

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Poems, by William Dean Howells

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Poems

Author: William Dean Howells

Release Date: September 15, 2009 [EBook #29993]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by David Edwards, Katherine Ward, and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net> (This book was produced from scanned images of public domain material from the Google Print project.)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ***

POEMS

BY
WILLIAM D. HOWELLS

BOSTON
TICKNOR AND COMPANY
211 TREMONT STREET
MDCCCLXXXVI

COPYRIGHT, 1873, BY JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
AND 1885, BY WILLIAM D. HOWELLS.

All rights reserved.

University Press:
JOHN WILSON AND SON, CAMBRIDGE.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------|------|
| THE PILOT'S STORY | 3 |
| FORLORN | 13 |
| PLEASURE-PAIN | 19 |
| IN AUGUST | 26 |
| THE EMPTY HOUSE | 27 |
| BUBBLES | 29 |
| LOST BELIEFS | 31 |
| LOUIS LEBEAU'S CONVERSION | 32 |
| CAPRICE | 49 |
| SWEET CLOVER | 51 |
| THE ROYAL PORTRAITS | 54 |
| THE FAITHFUL OF THE GONZAGA | 59 |
| THE FIRST CRICKET | 77 |
| THE MULBERRIES | 79 |
| BEFORE THE GATE | 84 |
| CLEMENT | 86 |
| BY THE SEA | 97 |
| SAINT CHRISTOPHER | 98 |
| ELEGY ON JOHN BUTLER HOWELLS | 100 |
| THANKSGIVING | 105 |
| A SPRINGTIME | 106 |
| IN EARLIEST SPRING | 108 |
| THE BOBOLINKS ARE SINGING | 110 |
| PRELUDE | 113 |
| THE MOVERS | 115 |
| THROUGH THE MEADOW | 120 |
| GONE | 122 |
| THE SARCASTIC FAIR | 123 |
| RAPTURE | 124 |
| DEAD | 125 |
| THE DOUBT | 127 |
| THE THORN | 129 |
| THE MYSTERIES | 130 |
| THE BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS | 131 |
| FOR ONE OF THE KILLED | 133 |
| THE TWO WIVES | 134 |
| BEREAVED | 136 |
| THE SNOW-BIRDS | 138 |
| VAGARY | 139 |
| FEUERBILDER | 141 |
| AVERY | 143 |
| BOPEEP: A PASTORAL | 148 |
| WHILE SHE SANG | 160 |
| A POET | 163 |
| CONVENTION | 164 |
| THE POET FRIENDS | 165 |
| NO LOVE LOST | 166 |
| THE SONG THE ORIOLE SINGS | 199 |
| PORDENONE | 201 |
| THE LONG DAYS | 223 |

THE PILOT'S STORY.

I.

It was a story the pilot told, with his back to his hearers,--
Keeping his hand on the wheel and his eye on the globe of the jack-staff,
Holding the boat to the shore and out of the sweep of the current,
Lightly turning aside for the heavy logs of the drift-wood,
Widely shunning the snags that made us sardonic obeisance.

II.

All the soft, damp air was full of delicate perfume
From the young willows in bloom on either bank of the river,--
Faint, delicious fragrance, trancing the indolent senses
In a luxurious dream of the river and land of the lotus.
Not yet out of the west the roses of sunset were withered;
In the deep blue above light clouds of gold and of crimson
Floated in slumber serene; and the restless river beneath them
Rushed away to the sea with a vision of rest in its bosom;
Far on the eastern shore lay dimly the swamps of the cypress;
Dimly before us the islands grew from the river's expanses,--
Beautiful, wood-grown isles, with the gleam of the swart inundation
Seen through the swaying boughs and slender trunks of their willows;
And on the shore beside us the cotton-trees rose in the evening,
Phantom-like, yearningly, wearily, with the inscrutable sadness
Of the mute races of trees. While hoarsely the steam from her 'scape-pipes
Shouted, then whispered a moment, then shouted again to the silence,
Trembling through all her frame with the mighty pulse of her engines,
Slowly the boat ascended the swollen and broad Mississippi,
Bank-full, sweeping on, with tangled masses of drift-wood,
Daintily breathed about with whiffs of silvery vapor,
Where in his arrowy flight the twittering swallow alighted,
And the belated blackbird paused on the way to its nestlings.

III.

It was the pilot's story:--"They both came aboard there, at Cairo,
From a New Orleans boat, and took passage with us for Saint Louis.
She was a beautiful woman, with just enough blood from her mother
Darkening her eyes and her hair to make her race known to a trader:
You would have thought she was white. The man that was with her,--you see such,--
Weakly good-natured and kind, and weakly good-natured and vicious,
Slender of body and soul, fit neither for loving nor hating.
I was a youngster then, and only learning the river,--
Not over-fond of the wheel. I used to watch them at monte,
Down in the cabin at night, and learned to know all of the gamblers.
So when I saw this weak one staking his money against them,
Betting upon the turn of the cards, I knew what was coming:
They never left their pigeons a single feather to fly with.
Next day I saw them together,--the stranger and one of the gamblers:
Picturesque rascal he was, with long black hair and moustaches,
Black slouch hat drawn down to his eyes from his villanous forehead.
On together they moved, still earnestly talking in whispers,
On toward the forecastle, where sat the woman alone by the gangway.
Roused by the fall of feet, she turned, and, beholding her master,
Greeted him with a smile that was more like a wife's than another's,
Rose to meet him fondly, and then, with the dread apprehension
Always haunting the slave, fell her eye on the face of the gambler,--
Dark and lustful and fierce and full of merciless cunning.
Something was spoken so low that I could not hear what the words were;
Only the woman started, and looked from one to the other,
With imploring eyes, bewildered hands, and a tremor
All through her frame: I saw her from where I was standing, she shook so.
'Say! is it so?' she cried. On the weak, white lips of her master
Died a sickly smile, and he said, 'Louise, I have sold you.'
God is my judge! May I never see such a look of despairing,
Desolate anguish, as that which the woman cast on her master,
Gripping her breast with her little hands, as if he had stabbed her,
Standing in silence a space, as fixed as the Indian woman

Carved out of wood, on the pilot-house of the old Pocahontas!
Then, with a gurgling moan, like the sound in the throat of the dying,
Came back her voice, that, rising, fluttered, through wild incoherence,
Into a terrible shriek that stopped my heart while she answered:--
'Sold me? sold me? sold--And you promised to give me my freedom!--
Promised me, for the sake of our little boy in Saint Louis!
What will you say to our boy, when he cries for me there in Saint Louis?
What will you say to our God?--Ah, you have been joking! I see it!--
No? God! God! He shall hear it,--and all of the angels in heaven,--
Even the devils in hell!--and none will believe when they hear it!
Sold me!--Her voice died away with a wail, and in silence
Down she sank on the deck, and covered her face with her fingers."

IV.

In his story a moment the pilot paused, while we listened
To the salute of a boat, that, rounding the point of an island,
Flamed toward us with fires that seemed to burn from the waters,--
Stately and vast and swift, and borne on the heart of the current.
Then, with the mighty voice of a giant challenged to battle,
Rose the responsive whistle, and all the echoes of island,
Swamp-land, glade, and brake replied with a myriad clamor,
Like wild birds that are suddenly startled from slumber at midnight,
Then were at peace once more; and we heard the harsh cries of the peacocks
Perched on a tree by a cabin-door, where the white-headed settler's
White-headed children stood to look at the boat as it passed them,
Passed them so near that we heard their happy talk and their laughter.
Softly the sunset had faded, and now on the eastern horizon
Hung, like a tear in the sky, the beautiful star of the evening.

V.

Still with his back to us standing, the pilot went on with his story:--
"All of us flocked round the woman. The children cried, and their mothers
Hugged them tight to their breasts; but the gambler said to the captain,--
'Put me off there at the town that lies round the bend of the river.
Here, you! rise at once, and be ready now to go with me.'
Roughly he seized the woman's arm and strove to uplift her.
She--she seemed not to heed him, but rose like one that is dreaming,
Slid from his grasp, and fleetly mounted the steps of the gangway,
Up to the hurricane-deck, in silence, without lamentation.
Straight to the stern of the boat, where the wheel was, she ran, and the people
Followed her fast till she turned and stood at bay for a moment,
Looking them in the face, and in the face of the gambler.
Not one to save her,--not one of all the compassionate people!
Not one to save her, of all the pitying angels in heaven!
Not one bolt of God to strike him dead there before her!
Wildly she waved him back, we waiting in silence and horror.
Over the swarthy face of the gambler a pallor of passion
Passed, like a gleam of lightning over the west in the night-time.
White, she stood, and mute, till he put forth his hand to secure her;
Then she turned and leaped,--in mid-air fluttered a moment,--
Down then, whirling, fell, like a broken-winged bird from a tree-top,
Down on the cruel wheel, that caught her, and hurled her, and crushed her,
And in the foaming water plunged her, and hid her forever."

VI.

Still with his back to us all the pilot stood, but we heard him
Swallowing hard, as he pulled the bell-rope for stopping. Then, turning,--
"This is the place where it happened," brokenly whispered the pilot.
"Somehow, I never like to go by here alone in the night-time."
Darkly the Mississippi flowed by the town that lay in the starlight,
Cheerful with lamps. Below we could hear them reversing the engines,
And the great boat glided up to the shore like a giant exhausted.
Heavily sighed her pipes. Broad over the swamps to the eastward
Shone the full moon, and turned our far-trembling wake into silver.
All was serene and calm, but the odorous breath of the willows
Smote with a mystical sense of infinite sorrow upon us.

FORLORN.

I.

Red roses, in the slender vases burning,
Breathed all upon the air,--
The passion and the tenderness and yearning,
The waiting and the doubting and despair.

II.

Still with the music of her voice was haunted,
Through all its charmed rhymes,
The open book of such a one as chanted
The things he dreamed in old, old summer-times.

III.

The silvern chords of the piano trembled
Still with the music wrung
From them; the silence of the room dissembled
The closes of the songs that she had sung.

IV.

The languor of the crimson shawl's abasement,--
Lying without a stir
Upon the floor,--the absence at the casement,
The solitude and hush were full of her.

V.

Without, and going from the room, and never
Departing, did depart
Her steps; and one that came too late forever
Felt them go heavy o'er his broken heart.

VI.

And, sitting in the house's desolation,
He could not bear the gloom,
The vanishing encounter and evasion
Of things that were and were not in the room.

VII.

Through midnight streets he followed fleeting visions
Of faces and of forms;
He heard old tenderesses and derisions
Amid the sobs and cries of midnight storms.

VIII.

By midnight lamps, and from the darkness under
That lamps made at their feet,
He saw sweet eyes peer out in innocent wonder,
And sadly follow after him down the street.

IX.

The noonday crowds their restlessness obtruded
Between him and his quest;
At unseen corners jostled and eluded,
Against his hand her silken robes were pressed.

X.

Doors closed upon her; out of garret casements
He knew she looked at him;
In splendid mansions and in squalid basements,
Upon the walls he saw her shadow swim.

XI.

From rapid carriages she gleamed upon him,

Whirling away from sight;
From all the hopelessness of search she won him
Back to the dull and lonesome house at night.

XII.

Full early into dark the twilights saddened
Within its closed doors;
The echoes, with the clock's monotony maddened,
Leaped loud in welcome from the hollow floors;

XIII.

But gusts that blew all day with solemn laughter
From wide-mouthed chimney-places,
And the strange noises between roof and rafter,
The wainscot clamor, and the scampering races

XIV.

Of mice that chased each other through the chambers,
And up and down the stair,
And rioted among the ashen embers,
And left their frolic footprints everywhere,--

XV.

Were hushed to hear his heavy tread ascending
The broad steps, one by one,
And toward the solitary chamber tending,
Where the dim phantom of his hope alone

XVI.

Rose up to meet him, with his growing nearer,
Eager for his embrace,
And moved, and melted into the white mirror,
And stared at him with his own haggard face.

XVII.

But, turning, he was 'ware *her* looks beheld him
Out of the mirror white;
And at the window yearning arms she held him,
Out of the vague and sombre fold of night.

XVIII.

Sometimes she stood behind him, looking over
His shoulder as he read;
Sometimes he felt her shadowy presence hover
Above his dreamful sleep, beside his bed;

XIX.

And rising from his sleep, her shadowy presence
Followed his light descent
Of the long stair; her shadowy evanescence
Through all the whispering rooms before him went.

XX.

Upon the earthy draught of cellars blowing
His shivering lamp-flame blue,
Amid the damp and chill, he felt her flowing
Around him from the doors he entered through.

XXI.

The spiders wove their webs upon the ceiling;
The bat clung to the wall;
The dry leaves through the open transom stealing,
Skated and danced adown the empty hall.

XXII.

About him closed the utter desolation,
About him closed the gloom;

The vanishing encounter and evasion
Of things that were and were not in the room

XXIII.

Vexed him forever; and his life forever
Immured and desolate,
Beating itself, with desperate endeavor,
But bruised itself, against the round of fate.

XXIV.

The roses, in their slender vases burning,
Were quenched long before;
A dust was on the rhymes of love and yearning;
The shawl was like a shroud upon the floor.

XXV.

Her music from the thrilling chords had perished;
The stillness was not moved
With memories of cadences long cherished,
The closes of the songs that she had loved.

XXVI.

But not the less he felt her presence never
Out of the room depart;
Over the threshold, not the less, forever
He felt her going on his broken heart.

PLEASURE-PAIN.

“Das Vergnügen ist Nichts als ein höchst angenehmer Schmerz.”--HEINRICH HEINE.

I.

Full of beautiful blossoms
Stood the tree in early May:
Came a chilly gale from the sunset,
And blew the blossoms away;

Scattered them through the garden,
Tossed them into the mere:
The sad tree moaned and shuddered,
“Alas! the Fall is here.”

But all through the glowing summer
The blossomless tree throve fair,
And the fruit waxed ripe and mellow,
With sunny rain and air;

And when the dim October
With golden death was crowned,
Under its heavy branches
The tree stooped to the ground.

In youth there comes a west-wind
Blowing our bloom away,--
A chilly breath of Autumn
Out of the lips of May.

We bear the ripe fruit after,--
Ah, me! for the thought of pain!--
We know the sweetness and beauty
And the heart-bloom never again.

II.

One sails away to sea,
One stands on the shore and cries;
The ship goes down the world, and the light
On the sullen water dies.

The whispering shell is mute,
And after is evil cheer:
She shall stand on the shore and cry in vain,
Many and many a year.

But the stately, wide-winged ship
Lies wrecked on the unknown deep;
Far under, dead in his coral bed,
The lover lies asleep.

III.

Through the silent streets of the city,
In the night's unbusy noon,
Up and down in the pallor
Of the languid summer moon,

I wander, and think of the village,
And the house in the maple-gloom,
And the porch with the honeysuckles
And the sweet-brier all abloom.

My soul is sick with the fragrance
Of the dewy sweet-brier's breath:
O darling! the house is empty,
And lonelier than death!

If I call, no one will answer;
If I knock, no one will come:
The feet are at rest forever,
And the lips are cold and dumb.

The summer moon is shining
So wan and large and still,
And the weary dead are sleeping
In the graveyard under the hill.

IV.

We looked at the wide, white circle
Around the Autumn moon,
And talked of the change of weather:
It would rain, to-morrow, or soon.

And the rain came on the morrow,
And beat the dying leaves
From the shuddering boughs of the maples
Into the flooded eaves.

The clouds wept out their sorrow;
But in my heart the tears
Are bitter for want of weeping,
In all these Autumn years.

V.

The bobolink sings in the meadow,
The wren in the cherry-tree:
Come hither, thou little maiden,
And sit upon my knee;

And I will tell thee a story
I read in a book of rhyme;
I will but fain that it happened
To me, one summer-time,

When we walked through the meadow,
And she and I were young.
The story is old and weary
With being said and sung.

The story is old and weary:

Ah, child! it is known to thee.
Who was it that last night kissed thee
Under the cherry-tree?

VI.

Like a bird of evil presage,
To the lonely house on the shore
Came the wind with a tale of shipwreck,
And shrieked at the bolted door,

And flapped its wings in the gables,
And shouted the well-known names,
And buffeted the windows
Afeared in their shuddering frames.

It was night, and it is morning,--
The summer sun is bland,
The white-cap waves come rocking, rocking,
In to the summer land.

The white-cap waves come rocking, rocking,
In the sun so soft and bright,
And toss and play with the dead man
Drowned in the storm last night.

VII.

I remember the burning brushwood,
Glimmering all day long
Yellow and weak in the sunlight,
Now leaped up red and strong,

And fired the old dead chestnut,
That all our years had stood,
Gaunt and gray and ghostly,
Apart from the sombre wood;

And, flushed with sudden summer,
The leafless boughs on high
Blossomed in dreadful beauty
Against the darkened sky.

We children sat telling stories,
And boasting what we should be,
When we were men like our fathers,
And watched the blazing tree,

That showered its fiery blossoms,
Like a rain of stars, we said,
Of crimson and azure and purple.
That night, when I lay in bed,

I could not sleep for seeing,
Whenever I closed my eyes,
The tree in its dazzling splendor
Against the darkened skies.

I cannot sleep for seeing,
With closed eyes to-night,
The tree in its dazzling splendor
Dropping its blossoms bright;

And old, old dreams of childhood
Come thronging my weary brain,
Dear, foolish beliefs and longings:
I doubt, are they real again?

It is nothing, and nothing, and nothing,
That I either think or see:
The phantoms of dead illusions
To-night are haunting me.

IN AUGUST.

All the long August afternoon,
The little drowsy stream
Whispers a melancholy tune,
As if it dreamed of June
And whispered in its dream.

The thistles show beyond the brook
Dust on their down and bloom,
And out of many a weed-grown nook
The aster-flowers look
With eyes of tender gloom.

The silent orchard aisles are sweet
With smell of ripening fruit.
Through the sere grass, in shy retreat,
Flutter, at coming feet,
The robins strange and mute.

There is no wind to stir the leaves,
The harsh leaves overhead;
Only the querulous cricket grieves,
And shrilling locust weaves
A song of Summer dead.

THE EMPTY HOUSE.

The wet trees hang above the walks
Purple with damps and earthish stains,
And strewn by moody, absent rains
With rose-leaves from the wild-grown stalks.

Unmown, in heavy, tangled swaths,
The ripe June-grass is wanton blown;
Snails slime the untrodden threshold-stone;
Along the sills hang drowsy moths.

Down the blank visage of the wall,
Where many a wavering trace appears,
Like a forgotten trace of tears,
From swollen eaves the slow drops crawl.

Where everything was wide before,
The curious wind, that comes and goes,
Finds all the latticed windows close,
Secret and close the bolted door.

And with the shrewd and curious wind,
That in the archéd doorway cries,
And at the bolted portal tries,
And harks and listens at the blind,--

Forever lurks my thought about,
And in the ghostly middle-night
Finds all the hidden windows bright,
And sees the guests go in and out,

And lingers till the pallid dawn,
And feels the mystery deeper there
In silent, gust-swept chambers, bare,
With all the midnight revel gone;

But wanders through the lonesome rooms,
Where harsh the astonished cricket calls,
And, from the hollows of the walls
Vanishing, start unshapen glooms;

And lingers yet, and cannot come
Out of the drear and desolate place,
So full of ruin's solemn grace,
And haunted with the ghost of home.

BUBBLES.

I.

I stood on the brink in childhood,
And watched the bubbles go
From the rock-fretted, sunny ripple
To the smoother tide below;

And over the white creek-bottom,
Under them every one,
Went golden stars in the water,
All luminous with the sun.

But the bubbles broke on the surface,
And under, the stars of gold
Broke; and the hurrying water
Flowed onward, swift and cold.

II.

I stood on the brink in manhood,
And it came to my weary brain,
And my heart, so dull and heavy
After the years of pain,--

That every hollowest bubble
Which over my life had passed
Still into its deeper current
Some heavenly gleam had cast;

That, however I mocked it gayly,
And guessed at its hollowness,
Still shone, with each bursting bubble,
One star in my soul the less.

LOST BELIEFS.

One after one they left us;
The sweet birds out of our breasts
Went flying away in the morning:
Will they come again to their nests?

Will they come again at nightfall,
With God's breath in their song?
Noon is fierce with the heats of summer,
And summer days are long!

O my Life, with thy upward liftings,

Thy downward-striking roots,
Ripening out of thy tender blossoms
But hard and bitter fruits!--

In thy boughs there is no shelter
For the birds to seek again.
The desolate nest is broken
And torn with storms and rain!

LOUIS LEBEAU'S CONVERSION.

Yesterday, while I moved with the languid crowd on the Riva,
Musing with idle eyes on the wide lagoons and the islands,
And on the dim-seen seaward glimmering sails in the distance,
Where the azure haze, like a vision of Indian-Summer,
Haunted the dreamy sky of the soft Venetian December,--
While I moved unwilling in the mellow warmth of the weather,
Breathing air that was full of Old World sadness and beauty
Into my thought came this story of free, wild life in Ohio,
When the land was new, and yet by the Beautiful River
Dwelt the pioneers and Indian hunters and boatmen.

Pealed from the campanili, responding from island to island,
Bells of that ancient faith whose incense and solemn devotions
Rise from a hundred shrines in the broken heart of the city;
But in my reverie heard I only the passionate voices
Of the people that sang in the virgin heart of the forest.
Autumn was in the land, and the trees were golden and crimson,
And from the luminous boughs of the over-elms and the maples
Tender and beautiful fell the light in the worshippers' faces,
Softer than lights that stream through the saints on the windows of churches,
While the balsamy breath of the hemlocks and pines by the river
Stole on the winds through the woodland aisles like the breath of a censer.
Loud the people sang old camp-meeting anthems that quaver
Quaintly yet from lips forgetful of lips that have kissed them;
Loud they sang the songs of the Sacrifice and Atonement,
And of the end of the world, and the infinite terrors of Judgment:--
Songs of ineffable sorrow, and wailing, compassionate warning
Unto the generations that hardened their hearts to their Savior;
Songs of exultant rapture for them that confessed him and followed,
Bearing his burden and yoke, enduring and entering with him
Into the rest of his saints, and the endless reward of the blessed.
Loud the people sang; but through the sound of their singing
Broke inarticulate cries and moans and sobs from the mourners,
As the glory of God, that smote the apostle of Tarsus,
Smote them and strewed them to earth like leaves in the breath of the whirlwind.

Hushed at last was the sound of the lamentation and singing;
But from the distant hill the throbbing drum of the pheasant
Shook with its heavy pulses the depths of the listening silence,
When from his place arose a white-haired exhorter, and faltered:
"Brethren and sisters in Jesus! the Lord hath heard our petitions,
So that the hearts of his servants are awed and melted within them,--
Even the hearts of the wicked are touched by his infinite mercy.
All my days in this vale of tears the Lord hath been with me,
He hath been good to me, he hath granted me trials and patience;
But this hour hath crowned my knowledge of him and his goodness.
Truly, but that it is well this day for me to be with you,
Now might I say to the Lord,--'I know thee, my God, in all fulness;
Now let thy servant depart in peace to the rest thou hast promised!'"

Faltered and ceased. And now the wild and jubilant music
Of the singing burst from the solemn profound of the silence,
Surged in triumph, and fell, and ebbd again into silence.

Then from the group of the preachers arose the greatest among them,--
He whose days were given in youth to the praise of the Savior,

He whose lips seemed touched, like the prophet's of old, from the altar,
So that his words were flame, and burned to the hearts of his hearers,
Quickening the dead among them, reviving the cold and the doubting.
There he charged them pray, and rest not from prayer while a sinner
In the sound of their voices denied the Friend of the sinner:
"Pray till the night shall fall,--till the stars are faint in the morning,--
Yea, till the sun himself be faint in that glory and brightness,
Faint in the light which shall dawn in mercy for penitent sinners."
Kneeling, he led them in prayer; and the quick and sobbing responses
Spoke how their souls were moved with the might and the grace of the Spirit.
Then while the converts recounted how God had chastened and saved them,--
Children, whose golden locks yet shone with the lingering effulgence
Of the touches of Him who blessed little children forever;
Old men, whose yearning eyes were dimmed with the far-streaming brightness
Seen through the opening gates in the heart of the heavenly city,--
Stealthily through the harking woods the lengthening shadows
Chased the wild things to their nests, and the twilight died into darkness.

Now the four great pyres that were placed there to light the encampment,
High on platforms raised above the people, were kindled.
Flaming aloof, as it were the pillar by night in the Desert
Fell their crimson light on the lifted orbs of the preachers,
Fell on the withered brows of the old men, and Israel's mothers,
Fell on the bloom of youth, and the earnest devotion of manhood,
Fell on the anguish and hope in the tearful eyes of the mourners.
Flaming aloof, it stirred the sleep of the luminous maples
With warm summer-dreams, and faint, luxurious languor.
Near the four great pyres the people closed in a circle,
In their midst the mourners, and, praying with them, the exhorters,
And on the skirts of the circle the unrepentant and scorners,--
Ever fewer and sadder, and drawn to the place of the mourners,
One after one, by the prayers and tears of the brethren and sisters,
And by the Spirit of God, that was mightily striving within them,
Till at the last alone stood Louis Lebeau, unconverted.

Louis Lebeau, the boatman, the trapper, the hunter, the fighter,
From the unlucky French of Gallipolis he descended,
Heir to Old World want and New World love of adventure.
Vague was the life he led, and vague and grotesque were the rumors
Through which he loomed on the people,--the hero of mythical hearsay,
Quick of hand and of heart, impatient, generous, Western,
Taking the thought of the young in secret love and in envy.
Not less the elders shook their heads and held him for outcast,
Reprobate, roving, ungodly, infidel, worse than a Papist,
With his whispered fame of lawless exploits at St. Louis,
Wild affrays and loves with the half-breeds out on the Osage,
Brawls at New Orleans, and all the towns on the rivers,
All the godless towns of the many-ruffianed rivers.
Only she who loved him the best of all, in her loving
Knew him the best of all, and other than that of the rumors.
Daily she prayed for him, with conscious and tender effusion,
That the Lord would convert him. But when her father forbade him
Unto her thought, she denied him, and likewise held him for outcast,
Turned her eyes when they met, and would not speak, though her heart broke.

Bitter and brief his logic that reasoned from wrong unto error:
"This is their praying and singing," he said, "that makes you reject me,--
You that were kind to me once. But I think my fathers' religion,
With a light heart in the breast and a friendly priest to absolve one,
Better than all these conversions that only bewilder and vex me,
And that have made men so hard and women fickle and cruel.
Well, then, pray for my soul, since you would not have spoken to save me,--
Yes; for I go from these saints to my brethren and sisters, the sinners."
Spoke and went, while her faint lips fashioned unuttered entreaties,--
Went, and came again in a year at the time of the meeting,
Haggard and wan of face, and wasted with passion and sorrow.
Dead in his eyes was the careless smile of old, and its phantom
Haunted his lips in a sneer of restless, incredulous mocking.
Day by day he came to the outer skirts of the circle,
Dwelling on her, where she knelt by the white-haired exhorter, her father,
With his hollow looks, and never moved from his silence.

Now, where he stood alone, the last of impenitent sinners,
Weeping, old friends and comrades came to him out of the circle,
And with their tears besought him to hear what the Lord had done for them.

Ever he shook them off, not roughly, nor smiled at their transports.
Then the preachers spoke and painted the terrors of Judgment,
And of the bottomless pit, and the flames of hell everlasting.
Still and dark he stood, and neither listened nor heeded;
But when the fervent voice of the white-haired exhorter was lifted,
Fell his brows in a scowl of fierce and scornful rejection.
"Lord, let this soul be saved!" cried the fervent voice of the old man;
"For that the Shepherd rejoiceth more truly for one that hath wandered,
And hath been found again, than for all the others that strayed not."

Out of the midst of the people, a woman old and decrepit,
Tremulous through the light, and tremulous into the shadow,
Wavered toward him with slow, uncertain paces of palsy,
Laid her quivering hand on his arm and brokenly prayed him:
"Louis Lebeau, I closed in death the eyes of your mother.
On my breast she died, in prayer for her fatherless children,
That they might know the Lord, and follow him always, and serve him.
O, I conjure you, my son, by the name of your mother in glory,
Scorn not the grace of the Lord!" As when a summer-noon's tempest
Breaks in one swift gush of rain, then ceases and gathers
Darker and gloomier yet on the lowering front of the heavens,
So broke his mood in tears, as he soothed her, and stilled her entreaties,
And so he turned again with his clouded looks to the people.

Vibrated then from the hush the accents of mournfullest pity,--
His who was gifted in speech, and the glow of the fires illumined
All his pallid aspect with sudden and marvellous splendor:
"Louis Lebeau," he spake, "I have known you and loved you from childhood;
Still, when the others blamed you, I took your part, for I knew you.
Louis Lebeau, my brother, I thought to meet you in heaven,
Hand in hand with her who is gone to heaven before us,
Brothers through her dear love! I trusted to greet you and lead you
Up from the brink of the River unto the gates of the City.
Lo! my years shall be few on the earth. O my brother,
If I should die before you had known the mercy of Jesus,
Yea, I think it would sadden the hope of glory within me!"

Neither yet had the will of the sinner yielded an answer;
But from his lips there broke a cry of unspeakable anguish,
Wild and fierce and shrill, as if some demon within him
Bent his soul with the ultimate pangs of fiendish possession;
And with the outstretched arms of bewildered imploring toward them,
Death-white unto the people he turned his face from the darkness.

Out of the sedge by the creek a flight of clamorous killdees
Rose from their timorous sleep with piercing and iterant challenge,
Wheeled in the starlight, and fled away into distance and silence.
White in the vale lay the tents, and beyond them glided the river,
Where the broadhorn^[1] drifted slow at the will of the current,
And where the boatman listened, and knew not how, as he listened,
Something touched through the years the old lost hopes of his childhood,--
Only his sense was filled with low, monotonous murmurs,
As of a faint-heard prayer, that was chorused with deeper responses.

Not with the rest was lifted her voice in the fervent responses,
But in her soul she prayed to Him that heareth in secret,
Asking for light and for strength to learn his will and to do it:
"O, make me clear to know if the hope that rises within me
Be not part of a love unmeet for me here, and forbidden!
So, if it be not that, make me strong for the evil entreaty
Of the days that shall bring me question of self and reproaches,
When the unrighteous shall mock, and my brethren and sisters shall doubt me!
Make me worthy to know thy will, my Savior, and do it!"
In her pain she prayed, and at last, through her mute adoration,
Rapt from all mortal presence, and in her rapture uplifted,
Glorified she rose, and stood in the midst of the people,
Looking on all with the still, unseeing eyes of devotion,--
Vague, and tender, and sweet, as the eyes of the dead, when we dream them
Living and looking on us, but they cannot speak, and we cannot,--
Knowing only the peril that threatened his soul's unrepentance,
Knowing only the fear and error and wrong that withheld him,
Thinking, "In doubt of me, his soul had perished forever!"
Touched with no feeble shame, but trusting her power to save him,
Through the circle she passed, and straight to the side of her lover,
Took his hand in her own, and mutely implored him an instant,

Answering, giving, forgiving, confessing, beseeching him all things;
Drew him then with her, and passed once more through the circle
Unto her place, and knelt with him there by the side of her father,
Trembling as women tremble who greatly venture and triumph,--
But in her innocent breast was the saint's sublime exultation.

So was Louis converted; and though the lips of the scorers
Spared not in after years the subtle taunt and derision
(What time, meeker grown, his heart held his hand from its answer),
Not the less lofty and pure her love and her faith that had saved him,
Not the less now discerned was her inspiration from heaven
By the people, that rose, and embracing and weeping together,
Poured forth their jubilant songs of victory and of thanksgiving,
Till from the embers leaped the dying flame to behold them,
And the hills of the river were filled with reverberant echoes,--
Echoes that out of the years and the distance stole to me hither,
While I moved unwilling in the mellow warmth of the weather;
Echoes that mingled and faded and fell with the fluttering murmurs
In the hearts of the hushing bells, as from island to island
Swooned the sound on the wide lagoons into palpitant silence.

FOOTNOTE:

[1]The old-fashioned flatboats were so called.

CAPRICE.

I.

She hung the cage at the window:
"If he goes by," she said,
"He will hear my robin singing,
And when he lifts his head,
I shall be sitting here to sew,
And he will bow to me, I know."

The robin sang a love-sweet song,
The young man raised his head;
The maiden turned away and blushed:
"I am a fool!" she said,
And went on broidering in silk
A pink-eyed rabbit, white as milk.

II.

The young man loitered slowly
By the house three times that day;
She took her bird from the window:
"He need not look this way."
She sat at her piano long,
And sighed, and played a death-sad song.

But when the day was done, she said,
"I wish that he would come!
Remember, Mary, if he calls
To-night--I'm not at home."
So when he rang, she went--the elf!--
She went and let him in herself.

III.

They sang full long together
Their songs love-sweet, death-sad;
The robin woke from his slumber,
And rang out, clear and glad.
"Now go!" she coldly said; "'tis late;"
And followed him--to latch the gate.

He took the rosebud from her hair,
While, "You shall not!" she said;
He closed her hand within his own,
And, while her tongue forbade,
Her will was darkened in the eclipse
Of blinding love upon his lips.

SWEET CLOVER.

"... My letters back to me."

I.

I know they won the faint perfume,
That to their faded pages clings,
From gloves, and handkerchiefs, and things
Kept in the soft and scented gloom

Of some mysterious box--poor leaves
Of summer, now as sere and dead
As any leaves of summer shed
From crimson boughs when autumn grieves!

The ghost of fragrance! Yet I thrill
All through with such delicious pain
Of soul and sense, to breathe again
The sweet that haunted memory still.

And under these December skies,
As bland as May's in other climes,
I move, and muse my idle rhymes
And subtly sentimentalize.

I hear the music that was played,--
The songs that silence knows by heart!--
I see sweet burlesque feigning art,
The careless grace that curved and swayed

Through dances and through breezy walks;
I feel once more the eyes that smiled,
And that dear presence that beguiled
The pauses of the foolish talks,

When this poor phantom of perfume
Was the Sweet Clover's living soul,
And breathed from her as if it stole,
Ah, heaven! from her heart in bloom!

II.

We have not many ways with pain:
We weep weak tears, or else we laugh;
I doubt, not less the cup we quaff,
And tears and scorn alike are vain.

But let me live my quiet life;
I will not vex my calm with grief,
I only know the pang was brief,
And there an end of hope and strife.

And thou? I put the letters by:
In years the sweetness shall not pass;
More than the perfect blossom was
I count its lingering memory.

Alas! with Time dear Love is dead,
And not with Fate. And who can guess
How weary of our happiness

We might have been if we were wed?

Venice.

THE ROYAL PORTRAITS.

(AT LUDWIGSHOF.)

I.

Confronting each other the pictures stare
Into each other's sleepless eyes;
And the daylight into the darkness dies,
From year to year in the palace there:
But they watch and guard that no device
Take either one of them unaware.

Their majesties the king and the queen,
The parents of the reigning prince:
Both put off royalty many years since,
With life and the gifts that have always been
Given to kings from God, to evince
His sense of the mighty over the mean.

I cannot say that I like the face
Of the king; it is something fat and red;
And the neck that lifts the royal head
Is thick and coarse; and a scanty grace
Dwells in the dull blue eyes that are laid
Sullenly on the queen in her place.

He must have been a king in his day
'Twere well to pleasure in work and sport:
One of the heaven-anointed sort
Who ruled his people with iron sway,
And knew that, through good and evil report,
God meant him to rule and them to obey.

There are many other likenesses
Of the king in his royal palace there;
You find him depicted everywhere,--
In his robes of state, in his hunting-dress,
In his flowing wig, in his powdered hair,--
A king in all of them, none the less;

But most himself in this on the wall
Over against his consort, whose
Laces, and hoops, and high-heeled shoes
Make her the finest lady of all
The queens or courtly dames you choose,
In the ancestral portrait hall.

A glorious blonde: a luxury
Of luring blue and wanton gold,
Of blanchéd rose and crimson bold,
Of lines that flow voluptuously
In tender, languorous curves to fold
Her form in perfect symmetry.

She might have been false. Of her withered dust
There scarcely would be enough to write
Her guilt in now; and the dead have a right
To our lenient doubt if not to our trust:
So if the truth cannot make her white,
Let us be as merciful as we--must.

II.

The queen died first, the queen died young,

But the king was very old when he died,
Rotten with license, and lust, and pride;
And the usual Virtues came and hung
Their cypress wreaths on his tomb, and wide
Throughout his kingdom his praise was sung.

How the queen died is not certainly known,
And faithful subjects are all forbid
To speak of the murder which some one did
One night while she slept in the dark alone:
History keeps the story hid,
And Fear only tells it in undertone.

Up from your startled feet aloof,
In the famous Echo-Room, with a bound
Leaps the echo, and round and round
Beating itself against the roof,--
A horrible, gasping, shuddering sound,--
Dies ere its terror can utter proof

Of that it knows. A door is fast,
And none is suffered to enter there.
His sacred majesty could not bear
To look at it toward the last,
As he grew very old. It opened where
The queen died young so many years past.

III.

How the queen died is not certainly known;
But in the palace's solitude
A harking dread and horror brood,
And a silence, as if a mortal groan
Had been hushed the moment before, and would
Break forth again when you were gone.

The present king has never dwelt
In the desolate palace. From year to year
In the wide and stately garden drear
The snows and the snowy blossoms melt
Unheeded, and a ghastly fear
Through all the shivering leaves is felt.

By night the gathering shadows creep
Along the dusk and hollow halls,
And the slumber-broken palace calls
With stifled moans from its nightmare sleep;
And then the ghostly moonlight falls
Athwart the darkness brown and deep.

At early dawn the light wind sighs,
And through the desert garden blows
The wasted sweetness of the rose;
At noon the feverish sunshine lies
Sick in the walks. But at evening's close,
When the last, long rays to the windows rise,

And with many a blood-red, wrathful streak
Pierce through the twilight glooms that blur
His cruel vigilance and her
Regard, they light fierce looks that wreak
A hopeless hate that cannot stir,
A voiceless hate that cannot speak

In the awful calm of the sleepless eyes;
And as if she saw her murderer glare
On her face, and he the white despair
Of his victim kindle in wild surmise,
Confronted the conscious pictures stare,--
And their secret back into darkness dies.

THE FAITHFUL OF THE GONZAGA. [2]

I.

Federigo, the son of the Marquis,
Downcast, through the garden goes:
He is hurt with the grace of the lily,
And the beauty of the rose.

For what is the grace of the lily
But her own slender grace?
And what is the rose's beauty
But the beauty of her face?--

Who sits beside her window
Waiting to welcome him,
That comes so lothly toward her
With his visage sick and dim.

"Ah! lily, I come to break thee!
Ah! rose, a bitter rain
Of tears shall beat thy light out
That thou never burn again!"

II.

Federigo, the son of the Marquis,
Takes the lady by the hand:
"Thou must bid me God-speed on a journey,
For I leave my native land.

"From Mantua to-morrow
I go, a banished man;
Make me glad for truth and love's sake
Of my father's curse and ban.

"Our quarrel has left my mother
Like death upon the floor;
And I come from a furious presence
I never shall enter more.

"I would not wed the woman
He had chosen for my bride,
For my heart had been before him,
With his statecraft and his pride.

"I swore to him by my princehood
In my love I would be free;
And I swear to thee by my manhood,
I love no one but thee.

"Let the Duke of Bavaria marry
His daughter to whom he will:
There where my love was given
My word shall be faithful still.

"There are six true hearts will follow
My truth wherever I go,
And thou equal truth wilt keep me
In welfare and in woe."

The maiden answered him nothing
Of herself, but his words again
Came back through her lips like an echo
From an abyss of pain;

And vacantly repeating
"In welfare and in woe,"
Like a dream from the heart of fever
From her arms she felt him go.

III.

Out of Mantua's gate at daybreak
Seven comrades wander forth
On a path that leads at their humor,
East, west, or south, or north.

The prince's laugh rings lightly,
"What road shall we take from home?"
And they answer, "We never shall lose it
If we take the road to Rome."

And with many a jest and banter
The comrades keep their way,
Journeying out of the twilight
Forward into the day,

When they are aware beside them
Goes a pretty minstrel lad,
With a shy and downward aspect,
That is neither sad nor glad.

Over his slender shoulder,
His mandolin was slung,
And around its chords the treasure
Of his golden tresses hung.

Spoke one of the seven companions,
"Little minstrel, whither away?"--
"With seven true-hearted comrades
On their journey, if I may."

Spoke one of the seven companions,
"If our way be hard and long?"--
"I will lighten it with my music
And shorten it with my song."

Spoke one of the seven companions,
"But what are the songs thou know'st?"--
"O, I know many a ditty,
But this I sing the most:

"How once was an humble maiden
Beloved of a great lord's son,
That for her sake and his troth's sake
Was banished and undone.

"And forth of his father's city
He went at break of day,
And the maiden softly followed
Behind him on the way

"In the figure of a minstrel,
And prayed him of his love,
'Let me go with thee and serve thee
Wherever thou may'st rove.

"For if thou goest in exile
I rest banished at home,
And where thou wanderest with thee
My fears in anguish roam,

"Besetting thy path with perils,
Making thee hungry and cold,
Filling thy heart with trouble
And heaviness untold.

"But let me go beside thee,
And banishment shall be
Honor, and riches, and country,
And home to thee and me!"

Down falls the minstrel-maiden
Before the Marquis' son,
And the six true-hearted comrades
Bow round them every one.

Federigo, the son of the Marquis,
From its scabbard draws his sword:

“Now swear by the honor and fealty
Ye bear your friend and lord,

“That whenever, and wherever,
As long as ye have life,
Ye will honor and serve this lady
As ye would your prince’s wife!”

IV.

Over the broad expanses
Of garlanded Lombardy,
Where the gentle vines are swinging
In the orchards from tree to tree;

Through Padua from Verona,
From the sculptured gothic town,
Carved from ruin upon ruin,
And ancients than renown;

Through Padua from Verona
To fair Venice, where she stands
With her feet on subject waters,
Lady of many lands;

From Venice by sea to Ancona;
From Ancona to the west;
Climbing many a gardened hillside
And many a castled crest;

Through valleys dim with the twilight
Of their gray olive trees;
Over plains that swim with harvests
Like golden noonday seas;

Whence the lofty campanili
Like the masts of ships arise,
And like a fleet at anchor
Under them, the village lies;

To Florence beside her Arno,
In her many-marbled pride,
Crowned with infamy and glory
By the sons she has denied;

To pitiless Pisa, where never
Since the anguish of Ugolin
The moon in the Tower of Famine^[3]
Fate so dread as his hath seen;

Out through the gates of Pisa
To Livorno on her bay,
To Genoa and to Naples
The comrades hold their way,

Past the Guelph in his town beleaguered,
Past the fortified Ghibelline,
Through lands that reek with slaughter,
Treason, and shame, and sin;

By desert, by sea, by city,
High hill-cope and temple-dome,
Through pestilence, hunger, and horror,
Upon the road to Rome;

While every land behind them
Forgets them as they go,
And in Mantua they are remembered
As is the last year’s snow;

But the Marchioness goes to her chamber
Day after day to weep,—
For the changeless heart of a mother
The love of a son must keep.

The Marchioness weeps in her chamber
Over tidings that come to her

Of the exiles she seeks, by letter
And by lips of messenger,

Broken hints of their sojourn and absence,
Comfortless, vague, and slight,--
Like feathers wafted backwards
From passage birds in flight.^[4]

The tale of a drunken sailor,
In whose ship they went to sea;
A traveller's evening story
At a village hostelry,

Of certain comrades sent him
By our Lady, of her grace,
To save his life from robbers
In a lonely desert place;

Word from the monks of a convent
Of gentle comrades that lay
One stormy night at their convent,
And passed with the storm at day;

The long parley of a peasant
That sold them wine and food,
The gossip of a shepherd
That guided them through a wood;

A boatman's talk at the ferry
Of a river where they crossed,
And as if they had sunk in the current
All trace of them was lost;

And so is an end of tidings
But never an end of tears,
Of secret and friendless sorrow
Through blank and silent years.

V.

To the Marchioness in her chamber
Sends word a messenger,
Newly come from the land of Naples,
Praying for speech with her.

The messenger stands before her,
A minstrel slender and wan:
"In a village of my country
Lies a Mantuan gentleman,

"Sick of a smouldering fever,
Of sorrow and poverty;
And no one in all that country
Knows his title or degree.

"But six true Mantuan peasants,
Or nobles, as some men say,
Watch by the sick man's bedside,
And toil for him, night and day,

"Hewing, digging, reaping, sowing,
Bearing burdens, and far and nigh
Begging for him on the highway
Of the strangers that pass by;

"And they look whenever you meet them
Like broken-hearted men,
And I heard that the sick man would not
If he could, be well again;

"For they say that he for love's sake
Was gladly banished,
But she for whom he was banished
Is worse to him, now, than dead,--

"A recreant to his sorrow,
A traitress to his woe."

From her place the Marchioness rises,
The minstrel turns to go.

But fast by the hand she takes him,--
His hand in her clasp is cold,--
"If gold may be thy guerdon
Thou shalt not lack for gold;

"And if the love of a mother
Can bless thee for that thou hast done,
Thou shalt stay and be his brother,
Thou shalt stay and be my son."

"Nay, my lady," answered the minstrel,
And his face is deadly pale,
"Nay, this must not be, sweet lady,
But let my words prevail.

"Let me go now from your presence,
And I will come again,
When you stand with your son beside you,
And be your servant then."

VI.

At the feet of the Marquis Gonzaga
Kneels his lady on the floor;
"Lord, grant me before I ask it
The thing that I implore."

"So it be not of that ingrate."--
"Nay, lord, it is of him."
'Neath the stormy brows of the Marquis
His eyes are tender and dim.

"He lies sick of a fever in Naples,
Near unto death, as they tell,
In his need and pain forsaken
By the wanton he loved so well.

"Now send for him and forgive him,
If ever thou loved'st me,
Now send for him and forgive him
As God shall be good to thee."

"Well so,--if he turn in repentance
And bow himself to my will;
That the high-born lady I chose him
May be my daughter still."

VII.

In Mantua there is feasting
For the Marquis' grace to his son;
In Mantua there is rejoicing
For the prince come back to his own.

The pomp of a wedding procession
Pauses under the pillared porch,
With silken rustle and whisper,
Before the door of the church.

In the midst, Federigo the bridegroom
Stands with his high-born bride;
The six true-hearted comrades
Are three on either side.

The bridegroom is gray as his father,
Where they stand face to face,
And the six true-hearted comrades
Are like old men in their place.

The Marquis takes the comrades
And kisses them one by one:
"That ye were fast and faithful
And better than I to my son,

“Ye shall be called forever,
In the sign that ye were so true,
The Faithful of the Gonzaga,
And your sons after you.”

VIII.

To the Marchioness comes a courtier:

“I am prayed to bring you word
That the minstrel keeps his promise
Who brought you news of my lord;

“And he waits without the circle
To kiss your highness’ hand;
And he asks no gold for guerdon,
But before he leaves the land

“He craves of your love once proffered
That you suffer him for reward,
In this crowning hour of his glory,
To look on your son, my lord.”

Through the silken press of the courtiers
The minstrel faltered in.
His clasped hands were bloodless,
His face was white and thin;

And he bent his knee to the lady,
But of her love and grace
To her heart she raised him and kissed him
Upon his gentle face.

Turned to her son the bridegroom,
Turned to his high-born wife,
“I give you here for your brother
Who gave back my son to life.

“For this youth brought me news from Naples
How thou layest sick and poor,
By true comrades kept, and forsaken
By a false paramour.

“Wherefore I charge you love him
For a brother that is my son.”
The comrades turned to the bridegroom
In silence every one.

But the bridegroom looked on the minstrel
With a visage blank and changed,
As his whom the sight of a spectre
From his reason hath estranged;

And the smiling courtiers near them
On a sudden were still as death;
And, subtly-stricken, the people
Harkened and held their breath

With an awe uncomprehended
For an unseen agony:--
Who is this that lies a-dying,
With her head on the prince’s knee?

A light of anguish and wonder
Is in the prince’s eye,
“O, speak, sweet saint, and forgive me,
Or I cannot let thee die!

“For now I see thy hardness
Was softer than mortal ruth,
And thy heavenly guile was whiter,
My saint, than martyr’s truth.”

She speaks not and she moves not,
But a blessed brightness lies
On her lips in their silent rapture
And her tender closed eyes.

Federigo, the son of the Marquis,
He rises from his knee:
"Aye, you have been good, my father,
To them that were good to me.

"You have given them honors and titles,
But here lies one unknown--
Ah, God reward her in heaven
With the peace he gives his own!"

FOOTNOTES:

[2]The author of this ballad has added a thread of evident love-story to a most romantic incident of the history of Mantua, which occurred in the fifteenth century. He relates the incident so nearly as he found it in the *Cronache Montovane*, that he is ashamed to say how little his invention has been employed in it. The hero of the story, Federigo, became the third Marquis of Mantua, and was a prince greatly beloved and honored by his subjects.

[3]

"Breve pertugio dentro dalla Muda,
La qual per me ha il titol della fame
E in che conviene ancor ch'altri si chiuda,
M'avea mostrato per lo suo forame
Piu lune gia."

DANTE, *L'Inferno*.

[4]

"As a feather is wafted downward
From an eagle in its flight."

THE FIRST CRICKET.

Ah me! is it then true that the year has waxed unto waning,
And that so soon must remain nothing but lapse and decay,--
Earliest cricket, that out of the midsummer midnight complaining,
All the faint summer in me takest with subtle dismay?

Though thou bringest no dream of frost to the flowers that slumber,
Though no tree for its leaves, doomed of thy voice, maketh moan,
Yet with th' unconscious earth's boded evil my soul thou dost cumber,
And in the year's lost youth makest me still lose my own.

Answerest thou, that when nights of December are blackest and bleakest,
And when the fervid grate feigns me a May in my room,
And by my hearthstone gay, as now sad in my garden, thou creakest,--
Thou wilt again give me all,--dew and fragrance and bloom?

Nay, little poet! full many a cricket I have that is willing,
If I but take him down out of his place on my shelf,
Me blither lays to sing than the blithest known to thy shrilling,
Full of the rapture of life, May, morn, hope, and--himself:

Leaving me only the sadder; for never one of my singers
Lures back the bee to his feast, calls back the bird to his tree.
Hast thou no art can make me believe, while the summer yet lingers,
Better than bloom that has been red leaf and sere that must be?

THE MULBERRIES.

I.

On the Rialto Bridge we stand;
The street ebbs under and makes no sound;
But, with bargains shrieked on every hand,
The noisy market rings around.

"Mulberries, fine mulberries, here!"

A tuneful voice,--and light, light measure;
Though I hardly should count these mulberries dear,
If I paid three times the price for my pleasure.

Brown hands splashed with mulberry blood,
The basket wreathed with mulberry leaves
Hiding the berries beneath them;--good!
Let us take whatever the young rogue gives.

For you know, old friend, I haven't eaten
A mulberry since the ignorant joy
Of anything sweet in the mouth could sweeten
All this bitter world for a boy.

II.

O, I mind the tree in the meadow stood
By the road near the hill: when I clomb aloof
On its branches, this side of the girdled wood,
I could see the top of our cabin roof.

And, looking westward, could sweep the shores
Of the river where we used to swim
Under the ghostly sycamores,
Haunting the waters smooth and dim;

And eastward athwart the pasture-lot
And over the milk-white buckwheat field
I could see the stately elm, where I shot
The first black squirrel I ever killed.

And southward over the bottom-land
I could see the mellow breadths of farm
From the river-shores to the hills expand,
Clasped in the curving river's arm.

In the fields we set our guileless snares
For rabbits and pigeons and wary quails,
Content with the vaguest feathers and hairs
From doubtful wings and vanished tails.

And in the blue summer afternoon
We used to sit in the mulberry-tree:
The breaths of wind that remembered June
Shook the leaves and glittering berries free;

And while we watched the wagons go
Across the river, along the road,
To the mill above, or the mill below,
With horses that stooped to the heavy load,

We told old stories and made new plans,
And felt our hearts gladden within us again,
For we did not dream that this life of a man's
Could ever be what we know as men.

We sat so still that the woodpeckers came
And pillaged the berries overhead;
From his log the chipmonk, waxen tame,
Peered, and listened to what we said.

III.

One of us long ago was carried
To his grave on the hill above the tree;
One is a farmer there, and married;
One has wandered over the sea.

And, if you ask me, I hardly know

Whether I'd be the dead or the clown,--
The clod above or the clay below,--
Or this listless dust by fortune blown

To alien lands. For, however it is,
So little we keep with us in life:
At best we win only victories,
Not peace, not peace, O friend, in this strife.

But if I could turn from the long defeat
Of the little successes once more, and be
A boy, with the whole wide world at my feet,
Under the shade of the mulberry-tree,--

From the shame of the squandered chances, the sleep
Of the will that cannot itself awaken,
From the promise the future can never keep,
From the fitful purposes vague and shaken,--

Then, while the grasshopper sang out shrill
In the grass beneath the blanching thistle,
And the afternoon air, with a tender thrill,
Harked to the quail's complaining whistle,--

Ah me! should I paint the morrows again
In quite the colors so faint to-day,
And with the imperial mulberry's stain
Re-purple life's doublet of hodden-gray?

Know again the losses of disillusion?
For the sake of the hope, have the old deceit?--
In spite of the question's bitter infusion,
Don't you find these mulberries over-sweet?

All our atoms are changed, they say;
And the taste is so different since then;
We live, but a world has passed away
With the years that perished to make us men.

BEFORE THE GATE.

They gave the whole long day to idle laughter,
To fitful song and jest,
To moods of soberness as idle, after,
And silences, as idle too as the rest.

But when at last upon their way returning,
Taciturn, late, and loath,
Through the broad meadow in the sunset burning,
They reached the gate, one fine spell hindered them both.

Her heart was troubled with a subtile anguish
Such as but women know
That wait, and lest love speak or speak not languish,
And what they would, would rather they would not so;

Till he said,--man-like nothing comprehending
Of all the wondrous guile
That women won win themselves with, and bending
Eyes of relentless asking on her the while,--

"Ah, if beyond this gate the path united
Our steps as far as death,
And I might open it!--" His voice, affrighted
At its own daring, faltered under his breath.

Then she--whom both his faith and fear enchanted
Far beyond words to tell,

Feeling her woman's finest wit had wanted
The art he had that knew to blunder so well--

Shyly drew near, a little step, and mocking,
"Shall we not be too late
For tea?" she said. "I'm quite worn out with walking:
Yes, thanks, your arm. And will you--open the gate?"

CLEMENT.

I.

That time of year, you know, when the summer, beginning to sadden,
Full-mooned and silver-misted, glides from the heart of September,
Mourned by disconsolate crickets, and iterant grasshoppers, crying
All the still nights long, from the ripened abundance of gardens;
Then, ere the boughs of the maples are mantled with earliest autumn,
But the wind of autumn breathes from the orchards at nightfall,
Full of winy perfume and mystical yearning and languor;
And in the noonday woods you hear the foraging squirrels,
And the long, crashing fall of the half-eaten nut from the tree-top;
When the robins are mute, and the yellow-birds, haunting the thistles,
Cheep, and twitter, and flit through the dusty lanes and the loppings,
When the pheasant booms from your stealthy foot in the cornfield,
And the wild-pigeons feed, few and shy, in the scone-berry bushes;
When the weary land lies hushed, like a seer in a vision,
And your life seems but the dream of a dream which you cannot remember,--
Broken, bewildering, vague, an echo that answers to nothing!
That time of year, you know. They stood by the gate in the meadow,
Fronting the sinking sun, and the level stream of its splendor
Crimsoned the meadow-slope and woodland with tenderest sunset,
Made her beautiful face like the luminous face of an angel,
Smote through the pained gloom of his heart like a hurt to the sense, there.
Languidly clung about by the half-fallen shawl, and with folded
Hands, that held a few sad asters: "I sigh for this idyl
Lived at last to an end; and, looking on to my prose-life,"
With a smile, she said, and a subtle derision of manner,
"Better and better I seem, when I recollect all that has happened
Since I came here in June: the walks we have taken together
Through these darling meadows, and dear, old, desolate woodlands;
All our afternoon readings, and all our strolls through the moonlit
Village,--so sweetly asleep, one scarcely could credit the scandal,
Heartache, and trouble, and spite, that were hushed for the night, in its silence.
Yes, I am better. I think I could even be civil to *him* for his kindness,
Letting me come here without him.... But open the gate, Cousin Clement;
Seems to me it grows chill, and I think it is healthier in-doors.
--No, then I you need not speak, for I know well enough what is coming:
Bitter taunts for the past, and discouraging views of the future?
Tragedy, Cousin Clement, or comedy,--just as you like it;--
Only not here alone, but somewhere that people can see you.
Then I'll take part in the play, and appear the remorseful young person
Full of divine regrets at not having smothered a genius
Under the feathers and silks of a foolish, extravagant woman.
O you selfish boy! what was it, just now, about anguish?
Bills would be your talk, Cousin Clement, if you were my husband."
Then, with her summer-night glory of eyes low-bending upon him,
Dark'ning his thoughts as the pondered stars bewilder and darken,
Tenderly, wistfully drooping toward him, she faltered in whisper,--
All her mocking face transfigured,--with mournful effusion:
"Clement, do not think it is you alone that remember,--
Do not think it is you alone that have suffered. Ambition,
Fame, and your art,--you have all these things to console you.
I--what have I in this world? Since my child is dead--a bereavement."
Sad hung her eyes on his, and he felt all the anger within him
Broken, and melting in tears. But he shrank from her touch while he answered
(Awkwardly, being a man, and awkwardly, being a lover),

"Yes, you know how it is done. You have cleverly fooled me beforetime,
 With a dainty scorn, and then an imploring forgiveness!
 Yes, you might play it, I think,—that *rôle* of remorseful young person,
 That, or the old man's darling, or anything else you attempted.
 Even your earnest is so much like acting I fear a betrayal,
 Trusting your speech. You say that you have not forgotten. I grant you—
 Not, indeed, for your word—that is light—but I wish to believe you.
 Well, I say, since you have not forgotten, forget now, forever!
 I—I have lived and loved, and you have lived and have married.
 Only receive this bud to remember me when we have parted,—
 Thorns and splendor, no sweetness, rose of the love that I cherished!"
 There he tore from its stalk the imperial flower of the thistle,
 Tore, and gave to her, who took it with mocking obeisance,
 Twined it in her hair, and said, with her subtle derision:
 "You are a wiser man than I thought you could ever be, Clement,—
 Sensible, almost. So! I'll try to forget and remember."
 Lightly she took his arm, but on through the lane to the farm-house,
 Mutely together they moved through the lonesome, odorous twilight.

II.

High on the farm-house hearth, the first autumn fire was kindled;
 Scintillant hickory bark and driest limbs of the beech-tree
 Burned, where all summer long the boughs of asparagus flourished.
 Wild were the children with mirth, and grouping and clinging together,
 Danced with the dancing flame, and lithely swayed with its humor;
 Ran to the window-panes, and peering forth into the darkness,
 Saw there another room, flame-lit, and with frolicking children.
 (Ah! by such phantom hearths, I think that we sit with our first-loves!)
 Sometimes they tossed on the floor, and sometimes they hid in the corners,
 Shouting and laughing aloud, and never resting a moment,
 In the rude delight, the boisterous gladness of childhood,—
 Cruel as summer sun and singing-birds to the heartsick.

Clement sat in his chair unmoved in the midst of the hubbub,
 Rapt, with unseeing eyes; and unafraid in their gambols,
 By his tawny beard the children caught him, and clambered
 Over his knees, and waged a mimic warfare across them,
 Made him their battle-ground, and won and lost kingdoms upon him.
 Airily to and fro, and out of one room to another
 Passed his cousin, and busied herself with things of the household,
 Nonchalant, debonair, blithe, with bewitching housewifely importance,
 Laying the cloth for the supper, and bringing the meal from the kitchen;
 Fairer than ever she seemed, and more than ever she mocked him,
 Coming behind his chair, and clasping her fingers together
 Over his eyes in a girlish caprice, and crying, "Who is it?"
 Vexed his despair with a vision of wife and of home and of children,
 Calling his sister's children around her, and stilling their clamor,
 Making believe they were hers. And Clement sat moody and silent,
 Blank to the wistful gaze of his mother bent on his visage
 With the tender pain, the pitiful, helpless devotion
 Of the mother that looks on the face of her son in his trouble,
 Grown beyond her consoling, and knows that she cannot befriend him.
 Then his cousin laughed, and in idleness talked with the children;
 Sometimes she turned to him, and then when the thistle was falling,
 Caught it and twined it again in her hair, and called it her keepsake,
 Smiled, and made him ashamed of his petulant gift there, before them.

But, when the night was grown old and the two by the hearthstone together
 Sat alone in the flickering red of the flame, and the cricket
 Carked to the stillness, and ever, with sullen throbs of the pendule
 Sighed the time-worn clock for the death of the days that were perished,—
 It was her whim to be sad, and she brought him the book they were reading.
 "Read it to-night," she said, "that I may not seem to be going."
 Said, and mutely reproached him with all the pain she had wrought him.
 From her hand he took the volume and read, and she listened,—
 All his voice molten in secret tears, and ebbing and flowing,
 Now with a faltering breath, and now with impassioned abandon,—
 Read from the book of a poet the rhyme of the fatally sundered,
 Fatally met too late, and their love was their guilt and their anguish,
 But in the night they rose, and fled away into the darkness,
 Glad of all dangers and shames, and even of death, for their love's sake.

Then, when his voice brake hollowly, falling and fading to silence,
 Thrilled in the silence they sat, and durst not behold one another,
 Feeling that wild temptation, that tender, ineffable yearning,
 Drawing them heart to heart. One blind, mad moment of passion
 With their fate they strove; but out of the pang of the conflict,

Through such costly triumph as wins a waste and a famine,
Victors they came, and Love retrieved the error of loving.

So, foreknowing the years, and sharply discerning the future,
Guessing the riddle of life, and accepting the cruel solution,--
Side by side they sat, as far as the stars are asunder.
Carked the cricket no more, but while the audible silence
Shrilled in their ears, she, suddenly rising and dragging the thistle
Out of her clinging hair, laughed mockingly, casting it from her:
"Perish the thorns and splendor,--the bloom and the sweetness are perished.
Dreary, respectable calm, polite despair, and one's Duty,--
These and the world, for dead Love!--The end of these modern romances!
Better than yonder rhyme?... Pleasant dreams and good night, Cousin Clement."

BY THE SEA.

I walked with her I love by the sea,
The deep came up with its chanting waves,
Making a music so great and free
That the will and the faith, which were dead in me,
Awoke and rose from their graves.

Chanting, and with a regal sweep
Of their 'broidered garments up and down
The strand, came the mighty waves of the deep,
Dragging the wave-worn drift from its sleep
Along the sea-sands bare and brown.

"O my soul, make the song of the sea!" I cried.
"How it comes, with its stately tread,
And its dreadful voice, and the splendid pride
Of its regal garments flowing wide
Over the land!" to my soul I said.

My soul was still; the deep went down.
"What hast thou, my soul," I cried,
"In thy song?" "The sea-sands bare and brown,
With broken shells and sea-weed strown,
And stranded drift," my soul replied.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER.

In the narrow Venetian street,
On the wall above the garden gate
(Within, the breath of the rose is sweet,
And the nightingale sings there, soon and late),

Stands Saint Christopher, carven in stone,
With the little child in his huge caress,
And the arms of the baby Jesus thrown
About his gigantic tenderness;

And over the wall a wandering growth
Of darkest and greenest ivy clings,
And climbs around them, and holds them both
In its netted clasp of knots and rings,

Clothing the saint from foot to beard
In glittering leaves that whisper and dance

To the child, on his mighty arm upreared,
With a lusty summer exuberance.

To the child on his arm the faithful saint
Looks up with a broad and tranquil joy;
His brows and his heavy beard aslant
Under the dimpled chin of the boy,

Who plays with the world upon his palm,
And bends his smiling looks divine
On the face of the giant mild and calm,
And the glittering frolic of the vine.

He smiles on either with equal grace,--
On the simple ivy's unconscious life,
And the soul in the giant's lifted face,
Strong from the peril of the strife:

For both are his own,--the innocence
That climbs from the heart of earth to heaven,
And the virtue that gently rises thence
Through trial sent and victory given.

Grow, ivy, up to his countenance,
But it cannot smile on my life as on thine;
Look, Saint, with thy trustful, fearless glance,
Where I dare not lift these eyes of mine.

Venice, 1863.

ELEGY ON JOHN BUTLER HOWELLS,

Who died, "with the first song of the birds," Wednesday morning, April 27, 1864.

I.

In the early morning when I wake
At the hour that is sacred for his sake,

And hear the happy birds of spring
In the garden under my window sing,

And through my window the daybreak blows
The sweetness of the lily and rose,

A dormant anguish wakes with day,
And my heart is smitten with strange dismay:

Distance wider than thine, O sea,
Darkens between my brother and me!

II.

A scrap of print, a few brief lines,
The fatal word that swims and shines

On my tears, with a meaning new and dread,
Make faltering reason know him dead,

And I would that my heart might feel it too,
And unto its own regret be true;

For this is the hardest of all to bear,
That his life was so generous and fair,

So full of love, so full of hope,
Broadening out with ample scope,

And so far from death, that his dying seems
The idle agony of dreams

To my heart, that feels him living yet,--
And I forget, and I forget.

III.

He was almost grown a man when he passed
Away, but when I kissed him last

He was still a child, and I had crept
Up to the little room where he slept,

And thought to kiss him good-by in his sleep;
But he was awake to make me weep

With terrible homesickness, before
My wayward feet had passed the door.

Round about me clung his embrace,
And he pressed against my face his face,

As if some prescience whispered him then
That it never, never should be again.

IV.

Out of far-off days of boyhood dim,
When he was a babe and I played with him,

I remember his looks and all his ways;
And how he grew through childhood's grace,

To the hopes, and strifes, and sports, and joys,
And innocent vanity of boys;

I hear his whistle at the door,
His careless step upon the floor,

His song, his jest, his laughter yet,--
And I forget, and I forget.

V.

Somewhere in the graveyard that I know,
Where the strawberries under the chestnuts grow,

They have laid him; and his sisters set
On his grave the flowers their tears have wet;

And above his grave, while I write, the song
Of the matin robin leaps sweet and strong

From the leafy dark of the chestnut-tree;
And many a murmuring honey-bee

On the strawberry blossoms in the grass
Stoops by his grave and will not pass;

And in the little hollow beneath
The slope of the silent field of death,

The cow-bells tinkle soft and sweet,
And the cattle go by with homeward feet,

And the squirrel barks from the sheltering limb,
At the harmless noises not meant for him;

And Nature, unto her loving heart
Has taken our darling's mortal part,

Tenderly, that he may be,
Like the song of the robin in the tree,

The blossoms, the grass, the reeds by the shore,
A part of Summer evermore.

VI.

I write, and the words with my tears are wet,--
But I forget, O, I forget!

Teach me, Thou that sendest this pain,
To know and feel my loss and gain!

Let me not falter in belief
On his death, for that is sorest grief:

O, lift me above this wearing strife,
Till I discern his deathless life,

Shining beyond this misty shore,
A part of Heaven evermore.

Venice, Wednesday Morning, at Dawn,
May 16, 1864.

THANKSGIVING.

I.

Lord, for the erring thought
Not into evil wrought:
Lord, for the wicked will
Betrayed and baffled still:
For the heart from itself kept,
Our thanksgiving accept.

II.

For ignorant hopes that were
Broken to our blind prayer:
For pain, death, sorrow, sent
Unto our chastisement:
For all loss of seeming good,
Quicken our gratitude.

A SPRINGTIME.

One knows the spring is coming:
There are birds; the fields are green;
There is balm in the sunlight and moonlight,
And dew in the twilights between.

But over there is a silence,
A rapture great and dumb,
That day when the doubt is ended,
And at last the spring is come.

Behold the wonder, O silence!
Strange as if wrought in a night,--
The waited and lingering glory,
The world-old, fresh delight!

O blossoms that hang like winter,
Drifted upon the trees,
O birds that sing in the blossoms,
O blossom-haunting bees,--

O green, green leaves on the branches,
O shadowy dark below,
O cool of the aisles of orchards,
Woods that the wild flowers know,--

O air of gold and perfume,
Wind, breathing sweet and sun,
O sky of perfect azure--
Day, Heaven and Earth in one!--

Let me draw near thy secret,
And in thy deep heart see
How fared, in doubt and dreaming,
The spring that is come in me.

For my soul is held in silence,
A rapture, great and dumb,--
For the mystery that lingered,
The glory that is come!

1861.

IN EARLIEST SPRING.

Tossing his mane of snows in wildest eddies and tangles,
Lion-like, March cometh in, hoarse, with tempestuous breath,
Through all the moaning chimneys, and thwart all the hollows and angles
Round the shuddering house, threatening of winter and death.

But in my heart I feel the life of the wood and the meadow
Thrilling the pulses that own kindred with fibres that lift
Bud and blade to the sunward, within the inscrutable shadow,
Deep in the oak's chill core, under the gathering drift.

Nay, to earth's life in mine some prescience, or dream, or desire
(How shall I name it aright?) comes for a moment and goes,--
Rapture of life ineffable, perfect,--as if in the brier,
Leafless there by my door, trembled a sense of the rose.

THE BOBOLINKS ARE SINGING.

Out of its fragrant heart of bloom,--
The bobolinks are singing!
Out of its fragrant heart of bloom
The apple-tree whispers to the room,
"Why art thou but a nest of gloom,
While the bobolinks are singing?"

The two wan ghosts of the chamber there,--
The bobolinks are singing!
The two wan ghosts of the chamber there
Cease in the breath of the honeyed air,
Sweep from the room and leave it bare,
While the bobolinks are singing.

Then with a breath so chill and slow,--
The bobolinks are singing!
Then with a breath so chill and slow,
It freezes the blossoms into snow,
The haunted room makes answer low,
While the bobolinks are singing.

"I know that in the meadow-land,--
The bobolinks are singing!
I know that in the meadow-land

The sorrowful, slender elm-trees stand,
And the brook goes by on the other hand,
While the bobolinks are singing.

“But ever I see, in the brawling stream,--
The bobolinks are singing!
But ever I see in the brawling stream
A maiden drowned and floating dim,
Under the water, like a dream,
While the bobolinks are singing.

“Buried, she lies in the meadow-land!--
The bobolinks are singing!
Buried, she lies in the meadow-land,
Under the sorrowful elms where they stand.
Wind, blow over her soft and bland,
While the bobolinks are singing.

“O blow, but stir not the ghastly thing,--
The bobolinks are singing!
O blow, but stir not the ghastly thing
The farmer saw so heavily swing
From the elm, one merry morn of spring,
While the bobolinks were singing.

“O blow, and blow away the bloom,--
The bobolinks are singing!
O blow, and blow away the bloom
That sickens me in my heart of gloom,
That sweetly sickens the haunted room,
While the bobolinks are singing!”

PRELUDE.

(TO AN EARLY BOOK OF VERSE.)

In March the earliest bluebird came
And caroled from the orchard-tree
His little tremulous songs to me,
And called upon the summer's name,

And made old summers in my heart
All sweet with flower and sun again;
So that I said, “O, not in vain
Shall be thy lay of little art,

“Though never summer sun may glow,
Nor summer flower for thee may bloom;
Though winter turn in sudden gloom,
And drowse the stirring spring with snow”;

And learned to trust, if I should call
Upon the sacred name of Song,
Though chill through March I languish long,
And never feel the May at all,

Yet may I touch, in some who hear,
The hearts, wherein old songs asleep
Wait but the feeblest touch to leap
In music sweet as summer air!

I sing in March brief bluebird lays,
And hope a May, and do not know:
May be, the heaven is full of snow,--
May be, there open summer days.

THE MOVERS.

SKETCH.

Parting was over at last, and all the good-bys had been spoken.
Up the long hillside road the white-tented wagon moved slowly,
Bearing the mother and children, while onward before them the father
Trudged with his gun on his arm, and the faithful house-dog beside him,
Grave and sedate, as if knowing the sorrowful thoughts of his master.

April was in her prime, and the day in its dewy awaking:
Like a great flower, afar on the crest of the eastern woodland,
Goldenly bloomed the sun, and over the beautiful valley,
Dim with its dew and shadow, and bright with its dream of a river,
Looked to the western hills, and shone on the humble procession,
Paining with splendor the children's eyes, and the heart of the mother.

Beauty, and fragrance, and song filled the air like a palpable presence.
Sweet was the smell of the dewy leaves and the flowers in the wild-wood,
Fair the long reaches of sun and shade in the aisles of the forest.
Glad of the spring, and of love, and of morning, the wild birds were singing:
Jays to each other called harshly, then mellowly fluted together;
Sang the oriole songs as golden and gay as his plumage;
Pensively piped the querulous quails their greetings unfrequent,
While, on the meadow elm, the meadow lark gushed forth in music,
Rapt, exultant, and shaken with the great joy of his singing;
Over the river, loud-chattering, aloft in the air, the kingfisher
Hung, ere he dropped, like a bolt, in the water beneath him;
Gossiping, out of the bank flew myriad twittering swallows;
And in the boughs of the sycamores quarrelled and clamored the blackbirds.

Never for these things a moment halted the Movers, but onward,
Up the long hillside road the white-tented wagon moved slowly.
Till, on the summit, that overlooked all the beautiful valley,
Trembling and spent, the horses came to a standstill unbidden;
Then from the wagon the mother in silence got down with her children,
Came, and stood by the father, and rested her hand on his shoulder.

Long together they gazed on the beautiful valley before them;
Looked on the well-known fields that stretched away to the woodlands,
Where, in the dark lines of green, showed the milk-white crest of the dogwood,
Snow of wild-plums in bloom, and crimson tints of the red-bud;
Looked on the pasture-fields where the cattle were lazily grazing,--
Soft, and sweet, and thin came the faint, far notes of the cow-bells,--
Looked on the oft-trodden lanes, with their elder and blackberry borders,
Looked on the orchard, a bloomy sea, with its billows of blossoms.
Fair was the scene, yet suddenly strange and all unfamiliar,
As are the faces of friends, when the word of farewell has been spoken.
Long together they gazed; then at last on the little log-cabin--
Home for so many years, now home no longer forever--
Rested their tearless eyes in the silent rapture of anguish.
Up on the morning air no column of smoke from the chimney
Wavering, silver and azure, rose, fading and brightening ever;
Shut was the door where yesterday morning the children were playing;
Lit with a gleam of the sun the window stared up at them blindly.
Cold was the hearthstone now, and the place was forsaken and empty.
Empty? Ah no! but haunted by thronging and tenderest fancies,
Sad recollections of all that had been, of sorrow or gladness.

Still they sat there in the glow of the wide red fire in the winter,
Still they sat there by the door in the cool of the still summer evening,
Still the mother seemed to be singing her babe there to slumber,
Still the father beheld her weep o'er the child that was dying,
Still the place was haunted by all the Past's sorrow and gladness!

Neither of them might speak for the thoughts that came crowding their hearts so,
Till, in their ignorant trouble aloud the children lamented;
Then was the spell of silence dissolved, and the father and mother

Burst into tears and embraced, and turned their dim eyes to the Westward.

Ohio, 1859.

THROUGH THE MEADOW.

The summer sun was soft and bland,
As they went through the meadow land.

The little wind that hardly shook
The silver of the sleeping brook
Blew the gold hair about her eyes,--
A mystery of mysteries!
So he must often pause, and stoop,
And all the wanton ringlets loop
Behind her dainty ear--emprise
Of slow event and many sighs.

Across the stream was scarce a step,--
And yet she feared to try the leap;
And he, to still her sweet alarm,
Must lift her over on his arm.

She could not keep the narrow way,
For still the little feet would stray,
And ever must he bend t' undo
The tangled grasses from her shoe,--
From dainty rosebud lips in pout,
Must kiss the perfect flower out!

Ah! little coquette! Fair deceit!
Some things are bitter that were sweet.

GONE.

Is it the shrewd October wind
Brings the tears into her eyes?
Does it blow so strong that she must fetch
Her breath in sudden sighs?

The sound of his horse's feet grows faint,
The Rider has passed from sight;
The day dies out of the crimson west,
And coldly falls the night.

She presses her tremulous fingers tight
Against her closed eyes,
And on the lonesome threshold there,
She cowers down and cries.

THE SARCASTIC FAIR.

Her mouth is a honey-blossom,
No doubt, as the poet sings;
But within her lips, the petals,
Lurks a cruel bee, that stings.

RAPTURE.

In my rhyme I fable anguish,
Feigning that my love is dead,
Playing at a game of sadness,
Singing hope forever fled,--

Trailing the slow robes of mourning,
Grieving with the player's art,
With the languid palms of sorrow
Folded on a dancing heart.

I must mix my love with death-dust,
Lest the draught should make me mad;
I must make believe at sorrow,
Lest I perish, over-glad.

DEAD.

I.

Something lies in the room
Over against my own;
The windows are lit with a ghastly bloom
Of candles, burning alone,--
Untrimmed, and all aflame
In the ghastly silence there!

II.

People go by the door,
Tiptoe, holding their breath,
And hush the talk that they held before,
Lest they should waken Death,
That is awake all night
There in the candlelight!

III.

The cat upon the stairs
Watches with flamy eye
For the sleepy one who shall unawares
Let her go stealing by.
She softly, softly purrs,
And claws at the banisters.

IV.

The bird from out its dream
Breaks with a sudden song,
That stabs the sense like a sudden scream;
The hound the whole night long
Howls to the moonless sky,
So far, and starry, and high.

THE DOUBT.

She sits beside the low window,
In the pleasant evening-time,
With her face turned to the sunset,
Reading a book of rhyme.

And the wine-light of the sunset,
Stolen into the dainty nook,
Where she sits in her sacred beauty,
Lies crimson on the book.

O beautiful eyes so tender,
Brown eyes so tender and dear,
Did you leave your reading a moment
Just now, as I passed near?

Maybe, 'tis the sunset flushes
Her features, so lily-pale;
Maybe, 'tis the lover's passion,
She reads of in the tale.

O darling, and darling, and darling,
If I dared to trust my thought;
If I dared to believe what I must not,
Believe what no one ought,--

We would read together the poem
Of the Love that never died,
The passionate, world-old story
Come true, and glorified.

THE THORN.

"Every Rose, you sang, has its Thorn,
But this has none, I know."
She clasped my rival's Rose
Over her breast of snow.

I bowed to hide my pain,
With a man's unskilful art;
I moved my lips, and could not say
The Thorn was in my heart!

THE MYSTERIES.

Once on my mother's breast, a child, I crept,
Holding my breath;
There, safe and sad, lay shuddering, and wept

At the dark mystery of Death.

Weary and weak, and worn with all unrest,
Spent with the strife,--
O mother, let me weep upon thy breast
At the sad mystery of Life!

THE BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS.

"The day had been one of dense mists and rains, and much of General Hooker's battle was fought above the clouds, on the top of Lookout Mountain."--GENERAL MEIG'S *Report of the Battle before Chattanooga*.

Where the dews and the rains of heaven have their fountain,
Like its thunder and its lightning our brave burst on the foe,
Up above the clouds on Freedom's Lookout Mountain
Raining life-blood like water on the valleys down below.
O, green be the laurels that grow,
O sweet be the wild-buds that blow,
In the dells of the mountain where the brave are lying low.

Light of our hope and crown of our story,
Bright as sunlight, pure as starlight shall their deeds of daring glow,
While the day and the night out of heaven shed their glory,
On Freedom's Lookout Mountain whence they routed Freedom's foe.
O, soft be the gales when they go
Through the pines on the summit where they blow,
Chanting solemn music for the souls that passed below.

FOR ONE OF THE KILLED.

There on the field of battle
Lies the young warrior dead:
Who shall speak in the soldier's honor?
How shall his praise be said?

Cannon, there in the battle,
Thundered the soldier's praise,
Hark! how the volumed volleys echo
Down through the far-off days!

Tears for the grief of a father,
For a mother's anguish, tears;
But for him that died in his country's battle,
Glory and endless years.

THE TWO WIVES.

(TO COLONEL J. G. M., IN MEMORY OF THE EVENT BEFORE ATLANTA.)

I.

The colonel rode by his picket-line
In the pleasant morning sun,
That glanced from him far off to shine
On the crouching rebel picket's gun.

II.

From his command the captain strode
Out with a grave salute,
And talked with the colonel as he rode;--
The picket levelled his piece to shoot.

III.

The colonel rode and the captain walked,--
The arm of the picket tired;
Their faces almost touched as they talked,
And, swerved from his aim, the picket fired.

IV.

The captain fell at the horse's feet,
Wounded and hurt to death,
Calling upon a name that was sweet
As God is good, with his dying breath.

V.

And the colonel that leaped from his horse and knelt
To close the eyes so dim,
A high remorse for God's mercy felt,
Knowing the shot was meant for him.

VI.

And he whispered, prayer-like, under his breath,
The name of his own young wife:
For Love, that had made his friend's peace with Death,
Alone could make his with life.

BEREAVED.

The passionate humming-birds cling
To the honeysuckles' hearts;
In and out at the open window
The twittering house-wren darts,
And the sun is bright.

June is young, and warm, and sweet;
The morning is gay and new;
Glimmers yet the grass of the door-yard,
Pearl-gray with fragrant dew,
And the sun is bright.

From the mill, upon the stream,
A busy murmur swells;
On to the pasture go the cattle,
Lowling, with tinkling bells,
And the sun is bright.

She gathers his playthings up,
And dreamily puts them by;
Children are playing in the meadow,
She hears their joyous cry,
And the sun is bright.

She sits and clasps her brow,
And looks with swollen eyes
On the landscape that reels and dances,--
To herself she softly cries,
And the sun is bright.

THE SNOW-BIRDS.

The lonesome graveyard lieth,
A deep with silent waves
Of night-long snow, all white, and billowed
Over the hidden graves.

The snow-birds come in the morning,
Flocking and fluttering low,
And light on the graveyard brambles,
And twitter there in the snow.

The Singer, old and weary,
Looks out from his narrow room:
"Ah, me! but my thoughts are snow-birds,
Haunting a graveyard gloom,

"Where all the Past is buried
And dead, these many years,
Under the drifted whiteness
Of frozen falls of tears.

"Poor birds! that know not summer,
Nor sun, nor flowers fair,--
Only the graveyard brambles,
And graves, and winter air!"

VAGARY.

Up and down the dusty street,
I hurry with my burning feet;
Against my face the wind-waves beat,
Fierce from the city-sea of heat.
Deep in my heart the vision is,
Of meadow grass and meadow trees
Blown silver in the summer breeze,
And ripe, red, hillside strawberries.

My sense the city tumult fills,--
The tumult that about me reels
Of strokes and cries, and feet and wheels.
Deep in my dream I list, and, hark!
From out the maple's leafy dark,
The fluting of the meadow lark!

About the throngéd street I go:
There is no face here that I know;
Of all that pass me to and fro
There is no face here that I know.
Deep in my soul's most sacred place,
With a sweet pain I look and trace
The features of a tender face,

All lit with love and girlish grace.

Some spell is on me, for I seem
A memory of the past, a dream
Of happiness remembered dim,
 Unto myself that walk the street
 Scathed with the city's noontide heat,
 With puzzled brain and burning feet.

FEUERBILDER.

The children sit by the fireside
 With their little faces in bloom;
And behind, the lily-pale mother,
 Looking out of the gloom,

Flushes in cheek and forehead
 With a light and sudden start;
But the father sits there silent,
 From the firelight apart.

"Now, what dost thou see in the embers?
 Tell it to me, my child,"
Whispers the lily-pale mother
 To her daughter sweet and mild.

"O, I see a sky and a moon
 In the coals and ashes there,
And under, two are walking
 In a garden of flowers so fair.

"A lady gay, and her lover,
 Talking with low-voiced words,
Not to waken the dreaming flowers
 And the sleepy little birds."

Back in the gloom the mother
 Shrinks with a sudden sigh.
"Now, what dost thou see in the embers?"
 Cries the father to the boy.

"O, I see a wedding-procession
 Go in at the church's door,--
Ladies in silk and knights in steel,--
 A hundred of them, and more.

"The bride's face is as white as a lily,
 And the groom's head is white as snow;
And without, with plumes and tapers,
 A funeral paces slow."

Loudly then laughed the father,
 And shouted again for cheer,
And called to the drowsy housemaid
 To fetch him a pipe and beer.

AVERY.

[NIAGARA, 1853.]

I.

All night long they heard in the houses beside the shore,
Heard, or seemed to hear, through the multitudinous roar,
Out of the hell of the rapids as 'twere a lost soul's cries,--
Heard and could not believe; and the morning mocked their eyes,
Showing, where wildest and fiercest the waters leaped up and ran
Raving round him and past, the visage of a man
Clinging, or seeming to cling, to the trunk of a tree that, caught
Fast in the rocks below, scarce out of the surges raught.
Was it a life, could it be, to yon slender hope that clung?
Shrill, above all the tumult the answering terror rung.

II.

Under the weltering rapids a boat from the bridge is drowned,
Over the rocks the lines of another are tangled and wound;
And the long, fateful hours of the morning have wasted soon,
As it had been in some blessed trance, and now it is noon.
Hurry, now with the raft! But O, build it strong and stanch,
And to the lines and treacherous rocks look well as you launch!
Over the foamy tops of the waves, and their foam-sprent sides,
Over the hidden reefs, and through the embattled tides,
Onward rushes the raft, with many a lurch and leap,--
Lord! if it strike him loose from the hold he scarce can keep!

No! through all peril unharmed, it reaches him harmless at last,
And to its proven strength he lashes his weakness fast.
Now, for the shore! But steady, steady, my men, and slow;
Taut, now, the quivering lines; now slack; and so, let her go!
Thronging the shores around stand the pitying multitude;
Wan as his own are their looks, and a nightmare seems to brood
Heavy upon them, and heavy the silence hangs on all,
Save for the rapids' plunge, and the thunder of the fall.
But on a sudden thrills from the people still and pale,
Chorussing his unheard despair, a desperate wail:
Caught on a lurking point of rock it sways and swings,
Sport of the pitiless waters, the raft to which he clings.

III.

All the long afternoon it idly swings and sways;
And on the shore the crowd lifts up its hands and prays:
Lifts to heaven and wrings the hands so helpless to save,
Prays for the mercy of God on him whom the rock and the wave
Battle for, fettered betwixt them, and who, amidst their strife,
Struggles to help his helpers, and fights so hard for his life,--
Tugging at rope and at reef, while men weep and women swoon.
Priceless second by second, so wastes the afternoon,
And it is sunset now; and another boat and the last
Down to him from the bridge through the rapids has safely passed.

IV.

Wild through the crowd comes flying a man that nothing can stay,
Maddening against the gate that is locked athwart his way.
"No! we keep the bridge for them that can help him. You,
Tell us, who are you?" "His brother!" "God help you both! Pass through."
Wild, with wide arms of imploring he calls aloud to him,
Unto the face of his brother, scarce seen in the distance dim;
But in the roar of the rapids his fluttering words are lost
As in a wind of autumn the leaves of autumn are tossed.
And from the bridge he sees his brother sever the rope
Holding him to the raft, and rise secure in his hope;
Sees all as in a dream the terrible pageantry,--
Populous shores, the woods, the sky, the birds flying free;
Sees, then, the form,--that, spent with effort and fasting and fear,
Flings itself feebly and fails of the boat that is lying so near,--
Caught in the long-baffled clutch of the rapids, and rolled and hurled
Headlong on to the cataract's brink, and out of the world.

BOPEEP: A PASTORAL.

“O, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed flower that simply blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?”

TENNYSON.

I.

She lies upon the soft, enamoured grass,
I' the wooing shelter of an apple-tree,
And at her feet the tranced brook is glass,
And in the blossoms over her the bee
Hangs charmed of his sordid industry;
For love of her the light wind will not pass.

II.

Her golden hair, blown over her red lips,
That seem two rose-leaves softly breathed apart,
Athwart her rounded throat like sunshine slips;
Her small hand, resting on her beating heart,
The crook that tells her peaceful shepherd-art
Scarce keeps with light and tremulous finger-tips.

III.

She is as fair as any shepherdess
That ever was in mask or Christmas scene:
Bright silver spangles hath she on her dress,
And of her red-heeled shoes appears the sheen;
And she hath ribbons of such blue or green
As best suits pastoral people's comeliness.

IV.

She sleeps, and it is in the month of May,
And the whole land is full of the delight
Of music and sweet scents; and all the day
The sun is gold; the moon is pearl all night,
And like a paradise the world is bright,
And like a young girl's hopes the world is gay.

V.

So waned the hours; and while her beauteous sleep
Was blest with many a happy dream of Love,
Untended still, her silly, vagrant sheep
Afar from that young shepherdess did rove,
Along the vales and through the gossip grove,
O'er daisied meads and up the thymy steep.

VI.

Then (for it happens oft when harm is nigh,
Our dreams grow haggard till at last we wake)
She thought that from the little runnel by
There crept upon a sudden forth a snake,
And stung her hand, and fled into the brake;
Whereat she sprang up with a bitter cry,

VII.

And wildly over all that place did look,
And could not spy her ingrate, wanton flock,—
Not there among tall grasses by the brook,
Not there behind the mossy-bearded rock;
And pitiless Echo answered with a mock
When she did sorrow that she was forsook.

VIII.

Alas! the scattered sheep might not be found,
And long and loud that gentle maid did weep,
Till in her blurred sight the hills went round,
And, circling far, field, wood, and stream did sweep;
And on the ground the miserable Bopeep
Fell and forgot her troubles in a swoond.

IX.

When she awoke, the sun long time had set,
And all the land was sleeping in the moon,
And all the flowers with dim, sad dews were wet,
As they had wept to see her in that swoon.
It was about the night's low-breathing noon;
Only the larger stars were waking yet.

X.

Bopeep, the fair and hapless shepherdess,
Rose from her swooning in a sore dismay,
And tried to smooth her damp and rumpled dress,
That showed in truth a grievous disarray;
Then where the brook the wan moon's mirror lay,
She laved her eyes, and curled each golden tress.

XI.

And looking to her ribbons, if they were
As ribbons of a shepherdess should be,
She took the hat that she was wont to wear
(Bedecked it was with ribbons flying free
As ever man in opera might see),
And set it on her curls of yellow hair.

XII.

"And I will go and seek my sheep," she said,
"Through every distant land until I die;
But when they bring me hither, cold and dead,
Let me beneath these apple-blossoms lie,
With this dear, faithful, lovely runnel nigh,
Here, where my cru--cru--cruel sheep have fed."

XIII.

Thus sorrow and despair make bold Bopeep,
And forth she springs, and hurries on her way:
Across the lurking rivulet she can leap,
No sombre forest shall her quest delay,
No crooked vale her eager steps bewray:
What dreadeth she that seeketh her lost sheep?

XIV.

By many a pond, where timorous water-birds,
With clattering cries and throbbing wings, arose,
By many a pasture, where the soft-eyed herds
Looked shadow-huge in their unmoved repose,
Long through the lonesome night that sad one goes
And fills the solitude with wailing words;

XV.

So that the little field-mouse dreams of harm,
Snuggled away from harm beneath the weeds;
The violet, sleeping on the clover's arm,
Wakes, and is cold with thoughts of dreadful deeds;
The pensive people of the water-reeds
Hark with a mute and dolorous alarm.

XVI.

And the fond hearts of all the turtle-doves
Are broken in compassion of her woe,
And every tender little bird that loves

Feels in his breast a sympathetic throe;
And flowers are sad wherever she may go,
And hoarse with sighs the waterfalls and groves.

XVII.

The pale moon droppeth low; star after star
Grows faint and slumbers in the gray of dawn;
And still she lingers not, but hurries far,
Till in a dreary wilderness withdrawn
Through tangled woods she lorn and lost moves on,
Where griffins dire and dreadful dragons are.

XVIII.

Her ribbons all are dripping with the dew,
Her red-heeled shoes are torn, and stained with mire,
Her tender arms the angry sharpness rue
Of many a scraggy thorn and envious brier;
And poor Bopeep, with no sweet pity nigh her,
Wrings her small hands, and knows not what to do.

XIX.

And on that crude and rugged ground she sinks,
And soon her seeking had been ended there,
But through the trees a fearful glimmer shrinks,
And of a hermit's dwelling she is 'ware:
At the dull pane a dull-eyed taper blinks,
Drowsed with long vigils and the morning air.

XX.

Thither she trembling moves, and at the door
Falls down, and cannot either speak or stir:
The hermit comes,--with no white beard before,
Nor coat of skins, nor cap of shaggy fur:
It was a comely youth that lifted her,
And to his hearth, and to his breakfast, bore.

XXI.

Arrayed he was in princeliest attire,
And of as goodly presence sooth was he
As any little maiden might admire,
Or any king-beholding cat might see
"My poor Bopeep," he sigheth piteously,
"Rest here, and warm you at a hermit's fire."

XXII.

She looked so beautiful, there, mute and white,
He kissed her on the lips and on the eyes
(The most a prince could do in such a plight);
But chiefly gazed on her in still surprise,
And when he saw her lily eyelids rise,
For him the whole world had no fairer sight.

XXIII.

"Rude is my fare: a bit of venison steak,
A dish of honey and a glass of wine,
With clean white bread, is the poor feast I make.
Be served, I pray: I think this flask is fine,"
He said. "Hard is this hermit life of mine:
This day I will its weariness forsake."

XXIV.

And then he told her how it chanced that he,
King Cole's son, in that forest held his court,
And the sole reason that there seemed to be
Was, he was being hermit there for sport;
But he confessed the life was not his forte,
And therewith both laughed out right jollily.

XXV.

And sly Bopeep forgot her sheep again
In gay discourse with that engaging youth:
Love hath such sovran remedies for pain!
But then he was a handsome prince, in truth,
And both were young, and both were silly, sooth,
And everything to Love but love seems vain.

XXVI.

They took them down the silver-claspéd book
That this young anchorite's predecessor kept,--
A holy seer,--and through it they did look;
Sometimes their idle eyes together crept,
Sometimes their lips; but still the leaves they swept,
Until they found a shepherd's pictured crook.

XXVII.

And underneath was writ it should befall
On such a day, in such a month and year,
A maiden fair, a young prince brave and tall,
By such a chance should come together here.
They were the people, that was very clear:
"O love," the prince said, "let us read it all!"

XXVIII.

And thus the hermit's prophecy ran on:
Though she her lost sheep wist not where to find,
Yet should she bid her weary care begone,
And banish every doubt from her sweet mind:
They, with their little snow-white tails behind,
Homeward would go, if they were left alone.

XXIX.

They closed the book, and in her happy eyes
The prince read truth and love forevermore,--
Better than any hermit's prophecies!
They passed together from the cavern's door;
Embraced, they turned to look at it once more,
And over it beheld the glad sun rise,

XXX.

That streamed before them aisles of dusk and gold
Under the song-swept arches of the wood,
And forth they went, tranced in each other's hold,
Down through that rare and luminous solitude,
Their happy hearts enchanted in the mood
Of morning, and of May, and romance old.

XXXI.

Sometimes the saucy leaves would kiss her cheeks,
And he must kiss their wanton kiss away;
To die beneath her feet the wood-flower seeks,
The quivering aspen feels a fine dismay,
And many a scented blossom on the spray
In odorous sighs its passionate longing speaks.

XXXII.

And forth they went down to that stately stream,
Bowed over by the ghostly sycamores
(Awearily, as if some heavy dream
Held them in languor), but whose opulent shores
With pearléd shells and dusts of precious ores
Were tremulous brilliance in the morning beam;

XXXIII.

Where waited them, beside the lustrous sand,
A silk-winged shallop, sleeping on the flood;
And smoothly wafted from the hither strand,
Across the calm, broad stream they lightly rode,
Under them still the silver fishes stood;

The eager lilies, on the other land,

XXXIV.

Beckoned them; but where the castle shone
With diamonded turrets and a wall
Of gold-embedded pearl and costly stone,
Their vision to its peerless splendor thrall
The maiden fair, the young prince brave and tall,
Thither with light, unlingering feet pressed on.

XXXV.

A gallant train to meet this loving pair,
In silk and steel, moves from the castle door,
And up the broad and ringing castle stair
They go with gleeful minstrelsy before,
And "Hail our prince and princess evermore!"
From all the happy throng is greeting there.

XXXVI.

And in the hall the prince's sire, King Cole,
Sitting with crown and royal ermine on,
His fiddlers three behind with pipe and bowl,
Rises and moves to lift his kneeling son,
Greeting his bride with kisses many a one,
And tears and laughter from his jolly soul;

XXXVII.

Then both his children to a window leads
That over daisied pasture-land looks out,
And shows Bopeep where her lost flock wide feeds,
And every frolic lambkin leaps about.
She hears Boy-Blue, that lazy shepherd, shout,
Slow pausing from his pipe of mellow reeds;

XXXVIII.

And, turning, peers into her prince's eyes;
Then, caught and clasped against her prince's heart,
Upon her breath her answer wordless dies,
And leaves her gratitude to sweeter art,—
To lips from which the bloom shall never part,
To looks wherein the summer never dies!

WHILE SHE SANG.

I.

She sang, and I heard the singing,
Far out of the wretched past,
Of meadow-larks in the meadow,
In a breathing of the blast.

Cold through the clouds of sunset
The thin red sunlight shone,
Staining the gloom of the woodland
Where I walked and dreamed alone;

And glinting with chilly splendor
The meadow under the hill,
Where the lingering larks were lurking
In the sere grass hid and still.

Out they burst with their singing,
Their singing so loud and gay;

They made in the heart of October
A sudden ghastly May,

That faded and ceased with their singing.
The thin red sunlight paled,
And through the boughs above me
The wind of evening wailed;--

Wailed, and the light of evening
Out of the heaven died;
And from the marsh by the river
The lonesome killdee cried.

II.

The song is done, but a phantom
Of music haunts the chords,
That thrill with its subtile presence,
And grieve for the dying words.

And in the years that are perished,
Far back in the wretched past,
I see on the May-green meadows
The white snow falling fast;--

Falling, and falling, and falling,
As still and cold as death,
On the bloom of the odorous orchard,
On the small, meek flowers beneath;

On the roofs of the village-houses,
On the long, silent street,
Where its plumes are soiled and broken
Under the passing feet;

On the green crest of the woodland,
On the cornfields far apart;
On the cowering birds in the gable,
And on my desolate heart.

A POET.

From wells where Truth in secret lay
He saw the midnight stars by day.

"O marvellous gift!" the many cried,
"O cruel gift!" his voice replied.

The stars were far, and cold, and high,
That glimmered in the noonday sky;

He yearned toward the sun in vain,
That warmed the lives of other men.

CONVENTION.

He falters on the threshold,
She lingers on the stair:
Can it be that was his footstep?

Can it be that she is there?

Without is tender yearning,
And tender love is within;
They can hear each other's heart-beats,
But a wooden door is between.

THE POET'S FRIENDS.

The robin sings in the elm;
The cattle stand beneath,
Sedate and grave, with great brown eyes
And fragrant meadow-breath.

They listen to the flattered bird,
The wise-looking, stupid things;
And they never understand a word
Of all the robin sings.

NO LOVE LOST.

A ROMANCE OF TRAVEL.

1862.

BERTHA-- *Writing from Venice.*

I.

On your heart I feign myself fallen--ah, heavier burden,
Darling, of sorrow and pain than ever shall rest there! I take you
Into these friendless arms of mine, that you cannot escape me;
Closer and closer I fold you, and tell you all, and you listen
Just as you used at home, and you let my sobs and my silence
Speak, when the words will not come--and you understand and forgive me.
--Ah! no, no! but I write, with the wretched bravado of distance,
What you must read unmoved by the pity too far for entreaty.

II.

Well, I could never have loved him, but when he sought me and asked me,--
When to the men that offered their lives, the love of a woman
Seemed so little to give!--I promised the love that he asked me,
Sent him to war with my kiss on his lips, and thought him my hero.
Afterward came the doubt, and out of long question, self-knowledge,--
Came that great defeat, and the heart of the nation was withered;
Mine leaped high with the awful relief won of death. But the horror,
Then, of the crime that was wrought in that guilty moment of rapture,--
Guilty as if my will had winged the bullet that struck him,--
Clung to me day and night, and dreaming I saw him forever,
Looking through battle-smoke with sorrowful eyes of upbraiding,
Or, in the moonlight lying gray, or dimly approaching,
Holding toward me his arms, that still held nearer and nearer,
Folded about me at last ... and I would I had died in the fever!--
Better then than now, and better than ever hereafter!

III.

Weary as some illusion of fever to me was the ocean--

Storm-swept, scourged with bitter rains, and wandering always
 Onward from sky to sky with endless processions of surges,
 Knowing not life nor death, but since the light was, the first day,
 Only enduring unrest till the darkness possess it, the last day.
 Over its desolate depths we voyaged away from all living:
 All the world behind us waned into vaguest remoteness;
 Names, and faces, and scenes recurred like that broken remembrance
 Of the anterior, bodiless life of the spirit,--the trouble
 Of a bewildered brain, or the touch of the Hand that created,--
 And when the ocean ceased at last like a faded illusion,
 Europe itself seemed only a vision of eld and of sadness.
 Naught but the dark in my soul remained to me constant and real,
 Growing and taking the thoughts bereft of happier uses,
 Blotting all sense of lapse from the days that with swift iteration
 Were and were not. They fable the bright days the fleetest:
 These that had nothing to give, that had nothing to bring or to promise,
 Went as one day alone. For me was no alternation
 Save from my dull despair to wild and reckless rebellion,
 When the regret for my sin was turned to ruthless self-pity--
 When I hated him whose love had made me its victim,
 Through his faith and my falsehood yet claiming me. Then I was smitten
 With so great remorse, such grief for him, and compassion,
 That, if he could have come back to me, I had welcomed and loved him
 More than man ever was loved. Alas, for me that another
 Holds his place in my heart evermore! Alas, that I listened
 When the words, whose daring lured my spirit and lulled it,
 Seemed to take my blame away with my will of resistance!

Do not make haste to condemn me: my will was the will of a woman,--
 Fain to be broken by love. Yet unto the last I endeavored
 What I could to be faithful still to the past and my penance;
 And as we stood that night in the old Roman garden together--
 By the fountain whose passionate tears but now had implored me
 In his pleading voice--and he waited my answer, I told him
 All that had been before of delusion and guilt, and conjured him
 Not to darken his fate with mine. The costly endeavor
 Only was subtler betrayal. O me, from the pang of confession,
 Sprang what strange delight, as I tore from its lurking that horror--
 Brooded upon so long--with the hope that at last I might see it
 Through his eyes, unblurred by the tears that disordered my vision!
 Oh, with what rapturous triumph I humbled my spirit before him,
 That he might lift me and soothe me, and make that dreary remembrance,
 All this confused present, seem only some sickness of fancy,
 Only a morbid folly, no certain and actual trouble!
 If from that refuge I fled with words of too feeble denial--
 Bade him hate me, with sobs that entreated his tenderest pity,
 Moved mute lips and left the meaningless farewell unuttered--
 She that never has loved, alone can wholly condemn me.

IV.

How could he other than follow? My heart had bidden him follow,
 Nor had my lips forbidden; and Rome yet glimmered behind me,
 When my soul yearned towards his from the sudden forlornness of absence.
 Everywhere his face looked from vanishing glimpses of faces,
 Everywhere his voice reached my senses in fugitive cadence.
 Sick, through the storied cities, with wretched hopes, and upbraidings
 Of my own heart for its hopes, I went from wonder to wonder,
 Blind to them all, or only beholding them wronged, and related,
 Through some trick of wayward thought, to myself and my trouble.
 Not surprise nor regret, but a fierce, precipitate gladness
 Sent the blood to my throbbing heart when I found him in Venice.
 "Waiting for you," he whispered; "you would so." I answered him nothing.

V.

Father, whose humor grows more silent and ever more absent
 (Changed in all but love for me since the death of my mother),
 Willing to see me contented at last, and trusting us wholly,
 Left us together alone in our world of love and of beauty.
 So, by noon and by night, we two have wandered in Venice,
 Where the beautiful lives in vivid and constant caprices,
 Yet, where the charm is so perfect that nothing fantastic surprises
 More than in dreams, and one's life with the life of the city is blended
 In a luxurious calm, and the tumult without and beyond it

Seems but the emptiest fable of vain aspiration and labor.

Yes, from all that makes this Venice sole among cities,
Peerless forever,--the still lagoons that sleep in the sunlight,
Lulled by their island-bells; the night's mysterious waters
Lit through their shadowy depths by stems of splendor, that blossom
Into the lamps that float, like flamy lotuses, over;
Narrow and secret canals, that dimly gleaming and glooming
Under palace-walls and numberless arches of bridges,
List no sound but the dip of the gondolier's oar and his warning
Cried from corner to corner; the sad, superb Canalazzo
Mirroring marvellous grandeur and beauty, and dreaming of glory
Out of the empty homes of her lords departed; the footways
Wandering sunless between the walls of the houses, and stealing
Glimpses, through rusted cancelli, of lurking greenness of gardens,
Wild-grown flowers and broken statues and mouldering frescos;
Thoroughfares filled with traffic, and throngs ever ebbing and flowing
To and from the heart of the city, whose pride and devotion,
Lifting high the bells of St. Mark's like prayers unto heaven,
Stretch a marble embrace of palaces toward the cathedral
Orient, gorgeous, and flushed with color and light, like the morning!--
From the lingering waste that is not yet ruin in Venice,
And her phantasmal show, through all, of being and doing--
Came a strange joy to us, untouched by regret for the idle
Days without yesterdays that died into nights without morrows.
Here, in our paradise of love we reigned, new-created,
As in the youth of the world, in the days before evil and conscience.
Ah! in our fair, lost world was neither fearing nor doubting,
Neither the sickness of old remorse nor the gloom of foreboding,--
Only the glad surrender of all individual being
Unto him whom I loved, and in whose tender possession,
Fate-free, my soul reposed from its anguish.

--Of these things I write you
As of another's experience; part of my own they no longer
Seem to me now, through the doom that darkens the past like the future.

VI.

Golden the sunset gleamed, above the city behind us,
Out of a city of clouds as fairy and lovely as Venice,
While we looked at the fishing-tails of purple and yellow
Far on the rim of the sea, whose light and musical surges
Broke along the sands with a faint, reiterant sadness.
But, when the sails had darkened into black wings, through the twilight
Sweeping away into night--past the broken tombs of the Hebrews
Homeward we sauntered slowly, through dew-sweet, blossomy alleys;
So drew near the boat by errant and careless approaches,
Entered, and left with indolent pulses the Lido behind us.

All the sunset had paled, and the campanili of Venice
Rose like the masts of a mighty fleet moored there in the water.
Lights flashed furtively to and fro through the deepening twilight.
Massed in one thick shade lay the Gardens; the numberless islands
Lay like shadows upon the lagoons. And on us as we loitered
By their enchanted coasts, a spell of ineffable sweetness
Fell and made us at one with them; and silent and blissful
Shadows we seemed, that drifted on through a being of shadow,
Vague, indistinct to ourselves, unbounded by hope or remembrance.
Yet we knew the beautiful night, as it grew from the evening:
Far beneath us and far above us the vault of the heavens
Glittered and darkened; and now the moon, that had haunted the daylight
Thin and pallid, dimmed the stars with her fulness of splendor,
And over all the lagoons fell the silvery rain of the moonbeams,
As in the song the young girls sang while their gondolas passed us,--
Sang in the joy of love, or youth's desire of loving.

Balmy night of the South! O perfect night of the Summer!
Night of the distant dark, of the near and tender effulgence!--
How from my despair are thy peace and loveliness frightened!
For, while our boat lay there at the will of the light undulations,
Idle as if our mood imbued and controlled it, yet ever
Seeming to bear us on athwart those shining expanses
Out to shining seas beyond pursuit or returning--
There, while we lingered, and lingered, and would not break from our rapture,
Down the mirrored night another gondola drifted

Nearer and slowly nearer our own, and moonlighted faces
Stared. And that sweet trance grew a rigid and dreadful possession,
Which, if no dream indeed, yet mocked with such semblance of dreaming,
That, as it happens in dreams, when a dear face, stooping to kiss us,
Takes, ere the lips have touched, some malign and horrible aspect,
His face faded away, and the face of the Dead--of that other--
Flashed on mine, and writhing, through every change of emotion,--
Wild amaze and scorn, accusation and pitiless mocking,--
Vanished into the swoon whose blackness encompassed and hid me.

PHILIP--*To Bertha.*

I am not sure, I own, that if first I had seen my delusion
When I saw *you*, last night, I should be so ready to give you
Now your promises back, and hold myself nothing above you,
That it is mine to offer a freedom you never could ask for.
Yet, believe me, indeed, from no bitter heart I release you:
You are as free of me now as though I had died in the battle,
Or as I never had lived. Nay, if it is mine to forgive you,
Go without share of the blame that could hardly be all upon your side.

Ghosts are not sensitive things; yet, after my death in the papers,
Sometimes a harrowing doubt assailed this impalpable essence:
Had I done so well to plead my cause at that moment,
When your consent must be yielded less to the lover than soldier?
"Not so well," I was answered by that ethereal conscience
Ghosts have about them, "and not so nobly or wisely as might be."
--Truly, I loved you, then, as now I love you no longer.

I was a prisoner then, and this doubt in the languor of sickness
Came; and it clung to my convalescence, and grew to the purpose,
After my days of captivity ended, to seek you and solve it,
And, if I haply had erred, to undo the wrong, and release you.

Well, you have solved me the doubt. I dare to trust that you wept me,
Just a little, at first, when you heard of me dead in the battle?
For we were plighted, you know, and even in this saintly humor,
I would scarce like to believe that my loss had merely relieved you.
Yet, I say, it was prudent and well not to wait for my coming
Back from the dead. If it may be I sometimes had cherished a fancy
That I had won some right to the palm with the pang of the martyr,--
Fondly intended, perhaps, some splendor of self-abnegation,--
Doubtless all that was a folly which merciful chances have spared me.
No, I am far from complaining that Circumstance coolly has ordered
Matters of tragic fate in such a commonplace fashion.
How do I know, indeed, that the easiest isn't the best way?

Friendly adieux end this note, and our little comedy with it.

FANNY--*To Clara.*

I.

Yes, I promised to write, but how shall I write to you, darling?
Venice we reached last Monday, wild for canals and for color,
Palaces, prisons, lagoons, and gondolas, bravoos, and moonlight,
All the mysterious, dreadful, beautiful things in existence.
Fred had joined us at Naples, insuff'rably knowing and travelled,
Wise in the prices of things and great at tempestuous bargains,
Rich in the costly nothing our youthful travellers buy here,
At a prodigious outlay of time and money and trouble;
Utter confusion of facts, and talking the wildest of pictures,--
Pyramids, battle-fields, bills, and examinations of luggage,
Passports, policemen, porters, and how he got through his tobacco,--
Ignorant, handsome, full-bearded, brown, and good-natured as ever:
Annie thinks him perfect, and I well enough for a brother.
Also, a friend of Fred's came with us from Naples to Venice;
And, altogether, I think, we are rather agreeable people,
For we've been taking our pleasure at all times in perfect good-humor;
Which is an excellent thing that you'll understand when you've travelled,
Seen Recreation dead-beat and cross, and learnt what a burden
Frescos, for instance, can be, and, in general, what an affliction
Life is apt to become among the antiques and old masters.

Venice we've thoroughly done, and it's perfectly true of the pictures--
Titians and Tintoretts, and Palmas and Paul Veroneses;
Neither are gondolas fictions, but verities, hearse-like and swan-like,
Quite as the heart could wish. And one finds, to one's infinite comfort,
Venice just as unique as one's fondest visions have made it:
Palaces and mosquitoes rise from the water together,
And, in the city's streets, the salt-sea is ebbing and flowing
Several inches or more.

--Ah! let me not wrong thee, O Venice!
Fairest, forlornest, and saddest of all the cities, and dearest!
Dear, for my heart has won here deep peace from cruel confusion;
And in this lucent air, whose night is but tenderer noon-day,
Fear is forever dead, and hope has put on the immortal!
--There! and you need not laugh. I'm coming to something directly.
One thing: I've bought you a chain of the famous fabric of Venice--
Something peculiar and quaint, and of such a delicate texture
That you must wear it embroidered upon a riband of velvet,
If you would have the effect of its exquisite fineness and beauty.
"Isn't it very frail?" I asked of the workman who made it.
"Strong enough, if you will, to bind a lover, signora,"--
With an expensive smile. 'Twas bought near the Bridge of Rialto.
(Shylock, you know.) In our shopping, Aunt May and Fred do the talking:
Fred begins always in French, with the most delicious effront'ry,
Only to end in profoundest humiliation and English.
Aunt, however, scorns to speak any tongue but Italian:
"Quanto per these ones here?" and "What did you say was the prezzo?"
"Ah! troppo caro! *Too much!* No, no! Don't I *tell* you it's troppo?"
All the while insists that the gondolieri shall show us
What she calls Titian's palazzo, and pines for the house of Othello.
Annie, the dear little goose, believes in Fred and her mother
With an enchanting abandon. She doesn't at all understand them,
But she has some twilight views of their cleverness. Father is quiet,
Now and then ventures some French when he fancies that nobody hears him,
In an aside to the valet-de-place--I never detect him--
Buys things for mother and me with a quite supernatural sweetness,
Tolerates all Fred's airs, and is indispensably pleasant.

II.

Prattling on of these things, which I think cannot interest deeply,
So I hold back in my heart its dear and wonderful secret
(Which I must tell you at last, however I falter to tell you),
Fain to keep it all my own for a little while longer,--
Doubting but it shall lose some part of its strangeness and sweetness,
Shared with another, and fearful that even *you* may not find it
Just the marvel that I do--and thus turn our friendship to hatred.

Sometimes it seems to me that this love, which I feel is eternal,
Must have begun with my life, and that only an absence was ended
When we met and knew in our souls that we loved one another.
For from the first was no doubt. The earliest hints of the passion,
Whispered to girlhood's tremulous dream, may be mixed with misgiving,
But, when the very love comes, it bears no vagueness of meaning;
Touched by its truth (too fine to be felt by the ignorant senses,
Knowing but looks and utterance) soul unto soul makes confession,
Silence to silence speaks. And I think that this subtle assurance,
Yet unconfirmed from without, is even sweeter and dearer
Than the perfected bliss that comes when the words have been spoken.
--Not that I'd have them unsaid, now! But 't was delicious to ponder
All the miracle over, and clasp it, and keep it, and hide it,--
While I beheld him, you know, with looks of indifferent languor,
Talking of other things, and felt the divine contradiction
Trouble my heart below!

And yet, if no doubt touched our passion,
Do not believe for that, our love has been wholly unclouded.
All best things are ours when pain and patience have won them:
Peace itself would mean nothing but for the strife that preceded;
Triumph of love is greatest, when peril of love has been sorest.
(That's to say, I dare say. I'm only repeating what *he* said.)
Well, then, of all wretched things in the world, a mystery, Clara,
Lurked in this life dear to mine, and hopelessly held us asunder
When we drew nearest together, and all but his speech said, "I love you."
Fred had known him at college, and then had found him at Naples,

After several years,--and called him a capital fellow.
Thus far his knowledge went, and beyond this began to run shallow
Over troubled ways, and to break into brilliant conjecture,
Harder by far to endure than the other's reticent absence--
Absence wherein at times he seemed to walk like one troubled
By an uneasy dream, whose spell is not broken with waking,
But it returns all day with a vivid and sudden recurrence,
Like a remembered event. Of the past that was closest the present,
This we knew from himself: He went at the earliest summons,
When the Rebellion began, and falling, terribly wounded,
Into the enemy's hands, after ages of sickness and prison,
Made his escape at last; and, returning, found all his virtues
Grown out of recognition and shining in posthumous splendor,--
Found all changed and estranged, and, he fancied, more wonder than welcome.
So, somewhat heavy of heart, and disabled for war, he had wandered
Hither to Europe for perfecter peace. Abruptly his silence,
Full of suggestion and sadness, made here a chasm between us;
But we spanned the chasm with conversational bridges,
Else talked all around it, and feigned an ignorance of it,
With that absurd pretence which is always so painful, or comic,
Just as you happen to make it or see it.

In spite of our fictions,
Severed from his by that silence, my heart grew ever more anxious,
Till last night when together we sat in Piazza San Marco
(Then, when the morrow must bring us parting--forever, it might be),
Taking our ices al fresco. Some strolling minstrels were singing
Airs from the Trovatore. I noted with painful observance,
With the unwilling minuteness at such times absolute torture,
All that brilliant scene, for which I cared nothing, before me:
Dark-eyed Venetian leoni regarding the forestieri
With those compassionate looks of gentle and curious wonder
Home-keeping Italy's nations bend on the voyaging races,--
Taciturn, indolent, sad, as their beautiful city itself is;
Groups of remotest English--not just the traditional English
(Lavish Milor is no more, and your travelling Briton is frugal)--
English, though, after all, with the Channel always between them,
Islanded in themselves, and the Continent's sociable races;
Country-people of ours--the New World's confident children,
Proud of America always, and even vain of the Troubles
As of disaster laid out on a scale unequalled in Europe;
Polyglot Russians that spoke all languages better than natives;
White-coated Austrian officers, anglicized Austrian dandies;
Gorgeous Levantine figures of Greek, and Turk, and Albanian--
These, and the throngs that moved through the long arcades and Piazza,
Shone on by numberless lamps that flamed round the perfect Piazza,
Jewel-like set in the splendid frame of this beautiful picture,
Full of such motley life, and so altogether Venetian.

Then we rose and walked where the lamps were blanched by the moonlight
Flooding the Piazzetta with splendor, and throwing in shadow
All the façade of Saint Mark's, with its pillars, and horses, and arches;
But the sculptured frondage, that blossoms over the arches
Into the forms of saints, was touched with tenderest lucence,
And the angel that stands on the crest of the vast campanile
Bathed his golden vans in the liquid light of the moonbeams.
Black rose the granite pillars that lift the Saint and the Lion;
Black sank the island campanili from distance to distance;
Over the charmed scene there brooded a presence of music,
Subtler than sound, and felt, unheard, in the depth of the spirit.

How can I gather and show you the airy threads of enchantment
Woven that night round my life and forever wrought into my being,
As in our boat we glided away from the glittering city?
Dull at heart I felt, and I looked at the lights in the water,
Blurring their brilliance with tears, while the tresses of eddying seaweed,
Whirled in the ebbing tide, like the tresses of sea-maidens drifting
Seaward from palace-haunts, in the moonshine glistened and darkened.

Sad and vague were my thoughts, and full of fear was the silence;
And, when he turned to speak at last, I trembled to hear him,
Feeling he now must speak of his love, and his life and its secret,--
Now that the narrowing chances had left but that cruel conclusion,
Else the life-long ache of a love and a trouble unuttered.
Better, my feebleness pleaded, the dreariest doubt that had vexed me,

Than my life left nothing, not even a doubt to console it;
 But, while I trembled and listened, his broken words crumbled to silence,
 And, as though some touch of fate had thrilled him with warning,
 Suddenly from me he turned. Our gondola slipped from the shadow
 Under a ship lying near, and glided into the moonlight,
 Where, in its brightest lustre, another gondola rested.
I saw two lovers there, and he, in the face of the woman,
 Saw what has made him mine, my own beloved, forever!
 Mine!--but through *what* tribulation, and awful confusion of spirit!
 Tears that I think of with smiles, and sighs I remember with laughter,
 Agonies full of absurdity, keen, ridiculous anguish,
 Ending in depths of blissful shame, and heavenly transports!

III.

White, and estranged as a man who has looked on a spectre, he mutely
 Sank to the place at my side, nor while we returned to the city
 Uttered a word of explaining, or comment, or comfort, but only,
 With his good-night, incoherently craved my forgiveness and patience,
 Parted, and left me to spend the night in hysterical vigils,
 Tending to Annie's supreme dismay, and postponing our journey
 One day longer at least; for I went to bed in the morning,
 Firmly rejecting the pity of friends, and the pleasures of travel,
 Fixed in a dreadful purpose never to get any better.

Later, however, I rallied, when Fred, with a maddening prologue
 Touching the cause of my sickness, including his fever at Jaffa,
 Told me that some one was waiting; and could he see me a moment?
 See me? Certainly not. Or,--yes. But why did he want to?
 So, in the dishabille of a morning-gown and an arm-chair,
 Languid, with eloquent wanness of eye and of cheek, I received him--
 Willing to touch and reproach, and half-melted myself by my pathos,
 Which, with a reprobate joy, I wholly forgot the next instant,
 When, with electric words, few, swift, and vivid, he brought me,
 Through a brief tempest of tears, to this heaven of sunshine and sweetness.

Yes, he had looked on a ghost--the phantom of love that was perished!--
 When, last night, he beheld the scene of which I have told you.
 For to the woman he saw there, his troth had been solemnly plighted
 Ere he went to the war. His return from the dead found her absent
 In the belief of his death; and hither to Europe he followed,--
 Followed to seek her, and keep, if she would, the promise between them,
 Or, were a haunting doubt confirmed, to break it and free her.
 Then, at Naples we met, and the love that, before he was conscious,
 Turned his life toward mine, laid torturing stress to the purpose
 Whither it drove him forever, and whence forever it swerved him.
 How could he tell me his love, with this terrible burden upon him?
 How could he linger near me, and still withhold the avowal?
 And what ruin were that, if the other were doubted unjustly,
 And should prove fatally true! With shame, he confessed he had faltered,
 Clinging to guilty delays, and to hopes that were bitter with treason,
 Up to the eve of our parting. And then the last anguish was spared him.
Her love for him was dead. But the heart that leaped in his bosom
 With a great, dumb throb of joy and wonder and doubting,
 Still must yield to the spell of his silencing will till that phantom
 Proved an actual ghost by common-place tests of the daylight,
 Such as speech with the lady's father.

And now, could I pardon--
 Nay, did I think I could love him? I sobbingly answered, I thought so.
 And we are all of us going to Lago di Como to-morrow,
 With an ulterior view at the first convenient Legation.

Patientest darling, good-by! Poor Fred, whose sense of what's proper
 Never was touched till now, is shocked at my glad self-betrayals,
 And I am pointed out as an awful example to Annie,
 Figuring all she must never be. But, oh, if *he* loves me!--

POSTSCRIPT.

Since, he has shown me a letter in which he absolves and forgives her
 (Philip, of course, not Fred; and the *other*, of course, and not Annie).
 Don't you think him generous, noble, unselfish, heroic?

Well, I'm glad, I am sure, if Fanny supposes she's happy.
I've no doubt her lover is good and noble--as men go.
But, as regards his release of a woman who'd wholly forgot him,
And whom he loved no longer, for one whom he loves, and who loves him,
I don't exactly see where the *heroism* commences.

THE SONG THE ORIOLE SINGS.

There is a bird that comes and sings
In the Professor's garden-trees;
Upon the English oak he swings,
And tilts and tosses in the breeze.

I know his name, I know his note,
That so with rapture takes my soul;
Like flame the gold beneath his throat,
His glossy cope is black as coal.

O oriole, it is the song
You sang me from the cottonwood,
Too young to feel that I was young,
Too glad to guess if life were good.

And while I hark, before my door,
Adown the dusty Concord Road,
The blue Miami flows once more
As by the cottonwood it flowed.

And on the bank that rises steep,
And pours a thousand tiny rills,
From death and absence laugh and leap
My school-mates to their flutter-mills.

The blackbirds jangle in the tops
Of hoary-antlered sycamores;
The timorous killdee starts and stops
Among the drift-wood on the shores.

Below, the bridge--a noonday fear
Of dust and shadow shot with sun--
Stretches its gloom from pier to pier,
Far unto alien coasts unknown.

And on those alien coasts, above,
Where silver ripples break the stream's
Long blue, from some roof-sheltering grove
A hidden parrot scolds and screams.

Ah, nothing, nothing! Commonest things:
A touch, a glimpse, a sound, a breath--
It is a song the oriole sings--
And all the rest belongs to death.

But oriole, my oriole,
Were some bright seraph sent from bliss
With songs of heaven to win my soul
From simple memories such as this,

What could he tell to tempt my ear
From you? What high thing could there be,
So tenderly and sweetly dear
As my lost boyhood is to me?

PORDENONE.

I.

Hard by the Church of Saint Stephen, in sole and beautiful Venice,
Under the colonnade of the Augustinian Convent,
Every day, as I passed, I paused to look at the frescos
Painted upon the ancient walls of the court of the Convent
By a great master of old, who wore his sword and his dagger
While he wrought the figures of patriarchs, martyrs, and virgins
Into the sacred and famous scenes of Scriptural story.

II.

Long ago the monks from their snug self-devotion were driven,
Wistful and fat and slow: looking backward, I fancied them going
Out through the sculptured doorway, and down the Ponte de'Frati,
Cowled and sandalled and beaded, a plump and pensive procession;
And in my day their cells were barracks for Austrian soldiers,
Who in their turn have followed the Augustinian Friars.
As to the frescos, little remained of work once so perfect.
Summer and winter weather of some three cycles had wasted;
Plaster had fallen, and left unsightly blotches of ruin;
Wanton and stupid neglect had done its worst to the pictures:
Yet to the sympathetic and reverent eye was apparent--
Where the careless glance but found, in expanses of plaster,
Touches of incoherent color and lines interrupted--
Somewhat still of the life of surpassing splendor and glory
Filling the frescos once; and here and there was a figure,
Standing apart, and out from the common decay and confusion,
Flushed with immortal youth and ineffaceable beauty,
Such as that figure of Eve in pathetic expulsion from Eden,
Taking--the tourist remembers--the wrath of Heaven al fresco,
As is her well-known custom in thousands of acres of canvas.

III.

I could make out the much-bepainted Biblical subjects,
When I had patience enough: The Temptation, of course, and Expulsion;
Cain killing Abel, his Brother--the merest fragment of murder;
Noah's Debauch--the trunk of the sea-faring patriarch naked,
And the garment, borne backward to cover it, fearfully tattered;
Abraham offering Isaac--no visible Isaac, and only
Abraham's lifted knife held back by the hovering angel;
Martyrdom of Saint Stephen--a part of the figure of Stephen;
And the Conversion of Paul--the greaves on the leg of a soldier
Held across the back of a prostrate horse by the stirrup;
But when I looked at the face of that tearful and beauteous figure,--
Eve in the fresco there, and, in Venice of old, Violante,
As I must fain believe (the lovely daughter of Palma,
Who was her father's Saint Barbara, and was the Bella of Titian),--
Such a meaning and life shone forth from its animate presence
As could restore those vague and ineffectual pictures,
With their pristine colors, and fill them with light and with movement.
Nay, sometimes it could blind me to all the present about me,
Till I beheld no more the sausage-legged Austrian soldiers,
Where they stood on guard beside one door of the Convent,
Nor the sentinel beggars that watched the approach to the other;
Neither the bigolanti, the broad-backed Friulan maidens,
Drawing the water with clatter and splashing, and laughter and gossip,
Out of the carven well in the midst of the court of the Convent--
No, not even the one with the mole on her cheek and the sidelong
Look, as she ambled forth with her buckets of bronze at her shoulder,
Swinging upon the yoke to and fro, a-drip and a-glimmer.
All in an instant was changed, and once more the cloister was peopled
By the serene monks of old, and against walls of the cloisters,
High on his scaffolding raised, Pordenone^[5] wrought at his frescos.
Armed with dagger and sword, as the legend tells, against Titian,
Who was his rival in art and in love.

IV.

It seemed to be summer,
 In the forenoon of the day; and the master's diligent pencil
 Laid its last light touches on Eve driven forth out of Eden,
 Otherwise Violante, and while his pupils about him
 Wrought and chattered, in silence ran the thought of the painter:
 "She, and forever she! Is it come to be my perdition?
 Shall I, then, never more make the face of a beautiful woman
 But it must take her divine, accursèd beauty upon it,
 And, when I finish my work, stand forth her visible presence?
 Ah! I could take this sword and strike it into her bosom!
 Though I believe my own heart's blood would stream from the painting,
 So much I love her! Yes, that look is marvellous like you,
 Wandering, tender--such as I'd give my salvation to win you
 Once to bend upon me! But I knew myself better than make you,
 Lest I should play the fool about you here before people,
 Helpless to turn away from your violet eyes, Violante,
 That have turned all my life to a vision of madness." The painter
 Here unto speech betraying the thoughts he had silently pondered,
 "Visions, visions, my son?" said a gray old friar who listened,
 Seated there in the sun, with his eye on the work of the painter
 Fishily fixed, while the master blasphemed behind his mustaches.
 "Much have I envied your Art, who vouchsafeth to those who adore her
 Visions of heavenly splendor denied to fastings and vigils.
 I have spent days and nights of faint and painful devotion,
 Scourged myself almost to death, without one glimpse of the glory
 Which your touch has revealed in the face of that heavenly maiden.
 Pleasure me to repeat what it was you were saying of visions:
 Fain would I know how they come to you, though I never see them,
 And in my thickness of hearing I fear some words have escaped me."
 Then, while the painter glared on the lifted face of the friar,
 Baleful, breathless, bewildered, fiercer than noon in the dog-days,
 Round the circle of pupils there ran a tittering murmur;
 From the lips to the ears of those nameless Beppis and Gigis
 Buzzed the stinging whisper: "Let's hear Pordenone's confession."
 Well they knew the master's luckless love, and whose portrait
 He had unconsciously painted there, and guessed that his visions
 Scarcely were those conceived by the friar, who constantly blundered
 Round the painter at work, mistaking every subject--
 Noah's drunken Debauch for the Stoning of Stephen the Martyr,
 And the Conversion of Paul for the Flight into Egypt; forever
 Putting his hand to his ear and shouting, "Speak louder, I pray you!"
 So they waited now, in silent, amused expectation,
 Till Pordenone's angry scorn should gather to bursting.
 Long the painter gazed in furious silence, then slowly
 Uttered a kind of moan, and turned again to his labor.
 Tears gathered into his eyes, of mortification and pathos,
 And when the dull old monk, who forgot, while he waited the answer,
 Visions and painter, and all, had maundered away in his error,
 Pordenone half envied the imbecile peace of his bosom;
 "For in my own," he mused, "is such a combat of devils,
 That I believe torpid age or stupid youth would be better
 Than this manhood of mine that has climbed aloft to discover
 Heights which I never can reach, and bright on the pinnacle standing
 In the unfading light, my rival crowned victor above me.
 If I could hint what I feel, what forever escapes from my pencil,
 All after-time should know my will was not less than my failure,
 Nor should any one dare remember me merely in pity.
 All should read my sorrows and do my discomfiture homage,
 Saying: 'Not meanly at any time this painter meant or endeavored;
 His was the anguish of one who falls short of the highest achievement,
 Conscious of doing his utmost, and knowing how vast his defeat is.
 Life, if he would, might have had some second guerdon to give him,
 But he would only the first; and behold! Let us honor
 Grief such as his must have been; no other sorrow can match it!
 There are certainly some things here that are nobly imagined:
 Look! here is masterly power in this play of light, and these shadows
 Boldly are massed; and what color! One can well understand Buonarotti
 Saying the sight of his Curtius was worth the whole journey from Florence.
 Here is a man at least never less than his work; you can feel it
 As you can feel in Titian's the painter's inferior spirit.
 He and this Pordenone, you know, were rivals; and Titian
 Knew how to paint to the popular humor, and spared not
 Foul means or fair (his way with rivals) to crush Pordenone,
 Who with an equal chance'--
 "Alas, if the whole world should tell me

I was his equal in art, and the lie could save me from torment,
So must I be lost, for my soul could never believe it!
Nay, let my envy snarl as fierce as it will at his glory,
Still, when I look on his work, my soul makes obeisance within me,
Humbling itself before the touch that shall never be equalled."

He who sleeps in continual noise is wakened by silence,
And Pordenone was roused from these thoughts anon by the sudden
Hush that had fallen upon the garrulous group of his pupils;
And ere he turned half-way with instinctive looks of inquiry,
He was already warned, with a shock at the heart, of a presence
Long attended, not feared; and he laid one hand on his sword-hilt,
Seizing the sheath with the other hand, that the pallet had dropped from.
Then he fronted Titian, who stood with his arms lightly folded,
And with a curious smile, half of sarcasm, half of compassion,
Bent on th' embattled painter, cried: "Your slave, Messere Antonio!
What good friend has played this bitter jest with your humor?
As I beheld you just now full-armed with your pencil and palette,
I was half awed by your might; but these sorry trappings of bravo
Make me believe you less fit to be the rival of Titian,
Here in the peaceful calm of our well-ordered city of Venice,
Than to take service under some Spanish lordling at Naples,
Needy in blades for work that can not wait for the poison."

Pordenone flushed with anger and shame to be taken
At an unguarded point; but he answered with scornful defiance:
"Oh, you are come, I see, with the favorite weapon of Titian,
And you would make a battle of words. If you care for my counsel,
Listen to me: I say you are skilfuller far in my absence,
And your tongue can inflict a keener and deadlier mischief
When it is dipped in poisonous lies, and wielded in secret."
"Nay, then," Titian responded, "methinks that our friend Aretino^[6]
Makes a much better effect than either of us in that tongue-play.
But since Messer Robusti has measured our wit for his portrait,
Even *he* has grown shy of using his tongue than he once was.
Have you not heard the tale? Tintoretto was told Aretino
Meant to make him the subject of one of his merry effusions;
And with his naked dirk he went carefully over his person,
Promising, if the poet made free with him in his verses,
He would immortalize my satirical friend with that pencil.
Doubtless the tale is not true. Aretino says nothing about it;
Always speaks, in fact, with the highest respect of Robusti.
True or not, 'tis well found." Then looking around on the frescos:
"Good, very good indeed! Your breadth and richness and softness
No man living surpasses; those heads are truly majestic.
Yes, Buonarrotti was right, when he said that to look at your Curtius
Richly repaid him the trouble and cost of a journey from Florence.
Surely the world shall know you the first of painters in fresco!
Well? You will not strike me unarmed? This was hardly expected
By the good people that taught you to think our rivalry blood-red.
Let us be friends, Pordenone!"

"Be patron and patronized, rather;

Nay, if you spoke your whole mind out, be assassin and victim.
Could the life beat again in the broken heart of Giorgione,
He might tell us, I think, something pleasant of friendship with Titian."
Suddenly over the shoulder of Titian peered an ironical visage,
Smiling, malignly intent--the leer of the scurrilous poet:
"You know--all the world knows--who dug the grave of Giorgione.^[7]
Titian and he were no friends--our Lady of Sorrows forgive 'em!
But for all hurt that Titian did him he might have been living,
Greater than any living, and lord of renown and such glory
As would have left you both dull as yon withered moon in the sunshine."
Loud laughed the listening group at the insolent gibe of the poet,
Stirring the gall to its depths in the bitter soul of their master,
Who with his tremulous fingers tapped the hilt of his poniard,
Answering naught as yet. Anon the glance of the ribald,
Carelessly ranging from Pordenone's face to the picture,
Dwelt with an absent light on its marvellous beauty, and kindled
Into a slow recognition, with "Ha! Violante!" Then, erring
Wilfully as to the subject, he cackled his filthy derision:
"What have we here! More Magdalens yet of the painter's acquaintance?
Ah--!"

The words had scarce left his lips, when the painter
Rushed upon him, and clutching his throat, thrust him backward and held him
Over the scaffolding's edge in air, and straightway had flung him

Crashing down on the pave of the cloister below, but for Titian,
 Who around painter and poet alike wound his strong arms and stayed them
 Solely, until the bewildered pupils could come to the rescue.
 Then, as the foes relaxed that embrace of frenzy and murder--
 White, one with rage and the other with terror, and either with hatred--
 Grimly the great master smiled: "You were much nearer paradise, Piero,
 Than you have been for some time. Be ruled now by me and get homeward
 Fast as you may, and be thankful." And then, as the poet,
 Looking neither to right nor to left, amid the smiles of the pupils
 Tottered along the platform, and trembling descended the ladder
 Down to the cloister pave, and, still without upward or backward
 Glimpse, disappeared beneath the outer door of the Convent,
 Titian turned again to the painter: "Farewell, Pordenone!
 Learn more fairly to know me. I envy you not; and no rival
 Now, or at any time, have I held you, or ever shall hold you.
 Prosper and triumph still, for all me: you shall but do me honor,
 Seeing that I too serve the art that your triumphs illustrate.
 I for my part find life too short for work and for pleasure;
 If it should touch a century's bound, I should think it too precious
 Even to spare a moment for rage at another's good fortune.
 Do not be fooled by the purblind flatterers who would persuade you
 Either of us shall have greater fame through the fall of the other.
 We can thrive only in common. The tardily blossoming cycles,
 Flowering at last in this glorious age of our art, had not waited,
 Folded calyxes still, for Pordenone or Titian.
 Think you if we had not been, our pictures had never been painted?
 Others had done them, or better, the same. We are only
 Pencils God paints with. And think you that He had wanted for pencils
 But for our being at hand? And yet--for some virtue creative
 Dwells and divinely exists in the being of every creature,
 So that the thing done through him is dear as if he had done it--
 If I should see your power, a tint of this great efflorescence,
 Fading, methinks I should feel myself beginning to wither.
 They have abused your hate who told you that Titian was jealous.
 Once, in my youth that is passed, I too had my hates and my envies.
 'Sdeath! how it used to gall me--that power and depth of Giorgione!
 I could have turned my knife in his heart when I looked at his portraits.
 Ah! we learn somewhat still as the years go. Now, when I see you
 Doing this good work here, I am glad in my soul of its beauty.
 Art is not ours, O friend! but if we are not hers, we are nothing.
 Look at the face you painted last year--or yesterday, even:
 Far, so far, it seems from you, so utterly, finally, parted,
 Nothing is stranger to you than this child of your soul; and you wonder--
 'Did I indeed then do it?' No thrill of the rapture of doing
 Stirs in your breast at the sight. Nay, then, not even the beauty
 Which we had seemed to create is our own: the frame universal
 Is as much ours. And shall I hate you because you are doing
 That which when done you cannot feel yours more than I mine can feel it?
 It shall belong hereafter to all who perceive and enjoy it,
 Rather than him who made it; he, least of all, shall enjoy it.
 They of the Church conjure us to look on death and be humble;
 I say, look upon life and keep your pride if you can, then:
 See how to-day's achievement is only to-morrow's confusion;
 See how possession always cheapens the thing that was precious
 To our endeavor; how losses and gains are equally losses;
 How in ourselves we are nothing, and how we are anything only
 As indifferent parts of the whole, that still, on our ceasing,
 Whole remains as before, no less without us than with us.
 Were it not for the delight of doing, the wonderful instant
 Ere the thing done is done and dead, life scarce were worth living.
 Ah, but that makes life divine! We are gods, for that instant immortal,
 Mortal for evermore, with a few days' rumor--or ages'--
 What does it matter? We, too, have our share of eating and drinking,
 Love, and the liking of friends--mankind's common portion and pleasure.
 Come, Pordenone, with me; I would fain have you see my Assumption
 While it is still unfinished, and stay with me for the evening:
 You shall send home for your lute, and I'll ask Sansovino to supper.^[8]
 After what happened just now I scarcely could ask Aretino;
 Though, for the matter of that, the dog is not one to bear malice.
 Will you not come?"

V.

I listen with Titian, and wait for the answer.
 But, whatever the answer that comes to Titian, I hear none.

Nay, while I linger, all those presences fade into nothing,
In the dead air of the past; and the old Augustinian Convent
Lapses to picturesque profanation again as a barrack;
Lapses and changes once more, and this time vanishes wholly,
Leaving me at the end with the broken, shadowy legend,
Broken and shadowy still, as in the beginning. I linger,
Teased with its vague unfathomed suggestion, and wonder,
As at first I wondered, what happened about Violante,
And am but ill content with those metaphysical phrases
Touching the strictly impersonal nature of personal effort,
Wherewithal Titian had fain avoided the matter at issue.

FOOTNOTES:

[3] Giovanni Antonio Licinio, called *Pordenone* from his birth-place in the Friuli, was a contemporary of Titian's, whom he equalled in many qualities, and was one of the most eminent Venetian painters in fresco.

[4] Pietro Aretino, the satirical poet, was a friend of Titian, whose house he frequented. The story of Tintoretto's measuring him for a portrait with his dagger is well known.

[7] Giorgione (Giorgio Barbarelli) was Titian's fellow-pupil and rival in the school of Bellini. He died at thirty-four, after a life of great triumphs and excesses.

[8] Sansovino, the architect, was a familiar guest at Titian's table, in his house near the Fondamenta Nuove.

THE LONG DAYS.

Yes! they are here again, the long, long days,
After the days of winter, pinched and white;
Soon, with a thousand minstrels comes the light,
Late, the sweet robin-haunted dusk delays.

But the long days that bring us back the flowers,
The sunshine, and the quiet-dripping rain,
And all the things we knew of spring again,
The long days bring not the long-lost long hours.

The hours that now seem to have been each one
A summer in itself, a whole life's bound,
Filled full of deathless joy--where in his round,
Have these forever faded from the sun?

The fret, the fever, the unrest endures,
But the time flies.... Oh, try, my little lad,
Coming so hot and play-worn, to be glad
And patient of the long hours that are yours!

Transcriber Notes

Archaic and variable spelling and hyphenation preserved, including words like chorussing and chipmonk.

Author's punctuation style is preserved, including some inconsistent quotes in "Pordenone".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE**THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE**

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation" or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the

United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state’s laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.