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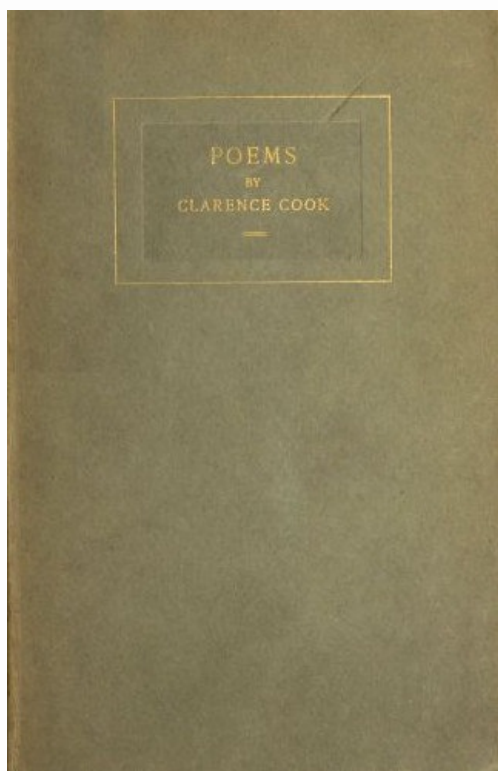
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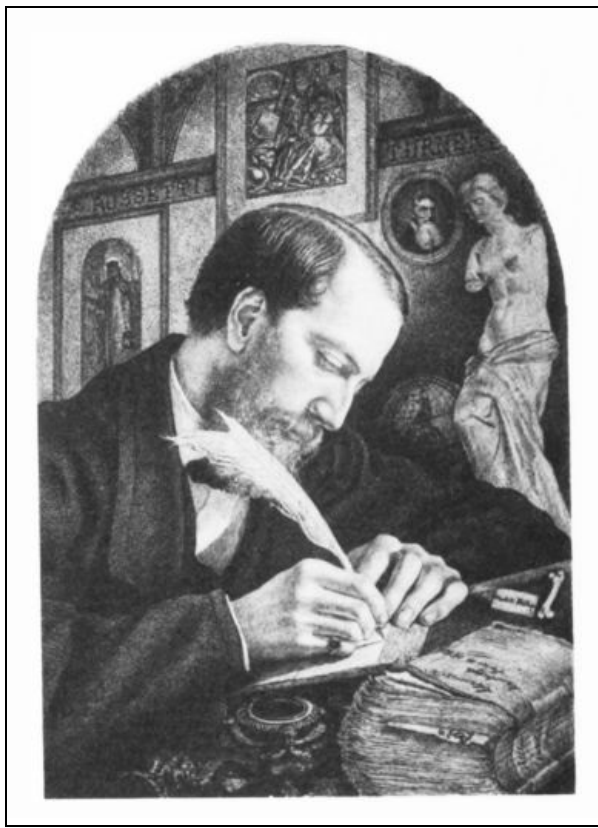
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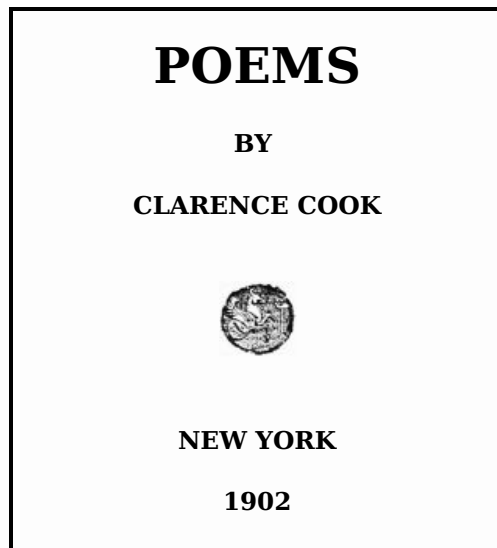
\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS \*\*\*



POEMS  
OF  
CLARENCE COOK



**CLARENCE C. COOK**  
AT THE AGE OF 36  
FROM A PEN-AND-INK DRAWING MADE IN 1864  
BY THOMAS C. FARRAR, PUPIL OF JOHN RUSKIN



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BY LOUISA W. COOK

PRIVATELY PRINTED  
AT THE GILLISS PRESS, NEW YORK  
FOR LOUISA W. COOK  
AND HER FRIENDS  
1902

THIS LITTLE VOLUME  
OF PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED VERSES  
BY THE LATE

CLARENCE COOK

IS DEDICATED TO HIS MANY FRIENDS AND LOVERS

BY HIS WIFE



## CHRONOLOGY

1828

September 8th, Clarence Chatham Cook born at Dorchester, Massachusetts.

1849

Graduated at Harvard College.

Studied architecture for a season. Then became a tutor. Lectured on Art and gave readings from Shakespeare's plays.

1852

Married Tuesday, October 26th, to Louisa De Wint Whittemore, widow of Samuel Whittemore of New York City.

1863

Began a series of articles published in the *New York Tribune*, on "American Art and Artists."

1864

Editor of *The New Path*, a pre-Raphaelite journal published in New York.

1868

Published "The Central Park."

1869

Paris correspondent of *The New York Tribune*. Went to Italy at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war.

1870

Returned to the United States and renewed his connection with *The New York Tribune*.

1874

Wrote the text of a heliotype reproduction of Dürer's "Life of the Virgin."

1878

Completed "The House Beautiful" and edited, with notes, the translation of Lübke's "History of Art."

1884

Editor and proprietor of *The Studio*, a monthly magazine of art published in New York.

1886

Published an illustrated work in three large volumes entitled "Art and Artists of Our Time."

1900

Clarence Chatham Cook died at Fishkill-on-the-Hudson May 31, aged 72 years.

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## POEMS

BY

CLARENCE COOK

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## THE MAPLE TREE

AN April sun with April showers  
Had burst the buds of lagging flowers;  
From their fresh leaves the violets' eyes  
Mirrored the deep blue of the skies;  
The daffodils, in clustering ranks,  
Fringed with their spears the garden banks,  
And with the blooms I love so well  
Their paper buds began to swell,  
While every bush and every tree  
Burgeoned with flowers of melody;  
From the quick robin with his range  
Of silver notes, a warbling change,  
Which he from sad to merry drew  
A sparkling shower of tuneful dew,  
To the brown sparrow in the wheat  
A plaintive whistle clear and sweet.  
Over my head the royal sky  
Spread clear from cloud his canopy,  
The idle noon slept far and wide  
On misty hill and river side,  
And far below me glittering lay  
The mirror of the azure bay.

I stood beneath the maple tree;  
Its crimson blooms enchanted me,  
Its honey perfume haunted me,  
And drew me thither unaware,  
A nameless influence in the air.  
Its boughs were hung with murmuring bees  
Who robbed it of its sweetnesses—  
Their cheerful humming, loud and strong,  
Drowned with its bass the robin's song,  
And filled the April noontide air  
With Labor's universal prayer.  
I paused to listen—soon I heard  
A sound of neither bee nor bird,  
A sullen murmur mixed with cheer  
That rose and fell upon the ear  
As the wind might—yet far away  
Unstirred the sleeping river lay,  
And even across the hillside wheat  
No silvery ripples wandered fleet.  
It was the murmur of the town,  
No song of bird or bee could drown—  
The rattling wheels along the street,  
The pushing crowd with hasty feet,  
The schoolboy's call, the gossip's story,  
The lawyer's purchased oratory,  
The glib-tongued shopman with his wares,  
The chattering schoolgirl with her airs,  
The moaning sick man on his bed,  
The coffin nailing for the dead,  
The new-born infant's lusty wail,  
The bells that bade the bridal hail,  
The factory's wheels that round and round  
Forever turn, and with their sound  
Make the young children deaf to all  
God's voices that about them call,  
Sweet sounds of bird and wind and wave;  
And Life no gladder than a grave.

These myriad, mingled human voices,  
These intertwined and various noises  
Made up the murmur that I heard  
Through the sweet hymn of bee and bird.  
I said—"If all these sounds of life  
With which the noontide air is rife,  
These busy murmurings of the bee  
Robbing the honied maple tree,  
These warblings of the song-birds' voices,  
With which the blooming hedge rejoices,  
These harsher mortal chords that rise  
To mar Earth's anthem to the skies,  
If all these sounds fall on my ear  
So little varying—yet so near—  
How can I tell if God can know  
A cry of human joy or woe  
From the loud humming of the bee,  
Or the blithe robin's melody?"

God sitteth somewhere in his heaven—

About him sing the planets seven;  
With every thought a world is made,  
To grow in sun or droop in shade;  
He holds Creation like a flower  
In his right hand—an æon's hour—  
It fades, it dies,—another's bloom  
Makes the air sweet with fresh perfume.  
Or, did he listen on that day  
To what the rolling Earth might say?  
Or, did he mark, as, one by one,  
The gliding hours in light were spun?  
And if he heard the choral hymn  
The Earth sent up to honor him,  
Which note rose sweetest to his ear?  
Which murmur did he gladliest hear?

*The Roses, April, 1853.*



# ABRAM AND ZIMRI

*Poem founded on a Rabinnical Legend*

ABRAM and Zimri owned a field together,  
A level field, hid in a happy vale;  
They ploughed it with one plough, and in the spring  
Sowed, walking side by side, the fruitful grain;  
Each carried to his home one-half the sheaves,  
And stored them, with much labor, in his barns.  
Now Abram had a wife and seven sons,  
But Zimri dwelt alone within his house.  
One night, before the sheaves were gathered in,  
As Zimri lay upon his lonely bed,  
And counted in his mind his little gains,  
He thought upon his brother Abram's lot,  
And said, "I dwell alone within my house,  
But Abram hath a wife and seven sons;  
And yet we share the harvest sheaves alike:  
He surely needeth more for life than I:  
I will arise and gird myself, and go  
Down to the field, and add to his from mine."  
So he arose and girded up his loins,  
And went out softly to the level field.  
The moon shone out from dusky bars of clouds,  
The trees stood black against the cold blue sky,  
The branches waved and whispered in the wind.  
So Zimri, guided by the shifting light,  
Went down the mountain path, and found the field;  
Took from his store of sheave a generous third,  
And bore them gladly to his brother's heap,  
And then went back to sleep and happy dreams.

Now that same night, as Abram lay in bed,  
Thinking upon his blissful state in life,  
He thought upon his brother Zimri's lot,  
And said, "He dwells within his house alone,  
He goeth forth to toil with few to help,  
He goeth home at night to a cold house,  
And hath few other friends but me and mine  
(For these two tilled the happy vale alone),  
While I, whom Heaven hath very greatly blessed,  
Dwell happy with my wife and seven sons,  
Who aid me in my toil, and make it light;  
And yet we share the harvest sheaves alike;  
This, surely, is not pleasing unto God.  
I will arise and gird myself, and go  
Out to the field, and borrow from my store,  
And add unto my brother Zimri's pile."

So he arose and girded up his loins,  
And went down softly to the level field.  
The moon shone out from silver bars of clouds,  
The trees stood black against the starry sky,  
The dark leaves waved and whispered in the breeze;  
So Abram, guided by the doubtful light,  
Passed down the mountain path, and found the field,  
Took from his store of sheaves a generous third,  
And added them unto his brother's heap;  
Then he went back to sleep and happy dreams.

So the next morning, with the early sun,  
The brothers rose and went out to their toil;  
And when they came to see the heavy sheaves,  
Each wondered in his heart to find his heap,  
Though he had given a third, was still the same.

Now the next night went Zimri to the field,  
Took from his store of sheaves a generous share  
And placed them on his brother Abram's heap;  
And then lay down behind his pile to watch.  
The moon looked out from bars of silvery cloud,  
The cedars stood up black against the sky,  
The olive branches whispered in the wind.  
Then Abram came down softly from his home,  
And, looking to the left and right, went on,  
Took from his ample store a generous third,  
And laid it on his brother Zimri's pile.  
Then Zimri rose and caught him in his arms,  
And wept upon his neck and kissed his cheek,  
And Abram saw the whole, and could not speak,  
Neither could Zimri, for their hearts were full.

## AN APRIL VIOLET

PALE flower, that by this stone  
Sweetenest the air alone,  
While round thee falls the snow  
And the rude wind doth blow.  
What thought doth make thee pine  
Pale Flower, can I divine?

Say, does this trouble thee  
That all things fickle be?  
The wind that buffets so  
Was kind an hour ago.  
The sun, a cloud doth hide,  
Cheered thee at morning tide.

The busy pleasuring bee  
Sought thee for company.  
The little sparrows near  
Sang thee their ballads clear.  
The maples on thy head  
Their spicy blossoms shed.

Because the storm made dumb  
The wild bees booming hum;  
Because for shivering  
The sparrows cannot sing;  
Is this the reason why  
Thou look'st so woefully?

To-morrow's laughing sun  
Will cheer thee, pallid one;  
To-morrow will bring back  
The gay bee on his track,  
Bursting thy cloister dim  
With his wild roistering.

Canst thou not wait the morrow,  
That rids thee of thy sorrow?  
Art thou too desolate  
To smile at any fate?  
Then there is naught for thee  
But Death's delivery.

*The Roses, May 4, 1853.*

## REGRET

LOOK out, sad heart, through wintry eyes  
To see thy summer go:  
How pallid are thy bluest skies  
Behind this veiling snow.

Look out upon thy purple hills,  
That all the summer long,  
Laughed with an hundred laughing rills,  
And sang their summer song.

You only see the sheeted snow  
That covers grass and tree;  
The frozen streamlets cannot flow,  
No bird dares sing to thee.

Look out upon Life's summer days  
That fade like summer flowers;  
What golden fruitage for thy praise,  
From all those bounteous hours?

Sings any bird, or any wind  
Amid thy falling leaves?  
Why is it, if thou look'st behind,  
Thy heart forever grieves?

*Newburgh, January 4, 1854.*

## L'ENNUI

Oh April grass, so truly  
My wish for spring divining,  
Oh April sun, so gaily  
In at my window shining,  
What cheer can ye impart  
Unto a faded heart?

Oh thoughts of Summer days  
Born of the violet's blue.  
Oh wooing western wind,  
That maketh all things new—  
What cheer can ye impart  
Unto a faded heart?

Oh mountains brown and sere,  
Mantled in morning light,  
Oh golden sunset sea  
Wrecked on the shores of night,  
What cheer can ye impart  
Unto a faded heart?

Oh longings evermore  
For some ungiven good,  
Oh yearnings to make clear  
The dimly understood,  
What cheer can ye impart  
Unto a faded heart?

Cover thy weary eyes  
With hands too weak for prayer,  
Think on the happy past,  
From other thoughts forbear  
Which can no cheer impart  
Unto a hopeless heart.

*The Roses, April 20, 1853.*

## ASPIRATION

THOU sea, whose tireless waves  
Forever seek the shore,  
Striving to clamber higher,  
Yet failing evermore;  
Why wilt thou still aspire  
Though losing thy desire?

Thou sun, whose constant feet  
Mount ever to thy noon,  
Thou canst not there remain,  
Night quenches thee so soon;  
Why wilt thou still aspire  
Though losing thy desire?

Rose, in my garden growing,  
Unharm'd by winter's snows,  
Another winter cometh  
Ere all thy buds unclose;  
Why wilt thou still aspire  
Though losing thy desire?

Mortal, with feeble hands  
Striving some work to do,  
Fate, with her cruel shears,  
Doth all thy steps pursue;  
Why wilt thou still aspire  
Though losing thy desire?

*The Roses, Newburgh,  
April 21, 1853.*

# THE SOUL'S QUESTION

*Inscribed to Rev. A. Dwight Mayo*

DEAR friend, in whom my soul abides,  
Who rulest all its wayward tides,  
Accept the feeble song I sing,  
And read aright my stammering.

## I

As on my bed at night I lay,  
My soul, who all the weary day  
Had fought with thoughts of death and life,  
Began again the bitter strife.

## II

This question would she ask, until  
My tired eyes with tears would fill,  
And overrun and fill again;  
So that I cried out in my pain—

## III

“When thou art made a heap of earth,  
And all thy gain is nothing worth,  
Where shall I go? Shall I too die  
And fade in utter entity?”

## IV

“Shall my fine essence be the sport  
Of idle chance and fade to nought;  
The morning dew upon the flower  
Dried by the sunlight in an hour?”

## V

“Doth God with careless eyes look down  
On peopled slope and crowded town,  
And, though he mark the sparrow's death,  
Think nothing *more* of human breath?”

## VI

“Or if I shall not die, but live—  
What other dwelling will he give  
In which to lead another life  
And wage anew the ended strife?”

## VII

“Turn up to heaven thy streaming face,  
And glance athwart the starry space;  
What planet, burning in the blue,  
Shall hold thy life begun anew?”

VIII

I looked out on the still midnight,  
A thousand stars were flashing bright;  
Unclouded shone the sailing moon  
And filled with pallor all the room.

IX

The earth was hid with silver snow,  
I heard the river's steady flow,  
I saw the moonlight softly fall  
On running stream and mountain wall.

X

I found no peace in gazing here;  
The earth seemed cold and very drear;  
River and mountain bathed in light,  
Were grim and ghastly in my sight.

XI

The mountain wall—a hand divine  
Drew on the sky its perfect line—  
Said to my soul, "Of this be sure,  
Thy race shall die, but I endure.

XII

"And while I take the morning's kiss  
On my brows bathed in crimson bliss  
Or listen to the eternal song  
The seven great spheres in heaven prolong.

XIII

"While on my sides the cedar grows  
Through summer's suns and winter's snows,  
Or while I rock my piny crown,  
Whose high tops draw the lightning down,

XIV

"So long as I in might endure  
I watch man fading, swift and sure;  
I smile, and whisper to my flowers,  
Man dieth and the earth is ours—"

XV

A scalding tear rolled down my cheek,  
Through thickening sobs I strove to speak;  
"Are those the hills I saw to-night  
Mantled in pomp of purple light?"

XVI



All day the earth on every side  
Lay robed in vesture of a bride,  
While lit on snow-wreathed bush and tree  
The winter birds sang joyfully.

XVII

The river sparkled cold and keen  
With burnished tracts of wintry gleam;  
Above, the sky's unclouded blue  
The smile of God on all things threw.

XVIII

O'er hill and field elate I walked,  
With all things fair by turns I talked;  
I felt the God within me move  
And nothing seemed too mean for Love.

XIX

The flower of day that bloomed so fair  
Closed on the perfumed evening air;  
A holy calm o'er Nature stole  
And bathed in prayer my happy soul.

XX

A golden glory caught the world;—  
High up the crimson clouds were curled,  
A purple splendor hid the sun  
A moment—and the day was done.

XI

I gazed at will; my thankful eyes  
Were bathed in dews of Paradise;  
My heart ran out my God to meet,  
And clasped his knees and kissed his feet.

XII

He led me like a little child  
Whereso he would; the darkness smiled  
Whereso we walked; such glory of light  
Enshrined him, making very bright

XIII

Whatever darkness veiled my mind;  
I looked on all the grief behind  
As on a fevered dream. To-night  
The peace is gone and gone the light

XIV

I prayed for sleep, an earnest prayer  
I thought that God would surely hear;  
Yet, though my tears fell fast and free,  
He kept his boon of sleep from me.

XXV

Again my soul her quest began—  
“Must I too fall beneath the ban?  
And, if I die not in thy death,  
Where shall I live who am but breath?”

XXVI

“When the frame stiffens into stone,  
And death and it are left alone,  
And round about it in the grave  
The rat shall gnaw and winds shall rave,

XXVII

“Shall I within the dwelling stay  
To watch above the heap of clay,  
And while the dreary ages roll  
Lie housed in earth, a prisoned soul?”

XXVIII

If this be Hell, to sit and hear  
The hum of life from year to year,  
Yet have no part nor lot in all  
That men do on this earthly ball,

XXIX

But sit and watch from hour to hour  
The slow decay of beauty and power,  
And when the last faint trace is gone  
To sit there still and still watch on,

XXX

While other men shall share my doom  
And other souls within the tomb  
Shall sit beside me dumb and pale  
Forever in that fearful vale—

XXXI

With that, cold sweat ran down my face  
I rose up straightway in my place  
I lit my lamp, my Bible took  
And sat to read the blessed Book.

XXXII

I turned the pages to and fro  
Not knowing where to read, and so  
Sat very still with tightened breath  
Till I could catch that one word—"death"

XXXIII

"Cain"—the page blackened as I read  
The awful name of him who led  
God's curse like lightning down to earth,  
Blasting and scarring home and hearth.

XXXIV

I turned the page; I read the line  
Of those old men, the half divine,  
Of whom no record is supplied  
But, "thus he lived, and then, he died—"

XXXV

Not any comfort could I find,  
A sudden sickness seized my mind,  
I felt my heart beat slow and weak  
I tried to pray, I could not speak.

XXXVI

Oh! bitterness beyond compare.  
When our last refuge fades to air;  
Where shall the hopeless soul repose,  
For who is there that *surely knows*?

XXXVII

I read how Saul in wild En-dor  
Questioned the witch, and what he saw.  
How Samuel's ghost rose pale and grim  
Out of the grave and answered him.

XXXVIII

I read the awful words he said—  
"Why am I thus disquieted?"  
"Disquieted"—what dreamless sleep  
Weighed on his eyelids calm and deep?

XXXIX

Thereat I shook from head to foot—  
I made no cry, my heart was mute;  
I could not call on God, nor pray,  
For all my faith had fled away.

As when a man, who in a dream  
To slide down some blank wall shall seem,  
Clutches at air, strikes out in vain  
His helpless hands and shrieks with pain,

XL I

While all the air with mocking eyes  
Is full, foul shapes and soundless cries  
That laugh to scorn his deadly fear  
With laughter that he swoons to hear,

XL II

And swooning wakes: my helpless soul  
Felt the dim waves above her roll,  
The firm earth slide beneath her feet,  
And all her agony complete.

XL III

I read that Christ had conquered Death  
By giving up his holy breath;  
And calling Lazarus by his name  
Had brought him back to life again.

XL IV

What these things mean I cannot say;  
They do not drive my fear away,  
For where was Lazarus when he heard  
The voice of Christ pronounce that word?

XL V

Was he within the voiceless tomb  
Beside his sometime earthly home,  
Watching the slowly changing form  
Yield to the touch of mole and worm?

XL VI

Or was he in some blessed place  
A saint, with glory in his face;  
And did he drop, a gliding star  
Down to the earth where mortals are?

XL VII

And clothe himself in dust again  
To share the bitter life of men,  
To live a few dark years below  
And back again to glory go?

XL VIII

This thought raised up my fainting heart  
And somewhat eased the deadly smart,  
My lips began to move in prayer—  
My soul to breathe a freer air.

XLIX

I prayed for peace, I prayed for trust;  
I prayed to feel that God is just;  
I prayed that let what would befall  
I still might trust Him over all.

L

And whether sunk in deadly gloom  
The soul must rest within the tomb;  
Or sit within God's awful light  
To which the sun's blaze is as night?

LI

Or shape its course from life to life  
And waxing strong in endless strife,  
Through everlasting years pursue  
The work that God shall give to do?

LII

I might, without a fear, lay down  
When he shall call, my earthly crown,  
Trusting that he who gave me breath  
Will keep me in the day of death.

LIII

I looked again upon the earth.  
The day rejoicèd in its birth;  
And on the sullen rack afar  
Trembled the fading morning star!

*Written 1849.*

## ASSERTION

Too late, I drew from scanty springs  
The barren cheer that in them lies.  
Too late, I fettered eager wings  
That longed to bathe in bluer skies.

Too late, I squandered golden hours  
God gave me for his praise to spend.  
Too late, I gathered idle flowers  
Forgetful of my journey's end.

God needs my deed; however small  
The help I lend, to work his will,  
Not without grief he sees me fall.  
Or fail his purpose to fulfil.

*New York, March 1, 1854.*

## THE APPLE

I PICKED an apple from the ground,  
A perfect apple, red and round.  
Its spicy perfume shy and sweet,  
Stole from the ground beneath my feet,  
Borne on a wind that lightly flew,  
Through the deep dome of cloudless blue.  
A swarm of ants had found the prize,  
Before it met my wandering eyes,  
And careless in their busy pleasure,  
Ran o'er and o'er the fragrant treasure.  
I blew them off, nor cared to know  
Whither the luckless things might go.  
So He who holdeth in his hand  
This perfect world on which we stand,  
Blows us, ah, whither? with His breath,  
Our friends who miss us call it "Death!"

# FOR EASTER DAY

## I

THIS is the Easter!  
Day of rejoicing!  
Day of renewing!  
See how the roseate,  
Delicate, virginal  
Feet of the Morning  
Haste o'er the mountains  
Joyful to meet her!

## II

Welcome the Easter!  
Day of renewing!  
Day of rejoicing!  
The snow has departed,  
The rain is assuaged,  
The winter is gone!  
Lo! on Earth's bosom  
The rainbow of promise,  
The rainbow of springtime,  
The rainbow of flowers!

## III

This is the Easter!  
Day of uprising!  
Day of renewing!  
Heart, take new courage!  
Look no more downward!  
See, the sun rising!  
Hark, the bird singing!  
See, the grass springing!  
The brook floweth free!  
Hand to the plough, man!  
Cut deep the furrow,  
Cast thy seed strongly!

Think not of sorrow!  
Of death or of sin!  
To-day, let thy future  
Burst from its cerements,—  
Roll back the Grave stone!  
To-day, Life immortal!  
Oh, mortal! begin!

*New York, April 2, 1877.*



# ON ONE WHO DIED IN MAY

*John H. Ellis, May 3, 1870*

WHY Death, what dost thou, here,  
This time o' year?  
Peach-blow, and apple-blossom;  
Clouds, white as my love's bosom;  
Warm wind o' the West  
Cradling the robin's nest;  
Young meadows, hasting their green laps to fill  
With golden dandelion and daffodil;—  
These are fit sights for spring;  
But, oh, thou hateful thing,  
What dost thou here?

Why, Death, what dost thou here  
This time o' year?  
Fair, at the old oak's knee,  
The young anemone;  
Fair, the plash places set  
With dog-tooth violet;  
The first sloop-sail,  
The shad-flower pale;  
Sweet are all sights,  
Sweet are all sounds of Spring;  
But thou, thou ugly thing,  
What dost thou, here?

Dark Death let fall a tear.  
Why am I here?  
Oh, heart ungrateful! Will man never know  
I am his friend, nor ever was his foe?  
Whose the sweet season, then, if it be not mine?  
Mine, not the bobolink's, that song divine  
Chasing the shadows o'er the flying wheat!  
'Tis a dead voice, not his, that sounds so sweet.  
Whose passionate heart burns in this flaming rose  
But his, whose passionate heart long since lay still?  
Whose wan hope pales this nun-like lily tall,  
Beside the garden wall,  
But hers, whose radiant eyes and lily grace,  
Sleep in the grave that crowns yon tufted hill!  
All Hope, all Memory  
Have their deep springs in me,  
And Love, that else might fade,  
By me immortal made,  
Spurns at the grave, leaps to the welcoming skies,  
And burns a steadfast star to steadfast eyes.

## THE YEW TREE

TAKE this small slip of sombre yew  
And lay it on thy breast;  
There, underneath thy downcast eyes,  
Let the sad emblem rest—  
Thy tears may fall upon it.

I pulled it from a little tree  
That just begins to grow—  
Once only has it seen the sun  
And only once the snow—  
Thy tears may rain upon it.

The garden where it grew is sad  
Before all other places,  
Death's shadow up and down its walks  
Forever darkly paces—  
Thy tears have fallen in it.

These yew trees stand, a pallid ring  
Upon the sunlit lawn—  
He planted them the very year  
That we were left to mourn—  
Our tears fell freely for it.

They stood like mourners round a grave  
Who look within, to see  
Where lie the ashes, while the fire  
Spire upward, clear and free.

## THE IMMORTAL

SOMEWHERE in silent starry lands,  
Forlorn with cold or faint with heat,  
He folds his ever active hands,  
And rest his never-resting feet.

A windless light illumines his skies;  
A moonless night, a sunless day,  
Unheeded by his careless eyes,  
Arise, and fade, and pass away.

All day his constant thoughts recall  
The blissful past, forever fled;  
A golden light illumines all  
The ghostly memories of the dead.

Once more adown his garden walks  
He moves serene from flower to flower:  
His wife beside him gaily talks,  
He listens gladly hour by hour.

But when he turns to kiss the lips,  
Or when he thinks the form to press  
Of her he loves—his hope's eclipse  
Renews the former bitterness.

In nightly dreams his tireless wings  
Convey him far to where she lies  
Folded in slumber, while he sings  
Low in her ear his lullabies.

He wakes—the happy dream is o'er,  
The slow, dull heart-ache gnaws again,  
Within his soul forevermore  
A long-enduring death of pain.

With her the suns arise and set,  
The singing stars renew their light,  
Deep in her heart one wild regret  
Moans for his presence day and night.

I well believe God loves thee still,  
To whatsoever planet borne;  
Breathing the bright auroral airs  
That haunt some glad eternal morn.

Walking with fair, unclouded eyes  
Beside the slow unfailing streams,  
Lulled in the memories of the Past,  
An ever gliding dance of dreams.

The ills that fret our feeble hearts,  
The toils in which thy life had share,  
The slender joys that make us glad  
In quiet moments snatched from care.

These memories of a vanished life,  
Pass dim before thine altered mind,  
As visions of the earth and sky  
Come to a man whose eyes are blind.

To whom the sun in cloudless light  
Forever shines; forever grow  
The flowers; the woods in beauty wave  
Unchanged; the constant planets glow.

All night above thy peaceful head,  
The sky is bright with burning stars;  
To thee the opening morning brings  
No news of peace, nor sound of wars;  
Sole tenant of thy starry home;  
Uncheered by friend, unvexed by foe;  
Down the slow tide of lapsing time  
Thy tranquil days in silence go.

Waiting with calm, expectant eyes  
The hour that makes her wholly thine  
Secure from all the blows of Fate  
And all the mischiefs wrought by Time.

## TWO MAYS

HERE is the stile on which I leaned;—  
This golden willow bending over;—  
Yonder's the same blue sky that gleamed  
The day that I murmured, "I am thy lover."

This is the stone on which she sat;  
See here the bright moss freshly springing,  
And look! overhead the same bluebirds  
Back and forth from the old nest winging.

Here is the briar whose flowers she pulled  
Leaf by leaf as she heard my pleading.  
Swayed by the same idle April wind  
That laughed as it flew, Love's pang unheeding.

Sky, trees, flowers—the same; but I?—  
Am I the same boy whose wild heart burning  
Leapt to one heart in the sweet wild world!  
Stilled on one bosom its passionate yearning?

Silk-soft hair and hazel eyes,  
Limbs that lightly moved or stood  
And a heart that beat with a loyal love  
For all things beautiful, true and good.

Follies that flecked this fairest fruit,  
Sins that spotted this whitest page,  
Changed without, but the same within,  
Life's rose untouched by the frost of age.

Thou, too, beloved, art still the same,  
Deep heart, passionate, tender and true,  
The same clear spirit and glancing wit  
Piercing the armor of folly through.

Sad, olivaster, Spanish face,  
Sweet low brow under shadowy hair,  
Dark eyes mingled of tears and fire,  
Voice like a song-bird's heard through a prayer.

Time! if thou steal her girlish beauty,  
Leave her spirit undimmed and free.  
Touch the rose with thy frosty fingers,  
But the rose's perfume stays with me.

## WIND HARPINGS

FAINT smell of box  
In the evening air,  
Faint bleat of flocks  
From fields afar;  
On the gray rocks,  
The lap and lapse  
Of the wan water.

The sunset fields  
Stretch fair and far.  
Mid the winrowed clouds  
The sickle moon  
Has clipt a star!  
Pale golden bloom!  
First flower of the night!  
It trembles down  
To the sunset streak,  
Light lost in light!

In the pleached bower,  
In the garden old,  
Hand closed in hand,  
We sit together.  
We do not speak.  
A wind from the pine  
With fingers fine,  
Lays her warm hair  
Against my cheek.

Sweet silent hour!  
As flower to flower  
Heart speaks to heart  
As star to star!  
Oh, hawthorn bower  
Oh, garden old  
How dear, how sad  
Your memories are!

## A VALENTINE

BRING me my lute, the sunlight fades;  
The evening breezes, soft and low,  
From the far South begin to blow.

Here will I watch the dying day:  
Here will I watch the pallid skies  
Flush with a myriad changing dyes.

What joy to see the fairy moon  
Cradled in folds of rosy light,  
The baby sovereign of the night.

What joy to hear, from far away,  
The rolling mill-stream roaring go  
Between his banks of ice and snow;

Or from the distant mountain's side,  
To hear the murmuring wind, that brings  
Promise of Spring between its wings.

Here at my window will I sit;  
Here, will I let the peaceful hour  
Try on my heart her aëry power.

This happy season sings of Thee,  
Where'er I turn my careless eyes  
Thine image will before them rise;

Not as thou art in human form;  
I cannot shape thy phantom so,  
The fleeting shadows come and go.

Thy face is fair with roseate bloom—  
I lift my eyes and lo! the sun  
Reddens the cloud he looks upon—

Thine eyes with deepening azure smile—  
Beyond the hills a line of blue  
Recalls the sunlit morning's dew.

On either side thy thoughtful brow  
Thy golden hair is floating free—  
Yon golden cloud is fair to see—

As floating from the purple West,  
Its glory slowly gathers dun  
And fadeth with the fading sun.

Ah! was it all an idle dream?  
A fleeting sunset fed my thought,  
And all this cloudy vision wrought?

Or does the maiden somewhere bloom  
Whom Nature cannot paint aright  
Her beauty is so passing bright?

## COMING—COME

HOW dreary are the crowded streets  
With not a soul abroad!  
How sunless is the sunny sky!  
No fire on hearth, no mirth at board!  
How long the nights, how slow the day!  
My love's away! My love's away!

How gay the crowded city streets!  
How cheerily shines the sun!  
Dances the fire, and round the board  
From lip to lip the greetings run!  
No longer in the dumps I roam—  
My love's come home! My love's come home!

## ULYSSES AND THE SIRENS

O H ye maids, with deep and rosy bosoms!  
Oh ye maids, with darkly flowing locks!  
Wherefore is it that with songs ye woo me  
Sitting in the shadows of the rocks?

Well hath she, the enchantress Circe told me,  
All the evil that shall on me fall;  
If I follow where your white feet lead me  
Or give answer when your voices call.

Oh my comrades, bind me to the mainmast,  
Stop my ears with wax and bind my hands,  
Close my eyes that so no sight nor murmur  
Of the singer or the song steal to me from the sands.

In the west the blood-red sun is sinking.  
And the angry billows redly glow,  
With the dying breeze the song is dying.  
Ply the oars, my comrades, let us go!

*Tarrytown, 1844.*



# OTTILIA

*Miss Mary Hamilton, afterwards Mrs. George Schuyler*

ALOW, sad brow with folded hair;  
From whose deep night one pallid rose  
White moonlight through the darkness throws.

A head, whose lordly, only crown  
Of Pride, Olympian Juno might  
Have worn for the great God's delight.

Deep eyes immixed of Night and Fire,  
In whose large motion you might see  
Her royal soul lived royally.

Unstained by any earthly soil,  
And only caring to walk straight  
The road ordained to her by Fate.

Her jewelled hands across the keys  
Flashed through the twilight of the room,  
A double light of gem and tune.

Still while she played you saw that hand  
Glide ghostly white, and fearless wave  
Dead faces up from Memory's grave.

The firelight flickered on the wall;  
Sweet tears came to the heart's relief;  
She sat and sang us into grief.

Yet now, she played some liquid song,  
A happy lover would have sung,  
If once he could have found a tongue—

And now the sparkling octaves ran  
Through the quick dance, where tangled braid  
Now caught the sunlight, now the shade.

And now the boatman's evening song,  
As, rowing homeward down the stream,  
He sees his maiden's garments gleam

Beside the trees, the trysting-place;  
While the sad singer whippoorwill,  
Cries from the willow by the mill.

Yet, howsoe'er her music ran,  
A sigh was in it, and a sense  
Of some dead voice that called us hence;

A voice that even now I hear,  
Although the hand that touched those keys  
Rests on her heart, that sleeps in peace.

*Newburgh, January 16, 1854.*

## A PORTRAIT

*Mrs. Carroll Dunham, September, 1877.*

I KNOW not wherein lay the charm  
She had in those remembered days.  
The Olympian gait, the welcoming hand,  
The frank soul looking from her face,  
The manly manners all her own—  
Nor yet coquette, nor cold, nor free:  
She puzzled, being each in turn;  
Or dazzled, mingling all the three.  
Out of those gowns, so quaintly rich—  
They grew, unshaped by Milan's shears!—  
Rose, like a tower, the ivory throat  
Ringed with the rings the Clytie wears.  
But, when you sought the Roman face  
That on such columns grew—and grows!  
You found this wonder in its stead—  
The sea-shell's curves, the sea-shell's rose!  
Her eyes, the succory's way-side blue;  
Her lips, the wilding way-side rose:  
But, Beauty dreamed a prouder dream,  
Throned on her forehead's moonlit snows.  
And, over all, the wreathed hair  
That caught the sunset's streaming gold,  
Where, now, a crocus bud was set,  
Or violet, hid in the braided fold!  
But, she, so deep her conscious pride,  
So sure her knowledge she was fair—  
What gowns she wore, or silk, or serge,  
She seemed to neither know, nor care.  
She smiled on cat, or frowned on friend,  
Or gave her horse the hand denied.  
To-day, bewitched you with her wit,  
To-morrow, snubbed you from her side.  
Loyal to truth, yet wed to whim,  
She held in fee her constant mind.  
Whatever tempests drove her bark,  
You felt her soul's deep anchor bind.  
In that dark day when, fever-driven,  
Her wits went wandering up and down,  
And seeming-cruel, friendly shears  
Closed on her girl-head's glorious crown,  
Another woman might have wept  
To see such gold so idly spilled.  
She only smiled, as curl and coil  
Fell, till the shearer's lap was filled;  
Then softly said: "Hair-sunsets fade  
As when night clips day's locks of gold!  
Dear Death, thy priestly hands I bless,  
And, nun-like, seek thy convent-fold!"  
Then slept, nor woke. O miser Death,  
What gold thou hidest in thy dust!  
What ripest beauty there decays,  
What sharpest wits there go to rust!  
Hide not this jewel with the rest—  
Base gems whose color fled thy breath—  
But, worn on thine imperial hand,  
Make all the world in love with Death!

# SONNET

## TO THE FRINGED GENTIAN

*Dedicated to E. C. H.*

OF had I heard thy beauty praised, dear flower,  
And often searched for thee through field and wood,  
Yet could I never find the secret bower  
Where thou dost lead in maiden solitude  
A cloistered life; but on one happy day  
Wandering in idle thought, with a dear friend,  
Through dying woods, listening the robin's lay,  
I saw thy fairy flowers whose azure gemmed  
The fading grass beneath a cedar's boughs.  
Oh never yet so glad a sight has met  
These eyes of mine! Depart, before the snows  
Of hastening winter thy fringed garments wet.  
Thine azure flowers should never fade nor die,  
But bloom, exhale, and gain their native sky.

*November, 1849.*

## TO GIULIA, SINGING

SING me the song again, and yet again  
Waken the music as it dies away;  
Make twilight sadder with it, nor refrain  
    While yet these sighing winds bemoan the day.  
    Still let that wavering voice  
    Make my young heart rejoice,  
Even tho' one truant tear adown my cheek may stray.

Cease not thy singing, dearest, for mine eyes  
    Feed on thy beauty, and I hear the song  
As one who, looking on the sunset skies,  
    Hears over flowery meads the south winds blow,  
And down the purple hills the flashing waters flow.

An idle song; I cannot tell the meaning,  
    Yet, sing I o'er and o'er, for in its wings  
It bringeth heavenly things:  
Dear memories of melodious hours,  
When all earth's weeds were flowers;  
Dear memories of the loved ones far away  
Whom yet we hope to greet some happy day;  
Dear memories of the travellers from Life's shore,  
Whom we shall greet again, ah! nevermore.

Cease, lady! Sing some song that brings again  
    The golden past, meet for this sunset hour;  
Some breath of melody not fraught with pain,  
    Some gayly-tinted flower!  
Let thy fair hand float o'er the willing keys,  
    And all my sorrows ease.

*Home Journal, 1852.*

## YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY

BUT yesterday the laughing sun  
Came dancing up the rosy East—  
You would have thought that it was May;  
The birds sang clear on every spray.

The heart with fuller motion beat,  
The sad eye flashed with brighter fire;  
Down to the ground the sunbeams came  
And lit the crocus' slender flame.

The branches of the lonely pine  
Rocked to a glad harmonious hymn.  
The song-bird's music and the breeze  
With double laughter shook the trees

That cluster round the southern wall,  
A feathery fringe against the sky;  
Their yellow branches in the sun  
Are very fair to look upon.

Far down between the rounded hills,  
I watched a wreath of morning mist  
Floating in shadow—rising slow,  
The sunlight glorified its snow.

The day was blesséd. Field and hill  
Dreamed, bathed in light and lulled with sound.  
All day my soul at peace within  
Went carolling her joyful hymn.

-----  
To-day you cannot see the sun,  
A blinding mist blots out the sky.  
You hear the angry waters flow,  
You hear the wintry breezes blow.

The branches of the lonely pine  
Mutter and sigh tossed to and fro;  
The birds that chanted in the sun  
Sit in the covert cold and dumb.

The maiden Spring that Yesterday  
Was born, To-Day, alas! is dead.  
The pitying heavens drop over all  
This silent snow for fittest pall.

The sobbing winds her requiem sing;  
The plashing waves upon the shore  
Sigh hour by hour; the dreary day  
In mist and silence fades away.

The heart is wintry as the earth—  
Tossed with the storm, and drenched with gloom,  
And dark with doubts that round her throng,  
To choke with tears her heavenly song.

*March 18, 1852.*

# A SONNET IN PRAISE OF HIS LADY'S HANDS

*Translated from the Italian of "Qualcheduns."*

HOW beautiful it is  
To see my lady's hands;  
Whether adorned with rings,  
Or with their snowy lengths  
And rosy tips,  
Undecked with gems of gold.

When her light work she plies,  
Creating mimic flowers,  
Or drawing the fair thread  
Through folds of snowy lawn.  
How beautiful it is  
To see my lady's hands;  
Often I, sitting, watch  
Their gliding to and fro,  
These lovely birds of snow.

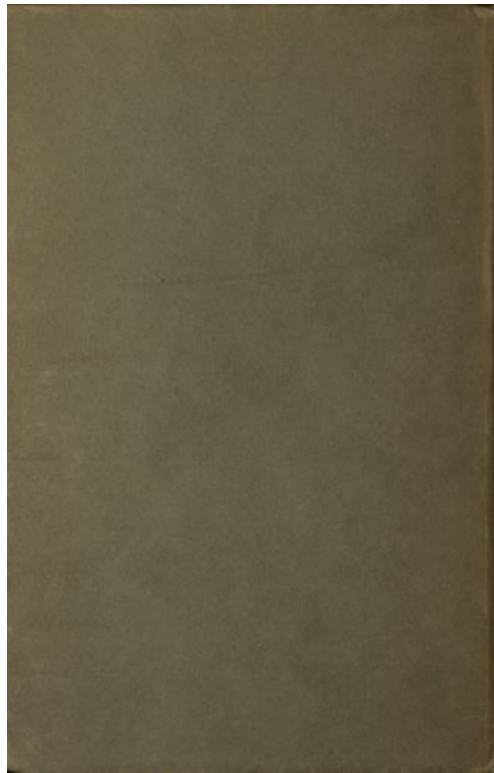
Sometimes the evening shades  
Draw around us as we talk,  
Sometimes the tired sun,  
Drooping towards the West,  
Makes all the fields of heaven  
With autumn's colors glow;  
Sometimes the sailing moon,  
Unclouded and serene,  
Rises between the misty woods  
That crown the distant hills;  
Then most I love to sit  
And watch my lady's hands  
Blush with the sunset's rose,  
Or whiten in the moon,  
Or, lucid in the amber evening air,  
Folded, repose.

Sometimes she paces slowly  
Among the garden flowers;  
Above her the trees tremble,  
And lean their leafage down,  
So much they love to see her;  
The flowers, white and red,  
Open their fragrant eyes,  
Gladder to hear her coming  
Than birds singing,  
Or bees humming.  
She, stooping, clad in grace,  
Gathers them one by one,  
Lily and crimson rose,  
With sprigs of tender green,  
And holds them in her hands.

Nothing can sweeter be  
Than, lying on the lawn,  
To see those graceful hands  
Drop all their odorous load  
Upon her snowy lap,  
And then, with magic skill  
And rosy fingers fine,  
To watch her intertwine  
Some wreath, not all unfitting  
Young brows divine.

How beautiful it is  
To see my lady's hands;  
In moonlight sorrowful,  
Or sunlight fire,  
Busied with graceful toil,  
Or folded in repose,  
How beautiful it is  
To see my lady's hands.

*Charlene Cook*



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