

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of Poems, with The Ballad of Reading Gaol, by Oscar Wilde

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Transcribed from the 1913 Methuen & Co. edition by David Price, email [ccx074@pglaf.org](mailto:ccx074@pglaf.org)

## POEMS BY OSCAR WILDE

WITH THE BALLAD OF  
READING GAOL

METHUEN & CO. LTD.  
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*Twelfth Edition*

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## NOTE

*This collection of Wilde's Poems contains the volume of 1881 in its entirety, 'The Sphinx', 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol,' and 'Ravenna.' Of the Uncollected Poems published in the Uniform Edition of 1908, a few, including the Translations from the Greek and the Polish, are omitted. Two new poems, 'Désespoir' and 'Pan,' which I have recently discovered in manuscript, are now printed for the first time. Particulars as to the original publication of each poem will be found in 'A Bibliography of the Poems of Oscar Wilde,' by Stuart Mason, London 1907.*

ROBERT ROSS.

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## POEMS

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### HÉLAS!

p. 3

*To drift with every passion till my soul  
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,  
Is it for this that I have given away  
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?  
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll  
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday  
With idle songs for pipe and virelay,  
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.  
Surely there was a time I might have trod  
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance  
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:  
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod  
I did but touch the honey of romance—  
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?*

### ELEUTHERIA

p. 5

### SONNET TO LIBERTY

p. 7

NOT that I love thy children, whose dull eyes  
See nothing save their own unlovely woe,  
Whose minds know nothing, nothing care to know,—  
But that the roar of thy Democracies,  
Thy reigns of Terror, thy great Anarchies,  
Mirror my wildest passions like the sea  
And give my rage a brother—! Liberty!  
For this sake only do thy dissonant cries  
Delight my discreet soul, else might all kings  
By bloody knout or treacherous cannonades  
Rob nations of their rights inviolate  
And I remain unmoved—and yet, and yet,  
These Christs that die upon the barricades,  
God knows it I am with them, in some things.

### AVE IMPERATRIX

p. 8

SET in this stormy Northern sea,  
Queen of these restless fields of tide,  
England! what shall men say of thee,  
Before whose feet the worlds divide?

The earth, a brittle globe of glass,  
Lies in the hollow of thy hand,  
And through its heart of crystal pass,  
Like shadows through a twilight land,

The spears of crimson-suited war,  
The long white-crested waves of fight,  
And all the deadly fires which are  
The torches of the lords of Night.

The yellow leopards, strained and lean,  
The treacherous Russian knows so well,  
With gaping blackened jaws are seen  
Leap through the hail of screaming shell.

The strong sea-lion of England's wars

Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,  
To battle with the storm that mars  
The stars of England's chivalry.

The brazen-throated clarion blows  
Across the Pathan's reedy fen,  
And the high steep of Indian snows  
Shake to the tread of armed men.

And many an Afghan chief, who lies  
Beneath his cool pomegranate-trees,  
Clutches his sword in fierce surmise  
When on the mountain-side he sees

The fleet-foot Marri scout, who comes  
To tell how he hath heard afar  
The measured roll of English drums  
Beat at the gates of Kandahar.

For southern wind and east wind meet  
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,  
England with bare and bloody feet  
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,  
Grey pillar of the Indian sky,  
Where saw'st thou last in clanging flight  
Our winged dogs of Victory?

The almond-groves of Samarcand,  
Bokhara, where red lilies blow,  
And Oxus, by whose yellow sand  
The grave white-turbaned merchants go:

And on from thence to Ispahan,  
The gilded garden of the sun,  
Whence the long dusty caravan  
Brings cedar wood and vermilion;

And that dread city of Cabool  
Set at the mountain's scarpèd feet,  
Whose marble tanks are ever full  
With water for the noonday heat:

Where through the narrow straight Bazaar  
A little maid Circassian  
Is led, a present from the Czar  
Unto some old and bearded khan,—

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,  
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight;  
But the sad dove, that sits alone  
In England—she hath no delight.

In vain the laughing girl will lean  
To greet her love with love-lit eyes:  
Down in some treacherous black ravine,  
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see  
The lingering wistful children wait  
To climb upon their father's knee;  
And in each house made desolate

Pale women who have lost their lord  
Will kiss the relics of the slain—  
Some tarnished epaulette—some sword—  
Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields  
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,  
Where we might deck their broken shields  
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,  
And many in the Afghan land,  
And many where the Ganges falls  
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,

And others in the seas which are  
The portals to the East, or by  
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

O wandering graves! O restless sleep!  
O silence of the sunless day!  
O still ravine! O stormy deep!  
Give up your prey! Give up your prey!

And thou whose wounds are never healed,  
Whose weary race is never won,  
O Cromwell's England! must thou yield  
For every inch of ground a son?

Go! crown with thorns thy gold-crowned head,  
Change thy glad song to song of pain;  
Wind and wild wave have got thy dead,  
And will not yield them back again.

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore  
Possess the flower of English land—  
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,  
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand.

What profit now that we have bound  
The whole round world with nets of gold,  
If hidden in our heart is found  
The care that groweth never old?

What profit that our galleys ride,  
Pine-forest-like, on every main?  
Ruin and wreck are at our side,  
Grim warders of the House of Pain.

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?  
Where is our English chivalry?  
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,  
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,  
What word of love can dead lips send!  
O wasted dust! O senseless clay!  
Is this the end! is this the end!

Peace, peace! we wrong the noble dead  
To vex their solemn slumber so;  
Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,  
Up the steep road must England go,

Yet when this fiery web is spun,  
Her watchmen shall descry from far  
The young Republic like a sun  
Rise from these crimson seas of war.

#### TO MILTON

MILTON! I think thy spirit hath passed away  
From these white cliffs and high-embattled towers;  
This gorgeous fiery-coloured world of ours  
Seems fallen into ashes dull and grey,  
And the age changed unto a mimic play  
Wherein we waste our else too-crowded hours:  
For all our pomp and pageantry and powers  
We are but fit to delve the common clay,  
Seeing this little isle on which we stand,  
This England, this sea-lion of the sea,  
By ignorant demagogues is held in fee,  
Who love her not: Dear God! is this the land  
Which bare a triple empire in her hand  
When Cromwell spake the word Democracy!

#### LOUIS NAPOLEON

EAGLE of Austerlitz! where were thy wings  
When far away upon a barbarous strand,  
In fight unequal, by an obscure hand,  
Fell the last scion of thy brood of Kings!  
Poor boy! thou shalt not flaunt thy cloak of red,

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Or ride in state through Paris in the van  
Of thy returning legions, but instead  
Thy mother France, free and republican,  
Shall on thy dead and crownless forehead place  
The better laurels of a soldier's crown,  
That not dishonoured should thy soul go down  
To tell the mighty Sire of thy race

That France hath kissed the mouth of Liberty,  
And found it sweeter than his honied bees,  
And that the giant wave Democracy  
Breaks on the shores where Kings lay couched at ease.

### SONNET

p. 16

ON THE MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN BULGARIA

CHRIST, dost Thou live indeed? or are Thy bones  
Still straitened in their rock-hewn sepulchre?  
And was Thy Rising only dreamed by her  
Whose love of Thee for all her sin atones?  
For here the air is horrid with men's groans,  
The priests who call upon Thy name are slain,  
Dost Thou not hear the bitter wail of pain  
From those whose children lie upon the stones?  
Come down, O Son of God! incestuous gloom  
Curtains the land, and through the starless night  
Over Thy Cross a Crescent moon I see!  
If Thou in very truth didst burst the tomb  
Come down, O Son of Man! and show Thy might  
Lest Mahomet be crowned instead of Thee!

### QUANTUM MUTATA

p. 17

THERE was a time in Europe long ago  
When no man died for freedom anywhere,  
But England's lion leaping from its lair  
Laid hands on the oppressor! it was so  
While England could a great Republic show.  
Witness the men of Piedmont, chiefest care  
Of Cromwell, when with impotent despair  
The Pontiff in his painted portico  
Trembled before our stern ambassadors.  
How comes it then that from such high estate  
We have thus fallen, save that Luxury  
With barren merchandise piles up the gate  
Where noble thoughts and deeds should enter by:  
Else might we still be Milton's heritors.

### LIBERTATIS SACRA FAMES

p. 18

ALBEIT nurtured in democracy,  
And liking best that state republican  
Where every man is Kinglike and no man  
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,  
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,  
Better the rule of One, whom all obey,  
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray  
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.  
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane  
Plant the red flag upon the piled-up street  
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign  
Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honour, all things fade,  
Save Treason and the dagger of her trade,  
Or Murder with his silent bloody feet.

### THEORETIKOS

p. 19

THIS mighty empire hath but feet of clay:  
Of all its ancient chivalry and might  
Our little island is forsaken quite:  
Some enemy hath stolen its crown of bay,  
And from its hills that voice hath passed away  
Which spake of Freedom: O come out of it,  
Come out of it, my Soul, thou art not fit  
For this vile traffic-house, where day by day

Wisdom and reverence are sold at mart,  
And the rude people rage with ignorant cries  
Against an heritage of centuries.

It mars my calm: wherefore in dreams of Art  
And loftiest culture I would stand apart,  
Neither for God, nor for his enemies.

## THE GARDEN OF EROS

p. 21

It is full summer now, the heart of June;  
Not yet the sunburnt reapers are astir  
Upon the upland meadow where too soon  
Rich autumn time, the season's usurer,  
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,  
And see his treasure scattered by the wild and spendthrift breeze.

p. 23

Too soon indeed! yet here the daffodil,  
That love-child of the Spring, has lingered on  
To vex the rose with jealousy, and still  
The harebell spreads her azure pavilion,  
And like a strayed and wandering reveller  
Abandoned of its brothers, whom long since June's messenger

The missel-thrush has frightened from the glade,  
One pale narcissus loiters fearfully  
Close to a shadowy nook, where half afraid  
Of their own loveliness some violets lie  
That will not look the gold sun in the face  
For fear of too much splendour,—ah! methinks it is a place

Which should be trodden by Persephone  
When wearied of the flowerless fields of Dis!  
Or danced on by the lads of Arcady!  
The hidden secret of eternal bliss  
Known to the Grecian here a man might find,  
Ah! you and I may find it now if Love and Sleep be kind.

p. 24

There are the flowers which mourning Herakles  
Strewed on the tomb of Hylas, columbine,  
Its white doves all a-flutter where the breeze  
Kissed them too harshly, the small celandine,  
That yellow-kirtled chorister of eve,  
And lilac lady's-smock,—but let them bloom alone, and leave

Yon spirèd hollyhock red-crocketed  
To sway its silent chimes, else must the bee,  
Its little bellringer, go seek instead  
Some other pleasaunce; the anemone  
That weeps at daybreak, like a silly girl  
Before her love, and hardly lets the butterflies unfurl

Their painted wings beside it,—bid it pine  
In pale virginity; the winter snow  
Will suit it better than those lips of thine  
Whose fires would but scorch it, rather go  
And pluck that amorous flower which blooms alone,  
Fed by the pander wind with dust of kisses not its own.

p. 25

The trumpet-mouths of red convolvulus  
So dear to maidens, creamy meadow-sweet  
Whiter than Juno's throat and odorous  
As all Arabia, hyacinths the feet  
Of Huntress Dian would be loth to mar  
For any dappled fawn,—pluck these, and those fond flowers which are

Fairer than what Queen Venus trod upon  
Beneath the pines of Ida, eucharis,  
That morning star which does not dread the sun,  
And budding marjoram which but to kiss  
Would sweeten Cytheræa's lips and make  
Adonis jealous,—these for thy head,—and for thy girdle take

Yon curving spray of purple clematis  
Whose gorgeous dye outflames the Tyrian King,  
And foxgloves with their nodding chalices,  
But that one narciss which the startled Spring  
Let from her kirtle fall when first she heard  
In her own woods the wild tempestuous song of summer's bird,



Ah! leave it for a subtle memory  
 Of those sweet tremulous days of rain and sun,  
 When April laughed between her tears to see  
 The early primrose with shy footsteps run  
 From the gnarled oak-tree roots till all the wold,  
 Spite of its brown and trampled leaves, grew bright with shimmering gold.

Nay, pluck it too, it is not half so sweet  
 As thou thyself, my soul's idolatry!  
 And when thou art a-wearied at thy feet  
 Shall oxlips weave their brightest tapestry,  
 For thee the woodbine shall forget its pride  
 And veil its tangled whorls, and thou shalt walk on daisies pied.

And I will cut a reed by yonder spring  
 And make the wood-gods jealous, and old Pan  
 Wonder what young intruder dares to sing  
 In these still haunts, where never foot of man  
 Should tread at evening, lest he chance to spy  
 The marble limbs of Artemis and all her company.

And I will tell thee why the jacinth wears  
 Such dread embroidery of dolorous moan,  
 And why the hapless nightingale forbears  
 To sing her song at noon, but weeps alone  
 When the fleet swallow sleeps, and rich men feast,  
 And why the laurel trembles when she sees the lightening east.

And I will sing how sad Proserpina  
 Unto a grave and gloomy Lord was wed,  
 And lure the silver-breasted Helena  
 Back from the lotus meadows of the dead,  
 So shalt thou see that awful loveliness  
 For which two mighty Hosts met fearfully in war's abyss!

And then I'll pipe to thee that Grecian tale  
 How Cynthia loves the lad Endymion,  
 And hidden in a grey and misty veil  
 Hies to the cliffs of Latmos once the Sun  
 Leaps from his ocean bed in fruitless chase  
 Of those pale flying feet which fade away in his embrace.

And if my flute can breathe sweet melody,  
 We may behold Her face who long ago  
 Dwelt among men by the Ægean sea,  
 And whose sad house with pillaged portico  
 And friezeless wall and columns toppled down  
 Looms o'er the ruins of that fair and violet cinctured town.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry still awhile,  
 They are not dead, thine ancient votaries;  
 Some few there are to whom thy radiant smile  
 Is better than a thousand victories,  
 Though all the nobly slain of Waterloo  
 Rise up in wrath against them! tarry still, there are a few

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood  
 And consecrate their being; I at least  
 Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,  
 And in thy temples found a goodlier feast  
 Than this starved age can give me, spite of all  
 Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so dogmatical.

Here not Cephissos, not Ilissos flows,  
 The woods of white Colonos are not here,  
 On our bleak hills the olive never blows,  
 No simple priest conducts his lowing steer  
 Up the steep marble way, nor through the town  
 Do laughing maidens bear to thee the crocus-flowered gown.

Yet tarry! for the boy who loved thee best,  
 Whose very name should be a memory  
 To make thee linger, sleeps in silent rest  
 Beneath the Roman walls, and melody  
 Still mourns her sweetest lyre; none can play  
 The lute of Adonais: with his lips Song passed away.

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left  
 One silver voice to sing his threnody,

But ah! too soon of it we were bereft  
When on that riven night and stormy sea  
Panthea claimed her singer as her own,  
And slew the mouth that praised her; since which time we walk alone,

Save for that fiery heart, that morning star  
Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye  
Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war  
The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy  
Rise mightily like Hesperus and bring  
The great Republic! him at least thy love hath taught to sing,

And he hath been with thee at Thessaly,  
And seen white Atalanta fleet of foot  
In passionless and fierce virginity  
Hunting the tuskèd boar, his honied lute  
Hath pierced the cavern of the hollow hill,  
And Venus laughs to know one knee will bow before her still.

And he hath kissed the lips of Proserpine,  
And sung the Galilæan's requiem,  
That wounded forehead dashed with blood and wine  
He hath discrowned, the Ancient Gods in him  
Have found their last, most ardent worshipper,  
And the new Sign grows grey and dim before its conqueror.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry with us still,  
It is not quenched the torch of poesy,  
The star that shook above the Eastern hill  
Holds unassailed its argent armoury  
From all the gathering gloom and fretful fight—  
O tarry with us still! for through the long and common night,

Morris, our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,  
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed,  
With soft and sylvan pipe has oft beguiled  
The weary soul of man in troublous need,  
And from the far and flowerless fields of ice  
Has brought fair flowers to make an earthly paradise.

We know them all, Gudrun the strong men's bride,  
Aslaug and Olafson we know them all,  
How giant Grettir fought and Sigurd died,  
And what enchantment held the king in thrall  
When lonely Brynhild wrestled with the powers  
That war against all passion, ah! how oft through summer hours,

Long listless summer hours when the noon  
Being enamoured of a damask rose  
Forgets to journey westward, till the moon  
The pale usurper of its tribute grows  
From a thin sickle to a silver shield  
And chides its loitering car—how oft, in some cool grassy field

Far from the cricket-ground and noisy eight,  
At Bagley, where the rustling bluebells come  
Almost before the blackbird finds a mate  
And overstay the swallow, and the hum  
Of many murmuring bees flits through the leaves,  
Have I lain poring on the dreamy tales his fancy weaves,

And through their unreal woes and mimic pain  
Wept for myself, and so was purified,  
And in their simple mirth grew glad again;  
For as I sailed upon that pictured tide  
The strength and splendour of the storm was mine  
Without the storm's red ruin, for the singer is divine;

The little laugh of water falling down  
Is not so musical, the clammy gold  
Close hoarded in the tiny waxen town  
Has less of sweetness in it, and the old  
Half-withered reeds that waved in Arcady  
Touched by his lips break forth again to fresher harmony.

Spirit of Beauty, tarry yet awhile!  
Although the cheating merchants of the mart  
With iron roads profane our lovely isle,  
And break on whirling wheels the limbs of Art,

p. 30

p. 31

p. 32

Ay! though the crowded factories beget  
The blindworm Ignorance that slays the soul, O tarry yet!

For One at least there is,—He bears his name  
From Dante and the seraph Gabriel,—  
Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame  
To light thine altar; He too loves thee well,  
Who saw old Merlin lured in Vivien's snare,  
And the white feet of angels coming down the golden stair,

Loves thee so well, that all the World for him  
A gorgeous-coloured vestiture must wear,  
And Sorrow take a purple diadem,  
Or else be no more Sorrow, and Despair  
Gild its own thorns, and Pain, like Adon, be  
Even in anguish beautiful;—such is the empery

Which Painters hold, and such the heritage  
This gentle solemn Spirit doth possess,  
Being a better mirror of his age  
In all his pity, love, and weariness,  
Than those who can but copy common things,  
And leave the Soul unpainted with its mighty questionings.

p. 33

But they are few, and all romance has flown,  
And men can prophesy about the sun,  
And lecture on his arrows—how, alone,  
Through a waste void the soulless atoms run,  
How from each tree its weeping nymph has fled,  
And that no more 'mid English reeds a Naiad shows her head.

Methinks these new Actæons boast too soon  
That they have spied on beauty; what if we  
Have analysed the rainbow, robbed the moon  
Of her most ancient, chastest mystery,  
Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope  
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a telescope!

What profit if this scientific age  
Burst through our gates with all its retinue  
Of modern miracles! Can it assuage  
One lover's breaking heart? what can it do  
To make one life more beautiful, one day  
More godlike in its period? but now the Age of Clay

p. 34

Returns in horrid cycle, and the earth  
Hath borne again a noisy progeny  
Of ignorant Titans, whose ungodly birth  
Hurls them against the august hierarchy  
Which sat upon Olympus; to the Dust  
They have appealed, and to that barren arbiter they must

Repair for judgment; let them, if they can,  
From Natural Warfare and insensate Chance,  
Create the new Ideal rule for man!  
Methinks that was not my inheritance;  
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul  
Passes from higher heights of life to a more supreme goal.

Lo! while we spake the earth did turn away  
Her visage from the God, and Hecate's boat  
Rose silver-laden, till the jealous day  
Blew all its torches out: I did not note  
The waning hours, to young Endymions  
Time's palsied fingers count in vain his rosary of suns!

Mark how the yellow iris wearily  
Leans back its throat, as though it would be kissed  
By its false chamberer, the dragon-fly,  
Who, like a blue vein on a girl's white wrist,  
Sleeps on that snowy primrose of the night,  
Which 'gins to flush with crimson shame, and die beneath the light.

p. 35

Come let us go, against the pallid shield  
Of the wan sky the almond blossoms gleam,  
The corncrake nested in the unmown field  
Answers its mate, across the misty stream  
On fitful wing the startled curlews fly,  
And in his sedgy bed the lark, for joy that Day is nigh,

Scatters the pearlèd dew from off the grass,  
In tremulous ecstasy to greet the sun,  
Who soon in gilded panoply will pass  
Forth from yon orange-curtained pavilion  
Hung in the burning east: see, the red rim  
O'ertops the expectant hills! it is the God! for love of him

Already the shrill lark is out of sight,  
Flooding with waves of song this silent dell,—  
Ah! there is something more in that bird's flight  
Than could be tested in a crucible!—  
But the air freshens, let us go, why soon  
The woodmen will be here; how we have lived this night of June!

p. 36

## ROSA MYSTICA

p. 37

### REQUIESCAT

p. 39

TREAD lightly, she is near  
Under the snow,  
Speak gently, she can hear  
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair  
Tarnished with rust,  
She that was young and fair  
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,  
She hardly knew  
She was a woman, so  
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,  
Lie on her breast,  
I vex my heart alone,  
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear  
Lyre or sonnet,  
All my life's buried here,  
Heap earth upon it.

AVIGNON.

## SONNET ON APPROACHING ITALY

p. 40

I REACHED the Alps: the soul within me burned,  
Italia, my Italia, at thy name:  
And when from out the mountain's heart I came  
And saw the land for which my life had yearned,  
I laughed as one who some great prize had earned:  
And musing on the marvel of thy fame  
I watched the day, till marked with wounds of flame  
The turquoise sky to burnished gold was turned.  
The pine-trees waved as waves a woman's hair,  
And in the orchards every twining spray  
Was breaking into flakes of blossoming foam:  
But when I knew that far away at Rome  
In evil bonds a second Peter lay,  
I wept to see the land so very fair.

TURIN.

## SAN MINIATO

p. 41

SEE, I have climbed the mountain side  
Up to this holy house of God,  
Where once that Angel-Painter trod  
Who saw the heavens opened wide,

And throned upon the crescent moon  
The Virginal white Queen of Grace,—  
Mary! could I but see thy face  
Death could not come at all too soon.

O crowned by God with thorns and pain!  
Mother of Christ! O mystic wife!

My heart is weary of this life  
And over-sad to sing again.

O crowned by God with love and flame!  
O crowned by Christ the Holy One!  
O listen ere the searching sun  
Show to the world my sin and shame.

### AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA

p. 42

Was this His coming! I had hoped to see  
A scene of wondrous glory, as was told  
Of some great God who in a rain of gold  
Broke open bars and fell on Danae:  
Or a dread vision as when Semele  
Sickening for love and unappeased desire  
Prayed to see God's clear body, and the fire  
Caught her brown limbs and slew her utterly:  
With such glad dreams I sought this holy place,  
And now with wondering eyes and heart I stand  
Before this supreme mystery of Love:  
Some kneeling girl with passionless pale face,  
An angel with a lily in his hand,  
And over both the white wings of a Dove.

FLORENCE.

### ITALIA

p. 43

ITALIA! thou art fallen, though with sheen  
Of battle-spears thy clamorous armies stride  
From the north Alps to the Sicilian tide!  
Ay! fallen, though the nations hail thee Queen  
Because rich gold in every town is seen,  
And on thy sapphire-lake in tossing pride  
Of wind-filled vans thy myriad galleys ride  
Beneath one flag of red and white and green.  
O Fair and Strong! O Strong and Fair in vain!  
Look southward where Rome's desecrated town  
Lies mourning for her God-anointed King!  
Look heaven-ward! shall God allow this thing?  
Nay! but some flame-girt Raphael shall come down,  
And smite the Spoiler with the sword of pain.

VENICE.

### SONNET

p. 44

WRITTEN IN HOLY WEEK AT GENOA

I WANDERED through Scoglietto's far retreat,  
The oranges on each o'erhanging spray  
Burned as bright lamps of gold to shame the day;  
Some startled bird with fluttering wings and fleet  
Made snow of all the blossoms; at my feet  
Like silver moons the pale narcissi lay:  
And the curved waves that streaked the great green bay  
Laughed i' the sun, and life seemed very sweet.  
Outside the young boy-priest passed singing clear,  
'Jesus the son of Mary has been slain,  
O come and fill His sepulchre with flowers.'  
Ah, God! Ah, God! those dear Hellenic hours  
Had drowned all memory of Thy bitter pain,  
The Cross, the Crown, the Soldiers and the Spear.

### ROME UNVISITED

p. 45

I.

THE corn has turned from grey to red,  
Since first my spirit wandered forth  
From the drear cities of the north,  
And to Italia's mountains fled.

And here I set my face towards home,  
For all my pilgrimage is done,  
Although, methinks, yon blood-red sun  
Marshals the way to Holy Rome.

O Blessed Lady, who dost hold  
Upon the seven hills thy reign!  
O Mother without blot or stain,  
Crowned with bright crowns of triple gold!

O Roma, Roma, at thy feet  
I lay this barren gift of song!  
For, ah! the way is steep and long  
That leads unto thy sacred street.

II.

p. 46

AND yet what joy it were for me  
To turn my feet unto the south,  
And journeying towards the Tiber mouth  
To kneel again at Fiesole!

And wandering through the tangled pines  
That break the gold of Arno's stream,  
To see the purple mist and gleam  
Of morning on the Apennines

By many a vineyard-hidden home,  
Orchard and olive-garden grey,  
Till from the drear Campagna's way  
The seven hills bear up the dome!

III.

p. 47

A PILGRIM from the northern seas—  
What joy for me to seek alone  
The wondrous temple and the throne  
Of him who holds the awful keys!

When, bright with purple and with gold  
Come priest and holy cardinal,  
And borne above the heads of all  
The gentle Shepherd of the Fold.

O joy to see before I die  
The only God-anointed king,  
And hear the silver trumpets ring  
A triumph as he passes by!

Or at the brazen-pillared shrine  
Holds high the mystic sacrifice,  
And shows his God to human eyes  
Beneath the veil of bread and wine.

IV.

p. 48

FOR lo, what changes time can bring!  
The cycles of revolving years  
May free my heart from all its fears,  
And teach my lips a song to sing.

Before yon field of trembling gold  
Is garnered into dusty sheaves,  
Or ere the autumn's scarlet leaves  
Flutter as birds adown the wold,

I may have run the glorious race,  
And caught the torch while yet aflame,  
And called upon the holy name  
Of Him who now doth hide His face.

ARONA.

### URBS SACRA ÆTERNA

p. 49

ROME! what a scroll of History thine has been;  
In the first days thy sword republican  
Ruled the whole world for many an age's span:  
Then of the peoples wert thou royal Queen,  
Till in thy streets the bearded Goth was seen;  
And now upon thy walls the breezes fan  
(Ah, city crowned by God, discrowned by man!)  
The hated flag of red and white and green.  
When was thy glory! when in search for power  
Thine eagles flew to greet the double sun,

And the wild nations shuddered at thy rod?  
Nay, but thy glory tarried for this hour,  
When pilgrims kneel before the Holy One,  
The prisoned shepherd of the Church of God.

MONTRE MARIO.

### SONNET

p. 50

ON HEARING THE DIES IRÆ SUNG IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

NAY, Lord, not thus! white lilies in the spring,  
Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove,  
Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love  
Than terrors of red flame and thundering.  
The hillside vines dear memories of Thee bring:  
A bird at evening flying to its nest  
Tells me of One who had no place of rest:  
I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.  
Come rather on some autumn afternoon,  
When red and brown are burnished on the leaves,  
And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,  
Come when the splendid fulness of the moon  
Looks down upon the rows of golden sheaves,  
And reap Thy harvest: we have waited long.

### EASTER DAY

p. 51

THE silver trumpets rang across the Dome:  
The people knelt upon the ground with awe:  
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,  
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.  
Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,  
And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,  
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head:  
In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.  
My heart stole back across wide wastes of years  
To One who wandered by a lonely sea,  
And sought in vain for any place of rest:  
'Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest.  
I, only I, must wander wearily,  
And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with tears.'

### E TENEBRIS

p. 52

COME down, O Christ, and help me! reach Thy hand,  
For I am drowning in a stormier sea  
Than Simon on Thy lake of Galilee:  
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,  
My heart is as some famine-murdered land  
Whence all good things have perished utterly,  
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie  
If I this night before God's throne should stand.  
'He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,  
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name  
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height.'  
Nay, peace, I shall behold, before the night,  
The feet of brass, the robe more white than flume,  
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

### VITA NUOVA

p. 53

I STOOD by the unvintageable sea  
Till the wet waves drenched face and hair with spray;  
The long red fires of the dying day  
Burned in the west; the wind piped drearily;  
And to the land the clamorous gulls did flee:  
'Alas!' I cried, 'my life is full of pain,  
And who can garner fruit or golden grain  
From these waste fields which travail ceaselessly!'  
My nets gaped wide with many a break and flaw,  
Nathless I threw them as my final cast  
Into the sea, and waited for the end.  
When lo! a sudden glory! and I saw  
From the black waters of my tortured past  
The argent splendour of white limbs ascend!

A LILY-GIRL, not made for this world's pain,  
 With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,  
 And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous tears  
 Like bluest water seen through mists of rain:  
 Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,  
 Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,  
 And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,  
 Through whose wan marble creeps one purple vein.  
 Yet, though my lips shall praise her without cease,  
 Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,  
 Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe,  
 Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice  
 Beneath the flaming Lion's breast, and saw  
 The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

## THE NEW HELEN

p. 55

WHERE hast thou been since round the walls of Troy  
 The sons of God fought in that great emprise?  
 Why dost thou walk our common earth again?  
 Hast thou forgotten that impassioned boy,  
 His purple galley and his Tyrian men  
 And treacherous Aphrodite's mocking eyes?  
 For surely it was thou, who, like a star  
 Hung in the silver silence of the night,  
 Didst lure the Old World's chivalry and might  
 Into the clamorous crimson waves of war!

Or didst thou rule the fire-laden moon?  
 In amorous Sidon was thy temple built  
 Over the light and laughter of the sea  
 Where, behind lattice scarlet-wrought and gilt,  
 Some brown-limbed girl did weave thee tapestry,  
 All through the waste and wearied hours of noon;  
 Till her wan cheek with flame of passion burned,  
 And she rose up the sea-washed lips to kiss  
 Of some glad Cyprian sailor, safe returned  
 From Calpé and the cliffs of Herakles!

p. 56

No! thou art Helen, and none other one!  
 It was for thee that young Sarpedôn died,  
 And Memnôn's manhood was untimely spent;  
 It was for thee gold-crested Hector tried  
 With Thetis' child that evil race to run,  
 In the last year of thy beleaguerment;  
 Ay! even now the glory of thy fame  
 Burns in those fields of trampled asphodel,  
 Where the high lords whom Ilion knew so well  
 Clash ghostly shields, and call upon thy name.

Where hast thou been? in that enchanted land  
 Whose slumbering vales forlorn Calypso knew,  
 Where never mower rose at break of day  
 But all unswathed the trammelling grasses grew,  
 And the sad shepherd saw the tall corn stand  
 Till summer's red had changed to withered grey?  
 Didst thou lie there by some Lethæan stream  
 Deep brooding on thine ancient memory,  
 The crash of broken spears, the fiery gleam  
 From shivered helm, the Grecian battle-cry?

p. 57

Nay, thou wert hidden in that hollow hill  
 With one who is forgotten utterly,  
 That discrowned Queen men call the Erycine;  
 Hidden away that never mightst thou see  
 The face of Her, before whose mouldering shrine  
 To-day at Rome the silent nations kneel;  
 Who gat from Love no joyous gladdening,  
 But only Love's intolerable pain,  
 Only a sword to pierce her heart in twain,  
 Only the bitterness of child-bearing.

The lotus-leaves which heal the wounds of Death  
 Lie in thy hand; O, be thou kind to me,  
 While yet I know the summer of my days;



For hardly can my tremulous lips draw breath  
To fill the silver trumpet with thy praise,  
So bowed am I before thy mystery;  
So bowed and broken on Love's terrible wheel,  
That I have lost all hope and heart to sing,  
Yet care I not what ruin time may bring  
If in thy temple thou wilt let me kneel.

Alas, alas, thou wilt not tarry here,  
But, like that bird, the servant of the sun,  
Who flies before the north wind and the night,  
So wilt thou fly our evil land and drear,  
Back to the tower of thine old delight,  
And the red lips of young Euphorion;  
Nor shall I ever see thy face again,  
But in this poisonous garden-close must stay,  
Crowning my brows with the thorn-crown of pain,  
Till all my loveless life shall pass away.

O Helen! Helen! Helen! yet a while,  
Yet for a little while, O, tarry here,  
Till the dawn cometh and the shadows flee!  
For in the gladsome sunlight of thy smile  
Of heaven or hell I have no thought or fear,  
Seeing I know no other god but thee:  
No other god save him, before whose feet  
In nets of gold the tired planets move,  
The incarnate spirit of spiritual love  
Who in thy body holds his joyous seat.

Thou wert not born as common women are!  
But, girt with silver splendour of the foam,  
Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise!  
And at thy coming some immortal star,  
Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern skies,  
And waked the shepherds on thine island-home.  
Thou shalt not die: no asps of Egypt creep  
Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air;  
No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,  
Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.

Lily of love, pure and inviolate!  
Tower of ivory! red rose of fire!  
Thou hast come down our darkness to illumine:  
For we, close-caught in the wide nets of Fate,  
Wearied with waiting for the World's Desire,  
Aimlessly wandered in the House of gloom,  
Aimlessly sought some slumberous anodyne  
For wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness,  
Till we beheld thy re-arisen shrine,  
And the white glory of thy loveliness.

## THE BURDEN OF ITYS

THIS English Thames is holier far than Rome,  
Those harebells like a sudden flush of sea  
Breaking across the woodland, with the foam  
Of meadow-sweet and white anemone  
To fleck their blue waves,—God is likelier there  
Than hidden in that crystal-hearted star the pale monks bear!

Those violet-gleaming butterflies that take  
Yon creamy lily for their pavilion  
Are monsignores, and where the rushes shake  
A lazy pike lies basking in the sun,  
His eyes half shut,—he is some mitred old  
Bishop in *partibus*! look at those gaudy scales all green and gold.

The wind the restless prisoner of the trees  
Does well for Palæstrina, one would say  
The mighty master's hands were on the keys  
Of the Maria organ, which they play  
When early on some sapphire Easter morn  
In a high litter red as blood or sin the Pope is borne

From his dark House out to the Balcony  
Above the bronze gates and the crowded square,

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p. 64

Whose very fountains seem for ecstasy  
To toss their silver lances in the air,  
And stretching out weak hands to East and West  
In vain sends peace to peaceless lands, to restless nations rest.

Is not yon lingering orange after-glow  
That stays to vex the moon more fair than all  
Rome's lordliest pageants! strange, a year ago  
I knelt before some crimson Cardinal  
Who bare the Host across the Esquiline,  
And now—those common poppies in the wheat seem twice as fine.

The blue-green beanfields yonder, tremulous  
With the last shower, sweeter perfume bring  
Through this cool evening than the odorous  
Flame-jewelled censers the young deacons swing,  
When the grey priest unlocks the curtained shrine,  
And makes God's body from the common fruit of corn and vine.

Poor Fra Giovanni bawling at the mass  
Were out of tune now, for a small brown bird  
Sings overhead, and through the long cool grass  
I see that throbbing throat which once I heard  
On starlit hills of flower-starred Arcady,  
Once where the white and crescent sand of Salamis meets sea.

Sweet is the swallow twittering on the eaves  
At daybreak, when the mower whets his scythe,  
And stock-doves murmur, and the milkmaid leaves  
Her little lonely bed, and carols blithe  
To see the heavy-lowing cattle wait  
Stretching their huge and dripping mouths across the farmyard gate.

And sweet the hops upon the Kentish leas,  
And sweet the wind that lifts the new-mown hay,  
And sweet the fretful swarms of grumbling bees  
That round and round the linden blossoms play;  
And sweet the heifer breathing in the stall,  
And the green bursting figs that hang upon the red-brick wall,

And sweet to hear the cuckoo mock the spring  
While the last violet loiters by the well,  
And sweet to hear the shepherd Daphnis sing  
The song of Linus through a sunny dell  
Of warm Arcadia where the corn is gold  
And the slight lithe-limbed reapers dance about the wattled fold.

And sweet with young Lycoris to recline  
In some Illyrian valley far away,  
Where canopied on herbs amaracine  
We too might waste the summer-tranced day  
Matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,  
While far beneath us frets the troubled purple of the sea.

But sweeter far if silver-sandalled foot  
Of some long-hidden God should ever tread  
The Nuneham meadows, if with reeded flute  
Pressed to his lips some Faun might raise his head  
By the green water-flags, ah! sweet indeed  
To see the heavenly herdsman call his white-fleeced flock to feed.

Then sing to me thou tuneful chorister,  
Though what thou sing'st be thine own requiem!  
Tell me thy tale thou hapless chronicler  
Of thine own tragedies! do not contemn  
These unfamiliar haunts, this English field,  
For many a lovely coronal our northern isle can yield

Which Grecian meadows know not, many a rose  
Which all day long in vales Æolian  
A lad might seek in vain for over-grows  
Our hedges like a wanton courtesan  
Unthrifty of its beauty; lilies too  
Ilissos never mirrored star our streams, and cockles blue

Dot the green wheat which, though they are the signs  
For swallows going south, would never spread  
Their azure tents between the Attic vines;  
Even that little weed of ragged red,

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Which bids the robin pipe, in Arcady  
Would be a trespasser, and many an unsung elegy

Sleeps in the reeds that fringe our winding Thames  
Which to awake were sweeter ravishment  
Than ever Syrinx wept for; diadems  
Of brown bee-studded orchids which were meant  
For Cytheræa's brows are hidden here  
Unknown to Cytheræa, and by yonder pasturing steer

p. 68

There is a tiny yellow daffodil,  
The butterfly can see it from afar,  
Although one summer evening's dew could fill  
Its little cup twice over ere the star  
Had called the lazy shepherd to his fold  
And be no prodigal; each leaf is flecked with spotted gold

As if Jove's gorgeous leman Danae  
Hot from his gilded arms had stooped to kiss  
The trembling petals, or young Mercury  
Low-flying to the dusky ford of Dis  
Had with one feather of his pinions  
Just brushed them! the slight stem which bears the burden of its suns

Is hardly thicker than the gossamer,  
Or poor Arachne's silver tapestry,—  
Men say it bloomed upon the sepulchre  
Of One I sometime worshipped, but to me  
It seems to bring diviner memories  
Of faun-loved Heliconian glades and blue nymph-haunted seas,

Of an untrodden vale at Tempe where  
On the clear river's marge Narcissus lies,  
The tangle of the forest in his hair,  
The silence of the woodland in his eyes,  
Wooing that drifting imagery which is  
No sooner kissed than broken; memories of Salmacis

p. 69

Who is not boy nor girl and yet is both,  
Fed by two fires and unsatisfied  
Through their excess, each passion being loth  
For love's own sake to leave the other's side  
Yet killing love by staying; memories  
Of Oreads peeping through the leaves of silent moonlit trees,

Of lonely Ariadne on the wharf  
At Naxos, when she saw the treacherous crew  
Far out at sea, and waved her crimson scarf  
And called false Theseus back again nor knew  
That Dionysos on an amber pard  
Was close behind her; memories of what Mæonia's bard

With sightless eyes beheld, the wall of Troy,  
Queen Helen lying in the ivory room,  
And at her side an amorous red-lipped boy  
Trimming with dainty hand his helmet's plume,  
And far away the moil, the shout, the groan,  
As Hector shielded off the spear and Ajax hurled the stone;

p. 70

Of wingèd Perseus with his flawless sword  
Cleaving the snaky tresses of the witch,  
And all those tales imperishably stored  
In little Grecian urns, freightage more rich  
Than any gaudy galleon of Spain  
Bare from the Indies ever! these at least bring back again,

For well I know they are not dead at all,  
The ancient Gods of Grecian poesy:  
They are asleep, and when they hear thee call  
Will wake and think 't is very Thessaly,  
This Thames the Daulian waters, this cool glade  
The yellow-irised mead where once young Itys laughed and played.

If it was thou dear jasmine-cradled bird  
Who from the leafy stillness of thy throne  
Sang to the wondrous boy, until he heard  
The horn of Atalanta faintly blown  
Across the Cumnor hills, and wandering  
Through Bagley wood at evening found the Attic poets' spring,—

Ah! tiny sober-suited advocate  
 That pleadest for the moon against the day!  
 If thou didst make the shepherd seek his mate  
 On that sweet questing, when Proserpina  
 Forgot it was not Sicily and leant  
 Across the mossy Sandford stile in ravished wonderment,—

Light-winged and bright-eyed miracle of the wood!  
 If ever thou didst soothe with melody  
 One of that little clan, that brotherhood  
 Which loved the morning-star of Tuscany  
 More than the perfect sun of Raphael  
 And is immortal, sing to me! for I too love thee well.

Sing on! sing on! let the dull world grow young,  
 Let elemental things take form again,  
 And the old shapes of Beauty walk among  
 The simple garths and open crofts, as when  
 The son of Leto bare the willow rod,  
 And the soft sheep and shaggy goats followed the boyish God.

Sing on! sing on! and Bacchus will be here  
 Astride upon his gorgeous Indian throne,  
 And over whimpering tigers shake the spear  
 With yellow ivy crowned and gummy cone,  
 While at his side the wanton Bassarid  
 Will throw the lion by the mane and catch the mountain kid!

Sing on! and I will wear the leopard skin,  
 And steal the moonèd wings of Ashtaroth,  
 Upon whose icy chariot we could win  
 Cithæron in an hour ere the froth  
 Has over-brimmed the wine-vat or the Faun  
 Ceased from the treading! ay, before the flickering lamp of dawn

Has scared the hooting owlet to its nest,  
 And warned the bat to close its filmy vans,  
 Some Mænad girl with vine-leaves on her breast  
 Will filch their beech-nuts from the sleeping Pans  
 So softly that the little nested thrush  
 Will never wake, and then with shrilly laugh and leap will rush

Down the green valley where the fallen dew  
 Lies thick beneath the elm and count her store,  
 Till the brown Satyrs in a jolly crew  
 Trample the loosestrife down along the shore,  
 And where their hornèd master sits in state  
 Bring strawberries and bloomy plums upon a wicker crate!

Sing on! and soon with passion-wearied face  
 Through the cool leaves Apollo's lad will come,  
 The Tyrian prince his bristled boar will chase  
 Adown the chestnut-copses all a-bloom,  
 And ivory-limbed, grey-eyed, with look of pride,  
 After yon velvet-coated deer the virgin maid will ride.

Sing on! and I the dying boy will see  
 Stain with his purple blood the waxen bell  
 That overweighs the jacinth, and to me  
 The wretched Cyprian her woe will tell,  
 And I will kiss her mouth and streaming eyes,  
 And lead her to the myrtle-hidden grove where Adon lies!

Cry out aloud on Itys! memory  
 That foster-brother of remorse and pain  
 Drops poison in mine ear,—O to be free,  
 To burn one's old ships! and to launch again  
 Into the white-plumed battle of the waves  
 And fight old Proteus for the spoil of coral-flowered caves!

O for Medea with her poppied spell!  
 O for the secret of the Colchian shrine!  
 O for one leaf of that pale asphodel  
 Which binds the tired brows of Proserpine,  
 And sheds such wondrous dew at eve that she  
 Dreams of the fields of Enna, by the far Sicilian sea,

Where oft the golden-girdled bee she chased  
 From lily to lily on the level mead,

Ere yet her sombre Lord had bid her taste  
The deadly fruit of that pomegranate seed,  
Ere the black steeds had harried her away  
Down to the faint and flowerless land, the sick and sunless day.

O for one midnight and as paramour  
The Venus of the little Melian farm!  
O that some antique statue for one hour  
Might wake to passion, and that I could charm  
The Dawn at Florence from its dumb despair,  
Mix with those mighty limbs and make that giant breast my lair!

Sing on! sing on! I would be drunk with life,  
Drunk with the trampled vintage of my youth,  
I would forget the wearying wasted strife,  
The riven veil, the Gorgon eyes of Truth,  
The prayerless vigil and the cry for prayer,  
The barren gifts, the lifted arms, the dull insensate air!

p. 75

Sing on! sing on! O feathered Niobe,  
Thou canst make sorrow beautiful, and steal  
From joy its sweetest music, not as we  
Who by dead voiceless silence strive to heal  
Our too untented wounds, and do but keep  
Pain barricadoed in our hearts, and murder pillowed sleep.

Sing louder yet, why must I still behold  
The wan white face of that deserted Christ,  
Whose bleeding hands my hands did once enfold,  
Whose smitten lips my lips so oft have kissed,  
And now in mute and marble misery  
Sits in his lone dishonoured House and weeps, perchance for me?

O Memory cast down thy wreathèd shell!  
Break thy hoarse lute O sad Melpomene!  
O Sorrow, Sorrow keep thy cloistered cell  
Nor dim with tears this limpid Castaly!  
Cease, Philomel, thou dost the forest wrong  
To vex its sylvan quiet with such wild impassioned song!

Cease, cease, or if 't is anguish to be dumb  
Take from the pastoral thrush her simpler air,  
Whose jocund carelessness doth more become  
This English woodland than thy keen despair,  
Ah! cease and let the north wind bear thy lay  
Back to the rocky hills of Thrace, the stormy Daulian bay.

p. 76

A moment more, the startled leaves had stirred,  
Endymion would have passed across the mead  
Moonstruck with love, and this still Thames had heard  
Pan plash and paddle groping for some reed  
To lure from her blue cave that Naiad maid  
Who for such piping listens half in joy and half afraid.

A moment more, the waking dove had cooed,  
The silver daughter of the silver sea  
With the fond gyves of clinging hands had wooed  
Her wanton from the chase, and Dryope  
Had thrust aside the branches of her oak  
To see the lusty gold-haired lad rein in his snorting yoke.

A moment more, the trees had stooped to kiss  
Pale Daphne just awakening from the swoon  
Of tremulous laurels, lonely Salmacis  
Had bared his barren beauty to the moon,  
And through the vale with sad voluptuous smile  
Antinous had wandered, the red lotus of the Nile

Down leaning from his black and clustering hair,  
To shade those slumberous eyelids' caverned bliss,  
Or else on yonder grassy slope with bare  
High-tuniced limbs unravished Artemis  
Had bade her hounds give tongue, and roused the deer  
From his green ambushade with shrill halloo and pricking spear.

p. 77

Lie still, lie still, O passionate heart, lie still!  
O Melancholy, fold thy raven wing!  
O sobbing Dryad, from thy hollow hill  
Come not with such despondent answering!

No more thou wingèd Marsyas complain,  
Apollo loveth not to hear such troubled songs of pain!

It was a dream, the glade is tenantless,  
No soft Ionian laughter moves the air,  
The Thames creeps on in sluggish leadenness,  
And from the copse left desolate and bare  
Fled is young Bacchus with his revelry,  
Yet still from Nuneham wood there comes that thrilling melody

So sad, that one might think a human heart  
Break in each separate note, a quality  
Which music sometimes has, being the Art  
Which is most nigh to tears and memory;  
Poor mourning Philomel, what dost thou fear?  
Thy sister doth not haunt these fields, Pandion is not here,

p. 78

Here is no cruel Lord with murderous blade,  
No woven web of bloody heraldries,  
But mossy dells for roving comrades made,  
Warm valleys where the tired student lies  
With half-shut book, and many a winding walk  
Where rustic lovers stray at eve in happy simple talk.

The harmless rabbit gambols with its young  
Across the trampled towing-path, where late  
A troop of laughing boys in jostling throng  
Cheered with their noisy cries the racing eight;  
The gossamer, with ravelled silver threads,  
Works at its little loom, and from the dusky red-eaved sheds

Of the lone Farm a flickering light shines out  
Where the swinked shepherd drives his bleating flock  
Back to their wattled sheep-cotes, a faint shout  
Comes from some Oxford boat at Sandford lock,  
And starts the moor-hen from the sedgy rill,  
And the dim lengthening shadows flit like swallows up the hill.

p. 79

The heron passes homeward to the mere,  
The blue mist creeps among the shivering trees,  
Gold world by world the silent stars appear,  
And like a blossom blown before the breeze  
A white moon drifts across the shimmering sky,  
Mute arbitress of all thy sad, thy rapturous threnody.

She does not heed thee, wherefore should she heed,  
She knows Endymion is not far away;  
'Tis I, 'tis I, whose soul is as the reed  
Which has no message of its own to play,  
So pipes another's bidding, it is I,  
Drifting with every wind on the wide sea of misery.

Ah! the brown bird has ceased: one exquisite trill  
About the sombre woodland seems to cling  
Dying in music, else the air is still,  
So still that one might hear the bat's small wing  
Wander and wheel above the pines, or tell  
Each tiny dew-drop dripping from the bluebell's brimming cell.

p. 80

And far away across the lengthening wold,  
Across the willowy flats and thickets brown,  
Magdalen's tall tower tipped with tremulous gold  
Marks the long High Street of the little town,  
And warns me to return; I must not wait,  
Hark! 't is the curfew booming from the bell at Christ Church gate.

## WIND FLOWERS

p. 81

## IMPRESSION DU MATIN

p. 83

THE Thames nocturne of blue and gold  
Changed to a Harmony in grey:  
A barge with ochre-coloured hay  
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down  
The bridges, till the houses' walls  
Seemed changed to shadows and St. Paul's

Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang  
Of waking life; the streets were stirred  
With country waggons: and a bird  
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman all alone,  
The daylight kissing her wan hair,  
Loitered beneath the gas lamps' flare,  
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

### MAGDALEN WALKS

p. 84

THE little white clouds are racing over the sky,  
And the fields are strewn with the gold of the flower of March,  
The daffodil breaks under foot, and the tasselled larch  
Sways and swings as the thrush goes hurrying by.

A delicate odour is borne on the wings of the morning breeze,  
The odour of deep wet grass, and of brown new-furrowed earth,  
The birds are singing for joy of the Spring's glad birth,  
Hopping from branch to branch on the rocking trees.

And all the woods are alive with the murmur and sound of Spring,  
And the rose-bud breaks into pink on the climbing briar,  
And the crocus-bed is a quivering moon of fire  
Girdled round with the belt of an amethyst ring.

And the plane to the pine-tree is whispering some tale of love  
Till it rustles with laughter and tosses its mantle of green,  
And the gloom of the wych-elm's hollow is lit with the iris sheen  
Of the burnished rainbow throat and the silver breast of a dove.

p. 85

See! the lark starts up from his bed in the meadow there,  
Breaking the gossamer threads and the nets of dew,  
And flashing adown the river, a flame of blue!  
The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air.

### ATHANASIA

p. 86

To that gaunt House of Art which lacks for naught  
Of all the great things men have saved from Time,  
The withered body of a girl was brought  
Dead ere the world's glad youth had touched its prime,  
And seen by lonely Arabs lying hid  
In the dim womb of some black pyramid.

But when they had unloosed the linen band  
Which swathed the Egyptian's body,—lo! was found  
Closed in the wasted hollow of her hand  
A little seed, which sown in English ground  
Did wondrous snow of starry blossoms bear  
And spread rich odours through our spring-tide air.

With such strange arts this flower did allure  
That all forgotten was the asphodel,  
And the brown bee, the lily's paramour,  
Forsook the cup where he was wont to dwell,  
For not a thing of earth it seemed to be,  
But stolen from some heavenly Arcady.

In vain the sad narcissus, wan and white  
At its own beauty, hung across the stream,  
The purple dragon-fly had no delight  
With its gold dust to make his wings a-gleam,  
Ah! no delight the jasmine-bloom to kiss,  
Or brush the rain-pearls from the eucharis.

p. 87

For love of it the passionate nightingale  
Forgot the hills of Thrace, the cruel king,  
And the pale dove no longer cared to sail  
Through the wet woods at time of blossoming,  
But round this flower of Egypt sought to float,  
With silvered wing and amethystine throat.

While the hot sun blazed in his tower of blue  
A cooling wind crept from the land of snows,  
And the warm south with tender tears of dew

Drenched its white leaves when Hesperos up-rose  
Amid those sea-green meadows of the sky  
On which the scarlet bars of sunset lie.

But when o'er wastes of lily-haunted field  
The tired birds had stayed their amorous tune,  
And broad and glittering like an argent shield  
High in the sapphire heavens hung the moon,  
Did no strange dream or evil memory make  
Each tremulous petal of its blossoms shake?

Ah no! to this bright flower a thousand years  
Seemed but the lingering of a summer's day,  
It never knew the tide of cankering fears  
Which turn a boy's gold hair to withered grey,  
The dread desire of death it never knew,  
Or how all folk that they were born must rue.

For we to death with pipe and dancing go,  
Nor would we pass the ivory gate again,  
As some sad river wearied of its flow  
Through the dull plains, the haunts of common men,  
Leaps lover-like into the terrible sea!  
And counts it gain to die so gloriously.

We mar our lordly strength in barren strife  
With the world's legions led by clamorous care,  
It never feels decay but gathers life  
From the pure sunlight and the supreme air,  
We live beneath Time's wasting sovereignty,  
It is the child of all eternity.

### SERENADE

(FOR MUSIC)

THE western wind is blowing fair  
Across the dark Ægean sea,  
And at the secret marble stair  
My Tyrian galley waits for thee.  
Come down! the purple sail is spread,  
The watchman sleeps within the town,  
O leave thy lily-flowered bed,  
O Lady mine come down, come down!

She will not come, I know her well,  
Of lover's vows she hath no care,  
And little good a man can tell  
Of one so cruel and so fair.  
True love is but a woman's toy,  
They never know the lover's pain,  
And I who loved as loves a boy  
Must love in vain, must love in vain.

O noble pilot, tell me true,  
Is that the sheen of golden hair?  
Or is it but the tangled dew  
That binds the passion-flowers there?  
Good sailor come and tell me now  
Is that my Lady's lily hand?  
Or is it but the gleaming prow,  
Or is it but the silver sand?

No! no! 'tis not the tangled dew,  
'Tis not the silver-fretted sand,  
It is my own dear Lady true  
With golden hair and lily hand!  
O noble pilot, steer for Troy,  
Good sailor, ply the labouring oar,  
This is the Queen of life and joy  
Whom we must bear from Grecian shore!

The waning sky grows faint and blue,  
It wants an hour still of day,  
Aboard! aboard! my gallant crew,  
O Lady mine, away! away!  
O noble pilot, steer for Troy,  
Good sailor, ply the labouring oar,

p. 88

p. 89

p. 90



O loved as only loves a boy!  
O loved for ever evermore!

## ENDYMION

p. 91

(FOR MUSIC)

The apple trees are hung with gold,  
And birds are loud in Arcady,  
The sheep lie bleating in the fold,  
The wild goat runs across the wold,  
But yesterday his love he told,  
I know he will come back to me.  
O rising moon! O Lady moon!  
Be you my lover's sentinel,  
You cannot choose but know him well,  
For he is shod with purple shoon,  
You cannot choose but know my love,  
For he a shepherd's crook doth bear,  
And he is soft as any dove,  
And brown and curly is his hair.

The turtle now has ceased to call  
Upon her crimson-footed groom,  
The grey wolf prowls about the stall,  
The lily's singing seneschal  
Sleeps in the lily-bell, and all  
The violet hills are lost in gloom.  
O risen moon! O holy moon!  
Stand on the top of Helice,  
And if my own true love you see,  
Ah! if you see the purple shoon,  
The hazel crook, the lad's brown hair,  
The goat-skin wrapped about his arm,  
Tell him that I am waiting where  
The rushlight glimmers in the Farm.

p. 92

The falling dew is cold and chill,  
And no bird sings in Arcady,  
The little fauns have left the hill,  
Even the tired daffodil  
Has closed its gilded doors, and still  
My lover comes not back to me.  
False moon! False moon! O waning moon!  
Where is my own true lover gone,  
Where are the lips vermilion,  
The shepherd's crook, the purple shoon?  
Why spread that silver pavilion,  
Why wear that veil of drifting mist?  
Ah! thou hast young Endymion,  
Thou hast the lips that should be kissed!

## LA BELLA DONNA DELLA MIA MENTE

p. 93

My limbs are wasted with a flame,  
My feet are sore with travelling,  
For, calling on my Lady's name,  
My lips have now forgot to sing.

O Linnet in the wild-rose brake  
Strain for my Love thy melody,  
O Lark sing louder for love's sake,  
My gentle Lady passeth by.

She is too fair for any man  
To see or hold his heart's delight,  
Fairer than Queen or courtesan  
Or moonlit water in the night.

Her hair is bound with myrtle leaves,  
(Green leaves upon her golden hair!)  
Green grasses through the yellow sheaves  
Of autumn corn are not more fair.

Her little lips, more made to kiss  
Than to cry bitterly for pain,  
Are tremulous as brook-water is,  
Or roses after evening rain.

Her neck is like white melilote  
Flushing for pleasure of the sun,  
The throbbing of the linnet's throat  
Is not so sweet to look upon.

p. 94

As a pomegranate, cut in twain,  
White-seeded, is her crimson mouth,  
Her cheeks are as the fading stain  
Where the peach reddens to the south.

O twining hands! O delicate  
White body made for love and pain!  
O House of love! O desolate  
Pale flower beaten by the rain!

## CHANSON

p. 95

A RING of gold and a milk-white dove  
Are goodly gifts for thee,  
And a hempen rope for your own love  
To hang upon a tree.

For you a House of Ivory,  
(Roses are white in the rose-bower)!  
A narrow bed for me to lie,  
(White, O white, is the hemlock flower)!

Myrtle and jessamine for you,  
(O the red rose is fair to see)!  
For me the cypress and the rue,  
(Finest of all is rosemary)!

For you three lovers of your hand,  
(Green grass where a man lies dead)!  
For me three paces on the sand,  
(Plant lilies at my head)!

## CHARMIDES

p. 97

### I.

p. 99

HE was a Grecian lad, who coming home  
With pulpy figs and wine from Sicily  
Stood at his galley's prow, and let the foam  
Blow through his crisp brown curls unconsciously,  
And holding wave and wind in boy's despite  
Peered from his dripping seat across the wet and stormy night.

Till with the dawn he saw a burnished spear  
Like a thin thread of gold against the sky,  
And hoisted sail, and strained the creaking gear,  
And bade the pilot head her lustily  
Against the nor'west gale, and all day long  
Held on his way, and marked the rowers' time with measured song.

And when the faint Corinthian hills were red  
Dropped anchor in a little sandy bay,  
And with fresh boughs of olive crowned his head,  
And brushed from cheek and throat the hoary spray,  
And washed his limbs with oil, and from the hold  
Brought out his linen tunic and his sandals brazen-soled,

p. 100

And a rich robe stained with the fishers' juice  
Which of some swarthy trader he had bought  
Upon the sunny quay at Syracuse,  
And was with Tyrian broideries inwrought,  
And by the questioning merchants made his way  
Up through the soft and silver woods, and when the labouring day

Had spun its tangled web of crimson cloud,  
Clomb the high hill, and with swift silent feet  
Crept to the fane unnoticed by the crowd  
Of busy priests, and from some dark retreat  
Watched the young swains his frolic playmates bring  
The firstling of their little flock, and the shy shepherd fling

The crackling salt upon the flame, or hang  
His studded crook against the temple wall  
To Her who keeps away the ravenous fang

Of the base wolf from homestead and from stall;  
And then the clear-voiced maidens 'gan to sing,  
And to the altar each man brought some goodly offering,

p. 101

A beechen cup brimming with milky foam,  
A fair cloth wrought with cunning imagery  
Of hounds in chase, a waxen honey-comb  
Dripping with oozy gold which scarce the bee  
Had ceased from building, a black skin of oil  
Meet for the wrestlers, a great boar the fierce and white-tusked spoil

Stolen from Artemis that jealous maid  
To please Athena, and the dappled hide  
Of a tall stag who in some mountain glade  
Had met the shaft; and then the herald cried,  
And from the pillared precinct one by one  
Went the glad Greeks well pleased that they their simple vows had done.

And the old priest put out the waning fires  
Save that one lamp whose restless ruby glowed  
For ever in the cell, and the shrill lyres  
Came fainter on the wind, as down the road  
In joyous dance these country folk did pass,  
And with stout hands the warder closed the gates of polished brass.

Long time he lay and hardly dared to breathe,  
And heard the cadenced drip of spilt-out wine,  
And the rose-petals falling from the wreath  
As the night breezes wandered through the shrine,  
And seemed to be in some entranced swoon  
Till through the open roof above the full and brimming moon

p. 102

Flooded with sheeny waves the marble floor,  
When from his nook up leapt the venturesome lad,  
And flinging wide the cedar-carven door  
Beheld an awful image saffron-clad  
And armed for battle! the gaunt Griffin glared  
From the huge helm, and the long lance of wreck and ruin flared

Like a red rod of flame, stony and steeled  
The Gorgon's head its leaden eyeballs rolled,  
And writhed its snaky horrors through the shield,  
And gaped aghast with bloodless lips and cold  
In passion impotent, while with blind gaze  
The blinking owl between the feet hooted in shrill amaze.

The lonely fisher as he trimmed his lamp  
Far out at sea off Sunium, or cast  
The net for tunnies, heard a brazen tramp  
Of horses smite the waves, and a wild blast  
Divide the folded curtains of the night,  
And knelt upon the little poop, and prayed in holy fright.

p. 103

And guilty lovers in their venery  
Forgot a little while their stolen sweets,  
Deeming they heard dread Dian's bitter cry;  
And the grim watchmen on their lofty seats  
Ran to their shields in haste precipitate,  
Or strained black-bearded throats across the dusky parapet.

For round the temple rolled the clang of arms,  
And the twelve Gods leapt up in marble fear,  
And the air quaked with dissonant alarms  
Till huge Poseidon shook his mighty spear,  
And on the frieze the prancing horses neighed,  
And the low tread of hurrying feet rang from the cavalcade.

Ready for death with parted lips he stood,  
And well content at such a price to see  
That calm wide brow, that terrible maidenhood,  
The marvel of that pitiless chastity,  
Ah! well content indeed, for never wight  
Since Troy's young shepherd prince had seen so wonderful a sight.

p. 104

Ready for death he stood, but lo! the air  
Grew silent, and the horses ceased to neigh,  
And off his brow he tossed the clustering hair,  
And from his limbs he throw the cloak away;  
For whom would not such love make desperate?

And nigher came, and touched her throat, and with hands violate

Undid the cuirass, and the crocus gown,  
And bared the breasts of polished ivory,  
Till from the waist the peplos falling down  
Left visible the secret mystery  
Which to no lover will Athena show,  
The grand cool flanks, the crescent thighs, the bossy hills of snow.

Those who have never known a lover's sin  
Let them not read my ditty, it will be  
To their dull ears so musicless and thin  
That they will have no joy of it, but ye  
To whose wan cheeks now creeps the lingering smile,  
Ye who have learned who Eros is,—O listen yet awhile.

A little space he let his greedy eyes  
Rest on the burnished image, till mere sight  
Half swooned for surfeit of such luxuries,  
And then his lips in hungering delight  
Fed on her lips, and round the towered neck  
He flung his arms, nor cared at all his passion's will to check.

p. 105

Never I ween did lover hold such tryst,  
For all night long he murmured honeyed word,  
And saw her sweet unravished limbs, and kissed  
Her pale and argent body undisturbed,  
And paddled with the polished throat, and pressed  
His hot and beating heart upon her chill and icy breast.

It was as if Numidian javelins  
Pierced through and through his wild and whirling brain,  
And his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins  
In exquisite pulsation, and the pain  
Was such sweet anguish that he never drew  
His lips from hers till overhead the lark of warning flew.

They who have never seen the daylight peer  
Into a darkened room, and drawn the curtain,  
And with dull eyes and wearied from some dear  
And worshipped body risen, they for certain  
Will never know of what I try to sing,  
How long the last kiss was, how fond and late his lingering.

The moon was girdled with a crystal rim,  
The sign which shipmen say is ominous  
Of wrath in heaven, the wan stars were dim,  
And the low lightening east was tremulous  
With the faint fluttering wings of flying dawn,  
Ere from the silent sombre shrine his lover had withdrawn.

p. 106

Down the steep rock with hurried feet and fast  
Clomb the brave lad, and reached the cave of Pan,  
And heard the goat-foot snoring as he passed,  
And leapt upon a grassy knoll and ran  
Like a young fawn unto an olive wood  
Which in a shady valley by the well-built city stood;

And sought a little stream, which well he knew,  
For oftentimes with boyish careless shout  
The green and crested grebe he would pursue,  
Or snare in woven net the silver trout,  
And down amid the startled reeds he lay  
Panting in breathless sweet affright, and waited for the day.

On the green bank he lay, and let one hand  
Dip in the cool dark eddies listlessly,  
And soon the breath of morning came and fanned  
His hot flushed cheeks, or lifted wantonly  
The tangled curls from off his forehead, while  
He on the running water gazed with strange and secret smile.

p. 107

And soon the shepherd in rough woollen cloak  
With his long crook undid the wattled cotes,  
And from the stack a thin blue wreath of smoke  
Curled through the air across the ripening oats,  
And on the hill the yellow house-dog bayed  
As through the crisp and rustling fern the heavy cattle strayed.

And when the light-foot mower went afield  
Across the meadows laced with threaded dew,  
And the sheep bleated on the misty weald,  
And from its nest the waking corncrake flew,  
Some woodmen saw him lying by the stream  
And marvelled much that any lad so beautiful could seem,

Nor deemed him born of mortals, and one said,  
'It is young Hylas, that false runaway  
Who with a Naiad now would make his bed  
Forgetting Herakles,' but others, 'Nay,  
It is Narcissus, his own paramour,  
Those are the fond and crimson lips no woman can allure.'

And when they nearer came a third one cried,  
'It is young Dionysos who has hid  
His spear and fawnskin by the river side  
Weary of hunting with the Bassarid,  
And wise indeed were we away to fly:  
They live not long who on the gods immortal come to spy.'

So turned they back, and feared to look behind,  
And told the timid swain how they had seen  
Amid the reeds some woodland god reclined,  
And no man dared to cross the open green,  
And on that day no olive-tree was slain,  
Nor rushes cut, but all deserted was the fair domain,

Save when the neat-herd's lad, his empty pail  
Well slung upon his back, with leap and bound  
Raced on the other side, and stopped to hail,  
Hoping that he some comrade new had found,  
And gat no answer, and then half afraid  
Passed on his simple way, or down the still and silent glade

A little girl ran laughing from the farm,  
Not thinking of love's secret mysteries,  
And when she saw the white and gleaming arm  
And all his manlihood, with longing eyes  
Whose passion mocked her sweet virginity  
Watched him awhile, and then stole back sadly and wearily.

Far off he heard the city's hum and noise,  
And now and then the shriller laughter where  
The passionate purity of brown-limbed boys  
Wrestled or raced in the clear healthful air,  
And now and then a little tinkling bell  
As the shorn wether led the sheep down to the mossy well.

Through the grey willows danced the fretful gnat,  
The grasshopper chirped idly from the tree,  
In sleek and oily coat the water-rat  
Breasting the little ripples manfully  
Made for the wild-duck's nest, from bough to bough  
Hopped the shy finch, and the huge tortoise crept across the slough.

On the faint wind floated the silky seeds  
As the bright scythe swept through the waving grass,  
The ouzel-cock splashed circles in the reeds  
And flecked with silver whorls the forest's glass,  
Which scarce had caught again its imagery  
Ere from its bed the dusky tench leapt at the dragon-fly.

But little care had he for any thing  
Though up and down the beech the squirrel played,  
And from the copse the linnet 'gan to sing  
To its brown mate its sweetest serenade;  
Ah! little care indeed, for he had seen  
The breasts of Pallas and the naked wonder of the Queen.

But when the herdsman called his stragglings goats  
With whistling pipe across the rocky road,  
And the shard-beetle with its trumpet-notes  
Boomed through the darkening woods, and seemed to bode  
Of coming storm, and the belated crane  
Passed homeward like a shadow, and the dull big drops of rain

Fell on the pattering fig-leaves, up he rose,  
And from the gloomy forest went his way

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Past sombre homestead and wet orchard-close,  
And came at last unto a little quay,  
And called his mates aboard, and took his seat  
On the high poop, and pushed from land, and loosed the dripping sheet,

And steered across the bay, and when nine suns  
Passed down the long and laddered way of gold,  
And nine pale moons had breathed their orisons  
To the chaste stars their confessors, or told  
Their dearest secret to the downy moth  
That will not fly at noonday, through the foam and surging froth

Came a great owl with yellow sulphurous eyes  
And lit upon the ship, whose timbers creaked  
As though the lading of three argosies  
Were in the hold, and flapped its wings and shrieked,  
And darkness straightway stole across the deep,  
Sheathed was Orion's sword, dread Mars himself fled down the steep,

And the moon hid behind a tawny mask  
Of drifting cloud, and from the ocean's marge  
Rose the red plume, the huge and hornèd casque,  
The seven-cubit spear, the brazen targe!  
And clad in bright and burnished panoply  
Athena strode across the stretch of sick and shivering sea!

To the dull sailors' sight her loosened looks  
Seemed like the jagged storm-rack, and her feet  
Only the spume that floats on hidden rocks,  
And, marking how the rising waters beat  
Against the rolling ship, the pilot cried  
To the young helmsman at the stern to luff to windward side

But he, the overbold adulterer,  
A dear profaner of great mysteries,  
An ardent amorous idolater,  
When he beheld those grand relentless eyes  
Laughed loud for joy, and crying out 'I come'  
Leapt from the lofty poop into the chill and churning foam.

Then fell from the high heaven one bright star,  
One dancer left the circling galaxy,  
And back to Athens on her clattering car  
In all the pride of venged divinity  
Pale Pallas swept with shrill and steely clank,  
And a few gurgling bubbles rose where her boy lover sank.

And the mast shuddered as the gaunt owl flew  
With mocking hoots after the wrathful Queen,  
And the old pilot bade the trembling crew  
Hoist the big sail, and told how he had seen  
Close to the stern a dim and giant form,  
And like a dipping swallow the stout ship dashed through the storm.

And no man dared to speak of Charmides  
Deeming that he some evil thing had wrought,  
And when they reached the strait Symplegades  
They beached their galley on the shore, and sought  
The toll-gate of the city hastily,  
And in the market showed their brown and pictured pottery.

## II.

BUT some good Triton-god had ruth, and bare  
The boy's drowned body back to Grecian land,  
And mermaids combed his dank and dripping hair  
And smoothed his brow, and loosed his clenching hand;  
Some brought sweet spices from far Araby,  
And others bade the halcyon sing her softest lullaby.

And when he neared his old Athenian home,  
A mighty billow rose up suddenly  
Upon whose oily back the clotted foam  
Lay diapered in some strange fantasy,  
And clasping him unto its glassy breast  
Swept landward, like a white-maned steed upon a venturous quest!

Now where Colonos leans unto the sea  
There lies a long and level stretch of lawn;

The rabbit knows it, and the mountain bee  
For it deserts Hymettus, and the Faun  
Is not afraid, for never through the day  
Comes a cry ruder than the shout of shepherd lads at play.

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But often from the thorny labyrinth  
And tangled branches of the circling wood  
The stealthy hunter sees young Hyacinth  
Hurling the polished disk, and draws his hood  
Over his guilty gaze, and creeps away,  
Nor dares to wind his horn, or—else at the first break of day

The Dryads come and throw the leathern ball  
Along the reedy shore, and circumvent  
Some goat-eared Pan to be their seneschal  
For fear of bold Poseidon's ravishment,  
And loose their girdles, with shy timorous eyes,  
Lest from the surf his azure arms and purple beard should rise.

On this side and on that a rocky cave,  
Hung with the yellow-belled laburnum, stands  
Smooth is the beach, save where some ebbing wave  
Leaves its faint outline etched upon the sands,  
As though it feared to be too soon forgot  
By the green rush, its playfellow,—and yet, it is a spot

So small, that the inconstant butterfly  
Could steal the hoarded money from each flower  
Ere it was noon, and still not satisfy  
Its over-greedy love,—within an hour  
A sailor boy, were he but rude enow  
To land and pluck a garland for his galley's painted prow,

p. 116

Would almost leave the little meadow bare,  
For it knows nothing of great pageantry,  
Only a few narcissi here and there  
Stand separate in sweet austerity,  
Dotting the unmown grass with silver stars,  
And here and there a daffodil waves tiny scimitars.

Hither the billow brought him, and was glad  
Of such dear servitude, and where the land  
Was virgin of all waters laid the lad  
Upon the golden margent of the strand,  
And like a lingering lover oft returned  
To kiss those pallid limbs which once with intense fire burned,

Ere the wet seas had quenched that holocaust,  
That self-fed flame, that passionate lustihead,  
Ere grisly death with chill and nipping frost  
Had withered up those lilies white and red  
Which, while the boy would through the forest range,  
Answered each other in a sweet antiphonal counter-change.

p. 117

And when at dawn the wood-nymphs, hand-in-hand,  
Threaded the bosky dell, their satyr spied  
The boy's pale body stretched upon the sand,  
And feared Poseidon's treachery, and cried,  
And like bright sunbeams flitting through a glade  
Each startled Dryad sought some safe and leafy ambuscade.

Save one white girl, who deemed it would not be  
So dread a thing to feel a sea-god's arms  
Crushing her breasts in amorous tyranny,  
And longed to listen to those subtle charms  
Insidious lovers weave when they would win  
Some fenced fortress, and stole back again, nor thought it sin

To yield her treasure unto one so fair,  
And lay beside him, thirsty with love's drouth,  
Called him soft names, played with his tangled hair,  
And with hot lips made havoc of his mouth  
Afraid he might not wake, and then afraid  
Lest he might wake too soon, fled back, and then, fond renegade,

p. 118

Returned to fresh assault, and all day long  
Sat at his side, and laughed at her new toy,  
And held his hand, and sang her sweetest song,  
Then frowned to see how froward was the boy

Who would not with her maidenhood entwine,  
Nor knew that three days since his eyes had looked on Proserpine;

Nor knew what sacrilege his lips had done,  
But said, 'He will awake, I know him well,  
He will awake at evening when the sun  
Hangs his red shield on Corinth's citadel;  
This sleep is but a cruel treachery  
To make me love him more, and in some cavern of the sea

Deeper than ever falls the fisher's line  
Already a huge Triton blows his horn,  
And weaves a garland from the crystalline  
And drifting ocean-tendrils to adorn  
The emerald pillars of our bridal bed,  
For sphered in foaming silver, and with coral crownèd head,

We two will sit upon a throne of pearl,  
And a blue wave will be our canopy,  
And at our feet the water-snakes will curl  
In all their amethystine panoply  
Of diamonded mail, and we will mark  
The mullets swimming by the mast of some storm-foundered bark,

p. 119

Vermilion-finned with eyes of bossy gold  
Like flakes of crimson light, and the great deep  
His glassy-ported chamber will unfold,  
And we will see the painted dolphins sleep  
Cradled by murmuring halcyons on the rocks  
Where Proteus in quaint suit of green pastures his monstrous flocks.

And tremulous opal-hued anemones  
Will wave their purple fringes where we tread  
Upon the mirrored floor, and argosies  
Of fishes flecked with tawny scales will thread  
The drifting cordage of the shattered wreck,  
And honey-coloured amber beads our twining limbs will deck.'

But when that baffled Lord of War the Sun  
With gaudy pennon flying passed away  
Into his brazen House, and one by one  
The little yellow stars began to stray  
Across the field of heaven, ah! then indeed  
She feared his lips upon her lips would never care to feed,

And cried, 'Awake, already the pale moon  
Washes the trees with silver, and the wave  
Creeps grey and chilly up this sandy dune,  
The croaking frogs are out, and from the cave  
The nightjar shrieks, the fluttering bats repass,  
And the brown stoat with hollow flanks creeps through the dusky grass.

p. 120

Nay, though thou art a god, be not so coy,  
For in yon stream there is a little reed  
That often whispers how a lovely boy  
Lay with her once upon a grassy mead,  
Who when his cruel pleasure he had done  
Spread wings of rustling gold and soared aloft into the sun.

Be not so coy, the laurel trembles still  
With great Apollo's kisses, and the fir  
Whose clustering sisters fringe the seaward hill  
Hath many a tale of that bold ravisher  
Whom men call Boreas, and I have seen  
The mocking eyes of Hermes through the poplar's silvery sheen.

Even the jealous Naiads call me fair,  
And every morn a young and ruddy swain  
Woos me with apples and with locks of hair,  
And seeks to soothe my virginal disdain  
By all the gifts the gentle wood-nymphs love;  
But yesterday he brought to me an iris-plumaged dove

p. 121

With little crimson feet, which with its store  
Of seven spotted eggs the cruel lad  
Had stolen from the lofty sycamore  
At daybreak, when her amorous comrade had  
Flown off in search of berried juniper  
Which most they love; the fretful wasp, that earliest vintager



Of the blue grapes, hath not persistency  
So constant as this simple shepherd-boy  
For my poor lips, his joyous purity  
And laughing sunny eyes might well decoy  
A Dryad from her oath to Artemis;  
For very beautiful is he, his mouth was made to kiss;

His argent forehead, like a rising moon  
Over the dusky hills of meeting brows,  
Is crescent shaped, the hot and Tyrian noon  
Leads from the myrtle-grove no goodlier spouse  
For Cytheræa, the first silky down  
Fringes his blushing cheeks, and his young limbs are strong and brown;

And he is rich, and fat and fleecy herds  
Of bleating sheep upon his meadows lie,  
And many an earthen bowl of yellow curds  
Is in his homestead for the thievish fly  
To swim and drown in, the pink clover mead  
Keeps its sweet store for him, and he can pipe on oaten reed.

And yet I love him not; it was for thee  
I kept my love; I knew that thou would'st come  
To rid me of this pallid chastity,  
Thou fairest flower of the flowerless foam  
Of all the wide Ægean, brightest star  
Of ocean's azure heavens where the mirrored planets are!

I knew that thou would'st come, for when at first  
The dry wood burgeoned, and the sap of spring  
Swelled in my green and tender bark or burst  
To myriad multitudinous blossoming  
Which mocked the midnight with its mimic moons  
That did not dread the dawn, and first the thrushes' rapturous tunes

Startled the squirrel from its granary,  
And cuckoo flowers fringed the narrow lane,  
Through my young leaves a sensuous ecstasy  
Crept like new wine, and every mossy vein  
Throbbled with the fitful pulse of amorous blood,  
And the wild winds of passion shook my slim stem's maidenhood.

The trooping fawns at evening came and laid  
Their cool black noses on my lowest boughs,  
And on my topmost branch the blackbird made  
A little nest of grasses for his spouse,  
And now and then a twittering wren would light  
On a thin twig which hardly bare the weight of such delight.

I was the Attic shepherd's trysting place,  
Beneath my shadow Amaryllis lay,  
And round my trunk would laughing Daphnis chase  
The timorous girl, till tired out with play  
She felt his hot breath stir her tangled hair,  
And turned, and looked, and fled no more from such delightful snare.

Then come away unto my ambushade  
Where clustering woodbine weaves a canopy  
For amorous pleasaunce, and the rustling shade  
Of Paphian myrtles seems to sanctify  
The dearest rites of love; there in the cool  
And green recesses of its farthest depth there is pool,

The ouzel's haunt, the wild bee's pasturage,  
For round its rim great creamy lilies float  
Through their flat leaves in verdant anchorage,  
Each cup a white-sailed golden-laden boat  
Steered by a dragon-fly,—be not afraid  
To leave this wan and wave-kissed shore, surely the place was made

For lovers such as we; the Cyprian Queen,  
One arm around her boyish paramour,  
Strays often there at eve, and I have seen  
The moon strip off her misty vestiture  
For young Endymion's eyes; be not afraid,  
The panther feet of Dian never tread that secret glade.

Nay if thou will'st, back to the beating brine,  
Back to the boisterous billow let us go,

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And walk all day beneath the hyaline  
Huge vault of Neptune's watery portico,  
And watch the purple monsters of the deep  
Sport in ungainly play, and from his lair keen Xiphias leap.

For if my mistress find me lying here  
She will not ruth or gentle pity show,  
But lay her boar-spear down, and with austere  
Relentless fingers string the cornel bow,  
And draw the feathered notch against her breast,  
And loose the archèd cord; aye, even now upon the quest

p. 125

I hear her hurrying feet,—awake, awake,  
Thou laggard in love's battle! once at least  
Let me drink deep of passion's wine, and slake  
My parchèd being with the nectarous feast  
Which even gods affect! O come, Love, come,  
Still we have time to reach the cavern of thine azure home.'

Scarce had she spoken when the shuddering trees  
Shook, and the leaves divided, and the air  
Grew conscious of a god, and the grey seas  
Crawled backward, and a long and dismal blare  
Blew from some tasselled horn, a sleuth-hound bayed,  
And like a flame a barbèd reed flew whizzing down the glade.

And where the little flowers of her breast  
Just brake into their milky blossoming,  
This murderous paramour, this unbidden guest,  
Pierced and struck deep in horrid chambering,  
And ploughed a bloody furrow with its dart,  
And dug a long red road, and cleft with wingèd death her heart.

Sobbing her life out with a bitter cry  
On the boy's body fell the Dryad maid,  
Sobbing for incomplete virginity,  
And raptures unenjoyed, and pleasures dead,  
And all the pain of things unsatisfied,  
And the bright drops of crimson youth crept down her throbbing side.

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Ah! pitiful it was to hear her moan,  
And very pitiful to see her die  
Ere she had yielded up her sweets, or known  
The joy of passion, that dread mystery  
Which not to know is not to live at all,  
And yet to know is to be held in death's most deadly thrall.

But as it hapt the Queen of Cythere,  
Who with Adonis all night long had lain  
Within some shepherd's hut in Arcady,  
On team of silver doves and gilded wain  
Was journeying Paphos-ward, high up afar  
From mortal ken between the mountains and the morning star,

And when low down she spied the hapless pair,  
And heard the Oread's faint despairing cry,  
Whose cadence seemed to play upon the air  
As though it were a viol, hastily  
She bade her pigeons fold each straining plume,  
And dropt to earth, and reached the strand, and saw their dolorous doom.

p. 127

For as a gardener turning back his head  
To catch the last notes of the linnet, mows  
With careless scythe too near some flower bed,  
And cuts the thorny pillar of the rose,  
And with the flower's loosened loneliness  
Strews the brown mould; or as some shepherd lad in wantonness

Driving his little flock along the mead  
Treads down two daffodils, which side by aide  
Have lured the lady-bird with yellow brede  
And made the gaudy moth forget its pride,  
Treads down their brimming golden chalices  
Under light feet which were not made for such rude ravages;

Or as a schoolboy tired of his book  
Flings himself down upon the reedy grass  
And plucks two water-lilies from the brook,  
And for a time forgets the hour glass,

Then wearies of their sweets, and goes his way,  
And lets the hot sun kill them, even go these lovers lay.

And Venus cried, 'It is dread Artemis  
Whose bitter hand hath wrought this cruelty,  
Or else that mightier maid whose care it is  
To guard her strong and stainless majesty  
Upon the hill Athenian,—alas!  
That they who loved so well unloved into Death's house should pass.'

p. 128

So with soft hands she laid the boy and girl  
In the great golden waggon tenderly  
(Her white throat whiter than a moony pearl  
Just threaded with a blue vein's tapestry  
Had not yet ceased to throb, and still her breast  
Swayed like a wind-stirred lily in ambiguous unrest)

And then each pigeon spread its milky van,  
The bright car soared into the dawning sky,  
And like a cloud the aerial caravan  
Passed over the Ægean silently,  
Till the faint air was troubled with the song  
From the wan mouths that call on bleeding Thammuz all night long.

But when the doves had reached their wonted goal  
Where the wide stair of orbèd marble dips  
Its snows into the sea, her fluttering soul  
Just shook the trembling petals of her lips  
And passed into the void, and Venus knew  
That one fair maid the less would walk amid her retinue,

p. 129

And bade her servants carve a cedar chest  
With all the wonder of this history,  
Within whose scented womb their limbs should rest  
Where olive-trees make tender the blue sky  
On the low hills of Paphos, and the Faun  
Pipes in the noonday, and the nightingale sings on till dawn.

Nor failed they to obey her hest, and ere  
The morning bee had stung the daffodil  
With tiny fretful spear, or from its lair  
The waking stag had leapt across the rill  
And roused the ouzel, or the lizard crept  
Athwart the sunny rock, beneath the grass their bodies slept.

And when day brake, within that silver shrine  
Fed by the flames of cressets tremulous,  
Queen Venus knelt and prayed to Proserpine  
That she whose beauty made Death amorous  
Should beg a guerdon from her pallid Lord,  
And let Desire pass across dread Charon's icy ford.

### III

p. 130

IN melancholy moonless Acheron,  
Farm for the goodly earth and joyous day  
Where no spring ever buds, nor ripening sun  
Weighs down the apple trees, nor flowery May  
Chequers with chestnut blooms the grassy floor,  
Where thrushes never sing, and piping linnets mate no more,

There by a dim and dark Lethæan well  
Young Charmides was lying; wearily  
He plucked the blossoms from the asphodel,  
And with its little rifled treasury  
Strewed the dull waters of the dusky stream,  
And watched the white stars founder, and the land was like a dream,

When as he gazed into the watery glass  
And through his brown hair's curly tangles scanned  
His own wan face, a shadow seemed to pass  
Across the mirror, and a little hand  
Stole into his, and warm lips timidly  
Brushed his pale cheeks, and breathed their secret forth into a sigh.

p. 131

Then turned he round his weary eyes and saw,  
And ever nigher still their faces came,  
And nigher ever did their young mouths draw  
Until they seemed one perfect rose of flame,

And longing arms around her neck he cast,  
And felt her throbbing bosom, and his breath came hot and fast,

And all his hoarded sweets were hers to kiss,  
And all her maidenhood was his to slay,  
And limb to limb in long and rapturous bliss  
Their passion waxed and waned,—O why essay  
To pipe again of love, too venturous reed!  
Enough, enough that Eros laughed upon that flowerless mead.

Too venturous poesy, O why essay  
To pipe again of passion! fold thy wings  
O'er daring Icarus and bid thy lay  
Sleep hidden in the lyre's silent strings  
Till thou hast found the old Castalian rill,  
Or from the Lesbian waters plucked drowned Sappho's golden quid!

Enough, enough that he whose life had been  
A fiery pulse of sin, a splendid shame,  
Could in the loveless land of Hades glean  
One scorching harvest from those fields of flame  
Where passion walks with naked unshod feet  
And is not wounded,—ah! enough that once their lips could meet

p. 132

In that wild throb when all existences  
Seemed narrowed to one single ecstasy  
Which dies through its own sweetness and the stress  
Of too much pleasure, ere Persephone  
Had bade them serve her by the ebon throne  
Of the pale God who in the fields of Enna loosed her zone.

## FLOWERS OF GOLD

p. 133

### IMPRESSIONS

p. 135

#### I LES SILHOUETTES

THE sea is flecked with bars of grey,  
The dull dead wind is out of tune,  
And like a withered leaf the moon  
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand  
Lies the black boat: a sailor boy  
Clambers aboard in careless joy  
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,  
Where through the dusky upland grass  
The young brown-throated reapers pass,  
Like silhouettes against the sky.

#### II LA FUITE DE LA LUNE

p. 136

To outer senses there is peace,  
A dreamy peace on either hand  
Deep silence in the shadowy land,  
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill  
From some lone bird disconsolate;  
A corncrake calling to its mate;  
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws  
Her sickle from the lightening skies,  
And to her sombre cavern flies,  
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

## THE GRAVE OF KEATS

p. 137

RID of the world's injustice, and his pain,  
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue:  
Taken from life when life and love were new  
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,  
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.  
No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,

But gentle violets weeping with the dew  
Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.  
O proudest heart that broke for misery!  
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene!  
O poet-painter of our English Land!  
Thy name was writ in water—it shall stand:  
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,  
As Isabella did her Basil-tree.

ROME.

### THEOCRITUS

p. 138

A VILLANELLE

O SINGER of Persephone!  
In the dim meadows desolate  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
  
Still through the ivy flits the bee  
Where Amaryllis lies in state;  
O Singer of Persephone!  
  
Simætha calls on Hecate  
And hears the wild dogs at the gate;  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
  
Still by the light and laughing sea  
Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate;  
O Singer of Persephone!  
  
And still in boyish rivalry  
Young Daphnis challenges his mate;  
Dost thou remember Sicily?  
  
Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,  
For thee the jocund shepherds wait;  
O Singer of Persephone!  
Dost thou remember Sicily?

### IN THE GOLD ROOM

p. 139

A HARMONY

HER ivory hands on the ivory keys  
Strayed in a fitful fantasy,  
Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees  
Rustle their pale-leaves listlessly,  
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea  
When the waves show their teeth in the flying breeze.  
  
Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold  
Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun  
On the burnished disk of the marigold,  
Or the sunflower turning to meet the sun  
When the gloom of the dark blue night is done,  
And the spear of the lily is aureoled.  
  
And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine  
Burned like the ruby fire set  
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,  
Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,  
Or the heart of the lotus drenched and wet  
With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

### BALLADE DE MARGUERITE

p. 140

(NORMANDE)

I AM weary of lying within the chase  
When the knights are meeting in market-place.  
  
Nay, go not thou to the red-roofed town  
Lest the hoofs of the war-horse tread thee down.  
  
But I would not go where the Squires ride,  
I would only walk by my Lady's side.  
  
Alack! and alack! thou art overbold,  
A Forester's son may not eat off gold.

Will she love me the less that my Father is seen  
Each Martinmas day in a doublet green?

Perchance she is sewing at tapestrie,  
Spindle and loom are not meet for thee.

Ah, if she is working the arras bright  
I might ravel the threads by the fire-light.

Perchance she is hunting of the deer,  
How could you follow o'er hill and mere?

Ah, if she is riding with the court,  
I might run beside her and wind the morte.

Perchance she is kneeling in St. Denys,  
(On her soul may our Lady have gramercy!)

Ah, if she is praying in lone chapelle,  
I might swing the censer and ring the bell.

Come in, my son, for you look sae pale,  
The father shall fill thee a stoup of ale.

But who are these knights in bright array?  
Is it a pageant the rich folks play?

'T is the King of England from over sea,  
Who has come unto visit our fair countrie.

But why does the curfew toll sae low?  
And why do the mourners walk a-row?

O 't is Hugh of Amiens my sister's son  
Who is lying stark, for his day is done.

Nay, nay, for I see white lilies clear,  
It is no strong man who lies on the bier.

O 't is old Dame Jeannette that kept the hall,  
I knew she would die at the autumn fall.

Dame Jeannette had not that gold-brown hair,  
Old Jeannette was not a maiden fair.

O 't is none of our kith and none of our kin,  
(Her soul may our Lady assoil from sin!)

But I hear the boy's voice chaunting sweet,  
'Elle est morte, la Marguerite.'

Come in, my son, and lie on the bed,  
And let the dead folk bury their dead.

O mother, you know I loved her true:  
O mother, hath one grave room for two?

### THE DOLE OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER

(BRETON)

SEVEN stars in the still water,  
And seven in the sky;  
Seven sins on the King's daughter,  
Deep in her soul to lie.

Red roses are at her feet,  
(Roses are red in her red-gold hair)  
And O where her bosom and girdle meet  
Red roses are hidden there.

Fair is the knight who lieth slain  
Amid the rush and reed,  
See the lean fishes that are fain  
Upon dead men to feed.

Sweet is the page that lieth there,  
(Cloth of gold is goodly prey,)  
See the black ravens in the air,  
Black, O black as the night are they.

What do they there so stark and dead?  
(There is blood upon her hand)

p. 141

p. 142

p. 143

p. 144

Why are the lilies flecked with red?  
(There is blood on the river sand.)

There are two that ride from the south and east,  
And two from the north and west,  
For the black raven a goodly feast,  
For the King's daughter rest.

There is one man who loves her true,  
(Red, O red, is the stain of gore!)  
He hath duggen a grave by the darksome yew,  
(One grave will do for four.)

No moon in the still heaven,  
In the black water none,  
The sins on her soul are seven,  
The sin upon his is one.

### AMOR INTELLECTUALIS

p. 145

OFT have we trod the vales of Castaly  
And heard sweet notes of sylvan music blown  
From antique reeds to common folk unknown:  
And often launched our bark upon that sea  
Which the nine Muses hold in empery,  
And ploughed free furrows through the wave and foam,  
Nor spread reluctant sail for more safe home  
Till we had freighted well our argosy.  
Of which despoiled treasures these remain,  
Sordello's passion, and the honeyed line  
Of young Endymion, lordly Tamburlaine  
Driving his pampered jades, and more than these,  
The seven-fold vision of the Florentine,  
And grave-browed Milton's solemn harmonies.

### SANTA DECCA

p. 146

THE Gods are dead: no longer do we bring  
To grey-eyed Pallas crowns of olive-leaves!  
Demeter's child no more hath tithe of sheaves,  
And in the noon the careless shepherds sing,  
For Pan is dead, and all the wantoning  
By secret glade and devious haunt is o'er:  
Young Hylas seeks the water-springs no more;  
Great Pan is dead, and Mary's son is King.

And yet—perchance in this sea-tranced isle,  
Chewing the bitter fruit of memory,  
Some God lies hidden in the asphodel.  
Ah Love! if such there be, then it were well  
For us to fly his anger: nay, but see,  
The leaves are stirring: let us watch awhile.

CORFU.

### A VISION

p. 147

Two crownèd Kings, and One that stood alone  
With no green weight of laurels round his head,  
But with sad eyes as one uncomforted,  
And wearied with man's never-ceasing moan  
For sins no bleating victim can atone,  
And sweet long lips with tears and kisses fed.  
Girt was he in a garment black and red,  
And at his feet I marked a broken stone  
Which sent up lilies, dove-like, to his knees.  
Now at their sight, my heart being lit with flame,  
I cried to Beatricé, 'Who are these?'  
And she made answer, knowing well each name,  
'Æschylos first, the second Sophokles,  
And last (wide stream of tears!) Euripides.'

### IMPRESSION DE VOYAGE

p. 148

THE sea was sapphire coloured, and the sky  
Burned like a heated opal through the air;  
We hoisted sail; the wind was blowing fair

For the blue lands that to the eastward lie.  
From the steep prow I marked with quickening eye  
Zakynthos, every olive grove and creek,  
Ithaca's cliff, Lycaon's snowy peak,  
And all the flower-strewn hills of Arcady.  
The flapping of the sail against the mast,  
The ripple of the water on the side,  
The ripple of girls' laughter at the stern,  
The only sounds:—when 'gan the West to burn,  
And a red sun upon the seas to ride,  
I stood upon the soil of Greece at last!

KATAKOLO.

### THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY

p. 149

LIKE burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed  
Gaunt cypress-trees stand round the sun-bleached stone;  
Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,  
And the slight lizard show his jewelled head.  
And, where the chaliced poppies flame to red,  
In the still chamber of yon pyramid  
Surely some Old-World Sphinx lurks darkly hid,  
Grim warder of this pleasaunce of the dead.  
  
Ah! sweet indeed to rest within the womb  
Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,  
But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb  
In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,  
Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom  
Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.

ROME.

### BY THE ARNO

p. 150

THE oleander on the wall  
Grows crimson in the dawning light,  
Though the grey shadows of the night  
Lie yet on Florence like a pall.

The dew is bright upon the hill,  
And bright the blossoms overhead,  
But ah! the grasshoppers have fled,  
The little Attic song is still.

Only the leaves are gently stirred  
By the soft breathing of the gale,  
And in the almond-scented vale  
The lonely nightingale is heard.

The day will make thee silent soon,  
O nightingale sing on for love!  
While yet upon the shadowy grove  
Splinter the arrows of the moon.

Before across the silent lawn  
In sea-green vest the morning steals,  
And to love's frightened eyes reveals  
The long white fingers of the dawn

Fast climbing up the eastern sky  
To grasp and slay the shuddering night,  
All careless of my heart's delight,  
Or if the nightingale should die.

p. 151

### IMPRESSIONS DE THÉÂTRE

p. 153

### FABIEN DEI FRANCHI

p. 155

TO MY FRIEND HENRY IRVING

THE silent room, the heavy creeping shade,  
The dead that travel fast, the opening door,  
The murdered brother rising through the floor,  
The ghost's white fingers on thy shoulders laid,  
And then the lonely duel in the glade,  
The broken swords, the stifled scream, the gore,



Thy grand revengeful eyes when all is o'er,—  
These things are well enough,—but thou wert made  
For more august creation! frenzied Lear  
Should at thy bidding wander on the heath  
With the shrill fool to mock him, Romeo  
For thee should lure his love, and desperate fear  
Pluck Richard's recreant dagger from its sheath—  
Thou trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow!

### PHÈDRE

p. 156

TO SARAH BERNHARDT

How vain and dull this common world must seem  
To such a One as thou, who should'st have talked  
At Florence with Mirandola, or walked  
Through the cool olives of the Academe:  
Thou should'st have gathered reeds from a green stream  
For Goat-foot Pan's shrill piping, and have played  
With the white girls in that Phæacian glade  
Where grave Odysseus wakened from his dream.

Ah! surely once some urn of Attic clay  
Held thy wan dust, and thou hast come again  
Back to this common world so dull and vain,  
For thou wert weary of the sunless day,  
The heavy fields of scentless asphodel,  
The loveless lips with which men kiss in Hell.

### WRITTEN AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE

p. 157

#### I PORTIA

TO ELLEN TERRY

I MARVEL not Bassanio was so bold  
To peril all he had upon the lead,  
Or that proud Aragon bent low his head  
Or that Morocco's fiery heart grew cold:  
For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold  
Which is more golden than the golden sun  
No woman Veronesé looked upon  
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold.  
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield  
The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned,  
And would not let the laws of Venice yield  
Antonio's heart to that accursèd Jew—  
O Portia! take my heart: it is thy due:  
I think I will not quarrel with the Bond.

#### II QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA

p. 158

TO ELLEN TERRY

IN the lone tent, waiting for victory,  
She stands with eyes marred by the mists of pain,  
Like some wan lily overdrenched with rain:  
The clamorous clang of arms, the ensanguined sky,  
War's ruin, and the wreck of chivalry  
To her proud soul no common fear can bring:  
Bravely she tarrieth for her Lord the King,  
Her soul a-flame with passionate ecstasy.  
O Hair of Gold! O Crimson Lips! O Face  
Made for the luring and the love of man!  
With thee I do forget the toil and stress,  
The loveless road that knows no resting place,  
Time's straitened pulse, the soul's dread weariness,  
My freedom, and my life republican!

#### III CAMMA

p. 159

TO ELLEN TERRY

As one who poring on a Grecian urn  
Scans the fair shapes some Attic hand hath made,  
God with slim goddess, goodly man with maid,

And for their beauty's sake is loth to turn  
And face the obvious day, must I not yearn  
For many a secret moon of indolent bliss,  
When in midmost shrine of Artemis  
I see thee standing, antique-limbed, and stern?

And yet—methinks I'd rather see thee play  
That serpent of old Nile, whose witchery  
Made Emperors drunken,—come, great Egypt, shake  
Our stage with all thy mimic pageants! Nay,  
I am grown sick of unreal passions, make  
The world thine Actium, me thine Anthony!

## PANTHEA

p. 161

NAY, let us walk from fire unto fire,  
From passionate pain to deadlier delight,—  
I am too young to live without desire,  
Too young art thou to waste this summer night  
Asking those idle questions which of old  
Man sought of seer and oracle, and no reply was told.

p. 163

For, sweet, to feel is better than to know,  
And wisdom is a childless heritage,  
One pulse of passion—youth's first fiery glow,—  
Are worth the hoarded proverbs of the sage:  
Vex not thy soul with dead philosophy,  
Have we not lips to kiss with, hearts to love and eyes to see!

Dost thou not hear the murmuring nightingale,  
Like water bubbling from a silver jar,  
So soft she sings the envious moon is pale,  
That high in heaven she is hung so far  
She cannot hear that love-enraptured tune,—  
Mark how she wreathes each horn with mist, yon late and labouring moon.

p. 164

White lilies, in whose cups the gold bees dream,  
The fallen snow of petals where the breeze  
Scatters the chestnut blossom, or the gleam  
Of boyish limbs in water,—are not these  
Enough for thee, dost thou desire more?  
Alas! the Gods will give nought else from their eternal store.

For our high Gods have sick and wearied grown  
Of all our endless sins, our vain endeavour  
For wasted days of youth to make atone  
By pain or prayer or priest, and never, never,  
Hearken they now to either good or ill,  
But send their rain upon the just and the unjust at will.

They sit at ease, our Gods they sit at ease,  
Strewing with leaves of rose their scented wine,  
They sleep, they sleep, beneath the rocking trees  
Where asphodel and yellow lotus twine,  
Mourning the old glad days before they knew  
What evil things the heart of man could dream, and dreaming do.

And far beneath the brazen floor they see  
Like swarming flies the crowd of little men,  
The bustle of small lives, then wearily  
Back to their lotus-haunts they turn again  
Kissing each others' mouths, and mix more deep  
The poppy-seeded draught which brings soft purple-lidded sleep.

p. 165

There all day long the golden-vestured sun,  
Their torch-bearer, stands with his torch ablaze,  
And, when the gaudy web of noon is spun  
By its twelve maidens, through the crimson haze  
Fresh from Endymion's arms comes forth the moon,  
And the immortal Gods in toils of mortal passions swoon.

There walks Queen Juno through some dewy mead,  
Her grand white feet flecked with the saffron dust  
Of wind-stirred lilies, while young Ganymede  
Leaps in the hot and amber-foaming must,  
His curls all tossed, as when the eagle bare  
The frightened boy from Ida through the blue Ionian air.

There in the green heart of some garden close  
 Queen Venus with the shepherd at her side,  
 Her warm soft body like the briar rose  
 Which would be white yet blushes at its pride,  
 Laughs low for love, till jealous Salmacis  
 Peers through the myrtle-leaves and sighs for pain of lonely bliss.

There never does that dreary north-wind blow  
 Which leaves our English forests bleak and bare,  
 Nor ever falls the swift white-feathered snow,  
 Nor ever doth the red-toothed lightning dare  
 To wake them in the silver-fretted night  
 When we lie weeping for some sweet sad sin, some dead delight.

Alas! they know the far Lethæan spring,  
 The violet-hidden waters well they know,  
 Where one whose feet with tired wandering  
 Are faint and broken may take heart and go,  
 And from those dark depths cool and crystalline  
 Drink, and draw balm, and sleep for sleepless souls, and anodyne.

But we oppress our natures, God or Fate  
 Is our enemy, we starve and feed  
 On vain repentance—O we are born too late!  
 What balm for us in bruised poppy seed  
 Who crowd into one finite pulse of time  
 The joy of infinite love and the fierce pain of infinite crime.

O we are wearied of this sense of guilt,  
 Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,  
 Wearied of every temple we have built,  
 Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,  
 For man is weak; God sleeps: and heaven is high:  
 One fiery-coloured moment: one great love; and lo! we die.

Ah! but no ferry-man with labouring pole  
 Nears his black shallop to the flowerless strand,  
 No little coin of bronze can bring the soul  
 Over Death's river to the sunless land,  
 Victim and wine and vow are all in vain,  
 The tomb is sealed; the soldiers watch; the dead rise not again.

We are resolved into the supreme air,  
 We are made one with what we touch and see,  
 With our heart's blood each crimson sun is fair,  
 With our young lives each spring-impassioned tree  
 Flames into green, the wildest beasts that range  
 The moor our kinsmen are, all life is one, and all is change.

With beat of systole and of diastole  
 One grand great life throbs through earth's giant heart,  
 And mighty waves of single Being roll  
 From nerveless germ to man, for we are part  
 Of every rock and bird and beast and hill,  
 One with the things that prey on us, and one with what we kill.

From lower cells of waking life we pass  
 To full perfection; thus the world grows old:  
 We who are godlike now were once a mass  
 Of quivering purple flecked with bars of gold,  
 Unsentient or of joy or misery,  
 And tossed in terrible tangles of some wild and wind-swept sea.

This hot hard flame with which our bodies burn  
 Will make some meadow blaze with daffodil,  
 Ay! and those argent breasts of thine will turn  
 To water-lilies; the brown fields men till  
 Will be more fruitful for our love to-night,  
 Nothing is lost in nature, all things live in Death's despite.

The boy's first kiss, the hyacinth's first bell,  
 The man's last passion, and the last red spear  
 That from the lily leaps, the asphodel  
 Which will not let its blossoms blow for fear  
 Of too much beauty, and the timid shame  
 Of the young bridegroom at his lover's eyes,—these with the same

One sacrament are consecrate, the earth  
 Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,

The yellow buttercups that shake for mirth  
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real  
Than we do, when in some fresh-blossoming wood,  
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that life is good.

So when men bury us beneath the yew  
Thy crimson-stained mouth a rose will be,  
And thy soft eyes lush bluebells dimmed with dew,  
And when the white narcissus wantonly  
Kisses the wind its playmate some faint joy  
Will thrill our dust, and we will be again fond maid and boy.

And thus without life's conscious torturing pain  
In some sweet flower we will feel the sun,  
And from the linnet's throat will sing again,  
And as two gorgeous-mailed snakes will run  
Over our graves, or as two tigers creep  
Through the hot jungle where the yellow-eyed huge lions sleep

And give them battle! How my heart leaps up  
To think of that grand living after death  
In beast and bird and flower, when this cup,  
Being filled too full of spirit, bursts for breath,  
And with the pale leaves of some autumn day  
The soul earth's earliest conqueror becomes earth's last great prey.

p. 170

O think of it! We shall inform ourselves  
Into all sensuous life, the goat-foot Faun,  
The Centaur, or the merry bright-eyed Elves  
That leave their dancing rings to spite the dawn  
Upon the meadows, shall not be more near  
Than you and I to nature's mysteries, for we shall hear

The thrush's heart beat, and the daisies grow,  
And the wan snowdrop sighing for the sun  
On sunless days in winter, we shall know  
By whom the silver gossamer is spun,  
Who paints the diapered fritillaries,  
On what wide wings from shivering pine to pine the eagle flies.

Ay! had we never loved at all, who knows  
If yonder daffodil had lured the bee  
Into its gilded womb, or any rose  
Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree!  
Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring,  
But for the lovers' lips that kiss, the poets' lips that sing.

p. 171

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,  
Or is this dædal-fashioned earth less fair,  
That we are nature's heritors, and one  
With every pulse of life that beats the air?  
Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,  
New splendour come unto the flower, new glory to the grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,  
Critics of nature, but the joyous sea  
Shall be our raiment, and the bearded star  
Shoot arrows at our pleasure! We shall be  
Part of the mighty universal whole,  
And through all æons mix and mingle with the Kosmic Soul!

We shall be notes in that great Symphony  
Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic spheres,  
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be  
One with our heart; the stealthy creeping years  
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,  
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality.

## THE FOURTH MOVEMENT

p. 173

### IMPRESSION

p. 175

LE RÉVEILLON

THE sky is laced with fitful red,  
The circling mists and shadows flee,  
The dawn is rising from the sea,  
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall  
Athwart the feathers of the night,  
And a long wave of yellow light  
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold  
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,  
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,  
And all the branches streaked with gold.

#### AT VERONA

p. 176

How steep the stairs within Kings' houses are  
For exile-wearied feet as mine to tread,  
And O how salt and bitter is the bread  
Which falls from this Hound's table,—better far  
That I had died in the red ways of war,  
Or that the gate of Florence bare my head,  
Than to live thus, by all things comraded  
Which seek the essence of my soul to mar.

'Curse God and die: what better hope than this?  
He hath forgotten thee in all the bliss  
Of his gold city, and eternal day'—  
Nay peace: behind my prison's blinded bars  
I do possess what none can take away  
My love, and all the glory of the stars.

#### APOLOGIA

p. 177

Is it thy will that I should wax and wane,  
Barter my cloth of gold for hodden grey,  
And at thy pleasure weave that web of pain  
Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day?

Is it thy will—Love that I love so well—  
That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot  
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell  
The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not?

Nay, if it be thy will I shall endure,  
And sell ambition at the common mart,  
And let dull failure be my vestiture,  
And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so—at least  
I have not made my heart a heart of stone,  
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,  
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so; sought to fence  
In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,  
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,  
While all the forest sang of liberty,

p. 178

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight  
Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,  
To where some steep untrodden mountain height  
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair.

Or how the little flower he trod upon,  
The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,  
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun  
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been  
The best beloved for a little while,  
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen  
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Ay! though the gorgèd asp of passion feed  
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,  
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed  
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars!

#### QUIA MULTUM AMAVI

p. 179

DEAR Heart, I think the young impassioned priest  
When first he takes from out the hidden shrine

His God imprisoned in the Eucharist,  
And eats the bread, and drinks the dreadful wine,

Feels not such awful wonder as I felt  
When first my smitten eyes beat full on thee,  
And all night long before thy feet I knelt  
Till thou wert wearied of Idolatry.

Ah! hadst thou liked me less and loved me more,  
Through all those summer days of joy and rain,  
I had not now been sorrow's heritor,  
Or stood a lackey in the House of Pain.

Yet, though remorse, youth's white-faced seneschal,  
Tread on my heels with all his retinue,  
I am most glad I loved thee—think of all  
The suns that go to make one speedwell blue!

### SILENTIUM AMORIS

p. 180

As often-times the too resplendent sun  
Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon  
Back to her sombre cave, ere she hath won  
A single ballad from the nightingale,  
So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,  
And all my sweetest singing out of tune.

And as at dawn across the level mead  
On wings impetuous some wind will come,  
And with its too harsh kisses break the reed  
Which was its only instrument of song,  
So my too stormy passions work me wrong,  
And for excess of Love my Love is dumb.

But surely unto Thee mine eyes did show  
Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung;  
Else it were better we should part, and go,  
Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,  
And I to nurse the barren memory  
Of un-kissed kisses, and songs never sung.

### HER VOICE

p. 181

THE wild bee reels from bough to bough  
With his furry coat and his gauzy wing,  
Now in a lily-cup, and now  
Setting a jacinth bell a-swing,  
In his wandering;  
Sit closer love: it was here I trow  
I made that vow,

Swore that two lives should be like one  
As long as the sea-gull loved the sea,  
As long as the sunflower sought the sun,—  
It shall be, I said, for eternity  
'Twixt you and me!  
Dear friend, those times are over and done;  
Love's web is spun.

Look upward where the poplar trees  
Sway and sway in the summer air,  
Here in the valley never a breeze  
Scatters the thistledown, but there  
Great winds blow fair  
From the mighty murmuring mystical seas,  
And the wave-lashed leas.

Look upward where the white gull screams,  
What does it see that we do not see?  
Is that a star? or the lamp that gleams  
On some outward voyaging argosy,—  
Ah! can it be  
We have lived our lives in a land of dreams!  
How sad it seems.

p. 182

Sweet, there is nothing left to say  
But this, that love is never lost,  
Keen winter stabs the breasts of May

Whose crimson roses burst his frost,  
Ships tempest-tossed  
Will find a harbour in some bay,  
And so we may.

And there is nothing left to do  
But to kiss once again, and part,  
Nay, there is nothing we should rue,  
I have my beauty,—you your Art,  
Nay, do not start,  
One world was not enough for two  
Like me and you.

### MY VOICE

p. 183

WITHIN this restless, hurried, modern world  
We took our hearts' full pleasure—You and I,  
And now the white sails of our ship are furled,  
And spent the lading of our argosy.

Wherefore my cheeks before their time are wan,  
For very weeping is my gladness fled,  
Sorrow has paled my young mouth's vermilion,  
And Ruin draws the curtains of my bed.

But all this crowded life has been to thee  
No more than lyre, or lute, or subtle spell  
Of viols, or the music of the sea  
That sleeps, a mimic echo, in the shell.

### TÆDIUM VITÆ

p. 184

To stab my youth with desperate knives, to wear  
This paltry age's gaudy livery,  
To let each base hand filch my treasury,  
To mesh my soul within a woman's hair,  
And be mere Fortune's lackeyed groom,—I swear  
I love it not! these things are less to me  
Than the thin foam that frets upon the sea,  
Less than the thistledown of summer air  
Which hath no seed: better to stand aloof  
Far from these slanderous fools who mock my life  
Knowing me not, better the lowliest roof  
Fit for the meanest hind to sojourn in,  
Than to go back to that hoarse cave of strife  
Where my white soul first kissed the mouth of sin.

### HUMANITAD

p. 185

IT is full winter now: the trees are bare,  
Save where the cattle huddle from the cold  
Beneath the pine, for it doth never wear  
The autumn's gaudy livery whose gold  
Her jealous brother pilfers, but is true  
To the green doublet; bitter is the wind, as though it blew

p. 187

From Saturn's cave; a few thin wisps of hay  
Lie on the sharp black hedges, where the wain  
Dragged the sweet pillage of a summer's day  
From the low meadows up the narrow lane;  
Upon the half-thawed snow the bleating sheep  
Press close against the hurdles, and the shivering house-dogs creep

From the shut stable to the frozen stream  
And back again disconsolate, and miss  
The bawling shepherds and the noisy team;  
And overhead in circling listlessness  
The cawing rooks whirl round the frosted stack,  
Or crowd the dripping boughs; and in the fen the ice-pools crack

Where the gaunt bittern stalks among the reeds  
And flaps his wings, and stretches back his neck,  
And hoots to see the moon; across the meads  
Limps the poor frightened hare, a little speck;  
And a stray seamew with its fretful cry  
Flits like a sudden drift of snow against the dull grey sky.

p. 188

Full winter: and the lusty goodman brings  
His load of faggots from the chilly byre,  
And stamps his feet upon the hearth, and flings  
The sappy billets on the waning fire,  
And laughs to see the sudden lightening scare  
His children at their play, and yet,—the spring is in the air;

Already the slim crocus stirs the snow,  
And soon yon blanchèd fields will bloom again  
With nodding cowslips for some lad to mow,  
For with the first warm kisses of the rain  
The winter's icy sorrow breaks to tears,  
And the brown thrushes mate, and with bright eyes the rabbit peers

From the dark warren where the fir-cones lie,  
And treads one snowdrop under foot, and runs  
Over the mossy knoll, and blackbirds fly  
Across our path at evening, and the suns  
Stay longer with us; ah! how good to see  
Grass-girdled spring in all her joy of laughing greenery

Dance through the hedges till the early rose,  
(That sweet repentance of the thorny briar!)  
Burst from its sheathèd emerald and disclose  
The little quivering disk of golden fire  
Which the bees know so well, for with it come  
Pale boy's-love, sops-in-wine, and daffadillies all in bloom.

Then up and down the field the sower goes,  
While close behind the laughing younker scares  
With shrilly whoop the black and thievish crows,  
And then the chestnut-tree its glory wears,  
And on the grass the creamy blossom falls  
In odorous excess, and faint half-whispered madrigals

Steal from the bluebells' nodding carillons  
Each breezy morn, and then white jessamine,  
That star of its own heaven, snap-dragons  
With lolling crimson tongues, and eglantine  
In dusty velvets clad usurp the bed  
And woodland empery, and when the lingering rose hath shed

Red leaf by leaf its folded panoply,  
And pansies closed their purple-lidded eyes,  
Chrysanthemums from gilded argosy  
Unload their gaudy scentless merchandise,  
And violets getting overbold withdraw  
From their shy nooks, and scarlet berries dot the leafless haw.

O happy field! and O thrice happy tree!  
Soon will your queen in daisy-flowered smock  
And crown of flower-de-luce trip down the lea,  
Soon will the lazy shepherds drive their flock  
Back to the pasture by the pool, and soon  
Through the green leaves will float the hum of murmuring bees at noon.

Soon will the glade be bright with bellamour,  
The flower which wantons love, and those sweet nuns  
Vale-lilies in their snowy vestiture  
Will tell their beaded pearls, and carnations  
With mitred dusky leaves will scent the wind,  
And straggling traveller's-joy each hedge with yellow stars will bind.

Dear bride of Nature and most bounteous spring,  
That canst give increase to the sweet-breath'd kine,  
And to the kid its little horns, and bring  
The soft and silky blossoms to the vine,  
Where is that old nepenthe which of yore  
Man got from poppy root and glossy-berried mandragore!

There was a time when any common bird  
Could make me sing in unison, a time  
When all the strings of boyish life were stirred  
To quick response or more melodious rhyme  
By every forest idyll;—do I change?  
Or rather doth some evil thing through thy fair pleasaunce range?

Nay, nay, thou art the same: 'tis I who seek  
To vex with sighs thy simple solitude,

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p. 191



And because fruitless tears bedew my cheek  
Would have thee weep with me in brotherhood;  
Fool! shall each wronged and restless spirit dare  
To taint such wine with the salt poison of own despair!

Thou art the same: 'tis I whose wretched soul  
Takes discontent to be its paramour,  
And gives its kingdom to the rude control  
Of what should be its servitor,—for sure  
Wisdom is somewhere, though the stormy sea  
Contain it not, and the huge deep answer "'Tis not in me.'

p. 192

To burn with one clear flame, to stand erect  
In natural honour, not to bend the knee  
In profitless prostrations whose effect  
Is by itself condemned, what alchemy  
Can teach me this? what herb Medea brewed  
Will bring the unexultant peace of essence not subdued?

The minor chord which ends the harmony,  
And for its answering brother waits in vain  
Sobbing for incompleting melody,  
Dies a swan's death; but I the heir of pain,  
A silent Memnon with blank lidless eyes,  
Wait for the light and music of those suns which never rise.

The quenched-out torch, the lonely cypress-gloom,  
The little dust stored in the narrow urn,  
The gentle XAIPE of the Attic tomb,—  
Were not these better far than to return  
To my old fitful restless malady,  
Or spend my days within the voiceless cave of misery?

Nay! for perchance that poppy-crownèd god  
Is like the watcher by a sick man's bed  
Who talks of sleep but gives it not; his rod  
Hath lost its virtue, and, when all is said,  
Death is too rude, too obvious a key  
To solve one single secret in a life's philosophy.

p. 193

And Love! that noble madness, whose august  
And inextinguishable might can slay  
The soul with honeyed drugs,—alas! I must  
From such sweet ruin play the runaway,  
Although too constant memory never can  
Forget the archèd splendour of those brows Olympian

Which for a little season made my youth  
So soft a swoon of exquisite indolence  
That all the chiding of more prudent Truth  
Seemed the thin voice of jealousy,—O hence  
Thou huntress deadlier than Artemis!  
Go seek some other quarry! for of thy too perilous bliss.

My lips have drunk enough,—no more, no more,—  
Though Love himself should turn his gilded prow  
Back to the troubled waters of this shore  
Where I am wrecked and stranded, even now  
The chariot wheels of passion sweep too near,  
Hence! Hence! I pass unto a life more barren, more austere.

p. 194

More barren—ay, those arms will never lean  
Down through the trellised vines and draw my soul  
In sweet reluctance through the tangled green;  
Some other head must wear that aureole,  
For I am hers who loves not any man  
Whose white and stainless bosom bears the sign Gorgonian.

Let Venus go and chuck her dainty page,  
And kiss his mouth, and toss his curly hair,  
With net and spear and hunting equipage  
Let young Adonis to his tryst repair,  
But me her fond and subtle-fashioned spell  
Delights no more, though I could win her dearest citadel.

Ay, though I were that laughing shepherd boy  
Who from Mount Ida saw the little cloud  
Pass over Tenedos and lofty Troy  
And knew the coming of the Queen, and bowed

In wonder at her feet, not for the sake  
Of a new Helen would I bid her hand the apple take.

Then rise supreme Athena argent-limbed!  
And, if my lips be musicless, inspire  
At least my life: was not thy glory hymned  
By One who gave to thee his sword and lyre  
Like Æschylos at well-fought Marathon,  
And died to show that Milton's England still could bear a son!

p. 195

And yet I cannot tread the Portico  
And live without desire, fear and pain,  
Or nurture that wise calm which long ago  
The grave Athenian master taught to men,  
Self-poised, self-centred, and self-comforted,  
To watch the world's vain phantasies go by with unbowed head.

Alas! that serene brow, those eloquent lips,  
Those eyes that mirrored all eternity,  
Rest in their own Colonos, an eclipse  
Hath come on Wisdom, and Mnemosyne  
Is childless; in the night which she had made  
For lofty secure flight Athena's owl itself hath strayed.

Nor much with Science do I care to climb,  
Although by strange and subtle witchery  
She drew the moon from heaven: the Muse Time  
Unrolls her gorgeous-coloured tapestry  
To no less eager eyes; often indeed  
In the great epic of Polymnia's scroll I love to read

p. 196

How Asia sent her myriad hosts to war  
Against a little town, and panoplied  
In gilded mail with jewelled scimitar,  
White-shielded, purple-crested, rode the Mede  
Between the waving poplars and the sea  
Which men call Artemisium, till he saw Thermopylæ

Its steep ravine spanned by a narrow wall,  
And on the nearer side a little brood  
Of careless lions holding festival!  
And stood amazed at such hardihood,  
And pitched his tent upon the reedy shore,  
And stayed two days to wonder, and then crept at midnight o'er

Some unfrequented height, and coming down  
The autumn forests treacherously slew  
What Sparta held most dear and was the crown  
Of far Eurotas, and passed on, nor knew  
How God had staked an evil net for him  
In the small bay at Salamis,—and yet, the page grows dim,

Its cadenced Greek delights me not, I feel  
With such a goodly time too out of tune  
To love it much: for like the Dial's wheel  
That from its blinded darkness strikes the noon  
Yet never sees the sun, so do my eyes  
Restlessly follow that which from my cheated vision flies.

p. 197

O for one grand unselfish simple life  
To teach us what is Wisdom! speak ye hills  
Of lone Helvellyn, for this note of strife  
Shunned your untroubled crags and crystal rills,  
Where is that Spirit which living blamelessly  
Yet dared to kiss the smitten mouth of his own century!

Speak ye Rydalian laurels! where is he  
Whose gentle head ye sheltered, that pure soul  
Whose gracious days of uncrowned majesty  
Through lowliest conduct touched the lofty goal  
Where love and duty mingle! Him at least  
The most high Laws were glad of, he had sat at Wisdom's feast;

But we are Learning's changelings, know by rote  
The clarion watchword of each Grecian school  
And follow none, the flawless sword which smote  
The pagan Hydra is an effete tool  
Which we ourselves have blunted, what man now  
Shall scale the august ancient heights and to old Reverence bow?

p. 198

One such indeed I saw, but, Ichabod!  
Gone is that last dear son of Italy,  
Who being man died for the sake of God,  
And whose unrisen bones sleep peacefully,  
O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,  
Thou marble lily of the lily town! let not the lour

Of the rude tempest vex his slumber, or  
The Arno with its tawny troubled gold  
O'er-leap its marge, no mightier conqueror  
Clomb the high Capitol in the days of old  
When Rome was indeed Rome, for Liberty  
Walked like a bride beside him, at which sight pale Mystery

Fled shrieking to her farthest sombrest cell  
With an old man who grabbed rusty keys,  
Fled shuddering, for that immemorial knell  
With which oblivion buries dynasties  
Swept like a wounded eagle on the blast,  
As to the holy heart of Rome the great triumvir passed.

He knew the holiest heart and heights of Rome,  
He drave the base wolf from the lion's lair,  
And now lies dead by that empyreal dome  
Which overtops Valdarno hung in air  
By Brunelleschi—O Melpomene  
Breathe through thy melancholy pipe thy sweetest threnody!

Breathe through the tragic stops such melodies  
That Joy's self may grow jealous, and the Nine  
Forget awhile their discreet emperies,  
Mourning for him who on Rome's lordliest shrine  
Lit for men's lives the light of Marathon,  
And bare to sun-forgotten fields the fire of the sun!

O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower!  
Let some young Florentine each eventide  
Bring coronals of that enchanted flower  
Which the dim woods of Vallombrosa hide,  
And deck the marble tomb wherein he lies  
Whose soul is as some mighty orb unseen of mortal eyes;

Some mighty orb whose cycled wanderings,  
Being tempest-driven to the farthest rim  
Where Chaos meets Creation and the wings  
Of the eternal chanting Cherubim  
Are pavilioned on Nothing, passed away  
Into a moonless void,—and yet, though he is dust and clay,

He is not dead, the immemorial Fates  
Forbid it, and the closing shears refrain.  
Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates!  
Ye argent clarions, sound a loftier strain  
For the vile thing he hated lurks within  
Its sombre house, alone with God and memories of sin.

Still what avails it that she sought her cave  
That murderous mother of red harlotries?  
At Munich on the marble architrave  
The Grecian boys die smiling, but the seas  
Which wash Ægina fret in loneliness  
Not mirroring their beauty; so our lives grow colourless

For lack of our ideals, if one star  
Flame torch-like in the heavens the unjust  
Swift daylight kills it, and no trump of war  
Can wake to passionate voice the silent dust  
Which was Mazzini once! rich Niobe  
For all her stony sorrows hath her sons; but Italy,

What Easter Day shall make her children rise,  
Who were not Gods yet suffered? what sure feet  
Shall find their grave-clothes folded? what clear eyes  
Shall see them bodily? O it were meet  
To roll the stone from off the sepulchre  
And kiss the bleeding roses of their wounds, in love of her,

Our Italy! our mother visible!  
Most blessed among nations and most sad,

For whose dear sake the young Calabrian fell  
That day at Aspromonte and was glad  
That in an age when God was bought and sold  
One man could die for Liberty! but we, burnt out and cold,

See Honour smitten on the cheek and gyves  
Bind the sweet feet of Mercy: Poverty  
Creeps through our sunless lanes and with sharp knives  
Cuts the warm throats of children stealthily,  
And no word said:—O we are wretched men  
Unworthy of our great inheritance! where is the pen

Of austere Milton? where the mighty sword  
Which slew its master righteously? the years  
Have lost their ancient leader, and no word  
Breaks from the voiceless tripod on our ears:  
While as a ruined mother in some spasm  
Bears a base child and loathes it, so our best enthusiasm

p. 202

Genders unlawful children, Anarchy  
Freedom's own Judas, the vile prodigal  
Licence who steals the gold of Liberty  
And yet has nothing, Ignorance the real  
One Fratricide since Cain, Envy the asp  
That stings itself to anguish, Avarice whose palsied grasp

Is in its extent stiffened, moneyed Greed  
For whose dull appetite men waste away  
Amid the whirr of wheels and are the seed  
Of things which slay their sower, these each day  
Sees rife in England, and the gentle feet  
Of Beauty tread no more the stones of each unlovely street.

What even Cromwell spared is desecrated  
By weed and worm, left to the stormy play  
Of wind and beating snow, or renovated  
By more destructful hands: Time's worst decay  
Will wreath its ruins with some loveliness,  
But these new Vandals can but make a rain-proof barrenness.

p. 203

Where is that Art which bade the Angels sing  
Through Lincoln's lofty choir, till the air  
Seems from such marble harmonies to ring  
With sweeter song than common lips can dare  
To draw from actual reed? ah! where is now  
The cunning hand which made the flowering hawthorn branches bow

For Southwell's arch, and carved the House of One  
Who loved the lilies of the field with all  
Our dearest English flowers? the same sun  
Rises for us: the seasons natural  
Weave the same tapestry of green and grey:  
The unchanged hills are with us: but that Spirit hath passed away.

And yet perchance it may be better so,  
For Tyranny is an incestuous Queen,  
Murder her brother is her bedfellow,  
And the Plague chambers with her: in obscene  
And bloody paths her treacherous feet are set;  
Better the empty desert and a soul inviolate!

For gentle brotherhood, the harmony  
Of living in the healthful air, the swift  
Clean beauty of strong limbs when men are free  
And women chaste, these are the things which lift  
Our souls up more than even Agnolo's  
Gaunt blinded Sibyl poring o'er the scroll of human woes,

p. 204

Or Titian's little maiden on the stair  
White as her own sweet lily and as tall,  
Or Mona Lisa smiling through her hair,—  
Ah! somehow life is bigger after all  
Than any painted angel, could we see  
The God that is within us! The old Greek serenity

Which curbs the passion of that level line  
Of marble youths, who with untroubled eyes  
And chastened limbs ride round Athena's shrine  
And mirror her divine economies,

And balanced symmetry of what in man  
Would else wage ceaseless warfare,—this at least within the span

Between our mother's kisses and the grave  
Might so inform our lives, that we could win  
Such mighty empires that from her cave  
Temptation would grow hoarse, and pallid Sin  
Would walk ashamed of his adulteries,  
And Passion creep from out the House of Lust with startled eyes.

p. 205

To make the body and the spirit one  
With all right things, till no thing live in vain  
From morn to noon, but in sweet unison  
With every pulse of flesh and throb of brain  
The soul in flawless essence high enthroned,  
Against all outer vain attack invincibly bastioned,

Mark with serene impartiality  
The strife of things, and yet be comforted,  
Knowing that by the chain causality  
All separate existences are wed  
Into one supreme whole, whose utterance  
Is joy, or holier praise! ah! surely this were governance

Of Life in most august omnipresence,  
Through which the rational intellect would find  
In passion its expression, and mere sense,  
Ignoble else, lend fire to the mind,  
And being joined with it in harmony  
More mystical than that which binds the stars planetary,

Strike from their several tones one octave chord  
Whose cadence being measureless would fly  
Through all the circling spheres, then to its Lord  
Return refreshed with its new empery  
And more exultant power,—this indeed  
Could we but reach it were to find the last, the perfect creed.

p. 206

Ah! it was easy when the world was young  
To keep one's life free and inviolate,  
From our sad lips another song is rung,  
By our own hands our heads are desecrate,  
Wanderers in drear exile, and dispossessed  
Of what should be our own, we can but feed on wild unrest.

Somehow the grace, the bloom of things has flown,  
And of all men we are most wretched who  
Must live each other's lives and not our own  
For very pity's sake and then undo  
All that we lived for—it was otherwise  
When soul and body seemed to blend in mystic symphonies.

But we have left those gentle haunts to pass  
With weary feet to the new Calvary,  
Where we behold, as one who in a glass  
Sees his own face, self-slain Humanity,  
And in the dumb reproach of that sad gaze  
Learn what an awful phantom the red hand of man can raise.

p. 207

O smitten mouth! O forehead crowned with thorn!  
O chalice of all common miseries!  
Thou for our sakes that loved thee not hast borne  
An agony of endless centuries,  
And we were vain and ignorant nor knew  
That when we stabbed thy heart it was our own real hearts we slew.

Being ourselves the sowers and the seeds,  
The night that covers and the lights that fade,  
The spear that pierces and the side that bleeds,  
The lips betraying and the life betrayed;  
The deep hath calm: the moon hath rest: but we  
Lords of the natural world are yet our own dread enemy.

Is this the end of all that primal force  
Which, in its changes being still the same,  
From eyeless Chaos cleft its upward course,  
Through ravenous seas and whirling rocks and flame,  
Till the suns met in heaven and began  
Their cycles, and the morning stars sang, and the Word was Man!

p. 208

Nay, nay, we are but crucified, and though  
The bloody sweat falls from our brows like rain  
Loosen the nails—we shall come down I know,  
Staunch the red wounds—we shall be whole again,  
No need have we of hyssop-laden rod,  
That which is purely human, that is godlike, that is God.

## FLOWER OF LOVE

p. 209

## ΓΛΥΚΥΠΙΚΡΟΣ ΕΡΩΣ

p. 211

SWEET, I blame you not, for mine the fault  
was, had I not been made of common clay  
I had climbed the higher heights unclimbed  
yet, seen the fuller air, the larger day.

From the wildness of my wasted passion I had  
struck a better, clearer song,  
Lit some lighter light of freer freedom, battled  
with some Hydra-headed wrong.

Had my lips been smitten into music by the  
kisses that but made them bleed,  
You had walked with Bice and the angels on  
that verdant and enamelled mead.

I had trod the road which Dante treading saw  
the suns of seven circles shine,  
Ay! perchance had seen the heavens opening,  
as they opened to the Florentine.

And the mighty nations would have crowned  
me, who am crownless now and without name,  
And some orient dawn had found me kneeling  
on the threshold of the House of Fame.

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I had sat within that marble circle where the  
oldest bard is as the young,  
And the pipe is ever dropping honey, and the  
lyre's strings are ever strung.

Keats had lifted up his hymeneal curls from out  
the poppy-seeded wine,  
With ambrosial mouth had kissed my forehead,  
clasped the hand of noble love in mine.

And at springtide, when the apple-blossoms brush  
the burnished bosom of the dove,  
Two young lovers lying in an orchard would  
have read the story of our love.

Would have read the legend of my passion,  
known the bitter secret of my heart,  
Kissed as we have kissed, but never parted as  
we two are fated now to part.

For the crimson flower of our life is eaten by  
the cankerworm of truth,  
And no hand can gather up the fallen withered  
petals of the rose of youth.

Yet I am not sorry that I loved you—ah! what  
else had I a boy to do,—  
For the hungry teeth of time devour, and the  
silent-footed years pursue.

p. 213

Rudderless, we drift athwart a tempest, and  
when once the storm of youth is past,  
Without lyre, without lute or chorus, Death  
the silent pilot comes at last.

And within the grave there is no pleasure, for  
the blindworm battens on the root,  
And Desire shudders into ashes, and the tree of  
Passion bears no fruit.

Ah! what else had I to do but love you, God's  
own mother was less dear to me,  
And less dear the Cytheræan rising like an

argent lily from the sea.

I have made my choice, have lived my poems,  
and, though youth is gone in wasted days,  
I have found the lover's crown of myrtle better  
than the poet's crown of bays.

## UNCOLLECTED POEMS

p. 215

### FROM SPRING DAYS TO WINTER

p. 217

(FOR MUSIC)

IN the glad springtime when leaves were green,  
O merrily the throstle sings!  
I sought, amid the tangled sheen,  
Love whom mine eyes had never seen,  
O the glad dove has golden wings!

Between the blossoms red and white,  
O merrily the throstle sings!  
My love first came into my sight,  
O perfect vision of delight,  
O the glad dove has golden wings!

The yellow apples glowed like fire,  
O merrily the throstle sings!  
O Love too great for lip or lyre,  
Blown rose of love and of desire,  
O the glad dove has golden wings!

But now with snow the tree is grey,  
Ah, sadly now the throstle sings!  
My love is dead: ah! well-a-day,  
See at her silent feet I lay  
A dove with broken wings!  
Ah, Love! ah, Love! that thou wert slain—  
Fond Dove, fond Dove return again!

p. 218

### TRISTITÆ

p. 219

*Αἴλινον, αἴλινον εἶπέ, τὸ δ' εὖ νικάτω*

O WELL for him who lives at ease  
With garnered gold in wide domain,  
Nor heeds the splashing of the rain,  
The crashing down of forest trees.

O well for him who ne'er hath known  
The travail of the hungry years,  
A father grey with grief and tears,  
A mother weeping all alone.

But well for him whose foot hath trod  
The weary road of toil and strife,  
Yet from the sorrows of his life.  
Builds ladders to be nearer God.

### THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE

p. 220

*... ἀναγκαίως δ' ἔχει  
Βίον θερίζειν ὥστε κάρπιμον στάχυν,  
καὶ τὸν γέν εἶναι τὸν δὲ γή.*

THOU knowest all; I seek in vain  
What lands to till or sow with seed—  
The land is black with briar and weed,  
Nor cares for falling tears or rain.

Thou knowest all; I sit and wait  
With blinded eyes and hands that fail,  
Till the last lifting of the veil  
And the first opening of the gate.

Thou knowest all; I cannot see.  
I trust I shall not live in vain,  
I know that we shall meet again  
In some divine eternity.

## IMPRESSIONS

p. 221

### I LE JARDIN

THE lily's withered chalice falls  
Around its rod of dusty gold,  
And from the beech-trees on the wold  
The last wood-pigeon coos and calls.

The gaudy leonine sunflower  
Hangs black and barren on its stalk,  
And down the windy garden walk  
The dead leaves scatter,—hour by hour.

Pale privet-petals white as milk  
Are blown into a snowy mass:  
The roses lie upon the grass  
Like little shreds of crimson silk.

### II LA MER

p. 222

A WHITE mist drifts across the shrouds,  
A wild moon in this wintry sky  
Gleams like an angry lion's eye  
Out of a mane of tawny clouds.

The muffled steersman at the wheel  
Is but a shadow in the gloom;—  
And in the throbbing engine-room  
Leap the long rods of polished steel.

The shattered storm has left its trace  
Upon this huge and heaving dome,  
For the thin threads of yellow foam  
Float on the waves like ravelled lace.

## UNDER THE BALCONY

p. 223

O BEAUTIFUL star with the crimson mouth!  
O moon with the brows of gold!  
Rise up, rise up, from the odorous south!  
And light for my love her way,  
Lest her little feet should stray  
On the windy hill and the wold!  
O beautiful star with the crimson mouth!  
O moon with the brows of gold!

O ship that shakes on the desolate sea!  
O ship with the wet, white sail!  
Put in, put in, to the port to me!  
For my love and I would go  
To the land where the daffodils blow  
In the heart of a violet dale!  
O ship that shakes on the desolate sea!  
O ship with the wet, white sail!

O rapturous bird with the low, sweet note!  
O bird that sits on the spray!  
Sing on, sing on, from your soft brown throat!  
And my love in her little bed  
Will listen, and lift her head  
From the pillow, and come my way!  
O rapturous bird with the low, sweet note!  
O bird that sits on the spray!

p. 224

O blossom that hangs in the tremulous air!  
O blossom with lips of snow!  
Come down, come down, for my love to wear!  
You will die on her head in a crown,  
You will die in a fold of her gown,



To her little light heart you will go!  
O blossom that hangs in the tremulous air!  
O blossom with lips of snow!

## THE HARLOT'S HOUSE

p. 225

We caught the tread of dancing feet,  
We loitered down the moonlit street,  
And stopped beneath the harlot's house.

Inside, above the din and fray,  
We heard the loud musicians play  
The 'Treues Liebes Herz' of Strauss.

Like strange mechanical grotesques,  
Making fantastic arabesques,  
The shadows raced across the blind.

We watched the ghostly dancers spin  
To sound of horn and violin,  
Like black leaves wheeling in the wind.

Like wire-pulled automatons,  
Slim silhouetted skeletons  
Went sidling through the slow quadrille,

Then took each other by the hand,  
And danced a stately saraband;  
Their laughter echoed thin and shrill.

Sometimes a clockwork puppet pressed  
A phantom lover to her breast,  
Sometimes they seemed to try to sing.

p. 226

Sometimes a horrible marionette  
Came out, and smoked its cigarette  
Upon the steps like a live thing.

Then, turning to my love, I said,  
'The dead are dancing with the dead,  
The dust is whirling with the dust.'

But she—she heard the violin,  
And left my side, and entered in:  
Love passed into the house of lust.

Then suddenly the tune went false,  
The dancers wearied of the waltz,  
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.

And down the long and silent street,  
The dawn, with silver-sandalled feet,  
Crept like a frightened girl.

## LE JARDIN DES TUILERIES

p. 227

THIS winter air is keen and cold,  
And keen and cold this winter sun,  
But round my chair the children run  
Like little things of dancing gold.

Sometimes about the painted kiosk  
The mimic soldiers strut and stride,  
Sometimes the blue-eyed brigands hide  
In the bleak tangles of the bosk.

And sometimes, while the old nurse cons  
Her book, they steal across the square,  
And launch their paper navies where  
Huge Triton writhes in greenish bronze.

And now in mimic flight they flee,  
And now they rush, a boisterous band—  
And, tiny hand on tiny hand,  
Climb up the black and leafless tree.

Ah! cruel tree! if I were you,  
And children climbed me, for their sake  
Though it be winter I would break  
Into spring blossoms white and blue!

THESE are the letters which Endymion wrote  
 To one he loved in secret, and apart.  
 And now the brawlers of the auction mart  
 Bargain and bid for each poor blotted note,  
 Ay! for each separate pulse of passion quote  
 The merchant's price. I think they love not art  
 Who break the crystal of a poet's heart  
 That small and sickly eyes may glare and gloat.

Is it not said that many years ago,  
 In a far Eastern town, some soldiers ran  
 With torches through the midnight, and began  
 To wrangle for mean raiment, and to throw  
 Dice for the garments of a wretched man,  
 Not knowing the God's wonder, or His woe?

### THE NEW REMORSE

p. 229

THE sin was mine; I did not understand.  
 So now is music prisoned in her cave,  
 Save where some ebbing desultory wave  
 Frets with its restless whirls this meagre strand.  
 And in the withered hollow of this land  
 Hath Summer dug herself so deep a grave,  
 That hardly can the leaden willow crave  
 One silver blossom from keen Winter's hand.

But who is this who cometh by the shore?  
 (Nay, love, look up and wonder!) Who is this  
 Who cometh in dyed garments from the South?  
 It is thy new-found Lord, and he shall kiss  
 The yet unravished roses of thy mouth,  
 And I shall weep and worship, as before.

### FANTAISIES DÉCORATIVES

p. 230

#### I LE PANNEAU

UNDER the rose-tree's dancing shade  
 There stands a little ivory girl,  
 Pulling the leaves of pink and pearl  
 With pale green nails of polished jade.

The red leaves fall upon the mould,  
 The white leaves flutter, one by one,  
 Down to a blue bowl where the sun,  
 Like a great dragon, writhes in gold.

The white leaves float upon the air,  
 The red leaves flutter idly down,  
 Some fall upon her yellow gown,  
 And some upon her raven hair.

She takes an amber lute and sings,  
 And as she sings a silver crane  
 Begins his scarlet neck to strain,  
 And flap his burnished metal wings.

She takes a lute of amber bright,  
 And from the thicket where he lies  
 Her lover, with his almond eyes,  
 Watches her movements in delight.

And now she gives a cry of fear,  
 And tiny tears begin to start:  
 A thorn has wounded with its dart  
 The pink-veined sea-shell of her ear.

And now she laughs a merry note:  
 There has fallen a petal of the rose  
 Just where the yellow satin shows  
 The blue-veined flower of her throat.

With pale green nails of polished jade,

p. 231

Pulling the leaves of pink and pearl,  
There stands a little ivory girl  
Under the rose-tree's dancing shade.

## II LES BALLONS

p. 232

AGAINST these turbid turquoise skies  
The light and luminous balloons  
Dip and drift like satin moons,  
Drift like silken butterflies;  
Reel with every windy gust,  
Rise and reel like dancing girls,  
Float like strange transparent pearls,  
Fall and float like silver dust.  
Now to the low leaves they cling,  
Each with coy fantastic pose,  
Each a petal of a rose  
Straining at a gossamer string.  
Then to the tall trees they climb,  
Like thin globes of amethyst,  
Wandering opals keeping tryst  
With the rubies of the lime.

## CANZONET

p. 233

I HAVE no store  
Of gryphon-guarded gold;  
Now, as before,  
Bare is the shepherd's fold.  
Rubies nor pearls  
Have I to gem thy throat;  
Yet woodland girls  
Have loved the shepherd's note.

Then pluck a reed  
And bid me sing to thee,  
For I would feed  
Thine ears with melody,  
Who art more fair  
Than fairest fleur-de-lys,  
More sweet and rare  
Than sweetest ambergris.

What dost thou fear?  
Young Hyacinth is slain,  
Pan is not here,  
And will not come again.  
No hornèd Faun  
Treads down the yellow leas,  
No God at dawn  
Steals through the olive trees.

Hylas is dead,  
Nor will he e'er divine  
Those little red  
Rose-petalled lips of thine.  
On the high hill  
No ivory dryads play,  
Silver and still  
Sinks the sad autumn day.

p. 234

## SYMPHONY IN YELLOW

p. 235

AN omnibus across the bridge  
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,  
And, here and there, a passer-by  
Shows like a little restless midge.  
Big barges full of yellow hay  
Are moored against the shadowy wharf,  
And, like a yellow silken scarf,  
The thick fog hangs along the quay.

The yellow leaves begin to fade  
And flutter from the Temple elms,  
And at my feet the pale green Thames  
Lies like a rod of rippled jade.

## IN THE FOREST

p. 236

OUT of the mid-wood's twilight  
Into the meadow's dawn,  
Ivory limbed and brown-eyed,  
Flashes my Faun!

He skips through the copses singing,  
And his shadow dances along,  
And I know not which I should follow,  
Shadow or song!

O Hunter, snare me his shadow!  
O Nightingale, catch me his strain!  
Else moonstruck with music and madness  
I track him in vain!

## TO MY WIFE

p. 237

WITH A COPY OF MY POEMS

I CAN write no stately proem  
As a prelude to my lay;  
From a poet to a poem  
I would dare to say.

For if of these fallen petals  
One to you seem fair,  
Love will waft it till it settles  
On your hair.

And when wind and winter harden  
All the loveless land,  
It will whisper of the garden,  
You will understand.

## WITH A COPY OF 'A HOUSE OF POMEGRANATES'

p. 238

Go, little book,  
To him who, on a lute with horns of pearl,  
Sang of the white feet of the Golden Girl:  
And bid him look  
Into thy pages: it may hap that he  
May find that golden maidens dance through thee.

## ROSES AND RUE

p. 239

(To L. L.)

COULD we dig up this long-buried treasure,  
Were it worth the pleasure,  
We never could learn love's song,  
We are parted too long.

Could the passionate past that is fled  
Call back its dead,  
Could we live it all over again,  
Were it worth the pain!

I remember we used to meet  
By an ivied seat,  
And you warbled each pretty word  
With the air of a bird;

And your voice had a quaver in it,  
Just like a linnet,  
And shook, as the blackbird's throat  
With its last big note;

And your eyes, they were green and grey  
Like an April day,  
But lit into amethyst  
When I stooped and kissed;

And your mouth, it would never smile  
 For a long, long while,  
 Then it rippled all over with laughter  
 Five minutes after.

You were always afraid of a shower,  
 Just like a flower:  
 I remember you started and ran  
 When the rain began.

I remember I never could catch you,  
 For no one could match you,  
 You had wonderful, luminous, fleet,  
 Little wings to your feet.

I remember your hair—did I tie it?  
 For it always ran riot—  
 Like a tangled sunbeam of gold:  
 These things are old.

I remember so well the room,  
 And the lilac bloom  
 That beat at the dripping pane  
 In the warm June rain;

And the colour of your gown,  
 It was amber-brown,  
 And two yellow satin bows  
 From your shoulders rose.

And the handkerchief of French lace  
 Which you held to your face—  
 Had a small tear left a stain?  
 Or was it the rain?

On your hand as it waved adieu  
 There were veins of blue;  
 In your voice as it said good-bye  
 Was a petulant cry,

'You have only wasted your life.'  
 (Ah, that was the knife!)  
 When I rushed through the garden gate  
 It was all too late.

Could we live it over again,  
 Were it worth the pain,  
 Could the passionate past that is fled  
 Call back its dead!

Well, if my heart must break,  
 Dear love, for your sake,  
 It will break in music, I know,  
 Poets' hearts break so.

But strange that I was not told  
 That the brain can hold  
 In a tiny ivory cell  
 God's heaven and hell.

## DÉSESPOIR

THE seasons send their ruin as they go,  
 For in the spring the narciss shows its head  
 Nor withers till the rose has flamed to red,  
 And in the autumn purple violets blow,  
 And the slim crocus stirs the winter snow;  
 Wherefore yon leafless trees will bloom again  
 And this grey land grow green with summer rain  
 And send up cowslips for some boy to mow.

But what of life whose bitter hungry sea  
 Flows at our heels, and gloom of sunless night  
 Covers the days which never more return?  
 Ambition, love and all the thoughts that burn  
 We lose too soon, and only find delight  
 In withered husks of some dead memory.

## I

O goat-foot God of Arcady!  
 This modern world is grey and old,  
 And what remains to us of thee?

No more the shepherd lads in glee  
 Throw apples at thy wattled fold,  
 O goat-foot God of Arcady!

Nor through the laurels can one see  
 Thy soft brown limbs, thy beard of gold,  
 And what remains to us of thee?

And dull and dead our Thames would be,  
 For here the winds are chill and cold,  
 O goat-foot God of Arcady!

Then keep the tomb of Helice,  
 Thine olive-woods, thy vine-clad wold,  
 And what remains to us of thee?

Though many an unsung elegy  
 Sleeps in the reeds our rivers hold,  
 O goat-foot God of Arcady!  
 Ah, what remains to us of thee?

## II

p. 244

Ah, leave the hills of Arcady,  
 Thy satyrs and their wanton play,  
 This modern world hath need of thee.

No nymph or Faun indeed have we,  
 For Faun and nymph are old and grey,  
 Ah, leave the hills of Arcady!

This is the land where liberty  
 Lit grave-browed Milton on his way,  
 This modern world hath need of thee!

A land of ancient chivalry  
 Where gentle Sidney saw the day,  
 Ah, leave the hills of Arcady!

This fierce sea-lion of the sea,  
 This England lacks some stronger lay,  
 This modern world hath need of thee!

Then blow some trumpet loud and free,  
 And give thine oaten pipe away,  
 Ah, leave the hills of Arcady!  
 This modern world hath need of thee!

**THE SPHINX**

p. 245

TO  
 MARCEL SCHWOB  
 IN FRIENDSHIP  
 AND  
 IN ADMIRATION

**THE SPHINX**

p. 247

IN a dim corner of my room for longer than my fancy thinks  
 A beautiful and silent Sphinx has watched me through the shifting gloom.

Inviolate and immobile she does not rise she does not stir  
 For silver moons are naught to her and naught to her the suns that reel.

Red follows grey across the air, the waves of moonlight ebb and flow  
 But with the Dawn she does not go and in the night-time she is there.

Dawn follows Dawn and Nights grow old and all the while this curious cat  
 Lies couching on the Chinese mat with eyes of satin rimmed with gold.

Upon the mat she lies and leers and on the tawny throat of her  
Flutters the soft and silky fur or ripples to her pointed ears.

Come forth, my lovely seneschal! so somnolent, so statuesque!  
Come forth you exquisite grotesque! half woman and half animal!

p. 248

Come forth my lovely languorous Sphinx! and put your head upon my knee!  
And let me stroke your throat and see your body spotted like the Lynx!

And let me touch those curving claws of yellow ivory and grasp  
The tail that like a monstrous Asp coils round your heavy velvet paws!

A THOUSAND weary centuries are thine while I have hardly seen  
Some twenty summers cast their green for Autumn's gaudy liveries.

p. 249

But you can read the Hieroglyphs on the great sandstone obelisks,  
And you have talked with Basilisks, and you have looked on Hippogriffs.

O tell me, were you standing by when Isis to Osiris knelt?  
And did you watch the Egyptian melt her union for Antony

And drink the jewel-drunken wine and bend her head in mimic awe  
To see the huge proconsul draw the salted tunny from the brine?

And did you mark the Cyprian kiss white Adon on his catafalque?  
And did you follow Amenalk, the God of Heliopolis?

p. 250

And did you talk with Thoth, and did you hear the moon-horned Io weep?  
And know the painted kings who sleep beneath the wedge-shaped Pyramid?

LIFT up your large black satin eyes which are like cushions where one sinks!  
Fawn at my feet, fantastic Sphinx! and sing me all your memories!

p. 251

Sing to me of the Jewish maid who wandered with the Holy Child,  
And how you led them through the wild, and how they slept beneath your shade.

Sing to me of that odorous green eve when crouching by the marge  
You heard from Adrian's gilded barge the laughter of Antinous

And lapped the stream and fed your drouth and watched with hot and hungry stare  
The ivory body of that rare young slave with his pomegranate mouth!

Sing to me of the Labyrinth in which the twi-formed bull was stalled!  
Sing to me of the night you crawled across the temple's granite plinth

When through the purple corridors the screaming scarlet Ibis flew  
In terror, and a horrid dew dripped from the moaning Mandragores,

p. 252

And the great torpid crocodile within the tank shed slimy tears,  
And tare the jewels from his ears and staggered back into the Nile,

And the priests cursed you with shrill psalms as in your claws you seized their snake  
And crept away with it to slake your passion by the shuddering palms.

WHO were your lovers? who were they who wrestled for you in the dust?  
Which was the vessel of your Lust? What Leman had you, every day?

p. 253

Did giant Lizards come and crouch before you on the reedy banks?  
Did Gryphons with great metal flanks leap on you in your trampled couch?

Did monstrous hippopotami come sidling toward you in the mist?  
Did gilt-scaled dragons writhe and twist with passion as you passed them by?

And from the brick-built Lycian tomb what horrible Chimera came  
With fearful heads and fearful flame to breed new wonders from your womb?

OR had you shameful secret quests and did you harry to your home  
Some Nereid coiled in amber foam with curious rock crystal breasts?

p. 254

Or did you treading through the froth call to the brown Sidonian  
For tidings of Leviathan, Leviathan or Behemoth?

Or did you when the sun was set climb up the cactus-covered slope  
To meet your swarthy Ethiop whose body was of polished jet?

Or did you while the earthen skiffs dropped down the grey Nilotic flats  
At twilight and the flickering bats flew round the temple's triple glyphs

Steal to the border of the bar and swim across the silent lake

And slink into the vault and make the Pyramid your lúpanar

Till from each black sarcophagus rose up the painted swathèd dead?  
Or did you lure unto your bed the ivory-horned Tragelaphos?

p. 255

Or did you love the god of flies who plagued the Hebrews and was splashed  
With wine unto the waist? or Pasht, who had green beryls for her eyes?

Or that young god, the Tyrian, who was more amorous than the dove  
Of Ashtaroth? or did you love the god of the Assyrian

Whose wings, like strange transparent talc, rose high above his hawk-faced head,  
Painted with silver and with red and ribbed with rods of Oreichalch?

Or did huge Apis from his car leap down and lay before your feet  
Big blossoms of the honey-sweet and honey-coloured nenuphar?

How subtle-secret is your smile! Did you love none then? Nay, I know  
Great Ammon was your bedfellow! He lay with you beside the Nile!

p. 256

The river-horses in the slime trumpeted when they saw him come  
Odorous with Syrian galbanum and smeared with spikenard and with thyme.

He came along the river bank like some tall galley argent-sailed,  
He strode across the waters, mailed in beauty, and the waters sank.

He strode across the desert sand: he reached the valley where you lay:  
He waited till the dawn of day: then touched your black breasts with his hand.

You kissed his mouth with mouths of flame: you made the hornèd god your own:  
You stood behind him on his throne: you called him by his secret name.

You whispered monstrous oracles into the caverns of his ears:  
With blood of goats and blood of steers you taught him monstrous miracles.

p. 257

White Ammon was your bedfellow! Your chamber was the steaming Nile!  
And with your curved archaic smile you watched his passion come and go.

WITH Syrian oils his brows were bright: and wide-spread as a tent at noon  
His marble limbs made pale the moon and lent the day a larger light.

p. 258

His long hair was nine cubits' span and coloured like that yellow gem  
Which hidden in their garment's hem the merchants bring from Kurdistan.

His face was as the must that lies upon a vat of new-made wine:  
The seas could not insapphirine the perfect azure of his eyes.

His thick soft throat was white as milk and threaded with thin veins of blue:  
And curious pearls like frozen dew were broidered on his flowing silk.

ON pearl and porphyry pedestalled he was too bright to look upon:  
For on his ivory breast there shone the wondrous ocean-emerald,

p. 259

That mystic moonlit jewel which some diver of the Colchian caves  
Had found beneath the blackening waves and carried to the Colchian witch.

Before his gilded galiot ran naked vine-wreathed corybants,  
And lines of swaying elephants knelt down to draw his chariot,

And lines of swarthy Nubians bare up his litter as he rode  
Down the great granite-paven road between the nodding peacock-fans.

The merchants brought him steatite from Sidon in their painted ships:  
The meanest cup that touched his lips was fashioned from a chrysolite.

The merchants brought him cedar chests of rich apparel bound with cords:  
His train was borne by Memphian lords: young kings were glad to be his guests.

p. 260

Ten hundred shaven priests did bow to Ammon's altar day and night,  
Ten hundred lamps did wave their light through Ammon's carven house—and now

Foul snake and speckled adder with their young ones crawl from stone to stone  
For ruined is the house and prone the great rose-marble monolith!

Wild ass or trotting jackal comes and couches in the mouldering gates:  
Wild satyrs call unto their mates across the fallen fluted drums.

And on the summit of the pile the blue-faced ape of Horus sits  
And gibbers while the fig-tree splits the pillars of the peristyle



THE god is scattered here and there: deep hidden in the windy sand  
I saw his giant granite hand still clenched in impotent despair.

p. 261

And many a wandering caravan of stately negroes silken-shawled,  
Crossing the desert, halts appalled before the neck that none can span.

And many a bearded Bedouin draws back his yellow-striped burnous  
To gaze upon the Titan thews of him who was thy paladin.

Go, seek his fragments on the moor and wash them in the evening dew,  
And from their pieces make anew thy mutilated paramour!

p. 262

Go, seek them where they lie alone and from their broken pieces make  
Thy bruised bedfellow! And wake mad passions in the senseless stone!

Charm his dull ear with Syrian hymns! he loved your body! oh, be kind,  
Pour spikenard on his hair, and wind soft rolls of linen round his limbs!

Wind round his head the figured coins! stain with red fruits those pallid lips!  
Weave purple for his shrunken hips! and purple for his barren loins!

AWAY to Egypt! Have no fear. Only one God has ever died.  
Only one God has let His side be wounded by a soldier's spear.

p. 263

But these, thy lovers, are not dead. Still by the hundred-cubit gate  
Dog-faced Anubis sits in state with lotus-lilies for thy head.

Still from his chair of porphyry gaunt Memnon strains his lidless eyes  
Across the empty land, and cries each yellow morning unto thee.

And Nilus with his broken horn lies in his black and oozy bed  
And till thy coming will not spread his waters on the withering corn.

Your lovers are not dead, I know. They will rise up and hear your voice  
And clash their cymbals and rejoice and run to kiss your mouth! And so,

Set wings upon your argosies! Set horses to your ebon car!  
Back to your Nile! Or if you are grown sick of dead divinities

p. 264

Follow some roving lion's spoor across the copper-coloured plain,  
Reach out and hale him by the mane and bid him be your paramour!

Couch by his side upon the grass and set your white teeth in his throat  
And when you hear his dying note lash your long flanks of polished brass

And take a tiger for your mate, whose amber sides are flecked with black,  
And ride upon his gilded back in triumph through the Theban gate,

And toy with him in amorous jests, and when he turns, and snarls, and gnaws,  
O smite him with your jasper claws! and bruise him with your agate breasts!

WHY are you tarrying? Get hence! I weary of your sullen ways,  
I weary of your steadfast gaze, your somnolent magnificence.

p. 265

Your horrible and heavy breath makes the light flicker in the lamp,  
And on my brow I feel the damp and dreadful dews of night and death.

Your eyes are like fantastic moons that shiver in some stagnant lake,  
Your tongue is like a scarlet snake that dances to fantastic tunes,

Your pulse makes poisonous melodies, and your black throat is like the hole  
Left by some torch or burning coal on Saracenic tapestries.

Away! The sulphur-coloured stars are hurrying through the Western gate!  
Away! Or it may be too late to climb their silent silver cars!

See, the dawn shivers round the grey gilt-dialled towers, and the rain  
Streams down each diamonded pane and blurs with tears the wannish day.

p. 266

What snake-tressed fury fresh from Hell, with uncouth gestures and unclean,  
Stole from the poppy-drowsy queen and led you to a student's cell?

WHAT songless tongueless ghost of sin crept through the curtains of the night,  
And saw my taper burning bright, and knocked, and bade you enter in?

p. 267

Are there not others more accursed, whiter with leprosy than I?  
Are Abana and Pharpar dry that you come here to slake your thirst?

Get hence, you loathsome mystery! Hideous animal, get hence!

You wake in me each bestial sense, you make me what I would not be.

You make my creed a barren sham, you wake foul dreams of sensual life,  
And Atys with his blood-stained knife were better than the thing I am.

False Sphinx! False Sphinx! By reedy Styx old Charon, leaning on his oar,  
Waits for my coin. Go thou before, and leave me to my crucifix,

Whose pallid burden, sick with pain, watches the world with wearied eyes,  
And weeps for every soul that dies, and weeps for every soul in vain.

p. 268

## THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

p. 269

IN MEMORIAM

C. T. W.

SOMETIME TROOPER OF THE ROYAL HORSE GUARDS

OBIIT H.M. PRISON, READING, BERKSHIRE

JULY 7, 1896

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## THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

p. 273

### I

He did not wear his scarlet coat,  
For blood and wine are red,  
And blood and wine were on his hands  
When they found him with the dead,  
The poor dead woman whom he loved,  
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men  
In a suit of shabby grey;  
A cricket cap was on his head,  
And his step seemed light and gay;  
But I never saw a man who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every drifting cloud that went  
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,  
Within another ring,  
And was wondering if the man had done  
A great or little thing,  
When a voice behind me whispered low,  
'*That fellow's got to swing.*'

p. 274

Dear Christ! the very prison walls  
Suddenly seemed to reel,  
And the sky above my head became  
Like a casque of scorching steel;  
And, though I was a soul in pain,  
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought  
Quickened his step, and why  
He looked upon the garish day  
With such a wistful eye;  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.



Yet each man kills the thing he loves,  
By each let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,  
 And some when they are old;  
 Some strangle with the hands of Lust,  
 Some with the hands of Gold:  
 The kindest use a knife, because  
 The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,  
 Some sell, and others buy;  
 Some do the deed with many tears,  
 And some without a sigh:  
 For each man kills the thing he loves,  
 Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame  
 On a day of dark disgrace,  
 Nor have a noose about his neck,  
 Nor a cloth upon his face,  
 Nor drop feet foremost through the floor  
 Into an empty space.



He does not sit with silent men  
 Who watch him night and day;  
 Who watch him when he tries to weep,  
 And when he tries to pray;  
 Who watch him lest himself should rob  
 The prison of its prey.

He does not wake at dawn to see  
 Dread figures throng his room,  
 The shivering Chaplain robed in white,  
 The Sheriff stern with gloom,  
 And the Governor all in shiny black,  
 With the yellow face of Doom.

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He does not rise in piteous haste  
 To put on convict-clothes,  
 While some coarse-mouthed Doctor gloats, and notes  
 Each new and nerve-twitched pose,  
 Fingering a watch whose little ticks  
 Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst  
 That sands one's throat, before  
 The hangman with his gardener's gloves  
 Slips through the padded door,  
 And binds one with three leathern thongs,  
 That the throat may thirst no more.

He does not bend his head to hear  
 The Burial Office read,  
 Nor, while the terror of his soul  
 Tells him he is not dead,  
 Cross his own coffin, as he moves  
 Into the hideous shed.

He does not stare upon the air  
 Through a little roof of glass:  
 He does not pray with lips of clay  
 For his agony to pass;  
 Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek  
 The kiss of Caiaphas.

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## II

p. 278

Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard,  
 In the suit of shabby grey:  
 His cricket cap was on his head,  
 And his step seemed light and gay,  
 But I never saw a man who looked  
 So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked  
 With such a wistful eye  
 Upon that little tent of blue

Which prisoners call the sky,  
And at every wandering cloud that trailed  
Its ravelled fleeces by.

He did not wring his hands, as do  
Those witless men who dare  
To try to rear the changeling Hope  
In the cave of black Despair:  
He only looked upon the sun,  
And drank the morning air.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,  
Nor did he peek or pine,  
But he drank the air as though it held  
Some healthful anodyne;  
With open mouth he drank the sun  
As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain,  
Who tramped the other ring,  
Forgot if we ourselves had done  
A great or little thing,  
And watched with gaze of dull amaze  
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass  
With a step so light and gay,  
And strange it was to see him look  
So wistfully at the day,  
And strange it was to think that he  
Had such a debt to pay.



For oak and elm have pleasant leaves  
That in the springtime shoot:  
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,  
With its adder-bitten root,  
And, green or dry, a man must die  
Before it bears its fruit!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace  
For which all worldlings try:  
But who would stand in hempen band  
Upon a scaffold high,  
And through a murderer's collar take  
His last look at the sky?

It is sweet to dance to violins  
When Love and Life are fair:  
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes  
Is delicate and rare:  
But it is not sweet with nimble feet  
To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise  
We watched him day by day,  
And wondered if each one of us  
Would end the self-same way,  
For none can tell to what red Hell  
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more  
Amongst the Trial Men,  
And I knew that he was standing up  
In the black dock's dreadful pen,  
And that never would I see his face  
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm  
We had crossed each other's way:  
But we made no sign, we said no word,  
We had no word to say;  
For we did not meet in the holy night,  
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,

Two outcast men we were:  
The world had thrust us from its heart,  
And God from out His care:  
And the iron gin that waits for Sin  
Had caught us in its snare.

III

p. 282

IN Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,  
And the dripping wall is high,  
So it was there he took the air  
Beneath the leaden sky,  
And by each side a Warder walked,  
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched  
His anguish night and day;  
Who watched him when he rose to weep,  
And when he crouched to pray;  
Who watched him lest himself should rob  
Their scaffold of its prey.

The Governor was strong upon  
The Regulations Act:  
The Doctor said that Death was but  
A scientific fact:  
And twice a day the Chaplain called,  
And left a little tract.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,  
And drank his quart of beer:  
His soul was resolute, and held  
No hiding-place for fear;  
He often said that he was glad  
The hangman's hands were near.

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But why he said so strange a thing  
No Warder dared to ask:  
For he to whom a watcher's doom  
Is given as his task,  
Must set a lock upon his lips,  
And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try  
To comfort or console:  
And what should Human Pity do  
Pent up in Murderers' Hole?  
What word of grace in such a place  
Could help a brother's soul?



With slouch and swing around the ring  
We trod the Fools' Parade!  
We did not care: we knew we were  
The Devil's Own Brigade:  
And shaven head and feet of lead  
Make a merry masquerade.

We tore the tarry rope to shreds  
With blunt and bleeding nails;  
We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,  
And cleaned the shining rails:  
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,  
And clattered with the pails.

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We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,  
We turned the dusty drill:  
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,  
And sweated on the mill:  
But in the heart of every man  
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day  
Crawled like a weed-clogged wave:  
And we forgot the bitter lot  
That waits for fool and knave,

Till once, as we tramped in from work,  
We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole  
Gaped for a living thing;  
The very mud cried out for blood  
To the thirsty asphalt ring:  
And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair  
Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent  
On Death and Dread and Doom:  
The hangman, with his little bag,  
Went shuffling through the gloom:  
And each man trembled as he crept  
Into his numbered tomb.

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That night the empty corridors  
Were full of forms of Fear,  
And up and down the iron town  
Stole feet we could not hear,  
And through the bars that hide the stars  
White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams  
In a pleasant meadow-land,  
The watchers watched him as he slept,  
And could not understand  
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep  
With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep  
Who never yet have wept:  
So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave—  
That endless vigil kept,  
And through each brain on hands of pain  
Another's terror crept.

Alas! it is a fearful thing  
To feel another's guilt!  
For, right within, the sword of Sin  
Pierced to its poisoned hilt,  
And as molten lead were the tears we shed  
For the blood we had not spilt.

p. 286

The Warders with their shoes of felt  
Crept by each padlocked door,  
And peeped and saw, with eyes of awe,  
Grey figures on the floor,  
And wondered why men knelt to pray  
Who never prayed before.

All through the night we knelt and prayed,  
Mad mourners of a corse!  
The troubled plumes of midnight were  
The plumes upon a hearse:  
And bitter wine upon a sponge  
Was the savour of Remorse.

The grey cock crew, the red cock crew,  
But never came the day:  
And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,  
In the corners where we lay:  
And each evil sprite that walks by night  
Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast,  
Like travellers through a mist:  
They mocked the moon in a rigadon  
Of delicate turn and twist,  
And with formal pace and loathsome grace  
The phantoms kept their tryst.

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With mop and mow, we saw them go,

Slim shadows hand in hand:  
About, about, in ghostly rout  
They trod a saraband:  
And the damned grotesques made arabesques,  
Like the wind upon the sand!

With the pirouettes of marionettes,  
They tripped on pointed tread:  
But with flutes of Fear they filled the ear,  
As their grisly masque they led,  
And loud they sang, and long they sang,  
For they sang to wake the dead.

*'Oho!' they cried, 'The world is wide,  
But fettered limbs go lame!  
And once, or twice, to throw the dice  
Is a gentlemanly game,  
But he does not win who plays with Sin  
In the secret House of Shame.'*

No things of air these antics were,  
That frolicked with such glee:  
To men whose lives were held in gyves,  
And whose feet might not go free,  
Ah! wounds of Christ! they were living things,  
Most terrible to see.

Around, around, they waltzed and wound;  
Some wheeled in smirking pairs;  
With the mincing step of a demirep  
Some sidled up the stairs:  
And with subtle sneer, and fawning leer,  
Each helped us at our prayers.

The morning wind began to moan,  
But still the night went on:  
Through its giant loom the web of gloom  
Crept till each thread was spun:  
And, as we prayed, we grew afraid  
Of the Justice of the Sun.

The moaning wind went wandering round  
The weeping prison-wall:  
Till like a wheel of turning steel  
We felt the minutes crawl:  
O moaning wind! what had we done  
To have such a seneschal?

At last I saw the shadowed bars,  
Like a lattice wrought in lead,  
Move right across the whitewashed wall  
That faced my three-plank bed,  
And I knew that somewhere in the world  
God's dreadful dawn was red.

At six o'clock we cleaned our cells,  
At seven all was still,  
But the sough and swing of a mighty wing  
The prison seemed to fill,  
For the Lord of Death with icy breath  
Had entered in to kill.

He did not pass in purple pomp,  
Nor ride a moon-white steed.  
Three yards of cord and a sliding board  
Are all the gallows' need:  
So with rope of shame the Herald came  
To do the secret deed.

We were as men who through a fen  
Of filthy darkness grope:  
We did not dare to breathe a prayer,  
Or to give our anguish scope:  
Something was dead in each of us,  
And what was dead was Hope.

For Man's grim Justice goes its way,  
And will not swerve aside:  
It slays the weak, it slays the strong,

It has a deadly stride:  
With iron heel it slays the strong,  
The monstrous parricide!

We waited for the stroke of eight:  
Each tongue was thick with thirst:  
For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate  
That makes a man accursed,  
And Fate will use a running noose  
For the best man and the worst.

We had no other thing to do,  
Save to wait for the sign to come:  
So, like things of stone in a valley lone,  
Quiet we sat and dumb:  
But each man's heart beat thick and quick,  
Like a madman on a drum!

With sudden shock the prison-clock  
Smote on the shivering air,  
And from all the gaol rose up a wail  
Of impotent despair,  
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear  
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things  
In the crystal of a dream,  
We saw the greasy hempen rope  
Hooked to the blackened beam,  
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare  
Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so  
That he gave that bitter cry,  
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,  
None knew so well as I:  
For he who lives more lives than one  
More deaths than one must die.

#### IV

THERE is no chapel on the day  
On which they hang a man:  
The Chaplain's heart is far too sick,  
Or his face is far too wan,  
Or there is that written in his eyes  
Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,  
And then they rang the bell,  
And the Warders with their jingling keys  
Opened each listening cell,  
And down the iron stair we tramped,  
Each from his separate Hell.

Out into God's sweet air we went,  
But not in wonted way,  
For this man's face was white with fear,  
And that man's face was grey,  
And I never saw sad men who looked  
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked  
With such a wistful eye  
Upon that little tent of blue  
We prisoners called the sky,  
And at every careless cloud that passed  
In happy freedom by.

But there were those amongst us all  
Who walked with downcast head,  
And knew that, had each got his due,  
They should have died instead:  
He had but killed a thing that lived,  
Whilst they had killed the dead.

For he who sins a second time  
Wakes a dead soul to pain,  
And draws it from its spotted shroud,

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And makes it bleed again,  
And makes it bleed great gouts of blood,  
And makes it bleed in vain!



Like ape or clown, in monstrous garb  
With crooked arrows starred,  
Silently we went round and round  
The slippery asphalt yard;  
Silently we went round and round,  
And no man spoke a word.

Silently we went round and round,  
And through each hollow mind  
The Memory of dreadful things  
Rushed like a dreadful wind,  
And Horror stalked before each man,  
And Terror crept behind.

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The Warders strutted up and down,  
And kept their herd of brutes,  
Their uniforms were spick and span,  
And they wore their Sunday suits,  
But we knew the work they had been at,  
By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,  
There was no grave at all:  
Only a stretch of mud and sand  
By the hideous prison-wall,  
And a little heap of burning lime,  
That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,  
Such as few men can claim:  
Deep down below a prison-yard,  
Naked for greater shame,  
He lies, with fetters on each foot,  
Wrapt in a sheet of flame!

And all the while the burning lime  
Eats flesh and bone away,  
It eats the brittle bone by night,  
And the soft flesh by day,  
It eats the flesh and bone by turns,  
But it eats the heart away.

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For three long years they will not sow  
Or root or seedling there:  
For three long years the unblest spot  
Will sterile be and bare,  
And look upon the wondering sky  
With unreproachful stare.

They think a murderer's heart would taint  
Each simple seed they sow.  
It is not true! God's kindly earth  
Is kindlier than men know,  
And the red rose would but blow more red,  
The white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose!  
Out of his heart a white!  
For who can say by what strange way,  
Christ brings His will to light,  
Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore  
Bloomed in the great Pope's sight?

But neither milk-white rose nor red  
May bloom in prison-air;

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The shard, the pebble, and the flint,  
Are what they give us there:  
For flowers have been known to heal  
A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white,  
Petal by petal, fall  
On that stretch of mud and sand that lies  
By the hideous prison-wall,  
To tell the men who tramp the yard  
That God's Son died for all.



Yet though the hideous prison-wall  
Still hems him round and round,  
And a spirit may not walk by night  
That is with fetters bound,  
And a spirit may but weep that lies  
In such unholy ground,

He is at peace—this wretched man—  
At peace, or will be soon:  
There is no thing to make him mad,  
Nor does Terror walk at noon,  
For the lampless Earth in which he lies  
Has neither Sun nor Moon.

They hanged him as a beast is hanged:  
They did not even toll  
A requiem that might have brought  
Rest to his startled soul,  
But hurriedly they took him out,  
And hid him in a hole.

They stripped him of his canvas clothes,  
And gave him to the flies:  
They mocked the swollen purple throat,  
And the stark and staring eyes:  
And with laughter loud they heaped the shroud  
In which their convict lies.

The Chaplain would not kneel to pray  
By his dishonoured grave:  
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross  
That Christ for sinners gave,  
Because the man was one of those  
Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well; he has but passed  
To Life's appointed bourne:  
And alien tears will fill for him  
Pity's long-broken urn,  
For his mourners will be outcast men,  
And outcasts always mourn

V

I KNOW not whether Laws be right,  
Or whether Laws be wrong;  
All that we know who lie in gaol  
Is that the wall is strong;  
And that each day is like a year,  
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law  
That men have made for Man,  
Since first Man took his brother's life,  
And the sad world began,  
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff  
With a most evil fan.

This too I know—and wise it were  
If each could know the same—  
That every prison that men build  
Is built with bricks of shame,  
And bound with bars lest Christ should see

How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,  
And blind the goodly sun:  
And they do well to hide their Hell,  
For in it things are done  
That Son of God nor son of Man  
Ever should look upon!



The vilest deeds like poison weeds,  
Bloom well in prison-air;  
It is only what is good in Man  
That wastes and withers there:  
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,  
And the Warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child  
Till it weeps both night and day:  
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,  
And gibe the old and grey,  
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,  
And none a word may say.

Each narrow cell in which we dwell  
Is a foul and dark latrine,  
And the fetid breath of living Death  
Chokes up each grated screen,  
And all, but Lust, is turned to dust  
In Humanity's machine.

The brackish water that we drink  
Creeps with a loathsome slime,  
And the bitter bread they weigh in scales  
Is full of chalk and lime,  
And Sleep will not lie down, but walks  
Wild-eyed, and cries to Time.



But though lean Hunger and green Thirst  
Like asp with adder fight,  
We have little care of prison fare,  
For what chills and kills outright  
Is that every stone one lifts by day  
Becomes one's heart by night.

With midnight always in one's heart,  
And twilight in one's cell,  
We turn the crank, or tear the rope,  
Each in his separate Hell,  
And the silence is more awful far  
Than the sound of a brazen bell.

And never a human voice comes near  
To speak a gentle word:  
And the eye that watches through the door  
Is pitiless and hard:  
And by all forgot, we rot and rot,  
With soul and body marred.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain  
Degraded and alone:  
And some men curse, and some men weep,  
And some men make no moan:  
But God's eternal Laws are kind  
And break the heart of stone.



And every human heart that breaks,  
In prison-cell or yard,  
Is as that broken box that gave  
Its treasure to the Lord,

And filled the unclean leper's house  
With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah! happy they whose hearts can break  
And peace of pardon win!  
How else may man make straight his plan  
And cleanse his soul from Sin?  
How else but through a broken heart  
May Lord Christ enter in?



And he of the swollen purple throat,  
And the stark and staring eyes,  
Waits for the holy hands that took  
The Thief to Paradise;  
And a broken and a contrite heart  
The Lord will not despise.

The man in red who reads the Law  
Gave him three weeks of life,  
Three little weeks in which to heal  
His soul of his soul's strife,  
And cleanse from every blot of blood  
The hand that held the knife.

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And with tears of blood he cleansed the hand,  
The hand that held the steel:  
For only blood can wipe out blood,  
And only tears can heal:  
And the crimson stain that was of Cain  
Became Christ's snow-white seal.

VI

p. 303

IN Reading gaol by Reading town  
There is a pit of shame,  
And in it lies a wretched man  
Eaten by teeth of flame,  
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,  
And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,  
In silence let him lie:  
No need to waste the foolish tear,  
Or heave the windy sigh:  
The man had killed the thing he loved,  
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,  
By all let this be heard,  
Some do it with a bitter look,  
Some with a flattering word,  
The coward does it with a kiss,  
The brave man with a sword!

## RAVENNA

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*Newdigate Prize Poem*  
Recited in the Sheldonian Theatre  
Oxford  
June 26th, 1878

TO MY FRIEND  
GEORGE FLEMING  
AUTHOR OF  
'THE NILE NOVEL' AND 'MIRAGE'

*Ravenna, March 1877*  
*Oxford, March 1878*

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RAVENNA

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## I.

A YEAR ago I breathed the Italian air,—  
 And yet, methinks this northern Spring is fair,—  
 These fields made golden with the flower of March,  
 The throstle singing on the feathered larch,  
 The cawing rooks, the wood-doves fluttering by,  
 The little clouds that race across the sky;  
 And fair the violet's gentle drooping head,  
 The primrose, pale for love uncomforted,  
 The rose that burgeons on the climbing briar,  
 The crocus-bed, (that seems a moon of fire  
 Round-girdled with a purple marriage-ring);  
 And all the flowers of our English Spring,  
 Fond snowdrops, and the bright-starred daffodil.  
 Up starts the lark beside the murmuring mill,  
 And breaks the gossamer-threads of early dew;  
 And down the river, like a flame of blue,  
 Keen as an arrow flies the water-king,  
 While the brown linnets in the greenwood sing.  
 A year ago!—it seems a little time  
 Since last I saw that lordly southern clime,  
 Where flower and fruit to purple radiance blow,  
 And like bright lamps the fabled apples glow.  
 Full Spring it was—and by rich flowering vines,  
 Dark olive-groves and noble forest-pines,  
 I rode at will; the moist glad air was sweet,  
 The white road rang beneath my horse's feet,  
 And musing on Ravenna's ancient name,  
 I watched the day till, marked with wounds of flame,  
 The turquoise sky to burnished gold was turned.

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O how my heart with boyish passion burned,  
 When far away across the sedge and mere  
 I saw that Holy City rising clear,  
 Crowned with her crown of towers!—On and on  
 I galloped, racing with the setting sun,  
 And ere the crimson after-glow was passed,  
 I stood within Ravenna's walls at last!

## II.

How strangely still! no sound of life or joy  
 Startles the air; no laughing shepherd-boy  
 Pipes on his reed, nor ever through the day  
 Comes the glad sound of children at their play:  
 O sad, and sweet, and silent! surely here  
 A man might dwell apart from troublous fear,  
 Watching the tide of seasons as they flow  
 From amorous Spring to Winter's rain and snow,  
 And have no thought of sorrow;—here, indeed,  
 Are Lethe's waters, and that fatal weed  
 Which makes a man forget his fatherland.

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Ay! amid lotus-meadows dost thou stand,  
 Like Proserpine, with poppy-laden head,  
 Guarding the holy ashes of the dead.  
 For though thy brood of warrior sons hath ceased,  
 Thy noble dead are with thee!—they at least  
 Are faithful to thine honour:—guard them well,  
 O childless city! for a mighty spell,  
 To wake men's hearts to dreams of things sublime,  
 Are the lone tombs where rest the Great of Time.

## III.

Yon lonely pillar, rising on the plain,  
 Marks where the bravest knight of France was slain,—  
 The Prince of chivalry, the Lord of war,  
 Gaston de Foix: for some untimely star  
 Led him against thy city, and he fell,  
 As falls some forest-lion fighting well.  
 Taken from life while life and love were new,  
 He lies beneath God's seamless veil of blue;  
 Tall lance-like reeds wave sadly o'er his head,  
 And oleanders bloom to deeper red,  
 Where his bright youth flowed crimson on the ground.

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Look farther north unto that broken mound,—  
There, prisoned now within a lordly tomb  
Raised by a daughter's hand, in lonely gloom,  
Huge-limbed Theodoric, the Gothic king,  
Sleeps after all his weary conquering.  
Time hath not spared his ruin,—wind and rain  
Have broken down his stronghold; and again  
We see that Death is mighty lord of all,  
And king and clown to ashen dust must fall

Mighty indeed *their* glory! yet to me  
Barbaric king, or knight of chivalry,  
Or the great queen herself, were poor and vain,  
Beside the grave where Dante rests from pain.  
His gilded shrine lies open to the air;  
And cunning sculptor's hands have carven there  
The calm white brow, as calm as earliest morn,  
The eyes that flashed with passionate love and scorn,  
The lips that sang of Heaven and of Hell,  
The almond-face which Giotto drew so well,  
The weary face of Dante;—to this day,  
Here in his place of resting, far away  
From Arno's yellow waters, rushing down  
Through the wide bridges of that fairy town,  
Where the tall tower of Giotto seems to rise  
A marble lily under sapphire skies!

Alas! my Dante! thou hast known the pain  
Of meaner lives,—the exile's galling chain,  
How steep the stairs within kings' houses are,  
And all the petty miseries which mar  
Man's nobler nature with the sense of wrong.  
Yet this dull world is grateful for thy song;  
Our nations do thee homage,—even she,  
That cruel queen of vine-clad Tuscany,  
Who bound with crown of thorns thy living brow,  
Hath decked thine empty tomb with laurels now,  
And begs in vain the ashes of her son.

O mightiest exile! all thy grief is done:  
Thy soul walks now beside thy Beatrice;  
Ravenna guards thine ashes: sleep in peace.

#### IV.

How lone this palace is; how grey the walls!  
No minstrel now wakes echoes in these halls.  
The broken chain lies rusting on the door,  
And noisome weeds have split the marble floor:  
Here lurks the snake, and here the lizards run  
By the stone lions blinking in the sun.  
Byron dwelt here in love and revelry  
For two long years—a second Anthony,  
Who of the world another Actium made!  
Yet suffered not his royal soul to fade,  
Or lyre to break, or lance to grow less keen,  
'Neath any wiles of an Egyptian queen.  
For from the East there came a mighty cry,  
And Greece stood up to fight for Liberty,  
And called him from Ravenna: never knight  
Rode forth more nobly to wild scenes of fight!  
None fell more bravely on ensanguined field,  
Borne like a Spartan back upon his shield!  
O Hellas! Hellas! in thine hour of pride,  
Thy day of might, remember him who died  
To wrest from off thy limbs the trammelling chain:  
O Salamis! O lone Platæan plain!  
O tossing waves of wild Euboean sea!  
O wind-swept heights of lone Thermopylæ!  
He loved you well—ay, not alone in word,  
Who freely gave to thee his lyre and sword,  
Like Æschylos at well-fought Marathon:

And England, too, shall glory in her son,  
Her warrior-poet, first in song and fight.  
No longer now shall Slander's venom'd spite  
Crawl like a snake across his perfect name,

Or mar the lordly scutcheon of his fame.

For as the olive-garland of the race,  
Which lights with joy each eager runner's face,  
As the red cross which saveth men in war,  
As a flame-bearded beacon seen from far  
By mariners upon a storm-tossed sea,—  
Such was his love for Greece and Liberty!

p. 313

Byron, thy crowns are ever fresh and green:  
Red leaves of rose from Sapphic Mitylene  
Shall bind thy brows; the myrtle blooms for thee,  
In hidden glades by lonely Castaly;  
The laurels wait thy coming: all are thine,  
And round thy head one perfect wreath will twine.

V.

The pine-tops rocked before the evening breeze  
With the hoarse murmur of the wintry seas,  
And the tall stems were streaked with amber bright;—  
I wandered through the wood in wild delight,  
Some startled bird, with fluttering wings and fleet,  
Made snow of all the blossoms; at my feet,  
Like silver crowns, the pale narcissi lay,  
And small birds sang on every twining spray.  
O waving trees, O forest liberty!  
Within your haunts at least a man is free,  
And half forgets the weary world of strife:  
The blood flows hotter, and a sense of life  
Wakes i' the quickening veins, while once again  
The woods are filled with gods we fancied slain.  
Long time I watched, and surely hoped to see  
Some goat-foot Pan make merry minstrelsy  
Amid the reeds! some startled Dryad-maid  
In girlish flight! or lurking in the glade,  
The soft brown limbs, the wanton treacherous face  
Of woodland god! Queen Dian in the chase,  
White-limbed and terrible, with look of pride,  
And leash of boar-hounds leaping at her side!  
Or Hylas mirrored in the perfect stream.

p. 314

O idle heart! O fond Hellenic dream!  
Ere long, with melancholy rise and swell,  
The evening chimes, the convent's vesper bell,  
Struck on mine ears amid the amorous flowers.  
Alas! alas! these sweet and honied hours  
Had whelmed my heart like some encroaching sea,  
And drowned all thoughts of black Gethsemane.

VI.

O lone Ravenna! many a tale is told  
Of thy great glories in the days of old:  
Two thousand years have passed since thou didst see  
Cæsar ride forth to royal victory.  
Mighty thy name when Rome's lean eagles flew  
From Britain's isles to far Euphrates blue;  
And of the peoples thou wast noble queen,  
Till in thy streets the Goth and Hun were seen.  
Discrowned by man, deserted by the sea,  
Thou sleepest, rocked in lonely misery!  
No longer now upon thy swelling tide,  
Pine-forest-like, thy myriad galleys ride!  
For where the brass-beaked ships were wont to float,  
The weary shepherd pipes his mournful note;  
And the white sheep are free to come and go  
Where Adria's purple waters used to flow.

p. 315

O fair! O sad! O Queen uncomforted!  
In ruined loveliness thou liest dead,  
Alone of all thy sisters; for at last  
Italia's royal warrior hath passed  
Rome's lordliest entrance, and hath worn his crown  
In the high temples of the Eternal Town!  
The Palatine hath welcomed back her king,  
And with his name the seven mountains ring!

And Naples hath outlived her dream of pain,  
And mocks her tyrant! Venice lives again,  
New risen from the waters! and the cry  
Of Light and Truth, of Love and Liberty,  
Is heard in lordly Genoa, and where  
The marble spires of Milan wound the air,  
Rings from the Alps to the Sicilian shore,  
And Dante's dream is now a dream no more.

p. 316

But thou, Ravenna, better loved than all,  
Thy ruined palaces are but a pall  
That hides thy fallen greatness! and thy name  
Burns like a grey and flickering candle-flame  
Beneath the noonday splendour of the sun  
Of new Italia! for the night is done,  
The night of dark oppression, and the day  
Hath dawned in passionate splendour: far away  
The Austrian hounds are hunted from the land,  
Beyond those ice-crowned citadels which stand  
Girdling the plain of royal Lombardy,  
From the far West unto the Eastern sea.

I know, indeed, that sons of thine have died  
In Lissa's waters, by the mountain-side  
Of Aspromonte, on Novara's plain,—  
Nor have thy children died for thee in vain:  
And yet, methinks, thou hast not drunk this wine  
From grapes new-crushed of Liberty divine,  
Thou hast not followed that immortal Star  
Which leads the people forth to deeds of war.  
Weary of life, thou liest in silent sleep,  
As one who marks the lengthening shadows creep,  
Careless of all the hurrying hours that run,  
Mourning some day of glory, for the sun  
Of Freedom hath not shewn to thee his face,  
And thou hast caught no flambeau in the race.

p. 317

Yet wake not from thy slumbers,—rest thee well,  
Amidst thy fields of amber asphodel,  
Thy lily-sprinkled meadows,—rest thee there,  
To mock all human greatness: who would dare  
To vent the paltry sorrows of his life  
Before thy ruins, or to praise the strife  
Of kings' ambition, and the barren pride  
Of warring nations! wert not thou the Bride  
Of the wild Lord of Adria's stormy sea!  
The Queen of double Empires! and to thee  
Were not the nations given as thy prey!  
And now—thy gates lie open night and day,  
The grass grows green on every tower and hall,  
The ghastly fig hath cleft thy bastioned wall;  
And where thy mailed warriors stood at rest  
The midnight owl hath made her secret nest.  
O fallen! fallen! from thy high estate,  
O city trammelled in the toils of Fate,  
Doth nought remain of all thy glorious days,  
But a dull shield, a crown of withered bays!

Yet who beneath this night of wars and fears,  
From tranquil tower can watch the coming years;  
Who can foretell what joys the day shall bring,  
Or why before the dawn the linnets sing?  
Thou, even thou, mayst wake, as wakes the rose  
To crimson splendour from its grave of snows;  
As the rich corn-fields rise to red and gold  
From these brown lands, now stiff with Winter's cold;  
As from the storm-rack comes a perfect star!

p. 318

O much-loved city! I have wandered far  
From the wave-circled islands of my home;  
Have seen the gloomy mystery of the Dome  
Rise slowly from the drear Campagna's way,  
Clothed in the royal purple of the day:  
I from the city of the violet crown  
Have watched the sun by Corinth's hill go down,  
And marked the 'myriad laughter' of the sea



From starlit hills of flower-starred Arcady;  
Yet back to thee returns my perfect love,  
As to its forest-nest the evening dove.

O poet's city! one who scarce has seen  
Some twenty summers cast their doublets green  
For Autumn's livery, would seek in vain  
To wake his lyre to sing a louder strain,  
Or tell thy days of glory;—poor indeed  
Is the low murmur of the shepherd's reed,  
Where the loud clarion's blast should shake the sky,  
And flame across the heavens! and to try  
Such lofty themes were folly: yet I know  
That never felt my heart a nobler glow  
Than when I woke the silence of thy street  
With clamorous trampling of my horse's feet,  
And saw the city which now I try to sing,  
After long days of weary travelling.

p. 319

## VII.

Adieu, Ravenna! but a year ago,  
I stood and watched the crimson sunset glow  
From the lone chapel on thy marshy plain:  
The sky was as a shield that caught the stain  
Of blood and battle from the dying sun,  
And in the west the circling clouds had spun  
A royal robe, which some great God might wear,  
While into ocean-seas of purple air  
Sank the gold galley of the Lord of Light.

Yet here the gentle stillness of the night  
Brings back the swelling tide of memory,  
And wakes again my passionate love for thee:  
Now is the Spring of Love, yet soon will come  
On meadow and tree the Summer's lordly bloom;  
And soon the grass with brighter flowers will blow,  
And send up lilies for some boy to mow.  
Then before long the Summer's conqueror,  
Rich Autumn-time, the season's usurer,  
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,  
And see it scattered by the spendthrift breeze;  
And after that the Winter cold and drear.  
So runs the perfect cycle of the year.  
And so from youth to manhood do we go,  
And fall to weary days and locks of snow.  
Love only knows no winter; never dies:  
Nor cares for frowning storms or leaden skies  
And mine for thee shall never pass away,  
Though my weak lips may falter in my lay.

p. 320

Adieu! Adieu! yon silent evening star,  
The night's ambassador, doth gleam afar,  
And bid the shepherd bring his flocks to fold.  
Perchance before our inland seas of gold  
Are garnered by the reapers into sheaves,  
Perchance before I see the Autumn leaves,  
I may behold thy city; and lay down  
Low at thy feet the poet's laurel crown.

Adieu! Adieu! yon silver lamp, the moon,  
Which turns our midnight into perfect noon,  
Doth surely light thy towers, guarding well  
Where Dante sleeps, where Byron loved to dwell.

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