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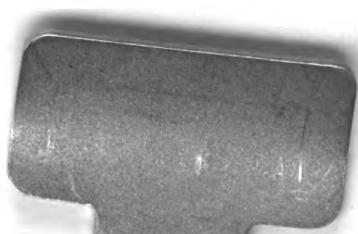
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THE WAY OF
THE WINEPRESS
BY JOHN PAYNE.

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THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS

By JOHN PAYNE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THOMAS WRIGHT
AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF JOHN PAYNE," ETC.

THE JOHN PAYNE SOCIETY

SECRETARY: MR. THOMAS WRIGHT, OLNEY, BUCKS

1920

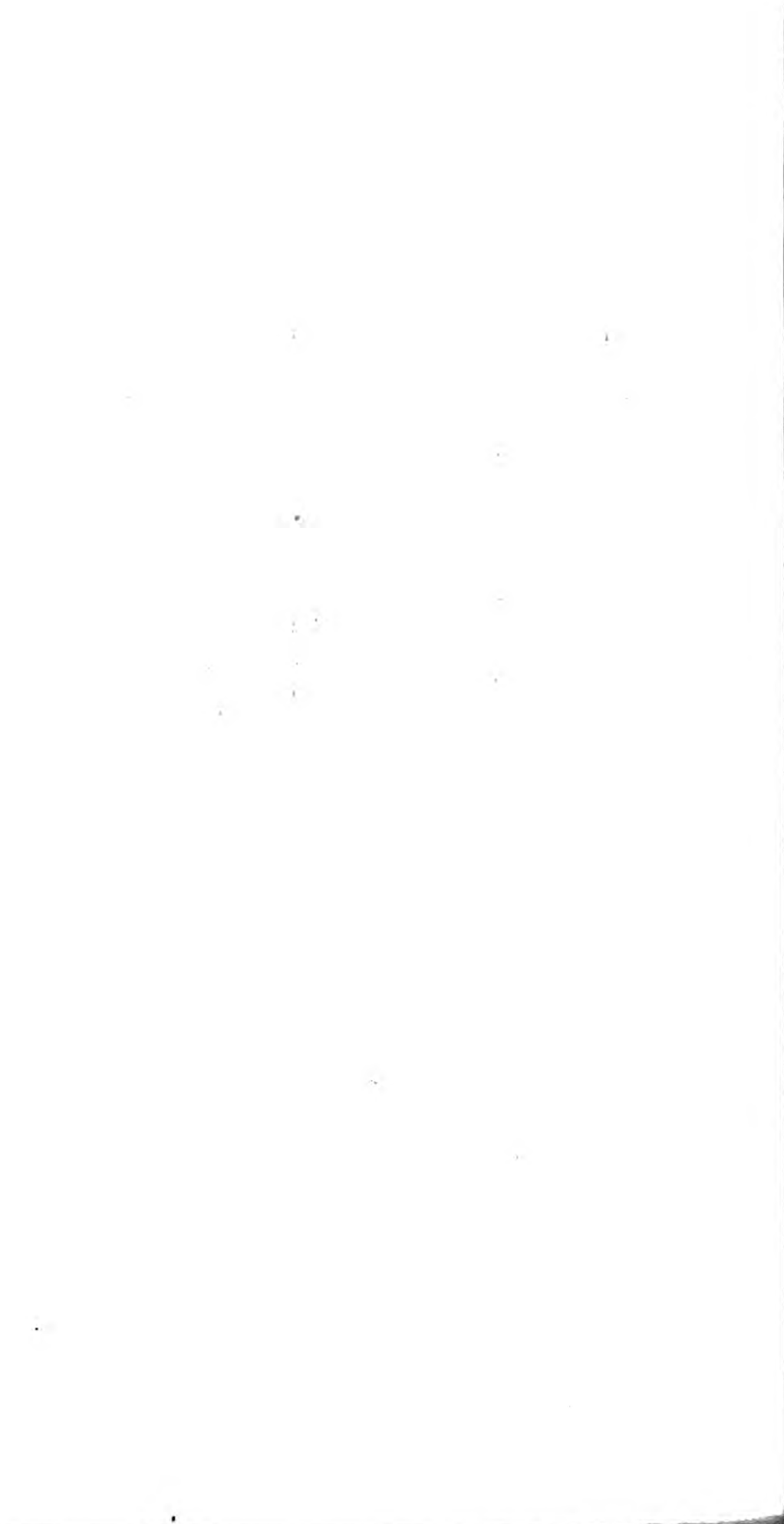


INTRODUCTION

THE present edition of *The Way of the Winepress*, of which I can find only fifty perfect ordinary copies and nine perfect large-paper copies, was, with the exception of the title-page and list of contents, ready for the binder at the time of Payne's death. The book contains some very beautiful work. Lovers of Payne will treasure, for example, "Ideality," "Consistency," "Life's Motive Force," "*Coelum non animus*," and "The Salt of Life,"—to mention only a few of the finest of the poems. Reference should be made to my *Life of John Payne*, pp. 245-249. I must express regret that Payne, disregarding my urgent request, did not suppress "Resurrection," "A Call from the Night," "*Etiam si omnes, ego non*," "Pilate," with its footnote, and a few lines from other poems. The wise reader, however, will garner only the gold, of which there is great abundance, and reject whatever could with advantage have been omitted. When writing this work Payne had, to use his own expression, arrived at the last inn; and these are his last words. I shall be pleased to send particulars of the John Payne Society and the prospectus of my *Life of John Payne* to any applicant.

THOMAS WRIGHT.

COWPER SCHOOL,
OLNEY, BUCKS.
23 August 1920.



CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
Introit	3	The Whirligig	21
The Pantheist	4	<i>Memento aequam servare ani-</i>	
Two Heavens	4	<i>mam</i>	21
Longsome Thought	5	Hours of wake	22
Niriswara	5	Faint, yet pursuing	22
A Light Age	6	Some Day	23
The Lost Lyre	6	A Call from the Night	23
They shall be called by a		Thought and Speech	24
New Name	7	Soul-ache	24
Mourning Colours	7	Harvest-Tide	25
Snow in the Air	8	Life's Motive Force	25
Morning-Glory	8	<i>Entbehren sollst du</i>	26
<i>Ars Moriendi</i>	9	Consistency	26
<i>Tout comprendre</i>	9	The Lodestar	27
The Last Infirmity	10	Sea and Shore	27
<i>Lux indica</i>	10	The Moon's Secret	28
Cat-choristers	11	Drunk or Sober	28
Life's Winter	11	Nature on the Watch	29
Exile	12	Priesthood	30
March-Magic	12	Summer Solace	30
Except a corn of wheat.	13	Horses of the Sun	31
Life's Reckoning	13	The Angel of the Dawn	31
Dreams of Eld	14	Limed Wings	32
Prisoner Soul	14	The Sower	32
Ideality	15	Death and Birth	33
The Wind's Will	15	The Wine of Circe	33
The Gifts of the Gods	16	<i>Etiam si omnes, ego non</i>	34
The Fire's Question	17	<i>Quis consolabit</i>	35
A New Commandment	17	<i>Numinis umbra</i>	35
Joy	18	Midas and Silenus	36
<i>La vida es sueño</i>	18	Returning and Rest	37
The Word of Creation	19	A Fly on the Pane	37
Departing Dreams	19	The Olympians	38
The Last Prayer	20	The Siren	40
Resurrection	20	The Undying Worm	40

	PAGE		PAGE
Love and Love	41	<i>Nil nisi bonum</i>	62
The Might-have-been	41	That which abideth	62
Rotten in the Bud	42	Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly	
<i>Quod docet experientia</i>	42	worship	63
The Beginning of Knowledge	43	Elusive Thought	63
Modern Athenians	43	<i>Divina non expugnanda</i>	64
The Unknown God	44	Dream and Vision	64
Vanity of Vanities	44	The Endless Choice	65
New Lamps for Old	45	The Parting of the Ways	65
<i>Trunkenheit ohne wein</i>	46	<i>Sursum corda</i>	66
The Kingdom of Heaven	46	<i>Il est des morts qu'il faut qu'on</i>	
Sly Nature	47	<i>tue</i>	66
Ebbtide	47	Blind Souls	67
The Soul's Seasons	48	<i>Inde naenia</i>	67
<i>Coelum non animum</i>	48	The Plover	68
Monkeys by the Sea	49	Towards Appeasement	69
The Eternal Round	50	The Last Inn	69
The Buried Past	50	FOUR POETS: Dante, Heine,	
<i>Procul este. . . .!</i>	51	Leconte de Lisle, Henley	73
<i>Quid novi fert Africa!</i>	51	MARTYRS OF HISTORY, 4th	
A Poisonous Heritage	52	SERIES:	
Tents of a Night	52	Hercules	79
Lambs of God	53	Pilate	79
The Harpies	53	Jaafer the Barmecide	81
The Salt of Life	54	Guatemozin	82
Bodiless Souls	54	Carolus Martyr	82
The Turn of the Tide	55	Prince Rupert	83
The Restless Dead	55	Maximilian of Mexico	83
The Tide of Tears	56	Napoleon the Third	84
The Last Strength	56	Pedro of Brazil	84
Evil Communications	57	<i>Qui carent vate sacro</i>	85
Buried Cities	57	MOTH FLIGHTS:	
<i>Solitudinem Faciunt</i>	58	The Soul's Ventures	90
The Lonely Harvester	58	Moths' Wings	91
Almond Blossom	59	Vain Visions	92
England Fallen	59	Versicles	92
Song Sacrament	60	<i>Glossa Marginalis</i>	93
Feigned Youth	61	The Return of the Wanderers	94
Lonely Souls	61		

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.



THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS:
a Vintaging of Verse.

I have trodden the winepress alone and of
the people there was none with me.
Isaiah, LXIII, 3.

INTROIT.

I HAVE trodden the winepress alone; my feet with the
vineblood are red,
The blood of the grapes of the grief, of the travail and
toil of the time:
None was of the people with me: all slumbered like hogs
in the slime.
For grapes, hearts of men young and old were heaped in
the vintaging-stead
And eke my own heart in the press must bleed as its
fellow-hearts bled,
To brim up the vats to the brink, for the feast of the
forthcoming Prime.
The blood from the winepress that flowed I garnered in
flagons of rhyme
And sealed with the seal of a soul that had purged been
with pain and with dread.
Come, drink of my vintage! Though rough, it is blent
with the blandness of ruth;
Though bitter, health-bringing it is. Turn not from the
draught, brothers mine:
For, even as milk to the mouth behoveth of childhood
and youth,
So wine, on like wise, to the lips of the old and the world
in decline

4 *THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.*

Befitteth, strong wine, bitter-sweet, the brewage of soul-
stirring truth.
I have trodden the winepress alone and proffer you now
of the wine.

THE PANTHEIST.

A NEW rose on the bush, a ripe red mouth,
Coy opening to the kisses of the sun;
A new bird on the bough, for Summer won
A-carol in the tangled hawthorn growth;
A new breath in the breeze, of the soft South
That tells, new stirrings in the air that run.
But trifles all, when all is said and done:
Yet they avail to stay the spirit's drouth,
Voicing the promise, given by Winter past
And Summer sacring all the woods and leas,
Of some far fairer ecstasy and ease,
Which shall be ours, when, Life's dull dream at last
Dreamt to an end, we one are with all these,
With rain and sun, with rose and bird and breeze.

TWO HEAVENS.

OUR creeds are like the air-built firmament,
That, with its sun, its stars, its motley rout
Of clouds, encompasseth our earth about,
All overarching with its azure tent.
Like it, they shut from us the Sphere's extent;
Like it, their air is Faith, that stretches out
Past vision, save unto the eye of doubt,
And bounds our being with its element.
But, as with this our Heaven of day and night,
When, on the pinions of the aspiring spright,



Beyond the bounds of Number, Time and Place
We soar, the creeds, the heavens of the mind,
Melt into air and only leave behind
The immeasurable silences of Space.

LONGSOME THOUGHT.

LONG are the thoughts of age; they are to those
Of Youth as is the whelming Winter-night
Unto the April morning's brief delight,
As the grim cypress of the churchyard-close
To the ephemeral splendour of the rose.
With the mean Present their concern is slight;
'Tis on the Past they mostly dwell, contrite:
Age reaps; 'tis Youth and Youth alone that sows.
Reviewing still the way-marks overwon,
Among old memories back and forth they go,
Still wearying to amend the things misdome
And what hath been to exchange for what should be.
Long are the thoughts of age: their length they owe
Unto the nearness of Eternity.

NIRISWARA.

THE wind blows hither, thither, and the thought
Follows its flight into the fields of Space,
Seeking the Eternal Essence face to face
To meet, the Power that into being brought
The shining systems of the stars and wrought
The worlds from nothing with His word of grace,
"Be and it was,"¹ panurgic, and His trace
Ensuing, still finds nought and ever nought.

¹ The Koranic formula of Creation.

6 *THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.*

Seek in thyself, friend. Nowhere else thou'lt find
God, Heaven, Hell, Time, Place, Number, save in thee.
These all are creatures of the imperial Mind,
Children of Thought creative, that o'er sea,
Earth, Heaven and Hell, Past, Present and To-be,
Whither it listeth bloweth, like the wind.

A LIGHT AGE.

AN age of sitting down to eat
And drink and rising up to play!
The light folk fool their lives away,
As if Time brought no bills to meet.
Upon the earth's volcanic heat,
Which tells of fires that must some day
Burst up and all in ruins lay,
Tripping, they go with trifling feet.
Their every hope, ambition, faith,
Fear, hatred, love, belief and doubt,
Are, (of the flare as Villon saith
By which his beldams sit and sigh,)
But as a fire of hempstalks dry,
Easy to light and soon gone out.

THE LOST LYRE.

POET, thou thought'st to be a living lyre,
That should have voiced all sounds of song which strayed
In earth and Heaven, in rain and sun and shade,
A lute compacted of the air and fire,
With heart for sounding-shell and wit for wire,
Whereon the very Sun-God might have played,
When music in Olympus halls he made;
This was the heart and height of thy desire.

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS. 7

Alack! A lyre o'erstrained by sordid strife,
Warped by world's use and unattuned by pain,
Thou'rt grown, that answereth all the sounds of Life,
Indeed, yet rendereth discords but again,
With just some chance accord of Heaven's own truth,
To tell of the aspirings of thy youth.

THEY SHALL BE CALLED BY A NEW NAME.

MIDST the dull herd, driven by the shepherd's crook
Of harsh Necessity about, I see
Whiles some whose faces shine, — whether it be
Some poet syllabling his secret book,
Some saint descended from his chapel-nook,
Some seeker, on the stars, that o'er the sea
Rise of his thought, intent, — it knows not me;
But they all wear the same unworldly look.
These are the blessèd of this life; they dream
And with their dream contented are to live
Nor ask for otherwhat the world can give.
Each in his Heaven they walk; and whiles 'twould seem
I hear them murmur, as I pass them nigh,
The new names that the angels know them by.

MOURNING COLOURS.

IN the Far East men use to mourn their dead
In white; for, in the purlieus of the sun,
The people tend the tyrannous light to shun
And hold the shadow more of goodlihead.
But we, in lack of light and greyness bred,
For sign of sorrow, better hue know none
Than that of ended day and dark begun

And drape with sable the funereal bed.
 Yet black's the livery of the lovesome night,
 Calmer of cares and solacer of strife;
 And white, pale, passionless, implacable white,
 The natural negation is of Life,
 The hue incorporate of the ice-bound sea,
 Of Chaos cold and blank Nonentity.

SNOW IN THE AIR.

THE raging North hath scourged the soul of mirth
 Forth of the world, and 'neath the cloud-rack low,
 The air is straitened with the unfallen snow:
 Black with the tempest's undelivered birth,
 The sky scowls curses at the cowering earth.
 Come, haste thee, Heaven, and let thy burden go!
 Better a known is than an unknown woe
 And threatened life is little living-worth.
 My thought is like the snow-encumbered sky,
 Big with storm-burthened clouds, that will not burst,
 But threaten me fore'er with every worst
 Calamity hailed on me from on high;
 And so I dwell beneath a vault of fear,
 That draineth all my days of joy and cheer.

MORNING-GLORY.

I THINK whiles yet to look upon the morning-glory,
 Yet, on my path obscured by Life's volcano-steam,
 Before I die, to see the golden dawning gleam,
 The sun armipotent cleave the twilight's caverns hoary
 And the blue heavens on high break open, story on story,
 To shuffle off, at last, Life's dull delirious dream
 And on my lightless days the glad life-giving stream

Feel of the flaming star, the God consolatory.
Alas, sad soul! Thy hope is but a dream delusive:
The dweller in the dark no lot hath in the light;
Sorrow in the realms of joy and cheer was still intrusive.
Thou in the shade hast lived of men's neglect and scorning
And in that shade wilt die. To such the Eternal Morning
As thou its lining turns of black, the Eternal Night.

ARS MORIENDI.

YET but a while and I shall see no more
The sun nor feel the fountains of the dawn
Life with full hands pour upon hill and lawn,
No more be witness to the mimic war
'Twixt light and dark, when Day or Night is o'er,
Or see the sun and shade at daggers drawn;
I shall not hear the birds; I shall be gone
Unto the silence and the shadow-shore.
Sick soul, content thee; thou art going home.
To the tired traveller, in the evenglome,
The long way wended, welcome is the inn.
Though narrow be the house and cold the bed,
At least thou shalt sleep well among thy kin,
The innumerable generations of the dead.

TOUT COMPRENDRE. . . .

"TO understand all is to pardon all,"
Folk say; and in the main the saw is true;
For that, from Night primaeval since the blue
Day broke and brimmed with light Earth's darkling ball,
In the high soul, from ignorance's thrall
Released, mansuetude still germed and grew
And in the widening heart, with knowledge due,

Compassion sprang, at waxing wisdom's call.
 Yet of the syllogism they omit
 The middle term: since all to comprehend
 All to despise, alack! is, all, to wit,
 The thriftless traffic of the unthinking herd.
 Thus, knowing all unworth a wrathful word,
 The pitying sage to pardon all will tend.

THE LAST INFIRMITY.

I HAVE outlived the laurel: fawn who will
 On the fool commons for their paltry praise,
 Let who will trade and truckle for the bays!
 Here, on the thither slope of Life's long hill,
 The laurel leafs not, for the air is chill:
 Here but the cypress and the yew upraise
 Their plumes funereal in the wind-swept ways.
 With these I must content me, will or nill.
 Nor do I look for justice after death:
 All for Life ended is with 'scape of breath.
 Once had it welcome been to hear "Well done!"
 Cried by the few who feel the fair, the high:
 But now, my last once looked upon the sun,
 If I relive, I shall be no more I.

LUX INDICA.

THREE hundred million Gods the lore of Ind
 Counts in its Heaven, one to every man,
 Woman and child within the mighty span
 Between the Indus and the sea confined.
 Such reckoning stuff to the unreasoning mind
 For sheer derision seems; but, if thou scan
 The case with philosophic eye, a plan

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS. 11

Profound beneath its mien grotesque thou'lt find.
To each his God; to wit, let each the light
Follow of his soul, o'erdarkened by no wraith
Of man-made deity, no priest-wrought rite,
And by the fruits be judged of his own faith.
And thus the enlightened East a new behest
Of high-souled wisdom gives the grosser West.

CAT-CHORISTERS.

THE cats are choiring on my garden-wall.
Brahms or Tchaikowsky might the witless throng
Witch with such music as their throats night-long
Emit and fret the affrighted moon withal.
What is it, cats, thus makes you caterwaul?
What is it thus enforceth you prolong
The cadence of your cacophonic song?
Folk say, ye carol thus at Cupid's call.
Yet, rather spleen it is, meseems, than love,
The strains inspires, that, hissing through your teeth,
Multisonant, ye hurl at Heaven above,
Strains such as fiends, who hate the human race,
About the witches' pot, that boils apace,
Shrill to the stars upon the haunted heath.

LIFE'S WINTER.

'TIS Winter, Winter all about me now.
The very memory of the Spring forsped
In my cold heart and brain is well nigh dead;
And scarce can I recall, with knitted brow,
The days when, like a bird upon the bough,
I carolled to each cloud above my head,
Each flush of flower, each rose of morning-red,

Nor gave a thought to cares of Why or How.
Life hath forsaken me and Death, 'twould seem,
Hath overlooked and left me by the way:
So, like a leaf that lingers on the spray,
Forgotten by the Autumn wind, I dream,
A brooding phantom, by the Winter fire,
Purged by long pain of dross of old desire.

EXILE.

SOUL, thou hast been a dweller in the dark,
Since thou embodied wast; yet thou the right
Must in some former life have had of flight,
Before the Fates immured thee in this ark
Of murk mortality; for, like the lark,
Thou yearnest still for the coerulean height
And strainest up unto the lands of light,
Beyond our atmosphere of care and cark.
Remembrance yet or knowledge is it not
That draws thee Heavenward, like a flower of flame;
For thou thy former sojourn hast forgot
And hast no memory of thy heavenly name.
There must thou voice and wings have had, though dumb
And wingless thou in exile art become.

MARCH-MAGIC.

THE sun is ashine
In the wind-whitened ways;
The dance of the days
Hath a rhythm divine.
Though bare is the bine
And the calendar says
It is March's, not May's,

The air is like wine.
Thou, also, my soul,
Though the mists of mischance
And the Winter of dole
About thee still cling,
Yet needs must thou dance
And be drunken with Spring.

EXCEPT A CORN OF WHEAT....

TO crush for sustinence the stubborn clods,
To wish and want or (yet more piteous!)
Find, the wish filled, we would not have it thus;
To cower and tremble 'neath the Furies' rods,
To wrestle with the unrelenting Gods
And children to beget, who shall, like us,
Fight the same battle unvictorious
And lie at last beneath the daisied sods;
Such is man's lot. Small wonder that he flies
For solace still to dreams of lands of light
Beyond the darkness; — dreams, alas! in vain,
Since in the furrow needs the golden grain
Must rot, ere, in its semblance, from Death's night,
Alike, yet not the same, new sheaves arise.

LIFE'S RECKONING.

THIS world a mart of shadows is, its gain
Even as its loss and as its foul its fair.
Pay down the price, quoth God, and whatsoe'er
Thou choosest take. For pleasure or for pain,
All that the earth and seas and heavens contain
Lies open for our taking without spare.
Our peace of mind the price is for the ware

Which we must pay and pay o'er oft in vain.
Prodigal Present on improvident Past
Heaped hast thou, soul; Life's better and its worse
Spent hast thou without stint and find'st at last
Thyself with wind in hand and empty purse,
Beggared of hope. Oh, poor Humanity!
What is there left in Heaven or Earth for thee?

DREAMS OF ELD.

IN eld, the feet of fancy climb
Thought's slope less lightly and Life seems
One of such stories as one dreams
In the drear nights of Wintertime,
Tales without reason, ay, or rhyme,
That end not with the morning's beams,
But linger in the mind, like streams
That shallow out in sand and slime.
How different from the dreams of youth,
That oft begun and ended are
'Twixt rise and set of star and star!
But these are stimulants, in sooth,
And those narcotics, that condole
The sufferance of the aching soul.

PRISONER SOUL.

ONLY the water given and the bread;
All food for heart and brain withholden sheer;
Time's cobweb curtains, layer year by year
To layer added, woven about my head;
Cloud-copes of lonesness o'er me, heavy as lead;
No plaudits for my pains, no word of cheer;
For all that meets the eye or strikes the ear,

Well might I buried be, before I'm dead.
A sea of silence round about me grown,
Wherein endeavour, hope, achievement, drown;
A wall of shadow, starker far than stone,
That shuts the sunlight from my every sheaf;
And never angel of the Lord sent down,
To lift my life up from its grave of grief.

IDEALITY.

WE strain athwart the cloud-screen of the years
And on the dim horizon think to trace
The flowerage of the Future's growth of grace, —
As in the East the phantom Dawn appears
Against the darkness, ere the daybreak nears, —
Nor know that the reflection of our face
It is, refracted from the fields of Space,
We see, our mirrored wishes, hopes and fears.
Yet, courage, soul! Thy will the planets seven
It was that bade illumine our life benighted,
Thy thought the towering star-crowned steeps of Heaven
That stormed for hope. True ideality,
Indeed, the sick sage ¹ said, it is to see
The sunrise blossom, where a taper's lighted.

THE WIND'S WILL.

THE wind goes wailing, wailing overhead,
A voice of unpropitiable woe,
Now fierce with rage and pain, now faint and low.
The myriad myriad voices of the dead,
That lived unhoping lives in days long sped
And drooped and died, unhoping, evenso,

¹ Nietzsche.

We hearken in its sound and in its flow
 Taste the salt savour of the tears they shed.
 Yet, Wind, methinks, thou reckest nought of Man
 Nor sorrowest with his dolour and disgrace:
 Nay, rather, Child of Chaos, Son of Space,
 Thou dirgest for the days ere Life began
 And sighest for the cease of joy and pain
 And Nothingness Antæval come again.

THE GIFTS OF THE GODS.

1. HEALTH, wealth, strength, beauty, understanding, —
 The common objects of a man's desire, [these,
 Still of the favouring Fates we all require
 And hold ourselves by Fortune's harsh decrees
 Denied our common due of common ease,
 If of these all we fail. Yet, son and sire,
 So deeply sunk in ignorance's mire,
 So dark we are of deeming, that none sees
 How of these all, whereby such store we set,
 None may avail to stay our spirit's fret;
 Nay, rather fire unto our discontent
 They add and draw on us the evil eye
 Of envy, that ensues, without relent,
 Such as their heads above the herd rear high.

2. One only gift availeth to defeat
 The assaults of envy; only one a spell
 Of solace proffers 'gainst the poison fell
 Of torturing thought, that on the soul doth eat,
 And foreassures from Passion's bitter-sweet:
 Wherefore let all, who wisely would and well
 Live and at peace be in this worldly hell
 God with joined hands and bended knees entreat
 His blessèd gift of dullness to bestow,

Not to think, not to feel, to fare through life,
Unmarking sweet or sour, only to know
Content of sense and what each day may give
Take, as the groundlings take, who only live
Elate in this our round of sordid strife.

THE FIRE'S QUESTION.

"WHAT worth is Life?" Meseems the embers ask,
That, as I watch them, fade and fall together.
"A little flight with pinions scant of feather,
A little soaring in the sun to bask,
A little conning of a thankless task,
A little straining at the unyielding tether,
A little sun and shade; then Winter weather:
The draught outdrained is; fling away the flask!"
And yet who knows? Our little stress of fears
And hopes is with the Eternal Scheme at one,
And, with the termless process of the spheres,
In the far Future, Earth and Heaven above,
Yet 'midst the void may kindle some new sun
And warm a myriad worlds to life and love.

A NEW COMMANDMENT.

THAT which thou dost do lightly; let the wings
Of music lift thine every thought and act
Clear of the clogging clay of Faith and Fact.
Unhampered be of common folk and things
And for thy laws of life unto the springs
Of thought resort nor let thy soul be racked
By fear of men's approval and sanction lacked;
But live thy life out as a linnet sings.
Cast back Wont's cloud-wrought curtains; let the sun

Shine on thy life. The World's an ass that plods
 Still in the shadow of the things foredone.
 Do grave things gladly; set this farce of strife
 To song and let the rhythm of thy life
 Follow the dancing footsteps of the Gods.

JOY.

I HAVE known little of what men call joy:
 My pleasure ever founded was in pain:
 Brain spoke to heart and heart replied to brain
 With such immediateness as left the coy
 Affect scant room to blossom. As a boy,
 My best delights, — the cowslip-covered plain,
 Some poet's perfect word, some haunting strain
 Of mystic music, — all with this alloy
 Blent were, a poignance of the sense, o'erkeen
 For simple gladness; and as I grew old,
 The purest pleasures of my life on earth,
 — To feel the seeds of song in me unfold, —
 So rudely wrought in me, they might have been
 As lightly throes of death as thrills of birth.

LA VIDA ES SUEÑO.

"METHINKETH, whiles, this world is as a dream,
 Dreamt of a drunken God." So said a sage,¹
 Who by the light, in this our lightless age,
 Of wisdom lived and steered against the stream.
 Thought daylong bent o'er Life's volcano-steam,
 Waiting the outburst of its witless rage,
 And poring nightlong on the dark's blank page,
 Expectant of the day's reluctant beam;

¹ Théophile Gautier.

Fear, the time's travail following and unease,
And haggard hope, a-strive with beat of drum
To drown the knell of nearing doom, that goes
Droning beneath the surface; — what are these
But phases of a dream, the birth, who knows,
Whether of a God's or fiend's delirium?

THE WORD OF CREATION.

WHAT was it called the world out of the night
And sent it spinning, whirling, through the bare
Blank spaces of the interstellar air,
That from the womb of darkness drew the light
And made withal the face of Nature bright,
That Earth and Heaven with the luminous stair
Linked of the stars and lit the glad sun there?
Awe was it not nor majesty nor might.
The word that filled the earth below with flowers,
That peopled all the plains of blue above
With seraphs glittering in their golden cars,
That made the Summer and its shining hours,
Was mightier than these; indeed, 'twas Love,
"The love that moves the sun and the other stars." ¹

DEPARTING DREAMS.

AS age draws on, our dreams to us farewell
Bid, one by one, our starry, flowery dreams,
That, through the meadows of our youth, like streams
Of solace, straying, Life's each stone and shell
To jewels turn and with their subtle spell,
Founding a wonder-world on what but seems,
Blooms bright as sun- and mellow as moon-beams

¹ Dante.

From Time's sour soil and sterile sands compel.
 One after one, from our despairing hearts
 They lapse. The dream of Love its rosy ray
 First veils; then that of Hope from us doth cease
 And Faith, twin polestars of our pilgrim-way;
 And in the end from our sad souls departs,
 Yet lingers to the last, the dream of Peace.

THE LAST PRAYER.

THE bird is on the spray,
 The apple on the bough,
 The Then of Night the Now
 Become of Summer day:
 The streets with scent of hay
 Are sweet; with shining brow,
 Folk fare, forgetting how
 Life lapses without stay.
 Why cannot I, like these,
 The memory of Death's debt
 Put off and be at ease?
 O God, if God Thou be,
 I crave but this of Thee,
 Let me with these forget!

RESURRECTION.

THE trumpet calls; the graves gape open wide;
 The shrilling clangours rend the shivering skies;
 The sheeted dead sit up and rub their eyes.
 It seems but yesterday since I, I died,
 Since in the grave I laid me, heavy-eyed,
 To sleep away, in healing dark, child-wise,
 The agonies of this our life of lies.
 Fain would I then of God be justified;

Fain would I then have met Him front to front
And hurled defiance in His face unjust:
But now I have outslumbered in the dust
Vengeance and wrath and sorrow's bitter brunt,
O'erweary for remembrance. Rise who may,
I will sleep on and let God pass away.¹

THE WHIRLIGIG.

AS rosetime and rose
Blight bring us and thorn,
So dark of Day's born
And grief of joy grows.
From these unto those,
'Twixt merrythought Morn
And darkness forlorn,
Life's whirligig goes.
Far better the kine
Than men know to deal
With what may befall.
Come shadow, come shine,
Come woe or come weal,
They dream through it all.

MEMENTO AEQUAM SERVARE ANIMAM.

NOW, when the damps of dissolution lave
Thy flagging feet and stir the cold grey haze,
That grows and gathers in the latter days
About the soul, — when in Time's whelming wave
All that the clamorous senses seek and crave

¹ "The Gods are on *this* side the evolution of the Self and pass away, with their Heavens and their Hells, at the expiration of the Æon to which they pertain." The Upanishads of the Veda.

Is swallowed up, health, fortune, peace and praise,
 And nothing lights for thee life's darkening ways,
 Save the pale flame that flickers o'er the grave;
 Now, — above all, — when hope is left behind,
 Remember to conserve a constant mind;
 Seeing that, with death if all be done for thee,
 All will be solved in sleep; and if again
 Thou live, thou wilt have purged been in Death's sea
 Of all remembrance of joy and pain.

HOURS OF WAKE.

WE waken once-a-while from Life's delirious dream
 And for a moment's space see all things as they are,
 As through the ether thin, that flows 'twixt star and star,
 Of substance prism-like devoid, the diamond beam
 Of Truth's white light to cleave in hues, whose garish gleam
 Obscures its vestal ray, and colours, such as mar
 The vision of the soul, even as the straightest spar
 Is by refraction warped, when mirrored in the stream.
 A moment in the flood of silver fire our souls
 Bathe and are purified of Life's abhorrent stain,
 Its pleasures without peace, its unrefining pain;
 A moment up we strive to new celestial goals:
 But soon once more the tide narcotic o'er us rolls
 And drowsing, back we sink into our dream again.

FAINT, YET PURSUING.

WEARY of strife without end for the gaining
 That which no man upon earth ever won,
 Weary of hoping, where hope there is none,
 Worn with unfruitful aspiring, abstaining,
 Jaded with travail and toil unattaining,

Fain would we turn from the task never done,
Fain would we slumber awhile in the sun,
Cease for a space from our stress and our straining.
Yet that strange somewhat in us, that immortal
Is, will not suffer us rest and be still;
Nay, in us stirring, for ever renewing,
Onward it drives us and up, at its will:
Still must we follow, at Heaven's shut portal
Beating and fluttering, faint, yet pursuing.

SOME DAY.

A TRUCE to talk! What matter how or why
The folk will lend no heed to what I say?
The world is over-loud with trade and play
To fash with what demands a seeing eye,
A feeling heart and brain. My songs and I,
We have too long gone begging by the way.
But this I know; the world will hark some day
And shout, applausive, to the hearkening sky.
Some day! But then I shall be dead and cold
And nought thereof shall know, where, buried deep,
I lie and sleep the unremembering sleep;
No sound will reach me through the unresonant mould.
But you will wish me live and warm again,
That you may plague me with your plaudits vain.

A CALL FROM THE NIGHT.

I HEARD a stray cat crying in the night,
A voice of absolute abandonment,
Appealing from a fate without relent
For help and succour to some unseen might.
I was awake, (my sleep was ever light,)

So rose and down into the garden went,
 With succour in my hand and solacement,
 But found the suppliant nowhere in my sight.
 A fool's trick, quotha? Well, no God am I,
 That knows the mysteries of Life and Death,
 That holds the secret springs, the How and Why
 Of this our motley world of mortal breath,
 In hand, that I should let a live soul cry
 Out of the dark and pass, unheeded, by.

THOUGHT AND SPEECH.

"MY long thought," saith the Sage of Khorasan,
 "Briefly I cannot tell." How often, bard,
 Despairing, must thou curse the Fates ill-starred,
 That branded thee, for birthmark, with the ban
 To be of those, Earth, Hell and Heaven who scan
 For answers to Life's riddle, — all yet marred
 By lack of speech to interpret them! So hard
 It is for man to speak to other man.
 Yet, soul, despair not! Though thou seem to fail
 Of setting forth the thought that burns in thee,
 The voices of the earth, the air, the sea,
 The winds and rains of Heaven, take up the tale;
 The tides of Time and of Eternity
 Whole make thy message for the worlds to be.

SOUL-ACHE.

LIKE an old lion, in his den
 That wearies for the sun and shine,
 The poet old alone must pine
 In this our narrow world of men.
 Not so in youth it was; for then

He still was drunken without wine:
But, now Life is on the decline,
Heavy is the heart in him; and when,
In Eld's long nights of winter weather,
His dreams the wind of memory shakes
And all the old sorrows wake together
And overstorm him like a sea,
Clamouring for condolence, ah me,
How his heart bleeds, how his soul aches!

HARVEST-TIDE.

SOUL, thou hast toiled and travailed all thy days,
East, West, South, North, hast searched for golden store,
Thought adding unto thought, lore unto lore,
Yet laidst thy gain not, as a miser lays,
To rot in dust and moulder without praise;
Nay, in the seedfields sown of thy heart's core,
It filled the furrows with glad sheaves and bore
Flowers, such as flame in Paradisal ways.
And now, thy barns brimmed up with golden grain,
The enchanted harvesting of heart and brain,
Thy gardens filled with fairy flowerage, — Death,
Nigh drawing, dooms, with his pestiferous breath,
All thou hast reared of beauty and of bloom
Die and be buried with thee in thy tomb.

LIFE'S MOTIVE FORCE.

IMAGINATION is the spirit's light:
Without it, through Life's pageant, deaf and blind,
We pass, all hearing as a babbling wind,
All seeing as a cloud-rack in the night.
Without its purging, sublimating might,

Dogs drowsing in the dark were humankind.
 It is the spur that vivifies the mind,
 That stirs the sense to dare the heavenward flight,
 The influence of the Past and the To-be,
 Moulding the Now, that makes us see and feel.
 Still in Thought's shallows and Doubt's shifting sands
 The vessel of the soul sticks fast and stands,
 Except it urged and furthered o'er Life's sea
 Be by Imagination's driving-wheel.

ENTBEHREN SOLLST DU.

"THOU shalt forswear; forswear thou shalt fore'er!"
 So knells the burden of this life of ours:
 No pause of love and peace, no lightsome hours,
 To break our toil! — Yet, why should *we* forswear,
 We, in the service of the True, the Fair,
 That still have faced the fire, the storm, the showers?
 Shall we in all that we have wrought, the flowers,
 The beauty we've begotten, have no share?
 Nay, soul, I know thee: in the appointed way
 Still wilt thou plod, whatever longings rend
 Thy core and lure thy feet to turn away
 From the rough ruts into the meads of May:
 Whatever angels from Love's heavens descend
 To tempt, thou wilt forswear unto the end.

CONSISTENCY.

FACTS pass, but Truth abideth. Thus 'tis said
 That of man's body every single grain
 In every seven years' space is born again:
 Ten times, to wit, in our life's span we shed
 Our mortal slough and raised are from the dead.

And with the body needs must change the brain;
Nor can thought constant to one creed remain,
Being but a function of the changing head.
Thus, changing with the changing body, we,
— Like shipfolk sailing an ensorceled sea,
Whose compass varies with the varying poles,
— New faiths adopt, beliefs, opinions, goals:
And why, a show of vain consistency
To keep, should we be false to our own souls?

THE LODESTAR.

THE sea surges up to the sun;
The day struggles up to the light;
Till the sun swallowed up is in night
And the day with the darkness is done.
Day, darkness, sun, shadow, all run,
One after another, in flight;
Pain follows on peace, wrong on right:
And what in the issue is won?
This won is (though sole by the strife
The Gods are the gainers, not Man,
That still, from the din and the dark,
As ever, since Being began,
Hope soars for a guide to the bark;
And Hope is the lodestar of Life.

SEA AND SHORE.

AS seamen, tossed on some tempestuous main,
When the shrill wind scourges the weltering wave
And all the fiends of flood and fury rave
Through the tense ropes, in clamorous refrain,
Long for the land and cease of toil and pain,

Yet, travail ended, weary of the grave
 Dull landsman's life ere long become and crave
 The adventure of the deep to dare again,
 So, tempest-cradled soul, thou yearnst for rest,
 Yet, satiated soon with peace and calm,
 Longest to launch upon the sea of strife
 Once more, to ride the raging billows' crest
 And hear the wild loud-warring winds of Life
 Howl in thine ears their hoarse cyclonic psalm.

THE MOON'S SECRET.

WHAT ails thee, moon, disconsolate thus to go
 About the pathless places of the sky,
 Wandering at large? What (wondered oft have I)
 Enforceth thee in Heaven's high portico
 Thy silver shrine funereal to and fro
 To urge, as 'twere a catafalque, piled high
 With pomp commemorative? How and why,
 Long have I pondered it; but now I know.
 I know; for, in the visions of the night,
 It hath to me discovered been that dead
 And buried deep is God this many a year:
 The stars the shining tears are that He shed,
 In dying, hath, and in the heavenly height,
 The moon's His mute, resplendent sepulchre.

DRUNK OR SOBER.

DRUNKENNESS, (old Hafiz 'twas that said,)
 Drunkenness is better than dead dryness.
 In this world of rottenness and wryness,
 Where the Gods among the folk might tread

And be no more noted for their nighness,
In this day, when lowness scoffs at highness,
Better drunk than sober go to bed.
Either aching heart or aching head;
Make thy choice, o servant of the highest;
Sick at heart and sober, with the Real,
All thy life to languish, or, instead,
Day and night to be, until thou diest,
Drunken with the wine of the Ideal.

NATURE ON THE WATCH.

THE stir of the seeds in the earth, the voice of the
wind in the tree,
The whisper of the boughs in the breeze, the rustle of the
rain on the ground,
The silence that waits on our noise, that, wave-like, encir-
cles our sound,
The darkness that shadows our light and swallows it up,
like a sea,
If only, for this cause or that, it cease for a second to be,
The stillness that follows our strife, that doggeth our din,
like a hound,
These phases of Nature, our days and our dealings that
compass around,
What meaning, bethink you, therein abideth for you and
for me?
This meaning; that Nature awatch with her pitiless patience
is still,
Her patience, whereto as an hour are thousands and thou-
sands of years,
The time when Man's hands and his feet from working and
faring shall cease
Awaiting, to blot from Earth's face the trace of his good
and his ill,

To cover with sandheaps and grass the graves of his hopes
 and his fears
 And mantle the world-all once more in cerecloths of pas-
 sionless peace.

PRIESTHOOD.

THE world, with waxing wisdom, puts away
 Its foredawn fancies, as the morning clears;
 The giant phantoms of its doubts and fears,
 That it for Gods against the twilight grey
 Painted, fade out before the growing day:
 The Christs, whose altars with its burning tears
 It watered hath these many weary years,
 From their void temples vanished are for aye.
 Poet, the priests, too, with their Gods, are dead:
 Thine is to-day their office, only thine,
 That, with the travail of thy thorn-crowned head
 And with the holy blood thy heart in pine
 Outpours, dispensest sole to-day the bread
 Of blessing and the sacramental wine.

SUMMER SOLACE.

THE time of Summer and soft airs
 Is come, the fair fulfilment-time
 Of the sweet promise of the Prime,
 When all the world casts off its cares
 And Heaven, on mother-fashion, bares
 Its bosom blue, so all may climb,
 On the glad wings of love and rhyme,
 And gather at the gate of prayers.
 Up, o my soul! Aspire with them;
 Put on a shining summer-face!

Like them, take hold upon the hem
Of Summer's skirts! Why cower on earth,
Still hugging in a strait embrace
The memory of thy Winter's dearth?

HORSES OF THE SUN.

SET not the horses of the sun at the tillage to toil!
Moulded of ether and fire
Are they, the lilt of the lyre
Yet in their ears, in their nostrils the Oracles' oil.
Linked to the labour uncouth and the feet-clogging soil,
Soon of the task will they tire;
Ay, and the Bow-bearer's ire
Will ye incur and be given to the God for a spoil.
Cattle and to spare of the kind
Are to the travail of the farm and the field that are born,
Women and men who as carthorse and ox are and cow.
Be, then, by these the yoke worn.
'Ware lest the dreamer, the bard, to Earth's drudgeries ye bind:
Set not the foals of the sun in the furrow to plough.

THE ANGEL OF THE DAWN.

THE angel of the dawn is here;
I note his pinions on the breeze,
That fluttereth the awakening trees.
The birds their scranne pipes uprear
And drowsing, hail his drawing near.
Gifts unto all he brings, to these
Comfort and hope and joy and ease
And grief to those and doubt and fear.
For otherwhat to him / I look,
Who over-often through the dark

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.

The watch of wakefulness must keep,
 Whose nightingale was still the lark.
 O angel of Day's opening book,
 I sue to thee for only sleep.

LIMED WINGS.

DREAM at thy list, if thou to dreams be fain;
 But 'ware the waking, when the dream is done:
 Since from dream ended unto dream begun
 A parlous passage 'tis and full of pain;
 And if thou canst not quickly dream again,
 No eagle being, thou mayst fare as one,
 Who, having looked o'erlong upon the sun,
 Must many a day with dazzled eyes remain.
 Not enough simple are we in our time
 To dream as do the kine: neither of the earth
 Nor of the heavens wholly is our birth:
 Being one part divine to three parts man,
 We are as larks, whose wings are lamed with lime:
 Nor dream nor live with a whole heart we can.

THE SOWER.

DEATH scarce can be an evil; else 'twere not
 Common to all that breathe beneath the sun:
 Man, bird, beast, fish, tree, blossom, all as one
 Must, when the tide of Life no longer hot
 Flows in their veins and arteries, die and rot;
 And (Man alone excepted) there is none
 But, when the foreappointed course is run,
 Yields, unrepineful, to the common lot.
 All things created (save Man only) know
 The secret of the world; they understand

How Death the Sower is and in his hand
The seeds of future Being hath; and so
They look on him as friend and not as foe,
See in him the beginning, not the end.

DEATH AND BIRTH.

DEATH is the sole alternative of Birth,
The counterpoise, that holds Life's balance true.
Did not Death's sickle still, in season due,
Birth's boundless harvests reap, the wide world's girth
Might not suffice unto the unbridled stirth
Of gendrance; outblotted were Heaven's blue
By stars and for renascence ever-new,
No room to breathe were on the burdened earth.
Youth, but for Death, were not, but only age:
The world were full of fierce decrepitudes,
That each with each, like tigers in the woods,
For mere existence merciless war would wage,
The o'ercrowded earth too weak to flower, to fruit,
And Life hypertrophied rotten at the root.

THE WINE OF CIRCE.

OUR modern folk have drunken of Circe's wine
And yielding up their reason to the spell,
Think but to eat and drink and buy and sell,
Flouting to scorn all thought of things divine;
Yet, for they fare on their hind-feet, opine
Still to be men: but, wallowing in the hell
That they hold Heaven, they mostly, truth to tell,
Are no more human than a herd of swine.
Yet some there be who shun the inglorious guild
And in the purer places of the earth,

On the bright memories of their island-birth
 Founding, a new and nobler England build,
 That shall relume the glories of the old,
 When the hogs dead are on their heaps of gold.

ETIAMSI OMNES, EGO NON.

Juletta. Why, knaves, 'tis in our power to hang ye!
 Master. Very likely:
 'Tis in our power, then, to be hanged and scorn ye.
 The Sea-Voyage.

1. JOB of his grim God, "Though He slay me," says,
 "Yet will I trust in Him." — Nor ant in sand
 Nor wolf in wood but would at least make stand
 'Gainst the fell force that crushed his careful days
 And but by death and doom itself displays.
 Men only, by Faith's opiate fumes unmanned,
 Thus bow the knee to kiss the blind brute hand
 Of deaf Omnipotence, that begets and slays.
 None such am I: love neither dread nor trust
 I feel for that vast Fear that hides Heaven's light
 From us, that grinds our lives into the dust
 And but by scaith and slaughter shows His might:
 Still, though He slay me, at my slayer grim
 I'll scoff and perish proudly, scorning Him.

2. God of the groundling and the good-for-nought,
 Unhearkening ears and eyes devoid of gaze,
 Portentous phantom, through Faith's hallowing haze
 Dim-looming, deaf to reason and to thought,
 That ne'er the true man succouredst in aught,
 Thy favours for the flatterer kept, who sways
 Thy sense obscure with incense and with praise,
 My service never to Thy shrine was brought.
 I know (who better?) Thine omnipotence:
 Still hast Thou stood between me and the sun

And with a single breath canst send me hence
Into the darkness and the unknown sea;
Yet canst no more than slay me, when all's done;
And Life's not worth the cringing for to Thee.

QUIS CONSOLABIT?

THE world's wounds, poet, hast thou staunched with song
And for fresh blood, in each exhausted vein
Poured the pure tide of thy prophetic pain.
But who shall staunch *thy* wounds? What God were strong
Enough to stay the ichorous floods that throng
From thy Time-tortured heart and world-worn brain?
Alcides-like, to Gods and men in vain
For help the righter looks of the world's wrong.
As 'midst the eternal snows the eternal fire,
So, phosphorescent 'gainst the bloody mire
Of this our inextinguishable Hell,
Each on his several cross of stone or tree,
The singer and the saviour still we see
And the consoler inconsolable.

NUMINIS UMBRA.

WHEN Buddha, he who came the world to save
From loveless life and teach it how to die,
Gave up the ghost and bade the sun good-bye,
They say, his mighty shadow in the cave
Lingered, where he had dwelt, nor to the grave
Followed his mortal part, until well nigh
A twelvemonth's space the sun the Eastern sky
Had climbed and fallen beneath the Western wave.
Unlike the mild sage of the Indian woods,
The cruel God of cynic Israel,

Though dead and buried these five hundred years,¹
 Still o'er the world with baleful shadow broods,
 Blighting Life's harvests with the smoke of Hell
 And the grey ghosts of half-forgotten fears.

MIDAS AND SILENUS.

1. SILENUS, — wandering with the Maenad train,
 To cheat his sadness inconsolable,
 The sadness of a God, that Heaven and Hell
 Knew and the sources of the Eternal Pain,
 Wherewith Creation languishes, yet fain
 Must hide the lore at heart, as pearl in shell,
 Since none would apprehend it, did he tell,
 And men would mock him with a dull disdain,
 — Drunken with the vinejuice, slept and sleeping so,
 Of Midas overfall'n, awoke and found
 Himself both hand and foot with flowerbands bound
 And of the curious king was then and there
 Adjured what best for man is to declare,
 An he would free with Bacchus be to go.

2. The unwilling sage in sullen silence lay
 Awhile; then, seeing it availed him not
 To strain against the inevitable lot,
 Said, "Miserable creature of a day,
 Child of mischance and dolour and dismay,
 Wherefore constrain'st thou me to tell thee what,
 When thou hast heard it, will to thee no jot
 Of joyance bring nor vantage any way?
 Know that the Best thou nowise mayst attain,

¹ The revival of Greek and Latin letters, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, may be said to have dealt the death-blow to what Merimée calls "the imposture of the Nazarene."

That best of all, to have been never born,
Not to be, nought to be, nor Night nor Morn
To have known nor suffered pleasance neither pain:
But this at least, this Second Best, for thee
Is possible, — to die, and speedily." ¹

RETURNING AND REST.

HOW long, o my soul, wilt thou follow the fire
Of the lusts of the flesh, o'er Life's quagmire afit,
Fatal Will-o' the-Wisp, at Hell's furnaces lit,
That lureth thee still through the mist and the mire?
Go, travel the swamps of the sense till thou tire;
Thou wilt ne'er find contentment. Heart's easance, as it
From of old in the books of the Orient is writ,
But one thing can bring thee, surrender of desire.
Since all thou pursuest unprized is, once won,
And nothing contentful is under the sun,
Resign thee to cease from the life-quelling quest.
To Nature all-healing betake thee for balm,
Content her sereneness to share and her calm;
And saved shalt thou be in returning and rest. ²

A FLY ON THE PANE.

LIFE is as a fly on the pane.
Pursuing the things that it sees
Athwart the transparence, tow'rd these
It striveth with might and with main,
Nor ever will taugt be by pain
False hopes to forgo and unease,

¹ v. Ælian's *Varia Historia*.

² *Isaiah*, XXX, 15.

But still 'gainst the glass head, wings, knees,
 It batters and bruises in vain.
 Nor yet, till old age comes and clears
 The eyes of the soul, though the eyes
 Of the body wax dim with the years,
 It is that, grown sadlier wise,
 How feeble its wings are, alas!
 It feels and how hard is the glass.

THE OLYMPIANS.

1. ALAS, for heedless, hapless humankind!
 When shall we learn from linnet and from wren
 And cease to aspire to spheres beyond our ken?
 When apprehend how vain it is the blind
 Deaf Gods, for whom our crying is as wind,
 To take to task for what they do with men?
 In their allseeing sight Now is as Then:
 Tools of the Fate that towers their thrones behind,
 They make no reckoning of How or Why
 And know no difference between Death and Birth,
 Rejoice not over this with mindless mirth
 Nor mourn for that, accounting both unworth
 Their heed who sojourn in the halls on high
 Nor know what is it to be born or die.

2. These, in their realms beyond the scope of Chance,
 Beyond the attainment of Time's all-mastering maw,
 Where no nights darken and no mornings daw,
 Sit, rein in hand, and with the years' advance,
 Relentless, in the ruts of circumstance, —
 Following the rigid rule of loveless Law,
 That hath no purging-place for fault or flaw,
 Their eyes fast fixed in their eternal trance, —

Drive the dull earth upon its restless round
Of joys and griefs, until the stern hour sound,
When the spent atoms, that compose a world,
Each from the other loosed, abroad are hurled
Into the abysses of Space, new-shaped to be
In the far fallows of Eternity.

3. But thou, the fiercest seeming foe by far
Of humankind, — Love, — cruellest of all
The viewless might, to whom we men are thrall,
No God 'midst Gods art thou, 'midst stars no star,
But the first force whereby all others are.
Thou 'twas that Life createdst: at thy call
'Tis that the tides of Being rise and fall,
Following the course of thy foreordering car.
At thy command it was that Life to light
First came: thy high behest it was gave birth
To sun and moon and bade the day and night
Alternate stir and soothe the labouring earth.
Thy real name is Nature, Final Cause,
Prime of the Prime and Law above all laws.

4. The world thou ledest through the lapsing year,
Now quickening it with green and grain, with rose
And lys, and now beneath the shrouding snows
Lulling it, tired, to slumber without fear
And gather, 'gainst the awakening, strength and cheer.
Yet, so the thrills of Birth upon Death's throes
Follow and in all, howe'er it ebbs and flows,
The tide of Being still run high and clear,
So but Life's process underneath the sun
Unchecked abide, with that which to the one
May hap, o Love, thou hast no whit to mell
Nor for the individual car'st. If well
All with the race go and the general Whole,
Thou reckest nought of this or the other soul.

THE SIREN.

A WEIRD voice wakes me in the dawning grey,
The sound that borne is on the sighing breeze
Of sirens from the far-off factories.
Into my garden-close it makes its way,
Insistent on the dim returning Day,
Its call to toil recurrent and unease
Of labour shrilling through the shivering trees,
Ere the first crest have caught the first sun-ray.
Toneless, expressionless, indifferent voice,
All to the Primal Curse to bend the knee
It calls, the curse Heaven-branded, without choice,
On each man's forehead in the far Hath-been,
Voice of inexorable Necessity,
Borrowing for breath the mouth of a machine.

THE UNDYING WORM.

HAD I my life to live again,
I should but do as I have done;
The self-same course I should o'errun
Of scanty cheer and plenteous pain;
Since at my birth the Fates were fain
For me (as else for every one
That born is underneath the sun)
My line of life to foreordain.
So little matter of regret
For me it is that life anew
I have no power to live; and yet
The thought still frets me, that I might,
The occasion given, mayhap undo
Some things misdome, some wrongs set right.

LOVE AND LOVE.

WE were lovers, indeed, in our day; we loved because
we must,
Because of the heat in our hearts, that soared to the skies
like a spire
And lifted our lives from the swamp, our souls from the
mist and the mire.
For Love and the world well lost we lived. You may style
it lust;
But the lusts of the soul and the sense combine in a birth
august,
To gender a joy divine, a flame like a flower of fire,
That dries up the dross of the flesh with the blaze of its
bright desire.
But you, like the swine in the slough you love, like the
dogs in the dust.
You, what can you do for Love, who know not what 'tis
to give,
Who know not what 'tis to die, who know not what 'tis
to live?
Whilst youth in our hearts was hot, we poured out our
lives like wine
At the altars of Love and Spring; and now that the fiery
flood
No longer beats in our brain, no longer boils in our blood,
The love, that we lit with sense, burns bright at the spirit's
shrine.

THE MIGHT-HAVE-BEEN.

THAT which is done is done; no more to say or do
There is. Who can recall the course of Night and Day?
That which is past is past and buried in the clay,

Beneath its wreaths it rests of rosemary or rue:
 But that which might have been, it still to me doth sue
 For its accomplishment and will not go its way.
 From the dark graves of Night and in the dawning grey,
 Up rising like a ghost, it duns me for its due.
 That which whilere I thought to do and did it not
 Will not abide content to wait a second birth.
 I deemed it dead, alack! and coffined and forgot;
 But, starting up, it bursts its cerements of earth
 And threatens to demand of me its soul unborn
 Upon the Reckoning Day, the Resurrection Morn.

ROTTEN IN THE BUD.

UPON the youth of this our day, despairing,
 I look, to think that, in the turbid flood,
 Which, drowsing in their veins, must pass for blood,
 The seed-corn germs, which, come to harvest-bearing,
 The future of our race, with Time's preparing,
 Must furnish forth. For rotten in the bud
 Meseems they are and in our modern mud
 Wallow, still rottener waxing and uncaring.
 The gaming-house for them the glories vernal,
 Their foolish feasts the summer sweets outvie,
 And they in utter Hades hold we dwell
 Who scorn their joys: but, which of us, who sigh
 In what their frenzy deems the shades infernal,
 Would for their Heaven consent to exchange his Hell?

QUOD DOCET EXPERIENTIA.

NOTHING of other worlds than this we know,
 Wherein we live, nor others, dark or bright,
 Than this our workday world of Day and Night,
 Can we conceive. Nay, when about we go

A Heaven above to frame, a place aglow
With earthly gems and gauds, for our delight,
We picture, and no less, for our affright,
Lurid with earthly fires, a Hell below.
Nay, why not, by the experience of the Past
Example taking, from our thought the vain
Chimeric dream of other worlds out cast
And to the purging of *this* life of pain
And strife devote the toil we waste and care
In the vain quest of worlds that never were?

THE BEGINNING OF KNOWLEDGE.

ONE "The beginning of all knowledge" said
"Confession is of ignorance." As a wraith
The saying comes to us from times of faith
And he who spoke it, in an age long sped,
Holden of our modern ignorance dark and dead,
A nameless sage of Northern Afric, (saith
Old Ibn Khaldoun), with all his gear and graith,
Long in the grave is mouldered, heart and head.
But little welcome were thy saw to day,
Old Arab of seven hundred years ago,
When ignorance flouts knowledge and the dunce
Joys in his dullness, when what wisdom once
Was is held folly, when men toil at play
And nobler 'tis accounted not to know.

MODERN ATHENIANS.

TO see and to hear some new thing
Is all that folk seek nowadays.
The things that of price are and praise,
That heired we from sage have and king,

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.

Away from them, heedless, they fling:
 Their gear by the glitter and glaze
 They judge nor how light the coin weighs
 Remark nor how false it may ring.
 The lore, that past ages were fain
 To garner for us, they disdain;
 Old corn they reject for new chaff.
 If Gods in Olympus yet be,
 How loud at our follies, ah me!
 The Gods in Olympus must laugh!

THE UNKNOWN GOD.

ALL men build altars to the Gods unknown;
 Some to their loves and to their hatreds some,
 Some to the incarnate hope, in days to come,
 Of harvests springing from the seeds they've sown:
 But most their passions and their lusts enthrone
 In the high courts where worldly din should dumb
 Be; and but those, whose senses dull and numb
 Are as their Gods, their idols hew in stone.
 Some few to the aspirings of their souls
 Make censers of their thought, wherefrom the flame
 Of the heart's ardour ever heavenward rolls:
 But, be the altar heart or stone or sod,
 That which he worships none aright may name;
 Each rears his altar to an unknown God.

VANITY OF VANITIES.

IF all beneath the sun be vanity,
 The vainest, sure, of all's the thirst for fame,
 That which makes men the winsome worldly game
 Forswear and live aloof, content, like thee,

Poet, divorced from all delight to be,
So but they may to this their only aim
Their lives devote, to leave a lasting name
And pass with praise to far posterity.
A fool's quest, certes! Since this earth, we know,
Ere long, for lack of water must and air
Die and in space, like yonder moon up there,
A frozen sepulchre, still wandering go,
Why sell what Life may deign of lovesome days
For a poor age or two of posthumous praise?

NEW LAMPS FOR OLD.

1. THE lamp, that Christ two thousand years ago
Kindled with borrowed oil from many a source,
Long since expended hath its last of force:
The vase is void; the oil hath ceased to flow.
Whatever faiths for man the Future show,
— For man, who hath not, like the ox and horse,
Instinct for lamp to light him in Life's course,
— The lamp of Christ will nevermore reglow.
The world await is for the Gods unknown.
Jehovah, Allah, Brahma, Zeus, are dead,
To live no more. Have men belike outgrown
The need of Gods? It might as well be said
That the draught-ox no more in need of goad
Standeth to enforce him labour at the load.

2. Some kind of faith is needful for the herd,
For those who cannot breathe the Alpine air
Of thought austere, to whom the precept bare
Of Truth and Righteousness is but a word,
Whereto obedience need not be deferred,
Except enforced it be with promise fair
Of duty done rewarded and with scare

Of punishment condign for duty slurred.
 But it a faith must be without a priest,
 Pure of that poisonous parasite, which feeds
 And fattens on men's spiritual needs,
 Which every creed corrupted, West as East,
 Hath with its huckstering greed, since Time began,
 And from a blessing made a curse for man.

TRUNKENHEIT OHNE WEIN.

YOUTH (so the sage of Weimar said
 And spoke of what he knew in this)
 As drunkenness without wine is;
 But not, alack! when youth is fled,
 Without the morrow's aching head.
 Who hath not heard Hate's serpents hiss
 Beneath the roses of Love's kiss?
 Whose heart hath for their bite not bled?
 Alas, the morrows of man's life!
 They will not suffer us to taste
 The unmingled sweetness of to-day,
 But still, foreboding, brooding, waste
 Our brightest, sunniest Presents lay
 With shadows of impending strife.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

"THE kingdom of Heaven is within you," quoth Jesus
 of old.
 But are there two kingdoms of Heaven? Another than this
 He promised his faithful, a pleasaunce of palpable bliss,
 Where they upon thrones should be seated of crystal and
 gold.
 Was ever an adept more apt at hot blowing and cold?

A sophist, that fast and loose playing still went, hit or miss,
With all that the old world held sacred, Olympus to Dis,
He might have a demagogue been of the modernest mould.
Well, all but forgot is his doctrine, as shifting as sand,
Though long will it be ere Life's fabric whole made be
 and sound
Of the ruin he wrought for the world-all, the sorrow and
 scaith.
Yet one pearl of lore from his dust-heap is left us in hand, —
"The kingdom of Heaven is within you;" — whereon we
 may found
The faith of the Future, the lasting, the life-giving faith.

SLY NATURE.

THE whispering voices of the rain
Set all the weary world astir
With dreams of April drawing near
And brim the general heart and brain
With hopes of Winter on the wane
And visions of the vernal year.
The end of February's here
And March is at the gate again.
Ah, Nature, arch deceiver thou!
But for thy blandishments, of strife
And sufferance and sorrowing
We long were quit; but thou com'st now
And with thy soft seductive Spring,
Cajolest us again to Life.

EBBTIDE.

IN our hot youth, we count the common earth
Too mean a carpet for our fervid feet
And on the tide upborne of generous heat,
The spheres beyond the bounds of Death and Birth,

Beyond the assay of mortal dole and mirth,
 Ransack for manna otherworldly sweet,
 Accounting nought, that Life of fair and feat
 For our approof can proffer, questing-worth.
 But, as, with eld, the fire of youth fades out,
 The aspiring thought stoops to the senses' lure
 And in the darkling marish falls of doubt,
 And the tired body bids the brain forspent
 The quest adventurous leave and rest content
 With the bread given and the water sure.

THE SOUL'S SEASONS.

HELPLESS, Life lies in the hand of the rigorous rime;
 Not a leaf stirs, not a bird is that calls to his mate;
 Music and motion and bloom, as by lead-footed Fate,
 Blotted and blurred from the face of the cowering clime;
 Not a sign seen is or heard of the forthcoming Prime.
 Yet well we know, from of old, that the season await,
 Far, afar, ready to enter with March in the gate,
 Stands of the singing of birds and the blossoming-time.
 Poet, despair not. Though all dark and cold be about thee,
 Though for Death's end to Life's Yule it may be thou
 must wait,
 Though for the nonce it be Winter within and without thee,
 Spring shall yet stir in thy soul, from its treasuries bringing
 Yet to thy sorrowing sense, be it soon, be it late,
 Back the sweet season of burgeon and bloom and bird-
 singing.

COELUM NON ANIMUM.

"COELUM, non animum mutant," — "one sky they for
 other exchange,"
 Quoth Horace of old of his fellows, the wander-the-worlds
 of his kind.

“Who run overseas without ceasing, they change only
Heaven, not mind.”
What would the old bard of our hustlers have said, of our
roamers who range,
Unresting, o'er land and o'er ocean, in quest of the new
and the strange?
Head empty and heart, hither, thither, they stray, like the
purposeless wind,
Themselves to escape their endeavour, leave care and
thought-taking behind,
At heart though they know all in vain is; sky only, not
soul, can they change.
Nay, take but a thought, foolish mortals! What is it ye
find overseas,
At home that the constant of spirit possess not, with peace
and heart's ease?
To stifle your heart's protestations, the cry of your con-
science, you crave:
Black care at Man's heels, quoth the Roman, still follows,
wherever he flees.
Your souls with such riot and clamour of Will, as of wind
and of wave,
Are shaken, Death surely will find you too restless to sleep
in the grave.

MONKEYS BY THE SEA.

IN this our day of dull pretence, the vain
Fool folk, who prate of lore, whereof no word
They understand, meseems, are as a herd
Of monkeys playing by some plashing main,
Who, for mere stringence of the sense, are fain,
And idiot craving to be seen and heard,
First some, then all, to emulation stirred,
With stones to pelt the smooth unstable plain.

Each striving for the loudest splash, West, East,
 South, North, they cast; and of the idle play,
 When, weary, to some other form away
 Of vain activity they turn, no least
 Light wrinkle on the vast majestic tide,
 Memorial of their trifling, doth abide.

THE ETERNAL ROUND.

AS the rain on the roofs and the storm in the skies,
 When the winter's a-wane and the fields are in flood,
 Wash the face of the world fair of mist and of mud,
 For the white feet of Spring, as she hitherward hies,
 So the sighs of the soul and the tears of the eyes
 Clear the bosom oppressed of the care-clotted blood
 And make room for the flowers of forgetting to bud
 And the harvest of hope in the heart to arise.
 Frost, Winter and snowtime, then tempest and rain,
 Then Springtime, buds blowing and grass growing green;
 Heart's grief, blood-devouring, and trouble and teen,
 Then tears and sad solace and peace after pain.
 But Winter and sorrow yet come will again
 And Spring be and joy as they never had been.

THE BURIED PAST.

WHO to-day recketh aught of yesterday?
 Who is there thought to all the treasure vast
 Of lore and lesson taketh, first and last
 Stored by a thousand ages grave and gay,
 To serve the fledgling Future? Wellaway!
 By the proud Present's rubbish-heaps o'er cast,
 Deep-buried lies the pale forgotten Past
 And on its grave there's none a wreath to lay.

Yet in the sepulchre it doth but sleep
And turning now and then from side to side,
Shakes the world, earthquake-like; nay, when the days
Are ripe, its head, volcano-wise, 'twill raise
And thrusting through the Present, will upheap
Its flimsy bulth in ruin far and wide.

PROCUL ESTE . . . !

"FAR from the temple begone, ye profane ones!"
Thus, of the hero, the offspring of Venus,
Visited, clamoured the priest of Misenus.¹
"Far from the groves of the goddess, immane ones,
Lest for her lightnings ye be of the slain ones!
Here let no satyr intrude nor Silenus,
None of the shag-coated, hoof-footed genus!
None she admits to her courts but germane ones."
So from the courts of Apollo a bawling
Warns off the unelect rabble. Let none
Come to the altars of Art without calling,
None press, unbid, to the shrines of the Sun,
Lest, of His arrows attainted, he sicken
And be with madness mortiferous stricken.

QUID NOVI FERT AFRICA?

"WHAT is't of new that Afric brings?"
Folk wont to ask in Rome of old.
And now that Rome is dead and cold
This many an age, the saw still clings.
The land of crocodiles and kings,
Of apes and ivory and gold,
Is yet, 'spite twenty centuries told,

¹ v. Virg. *Æn.*, VI, 258.

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS.

The region of strange happenings.
 Still for things new and strange look we
 To Egypt, Barbary, Tripoli,
 Nor know what wonders are at work
 Within its vast unfathomed gloom,
 The only region of Earth's room,
 Where mystery still and wonder lurk.

A POISONOUS HERITAGE.

THE minds of those who dwell in this our day
 With the heaped heritage of many an age
 Are, with the fear, the grief, the impotent rage,
 Poisoned of pain bygone and past affray;
 And in their hearts the horror and dismay
 Of many a bloodstained grim historic page.
 When false Gods revelled on the worldly stage,
 Too deep are graven for Time to wash away.
 So intimate the impress, so sore the strain
 Of the remembrance of ancestral woe
 Is on each fibre of the heart and brain,
 That the whole force and fabric of their will
 Is weakened grown and they no longer know
 Wholly to love the Good or hate the Ill.

TENTS OF A NIGHT.

FAIR is the first and dawning of the day
 And fair the evening, when the day is done;
 Lovesome Life ended is as Life begun,
 Its golden hours no goodlier than its grey;
 Lovely and reverend August is as May:
 Winter and Spring and Age and Youth are one,
 Even as the rising and the setting sun;
 Grave things their glory have no less than gay.

Ah, poor Humanity! Why not content
Resign thyself to be with what in hand
Thou hast, the Evening as the Morning Land,
Since all things earthly are but as a tent,
Wherein to lodge Life's night in, and begone
Forever must thou with the break of dawn?

LAMBS OF GOD.

'MIDST the lewd crowd, the lusts of their own soul
That follow, flouting all that from the mire
Calls them of their insatiate desire,
Whiles some we see who seek another goal.
Simple of wit, but pure of heart and whole,
Unscathed, as innocents on coals of fire
That tread, the world, unknowing hate or ire,
They walk and to its sorrows pay no toll.
Through the lewd marsh of modern life they fare,
With skirts unsoiled, by some mysterious grace;
O'er all the bogs of ill they pass dryshod,
Unconscious of corruption in the air.
The thinker smiles to see their shining trace
And sighs, "Heaven guard the silly lambs of God!"

THE HARPIES.

MOST great ideas to-day by the profane
Are parodied, by those who cannot think
A thought to its conclusion, link by link,
Successive, forging cogitation's chain,
Yet claim to judge the highest, parrot-fain
Being from the tides of talk, that on Life's brink
Still, at the senses' bidding, rise and sink,
The names of things to catch, husks without grain.

Thus armed, they claim the mysteries for their prey
 And with their lewd attouchments, harpy-wise,
 The Spirit's sanctities so sore beray
 That they disvalued in the people's eyes
 Become and long must in oblivion's sea
 Steep, ere they purged of the infection be.

THE SALT OF LIFE.

"A FOOL according to his folly spare
 To answer," quoth the sage. Now, when the chaff
 Would fain for corn be measured and the half-
 Of-wit usurp the professorial chair,
 How should the wise man breathe the envenomed air
 And live, except, for cordial, deep he quaff
 Of undespiteful humour and fools laugh
 To scorn who would the sacred fillet wear?
 He who can laugh at grim ungracious Fate
 And bandy jests with Fortune, though her knife
 Stick in his heart, unto the lure of hate
 Insensible is; for laughter lightens strife
 And none who humour hath disconsolate
 Need bide, since humour is the salt of Life.

BODILESS SOULS.

WHEN the soul quit is of the body worn
 And the spent house, wherein so long it dwelt,
 Wherein it joyed and sorrowed, thought and felt,
 Wherein to Life, Love, Weal and Woe 'twas born,
 Is laid to rot in darkness, like the corn,
 And wait, like it, till the new spells be spelt
 And the new lots of Life and Death be dealt,
 For the new harvest's Resurrection-Morn,

Sure, for the safe, snug dwelling left behind
It pines, the fair, familiar hostelry
Of flesh. Methinks I hear them in the wind,
The disembodied souls, o'er land and sea
That stray, disconsolate, and wailing, sue
In some warm body to be born anew.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

THE turn of the tide hath begun:
Far out from the bottomless deep,
Their crests flashing white on the steep,
The waters climb up to the sun.
Still, frisking, ten thousand as one,
Each other they follow, like sheep,
And laugh in the light, as they heap
Themselves on the shore overrun.
Yet, casting abroad for a sign,
The weatherwise look, doubting-eyed:
Is't only the life-giving tide
Or is it the Deluge Divine,
The flood of the fury of God,
Death-dealing that comes at His nod?

THE RESTLESS DEAD.

THE air about me, where my life is led,
Here in these brumous steppes of stone and brick,
Heavy with mournful memories and thick
Is with the windy presence of the dead.
The ways nocturnal feet of shadow tread,
A million-fold more numerous than the quick,
And echoes of extinguished voices prick
The silence in the darkness overhead.

What is it stirs you in your senseless sleep,
 Sad souls, Life's hollowness who've proved and won
 The right to rest eternal, that ye strive
 For vain remembrance from Death's shadow-deep,
 Where peace perpetual is, and with the live
 Their puppet-world dispute of moon and sun?

THE TIDE OF TEARS.

THE tale of all the tears, that have been shed,
 Since this strange weed, Humanity, first rife
 Became, the tide that turns the mills of Life,
 Which, by joy only driven, would grind no bread,
 Mounts ever round us, from eyes live and dead
 Flowing, a sea of sorrow and of strife,
 Sorrow receptive, feminine, as wife
 To husband, that to gladness is wed.
 Still in our ears its waters' murmurous noise
 A ground-bass drones, responsive to our thought,
 Foreboding accent adding to our fears.
 To its dull dominance our hopes and joys
 Yield and all healthier impulse sinks to nought,
 Lost in the Life-encompassing tide of tears.

THE LAST STRENGTH.

WHOSO, in this our Sabbat of the sense,
 The Spirit serves, meseems, is as a king,
 'Gainst whom his subjects, unremembering
 Their oaths of fealty and obedience,
 Revolted, drive him forth from fence to fence,
 Till but one strength is left him, which no thing
 That they can do will force to parleying,
 The city of his throne and residence.

So with the servant of the Spirit: still,
From all Life's strongholds, sympathy, hope, cheer,
Love, friendship, comfort, by the usurping Will
Driven, he hath yet one fortress fast and whole,
Wherein entrenched he dwells 'gainst doubt and fear,
The inexpugnable City of the Soul.

EVIL COMMUNICATIONS.

MENANDER warns us 'gainst communications
Evil, as certain to corrupt good manners:
Behoveth shun, beneath whatever banners
They march, the lewdly-minded of all stations,
Berlin Jews, Eastern Christians, Slavs or Asians,
Gamblers in stocks, rich I. D. B.'s, pork-canners,
Theosophists, cheap sorcerers, crystal-scanners;
The saw holds good not only of men, but nations.
How much of ill from Celt, Jew, Slav and Yankee
Hath England learned, — how to play hanky-panky
With every principle of truth and duty
And all to sacrifice, faith, honour, beauty,
All (as Kheyyàm would say) Heaven's milk and honey,
Upon the altars of their idol, Money!

BURIED CITIES.

THE ruthless sun of Scythia rises, sets
On miles of sandheaps, ranged on either hand,
A stately city once, — Old Samarcand.
Now, with its towers, its domes, its minarets,
Bazaars and gardens, tangled in the nets
Of Time, it drowns in the desert land,
Under the cerecloths of the strangling sand,
What while the world its very name forgets.



So is it with the City of thy Thought,
 That thou to might and majesty hast wrought
 With pillared verse and pinnacles of rhyme,
 Through many an abstinent day and night austere,
 Yet soon will blotted be and buried sheer
 Under the drifting, shifting sands of Time.

SOLITUDINEM FACIUNT.

“THEY make a solitude and style it peace,”
 The old Roman said of those of his own day.
 The saw of this our world, that’s growing grey
 For sheer decadence, worse than Rome or Greece,
 Might spoken be, where ever on the increase
 The brute ventripotent is, the beast of prey,
 That waxeth still in numbers and in sway
 And mouldeth all unto his lewd caprice.
 The solitude he makes is of the soul;
 All underborne that with the things to do
 Hath of the Spirit, all that’s good and true
 Driven into exile, all that’s fair and whole,
 The conduct of the State, the general life,
 Given to brute greed and base and sensual strife.

THE LONELY HARVESTER.

THROUGH evil and good report I’ve foughten;
 The Present never might blur for me
 The thought of the Past and the Yet-to-be;
 The Good, as man may, and the Fair, I’ve soughten
 Nor ever for gold have sold or boughten
 The things of the Spirit nor bowed the knee
 To Mammon; and here in the sun to see
 My harvest heaped is, the work I’ve wroughten.

God wot, there are others have done the same:
I know them but, if at all, by name:
We never have chanced to come together:
And here in the setting I stand, with none
To hail my harvest or cry "Well done!"
A lonely soul in Life's winter-weather.

ALMOND BLOSSOM.

WITH flower the almonds are aflame:
'Gainst March's skies of wind-swept gloom,
They weave their webs of bridal bloom.
Defying with a rosy shame
Long-lingering Winter in Spring's name,
They character the tyrant's doom,
With blossom-script, upon his tomb,
Ere yet he gone is whence he came.
What stirs you, thus, frail trees, to flout
Grim Winter's rearguard, ere it driven
From Earth's face be by Springtide out?
Yet to the brave alone 'tis given
In hours to hearken of defeat
The tramp of Triumph's future feet.

ENGLAND FALLEN.

1. HOW art thou fallen, England of our pride!
When I recall how, in the high Hath-been,
Of the whole world thou wast the unquestioned queen,
How, with thy feet across the seas astride,
Peace, justice, ruth, thou strewedst far and wide,
It breaks my heart to see the herd obscene
Grunt in thy place of power and greed unclean
Root in thy glory, swine-like, undenied.

The fruit of virtue was it that thou wast
And that which now thou art, thy mighty name
A shadow grown, the fruit of virtue lost,
When ape and vulture feed on thy fair fame
And to usurp thy world-involving room
The Teuton gross and the sour Wend assume.

2. Such, in these days degenerate, as at heart
Love England and would serve her as is meet,
Shake off the dust of England from their feet
And to the worlds beyond the seas depart,
Which erst she won for citadel and mart;
Where, in the Arctic cold, the tropic heat,
A true life lived may, from the old home, effete
With luxury and lewdness, be, apart.
There is our strength; not here at home, indeed,
Where Falsehood riots in the robes of Truth
And License masquerades as Liberty;
And to these, who, for duty's sake, their youth
And manhood spend in exile, look must we
For succour in our nearing hour of need.

SONG-SACRAMENT.

IS not the blood as the life!
We, who from you dwell apart,
Banished from banquet and mart,
Who on the wrongs that are rife
War with wit wage to the knife,
Song for our sword and our dart, —
We bring you the blood of our heart,
To ease you of sorrow and strife.
Lo, with our songs, as a flood,
Fain would we heave you on high,

Up from the mist and the mud,
Up from the swamp to the sky,
We, who "Take, eat," to you cry;
"This is our body and our blood."

FEIGNED YOUTH.

FEW nowadays content are to be old;
Most with a piteous parody of youth
Think from their track to off-cast the unerring sleuth
Hounds of the years, — that, with persistence cold,
Dog their dull feet, — and for awhile withhold
The acceptance of the inexorable truth.
Poor fools, who think that Time can be to ruth
Moved or be bribed to spare with prayers or gold!
Nay, take a thought; resign yourselves to need.
Eld hath its beauty, gentle and serene,
As of a sea where storms no longer rage.
But, with a painted mask, the faded sheen
Of youth to ape, an outrage is, indeed,
A crime against the reverend rights of age.

LONELY SOULS.

SOME are who cannot live among their kind;
Not such alone as, driven from place to place
By the sheer spirit of adventure, face
The seas, the Polar snows, the desert wind,
But such as, in great cities, fenced behind
A crystal wall, aloof from good and base
Abide nor mingle in the worldly race,
To poverty and solitude resigned.
Their thought with other men they may not share;
They look for help and solace unto none

But the inarticulate creatures of the air
 And earth, the birds, the breeze, the rain, the sun,
 Flowers, trees; and unto these excepted, where
 Shall their lone souls return, when Life is done?

NIL NISI BONUM.

FEW saws (and many false for true among the vulgar
 pass)
 Are more obnoxious to my sense than that which of the
 dead
 Will nothing else than good, no word have of their failings
 said.
 A man, once buried with his deeds beneath the graveyard's
 grass,
 To history appertains and not to this or the other class;
 And history claims the truth nor will deluded be to shed
 Tears hypocritical upon the wicked's funeral bed
 Nor grave a lying eulogy upon his chapel-brass.
 Consideration to the live and to the dead owe we
 But the plain praise and blame for which their acts and
 purpose call.
 'Tis Shakspeare's self that lessons us in this, as else in all;
 "Nothing extenuate nor aught set down in malice be"
 Of the departed. As the sage ¹ saith of a later day,
 "L'on doit aux vivants les égards, aux morts la vérité."

THAT WHICH ABIDETH.

TOWARD some undiscovered goal,
 From darkness lapsing into light
 And into darkness out of sight
 Again, the seas of Being roll,

¹ Voltaire.

But leave Thought standing fixed and whole.
The alternate tides of Day and Night
May wash away thy heart's delight,
But not the aspirings of thy soul.
These rise like rocks above the tide
Of Circumstance, that changeth all;
These, though all pass, unstirred abide
And though thy world in ruins fall,
Upon the wreck of nights and days
Another world avail to raise.

WHOM, THEREFORE, YE IGNORANTLY WORSHIP.

THE Gods have many forms; their deity
Lurks whiles within the least suspected thing:
Serf, beggar, sage, bard, mountebank or king,
None knoweth where it may incarnate be.
The poet only gifted is to see
And know the elusive Proteus, issuing
From Life's vexed surge, to take him by the wing
And unto speech enforce him, ere he flee.
Some undeveloped growth of things Divine
Germs in each heart, although the gross cold air
Of common life of its eclosion due
The seed debar. Whom, therefore, brothers mine,
Ye ignorantly worship, Him to you
We, the world's dream-interpreters, declare.

ELUSIVE THOUGHT.

MANY are the thoughts that rise and set in me,
Star-like, as saith the great old poet blind,
"This way and that dividing the swift mind;"
And many, though I know them fair and free,

Slip from my grasp and will not spoken be.
 Nay, most, like ships that drift before the wind,
 Inapt a harbourage in Life to find,
 Lapse and are lost in Death's indefinite sea.
 Whither, sad thoughts, that might not win on earth
 A house of words, wherein to lay the head,
 Do ye betake yourselves? Is hope in vain
 That ye will one day, rising up again,
 Find incarnation in some bright new birth,
 When the great tide of Time gives up its dead?

DIVINA NON EXPUGNANDA.

THE Gods bespeak not any at his will.
 Who, where they sit in sempiternal state,
 Would fain approach them, early, ay, and late,
 The weapon-watch must keep at Heaven's shut sill,
 Must at the foot wake of Olympus Hill
 And for the opening of the heavenly gate,
 The fulness of the appointed times await,
 When they shall speak with him, for good or ill.
 So with the things that bear the stamp Divine,
 That men have moulded to the Eternal Form.
 Man of the herd, with that weak wit of thine
 Think not their high celestial sense by storm
 To take, but wait, with bent and humble knee,
 In reverence, till they deign to speak with thee.

DREAM AND VISION.

BUT few see visions; many men dream dreams.
 The bird of vision stoopeth from on high
 And to its home, the spheres beyond the sky,
 Bearing it off, by Paradisal streams

And meadows bright with otherworldly beams,
Pastures the soul, where I no more is I
And there no question is of How or Why,
No thought of Life and Death, of Is and Seems.
But dreams of the earth earthy are and spring
From the strained sense, upon whose every string,
Stretched to the utmost, thought and memory play
And make fantastic melodies, that rise
From the tense nerves and the retentive eyes
And mostly are forgotten with the day.

THE ENDLESS CHOICE.

BE not dismayed, o soul, if, like a sieve,
The worn-out body still let slip the wine
Of Being. Life or Death, the choice is thine.
Die, if thou wilt; but, if thou choose to live,
There is no power in Earth or Heaven can give
Pause to thy will; thou only art Divine
And with thee resteth whether or no, in fine,
God and the foolish Fates thou wilt forgive.
Yet this condition thou on thee must take
And keep, that thou accept all that which done
Hath been and will be and consent to make
Part of the eternal process of the sun
And stars, the worlds that sleep not neither wake,
Unending being, even as unbegun.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

A DAY there comes in every nation's days,
When, resting on the achievements of their sires,
The dull folk drowse and the sense sated tires
Of heaping power on power and praise on praise.

Then, when a mighty people stands at gaze,
 Pausing in mid-career, and none aspires
 Save to gross ease and satisfied desires,
 Come are they to the parting of the ways.
 Two ways; the one, for those who with their might
 Their faith ancestral fain are to defend,
 Which leadeth upward to the place of light;
 The other, in the inevitable end,
 For those who honour hold and duty light,
 Which doth to darkness and to death descend.

SURSUM CORDA!

SINCE with our blood and tears the knowledge have
 At last, that God is dead, [we bought,
 (If any can be said
 To die, that never lived except in lawless thought,)
 Gone is the gloom, wherein the world so long hath wrought;
 The pall of doubt and dread,
 That, like a cope of lead,
 Hath Life so long oppressed, is shrivelled up to nought.
 Since, then, of that vast Fear
 The heavens at last are clear,
 That hearts to water turned and of the day made night,
 Up, man! Leave cross and scourge;
 Be Life no more a dirge,
 But a triumphal march toward the lands of light!

“IL EST DES MORTS QU’IL FAUT QU’ON TUE.”¹

THOUGH God is dead this many an age and reigns
 No longer o’er the earth and in the skies,
 Yet, from his grave uprising, vampire-wise,

¹ Fernand Desnoyers.

He haunts the haggard world and from the veins
Of humankind the ruddy lifeblood drains.
His cruel memory overclouds all eyes;
His malediction heavy on Being lies,
Poisoning the springs of life in hearts and brains.
His giant phantom still the earth doth tread,
Crushing men's hopes and joys with feet of lead
Into the mire. Until His ghost affraying
Be laid for ever, there can be no laying
Life's new foundations; God is of the dead
Who for another call, a final slaying.

BLIND SOULS.

IN our old world as yonder in the New,
Grot upon grot successive, underground
Extending miles and miles, are caverns found
And rivers deep, the darkness running through,
Wherein fish dwell of strange and sombre hue,
Which, having there, whilst ages ran their round,
In unenlightened gloom abidden drowned,
Have vision lost, for lack of usance due.
So is it with the folk of these our days.
The lamp of Faith that on their spirit's night
So many an age had shed its shimmering rays,
Long since hath ceased their stumbling steps to light;
And for disuse, in Life's o'erdarkened ways,
Their spirits' eyes have lost the sense of sight.

INDE NÆNIA.

- i. NO otherwhat than peace I asked of Fate;
Nought else I craved of all the world holds dear.
Wealth, fame, love, worship, easance, happy cheer,
All these I was content to abdicate.

Peace, only peace, I sought at any rate,
 So I my heart and brain a seed-field clear
 Of sordid cares might make, wherein to rear
 To flower the visions of my soul elate.
 But he great things must seek of Fortune, small
 Who'd have; she giveth much or not at all.
 The little which I sought the jade denied,
 Nay, and contrarious willed that all my life
 Be overweltered of a squalid tide
 Of miseries mean and vain and vulgar strife.

2. Had but the prayed-for peace to me been given,
 The boon so dear with abnegation bought,
 The music of the spheres in me had wrought
 And the sweet influence of the Planets Seven,
 To purge my heart and brain of earthly leaven:
 In the pure streams of Paradise my thought
 Had steeped and all my songs the flush had caught
 And fragrance of the airs and flames of Heaven.
 Alack! My wings with weight of worldly care
 Were clogged and lamed with lime of petty pain;
 Still of the flight into the upper air
 Baulked was my soul and dragged to earth again.
 From a caged skylark, with a crippled wing,
 How look for aught but songs of sorrowing?

THE PLOVER.

THE cloud-burst's come; the world's afloat;
 'Tis February Fillydyke's here,
 Aquarius of the thirsting year.
 My garden's like a fortress moat,
 Whereon to fare one needs a boat.
 Forth on the flooded world I peer
 And high above my head I hear
 A passing plover's peevish note.

THE WAY OF THE WINEPRESS. 69

Strange bird, that lov'st the wind-swept down,
The marshy moor, the lonely leas,
What dost thou in the thronging town,
Voicing the spirit of unease,
The foredawn shiver of the Prime,
That stirs the world in seeding-time?

TOWARD APPEASEMENT.

THE clouds return after the rain,
The day after the day;
Life lapses on its endless way,
Th'eternal wax and wane
Alternative of joy and pain:
But what of glad and gay
Thou'st had, thy memories of May,
Time cannot take again.
Rose, birds, enjoyed thou hast, though dumb
Are these and that is shed.
Like Nature, cast away no crumb
That Life vouchsafes of bread,
Content to know that joy will come
Again, when thou art dead.

THE LAST INN.

WHENAS our flagging feet have reached the final stage
And to survey we turn the overtravelled Past,
The lands of light and shade, of rain and sun and blast,
Through which we've fared, the streams that did our thirst
 assuage,
The lusts that lured our youth, the faiths that fed our age,
All by the clouding mists of memory are o'ercast;
The caravanserais, that housed us first and last,

Love, hope, ambition, doubt, are blotted from Life's page.
Above the o'erwandered ways the darkness draws apace
And in our onward path the Night yet greyer grows,
Obscuring the To-be and all that hides therein:
Yet, through the gathering gloom, a steady taper glows,
Marking for our faint feet yet one more halting-place;
And "Resignation" reads the sign of the last inn.

FOUR POETS.



FOUR POETS.

I.

DANTE.

DANTE, old dreamer, born a son of solitude
Thou wast; among thy kind thy spirit found no mate
Nor ever cared to call a truce with tyrant Fate.
Though, like the forest king, thine hours of milder mood
Thou hadst, thou wast, as he, a hermit stern and rude
Nor mightst, for vantage sake, thy thought dissimulate.
Unmeasured in thy love, relentless in thy hate,
Foredoomed thou wast to dwell and die in strangerhood.
Even as the Bedouin, born a wanderer of the waste,
If aught with men thou hadst to mell, 'twas but by chance.
Earth, Hell and Heaven thou knew'st, yet everywhere mis-
placed,
Save in thy dream, thou wast, and in the loveless lands
Of solitary thought. There only, thy stern glance
Tells us, at home thou wast, in Exile's sterile sands.

2.

HEINRICH HEINE.

A KNIGHT himself he of the Holy Ghost
Styled; on his helm the dove, the Spirit's bird,
Sat, so he deemed, and ordered all his word.
Natheless, mistaken was he in his boast.
No Jew was ever of that haughty host
Counted: no Jew was ever, from the herd
That for thought's sake might sever or preferred

The costlier Less unto the coarser Most.
 A higher rank and title yet he wore
 And holier than this of his belief.
 Nay, he a knight was of the Bleeding Heart;
 For passion held in him the highest part
 And on his breast for cognisance he bore
 The blazon of the soul afire with grief.

3.

LECONTE DE LISLE.

THE Arab, following where his camel strays,
 Whiles on some nameless oasis, that lies
 Deep in the Lybian deserts, island-wise,
 Chancing at eve, stands stricken with amaze;
 For there, high-reared against the Western rays,
 Under the pearl and gold and emerald skies,
 Facing the sunset with unfaltering eyes,
 A vast majestic figure sits at gaze.
 Over the known worlds and the worlds unknown,
 Outstraining to the lands beyond the light,
 Still with rapt eyes it scans the sunset-bars;
 And on the Bedouin passes with the night,
 Leaving the eternal statue to its lone
 Eternal dream beneath the eternal stars.

4.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

(ob. July 11, 1903.)

A FIGHTER ever, mid the bullets' hum
 Foremost and fiercest in the battle's press;
 In love still strenuous and in hate no less;

Men shall his whims, his mettle humoursome,
Born of *perfervidum ingenium*,
Condone, which over often very stress
Caused him confound with song the effortless
And take for trumpet-thunder dub of drum;
His phrase that would have made Quintilian frown,
His slaughter of the written word, with noun
Confusing adjective, as "naught" with "nought;"
For that pretence and shams he still abhorred,
Still in the darkling days for England fought
And sang the song of justice and the Sword.

MARTYRS OF HISTORY.

Fourth Series.



MARTYRS OF HISTORY.

Fourth Series. ¹

XXI.

HERCULES.

NONE stronglier stirs in me than Hercules
The sorrowing sense; the hero Heaven-born,
Strong as the sun and radiant as the morn,
Who, for pure pity's sake, forswore all ease
And in the untravelled lands, the trackless seas,
Wearied life-long to succour folk forlorn,
To strip Life's rose of Ill's relentless thorn
And lead the light back to its sunless leas.
Yet the ill conquered: through his arteries stole
The venom of the incurable woes of earth,
Till, for the purging of his poisoned soul,
He gave his glorious body to the pyre
And on the purifying wings of fire,
Passed to that Heaven wherefrom he had his birth.

XXII.

PILATE.

"WHAT" Pilate asked, "is Truth?" nor asked in jest,
As the light world with fleering Bacon deems, ²

¹ For First, Second and Third Series, see my "Vigil and Vision" (1903), "Carol and Cadence" (1908) and "Flower o' the Thorn" (1909.)

² "What is Truth? said jesting Pilate and would not stay for an answer." Bacon's Essays. It is evident that Bacon was not acquainted

Nay, but in saddest earnestness, meseems.
 Forsooth, in time of trouble and unrest,

with (or ignored) the version of the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus given by the Gospel of Nicodemus (III, 10—14), as follows: "Jesus answered, "To this end was I born and for this end came I into the world and for this purpose I came, that I might bear witness to the Truth; and every one who is of the Truth heareth my word." Pilate said to him, "What is Truth?" Jesus said, "Truth is from Heaven." Pilate said, "Therefore Truth is not on earth." And Jesus said to Pilate, "Believe that Truth is on Earth among those who, when they have the power of judgment, are governed by Truth and form right judgment." (Which latter speech, by the way, to borrow the terminology of Schopenhauer, is a shameless piece of "windbaggery.") It may be noted that the text of this passage shows manifest signs of sophistication, the clerical "editors" of prae-typographical days having almost certainly omitted the definite article in Pilate's speech ("What is Truth?"), with the object of giving the public to believe that the Roman Governor cynically questioned Truth in general, instead of simply enquiring (as was manifestly the case) the nature of the particular truth of which Jesus claimed to be the exclusive depository. Indeed, on reviewing the whole story of the dealings of Pilate with Jesus, even as set forth in the unscrupulously partisan statement of the ecclesiastical writers, and considering the shifty and sophistical character of Jesus's "fencing" answers to the Governor's manifestly well-meaning and kindly enquiries, it is difficult for an impartial reader, unbiassed by theological delusion, to help agreeing with Nietzsche (VIII, pp. 280—1) that Pilate is the one respectable (i. e. respectable) figure in the whole squalid melodrama of the Gospel narrative. "The aristocratic (or highbred, *vornehm*,) scorn," continues the author of "Der Antichrist," "of a Roman, before whom a shameless (or impudent) misuse of the word "Truth" had been practised, has enriched the New Testament with the one word that is of value, — a word that is its critique, nay, its nullification, — "What is Truth?"" It is evident, however, that Nietzsche also was unacquainted with the version of the Gospel of Nicodemus, which throws quite a new light on the question. That of John is evidently the same version, truncated for ecclesiastical purposes, after the fashion of the Fathers of the Church.

When with pretenders to the high behest
Prophetic, like the Nazarene, life teems
And each himself and his fantastic dreams
The only truth to proffer doth protest,
Yet nought but bare assertion and abuse
Of speech for demonstration can adduce,
The impartial spirit, seeking right and ruth
To practise, tangled in a maze confused
Of fraud and verbiage, well may be excused
If, in despair, it question "What is Truth?"

XXIII.

JAAFER THE BARMECIDE. ¹

JAAFER, whose memory, 'mid the sea of slaughters
Of Orient story, 'gainst the bloodstained sky
Upstanding, stainless as a lily high
And radiant, rises from the turbid waters
Of times with evil filled and evil-factors, —
Thou, to be numbered with their names, that die
Not ever, but the tooth of Time defy,
Most worth that art of Syria's sons and daughters, —
'Midst these that have of History suffered wrong,
Thy name upon my page for greater grace
I grave, that didst nor saidest aught of base,
Thine, whose fair life a thousand years erewhen
Failed at the tyrant's mandate, yet in song
Undying dures and in the minds of men.

¹ v. my "Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night," Vol. IX, Terminal Essay, pp. 337—367.

XXIV.

GUATEMOZIN.

THOUGHT rends the mists of History; and so,
 The curtain of four centuries uprolled,
 Unveils to view a scene of sufferance old.
 See, on a torture-bed of coals aglow,
 Where the last Aztec emperor lies low,
 His courtiers round him, suffering pains untold;
 Whilst the fierce Spaniard, ravening for gold,
 The embers stirs, to enhance his victims' woe.
 Awhile they suffer all in silent pain,
 Till one, his martyred patience at an end,
 Uplifts his voice and groans; whereat, his eyes
 Upon him turning with a mild disdain,
 "And I," in answer Guatemozin sighs,
 "Am I, then, on a bed of roses, friend?"

XXV.

CAROLUS MARTYR.

THY sad eyes greet us from the canvas here,
 — Where Vandyke's art august did erst retrace
 For us thy grave and melancholy grace,
 Thy traits of dreamer and of cavalier,
 Pale with the presage of a doom austere,
 — As who should ask, "What did I in this place
 Of sordid strife, White King, whose soul unbase
 Was stainless as his coronation-gear?
 Was I not apter, in Thought's orchard-close,
 With Shakspeare sweet my days and nights to spend
 Or with the Muse in converse rapt and lone,

Life's paltry joys to o'erpass and sordid woes,
Than in this slough of slanders to contend
With churl and traitor for a cheerless throne?"

XXVI.

PRINCE RUPERT.

KNIGHT-ERRANT of a day, when war a game
Played for men's profit was and little sage
Was he accounted who for battle-gage
Vain loyalty ensued and fruitless fame,
Thy headlong valiance unto thee for blame
Imputed is of this our venal age
And thy high venturousness on history's page
Stands for a mockery and well-nigh a shame.
Yet of thy feats Fame, fabling, minstrel-wise,
Still, with the clarion of thy name, like wine,
Quickens their hearts who love of high emprise
To hear and great blows taken and given again,
For honour's sake, and death held in disdain,
Thy name altisonant, Rupert of the Rhine.

XXVII.

MAXIMILIAN OF MEXICO.

FRIEND of the Muses, what unfriendly Fate
Sinister tore thee from thy studious ease
And to thy doom despatched thee overseas,
Without thy will, for service of the State,
There where foul treachery, asp-like, lay in wait,
On thee, high victim, for its prey to seize,
Nor, save thy shameful death, might aught appease
The lewd intriguer-mongrel's murderous hate?

Withal, in great things (as Propertius says)
 Enough to have even willed 'tis; and the bays
 The generous soul will not to him deny
 Who, though, by others' fault, of his high aim
 He failed, failed nobly in the front of fame
 And for his failure nobly knew to die.

XXVIII.

NAPOLEON THE THIRD.

NEVER, of Caesar Suetonius says,
 Hurt unto any one endure might he
 To do: and evenso it may of thee
 Be said, sad second bearer of the bays,
 Heir to Napoleon's name of overpraise.
 Like Caesar, throne thou lost'st (and life, may be,)
 For that thou sufferedst the rogue run free
 And sett'st no hindrance in the intriguer's ways.
 At least, the tardy tribute of a tear,
 Magnanimous soul, hard driven of felon Fate,
 We offer at thy grave and vain regret
 That such as thou should lack the will austere
 To crush the traitor and through Treason's net
 Of reefs to steer the vessel of the State.

XXIX.

PEDRO OF BRAZIL.

FATHER of his folk, wise, just and mild, the best
 Of men and kings, what might his virtues weigh
 Against the unwitting of this our graceless day?
 How should a man of heart for place contest
 With the vile, vulturous peddlers in unrest?
 How 'gainst the knaves that cheat the mob make way,

The rogues that stir the waters, so they may
Fish from the troubled tide their gain unblest?
A world of woes he bore and made no moan
Nor ever faltered from his constant cheer.
O thou that enterest this funereal space,
Put off thy shoes from off thy feet: the place
Is holy ground; for underneath this stone
Sleeps Pedro of Brazil, the modern Lear.

XXX.

QUI CARENT VATE SACRO.

HOW many noble souls misfortune-marred
There be, to whom the Fates such rancour show
That they through grief to death not only go,
But for remembrance lack the sacred bard!
Such Fouquet, Favras, noble and ill-starred;
Such Bonchamps, Cadoudal, Cathélineau;
Such John de Witt and Swedish Charles e'enso,
The brave, the high, of Fortune followed hard;
Such Harold Godwinson and sweet Jane Grey;
Such Laud and Strafford, to the appointed goal
Their lord foregoing in the fated way:
To whom and many a fate-forsaken soul,
Martyred and mortified of traitor Time,
Thus late I consecrate this tribute rhyme.



MOTH-FLIGHTS.



MOTH-FLIGHTS.

THE SOUL'S VENTURES.

THE winds blow South, the winds blow North;
They blow no luck to me.
A fleet of ships I built and forth
I sent them all to sea.

They all were furnished and equipped
With wonder-goodly gear;
And I for venture on them shipped
That which I held most dear.

The first, Ambition, forth I sent
To fetch me golden store;
But on the seas astray it went
And came again no more.

The second I despatched, Desire,
In quest of wine of fame;
But in mid-ocean it took fire
And foundered in the flame.

The third, Love, sent was by my soul
To seek the Isles of Spice;
But, chancing on the frozen Pole,
It perished in the ice.

The fourth must fare (its name was Hope)
For frankincense and oil;
But tempests shattered mast and rope
And vain was all its toil.

MOTH-FLIGHTS.

The fifth Endeavour was by name;
I chartered it for grain;
But on a reef it ran and came
Not back to me again.

Fancy, the sixth, to the sun-lands,
For apes and ivory,
Despatched, was driven upon the sands
And shattered by the sea.

For fruit of peace the seventh, Faith,
To fare I fitted out;
But it encountered storm and scaith
And brought me back but Doubt.

And many another carrack tall,
Which should for me have earned
Rich store, I launched; but of them all
But few to me returned.

Some perished in the seas icebound
And some the corals tore;
And some the world went wandering round
And came again no more.

And some few staggered home again,
Scourged by the scornful gales,
With nought to show for all their pain
But shattered masts and sails.

The ship of Song, of all the pack
Whereon my hopes most high
I built, a freight of dreams brought back,
Which none to-day will buy.

Of all my soul did thus out fit
And forth a-faring sent,
But Resignation now with it
Abides and Sad Content.

With these, the storm though over-frail
To face, unto the end
My harbourage yet I may avail
'Gainst Fortune to defend.

The winds blow East, the winds blow West;
They blow no luck to me;
My ships, henceforth at home we'll rest
And go no more to sea.

MOTHS' WINGS.

I.

HEAV'N whitens to windward; the darkness shows signs
of relenting.
What dost thou, my soul, in the limboes of lingering Night?
Long since, were thy wings as the wings of a dove, Time
and Space circumventing,
Long since from this den of the dark
And the cold, with the upspringing lark,
Thou hadst thrust through the clouds to the spheres of
the sun and the lands of the light.

2.

Alas! but as moths' wings the wings are, which thou,
thou must fly with.
They serve but to flit round the low-burning taper of Life.
They are given thee, indeed, in this night of the world
but to live and to die with.
Who fain with the cloud-cleaving one
Would vie for the flight to the sun
Must winged even as he be for cleaving his way through
the storm-clouds of strife.

VAIN VISIONS.

LANDS of love
 My cheating dreams forecast,
 Wherein, Life's passion past,
 My hungry heart shall feed its fill with Peace's dove.

Seas of sleep
 They picture, where at rest,
 At last, as in a nest,
 My wake-bewildered soul shall lie and slumber deep;

Hills of hope,
 Beneath whose sheltering shade,
 My fancy, Life-affrayed,
 Shall calm and constant wax as Heaven's unwrinkled scope.

Me, as a mist,
 All with the dawn forsake.
 Nay, in my hours of wake,
 I know that lands, seas, hills, but in my dreams exist.

VERSICLES.

I.

LIFE and Love,
 To the wounded dove
 Can they mean what they meant to the free sky-rover?
 Earth, Heaven and sea
 To a waif like me
 But memories are of the Past and Over.

2.

Shall ever a time
For the rose of rhyme
To bloom for me be without thorns, at last?
I know not, I.
Earth, sea and sky
Say nothing to me but Over and Past.

GLOSSA MARGINALIS

TO "THE RIME OF MELISANDE."

(v. Carol and Cadence, pp. 113—127.)

1.

IN days of old,
When Right yet Right was titled and Wrong Wrong,
Before both yet
Together were confounded in the eclipse
Of Faith and Truth, that swept the world along;
Before the ever-waxing fume and fret,
The over-mastering empery of gold,
The queens of beauty loved the kings of song.
Then Marguerite kissed Chartier on the lips
And Rudel on the breast of Melisande
Died; for the minstrel and the bard of yore
In hut and hall and palace still was graced
And all the loveliest ladies in the land
His love for jewel in their bosoms placed
And wore.

2.

But, nowadays,
When Love and Faith are dreams discredited
And the waste world

MOTH-FLIGHTS.

By the wild winds of lust and care and greed
Toward the abysses of the Place of Dread
Along the resonant rails of Time is hurled,
And Life gropes, darkling, in the lightless ways,
The love of song in women's hearts is dead;
Rapine and vanity in them the need
Of more than meat and wine and wede have slain.
Driven by our whirl of greed and stress and strife,
To-day the fair care only for the brute
And on the minstrel look with dull disdain:
None heeds the flower; all only seek the fruit
Of Life.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERERS.

IN flocks that flutter the softened sky-light,
White birds come winging from East and West:
My dreams fare home in the falling twilight,
Come back to shelter within my breast.

My dreams, you are shaken sore and shattered,
Like ships returned from the unknown seas:
O'erlong at the gates of ice you've battered,
That bar the way to the worlds of ease.

You've striven sore with the wild world-weather;
The dust from your butterfly wings is gone,
The rainbow dust, that on every feather
Lay, red, gold, blue, as the mists of dawn.

You've winged and wandered it far and striven
With hail and tempest, with rain and wind,
In quest of that which it is not given
To any beneath the moon to find.

Your wings have borne you to bove-most Heaven.
You found it empty and fell again;
The world-wastes four and the oceans seven,
All, all you've traversed and found all vain.

You followed a faith that had no being,
A flame that fled, as you drew it near:
You sought to see what is not for seeing,
To hark what is not for mortal ear.

You've still gone grasping at visions airy
In some impossible wonder-land,
Still bent on gleaning some flower of Faerie,
That never blossomed on shore or strand.

You've ploughed your path through the Arctic surges
And plunged for pearls in the tropic tide,
For diamonds delved, where the waste-wind scourges
The sands and scatters them far and wide.

But never the pearl of pearls you've founden,
The dreamt-of diamond, white and whole,
The perfect jewel of worth to bounden
Be on the brows of the bridal soul.

Alas, my dreams, you have lost your labour!
It skilled you nothing to rove and roam.
You'd better have tarried, with thrift for neighbour,
And trodden the track of peace at home.

It skilled you nothing to skim the oceans,
To follow the feet of the setting sun,
To strain for the sound of the spheral motions;
It skilled you nothing, when all was done.

You come back, broken, with senses blunted,
And beggared of hope and faith, as they
For gold abroad who have life-long hunted,
Whilst under their feet at home it lay.

You come back, beggared, with nought in budget
To tell of your travel o'er land and sea:
It skilled you nothing abroad to trudge it:
You'd better have stayed at home with me.

For here in my heart are world-wastes vaster
And wilder than Jupiter's self or Mars
And seas, that, like sheep without a master,
No homage owe to the straitening stars.

Here Heaven-aspiring summits steeper
Than any there be beneath the light
And black abysses, obscurer, deeper
Than all which furrow the fields of Night.

Here mighty deserts there be, that wilder
And waster than any are on earth,
And Springtide meadows where May is milder
And larger life in its full flower-birth.

Here seas of solace one findeth, fairer
Than those which fade with the sunset out,
And icebound solitudes, bleaker, barer
Than those which prison the Pole about.

Here may you travel it, undespairing
To follow and find the Golden Fleece,
Assured, at last, in the end of faring,
To light, at least, on the ports of peace.

Nay, here, my dreams, can you delve at leisure
In these its limitless golden sands,
And trust of finding the fairy treasure,
If nowhere else in the seas and lands.

The spell-bound store, that ye found not, straying,
The mines of my soul in wait may hold,
In wait for him who is strong for slaying
The dragons that guard the goblin gold.

That bloom of fable, the blue flower lonely,
You followed fruitlessly here and there,
In Fancy's gardens it germeth only
Nor ever blossometh elsewhere.

The faith, that fled from you, flame-like, stronger
Or fainter, as you fared to and fro,
On the hearth of the heart it burns, no longer
A marish-flame, but a fireside glow.

My dreams, your wayfaring days are over;
Come, close your pinions, no more to roam.
Nay, all your lives have you played the rover,
In quest of that which you left at home.

Your wings shall winnow the winds eternal
No more; enough the winter's cease
For you henceforward, the vision vernal,
The summer splendours, the Autumn's peace.

Mayhap, you shall find what you missed, wide-winging.
Whiles victory flees from the fifes and drums.
And Fortune whiles to the sleeper, bringing
The boon that baffled him, waking, comes.



