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To-day and Yesterday..

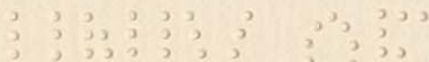


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Edward Willard Watson



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TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY.

Since all the thought of yesterday is old,
And, for to-morrow, different from to-day,
Uncertain is the soul on what to hold ;
What to store up, and what to cast away.

And, as a mirror flashes back to view
Each passing scene, yet keeps its lustre bright,
So we discard the old thought for the new,
And still go on in thinking, wrong or right.

But could we have these images that pass
Brought all together from a score of years,
Just as they shone within the silvered glass,
We scarce could see them thro' a mist of tears.

BEYOND THE VEIL.

Out of the night we came,
And into night,
In joy or shame,
We take our flight.
This end to all will come ;
For us earth seals no doom ;
But when, or where,
Can spirit dare
To claim its share.

Out of the night we came,
Was it from dark to light ?
Our day may be as night
To those beyond ;
It seemeth bright below,
And sunlight's silver glow
Brings fancies fond ;
But what beyond may be,
In vast eternity,
Is strange to me.

Against thy veil, O Death, I beat,
While here below life comes and goes ;
Against thy soft, dark veil, O Death,
I beat like fire-fly, in some burning heat,
That scorns the rose,
Yet dares the flame,
Of which it nothing knows ;

Dark may be light,
 And darkness may be bright
 To those beyond ;
 There may they gaze,
 Through burning haze,
 While we but strive,
 While here we live,
 To guess, with fancies fond.

Against thy soft, still veil
 Press faces pale ;
 Against thy sombre cloud.
 Hushed voices crowd ;
 And cry, and die,
 And from our vision fly.

If we might only know,
 Not guess, with fond imaginings
 If in our hearts might flow
 Some melody from heavenly strings ;
 If we might only know
 If there be more beyond ;
 Or, if we only flash and glow,
 Then, fade from memories fond.
 If we might only know
 What comes to all,
 When the wild blood will flow
 No more, nor voices call.

In our distress, our limbs we press
 Against each dismal fold.
 What sights and scenes of awfulness
 Might we beyond behold.

All evil things, and spectres die
 In darkness, lit by lurid fire,
 In burning heat, or deadly cold,
 Into one Hell of horror rolled,
 We see in our distress.
 All the dark things we hold in dread,
 All evil ones among the dead,
 These we descry, and shrink, and die,
 And vanish, too, in nothingness.

What lies beyond?
 O memories fond!
 O dear ones gone!
 O long lost song!
 O soft, sweet light!
 O dear eyes bright!
 O fond delight!
 'Tis never night
 If these be there;
 Away from care,
 Away from fear,
 Among all dear,
 In the soft light that knows no night,
 No burning heat, but rest that's sweet;
 Which may it be, O Curtain Dread,
 That parts us from the dear and dead?

Hast Thou another side, or can
 Thy folds be ever passed by man?
 For none return; none come to tell;
 We die, and with the tolling bell
 Our memories end.

Our thoughts may burn,
 Our hearts may yearn,
 But never may thy curtain rend,
 Or through its fold quick glances send.

What power dread, O Death, art Thou?
 Laying thy cold hand on the brow;
 Stilling wild beat of hearts, and eager feet,
 Leaving for us—a sob;
 Coming our homes to rob,
 Of all that's dear and sweet.

Before thy veil lies silence.
 Behind? Are glories rolled
 In myriad circles, fold on fold,
 And laughter, and glad singing?
 Or Stillness? Black or Gold?
 Which is it? Answer us, O Death!
 To Thee we cry; to Thee we pray,
 To Thee, on bended knees, we say
 Our Prayer; Who art Thou then, O Death?
 Giver or Taker-away of life,
 Beginner or Ender of earthly strife,
 Tell us; we listen, we plead, we pray?
 Thou Lord of the night,
 Thou Lord of the day,
 Hear us, and answer us while we pray.

Answer I hear, so sweet, so clear:
 "Weary mortals banish fear;
 Cease to cry ye know not what;
 I am all ye think me not.

I am He that gave you life,
 Sent you forth to deadly strife,
 But, tho' ye win but tears and pain,
 I take you to myself again.
 I give you sorrow, I give you breath,
 I watch and wait behind the veil ;
 I long to call you far from pain,
 And claim you as mine own again ;
 But ever ye faint, ye fail ;
 Ye will not learn my name,
 Tho' I wait to give you bliss,
 For on your side you call me Death,
 But my name is Love on this.
 Darkness on that side, Light on this.
 Love is my name, all hearts I claim,
 But ye will not, ye will not, ye choose your lot,
 And I cannot break your chain."

O, Spirit high and far, whose name is Love,
 Thou Giver, Lover, ever brooding Dove,
 I lift, O love, my arms to Thee
 Whom I believe, yet cannot see ;
 I lift my arms in vain, from out my pain ;
 Come for me, if I be thine own,
 And take me back to Thee again.
 With burning eyes I strive to pierce
 The very skies, with vision fierce ;
 I stretch my arms in vain to Thee
 Whom I believe, yet cannot see.

"This is the answer, loud and clear,
 Told in your ear, by saint and seer,

Only, when bringing love to me,
Can I reach down my arms to thee.

Bring love to me ;

Bring any love to me ;

Thy faults 'twill cover and remove,

For I am Love.

Bring love to me, bring human love to me,

Bring any love, but love of self, to me,

For I am Love.

I watch, I wait, to ope the gate ;

Stretch thy love-laden arms to me.

Hast lost thy life, in deadly strife,

To save the right, from error's might,

Hast languished ill, in dungeon still,

Wast lost in sea, for love of me,

Or love of any one, small or great,

In the world men fill with burning hate,

That I gave them to keep ;

Then awake ! Arise from your weary sleep ;

Out from the fire-flame, up from the keep !

From noisome mists that at evening creep ;

Out, and up from the awful deep,

To my arms, to my love, you may joyful leap.

This and this only—Love is all.

Love that dares, love that dies,

Love that cares, love that flies,

Love that conquers, love that fails,

Love that is tearful, love that smiles,

Love that fears not, love that hears not,

Love that cares not, love that wears not

Out in the struggle of sin below ;

This is the love that ye must know ;

This is the love divine, and ye
When ye possess it, then shall see
Love that gave you, Death that claims,
Are but the same, and both my names.
I am the Spirit of Love and Death;
Giver, and Taker-away, of breath,
Maker—Destroyer—both in one;
Night and Darkness, Day and Sun;
But only when laden with love for me
Can I ever reach down my arms for thee.”

LOST LOVE.

Sweet love is bliss, but that the thought of parting
Comes, like a cloud, over our loving sun ;
And love is life, yet, thro' our senses darting,
Comes the dread thought of death and we undone.

And love is sweet, but death is dark and dreary,
Yet are they two, one and the same, at last ;
Death is the lover coming for the weary,
Love is the rest, when grief and pain are past.

Ah, Love and Death, Ah, Death and Love, I pray ye
Be to my heart as one and come to-night ;
For saddest love I have, may naught delay ye,
And take me with you in your timeless flight.

Dear love, lost love, lost yet among the living,
Seen, yet unseen, mine, but still never mine,
Who gavest love for love, yet by no giving,
Can bless my life, I now thy love resign.

Unlock thine arms, shut thy dark eyes and sever,
Once and for all, thy heart from mine to-night.
Leave me to darkness and the dread forever,
And let death take me from thy living light.

For Love is sweet, and Death is dark and dreary,
Yet are they two, one and the same, at last ;
Death is the Lover, coming for the weary,
Love is the Rest, when grief and pain are past.

MY WHITE ROSE.

O, my sweet rose, my white rose,
My single, blooming flower,
Must thou go? For I love thee so!
God knows, for it is His hour.

O, my rare rose, my white rose,
Sole treasure of my bower;
I cannot sleep, I cannot weep,
God knows, for it is His hour.

O, my dear rose, my white rose,
My pale, pure, loving flower,
It is my doom; no more will bloom,
God knows, for it is His hour.

O, my lost rose, my white rose,
My one sweet-scented flower;
Oh, why take thee! thou'rt all to me?
God knows, for it is His hour.

WHEN I AM DEAD.

When I am dead shall I meet thee, coming, O Christ
in the gloaming,
Coming thro' shadows of death, with light on thy
glorious face?

Shall I fall low at thy feet, I, so weary of roaming,
Clasping thy robe in my arms with despairing embrace?

When I am dead shall I see thee, afar off, distant
and faintly,
Gazing on others with love, but thy face turned ever
away?

Ringed round and circled with thousands of beings
angelic and saintly,
And shall I turn in despair, and flee from thy
beautiful day?

Shall I see thee at all? art thou in the distant here-
after;

Or hast thou gone down to death, just as the
others who sleep?

Is there no place in the grave, any more, for sorrow or
laughter;

Fond recollections of earth, or of those who rejoice
or who weep?

Hundreds of years we have waited ; still in despair
 we are falling ;
 Doomed to uncertainty, fated to live and to die
 without hope ;
 Where is his promise they ask us ? hark how the ages
 are calling !
 Why drag the wheels of his chariot, while in the
 darkness we grope ?

Am I a dreamer of dreams when I call thee " Lord
 of the Nations " ?
 Art thou Lord of the waking, or Lord of the crea-
 tures that sleep ?
 Art thou no better than they, whom all men call thy
 creations,
 Dost thou, too, lie in the grave, and thy court in
 nothingness keep ?

Come to us, come when the evening is dark and the
 moonlight is hidden.
 Come while we sit in the silence, and brood o'er the
 wreck of our faith.
 Come to us, just as thou didst to thy little band, com-
 ing unbidden,
 Come like a thief in the night, come like a tenuous
 wraith.

Answer, we claim it, we dare it, light on our darkness
 is breaking.
 Come, now if ever, declare it, time must be ripe for
 thy light ;

But in the silence is terror, list to our hearts and their
 quaking ;
 Souls are not ; life's but a fever, and dieth away in a
 night.

Come, for the ages have tarried, the night to the world
 still is clinging ;
 Come, for we've waited and wondered, and longed
 for the promise you gave ;
 Come, and our sorrows will end, and joy, made tri-
 umphant by singing,
 Burst from our wearying hearts, as life breaks forth
 from thy grave.

When I am dead shall I meet thee, coming, O Christ,
 in the gloaming ?
 Coming thro' shadows of death, with love on thy
 glorious face ?
 Shall I fall low at thy feet, I, so weary of roaming ;
 Clasp the hem of thy robe, in despairing em-
 brace ?

REMINISCENCE.

On earth I pray,
In early day,
To Ishtar—Goddess sweet of love.
As time goes swift,
My eyes I lift
To Hathor and her sacred dove.

At Here's shrine
I pour out wine,
In Greece, as time goes by.
In Rome I raise
My ardent gaze
To Venus for reply.

Now, as I wait,
To learn my fate,
No Goddess near I see;
Though, "God is love,"
All gods above,
Religion cries to me.

O Mary, virgin,
In the skies,
Thou lookest down with Here's eyes,
O Mary, mother,
Tried and true,
What are our little loves to you?

HEREDITY.

I will arise and to my fathers go ;
To all the fathers that I boast as mine.
To all the line innumerable of them
That were my fathers since my race began.
I will arise, yet to myself I'll go,
To myriad forms and shadows of myself
Who people Hades ; like me once, and now,
But the decayed and tenuous ghosts of me ;
To them I go, to me they downward come
And claim in me their child, and yet themselves.
All merged in me—I backward turned in them,
Into a thousand others, yet the same.
Like broken images in breaking wave,
Like shadows, cast on walls of some vast cave.
Caused by one form—passing, and passing back,
Endlessly pacing on one narrow path.
I will arise and search the hidden way,
For all my sisters and my brothers lost,
Whom I have known and loved in ages past.
I will arise—yet whither shall I go?
Into the Past? Why, I might sooner wend
Upon my way thro' distant future scenes,
Than to go backward and retrace my steps.
The past is barren, and the world of shades
Holds none that claim me, none that know my
name.
For all around me, on life's narrow stage,
Are all I loved or hated, in the eld ;
All that did work me evil, do me good,

Lull my last hour, or catch my infant cry.
 With them I act my part. The players all,
 Each time we enter on our narrow stage,
 Are still the same. The names are changed, per-
 chance,
 And so's the drama's title, which we play,
 But the old scenes recur; the lines we learn
 As new to-day slip glibly from the tongue;
 For many a time, in ages gone, we walked
 And spouted to the listeners the same words;
 Did the same deeds, received the same applause,
 Or fled the stage in terror or disgrace.
 For life's a play, played o'er, sometimes, I think,
 For ears and eyes divine, to while an hour;
 To trick the *ennui* of a gilded heaven,
 And stir the pulse Eternity has chilled.
 And we, the players, we, who love and mourn,
 Are crowned or crushed, are torn with joy or pain,
 After our many scenes, when perfect we
 In all our lines and characters and work,
 May be received as worthy then to be
 Viewers of others, on some alien stage,
 Be stage-directors, managers and powers,
 Who move the marionettes and pull the wires
 That shift the scenery; beat the drums, that roll
 In muttering thunder, mechanism to us,
 But to the actors very real and true;
 Chilling their hearts with terror, till they fall
 Down on their knees, and beg us, drummers all,
 Only to spare them space for better deeds,
 Only to grant them life—a few brief days—
 And health—and riches—and the thing we yearned
 Always to have and hold, when we were men.

THE WHEEL OF GOD.

“Oh, my God, make them like unto a wheel.”

O, my God, to *me* be pitiful!
To mine enemies be a sword.
I Thy Servant was ever, and trusted Thee,
Resting my hope on Thy word.
But mine enemies pursue me; without Thee,
Even now, they bring me to the ground;
I never failed Thee; they ever defy Thee;
Therefore, I pray Thee, “Make them go round.”
Make them go round and round, as a wheel;
Make them whirl round and round,
Till Thy Power, in agony, they feel,
Whirling round, in darkness profound.
Down to the depths of Thy sunless world,
Up to the blaze of Thy star-fires hurled.

Make them go round in fears.
Morrow on morrow, unending before them,
Thine eye awful in anger o'er them,
Make them go round in tears.
Make them go round in terror and pain,
Till tears can flow no more again,
On Thy rolling wheel, that maddens and sears,
While their blinded souls shriek louder again,
With their shrunken cheeks terror-blanced,
As out into oceans vast they're launched.
Let them go round in Thine Ocean,
Thine Ocean without a shore.

Let them forever go round—go round,
Whirling, forevermore.

Up to Thy pallid sky whirl them,
Down to the darkness of night.
Off to Thy Outermost hurl them,
Far from the blessing of light.
Scorch their mad eyes ; when they would see,
Show them the terrors of sight.
Round let them go, ever spinning,
No ending, nor ever beginning ;
Oh, my God, shut mercy from them !
Close forever Thy door !
Oh ! my God, make them go round and round,
Like a wheel, forevermore.

THE HERALD.

Surely man, by Evolution, is the herald of his God,
But in ages few are fitted to announce his coming
reign ;

Yet, when time is ripe and waiting, springs the herald
from the sod,

As a taller spray of barley in a ripening field of
grain.

And the sun may scorch its freshness, or too early it
may ripe,

Or the winds blow fiercely on it, till it falls upon
the ground ;

So we recognize but rarely men of high and wondrous
type,

And we know not how they often die away without
a sound ;

How the fowls of air may flutter over fields of human
grain,

How the grasshopper may waste them, till they lie
all sere and brown ;

But we thank the lord of Nature that a few may still
remain,

Rising high above the harvest, in the field which He
has sown.

For they spring up to the sunlight and they lift their
voices high,

And they cry aloud their message, on the warm and
 sultry air ;
 To their brothers all appealing—ever pointing to the
 sky,
 With their words of love and warning, which they
 grew but to declare.

These are they the world has cherished, these are they
 the world has killed.
 Little bands of faithful servants holding by them to
 the end ;
 Till the voices, and their sweetness, by the wicked
 world were stilled,
 And their beautiful, bright spirits to the azure sky
 ascend.

Name them not, or name not, one *alone* and silence
 keep beside,
 They are all, together, worthy ; they are brothers of
 mankind ;
 For humanity they lived their life, for human hope
 they died,
 But humanity was thoughtless, and human hope was
 blind.

Unknown heroes, unknown teachers, of whom history
 telleth not,
 Lying low in unknown graves, no lofty tombs to tell
 the place,
 Yet perchance to them befell—not to us—the happy
 lot,
 And they earned the bright reward, though they per-
 ished in the race.

All their voices, if you listen, cry in unison to earth,
But we hear with feeble ears, and we often lose its
tone.

God—Eternity—and Love—sing they from their lowly
birth,

And they sing, and die in singing, as they lived their
lives, alone.

SCIENCE AND FAITH.

I.

Old is the world, its ways are new ;
For now it seeks to find the True.
As once the Beautiful it sought,
And all the lines of Beauty taught ;
Now, in the cold and steady glare
Of mighty science, Truth lies bare.
Stripped from the very heart of men
Lie all their fancies fond, and then,
Naked and cold, they turn and cry,
“Give us some new divinity.”
For who can rest in dying hour
And reach out toward an “Unknown Power,”
And what are “Light and Sweetness,” then,
But attributes beyond our ken ?
Where is the God we learned in youth,
The “Love Divine,” the “Living Truth” ?
Where for the homeless soul shall be
Its home, in dread Eternity ?
These are the questions men will ask ;
To answer them their hopeless task.
And if we live not, if this life
Below be all, why the hard strife ?
Why toil and strain, with eager eye,
Toward the infinite starry sky ?
There is no heaven, some idle dream
Of former time, when great men *seem*

To have lived forever, in a land
 That sank, long ages past, in sand
 And ocean, while the tale remained
 Of all the wonders that its shores contained.

II.

O ye mighty and wise men of Science,
 We kneel to you humbly and pray :
 Ye now are our only reliance,
 Since God ye have taken away.
 Ye have taken the faith of childhood,
 Ye have broken the stay of years,
 The hope of the Future we cherished,
 And left us despair and our tears.
 So now, since Jehovah has perished,
 And his Son, the dear Saviour, is dead,
 And gone is the fond hope we cherished,
 And peace and quiet are fled,
 Here we worship before *you*, in sorrow ;
 Ye only are left to our race.
 Give sign ! Where go we to-morrow ?
 Whence came we ? we ask of your grace.
 And to you, great Power Herbert Spencer,
 And to Darwin, we humbly pray,
 Tell what lies before in the future,
 What comes at the close of our day ?
 All is myth, evolution, and science ;
 No hope, faith, patience, or love,
 No beneath, save the earth we must lie in,
 No chance for heaven above.
 Our fables have vanished, and children

No longer, we gaze undismayed ;
 Why rear any temple or altar ;
 Do ye wish it, ye mighty and staid ?
 Serene is your far-reaching science,
 Ye are calm and faultless and proud,
 But ye take from us every reliance,
 And leave us—a grave and a shroud.

III.

To Matthew Arnold, teacher great,
 Torn from this earth by cruel fate.
 To Matthew Arnold, he who knew
 The way the name of God first grew ;
 To Spencer, to them all we cry,
 Show us the way, or we shall die.
 We thought we knew, we fancied, too,
 The way was plain, the knowledge true.
 Beyond the earth, beyond the sky,
 The blessed realms of heaven did lie.
 Thro' life, with faith and hope, we strove
 To live obedient to the Love
 Who came from heaven to earth, to save,
 And gained a victory o'er the grave.
 And when our span of life was o'er
 We looked to Him, and feared no more.
 Our little ones, they lived and died ;
 Our loved ones went, we only cried :
 Take them to Thee, and safely keep,
 Till we into Thy shelter creep.
 There was no night ; the future bright
 Shone on our lives with endless light.

This was the goal we strove to reach,
 When ye our minds began to teach.
 And now, no more our prayers ascend,
 No more with them our praises blend.
 There is no God, or, if there be,
 A "Power for Righteousness" is He;
 No Person, tangible, and real,
 To watch our struggles, for us feel,
 But a remote and awful Power
 That works by clock-work, hour by hour.
 Ye are our Prophets, Teachers, Kings,
 Who find out all we know of things.
 Therefore to you we humbly pray,
 Be ye our Gods and with us stay.
 But, Oh! to be as once we were,
 To feel as little children feel,
 To read the sacred words once more,
 And at His footstool humbly kneel.
 We cannot, for the void above
 Is empty, and our words are lost,
 Gone from us is Almighty Love,
 And we are wrecked and passion-tossed.

IV.

We need no churches, altars none,
 For ye are men of simple mind;
 But since we rest on you alone,
 Say, are ye aught for them inclined?
 For ye have burst the chains of years,
 Have shown us all our futile hopes,
 And how unreasoning were our fears,

And our religions, rotten ropes.
 And when we die, we will not go
 To join the ones we loved and lost,
 Nor bliss will enter, nor to woe
 By a malignant power be tossed,
 But, by the Mighty Chemic Powers,
 Into the gases whence we sprung
 Will we dissolve, with passing hours,
 When once the solemn peal has rung.

V.

So will we cherish you, as though
 Ye were the Gods ye overthrew.
 So will we bow in reverence low
 And render homage, as your due.
 For ye have freed our minds from chains,
 Have stripped us of an idle faith;
 What matter if despair remains,
 And for our comfort naught he saith.
 We know we know not, blessed thought;
 We know that this is all we know.
 No God descended, for us wrought,
 And burst the bonds that held us low.
 There may be, this we know, for you
 Have told us so, and we can see,
 There is a Power—this much is true—
 That works for good; but if there be
 Such power, it is remote and free,
 Working afar and silently.

VI.

Hark, the wail of poor humanity,
 Life once was, now Faith is, vanity ;
 Nor below, nor far up reaching,
 Find we God, although beseeching.

VII.

As once, in lonely garden,
 In chill of early morning,
 The words of one heart-broken,
 With agony torn and sorrow,
 So now we cry them ; no pardon
 For us in distance is dawning,
 No loved face smiles for a token,
 Nor hope from it may we borrow ;
 Ye have taken away our Lord,
 And we know not where ye have laid Him ;
 Ye have slain our Love with the sword,
 Like Judas—ye, too, have betrayed Him.
 No longer we pray at eve,
 When stars above are shining ;
 No longer we hope to receive,
 In the morn, what we asked reclining ;
 No longer we lay with tears,
 Loved ones away for sleeping ;
 Free from sorrow and fears,
 Safe in God's merciful keeping,
 But—dust unto dust—all is over,
 Blow winds and ye tempests rage on,

The loved one is lost to his lover
Forever, and science has won.

Science has won, yet hearts are lamenting.
Science has won, yet Death triumphs chill.
Reason to science is ever consenting,
But heart cries to heart, in its agony, still.

“MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.”

Not in the world my kingdom lies,
Nor march my followers to its war,
Nor trumpets sound, nor banner flies,
Though wars we wage and soldiers are;

Not in the world you see without,
But in the hidden world within
I conquer realms of sin and doubt,
And there my victories I win.

For souls I fight, for hearts I strive,
And love, the weapon in my hand,
With it the foeman far I drive,
And conquer back my heavenly land.

THE CHURCH AND THE CHEMIST.

Can the Church and the Chemist agree?
Can the Saint and the world;
For Science and Faith
Is there still neutral ground
Anywhere to be found?

Like atoms in the molecule
The giddy stars on high are set;
The atoms vibrate to and fro,
And they may scintillate and glow,
For all we know as yet.

The complex forms we dream about,
In deeper chemic dreams to-day,
To-morrow may be realized,
They may not, yet they may.

The atoms in the molecule
Are small and great,
Have little weight,
And little size, and never meet,
But circle round with motion fleet,
So many to a pound.

So worlds and sun
Their orbits run,
Above us in the ebon sky;

Just as the atoms, here below,
 Around companion atoms fly,
In circles round and round.

The little thing is only small
When something greater is above.
The great suns whirling upon high
 With their attendant worlds may be
But, in the eye of mighty love,
 A task in some vast chemistry.

So small to Him, so tiny they,
 These masses that we mighty call,
That they might be but specks of clay
 Upon his footstool, that is all.

And atoms in a tiny grain
Of some long-time discovered salt
May covered be with land and main,
 And domed about with starry vault,

And peopled, too, with man and beast,
 And covered o'er with cities vast,
For nothing to His eye is least,
 Nor future, nor is any past,
But in eternal Present, He
Controls the things that ever be.

KNOWLEDGE AND DOUBT.

If we could only know, in depth and height,
The new-won wisdom of the age, yet keep
All the fond imagery of the Eld from blight,
Men would not falter, women need not weep.

But both together cannot hold the mind;
Reason and folly—truth and fable old;
God may not be within the whistling wind,
Yet in the silence may His will be told.

So round the world we peer, its nooks explore;
Up to the great blue arch He built above:
Down in the depths, interrogating Power
With the one question, "Art thou God and Love?"

We sweep the sky and dig the earth below,
For seeking is the Spirit of the Age;
Back to the origin of things we go,
Deep into history, far beyond its page;

And as we find, and as we gain some ground,
Whence we may overlook the world we know,
How many fond beliefs die without sound,
But leave us grim despair in overthrow.

But there is no alternative—no more
The stories old can charm the listeners all;
We have plucked down, from life's bright river-shore,
The fruit of knowledge, and its taste is gall.

If, like a man suspected, we could bring,
 Before the august bar of some high court
 All the Religions of the earth and cling
 To its decision, as with justice fraught ;

If we could hear its sentence, and could rest
 Sure in its verdict, happy then were we ;
 Till then we never can be wholly blest,
 Plunged day by day in worse perplexity.

For science finds so many fatal flaws
 In all we thought most perfect, that we dread
 Even her light, and listen to her laws
 In terror, while our old beliefs are dead.

For to the soul she shows an endless Chance,
 In which we live, the sport of warring powers,
 Dodging among mad devils, as they dance
 Over the bodies we can scarce call ours.

The sport of Circumstance, the play of Fate,
 Prey of the stronger, doomed to fall and die,
 And after death, untimely, or too late,
 In the dark earth we perish where we lie.

No hope beyond, no perfect scheme of life,
 Made for our progress to some happier world ;
 But these mad moments of perpetual strife,
 And then into blank nothingness we're hurled.

But Science grows : she yet is but a child
 In her strong youth, destroying as she plays ;
 As years increase, she may with age grow mild,
 And gain more tenderness with many days ;

May spare the troubled heart, may even give
Hope to the hopeless, that at last they'll find
Where all seems chaos, there is place to live,
And God "unknowable," not all unkind.

THE CRY OF THE HOPELESS.

The world, awake to brighter day,
Its grand assize is holding high,
And mighty trumpeters give bray
And summon forth each ancient lie ;
And as before the bar they stand,
In sight of that assembly grand,
The outcast world, the poor who lie
Unheeded, or in suffering die,
The millions who no pleasure know,
But old with toil in childhood grow,
Who see no blessed fields, nor look
On limpid stream or running brook,
To whom the trees, the birds, the flowers,
Are memories of rarest hours,
Lift up their hands and justice crave,
And mercy, for the toiling slave ;
For something of the life they see
The favored few live happily.
“Give us,” they cry, “before we die,
Some of the things we earn for you,
If you are honest, good and true,
Nor put us off with pious fraud,
About the poor being blest by God.
For we can see with our own eyes
Upon the rich—His blessing lies ;
And you have taught, as known and true,
Things that were only guessed by you ;

And you have held o'er us the rod,
 As sole proprietors of God ;
 Have sworn that every word of His
 Is only what you say it is ;
 And that the book, you tightly hold,
 Was by his fingers writ of old.
 And, when we ventured to inquire,
 You doomed us to his hell of fire.
 Against this God, that you have made,
 And men like you, we stand arrayed.
 Up to the God of truth and right
 We cry, ' Avenge us in Thy Might ' !
 We cry for justice to the sky,
 We cry for mercy to the sun,
 Whose beams of light unequal lie,
 Whose course is so unfairly run,
 O God of Love ! didst thou ordain
 These lives of hopelessness and pain ?
 Oh, God of power, dost thou allow
 This anguish, upon every brow ?
 O God of purity and peace,
 Can'st thou for us show no release ?
 And to our happier brothers, you,
 Who bitter penury never knew,
 We lift our cry, with all our might,
 For we are creatures of the night
 That you may bask in gladsome day ;
 We shiver in our rags, that you
 With fire may make your sport and play ;
 We must be starved, one soul in ten,
 That ye, the noble nine, may thrive ;
 Go down to death in sin and pain,

That ye may pass bright days alive.
 We must to war, that you in peace
 Your homes, ours gone, may safe possess,
 While ye are they, who ever say,
 We practise Christianity.
 'Resist not' nor do ye resist,
 We do it for you, fight your wars ;
 'Be peaceable,' count not our scars ;
 'Be honest,' while ye rob our toil
 And tear from us our native soil ;
 'Be chaste,' ye are perhaps, but see
 Our troop which wanders thro' the night,
 Of all the fairest ones there be,
 The children of our heart's delight.
 O Heart Divine, whom ye misjudge,
 Whose words ye make an idle tale,
 Hark to our bleeding heart's sad plaint,
 When weak with toil, with hunger faint.
 Down in the dust we lie, that ye may tread
 Daintily o'er our bodies, lest the soil
 Of the earth's mire should touch you, and you dread
 To stain your finger-tips with honest toil."

Can hope be a kind of despair ?
 Can war be mistaken for peace ?
 Heaven bring us sorrow and care,
 And Hell grant us happy release ?

Can belief in a lie be the truth ?
 Can a world of madness be love ?
 Carnage be kindness and blood,
 A merciful shower from above ?

X
"NOT A SPARROW FALLS."

O sparrow, tiny bird,
How often have we heard
That you fall not to the stony ground and die,
Unless it be His will,
Who the universe doth fill,
And you perish underneath His loving eye.

O sparrows, must ye fall?
I hear at dawn your call,
Chattering early in the matted ivy leaves;
Beneath the Father's eye
Must ye, must ye, ever die?
And can we think He sees, and never grieves?

How could He let you die!
How hear your faint, sweet cry
And never try to save you and your song;
Perhaps His arm is weak,
If so, then let Him speak,
For God the Mighty Father should be strong.

O sparrows, when ye fall
Will ye despairing call,
And blame the Father and his useless care,
For knowing danger came,
Can He escape all blame,
When ye perished, in your feathered beauty rare.

THE EVOLUTION OF DOUBT.

I.

Ye teachers of religions lost, and those
Whose fanes still flourish on the patient earth,
Ye are but parts of an eternal whole
That reaches from the lowest depths, to God.
Nor can ye dare assume that His high throne
Ye yet have reached, or found his dwelling-place.
But as ye are, so have ye slowly grown
Up from the soil ; nor can ye boast and say,
We are divine, and you, poor mortal men,
Are but the fleeting product of a day.
For as man grew, ye, with him, also grew,
Much to his sorrow in the ancient days.
And many men ye sent from life, afar,
To wander aimless in some dark beyond.
Nor can man cry and blame you, overmuch ;
For his the hand that fashioned all his gods.
If he were cruel, ye more cruel were ;
If he were gentle, ye were mild and kind.
Each grew with each, together, hand in hand,
And withered side by side, when greater gods
And stronger peoples swept you both away.
For struggle is the law of every life,
And war, and death ; and few survive the strife.
But the survivors prove that nature knew
How to strike down the false and save the true.
And Evolution is the impress on the world

Of all its Maker willed it to become.
 And though the ages move but slowly on,
 And many thousand years must come and go,
 Ere to the making of a man they bring
 Their powers to full perfection, yet to Him,
 Who by His fiat started all the scheme,
 They may be moments. Are they slow indeed,
 Yet who would wish them faster ; who has cried
 That his life-span be shortened ; how have all
 Mourned our brief days ; and if perhaps a wretch,
 Hurried to death by fellow wretches, chanced
 Once in a year—one in a million men,
 To rail at nature, and to wish that death
 Could but come speedily, a thousand more
 Beg for their lives, and pray for longer days.
 And yet, maybe, in ages now to come,
 When the fierce light of knowledge blasts our hopes
 We all may cringe and cry to unheeding heaven
 For death the longed-for and the cure of ills.
 For now despair seems stirring in its cave ;
 And putting forth its arms from its grim lair,
 And drawing in its hopeless, dread embrace
 The brightest and the bravest men who live.
 They pray not, for they know no ear can hear ;
 They curse not, for they know no God will care ;
 They die not ; for a certain stolid heart,
 Not faint, but angry, urges them to live,
 Till their life's span be over : then will all
 Fade from their vision—and their sleep begin,
 To pass thro' time eternal. We have found,
 Fiercely they cry, the honest laws of life ;
 And we have formed the moral code we keep,

Worked out from nothing—or from basest source,
To this the highest. Let us live our life,
Keep the road won thro' myriad toiling years,
Live to the end, and suffer while we live,
And throw our lives at last, as a great taunt,
Into the face of Him who made us low,
Kept us crushed down, nor deigned to lift a hand,
When all our struggles and our falls He saw.

THE WEED AND THE FLOWER.

Ye teachers of the wisdom of the world,
High priests of science, nearer God than we,
Whose temple is the arch above us all,
The earth below—the many-storied rocks ;
Who search into the infinite distant light,
And sent your throbbing thought along its ray ;
To whom the history of the teeming race,
To which ye, too, belong, is known and read,
Till all the weakness of mankind ye know ;
Tell men your judgment, let them see
From whence their fond beliefs have sprung,
With all the creeds to which they cling
And which for ages they have died to save.
How in the dunghills of the past
The flower grew, they hold so fast.

As first it came, a simple weed,
Springing to light from unknown seed.

How man no better found, and so,
He watered it and made it grow.

Then as a gardener, with his care,
He taught its tendrils how to dare.

Trained them aloft, as ever they
Toward the sun threw out their spray.

They flowered, but not the flower we know,
That in perfection seems to glow ;
Their flowers, for ages, seemed to be
Things scentless, shaped hideously ;

Or sending forth a poisonous breath,
That spread an atmosphere of death.
But, age by age, they bloomed and blew,
As still the gardener's care they knew,
And grew to be more choice than gold,
Till they repaid him thousand-fold.
Oh, fair Religion, man's choice flower,
Whose buds he tended long ago,
Now underneath thy leafy bower
He from the heat, for shade, may go.
There may he rest from burning rays,
There may he pass his peaceful days,
And gaze up to thy glowing bloom
Thro' life, and in his hour of doom.

Whence came the weed? whence came the flower?
Grown now to be a mighty power;
And whence the wisdom of our race,
To water it and guard its place?
And whence the impulse strange, that strove
In it, to reach the sun, its love?

THE HOPE THAT SCIENCE LEAVES.

Hope thou, faint heart, for better days to come,
For some bright sun to light to-morrow's East,
For, watching thro' the night we joy to see
The clouds, low-lying, tinged with rose at last.
Hope yet, faint heart, for dawn is coming fast,
And man regards each day with tenderer care,
The rights of all creation—save his own
As he stands lone—unaided but as he
Receives from others as to them he gives,
And gains life from the world's humanity.
No dwellers on some lonely star are we,
Lost and forgotten in a boundless sky,
But parts of one vast whole, whose rare design
Embraces all the web that holds the stars,
And all the interwoven rays that shine
From constellations; in its tapestry,
Whereon men thought their foolish eyes could see
Figures gigantic, traced by ancient seer,
Or guessed by him from tracings of a hand
Greater than man's, but guardian of his lot,
Watchful, but unrelenting—for the stars,
Rising and falling thro' the tired hours,
Only, for him, foretold unerring fate,
And made his life the sport and play of heaven.
But to the eye that gazes up, to-day,
No fate spells out the legend of our lives,
But in the distant star-dust, galaxy,
And constellations with mysterious names,

We see the signs of empire—stretching far—
 Ruled by the One who ordered all its ways ;
 And from our world, ourselves, our little lives,
 Tracing up step by step, we climb aloft,
 Till on the pinnacle of earth we stand
 And gaze still to the azure. Then we see
 The spiral stairs ascending, round on round,
 We on the lowest—God above them all ;
 And many myriad steps 'twixt Him and us ;
 Till with the hope we flush, and strain each limb
 Upward, while hours and minutes bide our will,
 Upward to that last step, the last we know,
 And then—in faith—we take the step beyond ;
 Faith based on knowledge of our world below,
 Faith, fired by study of the stars above,
 Faith that the dark we enter when we die
 May be as noonday to our night of life.
 For without faith we lead but cheerless lives,
 And without hope death's coming chills our blood ;
 And without hope we care not if the day
 Rise for us ever on another morn.
 Hope thou, faint heart, He has not thee forgot,
 Who keeps the stars in everlasting round.
 Hope on for He, the mighty one who cares
 That flowers should bloom, and rainbow shed its glow,
 And beauty strew the world, where He alone
 Can see it, springing through the arid day,
 Though He may seem thy love to overlook,
 Stores it as precious in his heart of hearts.
 For not by chance came earth and living things,
 And not by chance evolve they up to man,
 And not by chance does man forever make

Something beyond himself, to which to cling ;
These are but steps, all upward circling long
In mighty curves, whose fulness none can see ;
But only, here and there, catch glimpses rare
Thro' the vast space that makes eternity.
Nor hath man seen the God above the All,
Nor has he ever gazed upon His face,
Nor knows he where He has His high abode,
But somewhere—not on earth—is His great throne ;
And if we cling, and if we climb aloft,
And if we mount the ever-circling rounds,
Feeling each step the only certain thing,
But ever climbing higher still in hope,
We must, tho' years be endless, sometime come,
In some blest hour, somewhere, that's nearer Him
Who planted in our hearts the wish to climb,
As climbs the tendril to the sun it loves.

THE UNHEEDED VOICE.

Ye men of earth are older than its soil,
Albeit ye were made of common clay.
For long before the mountains proudly rose,
Or hills were formed, life was, and ye are life.
We see your faces now, and as ye were
In the long seasons, when ye bloomed and died.
For in the ages since God planted you,
Like flowers in the garden of His world,
Ye have grown up, have withered low, and died
Ten thousand times, yet still ye spring and grow.
For man is born to die, and dies to be
Born in the fields, he one time knew, again ;
And tho' the fields may hold remembrance dumb,
He knows it not, nor ever doth recall
The plains familiar, and the rocks and seas.
Yet will there come, like scented summer air,
In moments rare, the thought that oft before,
Over the stony road, or up the crag,
Or by the lonely sea he journeyed once,
In days uncalendered and times unknown ;
Or in his heart the strains of music soft
Will stir a memory, which remembers not ;
So faint, so dear, so alien from to-day,
That, like the breath it is of other times,
He fancies it but dreaming, and he smiles ;
While all the while 'tis but the language faint,
Thoughts without words, by which the field and wood,

The scent of flowers, the strains of bygone song,
 Strive but to tell him how they've missed him long,
 And claim him brother from forgotten years.
 But he can never know; has he not drained
 Ere he was born, the waters of that stream
 Whose name is Lethé and whose wave is life?
 But death will bring remembrance; then will all
 Crowd on his thought and fill his soul with dread.
 Lives upon lives, gone and forgotten long;
 Filled full with action; lives in which he lived
 Ringed round with friends; was chief or king or slave;
 Fought in fierce wars, or swept the heaving main;
 Ravaged fair cities; steeped his hands in blood;
 Clutched all earth's treasure; lived in penury;
 Loved bright-eyed women—died perchance for love;
 Fierce for religion, swept the doubters down,
 Showing no mercy, asking none from man;
 Prayed to high heaven, or to some graven stone
 Worked till life ended—lived a toilless life;
 Was good or evil, mad, or mildly kind;
 Then he remembers, then the lesson burns,
 Till thought can bear no longer, and he falls
 Prone on the unstable elements and begs,
 Begs, with no tears, for tears no longer flow,
 But to return and live out wiser days,
 Only to live, and right the wrong he wrought;
 Only to live, that he may die for truth.
 Only to live, though poverty and scorn
 Rise with him waking, lie by him at night;
 Till heaven itself is weary of his prayer,
 And very God is touched to hear his plaint,
 And to the river leads him, and he drinks,

And no more then remembers ; but there still
Broods o'er his soul, now infant though it be,
Gleams of his former state, his wish to live
Better and truer to the standard high
That death had shown him ; purer then is he
Than in the future, when the voice of man
Rudely confronts him, binds him to its will ;
But he is better ; slowly doth he grow,
Each life the nearer, till at last he comes
Into the very heaven and proudly claims
That he has conquered by the scars he shows.

JUDGE NOT.

Judge not, nor then shall ye
Unfairly judged be.
Judge not, for man cannot,
With eyes imperfect, see
The page beneath the blot,
Shining in purity.

Judge not. So shall ye gain
The love of all; nor pain,
Which from injustice springs,
Shall ever know;
For ignorance still clings
To judgment, here below.

But there—when time is past,
When we are free at last,
Then, no more need we say,
“Life is unfair,” for we,
In that unclouded day,
Its purpose grand will see.

4
A MARTYR.

He held within his hand a shining stone,
Perchance a diamond, or some jewel rare,
Which he had found, and 'twas for him alone
To show its beauty and its worth declare.

And as he gazed on it, a rainbow ray
Came o'er his face, in gloried halo thrown;
And all who met him, as he went his way,
Hated him for the light that on him shone,

And cried "this is no jewel, has no price,
Is but a gaud, a false, tho' shining stone,"
Offered him condolence and sage advice,
Till muttering passion swelled in undertone.

And then they seized him; dragged him down to
death,
All unresisting, but declaiming high
All its rich virtues, till his wasted breath
Failed him, and there in death they let him lie,

Still holding in his grasp his jewel bright,
That o'er his blood-stained face a glory cast,
While in the busy mart, to left and right
The buyers hurried on and smiling passed.

OH, RAPT BELIEVER.

O rapt believer in your creed,
A thousand mysteries bar your way,
A thousand doubts besiege your rest,
And cloud your sun throughout the day ;

A thousand cries break on your night,
When rest you seek from life and fate ;
And still they cry, O doomed to die,
Discover, ere it be too late.

SIN.

“God permitteth evil,” murmur men,
He, all powerful, might sweep away
All our darkness and let in the day,
Driving sin and sorrow from our ken.”

Would you rob heaven of its Priests and Kings,
Take away the martyr's shining crown,
Let us live and die without renown,
Conquered by, or conquering little things?

But for sin we never could mount up
Past the sinless angels in their white,
We, in earth-stained robes—into the light,
Crying “We have drained the bitter cup.”

What the chisel is to marble pure
Sin to man is; bringing every trace
Of the Godlike to his upturned face,
Through the endless ages to endure.

TOLERATION.

We may be right, they may be wrong,
Yet let us some forbearance show,
Not, flushed with pride, sweep swift along;
Nor filled with fire and slaughter go.

And if perchance, *they* may be right,
And we be wrong,—Ah! let us hear
The heavenly voice, and see the light,
Before Damascus' walls appear,

And stricken down from pride to earth,
We, too, must ask, "What wilt Thou have?"
Lord of our lives, Lord of our birth,
As Thou hast humbled, Thou must save.

THE HADES OF SCIENCE.

Infants die with a cry,
Men live on in distress,
Thousands strive but fail
Ever to reach success.

Yet 'neath the struggle of life,
Under the conflict, we know
Lieth a deadlier strife,
Lurketh an endless woe.

Millions swarm at the gate
That opens only for one,
Millions come too late
And fade from the light of the sun.

Hell is the struggle of soul
To enter a life again,
Far away is the goal
Circled with death and pain.

Ages must come and go,
Aeons must wax and wane,
Millions of tides must flow
And ebb and flow again.

Many are called and come,
Many strive to be born,
Many despairing roam,
But few will enter the morn.

NIRVANA.

Mid warring elements and warring men,
Our lives uneasy grow, as time goes by ;
Nor see we hope of peace—not even then,
When with our fellows in the earth we lie ;
For wrangling creeds and wrangling science tend
To make us pause and ask, Where is the end ?

Must man's bright hope go down before the blast ?
Must he surrender all he loved and taught ?
Learn that the truest lesson is the last,
And that by science must his wars be fought ?
But when the fight is over, and he wins,
He only falls, in victory, crowned with sins.

Where then is peace ? Go ask the eastern sage
Who points beyond the life that is, and says,
Life, here, is but a step in coming age,
And after death come many weary days ;
And to escape that fate, for you so dire,
I teach you to Nirvana to aspire.

What is Nirvana ? Perfect peace and rest !
How can we reach it, from the turmoil here ?
Nirvana must be sought in every breast,
By holding nothing valued, nothing dear.
If ye can tear your hearts away from life
And set your thoughts beyond, ye win the strife.

For man returns to earth from base desire ;
 Longing for all he had and once enjoyed.
 Thirst is the foe within, the secret fire,
 That ever burns us, yet is ne'er destroyed
 Seek then to set your hearts no more on earth
 Or earthly things, for they are nothing worth.

Are children dear? away into the wild!
 Is wife beloved? leave her and away!
 For love of parent, brother, wife or child
 Will, from Nirvana, lead your heart astray.
 Nor will it easy be to then return,
 While passions waste, and fires within you burn.

Are riches and the prizes of the world,
 Things dear and daily sought, with all your might ;
 Are honors, and gay banners wide unfurled,
 And martial music, and the glorious fight?
 Or do you cling to learning and its ways?
 Far from them all in deserts pass your days.

Seek the right path. Be honest, just and true.
 Owe no man anything, but ever take
 From every man who offers, as your due,
 The food to nourish, and the drink to slake ;
 And so, no tie you bind upon your soul,
 But on the path you march, and toward the goal.

But where? not here below, nor up above ;
 But everywhere, we all may enter in.
 For when the soul is filled with peace and love,
 Then will that blessed state for us begin ;
 And in Nirvana, freed from every care,
 We enter, and are lost in being there.

Within us lies the kingdom we would win ;
 Within us, in ourselves, its realm we'll find ;
 Besieged without with sorrow and with sin,
 Yet seek we elsewhere, and are ever blind.
 For not of earth my kingdom is, He said,
 But lies within you. Yet His words are dead.

For life is death, in language of the seer ;
 And death to life, is life forevermore ;
 Since life is living death, and only here
 Are we like swimmers, struggling for the shore.
 And ever, as we reach the margin sure,
 The waves recede and we once more endure.

And on the shore is hope and there is rest ;
 And in the sea is change, and war and pain ;
 And only those who gain the marge are blest,
 And curst are they who in the sea remain.
 Life is the sea that drives us where it will,
 With none to cry unto it, "Peace, be still."

"Come unto me and I will give you rest ;"
 Nirvana, blessed rest, in God alone.
 There will that peace pervade the tired breast,
 That passes all that man has ever known ;
 That passes understanding, and the deep
 And subtle wisdom of the sons of men ;
 And it forever, in itself, will keep
 Those who have entered in, from life again.
 No toil, no trouble, and no life they know ;
 But on forever in its light they grow.

4
KARMA.

Vast, throbbing life, whose palpitating breath
Begins ere ever birth, nor stops at death,
 How little know we, peeping here and there,
 Of thy great laws, how little do we care.
For men go on their way, nor question ask,
But take the life they have and do their task.

Surely some Genius makes us but his play,
Cares not for man who in the heat of day
 Stands up for right, but lets his torrid sun
 Wither his life—whose work is just begun ;
Who cares not for defenders, men who dare
The things they know are true, boldly declare.

But lets the world crush out the feeble spark,
 Extends no helping hand to lift the weak,
Lets the bright light of virtue fade to dark,
 Is vainly oft besought, will never speak,
Or, ages back, spoke with uncertain sound,
When time and distance all his words have drowned.

Is God unjust as man is? How can He
Look down contented on the things that be?
 Has He some plan, beyond our power to guess,
 By which life's curses altogether bless?
Can He see justice in the world around,
Filled as it is with strife and murmuring sound?

Is then this life I have my own, my all?
 Was there to me no past, while still I call
 The endless future mine? Did I begin
 Here, yesterday, existence steeped in sin?
 Or have I lived thro' ages, and is mine
 But a faint ray of the one life divine?

Whence came I, with my passions and my fears,
 Into this life that lasts a few brief years?
 Do I remember, in the misty past,
 Another life, or scores before the last?
 What was I called, where lived I, was the name
 I bore in ages gone my joy or shame?

Tell us, O God, by what far-seeing rule
 Thou orderest our lives? Is this Thy school
 In which we learn, by suffering, what to do;
 Where punishment comes oft, rewards are few;
 Or must we look, beyond this life, to see
 How justice and Thy way with man agree.

But if we come to earth a sullied page,
 If we were old, long ere our present age,
 If we have lived before, and carried here
 The faults and punishments that seem so drear,
 And if this life but balanced what is past,
 We might see justice in Thy world at last.

Great balance-wheel, great Pendulum of life,
 That swings from care to ease, from rest to strife,
 From bad to good, from poverty to wealth,
 From fell diseases up to bounding health,

As thro' the cycles of our lives we ride
On ever rising, ever falling tide.

So sin we on and suffer for our sin ;
So strike we down, and fall when we begin ;
 So we enjoy and grudge the rest our store ;
 So we lie hungry at some princely door ;
So as we do to others, Thou dost give
To us, reward or pain, and let us live.

4
THE ROSARY OF LIFE.

Golden bead of a life is mine,
Strung on the thread of the life divine ;
Many have been and more will be
Ere I finish the chain of life's rosary.

Down from the distant years I come,
To claim a new age, friends and home ;
Thousands of years perchance have flown,
Since life and its pleasures and pains I've known.

Was it in Europe, or Asia last,
That my fourscore years or less were passed ?
Was it afar in the sunny East,
Where pleasure is brightest and pain is least ?

Did I march out a Crusader bold,
From Germany, France, or England old ;
Was I a Viking, roaming free,
Ravaging land and conquering sea ?

Was I a serf, a prince, a king ?
See if my soul does to greatness cling ;
Was I a courtier, was I slain
By children who hoped my wealth to gain ?

Memories tell not, but whisper soft,
How I have trodden these pathways oft ;
Memories that linger to die away,
Like blessed dream at dawn of day.

Who were with me in life's high tide,
 Floating along on the wave at my side?
 Who were they, in the ebb, that fell
 Close to me, down with me, into Hell?

Did they rise with me? Can I know?
 Feel I sometime a sudden glow?
 But can I claim one soul as mine,
 From the lost ages, by right divine?

Do I shudder, and shrink in fear,
 When a stranger approaches near?
 Do attractions, repulsions, tell
 Aught of what ages ago befell?

Do the sorrows that on me fall,
 Do the fates that unfair I call,
 Pay me, now in this present time,
 For the sins committed in earlier clime?

O ye winds, that memories bear,
 Tell me what was I, and what ye are;
 Speak more loudly, I would I knew
 Where, in the ages gone, I grew?

O ye glances of loving eyes,
 O fond hearts that most I prize,
 Did I love you, in ages when
 I lived the life that's beyond my ken?

O ye thoughts and fancies rare,
 O ye tresses of waving hair,
 O ye visions and memories fond,
 Are ye glimpses true of some lost beyond?

A SUNSET IDYL.

I.

A crimson globe lies in the West,
Cradled in cloud—a feathery nest,
If wearied sun could pause and rest.

And now before my raptured sight,
Beyond the far-off mountain height,
It sinks in its own crimson light.

The crimson shades to orange deep,
Then yellow waves in silence sweep
To where the emerald æthers sleep.

Last steals the blue, so soft, so light,
'Tis scarcely blue, yet scarcely white,
To meet the violet-grey of night.

II.

O sea of crimson, purple, blue,
If only I might sail on you,
And float in dreams to regions new!

O fairy realms by man untrod,
Belonging only unto God,
All undefiled by mortal clod!

Are there no homes in yonder land,
 Of angel brothers no bright band,
 To greet me with a friendly hand?

III.

As deeper grow on earth the shades,
 And from my eyes the landscape fades,
 I gaze through never-ending glades,

Where isles of gold in seas of fire
 Kindle within me wild desire
 To gain them, though I there expire!

Sweet vision of snow-drifted hills,
 Down whose bright side flow silver rills,
 My soul with softest murmur fills.

IV.

Oh! could I like a swallow float
 On yonder tiny, fleecy mote,
 As in a swift celestial boat!

If only up beyond the world,
 Among the breezy cloud-wreaths curled,
 I might, one hour, thro' space be whirled!

V.

Yon filmy flake of purple hue
 Alone, set in a sea of blue,
 Melts gently, softly, from the view.

Above that dark and sombre bar
Of cloud, behold a tiny star,
Beaming upon me from afar.

VI.

There rises from the sun, though set,
A stream of light that lingers yet,
Like lovers that to part have met.

But now 'tis gone. I cannot stay
The lingering light, the feeble ray ;
Farewell, thou dear, departed day !

AN IDYL BY THE SEA.

I.

The dark cliff threatens overhead;
I sit beneath it like one dead,
Whose every earthly care has fled.

Oh! wash me, wash me, mighty sea,
In thy white foam, until I be
Free from the world's impurity.

Far down within thy waters green,
With sluggish air and sullen mien,
Thy mighty monsters move unseen.

They sweep above the ocean-flowers,
Where, clustered thick in rocky bowers,
They bloom unheeded thro' the hours.

II.

So, idly, one can watch the sea,
From all perplexity so free,
Caring not what or where he be.

Lost in a mightier moving thing,
Entranced unto the rock I cling,
And o'er the seething waters swing.

The endless motion—I so still—
 My soul doth satisfy and fill,
 Wrapped in a dream beneath the hill.

III.

Oh! rich and rare thy treasures are,
 Brought tribute to thee from afar,
 Kept safely without bolt or bar.

Are thy mermaidens all asleep,
 That none above the ripples peep,
 Or on the waves exulting leap?

Oh could I cleave thy depths, O Mer,
 And casting off all human fear,
 Wander thy realms of crystal clear;

See, where upon the silent sand,
 Lies, wreathed in weed, some vessel grand,
 That sank, within the sight of land.

Where, in the dim unearthly gloom,
 Her spars far up above me loom,
 And weird, fantastic forms assume.

Ah! freighted still with buried hopes
 And dear, the slimy monster gropes,
 Among thy sea-worn planks and ropes.

IV.

The sun sinks down, a golden sea
 Spreads from my feet away from me,
 To endless regions heavenly.

Oh! that, life over, bliss begun,
 With eager footsteps we might run,
 On golden pathway, to the sun!

Or merged within its dazzling ray,
 In some bright shell might float away,
 To realms of everlasting day.

V.

Oh! couldst thou lead me by the hand,
 Oh sea, into thy mighty land;
 Into thy caves and castles grand.

Ah! couldst thou let me, but an hour,
 Within some dim-illumined bower,
 Recline on bed of ocean-flower.

But I can hear thee sigh and say,
 "None *sleep* within my depths, I lay
 Them, cold and still, in death away.

"Here is no tumult, no unrest,
 No fitful dreaming, on my breast;
 But all with peace, at last, are blessed."

AN IDYL OF CHILDHOOD.

Out from the city, its noise and glare,
Did I ride one day, thro' the summer air.

Quiet, shady, dreamy, still,
Lay the valley, rose the hill.

Hidden deep in a lovely dell,
Lay a farm-house, on it the sunlight fell,

Softened, robbed of half the heat,
That on the dusty city beat.

Back of the farm-house the pasture lay,
High in the centre the sweet, stacked hay,

Further, walls of rugged stone,
Rain-worn, time-stained, moss-o'ergrown.

Into the wall a gate was set,
Where pasture and woodland together met,

Thro' the gate a path ran deep
Into the woods, where shadows sleep.

Just as the sun, with fiercer light,
Poised aloft ere his downward flight,

Children twain, thro' the leafy shade,
On to the wildwood deeper strayed.

Ellen, once seen—but once—by me,
Yet never may she forgotten be,

Ellen, and I, the younger child,
Wandered into the woodland wild.

Child of the country-side was she,
Gay as the birds and just as free.

Arm in arm, a happy pair,
Against my cheek her flaxen hair,

With my hand in her hand, sun-brown,
Toward the brooklet we sauntered down.

Thro' the pasture, where the kine
Browsed in peace, though fear of mine

Made them like "Bulls of Bashan" loom,
As the air of a brave I strove to assume.

Champion—Protector—Defender—these
Were the names my childish heart to please,

Who could harm my girl, while I,
Brave as a lion, stood sternly by!

How she would bless me, and love me then,
Her defender, prouder than grown-up men.

Still the kine in the meadow grazed,
Scarcely their heads in wonder raised.

Out of the bed of the babbling brook
Treasures uncounted we quickly took,

Pebbles, of colors rich and rare,
And crystals, like diamonds shining there.

Wading the shallows, with laughter soft,
Turned to fear in a moment oft,

Trembling in dread of the water-snake,
With ashen faces, our flight we take.

Crowning each other with fragrant flowers,
Heedless quite of the flying hours,

So passed on the happy day,
Till the sun behind the farm-house lay,

Then together, we backward turned,
Many a thought in our bosoms burned,

Many a thought that found no word,
Never was spoken—never heard;

Into the carriage at the door,
And away, with scarce a word before;

Looking back I saw her stand
Waving a farewell with her hand.

Oh, how often, in days gone by,
Have I drawn a deep and bitter sigh,

Finding the world so cold and stern,
Finding my heart in sorrow yearn,

For living soul, if such might be,
Kind as this maiden was to me.

And drawn by memory from care apart,
A calm comes over my weary heart,

That is the echo, thro' all the years,
Of my Ellen's childish smiles and tears.

AN IDYL OF SUNRISE.

I.

Over the earth that silent sleeps,
Over the soul that laughs or weeps,
A hush of expectation creeps.

The bullfrog's noisy twang is stayed.
The cricket chirps no more, afraid
Of the shrill song it lately made.

We feel the river's onward rush,
Yet scarcely hear it, in the hush,
Its grass-edged margin softly brush.

Above us, in the eastern sky,
The pallid stars in envy die,
Before the day-star drawing nigh.

II.

It is the time to feel alone,
To bear without a sigh or groan
The deepest woes were ever known.

O lonely exile, wouldst thou be
More lonely still, go forth and see
The sun rise cold and drearily.

Know then how all alone thou art,
 So silent, save thy throbbing heart,
 From life and living things apart.

III.

The burning stars of night are gone,
 And now the blessed star of morn
 Is tired of being left forlorn.

The owl within the wood is still ;
 His great green eyes with fire fill,
 That to the daybreak bodeth ill.

The East is brighter, one can see
 The distant loom of house and tree,
 Though veiled in darkness mistily.

Hark ! the cock crows ; the red has tipped
 The mountain top and downward tripped,
 To meet the hillside, ruddy lipped.

Quick answers back the blushing West,
 Where dreamy vapors softly rest
 Like down, upon the valley's breast.

IV.

But not with warm and fiery gold
 That doth the setting sun enfold,
 Now, pearly-tinted, calm and cold,

The day in solemn glory breaks.
As though a trump the stillness shakes,
The world to life and action wakes.

The dew lies gleaming on the rose,
On spider's-web its glory glows,
Over the grass its rainbow throws ;

From unknown haunts the butterfly
On painted wing, comes fluttering by ;
While many-tinted atoms lie

At rest, above the silent stream,
Or shoot across with sudden gleam,
Like bright-hued fancies of a dream.

The world has wakened. In the grove,
And in the echoing sky above,
The birds are trilling loud their love.

The day has come, with work and wear,
With changing skies of cloud or fair,
With heavy burdens, hard to bear.

“IN THE LAND WEST OF THE SUN.”

A fairy princess waits for me
In lands beyond the Western Sea,
And on her castle walls she stands,
And beckons with her snow-white hands.

Where is she? How may I attain
Her happy realm and there remain?
Answer me stars, my course I run,
Toward the Land West of the Sun;

Answer me stars, and shall I soon
Reach her who dwells East of the Moon?
And shall I see her, standing there,
With sunlight on her golden hair?

In dreams I see her, night by night,
But lose her in the dim daylight.
O Princess wait, O! tarry long,
I come, I come, with joy and song.

Not here, but there, not now, but then,
Thro' lands untold by tongue or pen.
The way is weary oft to me,
But in glad dreams your face I see.

And in a dream, that longest dream,
When dreams are real and fancies true,
And all the world has faded long,
And all my soul is wrapped in you,

I'll see you gazing from your tower,
 In the bright sun and happy light,
 And bending down to me, to me,
 With tears upon your lashes bright.

For long ago, with you afar
 I dwelt beyond the evening star,
 And long ago, I listened oft,
 And heard you singing low and soft.

And long ago the sunlight shone
 Upon your face, in rose and gold,
 And once again, when time has flown,
 I shall you in my arms enfold.

For you are mine and I am thine,
 Once more, and many times, shall we
 Love and be torn apart by fate,
 And, severed, wander hopelessly.

But in the ever, ages on,
 We'll meet—we'll greet, with laughter low,
 While myriad years their cycles run,
 In lands beyond the sunset's glow.

O Princess, tender heart that still
 Must, far away, await my fate,
 Must watch me and with sorrow thrill,
 When years are long, and time is late.

Far from the world you dwell, afar
 From earth and men and sordid things,

And none can reach you on your star,
Without the help of angels' wings.

But I will come. Though long you wait ;
With joy and singing, in the light,
I come, though time be long and late,
As conqueror from a weary fight.

My fairy princess, in her lands,
Waits still beyond the western sea,
Still on her castle walls she stands,
And gazes thro' the mist for me.

UNDINE LOST.

All the day the sturdy rowers
 Urged the barge thro' the bright water,
 Bearing on the sea-king's daughter,
 Tho' she knew not—to her doom.
 And her spouse, the knight, undaunted,
 By no apprehension haunted,
Stood beside her—watched the oars—
 And the river's eddy spume.

But Bertalda, still dissembling,
 Sat in silence, looking over,
 Like a maid bereft of lover,
 In the water at her side ;
 And she dipped a golden necklace,
 Either careless grown or reckless,
And she watched its image trembling
 In the shining silver tide.

When a hand rose from the river,
 Gaunt and swarthy—huge and cruel,
 Seized relentless on the jewel,
 And sank back into the sea ;
 With one farewell flash and shiver
 It was gone—the knight its giver—
While from out the depths did quiver
 A shrill cry of mockery.

Then the knight could bear no longer,
 All his pent up passion rushing
 To his lips, like torrent gushing,
 As he cursed the haunted stream ;
 With its water-sprites and devils,
 And he dared them stay their revels,
 And come prove if they be stronger
 Or be weaker than they seem.

But Bertalda still sat weeping,
 While Undine sat softly singing
 To the waves, till one came bringing
 A bright necklace, to her hand.
 "Take this jewel," said she, showing
 It in ruddy beauty glowing,
 "They have left it in my keeping,
 For they still heed my command."

Then the knight seized it and threw it
 In the sea. "You cling forever
 To your kin, nor will you sever
 From them till you cease to live!
 Get you back ! you witch of evil !
 To your parent, fiend and devil,
 For you love them best—I knew it !—
 Go ! with all the gifts they give."

Then she stood, like one in terror ;
 For a moment—tear-drops streaming,
 As a dream of sorrow dreaming,
 With her hand still stretched to him ;
 Then with accent faint and weary,

Said, "Farewell, to regions dreary
 Must I go—yet still I'll watch thee,
 Guard thee—from the sea-caves dim,"

"Only be thou true and danger
 Will I ward from thee forever,
 Oh! must I behold thee never?
 Must I go, when bliss seemed won?
 In the dawn of youth and pleasure,
 Must I lose all joy and treasure?
 Woe is me! To thee a stranger,
 Woe! Alas! What hast thou done?"

And she vanished from their vision
 Like a spirit in the moonlight,
 There she stood, but now in noon-light,
 Yet she was not. She was gone;
 And the waves they murmured only
 "Woe is me," in accents lonely,
 "Ah, be true, be true forever,"
 Sighed they, till the morrow's dawn.

THE RETURN OF UNDINE.

Back in terror, pale and silent,
Fell the servants, while the water
Rose majestic from its centre,
White and wonderful and dread,
And they saw a woman weeping—
Yet her face close-veiléd keeping—
In the doorway saw her enter
With a slow and noiseless tread.

At the knight's own door she pauses,
With her finger lightly taps she
On its panel, while within it
Stands the master in a dream.
Oh, how like Undine's soft tapping
Came the sound of fingers rapping—
Louder, clearer, every minute,
Till his dreamings real seem.

Then he roused and cried out, "Enter!"
And within the polished mirror
Saw a veiléd figure moving
Toward him with a solemn mien.
Saw a woman, silent weeping,
Yet her face close-veiléd keeping,
And half fearing, wholly loving,
Knew it was the lost Undine.

“They have opened up the fountain,
 And I cannot stay my coming—
 Though my heart be almost broken,
 I have come and *thou must die.*”

“Back! Away!” His hands outspreading,
 At a word her presence dreading.

“Look not on me, give no token
 Of thy name!” his bitter cry.

“Show me not that face of horror—
 Draw not back the veil that covers
 What I fear to see, but slay me,
 Veiled and covered from my sight.
 Let no form of Hell strike terror—
 Death will punish all my error;
 Haste, nor longer here delay me;
 Strike me dead, with all thy might.”

“Oh, alas! wilt thou not see me?
 Once more see me, ere the life-light
 Fades from out those eyes, oh, dearest—
 For I am the very same
 Whom thou lovedst and didst marry,
 In the days when thou didst tarry
 On the island, in the forest,
 And Undine is still my name.

“If I charmed thee then, oh, dear one,
 Beauty has not from me faded;
 In my eyes are tears, not anger,”
 And she stopped with sobbing breath.

Then the knight took heart, and weeping
 Cried, "Oh! God, into thy keeping
 I commend me; let me see her;
 Would her kiss might be my death."

Then she threw her veil back, smiling
 Like a Queen of wondrous beauty,
 Sent to do the hardest duty
 That could fall to mortal lot.

And the knight stooped down to kiss her,
 And thought once how he should miss her
 In the realms to which he hastened,
 And within her arms was not.

* * * * *

Then there fell an awful silence,
 And they heard the sound of foot-falls,
 And the door was opened slowly
 While for fear they held their breath;
 For they saw an angel weeping,
 Her bright face unveiled keeping,
 And thus spoke the vision holy—
 "I have wept him to his death."

NOT OF OUR WORLD.

All around you, my dear brother,
Lies a world you never enter,
And I think you scarcely see it
 Though it spreads before your eyes.
You belong to quite another,
And your bright home is its centre;—
Little wonder that you flee it,
 When your own is Paradise.

It is early, chilly morning,
When the sun seems slow in rising,
Though it fall thro' crimson curtain
 On your slumber-laden eyes,
While with many a lazy yawning
At the daylight so surprising,
You lie dreamily uncertain,
 Really dreading to arise.

Hark! the factory bell is ringing,
The mill-whistle shrill is blowing,
There is bustle in the hovel
 With the tramp of hurried feet.
To the mother babes are clinging,
She must go though it be snowing,
While the men with weary faces
 Must invade the silent street.

Yes, and children, young and tender,
 Answer to the iron summons,
 And steal shivering thro' the snowflakes,
 Or before the pelting rain.

Girlhood, pale, unkempt, and slender,
 Thro' the lanes and o'er the commons,
 Must be going as the morn breaks,
 Life's hard struggle to maintain.

O my brother, are you better
 Than these toiling men and women,
 In aught else except the chances
 That have fixed your lot and theirs?
 Have they sinned that God should fetter
 Them from childhood to their toil, when
 He on you with favor glances
 And your finer nature spares?

Have you never, in your wandering,
 Lit upon some lovely picture
 Of a far-off land of pleasure,
 Where the softly gleaming sun
 Rests on rivulets meandering
 Thro' green fields, where quiet nature
 Sleepeth to a murmured measure
 Of her own, till day is done?

Have you never sighed, contrasting
 That ideal scene of beauty
 With the rugged world about you,
 And the hard, real look of things?
 Felt a nameless sorrow blasting
 Every joy and every duty,

That the world could move without you,
 And a longing for the wings

Of the dove, to soar forever
 To the land within the picture,
 To the land you knew in childhood,
 To the fields you've seen in dreams,
 From the reach of that stern *never*
 That so galls the human creature,
 To the rustle of the green wood,
 To the murmur of the streams?

So, to these born heirs of sorrow
 You and yours are but a vision,
 Caught gas-lighted thro' some window,
 They, without, in the dark street;
 Piercing like a barbed arrow,
 Though the lip may speak derision,
 As they gaze in on the warm glow
 Of your fireside picture sweet.

To whom, gentle spring returning,
 And the soft, green grasses growing,
 And the daisy on the smooth lawn,
 Bring no pleasure—only pain;
 And a deep and bitter yearning,
 While the years are onward going,
 Each night longing for the sun-dawn,
 And at morn for eve again.

In whose heart the song-bird's trilling;
 And the deep blue sky above them;
 And the scented breezes o'er them;
 And the flickering shadows cast,

Bring no pleasure, but a thrilling,
 Hopeless wish for some to love them,
 As they see but toil before them
 And dead hopes throughout the past.

In whose eyes the smiles of beauty,
 And the light of loving glances,
 And the sheen of golden tresses,
 And the sound of dancing feet,
 Nerve them only for stern duty,
 While unloving age advances,
 And no love the lone heart blesses,
 No kind eyes their sad eyes meet.

And the wedding bell but mocks them
 With its merry, merry pealing,
 As the bridal train sweeps by them
 With its scent of flashing flowers;
 And the pluméd hearse scarce shocks them,
 Though their life away is stealing;
 Does not cruel life deny them
 Happy homes and blessed hours?

So, my brother, sometimes ponder,
 Since you have all earthly treasure
 That you need, yet feel unsated,
 Wanting, still, more shining gold,
 On the ones who homeless wander,
 Or who toil without a pleasure,
 To a life of sorrow fated,
 And who are not of your world.

A SOCIALIST'S PLEA.

I am an honest Socialist
And came to it by honest ways,
By other men I'm seldom missed,
But called a man who has a craze,
A crank, an idiot, a fool,
A communist, an anarchist,
And till you've gone to the same school
You all may call me what you list ;
For I have never wished to burn,
Or rob, or plunder other men,
But only do an honest turn
To benefit "the one in ten" ;
The trodden down, the overworked,
The dwellers in the mire and dirt ;
And daily task I've seldom shirked,
Or to a fellow done a hurt.
But when I see, perpetually,
The filthy homes, the scanty fare,
The sickness bred of poverty,
The weary hours, the poisoned air,
The old age coming on in youth,
The maiden beauty up for sale,
I burn to learn the honest truth,
And help, if help can be, or fail.
Why should yon man, with little toil,
Heap riches to the arching sky,
And leave them to his favored child,
When he unwillingly must die ;

And why his child, with stock and bond,
 Should start in life with every chance,
 Earth reaching out a helping hand,
 And life perpetual song and dance ;
 While his poor neighbor, in the row
 That runs behind his palace door,
 The throes of hunger oft may know,
 The pinch of poverty feel, sore ?
 Has meekness gained the rule of earth,
 Or are the " poor in spirit " great ?
 Were these the words of jest and mirth,
 Or were they spoken all too late ?
 Oh ! Lone Reformer—Socialist,
 The truest earth has ever known,
 How was thy meaning strangely missed
 And far from earnest ears has flown.
 The priests who teach, the folk who hear,
 Know little of thy words divine ;
 They misinterpret every thought
 And every hope, away refine.
 They praise up simple poverty,
 Exalt the men who humble be,
 That they may have security
 And faster to their riches flee.
 Did He but bless the poor one day
 They tell it to the lower ranks,
 The poor are blessed—so they say,
 But rich men give the Lord their thanks ;
 It keeps the murmurers down, and so
 The millionaire in quiet sleeps ;
 One cannot count what blessings flow
 To him who always treasure heaps.

The burglar can be Christianized
 And he will rob no more, you see,
 And all the state is quite elate,
 When propped by Christianity.
 But I'm not sure, the Founder poor
 And lowly, whom they claim to know,
 Imagined how they'd use his words,
 Or how his Church was going to grow.
 How all the things he said to do,
 They have forgotten long ago ;
 And all the things he said, "do not,"
 They always say are right, you know.
 For wars are right, and yet he came
 And He was called the "Prince of Peace,"
 And poverty he said was best,
 While Christian men in wealth increase ;
 And oaths were bad, 'tis really sad,
 To hear men swear in court, but see
 They so explain, that 'tis quite plain
 That oaths are not profanity.
 I get confused. They use his name
 To further all the ends of power,
 And His authority they claim
 To falsely rule until this hour.
 So I'm an honest Socialist
 And came to it by honest ways,
 From other paths I'm seldom missed,
 Or, called a "man who has a craze."

“RENDER UNTO CÆSAR.”

Who is this Cæsar that I should give to him ?

What be the gifts that to him belong ?

Shall I bring all that is mine, while I live, to him ?

Or will he smile on the gift of my song ?

Who is this Cæsar, and what is a world to him ?

Doth he not own it, from age unto age ?

Are not his banners, each day, unfurled to him ?

Do not all praise him, from dotard to sage ?

All times belong to him, all climes throng to him ;

On thro' the æons, perpetual, he reigns.

Ever deceiving all, ever receiving all

Good things, and blessings, men earn with their pains.

But he gives back to us, yes, he gives royally ;

Think of the gifts, thro' the ages he showers.

Doth he not crush down each heart that beats loyally,

Sprinkling its blood-drops about him, like flowers ?

Bones of the slaughtered ones name him and claim
him,

Rivers of blood pour their clots to his feet ;

Black with his fires, even nature must shame him,

Ruthless destroyer of all that is sweet.

Out of the flame we have cried to him, died for him,

While his great name we in agony call ;

But he gave death to us, for all our pride in him,
And he recks not, tho' a thousand hearts fall.

Let us give back to him, all that he gave to us ;
Death, and the flame, and the loved ones he slew ;
Hark ! how they cheer us, and cry from the grave to
us,
Down with the old order—long live the new !

THE CONQUEROR.

Great Conqueror! Leader of Armies,
Be thy name Cæsar, Cambyses,
Alexander, Philip of Macedon,
Xerxes, Attila, Napoleon ;
Names by scores, pages on pages,
Lost to history, in its dark ages ;
Thou hast, oh silent eyes,
One name, one dread surprise,
Known alone to thee
And Him who set thee free,
To ravage humanity.
Thou whom no pity moves,
Who hast no human loves,
Angel of Death in man incarnate,
Knowing no brotherhood, without mate,
We are too many, we
Tremblingly look for thee,
To sweep us mortals
Thro' Hades' portals.
Thy faces are ever the same,
Like thy name.
Thy rank forever unknown,
Or to God alone.
Thine eyes, with baleful light,
Shine joyously out in fight.
Merciless ; pitiless ; evil ;
We know thee ; thou art the devil !
Satan—Asmodeus—Azrael !
Kneel man to thy conqueror, kneel !

THE POWERS THAT BE.

O Power that is, one of the Powers that be,
We humbly bow in reverence unto thee ;
Because God hath ordained thee, and the harm
Thou doest is supported by His arm.
But list ! To-morrow we will cast thee down,
Strip from thy cruel brow thy jeweled crown,
And, soon, another revered one we'll raise,
To be cast down in turn, in like disgrace.
But, while he stands, we'll reverence him, for he
Will be God's own ordained, like unto thee.
Thus God ordains what man does ; He confirms
The judgment and the deeds of us poor worms.
And so these words, grand-sounding, seem but poor
To us, while tyrants and their crimes endure ;
And we claim God our helper, when we thrust
The rulers of the world down into dust.

OLD THANKSGIVING.

'Tis the day we call Thanksgiving, honored custom of
the past,
To recall for once our blessings, and to feast as well
as fast ;

And each home, the rich, the lowly, bringeth forth its
choicest store,
For the baby of a summer, for the grandsire of four-
score.

While without the leaves are falling, the last leaflet,
brown and sere,
To the coming winter calling, as his hastening feet
they hear.

Still the sun looks down upon us, but his rays have
lost their fire,
Still they fall in glory, at the eve, on humble roof and
spire,

Still he lights with gold the lines of cloud that hover
in the West,
But he groweth daily sadder, as he hasteneth to his
rest.

And the travelers draw their mantles, closer, closer,
for the night
Groweth chill and bleak and bitter, with the fading of
the light.

But within the house is pleasure, thro' the curtains
 you may see
 Shadows flitting, figures sitting—while the night goes
 merrily ;

And they crack the “shellbarks,” butternuts, and
 walnuts smooth and brown,
 And they roast the dark bay chestnuts, tipped with
 shining silver down ;

And their hearts rise up unconscious, to the Giver of
 all joys,
 He who gives the rich their riches—and the little
 child his toys,

He who watches, with a loving eye, while human
 beings rest ;
 He who folds in down the wealthy, but the homeless
 on his breast.

He who gives and takes at pleasure, for we all belong
 to Him,
 Good and evil, rich and humble—saint and shining
 seraphim.

Are there none to-night in sorrow, while the throngs
 of earth rejoice ?
 And in all the hum of pleasure speaks there not one
 plaintive voice ?

But within we rest so happily, that like a passing
 dream,
 Half forgotten in the morning—others cares and
 troubles seem.

Here are those we knew in childhood, whom we loved
 with youthful heart,
 Whom we thought to hold forever, yet the world our
 lives did part.

Who had faded from our thoughts, perhaps, yet once
 held mighty sway,
 Our old loves and lovers, met again, upon Thanks-
 giving day.

Coming eager, from the Indies, from the distant
 islands come,
 To be all within their places, in their childhood's
 happy home.

From successes and from failures, though the world
 may cast them out ;
 In the home to which they hasten, no suspicion, slur,
 or doubt.

And their hearts grow young and joyous, and the
 years seem only days,
 All the years, that were as ages, to the toilers on their
 ways.

But how can the soul within us sit here silent and at
 rest,
 Can we fold our hands together, and yet hope we may
 be blest ?

Should the bright glad life within us vanish with
 Thanksgiving night,
 Would the years spent here look honest and our deeds
 seem ever right ?

Would there be no burning torment, worse by far than
 scorching flame,
 As, against the outer darkness, flashed some long-for-
 gotten name ?

As we traced the end of actions which our thought-
 less hands begun,
 Traced, when powerless then to alter, one least thing
 beneath the sun ;

As we viewed the past like visions, and, within the
 lurid light,
 Saw the little good we fancied gone—the evil only
 bright.

'Tis so easy to be thankful, one would think, if one
 has all,
 When the richest gift of heaven, in our laps, unsought
 for, fall.

Yet, perchance, it may be truer than we dream, that
 only those
 Are most thankful who have drained to its dregs the
 cup of woes,

Only those can love the deepest who have sinned the
 greatest sin,
 Only those, who waited long without, with songs of
 joy come in.

If He keep rewards for those who here have little lot
 and store,
 Will He spare us pampered creatures, who are misers
 to the core ?

And the way to keep our riches, as the sacred lips
have told,
Is to lay them where no robber can break in and steal
our gold;

Is to hide them where no mildew can spot or rust
corrode,
In the heaven, and we may reach it, but thro' poverty's
abode.

For the grain within the garner may be worth just so
much gold,
But the seed sown in the fallow will return an hundred-
fold.

A PRAYER.

Not unto me, ah! give not unto me
All of the crosses that were borne by Thee,
Lest I fall faint upon the weary road,
And fail to reach at all Thy blest abode.

Not unto me, ah! give not unto me
All of the treasures that in life may be;
Lest I grow proud and quite forget that Thou
Hast richer jewels for the conqueror's brow.

Give unto me, O Lord, give unto me
Whatever in Thy sight seems best to be.
My strength is, in Thine eyes, a feeble span,
And Thou rememberest that I am but man.

Give unto me, dear Lord, give unto me,
Always contented with my lot to be;
Always to see, in whatsoe'er befall,
Thy hand bestowing, or withholding all.

A PROTEST.

Now! by the great Eternal,
Who formed us like Himself,
'Tis right that man should leave his lands,
His stocks, his hoarded pelf,

But in another world beyond
His children and his wife
He *must* possess, to live at all
A glad eternal life.

Yea! and the Lord Almighty
Himself, shall *He* possess
A dearly loved Son and we
His likeness joy in less?

Ah! lonely would the heavens be,
And lone the crystal sea,
If on its banks I walked alone,
And none were near to me.

And what, though all the angel band
Poured forth their sweetest song,
If one dear loving voice were missed,
Unheard amid the throng.

So earth is not the dreary place
We feign it, for you see,
How, missing common things of earth,
The heavens would dreary be.

AS HOME I COME.

As home I come at Summer's eve,
And upward to my windows look,
I miss the little heads, that once
Their curly locks in sunlight shook.

And was it two, or was it three
Small faces, that I used to see ;
For one is faint, but Oh ! so dear,
Yet never more will there appear.

As home I come, as come I may,
When sun has set on life's brief day,
From out the windows of the sky,
Whence look the eyes of them who die,
Oh, may I see, gaze down on me,
The one I miss among the three.

WITHOUT THE GATE.

Without the gate, the day comes late ;
Within—the night can never be.
While, o'er the sullen waves, a light
Flashes and glows in ruby red ;
And o'er the wall, sweet voices call
Of souls, in bliss, to sorrow dead ;
And, from the wave, voices come far
And sad, for they in torment are.

Ah, I can hear, who sit so near,
And yet removed forevermore,
The laugh of those on earth I chose,
And loved, and called my own, before.
But now I beat, with aimless feet,
And strive, and call, till silence fall.

Without the gate of Paradise I sit and wait,
While o'er the wall, the voices fall,
Of song, and melody and joy.
I wait, and hope the gates may ope,
And let the longed-for vision glide
Down quite to me—yet only see
The turrets frowning endlessly ;
Uprising from the wintry sea,
To bar the light within from me.
I to that home may never come
By day or night—by dark or light,
But, all too late, I sit and wait,
Before heaven's never-opened gate.

BROTHERS OF DIVES.

In ancient Sidon, by the purple sea,
The brothers of great Divés sat in state.
For he was dead—yea—turned to dust was he—
While song and dance resounded from his gate.

Up past the clustered pillars, carved and bright,
The spoil of Egypt and of many fanes,
Amid the revelers, thro' the softened light,
That fell on marble floor, in silvery lanes,

Into the presence of these mighty lords,
There stepped one eve a youth, so wondrous fair,
With gleaming eye, and bold and strange his words,
While golden light came blazing from his hair.

“Lo, I was once the beggar at your gate ;
While, down the hall, your music floated low,
Or rang in joyous gayety, when late
The shaded lamps gave forth a ruby glow.

“I could look up thro' columned portico
And watch the rosy garlands on each head.
Ye could look down and see me, stretched below,
Sore, faint and hungry—with the dogs ye fed.

“And down the air came perfumes rich and rare,
And scent of viands from your princely feast.
And crumbs ye threw me, for my only fare,
As with your dogs I lay—less than the least.

“ But once ye smiled on me as ye swept by,
 And even tossed a coin to me that day
 In pity—when ye saw me naked lie,
 And thought, perchance, that ye were finer clay.

“ And so I came. They would not let me come,
 Till, in high heaven, I wept and moaned your fate.
 They could not bear my misery, in that home,
 Where naught but joy comes early and comes late.

“ For Divés, once your brother in these halls—
 Now lies in Hades, in the burning flame,
 And every moment, from its fiery walls,
 He calls me, yes, he calls the beggar’s name.

“ I could not stay. I must to you come down,
 And bear his message, to repent and turn.
 Cast from your arms each purple, silken gown,
 And live in poverty, or *ye* will burn.

“ Repent, or torment to you all will come.
 Give all you have! Throw forth your riches wide!
 Open your doors and give the beggars home,
 And not in vain, oh Divés, hast thou died.”

He ceased, and all the six in madness rose,
 Their loosened garlands falling to the ground.
 Their angry words upon their pale lips froze
 As Lazarus vanished, and they made no sound.

Weep Divés, in thy misery and flame,
 Beg for the water that can cool alone.
 Thy kin forget thee : curse thy vanished name :
 And thou canst never for thy sin atone.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

Unreasoning love, but highest love, for all ;
'Tis easy to give love for love again ;
'Tis easy to live on and love, in joy,
In wealth, in health, in calm tranquillity,
But to be scorned and love ? to be
Stung by the taunt, pierced by the look of hate,
Cut to the heart by cruel word, and love ;
By cold neglect to wither, like a flower
In autumn ; to be struck in anger—aye,
Ever so lightly, by the hand one loves—
By this, all but the truest love must die.
Unreasoning love—to bear the blow and shame,
To hide the wound from all, and pine, and fade ;
To watch the waning night-hours, or to list
The tread unsteady, or to meet the eye
Lustreless, listless, angrily insane ;
To bear with hunger, cold, neglect and pain—
Yet these so live by thousands. These are they
Who win their crowns unnoticed, and at last
From garret and from snow-drift and the cold,
Uncharitable doorstep of the rich,
Ascend the skies to claim them. Men may love
And do great actions, and be borne by love
Thro' deadly perils, and be brave in war,
But woman's victories grand and silent are.

THE RING.

Look! in my hand a sparkling ring I hold;
A diamond, set aloft in virgin gold;
No pebble, no base metal, each is pure;
Each will the staining touch of time endure;
Nor will the gold grow dim, nor yet the light
Cease to burst, sun-like, from this diamond bright.
Each on the other for its all depends;
The circlet, the gem gone, its mission ends;
The diamond, with no setting, could but lie,
For safety, in some strong obscurity,
Unable, like an infant, to be trusted
Alone; perchance, occasionally dusted;
Poised 'twixt the thumb and finger for a minute,
Then to the safe, no sooner out than in it;
But set together, lo, the ring entire!
The polished gold flashing a ruddy fire;
Its crown of glory gleaming like a star
Seen in the distance and admired from far.
This fable teaches, as the school-books say,
What? Everything within the light of day;
The first thing that befell to man created,
While yet in Eden he sojourned unmated.
This ring but typifies unto my mind
The mystic union of our human kind.
Call you the diamond woman? let it pass,
Though sometimes you might find your diamond glass;
Then man's the setting—man the back and foil;
His the strong arms that do the mighty toil,

Hold her above the dust yet clasp her close;
Or, if to look another way you choose,
Woman's the gold, the true, tried, virgin gold,
Who from unworthy paths the man must hold.
Clasp 'round him arms of strength, because of love,
Lift him aloft, even herself above,
So sacrificing of herself that she
Helps him to heights where she may never be.
So each helps each; each gathers strength and hope
With all the ills of life to better cope;
So each grows brighter, till the darkest lot,
Thus lighted, owns one shining, happy spot.

“WHOM GOD HATH JOINED.”

Whom God hath joined together
For fair, or stormy weather,
For cloud or sunshine,
Sun or rain,
Man may not part,
Nor burst their bands asunder,
Lest he himself fall under
The dread command,
Which plain doth stand,
And holds each loving heart.

Let man not part, by impious deed,
Such loving hearts, with careless heed,
But who are those, we wonder,
Whom God hath joined together?
Would those He joined, asunder
Desire to be? Or whether
Can it be true, that man may
Carelessly join, and then say,
“God did it, and His dread command
Holds you as one, on sea and land.”

JANET.

Beautiful is dear Janet
As she smiling watches me,
Scarce a woman, more than child,
Modest—yet a trifle wild ;
Surely eye has never met
Picture fair as she.

Sunlight falls upon her head,
Bathing it in golden light ;
As upon an angel's face,
I, a man of mortal race,
Gaze in wonder till the red
Flashes in a torrent bright

O'er her cheeks and o'er her brow,
From pure joy and happiness,
For she loves to be admired,
And but lately I've aspired
To be, what she calls me now,
Husband—nothing more—nor less.

Singing sweetly to my soul,
Hers the sweetest voice to me,
What can heaven give more, I cry,
Oh! that we might never die,
But, as endless seasons roll,
Only endless love forsee.

Pure in woman's purity,
 By her side so dark I seem ;
 Calm in many a trying hour,
 Yet as fragile as a flower,
 Childhood in maturity ;
 Angel in a blessed dream.

Artful, without thought of harm,
 Careless, without need of care,
 Dark as even are her eyes,
 And their lightest glance I prize ;
 Soft the curve of the white arm,
 Deepest brown her wealth of hair.

Kind and gentle, when I feel
 Careworn and oppressed with ill,
 Fond of having her own way,
 As all women are, they say,
 To my heart I let her steal,
 And she always has her will.

Proud as queen of eastern land,
 Very proud indeed of me ;
 Scornfully she looks on all
 Who themselves her lovers call,
 Joying in the blessed band
 That binds her—yet is free.

Very rich is dear Janet,
 Very rich I now am, too ;
 All your wealth is this poor heart,
 And all mine—love, do not start,
 I'm a lowly man as yet,
 But so rich in having you.

HIS PLEA.

She was toiling with her needle, in a bare room in the
city,
High up toward the lonely heavens, toiling, scarcely
earning bread ;
To have seen her fading fair-bloom would have moved
your heart to pity,
With no God to send His ravens, till with hunger
she was dead.

To have seen her cheeks grow thinner, with each day
of wasting hunger,
While the gold lay all around her, if she stooped
herself to shame,
But this woman was no sinner, though there may be
many younger,
'Twas her own pure virtue bound her, had she yielded
who could blame,

Not you surely, you were never tried by hunger, never
friendless,
While around you lay the riches which could bring
you food and rest,
Nor condemned to live forever, in a round of labor end-
less,
Taking weary, weary stitches, for a pittance, at the
best ;

While to catch you, in your weakness, every hour
 the wily devils
 Whispered softly of the treasures that the world to
 sinners gave,
 In your garret, dark and cheerless, painted visions of
 gay revels,
 Filled the air with dreamy measures, sang of freedom
 to the slave.

'Tis so easy to live purely, when you have the safe
 protections
 Of your home and every pleasure, and temptation
 never near ;
 But another thing 'tis, surely, to crush down your best
 affections,
 And to hide your beauty's treasure, with a blind and
 deadly fear.

Women's hearts cry out for loving, women's beauty
 for admiring,
 And their lips for only kissing, and their arms for
 babes to hold ;
 Not the women who are moving heaven and earth
 and still aspiring,
 While their highest "rights" they're missing, and
 their hearts beat slow and cold.

If I saw her on the cold earth, she all friendless, you
 befriended,
 Saw her homeless, faith may falter, and her life was
 almost lost—

Must she perish by her lone hearth, must I sit and see
it ended,
With no loving arm to shelter her poor heart, tempta-
tion-tossed ;

Could I watch her, downward sinking, caught in snares
ever set for her,
While her beauty was her danger, and no refuge but
the grave ;
Could I see it, without linking myself to her, while I
bore her
From the perils of the stranger, when I had the power
to save ?

So I took her, and I called her my best treasure and
my dearest,
And she grows to be the flower and the glory of my
days ;
In my home have I installed her, as of all the world
the nearest,
And for many a blessed hour has she bloomed
beneath my gaze.

For beneath her dark eyes shining there is nothing
she would cover,
And there can be no concealing where is nothing to
conceal ;
As she sits there, not divining half the joy of her dear
lover,
To his heart the truth revealing, not for woe, but all
for weal.

AT THE THEATRE.

Agnes and I had fallen out,
After a love of years and years.
By some trifle it came about,
My petulance, and her tears.

So the evenings were long and sad,
So the days were sad and long,
And, just because I nothing had
To do, I went with the throng.

Up the steps of the theatre, bright
With a score of lights and their flaming glare,
I trod, with a heavy heart that night,
With a hope to be quiet there.

Just to forget, for an hour or so,
One sweet face with tearful eyes ;
And there I sat, in the cushioned row,
Awaiting the curtain rise.

What the play was I quite forget,
Some love story of country life,
Lovers baffled, despairing, yet,
In the ending, man and wife.

So I gazed on the painted scenes,
Seeing their emptiness, all untrue ;
Chrome and verdigris made the greens,
And the skies but cobalt blue.

But in a moment, a glance, a tone,
Dropped by chance in the actor's role,
Sent, in mercy, to me alone,
Swept in a torrent across my soul.

For the scene shifted, melted away ;
Gone was the stage and its jeweled queens ;
The loud-mouthed actors ceased their bray,
And I gazed on other scenes.

Under the shade of living trees
I stood myself on the velvet grass,
Heaven's blue sky and summer breeze
O'er me and my country lass ;

And my words came thick and fast,
As I plead with the maid who stood by me,
As I promised, " while life shall last,
Agnes, I will be true to thee."

Then the rush of the world broke in,
Down came the curtain to music sweet,
As from Eden, cast out by sin,
I rushed to Eden, my Agnes' feet.

A MEDALLION.

Beautiful face—clear cut—
'Gainst the darkness,
Set medallion-wise
Into the past ;
Looking back musingly,
I see thee only ;
See every line of thee,
Curve of thee, shade of thee,
Beautiful face,
Long loved and long lost.

Beautiful blush
Of the faintest vermilion
Hue on thy cheek,
That never grows deeper,
Never grows paler, for no emotion
Comes o'er thee now to stir into action
Pulses that beat till
The bright tinge was brighter,
On thy beautiful face,
Long loved and long lost.

Beautiful eyes
That loved me and looked on me ;
Loved me so dearly,
So fondly, so faithfully ;
Shone bright in darkness
Upon me, still-lying,

Beautiful eyes
In laughing, in crying,
Dark, silent eyes,
Long loved and long lost.

Beautiful days
Whose memory can never
Fade from my heart quite,
Till life be all over ;
Beautiful love
Now wronged and polluted,
Beautiful heart
For sin so unsuited,
Dear, tender heart,
Long loved and long lost.

TO A SISTER OF MERCY.

To live, to love, yet never see my love ;
 To know her heart beats truly still for me ;
To dream of her by night, to vainly move
 My empty arms, as her in dreams I see.

To kneel at eve, for her repose to pray,
 Knowing she then doth pray for me with tears,
To wake each morn and live the weary day,
 Worn and disheartened by a thousand fears.

To meet a form like her, amid the throng
 Of busy travelers in the crowded street,
To strain my eager eyes, to find them wrong,
 Or meeting, pale and trembling, fear to greet.

To smile, to cry, "Ah, Dearest, speak one word,"
 To see behind the veil the trembling lip,
Yet with fixed eyes, as though she nothing heard,
 Save for the faltering feet that fail and slip.

To know that she is sick and near to death ;
 To see, between, the gloomy convent walls ;
To never know if she, with dying breath,
 Waking, or wildly raving, for me calls.

Knowing her heart is ever all my own,
 Oh! "Bride of Christ," 'tis mockery, thou art mine !
Yet am I here without thee, all alone,
 Thou ever mine by love's own law divine.

Sister of Mercy do they call thee now.

Is there no heart beneath that sombre stole,
No love, no hate, behind that placid brow,
Does peace forever reign within thy soul?

Hast thou no mercy then to give me?

No pity, not a smile to cheer my lot?
No love? ah, yes, I trust thee still; no blot
Shall ever stain my fervent faith in thee.

FAREWELL.

Two hands within two hands,
Face set to face,
Within the shadows, as the eve
Was stealing on apace.
Oh! love let us not grieve,
Since now no other bands
Than love can hold us, still,
And love is sin ;—
Then let us part at last,
Ere we begin
Another burning and tumultuous past,
That can but work us ill.

Not yet—ah, no, not yet,
Ere on thy lips
My soul one moment lingers in a dream,
And gently dips
Into thy soul, and we a moment seem
Lost in one lingering, loving, long regret.
Not yet, ah, no, not yet,
Till to my breast
I hold thee, this one moment mid my tears ;
There shalt thou rest
No more, forever, with thy hopes and fears,
And I have left me, only, to forget.

DELILAH.

Down through vineyards, grape-laden,
Comes Samson, the strong man of Dan,
Seeking a Philistine maiden.

Down to the strong-walled city,
Gaza, whose gates are so mighty,
Comes he to sing his love ditty.

Murmur a melody o'er him,
Touch him so lightly with kisses,
Knowing the ruin before him.

Take thou the best we can render,
All of our truest and bravest,
Every one manly and tender.

What canst thou give us in payment
For our brothers and lovers?
Not all thy silken, rich raiment.

Murmur a melody o'er them,
Touch them so lightly with kisses,
Knowing the ruin before them.

HELÉNE.

Thou art fair as the morn, Heléne,
And thy brow
Is fit for the crown of a queen,
My queen thou art now.

Thou art older than I, Heléne,
By a few short years,
Yet a tear-drop thy sorrows have been
To my ocean of tears.

Thou art wiser, far wiser than I,
In the world and its ways,
Yet thy wisdom is folly
And "fool" is thy praise.

What end lies before thee in life,
What end before me?
To be swallowed and lost in a love,
Like a raging sea?

O passionate—deep—shallow heart,
Is life given only to love;
Are cares but a myth and a dream,
To thy grand eyes above?

Is life to be spent in a clasp
Or a kiss?
Can man not go on to his doom
Content, without this?

Yet thou goest the way of the world,
 Thy roses shall fade,
 And thy lips, that are ruby-red now,
 In the dust shall be laid.

Thy bosom shall heave no more
 With love-sighs,
 And the love-light forever die out
 From thy glorious eyes.

Release me! Release me! Heléne,
 But a child am I
 In thine arms, if thou cast me not down,
 Shall I die.

And the world, without us, is dead.
 On thy lips I breathe;
 This only the circle of earth,
 Which thy white arms enwreath.

Yet stay! On the chance of the hour
 Hangs my lot;
 Shall I fold thee again to my heart,
 Ambition forgot?

Nay! Find a new love for thyself;
 Let me go!
 Tired quite of the warmth of thy fire,
 To the cold glittering snow.

A RED SUNSET.

The red sky in the West
Is the light of a life that's spent.
The sun, in crimson nest,
Lies in clouds of glory blent.
But behind him darkness lies,
And with him bright hope flies,
And leaves despair and sighs.

The sky in the West is red;
And the day and life are dead.
Hope thou with the rising sun,
When the day has just begun,
But despair when he leaves thee lone,
And the earth is cold as stone,
And the dying lie and moan.

For the sky above is dark
And the sky behind is drear;
There is no hope—but hark!
Far off music we can hear;
And it sweeps across the soul,
As it fails to reach its goal,
And the melodies onward roll.

And the red sky fades away;
Nevermore for us the light
Shall announce the coming day,
After hours of weary night.

For we lie, bereft, forlorn,
Of our dear-loved bodies shorn,
And our souls forever mourn.

O ye singers, heed us not ;
Ye are happy, for ye know
Nothing of our saddened lot,
In the darkness here below.
All our loves from us have fled,
All our heart's blood we have bled,
We are down among the dead.

WAITING.

A lonely watcher waiting for the dawn,
A sick man, tossing, with the cry,
“Is there no glimmer in the sky
To tell of coming morn?”

A weeping group around a bed,
Waiting as moments faster speed,
The breaking of the bruised reed,
Till all is over—with the dead.

Two fair-haired children at the gate,
Waiting, and gazing down the street,
To be the very first to greet
The weary father, coming late.

A man condemned, in narrow cell,
Waiting his single, only hour;
Before Eternity's dim glower,
Called nearer by the tolling bell.

A maiden, by the light of moon,
Waiting within the garden's shade,
“What can his footsteps have delayed,
He must be coming, coming soon.”

A dying man waiting for death,
The leader of a hope forlorn,
On whom the silent cannon yawn,
While calm as child he draws his breath.

A merchant, waiting till he heaps
His treasure-house with riches, high,
While Ruin waits with eager eye,
Or lurking death behind him creeps.

A starving child, waiting for bread ;
Gazing in brightly-lighted shops
With agony, till down it drops,
Before the food, and lies there—dead.

The world is waiting—young and old,
Waiting, and watching thro' the years ;
With laugh and jest, with pain and tears,
Till the long story all is told.

MYSTERY.

Look through the records of the past and see,
In every age, some tinge of mystery.
For mystery, though a charm, 'tis truly said,
Is but the lure by which mankind is led
To heights of knowledge. As of old the sage,
Gazing long sky-ward, in benighted age,
Fancied the wondrous movements of the stars
Betokened human fates; to nations wars,
Distresses, famines, plagues, while unto men
Lots were assigned by Power beyond their ken,
Lots, good and evil, lives of pleasure, pain,
Spent in great actions, or lived out in vain;
Yet there arose, as time maturer grew,
Men who pursued unceasing, till they knew
The ways of stars and their mysterious round,
And in Astronomy a science found;
As searching Alchemists long vainly strove
To change base metal to the gold we love—
Find the "Elixir Vitæ," essence pure,
Imbibing which—eternal we endure;
Yet while they strove to wrest the secret rare
From Mother Nature, all their pains and care
Fruitless for this, availed for other use—
To save those secrets from her hand let loose,
With many more, till Chemistry became
A living science, and a mighty name;
As in pursuit of the perennial stream
Whose Youth Perpetual, was a poet's dream,

And wandering after El Dorado's gold,
Or wealth of Indies—tales by travelers told—
Across the seas to virgin fields men came
And gave America its folk and name ;
So everywhere, if to the Past we look,
Mystery points but to the sealéd book,
Bidding us break the seal and read the page,
To unravel every secret of the age.
Still, as of old, before our dazzled eyes
Some mystery forever holds a prize,
Close in its casket—to the finder worth
Some of the best rewards of Mother Earth ;
Or the still dearer gift, that falls to few,
Their own true pride in finding what is true.
Let us not live, as men are prone to live,
Taking contented what the world can give ;
Behind the doubt the truth must lie concealed,
And by our search alone can be revealed ;
Beneath the fact lies hidden the idea ;
Behind the rainbowed cloud the sunlight clear.
Beyond each form we see there ever shone
Its Archetype, that dwells in God alone.

WORK.

Better work all day with plane,
Saw and adze, and daily earn
Daily bread, and daily learn
That toil is sweet ;
That 'tis better far to turn
All our skill, all our brain,
To the work we have to do,
Than, among the idle few,
Life to live, death to meet.

Better live a life alone,
Sad by turns and sorely tried,
Yet in loneliness abide
Till we die ;
Than along our way to glide,
Using blessings never known,
Without thanks, without care,
So the skies be always fair,
And at night we quiet lie.

MELODY.

What to me, O Melody, art thou telling?
Rising and falling, dying and swelling;
What the thought that brings these fears to me,
What the whisper that wrings these tears from me?
Speaking ever an unknown tongue to me,
Yet I know all thou hast sung to me.
What dost bring to me? What am I wanting?
For there clings to me, something haunting;
Something intangible, and so fleet,
Something sorrowful, yet so sweet.
I have a song for thee, give but speech to me.
I so long for thee, yet cannot reach thee.
Sweet melody, higher trilling,
Spirit goes with thee, ever willing.

What to me art thou softly saying?
Soul of me, heart of me, swift obeying;
Tears to my eyes suddenly welling,
Heart wildly throbbing, madly swelling,
Beating, and sobbing, almost bursting
Out from me, for an answer thirsting.
Canst thou not tell me? Whence this longing?
For all thou hast in thee, to me belonging?
Some lost something, forever gone for me,
Untold something, yet to be won for me.
Soft spirit language that now has flown from me,
Wilt thou ever speak tongue that is known to me?
Sweet melody, louder trilling,
Thro' my soul, still thou art thrilling.

✓
MY GALLERY.

I my walls would cover
With rare pictures over,
But I cannot buy them, though I love them all too
well ;
Cannot aid the painter
When his touch grows fainter,
And he looks despairing on the works he cannot
sell.

Cannot buy at pleasure
Some rich gallery's treasure,
Bear it home in triumph, and hang it fair in sight ;
Call my friends around it,
Tell them where I found it,
And discuss the mysteries of tone and shade and
light.

Pray, where could I place them,
Not to quite disgrace them,
In my humble dwelling there is hardly spot to spare ;
Furnished rather poorly
Is it, and as surely,
There is scarcely room at times to put an extra chair.

But the soul is spacious ;
Compensation gracious
Cometh unto every man, however poor or low ;
In its deep recesses,
Which no stranger guesses,
There do I my treasures with joyful hand bestow.

Visions of bright beaches,
 Shining, snowy reaches,
 Rocks lit up by moonlight, where sit my love and I;
 Scenes upon the ocean,
 Catching the soft motion
 Of the undulating boat in which at ease I lie.

Skies of tint ethereal,
 Purple quite imperial,
 Golden yellow, azure blue, and misty fleecy white,
 Where, beneath the crumbling
 Wrecks of arches tumbling,
 You and I are sitting, in the warm and glowing light.

By some placid river,
 Where the rushes quiver,
 To the gentle motion of the subtly stealing tide;
 Half the stream deep-shaded
 By the branches braided
 In a leafy roof, above the river's grassy side.

If in foreign regions
 I review the legions,
 Wrought by evanescent hands in everlasting stone,
 Straight I find, returning,
 Their clear outline burning,
 For they journeyed with me, when I deemed myself
 alone.

Some white-limbed Apollo
 Gazing o'er the hollow
 Empty world beneath him, with a smile of sad dis-
 dain;

Viewing with derision
 The fantastic vision,
 Knowing how they vanish,—yet he will still remain.

Some gold-haired Madonna
 Raised high upon a
 Pedestal of human love and human loving art,
 Raised by grand emotion,
 And one soul's devotion,
 Far above the sordid world, from human love apart.

Scenes of days forever
 Gone, with friends who never
 May return to meet us, from the unknown shore,
 Days before the glamour
 Of the world—its clamour,
 Sullied all the fairness of the years that come no
 more.

Dear Friend—could I take you
 Thro' my halls and make you
 See them with my vision, and love them with my
 heart!
 But the porter, zealous,
 Thrusts you from me, jealous,
 And upon the threshold we for once must part.

THE BEACHES.

The beaches, the white beaches
We saw with eyes closed tightly,
The solemn, changeless roaring
 We heard in silent hours ;
The fresh, smooth, sunny reaches
In sunshine flashing brightly,
The white-winged creatures soaring,
 The cliff that darkly towers.

Love and life reviving,
Springs of pleasure welling,
Childhood oft returning
 To the world-worn face ;
Till we feel like striving
To be ever telling,
All the visions burning
 In this hour of grace.

Oh! how in the weary
Air of summer noonday,
When the winds are resting,
 And the world is still,
Have we fancied, dreary,
This sea;—seen the moon play,
With its shimmer cresting
 Dark waves at its will.

THE MINSTER BELLS.

In dim silence hanging
Mute, so lately clanging,
Rest to us is blessed
 As it is to man below ;
And we brood in pleasure,
Dreaming out some measure,
To be told, in waking hours,
 With our whole souls' fervid glow.
When the day comes laughing,
O'er the world awaking,
Ye shall hear it, ye shall know it,
On your lazy slumbers breaking.

Ah, ye mould us proudly,
Shape us to ring loudly,
Hang us high above you all,
 Yet know not what we are ;
Know not how we ponder,
Think and watch and wonder,
As ye wonder in your science
 On some distant twinkling star ;
While the rain is rattling,
And the winds are wrestling,
To o'erthrow us, for they envy us,
Within our shadows nestling.

And the raindrops pattering,
And the hailstones clattering,

Strike from us a music
 That may never fall to you;
 And the snow sings sweetly,
 As it falls discreetly,
 Such a melody as you
 From all your organs never drew;—
 Such a trembling murmur
 As a maid may lisp her
 Love with, in her lover's ear
 By night, with softest whisper.

And the fierce wind blowing,
 Thro' dark arches flowing
 In upon us, as it strikes us,
 Makes us ring with answering sound.
 But ye cannot hear it,
 For ye are not near it,
 All ye dull-eared dwellers
 Upon the distant ground.
 But there come up to us,
 All your sounds ascending,
 In a wonderful and mingled
 Inharmonious tumult blending.

Hark! the south wind coming,
 In our tower a-humming
 Rises, till a murmur fills
 And swells toward the sky.
 'Tis the songs we're singing,
 Softly, when the ringing,
 Noisy, busy ringing
 Of the day has passed us by;

'Tis the songs we're dreaming,
 'Tis the words we're saying,
 To the moonbeams lightly
 O'er our stained surface playing.

'Tis the echo broken,
 Of your words unspoken,
 Caught in our great open mouths
 From off your troubled world.
 'Tis the sigh of sadness,
 'Tis the shout of gladness,
 That upward, like the smoke wreaths,
 Unto us above has curled.
 And we catch it rising,
 And we hum it lowly,
 Mingling in a mystic song
 Its cadence, floating slowly.

With a human feeling,
 When the daylight stealing
 Upward, thro' the night shades,
 Lights our towers with ruddy gold—
 While the world is shaded,
 Since at eve it faded,
 Underneath the billowy mists
 That still its homes enfold—
 We await, all breathless,
 Till a thrill comes creeping
 To our still tongues, in a moment,
 Like a maddening fire leaping.

We, so far above you,
 Still like brothers love you,

Watching all the changes
 Of your toiling, troubled lives ;
 See you in the city
 Hurry on, and pity,
 Yea, regret the tardy hours
 Till your time of rest arrives,
 Till the day is over,
 And ye toil no longer,
 For the rest we ring ye out
 Shall make the weary stronger.

Ring out higher—bolder—
 In glad music fold her,
 As there comes a happy bride
 Fill all the air with sound ;
 Tell her how we love her,
 As we peal above her,
 Shaking, with tumultuous joy,
 The unloving, stony ground.
 Scatter songs around her,
 Fill the air with singing,
 As the maidens scatter
 Rosy blossoms to our ringing.

Slowly toll we, slowly,
 In a measure holy,
 Lest the angels round us
 Might take flight to heaven too soon ;
 Ere they bear uplifted,
 Thro' some cloud, gold-rifted,
 One more soul to their bright home
 Beyond the sun and moon :

One soul freed from sorrow,
 One more glad immortal,
 Borne along, with songs of joy,
 Thro' heaven's radiant portal :

With a dirge of sorrow
 For the bitter morrow,
 That must come and come again
 To loving ones they leave ;
 For we hear their crying,
 Yes, we catch their sighing,
 And our adamantine hearts
 For their sorrows, too, may grieve.
 And we strive to tell them
 How the lost are winging,
 Upward still, their eager flight,
 With new-found voices singing.

We will ring for ages,
 While the wild storm rages,
 While the calm lies softly
 O'er the fields and homes beneath ;
 Ring the radiant morning
 At its faintest dawning,
 Ring the eve that creepeth
 O'er the world with bated breath ;
 Guard your sleep from danger,
 Sound the hurried warning,
 On the leaping fires below
 Looking down in lofty scorning.

Every creature leaves us,
 This it is that grieves us,

We must hang forever
Where ye hung us, to the end.
We grow old and older
And our fires are colder,
But we never with you
May at last in joy ascend.
We must hang and moulder,
Rust with years and crumble,
We are high above you now,
But time will make us humble.

When ye all are slumbering
'Neath us, then in numbering,
Silently and sadly,
The still days our lives will go;
Who shall hear the ringing
When, our mad tones flinging
To the sky, at last, an earthquake
Shall dash us down below;
With our falling towers,
Dash us—crash us—crying
Louder—fiercer—then in anguish
And despair, sullen dying.

THE WAY OF LIFE.

And so we go thro' life ;
The endless days of weariness,
 The meagre days of joy ;
The fleeting hours of merriment,
The long, sad hours of worriment,
The brightness and the dreariness,
 The gold and the alloy.

And so we go thro' life ;
The misery, the painful loss,
 The bitter toil ;
The bounding health,
The flowing wealth,
The core of dross
 Within the golden foil.

And so we go thro' life ;
The lover's mystery,
 The wedded blessedness,
The bitter history
Of hearts estranged,
Homes disarranged,
 The hatred and the happiness.

And so we go through life ;
The flush of bright success,
 The sad unfortunate,
The sought, but unfound, happiness,

The found, though unsought happiness,
Thick set throughout this wilderness,
Beset us so importunate.

And so we go through life ;
The feigned laugh, the aching heart,
The smiling look,
The angry fire within ;
Sweet innocence upon the face of sin,
The blush of shame upon the innocent,
Sorrow to meet and joy to part.

DREAMING.

Dreaming child-dreams
Which men are given to dreaming ;
Waking in larger age
 To find the dreams are flown.
Dreaming of death,
While life is only seeming ;
Waking from life to death
 And joys unknown.

Waking to lives undreamed
And scenes so new ;
Waking, in pure delight, to what
 We never dreamed of seeing ;
Sleeping to earth and seeming,
And all that once was true,
Waking from out time's dreaming,
 To Eternity's real being.

SPHINX OF THE EAST.

Sphinx of the East
Out on the red sands gazing,
Dost thou still ask
Thy questions of the dead?
Silence surrounds thee,
Stillness, dread, amazing;
The voice of busy life
Forever fled.

Sphinx of the West
Out on the new world gazing,
Down at thy feet
A myriad toilers lie;
Must they too perish,
Eyes reproachful raising,
As down they go to death
And hopeless die?

Solve thine own riddle!
Cease thy stony gazing!
Prove to the world of men
The hope they claim;
For high o'er head,
The sun of science blazing
Casts on the sands beneath
A shadowed name.

SHADOWS.

When in the ending of the day
The shadows long are lying,
And golden rays of sunlight play,
O'er hill and valley flying ;

When purple cloud strives to enshroud
And bar the sun from sinking,
And scarcely dare we speak aloud
The thoughts that we are thinking ;

We can't forget—in sunlight yet—
That day is slowly dying,
For we can see, 'neath rock and tree,
The shadows longer lying.

O eve of life ! O shadows long !
O wind of evening sighing !
O sinking sun ! O night begun !
O daylight slowly dying !

Is there no light, no sunbeam bright,
No voice to hope replying ?
No coming day, no sunny way,
When day and we are dying ?

Bright hope replies, "Lift tearful eyes,
Though shadows long are lying ;
Though night comes fast 'twill soon be past,
Darkness from daybreak flying."

O shadows long, O sad, sweet song
Of night—O sweet day dying !
Still will we wait, though morn be late,
Dread night in hope defying.



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