ; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear—

Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
 A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
 That never came from on high
 Nor ever arose from below,
 But only moves with the moving eye,
 Flying along the land and the main—
 Why should it look like Maud?
 Am I to be overawed
 By what I cannot but know
 Is a juggle born of the brain?

VI.

Back from the Breton coast,
 Sick of a nameless fear,
 Back to the dark sea-line
 Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
 An old song vexes my ear;
 But that of Lamech is mine.

VII.

For years, a measureless ill,
 For years, for ever, to part—
 But she, she would love me still;
 And as long, O God, as she
 Have a grain of love for me,
 So long, no doubt, no doubt,
 Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
 However weary, a spark of will
 Not to be trampled out.

VIII.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
 With a passion so intense
 One would think that it well
 Might drown all life in the eye,—
 That it should, by being so overwrought,
 Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
 For a shell, or a flower, little things
 Which else would have been past by!
 And now I remember, I,
 When he lay dying there,
 I noticed one of his many rings
 (For he had many, poor worm) and
 thought
 It is his mother's hair.

IX.

Who knows if he be dead?
 Whether I need have fled?

Am I guilty of blood?
 However this may be,
 Comfort her, comfort her, all things
 good,
 While I am over the sea!
 Let me and my passionate love go by,
 But speak to her all things holy and
 high,
 Whatever happen to me!
 Me and my harmful love go by;
 But come to her waking, find her asleep,
 Powers of the height, Powers of the
 deep,
 And comfort her tho' I die.

III.

Courage, poor heart of stone!
 I will not ask thee why
 Thou canst not understand
 That thou art left for ever alone:
 Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
 Or if I ask thee why,
 Care not thou to reply:
 She is but dead, and the time is at hand
 When thou shalt more than die.

IV.

I.

O that 'twere possible
 After long grief and pain
 To find the arms of my true love
 Round me once again!

II.

When I was wont to meet her
 In the silent woody places
 By the home that gave me birth,
 We stood tranced in long embraces
 Mixt with kisses sweeter sweeter
 Than anything on earth.

III.

A shadow flits before me,
 Not thou, but like to thee:
 Ah Christ, that it were possible
 For one short hour to see
 The souls we loved, that they might tell us
 What and where they be.

IV.

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

V.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies ;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

VI.

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendour falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls ;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet ;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings ;
In a moment we shall meet ;
She is singing in the meadow
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

VII.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye ?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate
cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled ;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold.

VIII.

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about !
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

IX.

Then I rise, the eavedrops fall,
And the yellow vapours choke
The great city sounding wide ;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

X.

Thro' the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Thro' all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same ;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

XI.

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering thro' the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall.

XII.

Would the happy spirit descend,
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest' ?

XIII.

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be ;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me :

Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

V.

I. manqué, flat.

Dead, long dead,
Long dead !
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing
feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamour and rumble, and ringing and
clatter,
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it
is not so ;
To have no peace in the grave, is that
not sad ?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go ;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II.

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man ;
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days
that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was
read ;
It is that which makes us loud in the
world of the dead ;
There is none that does his work, not
one ;
A touch of their office might have
sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their
church,
As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

T

III.

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient—all for what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty
head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

IV.

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold ;
Not let any man think for the public
good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whisper'd a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the
top of the house ;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there ?

V.

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not
back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where
he used to lie ;
He has gather'd the bones for his o'er-
grown whelp to crack ;
Crack them now for yourself, and howl,
and die.

VI.

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;
I know not whether he came in the
Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute
In an ancient mansion's crannies and
holes :

X

Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
 Except that now we poison our babes,
 poor souls !
 It is all used up for that.

VII.

Tell him now : she is standing here at my
 head ;
 Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
 He may take her now ; for she never
 speaks her mind,
 But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ;
 She comes from another stiller world of
 the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII.

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season is
 good,
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes :
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but
 blood ;
 For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spectral
 bride ;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
 brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

IX.

But what will the old man say ?
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day ;
 Yet now I could even weep to think
 of it ;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse in
 the pit ?

X.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
 Then to strike him and lay him low,
 That were a public merit, far,
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin ;
 But the red life spilt for a private blow—
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
 Are scarcely even akin.

XI.

O me, why have they not buried me deep
 enough ?
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb ;
 I will cry to the steps above my head
 And somebody, surely, some kind heart
 will come
 To bury me, bury me
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III.

VI.

I.

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
 That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing :
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
 When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
 That like a silent lightning under the stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,

And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars—
'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

II.

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have look'd, tho' but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright ;
And it was but a dream, yet it lighten'd my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defence of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,
Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire :
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

III.

And as months ran on and rumour of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I
(For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true),
'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mix'd my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

IV.

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a giant liar ;
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire ;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

V.

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
 We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
 And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind;
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
 I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
 I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assign'd.

IDYLLS OF THE KING.

IN TWELVE BOOKS.

'Flos Regum Arthurius.'—JOSEPH OF EXETER.

DEDICATION.

THESE to His Memory—since he held
 them dear,
 Perchance as finding there unconsciously
 Some image of himself—I dedicate,
 I dedicate, I consecrate with tears—
 These Idylls.

And indeed He seems to me
 Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
 'Who revered his conscience as his
 king;
 Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
 Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd
 to it;
 Who loved one only and who clave to her—'
 Her—over all whose realms to their last
 isle,
 Commingled with the gloom of imminent
 war,
 The shadow of His loss drew like eclipse,
 Darkening the world. We have lost
 him: he is gone:
 We know him now: all narrow jealousies
 Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
 How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
 wise,
 With what sublime repression of himself,
 And in what limits, and how tenderly;
 Not swaying to this faction or to that;
 Not making his high place the lawless
 perch
 Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
 For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of
 years
 Wearing the white flower of a blameless
 life,

Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
 In that fierce light which beats upon a
 throne,
 And blackens every blot: for where is he,
 Who dares foreshadow for an only son
 A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than his!
 Or how should England dreaming of *his*
 sons

Hope more for these than some inheritance
 Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
 Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
 Laborious for her people and her poor—
 Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day—
 Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
 To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace—
 Sweet nature gilded by the gracious glean
 Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
 Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
 Beyond all titles, and a household name,
 Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still
 endure;
 Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure,
 Remembering all the beauty of that star
 Which shone so close beside Thee that
 ye made
 One light together, but has past and leaves
 The Crown a lonely splendour.

May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow Thee,
 The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
 The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
 The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
 Till God's love set Thee at his side again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other
child ;

And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land ;
And still from time to time the heathen
host

Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was
left.

And so there grew great tracts of wilder-
ness,

Wherein the beast was ever more and
more,

But man was less and less, till Arthur
came.

For first Aurelius lived and fought and
died,

And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom
one.

And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table
Round,

Drew all their petty pryncedoms under
him,

Their king and head, and made a realm,
and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was
waste,

Thick with wet woods, and many a beast
therein,

And none or few to scare or chase the
beast ;

So that wild dog, and wolf and boar and
bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the
fields,

And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal

The children and devour, but now and
then,

Her own brood lost or dead, lent her
fierce teat

To human sucklings ; and the children,
housed

In her foul den, there at their meat would
growl,

And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-
like men,

Worse than the wolves. And King
Leodogran

Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,
And Cæsar's eagle : then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him : last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth
with blood,

And on the spike that split the mother's
heart

Spitting the child, brake on him, till,
amazed,

He knew not whither he should turn for
aid.

But—for he heard of Arthur newly
crown'd,

Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, ' He is not Uther's son '—the
King

Sent to him, saying, ' Arise, and help us
thou !

For here between the man and beast we
die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of
arms,

But heard the call, and came : and
Guinevere

Stood by the castle walls to watch him
pass ;

But since he neither wore on helm or
shield

The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his
knights,

And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she
saw,

One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life

Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and
pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he
drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and
fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the
knight
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of his
realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of
these,
Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying, 'Who
is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven
him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor
voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to battle,
felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, 'Her father said
That there between the man and beast
they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side with
me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
Vext—O ye stars that shudder over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under me,
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be
join'd
To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my
work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own
realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with
her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten
it,
And power on this dead world to make
it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells the
tale—
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle
bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
world
Was all so clear about him, that he saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
And even in high day the morning star.
So when the King had set his banner
broad,
At once from either side, with trumpet-
blast,
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
blood,
The long-lanced battle let their horses
run.
And now the Barons and the kings pre-
vail'd,
And now the King, as here and there
that war
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk
the world
Made lightnings and great thunders over
him,
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main
might,
And mightier of his hands with every
blow,
And leading all his knighthood threw the
kings
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumber-
land,
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
To one who sins, and deems himself alone
And all the world asleep, they swerved
and brake

Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
brands
That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho ! they
yield !'

So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
And honour'd most. 'Thou dost not
doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for me
to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire of
God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field :
I know thee for my King !' Whereat the
two,

For each had warder either in the fight,
Swore on the field of death a deathless
love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in
man :

Let chance what will, I trust thee to the
death.'

Then quickly from the foughten field
he sent

Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodo-
gran,

Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee
well,

Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in
heart

Debating—'How should I that am a
king,

However much he help me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son ?'—lifted his voice, and
call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel : 'Knowest thou aught of
Arthur's birth ?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and
said,

'Sir King, there be but two old men that
know :

And each is twice as old as I ; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art ; and one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,
Who taught him magic ; but the scholar
ran

Before the master, and so far, that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and
wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran replied,
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share
of me :

But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfus, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him, the
King said,

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser
fowl,
And reason in the chase : but wherefore
now

Do these your lords stir up the heat of
war,

Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton ? Tell me, ye your-
selves,

Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son ?'

And Ulfus and Brastias answer'd, 'Ay.'
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake—

For bold in heart and act and word was
he,

Whenever slander breathed against the
King—

'Sir, there be many rumours on this
head :

For there be those who hate him in their
hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways are
sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less than
man :