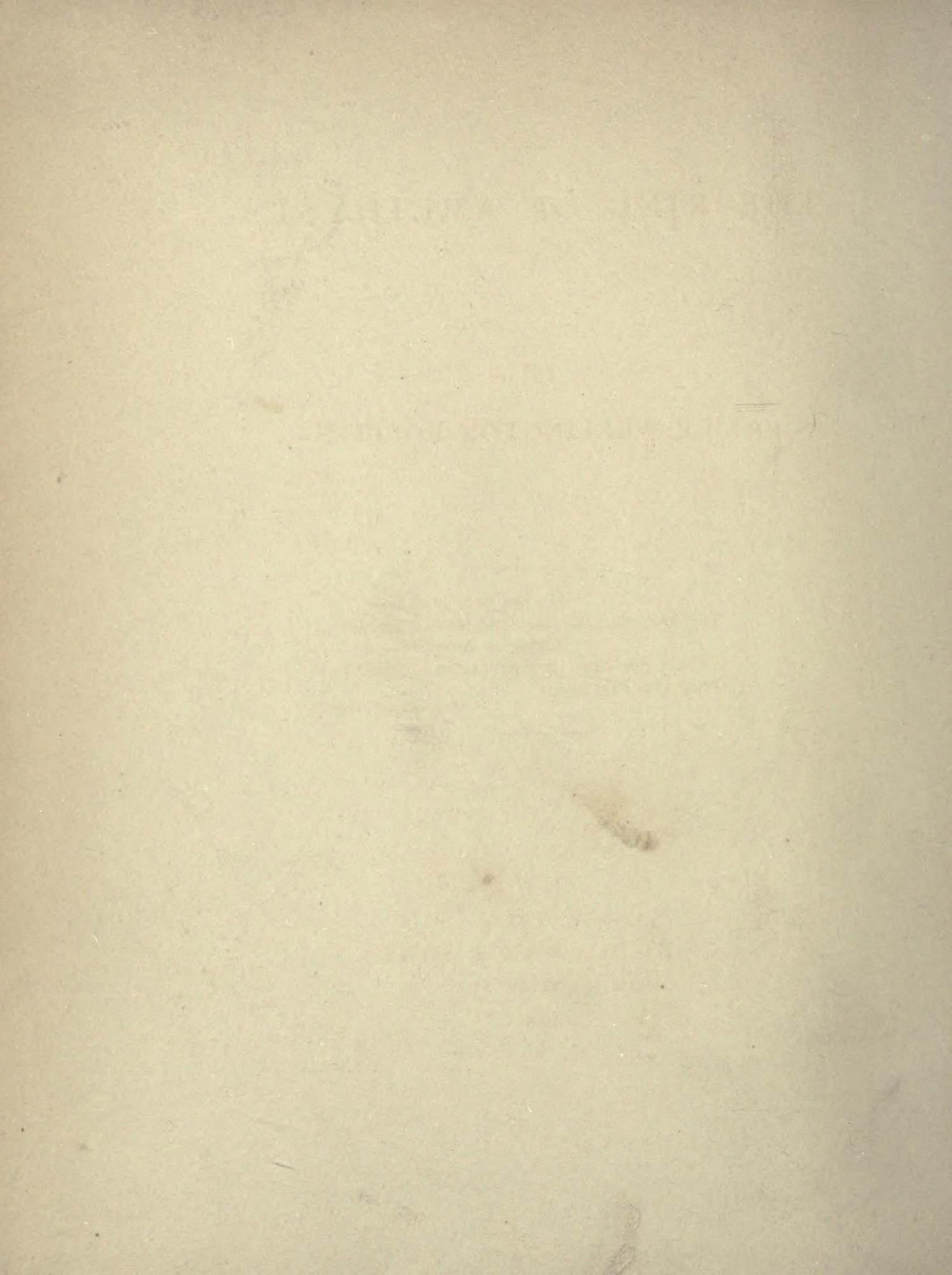




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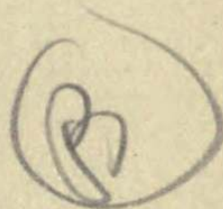


THE RING OF AMETHYST.

BY

ALICE WELLINGTON ROLLINS

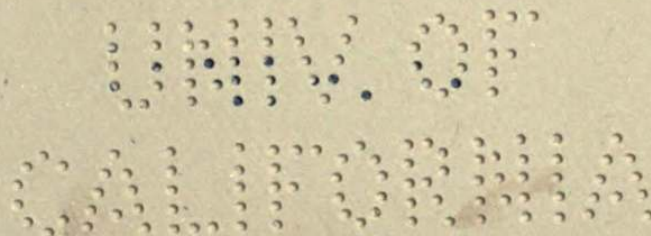
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“ He but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write.
A ring of Amethyst
I could not wear here plainer to my sight
Than that first kiss.”

—*Mrs. Browning.*

NEW YORK
G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
182 FIFTH AVENUE
1878



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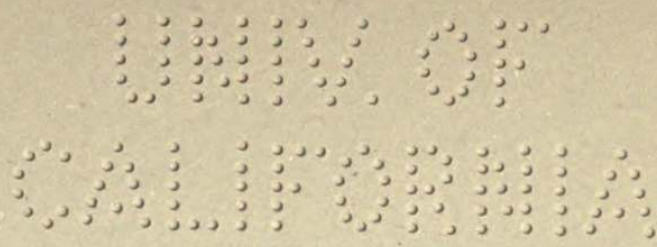
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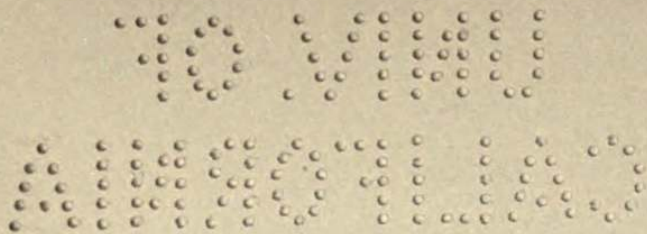


“THE RING AND THE BOOK.”

THE RING. ——— TO GEORGE ELIOT.

As she, thy Dorothea, loved of thee,
Refused to wear in careless ornament
The amethysts and emeralds that lent
Their charm to other women ;—even as she,
Turning one day by chance the golden key
Of their close casket, started as they sent
Swift, glowing rays to greet her, and then bent
To lift them in her white hands lovingly ;—

O great of heart, so calmly dost thou stand
In the proud splendor of thy fame, and bring
Thy glorious gifts to all the listening land,—
Thou canst not greatly care what I may sing !
Yet since I hold to thee my amethyst ring,
Take it one little moment in thy hand !



VI.

THE BOOK. ——— To D. M. R.

DEAR, if this little book of thine and mine
 Could bring me fame as glorious and rare
 As that whose splendid laurels shine so fair
For Dorothea,——it were less divine
A gift than this most priceless love of thine.
 Since, then, that came to me, why now despair
 Of laurel? though I may not hope to wear
Laurel or myrtle as the precious sign
Of any proud desert. Yet if I might
Not find that love could keep its holy tryst
With fame, how quickly would I yield the bright
 New dream, to keep my ring of amethyst :
 The memory of that day when love first kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write !

VII.

'Αμέδυστος

TO THE CRITIC.

I KNOW full well I cannot pour for you
The nectar of the gods ;—no epic wine
Is this I bring, to tempt you with its fine
Poetic flavor, as of grapes that grew
In the young vineyards when the world was new,
And only poets wrote ;—a slender vine
You scarce will care for, bore these grapes of mine,
From which frail hands have crushed the purple dew.
Yet if from what I bring you, there is missed
The lyric loveliness of some who write,
The passionate fervor and the keen delight
Of eloquent fire in some to whom you list,—
Think it may be, not that the gift is slight,
But that my cup is rimmed with amethyst !

VIII.

NARCISSEUS.

TO THE READER.

IF haply in these pages you should read
Aught that seems true to human nature, true
To heavenly instincts ;—if they speak to you
Of love, of sorrow, faith without a creed,
Of doubt, of hope, of longing,—or indeed
Of any pain or joy the poet knew
A heart could feel,—think not to find a clue
To his own heart—its gladness or its need.
From a deep spring with tangled weeds o'ergrown
The poet parts the leaves ; if they who pass,
Bending to look down through the tall wild grass,
By winds of heaven faintly overblown,
Should start to see there, dimly in a glass,
Some face,——'tis not the poet's, but their own !

IX.

PROEM.

I WONDER, little book, if after all
I greatly care whether with praise or blame
Men turn your leaves. Once, the fair hope of fame
Had made me wonder what fate should befall
My first faint singing ; now I cannot call
The singing mine ; I gave it him who came
To place my joy where no harsh touch can maim
Its safe, secure, bright beauty. Like a wall
Of strong defence to me this blessedness :
That of his love I am so proudly sure,
Though the whole world should bend to my success,
I think he could not love me any more !
And though the whole world say my book is poor,
I know he will not love me any less !

JOY.

MY heart was like a flower once,
That from its jewel-tinted cup
The generous fragrance of its joy
To all the world sent floating up.
But now 'tis like a humming-bird,
That in the cup his bright wing dips,
And with most dainty selfishness
Himself the choicest honey sips,
With eager, thirsty, longing lips !

And once my heart was like a gem,
Set in a fair betrothal ring ;
Content to light the happy darks
That shield love's shy self-wondering.
But now I think my heart is like
The lady fair who wears the ring ;
Pressed closely to her lips at night

With love's mysterious wondering
That hers should be the precious thing !

And once my heart was like a nest,
Where singing-birds have made their home ;
Set where the apple-boughs in bloom
Fleck the blue air with flower-foam.
But now it is itself a bird ;
And if it does not always sing,
The Heavenly Father knows what thoughts,—
Too strangely sweet for uttering,—
Stir faintly underneath its wing !

PAIN.

MY heart was once a folded flower,
Within whose jewel-tinted cup,—
Still hidden even from itself,—
A wealth of joy is treasured up.
But now my heart is like a flower
From which a dainty humming-bird
Has rifled all the choicest sweets,
And left without one last fond word
The flower-soul so deeply stirred.

And once my heart was like a gem,
Set in a rich betrothal ring ;
Unconscious in its darkened case
How fair it lies there glittering.
But now I think my heart is like
The lady who has worn the ring,
And draws it from her finger slight

With love's bewildered wondering
That love should be a poor bruised thing.

And once my heart was like a nest,
High in the apple branches hung ;
Where in the early April dew
No happy birds have ever sung.
Now 'tis itself a wounded bird ;
And though sometimes you hear it sing,
The Heavenly Father knows what pain
It tries to hide by uttering
The same sweet notes it used to sing.

A STUDY.

THINK, indeed, 'twas only this that made
Her seem peculiar : namely, she had no
Peculiarity. The world to-day
Is disappointed if we are not odd,
And hold decided views on some one point,
Or else unsettled views on all. But she
Was living simply what she wished to live :
A lovely life of rounded womanhood ;
With no sharp, salient points for eye or ear
To seize and pass quick judgment on. Not quite
Content was she to let the golden days
Slip from her fingers like the well-worn beads
Of some long rosary, told o'er and o'er
Each night with dull, mechanical routine ;
But yet she had no central purpose ; no
Absorbing aim to which all else must yield ;
And so the very sweetness of her life,

Its exquisite simplicity and calm,
Musical in its silence, smote the ear
More sharply than the discords of the rest.
So do we grow accustomed far at sea
To jar and clang of harsh machinery,
And sleep profoundly in our narrow berths
Amid the turmoil ; but if suddenly
The noisy whirr is silent, and the deep
Low murmur of the moonlit sea is all
That stirs the air, we waken with a start,
And ask in terror what has happened ! Then
Sink back again upon the pillows ; strange,
That silence should have wakened us !

Alas !

The world has grown so feverishly hot
With restless aims and poor ambitious dreams,
That lives which have the cool and temperate flow
Of healthful purpose in their veins, will seem
Peculiar !

“MANY THINGS THOU HAST GIVEN ME,
DEAR HEART.”

MANY things thou hast given me, dear heart ;
But one thing thou hast taken : that high
dream

Of heaven as of a country that should seem
Beyond all glory that divinest art
Has pictured :—with this I have had to part
Since knowing thee ;—how long, love, will the
gleam

Of each day's sunlight on my pathway stream,
Richer than what seemed richest at the start ?
Make my days happy, love ; yet I entreat
Make not each happier than the last for me ;
Lest heaven itself should dawn to me, complete
In joy, not the surprise I dreamed 'twould be,
But simply as the natural and sweet
Continuance of days spent here with thee.

BRUTUS AT PHILIPPI.

ROME, for whose haughtier sake proud Cæsar
made

His legions hers, to win her victories,
Denied him when her gods let Casca's blade
Pierce him who learned to make her legions his.

Still he is mighty ; with unchanging dread
Her people murmur for great Cæsar slain ;
Nor value, at the price of Cæsar dead,

Their greater cause lost on Philippi's plain.
If haply there are fields, as some pretend,

Beyond the silent Styx, where vaguely grim
Souls of dead heroes, shadowy and dim,

Awake,—I may find entrance at life's end,
Not as a hero who freed Rome from him,

But as a man who once was Cæsar's friend !

“VINO SANTO.”

TO H. H.

TASTE the cup of sacred wine,
Nor count with you the cost too great
For those who steadfastly can wait ;
Though grapes of fragrance so divine
Should ripen to their vintage late.

Gathered when only richest suns
Pour down a wealth of golden fire ;
Pressed while the holy heart's desire
Breathes grateful for these perfect ones,
And solemn prayer floats high and higher ;—

Type of a love that lets no stain
Of doubt or dullness mar its creed ;
But patient through its own great need
Of loving, wins its sure domain,—
Such love, such wine, is pure indeed.

Yet as I turn to pour for you,—
Vivid and sparkling at your gaze,—
My own heart's vintage,—let me praise
This glowing wine as holy, too ;
Since love may come in many ways.

And mine came to me as a star
Shines suddenly from worlds apart ;
And suddenly my lifted heart
Caught the rare brightness from afar
And mirrored its swift counterpart.

Love born of instant trust and need,
Each heart of each ; a love that knew
No test of time to prove it true,
No fostering care ; without a seed
It seemed as if the flower grew !

And you whose tender love was nursed
In strong sweet patience, till the wine
Of joy became for you divine,

Ripened in sunlight from the first,—
Will not refuse to this of mine

A sacredness ; remembering,—
By miracle changed instantly,—
The holy wine of Galilee ;—
Even so the wine of joy I bring
For you to taste, was changed for me !

CHARM.

QUENE day in June a crimson-breasted bird
Flitted from Heaven through the golden air,
And lit upon an apple-bough, that stirred
With rapture of delight to hold her there ;
And finding at the same time on its breast
A wealth of flowers, rose-red lined with snow,
Believed in joy its graceful little guest
Had brought them with her, and so murmured
low
In greeting,—“ Little bird, a poor old tree
Scarce can breathe worthily its thanks to thee,
For these sweet flowers thou hast brought to me !”

And then the pretty bird whose restless feet
Danced in and out among the blossoms there,
For very joyousness sent rippling sweet
A carol of bright laughter through the air.

Flushing with joy, the blooming sprays swung high,
Responsive to the quiver of her wings ;
As light of heart beneath the summer sky
Her voice ceased suddenly its twitterings,
To murmur back, " Thou foolish, dear old tree,
It is not I who bring the flowers to thee,
But thy most tempting flowers that bring me ! "

A FACE.

WE have known

Of many a man whose features were not carved
By his own soul to their high nobleness,
But handed down by some far ancestor.
Strange, that a man a generation long
Should do good deeds that mould his generous lips
To noble curves, and then should die and leave
His son the curves without the nobleness.
We've known of many a woman, many a man,
Whose own soul leaped in passionate high flames ;
But locked behind the fatal prison bars
Of cold ancestral dignity of face,
No glimmer of the light and warmth within
Creeps to the surface.

But this face of hers

Is not a face like those we've analyzed ;
True to its wearer, it is justly proud

With her own pride and not her ancestors.
Were you to chide her gently for some fault,
Or promise that whatever grand mistakes
Her woman's impulses might lead her to,
You would judge all with Christian charity,
Tis not impossible that she would say,
"Sir, I make no mistakes ; I have no faults ;
I thank you, but I need no charity !"
Well, what of that ? I would that there were more
Of us, who, bidden to confess our sins,
Could say Job's litany : "May God forbid
That you be justified ! my righteousness
Will I hold fast and will not let it go ;
My heart shall not reproach me while I live !"
Humility 's a grace at thirty-nine,
But scarce a virtue in the very young,
Who bend to us from fear, not reverence.
Nor truly humble is the violet
That keeps its face quite upturned to the sun
And would grow higher if it could ; it cannot.
Better for our young friend the haughtiness

Of strong white lilies that refuse to bloom
Near the dark earth they rose from ; eagerly
They push aside the lazy weeds that hide
The upper air ; and keeping in their breasts
The fair white secret of their blossoming,
Rise to the heaven they worship. Suddenly,
Awed at the vast immensity of light
That wraps the earth as with a garment ; awed
By the deep silence of that upper air,
They bend their stately heads, to breathe to earth
A murmured penitence for olden pride.
The fair white bells they kept so jealously
Lifted to heaven, now they overturn,
And let the cherished fragrance of their souls
Swing censer-like upon the general air.

You'll look at it again ?

No, I have put it back ; it's not a face
I like to argue over with a friend.
It is a woman's face ; and what is more,
A face I care for !

“LOVE WILL FIND OUT A WAY.”

THAT Love should find a way through iron bars
And close-drawn bolts—this does not seem
so strange ;—

More strange I count it that with wider range,
With naught to mark its course beneath the stars,
Love finds its sure, swift way. That day when we
First parted, Love, how dangerously near
The chance we never met again ! though clear
In the broad daylight, unrestrained and free
As breeze from heaven, naught between us lay
But the wide, shining, trackless fields of air
That gave no sign ; the lonely vastness, where
Love saw no clue to guide it, or to stay
Its course ;—well might the lover in despair
Yield up his search ;—and yet Love found a way !

SUMNER.

I.

DEAD!

But not where the flashing guns
Bring in a moment's glittering space
Death,—and heaven—and deathless fame—
To Victory's sons.

Dead!

But not where the crimson flame,
Leaping fierce in a cruel grace,
From the earthly clod
Burns away all pitiful dross
Till a martyr's soul on fiery cross
Ascends to God.

Whose life was martyrdom
Shall be spared a martyr's death
In winning a martyr's crown.
No struggle for restless breath ;—

A life laid calmly down ;—
Eloquent lips grown dumb ;—
Only for us the pain,
And the agony of loss ;
Only for us the test ;
For him, the wonderful gain,
For him, a longed-for rest.

II.

Dead !
And the mother state,
Mother of noble sons,
Reaches her yearning arms.
Give him back to her now !
Cold is the kingly brow,
Noblest of noble ones !
He cannot serve you now ;
Unheeding earthly things,
The royal soul, so great
To shield from threatening harms,
Has passed through a silent gate

That never outward swings.
Living, the world had need
Of him and his deathless name ;—
Living, the world had need
Of him and his stainless fame ;—
Living, we knew her need
Of him, and confessed her claim ;—
Dead, he is only ours !
Cover his bier with flowers ;
Give him back to us now !

III.

Nay !
Let Massachusetts wait !
In the capitol of the great
Let the statesman lie in state.
Let the house be draped in woe ;
Let the sentinel below
Pace solemnly to and fro.
All night let the tireless street
Echo the sad, slow feet

Of those who come and go.
All day let the voiceless street
In silence then repeat
The name we honor so.
Let the Senate chamber ring
Once more with his eloquence,
The eloquence of his death !
Let choicest flowers bring,
Delicate and intense,
Tribute of fragrant breath.
For ever the gentlest thing
With strongest love will cling
To one so grandly great.
Let Massachusetts wait !
Honored by every land,
Around him there shall stand
The noblest of each state !
And a nation's tears be shed
For our Massachusetts' dead !

IV.

Living, there was none so poor
That he need to hesitate
Loftiest aid from him to claim ;—
Dead, there is not one so great,
Standing now at his right hand,
But may tremble so to stand ;
Lest the touchstone of that pure
Stainless soul and deathless fame
Prove all poor who seem so great !

V.

Now,
To his mother where she stands,
Envied by the childless lands,
Bring him back with reverent hands.
Lonely mother, it is well
That your sorrowing lips should tell
Once again repentant woe
For the wound of long ago,
For rebuke that hurt him so !

No reproof could alienate
Patriot soul from patriot state ;—
Grandly patient, he could wait,
Cancelling reproachful past,
Words that almost came too late !
“ You were right and we were wrong ! ”
Strong and clear they came at last ;
And his sovereign spirit, great
In forgiveness for the long
Silent strain so gently borne,
Hearing Massachusetts mourn
For the wrong that she had done
Turned to her, her reverent son.
Ere her last word met his ear,
He had answered—he is here !

VI.

Here !
At the city gates !
And the long procession waits
To bear him to his bier.

No sound of muffled drums
Tells that a hero comes ;
No volleying cannon roll
The loss of a leader's soul ;
Not with the aid of these
Had he won his victories ;
He never loved such voice ;—
Let not these be our choice
To give this pain relief ;
For the people's hearts are mute
With the passion of their grief.
Break not upon his peace
With Massachusetts guns !
Only a tolling bell
To the sorrowing state shall tell
That the noblest of her sons,—
Highest in the world's repute,
Lowliest in the toil he gave,—
Given of God this swift release,
Comes at last from her to crave
For the service that he gave
The guerdon of a grave !

VII.

Dark
Over all,
Falls the twilight like a pall.
Kindle not the restless flare
Of the midnight torches' glare ;
Let the restful stars look down,
Silent through the clear, cold air,
High and pure as his renown !
Pale against the evening sky
Burns the banner that ye drape
With the heavy folds of crape ;
And ye have no need to tie,
All its fluttering crimson back
With those heavy folds of black ;—
For the very winds to-day
Droop with sadness, nor would care
With their crimson toy to play !

VIII.

He is here !
Massachusetts called him back,

And he answered—he is here !
Let the walls be hung with black,
Yet let roses richly red
On the casket of the dead
Be in bright profusion spread ;
And all night with solemn tread
Let the dusky sentinel,
Guarding what he loved so well,
Guarding what he held so dear,
Pace beside the quiet bier !

IX.

O beautiful sad day !
All of earthly must we lay
In the silent grave away.
And the very Winter, pale
At the sight of so much grief,
From her harshness will relent ;
Stoop to brush away the snow
From the frozen earth below
Where the noble dead shall lie.

Let no glorious dome less high
Than the over-arching sky
Bend above that royal grave ;
And for living monument,
Over it shall rise and wave
Living flower and living leaf.
Lay your costly roses down,
Civic wreath and cross and crown ;
These are frail !
Spring shall be your sentinel ;
Guarding now untiring here
All of what we held so dear,
All of what we loved so well !
Lay your costly roses down,
Civic wreath and crown and cross ;
Turn away with hearts made great
By the greatness of your loss !
Spring shall wait ;—
To her sacred care entrust
All of what is left us here :—
Dust to dust !

Lay your costly roses down,
Civic wreath and cross and crown ;
These are frail !
In the dim, unwonted shade,
These will fade !
But when next ye come this way,
Ye shall find the Spring still here ;
And a grave with violets set ;
Purple, living violet,
With the tears of heaven wet.

SIGHT.

TRY to make the baby on my knee
Look at the sunset ; pointing where it glows
Beyond the window-pane in tints of rose
And violet and gold ; when suddenly
He dimples with responsive baby-gee,
I think how wonderfully well he knows
Its beauty ; till the changing child-face shows
He had not seen the sky, but laughed to see
The sparkle of my rings ;—O baby dear,
This world of lovely gems and sunsets, bright
With children's faces,—is perhaps the near
Though lesser glory, dazzling our poor sight,
Until we cannot see, for very light,
The heaven that shines for us, revealed and clear.

PURITY.

Some souls are white
With perfectness, like stars full-orbed in heaven,
Silently moving through the stainless blue ;
Seeming naught of their nature to have drawn
From contact with the earth ; and some are white
With innocence, like daisies that too near
The ground their fair leaves fearlessly unfold.

This woman's soul
Is white with purity ; the snowy bloom
Of a camelia, that feels no disdain
In drawing from this common earth of ours
The sources of its beauty and its life ;
Yet with a wise and lofty self-control,
Refuses long to blossom to the sun ;
Spreading its glossy leaves to light and air ;
Winning a deep, sure knowledge of the world ;
Rising with quiet dignity and grace

Into a higher air ; and when at last
Its stately petals open to the day,
Not with the daisy's foolish trustfulness,
But with the confidence of slow-won strength,
To the world's gaze it silently unfolds
The perfect flower of a royal soul,
Not innocent, and yet forever pure.

A ROSE.

LAST night a little rose of love was laid
Softly in this poor hand, by one who knew
Not what most gracious breeze from heaven blew
The blossom in his path ; but since, he said,
All loveliest things he summoned to his aid
To win me,—let the fragrant flower that grew
Surely in Paradise to help him woo
And gain his wish,—be mine ; then half afraid,
Here on my breast I laid it, where it glows
With such rich sudden beauty, that my eyes,
Quickened by some new instinct, recognize
What is indeed my own ; for the fair rose,—
The rose of love bewilderingly sweet—
From my own heart had fallen at his feet !

RUE WITH A DIFFERENCE.

It is said

That women are more curious than men ;--
I should not put it so : they are more frank.
A woman who would like to know if this
Or that be so or so, makes no disguise,
But lifts her clear eyes candidly to yours
And asks directly, "*Is this true?*" a man,
More wise and quite as curious, simply states
A fact : "*This is so ;*" knowing well indeed
That if it is not, no true woman needs
A sharper challenge instantly to arm
Her soul with weapons to defend herself,
Her country, or her friends ; and so he gains
The knowledge that he wished, and yet has shown
No idle curiosity !

TO MAY H. R.—.

MANY a lovely dream a poet might
Weave into fancies round thy lovely name,
Sweetheart ; yet I, who surely have no claim
To be a poet,—(save the holy right
Love gives me to write poems at the sight
Of a young face whose eager brightness came
As part of life's best gift to me,—) can frame
No fitter reason why in such delight
I hold the one sweet syllable, than this :
Not for its visions of the field or wood,
But for its wealth of possibilities ;
Its hint of undefined, ideal good,
Suggesting all thy soul can scarcely miss,
That *May* one day crown thy rich womanhood.

CYCLES.

SING cheerily, O bluebird from on high !
Earth will be blue with violets by-and-by,
More blue than those you came from in the sky.

Haste, butterflies ! for radiant Summer brings
A crimson rose to match your sunlit wings,
Brighter than violets the blue-bird sings.

Croon, happy insects ; violet and rose
Have faded ; yet the autumn corn-field glows
Where in the golden grain the poppy grows.

Hush, eager voices ! for in dreamless sleep,
Wrapped in cool snow, the restless earth would keep
Forevermore serenity so deep.


Forevermore ? nay, tired earth, not so ;
Sweet as the violets of long ago
The pink arbutus rises from the snow.

Gathered too eagerly, it fades too soon ;
Then large white lilies open wide in June
Their golden hearts up to the golden noon.

And when the perfect lily in the gleam
Of too much sunlight, fades like a fair dream,
The crimson cardinals fringe the brightening stream.

Then once again the softly falling snow ;
While bright above the ivy green below
The scarlet berries of the holly glow.

EXPERIENCE.

 CHILD laid in the grave ere it had known
Earth held delight beyond its mother's kiss;—
A fair girl passing from a world like this
Into God's vast eternity, alone ;—
A brave man's soul in one brief instant thrown
To deepest agony from highest bliss ;—
A woman steeling her young heart to miss
All joys in life, one dear one having flown ;—
These have I seen ; yet happier these, I said,
Than one who by experience made strong,
Learning to live without the precious dead,
Survive despair, outlive remorse and wrong,
Can say when new grief comes, with unbowed head,
“Let me not mourn ! I shall forget ere long !”

A TRUST IN GOD.

She knew

She was not wise ; was conscious in herself
Of eager impulses that would have wrecked
Her whole heart's happiness a thousand times,
Had not some Power from without herself
Shut down the sudden gates, and with its stern
" *Thou shalt not!*" left her, stunned perhaps, but
saved.

For she was but a woman, and her will
Hung poised upon her heart, and swayed with each
Quick-passing impulse, like a humming-bird
Lit tremulous on some rich-tinted flower.
Rich-tinted, truly ; no forget-me-not,
Placid with blue serenity ; nor yet
That regal flower, stately in its calm
Fair dignity, that hoards its loveliness
From common gaze, with instinct to discern

The presence of unworthy worshippers.
Not till the twilight shadows have shut out
The common crowd that would have rifled all
Its queenly beauty,—does it condescend
For him who with a patient reverence
Has waited, to unfold with lovely grace
The royal petals ; and it droops and dies
Before the garish day has ushered in
Again the curious crowd.

This woman's soul

Was not so snowy in its purity,
And not so keen in its fine instincts ; nay,
But tinted with all splendid hues, intense
With high enthusiasms, and yet indeed
Not passionate, but pure as lilies are.
Transparent flames are surely just as pure
As icicles ; and something of the rich
And brilliant glow of her own nature fell
On everyone about her, till they stood
Transfigured in her eyes, with glory caught
From her own loveliness. She was not keen

To judge of human nature ; she believed
All men were noble ; and a thousand times
The poor heart would have offered up its all
On some unworthy shrine, had not the fates
Kindly removed the shrine. How could she help
Believe that God had stooped from highest heaven,
To save her from herself ?

FORESIGHT.

UNBAR, O heavy clouds, the gated West !
That this most weary day, beholding so
Her goal, may hasten her sad steps ; I know
She comes without fair gifts ; upon her breast
Close-clasped, the pale cold hands together pressed
Hold nothing ;—then let some red sunset glow
Tempt her to seek the unknown world below
The far horizon where she hopes for rest !

At last the day, like some poor toil-worn slave,
Passes, and leaves in sooth no gift for me ;—
Yet I, who thought my heart could be so brave
To bear what I had wisdom to foresee,
Sob in despair, as this poor day that gave
Me nothing, sinks behind the western sea !

TO FRANK S. R——.

WITH A VIOLIN.

THE stately trees that in the forest grow
Are not all destined for the same high thing ;
Some burn to useless cinders in the glow
Of the hearth-fire ; while some are meant to sing
For centuries the never-dying song
Once caught from wandering breeze or lingering bird
So clearly and so surely, that the strong
Firm wood was quickly seized by one who heard,
To fashion his dear violin ;—even so
Our human souls are fashioned ; some will fade
Away to useless ashes, others grow
Immortal through the sweetness they have made.

“THE EAGER SUN COMES GLADLY FROM
THE SEA.”

THE eager sun comes gladly from the sea ;
Remembering that one short year ago
He rose from unknown worlds of light below
Those same far waves, to shine on you and me
Standing together on the shore ;—but we
Are strangely far apart to-day ; and so
The saddened sun with lingering step and slow
Climbs the horizon, wondering not to see
Your face beside mine ; nor can understand
As we do, dear, that you and I to-day,—
Though million miles of ocean or of land
And centuries of time between us lay,—
Are nearer to each other than when hand
Touched hand, before we gave our hearts away !

RESERVE.

I hear you praise
What you are pleased to call unsounded depths
Of character ; a nature that the world
Would call reserved ; tempting you while it hides—
Or you suspect it hides—a richer wealth
Deep in some far recesses of the soul.
As if, indeed, you should approve the host
Who with most admirable courtesy
Should throw wide open to your curious gaze
His drawing-room, his green-house and his hall ;
Yet should not hesitate to let you see
Certain close-bolted doors of hardest oak,
Upon whose thresholds he informed you, “ Here,
Alas ! I cannot let you enter.”

You

At once are filled with curiosity
To listen at the keyhole.

So am I ;

Yet much I doubt if after all those deep
Recesses of the soul are filled with aught
But emptiness. Too thick the cobwebs hang ;
The master of the house can scarce himself
Feel tempted to draw back such heavy bolts ;
Although he take an honorable pride,
Leaning at ease in comfortable chair,
To know there are some chambers in his soul
Unentered even by himself.

But him

I call reserved, whose clear eyes seem a well
Of frank sincerity ; whose smiling lips,
Curving with hospitable gayety,
Bid you most welcome to his house and home ;
Throwing wide open to your curious gaze
Each nook and corner ; leaving you at ease
To wander where you will ; and if at times
You half suspect some hidden sweet retreat
Where hyacinths are blossoming unseen,
'Tis not because cold iron-bolted doors

Whisper of secrets you would fain explore ;
But that the tapestries upon the wall
So lightly hang, that swaying to and fro,
They half betray a fragrance from within.
You never once suspect that secret doors
Are sliding in the panels underneath ;
But when you go, the master of the house
Lifts easily the soft and shining silk,
To find there sacred silence from you all.

'Tis easier

To read the secrets of a dark, deep pool
That coldly says, " You cannot fathom me,"
With unstirred face turned blankly to the sky,
Than catch the meaning of a silver spring,
Though crystal-clear, above whose bright full heart
Delicate vine-leaves flutter in the sun.

A SONG OF SUMMER.


LADEN with gifts of your giving,
O summer of June !
With the rapturous idyl of living
In perfect attune ;
With the sweetness of eve when it closes
A day of delight ;
With the tremulous breath of the roses
Entrancing the night ;
With the glow of your cardinal flowers
On lips that had paled ;
And the coolness of silvery showers
For hands that had failed ;
With geraniums vivid with fire
To wear on my breast,
Where the lilies had paled with desire
To bring to me rest ;
With the joy that was born of your brightness
Still thrilling my soul,

And a heart whose bewildering lightness
I cannot control ;
Ah ! now that your idyl of living
Is over too soon,
What gifts can compare with your giving,
O summer of June ?

Then a wraith of the winter said gently,
“ I will not deceive ;
Of the brightness you prize so intently
No trace shall I leave.
The glow of the cardinal flowers
Shall pass from the field,
And the softness of silvery showers
To ice be congealed ;
The geraniums vivid with fire
Shall curl at the heart ;
And the lily forget the desire
Its peace to impart ;
Pale as the rose that is dying,
Your whitening cheek ;

Faint as its tremulous sighing,
Words you would speak ;
For a joy that was born of their brightness
I tremble with you,
When the gleam and the glory and lightness
Shall pass with the dew.
Ah ! now that your idyl of living
Is over so soon,
What gifts will be left of your giving,
O summer of June ?”

THOUGHT.

 PALACE richly furnished is the mind,
In whose fair chambers we may walk at will ;
And in its cloistered calm, serene and still,
Continual delight and comfort find.
Not only fretful cares we leave behind,
But restless happiness, and hopes that fill
The eager soul with too much light, until
Eyes dazzled see less wisely than the blind.
So perfect is the joy we find therein,
No pleasures of the outer world compare
With the divine repose so gladly sought ;
When from the wearying world we turn to win
High mental solitude, and cherish there
Silent companionship with lofty thought.

A CHANCE ACQUAINTANCE.

THOUGHT to hold thy memory as the sea
Holds in its heart a pale reflected moon,
Lost when the sunny radiance of noon
Dissolves the moonlight's tender mystery.

Lo ! thou art not her semblance in the seas,
But the fair moon herself, that near or far,
Orbed high in heaven as a shining star
Or hid from sight at love's antipodes ;—

Still sways the waters with love's restless tides ;
Not by her own will ; no coquette is she,—
The lovely moon to whom I liken thee ;—
For high above our earthly air she glides,

Unconscious as the waves that rise to greet
Her coming, of the mystery of God's law
Compelling her those far-off waves to draw
Forever towards her whom they never meet.

A REMEMBERED CRITIC.

TO J. R. D.

KIND words, that greater kindness still implied
From one unused to praise, for one unknown
To him and to the world where he had grown
Less wont to cheer the artist than to chide ;
And always in my heart I thought with pride
Some day to know him, and for him alone
Bring the fair finished work, that he might own—
“O friend, behold my full faith justified !”
Now he is dead ! a man severe, they said
Who knew the critic ; but around the spot
We call his grave, by some sweet memory led
Of kindred sweetness, violets have not
Refused to bloom ; and one he had forgot
Wept suddenly to hear that he was dead.

DAWN.

WAKE, happy heart, O awake !
For the mists are flitting away ;
And the hawthorn boughs for thy sake
Are eager and longing to break
 Into garlands of blossoming spray.
Sing, sing it, O gay little linnet !
And hasten, O glad lark, to bring it,
 The beautiful Day !

O Dawn, I am hungry with yearning
 For gifts thou canst give ;—
The proud soul within me is burning
 With new life to live.
I am strong with the strength of long sleeping ;
 Fill full now each vein
With rich crimson wine thou art keeping
 For glad hearts to drain !
O hush ! for the clouds break asunder ;
 Her delicate feet
Touch the hills with a reverent wonder

If earth will be sweet.
And the heart that within me was breaking
With longing for her,
Breaks utterly, now that awaking
I hear her low stir.
So frail and so dainty and tender ;
What heart could foresee
That the goddess it longed for, a slender
Young fairy would be ?
Empty-handed, she dreads my displeasure,
And turns half away ;
'Tis for me then to give of my treasure,
O beautiful Day !
Appealing, she waits till I greet her,
With no gifts for me ;
Dear Day, after all it is sweeter
For me to crown thee !
If I am not a happier maiden
Because of thy stay,
Thou shalt be with bright gifts from me laden,
A happier Day !

WITH AN ANTIQUE.

THE old, old story men would call our love ;
One cannot think of any time so old
That some "I love you" was not gladly told
To some one listening gladly ; each remove
Of the long lingering centuries does but prove
Its deathlessness ;—and we to-day who hold
Each other dear as if young Love had sold
To us alone his birthright from above,—
Love's secret ours alone,—turn back to seek
In the rich types of Roman art or Greek
Some fitting gift wherewith to fitly speak
A love that each heart to the other drew ;—
An old, old story it may seem to you ;
To us, each year more beautiful, more new.

DOUBT.

Tell me, my friend ;
Across your faith (which, pardon me, I know
To be sincere and honest ; else, indeed,
I had not spent this hour with you here ;)
Across your faith, then, does there never creep
A haunting doubt it may not all be true ?
For me, although my life were spanned above
With faith as honest as your own, if once
On the horizon there had dawned a doubt
No bigger than a pigmy's little hand,
Then heaven would be always overcast
With possible untruth, and I should think
The stars I saw were but poor will-o'-the-wisps
Created in my brain, beyond which rolled
The eternal darkness of a blank despair.
Whereas now, living underneath a sky
Continually clouded,—when a rift
Shows me a tender heavenly blue beyond,

I fancy then the darkness overhead
May be a gathered mist of my poor brain,
Beyond which rolls, immortal and unstained,
The glory of the everlasting Truth !

“I KNOW MYSELF THE BEST-BELOVED
OF ALL.”

I KNOW myself the best-beloved of all
The many dear to him ; yet not indeed
Because of his swift thought for every need
Of my love's craving ; I could scarcely call
My very own the power to enthrall
Such chivalry as his, that turns to heed
Each slightest claim, nor thinks to ask the meed
Of love returned where love's sweet offerings fall.
Not then because of all he is to me ;
But by this surer token ; when he earns
The right to his own happiness, or yearns
For some sweet, sudden, answering sympathy,
Ah me ! with what quick-beating heart I see
For his own joy it is to me he turns !

OCTOBER.

The very air
Has grown heroic ; a few crimson leaves
Have fallen here ; yet not to yield their breath
In pitiful sighing at so sad a fate,
But royally, as with spilt blood of kings.
The full life throbs exultant in my veins,
Till half ashamed to wear so high a mood,
Not for some splendid triumph of the soul,
But simply in response to light and air,
Slowly I let it fall.

And later, steal
Down the broad garden-walk, where cool and clear
The sharp-defined white moonlight marks the path.
Not the young moon that shy and wavering down
Trembled through leafy tracery of the boughs
In happy nights of June ; the peace that wraps
Me here is not the warm and golden peace
Of summer afternoons that lull the soul

To dreamy indolence ; but strong white peace,
Peace that is conscious power in repose.
No fragrance floats on the autumnal air ;
The white chrysanthemums and asters star
The frosty silence, but their leaves exhale
No passion of remembrance or regret.
The perfect calmness and the perfect strength
My senses wrap in an enchanted robe
Woven of frost and fire ; while in my soul
Blend the same mingled sovereignty and rest ;
As if indeed my spirit had drained deep
Some delicate elixir of rich wine,
Ripened beneath the haughtiest of suns,
Then cooled with flakes of snow.

SERENITY.

HER days are as a silver-flowing stream ;—
Above, the rippling sunbeams flash and
gleam ;

Beneath, strong currents noiseless as a dream.

Her heart is like the lilies that bloom wide
In restful beauty on the restless tide,
Asking not where the eager waters glide.

Her thoughts are white-winged birds, that from
below

To the high heavens soar and vanish so—
Alas ! mine cannot follow where they go.

Her joys are bright-winged birds that from on high
Come singing down, and tempt the stream to try
And sing with them as they flit singing by.

Her sorrows—she has none her heart will own ;
The air is silent when the birds have flown ;
But the poor stream still sings the song, alone.

"A YEAR AGO TO-DAY, LOVE."



YEAR ago to-day, love, for the space
Of a brief sudden moment, richly fraught
With deeper meaning than our light hearts
thought,
You held my hand and looked into the face
Which, poor in gifts, has since by God's good grace
Grown dear to you ;—and the full year has
brought
Friendship—and love—and marriage ; yet has
taught
My heart to call you in its sacred place
Still by the earliest name ; for you who are
My lover and my husband, and who bring
Heaven close around me, will not let me cling
To that near heaven ; but tempt my soul afar
By your ideals for me ; till life end,
My calm, dispassionate, sincerest *friend*.

STEADFAST.

Not like the stars that high in heaven
Shine so serenely with unchanging rays
That marveling at their calmness, you believe
Of their "firm-fixed and lasting quality"
There is no type upon the earth beneath.
A few weeks hence look up, and you shall find
Each steadfast planet steadfastly has moved
Across the midnight azure of the sky
With silent rays still tranquil and serene.
Not steadfast like the stars is she I love,
But as this gem I wear upon my breast ;
Whose rich rays wander from me through the room,
Sparkling and fading with capricious gleam
Of light and color, like the varying moods
Of my beloved one ; those who turn to praise
The beauty of the gem, admire most
The changefulness of its most restless rays ;
Yet I feel no uneasiness or doubt ;
Knowing full well whenever I look down
Upon my breast, the jewel will be there.

WITH A CRYSTAL LION.

FOR L. R. W.

KEEP watch and ward,
In stately guard,
Around my Una's wayward feet ;
Not lest she tread
False ways instead
Of higher paths, serenely sweet ;—

But lest in care
For all who share
Her tender ministry, too late
Her frail strength yield ;—
Be thou her shield ;
They also serve who sometimes wait !

Of crystal, clear
As in its sphere
Her lofty spirit moves alway ;—

Of massive strength
As all at length
Will find who make her soul their stay ;—

With flowers and buds
Whose sweetness floods
The air even when we cannot see ;—
This gift I send
My earliest friend ;—
Dear type of all she is to me !

ABSENT-MINDED.

YOU chide me that with self-absorbed, rapt
eyes

I seem to walk apart, nor care to clasp
Familiar hands once dear ; like one whose house
Filled with the guests of her own choosing, rings
With sounds of gladness, yet who steals away
Up to some silent chamber of her own,
Forgetful of the duties of a host.

But is not she
The truest and most hospitable friend
Who, noting suddenly among her guests
An unexpected comer, one to whom
She fain would show high honor and respect,
Hastens away with busy feet awhile
To throw wide open to the sun and air
Some long-untenanted fair chamber, rich
With storied heirlooms of her ancestors,
Bright with long windows looking towards the sun,
Waiting but for an occupant ?

Even so

Have I but stolen quietly away,
Within the happy silence of my heart
A lovely, sunny chamber to prepare
For a new-comer.

ANSWERED PRAYER.

FATHER, whose tenderness has wrapped me
round

In a great need,—to what shall I compare
Strength thou hast sent in answer to my prayer?
Not to the help some falling vine has found,
That trailing listless on the frozen ground
Clings suddenly to some high trellis there,
Lifting itself once more into the air
With timid tendrils on the lattice wound.
Rather to help the drooping plant has won,
That weary with the beating of the rains
Feels quickening in its own responsive veins
The sudden shining of a distant sun.
When from within the strength and gladness are,
My soul knows that its help comes from afar.

EXPRESSION.

A wave

Throbs restless in the darkness on the sea.
Glorious in heaven shines a strong white star,
Sending long slender lines of level light
Serenely through the stillness ; and the wave
Takes to its heart the beautiful bright thing,
Unconscious that it now stands self-revealed
In its own palpitating restlessness.
“ How very strange,” it murmurs to itself,
“ That a great radiant star should tremble so,
Even as I do ; and more strange it seems,
That it should be so willing to betray
Itself by shining.”

And meanwhile in heaven
The star, with eyes fixed only upon God,
Sweeps through the stately circles of the skies
In motion grand as silence ; undisturbed
And self-contained ; not dreaming that below,

A little wave whose tremulous young heart
Has caught a little of its brightness, thinks
To read and to interpret for itself
The heavenly mysteries.

Even so I hear
Men call it strange that poets should reveal
The sacred secrets of their inmost souls
To every idlest reader.

FULFILLMENT.

BURN bright, O sunset sky, with tints like
wine !

From all the west let the glad tidings shine,
So beautiful a joy is to be mine.

O little lily, lean into the gloom !
Pour from thy deep cup all its rare perfume,
Sweeter will be my joy when it shall bloom.

Sing gayly, that the richer world with me
May so rejoice in joy that is to be,
O little birds upon the Maple tree !

O happy heart, send up to eyes and cheek
The gladness that I have no words to speak ;
The fairest ones too powerless and weak.

Nay, burning sky, hide thy too brilliant glow !
I would not that the curious world should know
The sacred joy that now has blessed me so.

O little lily, leaning from the gloom,
Hold thy too fragrant breath, that there be room
In the deep stillness for my heart to bloom.

Hush, little birds upon the Maple tree !
I cannot hear, ye sing so noisily,
The sweeter song my soul would sing to me.

O happy lids, droop over happy eyes,
Lest all the marvel of their dear surprise
Escape once more to the far Paradise,

From which joy came so gently to my breast,
Forevermore to be its cherished guest ;
Not seeking there, but bringing, heavenly rest.

“THERE WILL BE SILENCE HERE, LOVE.”

THERE will be silence here, love, in the slow
Long summer months when there are none
to break

The stillness with the laugh of those who wake
New-born each day to joy ; and yet I know
The stillness cannot be so still, or grow
So deeply soundless, but that for my sake
The memory-haunted, lonely rooms will take
Some echo of my vanished voice ;—even so,
Amid the scenes to which I have no choice
But go without thee, dearest, there will be
No gayety so gay, no glad light glee
Wherein with others I, too, must rejoice,
But through it all my heart will make for me
Silence, wherein I shall but hear thy voice.

FAITH IN WORKS.

MY faith begins where your religion ends :
In service to mankind. This single thread
Is given to guide us through the maze of life.
You start at one end, I the other ;—you,
With eyes fixed only upon God, begin
With lofty faith, and seeking but to know
And do His will who guides the universe,
You find the slender and mysterious thread
Leads down to earth, with God's divine command
To help your fellow-men ; but this to me
Is something strangely vague ; I see alone
The fellow-men, the suffering fellow-men.
Yet with a cup of water in my hand
For all who thirst, who knows but I one day,
Following faithfully the slender thread,
May reach its other end, and kneel at last
With you in heaven at the feet of God ?

“No. 33—A PORTRAIT.”

FOR R. H. L.

WITH careless step I wander through the hall,
Scarce heeding many a work of lovely art ;
Till with a sudden thrill my listless heart
Leaps up to greet upon a stranger's wall
Those dear remembered eyes ;—her face, with all
The dreamy charm that made so sweet a part
Of my life once ;—and tender memories start
To meet her at her unexpected call.

True portrait of the unforgotten face,
How do I thank thee, that dost give me here
Tidings from her, so distant yet still dear
To me ;—for as I bid the painting tell
If all be well with her, its pictured grace
Answers beyond all doubting, “*It is well!*”

LONGING.

NOT high above us with the pitiless stars,
Nor deep below us in the soundless sea,
Nor far away to east or westward, lie
The little things we long for.

Here they are ;
Close to our hands, the eager, restless hands
That fain would grasp them ; and no fetters bind
The wistful fingers ; no relentless fate
Tells us we must not ; we are wholly free
To take them if we choose.

And yet—and yet—
We dare not ! lest the soul should wake some day,
Years hence, perhaps, to sense of other needs.
God save us ever from those sudden moods
When all life narrows to a single point,
And when the poor heart seizes its desire.
Only to wake to deeper restlessness.
But after all, what matter ? would it be

Harder to wake years hence to sense of thirst
Than to stand thirsty now ? for sunny wine
Sparkles before us, and a precious pearl,
Eager to lose its life upon our lips,
Waits but our instant grasping to dissolve
Its costly beauty in the nectar.

Nay !

We have no right to the white lovely pearl.
God give us strength not to stretch out our hands !
See ! they are slipping slowly from our reach—
Fading into the darkness—

They are gone—

The little things we longed for !

THE NEW DAY.

SUPREME through all the hours of the day
I hold one sweetest : not the day or hour,
Dear, when you came to me ; nor yet the flower
Of perfect days, though that is sweet always,
When your love came to me ; I cannot say
Why these are not divinest in their power ;
Yet as each new day comes, it brings for dower
One moment whose rich gladness will outweigh
All others : that first moment when the night
Yields to the daylight's clear and vivid blue ;
And waking to things real from things that seem,
My eager eyes unclose to the fair light,
Still undeceived ; to find their visions true,
And that your love for me was not my dream.

CONFESSION.

The eager year
Is passing, with its triumphs and defeats.
Alike earth rests from labor and from joy ;
Hushing each tiniest insect, wearing now
No careless ornament of flower or leaf ;
Reaching her pleading arms up to the sky
In longing for its silent chrism of snow
In benediction ; like a weary heart,
That worn with spent emotion, sinks at last
Into exhaustion that almost seems rest.
Not brooding over her lost violets,
High in her hands upon the leafless trees
She holds the woodbine, swaying in the wind,
A crimson rosary of remembered sins.

How shall we keep this solemn festival,
Thou, O my heart, and I? have we no sins
It would be well, confessing here to-night,

To know forgiven? Not to some gentle friend
Whose tenderness ere half the tale were told
Would silence it with kisses; but before
A more severe tribunal in my own
Exacting soul, that could endure no blot
Upon the scutcheon of its spotless truth.
Not without hope of pardon; for the soul
Is sponsor to the heart; if she can tell
Of purest purpose loftily upheld,
We need not be so sad, my heart and I,
To wear a little while upon our breast
The crimson rosary.

And when the soul
Shall speak at last the full "*Absolvo te,*"
Then will we lay forevermore aside
These memories of fault. Earth does not wear
Her scarlet woodbine all the year, to pain
Her beating heart with constant self-reproach.
Content with frank and full confession once,
The trembling vine, with sighing of the wind,
Drops slowly, one by one, its deep red leaves.

So having won forgiveness from myself,
Listening I hear the far-off harmonies
Of solemn chant in heaven : “ *Though thy sins
Had been as scarlet, they shall be like wool.*”
God’s benediction calms my troubled heart,
Pained with its consciousness of frailty,
Even as upon the fading crimson leaves
Fall tenderly the first white flakes of snow.

“AMONG THOSE JOYS FOR WHICH WE
UTTER PRAISE.”

AMONG those joys for which we utter praise
That were not in our lives one year ago ;—
(No need to name them, dearest ; for you know
Each one that came, our ignorant hearts to raise
To love's high level ;) let us count the days
Before we knew each other ; days when no
Sweet premonition of love's full rich glow
Gleamed on the darkness of our separate ways.
All preludes should be simple ; that no dream
Or hint of this new beauty came to fill
The unconscious hours with meaning, does but seem
Fit introduction to the joys that thrill
Our glad souls now, from love that knew no still
Awaking,—but dawned instantly supreme.

BECAUSE.

NOT because you are gentle of speech,
O brave knight of mine !
Nor because in the chivalrous list
With the brightest you shine ;
Nor because when you pass on the street
All the world turn to praise
The wonderful charm of your look
And grace of your ways ;
Nor because in your presence I know
I have but to command,
And the coveted treasures at once
Will fall from your hand ;
Nor because by the glance of your eyes
That so tenderly drew
My whole heart unto yours, I may know
I am perfect to you ;

But because in your presence, dear, *I*
Grow gentle of speech ;

The haughty young maiden who once
Was so wilful to teach ;
And because when I pass on the street
All the world turn to praise
A certain new charm in *my* look
And grace in *my* ways ;
And because in your presence I lose
The proud wish to command ;
Contented, nay eager, dear love,
To be led by your hand ;
And because your eyes full of reproach
At some things that I do,
Still show the belief I shall grow
To be worthy of you ;—
Do I love you ? 'twere idle indeed
To refuse now to yield ;
Quite useless for lips to deny
What the eyes have revealed ;
Yet not, (let me say it, for fear
That too vain you should be—)
Not so much for what you are yourself,
As for what you make me !

IVY.

THREADING its noiseless way among fair
things

Love-chosen to make beautiful my room,
The ivy spreads its tender living gloom,
Darkening and brightening the wall ; now clings
Closely around some picture, and now swings
Some airy shoot of tremulous young bloom
Into the freer sunlight ; till the doom
Of their slow silent fate together brings
At last the branches that for long years went
Their single, separate ways. Did no swift thrill
Of subtle recognition flash, and fill
Their veins ? Oh Ivy, still must we lament
Thou canst not with our joy in thee have part,
And thyself know how fair a thing thou art !

INFLUENCE.

Hearts that are glad
Beat quicker for the smiling of her lips ;
Even as the summer air that seems o'ercharged
With fragrance, will grow even sweeter still
At sudden blossoming of one more rose.

But the rose, too,
Has her own secret. From the heavenly blue,
Regnant upon his throne of light, the sun
Sends her his glances ; till the timid rose
Slowly, leaf after leaf, unveils to him
Her beauty ; and the summer air at once
Takes to itself the soft and fragrant sigh,
Nor dreams she offered to a distant sun
The incense of her soul.


Even so I hear
You praise a sudden sweetness in her ways,
Grown strangely kind and tender to us all ;

For me, I recognize the o'erfull heart,
Trembling and faint with effort to express
Surcharge of beauty that her soul has drawn
From one who stood above her.

MIRACLE.

IF love had found me in cold cheerless ways
And led me forth into the light ;—if bloom
Of sweet and sudden flowers, instead of gloom
In the long nights and unillumined days,
Thy love had brought me ;—then at love's high praise
I had not so much wondered ;—if the doom
Of pitiless destiny had given room
To thy bright presence ,—then in swift amaze
I were less awed than now. No life could be
More sweet than that past life of mine, I thought ;
And when the changing years in fulness brought
Another life enriched by love and thee,
That all my beautiful past should seem as naught,—
This is the miracle Love wrought for me !

“SHE CAME AND WENT.”

S a shy bird that startled from her nest
Wings her far way into the highest blue,
Nor dreams that she has left us any clue
To find which elm tree had been loved the best ;

Though all the while its light boughs, fluttering
In the deep noonday silence, softly beat
Their soundless echoes to her flying feet
Now swiftly in the blue air vanishing :—

So haply you would keep a secret, dear,
Your unseen presence in my little room,
That glorified into unwonted bloom
Betrays to me what fair guest has been here.

Who else, dear, in my absence would have thought
To close the favorite book, left open here
Where a disputed passage was made clear
By a few words with tedious patience sought ;—

Then with a sudden and repentant grace
That all the mischief of its fault bereft,
Have found the very page again, and left
A rose in the shut book to mark the place.

DREAMERS.

I.

I SAW her, though with earnest eyes bent low,
Unheedful of the violets at her feet,
That clustering in purple fragrance sweet
Touched her white dress ; absorbed in revery so,
She knew not that the morning sunshine's glow
Was for her sake ; and robins, fain to greet
So fair a lady with a love-song meet,
No recognition won from her below.
O dreamer of a dream thy heart shall see
Crowned with fulfillment when the dawn of day
Has deepened into noontide's richer gleam,—
Lest I too rudely should awaken thee,
With hushed and reverent step I steal away,
Praying God bless the dreamer and the dream !

II.

I saw her with her tearful eyes raised high,
Unheedful of the whirling flakes of snow,
That flitting through the sad air to and fro

Flecked her dark dress ; cold from the leaden sky,
The autumn winds came sobbing restless by,
Wailing to find it still so cold below ;
While faded violets of a year ago,
Pressed to her lips, hushed her own rising cry.
O lonely dreamer of a dream long flown,
I come to waken thee ! for dying day
In purple twilight shrouds the noontide gleam ;
And when the lovely visions that have grown
So fair and dear flit vanishing away,
God blesses dreamers who no longer dream.

ANDROMEDA.

LOOSEN my arms ! leave me one poor hand
free,

That I may shut one moment from my sight
The dreadful heaving of the shuddering sea !
For as it creeps back slowly from my feet,
Rise from its inky depths swift-coming waves
Big with the terrible and nameless thing
That soon along the shrinking sands will crawl
To wrap me in its hideous embrace.
I will not struggle ! leave me but one hand
To shield the poor eyes that refuse to close ;
For stretched and wide the fascinated lids
Deny their office, and I needs must look !
What have I done, that these fair limbs of mine,
(Nay, nay ; I meant not fair ; the gods forbid
That I should boast !) but young and piteous
And tender with soft flesh—O mother, take
Your proud words back ! O nymphs, be pitiful !

The green waves part, and poisonous is the air !
Red the fangs glitter ! save me, O ye gods !

Nay, what is this that wraps my shuddering limbs
With sudden coolness ?—Can it be that now
The merciless tall cliff which all day long
Refused its wonted shadow to protect
My burning body from the dazzling sun,
Relents, and spreads its gentle shade around
To calm my reeling senses ? Nay, for more
It seems to me like white o'ershadowing wings,
Circling above my head. Alas ! so dim
My poor eyes are with tears, I cannot see
What this may be so near me ; yet it seems
Like some young, gallant knight. Alack, good sir,
If thou art come to free my quivering limbs,
Know that against the gods contend in vain
The bravest knights. And yet how like a god
Himself he stands ! See how he spurns the ground,
Poised with sustaining wings upon the air,
And deals the monster a sharp, sudden blow

That sends him reeling from the trembling shore !
Shattered, I hear the chains fall to my feet ;
Yet much I fear another gentler fate
Fetters my heart anew. O valiant knight,
If in thy sight this tearful face was fair,—
(Fair dare I call it now ; since thou art near
To shield me ever from the envious hate
Of those less fair !) if worth it seemed to thee
The dreadful daring of the doubtful fight,
Surely that best should be thy dear reward
Which prompted thee to struggle ; all is thine !
The dim eyes, dull with weeping bitter tears,
Shall brighten at the sound of thy strong voice ;
The frail hands, red with struggling to be free,
Once more shall turn to lilies in thy clasp ;
Rose-red for thee shall flush with happiness
The poor, pale cheeks, still white with sickening fear ;
The tired feet sustained and strong shall grow,
Walking beside thee ; nay, dear love, not yet ;
For still they tremble, still I seem to need
Thy firm supporting arm around me thrown.

Fold me then, dearest, in thy close embrace ;
Bear me across the treacherous, yielding sands,
To that far country which must needs be fair,
Since thou hast followed from its chivalry,
Where I may now forget all else but thee.

LOVE SONG.

DREAMING of love and fame, sweetheart,
I dreamed that a sunbeam shone
For a wavering instant, and where it played
A hundred flowers had grown.
The sunshine flitting so soon away
Was a smile thou hadst given me ;
And the flowers that bloomed in the world for aye,
Were the songs I wrote for thee.

Waking to love and life, sweetheart,
I saw fair flowers fade ;
While still from the measureless heavens above
The flickering sunshine played.
The flowers fading from all men's sight
Were the songs they had heard from me ;
And the light that illumined the world to them,
Was a single smile from thee !

CLOSED.

WITHIN her' soul there is a sacred place,
Forever set apart to holy thought ;
There once a miracle divine was wrought,
And common things grew fair with heavenly grace.
Think not to know the secret of that room ;—
Closed is the door, even to herself ; no more
She lingers there, though well our hearts are sure
It is no spot of shadowy, haunted gloom.
The violets that blossom there unseen
Were never gathered, and so never fade ;
Breathing serenely through the gentle shade
Their memories of all that once had been.
When in the thoughtful twilight we, her friends,
Walk with her, and in spirit dimly feel
A strange, rare fragrance o'er the senses steal,
Let us speak softly of a Past that sends

Through the closed crevice of its silent door,
No bitterness in those remembered hours ;
But in the delicate breath of such fair flowers
Only the sweetness of the days of yore.

BABY-HOOD.

M. W. R.

DEAR bird of mine, with strong and untried
wing,

Ignorant yet of restless fluttering,
How long will you be so content to sing

For me alone? when will the world be stirred
By notes that even I have scarcely heard,
Since you are still only a mocking-bird?

My little Clytie with the constant eyes
Turned to me ever, though the true sunrise
Burns far above me in God's holy skies,—

How can you know, my sweet unconscious one,
In the bright days for you but just begun,
That I am worthy to be held your sun?

My little loyal worshipper, the bloom
Of whose fair face makes bright the midnight gloom,
Turned ever steadily to my near room,

Knowing so well, with instinct fine and true,
The one glad door through which I come to you,
Caring for naught but what that hides from view,—

How long, dear one, how many precious years,
Will this fair chamber where I hush your tears
Be the one Mecca for your hopes and fears ?

Not long, alas ! not long ; the mother heart
Knows well how quickly she will have to part
With all this wonder ;—she who tries each art

To lure him on ; the first to coax and praise
Each added grace ; then first in sore amaze
To mourn that he has lost his baby ways !

"IF I COULD KNOW, LOVE."

IF I could know, love, that some single prayer
From my full heart's supreme desires for thee,
With rich fulfillment would be granted me
By Him who gave us to each other,—where
Could I find truer wish than this : " O spare
My life to him ! " For surely love should be
Love's best interpreter ; an argosy
Freighted with all earth's joy, wert thou not there,—
Beside me always—how could I be glad
In aught of this ? my own great speechless need,
Not only of the love I once have had,
But of thy presence, teaches me to read
The deep, unspoken prayer thy heart would add
To mine, if highest heaven could lean to heed !

THE DIFFERENCE.

QNE day I heard a little lady say,
“O morning-glory, would that I were you !
Twining around the porch that lovely way,
Where you will see my dear one coming through.
So fair you are, he'll surely notice you,
And wait perhaps a moment, just to praise
The clinging prettiness of all your ways,
And tender tint of melting white and blue.
O morning-glory, would that I were you !”

I heard the little lady's lover say,
“O rose-white daisy, dying in the dew,
Breathing your half-crushed, fainting life away
Under her footstep,—would that I were you !
For when how cruelly she wounded you,
She turns to see in pitying distress,
With murmured words of sorrowing tenderness
Close to her lips your bruised leaves she will press ;—
O drooping daisy, would that I were you !”

INDIAN SUMMER.

LINGER, O Day !
Let not thy purple haze
Fade utterly away !

The Indian Summer lays
Her tender touch upon the emerald hills ;
Exquisite thrills
Of delicate gladness fill the blue-veined air.
More restful even than rest,
The passionate sweetness that is everywhere.
Soft splendors in the west
Touch with the charm of coming changefulness
The yielding hills.
O linger, Day !
Let not the dear
Delicious languor of thy dreamfulness
Vanish away !
Serene and clear,
The brooding stillness of the delicate air,
Dreamier than the dreamiest depths of sleep,

Falls softly everywhere.
Still let me keep
One little hour longer tryst with thee,
O Day of days !
Lean down to me,
In tender beauty of thy amethyst haze !
Upon the vine
Rich, clinging clusters of the ripening grape
Hang silent in the sun ;
But in each one
Beats with full throb the quickening purple wine
Whose pulse shall round the perfect fruit to shape.
Too dreamy even to dream,
I hear the murmuring bee and gliding stream ;
The singing silence of the afternoon
Lulling my drowsy senses till they swoon
Into still deeper rest ;
While soul released from sense,
Passionate and intense,
With quick, exultant quiver in its wings,
Prophetic longing for diviner things,

Escapes the unthinking breast ;—
Pierces rejoicing through the shining mist,
But shrinks before the keen, cold ether, kissed
By burning stars : delirious foretaste
Of joys the soul—(too eager in its haste
To grasp ere won by the diviner right
Of birth through death)—is far too weak to bear !

Bathed in earth's lesser light,
Slipping down slowly through the shining air,
Once more it steals into the dreaming breast,
Praying again to be its patient guest ;
And as my senses wake,
The beautiful glad soul again to take,
The twilight falls ;—
A lonely wood-thrush calls
The Day away.
Thou needst not linger, Day !
My soul and I

Would hold high converse of diviner things
Than blossom underneath thy tender sky.
Unfold thy wings !

Wrap softly round thyself thy delicate haze,
And gliding down the slowly darkening ways,
Vanish away !

“LAST—AN AMETHYST.”

Q THOU in whom, not knowing, I believe,
If in these uttered phrases there is naught
Of that supreme, deep language of Thy thought
Men call religion—yet wilt Thou receive
The finished task ; though I have dared to leave
Unseen, but not unfelt, though best unsought,
As Thou thyself to my own heart hast taught,
The solemn truths that so will strongest cleave
Unto men's souls. My hand would fain forget
Its eager cunning, ere the fingers kissed
By one whose love Thou gavest me, should yet
Yield all to joy, uncaring if they list,—
Thy angels—from the heavenly parapet
Of precious stones : “ the twelfth, an amethyst ! ”



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