

THE GARDEN OF DREAMS

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*Author of "Intimations of the Beautiful," "Undertones,"
and several other books of verse*



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TO
MY BROTHERS.

*Not while I live may I forget
That garden which my spirit trod !
Where dreams were flowers, wild and wet,
And beautiful as God.*

*Not while I breathe, awake, adream,
Shall live again for me those hours,
When, in its mystery and gleam,
I met her 'mid the flowers.*

*Eyes, talismanic heliotrope,
Beneath mesmeric lashes, where
The sorceries of love and hope
Had made a shining lair.*

*And daydawn brows, wherever hung
The twilight of dark locks ; and lips,
Whose beauty spoke the rose's tongue
Of fragrance-voweled drips.*

*I will not tell of cheeks and chin,
That held me as sweet language holds ;
Nor of the eloquence within
Her bosom's moony molds.*

*Nor of her large limbs' languorous
Wind-grace, that glanced like starlight through
Her ardent robe's diaphanous
Web of the mist and dew.*

*There is no star so pure and high
As was her look ; no fragrance such
As her soft presence ; and no sigh
Of music like her touch.*

*Not while I live may I forget
That garden of dim dreams ! where I
And Song within the spirit met,
Sweet Song, who passed me by.*

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THE GARDEN OF DREAMS



A FALLEN BEECH

NEVERMORE at doorways that are barken
Shall the madcap wind knock and the noonlight;
Nor the circle, which thou once didst darken,
Shine with footsteps of the neighboring moonlight,
Visitors for whom thou oft didst hearken.

Nevermore, gallooned with cloudy laces,
Shall the morning, like a fair freebooter,
Make thy leaves his richest treasure-places;
Nor the sunset, like a royal suitor,
Clothe thy limbs with his imperial graces.

And no more, between the savage wonder
Of the sunset and the moon's up-coming,
Shall the storm, with boisterous hoof-beats, under
Thy dark roof dance, Faun-like, to the humming
Of the Pan-pipes of the rain and thunder.

Oft the satyr spirit, beauty-drunken,
Of the Spring called; and the music-measure
Of thy sap made answer; and thy sunken
Veins grew vehement with youth, whose pressure
Swelled thy gnarly muscles, winter-shrunken.

A Fallien
Beech And the germs, deep down in darkness rooted,
Bubbled green from all thy million oilets,
Where the spirits, rain-and-sunbeam-suited,
Of the April made their whispering toilets,
Or within thy stately shadow footed.

Oft the hours of blonde Summer tinkled
At the windows of thy twigs, and found thee
Bird-blithe ; or, with shapely bodies, twinkled
Lissom feet of naked flowers around thee,
Where thy mats of moss lay sunbeam-sprinkled.

And the Autumn with his gipsy-coated
Troop of days beneath thy branches rested,
Swarthy-faced and dark of eye ; and throated
Songs of hunting ; or with red hand tested
Every nut-bur that above him floated.

Then the Winter, barren-browed, but rich in
Shaggy followers of frost and freezing,
Made the floor of thy broad boughs his kitchen,
Trapper-like, to camp in ; grimly easing
Limbs snow-furred and moccasoned with lichen.

Now, alas ! no more do these invest thee
With the dignity of whilom gladness !
They — unto whose hearts thou once confessed
thee
Of thy dreams — now know thee not ! and sadness
Sits beside thee where forgot dost rest thee.

THE HAUNTED WOODLAND

HERE in the golden darkness
And green night of the woods,
A fitting form I follow,
A shadow that eludes —
Or is it but the phantom
Of former forest moods ?

The phantom of some fancy
I knew when I was young,
And in my dreaming boyhood,
The wildwood flow'rs among,
Young face to face with Faery
Spoke in no unknown tongue.

Blue were her eyes, and golden
The nimbus of her hair ;
And crimson as a flower
Her mouth that kissed me there ;
That kissed and bade me follow,
And smiled away my care.

A magic and a marvel
Lived in her word and look,
As down among the blossoms
She sate me by the brook,
And read me wonder-legends
In Nature's Story Book.

*The
Haunted
Wood-
land*

Loved fairy-tales forgotten,
She never reads again,
Of beautiful enchantments
That haunt the sun and rain,
And, in the wind and water,
Chant a mysterious strain.

And so I search the forest,
Wherein my spirit feels,
In tree or stream or flower
Herself she still conceals —
But now she flies who followed,
Whom Earth no more reveals.

DISCOVERY

WHAT is it now that I shall seek,
Where woods dip downward, in the hills? —
A mossy nook, a ferny creek,
And May among the daffodils.

Or in the valley's vistaed glow,
Past rocks of terraced trumpet-vines,
Shall I behold her coming slow,
Sweet May, among the columbines?

With redbud cheeks and bluet eyes,
Big eyes, the homes of happiness,
To meet me with the old surprise,
Her hoiden hair all bonnetless.

Who waits for me, where, note for note,
The birds make glad the forest-trees ?
A dogwood blossom at her throat,
My May among the anemones.

Discovery

As sweetheart breezes kiss the blooms,
And dewdrops drink the moonlight's gleams,
My soul shall kiss her lips' perfumes,
And drink the magic of her dreams.

COMRADERY

WITH eyes hand-arched he looks into
The morning's face, then turns away
With schoolboy feet, all wet with dew,
Out for a holiday.

The hill brook sings, incessant stars,
Foam-fashioned, on its restless breast ;
And where he wades its water-bars
Its song is happiest.

A comrade of the chinquapin,
He looks into its knotted eyes
And sees its heart ; and, deep within,
Its soul that makes him wise.

The wood-thrush knows and follows him,
Who whistles up the birds and bees ;
And 'round him all the perfumes swim
Of woodland loam and trees.

*Comrad-
ery* Where'er he pass the supple springs'
Foam-people sing the flowers awake;
And sappy lips of bark-clad things
Laugh ripe each fruited brake.

His touch is a companionship;
His word, an old authority:
He comes, a lyric at his lip,
Unstudied Poesy.

OCCULT

UNTO the soul's companionship
Of things that only seem to be,
Earth points with magic fingertip
And bids thee see
How Fancy keeps thee company.

For oft at dawn hast not beheld
A spirit of prismatic hue
Blow wide the buds, which night has swelled?
And stain them through
With heav'n's ethereal gold and blue?

While at her side another went
With gleams of enigmatic white?
A spirit who distributes scent,
To vale and height,
In footsteps of the rosy light?

And oft at dusk hast thou not seen
The star-fays bring their caravans
Of dew, and glitter all the green,
Night's shadow tans,
From many starbeam sprinkling-cans ?

Nor watched with these the elfins go
Who tune faint instruments ? whose sound
Is that moon-music insects blow
When all the ground
Sleeps, and the night is hushed around ?

WOOD-WORDS

I.

THE spirits of the forest,
That to the winds give voice —
I lie the livelong April day
And wonder what it is they say
That makes the leaves rejoice.

The spirits of the forest,
That breathe in bud and bloom —
I walk within the black-haw brake
And wonder how it is they make
The bubbles of perfume.

The spirits of the forest,
That live in every spring —
I lean above the brook's bright blue
And wonder what it is they do
That makes the water sing.

*Wood-
Words*

The spirits of the forest,
That haunt the sun's green glow —
Down fungus ways of fern I steal
And wonder what they can conceal,
In dews, that twinkles so.

The spirits of the forest,
They hold me, heart and hand —
And, oh ! the bird they send by light,
The jack-o'-lantern gleam by night,
To guide to Fairyland !

II.

The time when dog-tooth violets
Hold up inverted horns of gold, —
The elvish cups that Spring upsets
With dripping feet, when April wets
The sun-and-shadow-marbled wold, —

Is come. And by each leafing way
The sorrel drops pale blots of pink ;
And, like an angled star a fay
Sets on her forehead's pallid day,
The blossoms of the trillium wink.

Within the vale, by rock and stream, —
A fragile, fairy porcelain, —
Blue as a baby's eyes a-dream,
The bluets blow ; and gleam in gleam
The sun-shot dog-woods flash with rain.

It is the time to cast off care ;
To make glad intimates of these : —
The frank-faced sunbeam laughing there ;
The great-heart wind, that bids us share
The optimism of the trees.

III.

The white ghosts of the flowers,
The green ghosts of the trees :
They haunt the blooming bowers,
They haunt the wildwood hours,
And whisper in the breeze.

For in the wildrose places,
And on the beechen knoll,
My soul hath seen their faces,
My soul hath met their races,
And felt their dim control.

IV.

Crab-apple buds, whose bells
The mouth of April kissed ;
That hang,—like rosy shells
Around a naiad's wrist,—
Pink as dawn-tinted mist.

And paw-paw buds, whose dark
Deep auburn blossoms shake
On boughs,—as 'neath the bark
A dryad's eyes awake,—
Brown as a midnight lake.

*Wood-
Words*

These, with symbolic blooms
Of wind-flower and wild-phlox,
I found among the glooms
Of hill-lost woods and rocks,
Lairs of the mink and fox.

The beetle in the brush,
The bird about the creek,
The bee within the hush,
And I, whose heart was meek,
Stood still to hear these speak

The language, that records,
In flower-syllables,
The hieroglyphic words
Of beauty, who enspells
The world and aye compels.

THE WIND AT NIGHT

I.

NOT till the wildman wind is shrill,
Howling upon the hill
In every wolfish tree, whose boisterous boughs,
Like desperate arms, gesture and beat the night,
And down huge clouds, in chasms of stormy white
The frightened moon hurries above the house,
Shall I lie down; and, deep,—
Letting the mad wind keep
Its shouting revel round me,— fall asleep.

II.

*The Wind
at Night*

Not till its dark halloo is hushed,
 And where wild waters rushed,—
 Like some hoofed terror underneath its whip
 And spur of foam,—remains
 A ghostly glass, hill-framed ; whereover stains
 Of moony mists and rains,
 And stealthy starbeams, like vague specters, slip ;
 Shall I — with thoughts that take
 Unto themselves the ache
 Of silence as a sound — from sleep awake.

AIRY TONGUES

I.

I HEAR a song the wet leaves lisp
 When Morn comes down the woodland way ;
 And misty as a thistle-wisp
 Her gown gleams windy gray ;
 A song, that seems to say,
 “Awake ! ’t is day !”

I hear a sigh, when Day sits down
 Beside the sunlight-lulled lagoon ;
 While on her glistening hair and gown
 The rose of rest is strewn ;
 A sigh, that seems to croon,
 “Come sleep ! ’t is noon !”

*Airy
Tongues* I hear a whisper, when the stars,
Upon some evening-purple'd height,
Crown the dead Day with nenuphars
Of dreamy gold and white ;
A voice, that seems t' invite,
"Come love ! 't is night !"

II.

Before the rathe song-sparrow sings
Among the hawtrees in the lane,
And to the wind the locust flings
Its early clusters fresh with rain ;
Beyond the morning-star, that swings
Its rose of fire above the spire,
Between the morning's watchet wings,
A voice that rings o'er brooks and boughs—
"Arouse ! arouse !"

Before the first brown owlet cries
Among the grape-vines on the hill,
And in the dam with half-shut eyes
The lilies rock above the mill ;
Beyond the oblong moon, that flies
Its pearly flower above the tower,
Between the twilight's primrose skies,
A voice that sighs from east to west—
"To rest ! to rest !"

THE HILLS

THERE is no joy of earth that thrills
My bosom like the far-off hills !
Th' unchanging hills, that, shadowy,
Beckon our mutability
To follow and to gaze upon
Foundations of the dusk and dawn.
Meseems the very heavens are massed
Upon their shoulders, vague and vast
With all the skyey burden of
The winds and clouds and stars above.
Lo, how they sit before us, seeing
The laws that give all Beauty being !
Behold ! to them, when dawn is near,
The nomads of the air appear,
Unfolding crimson camps of day
In brilliant bands ; then march away ;
And under burning battlements
Of twilight plant their tinted tents.
The faith of olden myths, that brood
By haunted stream and haunted wood,
They see ; and feel the happiness
Of old at which we only guess :
The dreams, the ancients loved and knew,
Still as their rocks and trees are true :
Not otherwise than presences
The tempest and the calm to these :
One shouting on them, all the night,
Black-limbed and veined with lambent light :
The other with the ministry
Of all soft things that company

The Hills With music—an embodied form,
Giving to solitude the charm
Of leaves and waters and the peace
Of bird-begotten melodies—
And who at night doth still confer
With the mild moon, who telleth her
Pale tale of lonely love, until
Wan images of passion fill
The heights with shapes that glimmer by
Clad on with sleep and memory.

IMPERFECTION

NOT as the eye hath seen, shall we behold
Romance and beauty, when we've passed
away ;
That robed the dull facts of the intimate day
In life's wild raiment of unusual gold :
Not as the ear hath heard, shall we be told,
Hereafter, myth and legend once that lay
Warm at the heart of Nature, clothing clay
In attribute of no material mold.
These were imperfect of necessity,
That wrought thro' imperfection for far ends
Of perfectness—As calm philosophy,
Teaching a child, from his high heav'n descends
To Earth's familiar things ; informingly
Vesting his thoughts with that it comprehends.

ARCANNA

EARTH hath her images of utterance,
Her hieroglyphic meanings which elude ;
A symbol language of similitude,
Into whose secrets science may not glance ;
In which the Mind-in-Nature doth romance
In miracles that baffle if pursued—
No guess shall search them and no thought intrude
Beyond the limits of her sufferance.
So doth the great Intelligence above
Hide His own thought's creations ; and attire
Forms in the dream's ideal, which He dowers
With immaterial loveliness and love—
As essences of fragrance and of fire—
Preaching th' evangels of the stars and flowers.

SPRING

FIRST came the rain, loud, with sonorous lips ;
A pursuivant who heralded a prince :
And dawn put on a livery of tints,
And dusk bound gold about her hair and hips :
And, all in silver mail, then sunlight came,
A knight, who bade the winter let him pass,
And freed imprisoned beauty, naked as
The Court of Love, in all her wildflower shame.
And so she came, in breeze-borne loveliness,
Across the hills ; and heav'n bent down to bless :
Before her face the birds were as a lyre ;
And at her feet, like some strong worshiper,
The shouting water pæan'd praise of her,
Who, with blue eyes, set the wild world on fire.

RESPONSE

THERE is a music of immaculate love,
That breathes within the virginal veins of
Spring :—
And trillium blossoms, like the stars that cling
To fairies' wands ; and, strung on sprays above,
White-hearts and mandrake blooms, that look
enough
Like the elves' washing, white with laundering
Of May-moon dews ; and all pale-opening
Wild-flowers of the woods, are born thereof.
There is no sod Spring's white foot brushes but
Must feel the music that vibrates within,
And thrill to the communicated touch
Responsive harmonies, that must unshut
The heart of beauty for song's concrete kin,
Emotions—that be flowers—born of such.

FULFILLMENT

YES, there are some who may look on these
Essential peoples of the earth and air—
That have the stars and flowers in their care—
And all their soul-suggestive secrecies :
Heart-intimates and comrades of the trees,
Who from them learn, what no known schools
declare,
God's knowledge ; and from winds, that discourse
there,

God's gospe' of diviner mysteries :
To whom the waters shall divulge a word
Of fuller faith ; the sunset and the dawn
Preach sermons more inspired even than
The tongues of Pentecost ; as, distant heard
In forms of change, through Nature upward
drawn,
God doth address th' immortal soul of Man.

*Fulfill-
ment.*

TRANSFORMATION

IT is the time when, by the forest falls,
The touchmenots hang fairy folly-caps ;
When ferns and flowers fill the lichened laps
Of rocks with color, rich as orient shawls :
And in my heart I hear a voice that calls
Me woodward, where the Hamadryad wraps
Her limbs in bark, or, bubbling in the saps,
Laughs the sweet Greek of Pan's old madrigals.
There is a gleam that lures me up the stream—
A Naiad swimming with wet limbs of light ?
Perfume, that leads me on from dream to dream—
An Oread's footprints fragrant with her flight ?
And, lo ! meseems I am a Faun again,
Part of the myths that I pursue in vain.

OMENS

SAD o'er the hills the poppy sunset died.
Slow as a fungus breaking through the crusts
Of forest leaves, the waning half-moon thrusts,

Omens Through gray-brown clouds, one milky silver side ;
In her vague light the dogwoods, vale-descried,
Seem nervous torches flourished by the gusts ;
The apple-orchards seem the restless dusts
Of wind-thinned mists upon the hills they hide.
It is a night of omens whom late May
Meets, like a wraith, among her train of hours ;
An apparition, with appealing eye
And hesitant foot, that walks a willowed way,
And, speaking through the fading moon and
flowers,
Bids her prepare her gentle soul to die.

ABANDONED

THE hornets build in plaster-dropping rooms,
And on its mossy porch the lizard lies ;
Around its chimneys slow the swallow flies,
And on its roof the locusts snow their blooms.
Like some sad thought that broods here, old per-
fumes
Haunt its dim stairs ; the cautious zephyr tries
Each gusty door, like some dead hand, then sighs
With ghostly lips among the attic glooms.
And now a heron, now a kingfisher,
Flits in the willows where the ruffle seems
At each faint fall to hesitate to leap,
Fluttering the silence with a little stir.
Here Summer seems a placid face asleep,
And the near world a figment of her dreams.

THE CREEK-ROAD

CALLING, the heron flies athwart the blue
That sleeps above it; reach on rocky reach
Of water sings by sycamore and beech,
In whose warm shade bloom lilies not a few.
It is a page whereon the sun and dew
Scrawl sparkling words in dawn's delicious speech;
A laboratory where the wood-winds teach,
Dissect each scent and analyze each hue.
Not otherwise than beautiful, doth it
Record the happ'nings of each summer day;
Where we may read, as in a catalogue,
When passed a thresher; when a load of hay;
Or when a rabbit; or a bird that lit;
And now a bare-foot truant and his dog.

THE COVERED BRIDGE

THERE, from its entrance, lost in matted
vines,—
Where in the valley foams a water-fall,—
Is glimpsed a ruined mill's remaining wall;
Here, by the road, the oxeye daisy mines
Hot brass and bronze; the trumpet-trailer shines
Red as the plumage of the cardinal.
Faint from the forest comes the rain-crow's call
Where dusty Summer dreams among the pines.
This is the spot where Spring writes wildflower
verses
In primrose pink, while, drowsing o'er his reins,

*The
Covered
Bridge*

The ploughman, all unnoticing, plods along :
And where the Autumn opens weedy purses
Of sleepy silver, while the corn-heaped wains
Rumble the bridge like some deep throat of song.

THE HILLSIDE GRAVE

TEN-HUNDRED deep the drifted daisies break
Here at the hill's foot ; on its top, the wheat
Hangs meagre-bearded ; and, in vague retreat,
The wisp-like blooms of the moth-mulleins shake.
And where the wild-pink drops a crimson flake,
And morning-glories, like young lips, make sweet
The shaded hush, low in the honeyed heat,
The wild-bees hum ; as if afraid to wake
One sleeping there ; with no white stone to tell
The story of existence ; but the stem
Of one wild-rose, towering o'er brier and weed,
Where all the day the wild-birds requiem ;
Within whose shade the timid violets spell
An epitaph, only the stars can read.

SIMULACRA

DARK in the west the sunset's somber wrack
Unrolled vast walls the rams of war had
split,
Along whose battlements the battle lit
Tempestuous beacons ; and, with gates hurled
back,
A mighty city, red with ruin and sack,
Through burning breaches, crumbling bit by bit,

Showed where the God of Slaughter seemed to sit *Simul-*
With conflagration glaring at each crack. *acra*
Who knows? perhaps as sleep unto us makes
Our dreams as real as our waking seems
With recollections time can not destroy,
So in the mind of Nature now awakes
Haply some wilder memory, and she dreams
The stormy story of the fall of Troy.

BEFORE THE END

HOW does the Autumn in her mind conclude
The tragic masque her frosty pencil writes,
Broad on the pages of the days and nights,
In burning lines of orchard, wold, and wood?
What lonelier forms—that at the year's door stood
At spectral wait—with wildly wasted lights
Shall enter? and with melancholy rites
Inaugurate their sadder sisterhood?—
Sorrow, who lifts a signal hand, and slow
The green leaf fevers, falling ere it dies;
Regret, whose pale lips summon, and gaunt Woe
Wakes the wild-wind harps with sonorous sighs;
And Sleep, who sits with popped eyes and sees
The earth and sky grow dream-accessories.

WINTER

THE flute, whence Autumn's misty finger-tips
Drew music—ripening the pinched kernels in
The burly chestnut and the chinquapin,
Red-rounding-out the oval haws and hips,—

Winter Now Winter crushes to his stormy lips
And surly songs whistle around his chin :
Now the wild days and wilder nights begin
When, at the eaves, the crooked icicle drips.
Thy songs, O Autumn, are not lost so soon !
Still dwells a memory in thy hollow flute,
Which, unto Winter's masculine airs, doth give
Thy own creative qualities of tune,
By which we see each bough bend white with fruit,
Each bush with bloom, in snow commemorative.

HOAR-FROST

THE frail eidolons of all blossoms Spring,
Year after year, about the forest tossed,
The magic touch of the enchanter, Frost,
Back from the Heaven of the Flow'rs doth bring ;
Each branch and bush in silence visiting
With phantom beauty of its blooms long lost :
Each dead weed bends, white-haunted of its ghost,
Each dead flower stands ghostly with blossoming.
This is the wonder-legend Nature tells
To the gray moon and mist a winter's night ;
The fairy-tale, which her weird fancy 'spells
With all the glamour of her soul's delight :
Before the summoning sorcery of her eyes
Making her spirit's dream materialize.

THE WINTER MOON

DEEP in the dell I watched her as she rose,
A face of icy fire, o'er the hills ;
With snow-sad eyes to freeze the forest rills,

And snow-sad feet to bleach the meadow snows : *The*
Pale as some young witch who, a-listening, goes *Win-*
To her first meeting with the Fiend ; whose fears *ter*
Fix demon eyes behind each bush she nears ; *Moon*
Stops, yet must on, fearful of following foes.
And so I chased her, startled in the wood,
Like a discovered Oread, who flies
The Faun who found her sleeping, each nude limb
Glittering betrayal through the solitude ;
Till in a frosty cloud I saw her swim,
Like a drowned face, a blur beneath the ice.

IN SUMMER

WHEN in dry hollows, hilled with hay,
The vesper-sparrow sings afar ;
And, golden gray, dusk dies away
Beneath the amber evening-star :
There, where a warm and shadowy arm
The woodland lays around the farm,
To meet you where we kissed, dear heart,
To kiss you at the tryst, dear heart,
To kiss you at the tryst !

When clover fields smell cool with dew,
And crickets cry, and roads are still ;
And faint and few the fire-flies strew
The dark where calls the whippoorwill ;
There, in the lane, where sweet again
The petals of the wild-rose rain,
To stroll with head to head, dear heart,
And say the words oft said, dear heart,
And say the words oft said !

RAIN AND WIND

I HEAR the hoofs of horses
Galloping over the hill,
Galloping on and galloping on,
When all the night is shrill
With wind and rain that beats the pane —
And my soul with awe is still.

For every dripping window
Their headlong rush makes bound,
Galloping up, and galloping by,
Then back again and around,
Till the gusty roofs ring with their hoofs,
And the draughty cellars sound.

And then I hear black horsemen
Hallooing in the night;
Hallooing and hallooing,
They ride o'er vale and height,
And the branches snap and the shutters clap
With the fury of their flight.

Then at each door a horseman, —
With burly bearded lip
Hallooing through the keyhole, —
Pauses with cloak a-drip;
And the door-knob shakes and the panel quakes
'Neath the anger of his whip.

All night I hear their gallop,
And their wild halloo's alarm ;
The tree-tops sound and vanes go round
In forest and on farm ;
But never a hair of a thing is there —
Only the wind and storm.

*Rain and
Wind*

UNDER ARCTURUS

I.

“**I** BELT the morn with ribboned mist ;
With baldricked blue I gird the noon,
And dusk with purple, crimson-kissed,
White-buckled with the hunter's moon.

“ These follow me,” the season says :
“ Mine is the frost-pale hand that packs
Their srips, and speeds them on their ways,
With gipsy gold that weighs their backs.”

II.

A daybreak horn the Autumn blows,
As with a sun-tanned hand he parts
Wet boughs whereon the berry glows ;
And at his feet the red-fox starts.

The leafy leash that holds his hounds
Is loosed ; and all the noonday hush
Is startled ; and the hillside sounds
Behind the fox's bounding brush.

Under When red dusk makes the western sky
Arcturus A fire-lit window through the firs,
 He stoops to see the red-fox die
 Among the chestnut's broken burs.

Then fanfaree and fanfaree,
Down vistas of the afterglow
His bugle rings from tree to tree,
While all the world grows hushed below.

III.

Like some black host the shadows fall,
And darkness camps among the trees ;
Each wildwood road, a Goblin Hall,
Grows populous with mysteries.

Night comes with brows of ragged storm,
And limbs of writhen cloud and mist ;
The rain-wind hangs upon her arm
Like some wild girl that will be kissed.

By her gaunt hand the leaves are shed
Like nightmares an enchantress herds ;
And, like a witch who calls the dead,
The hill-stream whirls with foaming words.

Then all is sudden silence and
Dark fear — like his who can not see,
Yet hears, aye in a haunted land,
Death rattling on a gallow's tree.

The days approach again ; the days,
Whose mantles stream, whose sandals drag ;
When in the haze by puddled ways
Each gnarled thorn seems a crookéd hag.

When rotting orchards reek with rain ;
And woodlands crumble, leaf and log ;
And in the drizzling yard again
The gourd is tagged with points of fog.

Oh, let me seat my soul among
Your melancholy moods ! and touch
Your thoughts' sweet sorrow without tongue,
Whose silence says too much, too much !

OCTOBER

LONG hosts of sunlight, and the bright wind
blows
A tourney trumpet on the listed hill :
Past is the splendor of the royal rose
And duchess daffodil.

Crowned queen of beauty, in the garden's space,
Strong daughter of a bitter race and bold,
A ragged beggar with a lovely face,
Reigns the sad marigold.

October And I have sought June's butterfly for days,
To find it — like a coreopsis bloom —
Amber and seal, rain-murdered 'neath the blaze
Of this sunflower's plume.

Here basks the bee ; and there, sky-voyaging wings
Dare God's blue gulfs of heaven ; the last song,
The red-bird flings me as adieu, still rings
Upon yon pear-tree's prong.

No angry sunset brims with rosier red
The bowl of heaven than the days, indeed,
Pour in each blossom of this salvia-bed,
Where each leaf seems to bleed.

And where the wood-gnats dance, a tiny mist,
Above the efforts of the weedy stream,
The girl, October, tired of the tryst,
Dreams a diviner dream.

One foot just dipping the caressing wave ,
One knee at languid angle ; locks that drown
Hands nut-stained ; hazel-eyed, she lies, and
grave,
Watching the leaves drift down.

BARE BOUGHS

O HEART, that beat the bird's blithe blood,
The blithe bird's message that pursued,
Now song is dead as last year's bud,
What dost thou in the wood ?

O soul, that kept the brook's glad flow,
The glad brook's word to sun and moon,
What dost thou here where song lies low
As all the dreams of June ?

*Bare
Boughs*

Where once was heard a voice of song,
The hautboys of the mad winds sing ;
Where once a music flowed along,
The rain's wild bugles ring.

The weedy water frets and ails,
And moans in many a sunless fall ;
And, o'er the melancholy, trails
The black crow's eldritch call.

Unhappy brook ! O withered wood !
O days, whom death makes comrades of !
Where are the birds that thrilled the blood
When life struck hands with love ?

A song, one soared against the blue ;
A song, one bubbled in the leaves :
A song, one threw where orchards grew
All appled to the eaves.

But now the birds are flown or dead ;
And sky and earth are bleak and gray ;
The wild winds sob i' the boughs instead,
The wild leaves sigh i' the way.

A THRENODY

I.

THE rainy smell of a ferny dell,
Whose shadow no sunray flaws,
When Autumn sits in the wayside weeds
Telling her beads
Of haws.

II.

The phantom mist, that is moonbeam-kissed,
On hills where the trees are thinned,
When Autumn leans at the oak-root's scarp,
Playing a harp
Of wind.

III.

The crickets' chirr 'neath brier and burr,
By leaf-strewn pools and streams,
When Autumn stands 'mid the dropping nuts,
With the book, she shuts,
Of dreams.

IV.

The gray "alas" of the days that pass,
And the hope that says "adieu,"
A parting sorrow, a shriveled flower,
And one ghost's hour
With you.

SNOW

THE moon, like a round device
On a shadowy shield of war,
Hangs white in a heaven of ice
With a solitary star.

The wind is sunk to a sigh,
And the waters are stern with frost ;
And gray, in the eastern sky,
The last snow-cloud is lost.

White fields, that are winter-starved,
Black woods, that are winter-fraught,
Cold, harsh as a face death-carved
With the iron of some black thought.

VAGABONDS

YOUR heart's a-tune with April and mine
a-tune with June,
So let us go a-roving beneath the summer moon :
Oh, was it in the sunlight, or was it in the rain,
We met among the blossoms within the locust
lane ?
All that I can remember 's the bird that sang
aboon,
And with its music in our hearts we'll rove beneath
the moon.

*Vaga-
bonds*

A love-word of the wind, dear, of which we'll read
the rune,

While we still go a-roving beneath the summer
moon :

A love-kiss of the water we'll often stop to hear—
The echoed words and kisses of our own love, my
dear :

And all our path shall blossom with wild-rose
sweets that swoon,

And with their fragrance in our hearts we'll rove
beneath the moon.

It will not be forever, yet merry goes the tune
While we still go a-roving beneath the summer
moon :

A cabin, in the clearing, of flickering firelight
When old-time lanes we strolled in the winter
snows make white :

Where we can nod together above the logs and
croon

The songs we sang when roving beneath the
summer moon.

AN OLD SONG

IT'S Oh, for the hills, where the wind's some one
With a vagabond foot that follows!

And a cheer-up hand that he claps upon

Your arm with the hearty words, "Come on!

We'll soon be out of the hollows,

My heart!

We'll soon be out of the hollows!"

It's Oh, for the songs, where the hope's some one *An*
With a renegade foot that doubles! *Old*
And a kindly look that he turns upon *Song*
Your face with the friendly laugh, "Come on!
We'll soon be out of the troubles,
My heart!
We'll soon be out of the troubles!"

A ROSE O' THE HILLS

THE hills look down on wood and stream,
On orchard-land and farm;
And o'er the hills the azure-gray
Of heaven bends the livelong day
With thoughts of calm and storm.

On wood and stream the hills look down,
On farm and orchard-land;
And o'er the hills she came to me
Through wildrose-brake and blackberry,
The hill wind hand in hand.

The hills look down on home and field,
On wood and winding stream;
And o'er the hills she came along,
Upon her lips a woodland song,
And in her eyes, a dream.

On home and field the hills look down,
On stream and vistaed wood;
And breast-deep, with disordered hair,
Fair in the wildrose tangle there,
A sudden space she stood.

*A Rose
o' the
Hills*

O hills, that look on rock and road,
On grove and harvest-field,
To whom God giveth rest and peace,
And slumber, that is kin to these,
And visions unrevealed!

O hills, that look on road and rock,
On field and fruited grove,
What now is mine of peace and rest
In you! since entered at my breast
God's sweet unrest of love!

DIRGE

WHAT shall her silence keep
Under the sun?
Here, where the willows weep
And waters run;
Here, where she lies asleep,
And all is done.

Lights, when the tree-top swings;
Scents that are sown;
Sounds of the wood-bird's wings;
And the bee's drone:
These be her comfortings
Under the stone.

What shall watch o'er her here
When day is fled?
Here, when the night is near

And skies are red ;
Here, where she lieth dear
And young and dead.

Dirge

Shadows, and winds that spill
Dew ; and the tune
Of the wild whippoorwill ;
And the white moon ;
These be the watchers still
Over her stone.

REST

UNDER the brindled beech,
Deep in the mottled shade,
Where the rocks hang in reach
Flower and ferny blade,
Let him be laid.

Here will the brooks, that rove
Under the mossy trees,
Grave with the music of
Underworld melodies,
Lap him in peace.

Here will the winds, that blow
Out of the haunted west,
Gold with the dreams that glow
There on the heaven's breast,
Lull him to rest.

Rest

Here will the stars and moon,
Silent and far and deep,
Old with the mystic rune
Of the slow years that creep,
Charm him with sleep.

Under the ancient beech,
Deep in the mossy shade,
Where the hill moods may reach,
Where the hill dreams may aid,
Let him be laid.

CLAIRVOYANCE

THE sunlight that makes of the heaven
A pathway for sylphids to throng ;
The wind that makes harps of the forests
For spirits to smite into song,
Are the image and voice of a vision
That comforts my heart and makes strong.

I look in one's face, and the shadows
Are lifted : and, lo, I can see,
Through windows of evident being,
That open on eternity,
The form of the essence of Beauty
God clothes with His own mystery.

I lean to one's voice, and the wrangle
Of living hath pause : and I hear
Through doors of invisible spirit,
That open on light that is clear,
The radiant raiment of Music
In the hush of the heavens sweep near.

INDIFFERENCE

SHE is so dear the wildflowers near
Each path she passes by,
Are over fain to kiss again
Her feet and then to die.

She is so fair the wild birds there
That sing upon the bough,
Have learned the staff of her sweet laugh,
And sing no other now.

Alas ! that she should never see,
Should never care to know,
The wildflower's love, the bird's above,
And his, who loves her so !

PICTURED

THIS is the face of her
I've dreamed of long ;
Here in my heart's despair,
This is the face of her
Pictured in song.

Look on the lily lids,
The eyes of dawn,
Deep as a Nereid's,
Swimming with dewy lids
In waters wan.

Pictured Look on the brows of snow,
The locks brown-bright ;
Only young sleep can show
Such brows of placid snow,
Such locks of night.

The cheeks, like rosy moons,
The lips of fire ;
Love thinks no sweeter tunes
Under enchanted moons
Than their desire.

Loved lips and eyes and hair,
Lo, this is she !
She, who sits smiling there
Over my heart's despair,
Never for me !

SERENADE

THE pink rose drops its petals on
The moonlit lawn, the moonlit lawn ;
The moon, like some wide rose of white,
Drops down the summer night.
No rose there is
As sweet as this —
Thy mouth, that greets me with a kiss.

The lattice of thy casement twines
With jasmine vines, with jasmine vines ;
The stars, like jasmine blossoms, lie

About the glimmering sky.
No jasmine tress
Can so caress
As thy white arms' soft loveliness.

Serenade

About thy door magnolia blooms
Make sweet the glooms, make sweet the glooms ;
A moon-magnolia is the dusk
Closed in a dewy husk.
However much,
No bloom gives such
Soft fragrance as thy bosom's touch.

The flowers, blooming now, shall pass,
And strew the grass, and strew the grass ;
The night, like some frail flower, dawn
Shall soon make gray and wan.
Still, still above,
The flower of
True love shall live forever, love.

KINSHIP

I.

THERE is no flower of wood or lea,
No April flower, as fair as she :
O white anemone, who hast
The wind's wild grace,
Know her a cousin of thy race,
Into whose face
A presence like the wind's hath passed.

There is no flower of wood or lea,
No Maytime flower, as fair as she :
O bluebell, tender with the blue
Of limpid skies,
Thy lineage hath kindred ties
In her, whose eyes
The heav'n's own qualities imbue.

III.

There is no flower of wood or lea,
No Juneday flower, as fair as she :
Rose,—odorous with beauty of
Life's first and best,—
Behold thy sister here confessed !
Whose maiden breast
Is fragrant with the dreams of love.

SHE IS SO MUCH

SHE is so much to me, to me,
And, oh ! I love her so,
I look into my soul and see
How comfort keeps me company
In hopes she, too, may know.
I love her, I love her, I love her,
This I know.

So dear she is to me, so dear,
And, oh! I love her so,
I listen in my heart and hear
The voice of gladness singing near
In thoughts she, too, may know.
I love her, I love her, I love her,
This I know.

*She is so
Much*

So much she is to me, so much,
And, oh! I love her so,
In heart and soul I feel the touch
Of angel callers, that are such
Dreams as she, too, may know.
I love her, I love her, I love her,
This I know.

HER EYES

IN her dark eyes dreams poetize;
The soul sits lost in love:
There is no thing in all the skies,
To gladden all the world I prize,
Like the deep love in her dark eyes,
Or one sweet dream thereof.

In her dark eyes, where thoughts arise,
Her soul's soft moods I see:
Of hope and faith, that make life wise;
And charity, whose food is sighs—
Not truer than her own true eyes
Is truth's divinity.

Her Eyes In her dark eyes the knowledge lies
Of an immortal sod,
Her soul once trod in angel-guise,
Nor can forget its heavenly ties,
Since, there in Heaven, upon her eyes
Once gazed the eyes of God.

MESSENGERS

THE wind, that gives the rose a kiss
With murmured music of the south,
Hath kissed a sweeter thing than this,—
The wind, that gives the rose a kiss—
The perfume of her mouth.

The brook, that mirrors skies and trees,
And echoes in a grottoed place,
Hath held a fairer thing than these,—
The brook, that mirrors skies and trees,—
The image of her face.

O happy wind! O happy brook!
So dear before, so free of cares!
How dearer since her kiss and look,—
O happy wind! O happy brook!—
Have blessed you unawares!

AT TWENTY-ONE

THE rosy hills of her high breasts,
Whereon, like misty morning, rests
The breathing lace; her auburn hair,
Wherein, a star point sparkling there,
One jewel burns; her eyes, that keep
Recorded dreams of song and sleep;
Her mouth, with whose comparison
The richest rose were poor and wan;
Her throat, her form—what masterpiece
Of man can picture half of these!
She comes! a classic from the hand
Of God! wherethrough I understand
What Nature means and Art and Love,
And all the lovely Myths thereof.

BABY MARY

TO LITTLE M. E. C. G.

DEEP in baby Mary's eyes,
Baby Mary's sweet blue eyes,
Dwell the golden memories
Of the music once her ears
Heard in far-off Paradise ;
So she has no time for tears,—
Baby Mary,—
Listening to the songs she hears.

Soft in baby Mary's face,
Baby Mary's lovely face,
If you watch, you, too, may trace
Dreams her spirit-self hath seen
In some far-off Eden-place,
Whence her soul she can not wean,—
Baby Mary,—
Dreaming in a world between.

A MOTIVE IN GOLD AND GRAY

I.

TO-NIGHT he sees their star burn, dewy-bright,
Deep in the pansy, eve hath made for it,
Low in the west; a placid purple lit
At its far edge with warm auroral light :
Love's planet hangs above a cedared height ;
And there in shadow, like gold music writ
Of dusk's dark fingers, scale-like fire-flies flit
Now up, now down the balmy bars of night.
How different from that eve a year ago !
Which was a stormy flower in the hair
Of dolorous day, whose sombre eyes looked,
 blurred,
Into night's sibyl face, and saw the woe
Of parting near, and imaged a despair,
As now a hope caught from a homing word.

II.

She came unto him—as the springtime does
Unto the land where all lies dead and cold,
Until her rosary of days is told
And beauty, prayer-like, blossoms where death
 was.—
Nature divined her coming—yea, the dusk
Seemed thinking of that happiness : behold,
No cloud it had to blot its marigold
Moon, great and golden, o'er the slopes of musk ;
Whereon earth's voice made music ; leaf and
 stream
Lilting the same low lullaby again,

*A Motive
in Gold
and Gray* To coax the wind, who romped among the hills
All day, a tired child, to sleep and dream :
When through the moonlight of the locust-lane
She came, as spring comes through her daffodils.

III.

White as a lily molded of Earth's milk
That eve the moon swam in a hyacinth sky ;
Soft in the gleaming glens the wind went by,
Faint as a phantom clothed in unseen silk :
Bright as a naiad's leap, from shine to shade,
The runnel twinkled through the shaken brier ;
Above the hills one long cloud, pulsed with fire,
Flashed like a great, enchantment-welded blade.
And when the western sky seemed some weird land,
And night a witching spell at whose command
One sloping star fell green from heav'n ; and deep
The warm rose opened for the moth to sleep ;
Then she, consenting, laid her hands in his,
And lifted up her lips for their first kiss.

IV.

There where they part, the porch's step is strewn
With wind-tossed petals of the purple vine ;
Athwart the porch the shadow of a pine
Cleaves the white moonlight ; and, like some calm
 rune
Heaven says to Earth, shines the majestic moon ;
And now a meteor draws a lilac line
Across the welkin, as if God would sign
The perfect poem of this night of June.

The wood-wind stirs the flowering chestnut-tree, *A Motive*
Whose curving blossoms strew the glimmering *in Gold*
grass *and Gray*

Like crescents that wind-wrinkled waters glass ;
And, like a moonstone in a frill of flame,
The dew-drop trembles on the peony,
As in a lover's heart his sweetheart's name.

V.

In after years shall she stand here again,
In heart regretful ? and with lonely sighs
Think on that night of love, and realize
Whose was the fault whence grew the parting
pain ?

And, in her soul, persuading still in vain,
Shall doubt take shape, and all its old surmise
Bid darker phantoms of remorse arise
Trailing the raiment of a dead disdain ?
Masks, unto whom shall her avowal yearn,
With looks clairvoyant seeing how each is
A different form, with eyes and lips that burn
Into her heart with love's last look and kiss ?—
And, ere they pass, shall she behold them turn
To her a face which evermore is his ?

VI.

In after years shall he remember how
Dawn had no breeze soft as her murmured name ?
And day no sunlight that availed the same
As her bright smile to cheer the world below ?
Nor had the conscious twilight's golds and grays
Her soul's allurements, that was free of blame,—

*A Motive
in Gold
and Gray* Nor dusk's gold canvas, where one star's white
flame
Shone, more bewitchment than her own sweet
ways.—

Then as the night with moonlight and perfume,
And dew and darkness, qualifies the whole
Dim world with glamour, shall the past with
dreams—

That were the love-theme of their lives—illuminate
The present with remembered hours, whose
gleams,
Unknown to him, shall face them soul to soul?

VII.

No! not for her and him that part;—the Might-
Have-Been's sad consolation;—where had bent,
Haply, in prayer and patience penitent,
Both, though apart, before no blown-out light.
The otherwise of fate for them, when white
The lilacs bloom again, and, innocent,
Spring comes with beauty for her testament,
Singing the praises of the day and night.
When orchards blossom and the distant hill
Is vague with haw-trees as a ridge with mist,
The moon shall see him where a watch he keeps
By her young form that lieth white and still,
With lidded eyes and passive wrist on wrist,
While by her side he bows himself and weeps.

VIII.

And, oh, what pain to see the blooms appear
Of haw and dogwood in the spring again;

The primrose leaning with the dragging rain,
And hill-locked orchards swarming far and near,
To see the old fields, that her steps made dear,
Grow green with deepening plenty of the grain,
Yet feel how this excess of life is vain,—
How vain to him!—since she no more is here.
What though the woodland burgeon, water flow,
Like a rejoicing harp, beneath the boughs!
The cat-bird and the hermit-thrush arouse
Day with the impulsive music of their love!
Beneath the graveyard sod she will not know,
Nor what his heart is all too conscious of!

*A Motive
in Gold
and Gray*

IX.

How blessed is he who, gazing in the tomb,
Can yet behold, beneath th' investing mask
Of mockery,—whose horror seems to ask
Sphinx-riddles of the soul within the gloom,—
Upon dead lips no dust of Love's dead bloom;
And in dead hands no shards of Faith's rent
flask;
But Hope, who still stands at her starry task,
Weaving the web of comfort on her loom!
Thrice blessed! who, 'though he hear the tomb
proclaim,
How all is Death's and Life Death's other name;
Can yet reply: "O Grave, these things are yours!
But that is left which life indeed assures—
Love, through whose touch I shall arise the same!
Love, of whose self was wrought the universe!"

A REED SHAKEN WITH THE WIND

I.

NOT for you and me the path
Winding through the shadowless
Fields of morning's dewiness!
Where the brook, that hurries, hath
Laughter lighter than a boy's;
Where recurrent odors poise,
Romp-like, with irreverent tresses,
In the sun; and birds and boughs
Build a music-haunted house
For the winds to hang their dresses,
Whisper-silken, rustling in.
Ours a path that led unto
Twilight regions gray with dew;
Where moon-vapors gathered thin
Over acres sisterless
Of all healthy beauty; where
Fungus growths made sad the air
With a phantom-like caress:
Under darkness and strange stars,
To the sorrow-silenced bars
Of a dubious forestland,
Where the wood-scents seemed to stand,
And the sounds, on either hand,
Clad like sleep's own servitors
In the shadowy livery
Of the ancient house of dreams;
That before us,— fitfully,
With white intermittent gleams
Of its pale-lamped windows,— shone;
Echoing with the dim unknown.

II.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

To say to hope,— Take all from me,
And grant me naught :
The rose, the song, the melody,
The word, the thought :
Then all my life bid me be slave,—
Is all I crave.

To say to time,— Be true to me,
Nor grant me less
The dream, the sigh, the memory,
The heart's distress ;
Then unto death set me a task,
Is all I ask.

III.

I came to you when eve was young.
And, where the park went downward to
The river, and, among the dew,
One vesper moment lit and sung
A bird, your eyes said something dear.
How sweet it was to walk with you !
How, with our souls, we seemed to hear
The darkness coming with its stars !
How calm the moon sloped up her sphere
Of fire-filled pearl through passive bars
Of clouds that berged the tender east !
While all the dark inanimate
Of nature woke ; initiate
With th' moon's arrival, something ceased
In nature's soul ; she stood again
Another self, that seemed t' have been

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Dormant, suppressed and so unseen
All day ; a life, unknown and strange
And dream-suggestive, that had lain,—
Masked on with light,—within the range
Of thought, but unrevealed till now.
It was the hour of love. And you,
With downward eyes and pensive brow,
Among the moonlight and the dew,—
Although no word of love was spoken,—
Heard the sweet night's confession broken
Of something here that spoke in me ;
A love, depth made inaudible,
Save to your soul, that answered well,
With eyes replying silently.

IV.

Fair you are as a rose is fair,
There where the shadows dew it ;
And the deeps of your brown, brown hair,
Sweet as the cloud that lingers there
With the sunset's auburn through it.
Eyes of azure and throat of snow,
Tell me what my heart would know !

Every dream I dream of you
Has a love-thought in it,
And a hope, a kiss or two,
Something dear and something true,
Telling me each minute,
With three words it whispers clear,
What my heart from you would hear.

V.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Summer came; the days grew kind
With increasing favors; deep
Were the nights with rest and sleep:
Fair, with poppies intertwined
On their blonde locks, dreamy hours,
Sunny-hearted as the rose,
Went among the banded flowers,
Teaching them, how no one knows,
Fresher color and perfume.—
In the window of your room
Bloomed a rich azalea. Pink,
As an egret's rosy plumes,
Shone its tender-tufted blooms.
From your care and love, I think,
Love's rose-color it did drink,
Growing rosier day by day
Of your 'tending hand's caress;
And your own dear naturalness
Had imbued it in some way.
Once you gave a blossom of it,
Smiling, to me when I left:
Need I tell you how I love it
Faded though it is now!—Reft
Of its fragrance and its color,
Yet 'tis dearer now than then,
As past happiness is when
We regret. And dimmer, duller
Though its beauty be, when I
Look upon it, I recall
Every part of that old wall;
And the dingy window high,

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Where you sat and read ; and all
The fond love that made your face
A soft sunbeam in that place :
And the plant, that grew this bloom
Withered here, itself long dead,
Makes a halo overhead
There again — and through my room,
Like faint whispers of perfume,
Steal the words of love then said.

VI.

All of my love I send to you,
I send to you,
On thoughts, like paths, that wend to you,
Here in my heart's glad garden,
Wherein, its lovely warden,
Your face, a lily seeming,
Is dreaming.

All of my life I bring to you,
I bring to you,
In deeds, like birds, that sing to you,
Here, in my soul's sweet valley,
Wherethrough, most musically,
Your love, a fountain, glistens,
And listens.

My love, my life, how blessed in you !
How blessed in you !
Whose thoughts, whose deeds find rest in you,
Here, on my self's dark ocean,
Whereo'er, in heavenly motion,
Your soul, a star, abideth,
And guideth.

VII.

Where the old Kentucky wound
Through the land,—its stream between
Hills of primitive forest green,—
Like a goodly belt around
Giant breasts of grandeur ; with
Many an unknown Indian myth,
On the boat we steamed. The land
Like an hospitable hand
Welcomed us. Alone we sat
On the under-deck, and saw
Farm-house and plantation draw
Near and vanish. 'Neath your hat,
Your young eyes laughed ; and your hair,
Blown about them by the air
Of our passage, clung and curled.
Music, and the summer moon ;
And the hills' great shadows hewn
Out of silence ; and the tune
Of the whistle, when we whirled
Round a moonlit bend in sight of
Some lone landing heaped with hay
Or tobacco ; where the light of
One dim solitary lamp
Signaled through the evening's damp :
Then a bell ; and, dusky gray,
Shuffling figures on the shore
With the cable ; rugged forms
On the gang-plank ; backs and arms
With their cargo bending o'er ;
And the burly mate before.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Then an iron bell, and puff
Of escaping steam; and out
Where the stream is wheel-whipped rough;
Music, and a parting shout
From the shore; the pilot's bell
Beating on the deck below;
Then the steady, quivering, slow
Smooth advance again. Until
Twinkling lights beyond us tell
There's a lock or little town,
Clasped between a hill and hill,
Where the blue-grass fields slope down. —
So we went. That summer-time
Lingers with me like a rhyme
Learned for dreamy beauty of
Its old-fashioned faith and love,
In some musing moment; sith
Heart-associated with
Joy that moment's quiet bore,
Thought repeated evermore.

VIII.

Three sweet things love lives upon:
Music, at whose fountain's brink
Still he stoops his face to drink;
Seeing, as the wave is drawn,
His own image rise and sink.
Three sweet things love lives upon.

Three sweet things love lives upon :
Odor, whose red roses wreath
His bright brow that shines beneath ;
Hearing, as each bud is blown,
His own spirit breathe and breathe.
Three sweet things love lives upon.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Three sweet things love lives upon :
Color, to whose rainbow he
Lifts his dark eyes burningly ;
Feeling, as the wild hues dawn,
His own immortality.
Three sweet things love lives upon.

IX.

Memories of other days,
With the whilom happiness,
Rise before my musing gaze
In the twilight . . . And your dress
Seems beside me, like a haze
Shimmering white ; as when we went
'Neath the star-strewn firmament,
Love-led, with impatient feet
Down the night that, summer-sweet,
Sparkled o'er the lamp-lit street.
Every look love gave us then
Comes before my eyes again,
Making music for my heart
On that path, that grew for us
Roses, red and amorous,
On that path, from which oft start,

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Out of recollected places,
With remembered forms and faces,
Dreams, love's ardent hands have woven
In my life's dark tapestry,
Beckoning, soft and shadowy,
To the soul. And o'er the cloven
Gulf of time, I seem to hear
Words, once whispered in the ear,
Calling—as might friends long dead,
With familiar voices, deep,
Speak to those who lie asleep,
Comforting—So I was led
Backward to forgotten things,
Contiguities that spread
Sudden unremembered wings;
And across my mind's still blue
From the nest they fledged in, flew
Dazzling shapes affection knew.

X.

Ah! over full my heart is
Of sadness and of pain;
As a rose-flower in the garden
The dull dusk fills with rain;
As a blown red rose that shivers
And bends to the wind and rain.

So give me thy hands and speak me
As once in the days of yore,
When love spoke sweetly to us,
The love that speaks no more;
The sound of thy voice may help him
To speak in our hearts once more.

Ah ! over grieved my soul is,
And tired and sick for sleep,
As a poppy-bloom that withers,
Forgotten, where reapers reap ;
As a harvested poppy-flower
That dies where reapers reap.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

So bend to my face and kiss me
As once in the days of yore,
When the touch of thy lips was magic
That restored to life once more ;
The thought of thy kiss, which awakens
To life that love once more.

XI.

Sitting often I have, oh !
Often have desired you so—
Yearned to kiss you as I did
When your love to me you gave,
In the moonlight, by the wave,
And a long impetuous kiss
Pressed upon your mouth that chid,
And upon each dewy lid—
That, all passion-shaken, I
With love language will address
Each dear thing I know you by,
Picture, needle-work or frame ;
Each suggestive in the same
Perfume of past happiness :
Till, meseems, the ways we knew
Now again I tread with you

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* From the oldtime tryst : and there
Feel the pressure of your hair
Cool and easy on my cheek,
And your breath's aroma : bare
Hand upon my arm, as weak
As a lily on a stream :
And your eyes, that gaze at me
With the sometime witchery,
To my inmost spirit speak.
And remembered ecstasy
Sweeps my soul again . . . I seem
Dreaming, yet I do not dream.

XII.

When day dies, lone, forsaken,
And joy is kissed asleep ;
When doubt's gray eyes awaken,
And love, with music taken
From hearts with sighings shaken,
Sits in the dusk to weep :

With ghostly lifted finger
What memory then shall rise ?—
Of dark regret the bringer—
To tell the sorrowing singer
Of days whose echoes linger,
Till dawn unstars the skies.

When night is gone and, beaming,
Faith journeys forth to toil ;
When hope's blue eyes wake gleaming,
And life is done with dreaming
The dreams that seem but seeming,
Within the world's turmoil :

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Can we forget the presence
Of death who walks unseen ?
Whose scythe casts shadowy crescents
Around life's glittering essence,
As lessens, slowly lessens,
The space that lies between.

XIII.

Bland was that October day,
Calm and balmy as the spring,
When we went a forest-way,
'Neath paternal beeches gray,
To a valleyed opening :
Where the purple aster flowered,
And, like torches shadow-held,
Red the fiery sumach towered ;
And, where gum-trees sentineled
Vistas, robed in gold and garnet,
Ripe the thorny chestnut shelled
Its brown plumpness. Bee and hornet
Droned around us ; quick the cricket,
Tireless in the wood-rose thicket,

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Tremoloed ; and, to the wind
All its moon-spun silver casting,
Swung the milk-weed pod unthinned ;
And, its clean flame on the sod
By the fading golden-rod,
Burned the white life-everlasting.
It was not so much the time,
Nor the place, nor way we went,
That made all our moods to rhyme,
Nor the season's sentiment,
As it was the innocent
Carefree childhood of our hearts,
Reading each expression of
Death and care as life and love :
That impression joy imparts
Unto others and retorts
On itself, which then made glad
All the sorrow of decay,
As the memory of that day
Makes this day of spring, now, sad.

XIV.

The balsam-breathed petunias
Hang riven of the rain ;
And where the tiger-lily was
Now droops a tawny stain ;
While in the twilight's purple pause
Earth dreams of Heaven again.

When one shall sit and sigh,
And one lie all alone
Beneath the unseen sky—
Whose love shall then deny ?
Whose love atone ?

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

With ragged petals round its pod
The rain-wrecked poppy dies ;
And where the hectic rose did nod
A crumbled crimson lies ;
While distant as the dreams of God
The stars slip in the skies.

When one shall lie asleep,
And one be dead and gone—
Within the unknown deep,
Shall we the trysts then keep
That now are done ?

XV.

Holding both your hands in mine,
Often have we sat together,
While, outside, the boisterous weather
Hung the wild wind on the pine
Like a black marauder, and
With a sudden warning hand
At the casement rapped. The night
Read no sentiment of light,
Starbeam-syllabled, within
Her romance of death and sin,

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Shadow-chaptered tragically. —
Looking in your eyes, ah me !
Though I heard, I did not heed
What the night read unto us,
Threatening and ominous :
For love helped my heart to read
Forward through unopened pages
To a coming day, that held
More for us than all the ages
Past, that it epitomized
In its sentence ; where we spelled
What our present realized
Only — all the love that was
Past and yet to be for us.

XVI.

'Though in the garden, gray with dew,
All life lies withering,
And there 's no more to say or do,
No more to sigh or sing,
Yet go we back the ways we knew,
When buds were opening.

Perhaps we shall not search in vain
Within its wreck and gloom ;
'Mid roses ruined of the rain
There still may live one bloom ;
One flower, whose heart may still retain
The long-lost soul-perfume.

And then, perhaps, will come to us
The dreams we dreamed before ;
And song, who spoke so beauteous,
Will speak to us once more ;
And love, with eyes all amorous,
Will ope again his door.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

So 'though the garden 's gray with dew,
And flowers are withering,
And there 's no more to say or do,
No more to sigh or sing,
Yet go we back the ways we knew
When buds were opening.

XVII.

Looking on the desolate street,
Where the March snow drifts and drives,
Trodden black of hurrying feet,
Where the athlete storm-wind strives
With each tree and dangling light, —
Centers, sphered with glittering white, —
Hissing in the dancing snow . . .
Backward in my soul I go
To that tempest-haunted night
Of two autumns past, when we,
Hastening homeward, were o'ertaken
Of the storm ; and 'neath a tree,
With its wild leaves whisper-shaken,
Sheltered us in that forsaken,
Sad and ancient cemetery, —
Where folk came no more to bury. —

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Haggard grave-stones, mossed and crumbled,
Tottered 'round us, or o'ertumbled
In their sunken graves; and some,
Urned and obelisked above
Iron-fenced in tombs, stood dumb
Records of forgotten love.
And again I see the west
Yawning inward to its core
Of electric-spasmed ore,
Swiftly, without pause or rest.
And a great wind sweeps the dust
Up abandoned sidewalks; and,
In the rotting trees, the gust
Shouts again — a voice that would
Make its gaunt self understood
Moaning over death's lean land.
And we sat there, hand in hand;
On the granite; where we read,
By the leaping skies o'erhead,
Something of one young and dead.
Yet the words begot no fear
In our souls: you leaned your cheek
Smiling on mine: very near
Were our lips: we did not speak.

XVIII.

And suddenly alone I stood
With scared eyes gazing through the wood.
For some still sign of ill or good,
To lead me from the solitude.

The day was at its twilighting ;
One cloud o'erhead spread a vast wing
Of rosy thunder ; vanishing
Above the far hills' mystic ring.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Some stars shone timidly o'erhead ;
And toward the west's cadaverous red—
Like some wild dream that haunts the dead
In limbo — the lean moon was led.

Upon the sad, debatable
Vague lands of twilight slowly fell
A silence that I knew too well,
A sorrow that I can not tell.

What way to take, what path to go,
Whether into the east's gray glow,
Or where the west burnt red and low —
What road to choose, I did not know.

So, hesitating, there I stood
Lost in my soul's uncertain wood :
One sign I craved of ill or good,
To lead me from its solitude.

XIX.

It was autumn : and a night,
Full of whispers and of mist,
With a gray moon, wanly whist,
Hanging like a phantom light
O'er the hills. We stood among
Windy fields of weed and flower,

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Where the withered seed pod hung,
And the chill leaf-crickets sung.
Melancholy was the hour
With the mystery and lonesomeness
Of the year, that seemed to look
On its own departed face ;
As our love then, in its oneness,
All its dead past did retrace,
And from that sad moment took
Presage of approaching parting. —
Sorrowful the hour and dark :
Low among the trees, now starting,
Now concealed, a star's pale spark—
Like a fen-fire — winked and lured
On to shuddering shadows ; where
All was doubtful, unassured,
Immaterial ; and the bare
Facts of unideal day
Changed to substance such as dreams.
And meseemed then, far away—
Farther than remotest gleams
Of the stars — lost, separated,
And estranged, and out of reach,
Grew our lives away from each,
Loving lives, that long had waited.

XX.

There is no gladness in the day
Now you're away ;
Dull is the morn, the noon is dull,
Once beautiful ;

And when the evening fills the skies
With dusky dyes,
With tired eyes and tired heart
I sit alone, I sigh apart,
And wish for you.

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind*

Ah! darker now the night comes on
Since you are gone ;
Sad are the stars, the moon is sad,
Once wholly glad ;
And when the stars and moon are set,
And earth lies wet,
With heart's regret and soul's hard ache,
I dream alone, I lie awake,
And wish for you.

These who once spake me, speak no more,
Now all is o'er ;
Day hath forgot the language of
Its hopes of love ;
Night, whose sweet lips were burdensome
With dreams, is dumb ;
Far different from what used to be,
With silence and despondency
They speak to me.

XXI.

So it ends — the path that crept
Through a land all slumber-kissed ;
Where the sickly moonlight slept
Like a pale antagonist.
Now the star, that led us onward, —
Reassuring with its light, —

*A Reed
Shaken
with the
Wind* Fails and falters ; dipping downward
Leaves us wandering in night,
With old doubts we once disdained. . . .
So it ends. The woods attained—
Where our heart's desire builded
A fair temple, fire-gilded,
With hope's marble shrine within,
Where the lineaments of our love
Shone, with lilies clad and crowned,
'Neath white columns reared above
Sorrow and her sister sin,
Columns, rose and ribbon-wound, —
In the forest we have found
But a ruin ! All around
Lie the shattered capitals,
And vast fragments of the walls . . .
Like a climbing cloud, — that plies,
Wind-wrecked, o'er the moon that lies
'Neath its blackness, — taking on
Gradual certainties of wan,
Soft assaults of easy white,
Pale-approaching ; till the skies'
Emptiness and hungry night
Claim its bulk again, while she
Rides in lonely purity :
So we found our temple, broken ,
And a musing moment's space
Love, whose latest word was spoken,
Seemed to meet us face to face,
Making bright that ruined place
With a strange effulgence ; then
Passed, and left all black again.

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS.

BEE-BITTEN in the orchard hung
The peach ; or, fallen in the weeds,
Lay rotting : where still sucked and sung
The gray bee, boring to its seed's
Pink pulp and honey blackly stung.

The orchard path, which led around
The garden, — with its heat one twinge
Of dinning locusts, — picket-bound,
And ragged, brought me where one hinge
Held up the gate that scraped the ground.

All seemed the same : the martin-box —
Sun-warped with pigmy balconies —
Still stood with all its twittering flocks,
Perched on its pole above the peas
And silvery-seeded onion-stocks.

The clove-pink and the rose ; the clump
Of coppery sunflowers, with the heat
Sick to the heart : the garden stump,
Red with geranium-pots and sweet
With moss and ferns, this side the pump.

I rested, with one hesitant hand
Upon the gate. The lonesome day,
Droning with insects, made the land
One dry stagnation ; soaked with hay
And scents of weeds, the hot wind fanned.

*A Flower
of the
Fields*

I breathed the sultry scents, my eyes
Parched as my lips. And yet I felt
My limbs were ice. As one who flies
To some strange woe. How sleepy smelt
The hay-sweet heat that soaked the skies!

Noon nodded; dreamier, lonelier,
For one long, plaintive, forestside
Bird-quaver. — And I knew me near
Some heartbreak anguish . . . She had died.
I felt it, and no need to hear!

I passed the quince and peartree; where
All up the porch a grape-vine trails —
How strange that fruit, whatever air
Or earth it grows in, never fails
To find its native flavor there!

And she was as a flower, too,
That grows its proper bloom and scent
No matter what the soil: she, who,
Born better than her place, still lent
Grace to the lowliness she knew. . . .

They met me at the porch, and were
Sad-eyed with weeping. Then the room
Shut out the country's heat and purr,
And left light stricken into gloom —
So love and I might look on her.

THE WHITE VIGIL.

LAST night I dreamed I saw you lying dead,
And by your sheeted form stood all alone :
Frail as a flow'r you lay upon your bed,
And on your still face, through the casement, shone
The moon, as lingering to kiss you there
Fall'n asleep, white violets in your hair.

Oh, sick to weeping was my soul, and sad
To breaking was my heart that would not break ;
And for my soul's great grief no tear I had,
No lamentation for my heart's deep ache ;
Yet all I bore seemed more than I could bear
Beside you dead, white violets in your hair.

A white rose, blooming at your window-bar,
And glimmering in it, like a fire-fly caught
Upon the thorns, the light of one white star,
Looked on with me ; as if they felt and thought
As did my heart, — " How beautiful and fair
And young she lies, white violets in her hair !"

And so we watched beside you, sad and still,
The star, the rose, and I. The moon had past,
Like a pale traveler, behind the hill
With all her echoed radiance. At last
The darkness came to hide my tears and share
My watch by you, white violets in your hair.

TOO LATE.

I LOOKED upon a dead girl's face and heard
What seemed the voice of Love call unto me
Out of her heart ; whereon the charactery
Of her lost dreams I read there word for word :—
How on her soul no soul had touched, or stirred
Her Life's sad depths to rippling melody,
Or made the imaged longing, there, to be
The realization of a hope deferred.
So in her life had Love behaved to her.
Between the lonely chapters of her years
And her young eyes making no golden blur
With god-bright face and hair ; who led me to
Her side at last, and bade me, through my tears,
With Death's dumb face, too late, to see and know.

INTIMATIONS.

I.

IS it uneasy moonlight,
On the restless field, that stirs ?
Or wild white meadow-blossoms
The night-wind bends and blurs ?

Is it the dolorous water,
That sobs in the wood and sighs ?
Or heart of an ancient oak-tree,
That breaks and, sighing, dies ?

The wind is vague with the shadows
That wander in No-Man's Land ;
The water is dark with the voices
That weep on the Unknown's strand.

O ghosts of the winds who call me !
O ghosts of the whispering waves !
As sad as forgotten flowers,
That die upon nameless graves !

What is this thing you tell me
In tongues of a twilight race,
Of death, with the vanished features,
Mantled, of my own face ?

II.

The old enigmas of the deathless dawns,
And riddles of the all immortal eyes, —
That still o'er Delphic lawns
Speak as the gods spoke through oracular leaves—
I read with new-born eyes,
Remembering how, a slave,
I lay with breast bared for the sacrifice,
Once on a temple's pave.

Or, crowned with hyacinth and helichrys,
How, towards the altar in the marble gloom,—
Hearing the magadis
Dirge through the pale amaracine perfume,—
'Mid chanting priests I trod,
With never a sigh or pause,
To give my life to pacify a god,
And save my country's cause.

*Intima-
tions* Again : Cyrenian roses on wild hair,
And oil and purple smeared on breasts and cheeks,
How with mad torches there —
Reddening the cedars of Cithæron's peaks —
With gesture and fierce glance,
Lascivious Mænad bands
Once drew and slew me in the Pyrrhic dance,
With Bacchanalian hands.

III.

The music now that lays
Dim lips against my ears,
Some wild sad thing it says,
Unto my soul, of years
Long passed into the haze
Of tears.

Meseems, before me are
The dark eyes of a queen,
A queen of Istakhar :
I seem to see her lean
More lovely than a star
Of mien.

A slave, I stand before
Her jeweled throne ; I kneel,
And, in a song, once more
My love for her reveal ;
How once I did adore
I feel.

Again her dark eyes gleam ;
Again her red lips smile ;
And in her face the beam
Of love that knows no guile ;
And so she seems to dream
A while.

Out of her deep hair then
A rose she takes — and I
Am made a god o'er men !
Her rose, that here did lie
When I, in th' wild-beasts' den,
Did die.

IV.

Old paintings on its wainscots,
And, in its oaken hall,
Old arras ; and the twilight
Of slumber over all.

Old grandeur on its stairways ;
And, in its haunted rooms,
Old souvenirs of greatness,
And ghosts of dead perfumes.

The winds are phantom voices
Around its carven doors ;
The moonbeams, specter footsteps
Upon its polished floors.

*Intima-
tions*

Old cedars build around it
A solitude of sighs ;
And the old hours pass through it
With immemorial eyes.

But more than this I know not ;
Nor where the house may be ;
Nor what its ancient secret
And ancient grief to me.

All that my soul remembers
Is that, — forgot almost, —
Once, in a former lifetime,
'Twas here I loved and lost.

V.

In eöns of the senses,
My spirit knew of yore,
I found the Isle of Circe,
And felt her magic lore ;
And still the soul remembers
What flesh would be once more.

She gave me flowers to smell of
That wizard branches bore,
Of weird and sorcerous beauty,
Whose stems dripped human gore —
Their scent when I remember
I know that world once more.

She gave me fruits to eat of
That grew beside the shore,
Of necromantic ripeness,
With human flesh at core —
Their taste when I remember
I know that life once more.

And then, behold! a serpent,
That glides my face before,
With eyes of tears and fire
That glare me o'er and o'er —
I look into its eyeballs,
And know myself once more.

VI.

I have looked in the eyes of poesy,
And sat in song's high place ;
And the beautiful spirits of music
Have spoken me face to face ;
Yet here in my soul there is sorrow
They never can name nor trace.

I have walked with the glamour gladness,
And dreamed with the shadow sleep ;
And the presences, love and knowledge,
Have smiled in my heart's red keep ;
Yet here in my soul there is sorrow
For the depth of their gaze too deep.

*Intima-
tions*

The love and the hope God grants me,
The beauty that lures me on,
And the dreams of folly and wisdom
That thoughts of the spirit don,
Are but masks of an ancient sorrow
Of a life long dead and gone.

Was it sin ? or a crime forgotten ?
Of a love that loved too well ?
That sat on a throne of fire
A thousand years in hell ?
That the soul with its nameless sorrow
Remembers but can not tell ?

TWO.

WITH her soft face half turned to me,
Like an arrested moonbeam, she
Stood in the cirque of that deep tree.

I took her by the hands ; she raised
Her face to mine ; and, half amazed,
Remembered ; and we stood and gazed.

How good to kiss her throat and hair,
And say no word !— Her throat was bare ;
As some moon-fungus white and fair.

Had God not giv'n us life for this ?
The world-old, amorous happiness
Of arms that clasp, and lips that kiss !

The eloquence of limbs and arms !
The rhetoric of breasts, whose charms
Say to the sluggish blood what warms !

Two

Had God or Fiend assigned this hour
That bloomed, — where love had all of power, —
The senses' aphrodisiac flower ?

The dawn was far away. Nude night
Hung savage stars of sultry white
Around her bosom's Ethiop light.

Night ! night, who gave us each to each,
Where heart with heart could hold sweet speech,
With life's best gift within our reach.

And here it was — between the goals
Of flesh and spirit, sex controls —
Took place the marriage of our souls.

TONES.

I.

A WOMAN, fair to look upon,
Where waters whiten with the moon ;
While down the glimmer of the lawn
The white moths swoon.

A mouth of music ; eyes of love ;
And hands of blended snow and scent,
That touch the pearl-pale shadow of
An instrument.

Tones And low and sweet that song of sleep
After the song of love is hushed ;
While all the longing, here, to weep,
Is held and crushed.

Then leafy silence, that is musk
With breath of the magnolia-tree,
While dwindles, moon-white, through the dusk
Her drapery.

Let me remember how a heart,
Romantic, wrote upon that night !
My soul still helps me read each part
Of it aright.

And like a dead leaf shut between
A book's dull chapters, stained and dark,
That page, with immemorial green,
Of life I mark.

II.

It is not well for me to hear
That song's appealing melody :
The pain of loss comes all too near,
Through it, to me.

The loss of her whose love looks through
The mist death's hand hath hung between :
Within the shadow of the yew
Her grave is green.

Ah, dream that vanished long ago!
Oh, anguish of remembered tears!
And shadow of unlifted woe
Athwart the years!

Tones

That haunt the sad rooms of my days,
As keepsakes of unperished love,
Where pale the memory of her face
Is framed above.

This olden song, she used to sing,
Of love and sleep, is now a charm
To open mystic doors and bring
Her spirit form.

In music making visible
One soul-assertive memory,
That steals unto my side to tell
My loss to me.

UNFULFILLED.

IN my dream last night it seemed I stood
With a boy's glad heart in my boyhood's wood.

The beryl green and the cairngorm brown
Of the day through the deep leaves sifted down.

The rippling drip of a passing shower
Rinsed wild aroma from herb and flower.

*Unful-
filled*

The splash and urge of a waterfall
Spread stairwayed rocks with a crystal caul.

And I waded the pool where the gravel gray,
And the last year's leaf, like a topaz lay.

And searched the strip of the creek's dry bed
For the colored keel and the arrow-head.

And I found the cohosh coigne the same,
Tossing with torches of pearly flame.

The owlet dingle of vine and brier,
That the butterfly-weed flecked fierce with fire.

The elder edge with its warm perfume,
And the sapphire stars of the bluet bloom ;

The moss, the fern, and the touch-me-not
I breathed, and the mint-smell keen and hot.

And I saw the bird, that sang its best,
In the moted sunlight building its nest.

And I saw the chipmunk's stealthy face,
And the rabbit crouched in a grassy place.

And I watched the crows, that cawed and cried,
Hunting the hawk at the forest-side ;

The bees that sucked in the blossoms slim,
And the wasps that built on the lichened limb.

And felt the silence, the dusk, the dread *Unful-*
Of the spot where they buried the unknown dead. *filled*

The water murmur, the insect hum,
And a far bird calling, *Come, oh, come!* —

What sweeter music can mortals make
To ease the heart of its human ache! —

And it seemed in my dream, that was all too true,
That I met in the woods again with you.

A sun-tanned face and brown bare knees,
And a hand stained red with dewberries.

And we stood a moment some thing to tell,
And then in the woods we said farewell.

But once I met you ; yet, lo ! it seems
Again and again we meet in dreams.

And I ask my soul what it all may mean ;
If this is the love that should have been.

And oft and again I wonder, *Can*
What God intends be changed by man ?

HOME.

AMONG the fields the camomile
Seems blown steam in the lightning's glare.
Unusual odors drench the air.
Night speaks above; the angry smile
Of storm within her stare.

The way for me to-night? — To-night,
Is through the wood whose branches fill
The road with dripping rain-drops. Till,
Between the boughs, a star-like light —
Our home upon the hill.

The path for me to take? — It goes
Around a trailer-tangled rock,
'Mid puckered pink and hollyhock,
Unto a latch-gate's unkempt rose,
And door whereat I knock.

Bright on the old-time flower-place
The lamp streams through the foggy pane.
The door is opened to the rain;
And in the door — her happy face,
And eager hands again.

ASHLY MERE.

COME! look in the shadowy water here,
The stagnant water of Ashly Mere:
Where the stirless depths are dark but clear,
What is the thing that lies there?—
A lily-pod half sunk from sight?
Or spawn of the toad all water-white?
Or ashen blur of the moon's wan light?
Or a woman's face and eyes there?

Now lean to the water a listening ear,
The haunted water of Ashly Mere:
What is the sound that you seem to hear
In the ghostly hush of the deeps there?—
A withered reed that the ripple lips?
Or a night-bird's wing that the surface whips?
Or the rain in a leaf that drips and drips?
Or a woman's voice that weeps there?

Now look and listen! but draw not near
The lonely water of Ashly Mere!—
For so it happens this time each year
As you lean by the mere and listen:
And the moaning voice I understand,—
For oft I have watched it draw to land,
And lift from the water a ghastly hand
And a face whose eyeballs glisten.

And this is the reason why every year
To the hideous water of Ashly Mere
I come when the woodland leaves are sear,
And the autumn moon hangs hoary:

Asbly For here by the mere was wrought a wrong . . .
Mere But the old, old story is over long —
And woman is weak and man is strong . . .
And the mere's and mine is the story.

BEFORE THE TOMB.

THE way went under cedared gloom
To moonlight, like a cactus bloom,
Before the entrance of her tomb.

I had an hour of night and thin
Sad starlight; and I set my chin
Against the grating and looked in.

A gleam, like moonlight, through a square
Of opening — I knew not where —
Shone on her coffin resting there.

And on its oval silver-plate
I read her name and age and date,
And smiled, soft-thinking on my hate.

There was no insect sound to chirr;
No wind to make a little stir.
I stood and looked and thought on her.

The gleam stole downward from her head,
Till at her feet it rested red
On Gothic gold, that sadly said : —

“God to her love lent a weak reed
Of strength : and gave no light to lead :
Pray for her soul : for it hath need.”

*Before
the
Tomb*

There was no night-bird's twitter near,
No low vague water I might hear
To make a small sound in the ear.

The gleam, that made a burning mark
Of each dim word, died to a spark ;
Then left the tomb and coffin dark.

I had a little while to wait ;
And prayed with hands against the grate,
And heart that yearned and knew too late.

There was no light below, above,
To point my soul the way thereof,—
The way of hate that led to love.

REVISITED.

IT was beneath a waning moon when all the
woods were sear,
And winds made eddies of the leaves that whis-
pered far and near,
I met her on the old mill-bridge we parted at last
year.

Revisited At first I deemed it but a mist that faltered in
that place,
An autumn mist beneath the trees that sentineled
the race ;
Until I neared and in the moon beheld her face
to face.

The waver of the summer-heat upon the drouth-
dry leas ;
The shimmer of the thistle-drift adown the
silences ;
The gliding of the fairy-fire between the swamp
and trees :

They qualified her presence as a sorrow may a
dream —
The vague suggestion of a self ; the glimmer of a
gleam ;
The actual unreal of the things that only seem.

Where once she came with welcome and glad eyes
all loving-wise,
She passed and gave no greeting that my heart
might recognize,
With far-set face unseeing and sad unremember-
ing eyes.

It was beneath a waning moon when woods were
bleak and sear,
And winds made whispers of the leaves that
edded far and near,
I met her ghost upon the bridge we parted at last
year.

AT VESPERS.

HIGH up in the organ-story
A girl stands slim and fair ;
And touched with the casement's glory
Gleams out her radiant hair.

The young priest kneels at the altar,
Then lifts the Host above ;
And the psalm intoned from the psalter
Is pure with patient love.

A sweet bell chimes ; and a censer
Swings gleaming in the gloom ;
The candles glimmer and denser
Rolls up the pale perfume.

Then high in the organ choir
A voice of crystal soars,
Of patience and soul's desire,
That suffers and adores.

And out of the altar's dimness
An answering voice doth swell,
Of passion that cries from the grimness
And anguish of its own hell.

High up in the organ-story
One kneels with a girlish grace ;
And, touched with the vesper glory,
Lifts her madonna face.

*At
Vespers* One stands at the cloudy altar,
A form bowed down and thin ;
The text of the psalm in the psalter
He reads, is sorrow and sin.

THE CREEK.

O CHEERLY, cheerly by the road
And merrily down the hillet ;
And where the acre-field is sowed
With bristle-bearded millet.

Then o'er a pebbled path that goes,
Through vista and through dingle,
Unto a farmstead's windowed rose,
And roof of moss and shingle.

O darkly, darkly through the bush,
And dimly by the boulder,
Where cane and water-cress grow lush,
And woodland wilds are older.

Then o'er the cedared way that leads,
Through burr and bramble-thickets,
Unto a burial-ground of weeds
Fenced in with broken pickets.

Then sadly, sadly down the vale,
And wearily through the rushes,
Where sunlight of the noon is pale,
And e'en the zephyr hushes.

For oft her young face smiled upon
My deeps here, willow-shaded ;
And oft with bare feet in the sun
My shallows there she waded.

The Creek

No more beneath the twinkling leaves
Shall stand the farmer's daughter ! —
Sing softly past the cottage eaves,
O memory-haunted water !

No more shall bend her laughing face
Above me where the rose is ! —
Sigh softly past the burial-place,
Where all her youth reposes !

ANSWERED.

DO you remember how that night drew on ?
That night of sorrow, when the stars looked
wan
As eyes that gaze reproachful in a dream,
Loved eyes, long lost, and sadder than the grave ?
How through the heaven stole the moon's gray
gleam,
Like a nun's ghost down a cathedral nave ? —
Do you remember how that night drew on ?

Do you remember the hard words then said ?
Said to the living, — now denied the dead, —
That left me dead, — long, long before I died, —

Answered In heart and spirit? — me, your words had slain,
Telling how love to my poor life had lied,
Armed with the dagger of a pale disdain.—
Do you remember the hard words then said?

Do you remember, now this night draws down
The threatening heavens, that the lightnings crown
With wrecks of thunder? when no moon doth give
The clouds wild witchery? — as in a room,
Behind the sorrowful arras, still may live
The pallid secret of the haunted gloom.—
Do you remember, now this night draws down?

Do you remember, now it comes to pass
Your form is bowed as is the wind-swept grass?
And death hath won from you that confidence
Denied to life? now your sick soul rebels
Against your pride with tragic eloquence,
That self-crowned demon of the heart's fierce
hells.—

Do you remember, now it comes to pass?

Do you remember? — Bid your soul be still.
Here passion hath surrendered unto will,
And flesh to spirit. Quiet your wild tongue
And wilder heart. Your kiss is naught to me.
The instrument love gave you lies unstrung,
Silent, forsaken of all melody.
Do you remember? — Bid your soul be still.

WOMAN'S PORTION.

I.

THE leaves are shivering on the thorn,
Drearily ;
And sighing wakes the lean-eyed morn,
Wearily.

I press my thin face to the pane,
Drearily ;
But never will he come again.
(Wearily.)

The rain hath sicklied day with haze,
Drearily ;
My tears run downward as I gaze,
Wearily.

The mist and morn spake unto me,
Drearily :
“ What is this thing God gives to thee ? ”
(Wearily.)

I said unto the morn and mist,
Drearily :
“ The babe unborn whom sin hath kissed.”
(Wearily.)

The morn and mist spake unto me,
Drearily :
“ What is this thing which thou dost see ? ”
(Wearily.)

Woman's I said unto the mist and morn,
Portion Drearily :
"The shame of man and woman's scorn."
(Wearily.)
"He loved thee not," they made reply,
Drearily.
I said, "Would God had let me die!"
(Wearily.)

II.

My dreams are as a closed up book,
(Drearily.)
Upon whose clasp of love I look,
Wearily.

All night the rain raved overhead,
Drearily ;
All night I wept awake in bed,
Wearily.

I heard the wind sweep wild and wide,
Drearily ;
I turned upon my face and sighed,
Wearily.

The wind and rain spake unto me,
Drearily :
"What is this thing God takes from thee?"
(Wearily.)

I said unto the rain and wind,
Drearly :
“ The love, for which my soul hath sinned.”
(Wearily.)

The rain and wind spake unto me,
Drearly :
“ What are these things thou still dost see ? ”
(Wearily.)

I said unto the wind and rain,
Drearly :
“ Regret, and hope despair hath slain.”
(Wearily.)

“ Thou lov'st him still,” they made reply,
Drearly.
I said, “ That God would let me die ! ”
(Wearily.)

FINALE.

SO let it be. Thou wilt not say 't was I !
Here in life's temple, where thy soul may see,
Look how the beauty of our love doth lie,
Shattered in shards, a dead divinity !
Approach : kneel down : yea, render up one sigh !
This is the end. What need to tell it thee !
So let it be.

Finale So let it be. Care, who hath stood with him,
And sorrow, who sat by him deified,
For whom his face made comfort, lo ! how dim
They heap his altar which they can not hide,
While memory's lamp swings o'er it, burning slim.
This it the end. What shall be said beside ?
So let it be.

So let it be. Did we not drain the wine,
Red, of love's sacramental chalice, when
He laid sweet sanction on thy lips and mine ?
Dash it aside ! Lo, who will fill again
Now it is empty of the god divine !
This is the end. Yea, let us say Amen.
So let it be.

THE CROSS.

THE cross I bear no man shall know —
No man can ease the cross I bear ! —
Alas ! the thorny path of woe
Up the steep hill of care !

There is no word to comfort me ;
No sign to help my bended head ;
Deep night lies over land and sea,
And silence dark and dread.

To strive, it seems, that I was born,
For that which others shall obtain ;
The disappointment and the scorn
Alone for me remain.

One half my life is overpast ;
The other half I contemplate —
Meseems the past doth but forecast
A darker future state.

Sick to the heart of that which makes
Me hope and struggle and desire,
The aspiration here that aches
With ineffectual fire ;

While inwardly I know the lack,
The insufficiency of power,
Each past day's retrospect makes black
Each morrow's coming hour.

Now in my youth would I could die ! —
As others love to live, — go down
Into the grave without a sigh,
Oblivious of renown !

THE FOREST OF DREAMS.

I.

WHERE was I last Friday night ? —
Within the forest of dark dreams
Following the blur of a goblin-light,
That led me over ugly streams,
Whereon the scum of the spawn was spread,
And the blistered slime, in stagnant seams ;

Where the weed and the moss swam black and dead,
Like a drowned girl's hair in the ropy ooze :
And the jack-o'-lantern light that led,
Flickered the fox-fire trees o'erhead,
And the owl-like things at airy cruise.

II.

Where was I last Friday night ? —
Within the forest of dark dreams
Following a form of shadowy white
With my own wild face it seems.
Did a raven's wing just flap my hair ?
Or a web-winged bat brush by my face ?
Or the hand of — something I did not dare
Look round to see in that obscene place ?
Where the boughs, with leaves a-devil's-dance,
And the thorn-tree bush, where the wind made moan,
Had more than a strange significance
Of life and of evil not their own.

III.

Where was I last Friday night ? —
Within the forest of dark dreams
Seeing the mists rise left and right,
Like the leathery fog that heaves and steams
From the rolling horror of Hell's red streams.
While the wind, that tossed in the tattered tree,
And danced alone with the last mad leaf. . . .
Or was it the wind ? . . . kept whispering me —
“ Now bury it here with its own black grief,
And its eyes of fire you can not brave ! ” —
And in the darkness I seemed to see
My own self digging my soul a grave.

LYNCHERS.

AT the moon's down-going, let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree. . . .

The red-rock road of the underbrush,
Where the woman came through the summer hush.

The sumach high, and the elder thick,
Where we found the stone and the ragged stick.

The trampled road of the thicket, full
Of foot-prints down to the quarry pool.

The rocks that ooze with the hue of lead,
Where we found her lying stark and dead.

The scraggy wood ; the negro hut,
With its doors and windows locked and shut.

A secret signal ; a foot's rough tramp ;
A knock at the door ; a lifted lamp.

An oath ; a scuffle ; a ring of masks ;
A voice that answers a voice that asks.

A group of shadows ; the moon's red fleck ;
A running noose and a man's bared neck.

A word, a curse, and a shape that swings ;
The lonely night and a bat's black wings. . . .

At the moon's down-going, let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

KU KLUX.

WE have sent him seeds of the melon's core,
And nailed a warning upon his door ;
By the Ku Klux laws we can do no more.

Down in the hollow, 'mid crib and stack,
The roof of his low-porched house looms black ;
Not a line of light at the doersill's crack.

Yet arm and mount ! and mask and ride !
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide !
And for a word too much men oft have died.

The clouds blow heavy towards the moon.
The edge of the storm will reach it soon.
The kildee cries and the lonesome loon.

The clouds shall flush with a wilder glare
Than the lightning makes with its angled flare,
When the Ku Klux verdict is given there.

In the pause of the thunder rolling low,
A rifle's answer — who shall know
From the wind's fierce hurl and the rain's black blow ?

Only the signature written grim
At the end of the message brought to him —
A hempen rope and a twisted limb.

So arm and mount ! and mask and ride !
The hounds can sense though the fox may hide !
And for a word too much men oft have died.

REMBRANDTS.

I.

I SHALL not soon forget her and her eyes,
The haunts of hate, where suffering seemed to
write
Its own dark name, whose syllables are sighs,
In strange and starless night.

I shall not soon forget her and her face,
So quiet, yet uneasy as a dream,
That stands on tip-toe in a haunted place
And listens for a scream.

She made me feel as one, alone, may feel
In some grand ghostly house of olden time,
The presence of a treasure, walls conceal,
The secret of a crime.

II.

With lambent faces, mimicking the moon,
The water lilies lie ;
Dotting the darkness of the long lagoon
Like some black sky.

A face, the whiteness of a water-flower,
And pollen-golden hair,
In shadow half, half in the moonbeams' glower,
Lifts slowly there.

Rembrandts A young girl's face, death makes cold marble of,
Turned to the moon and me,
Sad with the pathos of unspeakable love,
Floating to sea.

III.

One listening bent, in dread of something coming,
He can not see nor balk —
A phantom footstep, in the ghostly gloaming,
That haunts a terraced walk.

Long has he given his whole heart's hard endeavor
Unto the work begun,
Still hoping love would watch it grow and ever
Turn kindly eyes thereon.

Now in his life he feels there nears an hour,
Inevitable, alas !
When in the darkness he shall cringe and cower,
And see his dead self pass.

THE LADY OF THE HILLS.

THOUGH red my blood hath left its trail
For five far miles, I shall not fail,
As God in Heaven wills ! —
The way was long through that black land.
With sword on hip and horn in hand,
At last before thy walls I stand,
O Lady of the Hills !

No seneschal shall put to scorn
The summons of my bugle-horn !
No man-at-arms shall stay ! —
Yea ! God hath helped my strength too far
By bandit-caverned wood and scar
To give it pause now, or to bar
My all-avenging way.

This hope still gives my body strength —
To kiss her eyes and lips at length
Where all her kin can see ;
Then 'mid her towers of crime and gloom,
Sin-haunted like the Halls of Doom,
To smite her dead in that wild room
Red-lit with revelry.

Madly I rode ; nor once did slack.
Before my face the world rolled, black
With nightmare wind and rain.
Witch-lights mocked at me on the fen ;
And through the forest followed then
Gaunt eyes of wolves ; and ghosts of men
Moaned by me on the plain.

Still on I rode. My way was clear
From that wild time when, spear to spear,
Deep in the wind-torn wood,
I met him ! . . . Dead he lies beneath
Their trysting oak. I clenched my teeth
And rode. My wound scarce let me breathe,
That filled my eyes with blood.

*The Lady
of the
Hills*

And here I am. The blood may blind
My eyesight now . . . yet I shall find
Her by some inner eye !
For God — He hath this deed in care ! —
Yea ! I shall kiss again her hair,
And tell her of her leman there,
Then smite her dead — and die.

REVEALMENT.

AT moonset when ghost speaks with ghost,
And spirits meet where once they sinned,
Between the bournes of found and lost,
My soul met her soul on the wind,
My late-lost Evalind.

I kissed her mouth. Her face was wild.
Two burning shadows were her eyes,
Wherefrom the maiden love, that smiled
A heartbreak smile of severed ties,
Gazed with a wan surprise.

Then suddenly I seemed to see
No more her shape where beauty bloomed . . .
My own sad self gazed up at me —
My sorrow, that had so assumed
The form of her entombed.

HEART'S ENCOURAGEMENT.

NOR time nor all his minions
Of sorrow or of pain,
Shall dash with vulture pinions
The cup she fills again
Within the dream-dominions
Of life where she doth reign.

Clothed on with bright desire
And hope that makes her strong,
With limbs of frost and fire,
She sits above all wrong,
Her heart, a living lyre,
Her love, its only song.

And in the waking pauses
Of weariness and care,
And when the dark hour draws his
Black weapon of despair,
Above effects and causes
We hear its music there.

The longings life hath near it
Of love we yearn to see ;
The dreams it doth inherit
Of immortality ;
Are callings of her spirit
To something yet to be.

NIGHTFALL.

O DAY, so sicklied o'er with night !
O dreadful fruit of fallen dusk ! —
A Circe orange, golden-bright,
With horror 'neath its husk.

And I, who gave the promise heed
That made life's tempting surface fair,
Have I not eaten to the seed
Its ashes of despair !

O silence of the drifted grass !
And immemorial eloquence
Of stars and winds and waves that pass !
And God's indifference !

Leave me alone with sleep that knows
Not any thing that life may keep —
Not e'en the pulse that comes and goes
In germs that climb and creep.

Or if an aspiration pale
Must quicken there — oh, let the spot
Grow weeds ! that dust may so prevail,
Where spirit once could not !

PAUSE.

SO sick of dreams ! the dreams, that stain
The aisle, along which life must pass,
With hues of mystic colored glass,
That fills the windows of the brain.

So sick of thoughts! the thoughts, that carve *Pause*
The house of days with arabesques
And gargoyles, where the mind grotesques
In masks of hope and faith who starve.

Here lay thy over weary head
Upon my bosom! Do not weep! —
“He giveth His beloved sleep.” —
Heart of my heart, be comforted.

ABOVE THE VALES.

WE went by ways of bygone days,
Up mountain heights of story,
Where lost in vague, historic haze,
Tradition, crowned with battle-bays,
Sat 'mid her ruins hoary.

Where wing to wing the eagles cling
And torrents have their sources,
War rose with bugle voice to sing
Of wild spear thrust, and broadsword swing,
And rush of men and horses.

Then deep below, where orchards show
A home here, here a steeple,
We heard a simple shepherd go,
Singing, beneath the afterglow,
A love-song of the people.

*Above the
Vales* As in the trees the song did cease,
With matron eyes and holy
Peace, from the cornlands of increase,
And rose-beds of love's victories,
Spake, smiling, of the lowly.

A SUNSET FANCY.

WIDE in the west, a lake
Of flame that seems to shake
As if the Midgard snake
Deep down did breathe :
An isle of purple glow,
Where rosy rivers flow
Down peaks of cloudy snow
With fire beneath.

And there the Tower-of-Night,
With windows all a-light,
Frowns on a burning height ;
Wherein she sleeps, —
Young through the years of doom, —
Veiled with her hair's gold gloom,
The pale Valkyrie whom
Enchantment keeps.

THE FEN-FIRE.

THE misty rain makes dim my face,
The night's black cloak is o'er me ;
I tread the dripping cypress-place,
A flickering light before me.

Out of the death of leaves that rot
And ooze and weedy water,
My form was breathed to haunt this spot,
Death's immaterial daughter.

*The
Fen-Fire*

The owl that whoops upon the yew,
The snake that lairs within it,
Have seen my wild face flashing blue
For one fantastic minute.

But should you follow where my eyes
Like some pale lamp decoy you,
Beware! lest suddenly I rise
With love that shall destroy you.

TO ONE READING THE MORTE D'ARTHURE.

O DAUGHTER of our Southern sun,
Sweet sister of each flower,
Dost dream in terraced Avalon
A shadow-haunted hour?
Or stand with Guinevere upon
Some ivied Camelot tower?

Or in the wind dost breathe the musk
That blows Tintagel's sea on?
Or 'mid the lists by castled Usk
Hear some wild tourney's pæon?
Or 'neath the Merlin moons of dusk
Dost muse in old Cærleon?

*To One
Reading
the
Morte
d' Artbur*

Or now of Launcelot, and then
Of Arthur, 'mid the roses,
Dost speak with wily Vivien ?
Or where the shade reposes,
Dost walk with stately armored men
In marble-fountained closes ?

So speak the dreams within thy gaze,
The dreams thy spirit cages,
Would that Romance—which on thee lays
The spell of bygone ages—
Held me ! a memory of those days,
A portion of its pages !

STROLLERS.

I.

WE have no castles,
We have no vassals,
We have no riches, no gems and no gold ;
Nothing to ponder,
Nothing to squander—
Let us go wander
As minstrels of old.

II.

You with your lute, love,
I with my flute, love,
Let us make music by mountain and sea ;

You with your glances,
I with my dances,
Singing romances
Of old chivalry.

Strollers

III.

“Derry down derry !
Good folk, be merry !
Hither, and hearken where happiness is ! —
Never go borrow
Care of to-morrow,
Never go sorrow
While life hath a kiss.”

IV.

Let the day gladden
Or the night sadden,
We will be merry in sunshine or snow ;
You with your rhyme, love,
I with my chime, love,
We will make time, love,
Dance as we go.

V.

Nothing is ours,
Only the flowers,
Meadows, and stars, and the heavens above ;

Strollers Nothing to lie for,
Nothing to sigh for,
Nothing to die for
While still we have love.

VI.

“Derry down derry !
Good folk, be merry !
Hither, and hearken a word that is sooth :—
Care ye not any,
If ye have many
Or not a penny,
If still ye have youth !”

HAUNTED.

WHEN grave the twilight settles o'er my roof,
And from the haggard oaks unto my door
The rain comes, wild as one who rides before
His enemies that follow, hoof to hoof ;
And in each window's gusty curtain-woof
The rain-wind sighs, like one who mutters o'er
Some tale of love and crime ; and, on the floor,
The sunset spreads red stains as bloody proof ;
From hall to hall and stealthy stair to stair,
Through all the house, a dread that drags me
toward
The ancient dusk of that avoided room,
Wherein she sits with ghostly golden hair,
And eyes that gaze beyond her soul's sad doom,
Bending above an unreal harpsichord.

PRÆTERITA.

LOW belts of rushes ragged with the blast ;
Lagoons of marish reddening with the west ;
And o'er the marsh the water-fowl's unrest
While daylight dwindles and the dusk falls fast.
Set in sad walls, all mossy with the past,
An old stone gateway with a crumbling crest ;
A garden where death drowns manifest ;
And in gaunt yews the shadowy house at last.
Here, like some unseen spirit, silence talks
With echo and the wind in each gray room
Where melancholy slumbers with the rain :
Or, like some gentle ghost, the moonlight walks
In the dim garden, which her smile makes bloom
With all the old-time loveliness again.

THE SWASHBUCKLER.

SQUAT-NOSED and broad, of big and pompous
port ;
A tavern visage, apoplexy haunts,
All pimple-puffed ; the Falstaff-like resort
Of fat debauchery, whose veined cheek flaunts
A flabby purple : rusty-spurred he stands
In rakehell boots and belt, and hanger that
Claps when, with greasy gauntlets on his hands,
He swaggers past in cloak and slouch-plumed hat.
Aggression marches armies in his words ;
And in his oaths great deeds ride cap-a-pie ;

*The
Swash-
buckler*

His looks, his gestures breathe the breath of
swords ;
And in his carriage camp all wars to be :
With him of battles there shall be no lack
While buxom wenches are and stoops of sack.

THE WITCH.

SHE gropes and hobbles, where the dropsied
rocks
Are hairy with the lichens and the twist
Of knotted wolf's-bane, mumbling in the mist,
Hawk-nosed and wrinkle-eyed with scrawny locks.
At her bent back the sick-faced moonlight mocks,
Like some lewd evil whom the Fiend hath kissed ;
Thrice at her feet the slipping serpent hissed,
And thrice the owl called to the forest fox.—
What sabbath brew dost now intend ? What root
Dost seek for, seal for what satanic spell
Of incantations and demoniac fire ?
From thy rude hut, hill-huddled in the brier,
What dark familiar points thy sure pursuit,
With burning eyes, gaunt with the glow of Hell ?

THE SOMNAMBULIST.

OAKS and a water. By the water — eyes,
Ice-green and steadfast as cold stars ; and
hair
Yellow as eyes deep in a she-wolf's lair ;

And limbs, like darkness that the lightning dyes.
The humped oaks stand black under iron skies ;
The dry wind whirls the dead leaves everywhere ;
Wild on the water falls a vulture glare
Of moon, and wild the circling raven flies.
Again the power of this thing hath laid
Illusion on him : and he seems to hear
A sweet voice calling him beyond his gates
To longed-for love ; he comes ; each forest glade
Seems reaching out white arms to draw him near—
Nearer and nearer to the death that waits.

*The
Somnam-
bulist*

OPIUM.

On reading De Quincey's " Confessions of an Opium Eater."

I SEEMED to stand before a temple walled
From shadows and night's unrealities ;
Filled with dark music of dead memories,
And voices, lost in darkness, aye that called.
I entered. And, beneath the dome's high-halled
Immensity, one forced me to my knees
Before a blackness — throned 'mid semblances
And spectres — crowned with flames of emerald.
Then, lo ! two shapes that thundered at mine ears
The names of Horror and Oblivion,
Priests of this god, — and bade me die and dream.
Then, in the heart of hell, a thousand years
Meseemed I lay — dead ; while the iron stream
Of Time beat out the seconds, one by one.

MUSIC AND SLEEP.

TH**ES**E have a life that hath no part in death ;
These circumscribe the soul and make it
strong ;
Between the breathing of a dream and song,
Building a world of beauty in a breath.
Unto the heart the voice of this one saith
Ideals, its emotions live among ;
Unto the mind the other speaks a tongue
Of visions, where the guess, we christen faith,
May face the fact of immortality —
As may a rose its unembodied scent,
Or star its own reflected radiance.
We do not know these save unconsciously,
To whose mysterious shadows God hath lent
No certain shape, no certain countenance.

AMBITION.

NO**W** to my lips lift thou some opiate
Of black forgetfulness ! while in thy gaze
Still lures the loveless beauty that betrays,
And in thy mouth the music that is hate.
No promise more hast thou to make me wait ;
No smile to cozen my sick heart with praise !
Far, far behind thee stretch laborious days,
And far before thee, labors soon and late.
Thine is the fen-fire that we deem a star,
Flying before us, ever fugitive,
Thy mocking policy still holds afar :
And thine the voice, to which our longings give
Hope's siren face, that speaks us sweet and fair,
Only to lead us captives to Despair.

DESPONDENCY.

NOT all the bravery that day puts on
Of gold and azure, ardent or austere,
Shall ease my soul of sorrow ; grown more dear
Than all the joy that heavenly hope may don.
Far up the skies the rumor of the dawn
May run, and eve like some wild torch appear ;
These shall not change the darkness, gathered here,
Of thought, that rusts like an old sword undrawn.
Oh, for a place deep-sunken from the sun !
A wildwood cave of primitive rocks and moss !
Where Sleep and Silence — breast to married
breast —
Lie with their child, night-eyed Oblivion ;
Where, freed from all the trouble of my cross,
I might forget, I might forget, and rest !

DESPAIR.

SHUT in with phantoms of life's hollow hopes,
And shadows of old sins satiety slew,
And the young ghosts of the dead dreams love
knew,
Out of the day into the night she gropes.
Behind her, high the silvered summit slopes
Of strength and faith, she will not turn to view ;
But towards the cave of weakness, harsh of hue,
She goes, where all the dropsied horror ropes.
There is a voice of waters in her ears,
And on her brow a wind that never dies :

Despair One is the anguish of desired tears ;
One is the sorrow of unuttered sighs ;
And, burdened with the immemorial years,
Downward she goes with never lifted eyes.

SIN.

THERE is a legend of an old Hartz tower
That tells of one, a noble, who had sold
His soul unto the Fiend ; who grew not old
On this condition : That the demon's power
Cease every midnight for a single hour,
And in that hour his body should be cold,
His limbs grow shriveled, and his face, behold !
Become a death's-head in the taper's glower.—
So unto Sin Life gives his best. Her arts
Make all his outward seeming beautiful
Before the world ; but in his heart of hearts
Abides an hour when her strength is null ;
When he shall feel the death through all his parts
Strike, and his countenance become a skull.

INSOMNIA.

IT seems that dawn will never climb
The eastern hills ;
And, clad in mist and flame and rime,
Make flashing highways of the rills.

The night is as an ancient way
Through some dead land,
Whereon the ghosts of Memory
And Sorrow wander hand in hand.

By which man's works ignoble seem,
Unbeautiful;
And grandeur, but the ruined dream
Of some proud queen, crowned with a skull.

Insomnia

A way past-peopled, dark and old,
That stretches far—
Its only real thing, the cold
Vague light of sleep's one fitful star.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

TO help our tired hope to toil,
Lo! have we not the council here
Of trees, that to all hope appear
As sermons of the soil?

To help our flagging faith to rise,
Lo! have we not the high advice
Of stars, that for all faith suffice
As gospels of the skies?

Sustain us, Lord! and help us climb,
With hope and faith made strong and great,
The rock-rough pathway of our fate,
The care-dark way of time!

QUATRAINS.

PENURY.

Above his misered embers, gnarled and gray,
With toil-twitched limbs he bends ; around his hut,
Want, like a hobbling hag, goes night and day,
Scolding at windows and at doors tight-shut.

STRATEGY.

Craft's silent sister and the daughter deep
Of Contemplation, she, who spreads below
A hostile tent soft comfort for her foe,
With eyes of Jael watching till he sleep.

TEMPEST.

With helms of lightning, glittering in the skies,
On steeds of thunder, cloudy form on form,
Terrific beauty in their hair and eyes,
Behold the wild Valkyries of the storm.

THE LOCUST BLOSSOM.

The spirit Spring, in rainy raiment, met
The spirit Summer for a moonlit hour :
Sweet from their greeting kisses, warm and wet,
Earth shaped the fragrant purity of this flower.

MELANCHOLY.

With shadowy immortelles of memory
About her brow, she sits with eyes that look
Upon the stream of Lethe wearily,
In hesitant hands Death's partly-opened book.

Among the meadows of Life's sad unease —
 In labor still renewing her soul's youth —
 With trust, for patience, and with love, for peace,
 Singing she goes with the calm face of Ruth.

LIFE AND DEATH.

Of our own selves God makes a glass, wherein
 Two shadows image them as might a breath :
 And one is Life, whose other name is Sin ;
 And one is Love, whose other name is Death.

SORROW.

Death takes her hand and leads her through the
 waste
 Of her own soul, wherein she hears the voice
 Of lost Love's tears, and, famishing, can but taste
 The dead-sea fruit of Life's remembered joys.

A LAST WORD.

NOT for thyself, but for the sake of Song,
 Strive to succeed as others have, who gave
 Their lives unto her ; shaping sure and strong
 Her lovely limbs that made them god and slave.

Not for thyself, but for the sake of Art,
 Strive to advance beyond the others' best ;
 Winning a deeper secret from her heart
 To hang it moonlike 'mid the starry rest.

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