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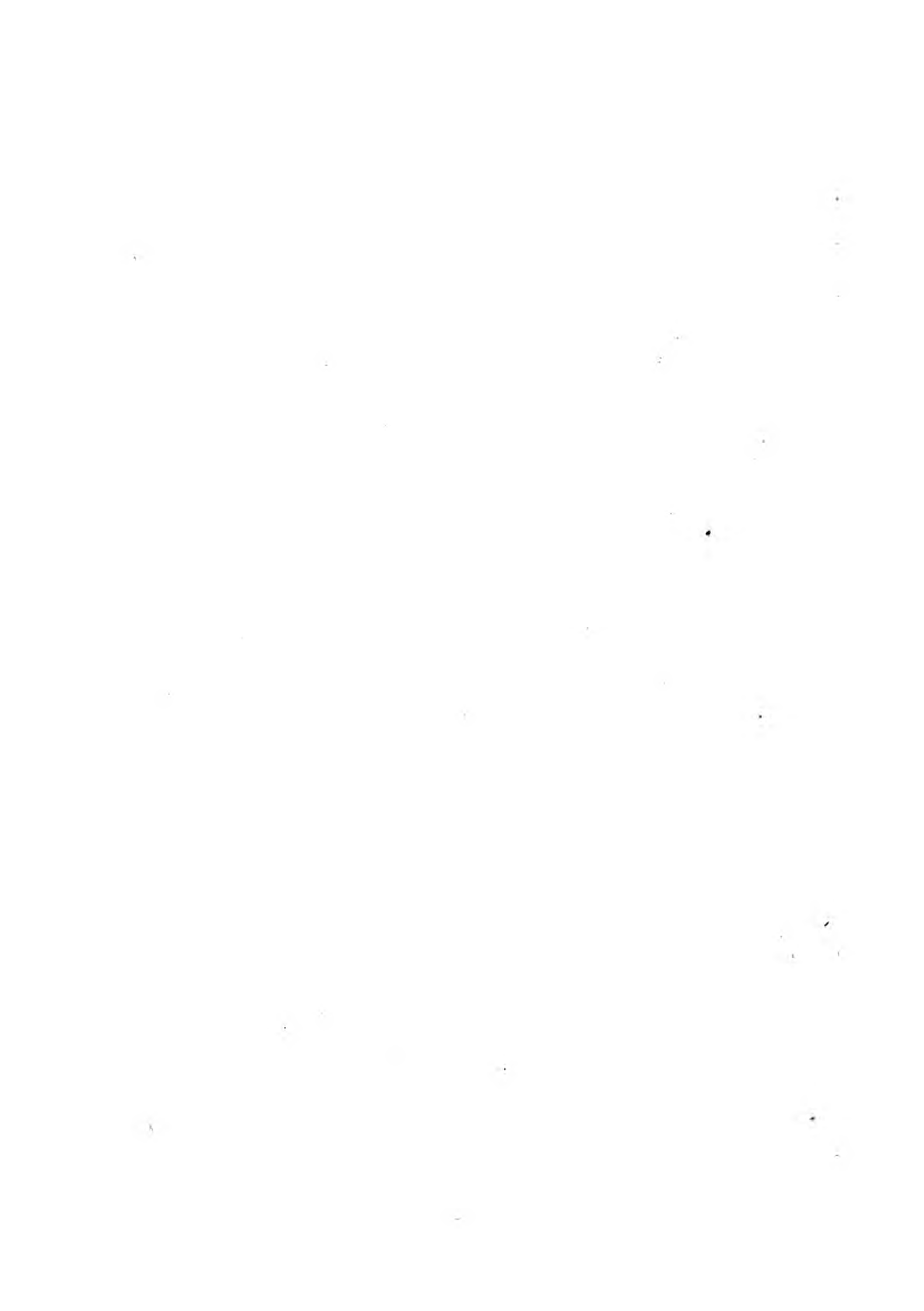




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POEMS.

POEMS.

BY

OSCAR WILDE.



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HELAS!

*To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday
With idle songs for pipe and virelay,
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.
Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?*



THE POEMS.

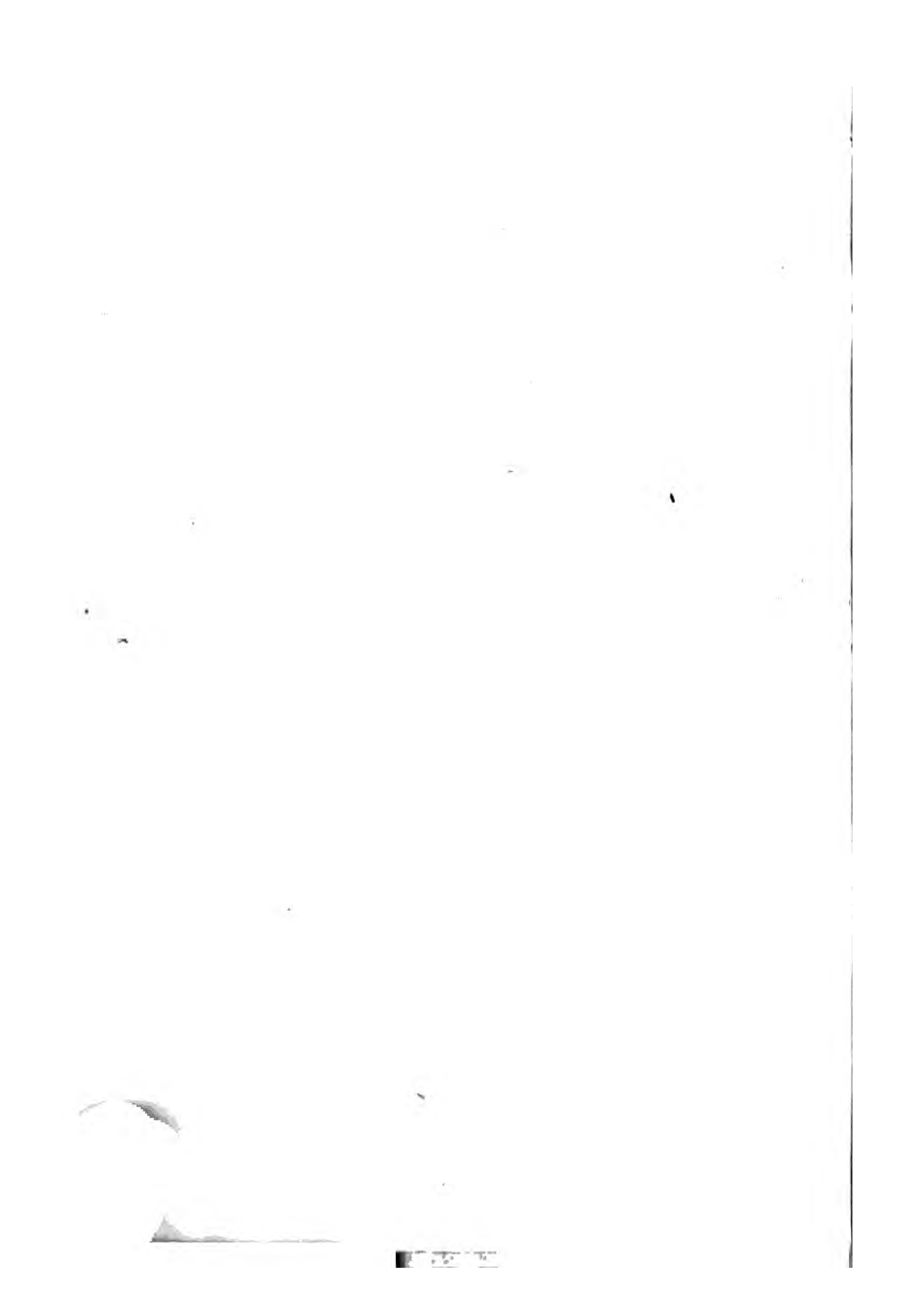
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THE POEMS.

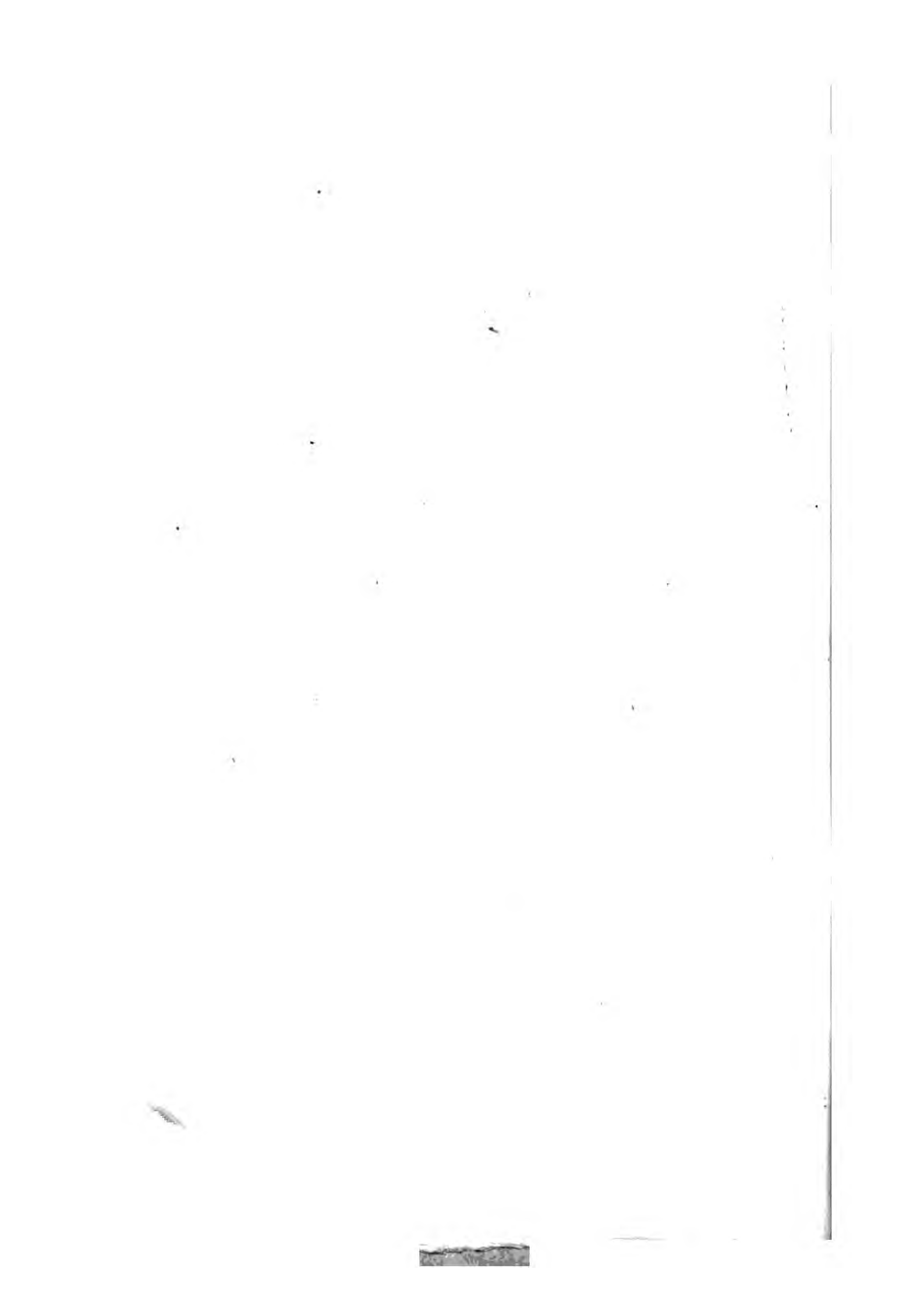
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ELEUTHERIA.

B



ELEUTHERIA.

SONNET TO LIBERTY.

NOT that I love thy children, whose dull eyes
See nothing save their own unlovely woe,
Whose minds know nothing, nothing care to know,—
But that the roar of thy Democracies,
Thy reigns of Terror, thy great Anarchies,
Mirror my wildest passions like the sea
And give my rage a brother——! Liberty!
For this sake only do thy dissonant cries
Delight my discreet soul, else might all kings
By bloody knout or treacherous cannonades
Rob nations of their rights inviolate
And I remain unmoved—and yet, and yet,
These Christs that die upon the barricades,
God knows it I am with them, in some things.

AVE IMPERATRIX.

SET in this stormy Northern sea,
Queen of these restless fields of tide,
England! what shall men say of thee,
Before whose feet the worlds divide?

The earth, a brittle globe of glass,
Lies in the hollow of thy hand,
And through its heart of crystal pass,
Like shadows through a twilight land,

The spears of crimson-suited war,
The long white-crested waves of fight,
And all the deadly fires which are
The torches of the lords of Night.

The yellow leopards, strained and lean,
The treacherous Russian knows so well,
With gaping blackened jaws are seen
Leap through the hail of screaming shell.

The strong sea-lion of England's wars
Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,
To battle with the storm that mars
The star of England's chivalry.

The brazen-throated clarion blows
Across the Pathan's reedy fen,
And the high steps of Indian snows
Shake to the tread of armèd men.

And many an Afghan chief, who lies
Beneath his cool pomegranate-trees,
Clutches his sword in fierce surmise
When on the mountain-side he sees

The fleet-foot Marri scout, who comes
To tell how he hath heard afar
The measured roll of English drums
Beat at the gates of Kandahar.

For southern wind and east wind meet
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,
England with bare and bloody feet
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,
Grey pillar of the Indian sky,
Where saw'st thou last in clanging flight
Our wingèd dogs of Victory ?

The almond-groves of Samarcand,
Bokhara, where red lilies blow,
And Oxus, by whose yellow sand
The grave white-turbaned merchants go :

And on from thence to Ispahan,
The gilded garden of the sun,
Whence the long dusty caravan
Brings cedar and vermilion ;

And that dread city of Cabool
Set at the mountain's scarpèd feet,
Whose marble tanks are ever full
With water for the noonday heat :

Where through the narrow straight Bazaar
A little maid Circassian
Is led, a present from the Czar
Unto some old and bearded khan,—

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight ;
But the sad dove, that sits alone
In England—she hath no delight.

In vain the laughing girl will lean
To greet her love with love-lit eyes :
Down in some treacherous black ravine,
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see
The lingering wistful children wait
To climb upon their father's knee ;
And in each house made desolate

Pale women who have lost their lord
Will kiss the relics of the slain—
Some tarnished epaulette—some sword—
Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,
And others in the seas which are
The portals to the East, or by
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

O wandering graves! O restless sleep!
O silence of the sunless day!
O still ravine! O stormy deep!
Give up your prey! give up your prey!

And thou whose wounds are never healed,
Whose weary race is never won,
O Cromwell's England! must thou yield
For every inch of ground a son?

Go! crown with thorns thy gold-crowned head,
Change thy glad song to song of pain;
Wind and wild wave have got thy dead,
And will not yield them back again.

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore
Possess the flower of English land—
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand.

What profit now that we have bound
The whole round world with nets of gold,
If hidden in our heart is found
The care that groweth never old ?

What profit that our galleys ride,
Pine-forest-like, on every main ?
Ruin and wreck are at our side,
Grim warders of the House of pain.

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet ?
Where is our English chivalry ?
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,
What word of love can dead lips send !
O wasted dust ! O senseless clay !
Is this the end ! is this the end !

Peace, peace ! we wrong the noble dead
 To vex their solemn slumber so ;
Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,
 Up the steep road must England go,

Yet when this fiery web is spun,
 Her watchmen shall descry from far
The young Republic like a sun
 Rise from these crimson seas of war.

TO MILTON.

MILTON! I think thy spirit hath passed away
From these white cliffs, and high-embattled towers;
This gorgeous fiery-coloured world of ours
Seems fallen into ashes dull and grey,
And the age changed unto a mimic play
Wherein we waste our else too-crowded hours :
For all our pomp and pageantry and powers
We are but fit to delve the common clay,
Seeing this little isle on which we stand,
This England, this sea-lion of the sea,
By ignorant demagogues is held in fee,
Who love her not: Dear God! is this the land
Which bare a triple empire in her hand
When Cromwell spake the word Democracy!

LOUIS NAPOLEON.

EAGLE of Austerlitz! where were thy wings
When far away upon a barbarous strand,
In fight unequal, by an obscure hand,
Fell the last scion of thy brood of Kings!

Poor boy! thou shalt not flaunt thy cloak of red,
Or ride in state through Paris in the van
Of thy returning legions, but instead
Thy mother France, free and republican,

Shall on thy dead and crownless forehead place
The better laurels of a soldier's crown,
That not dishonoured should thy soul go down
To tell the mighty Sire of thy race

That France hath kissed the mouth of Liberty,
And found it sweeter than his honied bees,
And that the giant wave Democracy
Breaks on the shores where Kings lay couched at ease.

SONNET

ON THE MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN
BULGARIA.

CHRIST, dost thou live indeed? or are thy bones
Still straitened in their rock-hewn sepulchre?
And was thy Rising only dreamed by Her
Whose love of thee for all her sin atones?
For here the air is horrid with men's groans,
The priests who call upon thy name are slain,
Dost thou not hear the bitter wail of pain
From those whose children lie upon the stones?
Come down, O Son of God! incestuous gloom
Curtains the land, and through the starless night
Over thy Cross the Crescent moon I see!
If thou in very truth didst burst the tomb
Come down, O Son of Man! and show thy might,
Lest Mahomet be crowned instead of Thee!

QUANTUM MUTATA.

THERE was a time in Europe long ago
When no man died for freedom anywhere,
But England's lion leaping from its lair
Laid hands on the oppressor! it was so
While England could a great Republic show.
Witness the men of Piedmont, chiefest care
Of Cromwell, when with impotent despair
The Pontiff in his painted portico
Trembled before our stern ambassadors.
How comes it then that from such high estate
We have thus fallen, save that Luxury
With barren merchandise piles up the gate
Where noble thoughts and deeds should enter by :
Else might we still be Milton's heritors.

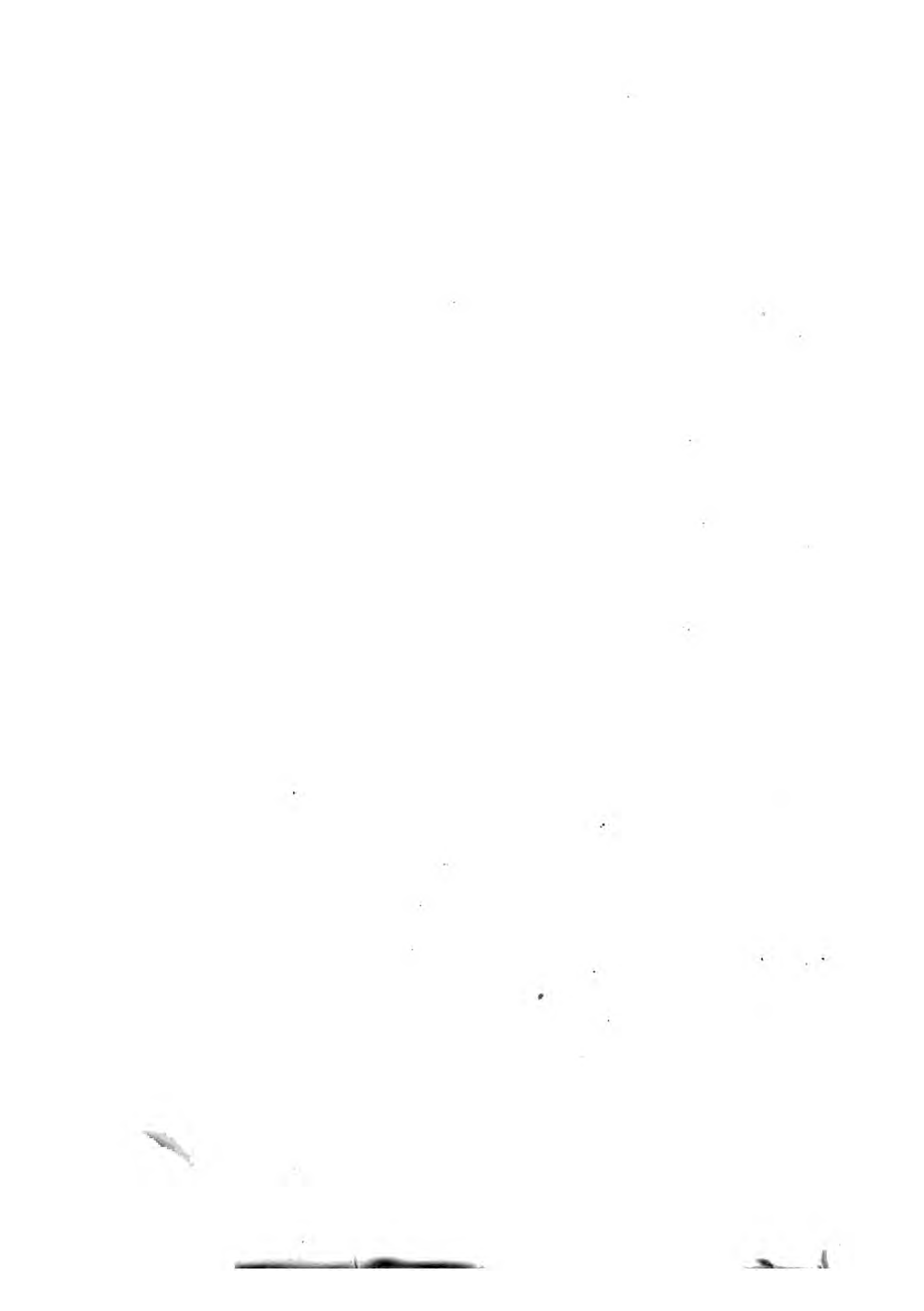
LIBERTATIS SACRA FAMES.

ALBEIT nurtured in democracy,
And liking best that state republican
Where every man is Kinglike and no man
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,
Better the rule of One, whom all obey,
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane
Plant the red flag upon the piled-up street
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign
Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honour, all things fade,
Save Treason and the dagger of her trade,
And Murder with his silent bloody feet.

THEORETIKOS.

THIS mighty empire hath but feet of clay :
Of all its ancient chivalry and might
Our little island is forsaken quite :
Some enemy hath stolen its crown of bay,
And from its hills that voice hath passed away
Which spake of Freedom : O come out of it,
Come out of it, my Soul, thou art not fit
For this vile traffic-house, where day by day
Wisdom and reverence are sold at mart,
And the rude people rage with ignorant cries
Against an heritage of centuries.
It mars my calm : wherefore in dreams of Art
And loftiest culture I would stand apart,
Neither for God, nor for his enemies.

THE GARDEN OF EROS.



IT is full summer now, the heart of June,
Not yet the sun-burnt reapers are a-stir
Upon the upland meadow where too soon
Rich autumn time, the season's usurer,
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,
And see his treasure scattered by the wild and spend-
thrift breeze.

Too soon indeed! yet here the daffodil,
That love-child of the Spring, has lingered on
To vex the rose with jealousy, and still
The harebell spreads her azure pavilion,
And like a strayed and wandering reveller
Abandoned of its brothers, whom long since June's
messenger

The missel-thrush has frightened from the glade,
 One pale narcissus loiters fearfully
Close to a shadowy nook, where half afraid
 Of their own loveliness some violets lie
That will not look the gold sun in the face
For fear of too much splendour,—ah! methinks it is
 a place

Which should be trodden by Persephone
 When wearied of the flowerless fields of Dis!
Or danced on by the lads of Arcady!
 The hidden secret of eternal bliss
Known to the Grecian here a man might find,
Ah! you and I may find it now if Love and Sleep be
 kind.

There are the flowers which mourning Herakles
 Strewed on the tomb of Hylas, columbine,
Its white doves all a-flutter where the breeze
 Kissed them too harshly, the small celandine,
That yellow-kirtled chorister of eve,
And lilac lady's-smock,—but let them bloom alone,
 and leave

Yon spired holly-hock red-crocketed
To sway its silent chimes, else must the bee,
Its little bellringer, go seek instead
Some other pleasaunce ; the anemone
That weeps at daybreak, like a silly girl
Before her love, and hardly lets the butterflies unfurl

Their painted wings beside it,—bid it pine
In pale virginity ; the winter snow
Will suit it better than those lips of thine
Whose fires would but scorch it, rather go
And pluck that amorous flower which blooms alone,
Fed by the pander wind with dust of kisses not its
own.

The trumpet-mouths of red convolvulus
So dear to maidens, creamy meadow-sweet
Whiter than Juno's throat and odorous
As all Arabia, hyacinths the feet
Of Huntress Dian would be loth to mar
For any dappled fawn,—pluck these, and those fond
flowers which are

Fairer than what Queen Venus trod upon
 Beneath the pines of Ida, eucharis,
That morning star which does not dread the sun,
 And budding marjoram which but to kiss
Would sweeten Cytheræa's lips and make
Adonis jealous,—these for thy head,—and for thy
 girdle take

Yon curving spray of purple clematis
 Whose gorgeous dye outflames the Tyrian King,
And fox-gloves with their nodding chalices,
 But that one narciss which the startled Spring
Let from her kirtle fall when first she heard
In her own woods the wild tempestuous song of sum-
 mer's bird,

Ah! leave it for a subtle memory
 Of those sweet tremulous days of rain and sun,
When April laughed between her tears to see
 The early primrose with shy footsteps run
From the gnarled oak-tree roots till all the wold,
Spite of its brown and trampled leaves, grew bright
 with shimmering gold.

Nay, pluck it too, it is not half so sweet
 As thou thyself, my soul's idolatry !
And when thou art a-wearied at thy feet
 Shall oxlips weave their brightest tapestry,
For thee the woodbine shall forget its pride
And vail its tangled whorls, and thou shalt walk on
 daisies pied.

And I will cut a reed by yonder spring
 And make the wood-gods jealous, and old Pan
Wonder what young intruder dares to sing
 In these still haunts, where never foot of man
Should tread at evening, lest he chance to spy
The marble limbs of Artemis and all her company.

And I will tell thee why the jacinth wears
 Such dread embroidery of dolorous moan,
And why the hapless nightingale forbears
 To sing her song at noon, but weeps alone
When the fleet swallow sleeps, and rich men feast,
And why the laurel trembles when she sees the
 lightening east.

And I will sing how sad Proserpina
 Unto a grave and gloomy Lord was wed,
And lure the silver-breasted Helena
 Back from the lotus meadows of the dead,
So shalt thou see that awful loveliness
For which two mighty Hosts met fearfully in war's
 abyss!

And then I'll pipe to thee that Grecian tale
 How Cynthia loves the lad Endymion,
And hidden in a grey and misty veil
 Hies to the cliffs of Latmos once the Sun
Leaps from his ocean bed in fruitless chase
Of those pale flying feet which fade away in his
 embrace.

And if my flute can breathe sweet melody,
 We may behold Her face who long ago
Dwelt among men by the Ægean sea,
 And whose sad house with pillaged portico
And friezeless wall and columns toppled down
Looms o'er the ruins of that fair and violet-cinctured
 town.

Spirit of Beauty ! tarry still a-while,
They are not dead, thine ancient votaries,
Some few there are to whom thy radiant smile
Is better than a thousand victories,
Though all the nobly slain of Waterloo
Rise up in wrath against them ! tarry still, there are a
few

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood
And consecrate their being, I at least
Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,
And in thy temples found a goodlier feast
Than this starved age can give me, spite of all
Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so dogmatical.

Here not Cephissos, not Ilissos flows,
The woods of white Colonos are not here,
On our bleak hills the olive never blows,
No simple priest conducts his lowing steer
Up the steep marble way, nor through the town
Do laughing maidens bear to thee the crocus-flowered
gown.

Yet tarry! for the boy who loved thee best,
Whose very name should be a memory
To make thee linger, sleeps in silent rest
Beneath the Roman walls, and melody
Still mourns her sweetest lyre, none can play
The lute of Adonais, with his lips Song passed away.

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left
One silver voice to sing his threnody,
But ah! too soon of it we were bereft
When on that riven night and stormy sea
Panthea claimed her singer as her own,
And slew the mouth that praised her ; since which
time we walk alone,

Save for that fiery heart, that morning star
Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye
Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war
The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy
Rise mightily like Hesperus and bring
The great Republic! him at least thy love hath
taught to sing,

And he hath been with thee at Thessaly,
And seen white Atalanta fleet of foot
In passionless and fierce virginity
Hunting the tuskéd boar, his honied lute
Hath pierced the cavern of the hollow hill,
And Venus laughs to know one knee will bow
before her still.

And he hath kissed the lips of Proserpine,
And sung the Galilæan's requiem,
That wounded forehead dashed with blood and wine
He hath discrowned, the Ancient Gods in him
Have found their last, most ardent worshipper,
And the new Sign grows grey and dim before its
conqueror.

Spirit of Beauty ! tarry with us still,
It is not quenched the torch of poesy,
The star that shook above the Eastern hill
Holds unassailed its argent armoury
From all the gathering gloom and fretful fight—
O tarry with us still ! for through the long and
common night,

Morris, our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed,
With soft and sylvan pipe has oft beguiled
The weary soul of man in troublous need,
And from the far and flowerless fields of ice
Has brought fair flowers meet to make an earthly
paradise.

We know them all, Gudrun the strong men's bride,
Aslaug and Olafson we know them all,
How giant Grettir fought and Sigurd died,
And what enchantment held the king in thrall
When lonely Brynhild wrestled with the powers
That war against all passion, ah! how oft through
summer hours,

Long listless summer hours when the noon
Being enamoured of a damask rose
Forgets to journey westward, till the moon
The pale usurper of its tribute grows
From a thin sickle to a silver shield
And chides its loitering car—how oft, in some cool
grassy field

Far from the cricket-ground and noisy eight,
At Bagley, where the rustling bluebells come
Almost before the blackbird finds a mate
And overstay the swallow, and the hum
Of many murmuring bees flits through the leaves,
Have I lain poring on the dreamy tales his fancy
weaves,

And through their unreal woes and mimic pain
Wept for myself, and so was purified,
And in their simple mirth grew glad again ;
For as I sailed upon that pictured tide
The strength and splendour of the storm was mine
Without the storm's red ruin, for the singer is divine,

The little laugh of water falling down
Is not so musical, the clammy gold
Close hoarded in the tiny waxen town
Has less of sweetness in it, and the old
Half-withered reeds that waved in Arcady
Touched by his lips break forth again to fresher
harmony.

Spirit of Beauty tarry yet a-while !

Although the cheating merchants of the mart
With iron roads profane our lovely isle,
And break on whirling wheels the limbs of Art,
Ay ! though the crowded factories beget
The blind-worm Ignorance that slays the soul, O
tarry yet !

For One at least there is,—He bears his name
From Dante and the seraph Gabriel,—
Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame
To light thine altar ; He too loves thee well,
Who saw old Merlin lured in Vivien's snare,
And the white feet of angels coming down the golden
stair,

Loves thee so well, that all the World for him
A gorgeous-coloured vestiture must wear,
And Sorrow take a purple diadem,
Or else be no more Sorrow, and Despair
Gild its own thorns, and Pain, like Adon, be
Even in anguish beautiful ;—such is the empery

Which Painters hold, and such the heritage
This gentle solemn Spirit doth possess,
Being a better mirror of his age
In all his pity, love, and weariness,
Than those who can but copy common things,
And leave the Soul unpainted with its mighty
questionings.

But they are few, and all romance has flown,
And men can prophesy about the sun,
And lecture on his arrows—how, alone,
Through a waste void the soulless atoms run,
How from each tree its weeping nymph has fled,
And that no more 'mid English reeds a Naiad shows
her head.

Methinks these new Actæons boast too soon
That they have spied on beauty; what if we
Have analyzed the rainbow, robbed the moon
Of her most ancient, chastest mystery,
Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a
telescope!

What profit if this scientific age
Burst through our gates with all its retinue
Of modern miracles! Can it assuage
One lover's breaking heart? what can it do
To make one life more beautiful, one day
More god-like in its period? but now the Age of Clay

Returns in horrid cycle, and the earth
Hath borne again a noisy progeny
Of ignorant Titans, whose ungodly birth
Hurls them against the august hierarchy
Which sat upon Olympus, to the Dust
They have appealed, and to that barren arbiter they
must

Repair for judgment, let them, if they can,
From Natural Warfare and insensate Chance,
Create the new Ideal rule for man!
Methinks that was not my inheritance;
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul
Passes from higher heights of life to a more supreme
goal.

Lo! while we spake the earth did turn away
Her visage from the God, and Hecate's boat
Rose silver-laden, till the jealous day
Blew all its torches out: I did not note
The waning hours, to young Endymions
Time's palsied fingers count in vain his rosary of
suns!

Mark how the yellow iris wearily
Leans back its throat, as though it would be kissed
By its false chamberer, the dragon-fly,
Who, like a blue vein on a girl's white wrist,
Sleeps on that snowy primrose of the night,
Which 'gins to flush with crimson shame, and die
beneath the light.

Come let us go, against the pallid shield
Of the wan sky the almond blossoms gleam,
The corn-crake nested in the unmown field
Answers its mate, across the misty stream
On fitful wing the startled curlews fly,
And in his sedgy bed the lark, for joy that Day is
nigh,

Scatters the pearléd dew from off the grass,
In tremulous ecstasy to greet the sun,
Who soon in gilded panoply will pass
Forth from yon orange-curtained pavilion
Hung in the burning east, see, the red rim
O'ertops the expectant hills! it is the God! for love of
him

Already the shrill lark is out of sight,
Flooding with waves of song this silent dell,—
Ah! there is something more in that bird's flight
Than could be tested in a crucible!—
But the air freshens, let us go, why soon
The woodmen will be here; how we have lived this
night of June!

ROSA MYSTICA.



ROSA MYSTICA.

REQUIESCAT.

TREAD lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast,
I vex my heart alone
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet,
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

AVIGNON.

SONNET ON APPROACHING ITALY.

I REACHED the Alps : the soul within me burned
Italia, my Italia, at thy name :
And when from out the mountain's heart I came
And saw the land for which my life had yearned,
I laughed as one who some great prize had earned :
And musing on the story of thy fame
I watched the day, till marked with wounds of flame
The turquoise sky to burnished gold was turned,
The pine-trees waved as waves a woman's hair,
And in the orchards every twining spray
Was breaking into flakes of blossoming foam :
But when I knew that far away at Rome
In evil bonds a second Peter lay,
I wept to see the land so very fair.

TURIN.

SAN MINIATO.

SEE, I have climbed the mountain side
Up to this holy house of God,
Where once that Angel-Painter trod
Who saw the heavens opened wide,

And throned upon the crescent moon
The Virginal white Queen of Grace,—
Mary! could I but see thy face
Death could not come at all too soon.

O crowned by God with thorns and pain!
Mother of Christ! O mystic wife!
My heart is weary of this life
And over-sad to sing again.

O crowned by God with love and flame!
O crowned by Christ the Holy One!
O listen ere the searching sun
Show to the world my sin and shame.

AVE MARIA PLENA GRATIA.

WAS this His coming ! I had hoped to see
A scene of wondrous glory, as was told
Of some great God who in a rain of gold
Broke open bars and fell on Danae :
Or a dread vision as when Semele
Sickening for love and unappeased desire
Prayed to see God's clear body, and the fire
Caught her white limbs and slew her utterly :
With such glad dreams I sought this holy place,
And now with wondering eyes and heart I stand
Before this supreme mystery of Love :
A kneeling girl with passionless pale face,
An angel with a lily in his hand,
And over both with outstretched wings the Dove.

FLORENCE.

ITALIA.

ITALIA! thou art fallen, though with sheen
Of battle-spears thy clamorous armies stride
From the north Alps to the Sicilian tide!
Ay! fallen, though the nations hail thee Queen
Because rich gold in every town is seen,
And on thy sapphire lake in tossing pride
Of wind-filled vans thy myriad galleys ride
Beneath one flag of red and white and green.
O Fair and Strong! O Strong and Fair in vain!
Look southward where Rome's desecrated town
Lies mourning for her God-anointed King!
Look heaven-ward! shall God allow this thing?
Nay! but some flame-girt Raphael shall come down,
And smite the Spoiler with the sword of pain.

VENICE.

SONNET

WRITTEN IN HOLY WEEK AT GENOA.

I WANDERED in Scoglietto's green retreat,
The oranges on each o'erhanging spray
Burned as bright lamps of gold to shame the day ;
Some startled bird with fluttering wings and fleet
Made snow of all the blossoms, at my feet
Like silver moons the pale narcissi lay :
And the curved waves that streaked the sapphire bay
Laughed i' the sun, and life seemed very sweet.
Outside the young boy-priest passed singing clear,
" Jesus the Son of Mary has been slain,
O come and fill his sepulchre with flowers."
Ah, God! Ah, God! those dear Hellenic hours
Had drowned all memory of Thy bitter pain,
The Cross, the Crown, the Soldiers, and the Spear.

ROME UNVISITED.

I.

THE corn has turned from grey to red,
Since first my spirit wandered forth
From the drear cities of the north,
And to Italia's mountains fled.

And here I set my face towards home,
For all my pilgrimage is done,
Although, methinks, yon blood-red sun
Marshals the way to Holy Rome.

O Blessed Lady, who dost hold
Upon the seven hills thy reign!
O Mother without blot or stain,
Crowned with bright crowns of triple gold!

O Roma, Roma, at thy feet
I lay this barren gift of song!
For, ah! the way is steep and long
That leads unto thy sacred street.

II.

And yet what joy it were for me
To turn my feet unto the south,
And journeying towards the Tiber mouth
To kneel again at Fiesole !

And wandering through the tangled pines
That break the gold of Arno's stream,
To see the purple mist and gleam
Of morning on the Apennines.

By many a vineyard-hidden home,
Orchard, and olive-garden grey,
Till from the drear Campagna's way
The seven hills bear up the dome !

III.

A pilgrim from the northern seas—
What joy for me to seek alone
The wondrous Temple, and the throne
Of Him who holds the awful keys!

When, bright with purple and with gold,
Come priest and holy Cardinal,
And borne above the heads of all
The gentle Shepherd of the Fold.

O joy to see before I die
The only God-anointed King,
And hear the silver trumpets ring
A triumph as He passes by!

Or at the altar of the shrine
Holds high the mystic sacrifice,
And shows a God to human eyes
Beneath the veil of bread and wine.

IV.

For lo, what changes time can bring !
The cycles of revolving years
May free my heart from all its fears,
And teach my lips a song to sing.

Before yon field of trembling gold
Is garnered into dusty sheaves,
Or ere the autumn's scarlet leaves
Flutter as birds adown the wold,

I may have run the glorious race,
And caught the torch while yet aflame,
And called upon the holy name
Of Him who now doth hide His face.

ARONA.

URBS SACRA ÆTERNA.

ROME! what a scroll of History thine has been ;
In the first days thy sword republican
Ruled the whole world for many an age's span :
Then of thy peoples thou wert crownèd Queen,
Till in thy streets the bearded Goth was seen ;
And now upon thy walls the breezes fan
(Ah, city crowned by God, discrowned by man !)
The hated flag of red and white and green.
When was thy glory ! when in search for power
Thine eagles flew to greet the double sun,
And all the nations trembled at thy rod ?
Nay, but thy glory tarried for this hour,
When pilgrims kneel before the Holy One,
The prisoned shepherd of the Church of God.

MONTE MARIO.

SONNET.

ON HEARING THE DIES IRÆ SUNG IN THE
SISTINE CHAPEL.

NAY, Lord, not thus! white lilies in the spring,
Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove,
Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love
Than terrors of red flame and thundering.
The empurpled vines dear memories of Thee bring :
A bird at evening flying to its nest,
Tells me of One who had no place of rest :
I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.
Come rather on some autumn afternoon,
When red and brown are burnished on the leaves,
And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,
Come when the splendid fulness of the moon
Looks down upon the rows of golden sheaves,
And reap Thy harvest : we have waited long.

EASTER DAY.

THE silver trumpets rang across the Dome :
The people knelt upon the ground with awe :
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.
Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,
And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head :
In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.
My heart stole back across wide wastes of years
To One who wandered by a lonely sea,
And sought in vain for any place of rest :
"Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest,
I, only I, must wander wearily,
And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with tears."

E TENEBRIS.

COME down, O Christ, and help me! reach thy hand,
For I am drowning in a stormier sea
Than Simon on thy lake of Galilee:
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,
My heart is as some famine-murdered land,
Whence all good things have perished utterly,
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie
If I this night before God's throne should stand.
"He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height."
Nay, peace, I shall behold before the night,
The feet of brass, the robe more white than flame,
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

VITA NUOVA.

I STOOD by the unvintageable sea
Till the wet waves drenched face and hair with
spray,
The long red fires of the dying day
Burned in the west ; the wind piped drearily ;
And to the land the clamorous gulls did flee :
“ Alas ! ” I cried, “ my life is full of pain,
And who can garner fruit or golden grain,
From these waste fields which travail ceaselessly ! ”
My nets gaped wide with many a break and flaw
Nathless I threw them as my final cast
Into the sea, and waited for the end.
When lo ! a sudden glory ! and I saw
The argent splendour of white limbs ascend,
And in that joy forgot my tortured past.

MADONNA MIA.

A LILY-GIRL, not made for this world's pain,
With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,
And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous tears
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain :
Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,
Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,
And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,
Through whose wan marble creeps one purple vein.
Yet, though my lips shall praise her without cease,
Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,
Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe.
Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice
Beneath the flaming Lion's breast, and saw
The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

THE NEW HELEN.

WHERE hast thou been since round the walls of Troy
The sons of God fought in that great emprise?
Why dost thou walk our common earth again?
Hast thou forgotten that impassioned boy,
His purple galley, and his Tyrian men,
And treacherous Aphrodite's mocking eyes?
For surely it was thou, who, like a star
Hung in the silver silence of the night,
Didst lure the Old World's chivalry and might
Into the clamorous crimson waves of war!

Or didst thou rule the fire-laden moon?
In amorous Sidon was thy temple built
Over the light and laughter of the sea?
Where, behind lattice scarlet-wrought and gilt,
Some brown-limbed girl did weave thee tapestry,
All through the waste and wearied hours of noon;

Till her wan cheek with flame of passion burned,
And she rose up the sea-washed lips to kiss
Of some glad Cyprian sailor, safe returned
From Calpé and the cliffs of Herakles !

No ! thou art Helen, and none other one !
It was for thee that young Sarpedôn died,
And Memnôn's manhood was untimely spent ;
It was for thee gold-crested Hector tried
With Thetis' child that evil race to run,
In the last year of thy beleaguerment ;
Ay ! even now the glory of thy fame
Burns in those fields of trampled asphodel,
Where the high lords whom Ilion knew so well
Clash ghostly shields, and call upon thy name.

Where hast thou been ? in that enchanted land
Whose slumbering vales forlorn Calypso knew,
Where never mower rose to greet the day
But all unswathed the trammelling grasses grew,
And the sad shepherd saw the tall corn stand
Till summer's red had changed to withered gray ?

Didst thou lie there by some Lethæan stream
Deep brooding on thine ancient memory,
The crash of broken spears, the fiery gleam
From shivered helm, the Grecian battle-cry ?

Nay, thou wert hidden in that hollow hill
With one who is forgotten utterly,
That discrowned Queen men call the Erycine ;
Hidden away that never mightst thou see
The face of Her, before whose mouldering shrine
To-day at Rome the silent nations kneel ;
Who gat from Love no joyous gladdening,
But only Love's intolerable pain,
Only a sword to pierce her heart in twain,
Only the bitterness of child-bearing.

The lotos-leaves which heal the wounds of Death
Lie in thy hand ; O, be thou kind to me,
While yet I know the summer of my days ;
For hardly can my tremulous lips draw breath
To fill the silver trumpet with thy praise,
So bowed am I before thy mystery ;

So bowed and broken on Love's terrible wheel,
That I have lost all hope and heart to sing,
Yet care I not what ruin time may bring
If in thy temple thou wilt let me kneel.

Alas, alas, thou wilt not tarry here,
But, like that bird, the servant of the sun,
Who flies before the northwind and the night,
So wilt thou fly our evil land and drear,
Back to the tower of thine old delight,
And the red lips of young Euphorion ;
Nor shall I ever see thy face again,
But in this poisonous garden must I stay,
Crowning my brows with the thorn-crown of pain,
Till all my loveless life shall pass away.

O Helen ! Helen ! Helen ! yet a while,
Yet for a little while, O, tarry here,
Till the dawn cometh and the shadows flee !
For in the gladsome sunlight of thy smile
Of heaven or hell I have no thought or fear,
Seeing I know no other god but thee :

No other god save him, before whose feet
In nets of gold the tired planets move,
The incarnate spirit of spiritual love
Who in thy body holds his joyous seat.

Thou wert not born as common women are !
But, girt with silver splendour of the foam,
Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise !
And at thy coming some immortal star,
Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern skies,
And waked the shepherds on thine island-home.
Thou shalt not die : no asps of Egypt creep
Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air ;
No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,
Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.

Lily of love, pure and inviolate !
Tower of ivory ! red rose of fire !
Thou hast come down our darkness to illumine :
For we, close-caught in the wide nets of Fate,
Wearied with waiting for the World's Desire,
Aimlessly wandered in the house of gloom,

Aimlessly sought some slumberous anodyne
For wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness,
Till we beheld thy re-arisen shrine,
And the white glory of thy loveliness.

THE BURDEN OF ITYS.



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THIS English Thames is holier far than Rome,
Those harebells like a sudden flush of sea
Breaking across the woodland, with the foam
Of meadow-sweet and white anemone
To fleck their blue waves,—God is likelier there,
Than hidden in that crystal-hearted star the pale
monks bear!

Those violet-gleaming butterflies that take
Yon creamy lily for their pavilion
Are monsignores, and where the rushes shake
A lazy pike lies basking in the sun
His eyes half shut,—He is some mitred old
Bishop *in partibus!* look at those gaudy scales all
green and gold.

The wind the restless prisoner of the trees
Does well for Palæstrina, one would say
The mighty master's hands were on the keys
Of the Maria organ, which they play
When early on some sapphire Easter morn
In a high litter red as blood or sin the Pope is borne

From his dark House out to the Balcony
Above the bronze gates and the crowded square,
Whose very fountains seem for ecstasy
To toss their silver lances in the air,
And stretching out weak hands to East and West
In vain sends peace to peaceless lands, to restless
nations rest.

Is not yon lingering orange afterglow
That stays to vex the moon more fair than all
Rome's lordliest pageants! strange, a year ago
I knelt before some crimson Cardinal
Who bare the Host across the Esquiline,
And now—those common poppies in the wheat seem
twice as fine.

The blue-green beanfields yonder, tremulous
With the last shower, sweeter perfume bring
Through this cool evening than the odorous
Flame-jewelled censers the young deacons swing,
When the grey priest unlocks the curtained shrine,
And makes God's body from the common fruit of corn
and vine.

Poor Fra Giovanni bawling at the mass
Were out of tune now, for a small brown bird
Sings overhead, and through the long cool grass
I see that throbbing throat which once I heard
On starlit hills of flower-starred Arcady,
Once where the white and crescent sand of Salamis
meets sea.

Sweet is the swallow twittering on the eaves
At daybreak, when the mower whets his scythe,
And stock-doves murmur, and the milkmaid leaves
Her little lonely bed, and carols blithe
To see the heavy-lowing cattle wait
Stretching their huge and dripping mouths across the
farmyard gate.

And sweet the hops upon the Kentish leas,
And sweet the wind that lifts the new-mown hay,
And sweet the fretful swarms of grumbling bees
That round and round the linden blossoms play ;
And sweet the heifer breathing in the stall,
And the green bursting figs that hang upon the red-
brick wall.

And sweet to hear the cuckoo mock the spring
While the last violet loiters by the well,
And sweet to hear the shepherd Daphnis sing
The song of Linus through a sunny dell
Of warm Arcadia where the corn is gold
And the slight lithe-limbed reapers dance about the
wattled fold.

And sweet with young Lycoris to recline
In some Illyrian valley far away,
Where canopied on herbs amaracine
We too might waste the summer-tranced day
Matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,
While far beneath us frets the troubled purple of the
sea.

But sweeter far if silver-sandalled foot
Of some long-hidden God should ever tread
The Nuneham meadows, if with reeded flute
Pressed to his lips some Faun might raise his head
By the green water-flags, ah! sweet indeed
To see the heavenly herdsman call his white-fleeced
flock to feed.

Then sing to me thou tuneful chorister,
Though what thou sings't be thine own requiem!
Tell me thy tale thou hapless chronicler
Of thine own tragedies! do not contemn
These unfamiliar haunts, this English field,
For many a lovely coronal our northern isle can yield

Which Grecian meadows know not, many a rose
Which all day long in vales Æolian
A lad might seek in vain for overgrows
Our hedges like a wanton courtezan
Unthrifty of its beauty, lilies too
Ilissus never mirrored star our streams, and cockles
blue

Dot the green wheat which, though they are the signs
For swallows going south, would never spread
Their azure tents between the Attic vines ;
Even that little weed of ragged red,
Which bids the robin pipe, in Arcady
Would be a trespasser, and many an unsung elegy

Sleeps in the reeds that fringe our winding Thames
Which to awake were sweeter ravishment
Than ever Syrinx wept for, diadems
Of brown bee-studded orchids which were meant
For Cytheræa's brows are hidden here
Unknown to Cytheræa, and by yonder pasturing steer

There is a tiny yellow daffodil,
The butterfly can see it from afar,
Although one summer evening's dew could fill
Its little cup twice over ere the star
Had called the lazy shepherd to his fold
And be no prodigal, each leaf is flecked with spotted
gold

As if Jove's gorgeous leman Danae
Hot from his gilded arms had stooped to kiss
The trembling petals, or young Mercury
Low-flying to the dusky ford of Dis
Had with one feather of his pinions
Just brushed them! the slight stem which bears the
burden of its suns

Is hardly thicker than the gossamer,
Or poor Arachne's silver tapestry,—
Men say it bloomed upon the sepulchre
Of One I sometime worshipped, but to me
It seems to bring diviner memories
Of faun-loved Heliconian glades and blue nymph-
haunted seas,

Of an untrodden vale at Tempe where
On the clear river's marge Narcissus lies,
The tangle of the forest in his hair,
The silence of the woodland in his eyes,
Wooing that drifting imagery which is
No sooner kissed than broken, memories of Salmacis

Who is not boy or girl and yet is both,
Fed by two fires and unsatisfied
Through their excess, each passion being loth
For love's own sake to leave the other's side
Yet killing love by staying, memories
Of Oreads peeping through the leaves of silent moon-
lit trees,

Of lonely Ariadne on the wharf
At Naxos, when she saw the treacherous crew
Far out at sea, and waved her crimson scarf
And called false Theseus back again nor knew
That Dionysos on an amber pard
Was close behind her, memories of what Maeonia's bard

With sightless eyes beheld, the wall of Troy,
Queen Helen lying in the carven room,
And at her side an amorous red-lipped boy
Trimming with dainty hand his helmet's plume,
And far away the moil, the shout, the groan,
As Hector shielded off the spear and Ajax hurled the
stone ;

Of wingèd Perseus with his flawless sword
Cleaving the snaky tresses of the witch,
And all those tales imperishably stored
In little Grecian urns, freightage more rich
Than any gaudy galleon of Spain
Bare from the Indies ever! these at least bring back
again,

For well I know they are not dead at all,
The ancient Gods of Grecian poesy,
They are asleep, and when they hear thee call
Will wake and think 'tis very Thessaly,
This Thames the Daulian waters, this cool glade
The yellow-irised mead where once young Itys laughed
and played.

If it was thou dear jasmine-cradled bird
Who from the leafy stillness of thy throne
Sang to the wondrous boy, until he heard
The horn of Atalanta faintly blown
Across the Cumner hills, and wandering
Through Bagley wood at evening found the Attic poets'
spring,—



Ah! tiny sober-suited advocate

That pleadest for the moon against the day!
If thou didst make the shepherd seek his mate
On that sweet questing, when Proserpina
Forgot it was not Sicily and leant
Across the mossy Sandford stile in ravished wonder-
ment,—

Light-winged and bright-eyed miracle of the wood!

If ever thou didst soothe with melody
One of that little clan, that brotherhood
Which loved the morning-star of Tuscany
More than the perfect sun of Raphael
And is immortal, sing to me! for I too love thee well,

Sing on! sing on! let the dull world grow young,

Let elemental things take form again,
And the old shapes of Beauty walk among
The simple garths and open crofts, as when
The son of Leto bare the willow rod,
And the soft sheep and shaggy goats followed the
boyish God.

Sing on! sing on! and Bacchus will be here
 Astride upon his gorgeous Indian throne,
And over whimpering tigers shake the spear
 With yellow ivy crowned and gummy cone,
While at his side the wanton Bassarid
Will throw the lion by the mane and catch the
 mountain kid!

Sing on! and I will wear the leopard skin,
 And steal the moonéd wings of Ashtaroth,
Upon whose icy chariot we could win
 Cithæron in an hour e'er the froth
Has overbrimmed the wine-vat or the Faun
Ceased from the treading! ay, before the flickering
 lamp of dawn

Has scared the hooting owlet to its nest,
 And warned the bat to close its filmy vans,
Some Mænad girl with vine-leaves on her breast
 Will filch their beechnuts from the sleeping Pans
So softly that the little nested thrush
Will never wake, and then with shrilly laugh and leap
 will rush

Down the green valley where the fallen dew
Lies thick beneath the elm and count her store,
Till the brown Satyrs in a jolly crew
Trample the loosestrife down along the shore,
And where their hornèd master sits in state
Bring strawberries and bloomy plums upon a wicker
crate!

Sing on! and soon with passion-wearied face
Through the cool leaves Apollo's lad will come,
The Tyrian prince his bristled boar will chase
Adown the chestnut-copses all a-bloom,
And ivory-limbed, grey-eyed, with look of pride,
After yon velvet-coated deer the virgin maid will ride.

Sing on! and I the dying boy will see
Stain with his purple blood the waxen bell
That overweighs the jacinth, and to me
The wretched Cyprian her woe will tell,
And I will kiss her mouth and streaming eyes,
And lead her to the myrtle-hidden grove where Adon
lies!

Cry out aloud on Itys ! memory
That foster-brother of remorse and pain
Drops poison in mine ear,—O to be free,
To burn one's old ships ! and to launch again
Into the white-plumed battle of the waves
And fight old Proteus for the spoil of coral-flowered
caves !

O for Medea with her poppied spell !
O for the secret of the Colchian shrine !
O for one leaf of that pale asphodel
Which binds the tired brows of Proserpine,
And sheds such wondrous dews at eve that she
Dreams of the fields of Enna, by the far Sicilian sea,

Where oft the golden-girdled bee she chased
From lily to lily on the level mead,
Ere yet her sombre Lord had bid her taste
The deadly fruit of that pomegranate seed,
Ere the black steeds had harried her away
Down to the faint and flowerless land, the sick and
sunless day.

O for one midnight and as paramour
The Venus of the little Melian farm!
O that some antique statue for one hour
Might wake to passion, and that I could charm
The Dawn at Florence from its dumb despair
Mix with those mighty limbs and make that giant
breast my lair!

Sing on! sing on! I would be drunk with life,
Drunk with the trampled vintage of my youth,
I would forget the wearying wasted strife,
The riven veil, the Gorgon eyes of Truth,
The prayerless vigil and the cry for prayer,
The barren gifts, the lifted arms, the dull insensate
air!

Sing on! sing on! O feathered Niobe,
Thou canst make sorrow beautiful, and steal
From joy its sweetest music, not as we
Who by dead voiceless silence strive to heal
Our too untented wounds, and do but keep
Pain barricadoed in our hearts, and murder pillowed
sleep.

Sing louder yet, why must I still behold
The wan white face of that deserted Christ,
Whose bleeding hands my hands did once enfold,
Whose smitten lips my lips so oft have kissed,
And now in mute and marble misery
Sits in his lone dishonoured House and weeps,
perchance for me.

O memory cast down thy wreathèd shell!
Break thy hoarse lute O sad Melpomene!
O sorrow sorrow keep thy cloistered cell
Nor dim with tears this limpid Castaly!
Cease, cease, sad bird, thou dost the forest wrong
To vex its sylvan quiet with such wild impassioned
song!

Cease, cease, or if 'tis anguish to be dumb
Take from the pastoral thrush her simpler air,
Whose jocund carelessness doth more become
This English woodland than thy keen despair,
Ah! cease and let the northwind bear thy lay
Back to the rocky hills of Thrace, the stormy Daulian
bay.

A moment more, the startled leaves had stirred,
Endymion would have passed across the mead
Moonstruck with love, and this still Thames had heard
Pan plash and paddle groping for some reed
To lure from her blue cave that Naiad maid
Who for such piping listens half in joy and half afraid.

A moment more, the waking dove had cooed,
The silver daughter of the silver sea
With the fond gyves of clinging hands had wooed
Her wanton from the chase, and Dryope
Had thrust aside the branches of her oak
To see the lusty gold-haired lad rein in his snorting
yoke.

A moment more, the trees had stooped to kiss
Pale Daphne just awakening from the swoon
Of tremulous laurels, lonely Salmacis
Had bared his barren beauty to the moon,
And through the vale with sad voluptuous smile
Antinous had wandered, the red lotus of the Nile

Down leaning from his black and clustering hair,
To shade those slumberous eyelids' caverned bliss,
Or else on yonder grassy slope with bare
High-tuniced limbs unravished Artemis
Had bade her hounds give tongue, and roused the deer
From his green ambushade with shrill halloo and
pricking spear.

Lie still, lie still, O passionate heart, lie still !
O Melancholy, fold thy raven wing !
O sobbing Dryad, from thy hollow hill
Come not with such desponded answering !
No more thou wingèd Marsyas complain,
Apollo loveth not to hear such troubled songs of
pain !

It was a dream, the glade is tenantless,
No soft Ionian laughter moves the air,
The Thames creeps on in sluggish leadenness,
And from the copse left desolate and bare
Fled is young Bacchus with his revelry,
Yet still from Nuneham wood there comes that
thrilling melody

So sad, that one might think a human heart
 Brake in each separate note, a quality
Which music sometimes has, being the Art
 Which is most nigh to tears and memory,
Poor mourning Philomel, what dost thou fear ?
Thy sister doth not haunt these fields, Pandion is not
 here,

Here is no cruel Lord with murderous blade,
 No woven web of bloody heraldries,
But mossy dells for roving comrades made,
 Warm valleys where the tired student lies
With half-shut book, and many a winding walk
Where rustic lovers stray at eve in happy simple talk.

The harmless rabbit gambols with its young
 Across the trampled towing-path, where late
A troop of laughing boys in jostling throng
 Cheered with their noisy cries the racing eight ;
The gossamer, with ravelled silver threads,
Works at its little loom, and from the dusky red-eaved
 sheds

Of the lone Farm a flickering light shines out
Where the swinked shepherd drives his bleating
flock
Back to their wattled sheep-cotes, a faint shout
Comes from some Oxford boat at Sandford lock,
And starts the moor-hen from the sedgy rill,
And the dim lengthening shadows flit like swallows
up the hill.

The heron passes homeward to the mere,
The blue mist creeps among the shivering trees,
Gold world by world the silent stars appear,
And like a blossom blown before the breeze
A white moon drifts across the shimmering sky,
Mute arbitress of all thy sad, thy rapturous threnody.

She does not heed thee, wherefore should she heed,
She knows Endymion is not far away,
'Tis I, 'tis I, whose soul is as the reed
Which has no message of its own to play,
So pipes another's bidding, it is I,
Drifting with every wind on the wide sea of misery.

Ah! the brown bird has ceased : one exquisite trill

 About the sombre woodland seems to cling,

Dying in music, else the air is still,

 So still that one might hear the bat's small wing

Wander and wheel above the pines, or tell

Each tiny dewdrop dripping from the blue-bell's

 brimming cell.

And far away across the lengthening wold,

 Across the willowy flats and thickets brown,

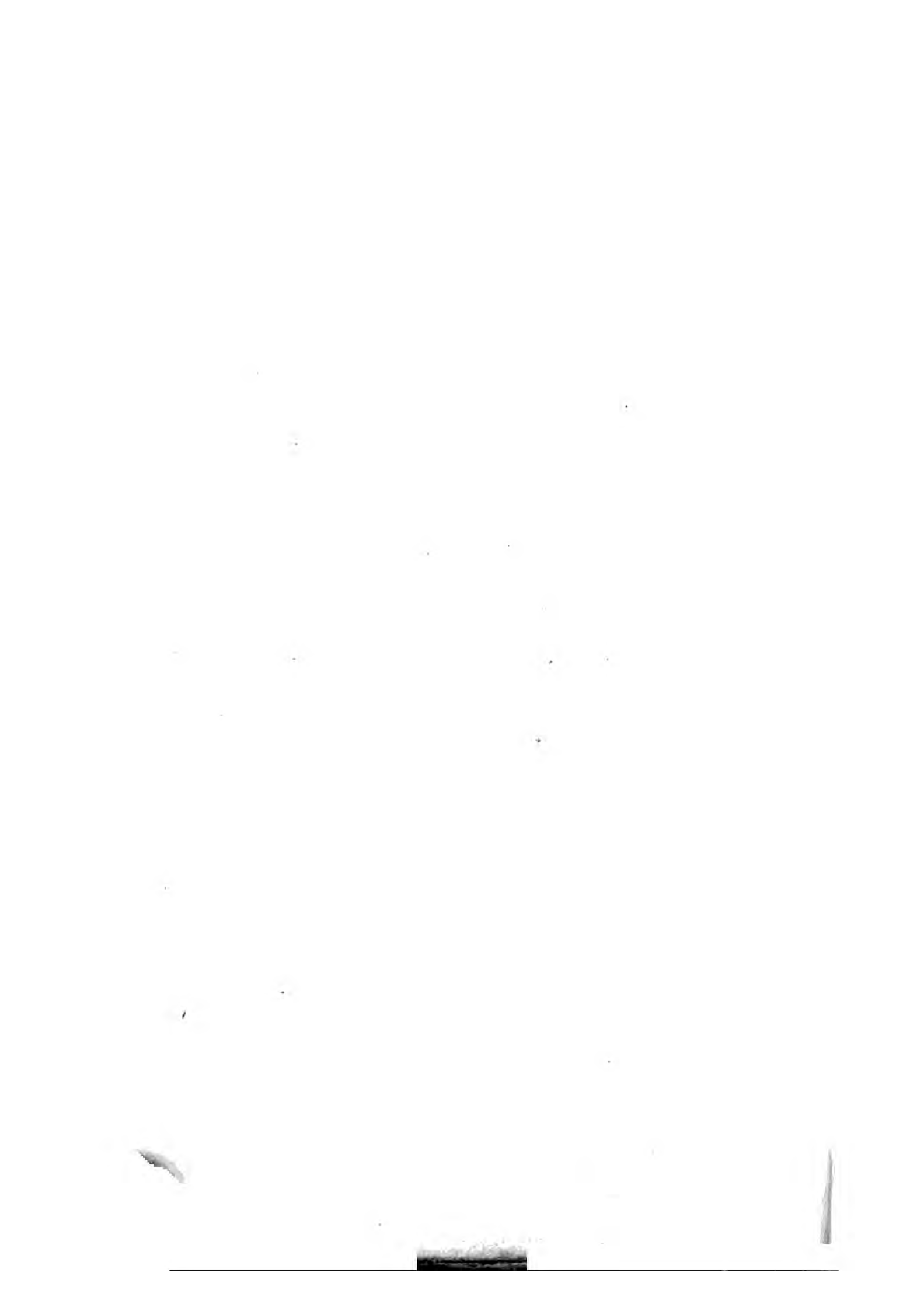
Magdalen's tall tower tipped with tremulous gold

 Marks the long High Street of the little town,

And warns me to return ; I must not wait,

Hark! 'tis the curfew booming from the bell at Christ

 Church gate.



IMPRESSION DU MATIN.

THE Thames nocturne of blue and gold
 Changed to a Harmony in grey :
 A barge with ochre-coloured hay
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down
 The bridges, till the houses' walls
 Seemed changed to shadows, and S. Paul's
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang
 Of waking life ; the streets were stirred
 With country waggons : and a bird
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

But one pale woman all alone,
 The daylight kissing her wan hair,
 Loitered beneath the gas lamps' flare,
With lips of flame and heart of stone.

MAGDALEN WALKS.

THE little white clouds are racing over the sky,
And the fields are strewn with the gold of the
flower of March,
The daffodil breaks under foot, and the tasselled
larch
Sways and swings as the thrush goes hurrying by.

A delicate odour is borne on the wings of the morning
breeze,
The odour of leaves, and of grass, and of newly
upturned earth,
The birds are singing for joy of the Spring's glad
birth,
Hopping from branch to branch on the rocking trees.

And all the woods are alive with the murmur and
sound of Spring,
And the rosebud breaks into pink on the climbing
briar,

And the crocus-bed is a quivering moon of fire
Girdled round with the belt of an amethyst ring.

And the plane to the pine-tree is whispering some
tale of love

Till it rustles with laughter and tosses its mantle
of green,

And the gloom of the wych-elm's hollow is lit with
the iris sheen

Of the burnished rainbow throat and the silver breast
of a dove.

See! the lark starts up from his bed in the meadow
there,

Breaking the gossamer threads and the nets of dew,
And flashing a-down the river, a flame of blue!

The kingfisher flies like an arrow, and wounds the air.

ATHANASIA.

To that gaunt House of Art which lacks for naught
Of all the great things men have saved from Time,
The withered body of a girl was brought
Dead ere the world's glad youth had touched its
prime,
And seen by lonely Arabs lying hid
In the dim womb of some black pyramid.

But when they had unloosed the linen band
Which swathed the Egyptian's body,—lo! was
found
Closed in the wasted hollow of her hand
A little seed, which sown in English ground
Did wondrous snow of starry blossoms bear,
And spread rich odours through our springtide air.

With such strange arts this flower did allure
That all forgotten was the asphodel,
And the brown bee, the lily's paramour,
Forsook the cup where he was wont to dwell,

For not a thing of earth it seemed to be,
But stolen from some heavenly Arcady.

In vain the sad narcissus, wan and white
At its own beauty, hung across the stream,
The purple dragon-fly had no delight
With its gold dust to make his wings a-gleam,
Ah! no delight the jasmine-bloom to kiss,
Or brush the rain-pearls from the eucharis.

For love of it the passionate nightingale
Forgot the hills of Thrace, the cruel king,
And the pale dove no longer cared to sail
Through the wet woods at time of blossoming,
But round this flower of Egypt sought to float,
With silvered wing and amethystine throat.

While the hot sun blazed in his tower of blue
A cooling wind crept from the land of snows,
And the warm south with tender tears of dew
Drenched its white leaves when Hesperos uprose
Amid those sea-green meadows of the sky
On which the scarlet bars of sunset lie.

But when o'er wastes of lily-haunted field
The tired birds had stayed their amorous tune,
And broad and glittering like an argent shield
High in the sapphire heavens hung the moon,
Did no strange dream or evil memory make
Each tremulous petal of its blossoms shake ?

Ah no ! to this bright flower a thousand years
Seemed but the lingering of a summer's day,
It never knew the tide of cankering fears
Which turn a boy's gold hair to withered grey,
The dread desire of death it never knew,
Or how all folk that they were born must rue.

For we to death with pipe and dancing go,
Nor would we pass the ivory gate again,
As some sad river wearied of its flow
Through the dull plains, the haunts of common men,
Leaps lover-like into the terrible sea !
And counts it gain to die so gloriously.

We mar our lordly strength in barren strife
With the world's legions led by clamorous care,

It never feels decay but gathers life
From the pure sunlight and the supreme air,
We live beneath Time's wasting sovereignty,
It is the child of all eternity.

SERENADE.

(FOR MUSIC.)

THE western wind is blowing fair
 Across the dark Ægean sea,
And at the secret marble stair
 My Tyrian galley waits for thee.
Come down! the purple sail is spread,
 The watchman sleeps within the town,
O leave thy lily-flowered bed,
 O Lady mine come down, come down!

She will not come, I know her well,
 Of lover's vows she hath no care,
And little good a man can tell
 Of one so cruel and so fair.
True love is but a woman's toy,
 They never know the lover's pain,
And I who loved as loves a boy
 Must love in vain, must love in vain.

O noble pilot tell me true
Is that the sheen of golden hair?
Or is it but the tangled dew
That binds the passion-flowers there?
Good sailor come and tell me now
Is that my Lady's lily hand?
Or is it but the gleaming prow,
Or is it but the silver sand?

No! no! 'tis not the tangled dew,
'Tis not the silver-fretted sand,
It is my own dear Lady true
With golden hair and lily hand!
O noble pilot steer for Troy,
Good sailor ply the labouring oar,
This is the Queen of life and joy
Whom we must bear from Grecian shore!

The waning sky grows faint and blue,
It wants an hour still of day,
Aboard! aboard! my gallant crew,
O Lady mine away! away!

O noble pilot steer for Troy,
Good sailor ply the labouring oar,
O loved as only loves a boy !
O loved for ever evermore !

E N D Y M I O N .

(FOR MUSIC.)

THE apple trees are hung with gold,
And birds are loud in Arcady,
The sheep lie bleating in the fold,
The wild goat runs across the wold,
But yesterday his love he told,
I know he will come back to me.
O rising moon! O Lady moon!
Be you my lover's sentinel,
You cannot choose but know him well,
For he is shod with purple shoon,
You cannot choose but know my love,
For he a shepherd's crook doth bear,
And he is soft as any dove,
And brown and curly is his hair.

The turtle now has ceased to call
Upon her crimson-footed groom,
The grey wolf prowls about the stall,

The lily's singing seneschal
Sleeps in the lily-bell, and all
The violet hills are lost in gloom.
O risen moon! O holy moon!
Stand on the top of Helice,
And if my own true love you see,
Ah! if you see the purple shoon,
The hazel crook, the lad's brown hair,
The goat-skin wrapped about his arm,
Tell him that I am waiting where
The rushlight glimmers in the Farm.

The falling dew is cold and chill,
And no bird sings in Arcady,
The little fauns have left the hill,
Even the tired daffodil
Has closed its gilded doors, and still
My lover comes not back to me.
False moon! False moon! O waning moon!
Where is my own true lover gone,
Where are the lips vermilion,
The shepherd's crook, the purple shoon?

Why spread that silver pavilion, .
 Why wear that veil of drifting mist ?
Ah ! thou hast young Endymion,
 Thou hast the lips that should be kissed !

LA BELLA DONNA DELLA MIA MENTE.

MY limbs are wasted with a flame,
 My feet are sore with travelling,
 For calling on my Lady's name
 My lips have now forgot to sing.

O Linnet in the wild-rose brake
 Strain for my Love thy melody,
 O Lark sing louder for love's sake,
 My gentle Lady passeth by.

She is too fair for any man
 To see or hold his heart's delight,
 Fairer than Queen or courtezan
 Or moon-lit water in the night.

Her hair is bound with myrtle leaves,
 (Green leaves upon her golden hair!)
 Green grasses through the yellow sheaves
 Of autumn corn are not more fair.

Her little lips, more made to kiss
Than to cry bitterly for pain,
Are tremulous as brook-water is,
Or roses after evening rain.

Her neck is like white melilote
Flushing for pleasure of the sun,
The throbbing of the linnet's throat
Is not so sweet to look upon.

As a pomegranate, cut in twain,
White-seeded, is her crimson mouth,
Her cheeks are as the fading stain
Where the peach reddens to the south.

O twining hands! O delicate
White body made for love and pain!
O House of love! O desolate
Pale flower, beaten by the rain!

CHANSON.

A RING of gold and a milk-white dove
Are goodly gifts for thee,
And a hempen rope for your own love
To hang upon a tree.

For you a House of Ivory
(Roses are white in the rose-bower) !
A narrow bed for me to lie
(White, O white, is the hemlock flower) !

Myrtle and jessamine for you
(O the red rose is fair to see) !
For me the cypress and the rue
(Fairest of all is rose-mary) !

For you three lovers of your hand
(Green grass where a man lies dead) !
For me three paces on the sand
(Plant lilies at my head) !

CHARMIDES.



HE was a Grecian lad, who coming home
With pulpy figs and wine from Sicily
Stood at his galley's prow, and let the foam
Blow through his crisp brown curls unconsciously,
And holding wave and wind in boy's despite
Peered from his dripping seat across the wet and
stormy night

Till with the dawn he saw a burnished spear
Like a thin thread of gold against the sky,
And hoisted sail, and strained the creaking gear,
And bade the pilot head her lustily
Against the nor'west gale, and all day long
Held on his way, and marked the rowers' time with
measured song,

And when the faint Corinthian hills were red
 Dropped anchor in a little sandy bay,
And with fresh boughs of olive crowned his head,
 And brushed from cheek and throat the hoary spray,
And washed his limbs with oil, and from the hold
Brought out his linen tunic and his sandals brazen-
 soled,

And a rich robe stained with the fishes' juice
 Which of some swarthy trader he had bought
Upon the sunny quay at Syracuse,
 And was with Tyrian broideries inwrought,
And by the questioning merchants made his way
Up through the soft and silver woods, and when the
 labouring day

Had spun its tangled web of crimson cloud,
 Clomb the high hill, and with swift silent feet
Crept to the fane unnoticed by the crowd
 Of busy priests, and from some dark retreat
Watched the young swains his frolic playmates bring
The firstling of their little flock, and the shy shepherd
 fling

The crackling salt upon the flame, or hang
His studded crook against the temple wall
To Her who keeps away the ravenous fang
Of the base wolf from homestead and from stall ;
And then the clear-voiced maidens 'gan to sing,
And to the altar each man brought some goodly
offering,

A beechen cup brimming with milky foam,
A fair cloth wrought with cunning imagery
Of hounds in chase, a waxen honey-comb
Dripping with oozy gold which scarce the bee
Had ceased from building, a black skin of oil
Meet for the wrestlers, a great boar the fierce and
white-tusked spoil

Stolen from Artemis that jealous maid
To please Athena, and the dappled hide
Of a tall stag who in some mountain glade
Had met the shaft ; and then the herald cried,
And from the pillared precinct one by one
Went the glad Greeks well pleased that they their
simple vows had done.

And the old priest put out the waning fires
Save that one lamp whose restless ruby glowed
For ever in the cell, and the shrill lyres
Came fainter on the wind, as down the road
In joyous dance these country folk did pass,
And with stout hands the warder closed the gates of
polished brass.

Long time he lay and hardly dared to breathe,
And heard the cadenced drip of spilt-out wine,
And the rose-petals falling from the wreath
As the night breezes wandered through the shrine,
And seemed to be in some entranced swoon
Till through the open roof above the full and
brimming moon

Flooded with sheeny waves the marble floor,
When from his nook upleapt the venturous lad,
And flinging wide the cedar-carven door
Beheld an awful image saffron-clad
And armed for battle! the gaunt Griffin glared
From the huge helm, and the long lance of wreck
and ruin flared

Like a red rod of flame, stony and steeled
The Gorgon's head its leaden eyeballs rolled,
And writhed its snaky horrors through the shield,
And gaped aghast with bloodless lips and cold
In passion impotent, while with blind gaze
The blinking owl between the feet hooted in shrill
amaze.

The lonely fisher as he trimmed his lamp
Far out at sea off Sunium, or cast
The net for tunnies, heard a brazen tramp
Of horses smite the waves, and a wild blast
Divide the folded curtains of the night,
And knelt upon the little poop, and prayed in holy
fright.

And guilty lovers in their vinery
Forgot a little while their stolen sweets,
Deeming they heard dread Dian's bitter cry ;
And the grim watchmen on their lofty seats
Ran to their shields in haste precipitate,
Or strained black-bearded throats across the dusky
parapet.

For round the temple rolled the clang of arms,
And the twelve Gods leapt up in marble fear,
And the air quaked with dissonant alarums
Till huge Poseidon shook his mighty spear,
And on the frieze the prancing horses neighed,
And the low tread of hurrying feet rang from the
cavalcade.

Ready for death with parted lips he stood,
And well content at such a price to see
That calm wide brow, that terrible maidenhood,
The marvel of that pitiless chastity,
Ah! well content indeed, for never wight
Since Troy's young shepherd prince had seen so
wonderful a sight.

Ready for death he stood, but lo! the air
Grew silent, and the horses ceased to neigh,
And off his brow he tossed the clustering hair,
And from his limbs he threw the cloak away,
For whom would not such love make desperate,
And nigher came, and touched her throat, and with
hands violate

Undid the cuirass, and the crocus gown,
And bared the breasts of polished ivory,
Till from the waist the peplos falling down
Left visible the secret mystery
Which to no lover will Athena show,
The grand cool flanks, the crescent thighs, the bossy
hills of snow.

Those who have never known a lover's sin
Let them not read my ditty, it will be
To their dull ears so musicless and thin
That they will have no joy of it, but ye
To whose wan cheeks now creeps the lingering smile,
Ye who have learned who Eros is,—O listen yet
a-while.

A little space he let his greedy eyes
Rest on the burnished image, till mere sight
Half swooned for surfeit of such luxuries,
And then his lips in hungering delight
Fed on her lips, and round the towered neck
He flung his arms, nor cared at all his passion's will
to check.

X

Never I ween did lover hold such tryst,
For all night long he murmured honeyed word,
And saw her sweet unravished limbs, and kissed
Her pale and argent body undisturbed,
And paddled with the polished throat, and pressed
His hot and beating heart upon her chill and icy
breast.

It was as if Numidian javelins
Pierced through and through his wild and whirling
brain,
And his nerves thrilled like throbbing violins
In exquisite pulsation, and the pain
Was such sweet anguish that he never drew
His lips from hers till overhead the lark of warning
flew.

They who have never seen the daylight peer
Into a darkened room, and drawn the curtain,
And with dull eyes and wearied from some dear
And worshipped body risen, they for certain
Will never know of what I try to sing,
How long the last kiss was, how fond and late his
lingering.

The moon was girdled with a crystal rim,
The sign which shipmen say is ominous
Of wrath in heaven, the wan stars were dim,
And the low lightening east was tremulous
With the faint fluttering wings of flying dawn,
Ere from the silent sombre shrine this lover had
withdrawn.

Down the steep rock with hurried feet and fast
Clomb the brave lad, and reached the cave of Pan,
And heard the goat-foot snoring as he passed,
And leapt upon a grassy knoll and ran
Like a young fawn unto an olive wood
Which in a shady valley by the well-built city stood.

And sought a little stream, which well he knew,
For oftentimes with boyish careless shout
The green and crested grebe he would pursue,
Or snare in woven net the silver trout,
And down amid the startled reeds he lay
Panting in breathless sweet affright, and waited for
the day.

On the green bank he lay, and let one hand
Dip in the cool dark eddies listlessly,
And soon the breath of morning came and fanned
His hot flushed cheeks, or lifted wantonly
The tangled curls from off his forehead, while
He on the running water gazed with strange and
secret smile.

And soon the shepherd in rough woollen cloak
With his long crook undid the wattled cotes,
And from the stack a thin blue wreath of smoke
Curled through the air across the ripening oats,
And on the hill the yellow house-dog bayed
As through the crisp and rustling fern the heavy cattle
strayed.

And when the light-foot mower went afield
Across the meadows laced with threaded dew,
And the sheep bleated on the misty weald,
And from its nest the waking corn-crake flew,
Some woodmen saw him lying by the stream
And marvelled much that any lad so beautiful could
seem,

Nor deemed him born of mortals, and one said,
 “ It is young Hylas, that false runaway
Who with a Naiad now would make his bed
 Forgetting Herakles,” but others, “ Nay,
It is Narcissus, his own paramour,
 Those are the fond and crimson lips no woman can
 allure.”

And when they nearer came a third one cried,
 “ It is young Dionysos who has hid
His spear and fawnskin by the river side
 Weary of hunting with the Bassarid,
And wise indeed were we away to fly
They live not long who on the gods immortal come
 to spy.”

So turned they back, and feared to look behind,
 And told the timid swain how they had seen
Amid the reeds some woodland God reclined,
 And no man dared to cross the open green,
And on that day no olive-tree was slain,
Nor rushes cut, but all deserted was the fair domain.

Save when the neat-herd's lad, his empty pail
Well slung upon his back, with leap and bound
Raced on the other side, and stopped to hail
Hoping that he some comrade new had found,
And gat no answer, and then half afraid
Passed on his simple way, or down the still and silent
glade

A little girl ran laughing from the farm
Not thinking of love's secret mysteries,
And when she saw the white and gleaming arm
And all his manlihood, with longing eyes
Whose passion mocked her sweet virginity
Watched him a-while, and then stole back sadly and
wearily.

Far off he heard the city's hum and noise,
And now and then the shriller laughter where
The passionate purity of brown-limbed boys
Wrestled or raced in the clear healthful air,
And now and then a little tinkling bell
As the shorn wether led the sheep down to the mossy
well.

Through the grey willows danced the fretful gnat,
The grasshopper chirped idly from the tree,
In sleek and oily coat the water-rat
Breasting the little ripples manfully
Made for the wild-duck's nest, from bough to bough
Hopped the shy finch, and the huge tortoise crept
across the slough.

On the faint wind floated the silky seeds,
As the bright scythe swept through the waving grass,
The ousel-cock splashed circles in the reeds
And flecked with silver whorls the forest's glass,
Which scarce had caught again its imagery
Ere from its bed the dusky tench leapt at the
dragon-fly.

But little care had he for any thing
Though up and down the beech the squirrel played,
And from the copse the linnet 'gan to sing
To her brown mate her sweetest serenade,
Ah! little care indeed, for he had seen
The breasts of Pallas and the naked wonder of the
Queen.

But when the herdsman called his straggling goats
 With whistling pipe across the rocky road,
And the shard-beetle with its trumpet-notes
 Boomed through the darkening woods, and seemed
 to bode

Of coming storm, and the belated crane
Passed homeward like a shadow, and the dull big
 drops of rain

Fell on the pattering fig-leaves, up he rose,
 And from the gloomy forest went his way
Past sombre homestead and wet orchard-close,
 And came at last unto a little quay,
And called his mates a-board, and took his seat
On the high poop, and pushed from land, and loosed
 the dripping sheet,

And steered across the bay, and when nine suns
 Passed down the long and laddered way of gold,
And nine pale moons had breathed their orisons
 To the chaste stars their confessors, or told
Their dearest secret to the downy moth
That will not fly at noonday, through the foam and
 surging froth

Came a great owl with yellow sulphurous eyes
And lit upon the ship, whose timbers creaked
As though the lading of three argosies
Were in the hold, and flapped its wings, and shrieked,
And darkness straightway stole across the deep,
Sheathed was Orion's sword, dread Mars himself fled
down the steep,

And the moon hid behind a tawny mask
Of drifting cloud, and from the ocean's marge
Rose the red plume, the huge and hornèd casque,
The seven-cubit spear, the brazen targe !
And clad in bright and burnished panoply
Athena strode across the stretch of sick and shivering
sea !

To the dull sailors' sight her loosened locks
Seemed like the jagged storm-rack, and her feet
Only the spume that floats on hidden rocks,
And marking how the rising waters beat
Against the rolling ship, the pilot cried
To the young helmsman at the stern to luff to wind-
ward side.

But he, the over-bold adulterer,
 A dear profaner of great mysteries,
An ardent amorous idolater,
 When he beheld those grand relentless eyes
Laughed loud for joy, and crying out "I come"
Leapt from the lofty poop into the chill and churning
 foam.

Then fell from the high heaven one bright star,
 One dancer left the circling galaxy,
And back to Athens on her clattering car
 In all the pride of venged divinity
Pale Pallas swept with shrill and steely clank,
And a few gurgling bubbles rose where her boy lover
 sank.

And the mast shuddered as the gaunt owl flew
 With mocking hoots after the wrathful Queen,
And the old pilot bade the trembling crew
 Hoist the big sail, and told how he had seen
Close to the stern a dim and giant form,
And like a dipping swallow the stout ship dashed
 through the storm.

And no man dared to speak of Charmides

Deeming that he some evil thing had wrought,
And when they reached the strait Symplegades

They beached their galley on the shore, and sought
The toll-gate of the city hastily,
And in the market showed their brown and pictured
pottery.

II.

But some good Triton-god had ruth, and bare
The boy's drowned body back to Grecian land,
And mermaids combed his dank and dripping hair
And smoothed his brow, and loosed his clenching
hand,
Some brought sweet spices from far Araby,
And others bade the halcyon sing her softest lullaby.

And when he neared his old Athenian home,
A mighty billow rose up suddenly
Upon whose oily back the clotted foam
Lay diapered in some strange fantasy,
And clasping him unto its glassy breast,
Swept landward, like a white-maned steed upon a
venturous quest!

Now where Colonos leans unto the sea

There lies a long and level stretch of lawn,
The rabbit knows it, and the mountain bee

For it deserts Hymettus, and the Faun
Is not afraid, for never through the day
Comes a cry ruder than the shout of shepherd lads at
play.

But often from the thorny labyrinth

And tangled branches of the circling wood
The stealthy hunter sees young Hyacinth

Hurling the polished disk, and draws his hood
Over his guilty gaze, and creeps away,
Nor dares to wind his horn, or—else at the first break
of day

The Dryads come and throw the leathern ball

Along the reedy shore, and circumvent
Some goat-eared Pan to be their seneschal

For fear of bold Poseidon's ravishment,
And loose their girdles, with shy timorous eyes,
Lest from the surf his azure arms and purple beard
should rise.

On this side and on that a rocky cave,
Hung with the yellow-bell'd laburnum, stands,
Smooth is the beach, save where some ebbing wave
Leaves its faint outline etched upon the sands,
As though it feared to be too soon forgot
By the green rush, its playfellow,—and yet, it is a
spot

So small, that the inconstant butterfly
Could steal the hoarded honey from each flower
Ere it was noon, and still not satisfy
Its over-greedy love,—within an hour
A sailor boy, were he but rude enow
To land and pluck a garland for his galley's painted
prow,

Would almost leave the little meadow bare,
For it knows nothing of great pageantry,
Only a few narcissi here and there
Stand separate in sweet austerity,
Dotting the unmown grass with silver stars,
And here and there a daffodil waves tiny scimeters.

Hither the billow brought him, and was glad
Of such dear servitude, and where the land
Was virgin of all waters laid the lad
Upon the golden margent of the strand,
And like a lingering lover oft returned
To kiss those pallid limbs which once with intense fire
burned,

Ere the wet seas had quenched that holocaust,
That self-fed flame, that passionate lustihead,
Ere grisly death with chill and nipping frost
Had withered up those lilies white and red
Which, while the boy would through the forest range,
Answered each other in a sweet antiphonal counter-
change.

And when at dawn the woodnymphs, hand-in-hand,
Threaded the bosky dell, their satyr spied
The boy's pale body stretched upon the sand,
And feared Poseidon's treachery, and cried,
And like bright sunbeams flitting through a glade,
Each startled Dryad sought some safe and leafy
ambuscade.

Save one white girl, who deemed it would not be
So dread a thing to feel a sea-god's arms
Crushing her breasts in amorous tyranny,
And longed to listen to those subtle charms
Insidious lovers weave when they would win
Some fenced fortress, and stole back again, nor thought
it sin

To yield her treasure unto one so fair,
And lay beside him, thirsty with love's drouth,
Called him soft names, played with his tangled hair,
And with hot lips made havoc of his mouth
Afraid he might not wake, and then afraid
Lest he might wake too soon, fled back, and then, fond
renegade,

Returned to fresh assault, and all day long
Sat at his side, and laughed at her new toy,
And held his hand, and sang her sweetest song,
Then frowned to see how froward was the boy
Who would not with her maidenhood entwine,
Nor knew that three days since his eyes had looked
on Proserpine,

Nor knew what sacrilege his lips had done,
 But said, " He will awake, I know him well,
He will awake at evening when the sun
 Hangs his red shield on Corinth's citadel,
This sleep is but a cruel treachery
To make me love him more, and in some cavern of
 the sea

Deeper than ever falls the fisher's line
 Already a huge Triton blows his horn,
And weaves a garland from the crystalline
 And drifting ocean-tendrils to adorn
The emerald pillars of our bridal bed,
For sphered in foaming silver, and with coral-crownèd
 head,

We two will sit upon a throne of pearl,
 And a blue wave will be our canopy,
And at our feet the water-snakes will curl
 In all their amethystine panoply
Of diamonded mail, and we will mark
The mullets swimming by the mast of some storm-
 foundered bark,

Vermilion-finned with eyes of bossy gold
Like flakes of crimson light, and the great deep
His glassy-portaled chamber will unfold,
And we will see the painted dolphins sleep
Cradled by murmuring halcyons on the rocks
Where Proteus in quaint suit of green pastures his
monstrous flocks.

And tremulous opal-hued anemones
Will wave their purple fringes where we tread
Upon the mirrored floor, and argosies
Of fishes flecked with tawny scales will thread
The drifting cordage of the shattered wreck,
And honey-coloured amber beads our twining limbs
- will deck."

But when that baffled Lord of War the Sun
With gaudy pennon flying passed away
Into his brazen House, and one by one
The little yellow stars began to stray
Across the field of heaven, ah! then indeed
She feared his lips upon her lips would never care
to feed,

And cried, " Awake, already the pale moon
Washes the trees with silver, and the wave
Creeps grey and chilly up this sandy dune,
The croaking frogs are out, and from the cave
The night-jar shrieks, the fluttering bats repass,
And the brown stoat with hollow flanks creeps through
the dusky grass.

Nay, though thou art a God, be not so coy,
For in yon stream there is a little reed
That often whispers how a lovely boy
Lay with her once upon a grassy mead,
Who when his cruel pleasure he had done
Spread wings of rustling gold and soared aloft into
the sun.

Be not so coy, the laurel trembles still
With great Apollo's kisses, and the fir
Whose clustering sisters fringe the sea-ward hill
Hath many a tale of that bold ravisher
Whom men call Boreas, and I have seen
The mocking eyes of Hermes through the poplar's
silvery sheen.

Even the jealous Naiads call me fair,
And every morn a young and ruddy swain
Woos me with apples and with locks of hair,
And seeks to soothe my virginal disdain
By all the gifts the gentle wood-nymphs love ;
But yesterday he brought to me an iris-plumaged
dove

With little crimson feet, which with its store
Of seven spotted eggs the cruel lad
Had stolen from the lofty sycamore
At day-break, when her amorous comrade had
Flown off in search of berried juniper
Which most they love ; the fretful wasp, that earliest
vintager

Of the blue grapes, hath not persistency
So constant as this simple shepherd-boy
For my poor lips, his joyous purity
And laughing sunny eyes might well decoy
A Dryad from her oath to Artemis ;
For very beautiful is he, his mouth was made to kiss,

His argent forehead, like a rising moon
Over the dusky hills of meeting brows,
Is crescent shaped, the hot and Tyrian noon
Leads from the myrtle-grove no goodlier spouse
For Cytheræa, the first silky down
Fringes his blushing cheeks, and his young limbs are
strong and brown :

And he is rich, and fat and fleecy herds
Of bleating sheep upon his meadows lie,
And many an earthen bowl of yellow curds
Is in his homestead for the thievish fly
To swim and drown in, the pink clover mead
Keeps its sweet store for him, and he can pipe on
oaten reed.

And yet I love him not, it was for thee
I kept my love, I knew that thou would'st come
To rid me of this pallid chastity ;
Thou fairest flower of the flowerless foam
Of all the wide Ægean, brightest star
Of ocean's azure heavens where the mirrored planets
are !

I knew that thou would'st come, for when at first
The dry wood burgeoned, and the sap of Spring
Swelled in my green and tender bark or burst
To myriad multitudinous blossoming
Which mocked the midnight with its mimic moons
That did not dread the dawn, and first the thrushes'
rapturous tunes

Startled the squirrel from its granary,
And cuckoo flowers fringed the narrow lane,
Through my young leaves a sensuous ecstasy
Crept like new wine, and every mossy vein
Throbbled with the fitful pulse of amorous blood,
And the wild winds of passion shook my slim stem's
maidenhood.

The trooping fawns at evening came and laid
Their cool black noses on my lowest boughs,
And on my topmost branch the blackbird made
A little nest of grasses for his spouse,
And now and then a twittering wren would light
On a thin twig which hardly bare the weight of such
delight.

I was the Attic shepherd's trysting place,
 Beneath my shadow Amaryllis lay,
And round my trunk would laughing Daphnis chase
 The timorous girl, till tired out with play
She felt his hot breath stir her tangled hair,
And turned, and looked, and fled no more from such
 delightful snare.

Then come away unto my ambushade
 Where clustering woodbine weaves a canopy
For amorous pleasaunce, and the rustling shade
 Of Paphian myrtles seems to sanctify
The dearest rites of love, there in the cool
And green recesses of its farthest depth there is a
 pool,

The ouzel's haunt, the wild bee's pasturage,
 For round its rim great creamy lilies float
Through their flat leaves in verdant anchorage,
 Each cup a white-sailed golden-laden boat
Steered by a dragon-fly,—be not afraid
To leave this wan and wave-kissed shore, surely the
 place was made

For lovers such as we, the Cyprian Queen,
 One arm around her boyish paramour,
Strays often there at eve, and I have seen
 The moon strip off her misty vestiture
For young Endymion's eyes, be not afraid,
The panther feet of Dian never tread that secret glade.

Nay if thou wil'st, back to the beating brine,
 Back to the boisterous billow let us go,
And walk all day beneath the hyaline
 Huge vault of Neptune's watery portico,
And watch the purple monsters of the deep
Sport in ungainly play, and from his lair keen Xiphias
 leap.

For if my mistress find me lying here
 She will not ruth or gentle pity show,
But lay her boar-spear down, and with austere
 Relentless fingers string the cornel bow,
And draw the feathered notch against her breast,
And loose the archèd cord, ay, even now upon the
 quest

I hear her hurrying feet,—awake, awake,
Thou laggard in love's battle! once at least
Let me drink deep of passion's wine, and slake
My parchèd being with the nectarous feast
Which even Gods affect! O come Love come,
Still we have time to reach the cavern of thine azure
home."

Scarce had she spoken when the shuddering trees
Shook, and the leaves divided, and the air
Grew conscious of a God, and the grey seas
Crawled backward, and a long and dismal blare
Blew from some tasselled horn, a sleuth-hound bayed,
And like a flame a barbèd reed flew whizzing down
the glade.

And where the little flowers of her breast
Just brake into their milky blossoming,
This murderous paramour, this unbidden guest,
Pierced and struck deep in horrid chambering,
And ploughed a bloody furrow with its dart,
And dug a long red road, and cleft with wingèd death
her heart.

Sobbing her life out with a bitter cry
On the boy's body fell the Dryad maid,
Sobbing for incomplete virginity,
And raptures unenjoyed, and pleasures dead,
And all the pain of things unsatisfied,
And the bright drops of crimson youth crept down
her throbbing side.

Ah! pitiful it was to hear her moan,
And very pitiful to see her die
Ere she had yielded up her sweets, or known
The joy of passion, that dread mystery
Which not to know is not to live at all,
And yet to know is to be held in death's most deadly
thrall.

But as it hapt the Queen of Cythere,
Who with Adonis all night long had lain
Within some shepherd's hut in Arcady,
On team of silver doves and gilded wane
Was journeying Paphos-ward, high up afar
From mortal ken between the mountains and the
morning star,

And when low down she spied the hapless pair,
And heard the Oread's faint despairing cry,
Whose cadence seemed to play upon the air
As though it were a viol, hastily
She bade her pigeons fold each straining plume,
And dropt to earth, and reached the strand, and saw
their dolorous doom.

For as a gardener turning back his head
To catch the last notes of the linnet, mows
With careless scythe too near some flower bed,
And cuts the thorny pillar of the rose,
And with the flower's loosened loveliness
Strews the brown mould, or as some shepherd lad in
wantonness

Driving his little flock along the mead
Treads down two daffodils which side by side
Have lured the lady-bird with yellow brede
And made the gaudy moth forget its pride,
Treads down their brimming golden chalices
Under light feet which were not made for such rude
ravages,

Or as a schoolboy tired of his book
Flings himself down upon the reedy grass
And plucks two water-lilies from the brook,
And for a time forgets the hour glass,
Then wearies of their sweets, and goes his way,
And lets the hot sun kill them, even so these lovers
lay.

And Venus cried, "It is dread Artemis
Whose bitter hand hath wrought this cruelty,
Or else that mightier may whose care it is
To guard her strong and stainless majesty
Upon the hill Athenian,—alas!
That they who loved so well unloved into Death's
house should pass.

So with soft hands she laid the boy and girl
In the great golden waggon tenderly,
Her white throat whiter than a moony pearl
Just threaded with a blue vein's tapestry
Had not yet ceased to throb, and still her breast
Swayed like a wind-stirred lily in ambiguous unrest.

And then each pigeon spread its milky van,
The bright car soared into the dawning sky,
And like a cloud the aerial caravan
Passed over the Ægean silently,
Till the faint air was troubled with the song
From the wan mouths that call on bleeding Thammuz
all night long.

But when the doves had reached their wonted goal
Where the wide stair of orbèd marble dips
Its snows into the sea, her fluttering soul
Just shook the trembling petals of her lips
And passed into the void, and Venus knew
That one fair maid the less would walk amid her
retinue,

And bade her servants carve a cedar chest
With all the wonder of this history,
Within whose scented womb their limbs should rest
Where olive-trees make tender the blue sky
On the low hills of Paphos, and the faun
Pipes in the noonday, and the nightingale sings on till
dawn.

Nor failed they to obey her hest, and ere
 The morning bee had stung the daffodil
With tiny fretful spear, or from its lair
 The waking stag had leapt across the rill
And roused the ouzel, or the lizard crept
Athwart the sunny rock, beneath the grass their bodies
 slept.

And when day brake, within that silver shrine
 Fed by the flames of cressets tremulous,
Queen Venus knelt and prayed to Proserpine
 That she whose beauty made Death amorous
Should beg a guerdon from her pallid Lord,
And let Desire pass across dread Charon's icy ford.

III.

IN melancholy moonless Acheron,
Far from the goodly earth and joyous day,
Where no spring ever buds, nor ripening sun
Weighs down the apple trees, nor flowery May
Chequers with chestnut blooms the grassy floor,
Where thrushes never sing, and piping linnets mate
no more,

There by a dim and dark Lethæan well
Young Charmides was lying, wearily
He plucked the blossoms from the asphodel,
And with its little rifled treasury
Strewed the dull waters of the dusky stream,
And watched the white stars founder, and the land
was like a dream,

When as he gazed into the watery glass
And through his brown hair's curly tangles scanned
His own wan face, a shadow seemed to pass
Across the mirror, and a little hand
Stole into his, and warm lips timidly
Brushed his pale cheeks, and breathed their secret forth
into a sigh.

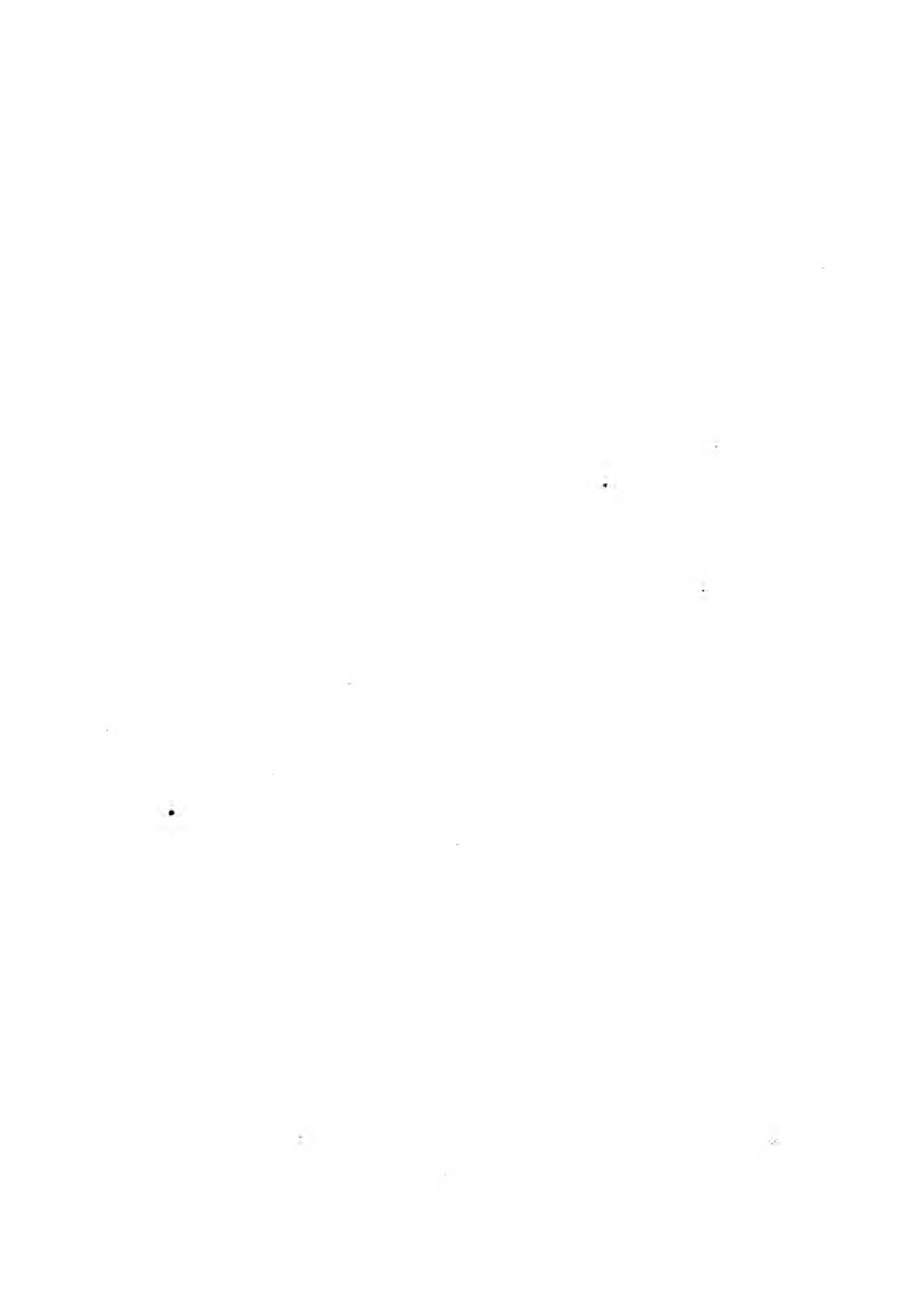
Then turned he round his weary eyes and saw,
And ever nigher still their faces came,
And nigher ever did their young mouths draw
Until they seemed one perfect rose of flame,
And longing arms around her neck he cast,
And felt her throbbing bosom, and his breath came
hot and fast,

And all his hoarded sweets were hers to kiss,
And all her maidenhood was his to slay,
And limb to limb in long and rapturous bliss
Their passion waxed and waned,—O why essay
To pipe again of love too venturous reed!
Enough, enough that Erôs laughed upon that
flowerless mead.

Too venturous poesy O why essay
To pipe again of passion ! fold thy wings
O'er daring Icarus and bid thy lay
Sleep hidden in the lyre's silent strings,
Till thou hast found the old Castalian rill,
Or from the Lesbian waters plucked drowned
Sappho's golden quill !

Enough, enough that he whose life had been
A fiery pulse of sin, a splendid shame,
Could in the loveless land of Hades glean
One scorching harvest from those fields of flame
Where passion walks with naked unshod feet
And is not wounded,—ah ! enough that once their lips
could meet

In that wild throb when all existences
Seem narrowed to one single ecstasy
Which dies through its own sweetness and the stress
Of too much pleasure, ere Persephone
Had bade them serve her by the ebon throne
Of the pale God who in the fields of Enna loosed her
zone.





IMPRESSIONS.

I.

LES SILHOUETTES.

THE sea is flecked with bars of grey,
The dull dead wind is out of tune,
And like a withered leaf the moon
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand
The black boat lies : a sailor boy
Clambers aboard in careless joy
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,
Where through the dusky upland grass
The young brown-throated reapers pass,
Like silhouettes against the sky.

L

II.

LA FUITE DE LA LUNE.

To outer senses there is peace,
A dreamy peace on either hand,
Deep silence in the shadowy land,
Deep silence where the shadows cease.

Save for a cry that echoes shrill
From some lone bird disconsolate ;
A corncrake calling to its mate ;
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws
Her sickle from the lightening skies,
And to her sombre cavern flies,
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.

THE GRAVE OF KEATS.

RID of the world's injustice, and his pain,
 He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue :
 Taken from life when life and love were new
 The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
 Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.
 No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,
 But gentle violets weeping with the dew
 Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.
 O proudest heart that broke for misery!
 O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene !
 O poet-painter of our English Land !
 Thy name was writ in water——it shall stand :
 And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,
 As Isabella did her Basil-tree.

ROME.

THEOCRITUS.

A VILLANELLE.

O SINGER of Persephone !

In the dim meadows desolate
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

Still through the ivy flits the bee

Where Amaryllis lies in state ;
O Singer of Persephone !

Simætha calls on Hecate

And hears the wild dogs at the gate ;
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

Still by the light and laughing sea

Poor Polypheme bemoans his fate :
O Singer of Persephone !

And still in boyish rivalry

 Young Daphnis challenges his mate :
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

Slim Lacon keeps a goat for thee,

 For thee the jocund shepherds wait,
O Singer of Persephone !
Dost thou remember Sicily ?

IN THE GOLD ROOM.

A HARMONY.

HER ivory hands on the ivory keys
 Strayed in a fitful fantasy,
Like the silver gleam when the poplar trees
 Rustle their pale leaves listlessly,
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea
When the waves show their teeth in the flying
 breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold
 Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun
On the burnished disk of the marigold,
 Or the sun-flower turning to meet the sun
 When the gloom of the jealous night is done,
And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine
 Burned like the ruby fire set
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,
 Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegranate,
 Or the heart of the lotus drenched and wet
With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red wine.

BALLADE DE MARGUERITE.

(NORMANDE.)

I AM weary of lying within the chase
When the knights are meeting in market-place.

Nay, go not thou to the red-roofed town
Lest the hooves of the war-horse tread thee down.

But I would not go where the Squires ride,
I would only walk by my Lady's side.

Alack! and alack! thou art over bold,
A Forester's son may not eat off gold.

Will she love me the less that my Father is seen,
Each Martinmas day in a doublet green?

Perchance she is sewing at tapestrie,
Spindle and loom are not meet for thee.

Ah, if she is working the arras bright
I might ravel the threads by the fire-light.

Perchance she is hunting of the deer,
How could you follow o'er hill and meer?

Ah, if she is riding with the court,
I might run beside her and wind the morte.

Perchance she is kneeling in S. Denys,
(On her soul may our Lady have gramercy !)

Ah, if she is praying in lone chapelle,
I might swing the censer and ring the bell.

Come in my son, for you look sae pale,
The father shall fill thee a stoup of ale.

But who are these knights in bright array?
Is it a pageant the rich folks play?

'Tis the King of England from over sea,
Who has come unto visit our fair countrie.

But why does the curfew toll sae low?
And why do the mourners walk a-row?

O 'tis Hugh of Amiens my sister's son
Who is lying stark, for his day is done.

Nay, nay, for I see white lilies clear,
It is no strong man who lies on the bier.

O 'tis old Dame Jeannette that kept the hall,
I knew she would die at the autumn fall.

Dame Jeannette had not that gold-brown hair,
Old Jeannette was not a maiden fair.

O 'tis none of our kith and none of our kin,
(Her soul may our Lady assoil from sin !)

But I hear the boy's voice chaunting sweet,
"Elle est morte, la Marguerite."

Come in my son and lie on the bed,
And let the dead folk bury their dead.

O mother, you know I loved her true:
O mother, hath one grave room for two?

THE DOLE OF THE KING'S DAUGHTER.

(BRETON.)

Seven stars in the still water,
And seven in the sky ;
Seven sins on the King's daughter,
Deep in her soul to lie.

Red roses are at her feet,
(Roses are red in her red-gold hair)
And O where her bosom and girdle meet
Red roses are hidden there.

Fair is the knight who lieth slain
Amid the rush and reed,
See the lean fishes that are fain
Upon dead men to feed.

Sweet is the page that lieth there,
 (Cloth of gold is goodly prey,)
See the black ravens in the air,
 Black, O black as the night are they.

What do they there so stark and dead ?
 (There is blood upon her hand)
Why are the lilies flecked with red ?
 (There is blood on the river sand.)

There are two that ride from the south and east,
 And two from the north and west,
For the black raven a goodly feast,
 For the King's daughter rest.

There is one man who loves her true,
 (Red, O red, is the stain of gore !)
He hath duggen a grave by the darksome yew,
 (One grave will do for four.)

No moon in the still heaven,
 In the black water none,
The sins on her soul are seven,
 The sin upon his is one.

AMOR INTELLECTUALIS.

OFT have we trod the vales of Castaly
And heard sweet notes of sylvan music blown
From antique reeds to common folk unknown :
And often launched our bark upon that sea
Which the nine Muses hold in empery,
And ploughed free furrows through the wave and
foam,
Nor spread reluctant sail for more safe home
Till we had freighted well our argosy.
Of which despoilèd treasures these remain,
Sordello's passion, and the honied line
Of young Endymion, lordly Tamburlaine
Driving his pampered jades, and, more than these,
The seven-fold vision of the Florentine,
And grave-browed Milton's solemn harmonies.

SANTA DECCA.

THE Gods are dead : no longer do we bring
 To grey-eyed Pallas crowns of olive-leaves !
 Demeter's child no more hath tithe of sheaves,
 And in the noon the careless shepherds sing,
 For Pan is dead, and all the wantoning
 By secret glade and devious haunt is o'er :
 Young Hylas seeks the water-springs no more ;
 Great Pan is dead, and Mary's Son is King.

And yet—perchance in this sea-trancèd isle,
 Chewing the bitter fruit of memory,
 Some God lies hidden in the asphodel.
 Ah Love ! if such there be then it were well
 For us to fly his anger : nay, but see
 The leaves are stirring : let us watch a-while.

A VISION.

Two crownèd Kings, and One that stood alone
With no green weight of laurels round his head,
But with sad eyes as one uncomforted,
And wearied with man's never-ceasing moan
For sins no bleating victim can atone,
And sweet long lips with tears and kisses fed.
Girt was he in a garment black and red,
And at his feet I marked a broken stone
Which sent up lilies, dove-like, to his knees.
Now at their sight, my heart being lit with flame
I cried to Beatricé, " Who are these ? "
And she made answer, knowing well each name,
" Æschylos first, the second Sophokles,
And last (wide stream of tears !) Euripides."

IMPRESSION DU VOYAGE.

THE sea was sapphire coloured, and the sky
Burned like a heated opal through the air,
We hoisted sail ; the wind was blowing fair
For the blue lands that to the eastward lie.
From the steep prow I marked with quickening eye
Zakynthos, every olive grove and creek,
Ithaca's cliff, Lycaon's snowy peak,
And all the flower-strewn hills of Arcady.
The flapping of the sail against the mast,
The ripple of the water on the side,
The ripple of girls' laughter at the stern,
The only sounds :—when 'gan the West to burn,
And a red sun upon the seas to ride,
I stood upon the soil of Greece at last !

THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY.

LIKE burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed
Gaunt cypress-trees stand round the sun-bleached
stone ;

Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,
And the slight lizard show his jewelled head.
And, where the chaliced poppies flame to red,
In the still chamber of yon pyramid
Surely some Old-World Sphinx lurks darkly hid,
Grim warder of this pleasaunce of the dead.

Ah! sweet indeed to rest within the womb
Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,
But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb
In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,
Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom
Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.

ROME.

BY THE ARNO.

THE oleander on the wall
Grows crimson in the dawning light,
Though the grey shadows of the night
Lie yet on Florence like a pall.

The dew is bright upon the hill,
And bright the blossoms overhead,
But ah! the grasshoppers have fled,
The little Attic song is still.

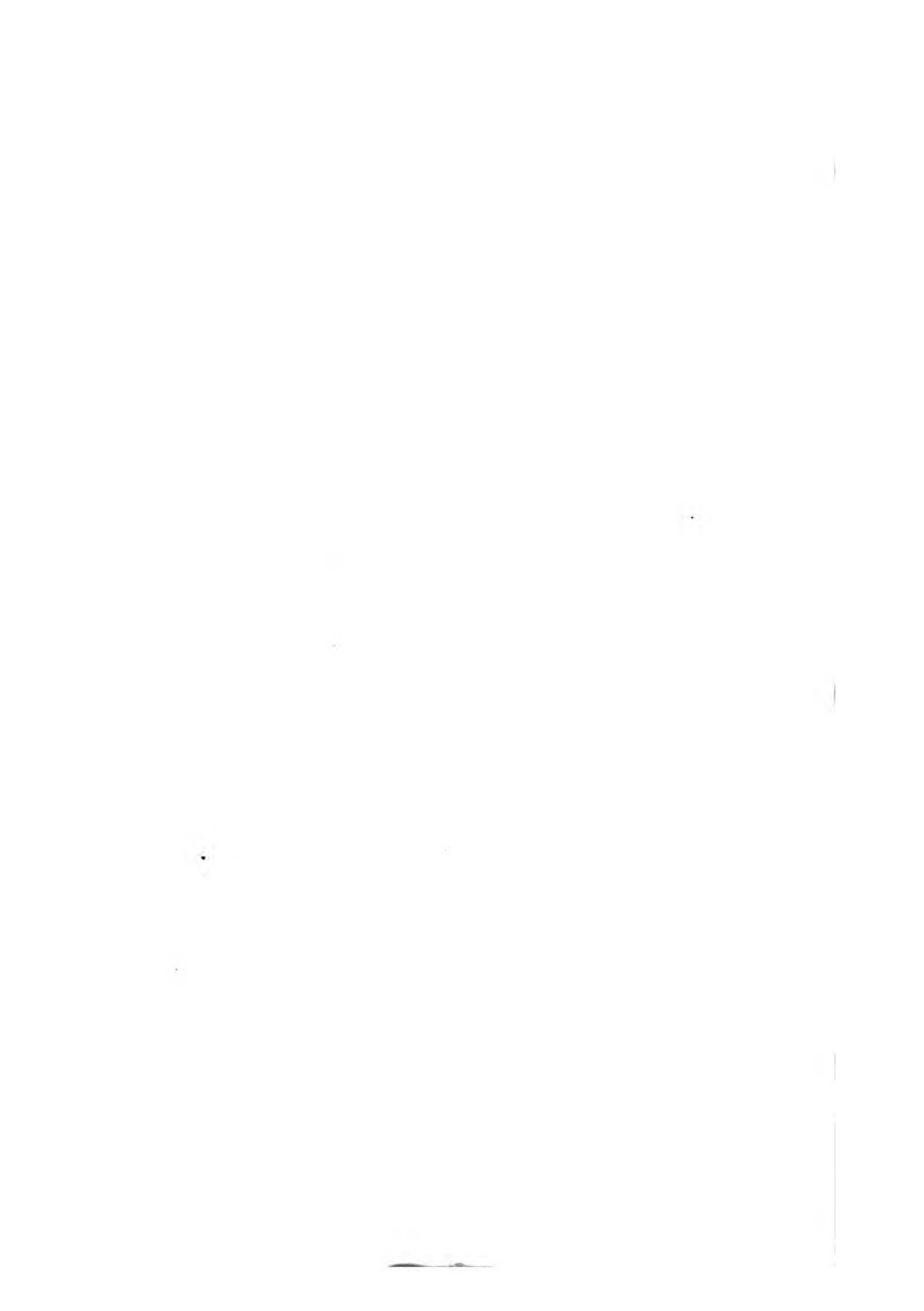
Only the leaves are gently stirred
By the soft breathing of the gale,
And in the almond-scented vale
The lonely nightingale is heard.

The day will make thee silent soon,
O nightingale sing on for love!
While yet upon the shadowy grove
Splinter the arrows of the moon.

Before across the silent lawn
In sea-green mist the morning steals,
And to love's frightened eyes reveals
The long white fingers of the dawn

Fast climbing up the eastern sky
To grasp and slay the shuddering night,
All careless of my heart's delight,
Or if the nightingale should die.

IMPRESSIONS DU THÉÂTRE.



FABIEN DEI FRANCHI.

THE silent room, the heavy creeping shade,
The dead that travel fast, the opening door,
The murdered brother rising through the floor,
The ghost's white fingers on thy shoulders laid,
And then the lonely duel in the glade,
The broken swords, the stifled scream, the gore,
Thy grand revengeful eyes when all is o'er,—
These things are well enough,—but thou wert made
For more august creation! frenzied Lear
Should at thy bidding wander on the heath
With the shrill fool to mock him, Romeo
For thee should lure his love, and desperate fear
Pluck Richard's recreant dagger from its sheath—
Thou trumpet set for Shakespeare's lips to blow!

PHÈDRE.

How vain and dull this common world must seem
 To such a One as thou, who should'st have talked
 At Florence with Mirandola, or walked
Through the cool olives of the Academe :
Thou should'st have gathered reeds from a green
 stream
 For Goat-foot Pan's shrill piping, and have played
 With the white girls in that Phæacian glade
Where grave Odysseus wakened from his dream.

Ah! surely once some urn of Attic clay
 Held thy wan dust, and thou hast come again
 Back to this common world so dull and vain,
For thou wert weary of the sunless day,
 The heavy fields of scentless asphodel,
 The loveless lips with which men kiss in Hell.

PORTIA.

I MARVEL not Bassanio was so bold
To peril all he had upon the lead,
Or that proud Aragon bent low his head,
Or that Morocco's fiery heart grew cold :
For in that gorgeous dress of beaten gold
Which is more golden than the golden sun,
No woman Veronesé looked upon
Was half so fair as thou whom I behold.
Yet fairer when with wisdom as your shield
The sober-suited lawyer's gown you donned,
And would not let the laws of Venice yield
Antonio's heart to that accursèd Jew—
O Portia ! take my heart : it is thy due :
I think I will not quarrel with the Bond.

QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA.

IN the lone tent, waiting for victory,
She stands with eyes marred by the mists of pain,
Like some wan lily overdrenched with rain :
The clamorous clang of arms, the ensanguined sky,
War's ruin, and the wreck of chivalry,
To her proud soul no common fear can bring :
Bravely she tarrieth for her Lord the King,
Her soul a-flame with passionate ecstasy.
O Hair of Gold ! O Crimson Lips ! O Face
Made for the luring and the love of man !
With thee I do forget the toil and stress,
The loveless road that knows no resting place,
Time's straitened pulse, the soul's dread weariness,
My freedom, and my life republican !

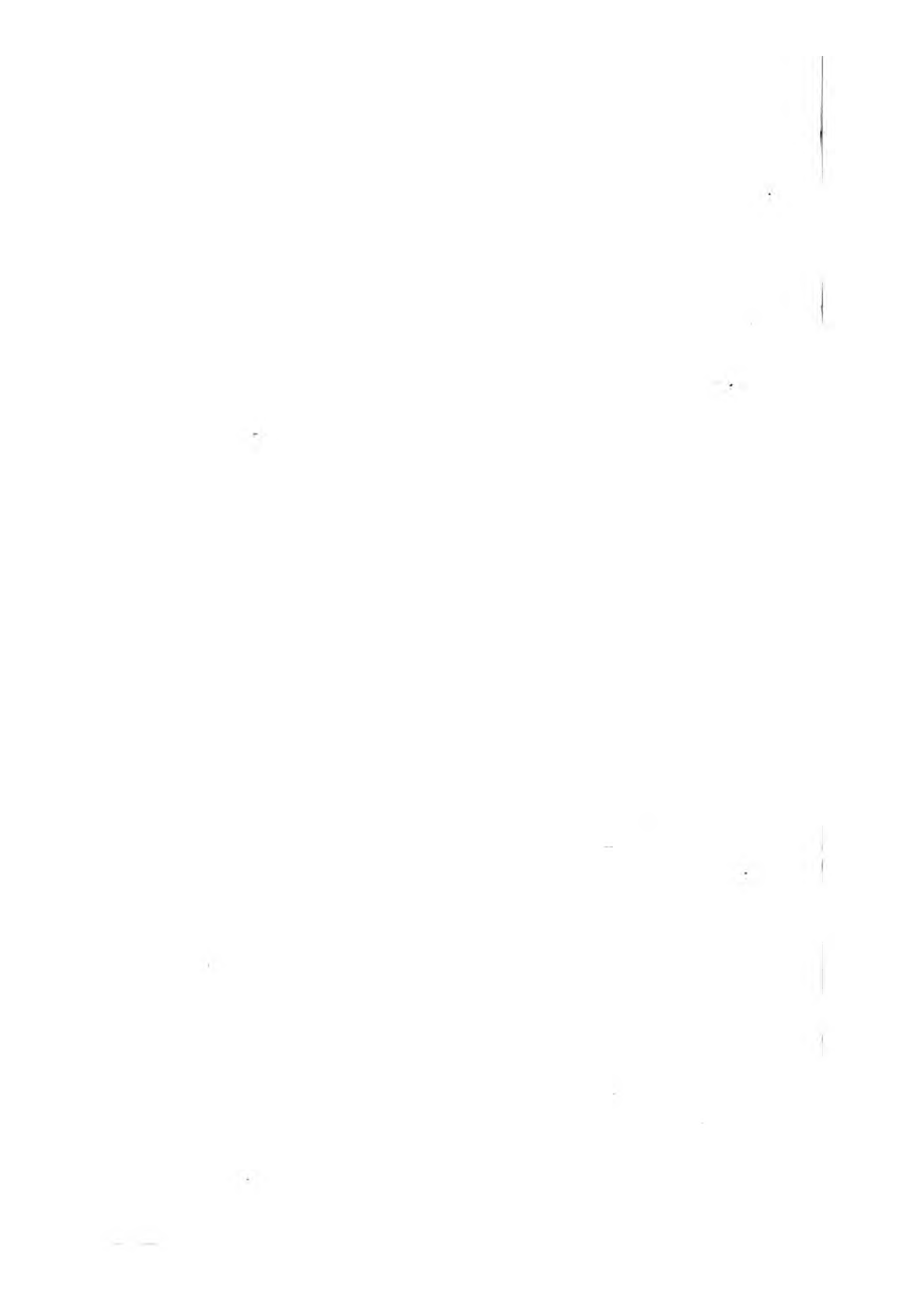
CAMMA.

AS one who poring on a Grecian urn
Scans the fair shapes some Attic hand hath made,
God with slim goddess, goodly man with maid,
And for their beauty's sake is loth to turn
And face the obvious day, must I not yearn
For many a secret moon of indolent bliss,
When in the midmost shrine of Artemis
I see thee standing, antique-limbed, and stern ?

And yet—methinks I'd rather see thee play
That serpent of old Nile, whose witchery
Made Emperors drunken,—come, great Egypt, shake
Our stage with all thy mimic pageants ! Nay,
I am grown sick of unreal passions, make
The world thine Actium, me thine Antony !



PANTHEA.



NAY, let us walk from fire unto fire,
From passionate pain to deadlier delight,—
I am too young to live without desire,
Too young art thou to waste this summer night
Asking those idle questions which of old
Man sought of seer and oracle, and no reply was told.

For, sweet, to feel is better than to know,
And wisdom is a childless heritage,
One pulse of passion—youth's first fiery glow,—
Are worth the hoarded proverbs of the sage :
Vex not thy soul with dead philosophy,
Have we not lips to kiss with, hearts to love, and eyes
to see !

Dost thou not hear the murmuring nightingale
Like water bubbling from a silver jar,
So soft she sings the envious moon is pale,
That high in heaven she is hung so far
She cannot hear that love-enraptured tune,—
Mark how she wreathes each horn with mist, yon late
and labouring moon.

White lilies, in whose cups the gold bees dream,
The fallen snow of petals where the breeze
Scatters the chestnut blossom, or the gleam
Of boyish limbs in water,—are not these
Enough for thee, dost thou desire more?
Alas! the Gods will give nought else from their
eternal store.

For our high Gods have sick and wearied grown
Of all our endless sins, our vain endeavour
For wasted days of youth to make atone
By pain or prayer or priest, and never, never,
Hearken they now to either good or ill,
But send their rain upon the just and the unjust at
will.

They sit at ease, our Gods they sit at ease,
 Strewing with leaves of rose their scented wine,
They sleep, they sleep, beneath the rocking trees
 Where asphodel and yellow lotus twine,
Mourning the old glad days before they knew
What evil things the heart of man could dream, and
 dreaming do.

And far beneath the brazen floor they see
 Like swarming flies the crowd of little men,
The bustle of small lives, then wearily
 Back to their lotus-haunts they turn again
Kissing each other's mouths, and mix more deep
The poppy-seeded draught which brings soft purple-
 lidded sleep.

There all day long the golden-vestured sun,
 Their torch-bearer, stands with his torch a-blaze,
And when the gaudy web of noon is spun
 By its twelve maidens through the crimson haze
Fresh from Endymion's arms comes forth the moon,
And the immortal Gods in toils of mortal passions
 swoon.

There walks Queen Juno through some dewy mead
Her grand white feet flecked with the saffron dust
Of wind-stirred lilies, while young Ganymede
Leaps in the hot and amber-foaming must,
His curls all tossed, as when the eagle bare
The frightened boy from Ida through the blue Ionian
air.

There in the green heart of some garden close
Queen Venus with the shepherd at her side,
Her warm soft body like the briar rose
Which would be white yet blushes at its pride,
Laughs low for love, till jealous Salmacis
Peers through the myrtle-leaves and sighs for pain of
lonely bliss.

There never does that dreary north-wind blow
Which leaves our English forests bleak and bare,
Nor ever falls the swift white-feathered snow,
Nor doth the red-toothed lightning ever dare
To wake them in the silver-fretted night
When we lie weeping for some sweet sad sin, some
dead delight.

Alas! they know the far Lethæan spring,
The violet-hidden waters well they know,
Where one whose feet with tired wandering
Are faint and broken may take heart and go,
And from those dark depths cool and crystalline
Drink, and draw balm, and sleep for sleepless souls,
and anodyne.

But we oppress our natures, God or Fate
Is our enemy, we starve and feed
On vain repentance—O we are born too late!
What balm for us in bruised poppy seed
Who crowd into one finite pulse of time
The joy of infinite love and the fierce pain of infinite
crime.

O we are wearied of this sense of guilt,
Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,
Wearied of every temple we have built,
Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,
For man is weak; God sleeps: and heaven is high:
One fiery-coloured moment: one great love; and lo!
we die.

Ah ! but no ferry-man with labouring pole
Nears his black shallop to the flowerless strand,
No little coin of bronze can bring the soul
Over Death's river to the sunless land,
Victim and wine and vow are all in vain,
The tomb is sealed ; the soldiers watch ; the dead
rise not again.

We are resolved into the supreme air,
We are made one with what we touch and see,
With our heart's blood each crimson sun is fair,
With our young lives each spring-impassioned tree
Flames into green, the wildest beasts that range
The moor our kinsmen are, all life is one, and all is
change.

With beat of systole and of diastole
One grand great life throbs through earth's giant
heart,
And mighty waves of single Being roll
From nerve-less germ to man, for we are part
Of every rock and bird and beast and hill,
One with the things that prey on us, and one with
what we kill.

From lower cells of waking life we pass
To full perfection ; thus the world grows old :
We who are godlike now were once a mass
Of quivering purple flecked with bars of gold,
Unsentient or of joy or misery,
And tossed in terrible tangles of some wild and wind-
swept sea.

This hot hard flame with which our bodies burn
Will make some meadow blaze with daffodil,
Ay ! and those argent breasts of thine will turn
To water-lilies ; the brown fields men till
Will be more fruitful for our love to-night,
Nothing is lost in nature, all things live in Death's
despite.

The boy's first kiss, the hyacinth's first bell,
The man's last passion, and the last red spear
That from the lily leaps, the asphodel
Which will not let its blossoms blow for fear
Of too much beauty, and the timid shame
Of the young bride-groom at his lover's eyes,—these
with the same

One sacrament are consecrate, the earth
Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,
The yellow buttercups that shake for mirth
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real
Than we do, when in some fresh-blossoming wood,
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that life
is good.

So when men bury us beneath the yew
Thy crimson-stainèd mouth a rose will be,
And thy soft eyes lush bluebells dimmed with dew,
And when the white narcissus wantonly
Kisses the wind its playmate some faint joy
Will thrill our dust, and we will be again fond maid
and boy.

And thus without life's conscious torturing pain
In some sweet flower we will feel the sun,
And from the linnet's throat will sing again,
And as two gorgeous-mailèd snakes will run
Over our graves, or as two tigers creep
Through the hot jungle where the yellow-eyed huge
lions sleep

And give them battle! How my heart leaps up
To think of that grand living after death
In beast and bird and flower, when this cup,
Being filled too full of spirit, bursts for breath,
And with the pale leaves of some autumn day
The soul earth's earliest conqueror becomes earth's
last great prey.

O think of it! We shall inform ourselves
Into all sensuous life, the goat-foot Faun,
The Centaur, or the merry bright-eyed Elves
That leave their dancing rings to spite the dawn
Upon the meadows, shall not be more near
Than you and I to nature's mysteries, for we shall
hear

The thrush's heart beat, and the daisies grow,
And the wan snowdrop sighing for the sun
On sunless days in winter, we shall know
By whom the silver gossamer is spun,
Who paints the diapered fritillaries,
On what wide wings from shivering pine to pine the
eagle flies.

Ay! had we never loved at all, who knows
If yonder daffodil had lured the bee
Into its gilded womb, or any rose
Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree!
Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring,
But for the lovers' lips that kiss, the poets' lips that
sing.

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,
Or is this dædal-fashioned earth less fair,
That we are nature's heritors, and one
With every pulse of life that beats the air?
Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,
New splendour come unto the flower, new glory to the
grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,
Critics of nature, but the joyous sea
Shall be our raiment, and the bearded star
Shoot arrows at our pleasure! We shall be
Part of the mighty universal whole,
And through all æons mix and mingle with the
Kosmic Soul!

We shall be notes in that great Symphony
Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic
spheres,
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be
One with our heart, the stealthy creeping years
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality !





IMPRESSION.

LE REVEILLON.

THE sky is laced with fitful red,
The circling mists and shadows flee,
The dawn is rising from the sea,
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall
Athwart the feathers of the night,
And a long wave of yellow light
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,
And all the branches streaked with gold.

AT VERONA.

How steep the stairs within Kings' houses are
 For exile-wearied feet as mine to tread,
 And O how salt and bitter is the bread
 Which falls from this Hound's table,—better far
 That I had died in the red ways of war,
 Or that the gate of Florence bare my head,
 Than to live thus, by all things comraded
 Which seek the essence of my soul to mar.

"Curse God and die : what better hope than this ?
 He hath forgotten thee in all the bliss
 Of his gold city, and eternal day"—
 Nay peace : behind my prison's blinded bars
 I do possess what none can take away,
 My love, and all the glory of the stars.

APOLOGIA.

Is it thy will that I should wax and wane,
Barter my cloth of gold for hodden grey,
And at thy pleasure weave that web of pain
Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day ?

Is it thy will—Love that I love so well—
That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell
The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not ?

Nay, if it be thy will I shall endure,
And sell ambition at the common mart,
And let dull failure be my vestiture,
And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so—at least

I have not made my heart a heart of stone,
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so ; sought to fence

In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,
While all the forest sang of liberty,

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight

Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,
To where the steep untrodden mountain height
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair.

Or how the little flower he trod upon,

The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been

The best beloved for a little while,
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Ay! though the gorgèd asp of passion feed
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars!

QUIA MULTUM AMAVI.

Dear Heart I think the young impassioned priest
When first he takes from out the hidden shrine
His God imprisoned in the Eucharist,
And eats the bread, and drinks the dreadful wine,

Feels not such awful wonder as I felt
When first my smitten eyes beat full on thee,
And all night long before thy feet I knelt
Till thou wert wearied of Idolatry.

Ah! had'st thou liked me less and loved me more,
Through all those summer days of joy and rain,
I had not now been sorrow's heritor,
Or stood a lackey in the House of Pain.

Yet, though remorse, youth's white-faced seneschal,
Tread on my heels with all his retinue,
I am most glad I loved thee—think of all
The suns that go to make one speedwell blue!

SILENTIUM AMORIS.

As oftentimes the too resplendent sun
Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon
Back to her sombre cave, ere she hath won
A single ballad from the nightingale,
So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,
And all my sweetest singing out of tune.

And as at dawn across the level mead
On wings impetuous some wind will come,
And with its too harsh kisses break the reed
Which was its only instrument of song,
So my too stormy passions work me wrong,
And for excess of Love my Love is dumb.

But surely unto Thee mine eyes did show
Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung ;

Else it were better we should part, and go,
Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,
And I to nurse the barren memory
Of unkissed kisses, and songs never sung.

HER VOICE.

THE wild bee reels from bough to bough
With his furry coat and his gauzy wing,
Now in a lily-cup, and now
Setting a jacinth bell a-swing,
In his wandering ;
Sit closer love : it was here I trow
I made that vow,

Swore that two lives should be like one
As long as the sea-gull loved the sea,
As long as the sunflower sought the sun,—
It shall be, I said, for eternity
'Twixt you and me !
Dear friend, those times are over and done,
Love's web is spun.

Look upward where the poplar trees
Sway and sway in the summer air,
Here in the valley never a breeze
Scatters the thistledown, but there
Great winds blow fair
From the mighty murmuring mystical seas,
And the wave-lashed leas.

Look upward where the white gull screams,
What does it see that we do not see?
Is that a star? or the lamp that gleams
On some outward voyaging argosy,—
Ah! can it be
We have lived our lives in a land of dreams!
How sad it seems.

Sweet, there is nothing left to say
But this, that love is never lost,
Keen winter stabs the breasts of May
Whose crimson roses burst his frost,
Ships tempest-tossed
Will find a harbour in some bay,
And so we may.

And there is nothing left to do
But to kiss once again, and part,
Nay, there is nothing we should rue,
I have my beauty,—you your Art,
Nay, do not start,
One world was not enough for two
Like me and you.

MY VOICE.

WITHIN this restless, hurried, modern world
We took our hearts' full pleasure—You and I,
And now the white sails of our ship are furled,
And spent the lading of our argosy.

Wherefore my cheeks before their time are wan,
For very weeping is my gladness fled,
Sorrow hath paled my lip's vermilion,
And Ruin draws the curtains of my bed.

But all this crowded life has been to thee
No more than lyre, or lute, or subtle spell
Of viols, or the music of the sea
That sleeps, a mimic echo, in the shell.

TÆDIUM VITÆ.

To stab my youth with desperate knives, to wear
This paltry age's gaudy livery,
To let each base hand filch my treasury,
To mesh my soul within a woman's hair,
And be mere Fortune's lackeyed groom,—I swear
I love it not! these things are less to me
Than the thin foam that frets upon the sea,
Less than the thistle-down of summer air
Which hath no seed: better to stand aloof
Far from these slanderous fools who mock my life
Knowing me not, better the lowliest roof
Fit for the meanest hind to sojourn in,
Than to go back to that hoarse cave of strife
Where my white soul first kissed the mouth of sin.

HUMANITAD.

IT is full Winter now : the trees are bare,
Save where the cattle huddle from the cold
Beneath the pine, for it doth never wear
The Autumn's gaudy livery whose gold
Her jealous brother pilfers, but is true
To the green doublet ; bitter is the wind, as though it
blew

From Saturn's cave ; a few thin wisps of hay
Lie on the sharp black hedges, where the wain
Dragged the sweet pillage of a summer's day
From the low meadows up the narrow lane ;
Upon the half-thawed snow the bleating sheep
Press close against the hurdles, and the shivering
house-dogs creep

From the shut stable to the frozen stream
And back again disconsolate, and miss
The bawling shepherds and the noisy team ;
And overhead in circling listlessness
The cawing rooks whirl round the frosted stack,
Or crowd the dripping boughs ; and in the fen the ice-
pools crack

Where the gaunt bittern stalks among the reeds
And flaps his wings, and stretches back his neck,
And hoots to see the moon ; across the meads
Limps the poor frightened hare, a little speck ;
And a stray seamew with its fretful cry
Flits like a sudden drift of snow against the dull grey
sky.

Full winter : and the lusty goodman brings
His load of faggots from the chilly byre,
And stamps his feet upon the hearth, and flings
The sappy billets on the waning fire,
And laughs to see the sudden lightening scare
His children at their play ; and yet,—the Spring is in
the air,

Already the slim crocus stirs the snow,
And soon yon blanchèd fields will bloom again
With nodding cowslips for some lad to mow,
For with the first warm kisses of the rain
The winter's icy sorrow breaks to tears,
And the brown thrushes mate, and with bright eyes
the rabbit peers

From the dark warren where the fir-cones lie,
And treads one snowdrop under foot, and runs
Over the mossy knoll, and blackbirds fly
Across our path at evening, and the suns
Stay longer with us ; ah ! how good to see
Grass-girdled Spring in all her joy of laughing
greenery

Dance through the hedges till the early rose,
(That sweet repentance of the thorny briar !)
Burst from its sheathèd emerald and disclose
The little quivering disk of golden fire
Which the bees know so well, for with it come
Pale boys-love, sops-in-wine, and daffadillies all in
bloom.

Then up and down the field the sower goes,
While close behind the laughing younker scares
With shrilly whoop the black and thievish crows,
And then the chestnut-tree its glory wears,
And on the grass the creamy blossom falls
In odorous excess, and faint half-whispered madrigals

Steal from the bluebells' nodding carillons
Each breezy morn, and then white jessamine,
That star of its own heaven, snapdragons
With lolling crimson tongues, and eglantine
In dusty velvets clad usurp the bed
And woodland empery, and when the lingering rose
hath shed

Red leaf by leaf its folded panoply,
And pansies closed their purple-lidded eyes,
Chrysanthemums from gilded argosy
Unload their gaudy scentless merchandise,
And violets getting overbold withdraw
From their shy nooks, and scarlet berries dot the
leafless haw.

O happy field! and O thrice happy tree!
 Soon will your queen in daisy-flowered smock
And crown of flowre-de-luce trip down the lea,
 Soon will the lazy shepherds drive their flock
Back to the pasture by the pool, and soon
Through the green leaves will float the hum of
 murmuring bees at noon.

Soon will the glade be bright with bellamour,
 The flower which wantons love, and those sweet
 nuns

Vale-lilies in their snowy vestiture
 Will tell their beaded pearls, and carnations
With mitred dusky leaves will scent the wind,
And stragglng traveller's joy each hedge with yellow
 stars will bind.

Dear Bride of Nature and most bounteous Spring!
 That cans't give increase to the sweet-breath'd kine,
And to the kid its little horns, and bring
 The soft and silky blossoms to the vine,
Where is that old nepenthe which of yore
Man got from poppy root and glossy-berried
 mandragore!

There was a time when any common bird
 Could make me sing in unison, a time
When all the strings of boyish life were stirred
 To quick response or more melodious rhyme
By every forest idyll ;—do I change ?
Or rather doth some evil thing through thy fair
 pleasaunce range ?

Nay, nay, thou art the same : 'tis I who seek
 To vex with sighs thy simple solitude,
And because fruitless tears bedew my cheek
 Would have thee weep with me in brotherhood ;
Fool ! shall each wronged and restless spirit dare
To taint such wine with the salt poison of his own
 despair !

Thou art the same : 'tis I whose wretched soul
 Takes discontent to be its paramour,
And gives its kingdom to the rude control
 Of what should be its servitor,—for sure
Wisdom is somewhere, though the stormy sea
Contain it not, and the huge deep answer "'Tis not
 in me."

To burn with one clear flame, to stand erect
In natural honour, not to bend the knee
In profitless prostrations whose effect
Is by itself condemned, what alchemy
Can teach me this? what herb Medea brewed
Will bring the unexultant peace of essence not
subdued?

The minor chord which ends the harmony,
And for its answering brother waits in vain,
Sobbing for incompleting melody
Dies a Swan's death; but I the heir of pain,
A silent Memnon with blank lidless eyes,
Wait for the light and music of those suns which
never rise.

The quenched-out torch, the lonely cypress-gloom,
The little dust stored in the narrow urn,
The gentle XAIPE of the Attic tomb,—
Were not these better far than to return
To my old fitful restless malady,
Or spend my days within the voiceless cave of
misery?

Nay ! for perchance that poppy-crownèd God
Is like the watcher by a sick man's bed
Who talks of sleep but gives it not ; his rod
Hath lost its virtue, and, when all is said,
Death is too rude, too obvious a key
To solve one single secret in a life's philosophy.

And Love ! that noble madness, whose august
And inextinguishable might can slay
The soul with honied drugs,— alas ! I must
From such sweet ruin play the runaway,
Although too constant memory never can
Forget the archèd splendour of those brows
Olympian

Which for a little season made my youth
So soft a swoon of exquisite indolence
That all the chiding of more prudent Truth
Seemed the thin voice of jealousy,—O Hence
Thou huntress deadlier than Artemis !
Go seek some other quarry ! for of thy too perilous
bliss

My lips have drunk enough,— no more, no more,—

Though Love himself should turn his gilded prow
Back to the troubled waters of this shore

Where I am wrecked and stranded, even now
The chariot wheels of passion sweep too near,
Hence! Hence! I pass unto a life more barren, more
austere.

More barren—ay, those arms will never lean

Down through the trellised vines and draw my soul
In sweet reluctance through the tangled green ;

Some other head must wear that aureole,
For I am Hers who loves not any man,
Whose white and stainless bosom bears the sign
Gorgonian.

Let Venus go and chuck her dainty page,

And kiss his mouth, and toss his curly hair,
With net and spear and hunting equipage

Let young Adonis to his tryst repair,
But me her fond and subtle-fashioned spell
Delights no more, though I could win her dearest
citadel.

Ay, though I were that laughing shepherd boy
Who from Mount Ida saw the little cloud
Pass over Tenedos and lofty Troy
And knew the coming of the Queen, and bowed
In wonder at her feet, not for the sake
Of a new Helen would I bid her hand the apple take.

Then rise supreme Athena argent-limbed !
And, if my lips be musicless, inspire
At least my life : was not thy glory hymned
By One who gave to thee his sword and lyre
Like Æschylus at well-fought Marathon,
And died to show that Milton's England still could
bear a son !

And yet I cannot tread the Portico
And live without desire, fear, and pain,
Or nurture that wise calm which long ago
The grave Athenian master taught to men,
Self-poised, self-centred, and self-comforted,
To watch the world's vain phantasies go by with un-
bowed head.

Alas ! that serene brow, those eloquent lips,
Those eyes that mirrored all eternity,
Rest in their own Colonos, an eclipse
Hath come on Wisdom, and Mnemosyne
Is childless ; in the night which she had made
For lofty secure flight Athena's owl itself hath
strayed.

Nor much with Science do I care to climb,
Although by strange and subtle witchery
She draw the moon from heaven : the Muse of Time
Unrolls her gorgeous-coloured tapestry
To no less eager eyes ; often indeed
In the great epic of Polymnia's scroll I love to read

How Asia sent her myriad hosts to war
Against a little town, and panoplied
In gilded mail with jewelled scimeter,
White-shielded, purple-crested, rode the Mede
Between the waving poplars and the sea
Which men call Artemisium, till he saw Ther-
mopylæ

Its steep ravine spanned by a narrow wall,
And on the nearer side a little brood
Of careless lions holding festival!
And stood amazed at such hardihood,
And pitched his tent upon the reedy shore,
And stayed two days to wonder, and then crept at
midnight o'er

Some unfrequented height, and coming down
The autumn forests treacherously slew
What Sparta held most dear and was the crown
Of far Eurotas, and passed on, nor knew
How God had staked an evil net for him
In the small bay at Salamis,—and yet, the page
grows dim,

Its cadenced Greek delights me not, I feel
With such a goodly time too out of tune
To love it much : for like the Dial's wheel
That from its blinded darkness strikes the noon
Yet never sees the sun, so do my eyes
Restlessly follow that which from my cheated vision
flies.

O for one grand unselfish simple life
To teach us what is Wisdom ! speak ye hills
Of lone Helvellyn, for this note of strife
Shunned your untroubled crags and crystal rills,
Where is that Spirit which living blamelessly
Yet dared to kiss the smitten mouth of his own
century !

Speak ye Rydalian laurels ! where is He
Whose gentle head ye sheltered, that pure soul
Whose gracious days of uncrowned majesty
Through lowliest conduct touched the lofty goal
Where Love and Duty mingle ! Him at least
The most high Laws were glad of, He had sat at
Wisdom's feast,

But we are Learning's changelings, know by rote
The clarion watchword of each Grecian school
And follow none, the flawless sword which smote
The pagan Hydra is an effete tool
Which we ourselves have blunted, what man now
Shall scale the august ancient heights and to old
Reverence bow ?

One such indeed I saw, but, Ichabod!

Gone is that last dear son of Italy,
Who being man died for the sake of God,
And whose unrisen bones sleep peacefully,
O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,
Thou marble lily of the lily town! let not the lour

Of the rude tempest vex his slumber, or

The Arno with its tawny troubled gold
O'erleap its marge, no mightier conqueror
Clomb the high Capitol in the days of old
When Rome was indeed Rome, for Liberty
Walked like a Bride beside him, at which sight pale
Mystery

Fled shrieking to her farthest sombrest cell

With an old man who grabbed rusty keys,
Fled shuddering for that immemorial knell
With which oblivion buries dynasties
Swept like a wounded eagle on the blast,
As to the holy heart of Rome the great triumvir
passed.

He knew the holiest heart and heights of Rome,
He drave the base wolf from the lion's lair,
And now lies dead by that empyreal dome
Which overtops Valdarno hung in air
By Brunelleschi—O Melpomene
Breathe through thy melancholy pipe thy sweetest
threnody !

Breathe through the tragic stops such melodies
That Joy's self may grow jealous, and the Nine
Forget a-while their discreet emperies,
Mourning for him who on Rome's lordliest shrine
Lit for men's lives the light of Marathon,
And bare to sun-forgotten fields the fire of the sun !

O guard him, guard him well, my Giotto's tower,
Let some young Florentine each eventide
Bring coronals of that enchanted flower
Which the dim woods of Vallombrosa hide,
And deck the marble tomb wherein he lies
Whose soul is as some mighty orb unseen of mortal
eyes.

Some mighty orb whose cycled wanderings,
 Being tempest-driven to the farthest rim
Where Chaos meets Creation and the wings
 Of the eternal chanting Cherubim
Are pavilioned on Nothing, passed away
Into a moonless void,—and yet, though he is dust and
 clay,

He is not dead, the immemorial Fates
 Forbid it, and the closing shears refrain,
Lift up your heads ye everlasting gates!
 Ye argent clarions sound a loftier strain!
For the vile thing he hated lurks within
Its sombre house, alone with God and memories of
 sin.

Still what avails it that she sought her cave
 That murderous mother of red harlotries?
At Munich on the marble architrave
 The Grecian boys die smiling, but the seas
Which wash Ægina fret in loneliness
Not mirroring their beauty, so our lives grow
 colourless

For lack of our ideals, if one star
Flame torch-like in the heavens the unjust
Swift daylight kills it, and no trump of war
Can wake to passionate voice the silent dust
Which was Mazzini once ! rich Niobe
For all her stony sorrows hath her sons, but Italy !

What Easter Day shall make her children rise,
Who were not Gods yet suffered ? what sure feet
Shall find their graveclothes folded ? what clear eyes
Shall see them bodily ? O it were meet
To roll the stone from off the sepulchre
And kiss the bleeding roses of their wounds, in love
of Her

Our Italy ! our mother visible !
Most blessed among nations and most sad,
For whose dear sake the young Calabrian fell
That day at Aspromonte and was glad
That in an age when God was bought and sold
One man could die for Liberty ! but we, burnt out
and cold,

See Honour smitten on the cheek and gyves
 Bind the sweet feet of Mercy: Poverty
 Creeps through our sunless lanes and with sharp
 knives
 Cuts the warm throats of children stealthily,
 And no word said :—O we are wretched men
 Unworthy of our great inheritance ! where is the pen

Of austere Milton ? where the mighty sword
 Which slew its master righteously ? the years
 Have lost their ancient leader, and no word
 Breaks from the voiceless tripod on our ears :
 While as a ruined mother in some spasm
 Bears a base child and loathes it, so our best en-
 thusiasm

Genders unlawful children, Anarchy
 Freedom's own Judas, the vile prodigal
 Licence who steals the gold of Liberty
 And yet has nothing, Ignorance the real
 One Fratricide since Cain, Envy the asp
 That stings itself to anguish, Avarice whose palsied
 grasp

Is in its extent stiffened, monied Greed
For whose dull appetite men waste away
Amid the whirr of wheels and are the seed
Of things which slay their sower, these each day
Sees rife in England, and the gentle feet
Of Beauty tread no more the stones of each unlovely
street.

What even Cromwell spared is desecrated
By weed and worm, left to the stormy play
Of wind and beating snow, or renovated
By more destructful hands: Time's worst decay
Will wreath its ruins with some loveliness,
But these new Vandals can but make a rainproof
barrenness.

Where is that Art which bade the Angels sing
Through Lincoln's lofty choir, till the air
Seems from such marble harmonies to ring
With sweeter song than common lips can dare
To draw from actual reed? ah! where is now
The cunning hand which made the flowering hawthorn
branches bow

For Southwell's arch, and carved the House of One
Who loved the lilies of the field with all
Our dearest English flowers? the same sun
Rises for us : the seasons natural
Weave the same tapestry of green and grey :
The unchanged hills are with us : but that Spirit hath
passed away.

And yet perchance it may be better so,
For Tyranny is an incestuous Queen,
Murder her brother is her bedfellow,
And the Plague chambers with her : in obscene
And bloody paths her treacherous feet are set ;
Better the empty desert and a soul inviolate !

For gentle brotherhood, the harmony
Of living in the healthful air, the swift
Clean beauty of strong limbs when men are free
And women chaste, these are the things which lift
Our souls up more than even Agnolo's
Gaunt blinded Sibyl poring o'er the scroll of human
woes,

Or Titian's little maiden on the stair
White as her own sweet lily and as tall,
Or Mona Lisa smiling through her hair,—
Ah! somehow life is bigger after all
Than any painted Angel could we see
The God that is within us! The old Greek serenity

Which curbs the passion of that level line
Of marble youths, who with untroubled eyes
And chastened limbs ride round Athena's shrine
And mirror her divine economies,
And balanced symmetry of what in man
Would else wage ceaseless warfare,—this at least
within the span

Between our mother's kisses and the grave
Might so inform our lives, that we could win
Such mighty empires that from her cave
Temptation would grow hoarse, and pallid Sin
Would walk ashamed of his adulteries,
And Passion creep from out the House of Lust with
startled eyes.

To make the Body and the Spirit one

With all right things, till no thing live in vain
From morn to noon, but in sweet unison

With every pulse of flesh and throb of brain
The Soul in flawless essence high enthroned,
Against all outer vain attack invincibly bastioned,

Mark with serene impartiality

The strife of things, and yet be comforted,
Knowing that by the chain causality

All separate existences are wed
Into one supreme whole, whose utterance
Is joy, or holier praise ! ah ! surely this were governance

Of Life in most august omnipresence,

Through which the rational intellect would find
In passion its expression, and mere sense,

Ignoble else, lend fire to the mind,
And being joined with in^{d-} harmony

More mystical than that which binds the stars
planetary,

Strike from their several tones one octave chord
Whose cadence being measureless would fly
Through all the circling spheres, then to its Lord
Return refreshed with its new empery
And more exultant power,—this indeed
Could we but reach it were to find the last, the perfect
creed.

Ah! it was easy when the world was young
To keep one's life free and inviolate,
From our sad lips another song is rung,
By our own hands our heads are desecrate,
Wanderers in drear exile, and dispossessed
Of what should be our own, we can but feed on wild
unrest.

Somehow the grace, the bloom of things has flown,
And of all men we are most wretched who
Must live each other's lives and not our own
For very pity's sake and then undo
All that we lived for—it was otherwise
When soul and body seemed to blend in mystic
symphonies.

But we have left those gentle haunts to pass
 With weary feet to the new Calvary,
Where we behold, as one who in a glass
 Sees his own face, self-slain Humanity,
And in the dumb reproach of that sad gaze
Learn what an awful phantom the red hand of man
 can raise.

O smitten mouth ! O forehead crowned with thorn !
 O chalice of all common miseries !
Thou for our sakes that loved thee not hast borne
 An agony of endless centuries,
And we were vain and ignorant nor knew
That when we stabbed thy heart it was our own real
 hearts we slew.

Being ourselves the sowers and the seeds,
 The night that covers and the lights that fade,
The spear that pierces and the side that bleeds,
 The lips betraying and the life betrayed ;
The deep hath calm : the moon hath rest : but we
Lords of the natural world are yet our own dread
 enemy.

Is this the end of all that primal force
Which, in its changes being still the same,
From eyeless Chaos cleft its upward course,
Through ravenous seas and whirling rocks and
flame,
Till the suns met in heaven and began
Their cycles, and the morning stars sang, and the
Word was Man!

Nay, nay, we are but crucified, and though
The bloody sweat falls from our brows like rain,
Loosen the nails—we shall come down I know,
Staunch the red wounds—we shall be whole again,
No need have we of hyssop-laden rod,
That which is purely human, that is Godlike, that is
God.



ΓΛΥΚΥΠΙΚΡΟΣ · ΕΡΩΣ ·

Sweet I blame you not for mine the fault was, had I
 not been made of common clay
 I had climbed the higher heights unclimbed yet, seen
 the fuller air, the larger day.

From the wildness of my wasted passion I had struck
 a better, clearer song,
 Lit some lighter light of freer freedom, battled with
 some Hydra-headed wrong.

Had my lips been smitten into music by the kisses
 that but made them bleed,
 You had walked with Bice and the angels on that
 verdant and enamelled mead.

I had trod the road which Dante treading saw the
 suns of seven circles shine,
 Ay! perchance had seen the heavens opening, as they
 opened to the Florentine.

And the mighty nations would have crowned me, who
am crownless now and without name,
And some orient dawn had found me kneeling on the
threshold of the House of Fame.

I had sat within that marble circle where the oldest
bard is as the young,
And the pipe is ever dropping honey, and the lyre's
strings are ever strung.

Keats had lifted up his hymenæal curls from out the
poppy-seeded wine,
With ambrosial mouth had kissed my forehead, clasped
the hand of noble love in mine.

And at springtide, when the apple-blossoms brush the
burnished bosom of the dove,
Two young lovers lying in an orchard would have read
the story of our love.

Would have read the legend of my passion, known the
bitter secret of my heart,
Kissed as we have kissed, but never parted as we two
are fated now to part.

For the crimson flower of our life is eaten by the
cankerworm of truth,
And no hand can gather up the fallen withered petals
of the rose of youth.

Yet I am not sorry that I loved you—ah! what else
had I a boy to do,—
For the hungry teeth of time devour, and the silent-
footed years pursue.

Rudderless, we drift athwart a tempest, and when
once the storm of youth is past,
Without lyre, without lute or chorus, Death a silent
pilot comes at last.

And within the grave there is no pleasure, for the
blind-worm battens on the root,
And Desire shudders into ashes, and the tree of
Passion bears no fruit.

Ah! what else had I to do but love you, God's own
mother was less dear to me,
And less dear the Cytheræan rising like an argent lily
from the sea.

I have made my choice, have lived my poems, and,
 though youth is gone in wasted days,
I have found the lover's crown of myrtle better than
 the poet's crown of bays.

THE END.

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