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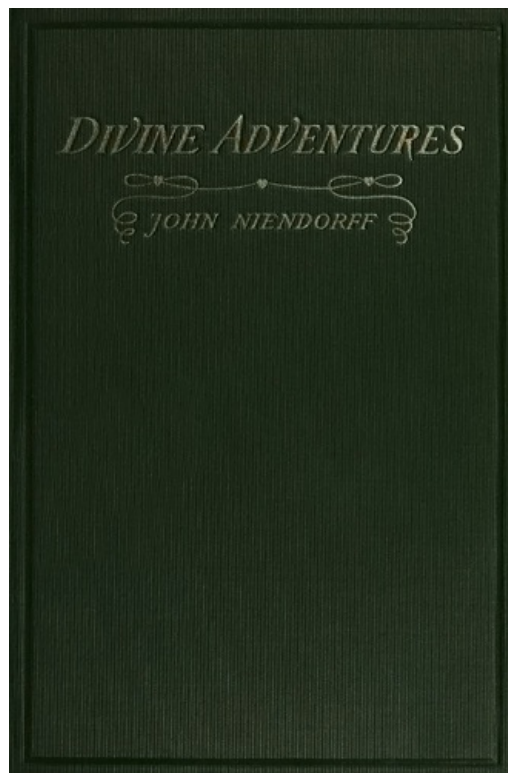
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DIVINE ADVENTURES: A BOOK OF VERSE



DIVINE ADVENTURES A BOOK OF VERSE

BY
JOHN NIENDORFF



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DIVINE ADVENTURES

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A BOOK OF VERSE

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CUPID AND PSYCHE

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(The Spirit of the Tale)

To M.

For in the morning of our love, there came
The spirit singing such entrancing notes,
As sweeps the whole empyrian with a flame,
Wherein, a dream, pure lofty pleasure floats,
And love and beauty find their mellow throats,
In glorious fervor, drinking from the golden bowl,
The wine of joy that binds them soul to soul,
Thou art my muse and thine the phantasy
With spirit hand to guide unconsciously.
For all I bring thee, minion of thy beauty,
This little garland of a memory fruity—
A simple tale, as old as love is old,
Of virgin art within a golden mold,
Still burning, molten, shaping unto glory—
A matchless song and yet a simple story.
How mischief led a cold unwitting boy
Along new paths to taste a sudden joy;
How curious Love asport from flower to flower,
Hath found a sense too sweet to overpower,
And yet such magic sweet, that once is tasted,
A moment otherwheres were eons wasted;
How Cupid, wandering in a lovely valley
With arrowed bow, by many a maid must dally,
Till Psyche, like a prisms ingathered hues,
Into a sudden virgin light he woos.

Sweet Psyche princes in a golden land,
And Princess still from bounding strand to strand,
The fairest maid of any. Cupid heavenly born,
Fair son of Beauty's queen, whom to adorn.
Needs but to name, Great Venus Queen of Beauty—
Whom to adore was but a solemn duty.
This lad whom she hath dowered with all her charms,
A voice resistless and soft amorous arms,
And named him Love, now raptured, lies,
A simple lover in a woman's eyes.

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A tale of heart and soul, and so of sorrow,
In afterwhiles when riches stoop to borrow—
A tale of being's subtlest jewelry
O'erlaying grief with golden filigree.
And I would soar on golden wings of song,
And in the souls empyrian float along,
From height to height of all the heart's dear chimes,
To bless thee for the love that thou hast brought,
With greater life. Let tender tinkling rhimes,
Like pure white doves, lead on the lovely thought.

I

Deep in a woody vale, where crystal streams
Run vaguely like the threads of vanished dreams;

Where fountains tinkle to the yellow sun
Sweet rainbow-tinted hopes, and lightly run,
In joyful race unto the distant ocean;
Where greeny swards are checked with light and shade,
To make a cool retreat for fine emotion;
And velvet lawns, than never weft was laid,
More intricate designed of pleasing hues,
So richly gem'd in Orient pearls of dew
Along quaint aisles in mosques of Samarkand,
To bear some solemn priest in deep devotion;
Where vague far vistas stretch on every hand.
To luring scenes; where happy shepherds amble,
With happy maids, as light as lambs agambol,
Or lie alone, with flocks abrowse by streams,
And rear quaint misty cities out of dreams,
Along far clouds of pearly shape and lining,
In crystal walls and domes of no defining,
And people them with shepherds, maids and gods
That live for love, until the shepherd nods,
And dreams of his own Phillis fairer far,—
Upon a hillock in a shady grove,
The heart of this fair scene, its central star,
And viewless as the stars of heaven are,
With too much light, stood once the house of love.
A mansion builded of the rarest stone,
Transparent, gem like, carved, and strangely wrought,
As some fine architecture in a dream is sought,
And gird with fancy's fairest flowers blown.

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The house of love, and here of balmy days,
Its gentle spirits thrid in dreamy maze.
And here the days are always balmy, here
'Tis sweet to laugh, and sweet to drop a tear.
Its crystal halls in magic mirror walls,
Stand empty but for one, while myriad falls
Of lover's feet go tripping after her
Or him and wild faint odors sweetly stir
Through all the room from raptured lovers breathing,
While each a rosy crown for aye is wreathing.
This is the house of love, the golden key
Is faith, sweet faith in joy of living,
That doubts the mirror not, nor cares to see
What hidden scenes the glass is loth in giving.

II

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Here long ago, so runs the gentle tale,
Sweet Psyche, wondrous fair and pearly pale,
Her young loves virgin brow all softly tinting,
With far faint hues of waking loves first hinting,
And all enraptured Cupid, arm in arm,
Secluded far from rude eyes loveless harm,
Have wiled through many a long and gracious hour,
Like fair twin bees within a fragrant flower.
Such love as they have sipt! Such silent bliss
Of raptured bosoms welded with a kiss!
Such kisses lavished rich and juicy ripe!
Such glorious songs as only lovers pipe!
From morn to morn, the lover's boundless season,
Unvext with chilly thought, or chilled with reason.

Ah! Love thou art a happy reckless boy,
To measure ages with a moments joy!
Adown the streams of golden waterfalls,
On hidden rocks the white faced Lurley calls.
Rash wilful Cupid recks without the cost—
If Venus favor not then all is lost.
Afar he flies unto her royal throne,
To claim the boon of joys that he would own,
And bring unto the mount his glorious bride,
Immortal thence forever by his side.
But Venus, queen of Beauty, waxes wrath,
To find new beauty cross her royal path.
And shall this son of all her royal favor,
Bind to a watery chit of mortal flavor?
Not so! A mother's newest plans are older,
Than any fancy scheme of youthful molder—

His fate is hers to mold! Then hie away
To sport, but think no more to disobey.
Old mother Locksmith! Venus is thy name!
Of myriad escapades, all back to thee the blame!
The angry queen hath ruled, and Love, aching
At wasted time, hies back to love alighting.
And he hath sworn that she is fairer far
Than that proud goddess of the morning star,
Albeit queen of Beauty. Here, in mortal line,
Our tale should end beneath the smile parental,
In Iris tinted shower of peace divine,
And blessings less of use than ornamental.

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III

But all the mount hath heard this reckless oath,
And all the mount aghast, if Venus wroth,
Be not the Venus terrible. Alas!
Such lovers make sad flowers in the grass.
And woful trees by many a dusky stream
Embar the fire of many a love's young dream.
And grizzly monsters moan in sunken path,
Some fiery love that stirred the gods to wrath.
But beauty's queen hath brooked no passing jest
To penetrate her deep heart's wild unrest.
But in the stilly quiet of her wrath,
Conceives dark pitfalls for the lover's path.
And she that once hath hied to amorous chase,
And grieved outstript in love's immortal race,
Now calls her white winged swans, on fleecy pinions,
To bear her down to earthly love's dominions,
For naught of love or sorrow. From a cave,
Whence flowed her double fountain bitter wave,
Two serpents, green and gray, and mottled golden,
Within her chariots hold hath she close folden;
Cirque-couchant, glittering, whispering sibilant
Deep curses old, they with their fury pant,
To strains the subtle bonds of jealous art,
And plant deep venomed fangs within her heart.

But now the feathry chariot glides along
The airy sea, among the sable throng
Of darkling hours, whose soundless feet are gliding
Unto the amorous dome of Love's abiding.
And they have halted, serpents, swans and queen
Within a grove that shields them with its screen
Of em'rald interlacing. There a little bloom
Of nameless hue, and forest wild perfume,
She plucks, and crusheth in a bowl of jade.
And with her breath a syrup weird hath made,
Whose faint escaping break along dim aisles,
Of forests, brooding mournful eld, beguiles,
Till such a wild heart rending moan hath risen,
As never rose within a tortured prison
To greet a ray of light. But heark'ning not,
She bends above her serpents, breathing hot
Upon their heads, e'en as they pause to strike,
This mystic lotion. Lo! what wonders like
Hath ever magic seer in lore beholden?—
Each serpent skin a woman's form enfolden,
That with that breath of drunken magic lotion
Hath sprung to being with an exquisite motion,
And such sweet words, as through a thousand years,
Have gathered music for a tale of tears.

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But Lo! one groweth old, and very old,—
A toothless haggard hideous to behold.
And one hath grown a marvellous sun-bright creature,
Of luscious form and speechless worship's feature.
One stands like sunlight on a crested wave,
And one like murky darkness in a cave.
But each a low obedient knee hath bended,
To hear the queenly will thus long suspended.
And thus the queen, to her the radiant maiden:
"Thou bitter sweet, thou vessel overladen,
"In yonder dome a fairer maid than thou,
"Sees all her beauty in a lover's vow,

"Nor heeds the ripples on that mirror's sheen,
"From troubled depths of her fair self unseen.
"Go thou, and with thine ointed tongue reverse
"The mirror's face, and there thine own immerse;
"Remembering still, thou hast a serpent's tongue,
"That holds thee slave, till thou hast surely flung
"Its glittering barb into that silly heart."

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Then, like an apparition of a dream,
The maid hath vanished, with a hellish gleam.
And thus the queen, unto that gruesome hag:
"In yonder dome a youth hath founden beauty
"Within a maid, and swears all foul and sooty,
"That is not there. Thou hast a serpent's eyes,
"And seeth so what dreary falsehood lies,
"In such a mirror. Go reverse the glass,
"And thine the beauty he has wasted on the lass,
"He hath not seen." The hory dame is gone.
And Venus left within the grove alone,
Recalls her swans and mounts the starry air.

Then she, the new born maid, as false as fair,
Hath found sweet Psyche in the crystal dome,
And creeping, like a mad thing to her soul,
In friendly guise, exacts a hideous toll
For all her blissful life: "How can she bind
"Her sunny soul to such a treacherous mind?
"And she hath wed a libertine, a rake,
"Whom even now her pleasures must forsake
"To drink new pleasures with another bride.
"And if she creeps in silence to his side
"Forsooth unwelcome sights might come unto her."
With such foul words the fiend began to woo her,
And in her pearly ear hath poured the breath,
Of hideous doubt that stabs her soul to death.
And then hath wandered with exultant heart,
Unto the vales of Crete, her glittering dart,
Of barbed tongue, a woman's sweetness singing,
And ever more hath myriad minions clinging,
Unto her heartless laughter. But no more
To grace our tale. And now the haggard hoar,
On Cupid's angry ears, with whisperings
Of faithless women, and the direful springs
Of wasted lives: "And she hath heard the wind
"Sing always, maids are false and men are blind,
"And in a cavern by the ocean side,
"'Tis daily jest of Wind and Sun and Tide,
"How Psyche tweaks the gentle Cupid's nose
"Between the beds; and Psyche false as fair,
"Needs but a whim to lay her treason bare.
"This very night, if he will but deny her,
"If nothing more, at least 'twere time to try her,
"For sooth unwelcome sights might come unto him."
With such foul words the witch began to woo him,
And in his angry ears hath poured the bane,
That sets his heart at riot in his brain.

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IV

What wonder then if in the lonely night,
Sweet Psyche weeps to find her love is slighted;
Feels darkness fall upon her trembling light,
And throws to wind the vows her love has plighted!
And she hath risen from her loveless bed,
With all the stealth her grief supplies instead,
And steals to Cupid's fine unguarded room,
Where she must feast her heart on deeper gloom.
Here Cupid, airy souled, hath fall'n asleep,
Too filled of love such watch for long to keep,
And even now with her in blissful dreams,
He roams again, and all the future seems
As sweets of old. No little pains of doubt,
To mar recalling moments with their rout.
All through the halls, such joy of living blent
Her soul and his in single ravishment.
And Oh! they wander in the flow'ry vale,

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All through the dewy morn and evening pale,
 And each to drink the other's loveliness,
 Despising richest nectar. Even the stress,
 Of queenly anger now had bode its time,
 And fresh Aurora speeding to this clime,
 Hath Venus' royal word to grant his prayer,
 That with the dawn to clasp his Psyche there,
 In perfect love, with all the world their own.
 Ah, promised day! his eager soul hath flown,
 To meet the morning. On his lonely bed
 Reclines his happy visionary head,
 In such sweet dreams. An hour hath lightly flown
 When o'er his senses steals a softened moan,
 As when a soul all pent and warp'd in gloom,
 Hath breathed soul deep, some sudden wild perfume,
 That is of freedom. Awaked to such surprise,
 He sees with heart aghast the famished eyes,
 Of Psyche filling to their very brim
 With his forbidden beauty, sees for him,
 The golden future vanish, sees aghast
 For now he knows his lovely dream hath passed;
 That soulless doubt hath razed the golden dome
 Of his high hopes to desert sandy loam.
 The structured palace falls with all its art,
 To grieve a valley with an aching heart.
 From out a darkened corner of the ruin rises,
 And laughs to view the dismal crisis,
 That baneful hag. But Ah! what beauty fairer!
 What luscious form arrayed in raiment rarer!
 And she hath flown to vales of Thessaly,
 Where ever more her mocking eyes shall see,
 A myriad eyes upon her beauty glisten,
 A myriad ears unto her rumor listen.
 And Cupid flees in sudden wild despair.
 To drown his soul within the bitter fountain,
 Nor Venus now may crown his heart laid bare,
 Nor any luscious goddess of the mountain.

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V

But Psyche wanders, like a saddened rill,
 Thrust from a jewelled grotto in the hill,
 To perish in a lonely sandy waste,
 And all forlorn, with steps that can not haste,
 For such absorbing grief, she chides his heart
 That was a glittering palace, now a part
 Of ruined things. She writes within the sand
 Some resolution high her grievous heart hath planned—
 A sign to mark the spot, some time, some how,
 A charm to lead her back again. And now
 A little shrine within a lonely place,
 Which flow'ry vines with subtle interlace,
 Hath reared to Demeter, her wearied feet
 Have found. And all her soul hath flown to meet
 Her prayer's happiness. It is a bowl,
 Of crystal dew, where nature paints her soul.
 And Psyche now, a gentle worshipper,
 Hath bent sad prayerful knees, and pearly ear,
 Low for the golden oracle. Sad eyes,
 In tangled braid of smiles and tears surprise
 The crystal truth. Lo! she hath seen. And death
 Seems struggling for her weary, panting breath!
 What horrid charm of Circe's baneful art!
 It is a serpent's head, green eyed and swart,
 With lightning flashes of a forked tongue,
 And glittering treachery on its forehead hung.
 Oh! for a generous draft of that sweet moly,
 To bring dear Psyche back as pure and holy,
 As when a maiden in her jewel palace,
 She kissed, for love, her nectar's brimming chalice,
 That held serene a limned picture there,
 Of wealth of beauty framed in golden hair.
 But nature's shrine guides not the errant feet
 Of little faith. And sudden prayers all unmeet
 For crippled love. Ah! where the happy shrine

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Of boundless heart, and still a tongue divine,
 In lover's oracles? With holy words
 Of sweet ablution when the night engirds
 Each little tear? When never a smile but darkens
 Its firefly gloom? When never an ear that hearkens.
 But dulls a moan? And never a scene outspread
 In mirror drops, but darts a serpent's head?
 Such bitter moan she made, such bitter moan
 No grieving Pan on bursting reeds alone,
 In madness ever made to startled streams.
 No nightingale her saddest tongueless dreams,
 Hath sobbed to beauty on a hidden thorn,
 To swoon in over-music at the morn.
 But soul is exquisite, the flowers essence,
 That through its bruises breathes quintessence.
 And all the suffering of the dateless world,
 Its rarest, gladdest petals hold enfurled.
 This is the soul. Yet all its world a thought
 Of smiling strands and sunlit oceans, fraught
 With homing argosies. And waneless suns
 Shine on its passing gonfalons.
 What e'er the mask, its keener eyes see through it.
 What e'er the ban its laughter will undo it.
 What e'er the time, its fleeting thought will span it.
 What e'er the deed its ancient hour began it.
 And bruised, unfurl the leaf, the bruise is gone,
 Yet heal the wound, the essence breathe right on.
 This is the soul. But Psyche grieves an hour
 Till every petal in the spirit's flower
 Is bruised by so much time, and wand'ring far,
 She yet hath wandered farther, like a star
 Of aimless race, in melancholy deeps.
 Her bittered feet have struggled on the steeps.
 Her moaning soul hath crossed the stygian river.
 And she hath read the runes of never, never,
 In wailing spirits of the sunless moors,
 And piteous quagmires seeking piteous shores.
 And she, whose mirror was a drop of dew,
 When golden fancy played upon her ear,
 Now shrieks where horror strikes her spirit through,
 Within the gloomy region of a tear.

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VI

But one that she hath met within the gloom,
 Some shadow wearied from the lake of doom,
 Whom she remembers for her ancient self,
 Hath led her from the low and crumbling shelf,
 That hangs upon oblivion; bound her tresses,
 About her brow with old times fond caresses.
 And to the weeping shade of beauty's fall,
 Presents a little curious lachrimal,
 Which she hath wrought with many quaint enlaying
 Of happy times and tears. Presents it, saying,
 "This is thy beauty bear it to thy love
 "And ask no more. Quick to the light above,
 "Thy wings must bear this precious charm away,
 "Nor pause till thou deliverest it. The day
 "Must wane not on thy loveless spirit lorn,
 "So long." Then swifter than the dainty morn
 She flies unto her love, and all a gleam
 Her beating fancy lives her future dream.
 How fair! How fair! But even as she flies,
 The curious urn must tempt her famished eyes,
 And she hath paused. Ah! woe betide the lover,
 That halts to dream, and tempt the soul to steep
 In th' unrevealed. What lethe fumes discover
 In such unfathomed deeps, of death or sleep!

VII

As if a pearl had golden wings and far
 Had flown to purple lurings of a star,
 From out her jewelled grotto still to seem,
 The gladdest spirit of a precious dream,
 And fluttering over misty mantled hills,

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Hath fallen wearied, where her beauty fills,
Some fair recess within a mossy dingle,
For such a rest, and lieth all amingle
With gladdest flowers that ever quivered through
To kiss so sweet and strange a drop of dew—
A bit of beauty ravishing the brain,
'Till unremembered dream touch back again
And sketch sweet rainbows on the raptured soul,
Thus gaining e'en her spirits golden goal
Hath Psyche, curious Psyche fallen asleep.

Her jewelled urn, in bedded mosses deep,
Hath fall'n aside and lieth like a gem,
Of goddess lost from starry anadem.
And here the sun in drinking up the dew,
Hath paused to find an ancient thirst renew,
And, raptured connoisseur of dewy gems,
Would woo the nymph the stony silence hems.
But on her pearly cheek his amorous kisses,
Fall deadly cold. And all is warm caresses,
Unheeded. Lo! His godly art of change,
He fain work. And make some rare and strange
Addition to the old immortal throng:
Behold! Within the raptured skies of song,

Another music like the morning star!
Poor gentle Echo wandering far
Here finds her dear Narcissus kissing lips,
As sweet as hers. But while the honey drips
Of saddest love he poureth in those ears,
Meander's flowery vale a happy whisper hears:
"Narcissus, dear Narcissus now is free,
"Ah! sweet to sing, e'en though his eyes but see,
"This new divine." And pausing on her wings,

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Her heart is free with old remembered things.
Poor wronged Arachne spins, a golden thread,
From oak to oak, and hoping wild has fled,
Along such path with such a beating heart,
To catch some dream that hedged her olden art.
It was not meet, in such an artist soul,
Should lurk a spider's venom, nor the whole
Of godly anger lessens this a bit.
And sad Arachne on her beam aflit,
Within a shower of hopes her soul doth steep,
To weave ah! thus to weave a soul asleep!
And Zephyr gathering anemones,
Among the flower beds her dear form sees,
Whom he of late in scented scarf hath borne,
With such fond care, and over seas of corn,
Of emerald depth far stretched in dreamy waves,
To flowery strands, where happy Flora laves
On April morns, he calls his love to view
This pearly fancy sleeping in the dew.

Sweet Flora goddess of the scented hours
Hath woven a dainty wreath of April flowers—
The tend'rest bloom she gathers for the scent
In maiden April's lap of wonderment—
A little wreath round head and feet and wing,
For Love-at-ease to call a fairy ring,
Where those enamored blooms must dance
For breezy joy about a soul in trance.

VIII

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Now wing'd Apollo, fing'ring golden strings,
Hath wandered far in his dear ponderings,
And fashioned such a music, wild and free,
As wakes to love the cold anemone,
And saddened Hyacinth forgets to moan,
Beside a sweetness sadder than his own—A
sweeter strain than Orpheus honeyed breath,
Had sung to charm the stygian tides of death.
And Iris on a heavenly message sent,
Hath paused to hear this new forlorn lament.

This tender goddess of all daintiness,
Stands tiptoe holding up her showery dress,

'Tween dainty fingers, till the spangled folds
Of mingled hues, in wondrous bow she holds,
And leans to learn what wondrous thing of beauty,
Must prompt so sweet a lay. Forgotten duty,
That bade her speed to regions somnolent,
For balmy dreams, to nurse a languishment,
That pales the boyish cheek of dimpled Cupid,
She speeds where all of beauty's minions groupéd,
Do feast their eyes upon the source of song.
And after her still comes a charmed throng,
From music's toils the slaves of loveliness.
Ah! when this radiant scene her eye doth bless
What sighs are born of deep enraptured joy!

And Iris now recalls the languid boy;
For this is Psyche! This the dainty nymph,
Whose love hath paled his cheek to dewy lymph!
And all aflame to do a happy thing,
She bounds away upon her swiftest wing,
To Somnus' gloomy cavern. Scarce a thought,
Might mark the time in which her pinions brought,
Her to the drowsy rug of poppies spread,
Where drowsy Somnus nods his hoary head.
His myriad minions, like the forest leaves,
When some wild gust their autumn rest upheaves,
Rush to her overwhelming. Lethe fumes,
Of sweet seduction, oozing from the glooms,
That shield the murky river, drag to aching
Her wearied eyes, and e'en her sense forsaking,
She fain would rest upon the popped rug,
Like some pale Orient deep within a drug.
But *beauty* is the dream of godly sleep,
And scare her eyes have fluttered, when a peep
Of golden fragments tantalize their sense
To waking; thus to try, with soul intense,
To reconstruct some evanescent gleam
Of something they remember. Ah! what dream
So fair as Psyche sleeping in a fairy ring?
So fair as languid love's sad wandering
To grief or joy along a feverish beam?
She wakes the drowsy god, demands a dream:
And quits the sunless cave with winged Morpheus.

And now again the amorous sire of Orpheus,
They meet, and now the sad immortal strain,
Shall lure them on to Psyche's dell again.

What though the Thracian queen may bide but ill,
Miscarrying chance with her imperial will?—
Sweet Iris hath a gentler thought. She brings,
The dream to see those luminous sleeping wings,
All pied and crested like a tiger moth,
When from a soothing beam his heart is loth,
To part, and basks for very idleness;
Those tiny feet where they so lightly press
As not to weight a daisy to the earth;
Turned dimple breasts, such beauty of one birth
As Nature yields no more; one small hand prest
Against them coldly white, and one carest
By raptured blooms, outstretched upon the grasses;
And oh! her head! what glory there surpasses,
Of golden ringlets curling and uncurling
As gentle Zephyr with a silent purling,
Plays free among them,—scarcely parted lips,
So flower like, a wild bee drops and sips,
So sweet he flies away full honey laden,
Unconscious of his lightness. Such a maiden
That Morpheus' old historian of th' ideal
Must write another canto. Softly steal,
The fine emotions o'er his countenance,
As though a prism's unveiléd hues should dance,
Upon a shy chameleon. Seeing this,
The happy Iris mounts upon his bliss,
With soothing words; "Thou seest the butterfly,
"Whose flooding beam hath drown'd dear Cupid's eye.
"The queen demands thou bring him fairest pleasure,
"Of all the joys thou holdest in thy measure.
"Sweet Psyche's story, whispered by the wind,

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"In every dewy flower cup thou'lt find,
"As deeply mirrored as the starry skies.
"Fly to the fretting boy with dear surprise
"Of all thy cunning. Kiss his fevered lips,
"As Psyche then, when doubting falls and slips,
"Still left unmarred their blissful stream of life.
"Sweet whisper tales of life and love arife,
"To guide his swooning fancy from its pain,
"To revel in the life of love again."

The Dream hath kindled to a gorgeous hue,
Out speaking words, and in a drop of dew
Hath read sweet Psyche's tearful story.
And Lo! the boy beholds a growing glory
Of something rich and old; and feels the sense
Of olden kisses planted quick, intense,
And warm caresses softly lingering
To lose no dear sensation. Blushes bring,
In quick succession, while his chin atilt,
'Tween tender fingers, meets a raptured lilt,
Of love for love, as lovers only know.
And he hath seen the bitter path of woe,
Each ragged rock her feet have limp'd upon;
Each hopeless deep, and heard each bitter moan.
And he hath seen her loving spirit burn,
To ope for him the glory of the urn;
Such glory as her joyful eyes have drunken,
Till drugg'd with their own beauty, they have sunken
Unto a dreamless swoon, where ringed thime
Hath framed an art, to rare to draw in rhyme.

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Then hath he risen from his joyless bed,
Thrown off his garb of woe, and swiftly sped,
Adown the olden path. And like a thought
His heart hath brought him to this valley fraught
With his rich treasure, all his soul asinging
To name the bubbling hope that he is bringing.
And softly as a warming shadow falls
On flowery paths along the sunny halls,
His gentle words caress her sleeping ear,
With all the magic love that she hath long'd to hear.

A blossom opening to the morning sun,
With white cold cheeks the dew hath dreamed upon,
Hath never opened sweeter eyes than hers.
Such sudden pulsing breast! such light that stirs
Such eyes unmeasured deep! as closely folded

In strong white arms her being is remolded,
And Lo! he leads her scarce a thought beyond,
And there where she hath written in the sand,
As though a wizzard waves a magic wand,
The palace rises, new and passing grand.

A TOAST

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To R. G. B.

My Soul! 'Tis a beaker of wine,
And the bubbles that flash to the brim,
Are the nameless, wild songs of mine,
And the ruby is sparkling with them.

Ah! The beaker is sparkling and brimming!—
We die, but there's life in the bowl,
While the bubbles are rising and swimming—
Camerado, I pledge thee my soul!

WHISPER TO MY LOVE

Ah Music! Whisper to my love,
Some golden fancy of thy clime—
Some glorious sound,

To breath around,
A sweetness, sweeter than my rhyme,
Of sweet breath thime
In orange grove,
When she may rove,
As wild and free,
As the Dryads be,
That circle there, around, above her,
To tell her that I love her.

Ah Beauty! Whisper to my love,
Some glorious fervor of thy being,
On golden sands
Of Orient strands;
By limpid lakes where she is fleeing,
And there is seeing
The classic grace
Of her proud race,
As wild and free,
As the Dryads be,
That circle there, around, above her,
To tell her that I love her.

Ah Pleasure! Whisper to my love,
Some happiness as sweet as thine,
When wild bee sips
The honey drips,
In early May. And lowing kine,
In dreamy line,
Have led her feet
To the pastures sweet,
As wild and free,
As the Dryads be,
That circle there, around, above her,
To tell her that I love her.

Sweet trine! Oh! whisper to my love,
Such wildest pleasures thou hast known,
Of lake or strand,
Or flow'ry land,
In happy regions all thine own;
Of dreamy zone,
Where all day long,
Hast sung her song,
As wild and free,
As the Dryads be,
That circle there around, above her,
To tell her that I love her.

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ODE TO A RURAL SCENE

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Oh! Soul of balsam calm, sweet rural scene!
Thy spirit hand hath led me back again,
By pebbly paths, to mossy couches green,
And where the glowworm and the moth have lain,
To lie and dream!
Or on some warm and soothing rock,
Supine, to watch the white clouds flee and flock,
On everchanging wings,
Of childhood's sweet imaginings.
Or seeking out some shadowy stream,
Where playful fishes flash and gleam, and vanish,
A wild thing too, dull leaden footed care to banish,
How I would seem!

Along the smoky autumn afternoon,
Where fall the brown leaves, wandring aimlessly,
What song of forest pine, what wild bird's tune,
Hath waked me not to life, but still to be
A spirit wild!
To cut me from the hickory bough,
A whistle piping music sweet enow,

And on the swinging vine,
As free as Bacchus, munch the wine,
From purple festoons undefiled;
Or with the wild winds sport from hill to hill,
As happy as the dewy balm they drink and spill,—
Their nameless child.

Or where the rain falls, patt'ring in the dust,
Of winding lanes, to seek no shelt'ring place,
But bare the soul to greet the coolly gust,
And laugh to feel the cold rain in the face.
What joys are mine,
Of haunted nook, and hidden dingle,
Where life and dimpling mirth, may meet and mingle,
And clear melodious plot,
To pipe sweet ditties of their lot,
Till the sad soul that did repine,
Shall wake to consciousness as sweet and wild,
As some lone promise-mother's dreaming of her child,
And as divine!

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Along these paths what amorous gods have pass'd!
What wood nymphs vanished down these shadowy lanes!
What happy olden memories here may last
Of shepherd lassies and great amorous swains,
In jocund dance;
Or fairy Mab, the merry queen,
Hath led her pageantry upon the green,
In delicate rigadoon,
Along the midnight's charmed noon!
But not of these my soul's entrance,
If now the mock bird, warbling wildwood notes,
In rich liquidity of myriad tuneful throats,
Tells his romance.

Or if the red bird preen his richest plume
Upon the dogwood bough; or crested jay,
Hid in some leafy oak's sequestered gloom,
Shall fret and chatter all the live long day.
Perchance to hear
Some music, fainter than a dream,
Range on its pinions till the soul must deem
That it is there and know
It hath been ever singing so.
And thus to grow as fine and clear—
Like wild-wood sound to come, to dream, to die,—
And only pray nought else to charm the spirit's eye,
The spirit's ear.

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ODE TO A BEE

Thou busy bee! Thou happy murm'ring bee!
How would I follow on thy viewless course,
To clover dell, or lusher linden tree,
And lose within thy honey's charmed source
All that I am, of hope or fondest dream—
To be as thou a honeyed spirit wild,
No more, no more from golden worth astray
For what may fairer seem,
But drinking still, with spirit undefiled,
The heavy secrets of the summer day.

No fruitless season mocks thee with its frown,
No dross within thy waxen treasure dome,
No dark remorse may ever weigh thee down,
But laughing Nature bids thee lightly roam
From scene to scene wherever joy may be.
Not aimless wand'ring on from gloom to gloom,
But with a purpose greater than thy days—
Yet art thou wholly free
To go, to come, to sleep in folded bloom:
No custom bids thee name thy wondrous ways.

Within thy far and olden Orient vales,
Sweet houris nursed and watched thee long ago.
And thou hast heard the soft and lowly couched tales,
Of lovers luting all the heart's sweet woe
Without the harem's amorous oriels;
And guarded sighs of maidens veiled and pining;
And demon lovers wailing sad nights long
Within the wildest dells;
Or, Sprite of Roses! couched in velvet lining,
Sad thorn struck nightingales' low dying song.

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Old caravans have plundered all thy treasure,
To feed the dark-eyed beauty of the Nile—
Thou hast not pined, nor lost thy queenly pleasure,
But out of ruins wrought new domes the while.
But lo! they robbed thy rosy land of thee;
Ah then! how blushed the spirit of the west!
That welcomed thee his wild-wood spirit bride,
To flee, to flee, to flee!
What spread of burning wings! What golden quest
For panting bliss in flow'ry fields untried!

Sweet critic of the fairest and the sweetest,
Thou hast not paused to mar the honey less—
And who knows where thy winged soul is fleetest?
What holidays thou hast of happiness
To drink the viewless honey of the air?
I saw thee on the golden rod at noon,
At evening by the frail anemone—
Which beauty charmed thee there?
Didst ease thy heart, or golden weighted shoon,
Within thy far and murm'rous hearted tree?

Away! away! farewell thou winged sprite!
From dale to dale, from hill to farthest hill.
The radiant blue hath melted round thy flight,
But, like an Ariel dream, I see thee still,
Where thou hast vanished, yet not wholly gone.
And I must sing thee of a treasure dome
Of drossless gold, which thou hast filled unwitting.
Then too to wander on,
Like thee as fain to pause, as fain to roam,
Forever pausing and forever flitting.

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TO DEATH

Ah Death! Thou art a strange and delicate thing,
Pale hooded sister of sweet sleep!
That like a patient holy nun,
Upon a battle steep,
Hath watched from sun to sun
Each laboring breath,
That welcomes thee, sweet Death.
Whilst thou with cooling balm
Do quiet lips, where lonely anguish cries,
And draw cool shades for wearied eyes,
And layeth speechless calm
Upon each fevered brow,
With strokings of thy coolly palm.
And thou, and only thou
Hath Alms
More sweet than psalms,
To famished souls
On barren goals.
What draughts of long forgetfulness
Hath held to moaning thirst!
To drink, to drink, and drinking, wildly bless,
That thou, the last, shall be the first.
What depths of great eternal night,
Hast held to failing eyes!
Till, pregnant with the awful sight,

A spirit in them lies
 That is not life.
 I see thee calming strife,
 And age old bitterness.
 The young man's mockery of the old
 Hath seen thy face and trembles all acold.
 I see thee in the bride's deep fathomless eyes,
 That flash with sudden consciousness,
 While all her pulses rise
 To greet sweet motherhood.
 I see thee in the lonely wood,
 With hardy woodsmen clearing future cities,
 And hardy daughters chanting ditties
 That are the songs of queens to be.
 I see thee in the golden halls of gait
 Where trips the lure of beauty ankle deep,
 And where the faded kings and queens in kindly shadows creep.
 I see thee in the busy marts of blood and brain,
 And in the crowded thoroughfares,
 Of ceaseless noise, and sightless glares,
 That lead to woods again.
 I see thee by the nervous ocean,
 That trembles still, with wild emotion,
 And brings sad penance for its night of wrath.
 I see thee on the lonely mountain path,
 That leadeth ever up and down.
 I see thee in the golden brown
 That burns gay summer's bonny cheeks.
 I see thee in the light that seeks
 A soberer gown along the afternoon.
 I see thee by the harvest's moon,
 And hear thee in the reaper's distant song.
 And whither this may rise and that be planting soon,
 I see thine hooded shadow glide along.
 I see thee with the poet on the hills

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Of soul's expression.
 I see thee with the raptured alchemist's in session,
 While each his magic mirror fills
 With drossless gold of music, art, and poesy,
 Whence o'er the world such beauty spills,
 That sorrow cannot be.
 I hear thee in the lovers' lilt,
 Of careless brightness.
 I see thee in the lightness,
 Of amorous lips atilt.

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I hear thee in the dreamy serenade,
 That wakes the charméd ear of night,
 And loosens in some farthest glade,
 A mocking bird to lyric flight.
 I see thee where the silence falls
 On haunted sleep men lie within,—
 And ah! thy dreamless solace calls,
 Far, faint and thin.
 And ever calls,
 Till perfect silence falls.
 I see, thee, hear thee, feel thee every where,
 O! passing breath!
 And life is glorified for thou art there,
 O! Death!

A DIRGE

I saw a lassie on the green,
 Ah me! Ah me!
 No sweeter sight since have I seen,
 Nor ever more may see.

At morning fair, at evening pale,
 And overcast.
 Oh, stay thou lassie, sad and frail,
 Why seek the night so fast?

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I took her hand, 'twas limp and cold,
She had no smile,
And in her eyes gleamed something old
That flickered out the while.

And then she told such piteous tale,
And heaved a sigh:—
"I dreamed that beauty could not fail,
"Nor simple pleasure die.

"I held him long, I held him fast—
"But he has gone.
"Oh stay me not—this way he past,
"And I must hasten on."

I saw a wannish haggard in the night,—
Alone was she.
I heard her laugh, her eyes were bright,
Ah me! ah woe is me!

TIME AND RHIME

Ah Ha! A lack-wit is the Time—
A foolish piece and niddy-noddy,
To teach her gentle daughter, Rhime,
To flirt and dance with everybody.

Her cheek was fresh, and passing fair
When very few did come to court her,
And king or swain must worship there,
That dared, or fancied to transport her.

And often there a sceptered king,
And often there a wit or jester,
Have fondly kneel'd her praise to sing,
And learned how sore it is to pester.

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But now alas! 'Tis come to pass,
She loves the addlest headed dandy.
A bon-bon lyric suits the lass,
Her Epic is a piece of candy.

THE POET AND THE WORLD

A poet came in a golden noon,
His eyes were bright and his soul in tune,
And he sang a song of a nameless bird.
And never a song of songs was sung,
As sweet and as rich as the lay that sprung,
From the forest-wild muse in the lyrical verd.

An old man dozing and dying alone,
Hath startled enrapt at the wondrous tone,
And thinks on his own youth's minstrelsy.
And his fingers tremble and itch again
And his tongue is lashed in its bed of pain,
To know at last such music may be.

A youth starts up, with his soul on fire,
And shatters his harp for something higher,
And sings of a glory he has not known,
Till his mad soul sinks on the raging sea,
As sad and as weary as spent wings be,
In the guideless paths where his hopes have flown.

And a maiden adream in her virgin bower,
Of her love's bright star and its rising hour,
Hath heard the song, and her being is folden

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To the starry breast of a winged god,
In the golden paths of a garden untrod,
Which her soul in the lyric depths beholden.

But the world hath roused on its listless bed
And calls to the ass for his bray instead,
And lo! he hath named the song and the bird!
And the young man lives, and the old man dies,
And the god hath flown from the maiden's eyes,
And the singer is gone, and the song is a word.

THE GUERDON

Sculptors have carved for us stories in stone,—
Spirits of gods from the chrysalis freeing;
Toiled for us, starved for us, dying unknown,
Still have they sought for the infinite being,
Calling it Beauty,—upbuilding its throne.
And this is the guerdon each bears to his tomb:
"Fortune is fickle, the saddest and gladdest
"Slumber as long as the meanest and maddest—
"Naught hast thou wrought so enduring as doom."

Painters have drawn for us marvellous lines,
Hues of the rainbow, and sunset, and morning—
Pigments an innermost glory divines,
Laurelled, or stultified canvas adorning;
Toiled for us, drunk for us bitterest wines,
And this is the guerdon each bears to his tomb:
"Fortune is fickle—the saddest and gladdest
"Slumber as long as the meanest and maddest
"Naught hast thou drawn so enduring as doom."

Poets have sung for us sweetest of song,
Aye, they have sung for us, limn'd for us, carved for us.
Laurell'd our fortune, and lightened our wrong—
Still have they dreamed for us, toiled for us, starved for us—
We are their passion's most fanciful throng—
And this is the guerdon each bears to his tomb:
"Fortune is fickle—the saddest, and gladdest,
"Slumber as long as the meanest and maddest,
"Naught hast thou sung so enduring as doom."

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A SONG

What is so rare as a pearly cloud,
With a burning sun behind it?
And this is the jewel I wear on my heart,
With a dream to bind it—
This is the treasure you sought from the start,
Forgetting to find it.

What is so sweet as the song of a bird,
That wakens the fancy that hears it?
And this is the music I hear in my heart
Whose heaven enspheres it—
This is the heaven you sought from the start
Forgetting to pierce it.

What is so glad as the heart of a child,
That gambols as careless as Maytime?
And this is the pleasure I hold to my heart,
Acalling it daytime—
This is the pleasure you sought from the start,
Forgetting the playtime.

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TO X

Boast not, poor man, that thou hast measured time,
And named it feeble seven thousand years,
Lest all the lore and wit of all thy seers
Must brand thee fool, and name thy folly *crime*.
I say that I have seen an eon's rime
Upon thy father's head, and bitter tears,
Quintillions old. And countless fears,
Remembered from an old world's mapless clime.
Nor call thy folly old,—'twas surely born
When thou didst cease to think. Thou hast a child,
Whose beauty brands thee for a thing forsworn.
Leave thou its tender reason undefiled!
For shame to chain the base of all thy glory,
Upon an olden tale, a useless allegory!

ON A FESTAL NIGHT

Above the city hangs a limpid glare,
From hollow laughter's laden festal board:
Thou seest the lover fondling his adored—
Thou hearest music singing of her hair.
Thou seest the tryst that's neither here nor there.
Thou seest the gallant with his mocking sword,
And honor at his feet;—the miser's hoard,
And Lo! the music, sword, and tryst are there.
Say when has music breathed a song,
Encored so long as yonder jingling gold?
Say when do lover's wand'ring from the throng,
Turn wholly from the mart where love is sold?
Ah man! were gold where erst it did belong
Then love were winged music as of old.

TO X

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And thou hast seen yon priest in holy stole,
But thinkest, never yet a jackal's skin,
Embodied more hereditary sin—
And he with healing ointment for the soul,
May not remember when his own was whole.
Behold a myriad monks he ushereth in
Whom dol'rous chant pronounceth holy kin,
And yet each readeth from a foreign scroll.
When all these jarring sects pronounce decree,
Then must thou wait another *Fiat lux*.
Old Chaos slumbering in eternity,
Hath writ his secret hope in monkish books,
That some shall beckon when his reign shall be—
And even now the priestly finger crooks.

WANDERING WILLIE

Willie, Willie, merry piper,
Wand'rer too from clime to clime,
Tell me if thy fruit is riper,
Sweeter than my rhyme.

Hast thou pluckt a golden apple,
I have never tasted yet?
Hast thou seen a pearly dapple,
Finer skies than mine have set?

Hast thou heard a music sweeter,
Than my wildest dreams intone?
Hast thou found a joy completer,

Than a pleasure I have known?

Willie, Willie, wand'ring ever,
Whither wend thy wayward feet?
Farther still must we dissever,
Only thus again to meet?

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Wander on I would not stay thee—
Fain were I a wand'rer too.
Drinking where the founts delay thee,
Thirsting all thy deserts through.

What! though little thou hast gathered,
Golden wealth is that I ween.
What! though nothing thou hast fathered,
Careless fancies are thy yearn.

All thy trees mayhap are fruitless;
All thy hopes be ships afar,
All thy plans mayhap are bootless,—
Still thou hast the eastern star.

I, in peace and plenty, yearning,
Yearning for thy wand'rer's crust
Weary, aching, burning, burning,
Fevered failure of the wander-lust.

Wander on, mayhap I'll meet thee,
Wand'ring in the waning glow
Rhiming still for joy to greet thee,
Piping on thy piccolo.

MY LADY OF DREAMS

'Tis the maiden April calling,—
Calling to the languid South,—
Where she lounges in the sunshine
With a secret at her mouth.

Where she lounges with the sunshine
Closely fondled to her breast.
Calling for that fickle lover,
Wanders with his old unrest.

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And her lips are full and luscious,
Where a thousand joys have kissed—
Ah! I must unto her garden,
Lo! I tremble for the tryst.

For her couch it is a languor
Cushioned for a passion rest,
Woven out of dreams and sunshine,
Pillowed with her pulsing breast.

And I clasp her warm embraces,
Kissing deep her dewy lips,
Like a bee upon a blossom,
Where the honey breathes and drips;

Lie within her warm embraces
Till the wildest passions wane—
Fall to dreaming of Nirvana
Pictured through a golden rain.

There adream with dreaming April
In the gentle southern land,
Hearing footsteps onward pressing,
Only she might understand.

Feel the cool wind fan the forehead,
Drink the mellow wine he brings,
Till the spirit drunk to fervor

Sweeps its own Æolean strings.

Hear the music of the vanished,
Join the far and lyric throng
Of the rare and radiant singers
In the starry skies of song.

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Hear with soul all hushed and quickened,
Wrapt in fine unconscious ears,
Music singing unto music,
In the bright Æolean spheres.

Till the Past is wed to Present
In the golden hall of Time,
And the Future brings a garland
From his pure and crystal clime.

Seeing then that life is rainfall,
Falling on a dreaming sea,
With a touch of speeding rainbows,
Hinting all eternity.

Seeing then, that dreaming ocean,
Drinking all the golden rain—
Call it death or dark oblivion,
Drinks and yields it back again.

Seeing past is not the total,
Seeing present not the last—
Is the future uncreated?
Nay 'tis older than the past.

Is today a mighty time-wall
Beaten outward by the waves?
Nay, it is the crystal mirror
Where an image still enslaves.

Seeing space is only measured
With an atom of the soul;
Seeing Space and Time are brothers
Racing from what goal to goal?

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Seeing systems all unnumbered,
Numbered by their vanished race;
Seeing Time among his diamonds,
Launching systems unto Space.

Till the Soul turns back to April
Faint with seeing, and the seen
There in dreams to wait and linger
For the rainfalls iris sheen.

Ah! 'tis only dreams that linger,
For a vision or a sound—
Ling'ring only, asking never
How and whence, or whither bound.

Only dreams that linger, hearing
Songs across the blue clad hills
From the lakes of cool savannahs,
Where the mirror fills and fills.

Hearing from the cool savannahs
Magic strains and elfin horns,
Heralding across the plainlands
Greater than the olden morns.

Dawnings to the world from dreamland
Where the souls of song are tryst
Covering over facts and angles
With the artful truth of mist.

Then the world is recreated
With the Supermen of dreams,
With the men from out the future

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Coming down the crystal streams;

Comes the painter mixing soul-tints
In his fine unconscious eye—
Comes the sculptor opening marbles
Where his dreaming godheads lie;

Comes embodied music seeing
All of Heaven in a sound—
Call him man or rapt musician,
Neither yet is wholly bound.

Comes the poet sweeping soul-strings
Lo! the painter dreams again,
Finds another golden pigment
In the minelands of his brain.

Comes the poet sweeping soul-strings,
Lo! the sculptor dreams again,
Frees a rarer winged spirit
In his blue marmorean brain.

Comes the poet sweeping soul-strings,
Lo! the music dreams again,
Finds another golden concord
In the silence of his brain.

There again the Bard of Avon,
Music names him not in words,
Singing to a raptured eon
All that life and death engirds.

There is Shelly, diamond hearted,
Singing lightning scintilant,
Wanting still a rarer lustre,
Sweeter ever than his want.

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There is framed and fashioned music,
Keats the golden tongue of song.
Browning crowned with highest heaven
Ruling all of right and wrong.

There is Mifflin toying jewels,
His own magic art hath wrought,
Tracing dreams and fancies
In the crystal depths of thought.

There is Carman of the Northland
Singing all the music of the north.
Beauty urging on his music,
Wagering all her soul is worth.

Goethe arm in arm with Hauptman
In the vine-clad hills of Rhine,
Hushed to catch the simplest whisper
From the great Norwegian Pine.

All the Kings of dainty fancy,
All the Kings of mighty song,
All the Kings of love and laughter,
All the Kings of right and wrong,

All the Kings of all the kingdoms,
To the farthest bounds of art,
Meeting on the swards of dreamland,
Ages can not bind apart.

Thus the world is recreated
With the Supermen of time,
Bearing on in royal pageant,
All of fullness and of prime.

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Thus the world is recreated
With the Supermen of dreams,
Footsteps onward pressing,

Plashing oars on crystal streams.

Silver lakes, and cool savannahs,
Mirrored in the blue clad hills,
Dream miragéd, dim oases
Where the spirit drinks and fills.

Wanting not a dear companion,
Wanting not the yester years,
Thus the world is recreated,
And the ring'd horizon clears.

And I turn again to April,
Maiden princess of the south;
Lo! the secret now has blossomed
To a white rose at her mouth.

TO A MOCKING BIRD

A Rhapsody

Hail! Sweetest rhapsodist
Of virgin song unfettered yet!
Sweet honey-bee of sound,
What flow'ry meads hast found,
Of wilding pain and rapture,
In spirit births, a moment's capture?
A part of all that thou hast met,
Sweet mocking bird!

How far above, how far beyond,
All dream or spirit fancy,
Each fountain burst of purest song!
To what fair region dost belong?
What roseate glory followeth after
Thy natures gladdest laughter,—
Thine infinite necromancy,
Sweet mocking bird?

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Within thy song, as in thy night,
What matchless dearth of fact!
Old Art bent low in arabesque,
Transmuting life to things grotesque.
And his golden mist, a still low call,
From model-nature's all-in-all,
Bids thee all rapture reinact,
Sweet mocking bird.

And when is nature more complete,
Than in thy midnight hour?
When every angle meet and mingle,
Within thy misty laden dingle,
And spirit pauseth in the heart,
To rectify its ancient art,
By the shadow on the flower,
Sweet mocking bird.

And when has music kissed a string
Till such a lyric breath intone?
Of all the joy, of all the pain,
Sweet summer holds to earth again.
The far sweet pain of bursting Hours,
Whose sparkling eyes, in tears of flowers,
Yield thee a drink that's all thine own,
Sweet mocking bird.

Ah! Light of dreams! when spirit hears
Such music calls, can life forget?
Each night thou lightest up the gloom
Within my spirits stifled room,
And beckoneth on to hopes afar,
My singer and my star, my star!

[Pg 48]

The all of all that thou hast met,
Sweet mocking bird!

THE MYSTERY

The gos'mer web that mistifies,
Lies not on any whole or part,
Or stop or start, but in the art,
Men hang upon their eyes.

And haply in an age afar,
Two men may see the self-same mote—
The selfsame beam, with motes afloat,
And learn what souls and systems are.

FAME

Triumphant Day's grand pageantry
At song, and all the garlands won,
Far in the west the queenly Eve,
Blue misty mantled, takes her leave,
Tiaraed with a Sun.

And Lo! Sweet night, a nut-brown maid,
With silent wonder pursing lips,
Or humming soft a bird's low song,
Trips down the hall. Behold the throng
Bow to her finger tips.

GOOD NIGHT MY LOVE

[Pg 49]

Thy dewy dreams, thine Ariel dreams,
Then turn thee to thy dainty dreams,
Thine airy shell is now alight,
To bear thee down Æolean streams,
Good night, my love, good night, good night.

By misty strands of phantom lands,
By golden shores and phantom lands,
Across the sea of starry light
To drop thee on enchanted strands—
Good night, my love, good night, good night.

Afar from me and there with thee,
Ah! could I journey there with thee,
Across the sea of starry light;
But nay, 'tis thine own journey's sea—
Good night, my love, good night, good night.

But golden Morn must sound her horn,
And when the morning's triton horn
Is heralding thy homing flight,
I'll meet thee on the shores of morn,—
Good night, my love, good night, good night.

MY SOUTH

Of the languorous South with her wine-stained mouth,
And her easy ways, I sing.
Ah! see where she stands, my lady of lands,
With a rose in her hair and a gracious air,
Where her lovers cling.

Will she play me false for the promised waltz,

[Pg 50]

In that easiest way of hers?
Ah see! she is fair as the rose in her hair,
And the sweet love drips from her honied lips,
When her fancy stirs.

Will she lightly resist for the promised tryst
With a smile of her easy ways?
Ah see! she is smiling with a sweetness beguiling
All sorrow to laughter till it dances thereafter
In a golden maze.

Alas! alack-a-day! she dances away!
Haphazard her favor confers.
Ah! see where she dances, and her sunlit glances
All scattered apart! But I store in my heart
A smile of hers.

TO LLOYD MIFFLIN

A Poet

And thou hast oped the matrix of sweet thought,
And graven on the gem rare imagery.
Or piercing free thine arts reality,
Hast found uncarven gods, as richly wrought;
Such tints of soul, such matchless colors fraught
With all thy beings dearest phantasy;
Such fair illusive forms that luring flee,
Within the crystal web of fancy caught.
Till to thine eyes, a radiant cosmos spreads
In crystalline delight from pole to pole,
Of godly folk at play on flowry meads,
And one fair form of beauties finished whole!
Then through the golden mist one fancy threads:
It is the god of gods, thy pristine soul.

KEATS

[Pg 51]

Thou golden fragment of the sweetest dream,
That ever smiled beside the gates of morn,
And left enraptured Beauty half forlorn
And half entranced. Still for thy vanished gleam
That spirit-maiden weeps. On her refulgent stream
No more the tinted bark is lightly borne,
But frail as thought by streaming phantoms torn,
She waits forever thy returning beam.
A golden dream of art's divinity
And held bright Beauty's jeweled anadem;
Of music breathing immortality
Till stonéd silence falls a carven gem.
And but a fragment! Ah! couldst thou have sated
A bursting heart, what worlds had been created!

A POET

As one, who gath'ring flowers in a dream,
Hath found a vanished passion all in bloom,
And wild sweet odors lifting in the gloom
Of olden time, but casts it on a stream,
To mar the silver moon's reflectant beam,
And laugh at circles sweeping on to doom,
In dusky marges, shining in her brume,
Hath England found thee. Thus her silly deem!
Ah! Shame that she, whose head is vaunted so,
Hath vision narrowed to a needle's eye.
And only far from home, doth England know
That she has doomed another son to die.

But fair Columbia brings her wreath of woe,
Sweet Rhine, a tear, and lyric France a sigh.

THE CRITICS

[Pg 52]

And when thy soul had made a simple song
And laughed for very glee to sing and sound it,
Outside the walls, the dim mysterious throng
Wrought keen and barbed darts wherewith to wound it:
There was a fault, a fearful deadly fault,
And loud they screamed a very bull's-eye named it;
As one they saw, as one they would assault—
Each kneeling archer drew his dart and aimed it.
And lo! How fared a myriad archetypes!
A myriad fancies, sounds, and colors riddled!
And harps! and horns! and flutes! and lutes! and pipes!
And O! the laugh as each some vict'ry twiddled!
But still the dainty spirit sang its song
And laughed its laugh unconscious of a wrong.

AVAILABILITY

And shall I join this scramble after fame,
Astonish so the free delightful spirit,
To bind his song, that fettered ears may hear it,
And win an encore, or a sounding name?
Or shall his broad imperial wings go lame,
To make a semblance of existing merit?
Or fly no more less favor disinherit,
And yield his lightness to an ordered game?
Not so! and never for the fickle throng,
One soaring rapture less in fancy free!
But sing thou bonden music's saddest wrong
My spirit-bird, 'til shackles melt for thee—
Still sing, for never yet thy spirit's song,
May bend to crass availability.

A PORTRAIT

[Pg 53]

She was a breath of forest-wild perfume
So sweet, one could but stand and drink it in,
Until the soul should burst; a dream so thin
And airy fine, it seemed a spirit's bloom,
And left a haunting fragrance in the room
When it had vanished. Garb'd in snowy lynn
So rare one knew not where it did begin—
A scented sunbeam in a human gloom.
And thou hast called her woman, woman only,
When thou hadst music yearning at thy tongue
To call her Heaven. Aching fancy lonely
Still breathes that fragrance in a song unsung,
Or wandering, lost deep in a golden dream,
Hears sweet white Lurley from a vanished stream.

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG LADY

Ah! Thou wert fairer than the early morn,
Thy dress all spangled with the dewy flowers—
A lynn soft woven in the wondrous hours
That hedged about thy dreams. But Lo! the horn
Of some far Triton from the sea up-borne
Across the bluey hills, and tinted showers
Faint limning scenes of Elfin grots and bowers,
Bound thee in thrall by misty strands forlorn.

Thou couldst not longer bide the sweet low calling
Of some sad sea-soul for his wand'ring nymph.
Thou couldst not yield to mortal love's enthralling
And Nerius calling in thy spirits coralled lymph.
O! if our hearts have sweeter balm than tears,
It is the call that kissed thy dreaming ears.

TO MY LOVE

[Pg 54]

I can not say how much I love thee, words,
Like wearied petrels, fall on shoreless seas.
But O! I love thee! Simple words of these
Float on the stormy soul, like halcyon birds,
With speechless calm. A golden zone engirds
The thee and me in worlds of nameless ease,
And promise fairer far than Æetes'.
No clouds there tempest tost, but phantom herds
Of golden fleece feed in the fields of blue,
And sunny harbors lull the freighted ships
Of tender song, the while thine hero woo,
For aye sweet message from thine honeyed lips;
Or catch some music from thy spheres above thee,—
A song of songs to tell how dear I love thee.

THE STORM KING

[Pg 55]

The storm-king playeth his organ tonight—
O! weep for the mortals that heareth at sea!
The King of the storm! What god in his might,
May still the dread music, or silence the key?

The lightning, the thunder, the rain, and the blast—
How he driveth each note to its ultimate goal!
And the roll of dead worlds in the infinite vast,
How they roll in his soul, in his madness of soul!

The lightning, the thunder, the blast, and the rain—
How he playeth each note for its ultimate soul!
'Til his caverns great center grows blacker again,
With the deep where his musics great nebulas roll!

And grandeur, mad grandeur, the sweep of his song,
The raging and lurid storm grandeur of night,
Till the Souls of the Ages, to him but a throng,
Of beetling black nebula, crash in their flight.

How he laugheth, and laugheth, this maddest of Kings!
How he rageth, and rendeth his organ assunder!
Now soaring, now crashing to nethermost springs—
The maddest of music but never a blunder.

For he smiteth the sea, and he teareth the land,
And never a prayer but he laugheth to scorn!
A King and a God—should he render less grand
For sake of the ghoulish haunted beeches of morn?

THE BIRTH OF FANCY

[Pg 56]

I dreamed, and ah! the dream was sweeter far,
Than any dream of cloud-born poet ever;
Or love-lorn maiden praying to a star
On Agne's Eve. I thought a glorious quiver,
Of ecstasy was trembling, full with tears,
Deep in the eyes of a maternal thought,
And Time, beyond the outposts of the years,
Was hushed expectant, all of wonder fraught.

For Fancy cradled in a golden cloud
Had risen in a dream of boundless glory,—
While on his brow his soul had overflowed,
And swiftly scaled a purple promontory.
Then back again, in speed as dreamy fleet,
And laid a snow-white feather at my feet.

DESPAIR

[Pg 57]

Alas! so sick at heart! My lips are dumb.
Dull inquisition racks the aching brain.
I work no more, but fight the growing pain
Of losing hours. Night of heart! No moonbeams come
To bring thee twilight. Still, ah! still the hum
Of artless industry—the spirit's chain
That binds for life sake. Still the fight for gain
That binds it to th' arena, pale and numb.
And I that hoped to do so much indeed,
To clear a path in spite of time and room,
To sing a song, ah! now I faint, I bleed,
A conquered victim. See the conqueror loom,
A careless frown and sword his only creed,—
And watching close the turning thumb of doom.

THE MAGAZINES

[Pg 58]

If Orpheus came to Maga with a song
As sad as tongueless sorrow dying,
So sweet the weeping world should throng
To hear the strain, but come not flying
The Maga pennant, unassailable,
Then faith! the song were not available.

If Orpheus, singing in the lonely hills,
Should charm the world to raptured wonder,
And Maga came in wraps and frills,
And dainty tears, to cry his blunder.
Then faith! the world might wait laconical,
If Maga readjust his monicle.

But if perchance the godly singer,
Should pass, like bitter grief with time.
What Ho! The dandy crooks his finger,
And menials bring each Orphean rhyme.
And Maga's bards, and Maga's sages,
Write epitaphs on tombs of pages.

THE SPHINX

[Pg 59]

Beside the falls of ancient walls,
And golden Halls,
Entomb'd forever,
On lonely sands, with phantom bands,
A figure stands,
Called never, never.

Her eyes are green, as em'rald sheen,
With glories seen,
In distant ages;
As dongon keep, her eyes are deep,
And there asleep,
Enchanted Mages.

A thousand years of hopes and fears,
With dying cheers,
Her cohort only.

A thousand miles of vanished piles,
Of olden whiles
Her Empire lonely.

From night to morn of glory shorn,
She stands forlorn,
Her only glory.
From sun to frost, a night uncrossed,
Forever lost,
An endless story.

A SHELL

[Pg 60]

Full wondrous wrought, and passing strange,
Of many a sea-born tint—
Some old and deathless work of change,
For fairy wonderment.

But what of that strange elfin sprite,
That in this rainbow hall
Once moved? What woe, or what delight,
Did make its all in all?

How roamed it through the scenery?
Of ocean's old expanse?
Or dreamed, in fragrant greenery,
O'er some sweet sea romance?

Was't haughty King, or was it slave,
In its unknown kingdom there?
Or loved, in elfin grot or cave,
Some sweet shell-maiden fair?

Alas! like some old haunted palace,
The silence, how profound!
Where mem'ry's drunk from death's deep chalice,
And turned the chalice down.

TO THE TRAVELLER

[Pg 61]

Because thy winged spirit ever craves
Then must thou range wide seas and distant lands—
To see, to know, thy burning thirst demands
No sweeter drink. To kneel in sainted naves
For art sake; marvel by Egyptian graves;
Seek paynim shrines with strange fantastic bands
Or pause to weep where sad Pompeii stands,
So richly jewelled in her granite waves.
Ah! 'Tis to know, till every cup is drained,
And passion wane in pale satiety.
Then but to dare the boundless unattained,—
Thy self a world, thy thirst its history.
Ah! such a world! such wash of human waves
On human shores, where still the thirst enslaves.

SONG TO DEATH

Ah Death! what a weakling art makes thee—
The art of the frighten'd to death;
Gay curtains where glory forsakes thee—
A straw for the clutching last breath.

Where finds in religion a balm
So soothing, so cool and so far?
What solemn great hush and what calm?
Degraded to Portals ajar!

O where is the lyric of rest—?
O where is the song of the soul—?
Unfettered, unmastered, undrest
A nude and a beautiful whole.

O where is thy lyric of room,—
Unclouded immeasurable night?
O where is the song of the doom
Still flawless of hope or afright—?

Ah! cool as the night is the song
The dewy fresh song of my soul,
Sung always far over the throng
To a dewy unblemishing goal;

Some music still wand'ring, unstrung
Ungarnished, unmastered with art,
That haply some feverish young
May garner for treasure of heart.

But never the song that is sung—
The sweet measured tongue laps of art,
That silvers old age for the young,
Or maketh a ball room of heart.

Too great is the prestige O! Death,
Where Day ever bendeth at noon
For false chanting, or clutching for breath
At sight of the guerdon so soon.

Too great is thy prestige O! Death!
To flatter with scorn or with fright.
No promise so vain as that breath,
So great so great is thy night!

[Pg 62]

THE MAGICAL RING

[Pg 63]

'Tis an ash circled bower,
Of berries and musk,
And the fairies' first hour,
Neither daylight nor dusk;

And fancy is thridding
In vistas of green,
Where the moth is out bidding
The cock for his sheen;

And the bee with his treasure,
Is at rest on a stone—
The measure of pleasure,
The depth of his own;

The blue-bells are tinkling,
The mocking birds woo,—
In a beautiful sprinkling
Of scintilant dew,

Far down in the grasses,
In a magical ring,
A clinking their glasses,
Sits Puck and the King.

* * * *

"Methinks, saith the King,
If the dome of our palace,
Were as happy a thing,
As the dome in this chalice,

"Of glittering dew,
And half so resplendent,

[Pg 64]

As fancy is too,
In this liquor impendent;

"Methinks, saith the King,
Then life were as jolly,
In this magical ring,
As its spirit of folly;

"Methinks, saith the King,
Titania were sweeter,
And this magical ring
Were magic completer.

"For the vixen is wild,
With this Squire from the highlands—
Like a sailor beguiled,
To magical islands,

"At sound of a voice,
To plunge in the sea foam,
And, dying, rejoice,
That the island should be foam.

"Methinks, saith the King
This rascal were better,
Far out of the ring,
In handcuff and fetter.

"For he talketh of love,
And faith, hope, and charity,
And a spirit above,
As the spirit of parity.

"And thou, saith the King,
Hath certain the gumption,
To see thus the spring
Of pleasure's consumption.

[Pg 65]

"Of late thou hast wandered,
To see and be seen,
And much thou hast squandered
My riches, I ween.

"Relate thine indentures,
Important of state,
And all thine adventures,
Of worth to relate."

Saith Puck

"A trace of wine's on the breath of summer,
And the spirit of June is a pure delight,
And the brimmer of light is sparkling and bright
With a cheer for the gladdest comer.

"Aloft in the oak a dove was cooing,
And a little gray bird on sycamore twig,
Was a pause abreath with a feathery sprig,
And fluttered away to his wooing.

"I peep'd in a bloom and a bee was in it,
I peered on a leaf and a moth slept there.
Ah! was ever a dream so deliciously rare,
And all for a tip-toed minute!"

Then Oberon winketh,
Reward to his Puck,
And solemnly drinketh,
The nation much luck.

"Good! Then let us be merry,
And call up the court—
Each knight and his deary,
For song and for sport.

[Pg 66]

"But none that are gloomy,
What ever the cost—
Though the palace be roomy,
Their space is all lost."

Puck boweth full low,
And a blue-bell he tinkleth,
And the courtiers inflow,
As thick as stars twinkleth.

And the King, from his wand,
Hath showered his graces,
On the rich and the grand,
And the favored of places.

Saluteth this grandee,
And passeth that by;
This sport, or that dandy,
To the tail of each eye.

"God een! my brave hearties,
Thou Fat and thou Thin,
How barren our parties
If thou art not in!

"Thou Nut and thou Cherry,
Thou Leaf and Thou Bloom,
Thou Bud and thou Berry,
All welcome to room.

"Thou Red, and thou Yellow,
Thou Purple, thou Green,
And—who is that fellow,
With blood in his een?

[Pg 67]

"Thou Lobster, come kneel here,
Behold thou the King!
What folly to steal here
To this magical ring!"

Saith Puck, "'tis a ranger
In the light of the queen."
Saith the ranger "And stranger
To thy pleasure, I ween.

"I come from the people,
With the people I dwell.
I favor the steeple,
I favor the bell.

"Ten thousand are weary,
That furnish thee sport,
Their homes are adreary,
To furnish thy court."

(A faint low rumble of thunder cometh from over the hills,) and Oberon saith,

"'Tis an orator, Hollo!
We've something here new!
Whatever may follow,
We'll hear the thing through.

"Continue, thou swine herd,
Right gladly we'll hear,
Of the grunts of thy fine herd,
And the stys that are drear."

[Pg 68]

The orator boweth,
And unrolleth a scroll.
And such sentences floweth,
To the cheek by jowl:

*To the greatest of Kings,
Whom Time in his fleetings
Hath gifted with wings,*

From his people, with greetings:

"We are weary of wine and of laughter,
We are weary of women and song!
Come back dear Brother October,
And bear us sober along!"

Then the palace, to dome,
With merriment ringeth,
And, dashing the foam,
The revellers singeth:

(A Song)

Ah! the clink of our glasses
How they clink as we drink!
And memory passes,
Too pleasant to think.

(The Orator)

"Too much there is singing and dancing,
Sweet sorrow is scorned for her weeds.
Come back dear Brother October
And chant us thine anthem of deeds!"

(The Revellers)

Here's one to each other,
Another as deep,
And life is a brother,
Too pleasant to weep.

(The Orator)

(While a dark cloud appeareth on the horizon.)

"Sweet thought is outclassed and outbidden,
Gay summer too high on her wings!
Come back dear Brother October
And chant us thy requiem of Kings!"

(Consternation among revellers. The King starteth up, but Puck singeth:)

(While the lightning flasheth.)

Here's one to our lasses,
How nimbly they dance!
And the bright of our glasses
Is the light of their glance.

(And the revellers.)

Here's one to the vintry,
How brightly he shines!
May never the wintry,
Drink deep of his wines.

(The Orator)

(He rolleth his parchment and speaketh.)

"'Tis young blood counts and moneyless brains!
And the heart and soul of devil-may-care
Is abroad in the land, with a fig for the pains,
To do and to dare! to do and to dare!"

(The Revellers.)

(While the storm rageth.)

Ah! the clink of our glasses,
How they clink as we drink!
And memory passes.
Too pleasant to think.

(And the court adjourneth.)

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TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

A page number error in the Table of Contents has been corrected.

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected without note.

Inconsistencies in spelling and hyphenation have been retained from the original.

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