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Dedicated to Fr. Richard Trout who brings his love of Christ and the Virgin Mary to life in his preaching at Corpus Christi Parish. "Thanks for the homilies."

[End Transcriber's Notes:]

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## MAY CAROLS.

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**MAY CAROLS.**

**by**

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1857.

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TO

THE VERY REVEREND

HENRY EDWARD MANNING

THESE POEMS

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

{v}

## INTRODUCTION.

The wisdom of the Church, which consecrates the fleeting seasons of Time to the interests of Eternity, has dedicated the month of May (the birthday festival, as it were, of Creation) to her who was ever destined in the Divine Counsels to become the Mother of her Creator. It belongs to her, of course, as she is the representative of the Incarnation, and its practical exponent to a world but too apt to forget what it professes to hold. The following Poems, written in her honour, are an attempt to set forth, though but in mere outline, each of them some one of the great Ideas or essential Principles embodied in that all-embracing Mystery. On a topic so comprehensive, converse statements, at one time illustrating the highest excellence compatible with mere creaturely existence, at another, the infinite distance between the chief of creatures and the Creator, may seem, at first sight, and to some eyes, contradictory, although in reality, mutually correlative. On an attentive perusal, however, that harmony which exists among the many portions of a single mastering Truth, can hardly fail to appear—and with it the scope and aim of this Poem.

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With the meditative, descriptive pieces have been interspersed. They are an attempt towards a Christian rendering of external nature. Nature, like Art, needs to be spiritualised, unless it is to remain a fortress in the hands of an adverse Power. The visible world is a passive thing, which ever takes its meaning from something above itself. In Pagan times, it drew its interpretation from Pantheism; and to Pantheism—nay, to that Idolatry which is the popular application of Pantheism—it has still a secret, though restrained tendency, not betrayed by literature alone. A World without Divinity, Matter without Soul, is intolerable to the human mind. Yet, on the other hand, there is much in fallen human nature which shrinks from the sublime thought of a Creator, and rests on that of a sheathed Divinity diffused throughout the universe, its life, not its maker. Mere personified elements, the Wood-God and River-Nymph, captivate the fancy and do not over-awe the soul. For a bias so seductive, no cure is to be found save in authentic Christianity, the only practical Theism. The whole truth, on the long run, holds its own better than the half truth; and minds repelled by the thought of a God who stands afar off, and created the universe but to abandon it to general laws, fling themselves at the feet of a God made Man. In other words, {vii} the Incarnation is the *Complement* of Creation. In it is revealed the true nature of that link which binds together the visible and invisible worlds. When the "Word was made Flesh," a bridge was thrown across that gulf which had else for ever separated the Finite from the Infinite. The same high Truth which brings home to us the doctrine of a Creation, consecrates that Creation, reconstituting it into an Eden meet for an unfallen Adam and an unfallen Eve; nay, exalting it into a heavenly Jerusalem, the dwelling-place of the Lamb and of the Bride. It does this, in part, through symbols and associations founded on the all-cleansing Blood and the all-sanctifying Spirit—symbols and associations the reverse of those in which an Epicurean mythology took delight, and which the very superficial alone can confound with such. This is perhaps the aspect of Religion least above the level of Poetry.

As to its form, the present work belongs to the class of serial poems, a species of composition happily revived in recent

times, as by Wordsworth, in his "Ecclesiastical Sketches," and "Sonnets dedicated to Liberty," by Landor, and, with preeminent success, by the author of "In Memoriam." It was in common use among our earlier poets, who derived it from Petrarch and the Italians. Most often the interest of such poems was of a personal sort, as in the serial sonnets of Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, Drummond, Daniel, and Drayton; as well as the "Aurora" of Lord {viii} Stirling, and the "Astrea" of Sir John Davies. Occasionally, it was of a more abstract character. In both cases, alike, advantage was derived from a method of writing which unites an indefinite degree of continuity with a somewhat lawless variety, and which gains in brevity by the omission of connecting bonds. In Herbert's "Temple," Vaughan's "Silex Scintillans," and the chief poems of Donne and Crashaw, the unity is but that of kindred thoughts, and a common subject, not of a complete design. Habington's "Castara," a noble work too little known, combines a personal with an abstract interest. In it many poems on religious and philosophical subjects are grouped for support round a single centre; that centre being the sustained homage paid by the poet to one not unworthy, apparently, of his reverence and love.

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## PROLOGUE.

That sun-eyed Power which stands sublime  
Upon the rock that crowns our globe,  
Her feet on all the spoils of time,  
With light eternal on her robe,

She, sovereign of the orb she guides,  
On Truth's broad sun may root a gaze  
That deepens, onward as she rides,  
And shrinks not from the fontal blaze:

But they—her daughter Arts—must hide  
Within the cleft, content to see  
Dim skirts of glory waving wide,  
And steps of parting Deity.

'Tis theirs to watch Religion break  
In types from Nature's frown or smile,  
The legend rise from out the lake,  
The relic consecrate the isle.

'Tis theirs to adumbrate and suggest;  
To point toward founts of buried lore;  
Leaving, in reverence, unexpressed  
What Man must know not, yet adore.

For where her court true Wisdom keeps,  
'Mid loftier handmaids, one there stands  
Dark as the midnight's starry deeps,  
A Slave, gem-crowned, from Nubia's sands.

O thou whose light is in thy heart  
Love-taught Submission! without thee  
Science may soar awhile; but Art  
Drifts barren o'er a shoreless sea.

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## MAY CAROLS

### PART I.

I.

Who feels not, when the Spring once more,  
Stepping o'er Winter's grave forlorn  
With winged feet, retreads the shore  
Of widowed Earth, his bosom burn?

As ordered flower succeeds to flower,  
And May the ladder of her sweets  
Ascends, advancing hour by hour  
From scale to scale, what heart but beats?

Some Presence veiled, in fields and groves,  
That mingles rapture with remorse;—  
Some buried joy beside us moves,  
And thrills the soul with such discourse

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As they, perchance, that wondering pair  
Who to Emmaus bent their way,  
Hearing, heard not. Like them our prayer  
We make:—"The night is near us . . . Stay!"

With Paschal chants the churches ring;  
Their echoes strike along the tombs;  
The birds their Hallelujahs sing;  
Each flower with floral incense fumes.

Our long-lost Eden seems restored;  
As on we move with tearful eyes  
We feel through all the illumined sward  
Some upward-working Paradise.

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II.

Upon Thy face, O God, Thy world  
Looks ever up in love and awe;  
Thy stars, in circles onward hurled,  
Still weave the sacred chain of law.

In alternating antiphons  
Stream sings to stream and sea to sea;  
And moons that set and sinking suns  
Obeisance make, O God, to Thee.

The swallow, winter's rage o'erblown,  
Again, on warm May breezes borne,  
Revisiteth her haunts well-known;  
The lark is faithful to the morn.

The whirlwind, missioned with its wings  
To drown the fleet and fell the tower,  
Obeys thee as the bird that sings  
Her love-chant in a fleeting shower.

Amid an ordered universe  
Man's spirit only dares rebel:—  
With light, O God, its darkness pierce!  
With love its raging chaos quell!

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III.

All but unutterable Name!  
Adorable, yet awful, sound!  
Thee can the sinful nations frame  
Save with their foreheads to the ground?

Soul-searching and all-cleansing Fire!  
To see Thy countenance were to die:  
Yet how beyond the bound retire  
Of Thy serene immensity?

Thou mov'st beside us, if the spot  
We change—a noteless, wandering tribe;  
The orbits of our life and thought  
In Thee their little arcs describe.

In the dead calm, at cool of day,  
We hear Thy voice, and turn, and flee:—  
Thy love outstrips us on our way:  
From Thee, O God, we fly—to Thee.

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## **Sancta Maria.**

IV.

Mary! To thee the humble cry.  
What seek they? Gifts to Pride unknown.  
They seek thy help—to pass thee by:—  
They murmur, "Show us but thy Son."

The childlike heart shall enter in;  
The virgin soul its God shall see:—  
Mother, and maiden pure from sin,  
Be thou the guide: the Way is He.

The mystery high of God made Man  
Through thee to man is easier made:  
Pronounce the consonant who can  
Without the softer vowel's aid!

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## Dei Genitrix.

V.

I see Him: on thy lap He lies  
'Mid that Judæan stable's gloom:  
O sweet, O awful Sacrifice!  
He smiles in sleep, yet knows His doom.

Thou gav'st Him life! But was not this  
That life which knows no parting breath?  
Unmeasured life? unwaning bliss  
Dread Priestess, lo! thou gav'st Him death!

Beneath the tree thy mother stood:  
Beneath the cross thou too shalt stand:—  
O Tree of Life! O bleeding Rood!  
Thy shadow stretches far its hand.

That God who made the sun and moon  
In swaddling bands lies dumb and bound!—  
Love's Captive! darker prison soon  
Awaits Thee in the garden ground.

He wakens. Paradise looks forth  
Beyond the portals of the grave.  
Life, life thou gavest! life to Earth,  
Not Him. Thine Infant dies to save.

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## Virgo Virginum.

VI.

When from their lurking place the Voice  
Of God dragged forth that fallen pair,  
Still seemed the garden to rejoice;  
The sinless Eden still was fair.

They, they alone, whose light of grace  
But late made Paradise look dim,  
Stood now, a blot upon its face,  
Before their God; nor gazed on Him.

They glanced not up; or they had seen  
In that severe, death-dooming eye  
Unutterable depths serene  
Of sadly-piercing sympathy.

Not them alone that Eye beheld,  
But, by their side, that other Twain,  
In whom the race whose doom was knelled  
Once more should rise; once more should reign.

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It saw that Infant crowned with blood;—  
And her from whose predestined breast

That Infant ruled the worlds. She stood,  
Her foot upon the serpent's crest!

Voice of primeval prophecy!  
She who makes glad whatever heart  
Adores her Son and Saviour, she  
In thee, that hour, possessed a part!

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VII.

Ascending from the convent-grates,  
The children mount the woodland vale.  
'Tis May-Day Eve; and Hesper waits  
To light them, while the western gale

Blows softly on their bannered line:  
And, lo! down all the mountain stairs  
The shepherd children come to join  
The convent children at their prayers.

They meet before Our Lady's fane:  
On yonder central rock it stands,  
Uplifting, ne'er invoked in vain,  
That cross which blesses all the lands.

Before the porch the flowers are flung;  
The lamp hangs glittering 'neath the Rood;  
The "Maris Stella" hymn is sung;  
Their chant each morn to be renewed.

Ah! if a secular muse might dare,  
Far off, the children's song to catch;  
To echo back, or burthen bear!—  
As fitly might she hope to match

The linnet's note as theirs, 'tis true:  
Yet, now and then, that borrowed tone,  
Like sunbeams flashed on pine or yew,  
Might shoot a sweetness through her own!

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## **Adolescentulae amaverunt te nimis.**

VIII.

"Behold! the wintry rains are past;  
The airs of midnight hurt no more:  
The young maids love thee. Come at last:  
Thou lingerest at the garden-door.

"Blow over all the garden; blow,  
Thou wind that breathest of the south,  
Through all the alleys winding low,  
With dewy wing and honeyed mouth.

"But wheresoever thou wanderest, shape  
Thy music ever to one Name:—  
Thou too, clear stream, to cave and cape  
Be sure thou whisper of the same.

"By every isle and bower of musk  
Thy crystal clasps, as on it curls,  
We charge thee, breathe it to the dusk;  
We charge thee, grave it in thy pearls."

The stream obeyed. That Name he bore  
Far out above the moon-lit tide.  
The breeze obeyed. He breathed it o'er  
The unforgetting pines; and died.



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## Mater Christi.

IX.

Daily beneath His mother's eyes  
Her Lamb matured His lowliness:  
Twas hers the lovely Sacrifice  
With fillet and with flower to dress.

Beside His little cross He knelt;  
With human-heavenly lips He prayed:  
His Will within her will she felt;  
And yet His Will her will obeyed.

Gethsemané! when day is done  
Thy flowers with falling dews are wet:  
Her tears fell never; for the sun  
Those tears that brightened never set.

The house was silent as that shrine  
The priest but entered once a year.  
There shone His emblem. Light Divine!  
Thy presence and Thy power was here!

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## Mater Christi.

X.

He willed to lack; He willed to bear;  
He willed by suffering to be schooled;  
He willed the chains of flesh to wear:  
Yet from her arms the worlds He ruled.

As tapers 'mid the noontide glow  
With merged yet separate radiance burn,  
With human taste and touch, even so,  
The things He knew He willed to learn.

He sat beside the lowly door:  
His homeless eyes appeared to trace  
In evening skies remembered lore,  
And shadows of His Father's face.

One only knew Him. She alone  
Who nightly to His cradle crept,  
And lying like the moonbeam prone,  
Worshipped her Maker as He slept.

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## Mater Creatoris.

XI.

Bud forth a Saviour, Earth! fulfil  
Thy first of functions, ever new!  
Balm-dropping heaven, for aye distil  
Thy grace like manna or like dew!

"To us, this day, a Child is born."  
Heaven knows not mere historic facts:—  
Celestial mysteries, night and morn,  
Live on in ever-present Acts.

Calvary's dread Victim in the skies  
On God's great altar rests even now:  
The Pentecostal glory lies

For ever round the Church's brow.

From Son and Father, He, the Lord  
Of Love and Life, proceeds alway:  
Upon the first creative word  
Creation, trembling, hangs for aye.

Nor less ineffably renewed  
Than when on earth the tie began,  
Is that mysterious Motherhood  
Which re-creates the worlds and man.

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## **Mater Salvatoris.**

XII.

O Heart with His in just accord!  
O Soul His echo, tone for tone!  
O Spirit that heard, and kept His word!  
O Countenance moulded like His own!

Behold, she seemed on Earth to dwell;  
But, hid in light, alone she sat  
Beneath the Throne ineffable,  
Chanting her clear Magnificat.

Fed from the boundless heart of God,  
The joy within her rose more high  
And all her being overflowed,  
Until the awful hour was nigh.

Then, then, there crept her spirit o'er  
The shadow of that pain world-wide  
Whereof her Son the substance bore:—  
Him offering, half in Him she died;

Standing like that strange Moon, whereon  
The mask of Earth lies dim and dead,  
An orb of glory, shadow-strewn,  
Yet girdled with a luminous thread.

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## **Mater Dolorosa.**

XIII.

She stood: she sank not. Slowly fell  
Adown the Cross the atoning blood.  
In agony ineffable  
She offered still His own to God.

No pang of His her bosom spared;  
She felt in Him its several power.  
But she in heart His Priesthood shared:  
She offered Sacrifice that hour.

"Behold thy Son!" Ah, last bequest!  
It breathed His last farewell! The sword  
Predicted pierced that hour her breast.  
She stood: she answered not a word.

His own in John He gave. She wore  
Thenceforth the Mother-crown of Earth.  
O Eve! thy sentence too she bore;  
Like thee in sorrow she brought forth.

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## **Mater Dolorosa.**

XIV.

From her He passed: yet still with her  
The endless thought of Him found rest;  
A sad but sacred branch of myrrh  
For ever folded in her breast.

A Boreal winter void of light—  
So seemed her widowed days forlorn:  
She slept; but in her breast all night  
Her heart lay waking till the morn.

Sad flowers on Calvary that grew;—  
Sad fruits that ripened from the Cross;—  
These were the only joys she knew:  
Yet all but these she counted loss.

Love strong as Death! She lived through thee  
That mystic life whose every breath  
From Life's low harpstring amorously  
Draws out the sweetened name of Death.

Love stronger far than Death or Life!  
Thy martyrdom was o'er at last  
Her eyelids drooped; and without strife  
To Him she loved her spirit passed.

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## **Mater Admirabilis.**

XV.

O Mother-Maid! to none save thee  
Belongs in full a Parent's name;  
So fruitful thy Virginity,  
Thy Motherhood so pure from blame!

All other parents, what are they?  
Thy types. In them thou stood'st rehearsed,  
(As they in bird, and bud, and spray).  
Thine Antitype? The Eternal First!

Prime Parent He: and next Him thou!  
Overshadowed by the Father's Might,  
Thy "Fiat" was thy bridal vow;  
Thine offspring He, the "Light of Light."

Her Son Thou wert: her Son Thou art,  
O Christ! Her substance fed Thy growth:—  
She shaped Thee in her virgin heart,  
Thy Mother and Thy Father both!

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## **Mater Amabilis.**

XVI.

Mother of Love! Thy love to Him  
Cherub and seraph can but guess:—  
A mother sees its image dim  
In her own breathless tenderness.

That infant touch none else could feel  
Vibrates like light through all her sense:  
Far off she hears his cry: her zeal  
With lions fights in his defence.

Unmarked his youth goes by: his hair  
Still smooths she down, still strokes apart:  
The first white thread that meets her there  
Glides, like a dagger, through her heart.

Men praise him: on her matron cheek  
There dawns once more a maiden red.  
Of war, of battle-fields they speak:  
She sees once more his father dead.

In sickness—half in sleep—she hears  
His foot, ere yet that foot is nigh:  
Wakes with a smile; and scarcely fears,  
If he but clasp her hand, to die.

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## Mater Filii.

XVII.

Others, the hours of youth gone by,  
A mother's hearth and home forsake;  
And, with the need, the filial tie  
Relaxes, though it does not break.

But Thou wert born to be a Son.  
God's Son in heaven, Thy will was this,  
To pass the chain of Sonship on,  
And bind in one whatever is.

Thou cam'st the *Son* of Man to be,  
That so Thy brethren too might bear  
Adoptive Sonship, and with Thee  
Thy Sire's eternal kingdom share.

Transcendently the Son Thou art:  
In this mysterious bond entwine,  
As in a single, two-celled heart,  
Thy natures, human and divine.

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## Mater Divinae Gratiae.

XVIII.

"They have no wine." The tender guest  
Was grieved their feast should lack for aught.  
He seemed to slight her mute request:  
Not less the grace she wished He wrought.

O great in Love! O full of Grace!  
That winds in thee, a river broad,  
From Christ, with heaven-reflecting face,  
Gladdening the City of thy God:—

Be this thy gift: that man henceforth  
No more should creep through life content  
(Draining the springs impure of earth)  
With life's material element.

Let sacraments to sense succeed:  
Let nought be winning, nought be good  
Which fails of Him to speak, and bleed  
Once more with His all-cleansing blood!

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## Mater Divinae Gratiae.

XIX.

The gifts a mother showers each day  
Upon her softly-clamorous brood:  
The gifts they value but for play,—  
The graver gifts of clothes and food,—

Whence come they but from him who sows  
With harder hand, and reaps, the soil;  
The merit of his labouring brows,  
The guerdon of his manly toil?

From Him the Grace: through her it stands  
Adjusted, meted, and applied;  
And ever, passing through her hands,  
Enriched it seems, and beautified.

Love's mirror doubles Love's caress:  
Love's echo to Love's voice is true:—  
Their Sire the children love not less  
Because they clasp a Mother too.

{24}

XX.

When April's sudden sunset cold  
Through boughs half-clothed with watery sheen  
Bursts on the high, new-cowslipped wold,  
And bathes a world half gold half green,

Then shakes the illuminated air  
With din of birds; the vales far down  
Grow phosphorescent here and there;  
Forth flash the turrets of the town;

Along the sky thin vapours scud;  
Bright zephyrs curl the choral main;  
The wild ebullience of the blood  
Rings joy-bells in the heart and brain:

Yet in that music discords mix;  
The unbalanced lights like meteors play;  
And, tired of splendours that perplex,  
The dazzled spirit sighs for May.

{25}

XXI.

As children when, with heavy tread,  
Men sad of face, unseen before,  
Have borne away their mother dead—  
So stand the nations thine no more.

From room to room those children roam,  
Heart-stricken by the unwonted black:  
Their house no longer seems their home:  
They search; yet know not what they lack.

Years pass: Self-Will and Passion strike  
Their roots more deeply day by day;  
Old servants weep; and "how unlike"  
Is all the tender neighbours say.

And yet at moments, like a dream,  
A mother's image o'er them flits:  
Like her's their eyes a moment beam;  
The voice grows soft; the brow unknits.

Such, Mary, are the realms once thine,  
That know no more thy golden reign.  
Hold forth from heaven thy Babe divine!  
O make thine orphans thine again!

{26}

## Mariae Cliens.

XXII.

A little longer on the earth  
That aged creature's eyes repose  
(Though half their light and all their mirth  
Are gone); and then for ever close.

She thinks that something done long since  
Ill pleases God:—or why should He  
So long delay to take her hence  
Who waits His will so lovingly?

Whene'er she hears the church-bells toll  
She lifts her head, though not her eyes,  
With wrinkled hands, but youthful soul,  
Counting her lip-worn rosaries.

And many times the weight of years  
Falls from her in her waking dreams:  
A child her mother's voice she hears:  
To tend her father's steps she seems.

{27}

Once more she hears the whispering rains  
On flowers and paths her childhood trod;  
And of things present nought remains  
Save the abiding sense of God.

Mary! make smooth her downward way!  
Not dearer to the young thou art  
Than her. Make glad her latest May;  
And hold her, dying, on thy heart.

{28}

## Fest. Visitationis.

XXIII.

The hilly region crossed with haste,  
Its last dark ridge discerned no more,  
Bright as the bow that spans a waste  
She stood beside her Cousin's door;

And spake:—that greeting came from God!  
Filled with the Spirit from on high  
Sublime the aged Mother stood,  
And cried aloud in prophecy,—

"Soon as thy voice had touched mine ears  
The child in childless age conceived  
Leaped up for joy! Throughout all years  
Blessed the woman who believed."

Type of Electing Love! 'tis thine  
To speak God's greeting from the skies!  
Thy voice we hear: thy Babe divine  
At once, like John, we recognise.

Within our hearts the second birth  
Exults, though blind as yet and dumb.  
The child of Grace his hands puts forth,  
And prophesies of things to come.

{29}

XXIV.

Not yet, not yet! the Season sings  
Not of fruition yet, but hope;  
Still holds aloft, like balanced wings,  
Her scales, and lets not either drop.

The white ash, last year's skeleton,  
Still glares, uncheered by leaf or shoot,  
'Gainst azure heavens, and joy hath none  
In that fresh violet at her foot.

Yet Nature's virginal suspense  
Is not forgetfulness nor sloth:  
Where'er we wander, soul and sense  
Discern a blindly working growth.

Her throne once more the daisy takes,  
That white star of our dusky earth;  
And the sky-cloistered lark down-shakes  
Her passion of seraphic mirth.

Twixt barren hills and clear cold skies  
She weaves, ascending high and higher,  
Songs florid as those traceries  
Which took, of old, their name from fire.

Sing! thou that need'st no ardent clime  
To sun the sweetness from thy breast;  
And teach us those delights sublime  
Wherein ascetic spirits rest!

{30}

## **Fest Nativitatis B.V.M.**

XXV.

When thou wert born the murmuring world  
Boiled on, nor dreamed of things to be,  
From joy to sorrow madly whirled;—  
Despair disguised in revelry.

A princess thou of David's line;  
The mother of the Prince of Peace;  
That hour no royal pomps were thine:  
The earth alone her boon increase.

Before thee poured. September rolled  
Down all the vine-clad Syrian slopes  
Her breadths of purple and of gold;  
And birds sang loud from olive tops.

Perhaps old foes, they knew not why,  
Relented. From a fount long sealed  
Tears rose, perhaps, to Pity's eye:  
Love-harvests crowned the barren field.

{31}

The respirations of the year.  
At least, grew soft. O'er valleys wide  
Pine-roughened crags again shone clear;  
And the great Temple, far descried,

To watchers, watching long in vain,  
To patriots grey, in bondage nursed,  
Flashed back their hope—"The Second Fane  
In glory shall surpass the First!"

{32}

XXVI.

The moon, ascending o'er a mass

Of tangled yew and sable pine,  
What sees she in yon watery glass?  
A tearful countenance divine.

Far down, the winding hills between,  
A sea of vapour bends for miles,  
Unmoving. Here and there, dim-seen,  
The knolls above it rise like isles.

The tall rock glimmers, spectre-white;  
The cedar in its sleep is stirred;  
At times the bat divides the night;  
At times the far-off flood is heard.

Above, that shining blue!—below,  
That shining mist! O, not more pure  
Midwinter's landscape, robed in snow,  
And fringed with frosty garniture.

The fragrance of the advancing year—  
That, that assures us it is May.  
Ah, tell me! in the heavenlier sphere  
Must all of earth have passed away?

{33}

XXVII.

A dream came to me while the night  
Thinned off before the breath of morn,  
Which filled my soul with such delight  
As hers who clasps a babe new-born.

I saw—in countenance like a child—  
(Three years methought were hers, no more)  
That maid and mother undefiled  
The Saviour of the world who bore.

A nun-like veil was o'er her thrown;  
Her locks by fillet-bands made fast,  
Swiftly she climbed the steps of stone;—  
Into the Temple swiftly passed.

Not once she paused her breath to take;  
Not once cast back a homeward look:—  
As longs the hart his thirst to slake,  
When noontide rages, in the brook,

So longed that child to live for God;  
So pined, from earth's enthrallments free,  
To bathe her wholly in the flood  
Of God's abysmal purity!

Anna and Joachim from far  
Their eyes on that white vision raised:  
And when, like caverned foam or star  
Cloud-hid, she vanished, still they gazed.

{34}

## **Fest. Purificationis.**

XXVIII.

Twelve years had passed, and, still a child,  
In brightness of the unblemished face,  
Once more she scaled those steps, and smiled  
On Him who slept in her embrace.

As in she passed there fell a calm  
Around: each bosom slowly rose  
Like the long branches of the palm  
When under them the south wind blows.



The scribe forgot his wordy lore;  
The chanted psalm was heard far off;  
Hushed was the clash of golden ore;  
And hushed the Sadducean scoff.

Type of the Christian Church! 'twas thine  
To offer, first, to God that hour,  
Thy Son—the Sacrifice Divine,  
The Church's everlasting dower!

Great Priestess! round that aureoled brow  
Which cloud or shadow ne'er had crossed,  
Began there not that hour to grow  
A milder dawn of Pentecost?

{35}

## **Fest. Epiphaniae.**

XXIX.

A veil is on the face of Truth:  
She prophesies behind a cloud;  
She ministers, in robes of ruth,  
Nocturnal rites, and disallowed.

Eleusis hints, but dares not speak;  
The Orphic minstrelsies are dumb;  
Lost are the Sibyl's books, and weak  
Earth's olden faith in Him to come.

But ah, but ah, that Orient Star!  
On straw-roofed shed and large-eyed kine  
It flashes, guiding from afar  
The Magians to the Child Divine.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh they bring—  
Love, Worship, Life severe and hard:  
Well pleased the symbol gifts the King  
Accepts; and Truth is their reward.

Rejoice, O Sion, for thy night  
Is past: the Lord, thy Light, is born.  
The Gentiles shall behold thy light;  
The kings walk forward in thy morn.

{36}

XXX.

The sunless day is sweeter yet  
Than when the golden sun-showers danced  
On bower new-glazed or rivulet;  
And Spring her banners first advanced.

By wind unshaken hang in dream  
The wind-flowers o'er their dark green lair;  
And those thin poppy cups that seem  
Not bodied forms, but woven of air.

Nor bird is heard; nor insect flits.  
A tear-drop glittering on her cheek,  
Composed but shadowed, Nature sits—  
Yon primrose not more staid and meek.

The light of pensive hope unquenched  
On those pathetic brows and eyes,  
She sits, by silver dew-showers drenched,  
Through which the chill spring-odours rise.

Was e'er on human countenance shed  
So sweet a sadness? Once: no more.  
Then when his charge the Patriarch led  
Dream-warned to Egypt's distant shore.

Down on her Infant Mary gazed;  
Her face the angels marked with awe;  
Yet 'neath its dimness, undisplaced,  
Looked forth that smile the Magians saw.

{37}

## Legenda.

XXXI.

As, flying Herod, southward went  
That Child and Mother, unamazed,  
Into Egyptian banishment,  
The weeders left their work, and gazed.

The bright One spake to them and said,  
"When Herod's messengers demand,  
"Passed not the Infant, Herod's dread,—  
"Passed not the Infant through your land?"

"Then shall ye answer make, and say,  
"Behold, since first the corn was green  
"No little Infant passed this way;  
"No little Infant we have seen."

Earth heard; nor missed the Maid's intent—  
As on the Flower of Eden passed  
With Eden swiftness up she sent  
A sun-browned harvest ripening fast.

By simplest words and sinless wheat  
The messengers rode back beguiled;  
And by that truthfullest deceit  
Which saved the little new-born Child!

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## PART II.

### Conservabat in Corde.

I.

As every change of April sky  
Is imaged in a placid brook,  
Her meditative memory  
Mirrored His every deed and look.

As suns through summer ether rolled  
Mature each growth the spring has wrought,  
So Love's strong day-star turned to gold  
Her harvests of quiescent thought.

Her soul was as a vase, and shone  
Translucent to an inner ray;  
Her Maker's finger wrote thereon  
A mystic Bible new each day.

Deep Heart! In all His sevenfold might  
The Paraclete with thee abode;  
And, sacramented there in light,  
Bore witness of the things of God.

{42}

## Ascensio Domini.

II.

Rejoice, O Earth, thy crown is won!  
Rejoice, rejoice, ye heavenly host!  
And thou, the Mother of the Son,  
Rejoice the first; rejoice the most!

Who captive led captivity—  
From Hades' void circumference  
Who led the Patriarch Band on high,  
There rules, and sends us graces thence.

Rejoice, glad Earth, o'er winter's grave  
With altars wreathed and clarions blown;  
And thou, the Race Redeemed, outbrave  
The rites of nature with thine own!

Rejoice, O Mary! thou that long  
Didst lean thy breast upon the sword—  
Sad nightingale, the Spirit's song  
That sang'st all night! He reigns, restored!

Rejoice! He goes, the Paraclete  
To send! Rejoice! He reigns on high!  
The sword lies broken at thy feet—  
His triumph is thy victory!

{43}

## Ascensio Domini.

III.

I take this reed—I know the hand  
That wields it must ere long be dust—  
And write, upon the fleeting sand  
Each wind can shake, the words, "I trust."

And if that sand one day was stone  
And stood in courses near the sky,  
For towers by earthquake overthrown,  
Or mouldering piecemeal, what care I?

Things earthly perish: life to death  
And death to life in turn succeeds.  
The spirit never perisheth:  
The chrysalis its Psyche breeds.

True life alone is that which soars  
To Him who triumphed o'er the grave:  
With Him, on life's eternal shores,  
I trust one day a part to have.

Ah, hark! above the springing corn  
That chime; in every breeze it swells!  
Ye bells that wake the Ascension morn,  
Ye give us back our Paschal bells!

{44}

## Elias.

IV.

O thou that rodest up the skies,  
Thy task fulfilled, on steeds of fire,—  
That somewhere, sealed from mortal eyes,  
Some air immortal dost respire!

Thou that in heavenly beams enshrined,  
In quiet lulled of soul and flesh,  
With one great thought of God thy mind  
Dost everlastingly refresh!

Where art thou? age succeeds to age;  
Thou dost not hear their fret and jar:  
With thy celestial hermitage  
Successive winters wage not war.

Still as a corse with field-flowers strewn  
Thou liest; on God thine eyes are bent:  
And the fire-breathing stars alone  
Look in upon thy cloudy tent.

Behold, there is a debt to pay!  
Like Enoch, hid thou art on high:  
But both shall back return one day,  
To gaze once more on earth, and die.

{45}

V.

Stronger and steadier every hour  
The pulses of the season's glee,  
As toward her zenith climbs that Power  
Which rules the purple revelry.

Trees, that from winter's grey eclipse  
Of late but pushed their topmost plume,  
Or felt with green-touched finger-tips  
For spring, their perfect robes assume.

Like one that reads, not one that spells,  
The unvarying rivulet onward runs:  
And bird to bird, from leafier cells,  
Sends forth more leisurely response.

Through the gorse covert bounds the deer:—  
The gorse, whose latest splendours won  
Make all the fulgent wolds appear  
Bright as the pastures of the sun.

A balmier zephyr curls the wave;  
More purple flames o'er ocean dance;  
And the white breaker by the cave  
Falls with more cadenced resonance;

While, vague no more, the mountains stand  
With quivering line or hazy hue;  
But drawn with finer, firmer hand,  
And settling into deeper blue.

{46}

## **Speculum Justitiae.**

VI.

Not in Himself the Eternal Word  
Lay hid upon creation's day:  
His Loveliness abroad He poured  
On all the worlds; and pours for aye.

Not in Himself the Incarnate Son,  
In whom Man's race is born again,  
His glory hides. The victory won,  
He rose to send His "Gifts on Men."

In sacraments—His dread behests;  
In Providence; in granted prayer;  
Before the time He manifests  
His glory, far as man may bear.

He shines not from a vault of gloom;  
The horizon vast His splendour paints:  
Both heaven and earth His beams illumine;  
His light is glorious in His saints.

{47}

He shines upon His Church—that Moon  
Who, in the watches of the night,  
Transmits to man the entrusted boon;  
A sister orb of sacred light.

And thou, pure mirror of His grace!—  
As sun reflected in a sea—  
So, Mary, feeblest eyes the face  
Of Him thou lovest discern in thee.

{48}

## Munera.

VII.

Not for herself does Mary hold  
Among the saints that queenly throne,  
Her seat predestined from of old;  
But for the brethren of her Son.

Pure thoughts that make to God their quest,  
With her find footing o'er the clouds;  
Like those sea-crossing birds that rest  
A moment on the sighing shrouds.

In her our hearts, no longer nursed  
On dust, for spiritual beauty yearn;  
From her our instincts, as at first,  
An upward gravitation learn.

Her distance makes her not remote:  
For in true love's supernal sphere  
No more round self the affections float—  
More near to God, to man more near.

In her, the weary warfare past,  
The port attained, the exile o'er,  
We see the Church's barque at last  
Close-anchored on the eternal shore!

{49}

## Predestinata.

VIII.

Eternal Beauty, ere the spheres  
Had rolled from out the gulfs of night,  
Sparkled, through all the unnumbered years,  
Before the Eternal Father's sight.

Like objects seen by Man in dream,  
Or landscape glassed on morning mist,  
Before His eyes it hung—a gleam  
Flashed from the eternal Thought of Christ.

It stood the Archetype sublime  
Of that fair world of finite things  
Which, in the bands of Space and Time,  
Creation's glittering verge enrings.

Star-like within the depths serene  
Of that still vision, Mary, thou

With Him, thy Son, of God wert seen  
Millenniums ere the lucid brow

{50}

Of Eye o'er Eden founts had bent,—  
Millenniums ere that second Fair  
With dust the hopes of man had blent,  
And stained the brightness once so fair.

Elect of Creatures! Man in thee  
Beholds that primal Beauty yet,—  
Sees all that Man was formed to be,—  
Sees all that Man can ne'er forget!

{51}

IX.

Three worlds there are:—the first of Sense—  
That sensuous earth which round us lies;  
The next of Faith's Intelligence;  
The third of Glory, in the skies.

The first is palpable, but base;  
The second heavenly, but obscure;  
The third is star-like in the face—  
But ah! remote that world as pure!

Yet, glancing through our misty clime,  
Some sparkles from that loftier sphere  
Make way to earth;—then most what time  
The annual spring-flowers re-appear.

Amid the coarser needs of earth  
All shapes of brightness, what are they  
But wanderers, exiled from their birth,  
Or pledges of a happier day?

Yea, what is Beauty, judged aright,  
But some surpassing, transient gleam;  
Some smile from heaven, in waves of light,  
Rippling o'er life's distempered dream?

Or broken memories of that bliss  
Which rushed through first-born Nature's blood  
When He who ever was, and is,  
Looked down, and saw that all was good?

{52}

X.

Alas! not only loveliest eyes,  
And brows with lordliest lustre bright,  
But Nature's self—her woods and skies—  
The credulous heart can cheat or blight.

And why? Because the sin of man  
Twixt Fair and Good has made divorce;  
And stained, since Evil first began,  
That stream so heavenly at its source.

O perishable vales and groves!  
Your master was not made for you;  
Ye are but creatures: human loves  
Are to the great Creator due.

And yet, through Nature's symbols dim,  
There are with keener sight that pierce  
The outward husk, and reach to Him  
Whose garment is the universe.

For this to earth the Saviour came  
In flesh; in part for this He died;

That man might have, in soul and frame,  
No faculty unsanctified.

That Fancy's self—so prompt to lead  
Through paths disastrous or defiled—  
Upon the Tree of Life might feed;  
And Sense with Soul be reconciled.

{53}

## Idolatria.

XI.

The fancy of an age gone by,  
When Fancy's self to earth declined,  
Still thirsting for Divinity,  
Yet still, through sense, to Godhead blind,

Poor mimic of that Truth of old,  
The patriarchs' hope—a faith revealed—  
Compressed its God in mortal mould,  
The prisoner of Creation's field.

Nature and Nature's Lord were one!  
Then countless gods from cloud and stream  
Glanced forth; from sea, and moon, and sun:  
So ran the pantheistic dream.

And thus the All-Holy, thus the All-True,  
The One Supreme, the Good, the Just,  
Like mist was scattered, lost like dew,  
And vanished in the wayside dust.

{54}

Mary! through thee the idols fell:  
When He the nations longed for [Footnote 1] came—  
True God yet Man—with man to dwell,  
The phantoms hid their heads for shame.

[Footnote 1: "The Desire of the Nations."]

His place or thine removed, ere long  
The bards would push the sects aside;  
And lifted by the might of song  
Olympus stand re-edified.

{55}

## Tota Pulchra.

XII.

A broken gleam on wave and flower—  
A music that in utterance dies—  
O Poets, and O Men! what more  
Is all that Beauty which ye prize?

And ah! how oft Corruption works  
Through that brief Beauty's force or wile!  
How oft a gloom eternal lurks  
Beneath an evanescent smile!

But thou, serene and smiling light  
Of every grace redeemed from Sense,  
In thee all harmonies unite  
That charm a pure Intelligence.

Whatever teaches mind or heart  
To God by loveliest types to mount,  
Mary, is thine. Of each true Art

The parent art thou, and the fount.

{56}

Those pictures, fair as moon or star,  
The ages dear to Faith brought forth,  
Formed but the illumined calendar  
Of her, that Church which knows thy worth.

Not less doth Nature teach through thee  
That mystery hid in hues and lines:  
Who loves thee not hath lost the key  
To all her sanctuaries and shrines.

{57}

## **Stella Matutina.**

XIII.

Shine out, O Star, and sing the praise  
Of that unrisen Sun whose glow  
Thus feeds thee with thine earlier rays—  
The secret of thy song we know.

Thou sing'st that Sun of Righteousness,  
Sole light of this benighted globe,  
Whose beams, reflected, dressed and dress  
His Mother in her shining robe.

Pale Lily, pearled around with dew,  
Lift high that heaven-illumined vase,  
And sing the glories ever new  
Of her, God's chalice, "full of grace."

Cerulean Ocean, fringed with white,  
That wear'st her colours evermore,  
In all thy pureness, all thy might,  
Resound her name from shore to shore.

That fringe of foam, when drops the sun  
To-night, a sanguine stain shall wear:—  
Thus Mary's heart had strength, alone,  
The passion of her Lord to share.

{58}

## **Janua Coeli.**

XIV.

The night through yonder cloudy cleft,  
With many a lingering last regard,  
Withdraws—but slowly—and hath left  
Her mantle on the dewy sward.

The lawns with silver dews are strewn;  
The winds lie hushed in cave and tree;  
Nor stirs a flower, save one alone  
That bends beneath the earliest bee.

Peace over all the garden broods;  
Pathetic sweets the thickets throng;  
Like breath the vapour o'er the woods  
Ascends—dim woods without a song:

Or hangs, a shining, fleece-like mass  
O'er half yon lake that winds afar  
Among the forests, still as glass,  
The mirror of that Morning Star

{59}



Which, halfway wandering from the sky,  
Amid the rose of morn delays  
And (large and less alternately)  
Bends down a lustrous, tearful gaze.

Mother and home of spirits blest!  
Bright gate of Heaven and golden bower!  
Thy best of blessings, love and rest,  
Depart not till on earth thou shower!

{60}

XV.

If sense of Man's unworthiness  
With Nature's blameless looks at strife,  
Should wake with wakening May, and press  
New-born contentment out of life:

If thoughts of sable breed and blind  
Should stamp upon the springing flower,  
Or blacker memories haunt the mind  
As ravens haunt the ruined tower:—

O then how sweet in heart to breathe  
Those pure Judean gales once more;  
From Bethlehem's crib to Nazareth  
In heart to tread that Syrian shore!

To watch that star-like Infant bring  
To one of soul as clear and white  
May-lilies, fresh from Siloa's spring,  
Or Passion-flower with May-dews bright!

To follow, earlier yet, the feet  
Of her the "hilly land" who trod  
With true love's haste, intent to greet  
That aged saint beloved of God.

Before her, like a stream let loose,  
The long vale's flowerage, winding, ran:  
Nature resumed her Eden use;  
And Earth was reconciled with Man.

{61}

## **Causa Nostra Laetitiae.**

XVI.

Whate'er is floral on the earth  
To thee, O Flower, of right belongs;  
Whate'er is musical in mirth,  
Whate'er is jubilant in songs.

Childhood and springtide never cease  
For him thy freshness keeps from stain:  
Dew-drenched for him, like Gideon's fleece,  
The dusty paths of life remain.

Spirit of Brightness and of Bliss!  
Thou threaten'st none! A sinless lure,  
Thy fragrance and thy gladness  
Draw on to Christ; to Christ secure.

Hope, Hope is Strength! That joy of thine  
To us is Glory's earliest ray!  
Through Faith's dim air, O star benign,  
Look down, and light our onward way!

{62}

# Stella Maris.

XVII.

I left at morn that blissful shore  
O'er which the fruit-bloom fluttered free;  
And sailed the wildering waters o'er,  
Till sunset streaked with blood the sea.

My sleep the hoarse sea-thunders broke,  
And sudden chill. Their feet foam-hid,  
Huge cliffs leaned out, through vapour-smoke,  
Like tower, and tomb, and pyramid.

In the black shadow, ghostly white  
The breaker raced o'er foaming shoals:  
From caverns of eternal night  
Came wailings, as of suffering souls.

Sudden, through clearing mists, the star  
Of ocean o'er the billow rose:  
Down dropped the elemental war;  
Tormented chaos found repose.

{63}

Star of the ocean! dear art thou,  
Ah! not to earth and heaven alone:  
The suffering Church, when shines thy brow  
Upon her penance, stays her moan.

The Holy Souls draw in their breath;  
The sea of anguish rests in peace;  
And, from beyond the gates of death,  
Up swell the anthems of release.

{64}

XVIII.

Blossom for ever, blossoming Rod!  
Thou did'st not blossom once to die:  
That Life which, issuing forth from God,  
Thy life enkindled, runs not dry.

Without a root in sin-stained earth,  
'Twas thine to bud Salvation's flower.  
No single soul the Church brings forth  
But blooms from thee and is thy dower.

Rejoice, O Eve! thy promise waned;  
Transgression nipt thy flower with frost  
But, lo! a mother man hath gained  
Holier than she in Eden lost.

{65}

# Unica.

XIX.

While all the breathless woods aloof  
Lie hush'd in noontide's deep repose,  
That dove, sun-warmed on yonder roof,  
With what a grave content she coos!

One note for her! Deep streams run smooth  
The ecstatic song of transience tells.  
O what a depth of loving truth  
In thy divine contentment dwells!

All day, with down-dropt lids, I sat,

In trance; the present scene forgone.  
When Hesper rose, on Ararat,  
Methought, not English hills, he shone.

Back to the ark, the waters o'er,  
The primal dove pursued her flight:  
A branch of that blest tree she bore  
Which feeds the Church with holy light.

I heard her rustling through the air  
With sliding plume—no sound beside,  
Save the sea-sobblings everywhere,  
And sighs of that subsiding tide.

{66}

## Magnificat.

XX.

She took the timbrel, as the tide  
Rushed, refluent, up the Red Sea shore:  
"The Lord hath triumphed," she cried:  
Her song rang out above the roar

Of lustral waves that, wall to wall,  
Fell back upon the host abhorred:  
Above the gloomy watery pall,  
As eagles soar, her anthem soared.

Miriam, rejoice! a mightier far  
Than thou, one day shall sing with thee!  
Who rises, brightening like a star  
Above yon bright baptismal sea?

That harp which David touched who rears  
Heaven-high above those waters wide?  
The Prophet-Queen! Throughout all years  
She sings the Triumph of the Bride!

{67}

## Mystica.

XXI.

As pebbles flung for sport, that leap  
Along the superficial tide,  
But enter not those chambers deep  
Wherein the beds of pearl abide;

Such those light minds that, grazing, spurn  
The surface text of Sacred Lore,  
Yet ne'er its deeper sense discern,  
Its hails of mystery ne'er explore.

Ah! not for such the unvalued gems;  
The priceless pearls of Truth they miss:  
Not theirs the starry diadems  
That light God's temple in the abyss!

Ah! not for such to gaze on her  
That moves through all that empire pale;  
At every shrine doth minister,  
Yet never drops her vestal veil.

"The letter kills." Make pure thy Will;  
So shalt thou pierce the Text's disguise:  
Till then, revere the veil that still  
Hides truth from truth-affronting eyes.

{68}

## Expectatio.

XXII.

A sweet exhaustion seems to hold  
In spells of calm the shrouded eve:  
The gorse itself a beamless gold  
Puts forth:—yet nothing seems to grieve.

The dewy chaplets hang on air;  
The willowy fields are silver-grey;  
Sad odours wander here and there;—  
And yet we feel that it is May.

Relaxed, and with a broken flow,  
From dripping bowers low carols swell  
In mellower, glassier tones, as though  
They mounted through a bubbling well.

The crimson orchis scarce sustains  
Upon its drenched and drooping spire  
The burden of the warm soft rains;  
The purple hills grow nigh and nigher.

{69}

Nature, suspending lovely toils,  
On expectations lovelier broods,  
Listening, with lifted hand, while coils  
The flooded rivulet through the woods.

She sees, drawn out in vision clear,  
A world with summer radiance drest,  
And all the glories of that year  
Which sleeps within her virgin breast.

{70}

XXIII.

Still on the gracious work proceeds;—  
The good, great tidings preached anew  
Yearly to green enfranchised meads,  
And fire-topped woodlands flushed with dew.

Yon cavern's mouth we scarce can see;  
Yon rock in gathering bloom lies meshed;  
And all the wood-anatomy  
In thickening leaves is over-fleshed.

That hermit oak which frowned so long  
Upon the spring with barren spleen,  
Yields to the holy Siren's song,  
And bends above her goblet green.

Young maples, late with gold embossed,—  
Lucidities of sun-pierced limes,  
No more surprise us—merged and lost  
Like prelude notes in deepening chimes.

Disordered beauties and detached  
Demand no more a separate place:  
The abrupt, the startling, the unmatched,  
Submit to graduated grace;

While upward from the ocean's marge  
The year ascends with statelier tread  
To where the sun his golden targe  
Finds, setting, on yon mountain's head.

{71}

## Turris Eburnea.

## XXIV.

This scheme of worlds, which vast we call,  
 Is only vast compared with man:  
 Compared with God, the One yet All,  
 Its greatness dwindles to a span.

A Lily with its isles of buds  
 Asleep on some unmeasured sea:—  
 O God, the starry multitudes,  
 What are they more than this to Thee?

Yet girt by Nature's petty pale  
 Each tenant holds the place assigned  
 To each in Being's awful scale:—  
 The last of creatures leaves behind

The abyss of nothingness: the first  
 Into the abyss of Godhead peers;  
 Waiting that vision which shall burst  
 In glory on the eternal years.

{72}

Tower of our Hope! through thee we climb  
 Finite creation's topmost stair;  
 Through thee from Sion's height sublime  
 Towards God we gaze through purer air.

Infinite distance still divides  
 Created from Creative Power;  
 But all which intercepts and hides  
 Lies dwarfed by that surpassing Tower!

{73}

## XXV.

Who doubts that thou art finite? Who  
 Is ignorant that from Godhead's height  
 To what is loftiest here below  
 The interval is infinite?

O Mary! with that smile thrice-blest  
 Upon their petulance look down;—  
 Their dull negation, cold protest—  
 Thy smile will melt away their frown!

Show them thy Son! That hour their heart  
 Will beat and burn with love like thine;  
 Grow large; and learn from thee that art  
 Which communes best with things divine.

The man who grasps not what is best  
 In creaturely existence, he  
 Is narrowest in the brain; and least  
 Can grasp the thought of Deity.

{74}

## XXVI.

They seek not; or amiss they seek;—  
 The cold slight heart and captious brain:—  
 To Love alone those instincts speak  
 Whose challenge never yet was vain.

True Gate of Heaven! As light through glass,  
 So He who never left the sky  
 To this low earth was pleased to pass  
 Through thine unstained Virginity.

Summed up in thee our hearts behold  
 The glory of created things:—  
 From His, thy Son's, corporeal mould

Looks forth the eternal King of Kings!

{75}

XXVII.

A sudden sun-burst in the woods,  
But late sad Winter's palace dim!  
O'er quickening boughs and bursting buds  
Pacific glories shoot and swim.

As when some heart, grief-darkened long,  
Conclusive joy by force invades—  
So swift the new-born splendours throng;  
Such lustre swallows up the shades.

The sun we see not; but his fires  
From stem to stem obliquely smite,  
Till all the forest aisle respire  
The golden-tongued and myriad light.

The caverns blacken as their brows  
With floral fire are fringed; but all  
Yon sombre vault of meeting boughs  
Turns to a golden fleece its pall,

As o'er it breeze-like music rolls.  
O Spring, thy limit-line is crossed!  
O Earth, some orb of singing Souls  
Brings down to thee *thy* Pentecost!

{76}

## **Dominica Pentecostes.**

XXVIII.

Clear as those silver trumps of old  
That woke Judea's jubilee;  
Strong as the breeze of morning, rolled  
O'er answering woodlands from the sea,

That matutinal anthem vast  
Which winds, like sunrise, round the globe,  
Following the sunrise, far and fast,  
And trampling on his fiery robe.

Once more the Pentecostal torch  
Lights on the courses of the year:  
The "upper chamber" of the Church  
Is thrilled once more with joy and fear.

Who lifts her brow from out the dust?  
Who fixes on a world restored  
A gaze like Eve's, but more august?  
Who bends it heaven-ward on her Lord?

{77}

It is the Birthday of the Bride.  
The new begins; the ancient ends:  
From all the gates of Heaven flung wide  
The promised Paraclete descends.

He who o'er-shadowed Mary once  
O'ershades Humanity to-day;  
And bids her fruitful prove in sons  
Co-heritors with Christ for aye.

{78}

## **Dominica Pentecostes.**

XXIX.

The Form decreed of tree and flower,  
The shape susceptible of life,  
Without the infused vivific Power,  
Were but a slumber or a strife.

He whom the plastic hand of God  
Himself created out of earth  
Remained a statue and a clod  
Till spirit infused to life gave birth.

So, till that hour, the Church. In Christ  
Her awful structure, nerve and bone,  
Though built, and shaped, and organised,  
Existed but in skeleton;

Till down on that predestined frame,  
Complete through all its sacred mould,  
The Pentecostal Spirit came,—  
The self-same Spirit who of old

Creative o'er the waters moved.  
Thenceforth the Church, made One and Whole,  
Arose in Him, and lived, and loved—  
His Temple she; and He her Soul.

{79}

## **Turris Davidica.**

XXX.

The towered City loves thee well,  
Strong Tower of David's House! In thee  
She hails the unvanquished citadel  
That frowns o'er Error's subject sea.

With magic might that Tower repels  
A host that breaks where foe is none,—  
No foe but statued Saints in cells  
High-ranged, and smiling in the sun.

There stands Augustin; Leo there;  
And Bernard, with a maiden face  
Like John's; and, strong at once and fair,  
That Spirit-Pythian, Athanase.

Upon thy star-surrounded height  
God's angel keepeth watch and ward;  
And sunrise flashes thence ere night  
Hath left dark street and dewy sward.

{80}

## **"Tu sola interemisti omnes Haereses."**

XXXI.

What tenderest hand uprears on high  
The standard of Incarnate God?  
Successive portents that deny  
Her Son, who tramples? She who trod

On Satan erst with starlike scorn!  
Ah! never Alp looked down through mist  
As she, that whiter star of morn,  
Through every cloud that darkens Christ!

Roll back the centuries:—who were those  
That, age by age, their Lord denied?  
Their seats they set with Mary's foes:—

They mocked the Mother as the Bride.

Of such was Arius; and of such  
He whom the Ephesian Sentence felled, [Footnote 2]  
Her Title triumphed. At the touch [Footnote 3]  
Of Truth the insurgent rout was quelled.

[Footnote 2: Nestorius.]

[Footnote 3: Dei-para.]

Back, back the hosts of Hell were driven  
As forth that sevenfold thunder rolled:—  
And in the Church's mystic Heaven  
There was great silence as of old.

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## MAY CAROLS.

### PART III.

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### PART III.

I.

In vain thine altars do they heap  
With blooms of violated May  
Who fail the words of Christ to keep;  
Thy Son who love not, nor obey.

Their songs are as a serpent's hiss;  
Their praise a poniard's poisoned edge;  
Their offering taints, like Judas' kiss,  
Thy shrine; their vows are sacrilege.

Sadly from such thy countenance turns:  
Thou canst not stretch thy Babe to such  
(Albeit for all thy pity yearns)  
As greet Him with a leper's touch.

Who loveth thee must love thy Son.  
Weak Love grows strong thy smile beneath:  
But nothing comes from nothing; none  
Can reap Love's harvest out of Death.

{84}

## Babylon.

II.

The watchman watched along the walls:  
And lo! an hour or more ere light  
Loud rang his trumpet. From their halls  
The revellers rushed into the night.

There hung a terror on the air;  
There moved a terror under ground;—  
The hostile hosts, heard everywhere,  
Within, without—were nowhere found.

"The Christians to the lions! Ho!"—  
Alas! self-tortured crowds, let be!  
Let go your wrath; your fears let go:  
Ye gnaw the net, but cannot flee.



Ye drank from out Orestes' cup;  
Orestes' Furies drave ye wild.  
Who conquers from on high? Look up!  
A Woman, holding forth a Child!

{85}

III.

The golden rains are dashed against  
Those verdant walls of lime and beech  
With which our happy vale is fenced  
Against the north; yet cannot reach

The stems that lift yon leafy crest  
High up above their dripping screen:  
The chestnut fans are downward pressed  
On banks of bluebell hid in green.

White vapours float along the glen,  
Or rise from every sunny brake;—  
A pause amid the gusts—again  
The warm shower sings across the lake.

Sing on, all-cordial showers, and bathe  
The deepest root of loftiest pine!  
The cowslip dimmed, the "primrose rathe"  
Refresh; and drench in nectarous wine

Yon fruit-tree copse, all blossomed o'er  
With forest-foam and crimson snow—  
Behold! above it bursts once more  
The world-embracing, heavenly bow!

{86}

## **Sedes Sapientiae.**

IV.

O that the wordy war might cease!  
Self-sentenced Babel's strife of tongues!  
Loud rings the arena. Athletes, peace!  
Nor drown the wild-dove's Song of Songs.

Alas, the wanderers feel their loss:  
With tears they seek—ah, seldom found—  
That peace whose volume is the Cross;  
That peace which leaves not holy ground.

Mary, who loves true peace loves thee!  
A happy child, not taught of Scribes,  
He stands beside the Church's knee;  
From her the lore of Christ imbibes.

Hourly he drinks it from her face:  
For there his eyes, he knows not how,  
The face of Him she loves can trace,  
And, crowned with thorns, the sovereign brow.

"Behold! all colours blend in white!  
Behold! all Truths have root in Love!"  
So sings, half lost in light of light,  
Her Song of Songs the mystic Dove.

{87}

## **Sedes Sapientiae.**

V.

"Wisdom hath built herself a House,

And hewn her out her pillars seven." [Footnote 4]  
Her wine is mixed. Her guests are those  
Who share the harvest-home of heaven.

[Footnote 4: Proverbs ix. 1.]

Who guards the gates? The flaming sword  
Of Penance. Every way it turns:  
But healing from on high is poured  
On each that fire seraphic burns.

The fruits upon her table piled  
Are gathered from the Tree of Life.  
Around are ranged the undefiled,  
And those that conquered in the strife.

Who tends the guests? Who smiles away  
Sad memories? bids misgiving cease?  
A crowned one countenanced like the day—  
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.

{88}

VI.

Here, in this paradise of light,  
Superfluous were both tree and grass:  
Enough to watch the sunbeams smite  
Yon white flower sole in the morass.

From his cold nest the skylark springs;  
Sings, pauses, sings; shoots up anew;  
Attains his topmost height, and sings  
Quiescent in his vault of blue.

With eyes half-closed I watch that lake  
Flashed from whose plane the sun-sparks fly,  
Like souls new-born that shoot and break  
From thy deep sea, Eternity!

Ripplings of sunlight from the wave  
Ascend the white rock, high and higher;  
Soft gurglings fill the satiate cave;  
Soft airs amid the reeds expire.

All round the lone and luminous meer  
The dark world stretches, far and free:  
That skylark's song alone I hear;  
That flashing wave alone I see.

O myriad Earth! Where'er thy Word  
Makes way indeed into the soul,  
An answering echo there is stirred:—  
Of thee the part is as the whole.

{89}

## **Fest. B.V.M. de Monte Carmelo.**

VII.

Carmel, with Alp and Apennine,  
Low whispers in the wind that blows  
Beneath the Eastern stars, ere shine  
The lights of morning on their snows.

Of thee, Elias, Carmel speaks,  
And that white cloud, so small at first,  
Thou saw'st approach the mountain peaks  
To quench a dying nation's thirst.

On Carmel, like a sheathed sword,  
Thy monks abode till Jesus came;

On Carmel then they served their Lord;—  
Then Carmel rang with Mary's name.

Blow over all the garden; blow  
O'er all the garden of the West,  
Balm-breathing Orient! Whisper low  
The secret of thy spicy nest.

{90}

"Who from the Desert upward moves  
Like cloud of incense onward borne?  
Who, moving, rests on Him she loves?  
Who mounts from regions of the Morn?"

"Behold! The apple-tree beneath—  
There where of old thy Mother fell—  
I raised thee up. More strong than Death  
Is Love;—more strong than Death or Hell." [Footnote 5]

[Footnote 5: Cant. viii. 5.]

{91}

VIII.

Come from the midnight mountain tops,  
The mountains where the panthers play:  
Descend; the veil of darkness drops;  
Come fair and fairer than the day!

Our hearts are wounded with thine eyes:  
They character in words of light  
Thereon the mystery of the skies:  
The "Name o'er every name" they write.

Come from thy Lebanonian peaks  
Whose sacerdotal cedars nod  
Above the world, when morning breaks—  
The Mountain of the House of God.

The land thou lov'st—well is she!  
The ploughers on her back may plough;  
But in her vales upgrows the Tree  
Of Life, and binds the bleeding brow.

{92}

## **Advocata Nostra.**

IX.

I saw, in visions of the night,  
Creation like a sea outspread,  
With surf of stars and storm of light  
And movements manifold and dread.

Then lo, within a Human Hand  
A Sceptre moved that storm above:  
Thereon, as on the golden wand  
Of kings new-crowned, there sat a Dove.

Beneath her gracious weight inclined  
That Sceptre drooped. The waves had rest  
And Sceptre, Hand, and Dove were shrined  
Within a glassy ocean's breast.

His Will it was that placed her there!  
He at whose word the tempests cease  
Upon that Sceptre planted fair  
That peace-bestowing type of Peace!

{93}

## Thronus Trinitatis.

X.

Each several Saint the Church reveres,  
What is he but an altar whence  
Some separate Virtue ministers  
To God a separate frankincense?

Each beyond each, not made of hands,  
They rise, a ladder angel-trod:  
Star-bright the last and loftiest stands—  
That altar is the Throne of God.

Lost in the uncreated light  
A Form all Human rests thereon:  
His shade from that surpassing height  
Beyond creation's verge is thrown.

Him "Lord of lords, and King of kings,"  
The chorus of all worlds proclaim:—  
"He took from her," one angel sings  
At intervals, "His Human frame."

{94}

## Cultus Sanctorum.

XI.

He seemed to linger with them yet:  
But late ascended to the skies,  
They saw—ah, how could they forget?—  
The form they loved, the hands, the eyes.

From anchored boat—in lane or field—  
He taught; He blessed, and brake the bread;  
The hungry filled; the afflicted healed;  
And wept, ere yet he raised, the dead.

But when, like some supreme of hills,  
Whose feet shut out its summit's snow,  
That, hid no longer, heavenward swells  
As further from its base we go,

Abroad His perfect Godhead shone,  
Each hour more plainly kened on high,  
And clothed His Manhood with the sun,  
And, cleansing, hurt the adoring eye;

{95}

Then fixed His Church a deepening gaze  
Upon His Saints. With Him they sate,  
And, burning in that Godhead's blaze,  
They seemed that Manhood to dilate.

His were they: of His likeness each  
Had grace some fragment to present,  
And nearer brought to mortal reach  
Of Him some line or lineament.

{96}

## Fest. S. S. Trinitatis.

XII.

Fall back, all worlds, into the abyss,  
That man may contemplate once more  
That which He ever was Who is:—

The Eternal Essence we adore.

Angelic hierarchies! recede

Beyond extinct creation's shade!

What were ye at the first? Decead:—

Decead, not fashioned; thought, not made!

Like wind the untold Millenniums passed.

Sole-throned He sat; yet not alone:

Godhead in Godhead still was glassed;—

The Spirit was breathed from Sire and Son.

Prime Virgin, separate and sealed;

Nor less of social love the root;

Dimly in lowliest shapes revealed;

Entire in every Attribute;—

{97}

Thou liv'st in all things, and around;

To Thee external is there nought;

Thou of the boundless art the bound;

And still Creation is Thy Thought.

In vain, O God, our wings we spread;

So distant art Thou—yet so nigh.

Remains but this, when all is said,

For Thee to live; in Thee to die.

{98}

XIII.

Where is the crocus now, that first,

When earth was dark and heaven was grey,

A prothalamion flash, up-burst?

Ah, then we deemed not of the May!

The clear stream stagnates in its course;

Narcissus droops in pallid gloom;

Far off the hills of golden gorse

A dusk Saturnian face assume.

The seeded dandelion dim

Casts loose its air-globe on the breeze;

Along the grass the swallows skim;

The cattle couch among the trees.

Yet ever lordlier loveliness

Succeeds to that which slips our hold:

The thorn assumes her snowy dress;

Laburnum bowers their robes of gold.

Down waves successive of the year

We drop; but drop once more to rise,

With ampler view, as on we steer,

Of lovelier lights and loftier skies.

{99}

## "Ad Nives."

XIV.

Before the morn began to break

The bright One bent above that pair

Whose childless vows aspired to take

The mother of their Lord for heir.

'Twas August: even in midnight shade

The roofs were hot, and hot the street:—

"Build me a fane," the vision said,

"Where first your eyes the snow shall meet." [Footnote 6]

[Footnote 6: Santa Maria Maggiore, on the Esquiline, at Rome.]

With snow the Esquiline was strewn  
At morn!—Fair Legend! who but thinks  
Of thee, when first the breezes blown  
From summer Alp to Alp he drinks?

He stands: he hears the torrents dash:  
Slowly the vapours break; and lo!  
Through chasms of endless azure flash  
The peaks of everlasting snow.

{100}

He stands; he listens; on his ear  
Swells softly forth some virgin hymn:  
The white procession windeth near,  
With glimmering lights in sunshine dim.

Mother of Purity and Peace!  
They sing the Saviour's name and thine  
Clothe them for ever with the fleece  
Unspotted of thy Lamb Divine!

{101}

## **Fest. Puritatis.**

XV.

Far down the bird may sing of love;  
The honey-bearing blossom blow:  
But hail, ye hills that rise above  
The limit of perpetual snow!

O Alpine City, with thy walls  
Of rock eterne and spires of ice,  
Where torrent still to torrent calls,  
And precipice to precipice;—

How like that holier City thou,  
The heavenly Salem's earthly porch,  
Which rears among the stars her brow,  
And plants firm feet on earth—the Church!

"Decaying, ne'er to be decayed,"  
Her woods, like thine, renew their youth:  
Her streams, in rocky arms embayed,  
Are clear as virtue, strong as truth.

{102}

At times the lake may burst its dam;  
Black pine and rock the valley strew;  
But o'er the ruin soon the lamb  
Its flowery pasture crops anew.

She, too, in regions near the sky  
Up-piles her cloistered snows, and thence  
Diffuses gales of purity  
O'er fields of consecrated sense.

On those still heights a love-light glows  
The plains from them alone receive;—  
Not all the Lily! There thy Rose,  
O Mary, triumphs, morn and eve!

{103}

XVI.

Cloud-piercing Mountains! Chance and Change  
More high than you their thrones advance.  
Self-vanquished Nature's rockiest range  
Gives way before them like the trance

Of one that wakes. From morn to eve  
Through fissured clefts her mists make way;  
At Night's cold touch they freeze, and cleave  
Her crags; and, with a Titan's sway,

Flake off and peel the rotting rocks,  
And heap the glacier tide below  
With isles of sand and floating blocks,  
As leaves on streams when tempests blow.

Lo, thus the great decree all-just,  
O Earth, thy mountains hear; and learn  
From fire and frost its import—"dust  
Thou art; and shalt to dust return."

He only is Who ever was;  
The All-measuring Mind; the Will Supreme.  
Rocks, mountains, worlds, like bubbles pass:  
God is; the things not God but seem.

{104}

## Foederis Arca.

XVII.

From end to end, O God, Thy Will  
With swift yet ordered might doth reach:  
Thy purposes their scope fulfil  
In sequence, resting each on each.

In Thee is nothing sudden; nought  
From harmony and law that swerves:  
The orbits of Thine act and thought  
In soft succession wind their curves.

O then with what a gradual care  
Must thou have shaped that sacred shrine,  
That Ark of grace, ordained to bear  
The burthen of the Babe divine!

How many a gift within her breast  
Lay stored, for Him a couch to strew!  
How many a virtue lined His nest!  
How many a grace beside Him grew!

Of love on love what sweet excess!  
How deep a faith! a hope how high!—  
Mary! on earth of thee we guess;  
But we shall see thee when we die!

{105}

## Domus Aurea.

XVIII.

She mused upon the Saints of old;  
Their toils, their pains, she longed to share  
Of Him she mused, the Child foretold;  
To Him her hands she stretched in prayer.

No moment passed without its crown;  
And each new grace was used so well  
It drew some tenfold talent down,  
Some miracle on miracle.

O golden House! O boundless store  
Of wealth by heavenly commerce won!  
When God Himself could give no more,  
He gave thee all; He gave His Son!

Blessed the Mother of her Lord!  
And yet for this more blessed still,  
Because she heard and kept His Word—  
High servant of His sovereign Will!

{106}

## **Respexit Humilitatem.**

XIX

Not all thy purity, although  
The whitest moon that ever lit  
The peaks of Lebanonian snow  
Shone dusk and dim compared with it;—

Not that great love of thine, whose beams  
Transcended in their virtuous heat  
Those suns which melt the ice-bound streams,  
And make earth's pulses newly beat:—

It was not these that from the sky  
Drew down to thee the Eternal Word:  
He looked on thy humility;  
He knew thee, "Handmaid of thy Lord."

Let no one claim with thee a part;  
Let no one, Mary, name thy name,  
While, aping God, upon his heart  
Pride sits, a demon robed in flame.

Proud Vices, die! Where Sin has place  
Be Sin's familiar self-disgust.  
Proud Virtues, doubly die; that Grace  
At last may burgeon from your dust.

{107}

## **Respexit Humilitatem.**

XX.

Supreme among the things create  
Omnipotence revealed below,  
More swift than thought, more strong than fate,  
Such, such, Humility, art thou!

All strength beside is weakness. Might  
Belongs to God: and they alone,  
Self-emptied souls and seeming-slight,  
Are filled with God and share his throne.

O Mary! strong wert thou and meek;  
Thy meekness gave thee strength divine:  
Thyself in nothing didst thou seek;  
Therefore thy Maker made Him thine.

Through Pride our parents disobeyed;  
Rebellious Sense avenged the crime:  
The soul, the body's captive made,  
Became the branded thrall of time.

{108}

With barrenness the earth was cursed;  
Inviolata she brought forth no more  
Her fruits, nor freely as at first:—



Thou cam'st, her Eden to restore!

Low breathes the wind upon the string;  
The harp, responsive, sounds in turn:  
Thus o'er thy Soul the Spirit's wing  
Creative passed; and Christ was born.

{109}

## "Sine Labe originali Concepta."

XXI.

Met in a point [Footnote 7] the circles twain  
Of temporal and eternal things  
Embrace, close linked. Redemption's chain  
Drops thence to earth its myriad rings.

[Footnote 7: The Incarnation.]

In either circle, from of old,  
That point of meeting stood decreed;—  
Twin mysteries cast in one deep mould,  
"The Woman," and "the Woman's Seed."

Mary, long ages ere thy birth  
Resplendent with Salvation's Sign,  
In thee a stainless hand the earth  
Put forth, to meet the Hand Divine!

First trophy of all-conquering Grace,  
First victory of that Blood all pure,  
Of man's once fair but fallen race  
Thou stood'st, the monument secure.

The Word made Flesh! the Way! the Door!  
The link that dust with Godhead blends!  
Through Him the worlds their God adore:—  
Through thee that God to man descends.

{110}

## "Sine Labe originali Concepta."

XXII.

A soul-like sound, subdued yet strong,  
A whispered music, mystery-rife,  
A sound like Eden airs among  
The branches of the Tree of Life—

At first no more than this; at last  
The voice of every land and clime,  
It swept o'er Earth, a clarion blast:  
Earth heard, and shook with joy sublime.

Mary! thy triumph was her own.  
In thee she saw her prime restored:  
She saw ascend a spotless Throne  
For Him, her Saviour, and her Lord.

The Church had spoken. She that dwells  
Sun-clad with beatific light,  
From Truth's unvanquished citadels,  
From Sion's Apostolic height,

Had stretched her sceptred hands, and pressed  
The seal of Faith, defined and known,  
Upon that Truth till then confessed  
By Love's instinctive sense alone.

{111}

XXIII.

Brow-bound with myrtle and with gold,  
Spring, sacred now from blasts and blights,  
Lifts in a firm, untrembling hold  
Her chalice of fulfilled delights.

Confirmed around her queenly lip  
The smile late wavering, on she moves;  
And seems through deepening tides to step  
Of steadier joys and larger loves.

The stony Ash itself relents,  
Into the blue embrace of May  
Sinking, like old impenitents  
Heart-touched at last; and, far away,

The long wave yearns along the coast  
With sob suppressed, like that which thrills  
(While o'er the altar mounts the Host)  
Some chapel on the Irish hills.

{112}

## Corpus Christi.

XXIV.

Rejoice, O Mary! and be glad,  
Thou Church triumphant here below!  
He cometh, in meekest emblems clad;  
Himself he cometh to bestow!

That body which thou gav'st, O Earth,  
He giveth back—that Flesh, that Blood;  
Born of the Altar's mystic birth;  
At once thy Worship and thy Food.

He who of old on Calvary bled  
On all thine altars lies to-day,  
A bloodless Sacrifice, but dread;  
The Lamb in heaven adored for aye.

His Godhead on the Cross He veiled;  
His Manhood here He veileth too:  
But Faith has eagle eyes unsealed;  
And Love to Him she loves is true.

{113}

"I will not leave you orphans. Lo!  
While lasts the world with you am I."  
Saviour! we see Thee not; but know,  
With burning hearts, that Thou art nigh!

He comes! Blue Heaven, thine incense breathe  
O'er all the consecrated sod;  
And thou, O Earth, with flowers enwreath  
The steps of thine advancing God!

{114}

## Corpus Christi.

XXV.

What music swells on every gale?  
What heavenly Herald rideth past?  
Vale sings to vale, "He comes; all hail!"  
Sea sighs to sea, "He comes at last."

The Earth bursts forth in choral song;  
Aloft her "Lauda Sion" soars;  
Her myrtle boughs at once are flung  
Before a thousand Minster doors.

Far on the white processions wind  
Through wood and plain and street and court  
The kings and prelates pace behind  
The King of kings in seemly sort.

The incense floats on Grecian air;  
Old Carmel echoes back the chant;  
In every breeze the torches flare  
That curls the waves of the Levant.

On Ramah's plain—in Bethlehem's bound—  
Is heard to-day a gladsome voice:  
"Rejoice," it cries, "the lost is found!  
With Mary's joy, O Earth, rejoice!"

{115}

XXVI.

Pleasant the swarm about the bough;  
The meadow-whisper round the woods;  
And for their coolness pleasant now  
The murmur of the falling floods.

Pleasant beneath the thorn to lie,  
And let a summer fancy loose;  
To hear the cuckoo's double cry;  
To make the noon-tide sloth's excuse.

Panting, but pleased, the cattle stand  
Knee-deep in water-weed and sedge,  
And scarcely crop the greener band  
Of osiers round the river's edge.

But hark! Far off the south wind sweeps  
The golden-foliaged groves among,  
Renewed or lulled, with rests and leaps—  
Ah! how it makes the spirit long

To drop its earthly weight, and drift  
Like yon white cloud, on pinions free,  
Beyond that mountain's purple rift,  
And o'er that scintillating sea!

{116}

XXVII.

Sing on, wide winds, your anthems vast!  
The ear is richer than the eye:  
Upon the eye no shape can cast  
Such impress of Infinity.

And thou, my soul, thy wings of might  
Put forth:—thou too, one day shalt soar,  
And, onward borne in heavenward flight,  
The starry universe explore;

Breasting that breeze which waves the bowers  
Of Heaven's bright forest never mute,  
Whereof perchance this earth of ours  
Is but the feeblest forest-fruit.

"The Spirit bloweth where He wills"—  
Effluence of that Life Divine  
Which wakes the Universe, and stills,  
In Thy strong refluent make us Thine!

{117}

## Coeli enarrant.

XXVIII.

Sole Maker of the Worlds! They lay  
A barren blank, a void, a nought,  
Beyond the ken of solar ray  
Or reach of archangelic thought.

Thou spak'st; and they were made! Forth sprang  
From every region of the abyss,  
Whose deeps, fire-clov'n, with anthems rang,  
The spheres new-born and numberless.

Thou spak'st:—upon the winds were found  
The astonished Eagles. Awed and hushed  
Subsiding seas revered their bound;  
And the strong forests upward rushed.

Before the Vision angels fell,  
As though the face of God they saw;  
And all the panting miracle  
Found rest within the arms of Law.

{118}

Perfect, O God, Thy primal plan—  
That scheme frost-bound by Adam's sin:  
Create, within the heart of Man,  
Worlds meet for Thee; and dwell therein.

From Thy bright realm of Sense and Nature,  
Which flowers enwreath and stars begem,  
Shape Thou Thy Church; the crowned Creature;  
The Bride; the New Jerusalem!

{119}

## Caro factus est.

XXIX.

When from beneath the Almighty Hand  
The suns and systems rushed abroad,  
Like coursers which have burst their band,  
Or torrents when the ice is thawed;

When round in luminous orbits flung  
The great stars gloried in their might;  
Still, still, a bridgeless gulf there hung  
'Twixt Finite things and Infinite.

That crown of light creation wore  
Was edged with vast unmeasured black;  
And all of natural good she bore  
Confessed her supernatural lack.

For what is Nature at the best?  
An arch suspended in its spring;  
An altar-step without a priest;  
A throne whereon there sits no king.

{120}

As one stone-blind that fronts the morn,  
The world before her Maker stood,  
Uplifting suppliant hands forlorn—  
God's creature, yet how far from God!

He came. That world His priestly robe;  
The Kingly Pontiff raised on high  
The worship of the starry globe:—

The gulf was bridged, and God was nigh.

{121}

XXX.

A woman "clothed with the sun," [Footnote 8]  
Yet fleeing from the Dragon's rage!—  
The strife in Eden-bowers begun  
Swells upward to the latest age.

[Footnote 8: Rev. xii. 1.]

That woman's Son is throned on high;  
The angelic hosts before Him bend:  
The sceptre of His empery  
Subdues the worlds from end to end.

Yet still the sword goes through her heart,  
For still on earth His Church survives.  
In her that woman holds a part:  
In her she suffers, wakes, and strives.

Around her head the stars are set;  
A dying moon beneath her wanes:  
But he that letteth still must let:  
The Power accurst awhile remains.

Break up, strong Earth, thy stony floors,  
And snatch to penal caverns dun  
That Dragon from the pit that wars  
Against the woman and her Son!

{122}

XXXI.

No ray of all their silken sheen  
The leaves first fledged have lost as yet  
Unfaded, near the advancing queen  
Of flowers, abides the violet.

The rose succeeds—her month is come:—  
The flower with sacred passion red:  
She sings the praise of martyrdom,  
And Him for whom His martyrs bled.

The perfect work of May is done:  
Hard by a new perfection waits:—  
The twain, a sister and a nun,  
A moment parley at the gates.

The whiter Spirit turns in peace  
To hide her in the cloistral shade:—  
'Tis time that you should also cease,  
Slight carols in her honour made.

{123}

## EPILOGUE.

{124}

{125}

### Epilogue

Regent of Change, thou waning Moon,  
Whom they, the sons of night, adore,  
Her feet are on thee! Late or soon  
Heap up upon the expectant shore

The tides of Man's Intelligence;

Or backward to the blackening deep  
Remit them: Knowledge won from Sense  
But sleeps to wake, and wakes to sleep.

Where are the hands that reared on high  
Heaven-threat'ning Babel? where the might  
Of them, that giant progeny,  
The Deluge dealt with? Lost in night.

The child who knows his creed doth stretch  
A sceptred hand o'er Space, and hold  
The end of all those threads that catch  
In wisdom's net the starry fold.

The Sabbath comes: the work-days six  
Of Time go by; meantime the key,  
O salutary crucifix,  
Of all the worlds, we clasp in thee.

{126}

Truth deeplier felt by none than him [Footnote 9]  
Who at the Alban mountain's foot,  
Wandering no more in shadows dim,  
Lay down, a lamb-like offering mute.

[Footnote 9: Robert Isaak Wilberforce.]

His mighty lore found rest at last  
In Faith, and woke in God. Ah, Friend!  
When life which is not Life is past,  
Pray that like thine may be my end.

Thy fair large front; thine eyes' grave blue;  
Thine English ways so staid and plain;—  
Through native rosemaries and rue  
Memory creeps back to thee again.

Beside thy dying bed were writ  
Some snatches of these random rhymes;  
Weak Song, how happy if with it  
Thy name should blend in after times.

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