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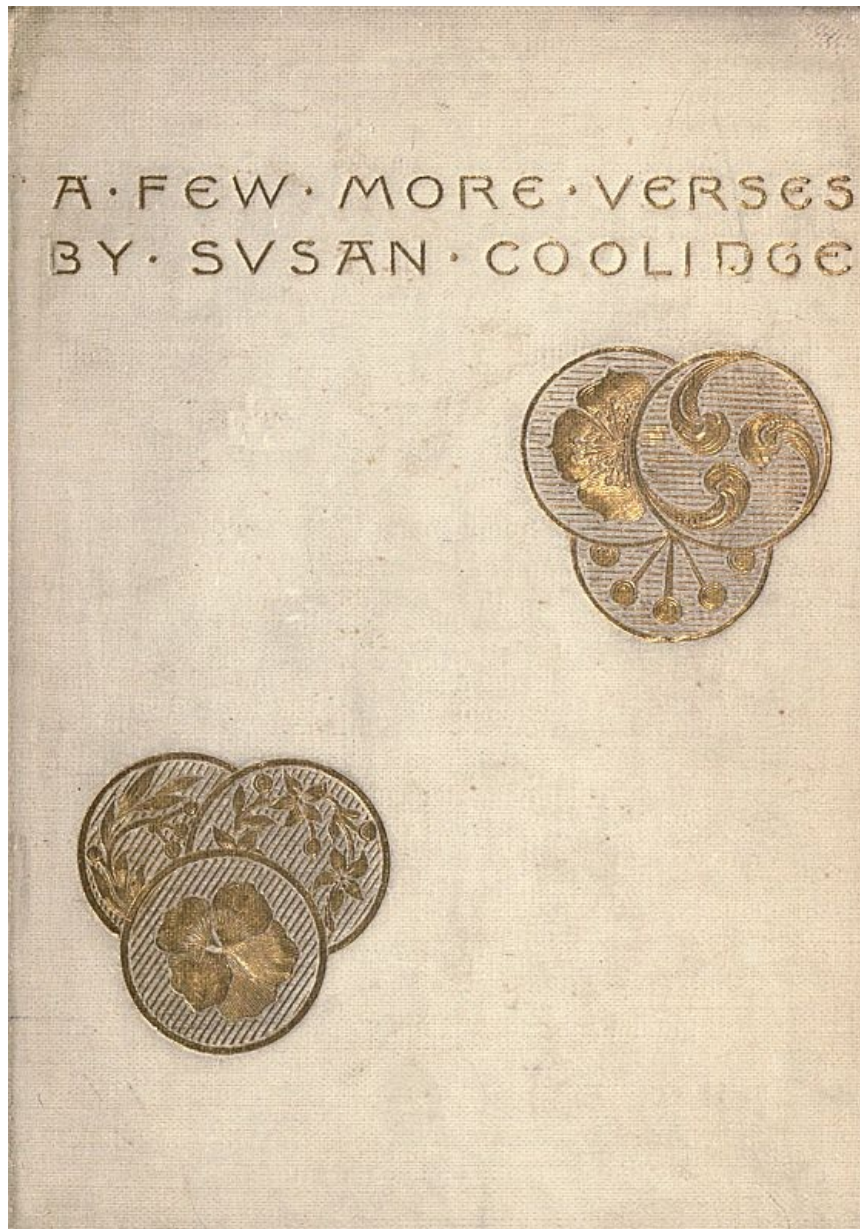
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A FEW MORE VERSES ***



A FEW MORE VERSES.

[i]

By SUSAN COOLIDGE.



UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

—
—
VERSES.

By SUSAN COOLIDGE.

PRICE, \$1.00.

ROBERTS BROTHERS,
PUBLISHERS.

A

FEW MORE VERSES.

By SUSAN COOLIDGE,
AUTHOR OF "VERSES."

BOSTON
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1907

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*GIVING to all, thou gavest as well to me.
A myriad thirsty shores await the tide:
They drink and drink, and will not be denied;
But not a drop less full the brimming Sea.*

*One tiny shell among the kelp and weed,
One sand-grain where the beaches stretch away,—
How shall the tide regard them? Yet each day
It comes, and fills and satisfies their need.*

*What can the singing sands give to the Sea?
What the dumb shell, though inly it rejoice?
Only the echo of its own strong voice;—
And this is all that here I bring to thee.*

A BENEDICTION.

[vi]
[vii]

*GOD give thee, love, thy heart's desire!
What better can I pray?
For though love falter not, nor tire,
And stand on guard all day,
How little can it know or do,
How little can it say!*

*How hard it strives, and how in vain,
By hope and fear misled,
To make the pathway soft and plain
For the dear feet to tread,
To shield from sun-beat and from rain
The one beloved head!*

*Its wisdom is made foolishness;
Its best intent goes wrong;
It curses where it fain would bless,
Is weak instead of strong,—
Marring with sad, discordant sighs
The joyance of its song.*

*I do not dare to bless or ban,—
I am too blind to see,—
But this one little prayer I can
Put up to God for thee,
Because I know what fair, pure things
Thy inmost wishes be;*

*That what thy heart desires the most
Is what he loves to grant,—
The love that counteth not its cost
If any crave or want;
The presence of the Holy Ghost,
The soul's inhabitant;*

[viii]

*The wider vision of the mind;
The spirit bright with sun;
The temper like a fragrant wind,
Chilling and grieving none;
The quickened heart to know God's will
And on his errands run;*

*The ministry of little things,—
Not counted mean or small
By that dear alchemy which brings
Some grain of gold from all;
The faith to wait as well as work,
Whatever may befall.*

*So, sure of thee, and unafraid,
I make my daily prayer,
Nor fear that my blind zeal be made
Thy injury or snare:
God give thee, love, thy heart's desire,
And bless thee everywhere!*

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1759.



THOUSAND leagues of wind-blown
 space,
 A thousand leagues of sea,
 Half of the great earth's hiding face
 Divides mine eyes from thee;
 The world is strong, the waves are wide,
 But my good-will is stronger still,
 My love, than wind or tide.

These sentinels which Fate has set
 To bar and hold me here
 I make my errand-men, to get
 A message to thine ear.
 The winds shall waft, the waters bear,
 And spite of seas I, when I please,
 Can reach thee everywhere.

Prayers are like birds to find the way;
 Thoughts have a swifter flight;
 And mine stream forth to thee all day,
 Nor stop to rest by night.
 Like silent angels at thy side
 They stand unseen, they bend and lean,
 They bless and warn and guide.

[14]

There is no near, there is no far,
 There is no loss or change,
 To love which, like a fixed star,
 Abideth in one range,
 And shines, and shines, with quenchless eyes,
 And sends long rays in many ways
 To lighten distant skies.

Where sight is not, faith brighter burns;
 So faithfully I wait,
 Secure that loyal loving earns
 Its guerdon soon or late,—
 Secure, though lacking word or sign,
 That thy true thought keeps as it ought
 Tryst with each thought of mine.



VERY day is a fresh beginning,
 Every morn is the world made new.
 You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
 Here is a beautiful hope for you,—
 A hope for me and a hope for you.

All the past things are past and over;
 The tasks are done and the tears are shed.
 Yesterday's errors let yesterday cover;
 Yesterday's wounds, which smarted and bled,
 Are healed with the healing which night has shed.

Yesterday now is a part of forever,
 Bound up in a sheaf, which God holds tight,
 With glad days, and sad days, and bad days, which never
 Shall visit us more with their bloom and their blight,
 Their fulness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Let them go, since we cannot re-live them,
 Cannot undo and cannot atone;
 God in his mercy receive, forgive them!
 Only the new days are our own;
 To-day is ours, and to-day alone.

[16]

Here are the skies all burnished brightly,
 Here is the spent earth all re-born,
 Here are the tired limbs springing lightly
 To face the sun and to share with the morn
 In the chrysm of dew and the cool of dawn.

Every day is a fresh beginning;
 Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
 And, spite of old sorrow and older sinning,
 And puzzles forecasted and possible pain,
 Take heart with the day, and begin again.



O have touched Heaven and failed to
 enter in!
 Ah, Elsa, prone upon the lonely shore,
 Watching the swan-wings beat along
 the blue,
 Watching the glimmer of the silver mail,
 Like flash of foam, till all are lost to view,—
 What may thy sorrow or thy watch avail?
 He cometh nevermore.

All gone the new hope of thy yesterday,—
 The tender gaze and strong, like dewy fire,
 The gracious form with airs of Heaven bedight,
 The love that warmed thy being like a sun:—
 Thou hadst thy choice of noonday or of night;
 Now the swart shadows gather, one by one,
 To give thee thy desire!

To every life one heavenly chance befalls;
 To every soul a moment, big with fate,
 When, grown importunate with need and fear,
 It cries for help, and lo! from close at hand,
 The voice Celestial answers, "I am here!"
 Oh, blessed souls, made wise to understand,
 Made bravely glad to wait!


[18]

But thou, pale watcher on the lonely shore,
 Where the surf thunders, and the foam-bells fly,
 Is there no place for penitence and pain,
 No saving grace in thy all-piteous rue?
 Will the bright vision never come again?
 Alas, the swan-wings vanish in the blue,
 There cometh no reply!



NE stitch dropped as the weaver drove
His nimble shuttle to and fro,
In and out, beneath, above,
Till the pattern seemed to bud and grow
As if the fairies had helping been,—
One small stitch which could scarce be seen.
But the one stitch dropped pulled the next stitch out,
And a weak place grew in the fabric stout;
And the perfect pattern was marred for aye
By the one small stitch that was dropped that day.

One small life in God's great plan,
How futile it seems as the ages roll,
Do what it may, or strive how it can
To alter the sweep of the infinite whole!
A single stitch in an endless web,
A drop in the ocean's flow and ebb!
But the pattern is rent where the stitch is lost,
Or marred where the tangled threads have crossed;
And each life that fails of its true intent
Mars the perfect plan that its Master meant.

“HAT, then, is Love?” she said.
 Love is a music, blent in curious key
 Of jarring discords and of harmony;
 'Tis a delicious draught which, as you
 sip,

Turns sometimes into poison on your lip.
 It is a sunny sky infolding storm,
 The fire to ruin or the fire to warm;
 A garland of fresh roses fair to sight,
 Which then becomes a chain and fetters tight.
 It is a half-heard secret told to two,
 A life-long puzzle or a guiding clew.
 The joy of joys, the deepest pain of pain;—
 All these Love has been and will be again.

“How may I know?” she said.
 Thou mayest *not* know, for Love has conned the art
 To blind the reason and befool the heart.
 So subtle is he, not himself may guess
 Whether he shall be more or shall be less;
 Wrapped in a veil of many colored mists,
 He flits disguised wheresoe'er he lists,
 And for the moment is the thing he seems,
 The child of vagrant hope and fairy dreams;
 Sails like a rainbow bubble on the wind,
 Now high, now low, before us or behind;
 And only when our fingers grasp the prize,
 Changes his form and swiftly vanishes.

[21]

“Then best not love,” she said.
 Dear child, there is no better and no best;
 Love comes not, bides not at thy slight behest.
 As well might thy frail fingers seek to stay
 The march of waves in yonder land-locked bay,
 As stem the surging tide which ebbs and fills
 Mid human energies and human wills.
 The moon leads on the strong, resisting sea;
 And so the moon of love shall beckon thee,
 And at her bidding thou wilt leap and rise,
 And follow o'er strange seas, 'neath unknown skies,
 Unquestioning; to dash, or soon or late,
 On sand or cruel crag, as is thy fate.

[22]

“Then woe is me!” she said.
 Weep not; there is a harder, sadder thing,—
 Never to know this sweetest suffering!
 Never to see the sun, though suns may slay,
 Or share the richer feast as others may.
 Sooner the sealed and closely guarded wine
 Shall seek again its purple clustered vine,
 Sooner the attar be again the rose,
 Than Love unlearn the secret that it knows!
 Abide thy fate, whether for good or ill;
 Fearlessly wait, and be thou certain still,
 Whether as foe disguised or friendly guest
 He comes, Love's coming is of all things best.



OUR little one was sick, and the sickness pressed her sore.
 We sat beside her bed, and we felt her hands and
 head,
 And in our hearts we prayed this one prayer o'er and
 o'er:

"Come to us, Christ the Lord; utter thine old-time word,
 "Talitha cumi!"

And as the night wore on, and the fever flamed more high,
 And a new look burned and grew in the eyes of tender blue,
 Still louder in our hearts uprose the voiceless cry,
 "O Lord of love and might, say once again to-night,
 "Talitha cumi!"

[24]

And then, and then—he came; we saw him not, but felt.
 And he bent above the child, and she ceased to moan, and smiled;
 And although we heard no sound, as around the bed we knelt,
 Our souls were made aware of a mandate in the air,
 "Talitha cumi!"

And as at dawn's fair summons faded the morning star,
 Holding the Lord's hand close, the child we loved arose,
 And with him took her way to a country far away;
 And we would not call her dead, for it was his voice that said,
 "Talitha cumi!"



HO serves his country best?
Not he who, for a brief and stormy
space,
Leads forth her armies to the fierce
affray.

Short is the time of turmoil and unrest,
Long years of peace succeed it and replace:
There is a better way.

Who serves his country best?
Not he who guides her senates in debate,
And makes the laws which are her prop and stay;
Not he who wears the poet's purple vest,
And sings her songs of love and grief and fate:
There is a better way.

He serves his country best,
Who joins the tide that lifts her nobly on;
For speech has myriad tongues for every day,
And song but one; and law within the breast
Is stronger than the graven law on stone:
There is a better way.

[26]

He serves his country best
Who lives pure life, and doeth righteous deed,
And walks straight paths, however others stray,
And leaves his sons as uttermost bequest
A stainless record which all men may read:
This is the better way.

No drop but serves the slowly lifting tide,
No dew but has an errand to some flower,
No smallest star but sheds some helpful ray,
And man by man, each giving to all the rest,
Makes the firm bulwark of the country's power:
There is no better way.



HEY sat together in the sun,
 And Youth and Hope stood
 hovering near;
 Like dropping bell-notes one by
 one
 Chimed the glad moments soft and clear;
 And still amid their happy speech
 The lovers whispered each to each,
 "Forever!"

Youth spread his wings of rainbow light,
 "Farewell!" he whispered as he went;
 They heeded not nor mourned his flight,
 Wrapped in their measureless content;
 And still they smiled, and still was heard
 The confidently uttered word,
 "Forever!"

Hope stayed, her steadfast smile was sweet,—
 Until the even-time she stayed;
 Then with reluctant, noiseless feet
 She stole into the solemn shade.
 A graver shape moved gently by,
 And bent, and murmured warningly,
 "Forever!"

[28]

And then—where sat the two, sat one!
 No voice spoke back, no glance replied.
 Behind her, where she rested lone,
 Hovered the spectre, solemn-eyed;
 She met his look without a thrill,
 And, smiling faintly, whispered still,
 "Forever!"

Oh, sweet, sweet Youth! Oh, fading Hope!
 Oh, eyes by tearful mists made blind!
 Oh, hands which vainly reach and grope
 For a familiar touch and kind!
 Time pauseth for no lover's kiss;
 Love for its solace has but this,—
 "Forever!"



H! not in strange portentous way
 Christ's miracles were wrought
 of old,
 The common thing, the common
 clay,
 He touched and tinctured, and straightway
 It grew to glory manifold.

The barley loaves were daily bread,
 Kneaded and mixed with usual skill;
 No care was given, no spell was said,
 But when the Lord had blessed, they fed
 The multitude upon the hill.

The hemp was sown 'neath common sun,
 Watered by common dews and rain,
 Of which the fishers' nets were spun;
 Nothing was prophesied or done
 To mark it from the other grain.

[30]

Coarse, brawny hands let down the net
 When the Lord spake and ordered so;
 They hauled the meshes, heavy-wet,
 Just as in other days, and set
 Their backs to labor, bending low;

But quivering, leaping from the lake
 The marvellous, shining burdens rise
 Until the laden meshes break,
 And, all amazed, no man spake,
 But gazed with wonder in his eyes.

So still, dear Lord, in every place
 Thou standest by the toiling folk
 With love and pity in thy face,
 And givest of thy help and grace
 To those who meekly bear the yoke.

Not by strange sudden change and spell,
 Baffling and darkening Nature's face;
 Thou takest the things we know so well
 And buildest on them thy miracle,—
 The heavenly on the commonplace.

[31]

The lives which seem so poor, so low,
 The hearts which are so cramped and dull,
 The baffled hopes, the impulse slow,
 Thou takest, touchest all, and lo!
 They blossom to the beautiful.

We need not wait for thunder-peal
 Resounding from a mount of fire,
 While round our daily paths we feel
 Thy sweet love and thy power to heal,
 Working in us thy full desire.



RCHID, chance-sown among the moorland
 heather,
 Scarce seen or tasted by the infrequent bee,
 Set mid rough mountain growths, lashed by
 wild weather,
 With none to foster thee.

We watch thee fronting all the blasts of heaven,
 Thy slender rootlets grappled fast to rock,
 Enduring from thy morning to thy even
 The buffet and the shock.

Never thy sun vouchsafed a cloudless shining,
 Never the wind was tempered to thy pain;
 No cloud turned out for thee its silver lining,
 No rainbow followed rain.

Nourished mid hardness, learning patience slowly
 As hearts must do which know no other food,
 Duty and Memory, companions holy,
 Shared thy bleak solitude.

[33]

Cold touch of Memory, strong chill hand of Duty,
 These held thee fast and ruled thee to the end,
 Until, with smile mysterious in its beauty,
 Came Death, rewarding friend.

Earth gave thee scanty cheer, but earth is ended,
 Finished the years of thwarted sacrifice.
 We see thee walking forward, well attended,
 Led into Paradise!

Heaven is twice Heaven to one who, hungry-hearted,
 Goes thither knowing no satisfaction here;
 And when we thank the Lord for those departed
 In this sure faith and fear,

We think of thee, lonely no more forever,
 And tasting, while the eternal years unroll,
 That joy of Heaven, which like a flowing river
 Satisfies every soul.



W E spend our strength in labor day by
 day,
 We find new strength replacing old
 alway;
 And still we cheat ourselves, and still we say:

“No man would work except to win some prize;
 We work to turn our hopes to certainties,—
 For gold, or gear, or favor in men’s eyes.”

And all the while the goal toward which we strain—
 Up hill and down, in sunshine and in rain,
 Heedless of toil, if so we may attain—

Is but a lure, a heavenly-set decoy
 To exercised endeavor, full employ
 Of every power, which is man’s highest joy.

And work becomes the end, reward the means,
 To woo us from our idleness and dreams;
 And each is truly what the other seems.

[35]

So, Lord, with such poor service as we do,
 Thy full salvation is our prize in view,
 For which we long, and which we press unto.

Like a great star on which we fix our eyes,
 It dazzles from the high, blue distances,
 And seems to beckon and to say, “Arise!”

And we arise and follow the hard way,
 Winning a little nearer day by day,
 Our hearts going faster than our footsteps may;

And never guess the secret sweet device
 Which lures us on and upward to the skies,
 And makes each toil its own reward and prize.

To give our little selves to thee, to blend
 Our weakness with thy strength, O Lord our Friend,
 This is life’s truest privilege and end.



HE last sweet flowers are
 dying,
 The last green leaves are
 red;
 The wild geese southward flying,
 By law mysterious led,
 Scream noisily o'erhead;
 The honey-bees have hived them,
 The butterflies have shrived them;
 All hushed the song and twitter
 And flutter of glad wing;—
 How could we bear the autumn
 If t'were not for the spring?

To see the summer banished,
 Nor dare to bid her stay;
 To mourn o'er beauty vanished
 And joyance driven away;
 To mark the shortening day;
 To note the sad winds plaining,
 The storm cloud and the raining;
 To see the frost lance stabbing
 Each faint and wounded thing;—
 Oh, we should hate the autumn
 Excepting for the spring!

[37]

To know that life is failing
 And pulses beating slow;
 To catch the unavailing
 Sad monotones of woe
 All the earth over go;
 To know that snows must cover
 The grave of friend and lover,
 To hide them from the eyes and hands
 That still caress and cling;—
 The heart would break in autumn
 If there were not a spring!

For every sleep a waking,
 For every shade a sun,
 A balm for each heart breaking,
 A rest for labor done,
 A life by death begun;
 And so in wintry weather,
 With smile and sigh together,
 We look beyond the present pain,
 The daily loss and sting,
 And welcome in the autumn
 For the sure hope of spring.

[38]



LITTLE, tender word,
 Wrapped in a little rhyme,
 Sent out upon the passing air,
 As seeds are scattered
 everywhere
 In the sweet summer-time.

A little, idle word,
 Breathed in an idle hour;
 Between two laughs that word was said,
 Forgotten as soon as uttered,
 And yet the word had power.

Away they sped, the words:
 One, like a wingèd seed,
 Lit on a soul which gave it room,
 And straight began to bud and bloom
 In lovely word and deed.

The other careless word,
 Borne on an evil air,
 Found a rich soil, and ripened fast
 Its rank and poisonous growths, and cast
 Fresh seeds to work elsewhere.

[40]

The speakers of the words
 Passed by and marked, one day,
 The fragrant blossoms dewy wet,
 The baneful flowers thickly set
 In clustering array.

And neither knew his word;
 One smiled, and one did sigh.
 "How strange and sad," one said, "it is
 People should do such things as this!
 I'm glad it was not I."

And, "What a wondrous word
 To reach so far, so high!"
 The other said, "What joy 'twould be
 To send out words so helpfully!
 I wish that it were I."



TOUCHED in the rocky lap of
 hills,
 The lake's blue waters gleam,
 And thence in linked and
 measured rills
 Down to the valley stream,
 To rise again, led higher and higher,
 And slake the city's hot desire.

High as the lake's bright ripples shine,
 So high the water goes,
 But not a drop that air-drawn line
 Passes or overflows;
 Though man may strive and man may woo,
 The stream to its own law is true.

Vainly the lonely tarn its cup
 Holds to the feeding skies;
 Unless the source be lifted up,
 The streamlet cannot rise:
 By law inexorably blent,
 Each is the other's measurement.

[42]

Ah, lonely tarn! ah, striving rill!
 So yearn these souls of ours,
 And beat with sad and urgent will
 Against the unheeding powers.
 In vain is longing, vain is force;
 No stream goes higher than its source.



SONG of sunshine through
the rain,
Of spring across the snow,
A balm to heal the hurts of
pain,

A peace surpassing woe.
Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones,
And be ye glad of heart,
For Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's saddest day and gladdest day,
Were just one day apart!

With shudder of despair and loss
The world's deep heart was wrung,
As lifted high upon his cross
The Lord of Glory hung,
When rocks were rent, and ghostly forms
Stole forth in street and mart;
But Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's blackest day and whitest day,
Were just one day apart!

[44]

No hint or whisper stirred the air
To tell what joy should be;
The sad disciples, grieving there,
Nor help nor hope could see.
Yet all the while the glad, near sun
Made ready its swift dart.
And Calvary and Easter Day,
The darkest day and brightest day,
Were just one day apart!

Oh, when the strife of tongues is loud,
And the heart of hope beats low,
When the prophets prophesy of ill,
And the mourners come and go,
In this sure thought let us abide,
And keep and stay our heart,—
That Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's heaviest day and happiest day,
Were but one day apart!



HEY stood upon the vessel's deck
 To catch our farewell look and
 beck.
 Two girlish figures, fair and frail,
 Hovering against a great white sail
 Like spirit shapes in dazzling air,—
 I seem to see them standing there,
 Always together, always so,—
 'Twas long ago, oh, long ago!

The east was bright with yellow noon,
 The flying vessel vanished soon.
 Flashes of jubilant white spray
 Beckoned and pointed her the way.
 A lessening speck she outward sped;
 Sadly we turned, but still we said,,
 "They will come back again, we know,"—
 'Twas long ago, so long ago!

[46]

Those faces sweet, those happy eyes,
 Looked nevermore on Western skies;
 Where the hot sunbeams weave their net
 O'er cedar-crowned, sad Olivet,
 They who had shared their lives shared death,
 Tasting at once the first strange breath
 Of those quick airs for souls that flow
 So long ago, so long ago!

In vain we picture to our eyes
 The convent gray, the still, blue skies,
 The mountain with its bordering wood;—
 Still do they stand as then they stood,
 Hovering like spirits fair and frail
 Against the dazzle of the sail;
 The red lips part, the faces glow,
 As long ago, so long ago!



WHAT shall I do to keep your day,
 My darling, dead for many a
 year?
 I could not, if I would, forget
 It is your day; and yet, and yet—
 It is so hard to find a way
 To keep it, now you are not here.

I cannot add the lightest thing
 To the full sum of happiness
 Which now is yours; nor dare I try
 To frame a wish for you, since I
 Am blind to know, as weak to bring,
 All impotent to aid or bless.

And yet it is your day, and so,
 Unlike all other days, one bead
 Of gold in the long rosary
 Of dull beads little worth to me.
 And I must keep it bright, and show
 That what is yours is dear indeed.

[48]

How shall I keep it here alone?—
 With prayers in which your name is set;
 With smiles, not tears; and sun, not rain;
 With memories sweeter far than pain,
 With tender backward glances thrown,
 And far on-lookings, clearer yet.

The gift I would have given to you,
 And which you cannot need or take,
 Shall still be given; and it shall be
 A secret between you and me,—
 A sweet thought, every birthday new,
 That it is given for your sake.

And so your day, yours safely still,
 Shall come and go with ebbing time,—
 The day of all the year most sweet,—
 Until the years so slow, so fleet,
 Shall bring me, as in time they will,
 To where all days are yours and mine.



BANDONED wrecks they plunge
and drift,
The sport of sea and wind,
The tempest drives, the billows lift,
The aimless sails they flap and shift
With impulse vague and blind,
As tossing on from wave to wave
They seek—and shun—the yawning grave.

The decks once trodden by busy feet
Man nevermore shall tread;
The cargoes brave of wine or wheat,
Now soaked with salt and drenched with sleet,
And mixed and scatterèd,
No merchant shall appraise or buy
Or store in vat or granary.

The wet ropes pull the creaking sails,
As though by hands drawn tight.
Echoes the hold with ghostly wails,
While daylight wanes, and twilight pales,
And drops the heavy night,
And vast and silent fish swim by,
And scan the wreck with cruel eye.

[50]

Ha! lights ahead! A ship is near!
The dumb wreck makes no sign;
No lantern shows, returns no cheer,
But straight and full, without a veer,
Sped by the urging brine
She goes—a crash! her errand done,
The deadly, lonely thing drives on.

Oh, hopeless lives, distorted, crushed,
Which, like the lonely wreck,
Lashed by the waves and tempest-tossed,
With rudder gone and cargo lost,
Torn ribs and leaking deck,
Plunge on through sunshine and eclipse,
A menace to the happier ships.

All oceans know them, and all lands.
Speechless they drift us by;
To questioning voices, friendly hands,
Warnings or counsels or commands,
Still making no reply.
God send them help if help may be,
Or sink them harmless in his sea.



HAT was she most like? Was she like the
wind,
Fresh always, and untired; intent to find
New fields to penetrate, new heights to
gain;

Scattering all mists with sudden, radiant wing;
Stirring the languid pulses; quickening
The apathetic mood, the weary brain?

Or was she like the sun, whose gift of cheer
Endureth for all seasons of the year,
Alike in winter's cold or summer's heat?
Or like the sea, which brings its gifts from far,
And still, wherever want and straitness are,
Lays down a sudden largess at their feet?

Or was she like a wood, where light and shade,
And sound and silence, mingle unafraid;
Where mosses cluster, and, in coverts dark,
Shy blossoms court the brief and wandering air,
Mysteriously sweet; and here and there
A firefly flashes like a sudden spark?

[52]

Or like a wilful brook, which laughs and leaps
All unexpectedly, and never keeps
The course predicted, as it seaward flows?
Or like a stream-fed river, brimming high?
Or like a fruit, where those who love descry
A pungent charm no other flavor knows?

I cannot find her type. In her were blent
Each varied and each fortunate element
Which souls combine, with something all her own,
Sadness and mirthfulness, a chorded strain,
The tender heart, the keen and searching brain,
The social zest, the power to live alone.

Comrade of comrades, giving man the slip
To seek in Nature truest comradeship;
Tenacity and impulse ruled her fate,
This grasping firmly what that flashed to feel,—
The velvet scabbard and the sword of steel,
The gift to strongly love, to frankly hate!

[53]

Patience as strong as was her hopefulness;
A joy in living which grew never less
As years went on and age drew gravely nigh;
Vision which pierced the veiling mists of pain,
And saw beyond the mortal shadows plain
The eternal day-dawn broadening in the sky.

The love of Doing, and the scorn of Done;
The playful fancy, which, like glinting sun,
No chill could daunt, no loneliness could smother.
Upon her ardent pulse Death's chillness lies;
Closed the brave lips, the merry, questioning eyes.
She was herself!—there is not such another.



WOULD be free! For freedom is all fair,
 And her strong smile is like the smile of
 God.

Her voice rings out like trumpet on the air,
 And men rise up and follow; though the road
 Be all unknown and hard to understand,
 They tread it gladly, holding Freedom's hand.

I would be free! The little spark of Heaven
 Let in my soul when life was breathed in me
 Is like a flame, this way and that way driven
 By ever wavering winds, which ceaselessly
 Kindle and blow till all my soul is hot.
 And would consume if liberty were not.

I would be free! But what is freedom, then?
 For widely various are the shapes she wears
 In different ages and to different men;
 And many titles, many forms she bears,—
 Riot and revolution, sword and flame,
 All called in turn by Freedom's honored name.

[55]

I would be free! Not free to burn and spoil,
 To trample down the weak and smite the strong,
 To seize the larger share of wine and oil,
 And rob the sun my daylight to prolong,
 And rob the night of sleep while others wake,—
 Feast on their famine, basely free to take.

I would be free! Free in a dearer way,
 Free to become all that I may or can;
 To be my best and utmost self each day,
 Not held or bound by any chain of man,
 By dull convention, or by foolish sneer,
 Or love's mistaken clasp of feeble fear.

Free to be kind and true and faithful; free
 To do the happy thing that makes life good,
 To grow as grows the goodly forest-tree;
 By none gainsaid, by none misunderstood,
 To taste life's freshness with a child's delight,
 And find new joy in every day and night.

I would be free! Ah! so may all be free.
 Then shall the world grow sweet at core and sound.
 And, moved in blest and ordered circuit, see
 The bright millennial sun rise fair and round,
 Heaven's day begin, and Christ, whose service is
 Freedom all perfect, rule the world as his.



HE trance of golden afternoon
Lay on the Judæan skies;
The trance of vision, like a
swoon,

Sealed the Apostle's eyes.
Upon the roof he sat and saw
Angelic hands let down and draw
Again the mighty vessel full
Of beasts and birds innumerable.

Three times the heavenly vision fell,
Three times the Lord's voice spoke;
When Peter, loath to break the spell,
Roused from his trance, and woke,
To hear a common sound and rude,
Which jarred and shook his solitude,—
A knocking at the doorway near,
Where stood the two from Cæsarea.

[57]

And should he heed, or should he stay?
Scarce had the vision fled,—
Perchance it might return that day,
Perchance more words be said
By the Lord's voice?—he rises slow;
Again the knocking; he must go;
Nor guessed, while going down the stair,
That 'twas the Lord who called him there.

Had he sat still upon the roof,
Wooing the vision long,
The Gentile world had missed the truth,
And Heaven one "sweet new song."
Souls might have perished in blind pain,
And the Lord Christ have died in vain
For them. He knew not what it meant,
But Peter rose and Peter went.

Oh, souls which sit in upper air,
Longing for heavenly sight,
Glimpses of truth all fleeting-fair,
Set in unearthly light,—
Is there no knocking heard below,
For which you should arise and go,
Leaving the vision, and again
Bearing its message unto men?

[58]

Sordid the world were vision not,
But fruitless were your stay;
So, having seen the sight, and got
The message, haste away.
Though pure and bright thy higher air,
And hot the street and dull the stair,
Still get thee down, for who shall know
But 'tis the Lord who knocks below?



ALWAYS when the roses bloom most
 brightly,
 Some sad heart is sure to presage
 blight;
 Always when the breeze is kindest blowing
 There are eyes that look out for a gale;
 Always when the bosom's lord sits lightly
 Comes some croaking proverb to affright,
 And in sweetest music grieving blindly
 Sits the shadow of a sorrow pale.

Though to-day says not a word to sadden,
 Still to-morrow's menace fills my ear.
 Less intent on this than that I hie me,
 Fearful, eager, all the worst to know,
 Missing that which might the moment gladden,
 For the prescience of a far-off fear,
 Which again and yet again flits by me,
 Clouding all the sunshine as I go.

[60]

There is manna for the day's supplying,
 There are daily dews and daily balms,
 Yet I shrink and shudder to remember
 All the desert drought I yet may see.
 Past the green oasis fare I, sighing,
 Caring not to rest beneath the palms.
 All my May is darkened by December,
 All my laughter by the tears to be.

Must my life go on thus to its closing?
 Lord, hold fast this restless heart of mine;
 Put thy arm about me when I shiver,
 Make me feel thy presence all the way.
 Hope and fear, and travail and reposing,
 All by thee are cared for, all are thine,
 Quick to help, sufficient to deliver,
 Near in sun and shade, in night and day.



HE seemed so young, so young
to die!
Life, like a dawning, rosy day,
Stretched from her fair young
feet away,
And beams from the just-risen sun
Beckoned and wooed and urged her on.
She met the light with happy eyes,
Fresh with the dews of Paradise,
And held her sweet hands out to grasp
The joys that crowded to her clasp,
Each a surprise, and all so dear:
How could we guess that night was near?

She seemed so young, so young to die!
When the old go, we sadly say,
'Tis Nature's own appointed way;
The ripe grain gathered in must be,
The ripe fruit from the laden tree,
The sear leaf quit the bare, brown bough;
Summer is done, 'tis autumn now,
God's harvest-time; the sheaves among,
His angels raise the reaping-song,
And though we grieve, we would not stay
The shining sickles on their way.

[62]

She seemed so young, so young to die!
We question wearily and vain
What never answer shall make plain:
"Can it be this the good Lord meant
Which frustrates his benign intent?
Why was she planted like a flower
In mortal sun and mortal shower,
And left to grow, and taught to bloom,
To gather beauty and perfume;
Why were we set to train and tend
If only for this bootless end?"

She seemed so young, so young to die!
But age and youth,—what do they mean
Measured by the eternal scheme
Of God, and sifted out and laid
In his unerring scales and weighed?
How may we test their sense or worth,—
These poor glib phrases, born of earth,
False accents of a long exile,—
Or know the angels do not smile,
Holding out truth's immortal gauge,
To hear us prate of youth and age?

[63]

She seemed so young, so young to die!
So needed here by every one,
Nor there; for heaven has need of none.
And yet, how can we tell or say?
Heaven is so far, so far away!
How do we know its blissful store
Is full and needeth nothing more?
It may be that some tiny space
Lacked just that little angel face,
Or the full sunshine missed one ray
Until our darling found the way.



HOUGHT to be kinder always,
For the light of his kindly
eyes;
I ought to be wiser always,
Because he is so just and wise;
And gentler in all my bearing,
And braver in all my daring,
For the patience that in him lies.

I must be as true as the Heaven
While he is as true as the day,
Nor balance the gift with the given,
For he giveth to me always.
And I must be firm and steady;
For my Love, he is that already,
And I follow him as I may.

O dear little golden fetter,
You bind me to difficult things;
But my soul while it strives grows better,
And I feel the stirring of wings
As I stumble, doubting and dreading,
Up the path of his stronger treading,
Intent on his beckonings.



SAW the gardener bring and
 strew
 Gray ashes where blush roses
 grew.

The fair, still roses bent them low,
 Their pink cheeks dimpled all with dew,
 And seemed to view with pitying air
 The dim gray atoms lying there.

Ah, bonny rose, all fragrances,
 And life and hope and quick desires,
 What can you need or gain from these
 Poor ghosts of long-forgotten fires?

The rose-tree leans, the rose-tree sighs,
 And wafts this answer subtly wise:
 "All death, all life are mixed and blent,
 Out of dead lives fresh life is sent,
 Sorrow to these is growth for me,
 And who shall question God's decree?"

[67]

Ah, dreary life, whose gladsome spark
 No longer leaps in song and fire,
 But lies in ashes gray and stark,
 Defeated hopes and dead desire,
 Useless and dull and all bereft,—
 Take courage, this one thing is left:
 Some happier life may use thee so,
 Some flower bloom fairer on its tree,
 Some sweet or tender thing may grow
 To stronger life because of thee;
 Content to play a humble part,
 Give of the ashes of thy heart,
 And haply God, whose dear decrees
 Taketh from those to give to these,
 Who draws the snow-drop from the snows
 May from those ashes feed a rose.



WHAT is the dearest happiness of heaven?
 Ah, who shall say!
 So many wonders, and so wondrous fair,
 Await the soul who, just arrivèd there
 In trance of safety, sheltered and forgiven,
 Opens glad eyes to front the eternal day:

Relief from earth's corroding discontent,
 Relief from pain,
 The satisfaction of perplexing fears,
 Full compensation for the long, hard years,
 Full understanding of the Lord's intent,
 The things that were so puzzling made quite plain;

And all astonished joy as, to the spot,
 From further skies,
 Crowd our belovèd with white wingèd feet,
 And voices than the chiming harps more sweet,
 Faces whose fairness we had half forgot, [69]
 And outstretched hands, and welcome in their eyes;—

Heart cannot image forth the endless store
 We may but guess;
 But this one lesser joy I hold my own:
 All shall be known in heaven; at last be known
 The best and worst of me; the less, the more,
 My own shall know—and shall not love me less.

Oh, haunting shadowy dread which underlies
 All loving here!
 We inly shiver as we whisper low,
 "Oh, if they knew—if they could only know,
 Could see our naked souls without disguise—
 How they would shrink from us and pale with fear!"

The bitter thoughts we hold in leash within
 But do not kill;
 The petty anger and the mean desire,
 The jealousy which burns,—a smouldering fire,—
 The slimy trail of half-unnoted sin,
 The sordid wish which daunts the nobler will. [70]

We fight each day with foes we dare not name.
 We fight, we fail!
 Noiseless the conflict and unseen of men;
 We rise, are beaten down, and rise again,
 And all the time we smile, we move, the same,
 And even to dearest eyes draw close the veil.

But in the blessed heaven these wars are past;
 Disguise is o'er!
 With new anointed vision, face to face,
 We shall see all, and clasped in close embrace
 Shall watch the haunting shadow flee at last,
 And know as we are known, and fear no more.

"DID you not know Me, my child?" the lips and eyes that were all love seemed to say to her. "You have thought the thoughts that I inspired, you have spoken my words, you set forth to fight on my side in the battle against evil; and yet you forget me, and have often gone near to deny me, while I was standing by your side and giving you the strength to speak and think. Look at me now, and see if I am not better than the images that have hid me from you."—*A Doubting Heart*.



HE day is long, and the day is hard;
 We are tired of the march and of
 keeping guard,
 Tired of the sense of a fight to be
 won,
 Of days to live through and of work to be done,
 Tired of ourselves and of being alone.

And all the while, did we only see,
 We walk in the Lord's own company;
 We fight, but 'tis he who nerves our arm,
 He turns the arrows which else might harm,
 And out of the storm he brings a calm.

[72]

The work which we count so hard to do,
 He makes it easy, for he works too;
 The days that are long to live are his,
 A bit of his bright eternities,
 And close to our need his helping is.

O eyes that were holden and blinded quite,
 And caught no glimpse of the guiding light!
 O deaf, deaf ears which did not hear
 The heavenly garment trailing near!
 O faithless heart, which dared to fear!



DREAMED we sat within a shaded place,
 Where mournful waters fell, and no sun shone;
 And suddenly, a smile upon his face,
 There came to us a winged, mysterious one,
 And said, with pitying eyes: "O mourning souls, arise!

"Take up your travelling staves, your sandals lace,
 And journey to the Northland and the snow,
 Where wild and leaping Borealis trace
 Fantastic, glistening dances to and fro;
 Where suns at midnight beam, to fright the sleeper's dream.

"There, in the icy, solitary waste,
 God's goodness grants this boon,—that thou shalt see,
 And hold communion for a little space
 With that dear child so lately gone from thee.
 Arise, and haste away; God may not let her stay."

[74]

So we arose, and quickly we went forth;
 How could we slight such all undreamed-of boon?
 And when we reached the ultimate far North—
 All in a hush of frozen afternoon,
 Lit by a dim sun-ray, liker to night than day—

There, o'er the white bare feld we saw her come,
 Our little maid, in the dear guise we knew,
 With the same look she used to wear at home,
 The same sweet eyes of deepest, dark-fringed blue;
 Her steps they made no sound upon the icy ground.

She kissed us gently, and she stood and smiled,
 While close we clasped and questioned her, and strove
 To win some hint or answer from the child
 That should appease the hunger of our love,
 Something to soothe the pain when she must go again.

And was she happy, happier than of old?
 Did heaven fulfil its promises of bliss?
 And had she seen our other dead, and told
 The story of that loving faithfulness
 Which held them dearly yet and never would forget?

To all these questions she made no replies:
 She only smiled a softly wistful smile,
 And looked with gentle eyes into our eyes,
 And kissed us back; and in a little while
 She said, "Now I must go; my Lady told me so."

[75]

Then jealously we cried: "What is the name
 Of this thy 'Lady'? Is she good to thee?
 Has she above all other angels claim
 To thine obedience, dear; or can it be
 The Mother of our Lord?" She answered not a word!

But sighed, and laid her finger on her lips,
 And kissed us all, and straightway from our sight,
 As twilight wanes and melts in night's eclipse,
 She vanished, and we looked to left and right,
 And wildly called her name, but, oh! no answer came.

And with the anguished call the vision broke,
 The equal sky of summer shone o'erhead;
 The earliest birds were singing as I woke.—
 All was a dream, except that she was dead,
 And that familiar pain I tasted once again.

Thank God, it was a dream! How could we bear
 To see her stand with wistful eyes down bent,
 In the old likeness that she used to wear,
 And know her sad and only half-content,
 And shy and puzzled even, as if not used to heaven?

[76]

Better, far better, not to know or see!
 O Lord, whose faithfulness all ages prove

O Lord, whose faithfulness all ages prove,
We trust the darling of our hearts to thee,
Asking no explanations of thy love;
Keep thou her safe alway, and give her back some day.



KNEEL before thine altar, Lord, and fain a gift would
bring,
But all I have is worthless and unfit for offering;
A foolish heart, a foolish dream, a foolish, fruitless pain,—
Such are my all; O Love of Love, do not the gift disdain!

And even as earthly monarchs do, who take the tribute given,
And quick restore, by royal grace increased to seven times seven,
So take, O Lord, my offering, and vouchsafe me presently,
For emptiness thy fulness, for my hunger thy supply.

I lay my heart down at thy feet, that tired heart and old,
Whose youthful throb has grown so faint, whose youthful fire so cold;
Heart of the world's heart, Lord of joy, and mighty Lord of pain,
Take thou the gift, and quicken it, and give it back again.

[78]

My foolish dream, so dear, so prized, baptized in many tears,
Loved even as sickly children are, the more for doubts and fears,
O Lord, whose word is faithfulness eternal to endure,
Take it; and give me, in its stead, the Hope that standeth sure.

The pain, that half was baffled will, which could not bear to die,
And, stilled by day, would stir by night and wake me with its cry,
That pain so close, so intimate, that Death could scarce destroy,
I leave it, Lord, before thy feet; give me instead thy joy.

All empty-handed came I in, full-handed forth I go;
Go thou beside me, Lord of Grace, and keep me ever so.
Thanks are poor things for such wide good, but all my life is thine,—
Thou who hast turned my stones to bread, my water into wine.



LITTLE waves, which kiss the
sands
With cool, caressing lips of foam,
And murmurs soft, and
 outstretched hands,
Like glad, tired children nearing home,
O little waves, so soft, so small,
How are you linked, if linked at all,
To those mid-ocean billows strong,
By fierce winds scourged and driven along,
Tossed up to heaven, and then again
Sucked in black gulfs of whelming main;
Never at rest and never spent?
Urged by a speeding discontent,
A seething strife which knows not ease,
Are you akin to such as these?
The little waves they flash and rise,
 And lisp this answer wonderingly,
With laughter in their glancing eyes:
 "They are the sea—we are the sea."
O small, spent waves of surging time,
 Which break and fall upon life's shore
With soft and intermittent chime,
 A moment seen, then seen no more,
How are you linked, if linked you be,
To that great dark eternity
Which stretches far beyond our gaze,
And rounds our nights and rounds our days?
We see its darkling billows flow,
But dare not follow where they go,
Nor guess what distance dim and vast
They span to find a shore at last.
O little waves, what share have ye
In this great dim eternity?
The fleet waves answer as they run:
 "Or near, or far, one name have we,
Time and eternity are one;
 It is the sea—we are the sea."

[80]



LONG time my restless wishes fought and
 strove,
 Long time I bent me to the heavy task
 Of winning such full recompense of love
 As dream could paint, importunate fancy
 ask.

Morning and night a hunger filled my soul;
 Ever my eager hands went out to sue;
 And still I sped toward a shifting goal,
 And still the horizon widened as I flew.

There was no joy in love, but jealous wrath;
 I walked athirst all day, and did not heed
 The wayside brooks which followed by my path
 And held their cooling threadlets to my need.

But now, these warring fancies left behind,
 I sit in clear air with the sun o'erhead,
 And take my share, repining not, and find
 Perpetual feast in just such daily bread:

[82]

Asking no more than what unasked is sent;
 Freedom is dearer still than love may be;
 And I, my dearest, am at last content,
 Content to love thee and to leave thee free.

Love me then not, for pity nor for prayer,
 But as the sunshine loveth and the rain,
 Which speed them gladly through the upper air
 Because the gracious pathway is made plain.

And as we watch the slant lines, gold and dun,
 Bridge heaven's distance all intent to bless,
 And cavil not if we or other one
 Shall have the larger portion or the less,

So with unvexèd eye I mark and see
 Where blessed and blessing your sweet days are spent;
 And though another win more love from thee,
 Having my share I am therewith content.

On earth as in heaven.—The Lord's Prayer.



N earth we take but feeble hold;
 Joy is not confident or bold;
 We dare not strike deep roots
 and stay,
 Nor trust to-morrow or to-day.
 We scatter grain beneath frail skies,
 And note its shoot and watch its rise,
 And do not know or guess a whit
 What other hands shall garner it.
 We raise our songs, but fast and soon
 Our voices unto silence die,
 And other voices end the tune
 Which, too, shall falter presently.
 "Forever" is our idle oath;
 But while the word is on our lip
 Night falls, and past and future both
 Out of our hold and keeping slip.
 We dare not love as angels may,
 Lest love should fail us or betray;
 And life goes on and we go hence,
 Nor never know continuance.

[84]

In heaven is safety and sure peace;
 There is no waning nor decrease.
 The endless ages ebb and flow,
 The endless harvests riper grow;
 Fast in the rich eternal mould
 The heart's deep roots take hold, take hold
 With the strong joy of permanence,
 Never to be transplanted thence.
 Sweet songs are sung to very close,
 Sweet closes recommence and blend;
 And still as rose-bud answers rose
 The new strains grow, the old strains end.
 Forever means forever there;
 New joy past sorrow reconciles,
 And hung in clear and golden air
 An undeceiving morrow smiles.
 While Love the law and Love the sun
 Blesses and warms and saves each one;
 And God's dear will, our earthly prayer,
 Is made quite plain and perfect there.



P in the shining and sun-lighted blue,
 Where foam-white clouds sail like a
 fairy fleet,
 The pale moon hovers, glimmering
 wanly through,
 Like a sad chord in chorus gay and sweet.

Frailer than cloud she seems, and torn and frayed;
 A little wandering fragment, drifting slow,
 Of that brave golden summer moon which made
 Midnight so beautiful awhile ago.

Why comes she back at this untimely hour,
 When noon is nigh and birds are singing clear,
 And the fierce sun, her rival, burns with power?—
 What can the poor, the pretty moon want here?

Does she feel lonely in the peopled sky,
 The only moon among a starry host;
 They all together in brave company,
 She wandering solitary as a ghost?

[86]

Or does she grieve that we so soon forget
 The perfect beauty of her tempered ray,
 Drowsily praising her sweet beams, but yet
 Keeping our real joyance for the day?

Poor, pallid moon, with a reproachful face
 She eyes the humming world as on it moves,
 Yearning through the vast intervening space
 For some one who remembers her and loves.

And like a homesick spirit, sad at heart,
 To heaven's happy ways not wonted yet,
 She seems to murmur when she strays apart:
 "I still am faithful; but you all forget."



DEARFUL of rivalry thou canst not be.
 How should the pure, pale moon dispute
 the sun;
 Or the innumerable company
 Of scintillant stars, though banded all as one?

One glance of thy hot anger can dismay
 The boldest planet till he fades and flees,
 And hastes to bury his affrighted ray
 In far, uncalculated distances.

Why linger then to rule the midnight sky,
 Baffling celestial rule, and vexing men
 Who watched thy sinking but an hour gone by
 Only to see thee turn thy steps again?

The drowsy birds are drooping on the trees,
 The cock's faint crow but dimly prophesies;
 The weary peasant slumbers ill at ease,
 And blinks and winks, half wakes and rubs his eyes.

[88]

The east it flushes wanly, as in doubt;
 Foams with unrest the roused and wrathful sea;
 The scared moon peeped, then turned her round about,
 And fled across the heavens at sight of thee.

Sovereign of day thou art by law divine,
 None shall thy rulership or sway divide;
 The dawning and the rosy morn are thine,
 The busy afternoon and hot noontide.

But dusk of breezy twilight firefly-lit,
 With chirp of drowsy bird and flash of dew,
 And children clasping sleep while shunning it,
 And midnight, with its deep, mysterious blue,—

These are the properties and appanage
 Of sovereign Night, thy equal and thy foe;
 And when she cometh and flings down her gage
 And claims her kingdom, 'tis thy time to go.

And when in turn thou comest she must flee.
 Each has a realm, and each must reign alone;
 And not for her remains and not for thee
 To seize and claim an undivided throne.

[89]

The sky it loves thee, but it loves the moon;
 The world it needs thee, but it needs the night.
 Blind us not, then, with thine inopportune,
 Bewildering, and unexpected light.

Leave us to sleep, and duly take thy rest.
 Vain is the plea; the king is on his way,
 And, following his tossing golden crest,
 Comes the long train of hours, and it is Day.

K. R. J.



HERE is the voice gone which so many
 years,
 Each year grown sweeter, rose in
 glorious song,
 Interpreting to all our hearts and ears
 Ecstasy, passion, pain, the yearning strong
 Of baffled love, the patience stronger yet,
 The pang of hope, the sweetness of regret?

How should that perish which seemed born of heaven
 And framed to breathe the meaning of the skies?
 Can music render back such gift once given;
 Or bear to know some subtlest harmonies
 Must evermore go half expressed, perceived,
 Forever thwarted and forever grieved?

Heaven did not need her voice; its courts are full
 Of choristers angelic trained for praise.
 No note is lacking in the wonderful
 According chorus, which, untired, always
 Sings, "Holy, holy, holy!" round the throne;
 But earth seems dumb to us now it is gone!

[91]

God does not grudge us anything of good!
 And I will dare to fancy when she died,
 And on the sweet lips which so feately wooed
 Music, the guest, to enter and abide,
 Death laid his hand, and with insistence strong
 Shut in the secret of their power of song,—

That the dear voice, thus sadly dispossessed
 And reft of home, sped forth upon its road,
 And like a lost and lonely child, in quest
 Of shelter, sought another warm abode
 In human shape,—some gentle, new-born thing,
 Where it might fold its torn and beaten wing.

And if, long years from now, we catch a strain
 Which has the old, familiar, rapturous thrill,
 We shall smile, saying, "There it is again!
 It is not dead, it wakes in music still.
 Hark! how the lovely accents soar and float,
 A skylark singing from a woman's throat!"



HAT is it, my Renzo? What is thy desire?
To hear my story, hear the whole of it?
And with a shamefaced air and reddened cheek
That "others know it all, and why not thou?"

Who has been talking to thee of me, then;
Setting thee on to question and suspect?
Ah, boy, with eyes still full of childish dreams,
And yet with manhood on the firm young lip,
'Tis a hard thing to ask me, and a strange!
A woman does not easily lay bare
Her history, which is her very heart,
Even to that piece of her she calls her son!
Son he may be, but still he is a man,
And she, though mother, is a woman still;
And men and women are made different,
And vainly 'gainst the barrier of sex
They beat and beat,—all their lives long they beat,
And never pass, never quite understand!
Yet must I do this hard thing for thy sake,
Since who shall do it for thee, if not I?
Thy father, who had else more fitly told,
Is at the wars, the weary, wasting wars;—
Long years ago he sailed unto the wars,
And, dead or living, comes not back to us.
Unhappy is the son who, woman-bred,
Knows not the firm feel of a father's hand;
And I, widow or wife, I know not which,
Wofulest widow, still more woful wife!
Must frame my faltering tongue to tell the tale,
And snatch my thoughts back from their present pain
To the old days, the hard and cruel days,
Full of sharp hatred and stern vengeance,
Which yet were beautiful to him and me
Who lived and loved each other and were young;
But unto thee, born in a softer hour,
Come as dim echoes of some warlike peal.

[93]

Thou bearest an honorable name, my son,
Two mighty houses meet and blend in thee;
For I, thy mother, of the warlike line
Of Bardi, lords of Florence in past time,
Was daughter, and thy sire Ippolito
Sprang from the Buondelmonti, their sworn foes;
For we were Guelph and they were Ghibelline,
And centuries of wrong, and seas of blood,
And old traditional hatreds sundered us.
Even in my babyhood I heard the name
Of Buondelmonti uttered 'twixt set teeth
And coupled with a curse, and I would pout,
And knit my brows, and clench my tiny fist
And whimper at the very sound of it;
Whereat my father, stout Amérigo,
Would catch me up and toss me overhead,
And swear I was best Bardi of them all;
And if his sons but matched his only maid
They'd make quick work of the black Ghibellines
And of the Buondelmonti!

[94]

So I grew
To woman's stature, and men called me fair,
And suitors, like a flight of bees, began
To hum and cluster wheresoe'er I moved;
And then there came the day,—that fateful day,
When little Gian, my father's latest born,
Was carried for chrism to the baptistery;
And standing, all unaware, beside the font,
I looked across the dim and crowded church
And saw a face—a dazzling, youthful face!
A face that smote my vision like a star;
With golden locks, and eyes divinely bright
Like San Michele in the picture there—
Fixed upon mine.

[95]

Had any whispered then
It was Ippolito, our foeman's son,
At whom I gazed, I should have turned away,
My father's daughter sure had turned away.
But nothing warned me, nothing hindered him;
We looked upon each other, Fate so willed,
And with our eyes our hearts met!

"Cursed cur,"
My brother muttered, fingering at his sword,
"I'll teach you to ogle us when this is done!"
"Who is it, then?" I whispered, and he told;
And with the name I felt my heart like lead
Turn cold and cold and suddenly sink down.

And still that tender, radiant gaze wooed mine,
And still I felt the enchantment burn and burn,
But would not turn my head or look again; [96]
And all that night I lay and felt those eyes,
And day by day they seemed to follow me,
Like unknown planets of some strange new heaven
Whose depths I dared not question or explore;
And love and hate so strove for mastery
Within my girl's heart, made their battle-field,
That all my forces failed and life grew faint.

He, for his part, set forth with heart afire
To learn my name,—sad knowledge, easy gained,
Leaving the learner stricken with a chill!
And after that, whenever I might go
To ball or feast, I saw him, only him!
And while the other cavaliers pressed round
To praise my face or dress, or hold my fan,
Or bid me to the dance, he stood aloof
With passionate eyes, but never might draw near.
For still my brother Piero or my sire
Were close behind, with dark set brows intent
To watch him that he did not dare to speak.
Only his eyes met mine, and in my cheeks
I felt the guilty color grow and grow;
And once, when all were masqued, amid the crowd [97]
A hand touched mine, and oh, I knew 'twas his!
At last, with baffling of his heart-sick hope
And long suspense and sorrow, he fell ill;
And in a moment when life's tide ran low
He told his mother all; she, loving him well
And loath to see him perish thus forlorn,
Became his ally, spoke him words of cheer,
And with my cousin Contessa, her sworn friend,
She counsel took; and so, betwixt the two,
It came about that on a day of spring
When almond blossoms whitened the brown boughs
And olives were in bud and all birds sang,
We met,—a meeting cunningly contrived,
In an old villa garden past the walls.
My mother had led me thither, knowing naught,
And I, naught knowing, had wandered for a space
Among the boskage and the fragrant vines,
And, standing by a water-fount of stone
Listening the tinkle and the cool, wet splash
Of the thin drip, and thinking still of him
(For I went thinking of him all the day),
I heard the soft throb of a mandolin,
And next a voice, divinely sweet it seemed,
A voice unheard till then, and yet I knew
The voice for his; and this the song it sang:— [98]

"Ah, thorns so sharp, so strong!
Ah, path so hard, so long!
What do I care? Thither I fare!
My Rose is there!

"Ah, life so dear, so brief!
Ah, death, the end of grief!
All I can bear, all will I dare!

The music ceased, the while spell-bound I stayed;
Then came a rustle,—he was at my feet!

Few moments might we stay, and few words speak;
But love is swift of tongue! all was arranged,—
The plan of our escape, the hour, the place,
And that Ippolito, next night but two,
With a rope-ladder hidden 'neath his cloak,
Should stand beneath my window. Once on ground
A priest should wait to bind us quickly one.
Then a mad gallop, ere the dawn of day,
Would set us safely forth beyond the rule
Of the Black Lily. Next, as hand in hand
We stood, our lips met in a first long kiss,
And then we parted.

[99]

With his vanishing
The thing grew like a dream, and as in dream
I seemed to walk the next day and the next;
For all my thoughts were of that coming night,
And all my fear was lest it should not come.
And all the old-time animosities,
And all the hates bred in me from a child,
And feudal faiths and loyalties were dead,—
I was no more a Bardi; Love ruled all.

It came, the night, and on the stroke of twelve
I stood at casement, wrapped in veil, with mask
And muffling cloak laid ready close beside;
And there I stood and watched, and heard the bells
Strike one, two, three, and saw the rose of dawn
Deepen to day, and still my love came not.

Then, fearing to be spied, I crept to bed;
And lying in a weary trance, half sleep,
Heard shouts and cries and noise of joyful stir
Run through the palace, and quick echoing feet,
And little Cosmo thundering at my door.
"Wake, Dianora, here is glorious news!
Ippolito, our foeman's only son,
Is caught red-handed on some midnight raid,
Taken with a rope-ladder 'neath his cloak,
Bound for some theft or felony, no doubt;
And as he offers neither excuse nor plea,
He is to suffer at the hour of noon,
In spite of his proud father's threats and cries.
All that the criminal asks by way of boon
Is he may pass our palace as he goes
Unto the scaffold. A queer fancy that!
But all the better sport it makes for us,
And we need neither pity nor deny!
So rise, sweet sister, don your bravest gear,
For all the household on the balcony
Will sit to jeer the fellow as he wends,
And in the midst of us one Bardi Rose
Must be to grace and enjoy the spectacle,
The best that ever Florence saw!"

[100]

My boy,
Look not so startled! Those were bitter days,
I said, and blood had flowed and hearts grown hard,
And hatred is contagious as disease.
Cosmo, my brother, was but as the rest.
He died at nine, ere ever thou wast born,
And I have paid for masses for his soul,—
For many, many masses have I paid;
Heaven will not be hard with a babe like that,
The Frate tells me so, and I am sure.

[101]

What was I saying? So I rose that day
A traitor unsuspected mid his foes,
Who were my friends, hiding 'neath feignèd smiles
A purpose desperate as was my hope.
I rose, and let them deck me as they would,

Put on my jewels, star my hair with pearls,
And all the while a voice like funeral dirge
Sang in my half-crazed ears, or seemed to sing,
The fragment and the cadence of a song.
"Ah, death, the end of grief, what do I care?"
Then I stood up among my tiring-maids,
And saw myself in the long Venice glass
A vision of pale splendor, as I moved
To take my station on the balcony,
In the mid place, the very front of all,
Set like a bride in festival array,
Among the laughing, chattering, peering throng,
To see the hated foeman of our race
Led past the palace on his way to die!
My love, my husband, my Ippolito,
Led past our palace on his way to die!
Long time we waited, till the fear began
To stir that some mischance had marred the plan,
And the procession by another street
Might pass, and so we miss the spectacle,
This was their fear, and my fear was the same;
And still I sat and smiled, and while the bells
Tolled, and they talked and buzzed, I only prayed.
"How if he did not come? Saints, let him come!
O pitying Virgin, only grant he come!"

[102]

They came at last, the Bargello and his troop,
And in the midst my love with hands fast tied,
And golden locks uncurled and face all wan,
But still with gallant bearing, and his eyes
Fixed upon mine,—me, for whose sake he died,
For whose sweet honor's sake he silent died.
There was a little halt, and then a cry
Of fierce joy rang from out our balcony.
Now was my time; all sudden sprang I up,
And while the astonished crowd kept silence deep,
And they, my kin, amazed, sat silent too,
I loudly told our tale, our woful tale,
And made avowal that 'twas for my sake
Ippolito his noble silence kept!
Then, while my brother strove to stop my mouth,
And fierce hands clutched my gown and seized my arms,
I clung and pleaded: "Find the holy Friar,
Good people, only send to find the Friar,—
Find him, for pity's sake! He will confirm
All I have said, and prove my truth and his,
And save my dear Love, slain for love of me."

[103]

Then a great cry arose, some this way ran,
Some that, and suddenly amid the press
A cowl was seen, and Fra Domenico,
Breathless with haste, just conscious of our need,
Ran in the midst, and then, I know not what,—
For all was tumult,—but my love stood free!
Free and unbound! and all the populace
Shouted our twofold names, "Ippolito
And Dianora," and the bells broke out,
And with the bells the sun and all the air
Seemed full of interlaced and tangled sounds,—
Cries and glad peelings and our blended names
On one side; on the other stormy words,
Reproach, and curses.

Then the Podestá

And many great lords came, and all passed in,
And up the stairs, and filled the palace full;
And high and low joined in an equal plea
That the long feud be stanchèd, and as a pledge
Of lasting peace we two be wedded straight.
But still my father frowned and closed his ears,
And still my brothers fumbled at their swords;
But when Count Buondelmonti, aged and gray,
And shattered with the horror just escaped
Suspense and heavy sickness, hurried in,
And kissed my hands, and knelt before my feet
And blessèd me the savior of his son

[104]

And blessed me, the savior of his son,
While with redoubled zeal the Podestá
Urged, and the noble lords,—Heaven touched their hearts,—
They gave consent; and so the feud was healed,
And the next day my Love and I were wed.

And twenty glad years came and fleetly sped.
Each like a separate rose which buds and falls
Duly and fragrantly and is not missed.
'Twas then he carved as a memorial
On the façade of the old Sta. Maria
Sopr' Arno, "*Fuccio mi fecé*" and the date—
"I made myself a robber;" and he laughed,
And said I was the treasure that he stole;
Ah me! and then he sailed unto the wars,
And all the years that have gone by since then
Are as sad night shades steeped in deadly dews.
Death hath been busy with us, as thou knowest;
Thou art the youngest of my six fair sons,
Thou art the only one to close my eyes
When time shall come and puzzles be explained.
How did the old song run? "My Rose is there."
If I shall wake in Paradise one day
And find him safe, and safely still my own,
Not won away from me by some new face,
And see his eyes with the old steadfast look,
Why, that will be enough, that will be heaven!
But if, instead, I find another there
Close to his side where once I used to rest,
No matter who it be, angel or saint,
I must cry "Shame!" whate'er the penalty.
God will not need to send me down to fires,
But only bid me stay in heaven and look!



E sit beside the lower feast to-day;
 She at the higher.
 Our voices falter as we bend to pray;
 In the great choir
 Of happy saints she sings, and does not tire.

We break the bread of patience, and the wine
 Of tears we share;
 She tastes the vintage of that glorious vine
 Whose branches fair
 Set for the healing of all nations are.

I wonder is she sorry for our pain,
 Or if, grown wise,
 She wondering smiles, and counts them idle, vain,—
 These heavy sighs,
 These longings for her face and happy eyes.

[107]

Smile on, then, darling! As God wills, is best.
 We loose our hold,
 Content to leave thee to the deeper rest,
 The safer fold,
 To joy's immortal youth while we grow old;

Content the cold and wintry day to bear,
 The icy wave,
 And know thee in immortal summer there,
 Beyond the grave;
 Content to give thee to the Love that gave.



LET me stand still upon the height of life;
 Much has been won, though much
 there is to win.

I am a little weary of the strife;
 Let me stand still awhile, nor count it

sin

To cool my hot brow, ease the travel pain,
 And then address me to the road again.

Long was the way, and steep and hard the climb;
 Sore are my limbs, and fain I am to rest.
 Behind me lie long sandy tracks of time;
 Before me rises the steep mountain crest.
 Let me stand still; the journey is half done,
 And when less weary I will travel on.

There is no standing still! Even as I pause,
 The steep path shifts and I slip back apace.
 Movement was safety; by the journey-laws
 No help is given, no safe abiding-place,
 No idling in the pathway hard and slow:
 I must go forward, or must backward go!

[109]

I will go up then, though the limbs may tire,
 And though the path be doubtful and unseen;
 Better with the last effort to expire
 Than lose the toil and struggle that have been,
 And have the morning strength, the upward strain,
 The distance conquered, in the end made vain.

Ah, blessed law! for rest is tempting sweet,
 And we would all lie down if so we might;
 And few would struggle on with bleeding feet,
 And few would ever gain the higher height,
 Except for the stern law which bids us know
 We must go forward or must backward go.



TILL swings the scarlet
 pentstemon
 Like threaded rubies on its stem,
 In the hid spot she loved so well;
 Still bloom wild roses brave and
 fair,
 And like a bubble borne in air
 Floats the shy Mariposa's bell.

Like torches lit for carnival,
 The fiery lilies, straight and tall,
 Burn where the deepest shadow is;
 Still dance the columbines cliff-hung,
 And like a brodered veil outflung
 The mazy-blossomed clematis.

Her garden! All is silent now,
 Save bell-note from some wandering cow,
 Or rippling lark-song far away,
 Or whisper from the wind-stirred leaves,
 Or mourning dove which grieves and grieves,
 And "Lost! lost! lost!" still seems to say.

[111]

Where is the genius of the place,—
 The happy voice, the happy face,
 The feet whose light, unerring tread
 Needed no guide in wildwood ways,
 But trod the rough and tangled maze
 By natural instinct taught and led?

Upon the wind-blown mountain-spur
 Chosen and loved as best by her,
 Watched over by near sun and star,
 Encompassed by wide skies, she sleeps,
 And not one jarring murmur creeps
 Up from the plain her rest to mar.

Sleep on, dear heart! we would not break
 Thy slumber for our sorrow's sake:
 The cup of life, with all its zest,
 Thy ardent nature quaffed at full;
 Now, in the twilight long and cool,
 Take thou God's final gift of rest.

[112]

And still below the grape-vine swings;
 The Mariposa's fragile wings
 Flutter, red lilies light their flame,
 Larks float, the dove still plains and grieves;
 But while one heart that loved thee lives,
 Still shall thy garden bear thy name.



Light the Easter fire, and the Easter lamps we trim,
And lilies rear their chaliced cups in churches rich and
dim,

And chapel low and Minster high the same triumphant
strains
In city and in village raise, and on the lonely plains.

"Life" is the strain, and "endless life" the chiming bells repeat,—
A word of victory over death, a word of promise sweet;
And as the great good clasps the less, the sun a myriad rays,
So do a hundred thoughts of joy cling round our Easter days.

And one, which seems at times the best and dearest of them all,
Is this: that all the many dead in ages past recall,
With the friends who died so long ago that memory seeks in vain
To call the vanished faces back, and make them live again;

[114]

And those so lately gone from us that still they seem to be
Beside our path, beside our board, in viewless company,—
A light for all our weary hours, a glory by the way,—
All, all the dead, the near, the far, take part in Easter day!

They share the life we hope to share, as once they shared in this;
They hold in fast possession our heritage of bliss.
Theirs is the sure, near Presence toward which we reach and strain;
On Easter day, on Easter day, we all are one again.

Oh, fairest of the fair, high thoughts that light the Easter dawn!
Oh, sweet and true companionship which cannot be withdrawn!
"The Lord is risen!" sealed lips repeat out of the shadows dim;
"The Lord is risen," we answer back, "and all shall rise in him!"



HE morning hours are joyful fair,
With call of bird and scent of
dew;
And blent with shining gold and
blue

And glad the summer noontides are;
The slow sun lingering seeks the west,
As loath to leave and grieve so soon
The long and fragrant afternoon;
But still the evening is the best.

Day may be full as day may be,—
Her hands all heaped with gifts, her eyes
Alight with joyful prophecies;
But still we turn where wistfully
The veiled evening, dimly fair,
Stands in the shadow without speech,
And holds her one gift out to each,—
Her gift of rest, for all to share.

[116]

Ah! sweetly falls the sunset glow
On silver hairs, all peaceful bent
To catch the last rays, and content
To watch the twilight softly grow;
Content to face the night and keep
The peaceful vigil of the eve,
And like a little child to breathe
A “Now I lay me down to sleep.”

Ah, close of life! Ah, close of day!
Which thinks of morn without regret;
Which thinks of busy noon, and yet
Grieves not to put its toils away;
Which, calmed with thoughts of coming rest,
Watches the sweet, still evening fade,
Counting its hours all unafraid,—
Surely the evening is the best.



YOU tell me, with a little scorn,
 A pitying blame in look and
 touch,
 Of conscious worldly-wisdom
 born,
 That I am hopeful over much;

That all my swans are veriest geese,
 My cheerfulness an easy vent
 For animal spirits, and my peace
 A cheap, contemptible content;

That it is shallow to be glad,
 Idle to hope and vain to trust,
 Because all good is mixed with bad,
 And men are liars, and flesh is dust;

That wisdom grimly prophesies,
 And sits distrustful and alert,
 Peering with far, experienced eyes
 For what may cheat and what may hurt.

[118]

I do not know if you are right;
 But these I hold as certainties:
 That God made day as well as night,
 And joy as well as pain is his;

That if philosophy means doubt,
 And wisdom boding discontents,
 Men may do better far without
 These all-divine accomplishments!

That souls are stronger to endure
 The heavy woes which all may taste,
 If, holding to God's promise sure,
 They wait his time, not making haste

To grieve, anticipating ill;
 How shall they know what sweet, hid thing
 He keeps in store for souls who still
 Follow his beck unquestioning?

Joy is the lesson set for some,
 For others pain best teacher is;
 We know not which for us shall come,
 But both are Heaven's high ministries.

[119]

The swollen torrent rages high;
 The path ahead is steep and wet.
 What then? We still are safe and dry;
 We need not cross that torrent yet!

Perhaps the waters may subside;
 There may be paths which skirt the flood.
 God holds our hand. With him for guide
 We need not fear; for he is good.

Meanwhile there is the sun, the sky,
 And life the joy, and love the zest;
 And, spite of scorn and pity, I
 Will taste to-day, and trust the rest.



THE way is hot, the way is
long,
'Tis weary hours to even-
song,
And we must travel though we tire;
But all the time beside the road
Trickle the small, clear rills of God,
At hand for our desire.

Quick mercies, small amenities,
Brief moments of repose and ease,—
We stoop, and drink, and so fare on,
Unpausing, but re-nerved in strength
From hour to hour, until at length
Night falleth, and the day is done.

The birds sip of the wayside rill,
And raise their heads in praises, still
Upborne upon their flashing wings;
So drinking thus along the way,
Our little meed of thanks we pay
To Him who fills the water-springs,

[121]

And deals with equal tenderness
The larger mercies and the less:
“O Lord, of good the fountain free,
Close by our hard day’s journeying
Be thou the all-sufficing spring,
And hourly let us drink of thee.”

I. LOVE AND DEATH.



UPON the threshold of his guarded
home

Stands Love the child.

A thousand roses bloom above his
head

With rain of dewy petals white and red;
All fair and joyous things themselves array
To deck and soften for dear Love the way.
He stands where often he has stood before;
But now his face is pale, his eyes all wild,
A strange and boding tread has caught his ear,
An awful, hovering shape sweeps into view,
And all his soul is rent with wrath and fear—
What can Love do?

Poor Love! brave Love! he nerves his feeble arm,
He grasps his bow;
The dreadful guest has seized the rainbow wings.
In vain Love strives with tears and shudderings,
In vain he lifts appealing eyes of prayer;
There is no pity or relenting there.
No power has Love to deprecate or charm,
Vain are his puny wiles against this foe;
The roses wither in the icy breath
Which eddies the defenceless portals through,
And, brushing Love aside, in passes Death—
What can Love do?

[123]

II. LOVE AND LIFE.

THE way is steep, and hard to tread, and drear;
Piercing and bleak the icy atmosphere.
My feet are bruised and bleeding, and my eyes
Can only with dim questionings seek the skies.
How could I walk a step without thine aid?
How face the awful silence unafraid?
How bear the star-rays and the moon-glance cold?
Loose not thine hold!

Earth and its kindly ways seem very far,
And yet the shining skies no nearer are;
Except for thee, dear Love, I could not go
Over the hard rocks, the untrodden snow,
But had sat down content with lower things,
With scanty crumbs and waning water-springs,—
A wingèd thing whose wings might not unfold:
Loose not thine hold!

[124]

Loose not thine hold! let me feel all the while
The quickening impulse of thy tender smile
Luring me on, and catch, as if in trance,
The lovely reverence of thy downward glance,
The pity and the splendor of thy face,
The recognition like a soft embrace:
Until my feet shall tread the streets of gold,
Loose not thy hold!

III. PAOLO È FRANCESCA.

THE mighty blast which sweeps and girdles hell
Drives us before it, whither none may tell.
No pause, no goal, no time of respite,—well,
 We are together!

Circling forever in a dark abyss,
Linked by a fate as wild as passionless,
One only thing is left us,—it is this:
 We are together!



PON the river's brink I stand
 Beside the rushing water's
 flow,
 And look from off the shore I
 know,
 The safe and dear familiar land,
 Unto another shore, which lies
 Mist-veiled beneath the crimsoning skies.
 This is a shore, and that a shore.
 Does the earth cease, to rise once more
 Beyond the river's span?
 Ah no! the shores are clasped in one;
 The same firm earth goes on, goes on,
 Though hidden for a little space
 From eye or tread of man.

Upon another shore we stand
 Beside a darker water's flow,
 And catch beyond the earth we know
 Faint glimpses of another land
 Dreaming in sunshine, half descried
 Beyond the rushing river-tide.
 It is life here, and life is there:
 We look from fair things to most fair,
 The river rolls between;
 But held and bound and clasped in one,
 Immortal life goes on, goes on,
 Though only from the farther strand
 The union can be seen.



LONG time in sloth, long time in sin,
Contented with thy dark estate
Hast thou abode, O soul of mine;
Now dawns the morning, fair though
late,

Her sunny tides are sweeping in.
Thy light has come; arise and shine!

The sheathèd bud which all night long
Has folded close its purple up
Upon the morning-glory vine;
At the first rose-flush, the first song,
Unrolls its petals, rears its cup,
And, light being come, makes haste to shine.

It cannot clasp the whole bright day,
Nor the wide-brimming sea of dew
Within its curve exact and fine.
Of countless beams a single ray,
One little freshening sip or two,
It takes, and so is glad to shine.

[128]

Make ready likewise, O my soul!
God's blessed day has dawned; partake!
Anoint thy head with oil and wine;
From the great sum, the mighty whole,
Thy little crumb and portion break,
And, giving thanks, arise and shine!



PLUCKED a purple violet,
Its petals were all dewy wet,
I held it tightly for an hour,
And then I dropped the faded
flower;

Dropped it and lost unconsciously,
Scarce thinking of the how or why.
'Twas hours since, but my fingers yet
Are scented with the violet;
The fragrant spell, invisible,
Has caught and holds me in it's sway.
I would not flee if flight might be;
The violet still rules my day.

I plucked a flower when life was young,
I chose it all the flowers among.
It was so fresh, it was so fair,
Heaven's very dew seemed cradled there;
A little while it smiled in morn,
And then it withered and was gone.
'Tis long years since, but every hour
I taste the perfume of that flower.
Still it endures, and all day pours
A balm of fragrance on the way.
I catch its breath high over death;
A memory still rules my day.



HIGH in the windy lighthouse tower
 The lamps are burning free,
 Each sending with good-will and
 power

Its message o'er the sea,
 Where ships are sailing out of sight,
 Hidden in storm and cloud and night.

On the white waves that seethe and dash
 A ruddy gleam is shed;
 Above, the lighted windows flash
 Alternate gold and red,
 Save where one sad and blinded glass
 Forbids the happy light to pass.

The hungry sea entreats the light,
 The struggling light is fain,
 But obdurate and blank as night
 Rises the darkened pane,
 Casting a shadow long and black
 Along the weltering ocean track.

[132]

Ah, who shall say what drowning eyes
 Yearn for that absent ray;
 What unseen fleets and argosies,
 Ploughing a doubtful way,
 Seek through the night, and grope and strain
 For guidance from that darkened pane?

Ah, Light Divine, so full, so free!
 Ah, world that lies in night!
 Ah, guiding radiance! shine through me
 Brightly and still more bright,
 Nor ever be thy rays in vain
 Because I am a "darkened pane."



IS centuries since they were torn away,
 Those sad-faced Moors from their beloved
 Spain;

In long procession to the wind-swept bay,
 With sobs and muttered curses, fierce with pain,
 They took their woful road and never came again.

Behind them lay the homes of their delight,
 The marble courtyards and cool palaces,
 Where fountains flashed and shimmered day and night
 'Neath dusk and silver blooms of blossoming trees.
 They closed the echoing doors, and bore away the keys.

Palace and pleasure-garden are forgot;
 The marble walls have crumbled long ago;
 Their site, their ownership, remembered not,
 And helpless wrath alike and hopeless woe
 Are cooled and comforted by Time's all-healing flow.

[134]

But still the children of those exiled Moors,
 A sad transplanted stem on alien shore,
 Keep as their trust—and will while time endures—
 The rusty keys which their forefathers bore;
 The keys of those shut doors which ne'er shall open more.

The doors are dust, but yet the hope lives on;
 The walls are dust, but memories cannot die;
 And still each sad-faced father tells his son
 Of the lost homes, the blue Granadian sky,
 The glory and the wrong of those old days gone by.

Ah, keys invisible of happy doors
 Which long ago our own hands fastened tight!
 We treasure them as do those hapless Moors,
 Though dust the palaces of our delight,
 Vacant and bodiless and vanished quite.

Keys of our dear, dead hopes, we prize them still,
 Wet them with tears, embalm with useless sighs;
 And at their sight and touch our pulses still
 Waken and throb, and under alien skies
 We taste the airs of home and gaze in long-closed eyes.



WHEN Lazarus from his three days'
tomb
Fronted with dazzled eyes the
day,
And all the amazed crowd made room,
As, wrapped in shroud, he went his way,
His sisters daring scarce to touch
His hand, their wonderment was such;

When friends and kindred met at meat,
And in the midst the man just dead
Sat in his old-time wonted seat,
And poured the wine and shared the bread
With the old gesture that they knew,—
Were they all glad, those sisters two?

Did they not guess a hidden pain
In the veiled eyes which shunned their gaze;
A dim reproach, a pale disdain
For human joys and human ways;
A loneliness too deep for speech,
Which all their love might never reach?

[136]

And as the slowly ebbing days
Went by, and Lazarus went and came
Still with the same estrangèd gaze,
His loneliness and loss the same,
Did they not whisper as they grieved,
"We are consoled—and he bereaved"?

Oh, weeper by a new-heaped mound,
Who vexes Heaven with outcries vain,
That, if but for one short hour's round,
Thy heart's desire might come again,—
The buried form, the vanished face,
The silent voice, the dear embrace,—

Think if he came, as Lazarus did,
But came reluctant, with surprise,
And sat familiar things amid
With a new distance in his eyes,
A distance death had failed to set,—
If hearts met not when bodies met!

If when you smiled you heard him sigh,
And when you spoke he only heard
As men absorbed hear absently
The idle chirping of a bird,
As, rapt in thoughts surpassing speech,
His mind moved on beyond your reach;

[137]

And still your joy was made his pain,
And still the distance wider grew,
His daily loss your daily gain,
Himself become more strange to you
Than when your following soul sought his
In the vast secret distances;—

If, death once tasted, life seemed vain
To please or tempt or satisfy,
And all his longing was again
To be released and free to die,
To get back to scarce-tasted bliss,—
What grief could be so sharp as this?



HOW can they bear it up in
 heaven,
 They who so loved, and love us
 yet,
 If they can see us still, and know
 The heavy hours that come and go,
 The fears that sting, the cares that fret,
 The hopes belied, the helps ungiven?

Can they sit watching us all day,
 Measure our tears, and count our sighs,
 And mark each throb and stab of pain,
 The ungranted wish, the longing vain,
 And still smile on with happy eyes,
 Content on golden harps to play?

Ah no! we will not do them wrong!
 When mothers hear their babies cry
 For broken toy or trivial woe,
 They smile, for all their love,—they know
 Laughter shall follow presently,
 And sighing turn to merry song.

[139]

They are not cruel, that they smile;
 Their eyes, grown old, can farther see,
 Weighing the large thing and the less
 With wise, experienced tenderness,—
 The moment's grief with joy to be
 In such a little, little while.

Just so the angels, starry-eyed,
 With vision cleared and made all-wise,
 Look past the storm-rack and the rain
 And shifting mists of mortal pain
 To where the steadfast sunshine lies,
 And everlasting summer-tide.

They see, beyond the pang, the strife,
 (To us how long, to them how brief!)
 The compensation and the balm,
 The victor's wreath, the conqueror's palm—
 They see the healing laid to grief,
 They see unfold the perfect life.

For all our blind, impatient pain,
 Our desolate and sore estate,
 They see the door that open is
 Of Heaven's abundant treasures,
 The comforts and the cures that wait
 The bow of promise in the rain.

[140]

And even as they watch, they smile,
 With eyes of love, as mothers may,
 Nor grieve too much although we cry,
 Because joy cometh presently,
 And sunshine, and the fair new day,
 When we have wept a little while.



UT of the bosom of the sea,
 From coasts where dim, rich
 treasures be,
 By vast and urging forces blent,
 Untired, untiring, and unspent,
 The glad waves speed them one by one;
 And, goal attained and errand done,
 They lap the sands and softly lave,—
 Wave after wave, wave after wave.

As stirred by longing for repose
 Higher and higher each wave goes,
 Striving to clasp with foam-white hands
 The yielding and eluding sands;
 And still the sea, relentless, grim,
 Calls his wild truants back to him,—
 Recalls the liberty he gave
 Wave after wave, wave after wave.

All sad at heart and desolate
 They heed the call, they bow to fate;
 And outward swept, a baffled train,
 Each feels his effort was in vain.
 But fed by impulse lent by each
 The gradual tide upon the beach
 Rises to full, and thunders brave,
 Wave after wave, wave after wave.

[142]

Ah, tired, discouraged heart and head,
 Look up, and be thou comforted!
 Thy puny effort may seem vain,
 Wasted thy toil and naught thy pain,
 Thy brief sun quench itself in shade,
 Thy worthiest strength be weakness made,
 Caught up in one great whelming grave,
 Wave after wave, wave after wave.

Yet still, though baffled and denied,
 Thy spendid strength has swelled the tide.
 A feather's weight where oceans roll—
 One atom in a mighty whole—
 God's hand uncounted agencies
 Marshals and notes and counts as his:
 His sands to bind, his threads to save,
 His tides to build, wave after wave.



HOW shall the Word be preached with power?

Not with elaborate care and toil,
 With wastings of the midnight oil,
 With graceful gesture studied well,
 And full intonèd syllable;
 With trope and simile lending force
 To subdivisions of discourse,
 Or labored feeling framed to please—
 The word of power is not in these.

How shall the Word be preached with power?

Not by a separate holiness
 Which stands aloof to warn and bless,
 Speaking as from a higher plane
 Which common men may not attain;
 Which treats of sin and want and strife
 As things outside the priestly life,
 And only draws anigh to chide,
 Holding a saintly robe aside.

[144]

How shall the Word be preached with power?

Ah, needless to debate and plan!
 Heart answereth unto heart in man;
 Out of the very life of each
 Must come the power to heal or teach.
 The life all eloquent may grieve,
 The brain may subtly work and weave,
 But if the heart take not its share,
 The word of power is wanting there.

How shall the Word be preached with power?

Go, preacher, search thy soul, and mark
 Each want, each weakness, every dark
 And painful dint where life and sin
 Have beaten their hard impress in:
 Apply the balm, and test the cure,
 And heal thyself, and be thou sure
 That which helps thee has power again
 To help the souls of other men.

How shall the Word be preached with power?

Go ask the suffering and the poor,
 Go ask the beggar at thy door,
 Go to the sacred page and read
 What served the old-time want and need:
 The clasping hand, the kindling eye,
 Virtue given out unconsciously,
 The self made selfless hour by hour,—
 In these is preached the Word with power!

[145]



HE sat where sunset shadows
 fell,
 And sunset rays, a miracle
 Of palest blue and rose and
 amber,
 Touched her and folded in their spell.

Her golden head against the sky
 Was traced and outlined tenderly,
 And, lily-soft in the soft late sunshine,
 Her fair face blossomed to my eye.

She sang of love with tuneful breath,
 Of sorrow, sweet as aught love saith;
 Of noble pain, immortal longing,
 And hope which stronger is than death.

And every word and every tone
 Seemed born of something all my own.
 'Twas I who sang, 'twas I who suffered;
 Mine was the joyance, mine the moan.

[147]

Each lovely, vibrant, rapturous strain
 Fulfilled my passion and my pain.
 I was the instrument she played on;
 I was her prelude and refrain.

And as dim echoes float and play
 Through forests at the close of day,
 Farther and farther, breathed mysterious
 From glades and copses far away,

So echoed through my heart her song,
 Deeper and deeper borne along,
 Waking to life half-unsuspected
 Grievings and hopes and yearnings strong.

Ah! life and heart may weary be
 And youth may fail, and love may flee;
 But when I hear her, see her singing,
 The world grows beautiful to me.



IS prayer availed! Touched by the tuneful
 plea,
 The Lord of Death relaxed his iron hold,
 And out of the swart shadows, deep and
 cold,
 Stole the lost wife, the fair Eurydice.
 He felt her soft arms in the old embrace,
 He guessed the smile upon her unseen face,
 And joyful turned him from the dreadful place.

A little patience, and all had been well;
 A little faith, and bale had changed to bliss:
 Was it too much that he should ask for this,
 Whose love had dared the steep descent of hell?
 Had faced the Furies and the tongues of fire,
 The reek of torment, rising high and higher,
 Proserpina's sad woe and Pluto's ire?

It seemed a little thing to hope and ask
 That the glad wife, just rescued from the dead,
 Should go unquestioning where her Orpheus led.
 But no; for woman's strength too hard the task.
 "Why dost thou turn thine eyes away from me?
 Am I grown ugly, then, unfit to see?
 Unkind! Thou lovest not Eurydice!"

[149]

Was it because so short a time she stayed
 Among the dead that she had not grown wise?
 Do petty doubts and fears and jealousies,
 Vanity, selfishness, the stain and shade
 On mortal love, survive the poignant thrust
 Which, winnowing souls from out their hindering dust,
 Should wake the eyes to see, the heart to trust?

If we came back to those who love us so,
 And fain would plead with Heaven for our recall,
 Should we come back having forgotten all
 The wisdom which all spirits needs must know?
 Would the old faults revive, the old scars sting,
 The old capacities for suffering
 Quicken to life even in our quickening?

Oh, lovely myth, with just this marring stain!
 I will not think that such deep wrong can be.
 If ever it were given to one again
 Earthward to turn in answer to Love's plea,
 Surely 'twould come in hushed and reverent guise,
 With gentlest wisdom in far-seeing eyes,
 Ripened for life by knowing Paradise.



WITHIN three worlds my Sorrow
 dwells;
 Each made her own by
 heavenly right;
 And one is sadly sweet and fair,
 And one is bright beyond compare,
 And one is void of light.

One is the world of long-past things;
 There she can go at will, and sit
 And sun herself in love's embrace,
 And see upon a vanished face
 The tender, old-time meanings flit.

The second, veiled in glory dim,
 She only dares in part explore;
 Upon its misty bound she stands,
 And reaches out imploring hands
 And straining eyes, but does no more.

[151]

It is the world of unknown joy,
 Where thou, Beloved, amid thy kin,
 The saints of God, the Sons of Light,
 The company in robes of white,
 Hast been made free to enter in.

She sees thee, companied with these,
 Standing far off among the Blest,
 And is content to watch and wait,
 To stand afar without the gate,
 Nor interrupt thy perfect rest.

And so she turns, and down she sinks
 To her third world, that dreary one,
 Which once was shared and lit by thee,
 And never any more can be,
 In which she dwelleth all alone.

It were too dark a world to bear,
 Could she not go, her pain to still,
 Into the fair world of the Past,
 Into the glory, sure and vast,
 Made thine by the Eternal Will.

[152]

In these three worlds my Sorrow sits,
 And each is dear because of thee;
 I joyed in that, I wait in this,
 And in the fulness of thy bliss
 Thou waitest too, I know, for me.



UT yesterday, but yesterday,
She stood beside our dusty
way,
Outreaching for one moment's
space
The key to fortune's hiding-place.

With wistful meanings in her eyes,
Her radiance veiled in dull disguise,
A moment paused, then turned and fled,
Bearing her message still unsaid.

And we? Our eyes were on the dust;
Still faring on as fare all must
In the hot glare of midday sun
Until the weary way be done.

So, fast and far she sped and flew
Into the depths of ether blue;
And we, too late, make bitter cry,
"Come back, dear Opportunity!"

[154]

In vain: the fleet, unpausing wings
Stay not in their bright journeyings;
And sadly sweet as funeral bell
The answer drops, "Farewell! Farewell!"

A PICTURE.



DIM rich space, a vault of arching
gold,

A furious, shouting rabble pressing
near,

A single sentinel to bar and hold
With his one spear.

I see the Roman ruler careless sit
To judge the cause in his accustomed place;
I see the coarse, dull, cruel meanings flit
Across his face.

I see the pitiless priests who urge and rave,
Intent to see the victim sacrificed,
Fearful that scruple or that plea should save—
Where is the Christ?

Not that pale shape which stands amid the press,
In gentle patience uncomplainingly,
Clad in the whiteness of his Teacher's dress—
That is not he!

That slender flame were easily blown out;
One furious gust of human hate, but one!
One chilling breath of treason or of doubt—
And it were gone!

[156]

But thou, O mighty Christ, endurest still;
Quenchless thy fire, fed by immortal breath,
Lord of the heart, Lord of the erring will,
And Lord of Death!

King of the world, thou livest to the end,
Ruling the nations as no other can;
Best comrade, healer, teacher, guide, best friend
And help of man.

I see thee, not a wan and grieving shape,
Facing, like lamb led forth for sacrifice,
The destiny from which is no escape,
With mild, sad eyes,—

But strong and brave and resolute to bear,
Knowing that Death, once conquered, was to be
Thy willing thrall, thy servant grave and fair,
Best help to thee!

[157]

The vision changes on the pictured scene;
The pallid Victim fades, and in his place
Comes a victorious, steadfast, glorious mien,
The true Christ's face.



H, blue and glad the summer
 skies,
 And golden green the widths of
 plain
 Where sun and shadow
 mingled lay,
 As forth we went, with gay intent,
 Across the Mesa's flowery rise,
 To where the shimmering mountain chain
 Beckoned and shone from far away!

The noontide flashed, the noontide sang,
 Along the glittering distant track;
 The dancing wind made answer brave.
 It seemed that all kept festival,
 That joy fires burned and joy bells rang;
 But still our hearts went hovering back
 To sit beside one lonely grave.

It seems so strange, so half unkind,
 That still the earth with life should stir,
 That still we smile, and still we jest. [159]
 And drink our share of sun and air
 And joy—and leave her there behind;
 Nor share such happy things with her
 Who always gave us all her best!

And yet—our love is loyal still;
 And yet—she joyed to have us gay;
 And yet—the moving world moves on,
 And does not wait our sad estate,
 To soothe our hurt or note our ill,
 But, touch by touch, and day by day,
 Heals us, and changes every one.

But she? What is her work to do?
 For never tell me that she lies
 Inactive, lifeless, in the mould,
 Content to keep a moveless sleep
 While worlds revolve in courses new.
 Her fiery zeal, her quick emprise,
 Could never brook such rest to hold!

That grave but hides her worn-out dress,—
 One of God's sure-winged messengers
 I see her, on swift errand sped, [160]
 Glad of the task which strong souls ask,
 Earth's sharpest pain grown littleness
 In the new tide of life made hers,
 Smiling that we should call her dead!

Smile on, dear Heart, until the dawn!
 When once the eternal heights are bared,
 And the long earthly shadows flit,
 And with clear eyes we front the skies,
 We too shall smile with heavenly scorn
 At the dull, human selves who dared
 To call life "Death" and pity it!



HE yellow lighthouse star is
 quenched
 Across the lonely sea;
 The mountains rend their misty
 veils,
 The wind of dawn blows free;
 The waves beat with a gladder thrill,
 Pulsing in lines of spray,
 And fast and far chime on the bar—
 God bless my Dear to-day!

A thousand leagues may lie between
 A world of distance dim;
 But speeding with the speeding light
 My heart goes forth to him.
 Faster than wind or wave it flies,
 As love and longing may,
 And undenied stands by his side—
 God bless my Dear to-day!

[162]

God bless him if he wake to smiles,
 Or if he wake to sighs;
 Temper his will to bear all fate,
 And keep him true and wise;
 Be to him all I fain would be
 Who am so far away,—
 Light, counsel, consolation, cheer—
 God bless my Dear to-day!

The gradual light has grown full fain,
 And streameth far abroad.
 The urgency of my voiceless plea
 Is gathered up by God.
 Take some sweet thing which else were mine,
 Inly I dare to pray,
 And with it brim his cup of joy—
 God bless my Dear to-day!



O many things there might have
 been,
 Had our dear child not died.
 We count them up and call them
 o'er,

We weigh the less against the more,—
 The joy she never knew or shared,
 The bitter woes forever spared,
 The dangers turned aside,
 Heaven's full security,—and then
 Perplexed we sigh,—all might have been.

We might have seen her sweet cheeks glow
 With love's own happy bloom,
 Her eyes with maiden gladness full,
 Finding the whole world beautiful;
 We might have seen the joyance fail,
 The dear face sadden and grow pale,
 The smiles fade into gloom,
 Love's sun grow dim and sink again,—
 Either of these it might have been.

[164]

We might have seen her with the crown
 Of wifehood on her head,
 A queen of home's fair sovereignties,
 With little children at her knees;
 Or, broken-hearted and alone,
 Bereft and widowed of her own,
 Mourning beside her dead,—
 This thing or that, beyond our ken,
 It might have been, it might have been.

There is no need of question now,
 No doubts or risks or fears:
 Safe folded in the Eternal care,
 Grown fairer each day and more fair,
 With radiance in the clear young eyes
 Which in cool depths of Paradise
 Look without stain of tears,
 Reading the Lord's intent, and then
 Smiling to think what might have been.

We too will smile, O dearest child!
 Our dull souls may not know
 The deep things hidden from mortal sense,
 Which feed thy heavenly confidence.
 On this one sure thought can we rest,
 That God has chosen for thee the best,
 Or else it were not so;
 He called thee back to Heaven again
 Because he knew what might have been.

[165]



HE night will round into the morn,
 The angry storm-wind cease to
 beat,
 The spent bird preen his wet tired
 wing,
 Grief ceaseth when the babe is born.
 There comes an end to hardest thing
 Some time,—
 Some time, some far time, late but sweet.

I could not keep on with the fight;
 I could not face my want, my sin,
 The baffled hope, the urgent foe,
 The mighty wrong, the struggling right,
 Excepting that I surely know
 Some time—
 Some time, some dear time,—I shall win.

I could not hold so sure, so fast,
 The truth which is to me so true,
 The truth which men deride and shun,
 Were I not sure it shall at last
 Be held as truth by every one
 Some time,—
 Some time all men shall own it too.

[167]

Some time the morning bells shall chime,
 Some time be heard the victor-song,
 Some time the hard goal be attained,
 The puzzles shall be clear some time,
 The tears all shed, the gains all gained,
 Some time—
 Ah, dear time, tarry not too long!



HE stars are in the sky all day;
 Each linkèd coil of Milky Way,
 And every planet that we know,
 Behind the sun are circling slow.
 They sweep, they climb with stately tread,—
 Venus the fair and Mars the red,
 Saturn engirdled with clear light,
 And Jupiter with moons of white.
 Each knows his path and keeps due tryst;
 Not even the smallest star is missed
 From those wide fields of deeper sky
 Which gleam and flash mysteriously,
 As if God's outstretched fingers must
 Have sown them thick with diamond dust.
 There are they all day long; but we,
 Sun-blinded, have no eyes to see.

[169]

The stars are in the sky all day;
 But when the sun has gone away,
 And hovering shadows cool the west,
 And call the sleepy birds to rest,
 And heaven grows softly dim and dun,
 Into its darkness one by one
 Steal forth those starry shapes all fair—
 We say steal forth, but they were there,
 There all day long, unseen, unguessed,
 Climbing the sky from east to west.
 The angels saw them where they hid,
 And so, perhaps, the eagles did,
 For they can face the sharp sun-ray,
 Nor wink, nor need to look away;
 But we, blind mortals, gazed from far,
 And did not see a single star.

I wonder if the world is full
 Of other secrets beautiful,
 As little guessed, as hard to see,
 As this sweet starry mystery?
 Do angels veil themselves in space,
 And make the sun their hiding-place?
 Do white wings flash as spirits go
 On heavenly errands to and fro,
 While we, down-looking, never guess
 How near our lives they crowd and press?
 If so, at life's set we may see
 Into the dusk steal noiselessly
 Sweet faces that we used to know,
 Dear eyes like stars that softly glow,
 Dear hands stretched out to point the way,
 And deem the night more fair than day.

[170]



LOVE me now! Love has such a little minute!
Day crowds on day with swift and
noiseless tread,
Life's end comes ere fairly we begin it;
Pain jostles joy, and hope gives place to
dread.

Love me now!
It will be too late when we are dead!

Love me now! While we still are young together,
While glad and brave the sun shines overhead,
Hand locked in hand, in blue, smiling weather.
Sighing were sin, and variance ill bestead;
It will be too late when you are dead!

Love me now! Shadows hover in the distance,
Cold winds are coming, green leaves must turn red.
Frownest thou, my Love, at this sad insistence?
Even this moment may the dart be sped.
Love me now!
It will be too late when I am dead!



WHEN out of the body the soul is sent,
 As a bird speeds forth from the opened
 tent,
 As the smoke flies out when it finds a
 vent,
 To lose itself in the spending,—

Does it travel wide, does it travel far,
 To find the place where all spirits are?
 Does it measure long leagues from star to star,
 And feel its travel unending?

And caught by each baffling, blowing wind,
 Storm-tossed and beaten, before, behind,
 Till the courage fails and the sight is blind,
 Must it go in search of its heaven?

I do not think that it can be so;
 For weary is life, as all men know,
 And battling and struggling to and fro
 Man goes from his morn to his even.

[173]

And surely this is enough to bear,—
 The long day's work in the sun's hot glare,
 The doubt and the loss which breed despair,
 The anguish of baffled hoping.

And when the end of it all has come,
 And the soul has won the right to its home,
 I do not believe it must wander and roam
 Through the infinite spaces groping.

No; wild may the storm be, and dark the day,
 And the shuddering soul may clasp its clay,
 Afraid to go and unwilling to stay;
 But when it girds it for going,

With a rapture of sudden consciousness,
 I think it awakes to a knowledge of this,
 That heaven earth's closest neighbor is,
 And only waits for our knowing;

That 'tis but a step from dark to day,
 From the worn-out tent and the burial clay,
 To the rapture of youth renewed for aye,
 And the smile of the saints uprisen;

[174]

And that just where the soul, perplexed and awed,
 Begins its journey, it meets the Lord,
 And finds that heaven and the great reward
 Lay just outside of its prison!



O soul can be quite separate,
 However set apart by fate,
 However cold or dull or shy,
 Or shrinking from the public
 eye.

The world is common to the race,
 And nowhere is a hiding-place;
 Before, behind, on either side,
 The surging masses press, divide;
 Behind, before, with rhythmic beat,
 Is heard the tread of marching feet;
 To left, to right, they urge, they fare,
 And touch us here, and touch us there.
 Hold back your garment as you will,
 The crowding world will rub it still.
 Then, since such contact needs must be,
 What shall it do for you and me?

Shall it be cold and hard alone,
 As when a stone doth touch a stone,
 Fruitless, unwelcome, and unmeant,
 Put by as a dull accident,
 While we pass onward, deaf and blind,
 With no relenting look behind?
 Or as when two round drops of rain,
 Let fall upon a window-pane,
 Wander, divergent, from their course,
 Led by some blind, instinctive force,
 Mingle and blend and interfuse,
 Their separate shapes and being lose,
 Made one thereafter and the same,
 Identical in end and aim,
 Nor brighter gleam, nor faster run,
 Because they are not two, but one?

[176]

Or shall we meet in warring mood,
 The contact of the fire and flood,
 Decreed by Nature and by Will,
 The one to warm, the one to chill,
 The one to burn, the one to slake,
 To thwart and counteract and make
 Each other's wretchedness, and dwell
 In hate irreconcilable?

Or as when fierce fire meets frail straw,
 And carries out the fatal law
 Which makes the weaker thing to be
 The prey of strength and tyranny;
 A careless touch, half scorn, half mirth,
 A brief resistance, little worth;
 A little blaze soon quenched and marred,
 And ashes ever afterward?

[177]

No; let us meet, since meet we must,
 Not shaking off the common dust,
 As if we feared our fellow-men,
 And fain would walk aloof from them;
 Not fruitlessly, as rain meets rain,
 To lose ourselves and nothing gain;
 Not fiercely, prey to adverse fate,
 And not to spoil and desolate.
 But as we meet and touch, each day,
 The many travellers on our way,
 Let every such brief contact be
 A glorious, helpful ministry;
 The contact of the soil and seed,
 Each giving to the other's need,
 Each helping on the other's best,
 And blessing, each, as well as blest.



We bore to see the summer go;
 We bore to see the ruthless
 wind
 Beat all the golden leaves and
 red

In drifting masses to and fro,
 Till not a leaf remained behind;
 We faced the winter's frown, and said,
 "There comes reward for all our pain,
 For every loss there comes a gain;
 And spring, which never failed us yet,
 Out of the snow-drift and the ice
 Shall some day bring the violet."

We bore—what could we do but bear?—
 To see youth perish in its prime,
 And hope grow faint, and joyance grieved,
 And dreams all vanish in thin air,
 And beauty, at the touch of time,

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Become a memory, half believed;
 Still we could smile, and still we said,
 "Hope, joy, and beauty are not dead;
 God's angel guards them all and sees—
 Close by the grave he sits and waits—
 There comes a spring for even these."

We bore to see dear faces pale,
 Dear voices falter, smiles grow wan,
 And life ebb like a tide at sea,
 Till underneath the misty veil
 Our best beloved, one by one,
 Vanished and parted silently.
 We stayed without, but still could say,
 "Grief's winter dureth not alway;
 Who sleep in Christ with Christ shall rise.
 We wait our Easter morn in tears,
 They in the smile of Paradise."


O thought of healing, word of strength!
 O light to lighten darkest way!
 O saving help and balm of ill!
 For all our dead shall dawn at length
 A slowly broadening Easter Day,
 A Resurrection calm and still.

[180]

The little sleep will not seem long,
 The silence shall break out in song,
 The sealed eyes shall ope,—and then
 We who have waited patiently
 Shall live and have our own again.

CONCORD.
MAY 31, 1882.

[181]

“ARTHER horizons every
year!”
Oh, tossing pines which
surge and wave
Above the poet's just made
grave,

And waken for his sleeping ear
The music that he loved to hear,
Through summer's sun and winter's chill,
With purpose stanch and dauntless will,
Sped by a noble discontent,
You climb toward the blue firmament,—
Climb as the winds climb, mounting high
The viewless ladders of the sky;
Spurning our lower atmosphere,
Heavy with sighs and dense with night,
And urging upward year by year
To ampler air, diviner light.

“Farther horizons every year!”
Beneath you pass the tribes of men,
Your gracious boughs o'ershadow them;
You hear, but do not seem to heed
Their jarring speech, their faulty creed. [182]
Your roots are firmly set in soil
Won from their humming paths of toil;
Content their lives to watch and share,
To serve them, shelter, and upbear,
Yet bent to win an upward way
And larger gift of heaven than they,
Benignant view and attitude,
Close knowledge of celestial sign,
Still working for all earthly good
While pressing on to the Divine.

“Farther horizons every year!”
So he, by reverent hands just laid
Beneath your boughs of wavering shade,
Climbed as you climb the upward way,
Knowing not boundary or stay.
His eyes surcharged with heavenly lights,
His senses steeped in heavenly sights,
His soul attuned to heavenly keys,
How should he pause for rest and ease,
Or turn his wingèd feet again,
To share the common feasts of men?
He blessed them with his word and smile, [183]
But still, above their fickle moods,
Wooring, constraining him awhile,
Beckoned the shining altitudes.

“Farther horizons every year!”
To what immeasurable height,
What clear irradiance of light,
What far and all-transcendent goal
Hast thou now risen, O steadfast soul!
We may not follow with our eyes
To where thy farther pathway lies,
Nor guess what vision vast and free
God keeps in store for souls like thee.
But still the pines that bend and wave
Their boughs above thy honored grave
Shall be thy emblem brave and fit,
Firm-rooted in the stalwart sod,
Blessing the earth while spurning it,
Content with nothing short of God.



WHEN we are dead, when you and I are dead,
 Have rent and tossed aside each earthly
 fether
 And wiped the grave-dust from our
 wondering eyes,
 And stand together, fronting the sunrise,
 I think that we shall know each other better.

Puzzle and pain will lie behind us then;
 All will be known and all will be forgiven.
 We shall be glad of every hardness past,
 And not one earthly shadow shall be cast
 To dim the brightness of the bright new heaven.

And I shall know, and you as well as I,
 What was the hindering thing our whole lives through,
 Which kept me always shy, constrained, distressed;
 Why I, to whom you were the first and best,
 Could never, never be my best with you;

[185]

Why, loving you as dearly as I did,
 And prizing you above all earthly good,
 I yet was cold and dull when you were by,
 And faltered in my speech or shunned your eye,
 Unable quite to say the thing I would;

Could never front you with the happy ease
 Of those whose perfect trust has cast out fear,
 Or take, content, from Love his daily dole,
 But longed to grasp and be and have the whole,
 As blind men long to see, the deaf to hear.

My dear Love, when I forward look, and think
 Of all these baffling barriers swept away,
 Against which I have beat so long and strained,
 Of all the puzzles of the past explained,
 I almost wish that we could die to-day.



“GIVE us our daily bread,” we
 pray,
 And know but half of what we
 say.

The bread on which our bodies feed
 Is but the moiety of our need.

The soul, the heart, must nourished be,
 And share the daily urgency.

And though it may be bitter bread
 On which these nobler parts are fed,

No less we crave the daily dole,
 O Lord, of body and of soul!

Sweet loaves, the wine-must all afoam,
 The manna, and the honey-comb,—

All these are good, but better still
 The food which checks and moulds the will.

[187]

The sting for pride, the smart for sin,
 The purging draught for self within,

The sorrows which we shuddering meet,
 Not knowing their after-taste of sweet,—

All these we ask for when we pray,
 “Give us our daily bread this day.”

Lord, leave us not athirst, unfed;
 Give us this best and hardest bread,

Until, these mortal needs all past,
 We sit at thy full feast at last,

The bread of angels broken by thee,
 The wine of joy poured constantly.



GOD giveth his beloved sleep;
 They lie securely 'neath his
 wing
 Till the night pale, the dawning
 break;
 Safe in its overshadowing
 They fear no dark and harmful thing;—
 What does he give to those who wake?

To those who sleep he gives good dreams;
 For bodies overtasked and spent
 Comes rest to comfort every ache;
 To weary eyes new light is sent,
 To weary spirits new content;—
 What does God give to those who wake?

His angels sit beside the beds
 Of such as rest beneath his care.
 Unweariedly their post they take,
 They wave their wings to fan the air,
 They cool the brow and stroke the hair,—
 God comes himself to those who wake.

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To fevered eyes that cannot close,
 To hearts o'erburdened with their lot,
 He comes to soothe, to heal, to slake;
 Close to the pillows hard and hot
 He stands, although they see him not,
 And taketh care of those who wake.

Nor saint nor angel will he trust
 With this one blessed ministry,
 Lest they should falter or mistake;
 They guard the sleepers faithfully
 Who are the Lord's beloved; but he
 Watches by those beloved who wake.

Oh, in the midnight dense and drear,
 When life drifts outward with the tide,
 And mortal terrors overtake,
 In this sure thought let us abide,
 And unafraid be satisfied,—
 God comes himself to those who wake!



ROSES have thorns, and love is thorny too;
 And this is love's sharp thorn which guards
 its flower,
 That our beloved have the cruel power
 To hurt us deeper than all others do.

The heart attuned to our heart like a charm,
 Beat answering beat, as echo answers song,
 If the throb falter, or the pulse beat wrong,
 How shall it fail to grieve us or to harm?

The taunt which, uttered by a stranger's lips,
 Scarce heard, scarce minded, passed us like the wind,
 Breathed by a dear voice, which has grown unkind,
 Turns sweet to bitter, sunshine to eclipse.

The instinct of a change we cannot prove,
 The pitiful tenderness, the sad too-much,
 The sad too-little, shown in look or touch,—
 All these are wounding thorns of thorny love.

[191]

Ah, sweetest rose which earthly gardens bear,
 Fought for, desired, life's guerdon and life's end,
 Although your thorns may slay and wound and rend,
 Still men must snatch you; for you are so fair.



HE talks of "gentry" still, and "birth,"
 And holds the good old-fashioned
 creed
 Of widely differing ranks and station,
 And gentle blood, whose obligation
 Is courteous word and friendly deed.

She knows her own ancestral line,
 And numbers all its links of honor;
 But in her theory of right living
 Good birth involves good will, good giving,—
 A daily duty laid upon her.

Her hands are versed in household arts:
 She kneads and stirs, compounds and spices;
 Her bread is famous in the region;
 Her cakes and puddings form a legion
 Of sure successes, swift surprises.

[193]

A lady in her kitchen apron;
 Always a lady, though she labors;
 She has a "faculty" prompt and certain,
 Which makes each flower-bed, gown, and curtain
 A standing wonder to her neighbors.

Her days seem measured by some planet
 More liberal than our common sun is;
 For she finds time when others miss it
 The poor to cheer, the sick to visit,
 And carry brightness in where none is.

Behold her as, her day's work over,
 Her house from attic to door-scraper
 In order, all her tasks completed,
 She sits down, calm, composed, unheated,
 To read her Emerson or her paper.

She hears the new æsthetic Gospel,
 And unconvinced although surprised is;
Her family knows what is proper.
 She smiles, and does not care a copper,
 Although her carpet stigmatized is.

[194]

She does not quite accept tradition;
 She has her private theory ready;
 Her shrewd, quaint insight baffles leading;
 And straight through dogma's special pleading
 She holds her own, composed and steady.

Kindness her law; her king is duty.
 You cannot bend her though you break her;
 As tough as yew and as elastic
 Her fibre; unconvinced, unplastic,—
 She clasps conviction like a Quaker.

Long live her type, to be our anchor
 When times go wrong and true men rally,
 Till aged Chocorua fails and bleaches
 Beside the shining Saco reaches,
 Monadnock by the Jaffrey valley.



UNDER the snow lie sweet things out of
 sight,
 Couching like birds beneath a downy
 breast;
 They cluster 'neath the coverlet warm
 and white,
 And bide the winter-time in hopeful rest.

There are the hyacinths, holding ivory tips
 Pointed and ready for a hint of sun;
 And hooded violets, with dim, fragrant lips
 Asleep and dreaming fairy dreams each one.

There lurk a myriad quick and linkèd roots,
 Coiled for a spring when the ripe time is near;
 The brave chrysanthemum's pale yellow shoots
 And daffodils, the vanguard of the year;

The nodding snowdrop and the columbine;
 The hardy crocus, prompt to hear a call;
 Pensile wistaria and thick woodbine;
 And valley lilies, sweetest of them all.

[196]

All undismayed, although the drifts are deep,
 All sure of spring and strong of cheer they lie;
 And we, who see but snows, we smile and keep
 The selfsame courage in the by and by.

Ah! the same drifts shroud other precious things,—
 Flower-like faces, pallid now and chill,
 Feet laid to rest after long journeyings,
 And fair and folded hands forever still.

All undismayed, in deep and hushed repose,
 Waiting a sweeter, further spring, they lie;
 And we, whose yearning eyes see but the snows,
 Shall we not trust, like them, the by and by?

SONNET
FOR A BIRTHDAY.

[197]



WISH thee sound health and true sanity,
Ripe youth, a summer heart in age's
snow,
Abiding joy in knowledge, wealth enow
That of the best thou ne'er mayst hindered be;
Long life, love, marriage, children, faithful friends,
Purpose in all thy doing, stintless zeal,
Ambition, enthusiasm, the power to feel
Thy country dearer than thy private ends;
The threefold joy of Nature, books, and fun,
To be thy solace in adversity,
To keep thy father's name as clean as he,
And so transmit it stainless to thy son;
And lastly, crown of glory and of strife,
May honored death give thee Eternal Life.

Now count my wishes, and, the numbering done,
You'll find the enumeration—twenty-one.



LITTLE grave in a desolate spot,
Where the sun scarce shines and flowers
grow not,
Where the prayers of the church are
never heard,
And the funeral bell swings not in air,
And the brooding silence is only stirred
By the cries of wild birds nesting there;
A low headstone, and a legend, green
With moss: “Leonora, just seventeen.”

Here she was laid long years ago,
A child in years, but a woman in woe.
Her sorrowful story is half forgot,
Her playmates are old and bent and gray,
And no one comes to visit the spot
Where, watched by the law, was hurried away
The youth cut short, and the hapless bloom
Which fled from its sorrow to find the tomb.

[199]

Her mourning kindred pleaded in vain
The broken heart and the frenzied brain;
The church had no pardon for such as died
Unblessed by the church, and sternly barred
All holy ground to the suicide;
So death as life to the girl was hard,
And the potter’s field with its deep disgrace
Was her only permitted resting-place.

So the friends who loved her laid her there
With no word of comfort, no word of prayer,
And years went by; but as, one by one,
They dropped from their daily tasks and died,
And turned their faces from the sun,
They were carried and buried by her side,—
Each gave command that such should be,
“For love to keep her company.”

So the little grave, with the letters green,
Of “Leonora, just seventeen,”
Is ringed about with kindred dust,
Not lonely like the other graves
In that sad place, wherein are thrust
Outcasts and nameless folk and slaves,
But gently held and folded fast
In the arms that loved her first and last.

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O potter’s field, did I call you bare?
No garden on earth can be more fair!
For deathless love has a deathless bloom,
And the lily of faithfulness a flower,
And they grow beside each lowly tomb,
And balm it with fragrance every hour;
And with God, who forgiveth till seven times seven,
A potter’s field may be gate of heaven.



ARE all the songs sung, all the music played?
 Are the keys quite worn out, and soundless
 quite,
 Which since sweet fancy's dawning day have
 made
 Perpetual melody for man's delight,
 And charmed the dull day and the heavy night?

Must we go on with stale, repeated themes,
 Content with threadbare chords that faint and fail,
 Till all the fairy fabric of old dreams
 Becomes a jaded, oft-repeated tale,
 And poetry grows tired, and romance pale?

I cannot think it; for the soul of man
 Is strung to answer to such myriad keys
 Set and attuned and chorded on a plan
 Of intricate and vibrant harmonies,
 How shall we limit that, or measure these?

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As free and urgent as the air that moves,
 As quick to tremble as Æolian strings,
 The soul responds and thrills to hates and loves,
 Desires and hopes, and joys and sufferings,
 And sympathy's soft touch and anger's stings.

How dare we say the breezes all are blown,
 The chords have no reserved sweet in store;
 Or claim that all is tested and made known,—
 That nightingales may trill, or skylarks soar,
 But neither can surprise us any more?

The world we call so old, God names his new;
 The thought we christen stale shall outlast men,
 While moons shall haunt the sky, and stars gleam through,
 While roses blossom on their thorny stem,
 And spring comes back again, and yet again;

While human things like blossoms small and white
 Are dropped on earth from unseen parent skies,
 The olden dreams shall please, the songs delight,
 And those who shape and weave fair fantasies
 Shall catch the answering shine in new-born eyes.



WHEN the New Year came, we
 said,
 Half with hope and half with
 dread:
 "Welcome, child, new-born to be
 Last of Time's great family!
 All thy brethren, bent and gray,
 Aged and worn, have passed away
 To the place where dead years go,—
 Place which mortals cannot know.
 Thou art fairest of them all,
 Ivory-limbed and strong and tall,
 Gold hair blown back, and deep eyes
 Full of happy prophecies;
 Rose-bloom on thy youthful cheek.
 Welcome, child!" And all the while
 The sweet New Year did not speak,
 Though we thought we saw him smile.

When the Old Year went, we said,
 Looking at his grim gray head,
 At the shoulders burden-bowed,
 And the sad eyes dark with cloud:
 "Was he ever young and fair?
 Did we praise his sunny hair
 And glad eyes, with promise lit?
 We can scarce remember it.
 Treacherously he smiled, nor spoke,
 Hiding 'neath his rainbow cloak
 Store of grievous things to strew
 On the way that we must go.
 Vain to chide him; old and weak,
 He is dying; let him die."
 And the Old Year did not speak,
 But we thought we heard him sigh.



MORE life we thirst for, but how can we
take?

We sit like children by the surging
sea,

Dip with our shallow shells all day, and make

A boast of the scant measure, two or three

Brief drops caught from the immensity;

But what are these the long day's thirst to slake?

There is the sea, which would not be less full,

Though all the lands should borrow of its flood;

The sea of Life, fed by the beautiful

Abounding river of the smile of God,

Source of supply and fountain of all good,

Boundless and free and inexhaustible.

There is the sea; and close by is our thirst,

Yet here we sit and gaze the waters o'er,

And dip our shallow shells in as at first.

Just where the ripples break to wash the shore,

And catch a tantalizing drop, nor durst

The depth or distance of the wave explore.

[206]

Ah, mighty ocean which we sport beside,

One day thy wave will rise and foam, and we,

Lost in its strong, outgoing, refluent tide,

Shall be swept out into the deeper sea,

Shall drink the life of life, and satisfied

Smile at the shore from far eternity.

And the Lord shut him in.—*Gen.* vii. 16.



AS it the Lord who shut me
in
Between these walls of
pain?

Who drew between me and the sun
The darkening curtains, one by one,
Cold storm and bitter rain,
Hiding all happy things and fair,
The flying birds, the blowing air,
And bidding me to lie,
All sick of heart and faint and blind,
Waiting his will to loose or bind,
To give or to deny?

Was it the Lord who shut me in
Within this place of doubt?
I chose not doubt, my doubt chose me,
Not unpermitted, Lord, of thee,—
It had not dared without:
What doubt shall venture to uprear
And whisper in a human ear,
If thou, Lord, dost forbid?
Yet is it of thy blessed will
That I sit questioning, grieving, chill,
Nor joy as once I did?

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Is it the Lord that shuts me in?
Then I can bear to wait!
No place so dark, no place so poor,
So strong and fast no prisoning door,
Though walled by grievous fate,
But out of it goes fair and broad
An unseen pathway, straight to God,
By which I mount to thee.
When the same Love that shut the door
Shall lift the heavy bar once more,
And set the prisoner free.



HE interlacing verdurous screen
 Of the stanch woodbine still is
 green,
 And thickly set with milk-white
 blooms
 Gold-anthered, breathing out perfumes;
 The clematis on trellis bars
 Still flaunts with white and purple stars;
 No missing leaf has thinner made
 The obelisks of maple shade;
 Fresh beech boughs flutter in the breeze
 Which, warm as summer, stirs the trees;
 The sun is clear, the skies are blue:
 But still a sadness filters through
 The beauty and the bloom; and we,
 Touched by some mournful prophecy,
 Whisper each day: "Delay, delay!
 Make not such haste to fly away!"
 And they, with silent lips, reply:
 "Summer is gone; we may not stay.
 Summer is gone. Good-by! good-by!"
 Roses may be as fragrant fair
 As in the sweet June days they were;
 No hint of frost may daunt as yet
 The clustering brown mignonette,
 Nor chilly wind forbid to ope
 The odorous, fragile heliotrope;
 The sun may be as warm as May,
 The night forbear to chase the day,
 And hushed in false security
 All the sweet realm of Nature be:
 But the South-loving birds have fled,
 By their mysterious instinct led;
 The butterflies their nests have spun,
 And donned their silken shrouds each one;
 The bees have hived them fast, while we
 Whisper each day: "Delay, delay!
 Make not such haste to fly away!"
 And all, with pitying looks, reply:
 "Summer is fled; we may not stay.
 Summer is gone. Good-by! good-by!"

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HEY sat in the cool of the day to rest,—
 Adam and Eve, and a nameless guest.
 The sky o'er the desert was hot and red,
 But the palm boughs nestled overhead,
 And the bubbling waters of the well
 Up and down in their basin fell,
 And the goats and the camels browsed at ease,
 And the confident song birds sang and flew
 In the shade of the thick mimosa trees;
 For fear was not when the world was new.

In the early dawning had come the guest,
 And whether from east or whether from west
 They knew not, nor asked, as he stood and bent
 At the entrance of the lowly tent:
 He had dipped his hand in the bowl of food,
 He had thanked and praised and called it good;
 And now between his hosts he sat,
 And talked of matters so deep and wise
 That Eve looked up from her braiding mat
 With wonderment in her beautiful eyes.

"All is not lost," the stranger said,
 "Though the garden of God be forfeited;
 Still is there hope for the life of man,
 Still can he struggle and will and plan,
 Still can he strain toward the shining goal
 Which tempts and beckons his sinewy soul;
 Still there is work to brace his thews,
 And love to sweeten the hard-won way,
 And the power to give, and the right to choose,—
 And—" He paused; and the rest he did not say.

Then silence fell, for their thoughts were full
 Of the fair lost garden beautiful;
 A homesick silence, which neither broke
 Till once again the stranger spoke:
 "You are strong," he said, "with the strength of heaven,
 And the world and its creatures to you are given;
 You shall win in the fight, though many oppose.
 You shall tread on the young of the lion's den,
 And the desert shall blossom as the rose
 'Neath your tendance." And Adam asked: "And then?"

"Then, ripening with the riper age,
 Your sons, a goodly heritage,
 Like palm-trees in their stately strength,
 Shall win to man's estate at length.
 Beside thee shall they take their stand,
 To do thy will, uphold thy hand,
 To speed thy errands with eager feet,
 To quit them in their lot like men,
 With tendance and obedience meet."
 Then once more Adam said, "And then?"

"Then, as mild age draws slowly on,
 And faintly burns thy westering sun,
 When on the pulse no longer hot
 Falls quietude which youth knows not,
 When patience rules the tempered will,
 And strength is won by sitting still,
 Then shall a new-born pleasure come
 Into thy heart and arms again,
 As children's children fill thy home."
 Eve smiled; but Adam said, "And then?"

"Then"—and the guest rose up to go—
 "The best, the last thing shalt thou know:
 This life of struggle and of fight
 Shall vanish like a wind-blown light;
 And after brief eclipse shall be
 Re-lit, to burn more gloriously.
 Men by a strange, sad name shall call

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Men by a strange, sad name shall call
The darkness, and with bated breath
Confront it, but of God's gifts all
Are nothing worth compared with death."

Even as he spoke his visage gleamed
With light unearthly, and it seemed
That radiant wings, unseen till then,
Lifted and bore him from their ken.
Awe-struck the solitary two
Beheld him vanish from their view.
"It was the angel of the Lord,"
They said. "How blind we were and dull!
He did not bear the fiery sword;
Surely the Lord is pitiful."

And then? The unrelenting years
Surged tide-like on, with hopes and fears
And labors full, but nevermore
Brought any angel to their door.
But still his words within her heart
Eve kept, and pondered them apart.
And when one fatal day they brought
Her Abel to her, cold and dead,
She stayed her anguish with this thought:
"Tis God's best gift, the angel said."

“ COMMONPLACE life,” we say, and we
sigh;
But why should we sigh as we say?
The commonplace sun in the
commonplace sky,
Makes up the commonplace day;
The moon and the stars are commonplace things,
And the flower that blooms, and the bird that sings:
But dark were the world and sad our lot
If the flowers failed and the sun shone not;
And God, who studies each separate soul,
Out of commonplace lives makes his beautiful whole.



OLD, frankincense, and myrrh they brought the new-born
Christ,—

Those wise men from the East,—and in the ox's stall
The far-brought precious gifts they heaped, with love
unpriced;

And Christ the babe looked on, and wondered not at all.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh I, too, would offer thee,
O King of faithful hearts, upon thy Christmas Day;
And poor and little worth although the offering be,
Because thou art so kind, I dare to think I may.

I bring the gold of faith, which, through the centuries long,
Still seeks the Holy Child, and worships at his feet,
And owns him for its Lord, with gladness deep and strong,
And joins the angel choir, singing in chorus sweet.

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The frankincense I bear is worship which can rise,
Like perfume floating up higher and higher still,
Till on the wings of prayer it finds the far blue skies,
And falls, as falls the dew, to freshen heart and will.

And last I bring the myrrh, half bitter and half sweet,
Of my own selfish heart, through sacrifice made clean,
And break the vase and spill the oil upon thy feet,
O Lord of Christmas Day, as did the Magdalene.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh,—'tis all I have to bring
To thee, O Holy Child, now throned in heaven's mid!
Because thou art so kind, take the poor offering,
And let me go forth blessed, as once the Wise Men did.



GOD, in his power, keeps making more
 men,
 Peopling the great world again and
 again;
 Age after age, as the centuries roll,
 Never he makes a mistake with a soul,
 Never neglects them, and never forgets.
 Atoms in space from their birth to their end,
 Dead or alive, he is always their friend.

Those who lived first, when the world was all new,
 Still are as dear in his sight as are you;
 Perished their names from the earth that they trod,
 But every name is remembered by God,—
 All that they sought for, and all that they wrought.
 Fixed in unlikeness each separate soul,
 Brethren and kin in the infinite whole.

Is God not tired, though almighty He is,
 As the long years form the slow centuries,
 And the slow centuries linked in embrace
 Make up the cycles and meet into space?
 Wearies He never, nor ceaseth His toil,
 Nor says, "It is finished; creation is done"—
 Men are so many, and God is but one!

[220]

Foolish and childish the thought that I frame.
 Meteors fall in, but the sun is the same.
 What are the birds to the air-spaces free?
 What are the fish to the surge or the sea,
 Grains to the desert sands, motes to the beam?
 Time hides its face at Eternity's call;
 Men may be many, but God he is all.



LL winter long it ebbd and ebbd, and left the cold earth
bare.
No pulse of growth the bare boughs stirred, no hope the
frozen air;
No twitters cheered the snow-heaped nests, no songs the vine and trees,
As outward, outward swept the tide, and left the world to freeze.

Then came a subtle change,—a time when for a moment's space
Life seemed to stay its flying feet and cease its outward race,
And, poised as waves poise, turn its face toward the deserted shore,
And with a pitying rush come back to visit it once more.

[222]

We saw the freshening forces rise in every yellowing stem,
In budding oak and tasselled larch and scarlet maple gem.
Inch after inch, wave following wave, it rose on every side;
And now the tide is at its flood, the blessed summer-tide.

For every ebb there comes a flow; brave hearts can smile at both.
The waters come, the waters go; we watch them, nothing loath.
Led by a hand invisible, their bright waves seem to sing,
"The Lord who rules the winter is the Lord who sends the spring!"




ARE the angels never impatient
That we are so weak and slow,
So dull to their guiding touches,
So deaf to the whispers low
With which, entreating and urging,
They follow us as we go?

Ah no! the pitiful angels
Are clearer of sight than we,
And they note not only the thing that we are,
But the thing that we fain would be,—
The hint of gold in the cumbering dross,
Of fruit on the bare, cold tree.

And I think that at times the angels
Must smile as mothers smile
At the peevish babies on their knees,
Loving them all the while,
And cheating the little ones of their pain
With sweet and motherly wile.

[224]

And if they are so patient, the angels,
How tenderer far than they
Must the mighty Lord of the angels be,
Whom the heavenly hosts obey,
Who speeds them forth on their errands,
And cares for us more than they!

“OT yet,” she cried, “not yet!
 It is the dawning, and life looks so
 fair;
 Give me my little hour of sun
 and dew.
 Is it a sin that I should crave my share,
 The common sunshine and the common air,
 Before I go away, dark shade, with you?
 Not yet!

“Not yet,” she cried, “not yet!
 The day is hot, and noon is pulsing strong,
 And every hour is measured by a task;
 There is no time for sighing or for song.
 Leave me a little longer, just so long
 As till my work is done,—’tis all I ask.
 Not yet!

“Not yet,” she cried, “not yet!
 Nightfall is near, and I am tired and frail;
 Day was too full, now resting-time has come.
 Let me sit still and hear the nightingale,
 And see the sunset colors shift and pale,
 Before I take the long, hard journey home.
 Not yet!”

[226]

And to all these in turn,
 Comes Death, the unbidden, universal guest,
 With deep and urgent meanings in his eyes,
 And popped flowers upon his brow, his breast,
 Whispering, “Life is good, but I am best;”
 And never a parted soul looks back and cries,
 “Not yet!”



O-DAY is mine; I hold it fast,
Hold it and use it as I may,
Unmindful of the shadow cast
By that dim thing called
Yesterday.

To-morrow hovers just before,
A bright-winged shape, and lures me on,
Till in my zeal to grasp and know her,
I drop To-day,—and she is gone.

The bright wings captured lose their light:
To-morrow weeps, and seems to say,
“I am To-day,—ah, hold me tight!
Erelong I shall be Yesterday.”

**“THAT WAS THE TRUE LIGHT, THAT LIGHTETH EVERY
MAN THAT COMETH INTO THE WORLD.”**

[228]



HEY spy it from afar,
The beacon's fiery star,
And storm-tossed birds, by fierce
winds buffeted,
Rally with half-spent force,
And shape their struggling course
To where it rears its blazing, beckoning head.

Faintly the tired wings beat
That rhythmical repeat
Which was such joy in summer and in sun;
Glazed are the keen, bright eyes,
And heave with panting sighs
The soft and plumèd bosoms every one.

O'er the white, weltering waves,
Which yawn like empty graves,
Borne on the urgings of the wind, they fly;
They reach the luring glow,
They launch and plunge, and lo!
Are dashed upon the glass, and fall and die.

[229]

So through the storm and night,
Outwearied with long flight,
Our souls come crowding o'er the angry sea.
In North, in East, in West,
There is no place of rest,
Except, O kindly Light, except with thee.

No cold, unyielding glass
Bars and forbids to pass;
Thy dear light scorcheth not, nor burns in vain;
The soul that finds and knows
Such safe and sure repose
Need nevermore go out or roam again.

Ah, steadfast citadel!
Ah, lamp that burns so well
Upon the Rock of Ages, founded true!
Above the angry sea
We urge our flight to thee.
Shine, kindly Light, and guide us safely through!



HEY followed the Star the whole night
 through;
 As it moved with the midnight they
 moved too;
 And cared not whither it led, nor knew,
 Till Christmas Day in the morning.

And just at the dawn in the twilight shade
 They came to the stable, and, unafraid,
 Saw the Blessed Babe in the manger laid
 On Christmas Day in the morning.

We have followed the Star a whole long year,
 And watched its beckon, now faint, now clear,
 And it now stands still as we draw anear
 To Christmas Day in the morning.

And just as the wise men did of old,
 In the hush of the winter dawning cold,
 We come to the stable, and we behold
 The Child on the Christmas morning.

[231]

And just as the wise men deemed it meet
 To offer him gold and perfumes sweet,
 We would lay our gifts at his holy feet,—
 Our gifts on the Christmas morning.

O Babe, once laid in the ox's bed,
 With never a pillow for thy head,
 Now throned in the highest heavens instead,
 O Lord of the Christmas morning!—

Because we have known and have loved thy star,
 And have followed it long and followed it far,
 From the land where the shadows and darkness are,
 To find thee on Christmas morning,—

Accept the gifts that we dare to bring,
 Though worthless and poor the offering,
 And help our souls to rise and to sing
 In the joy of thy Christmas morning.



HE autumn seems to cry for thee,
 Best lover of the autumn days!
 Each scarlet-tipped and wine-red
 tree,
 Each russet branch and branch of gold,
 Gleams through its veil of shimmering haze,
 And seeks thee as they sought of old;
 For all the glory of their dress,
 They wear a look of wistfulness.

In every wood I see thee stand,
 The ruddy boughs above thy head,
 And heaped in either slender hand
 The frosted white and amber ferns,
 The sumach's deep, resplendent red,
 Which like a fiery feather burns,
 And over all, thy happy eyes,
 Shining as clear as autumn skies.

[233]

I hear thy call upon the breeze
 Gay as the dancing wind, and sweet,
 And underneath the radiant trees,
 O'er lichens gray and darkling moss,
 Follow the trace of those light feet
 Which never were at fault or loss,
 But, by some forest instinct led,
 Knew where to turn and how to tread.

Where art thou, comrade true and tried?
 The woodlands call for thee in vain,
 And sadly burns the autumn-tide
 Before my eyes, made dim and blind
 By blurring, puzzling mists of pain.
 I look before, I look behind;
 Beauty and loss seem everywhere,
 And grief and glory fill the air.

Already, in these few short weeks,
 A hundred things I leave unsaid,
 Because there is no voice that speaks
 In answer, and no listening ear,
 No one to care now thou art dead!
 And month by month, and year by year,
 I shall but miss thee more, and go
 With half my thought untold, I know.

[234]

I do not think thou hast forgot,
 I know that I shall not forget,
 And some day, glad, but wondering not,
 We two shall meet, and face to face,
 In still, fair fields unseen as yet,
 Shall talk of each old time and place,
 And smile at pain interpreted
 By wisdom learned since we were dead.



ARK falls the night, withheld the
 day,
 Weary we fare perplexed and
 chill,
 Led by one little guiding ray
 Shining from centuries far away,—
 Good-will and Peace: Peace and Good-will.

The torch of glory pales and wanes,
 The lamp of love must know decease,
 But still o'er far Judæan plains
 The quenchless star-beam lives and reigns,—
 Peace and Good-will: Good-will and Peace.

And clear to-day as long ago
 The angel-chorus echoes still,
 Above the clamor and the throe
 Of human passion, human woe,—
 Good-will and Peace: Peace and Good-will.

[236]

Through eighteen hundred stormy years
 The dear notes ring, and will not cease;
 And past all mists of mortal tears
 The guiding star rebukes our fears,—
 Peace and Good-will: Good-will and Peace.

Shine, blessed star, the night is black,
 Shine, and the heavens with radiance fill,
 While on thy slender, guiding track
 The angel voices echo back,—
 Good-will and Peace: Peace and Good-will.



Is it the Fast which God
 approves,
 When I awhile for flesh eat
 fish,
 Changing one dainty dish
 For others no less good?

Do angels smile and count it gain
 That I compose my laughing face
 To gravity for a brief space,
 Then straightway laugh again?

Does Heaven take pleasure as I sit
 Counting my joys as usurers gold,—
 This bit to give, that to withhold,
 Weighing and measuring it;

Setting off abstinence from dance
 As buying privilege of song;
 Calling six right and seven wrong,
 With decorous countenance;

[238]

Compounding for the dull to-day
 By projects for to-morrow's fun,
 Checking off each set task as done,
 Grudging a short delay?

I cannot think that God will care
 For such observance; He can see
 The very inmost heart of me,
 And every secret there.

But if I keep a truer Lent,
 Not heeding what I wear or eat,
 Not balancing the sour with sweet,
 Evenly abstinent,

And lay my soul with all its stain
 Of travel from the year-long road,
 Between the healing hands of God
 To be made clean again;

And put my sordid self away,
 Forgetting for a little space
 The petty prize, the eager race,
 The restless, striving day;

[239]

Opening my darkness to the sun,
 Opening my narrow eyes to see
 The pain and need so close to me
 Which I had willed to shun;

Praying God's quickening grace to show
 The thing he fain would have me do,
 The errand that I may pursue
 And quickly rise and go;—

If so I do it, starving pride,
 Fasting from sin instead of food,
 God will accept such Lent as good,
 And bless its Easter-tide.



HE multitude was crowding all the way,
 But yesterday,
 To see and touch the Lord as he rode by,
 To catch his eye,
 Or at the very least a palm-branch fling
 Upon the pathway of the chosen King.

Faded and dry those palms lie in the sun,
 Withered each one;
 Those glad, rejoicing shouters presently
 Will flock to see,
 With never thought of pity or of loss,
 The King of Glory on his cruel cross.

Lord, we would fain some little palm-branch lay
 Upon thy way;
 But we have nothing fair enough or sweet
 For holy feet
 To tread, nor dare our sin-stained garments fling
 Upon the road where rides the Righteous King.

[241]

Yet thou, all-gracious One, didst not refuse
 Those fickle Jews;
 And even such worthless leaves as we may cull,
 Faded and dull,
 Thou wilt endure and pardon and receive,
 Because thou knowest we have naught else to give.

So, Lord, our stubborn wills we first will break,
 If thou wilt take;
 And next our selfishness, and then our pride,—
 And what beside?
 Our hearts, Lord, poor and fruitless though they be,
 And quick to change, and nothing worth to see.

If but the foldings of thy garment's hem
 Shall shadow them,
 These worthless leaves which we have brought and strewed
 Along thy road
 Shall be raised up and made divinely sweet,
 And fit to lie beneath thy gracious feet.



HE Soul said to the Body, in the watches of the night:
 "I am the nobler part of thee, stronger and far more
 worth.

God gave me of his life of life a tiny point of light;
 I show his glory to the world, but thou art of the earth."

The Body answered to the Soul: "Lower I am, and yet
 God made me in his image for angel eyes to see.
 Thou art but viewless essence, whom all men would forget
 Except for the abiding-place which thou hast found in me."

The Soul said to the Body: "I guide thee at my will.
 I am the wind within the sail, which else would lifeless swing;
 I am the mainspring of the watch, which else, inert and still,
 Would cumber all the universe, a dead and useless thing."

[243]

"I too have rule," the Body cried. "I curb thy higher flights;
 I fetter all thy soarings, and I bind thee, and I grieve.
 I can sting thee into wakefulness through long, unresting nights;
 Can take the glory from thy noon, the splendor from thy eve."

"And well can I return such wrong," replied the eager Soul.
 "How often hast thou laid thee down, to find thy sleep denied?
 While I quickened in thy brain, robbed thy heart-beats of control,
 And poured through every artery my warm, pulsating tide?"

"Thou shalt lie down to sleep one day, and long that sleep shall last,
 For I will shake thy shackles off and soar up to the skies;
 What power shall avail thee then to break thy slumber fast?
 What voice shall reach thy dreaming ear, to say to thee, 'Arise'?"

[244]

"Ah, Soul!" the Body humbly urged, "be merciful, I pray;
 Thou art the nobler part, but thou canst never let me go.
 I have my certain share of all, thy best, thy worst, alway:
 We are inextricably blent. God willed it should be so.

"Thou wilt reach heaven before me, but I may follow too.
 There is a resurrection for the Body, as the Soul;
 Comrades to all eternity, we should be comrades true
 Who own one common fate and life, who seek the self-same goal.

"Forbear, then, to reproach me, O brother given by Heaven!
 I wrong myself in wronging thee, dearest and closest friend!
 Let all our variance and strife be buried and forgiven,
 And let us work together in love unto the end."

Then the Soul smiled on the Body, and the Body drank the smile,
 As meadow pastures drink the flood of sunshine still and deep;
 And the two embraced each other, and in a little while,
 Close folded in the Body's arms, the Soul had fallen asleep.



HE wind is fierce and loud and
 high,
 The angry tempest hurtles by;
 With quivering keel and
 straining sail
 The ship of State confronts the gale.
 Rocks are ahead and peril near;
 But still we face the storm, nor fear,
 Saying this brave truth o'er and o'er:
 "The nation's heart is sound at core."

We knew it in those darker days
 When all the kind, familiar ways
 And all the tenderness of life
 Seemed lost in bitterness and strife;
 When, torn with shot and riddled through,
 Lay in the dust our Red and Blue,
 Dropped by the gallant hands that bore,
 "The nation's heart is sound at core."

[246]

We said it when the war-cloud rent,
 And out of field and out of tent
 The bronzed soldiers, Blue and Gray,
 Took each the peaceful homeward way;
 When the foiled traitors sought to attain
 By fraud what force had failed to gain,—
 Heart-sick, we said the words once more:
 "The nation's heart is sound at core."

And always, as the worst seemed near,
 And stout hearts failed for very fear,
 Came a great throb the country through,—
 The nation's heart still beating true!
 Ah, mother-land and mother-breast,
 We still will trust you and will rest;
 Although waves howl and tempests lower,
 Your heart, our heart, is sound at core.



T lies among the greenest hills
 New England's depths can show;
 About their base the river fills
 And empties as the distant mills
 Control its ebb and flow:
 It had a quick life of its own,
 But that was long ago.

Two centuries have rolled away
 Since a small, hardy band
 Turned their sad faces from the bay,
 The dim sky-line where England lay,
 And boldly marched inland.
 Before them lay the wilderness,
 Behind them lay the strand.

[248]

Bravely they plunged into the waste
 By white foot never trod;
 Bravely and busily they traced
 The village boundaries, and placed
 Their ploughs in virgin sod;
 Built huts, and then a meeting-house
 Where man might worship God.

The huts gave place to houses white;
 The axe-affrighted woods
 Shrank back to left, shrank back to right;
 The valleys laughed with harvest light;
 The river's vagrant moods
 Were curbed by clattering wheels, which shook
 The once green solitudes.

And years flowed on, and life flowed by.
 The hills were named and known.
 The young looked out with eager eye
 From the "old" village; by and by
 They stole forth one by one,
 Leaving the old folks in their homes
 To labor on alone.

[249]

And one by one the old folks died,
 Each in his lonely way.
 The doors which once stood open wide,
 To let a busy human tide
 Sweep in and out all day,
 Were closed; the unseeing windows stared
 Just as a blind man may.

The mills, abandoned, ceased to whir;
 The unchecked river ran
 Its old-time courses, merrier,
 And glad in spirit, as it were,
 For its escape from man,
 Teased the dumb wheels, and mocked and played
 As only a river can.

Looking to-day across the space,
 Beyond the flower-fringed track
 Which once was road, the eye can trace
 The outlines of a cellar-place,
 A half-burned chimney-back:
 They mark the ruins of a home
 Now empty, cold, and black.

[250]

And here and there an old dame stands
 Some farm-house window nigh,
 Or, dark against the pasture-lands,
 A ploughman old, with trembling hands,
 Checks his team suddenly,
 And turns a gray head to the road
 To watch the passer-by.

Above the empty village lies

One thickly peopled spot,
Where gray stones in gray silence rise,
And tell to sunset and sunrise
Of past lives that are not,—
The lives that fought and strove and toiled
And builded. And for what?

'Tis Nature's law in everything.
The river seeks the sea;
But not one droplet wandering
Goes ever back to feed the spring.
Such things are and must be.
The gone is gone, the lost is lost,
Fled irrevocably.

Old village on the lonely hill,
Deserted by your own,
Your spendid lifelike mountain rill
Has gone to swell the tide and fill
Some sea unseen, unknown.
Let this brave thought your comfort be,
As thus you die alone.

[251]



H, dear and friendly Death,
 End of my road, however long it be,
 Waiting with hospitable hands
 stretched out
 And full of gifts for me!

Why do we call thee foe,
 Clouding with darksome mists thy face divine?
 Life, she was sweet, but poor her largess seems
 When matched with thine.

Thy amaranthine blooms
 Are not less lovely than her rose of joy;
 And the rare, subtle perfumes which they breathe
 Never the senses cloy.

Thou holdest in thy store
 Full satisfaction of all doubt, reply
 To question, and the golden clews to dreams
 Which idly passed us by.

[253]

Darkness to tired eyes,
 Perplexed with vision, blinded with long day;
 Quiet to busy hands, glad to fold up
 And lay their work away.

A balm for anguish past,
 Rest to the long unrest which smiles did hide;
 The recognitions thirsted for in vain,
 And still by life denied.

A nearness, all unknown
 While in these stifling, prisoning bodies pent,
 Unto thy soul and mine, beloved, made one
 At last in full content.

Thou bringest me mine own,
 The garnered flowers which felt thy sickle keen,
 And the full vision of that Face divine,
 Which I have loved unseen.

Oh, dear and friendly Death,
 End of my road, however long it be,
 Nearing me day by day, I still can smile
 Whene'er I think of thee!



WE say, "The sun has set," and we sorrow sore
As we watch the darkness creep the landscape
o'er,
And the thick shadows fall, and the night draw
on;
And we mourn for the brightness lost, and the vanished sun.

And all the time the sun in the self-same place
Waits, ready to clasp the earth in his embrace,
Ready to give to all of his stintless ray;
And 'tis we who have "set," it is we who have turned away!

"The Lord has hidden his face," we sadly cry,
As we sit in the night of grief with no helper by.
"Guiding uncounted worlds in their courses dim,
How should our little pain be marked by him?"

But all the while that we mourn, the Lord stands near,
And the Son divine is waiting to help and hear;
And 'tis we who hide our faces, and blindly turn away,
While the Sun of the soul shines on mid the perfect day.



LOWERS die not in the winter-
 tide,
 Although they wake in spring;
 Pillowed 'neath mounds of fleecy
 snow,

While skies are gray and storm-winds blow,
 All patiently they bide,
 Fettered by frost, and bravely wait,
 And trust in spring or soon or late.

Hope dies not in the winter-tide,
 Though sore it longs for spring;
 Cool morn may ripen to hot noon,
 And evening dusks creep all too soon
 The noonday sun to hide;
 But through the night there stir and thrill
 The sleeping strengths of life and will.

[256]

For souls there comes a winter-tide,
 For souls there blooms a spring;
 Though winter days may linger long,
 And snows be deep and frosts be strong,
 And faith be sorely tried,
 When Christ shall shine, who is the Sun,
 Spring-time shall be for every one.

Oh, mighty Lord of winter-tide!
 Oh, loving Lord of spring!
 Come to our hearts this Easter Day,
 Melt all the prisoning ice away,
 And evermore abide,
 Making both good and ill to be
 Thy blessed opportunity.



HE world is vast and we are
small,
We are so weak and it so
strong,
Onward it goes, nor cares at all
For us,—our silence or our song,
Our fast-day or our festival.

We tremble as we feel it sway
Beneath our feet as on we fare;
But, like a ball which children play,
God spins it through the far blue air.
We are his own; why should we care?

Transcriber's Note:

Ostensible errors in layout were checked against other publishings of the poem and adjusted as noted below.

Page 47, *A Birthday*, final line of stanza beginning (I cannot add the lightest thing) was indented four spaces from two. (All impotent to aid or bless)

Page 69, *One Lesser Joy*, fourth line of stanza beginning (Oh, haunting shadowy dread which underlies) indented two spaces from zero. ("Oh, if only they knew—if only they could know,")

Page 104, "Sopr, Arno" changed to "Sopr' Arno" (Sopr' Arno, "*Fuccio mi fece*" and the date—)

Page 135, *Bereaved*, first stanza's last three lines had indents that were the opposite of the rest of the poem. After consulting another publication, the stanza was adjusted.

Page 205, *Life*, final line of first stanza indented two spaces. (But what are these the long day's thirst to slake?)

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