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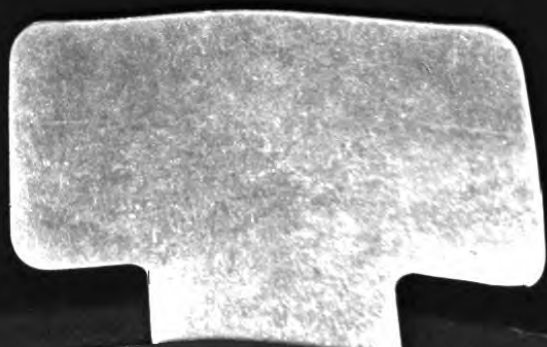


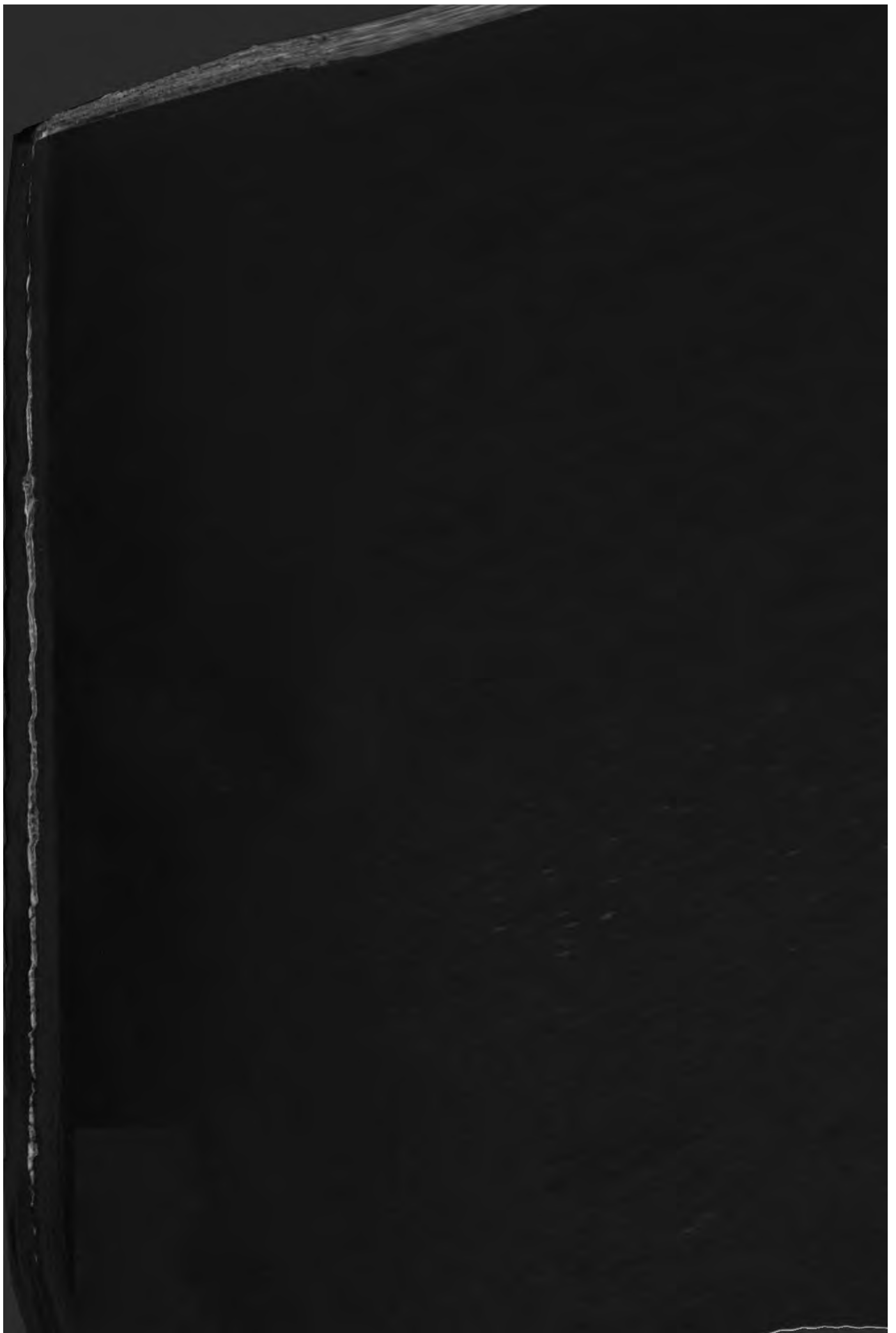
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DOLORIS



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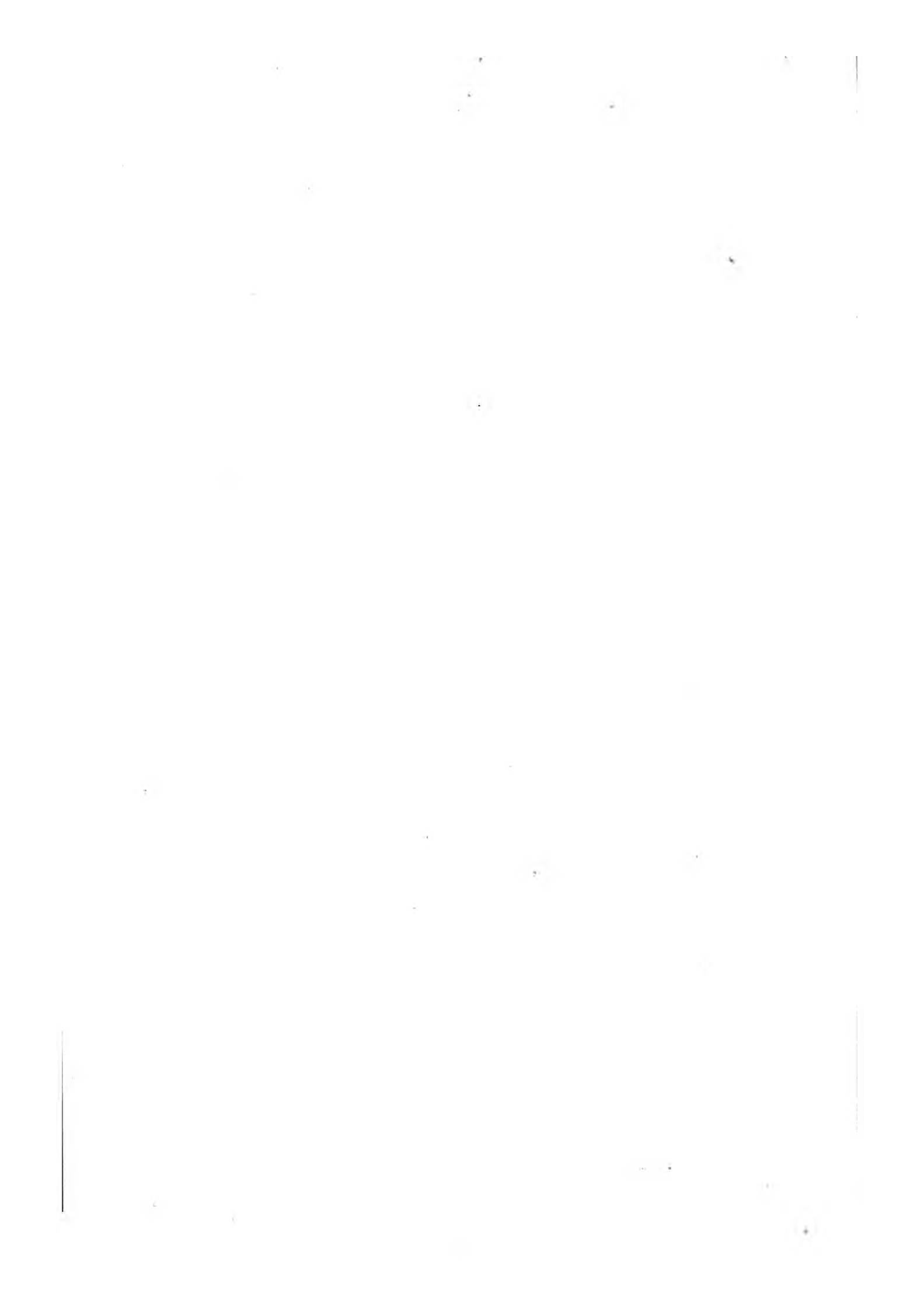






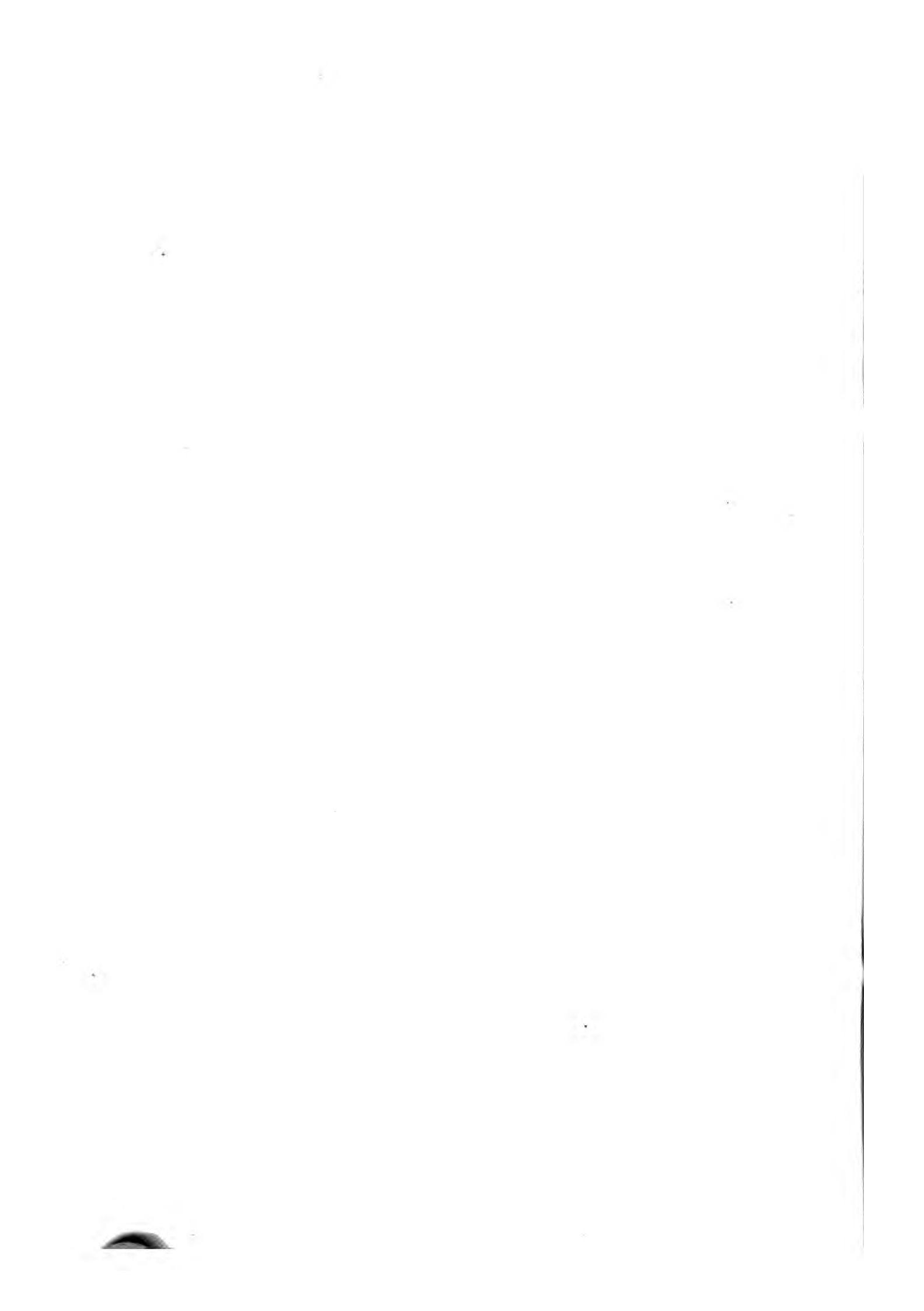












**DOLORS.**



# DOLORES:

*A THEME WITH VARIATIONS.*

*In Three Parts.*



LONDON:  
C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE,  
1880.

280. o. 601.



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*The days are getting short and dark :  
So is my day !  
Ere long, life's little human spark  
Will fade away.  
Perhaps, before it wholly dies,  
Memory will die ;  
And dreams, keen as realities,  
Unspoken lie.  
Therefore, before I quit a scene  
With interests rife,  
I trace some struggles that have been ;  
Some inward strife,  
Where a weak spirit ever asks  
For greater light ;  
Or almost sinks beneath its tasks  
Ere it is night.*

*Questions which meet with no reply,  
 And waste of strength  
 In seeking still, the reason why,—  
 All hushed at length !*

*I edit, thus, some furtive lines  
 Before me laid,  
 Where sad Dolores' soul repines,  
 And pleads for aid !  
 And if, it may be, natures live  
 Which feel like me,  
 I ask them freely to forgive  
 The faults they see.  
 I see them too !—not faults alone  
 Of pen and verse ;  
 But deeper ;—where despair has thrown  
 Its withering curse !  
 And as, awhile, we mortals tread  
 Life's mystic scope,  
 Seeming to bury with our dead,  
 —All love,—all hope,—  
 Yet, though too dulled to realise,  
 Are satisfied*

*That the thick veil again will rise,  
Where now they hide ;—  
—So all these thoughts, unanswered here,  
Of wondering pain,  
—May find solution in that sphere,  
Making all plain ;  
And if our faith in God grows dim,  
And we despair,  
Our doubts of Him we'll take to Him,  
And leave our care,  
A burden cast before His throne,  
In earnest prayer ;—  
He will make all His purpose known,  
—Not here,—but There !*





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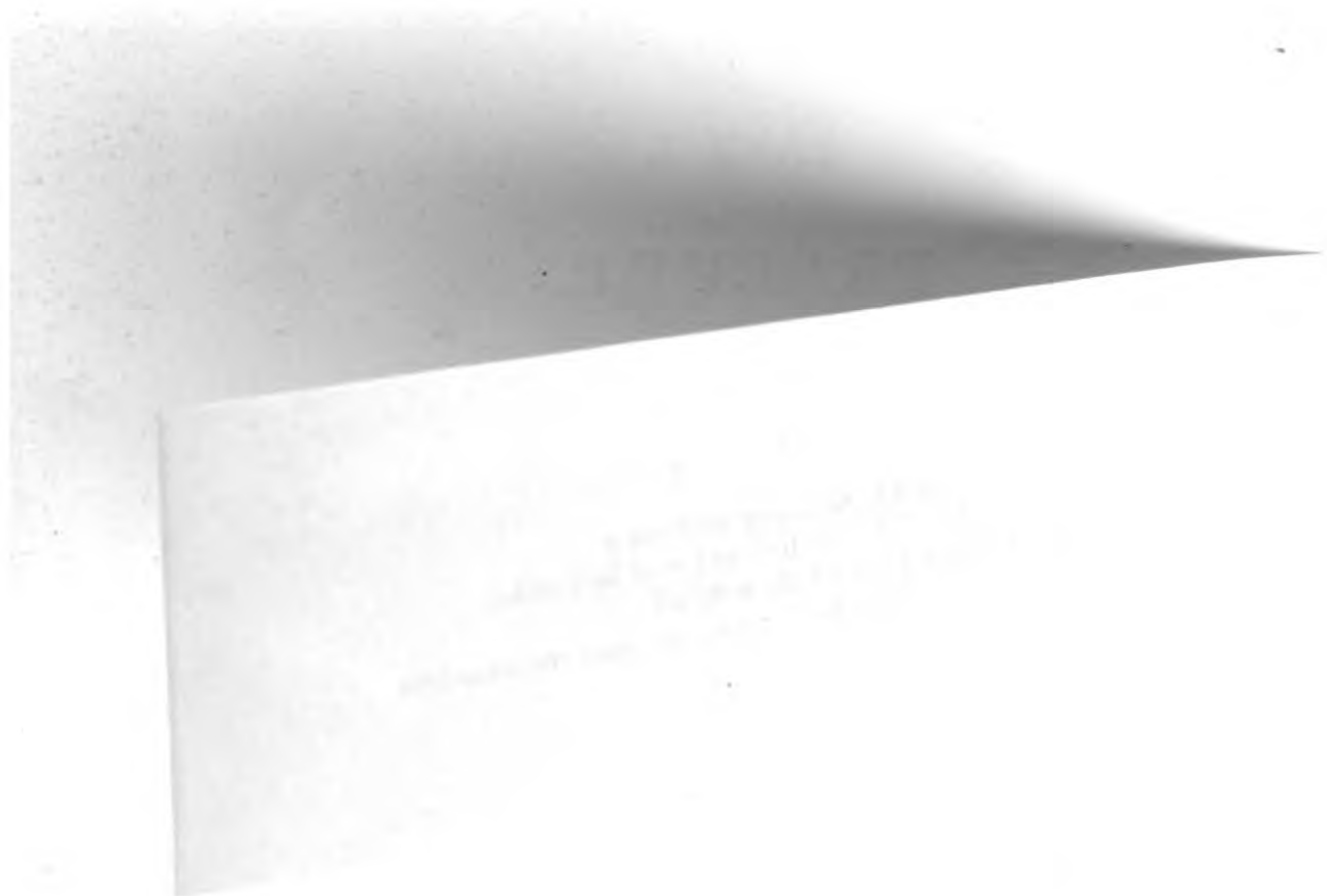


PART I.  
PRELUDE.

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B





## I.

COME ! read this story !—rather, thread of stories !—  
A medley of rash wishes, and crude thought :  
Sketches from differing scenes and persons brought ;  
And, with some truth, and greater fiction, wrought  
Into the life of her I call Dolores.

Yes ! it is fiction :—but although a fiction,  
Upon a basis of sad truth it rests.  
There is an undertone in human breasts  
Of anxious grief, fulfilling high behests,  
And waiting, patiently, God's benediction.

Oh, there are trials,—hidden, inward trials,—  
Which work out ends but half suspected here !  
The alchymy of thought makes life appear  
Some golden dream of an eternal sphere ;  
The chymist dies :—but health springs from his phials.

Ah, hearts may suffer !—what heart does not suffer ?  
And some men climb upon the rocks, and rise :—  
Some miss their footing, gazing on the skies :—  
Some crawl, complaining of rough destinies ;—  
Some march, triumphant that the way is rougher.

Well ! grief bears fruit :—a tree of vast fruition !  
Each sorrow in itself containing seed.  
But—if Dolores fail in hours of need  
The lesson of a mournful mind to read,  
Have not we failed sometimes, in like position ?

## II.

Little feet, with dewdrops sprinkled,  
Tripping through the dewy grass !  
Here she comes, a youthful maiden !  
Stir, light boughs !—to let her pass !  
Bar not, with your rough embraces,  
Steps which echoes proud repeat !  
Wandering, aimless, through the meadows,  
—Aimless through life's journey fleet ;—  
—Beware of thorns, oh little feet !

On she comes ! a sunny picture,  
Colours rich, mid blending shade !  
Contemptuous of her conscious beauty,  
April like, in smiles arrayed.  
Would you know in which direction  
She will bend her course to-day ?  
Go where mating birds are singing ;  
If her note be scarce as gay,  
Its theme will never die away !

To scent the upland Air she pauses ;  
Her petticoat from contact raised  
With Mother Earth, who, kindred claiming,  
—(At such lovely Dust amazed !)  
Fain would meet her touch in passing :  
Meanwhile a rival tries its powers.  
For the ethereal Breezes whisper  
‘She is heavenly ! she is ours !’  
(Earth and Air both nourish flowers.)

Blossoms, birds, and balmy breezes !—  
Do they give her mirth alone ?  
Alas ! those know, who study truly,  
Nature has an undertone !

Therefore she,—who loves her dearly,—  
 —This sweet maid,—with sudden sigh,  
 Pauses in the wayside meadow,  
 Serious wonder in her eye ;  
 Then sings a plaintive melody :

“ The Breeze is soft and light to-day :  
 “ The Birds among the Branches play :  
 “ The Branch is one long, blossoming spray !  
 “ The Breeze is dying of a sigh :  
 “ The Bird, late moulted, cannot fly :  
 “ The Blossom strews the ground hard by !  
 “ Why ? ”

### III.

However humble be the dwelling,  
 And however bright the heart,  
 There is room for Trouble in it,—  
 —Trouble always claims its part !  
 Even her gentle, girlish freshness  
 To Dolores brought a care ;  
 Since her cousin pressed her sorely  
 With a love she could not share.

*PRELUDE.*

7

His the temper, self asserting,  
Which another's right denies,  
Whose contracted mental vision  
Downward-gazing satisfies.  
Long Dolores, disbelieving,  
Treated all his suit as jest :  
Then discouraged his advances,  
With a shrinking at her breast.

'Twas one noontide, in the harvest,  
While the reapers stacked the corn,  
And the fragrance from the hop-yards  
By the pirate gale was borne,  
That Dolores, idly resting,  
Where a brook refreshment brought,  
Overheard his tones familiar,  
With too warm a meaning fraught.

Through the hedge, where climbed the bindweed,  
Timidly, a glance she gave,  
And saw a village maiden listening  
With attention, pleased yet grave.  
Moving from her hidden shelter,  
Some loose branches which she stirred  
Caused him to look up, and follow,  
Dreaming not that she had heard.

Instant, in her mind she modelled,  
 Silently, a cautioning speech ;  
 Thinking how she best could warn him,—  
 How his nature best could reach :—  
 When to her deep indignation,  
 Nigel spoke of love to her ;—  
 Causing anger, doubt, and wonder,  
 In her startled breast to stir.

“ Have you two hearts, Nigel, waiting !

“ One for me, and one for her ?

“ Or are you heartless altogether,—

“ Reckless what results occur ?

“ No ! believe me, one so selfish

“ Love of mine could never win !

“ What you deem mere idle pastime,

“ I consider deadly sin !

“ Cousin Nigel, like a sister

“ I have tried to be towards you,—

“ Take a word of earnest warning,

“ To your better self be true !

“ Cease, in time, these cruel fancies,

“ Which so much to others mean !

—“ A nobler spirit lives within you,

“ Let its nobler fruits be seen ! ”

Carelessly he strode beside her ;  
    Sideways glancing in her face ;  
A bitter irony of accent  
    Of his pleading taking place.  
‘ Truly now ! a pretty preacher !  
    ‘ Cold as northern ice and snow !  
‘ You with ease condemn my passion,  
    ‘ Since of passion nought you know !  
  
‘ If your frigid answer turns me  
    ‘ Back on those whose hearts are warm,  
—‘ Blame not me ! I but take shelter  
    ‘ By a fire from winter’s storm ! ’  
Thus replying, he retreated  
    To the harvest field again.  
“ Ah,” she sighed : “ a bitter harvest !  
    “ Gathered in with sin and pain ! ”

IV.

Better to love, and wear our heart  
    And life out in devotion,  
Than rust in selfishness apart,  
    Unroused by all emotion !



For even such love as they can raise  
     Whose natures are below us,  
 May call forth virtues beyond praise,  
     Ungessed by all who know us.  
 To watch and bear,—to give and do,—  
     Is womanly affection,  
 (If she to womanhood be true,  
     And self held in subjection.)  
 And even should her love,—high flown !—  
     Be half imagination,  
 Her hero's graces less his own,  
     Than her ideal creation,  
 Where, with the truest charity,  
     She robes a mind that needs it,  
 And finding famished vanity  
     Hungry for praise, she feeds it ;—  
 —Yet better this, than self alone,—  
     A mortal inanition,—  
 Where gazing inwardly has grown  
     To be distorted vision.  
 To shut oneself within, and view  
     Oneself by introspection,  
 Is sometimes wisdom,—duty too !—  
     (Though cause of deep dejection ;)—  
 But to shut up from outward calls  
     Hearts where self love abounded,

Would be like dwelling in closed halls  
By looking-glass surrounded.

Some natures must for ever give,  
If only admiration :  
Creating realms wherein to lead  
A life of consecration.  
If all they crave they find not here,  
—For truth is disappointing !—  
A spirit-hero claims the throne,  
By right of Love's anointing.  
Around this shadowy myth they fling  
The charms of fancy lavish,  
Till like a god their idol stands,  
Adoring eyes to ravish.  
The Indian shapes a thing of clay,  
With clumsy fingers, slowly ;  
Then deifies his work, and kneels  
In worship he deems holy.

When the void heart its idol waits,  
Dazed by the prism Hope creates,  
Whose radiant glow is o'er it beaming,  
And half bewildered by the glare  
Of the full glories bursting there,

—(Absorbed in golden mists of dreaming,  
 Scarce knows the actual from the seeming,  
 And clings to possible perfection ;—  
 —Then Forms which stand against its sun,  
 Though sullied, indistinct, or dun,—  
 In such excess, escape detection.  
 The luminous brilliance blinds the gaze,  
 (Which suffers from intensest rays,  
 And the strained vision, bathed in light,  
 Reverses,—tortures,—mocks !—the sight,  
 Till the dark spots themselves seem bright.

Thus, in the flame of her imagination,  
 Dolores' hero, Rex, first took his station.

## V.

If I describe one whom I love,  
 Is it his loss or gain ?  
 Such subtle touches needful prove,  
 Or all the sketch is vain !  
 —That movement of the lip or eye ;  
 —That trick of laugh or voice,—  
 Which wins my heart appealingly,  
 Making its pulse rejoice,

Even through weary years apart ;  
Or after Death has been ;  
(Or changes worse than Death, whose dart  
Is henbane-tipped, though keen ;)—  
—That look which brings him back once more,  
And means so much to me,  
Another's eyes scarce linger o'er,  
Or with distaste may see.  
So of the mind : and so of all !  
Yet such bind friend to friend !  
Trifles, perhaps : but they recall  
Hopes which with Heaven's we blend.

Something of Rex one fain would say,  
Of soul, and face, and form ;  
But words of mine will scarce convey  
A picture true and warm.  
The casement, open to the winds  
The message of the flowers admits,  
And every air that shakes the blinds  
Sheds grassy freshness where he sits.  
Around him, ranged among the books,  
Are sculptured forms of ease and grace :  
Through chequered shadows Hebe looks,  
And sunbeams streak Apollo's face.

Whatever date, or school, of art  
     Lifts Form into immortal fame,  
 Is to his soul of life a part,  
     A tutoring law, high tastes to frame.  
 While to his buoyant plenitude  
 Of youth,—with surplus force endued,—  
     Mere Being gives intense delight :  
 He deems no range too vast and wide  
 For human intellect to stride,  
     With a strong purpose kept in sight.  
     His is the careless power  
     —So rarely Nature's dower,—  
 Which gains success by taking it for granted :  
     Pleased with the wish to please,  
     Each face a friend's, he sees ;  
 And fears not being by rival power supplanted.  
     Learned in nature's laws,  
     Eager to help God's cause,  
 And, when mistaken, first to make concession,—  
     —His attitude of scorn,  
     For wrong too meekly borne,  
 Is passion, when encountering oppression  
  
 Some self sufficiency, perhaps, is here  
     So high these motives seem,  
     'Tis scarcely self esteem,

‘ But honour, and position he holds dear ! ’  
Thus conscience, cheated by a noble word,  
Whispers so softly, it is hardly heard.

His figure, buoyant, strong and pliant,  
An outward type of ease and grace,  
Fits with a nature, self reliant,  
Whose quick resolves and mental power  
Grasp the occasions of each hour,  
With intellect too oft defiant  
Of channelled rules of time and place.  
His eye is bright with ardour,—depth,—devotion,—  
Varying with rapid changes of emotion :  
Mere features rank as nought in such a face !

Yet, through all this, what is there incomplete ?  
That sudden mournfulness,—so often seen !—  
—That half-impatient sigh, struggling though fleet,—  
—That hasty frown,—or laugh !—what do such  
mean ?

Dolores, with an artist’s rich ideal,  
Filled in this picture with Love’s delicate touch ;  
As if a heaven-descended saint were there,  
Halo-enframed !—and worshipped it as such :  
Setting it in the light she deemed most real,  
And found the portrait haunt her everywhere.

To her, to whom all beauty was God-given,  
—A thing to hold, as representing Heaven,—  
Whether of nature, without sentient breath,  
Or of our human life,—ay, and of death !—

    This brilliant incarnation gave a thrill  
    Like some mesmeric influence o'er the will,  
    Which could but watch its ruler, and be still,  
While, as with floods of light, her being seemed to  
    fill.

She found in him a fond, keen apprehension  
    Of all her unsolved doubts,—her troubled dreams ;  
A fellowship of taste ; a quick invention,  
    Which glorified her future with its beams,  
    Diversifying thought with vivid gleams.

It is the very core of many a nature  
    Of all its fascination, and its claims,  
That it needs help which only few can offer,  
    Whose subtle influence masks their kindly aims.  
It knows not this itself ; but, independent,  
    Thinks it gives out, where it, in truth, receives ;  
And slides apart, through unsuspected failings,  
    From loving hearts, whose faith it scarce believes,  
    And many a patient friendship, which it grieves.

Such craves a touch so delicate and tender,  
The hand, though firm, can never wound nor  
pain,—  
—An unsuspected guidance, whose suggestions  
Seem emanations from its master-brain.  
The irritations of a daring spirit  
Which casts its lot in dangerous mines of thought  
Own not their darkness, and forbid intrusion  
To all but one, who has the password caught.  
Is it because to think oneself far-sighted  
Brings such a glow within one's selfish breast  
That one delights to understand a nature  
Which fancy calls too high to charm the rest  
Of those poor mortals, by poor aims possest,  
Who miss the Phoenix, hidden by clouds from sight,  
While twinkling tapers they stoop down to light?  
'Tis thus conceit invites the sweet delusion.  
Just bright enough to see the brightness there  
We over-estimate our own discernment,  
And scarce believe that others have their share :  
While to the faults which seem to them so glaring,  
We turn in vain, wholly, or mostly, blind ;  
And if, perforce, some failings we acknowledge,  
Fullest excuses, in our zeal, we find.  
Oh ! talk of colour blindness ! Love's gay hues  
Deceive the sharpest vision sense can use !



There were some lazy moments  
When Rex laid down the power  
Of intellect and talent  
To dream away the hour ;  
His eyes in depth would gather  
The shades of coming years,  
—A far-off look within them,  
More mournful still than tears.

So grand had been his soul's aspiring !  
Such lofty schemes his wild desiring !  
And now all seemed so vain !  
Without him, future years advancing  
Would nothing owe to that wide glancing  
Of anxious soul and brain !

Then would Dolores bring a balm ;  
Her sympathy with look so calm,  
And voice so full of trust,  
Would teach him that a life lay near  
As rich, though in a narrower sphere,  
Where Nature, true and just,  
Makes compensation for each care,  
And bids small virtues bloom and bear  
Fruit, scent, and flowers, to outlast the brambles there.

## VI.

Nature is full of secrets yet to learn ;  
 More knowledge for more mercy seems to plead .  
 Adaptive laws attract us at each turn,  
 The interest deepening, as we deeper read .  
 Dolores, resting in the summer shade,—  
 Watching where clouds in mimic races played  
 Over the upland heath, and red ploughed furrow ;—  
 Or where the Wheatear, fluttering on the furze,  
 (A sentinel, to mark each foot that stirs,)—  
 Shared, in content, the Rabbit's little burrow ;—  
 Thought of the happy lives by myriads led  
 Where unregarded creatures played and fed .  
 Each seemed a type of something pure and high !  
 Seclusion echoed in the Lapwing's cry :  
 Of love and soothing, spoke the Queest, hard by :  
 Glad exultation rang throughout the air,  
 With the wild screams of Swifts resounding there ;  
 The Linnet sang of friendship's happy care :  
 With joyous praise the Lark's voice seemed to ring ;  
 While freely rose the Seamew's widespread wing  
 Like Thought, from outward space new life to bring ;  
 She watched it skim the surface of the deep,  
 Then near the edge of some fresh sea-wave keep,—

Lest aught of value should, perchance, escape :  
 Busy with all that came,—without a fear.  
 Like Thought, too, it would sometimes disappear  
 And rise elsewhere, seeming to take new shape ;  
 Now making wider range, now coming very near ;—  
 Sombre, and gray ;—or dazzling white, and clear.

Her eye still watching thus, her Thought still soaring  
 high,  
 She saw it roll aside, at crack of gun, hard by.

She startled, and looked up,—her day-dream over,  
 As Nigel leaped the fences at her side,  
 Crushing the sweetness from the blossoming clover,  
 Careless to take the spoil ; having descried  
 A better sport ;—Dolores threading daisies,  
 With absent eyes, as one in Fancy's mazes.

‘ Ha, Coz ! ’ he cried, as on the ground  
 Close at her size, a seat he found ;  
 ‘ Had I but known what little Bird was waiting  
 ‘ To find a mate,—with patience unabating !—  
 ‘ Yon sea-gull, wafting out on ebbing tide  
 Had kept its life, and I been by your side.  
 ‘ I frightened you ?—your calmness over-rating ! ’

“ ’Twas for the innocent life I feared,  
    “ Torn ruthlessly away :  
“ Such beauty in its joy appeared !  
    “ Its plumage soft and gray  
    “ Seemed animated spray.  
“ Why did it tempt your wish like this ?  
“ Why must you spoil its happiness  
    “ To be your useless prey ? ”

Nigel, with nature unlike hers,  
    Could not such feelings comprehend.  
—The breeze which high, light, tree-tops stirs  
    Cannot the stones beneath them bend.

‘ Ho, ho ! fair Cousin ! no such waste  
‘ Of beauty shall offend your taste ;  
‘ To decorate your morning room  
    ‘ I will bring down the fellow bird :  
‘ But cast away that look of gloom,  
    ‘ And give me thanks !—one little word ! ’

    “ Oh, leave it free  
    “ To skim the sea !  
“ Take not its life away for me !  
    “ Lay down your gun again !  
    “ I have no pleasure in its pain !

“ I care not for the stiffened attitude,  
     “ Beneath a glass, for ever just the same !  
     “ Let it still search the beach for daily food,  
 “ And you shall have the best thanks I can frame.  
 “ But wanton cruelty like this, I can but scorn and  
     blame.”

But Nigel answered in an angered tone :  
 ‘ Ah, it is always thus ! You will not own  
     ‘ ’Tis but in scorn of my affection  
     ‘ My gifts for ever meet rejection !  
 ‘ “ Pity ! ”—if you have any left to spare,  
 ‘ ’Tis surely time you thought upon my share !  
 ‘ Or, if you want another object,—there ! ’

Again his gun rang sharply o’er the water,  
 Again a needless victim marked his slaughter.

Dolores rose :—her gesture gave  
     Sufficient answer, without voice.  
 She homeward turned, disturbed and grave ;  
     Unable longer to rejoice  
 In outward loveliness of bird or sea :  
 —A shadow darkened all. She could not see  
 The meaning of destructive wills,—or why such things  
     should be.

VII.

Wounded in spirit ; sad at heart  
From thoughts of cruelty and crime,  
Dolores set herself apart  
To con the lesson of all time :  
Failing, of course ! Since none yet know  
Why Sin and Suffering flourish so !  
Doubting,—so tear-dimm'd is grief's sight !—  
If triumph ever crowned the Right !

Rex from a different point of view  
The problem also tried ;  
Conviction with each essay grew  
That Sin was on God's side :—  
Only a cloud to give Faith play,—  
A strife where Virtue gains the day !  
That when, in time, mind grasped the cause,  
Suffering would yield to unlearnt laws.

' The eye which cannot bear the sun,'  
Rex said, ' will rest in shade,  
' There master all around, nor shun  
' To give its twilight aid :

‘ But place it in the burning light  
‘ Its blinded gaze sees nothing right ;  
‘ Is helpless,—as it must be, here ;—  
‘ For perfect light is Heaven’s own sphere.

Perhaps a vigorous, active frame,—  
A hopeful tenor in his mind,—  
To aid his explanations came,  
Making him see as most inclined.

Happy in all around, we bear  
An atmosphere of glorious air,  
And looking through, see all things bright  
From sheer preponderance of delight.

Yet even thus, Dolores gained  
A transient gleam, reflected back :  
Her anxious spirit felt less pained,  
Her fears paused midway in their track :  
Though unconvinced, she let things rest,  
Nor put her judgment to the test ;  
Thankful, awhile, that thought should cease,  
And trust in Rex, bring ease and peace.

Thus he, from her, sometimes fresh strength received,  
And sometimes she the weaker nature proved :  
Each in the other hoped, relied, believed,  
And over both the same deep influence moved,  
Till spirit voices whispered that they loved.

VIII.

Love's outlines, touching Fear's, are undefined  
Both tremble in the balance of the mind.

Ev'n Rex, Dolores clasped against his breast,  
Would whisper anxiously, by doubt distrest,  
Of this world's durance, o'er the head reclined  
Quiet and happy, on that place of rest.

- ' Since all things are the gift of Heaven,
- ' Then passion is its gift :
- ' Into intensest ecstasy
- ' At times the heart to lift.
- ' The power to catch another's thought,
- ' Love, through a blush, to trace,
- ' And with electric flashes, learn
- ' All meanings in a face ;—
- ' This is the dawn of some new sense !
- ' We cannot analyse !
- ' But own the mastering impulse comes
- ' All powers to mesmerise.
- ' Answer me, Darling ! look me through
- ' With those true eyes of thine !



' Is not this sense a spark from Heaven  
   ' Blending thy soul with mine ?  
 ' If in this world alone, our love  
   ' In human framework lies,  
 ' And passion shall exist no more  
   ' In realms beyond the skies,—  
 ' Then, Dearest, let us intertwine  
   ' Our hearts, till life is done ;  
 ' That in the regions of the blest  
   ' We may continue one.  
 ' Come ! own it, in one lingering kiss  
   ' Whose depth is almost pain !  
 ' I press my meaning through my lips,  
   ' Whose words assay in vain ! '

To him Dolores brought intense affection,  
   Like some new charm watching each changeful  
   mood,  
 Tending him in his gloom with half protection,  
 Finding another link in his dejection,  
   Nor seeing, in his future, aught but good.  
 Proud to be welcomed with her soul's revealings,  
 She laid before him all her girlish feelings,  
 Opening her secret nature with a spring  
 Of that strong force idolatry can bring,  
 For to such nature, love meant worshipping.

She brought him treasures from her fancy's regions,  
Quick flashes of perception, high-toned tastes,  
Ideas still crude, and bright, vague dreams, in  
legions ;—

A mind creative, while it ran to waste.  
He gave her purpose, raised a high ambition,  
And firmer groundwork, by his mind's tuition.  
Their vivid talk ran on with genial glow,  
Each gaining more than either seemed to know ;  
Like rivers, gathering brooklets as they flow.

She, like the mirror of a quiet lake,  
Which softens each reflection it may take,  
Copied his views with an unconscious breath  
Of lighter tastes rippling the springs beneath ;  
And he, entranced by flattery so sweet,

Bent o'er his new-found image, fondly proud,  
Unwittingly, his eidolon to greet,  
With sympathetic ties, scarce yet avowed ;  
So much of mist will first true love enshroud !

But waves will dash the quiet of the water,  
When wild winds burst on it from every quarter.  
Or under-currents, to each other rushing  
With eager contact, bubble up and boil,  
Even while the surface, with red sunset flushing,  
Shows nought but extra charms from the recoil,

So the strange rapture, when two hearts are meeting,  
Calm to observers, to each other known.  
All outward life some inward echo greeting,  
Comes full of meanings for themselves alone.  
Eye seeking eye, a sudden intuition  
Thrills through the nerves, like a fresh revelation ;  
The common things of life, to their wrought vision,  
Gaining, from Love, celestial elevation.  
All conversation takes a fresher tone,  
As being a store for converse of their own ;  
For interchange of thought on new opinions  
As telegraphic power, in his dominions.

But there were times when a wild storm would burst  
Unseen above, rousing the depths below ;  
Coming, perhaps, in breezes slight at first  
Which scarce with ripple struck the outward flow ;—  
Perhaps a sudden tempest, without warning  
Would break the peaceful calm their course adorning ;  
Or, like still water, checked by night, and hardened  
by the frost,  
A chillness would steal over them and confidence be  
lost.

Who shall count Man's varying humours ?  
Who shall gauge his heart's caprice ?

Yielding credence to its rumours,  
Such as shatter hope and peace !  
Admiring all the tender graces  
Which around a maiden spring,  
He belief implicit places  
In her powers of reasoning ;  
Then, if she, in shyness shrinking,  
Half her thoughts from him reserves,  
He, indignant, doubts her thinking ;  
And from his allegiance swerves !  
If she be not all he needed,  
—Or he knows not all she is,—  
He grieves not that he ill succeeded,  
But gives her blame,—in phrase like this :—  
(To him, in scorn, himself replies :)  
‘ Expect not that which cannot be !  
‘ A woman’s soul is in her eyes,  
‘ Alas ! the whole is there to see !  
‘ How could I build so broad,—so high,—  
‘ A structure on so weak a base ?  
‘ How look to find philosophy,  
‘ Where nature gives not depth a place ?  
‘ Because her face is passing fair,—  
‘ Because her deep eyes look me through,—  
‘ Will argument and sense be there ;—  
‘ Logic, and perseverance, too ?

' Oh Woman ; with an angel's brightness,  
 ' Pure and lofty as a saint,—  
 ' Is, then, thine essence only lightness ?  
 ' Rising ; but mist-like, thin, and faint ?  
 ' Is there no well-spring, underlying  
 ' The rainbow tints that upward steam  
 ' Of earnest purpose, never dying,  
 ' But flowing on in constant stream ?  
 ' Shallow !—even when thinking deepest !—  
 ' Rarely knowing where to aim !—  
 ' Losing strength when rocks are steepest,  
 ' And most zeal and vigour claim !  
 ' Satisfied with small successes,—  
 ' Measuring self by standard weak ;—  
 —' 'Tis with her loving, Woman blesses,  
 ' But kindred mind, in vain we seek ! '

Then would she loose imagination's riches ;  
 Her fancy his deficiencies supplying :  
 For even inconsistency bewitches

When each new phase fond love is beautifying :  
 Like diamond facets, sparkling in the sun,  
 Cold stone shows warmest hues, reflecting rays that  
 run.

## IX.

Chasing the seaweed on the sand  
Which waves and tides were stealing,  
Writing fond words with ungloved hand,  
A tell-tale love revealing,  
Dolores noted not, the while  
The shadow fast advancing,  
Till Rex stood by her, with a smile,  
At her child's play-work glancing.  
Blushing, she hid the written name,  
Lest he her words discover,  
Fearing her boldness he might blame,  
Though proud, as her sworn lover.  
But he, before she had effaced,  
The lines beside her lying,  
Already had their meaning traced,  
Some missing links supplying :  
Yet was not his the flattered tone  
Her shyness had been fearing,—  
No accents claimed her as his own !  
No look meant fond endearing !  
With an impatient turn of head :—  
' Written on sand ! ' he simply said :

Then moved away, and left her there,  
Wondering and grieving : in despair  
Ever to fathom all his heart ;  
Feeling, at times, so far apart !  
Seeing the future marked with fear  
Lest she, through each succeeding year  
Should ever fail to comprehend  
What would give pleasure ;—what offend !  
It seemed to her a mystery to which she saw no end !

And when, half timidly, she sought him next,  
—Dreading estrangement from her very bold-  
ness !—

He was all warmth, and by her fears perplexed ;—  
—Blaming her, lovingly, for timid coldness,—  
Bidding her grow less fanciful !—less prone to self-  
tormenting,—  
Or laughing at her ready wit in fancying and inventing.

Or haply, in another vein of mind  
He would rebuke some error undefined,  
With jealous force ; her negligence upbraid,  
Or see, by simple acts, wrong thoughts conveyed.  
Then, if Dolores raised astonished eyes,  
Looking him through with her straightforward gaze,  
—Her truthful face the surest of replies,  
Where sorrow mingled with intense amaze ;—



He,—wounded deeply that he wounded her,  
 Would to his maddening love lay all the blame ;  
 Question, distressed, what fiend his soul could stir  
 To wrong her, whom he ever loved the same !  
 And with a plaintive tone, whose essence came  
 From a wrung heart, would her forgiveness claim :

And when her hand she laid  
 On his, with answering smile,  
 —Though her brow bore a shade  
 Of troubled love, the while,—

He, with the tenderest words, her grieving to beguile,  
 Would speak of highest dreams, when both their  
 spirits blending,  
 Should form one perfect self, progressing, never-  
 ending,  
 Their steps, awhile on earth, through worlds eternal  
 bending.

Dolores, listening, had her own replies ;  
 But nearer prospects opened to her eyes.  
 To see him daily to fresh goodness rise,  
 —Secure of earth, secure beyond the skies !  
 To her the smaller virtues he passed by  
 Were most essential to life's truer meaning ;  
 She mourned to see him treat them slightly,  
 While to impossible schemes his mind was  
 leaning.



If, in some mutual confidence, she tried,  
With timid management, such to suggest,  
His wondering gaze, or laughter light, replied,  
Calling her views mere trifles, fit for jest ;  
He would deem Women's minds too slight for aims  
like his,  
And check her foolish arguments with an indulgent  
kiss.

Above all,—under all, around,—  
Beyond all looks, all voice,—  
He would be conscious of the inward bound  
Of heart and pulses, till they seemed to sound,—  
Bidding him to rejoice,  
If but Dolores,—his own cherished choice !—  
Her wandering way into his presence found.  
Never a thought to her untrue !  
As soon would he have waged  
War against Saints in heaven's full view,  
On Sin's dark side engaged !

Each thought, each wish, each scheme  
In her began and ended.  
Hope, golden as a beam,—  
From summer skies descended,—  
Made his whole future one pure, lovely dream ;  
By her from grief defended.

## X.

The squirrel sprang from bough to bough,  
The water-rat was splashing ;  
Amid the sedges moorfowl swam,  
And dragon-flies were flashing,  
All through the vacant summer hour ;  
When Rex, in silence watching,  
Wooded solitude to be his friend,  
His tone from Nature's, catching .  
At first his heart like squirrels leapt,  
With branching barriers playing,  
And thought on thought took insect wing,  
Above the river straying .  
His fancy wandered mid the reeds  
About life's waters growing,  
Among their columns intricate  
With calm assurance going .  
And with a lazy self-content  
He patronised God's working,  
Thankful that in His glorious plans  
He knew the wisdom lurking .  
Then, sinking to a humble mood  
He saw his years all wasting,  
And felt a useless, cumbering worm,  
Mere pleasures idly tasting !

And bent his head upon his hands  
     Remorseful and dejected,  
 The soul which raised him, lowering him,  
     —As he its claims inspected,—  
 Beneath the very insect tribe  
     Which act their end by being ;  
 —Beneath the weeds which sprang around  
     Too small for casual seeing !  
 Then rose, resolved ; with change of look,  
     A fresher aim pursuing :  
 (Though hope was hidden for awhile,)  
     His energy renewing.

‘ Forth from the mountain sod  
     ‘ Where mists were hazy,  
     ‘ Where footstep rarely trod,  
         ‘ Upsprang a daisy.  
 ‘ Eye never saw it ;—say, then, why it grew ?  
 ‘ Had its being no meaning, no object in view ?  
 ‘ Simply, it blossomed ; a coronal star,  
 ‘ And looked up to heaven, whose gems shone so  
     far ;—  
 ‘ For it could be patient, unquestioning, fair,  
 ‘ And fulfil some small purpose in solitude there,  
     ‘ Though only a daisy.’

XI.

The bitter herbs which make us strong,—  
The sighs which are the breath of song,—  
    By such as these, we rise  
    To loftier destinies.

    Do we regret, (when past the pain !)  
    The tastes and tears by which we gain ?  
    Do we not rather know  
    Wisdom, the crown of Woe ?  
    Herein, a slave may hug his chain,—  
If all its links to Heaven belong,  
    And drag us upward, heart and brain,  
From low pursuits, and wishes wrong !

Dolores, learning love meant care,  
Thanked God, the same, that love was there.  
    The rule of Rex to her implied  
    Powers that developed, day by day :  
    She knew him, through life's earnest way,  
    An earthly friend, a heavenward guide,  
Even while she felt his shadow o'er her glide.

“ A monarch in my bosom reigns,  
“ Despotic, yet who gilds his chains :  
    “ Do I rebel ? No, never !

" Has any voice,—a thing apart,—  
 " Said to the Love within my heart,  
     " ' Oh, king ! live for ever ?'  
  
 " A tyrant would usurp the throne !  
 " Relentless, fain would rule alone !  
     " Can I resist ? No, never !  
 " Has any voice, more powerful still,  
 " Said to the grief that seems to kill,  
     " ' Oh, king ! reign for ever ?' "

## XII.

The sinking sun, with slanting ray,—  
     —With golden pencil-line of light  
 Writing farewell to lingering day,—  
     Seeks his gray covert for the night :  
 The purple flushings of the heather,  
 And yellowing fern-brakes fade together.

Only above, among the pines  
     The red boughs twist in brilliant glow :  
 As though some Chief, whose power declines,  
     Still proudly rules the vale below ;  
 This solemn crown his rank revealing  
 O'er the lost realm which Night is stealing.

The tiny harebell to the breeze  
Alone its secret vesper breathes ;  
And round the stems of broken trees  
The bryony its tendrils wreathes,  
Its bronze leaves clasping with protection,  
Like weak attempts from sad affection .

But e'er the sun, by thickening twilight driven,  
Had to his consort moon his empire given,  
While pools defiant sent him back his flame,  
Along the moor, Rex and Dolores came .

Both paused a moment here,  
As by a mutual sense  
Of air so pure and clear,  
Of beauty so intense.  
His was a sombre mood,  
To autumn twilight kin,  
Like the dark leaves that strewed  
The path they wandered in.  
She,—foot and heart both light,—  
The elastic mosses pressed,  
—By sunset hues made bright,  
—Transfigured by the West.  
Stooping to see her face,  
—His own in shadow cast,—

Both in the hush could trace  
 Too deep a spell to last.  
 His smile, while fond, was sad,  
 —Experience of some fear :  
 Her smile was purely glad,  
 —'Twas perfect to be here !  
 He clasped her to his breast,  
 Moved by some sudden thrill,  
 While, closely bending still,  
 His feelings he expressed :  
 Spoken in tones of jest,  
 But tinged with deep unrest.

' Dolores ! look into my eyes,  
 ' And let me gaze in thine !  
 ' I see the sun from yonder skies  
 ' Reflected in them shine !  
 ' This evening, love, it seems to me  
 ' Celestial hues combined,  
 ' Have woven angelic drapery  
 ' In which thou art entwined !  
 ' I need from thee  
 ' No bended knee,  
 ' No altar vows of constancy !  
 ' Thou art a Spirit, which hath condescended  
 ' To visit earth, and my thin life befriend !

' No ! Doubt of thee shall wring me never !  
 ' Once mine, and thou art mine for ever !  
 ' Yet, maiden of holy look ! thine eye,  
 ' Did it not hold love's mystery,  
 ' Might seem too full of Heaven-sworn ecstasy !  
     ' But for the passion of thy kiss,  
     ' But for embraces such as this,  
 — ' Endearments which might even Cupid bless !—  
     ' 'Tis much as if a nun-like veil,  
     ' Woven of clouds of moonlight pale,  
 Alone such transcendental bride might dress !  
     ' Why do I shiver ?  
 ' Why do the frolic words, even as I speak them,  
     ' Through my whole being quiver ?  
 — ' As if, enforced, for prophecy I seek them !

But for the suffering which she caught,—  
 —Each tone,—each look,—with misery fraught !—  
 She from his arms, ere now, herself had freed ;  
 But sensitive to every nerve  
 Of pain in him, she did not swerve,  
 But closer clung in this, his self-made hour of need.  
 So low she spoke,—just whispering in his ear,—  
 'Twas scarce an outward voice he seemed to hear ;  
 The sympathy in which their lives were spent,  
 More than his senses, told him all she meant.



“ I would laugh off this foolish mood  
“ But that your pain is too intense,  
“ And light words, by your standard viewed,  
“ Might seem a cause of just offence.  
“ But oh ! you know without the telling,  
“ That all in me of truth or heaven  
“ Is yours alone ; the good indwelling  
“ My hopes to raise, to you is given.  
“ If I am yours, then nothing is my own ;  
“ What good I do, or am, is yours alone !  
“ Laugh at my logic ! but it was you who taught it,  
“ And from your lips, in moments past, I caught it.”

Thus on they wandered ; she in wonder  
At all the mysteries of his mind,  
Which ever seemed new food to find  
For fears he struggled to keep under.  
Glad to turn his thoughts away,  
A playful contest she proposed ;  
Which could, before the evening closed,  
The quaint old water-mill portray  
Which faced them with its stonework gray,  
And drapery soft of ivy green,  
The leading object in the scene.  
He, from the farther side,  
—Half loth thus to divide,  
From her by space so wide !—

His station took, to catch a different view,  
Where on the upper pool,  
The evening breeze blew cool  
Beneath the Autumn's rule,  
And round the placid lake the rushes grew.

Impatient at the separation,  
He scarcely touched the page at first ;  
Then laughing at his own vexation,  
And picturing her expectation,  
He worked with eager application,  
While into snatching song he burst.

‘ Love is in my heart,  
‘ And Love pines at delay,  
‘ Echoing fancy's moans  
‘ Always.  
‘ Oh, how like the shell  
‘ Severed from its ocean,  
‘ Is the wordless sound  
‘ Of intense emotion !

‘ Love is in my heart,  
‘ A poet's dreamy lay,  
‘ Hope bursts the embryo thought,  
‘ Always !

‘ Sweet poem of Love !  
    ‘ Theme never ending !  
‘ With tongue of earth  
    ‘ To heaven ascending !

‘ Love is in my heart,  
    ‘ And love will sing all day,  
‘ Hope bears the music on,  
    ‘ Alway.

‘ Oh, sentient harp !  
    ‘ Whereon Hope is playing !  
‘ O’er the strings of my heart  
    ‘ Her hand is straying !

‘ Love is in my heart  
    ‘ And paints in prisms gay :  
‘ Hope gilds the distance vague,  
    ‘ Alway !

‘ Paint, then, oh Love !  
    ‘ Bright colours using ;  
‘ With an aureole light,  
    ‘ Hope’s beams diffusing !

‘ Love is in my heart,  
    ‘ Whispering, “ Praise and pray ! ”  
‘ Hope rears the fane around,  
    ‘ Alway.

‘ Sing, then, oh Love !  
‘ Earth is too fleeting  
‘ For half the poem  
‘ Hope is repeating !’

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‘ As here I sit, and strive to trace  
‘ The beauties opening on my view,  
‘ Memory will only sketch your face,  
‘ And Fancy each dear look renew !  
‘ Thus shall I draw my picture, Darling,  
‘ All of you !

‘ Behold a home, where tastes combined  
‘ Weave daring dreams in patterns true !  
‘ Advancing love, advancing mind,—  
‘ And grief, if there, a blessing too !  
‘ Thus shall I draw my picture, Darling,  
‘ All for you !’

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Where the mill-wheel tossed the water  
To the greedy lower pool,—  
Where the beech and alder, stooping,  
Bathed within its basin cool,  
(Like the careless hand of Plenty,  
Flinging benefits below,

Where, the weary working over,  
    Meek recipients wait its flow,)  
—There Dolores, by the pathway  
    Staid, her pencil yet in hand,  
Loth to leave, with skill unfinished,  
    Scene so picturesque and grand.  
Clouds concentrated round the sunset !  
    Mimic clouds reversed below !  
Every reed, and fern, and withy,  
    Golden in the flooded glow !  
Piled in heaps of flame and blackness,  
    Fitful swept the threatening breeze,  
Whose rising whispers seemed to usher  
    Night's advancing mysteries.  
“ Thus,” she thought, “ both storm and sunshine,  
    “ Strife, and sweet serenity,  
“ Are elements which, well contrasted,  
    “ Make up life's intensity.”  
As thus she sat, the evening gathered :  
    Forth from hiding flew the owl ;  
The bat about the old mill wavered ;  
    The fir-wood donned its shadowy cowl.  
She rose, half startled, from her musing,  
    —Glad Rex quickly should return,—  
When steps, not his, came nearer,—nearer !  
    Staggering, roughly, through the fern.  
She knew the reckless, sin-worn features

More by instinct than by sight ;—  
Knew, too well, the daring freedom,  
Heightened by excess to-night,  
Why had He,—the All-creating,—  
Made her kin to one so low ?  
Why did twisted education  
Its light on evil powers bestow ?  
Never yet had she felt timid  
When in presence of this man ;  
Why did courage now forsake her,  
The while her blood so coldly ran ?  
He saw her : and with cry impatient  
In her path, midway, he sprang ;—  
And with a mocking laugh addressed her,  
Though, through all, pained feeling rang :  
His arms he spread to bar escaping,  
And once again he urged his suit ;  
And pressed her with coarse terms of loving,  
As she, at bay, stood cold and mute.  
Accusing her, ‘ that in past moments  
‘ When he an honest love professed,  
‘ She roused, with vanity unheeding,  
‘ The dormant passions in his breast :  
‘ That when with scorn she gave him answer,  
—‘ As if some hateful reptile spoke,—  
‘ She cared not how his all he offered,  
‘ Nor yet his vengeance how she woke ! ’

Angry, though just, her active conscience  
Admitted some absorbed self-thought :  
When, in those days, she saw one image,  
—Of all beside it, seeing nought !  
And taking cousinly position  
As some excuse for flirting jest ;  
Not deeming him one moment serious  
In the love-suit that he pressed.  
Some word of this she would have spoken  
Had his state brooked such reply :  
Yet her expression, growing softened,  
He caught, in her unconscious eye.  
Instant his arms around her flinging,  
His hot breath warmed her flushing face,  
As with a cry by terror strengthened,  
She struggled free from his embrace.  
“ If Rex were here,” in frantic tones, she cried ;  
“ You would not dare insult his promised bride !”

The words were still unfinished,  
Her echoing cry still rang,  
When from the clustering bushes,  
With answering call, Rex sprang,  
His face was white as ashes,  
His eyes were burning fires,

Whose intermittent flashes  
Were rage and wild desires.

Dolores flew to him, to rest  
Her smothered face upon his breast.

Her arms she wound  
His neck around ;  
While, even in that mad hour,  
Her mere touch had such power,  
That like one glorified,  
His whole expression changed ;  
Protection, fondness, pride,  
—Forgetting all beside,—  
Through Love's full channels changed .  
Upon her head his cheek he bent  
Silent, on her alone, intent.

Too much ! this was too much !  
Could one, rejected, stand and witness such ?  
The wrath which brimmed before  
In Nigel's angry breast, now bubbled o'er.  
A sudden blow Rex felt  
By hand behind him dealt.  
One moment more,  
And life to life, with demon-hate engaged  
Two mortal foes engaged !



Rex,—turning madly round  
Struck Nigel to the ground;  
Then, springing on him with a ringing yell,  
By fury blinded, crushed him where he fell :  
And kneeling on his breast  
His clenching hands around his throat he pressed.

Dolores rushed to save ;  
But her weak arm, though with Love's magnet  
freighted,—  
Her agonised voice, to which wild terror gave  
Unearthly tones,—not in the least abated  
The vengeance Rex poured forth upon the man  
he hated.

Yet soon, exhausted by the wrath he felt,  
He suffered her to raise him, while she knelt  
Beside her cousin, looking in his face  
One sign of life,—one breath of hope,—to trace !  
Rex bent to help her ; with that sudden change  
Of mood and temper which were ever strange ;  
Mechanical, but prompt, his utmost skill  
He strained to cure whom late he strained to kill :  
And when all efforts proved too utterly vain,  
First brought himself to mind, with wrench of brain ;

Still, in the new reaction which took place,  
Watching Dolores with a passive face ;  
While she, in voiceless agony of soul,—  
—Her flying thoughts too wild for her control,—  
Caressed the dead face, and the clammy brow,  
With the kind touch so coveted ere now,  
Closed the fierce eyes, with soft hand smoothing down  
What there for ever lay !—Cain's angry frown ;  
Then, starting to her feet, to Rex she turned,  
Shuddering and shivering, though her hot cheeks  
burned.

He stood like one absorbed, watching a play,  
Not like an actor in life's tragic scene !  
His gaze on her ; his soul-light far away ;  
Time, space, and circumstance alike unseen ;—  
—Still lightning-blinded, though the storm had been.

Starting, he wakened : as one wakes from sleep ;  
With sense of motion needed,—just to keep  
At bay that stagnant chill of horror deep.  
A rush of consequences fronted him,  
Scarcely less dreadful because vague and dim,  
Freezing the vital power in heart and limb.  
Instant escape was urgent ; how, and where,  
He could not think,—he scarcely seemed to care.

Anguish and agony were in his eye,—  
To what safe refuge could he hope to fly?  
He tried to plan ; but in his misty brain  
Despair took root, an inward hell of pain ;  
He was impelled to act,—not to be still !  
His movements irrespective of his will ;  
He scarcely felt ; he could not clearly see ;  
    His feeble thoughts in words seemed answered back ;  
A giddy whisper near him seemed to be,  
    With mocking tones, hounding him on life's track :  
Over and over echoing but one word,—  
    The one word, 'Murder,' with a laugh and hiss !  
Singing it ; spelling it ; mouthing it unheard ;  
    But never, for an instant, changing this.

Dolores spoke ; and like a signal given,  
The fiend-thoughts seemed to fly the voice of heaven.

“ Oh God ! art Thou still here !  
    “ With Thine all-watchful eye !  
“ Beholding what we do?—  
    “ Then, Father, hear my cry !  
“ Yes, even here art Thou !  
    “ Help us to bear Thy will !  
“ Come to the maddened heart,  
    “ And passion will be still.

“Desert us not in this dark hour !  
“Sustain us, by Thy wondrous power !  
    “ No other friend have we !  
    “ Even here, we pray to Thee !

“God is still with us, Rex : do not despair.  
“Our deepest crimes should rouse our deepest prayer.  
“He to the sinner comes, and lifts his care.  
    “ We will not dare to say,  
    “ ‘ We may not dare to pray.’ ”

Then, incoherently, Rex claimed her aid :  
Concealment,—flight,—were all his words conveyed.  
But she, with calmer brain and juster view  
Taking the lead, as knowing what to do,  
Bade him stand firm, and court the inquiring light  
Which should be thrown upon this deed of night.

As to a child, she spoke ;  
    Simply, slowly, clearly  
And at each word awoke

    A hope that touched more nearly.

“Not his the hand,” she said, “which struck the blow  
“First aimed, unseen, to lay a rival low.  
    “To save her, and in self-defence  
    “He fought ; though in his rage intense

“ Both struggling wildly,—hate to hate,—  
“ With hands that battled everywhere,  
“ He saw not, knew not, till too late,  
“ The stronger hand of death was there.”

Then for some succour nigh,  
To the old mill, hard by,  
She, with fleet footstep, fled ;  
Rex standing yet, beside the newly dead.

Already had her earlier shriek of pain  
Brought out the miller's wife ;  
Who stood, mute-staring, deeming her help vain ;  
A stupid horror freezing up her brain ;  
—Excitement not unwelcome, in the strain  
Of two men struggling in a mortal strife.  
Some turgid minds need horrible attraction  
Before they rouse themselves from slow inaction ;  
Where, with the details, most would faint and  
sicken,  
Their sluggish natures realise and quicken.

Dolores, panting, reached her, flying like the wind,—  
Pointed, with shaking hand, to what she left behind.  
Then fell, alike exhausted in body and in mind.

XIII.

“ Is this a calm,—the legacy of storm ?  
“ Is this my pulse,—beating alive and warm ?  
“ Slowly the weeks have gone ; and I awake  
“ Once more my place in this hard world to take.  
“ I would I could have died !—but for his sake !  
  
“ But is Rex dead ? Why comes he not to me ?  
    “ Alas ! I know !—that bitterest theme of all !  
    “ And I must fain be grateful to my God  
“ For this,—his doom of dread insanity,—  
    “ Though the worst doom which can the good appal !  
“ Since only by the horror of the brain  
“ Could he be saved from Sin’s intenser stain .  
    “ Father ! I see the budding of Thy rod !  
“ I thank Thee for the awful trial sent !  
“ Thy mercy spares me worse ; I am content.  
“ Help me to bear it ! Make me calm to share,  
“ And, if it might be, lighten his great care.  
“ Though broken sobs be all my prayer to Thee,  
“ Thou understandest ! Father, strengthen me !  
“ I will be patient, dark though Thy laws be,  
—“ We cling the more to faith, the less we see !

- “ Strange ! that through generations there should run  
“ The germs incipient of a mind accurst !  
“ A frightful gift by father made to son,  
“ Which, lying dormant, with more force may burst !  
—“ When least expected, menacing the worst ;—  
“ And horrid crimes in innocence be done !  
“ All things in nature have their wondrous links :  
“ Here purity and guilt may be allied !  
“ Harder the problem grows, the more one thinks !  
“ Since God, unsearchable, His way doth hide.
- “ I was unconscious of this fatal doom :  
“ Finding excuses through all reason’s range  
“ For sternness, inconsistency, or gloom ;  
“ How I have wondered when his moods were  
strange !  
“ How I have mourned at many a sudden change !
- “ My poor lost Rex ! lost to me here for ever !  
“ The strong corporeal frame all that is left !  
“ Yet, even from that, no power my troth shall sever,  
“ He needs me more, of his own self bereft.  
“ Fate still has blessings in her future store ;  
“ Some hopes to even the saddest lots belong ;  
“ This utterly prostrate time will soon be o’er,  
“ And I shall rise ;—face sorrow ;—and be strong.



- “ Then will I thank the laws  
    “ Which saw the provocation,  
“ Tracing effect to cause,  
    “ Finding justification ;  
“ Leaving him freedom to be still at large,  
“ If loving hearts will make his life their charge .  
“ Still is he mine ! and 'tis my care to tend  
“ His heavy lot on earth, even to its mournful end .
- “ And will he know me when we meet again ?  
    “ In the sad prison of his haunted mind  
“ What memories are entombed, hopeless and vain ?—  
    —“ What live,—new versions and new force to  
    find ?
- “ While stupor,—half anticipating death,—  
“ Suspended all my powers, save only breath,—  
“ Whose help sustained him ? was there no one near  
“ To whisper consolation in his ear ?  
“ And did he miss me, wondering day by day  
“ What awful thoughts of him kept me away ?  
“ Or did he know my state, and for my dying pray ?
- “ Perchance the past will hover round like dreams,  
“ Unreal to him, till so to me, it seems .  
“ His former self,—just what it used to be,—  
“ All that will ever show itself to me !



“ How hard to see him thus ! in nothing changed,  
   “ Unconscious of a crime,—attractive, dear ;  
 “ Just as in olden days :—yet feel estranged  
   “ By one dread secret, one unvarying fear,  
 “ The terrible unshared knowledge of a crime,  
   “ Gliding with spectral pace along my life !  
 “ Yet better this,—even thus to know in time  
   “ Than learn too late, already being his wife ;  
 “ And feel that those sweet faces raised to yours,—  
   —“ Those happy words of prattle at your knee,—  
 “ Carry the hidden curse Madness insures  
   “ And that as they are now, so once was he,—  
   “ As he is now,—so they one day may be ! ”

While waiting thus for health and strength, delayed  
   Even by the wish to rise and take her share ;—  
   At times, in her lone chamber of despair,  
 Wild, anxious utterings, Dolores made :  
   Seeking relief ; or power to wait and bear,  
   With none to hear, save God, who sent the care :  
 Or wept, till tears brought temporary aid :  
 More often still, in solitude she prayed.

When Memory, like a stern avenger stood  
   With vivid pencil marking out the past,  
   She, her whole mind into the shades would cast,  
 Seeking through evil, to decipher good :

Searching for palliation ; yearning ever,  
Right, volunteered, from wrong, enforced, to sever.

- “ Oh strength ! Give strength, oh God of strength !  
“ Make thy strength perfect in my utter weakness !  
“ Daily I cry : Come to me, Lord, at length !  
“ Thy visitation I desire, with meekness.  
“ Perhaps this patient waiting is my trial,  
“ That I may learn that I possess a soul ;  
“ And making cheerfulness my self-denial,  
“ May command influence by innate control.  
“ We know not half the powers that lie within,  
“ Till we have learnt what silent tears can teach !  
“ Forgiving sins, in what we also sin,  
“ And striving an ideal height to reach.  
“ We know, when desolate in solitude,  
“ How even the dearest friendship may intrude ;  
“ For while we groan beneath the chastening rod,  
“ We want no soother,—none to hear !—but God.  
“ Faint not, my soul ! nor weary of well-doing !  
“ Afar the harvest glows with golden grain !  
“ Thy vital powers from Him who gave renewing  
“ He shall create thy energy again.  
“ Faint not ! though around thee press  
“ Sordid claims, or mean distress ;—

- “ Though the shrinking nerves should quail ;—  
 “ Though the judgment err and fail,  
 “ Tangled in life’s sinuous snare ;—  
 “ Though unanswered seem thy prayer ;—  
 “ Though thou canst not mount on high  
 “ With all thy wonted energy ;—  
 —“ Faint not, soul ! for it may be  
 “ Mere Patience is required of thee ;  
 “ That hardest trial to fulfil,—  
 “ Panting to give thine aid,—that thou keep still.  
     “ For there are seasons in all hearts  
       “ When Faith will close her eyes,  
     “ When power to pray, itself, departs,  
       “ With power to realise :  
 “ Then, like the sheep, lie dumb and still,  
 “ Shorn even of God, if God so will !  
 “ Strive not, but wait : and this shall be  
 “ Virtue and sacrifice in thee.  
     “ Then take thy rest  
       “ From stringent prayer,  
     “ Just simply blest  
       “ That God is there.  
     “ Thou canst not rise to God,  
       “ But He the more will bend ;  
     “ And now the dreaded rod  
       “ Shall prove thy staff and friend ;

“ Thy faltering frame shall lean  
 “ Upon that surest stay,  
 “ Till, close before thee seen,  
 “ Opens the promised way  
 “ Wherein that weary man, life’s wayfarer,  
 “ Though fool in judgment, never more shall err.

“ For out of all deep sorrow  
 “ There comes a joy which nothing else can give.  
 “ We look beyond to-morrow,—  
 —“ That sad to-morrow, through which we *must* live,—  
 —“ Anyhow !—somehow !—so that it gets past !—  
 —“ And see the meaning of our God, at last !

“ In bitterness we kneel beside our bed,  
 “ Burying our face from all familiar things,  
 “ And cry aloud, in agony and dread,  
 “ To the one refuge of our sufferings.  
 “ We pray ;—till God is through the darkness seen ;  
 “ We pray,—till, groping, we can touch His Hand,  
 “ Our living on, proves how deep prayer has been,—  
 “ Our being sane, how firm His children stand.  
 “ Could we not recognise,—in answering tone,—  
 “ Our God beside ; within ; around ; above ;—  
 “ We could not bear it ! It is this alone  
 “ Supports us,—that we rest upon His love.

“ This is the joy of sorrow, that it brings God near,  
 “ And makes of prayer a realising blessing ;  
 “ We speak and cry, expecting Him to hear ;  
 “ And think of Him as one we are addressing,  
 “ To Whom, a present help, our wants we are  
 confessing ;  
 “ As actually there, as though He should appear !  
 “ There is no shamming then : we could not pray  
 “ If He were indistinct,—doubtful,—or far away.

“ Black anger, and empurpled rage !  
 “ Insanity claims both as kin !  
 “ The highest intellects in vain  
 “ Seek where they end and where begin,  
 “ And where responsibility  
 “ No longer holds control o’er sin.  
 “ Yet if too much they strive to know,  
 “ They half invite the tyrant in !  
 “ The vista whence one frenzied thought  
 “ For ever glares upon the view,  
 “ And tramples peace beneath its hoofs,—  
 “ However fenced the avenue,—  
 “ Drives on the will with maniac shout,  
 “ To battle, kill, and crush it out !  
 “ The crafty, tortuous, labyrinths  
 “ Of twisted minds, are madness, too :

“ And sometimes, with adroit finesse,  
 “ Bring ruin and disgrace about,  
 “ Horrors which time can ne'er undo,  
 “ Shame, which repeats itself anew.  
 “ Oh, rather writhe in constant pain,—  
 “ Stem, with weak arm, oppression's tide,—  
 “ Suffer all stings of wounded pride,—  
 “ Bear poverty,—or slander's stain,—  
 “ But shut out Madness from the seething brain !—  
 —“ That lightning stroke, which tears and blasts the  
     tree !—  
 —“ One moment's shock, to last futurity !

“ Both Good and Bad are offshoots from within.  
 “ Sin is not sin when not considered sin.  
 “ Often mere lack of opportunity  
 “ To relish sin, appropriates Virtue's name.  
 “ The man-slayer, with hatred just, we blame,—  
 “ Yet go to war with cool impunity.  
 “ Our strong support props up our feeble brother ;  
 “ We kindly place temptation out of reach ;  
 “ His ignorance of right and wrong we teach ;  
 “ And thus transmit our conscience to another.  
 “ The power to sin from others' lives withholding,  
 “ The virtue of their lives is scarcely theirs ;  
 “ It is ourselves, in them, we are unfolding :  
 “ Whose, then, the credit of their souls' affairs ?

“ So with the evil which we might prevent :

“ No action to itself can live alone.

“ Scarcely a thought is ours to call our own,

“ But it will spread, with unobserved descent,

“ The germ of deeds far beyond all we meant.

“ Thus we go forward to new generations ;

“ Repeat ourselves,—yet never quite the same ;—

“ And faintly in the future take our stations,

“ Long after Death has made his open claim.

“ So in the past : whence first the education

“ Which formed the basis of our present deeds ?

“ The original, and far-off inspiration,

“ Which for our harvest scattered forth the seeds ?

“ Who is responsible ? We ask in vain :

“ God alone knows, to Whom all things are plain.

“ Let us not judge, but simply leave to Him

“ All that to us is vague, confused, and dim.

“ Wait till these questionings, in His clear light

“ Receive their answer, ‘ All His ways are right.’ ”



XIV.

Dolores came to him ;  
With a pulse fluttering like a wounded bird.  
Would memories, better left, by her be stirred?  
Or would she find his thoughts confused and dim?

He sat, his face behind his fingers hidden,  
(Whose dark emotions worked unseen within,)  
Those fingers grown so translucent and thin,  
They had been hand in hand with Death unbidden.

She called him by his name,  
With tones of pathos from a loving heart ;  
With breath suspended,—looked to see him start,  
Comforted, in that she was still the same.

He moved not, save his clenching hands to tighten ;  
But a deep, sobbing sigh his bosom rent ;  
With furtive motion, back a space he went,  
Her overtures arousing but to frighten.

Her hand on his she laid ;  
Then on his head her burning cheek she pressed  
With tranquil pause, as at last finding rest,  
Which to her strong desire had been delayed.



He shook her off ! firmly, but very gently ;  
 As one with some marked purpose to fulfil :  
 His features and expression hidden still  
 From the sad looks she poured on him intently.

“ Then, Rex, I will not stay.  
 “ You need me not ; why, then, should I oppress ?  
 “ I came here with fresh love and prayer to bless :  
 “ I leave God with you, when I go away.”

Instant he spoke ; but oh, in voice so altered !  
 A tremulous agony was in its tone ;  
 Yet as if far away, and not his own,  
 The whispered, broken words with which it faltered.

‘ How shall I thank you, that you came to me !  
 ‘ Not shrinking from my doom of punishment !  
 ‘ Yet what I am, not even you shall see,  
 ‘ Lest you go mad, and of your love repent.  
 Yes ! God is with me !—That I know too well !  
 ‘ His awful wrath has changed my earth to Hell !  
 ‘ His presence is by frightful judgment shown !  
 ‘ By retribution is His power made known !  
 ‘ But oh, Dolores ! long before this curse  
 ‘ His anger sent to bind me to my sin,  
 ‘ And my lost soul in torment to immerse,—  
 —‘ Remorse and penitence had risen within.

' There is no value in a murderer's prayer !  
 ' I dare not breathe one, even if there were !  
 — ' The face you loved to look on in past days,  
 — ' Whose likeness you still wear,—perhaps still  
     praise !—  
 — ' That is no more, Dolores ! but *his* face  
 ' Who in the grave lies cold, is in its place !  
 ' When the true mirror gives me back my gaze,  
 ' The starting eyeballs,—the set mouth,—I trace !  
 ' Ask me no more ! Too horrible for speech !  
 ' But look not on me ! Hope is past my reach.  
 ' Inscrutable the Great Almighty's ways !  
 — ' But pray for me ! He hears when Virtue prays ! '

More to herself than Rex, Dolores spoke,  
 When her low, awestruck voice the silence broke.  
 Her mournful heart cried so for consolation  
     She only thought of God as present there ;  
 To Him she came, safe in His invitation,  
     Sure of His promise, in her heavy care,  
     That with the trial would rise the power to bear.  
 All Flesh must come to Him Who heareth prayer.

" I cannot bear this, Father ! without Thee !  
 " And yet Thy love my blindness cannot see !  
 " In vain we seem to cry ! Hear us, at length,  
 " And of our weakness make Thy perfect strength !

“ Oh, I will trust in Thee  
“ What time I am afraid !  
“ Our powerful safeguard be !  
“ We have no other aid !  
“ Stricken and contrite !—crushed with woe !  
“ Thou, only Thou, the grief canst know !  
“ Thou, only Thou, the help canst send !  
“ Hear us ! We have no other friend !”

## XV.

Well ! if the Fates, (and Furies too !)  
Had to her vision turned the page,  
Bringing this future grief to view,—  
—The sting of youth !—the wreck of age !—  
—Showing her how the doom was there  
And lay on him and his for ever,  
In spite of agony's hot prayer,  
And tenderest love, which slumbers never,—  
—Would she have turned aside from care  
And deemed it well all ties to sever ?  
Or would this piteous curse have been  
A closer tie their lives between ?

Ah ! being what she was, Dolores knew  
Simply that this admitted of no question.

She felt that love, having no choice, if true,  
Would scorn the insult of the mere suggestion !

If, in the crushing horror of her life

She never more could hope to be his wife,

Still she might comfort him, when lucid rays

Of reason came, to break the misty days.

And if,—as would be, often,—when they came,

They cleared the past with far too keen a flame,

And brought remorse, and timid throes of shame,—

—Yet more he needed her !—her quiet loving

And tender sympathies his fears removing ;

An antidote, her cheerful courage proving.

If he were selfish by her faith to gain,

He knew it not ; nor thought she to complain ;

Rather, had one besought her to refrain

From waste of years while watching him in vain,

—She would have shrunk, as from an added pain.

Sometimes, awakening from a dream of ease,

When, all unconscious of his dreadful past,

He wooed her still, with all old arts to please,

And round the future, radiant fancies cast,—

—He would, with sudden spasm, awake to find  
Her constant patience waiting on him still ;  
And in the shortlived clearness of his mind  
Would urge and press her sore, her life to fill  
With other interests, leaving him to bear  
Alone, the curse allotted to his share.

Sometimes he would accuse her of deceiving,  
Telling her Woman's love admits pretence,  
But that it argued lack of common-sense  
To credit him with aptness in believing !  
She could not love him now, seeing *that* face !  
—(For the face being index of the mind  
He to all evil must be now inclined !)  
—And she, denying what she saw, was blind ;  
Or, meaning well in cheating, brought Love into  
disgrace.

At times, when she would cheer him,  
No answer would he utter,  
And when she ventured near him  
Would faint remonstrance mutter,  
Shutting himself within himself, in luxury of woe,  
His mind receptacle of thoughts his mind alone could  
know.


Or if she feared to pain him  
By sympathy scarce heeded,  
—Hoping the more to gain him  
When timely words were needed,  
He said he saw he wearied her, he knew that this  
must be !  
Let her go forth to brighter scenes, less steeped in  
misery.

But there were seasons when his soul  
Would soar above all mournful things,  
Forgetting Earth's, and Sin's, control,  
And sweep the heavens with lofty wings.  
Science and Fancy, both combined,  
Would pour forth an immortal strain ;  
Like one inspired, that tortured mind  
Would reassert itself again.  
Or many an earnest hour was vainly spent  
In searching out the world's requirement,  
With ever-ready zeal, fresh answers to invent.

So on ;—and on. Slow weeks to slow months  
changing ;  
Yet in her steady love she wavered never.  
His visions through all widest circles ranging

Taking their hue from some fresh gleam, for  
ever ;  
Reason distorted by a vein too clever.  
First, in the pressing action of the brain,  
Some wild, intemperate jealousy would rank ;  
Then self-absorbing penitence would gain  
A desperate power, while from himself he shrank .  
Or,—all oblivious of the hideous past,—  
—Only the happier, earlier days retained,—  
He would around a glorious future cast  
The glamour of a fancy unrestrained,  
Wooing her soon to make it even more fair ;—  
—‘ Who, but his promised bride, his promised fame  
should share ? ’  
His buoyant laugh, gay as in times of old,  
Striking her ear and heart with shivering numb-  
ness cold.

So on ; and on. More weeks of drear delay ;  
When, all at once, the madness died away.  
A sweet, wild look of sorrow took its place ;  
A wistful, patient yearning lined his face.  
Conscious of all, he saw the cause of all ;  
Trust came, consoling him for Reason’s fall :  
No longer held responsible for crime  
He grasped eternity, in place of time ;





Dreaded no more Vengeance too hard to bear,  
But turned to Him for hope, Whose word forbids  
despair.

The brilliant intellect which aimed so high,  
—Which fell so low,—child of insanity,—  
—Twin-brain of genius ;—to which all things seemed  
A possible attainment, if once dreamed,—  
—Now ended, without fruit of one good deed ;—  
For later reapers, not one scattered seed !  
Yet the Creator, Who in His vast plan  
Gave mind to be the pride, or curse, of man,  
Having to him from birth this heirloom given  
Not for results thereof would shut out heaven.  
And reasoning thus, his heart was satisfied :  
Great strength and calmness o'er his spirit came :  
Great waste and weakness triumphed o'er his  
frame :  
Both ebbing out to the eternal tide.

Dolores watched and waited,  
Her fondness unabated,  
With thankful heart that peace  
Had to wild war succeeded,  
That, ere the soul's release,  
Had come the light it needed.



A little more, and all his tale is told.

The last few scenes we seek not to unfold.

Days which seemed years, such dread suspense was  
there.

Days which seemed seconds, they so precious were,—

—And bright with faith,—Dolores at his side,—

His hand still clasped in hers, he smiled, and died.

PART II.

FANTASIA IN VERSE.

IN A MINOR KEY.



I.

HAVE we a fear? Is it a fear of want,  
Which lurks around in hungry streets and alleys?  
Or, robed in outward finery to the world,  
At night, alone, with debts in secret dallies?  
Torturing our bosoms all the more that we  
A tyrant own,—Respectability!

Is it a fear of pestilence or war?  
Of being distanced in our mental races?  
Of unsuspected enmity and wrong?  
Of alien looks on our impoverished faces?  
Chase we such fears away!—while we engage  
With a far steadier foe,—advancing Age.

The middle distance, in a painter's view,  
Between wide spaces acts as demarcation,  
A shade, contrasting with the foreground bright  
And hazy blue of far-off obsuration;  
So middle life, indefinite at most,  
From youth and age its borrowed hues must boast.

Years travel on. How trite that saying is !  
—As all thus find it, is it worth the mention ?  
Yet to Dolores, since we saw her last,  
It has embodied all a soul's attention ;  
As full of details as a canvas wide,  
Like that, by noble touches beautified.

Sorrow has sought her, with its Proteus form,  
And mural Death has shut out life's affections ;  
The world-wealth, given by Fortune's reckless  
hand,  
That hand has scattered wide in new directions.  
Sin, with no power to catch her in its snare,  
And give remorse, has given, through others, care.

And shall we say she triumphed over these ?  
Yes ;—if a triumph means a meek obedience,  
A patient energy,—unselfish thoughts,  
And to a purpose high, unchecked allegiance :  
No ;—if a cheerful hope must form a part,  
—The traitor,—Discontent,—lurked in her heart.

What can we bring her triumph, then, to grace,  
The heroic Soul with valorous signs arraying ?  
What slaves among this Conqueror's troops  
parade ?  
What wreathes are cast ? What trumpet notes are  
braying ?

What crowns of fallen monarchy are there ?  
What robe of jewelled purple may she wear ?

We bring the indolent dreams, all captive now,  
Subdued by sympathy and bravery ;  
The wreaths of pleasure crushed ; high strains of  
prayer ;  
And self, with all its fiends, in slavery.  
The virgin's robe is in her triumph worn ;  
Her victor coronal, a crown of thorn.

But life is not all triumph, all success.  
Ask of the Hero what his failures number !  
Ev'n in the soul's deep struggles there are times  
When war with self, reacts in torpid slumber :  
Then the sly world, attracting, lays its claims,  
And in its network binds down higher aims.

Life seemed so finished in its earlier stage !  
The martyr-spirit an integral portion  
Of all the future, as of recent past,—  
And love and pleasure, phases of distortion.  
From all allurements, being henceforth secure,  
The heart no more keeps watch, as feeling sure.

What wakes it, with a sudden sense of shame ?  
 —Its faith in its own earnest purpose shaken ?  
 With startled gaze it turns to face its foe  
 And finds the citadel already taken.

The last few years, which seemed life's settled scheme,  
 Dissolved, like mists, before Love's midday beam.

‘Cling to the past !’ young Inexperience cries,  
 ‘Keep faith with that old dream of days departed !  
 ‘How beautiful the constancy which lives  
 ‘Through good and bad, unflinching and one-  
 hearted,  
 ‘Bearing all ill-usage, Sin, and,—much more,—Death ;  
 ‘Nor sighs for change till its own latest breath !’

Some natures thus. But as youth fades away,  
 Showing, perchance, Love's object overrated ;  
 —That pride was on a false foundation built ;  
 And worthless charms, and fame, have been mis-  
 stated :—

—Another, while to some old dream it clings,  
 Will hide, with stoic face, sharp, galling stings.

Yearning awhile,—awhile unsatisfied,—  
 Time glides along, lost in life's incompleteness ;  
 Then a fresh interest rises from the gloom  
 Giving the heart more than its primal sweetness :

*FANTASIA IN VERSE.*

The old love hovers round ; its sacred grace  
Assigns to every love a nobler place.

Sense after sense, as on an infant's mind,  
New thoughts and aims successively come stealing ;  
Not to be backward in the general race !—  
Communion somewhere sought for wakening feel-  
ing !—

The call for sympathy in daily needs !—  
The loving approbation, in good deeds !

The pertinacious rule of constancy  
Seems then a lesson of love's earliest pages.  
Love, to be love, must ever be in love ;  
(And passion, like a poem, commands, through  
ages.)

Crushed out the germ within can never be !  
Trampled on earth, it grasps eternity.

Look at the annals of historic truth ;  
How highest hearts of noblest aspiration  
When fate stamps out the channel of their love  
Turn to fresh founts, seeking its renovation.  
Congenial spirits they must find ! or lie  
In the lost regions of obscurity.



Oh, remember !

'Tis of years long gone I speak,  
 While bloom still flushed Dolores' cheek ;  
 While yet her step, with buoyant lightness  
 Echoed some music from youth's brightness.

But like December,  
 When he presses down the mists,  
 Starving the life from running rills,  
 Or the north-eastern blast enlists  
 To serve him with its deadly chills,—  
 —Thus cold Reality came stealing  
 Youth's soft, fresh glamour from her breast ;  
 A slow paralysis of feeling  
 Took from all action half its zest.

A grave procession, Sorrow's train,  
 In phalanx deep,  
 With shadowy sweep,

She felt upon her pathway gain :  
 Till, overtaken ; wearied ; she fell back  
 A listless mourner, following in its track.  
 Yet was she conscious of a slumbering power,  
 Which lay beneath, and none would care to waken ;  
 What man would stoop to hold the torch of Cupid  
 To light a Psyche, worn out, or forsaken ?—  
 (Reversing, thus, the legend which he stole,  
 Since the Soul waits for Love—Love waits not for  
 a Soul.)

And yet it is Love's beam,—Love's touch,—alone,  
that stirs  
With rousing, vital energy, Souls seeking light, like hers.

In early life, excitement marked each day :  
Now came Monotony, all empty-eyed,  
But with a heavy hand, which pressed away  
Hope, intellect, desire, ambition, pride :  
Her form still lived ; but half her soul had died :—  
Died to the interest of surrounding things,—  
—Yet starting into painful life, when probed by  
Memory's stings.

At times her inner nature rose  
Rebellious at Fate's leaden will,  
With yearnings sore, 'neath its repose,  
And Love's dead music echoing still :  
And she felt that the days were a heavy weight,  
—For the whispers of Love breathe early and late,—  
And she almost longed for the olden pain  
If with it romance could return again.  
She missed the stirring incident  
Which once her troubled spirit rent,  
And the lethargy of her present life  
Seemed harder, even, to bear  
Than agonies of inward strife

If Love were with her there,  
 For stagnant inanition is despair.  
 She cried for one wild storm her calm to shake ;  
 Some change of plan beyond her power to make ;  
 Some blast of fortune through the fog to blow,  
 And open out a space for one bright gleam  
 To prove the sun still shone with pristine glow :—  
 —Some incident to force her from her dream.

“ All lives are consecrated,  
 “ When, for a motive power  
 “ The love of God is foremost,  
 “ Present through every hour.  
 “ For if they have no object  
 “ The dearest place to claim,  
 “ The need is doubly earnest  
 “ To have a heavenly aim.”  
 ’Twas thus Dolores reasoned,  
 And strove to be content,  
 —Seeing the Hand of Mercy,—  
 —Waiting for Time’s event.  
 With honest, pure endeavour  
 To call a blessing down  
 On every loss and trial,  
 On cross and thorny crown.

Ah ! when the coronation  
Of earthly hopes seems near,  
How oft, instead of glory,  
The sudden thorns appear !  
Boast not, with high heart-beating !  
Even if a crown be worn,  
There may be bleeding foreheads  
Thereafter to be borne !

II.

With the first stirrings of unrest  
Music awoke in her dulled breast,  
One summer's day,  
When, in her prime of latter-math,  
Dolores paused in mid-life's path,  
To tell her heart she had a heart,  
And need not shut herself apart,  
And put her youth away.  
Like one bereaved who locks from sight  
The rainbow robes and flower-wreaths bright  
Which once she wore with heart so light,  
As being, henceforth, too gay :

—Proud ornaments ! required no more !—  
 Closing the lonely chamber door  
 Lest the indifferent world outside  
     Should look into the haunted room,  
 Ere those dear relics she can hide  
     As set apart from thoughts of gloom,  
                     And done with, from that hour.

Yet, presently, there comes a time  
     When,—though more sombre,—colours deck  
 Her graceful form of noonday prime,  
     And jewels cling around her neck,  
                     And life resumes its power.

Has she forgotten, then, the past ?  
     —Nay, from some closed recess,  
 She takes, and re-adapts, at last,  
     The adjuncts of her dress :  
 The tastes acquired in scenes long gone,  
     —And moulded, half unconsciously,  
     To please first love's admiring eye,—  
 Varying to suit fresh years, works on.

Wherever Passion draws one vital breath  
 Its voice re-echoes till the hour of death.  
     Though unsuspected, it still dwells  
                     In hidden cells.  
 She who has learnt some guide to need  
                     Her steps to lead,

Or some heart answering to her cry  
    For sympathy,  
Will stretch her feelers out to find  
    A kindred mind :  
And the old halo of sheen hues  
    Back on gray, leaden clouds will fling,  
Making a rainbow from cold dews  
    To glorify each dull, dark thing  
Which lies in shadows cast by Time's advancing  
    wing :  
Till fixing there such long, continual gaze,  
The dazzled eye sees only golden haze.

Where Romance lives, for ever it keeps young.  
    The aureole of its sparkling smiles and tears  
Hangs round it always. Oft it has no tongue  
    So to address itself to future years ;  
But its associations, like soft light  
Shed by some misty moon, on dewy night,  
Will penetrate through time, and toil, and care,  
With the same earnest look they used to wear.  
The old man, leaning on his garden gate,  
Watching the climbing moon in eastern state,  
The while his children,—out of childhood grown,—  
    Make tender music, such as he once made,  
And live a time of passion, like his own,  
    When, in days past, his love-notes he essayed,—

—Owns a romance grown double on one stem,  
In memory half revives, half buds afresh in them.

Dolores, noting how the full orb broke  
Beyond the clear-cut outline of the hill,  
And how the whispering night-sounds softly spoke,  
Felt her whole nature to such secrets thrill ;  
She could not check emotions at her will ;—  
Nor irresponsive stand, with pulses still,  
But with vague, sad desires, her spirit woke.

If thus the heart has seasons, mocking Nature,  
Or answering to her imperceptible touch,  
In life's first early autumn stage, Dolores,  
With April's gushing skies, acknowledged such.

“ Now the moon brings the season of passionate  
longings ;—

—“ That late Easter moon, which leads Spring in  
its train ;—

“ As it tranquilly, languidly, mounts the blue  
heavens,

“ To see the earth teeming with life power again.

“ In silence and loneliness,—almost heart-broken

“ With the infinite yearnings for One clasping hand,

“ I think, and I long, until real seems its presence,

“ And I start at the solitude wherein I stand.



“ I hear in my troubled dream—(’tis Love’s long  
echo !)

“ The laugh and the voice which no more I may  
hear,

“ I see the expression,—(that last look in parting !)

“ Dead Hope on her retina still pictures clear.

“ Oh Nature, concealing Life’s intricate workings !

“ Do all hearts thus suffer, unheard and unseen ?

“ While vividly painting, with touch realistic,

“ What, but for one fatal decree, might have been !”

### III.

A crash of elements ! a dangerous sea !  
White waves and black, commingled in high heaven ;  
Or racing one another up the strand  
As though a murderer pursued his foe :  
Great, savage waves ; that love to show their power.  
With them, the winds in treaty,—their allies,—  
Toss down the trees ashore as in a game,  
Making the Fishers’ huts which fringe the coast  
Tremble, with weak, rough roofing insecure.  
Aloud the heavens shout downward to the sea,



And messages of vivid import send,  
And all is motion, turmoil, wild affright ;—  
Not like a battle of well-ordered troops,  
But some mad *melée* of a hideous mob,  
Too rude for conscious, concentrated action.  
The winds seize one another, where they meet ;  
Waves dash back waves into the frothing main ;  
Rocks dance, and fling their sea-weed locks in scorn ;  
And rattling thunders roll along the shore.

Was that flash, lightning, in the offing there ?  
Dolores,—striving to look through the spray  
Which, thickening on the windward-facing panes  
Had made them like a sheet of crusted ice,—  
Stood for a moment, paralysed with awe.  
Another, and another : then she saw  
Dimly and indistinctly, on the beach,  
Figures of those who struggled with the storm ;  
Rough fishermen, who, seeking how to aid,  
Could only wait, and wish, and wait again ;  
Longing for one calm moment, and for morn.

Then came the question, “ Is there work for me ?  
“ Should that wild sea, in all its terrible wrath,  
“ Spare but one threatened victim, can I help ?  
“ In those poor huts is no provision made  
“ For scenes like this, although they live in them

“ Who daily face them most : 'tis only here  
“ That they could bring whatever they might find  
“ Of life or death washed up from yonder wreck.”

So, with due care, but white, incisive face,  
And startled eyes which followed each new sound,  
She made fresh fires leap up on every hearth ;  
And placid water,—kin to that wild sea !—  
She roused to heated fervour : and searched out  
The warmest coverings ; and the cellared stores,  
Whose praise by poets of old with bumpers given  
Now first appeared a boon conferred by Heaven.  
All thus made ready, what was to come next ?  
Only to wait. Those on the leeward side  
Being still unconscious of the rushing gale  
Save as a high wind, blowing waves ashore,  
She knew her sleeping charge might still sleep on —  
—That pain-bound sister of a Mother lost !

Only to wait : and if, perchance, at dawn,  
When, with a lull, the bright, new day appeared,  
All should be useless, and the dead, alone,  
Should ever bring their story from the wreck,  
—Then quietly to put all things away  
Back in their customary ordering,  
And try to cheat her memory of that night,  
When prayer and effort had alike seemed vain.

They were not vain. The throb of heavy feet  
Waked heavy echoes in her throbbing heart.  
They came : the boatmen whom she knew so well,  
With a look upon their faces she knew not :  
So solemn, and so decorous in the depth  
Of their emotion ; not with language rough,  
But as though Sabbath had come unawares  
Enriching them with more than Sabbath's awe ;  
Unspeakable holiness : and knowledge given  
Of death, and death's revealing sympathies.

The burden which they bore, and laid to rest  
On what might be the bed of his last sleep,  
Was young and manly ; noble with deep thought,  
And graceful, even amid the pendant droop  
With which he downward pressed to native earth.  
' As yet,' the boatmen said, ' the only one  
' Washed on the strand ;' and this, they feared, too late.  
The jagged rocks had pierced him, stunning him,  
And the limp, feeble hands were bruised and blue.

Without a sound to mark their strife,  
Those unseen actors, Death and Life,  
By sad bedsides their warfare wage :  
Both are most kingly potentates,  
But rulers of far different states,  
And with far different arms engage.

The one his kingdom shuts from sight,  
Nor tells the tactics of his might,  
Secure of ultimate success :

The other moves amid a crowd,  
And gossips of his ways aloud,  
Holding to self, with undeserved caress.

He is but under-king !

His title held in fee ;

But to his interest cling

Man's love and sympathy.

That crowd of friends who pray and weep,  
To the less worthy instincts keep :

They side with what is brief and low

A kingdom of unrest,

The partisans of what they know,

And not of what is best.

Life was the conqueror here : for eyes

Of darkest tint looked up, at last,

And gazed into Dolores' own

With wondering questions of the past.

A voice of soft, low undertone,

With foreign accent, rich and deep,

Muttered bewildered sentences

As if confused with recent sleep.

Then, one by one, the faculties,  
—Those outposts on the frontier land,—  
Were claimed again by Life, and filled  
With strength against the world to stand :  
But health, attacked by rock and wave,  
Came slowly to the imperilled frame,  
A weakened tenement, as yet,  
To hold the intellectual flame.  
But for the anxious care which watched  
The fluttering pulse, the brightening eye,  
He might have braved a ghastly death  
A sadder, wearier death to die.

## IV.

There is a churchyard by the sea,  
Where come the breezes, salt and strong ;  
Left lonely through the six days' work  
To the wild hymns of birds in song.  
The velvet bees among the flowers  
Of heath, and hyacinth, and thyme,  
Bear treasures from the holy ground  
To store for help in future time.

Uprises from the mounds the lark,  
From earth to heaven, with pæan clear ;  
And glowing sunbeams gild the tombs  
With earnest of a brighter sphere.  
And sometimes, on the scented air  
Which wafts the sound o'er hills and dells  
Like a carillon-message comes,  
In measured tones, the voice of bells.

Hither come the breezes  
Bringing peals of music,  
Louder still and louder,  
Through the waving trees :  
Bells across the water,  
Like the voice of spirits ;  
Now they swell, now languish  
In faintest melodies.

Ofttimes they are ringing  
With a hallowed triumph,  
Love's completed blessing  
Telling all around.  
Or, on holy Sabbath,  
Call to peaceful worship,  
Old and young together,  
With inviting sound.

Placid through the twilight,  
 In the summer evenings,  
 (Olden customs keeping,)
   
     Rings the curfew bell.  
 Sometimes, clanging slowly,  
 With repeated pauses,—  
 As if heavenward listening,—  
     Tolls the funeral knell.

Ascending to the house of God,  
     Beneath a sombre-tinted sky,  
 A slow procession winds along  
     Hushed into deep solemnity.  
 Untenanted the village street,  
     Closed the few scattered shops below,  
 While the rough villagers crowd round  
     To join the scene of woe.

From the wild havoc of that night,  
     Granting one life, Death gave no more ;  
 But here and there, the washing waves  
     Strewed scattered victims on the shore.  
 The gossips wonder ' What their barque ?  
     ' Their numbers ?—business ?—nation ?—aims ? '
   
 For of the few who fill this grave  
     They hardly know the names.

Kneeling amid that clustering throng,  
The solemn words Dolores hears ;  
In sympathy with hearts unknown  
She covers eyes which scald with tears.  
Yet, above all, deep gratitude  
Makes in her breast a throbbing stir,  
That from this tomb's wide opening depth  
One has been given to her.

Thus, earth to earth, with solemn prayer,  
They fill the friendless strangers' grave :  
The mournful bell booms through the air  
And sweeps across the murderous wave.  
The clouds hang heavy like a funeral pall :  
But in pity for those who were far away,  
Dolores has woven fresh flowers this day,  
Whose perfume rare  
Is the incense there ;  
And the sweet little robin, he sings through it all.



## V.

Now the evening sun slants gently,  
Or bright stars gaze down intently,  
    On the lady, pale and fair ;  
While the breezes softly flutter,  
And the sea-washed caverns mutter  
    To Dolores, lingering there .  
Dreams she of their treasures hidden,  
That large tears arise unbidden  
    In the depths of care-filled eyes ?  
Deems she, where the waves are swelling,  
That some one, loved beyond all telling,  
    Cold beneath the surface lies ?  
Does her fancy picture sorrow  
Where they wait him on the morrow,  
    Thinking ' He will soon return ! ' ?  
While the laughing children chatter,  
Knowing nothing of the matter,  
    And the fires of welcome burn !  
How, perchance, some wife or mother,  
Loving him beyond all other,

Some sad day the truth must know ;  
While strange Nature, half in mocking,  
All her wave-deep cells unlocking,  
    Decks him in the sands below !  
And, above, the ships go sailing,  
Lovely wind and harbour hailing,  
    Sunny shore, and dancing wave !  
Their crews rejoicing, at their meeting,  
How last storm was very fleeting,  
    Nothing to a sailor brave !  
Little thinking, in their gladness,  
How one moment brought such sadness,  
    Quenching out the light of love !  
One bright flash,—(they heard the thunder !)—  
And a bonnie boat went under,  
    And a spirit soared above.

## VI.

Time has its work to do,  
    And every passing day,  
Gives energy anew,  
    And brings fresh powers to play,  
    Fresh tools to cut a way  
To ends beyond the view.

But quicker than Time's flight,—  
—Beyond all power to measure,—  
Like a wild meteor's light  
Flashing on new-found treasure,—  
Is that strange look,—deep-reaching, fixed, yet bright,  
Feeding the heart with an exhaustless pleasure,  
—That piercing revelation of delight,  
—Yet not unmixed with tremulous affright ;—  
Which some believe not ;—love found at first sight !

When eyes which questioned, looked in hers,  
And hers gazed back, Dolores knew  
That Love had sent two messengers  
To thrill her future being through.  
And he, beholding praise and prayer  
Mirrored upon her earnest face,  
Felt that a life-time friend was there,  
Long ere he paused the thought to trace.  
Had Ocean, only, been the foe  
Which rose in wrath to lay him low,  
A term of pain less deep and slow,  
Had been to Victor given ;  
But spars and beams had on him crushed,  
Cold, drenching blasts their prey had lashed,  
And he from stunning rocks was dashed  
On others to be driven.

The elements conspired, like hate ;  
And though he shared not others' fate  
So maimed and weakened was his state,  
    That months must glide away,  
Before that trembling vital flame  
Which animates the mortal frame,  
Could reassert its normal claim,  
    And health resume its sway.  
By open casements he would lie  
And watch the hours, and clouds, drift by,  
Tired and depressed so easily !  
    So like a helpless child !  
For books and thought too weary yet,  
Dolores would be sent to get  
Roses, sweet-briar, and mignonette,  
    —Too happy, when he smiled ;  
While he would toss back, on his couch, not caring  
    even to speak,  
And watch her fingers placing them, and the colour  
    on her cheek.

Next, with a step which trembled still,  
Half laughing at his lack of skill,  
Of her frail arm a mainstay making,  
He would go forth with health's first thrill,  
And call the upland path, a hill,  
And every pace a wondrous undertaking.

He had no other friend ; and wished  
Only for her, and rest.  
His Mother,—Sister,—Nurse,—in one,  
And he, her grateful guest.  
In the long intervals of pain  
She oft would leave him sleeping,  
And to her kinswoman return,  
(The tenderest watch still keeping,)  
Whose petulant and fretful tones  
To her less hard appearing,  
She would find interest in her cares,  
—Cheerful, as well as cheering.  
And Victor, when again she came,  
Would look such welcome greeting,  
That carrying gladness in herself,  
All outward griefs seemed fleeting.  
The language of a distant land,  
Which she alone could understand,  
With a new charm their lives united ;  
Each sought to learn,—each sought to teach,—  
The idioms of a differing speech,  
By mutual love of books incited.  
And Victor strung his thoughts in rhyme,  
Her rustic sketches matching,  
From village roofs and fishing boats  
His inspiration catching :

He praised, yet criticised her work,  
With half-pretended rigour,  
And where her touch was fine and slight,  
Supplied a manly vigour.  
And often lost in converse deep,  
Each to the other told  
The grave experience of past years,  
The memories of old.  
His life lay open to her eyes,—  
—A page of inward feelings,  
His friends, his tastes, to her were known  
In every-day revealings.  
And sometimes in the shady glen  
And sometimes on the shore,  
Her merry laughter rose and fell  
As once it did of yore.  
And gladness brightened in the eye  
Whence tears were wont to start,  
And songs were on Dolores' lips,  
And songs were in her heart.

“ There is a song which comes to us  
“ We know not why ;  
“ The heart accompanies the voice,  
“ With lilting measure, cries ‘ Rejoice !  
“ ‘ Blue is the sky ! ’

“ The wild bee gaily hums to us,  
 “ Of golden flowers ;  
 “ The sun-gleams on the meadow grass  
 “ Shine when the flickering cloudlets pass,  
 “ Counting the hours.

“ The bind-weed tendril clings to us,  
 “ To keep us there !  
 “ It twines around its heart-shaped leaves ;  
 “ For smiles like those it now receives  
 “ It cannot spare !

“ The running streamlet sings to us,  
 “ With moral sound !  
 “ The more the stones that break its way,  
 “ The sweeter is the rondelay  
 “ It pours around.”

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“ Souls have no age ; 'tis only want of soul  
 “ Which marks the difference between age and  
 youth.  
 “ And brothers may be wide as pole from pole ;—  
 “ One being sentient, quick to catch all truth,  
 “ A yearning energy of frame and mind ;—  
 “ A vital emanation from his God ;—  
 —“ The other self-contented, and confined  
 “ To mean desires,—simply a moving clod !

“ Thus the condensed and elevated essence  
“ Of long experience, and the deepest thought,  
“ May find its counterpoise in the fresh presence  
“ Of one prepared to listen and be taught :  
“ Or the fresh energy,—the younger Being,—  
“ May be the leader, because more far-seeing.”

## VII.

Life is a complicated net ;  
    Since, to mature one single thought,  
To ages past we owe a debt  
    For treasures from their wisdom brought  
And many a clime, and many a mind,  
    To one another all unknown,—  
Have, through the veins of Time, combined  
    To make an act we call our own.  
A still more complex thing is feeling :  
From unseen springs its essence stealing.  
    Gold is not worked without alloy :  
    The disappointment of one hour  
    Makes of the next a vivid joy ;  
    And longings,—memories,—hopes,—have  
    power  
To weave results, all unsuspected,  
And bring fresh forces, undetected.



With even steps, Love treads this world of ours,  
While in his footmarks, spring both thorns and flowers.  
Distinct each print by which his course we trace,  
A new phase showing every separate pace.  
In reverent Childhood, Need produces Trust ;  
Passion, in Youth, stamps Prudence to the dust ;  
With middle life, Parental fondness grows ;  
Philanthropy attends its earlier close :  
Till, at the last, these earthly links decay,  
And for eternal unions clear the way.

A twofold spell was on Dolores laid ;  
By feelings both of age and youth betrayed,  
She saw in Victor what a mother sees  
Who knows her deep responsibilities ;  
Seeking to move temptation from his side,  
And in each new-found virtue taking pride,  
She wound her love around him, like a coil ;  
For him on troubled waters poured the oil ;  
Kept silence where her years threw his in shade ;  
And, often wiser, gladly sought his aid :  
Concealing faults, while making virtues known,  
Guarding his interests closer than her own ;  
Checking, encouraging, and warning too ;  
Nursing his frame with care for ever new ;

Meeting his wants, with watchful, thoughtful eyes,  
And, unobserved, providing fresh supplies :  
All Nature's instincts due to riper years  
Bringing that mute attention which endears.  
But parallel with these, in even course,  
Other affections were in equal force.  
For him she studied youth, its eager tone,  
Its inward strength, till youth became her own.  
His earnest bent, intent on mental things  
    Developed with false age, his character ;  
And buoyant sympathy's imaginings  
    Gave back an Indian summer's warmth to her.  
She looked on him as a fond sister may  
His playful equal, if in humour gay,  
The close companion of each struggling aim,  
    With him essaying fresher flights of mind ;  
Familiar with his studies ; laying claim  
To share his secrets ; taking praise or blame ;  
    And seeking him, as one to help inclined ;  
Finding protection,—guidance,—ever quick and  
    kind.  
    Thus Woman's instincts met :  
    There was another, yet !  
The wondrous sense that these were half untrue !  
    A slight restriction lay  
    On both, since he must pay  
As to a stranger, all the deference due.

Thus touched by some Philosopher's weird stone,  
Her outward frame assumed elastic tone :  
Kindred in talents, studies, hopes, and fears,  
What wonder, if she half forgot mere years !

“ The buttercups are open

“ All open to the sun,

“ The daisies stud the meadows,

“ And springtime has begun !

“ Welcome, youth's own season !

“ For joy comes in thy train !

“ And Nature's sentient pulses

“ The faster beat again !

“ Buoyant as the branches

“ That nod to greet the breeze,

“ Songful as the wild birds

“ In wordless melodies,

“ Again with pristine freshness

“ Both hope and memory come,

“ To prattle of the promise

“ Of happy Childhood's home .

“ This feeling,—almost giddy,—

“ The spirit known of old,

—“ The energy that sparkles

“ To meet all futures, bold,—

—“ This bracing burst of rapture  
“ Is yet not Nature’s gift !—  
“ For inward renovation  
“ Alone the soul can lift !  
  
“ The sense of being valued,  
“ The conscious power to win,  
“ Diffuses satisfaction  
“ Like secret Spring within.  
“ Because the heart beats music  
“ To sunbeams dancing round,  
“ The step itself grows lighter  
“ To tread earth’s actual ground.  
  
“ And what are ‘ years ’ this morning ?  
“ Simply an unknown name !  
“ All feelings being of childhood  
“ We reckon time the same.  
“ That child, who sits sedately  
“ Weaving a rushy chain,  
“ Is now by far the older,—  
“ I am a child again !”

On him, as her, each subtle influence acted,  
But with a different force, and different end.  
She came to save him, like a guardian angel,  
And just supplied his one great need,—a friend.

Yet, varying emblems to his mind recurring,  
    He mingled with his sense of gratitude  
A playful study of her inner nature,  
    As he lay back, in weary, listless mood.  
She rose before him, vision-like from dreamland,  
    A younger Sybil, with his leaves of fate.  
And he would feel, since she re-made his future,  
    A half-regret at their unequal date :  
For he perceived, when in long chilly evenings  
    She sought her earlier days for tales to tell,  
Her loveliness was kindred to past annals,  
    And had mysterious distance in its spell.  
Yet, beyond this, she moved a warmer interest,  
    Such as a younger brother fondly feels ;  
He saw in her one almost worthy worship !—  
    Madonna-like ;—to whom the erring kneels,  
When, in one, craving human sympathy  
    And spiritual help to rise above :  
He saw an over-anxious, weak companion :  
    —Saw everything,—except unequal love.  
His foreign tendencies, combined with training rare,  
Wherever Woman was, showed him a heroine there.

Yes ! she loved again !  
Not as in youth she loved ;  
    'This was a gasp of pain

Which through life's channels moved.  
For bitter though its end had proved,  
Hope had decked out with gold  
    That first, close love.  
On this shame took its hold  
    All else above.  
For an unreasoning slur  
    Is often cast  
When new affections rise  
    Mastering the past.  
Second love seems to be  
    Object of scorn,  
Though of necessity  
    It may be born.  
Some natures ever yearn  
    For love's reply,  
And to its new forms turn  
    As old ones die.  
Memory of former years  
    Lights up the flame ;  
Though the return appears  
    Not quite the same.

I speak of facts : I neither praise nor blame.

Youth, and youth's charms, and loveliness of face,  
Its reckless chatter,—in itself a grace,—

Careless of consequence, because all hot  
 To face the dangers which it fathoms not,—  
 —Youth and youth's charms all gone, which meet the  
     eye,  
 And win the smiles of every passer by,—  
 —All gone,—all faded into hazy years,  
 (As, in wide views, the landscape disappears,)  
 —All gone ! to decorous, outward seeming, gone !  
 But yet the passionate heart, inly, beats on.  
 Hope is not there ;—how can the age-ing hope  
 For any love which makes this earth its scope ?  
 While this staid world demands the usual show  
 Of even pulses, beating calm and slow :  
 Since no old maid, if ardent, is exempt  
 From ridicule perhaps ;—perhaps, contempt.

“ Oh, thou poor beating heart ! thou know'st, alone,  
 “ How years can never turn thy flesh to stone !  
 “ How broken hopes, and yearnings oft repressed,  
 “ Leave thee still fluttering in the longing breast !  
 “ Nor need this thought be worthy of a sneer,  
 “ For Nature's truer self is speaking here.”  
 And thus Dolores, in time's second phase  
 When age advances, even while youth delays,  
 Feels that to each some thanks from her are due,  
 Yet scarce belongs to either of the two.



Age with some outward touches, marks her  
frame,

Youth with undying spirit lays his claim :  
Age, with experience sad, her mind inspires,  
Youth keeps aflame his unacknowledged fires:  
Age with life's steady purpose would prevail,  
Youth flings romance around it, like a veil.  
Thus neither takes her wholly for his own  
And, to herself, she seems to stand alone.

So, from outside, Dolores, looking back,  
Watches her former self essay life's track:  
And being by wide experience set apart  
Of long, sad years, and weariness of heart,—  
It seems another maiden whom she sees  
Through the dim corridor of memories.  
Thus, without selfishness, without conceit,  
She can admire that face so wildly sweet,  
That pure artistic taste, that graceful form,  
Those charms of manner, innocent, yet warm,  
With all the thousand graces which adorn  
Attractive girlhood, in its fresh career,  
When its bright spirit sparkles like the morn,  
Or dews of sympathy compose each tear.



Dolores now, watching Dolores then,  
Wonders how carelessly her charms she carried,  
How little recked the admiring looks of men,  
As, with a laugh, their compliments she parried.

It seems to her, that could she but be young  
As then she was, even for a passing minute,  
With wild delight her heart would be unstrung,  
All vanity, and consciousness within it !

What songs of praise her gratitude would make  
Could she recall the least admired attractions !  
Neglected then, now longed for, for his sake  
Who scorned mere beauty, and her vain exactions.

Proud of her former self, she frets to show  
That had he known her then, she would have  
moved him ;  
Forgetting that in place of youth's first glow  
Her mental standard mounted as she loved him.

Oh, that she loved him less ! cared less to rise  
To all things worthy of his heart's desiring !  
Longed less to bring surprise into his eyes,  
And startle calmness to intense admiring !

She to her chamber wanders thus in thought,  
And at her glass sits down in meditation ;  
Questions it ; asking to be truly taught,  
And yet invests it with imagination.

The mirror tells her of much lingering grace,  
(When sought with silent yearning, face to face.)  
Till looking through and through the image there,  
She fancies it again in girlhood fair,  
Sees the bright bloom, the smooth, unwrinkled brow,  
The rounded cheeks, all, oh ! so altered now !  
The dimples near the rosy mouth that play,  
The shaded eyes, from which arch glances stray !  
—And yet those laughing glances, as thus seen,  
Mock her with their expression : ‘ this has been ! ’

Then gazing deeper, still another change  
Comes o’er the real reflection ; one so strange  
That though self-conjured by her fancy’s vein  
She starts away,—then turns to look again.  
For a white, sheeted face, with sunken eyes,  
And shrouded features, dim before her lies  
The calm repose when passion’s throbs are o’er,—  
The holy rest, where life intrudes no more :  
—Imagination thus Death’s seal can see  
And Truth a promise whispers, ‘ this shall be.’

## VIII.

Our shadowy globe, turning her face from light,  
Announced December, by the signs of night.  
While o'er another hemisphere, our Sun,  
(Seeming our northern latitudes to shun,)  
Shot from the Archer's bow his golden rays,  
Or lingered, with the Goat, in upward ways,—  
—The immortal Brother, with his mortal Twin,  
Knowing both spheres, looked down with sym-  
pathy;  
Revolving suns, in Cancer's distant group,  
Sent beams which flew for ages through the sky ;  
Orion with returning splendour glowed,  
His term of darkness and probation past ;  
The boastful Lady lingered in her chair,  
A proud glance from her brilliant eyes to cast ;  
—And every constellation sent a gleam,  
Bringing a message of high destinies ;  
While those fleet offspring of the atmosphere  
—The mimic meteors,—sprang across the skies.  
Such are the nights we mingle with our dreams,  
When truth seems false, and fiction truthful seems.

How the sad, solemn stars look down on us !  
Ages and ages move, still following ages,  
And those calm ' eyes of Heaven ' are still the same,  
—So little news of them !—though anxious Sages  
Write of their nightly doings, in their closely  
thoughtful pages !  
Ever the same ! while earth's unnumbered changes  
Pass without pause or durability !  
Yet, while our world moves on through Time's  
vast ranges  
With the low cry of ' Mutability ! '—  
Feeling and passion work on as of old :  
Hearts leap and sink,—hope, and again despair !  
The wheel turns round ; and they, still calm, behold  
Another generation struggling there,  
In that small, distant speck, our earth,  
The same old weary tale,—alternate death and birth.

One starry winter's evening,  
When dried boughs crisped with frost ;  
And icicles, just forming,  
The pools with splinters crossed,  
Dolores welcomed fondly  
Her cousin Amie back,  
—A school-girl,—yet a woman  
Verging on life's full track.

She, like a sweet young sister,  
Clung round Dolores' neck,  
And mingled with her kisses  
A tear she could not check.  
For this, her home returning  
Was for all future years,  
And she had left the region  
Of childhood's smiles and tears :  
And with fair hopes there mingled  
The shadowing forth of fears.

With Amie came another,  
A schoolmate, gay and bright,  
With rose-and-snow complexion,  
And eyes of varying light.  
An outward form of beauty,  
A blushing, dimpling face,  
And tricks of glance and manner  
Which gave an added grace.  
No home had she in England,  
—An orphan, and a guest ;—  
Glad to return with Amie,  
And find a place of rest :  
Yet looking to the future  
With girlhood's careless zest.

With quick glance at Dolores,  
She gave a tiny hand,  
Then, with fast mantling colour,  
Saw Victor by her stand.  
His eyes to hers responded,  
As, turning half away,  
She suffered smiles of pleasure  
Around her lips to play,  
And shook her ringlets downwards  
Along her neck to stray.

Amie gazed, wondering, in Dolores' face.

In that mute welcoming, heart strained to heart,  
She had felt rapidly, a trembling start,  
And backward drew from the first close embrace,  
That she might gaze, with better view, again.  
What gave it, through its love, that look of pain?  
She saw the old sweet smile, half sad, half brave,  
With the old movements of unconscious grace,  
But a new charm, whose source she could not  
trace,  
To every look more tender beauty gave.  
Yet there was something more, a sudden care  
Indefinite, but shrouding all, was there!  
What sharpened pang had made her white and grave?  
Was there some portent there, come to impart

A warning, ere lost time should make it vain,  
Such as love's quickening caution might explain ?

' Perhaps Dolores felt that joy is fleeting,  
' And sorrowed that, in this bright hour of meeting,  
' She had a grief to mingle with her greeting.'

Thus Amie thought : for in a chamber near  
Her Mother lay, growing each day more weak ;  
The voice of skill, admitting tones of fear,  
Though venturing not the truth in full to speak,  
Had deepening warnings for Dolores' ear,  
While closer watchings paled and thinned her  
cheek ;—

How heavy, then, the task to speak of Death  
And utter welcomes in the self-same breath !  
And Amie, in her first fresh flush of gladness,  
To teach the lesson of love's awe-struck sadness.

Was this the thought, then, which so suddenly came,  
Sending its tremor through Dolores' frame ?



## IX.

How the days creep, as twilight o'er the sky,  
When nursing one whom time has rendered dear !  
The shadow of approaching night draws nigh,  
Making each hour appear a lengthened gloom ;  
How faults seem buried, ere the opening tomb  
Closes upon them ! and the shroud so near  
Veils them with sanctity ; till that strange bloom  
Which o'er a dead face hovers to restore  
The loveliness of youth, throws its pure light  
Upon them ; and we think of them no more  
Save with a palliation ; for our sight  
Seems cleared to look beyond mere obvious fact  
(As though a tender ray shone on each act,  
To motives ; to mistakes we, too, may share,—  
—A careless rearing,—or, even, over-care :—  
And thus we see, in deep humility,  
Just as we trust others for us will see,  
When we, in time, a patient friendship ask,  
Too weak to think whose powers we overtask,  
Or how our words may have a different sound  
To those tired watchers, waiting kindly round ;



Trusting that love will know we also love,  
Though cold,—exacting,—querulous,—we prove.  
Thus, by the couch where care and suffering lie,  
Even more than ever, we obey the cry ;—  
' To others do as ye would be done by.'

Thus Amie and Dolores watched and waited ;  
And while they gave their charge due care and  
thought,  
Tending each change with ardour unabated,  
Fate with new instruments its purpose wrought.  
While they with patience bore impatient words,  
And soothed each other when the heart seemed  
breaking,  
Sharing the sympathies which love affords,  
And with forbearance all unkindness taking,—  
They saw not how, left much to one another,  
Victor and Belle passed hour succeeding hour,  
For Amie rarely left her suffering mother,  
And to prevent, Dolores had no power.

Did Victor miss Dolores in these days ?  
Does the plant miss the sunshine, or the rain ?  
He felt the solitude of thought and brain,  
Missing her blame, her sympathy, her praise.

Strong in the second life which she had made,  
His active frame became a second snare.  
Scarce knowing why, he wandered everywhere,  
Save in closed chambers he might not invade.  
He found employments for his needs of mind  
In the adjoining city's busy life,  
Forcing himself into the wearying strife,—  
The yeast of faculties,—which there we find.  
All uncongenial, and like a machine,  
He wound himself dull duties to fulfil ;—  
Grew sick at heart, though persevering still,  
And plunged, for penance, in each grinding scene.  
The weakness which from illness yet remained,  
Marred his exertions more than he would see :  
He blamed his soul for want of energy  
And harder worked, by force of will sustained,  
When, every evening, turning home once more,  
He yearned for sympathy, and found it not,  
He shunned Dolores, as though she forgot,  
Himself forgetting she was sad and sore.  
So long the centre of her watchful care,  
He, like a jealous child, felt cast aside,  
And, in the suffering strength of petty pride  
Drew himself off, with half-offended air :  
Yet sorrowed for her sorrow, day by day,  
Intending she should learn how much he felt,  
But saw her not alone ; although they dwelt

Under one roof, she seemed so far away !  
He planned to show his watchful gratitude,  
    But of himself, rather than her, he thought,  
    And grew aggrieved, when weeks, succeeding, brought  
Glimpses alone, of her kind, saddened mood.  
Then his chafed spirit, fretted and displeased,  
    Most with himself,—he scarce inquired why !—  
    Relapsed into receptive apathy,  
And on the first attracting object seized.  
Forgive him ! When recovering, all are weak !  
    And if he loved Dolores like a son,  
    He took the petted privilege of one ;  
Secure of friendship, words could never speak.

Thus he, by illness rendered indolent  
    Relaxed his watch on conscience and on mind,  
Taking whatever chances Fortune sent,  
    And willing, although conscious, to be blind ;  
    Even while suspecting mischief lurked behind.  
And trusting chances for a fair result  
    Suffered himself by Belle to be amused,  
Content to smile at faults with careless ease,  
    And welcome surface, by gay tints suffused.  
And she was fair to catch the half-closed eye  
    Which rested languidly on pleasant things,  
And her remarks had piquant playfulness,  
    Which clothed, to foreign ears, all hidden stings.

Victor, with heart that for Dolores ached,  
And thoughts too sad to be a welcome theme,  
Heard gladly a self-acting instrument,—  
—Ready to take its tones for all they seem ;  
—The Eolian harp which vibrates to the winds  
Feels not the tender music which it plays,  
Its very hollowness in part combines  
To give deep thrillings to the chords we praise .  
At times, the absence of true sympathy  
Would strike him with a jarring sense of pain,  
But when she looked, reproachful, in his eyes,  
He, half repentant, would smile back again,  
Thinking he wronged her, and that she assumed  
A brighter humour for his delectation ;  
And flattered thus, would fancy that he saw  
A depth of kindness, winning admiration.

But what of Belle meanwhile? Is she so hollow  
That vanity alone absorbs her thought?  
Too trifling any serious aim to follow,  
And by each passing, fresh excitement caught?  
Happy in being pretty !  
And seeking but to be  
The belle of some great city  
In full prosperity !

A mind which cannot rise !  
—Is it a mind at all ?  
    Slow to desire  
    Even, to aspire,  
Though conquest is the prize,  
    Or love's new duties call !  
How circumscribed this Life must seem to such  
Heaven a mere myth ; earth realized too much !

Sunshine around her pathway lies,  
    A roseate gleam is she !  
And many a glance from shy, soft eyes,  
    She steals beseechingly.  
Her ignorance of duty's claims  
    She to dame Nature lays,  
And pleads excuse of timid youth,  
    Which shrinks from life's rough ways.  
Her delicate and fine-strung mind  
    From sorrow turns aside ;  
And Sin is a forbidden word,  
    A thing to doubt, or hide.  
She urges that ' she is but weak,  
    ' And cannot stand alone ;  
' She needs must lean on Man's wise will,  
    ' His strong support must own.

‘ His tenderness shall be her boast,  
    ‘ His propping love, her shield ;  
‘ She will learn all things to his wish,  
    ‘ And mute obedience yield.  
‘ He knows not, now, how ardently  
    ‘ She will his views attain,  
‘ And make herself a model girl  
    ‘ The more his love to gain.’  
She listens to his noblest schemes  
    With deep, admiring gaze,  
And guesses, shrewdly, where to seem  
    To question, where to praise.  
The surface-talent which she has  
    She half conceals from view,  
Since thus some credit may be given  
    For other talents, too.  
And such fond pride is on her face,  
    Such gladness in her eye,  
The shallowness that is beneath  
    ’Twere treason to descry !  
Who could those dimpling blushes doubt ?  
    Or not those smiles believe  
And those knit brows,—that eager sigh —  
    Ithuriel might deceive !  
—Yet promises !—ah, what are they  
    —Excuses !—still less real

She is at leisure to seem true  
Just because so ideal !  
And, in a measure, truth is there !  
Her instincts, and quick tact  
Make it her nature to play parts  
Till fiction seems a fact.  
Her one sole aim,—to be admired,  
—To win, at any cost !—  
She bends all efforts to that end  
Till natural self is lost !

## X.

‘ Which is the star, then, of Love’s horoscope ? ’  
A lover’s poem might say, ‘ in Maidens’ eyes ! ’  
And eyes of holy thought and heavenly hope,  
Took part, one eve, in mortal destinies ;  
For from a casement, gazing on the night,  
Dolores saw two figures pass beneath,  
And heard that badinage, so soft and light,  
Which carries hidden meaning in its breath,  
And is of love the life-spring, or the death.  
She heard the girl’s low voice such warm words speak  
As brought a tinge to her own hidden cheek ;



While he, as choosing to be sought and courted,  
Laughed for reply, or with her praises sported.  
Though flattered by what he mistook for frankness,  
    He answered with much caution in his tone,  
    Suffering the net around him to be thrown  
Yet half aware of Flattery's vain, false rankness.

Dolores turned from this foreshadowing gloom  
    Into the simpler gloom of night within.  
She felt, that instant, in her chill, dark room,  
    A chill, new darkness in her heart begin  
Its clearest ray at best a misty glow  
Unsafe the paths of rectitude to show ;—  
    When disappointment, jealousy, or fear,  
    Glares on the heart the course is never clear !  
She staggered back, as from a sudden blow,  
And sank upon her knees, too stunned to know  
    The actual force of what she witnessed there,—  
    A groan escaping her, and yet a prayer.

“ God of all love !  
    “ Giver of pain !  
“ Bend from above !  
    “ Lift me again !



- “ Is there a moment more than others blest  
   “ With power to win an answer to its cry ?  
 “ Is there a prayer more piercing than the rest,  
 “ More constant, if unspoken, in the breast,  
   “ Which enters Heaven by importunity ?  
     “ What shall I do, to gain—  
       —“ Assurance that Thou hearest !  
     “ Oh Father ! in this pain,—  
     —“ Ev’n in this bitter pain  
       “ I know Thou carest !  
 “ And if this strange, unequal loving  
 “ Be of Thine ordering and approving,  
   “ Could I but see Thy will,  
     “ I would its helper be,  
   “ And pour into her life  
     “ What Thou hast given me  
 “ Of truth or light, and guard her path from snares  
 “ Such as have caught and crushed me unawares !  
   “ Send me some helpful sign !  
     “ Comfort me with a token !  
   “ Tell me my way is Thine ;—  
   “ If my heart knows it Thine,  
     “ ’Twill beat, unbroken.
- “ I cannot be to him I love  
   ‘ All I would love to him to be !  
   ‘ A mirrored reflex of his eyes

“ His mental self to see.  
“ I cannot win that precious smile  
“ Which beams for ‘ only me ’ !

“ But more, intensely more than this  
“ I hold it in my power to be !  
“ I can become that guardian soul  
“ Which cares his good to see,  
“ And, through another, wins that smile  
“ Which will not beam for me.

“ The worth and power, such as it is,  
“ Which I possess to share his heart,  
“ In measures far beyond my own  
“ I may to one he loves impart ;

“ She, by his love exalted, and by his praise inspired,  
“ Will glow with light, the readier, when by such  
motives fired.  
“ I will become a sentinel,  
“ And wander round and round ;  
“ The guardian of the citadel,  
“ For ever wakeful found :

“ No doubtful form, though passing fair,  
“ To enter that charmed Keep shall dare,  
“ But I will challenge, ‘ who goes there ? ’

“ Spirit of yearning ! what is this within me ?  
 “ Have my wild passions, then, survived my youth ?  
 “ Or is it youth wherever passion lingers ?  
 —“ Why should I shrink from owning common  
     truth !  
 ‘ Will not earth furnish many a kindred nature  
     “ Whose real experience is the same as mine ?  
 Would they but dare, as I dare, to be honest,  
     “ And let, for once, the light of candour shine !  
 And then, it might be, with a clearer vision,  
     “ No longer would it seem a cause for shame,  
 But a great gift,—a spark of high perception,  
     “ By contact kindled from celestial flame.  
 —“ For these, our passionate yearnings, — God  
     created ;  
     —“ This tremulous nature, never satisfied !—  
 And if we dedicate and train our longings  
     “ By prayer and praise, love is to Heaven allied.  
 And He who gave, requires not all suppression,  
     “ Even when He deals out sorrow and denial ;  
 ’Tis but another form of abnegation,  
     “ Another talent, and another trial.  
 To love, with jealous instincts giving over  
     “ All thoughts, all interests, to the one beloved,  
 Concealing all,—yet linking all things daily  
     “ In life’s dull round, (till dulness is removed,)

- “ With him who simply sees a kind affection  
 —“ An old maid, needing courteous Man’s protec-  
 tion :—  
 —“ To listen to a footfall, with heart-beating,—  
 —“ The smallest comforts, secretly, to tend,—  
 —“ To make, with gladness, pleasures never shared  
 in,—  
 —“ While half deserted ;—is not this a friend ?  
 “ And when another, younger far,—so fairer !—  
 “ Comes with the spell of freshness on the scene,  
 “ And gains those looks for which the heart is break-  
 ing !—  
 —“ To sympathise, and help,—a ‘ go-between ’ ;  
 “ Lending a willing ear to love confided,  
 “ Aiding, perchance, to make her worthier him,  
 “ Yet knowing her, despite grave eyes, but shallow ;—  
 —“ Does not this fill the tear-cup to the brim ?  
 “ One trial greater ! If the fair young maiden  
 “ In outward loveliness alone, has grace,  
 “ And owes to manner half her strong attraction,  
 “ Half to the specious soul-look in her face,—  
 “ Then to turn Mentor, and with frequent cautions,  
 “ (To which he is averse, doubting the cause,)  
 “ Bring an estrangement where there once was friend-  
 ship,—  
 —“ Is not this suffering for Love’s tangled laws ?

- “ Yet what more noble than such self-devotion ?  
“ A higher phase, than absence of emotion !
- “ Grant me, oh Lord, in this heart’s wilderness  
“ The angel visit which alone gives strength !
- “ That dedicated thus, uncomplainingly,  
“ I may come forth to this, Thy work, at length ! ”

## XI.

‘ All that is glittering is not solid gold.’  
Love has an aspect dreadful to behold !  
And could we raise the veil which hides his face,  
We should shrink back, in terror and amaze.  
Never his eye so keen and bright as now !  
Never such anger on his darkened brow !  
Never such quick invention, making play  
Over his features, as new thoughts have way.  
Should you beneath that veil the expression see,  
You would not call him Love, but Jealousy.

Ah ! let him come to young hearts, not to old !  
Life has to them such scanty secrets told !

Fast though their pulses fly,—their fancies skim,—  
Reality has left the teaching dim.  
It is for those whose memory travels back,—  
Experience for its guide,—o'er time's known track,  
To picture evils which mere looks betray,  
And torture self with visions all astray.  
Long as their thoughts to sympathy can chime,  
And vital powers refuse to sink with time,  
They will the object of their love entwine  
With the more care, the more their charms decline,  
With such attempts to ward off harm, or sin,  
They see not how 'tis Self that works within :  
With querulous fears lest more attractive aims  
And younger friends usurp their previous claims.  
—The last, last dread, ere age and death are one,  
Of being left neglected and alone !

The Widow sees her boy, freed from her care,  
Eager in pleasures which she cannot share.  
The little steps which faltered at her side,  
Then wandered in her sight in childish pride,  
Now pass the limits where before they strayed,  
And with companion youth, old haunts parade.  
' Where is he gone ? Does mischief, lurking there  
' With fresh associates, need her greater care ? '

And if she warns, at first a laugh replies,  
Then an impatient word, or wearied eyes ;  
She finds she only weakens her control,  
Yet fears to sink her influence o'er his soul ;  
Each caution makes his love of home the less,  
And lectures mar the wish for her caress ;  
—Yet, can she leave him to temptation's gleam  
From cowardly fear lest she a shadow seem ?  
Should he come late, to lone neglect a prey,  
She pictures what seductions make him stay :  
Suspects some secret grief, if once he sighs,  
Or sees a future wife in dreamy eyes ;  
His very choice of books, from hers apart,  
Bring questionings of influence to her heart ;  
And new pursuits, developing in haste,  
Cause her to reason,—‘ whence this sudden taste ? ’

Yet in the vista of fresh years she sees  
Visions of children clustering round her knees ;  
Herself, from very age, the dearer grown,  
An oracle, for extra wisdom known ;  
Incessantly the centre of appeal,  
And feeling, once again, as children feel .  
Her son, the staff and comfort of her age,  
Giving her counsel, with experience sage,



And a sweet wife, happy and proud to trace,  
Another Grandmamma in Baby's face.

Oh, from one centre what wide circles flow !  
Not youth itself more kindred ties can know !  
The friends of early days,—of life's bright Spring,—  
Are scattered ;—lost ! like chaff before Time's wing !  
Some, leaving memories of deep peace, are dead ;  
Some are estranged ; some by new interests led ;  
Few now are left of all that summer train,  
Those few, perchance, she ne'er may see again !  
Yet as her home she nears beyond the skies  
Fresh love around her starts and multiplies.  
With heart not barren her last glance shall see  
Friends gone before to share eternity.

But the lone maiden ! As the swift years trace  
Their flight in changes, holds inferior place.  
If for her yearning heart she finds fresh scopes  
In childhood's sympathies, she interlopes.  
Father and Mother watch with jealous eye,  
And grudge the good they gain, yet half deny :  
While using the fond power at which she aims  
Claiming it, too, 'because she has no claims' ;—  
And should her influence deepen, not content,  
But prone to murmur, ready to resent,



They think she steals young hearts, or interferes,  
As her adopted views mark growing years.

“ Alone ! Alone ! Try as we may,  
“ In narrow home, or circle gay ;  
“ We cannot live again our day,  
“ Or bid the dial’s shadow stay !

“ Alone ! Alone ! Our memory yearns  
“ Over dead hopes which none discerns.  
“ Regretful, counts her shattered urns,  
“ And mourns how love so slowly learns.

“ Alone ! Alone ! Our reason cries !  
“ We show but half our destinies :  
“ We keep concealed our agonies,  
“ Our struggles, failures, victories.

“ With our soul’s growth, this fact has grown :  
“ Some thoughts can only be our own.  
“ The strongest friendship we have known  
“ Confirms the cry,—‘ Alone ! Alone ! ’ ”

Something like this, Experience, scattering wide  
The seeds of Thought,—that plant which grows so  
slowly !—  
Cast in the furrows by Dolores’ side,  
Who gathered them, while bending humbly,—  
lowly,—

And garnered them ; and learnt their bitter taste,  
Lessons from Love's torn leaf, not conned in haste.

Who does not know,—not dying young,—  
How from life's early grief, has sprung  
The thin, late harvest of a heart laid waste ?

For the full, golden field,  
Only a bleak, dried yield,—  
Weak, unrewarding blades,—alone are seen !  
The stalks so few ; the ears so far between !  
—Striving to make it for the reaping fit,  
Culture supplies in vain,  
Salt drops for passionate rain ;  
Where is the sunshine now, to ripen it ?

## XII.

Our native land, which, like a cold, coy maiden,  
Had turned away from him she circled round,  
Now, as coquetting with him, came up, laden  
With all sweet buds of promise which abound.  
From every bush she sang in notes beguiling ;  
She courted back his warmth with glowing face ;  
All he called forth, she yielded to him, smiling,  
And decked herself to honour his embrace.

And patiently, as day succeeded day,  
The tiny leaves unfolded, one by one ;  
The feathered visitors made their essay,  
And a step more towards summer time was done ;  
Some work among young creatures was begun ;  
Some blossoming of orchards sweet and gay ;  
Some passing of old, frigid rule away ;  
Some progress made, or some achievement won .

Thus Nature did her part. But what of her  
—The human worker on a human soil ?  
Dolores found no hopeful harbinger  
Of Spring-like answers to her ceaseless toil.  
The ground she wrought on, while its sunny slope  
Gave to her patience evanescent hope,  
Was without depth, and could not long contain  
Of any better plant, the smallest grain :  
Still less had power, ev'n beneath watchful eyes,  
To rear the flower which blooms in Paradise.

“ What then ? What next to do ? ” Dolores asked.  
And like an outward voice the answer came.  
Since Belle to no high purposes laid claim  
Her shallow vanity must be unmasked.

As yet, that vanity bore all the blame ;  
No spring of love was touched, for none was there ;  
And Victor, hovering, moth-like, round a flame  
As yet, though dazzled, flew beyond the snare :  
And him to warn, must be Dolores' care :  
A raid on his affections Belle was making,  
To show it such, must be her undertaking.

Perhaps there is no harder task  
Which from Affection, Love can ask,  
Or Duty from Obedience claim,  
Than this which thus her charge became.  
Having to Belle great kindness shown,  
And into hourly converse grown,—  
—The very seeking how to raise her,—  
—The striving to see cause to praise her,—  
—One constant working for one end,—  
—The wish to grow into a friend,—  
    And make, or find,  
    An answering mind,  
Although it failed, despite its care,  
To meet a soul which was not there,—  
—Yet made it seem a treacherous thing  
Her faults before the light to bring.

In human nature lies  
So generous a glow,  
That only to bestow  
Some favours, or give out some sympathies  
Conspires to bind  
A chain of firm allegiance and affection,  
Until the giver's troth is in subjection,  
To the receiver, owing him protection.  
If we have patience shown,  
And long forbearance known,  
(Bringing an earnest thought  
As fellow-worker with more earnest prayer,)  
Just because we have wrought  
Not for ourselves, we take the greater care,  
With gentle outgiving of self, to spare  
What shame or pain might be another's share ;  
And when we must acknowledge Sin's distortion  
'Tis with repugnance, in inverse proportion.

When our 'heart strings' pull two ways,  
And separate interests ask our aid,  
We gladly catch at small delays,  
And seem of every step afraid.  
And thus Dolores felt ; but knew  
That Victor's claim was first and strongest,  
His love, if given, would last the longest ;

Though Belle might flutter for awhile,  
 Taking ev'n grief with giddy smile,  
 And turn, content, to something new,  
 With ease, her cobweb ties to sever ;—  
 He, once deceived, was wrecked for ever.  
 Her empty nature, learnt too late,  
 Might sink him lower than thought's worst fears,—  
 Might ruin all his future years,  
 And turn an ardent love to hate.  
 The shallowest stream that trickles down  
 May freeze what it lacks depth to drown.

Why is it, that when Man is wronged  
 We see excuse for Virtue's fall ;  
 The nobleness which once belonged  
 To him, we reckon scarce at all,  
 But half expect, as if of course,  
 To see him yield beneath the force  
 Of petty struggles ;—daily cares,  
 And sink before them, unawares :  
 And if such griefs his nature raise,  
 We single him for wondering praise.  
 While if to Woman comes the blow,  
 We turn to watch new graces grow ;—  
 —Patience, and faith in Heaven, through every trial,—  
 —A willing gladness to show self-denial,—

—Great reticence of sufferings borne,—  
 —A generous cheerfulness, though torn  
 On the sharp rack of questioning affection,—  
 —Unconsciousness of worth,—concealment of dejection !

High though Dolores placed  
 In fancy Victor's soul,  
 Each downward step she traced,  
 Doubting his self-control ;  
 Inevitable loss of faith in all things good appeared  
 To her the sole result of love by folly bound ;  
 When rousing from its trance with vision sharply  
 cleared,  
 It broke the glossy threads so feebly twisted round ;—  
 —But therewith snapped the anchor chain whereon  
 its hopes were wound !

All this she felt ;—all this, and more !  
 Alas ! she also knew  
 The danger lest her spoken word  
 Should fan the flame anew.  
 She thought how motives hide themselves  
 Ev'n from the actor's view !  
 And by another may be judged  
 As subtle, and untrue.



She feared the tremble of her voice,  
    The colour on her cheek,  
The hesitating look, which might  
    Indulgent thoughts bespeak,—  
And even the throbbing of her heart  
    Though bent his good to seek ;—  
—She felt, as only she could feel,  
    Unutterably weak !—  
The consciousness of looks beyond her reach,  
A fear of showing fear, which should mar all her speech.

## XIII.

The moon lay in the western sky,  
    And night drew nigh.  
The pale half-curve gave little light,  
    But on it, bright  
As promises of other spheres  
When we have done with cares and fears,  
Her mountains broke the inner rim  
    Which from the sun was turned away,  
    As finding him too bright and gay  
To touch her tearless valleys dim,  
Though cold and shattered, she yet followed him.



Victor was resting on a cliff  
     Which overlooked the rocking ocean,  
 Watching the shadows of the clouds  
     Chasing the waves, with mystic motion ;  
 His thoughtful mood, not oft indulged,  
     Was full of retrospection,  
 And vistas of his former life  
     Ended in strange dejection :  
 And murmuring of departed hopes and aims,—  
     —As which of us but has done, when alone ?  
 He brought again his memories from their grave,  
     Inscribing, with fond touch, the graphic stone  
 Which seemed to him as full of Heaven's com-  
     mands  
 As were the tablets placed in Moses' hands.

' Oh, my loved Mother ! her to whom my breath  
 ' First drawn to life, uttered the doom of death !  
 ' Not as reality her love has been,  
 But as a vision, in the night hours seen :  
 ' Not at her knee first came my words of prayer  
     ' With upward looks into her tender face,  
 ' But higher still !—to Heaven, for she was there !  
     —' An Angel, whom my yearnings could not trace  
 ' My frame, a thing of earth, seems simply mine ;  
 ' My spirit, Spirit-Mother —wholly thine !

‘ Son of a Soul, my soul is part of thee ;  
‘ Memory connects thee with no form of earth ;  
‘ In prayer and solitude art thou with me,  
‘ Waiting till death shall give my second birth.’

He paused awhile, with upward gazing eye,  
Drinking-in solemn meanings from the sky.

The haze of gathering twilight crept along,  
Subduing daybeams, for deep thought too strong !  
High, chequered clouds floated before the wind :  
The sea reflected rose-lights left behind,  
Till opal tints, ’neath evening’s magic spell,  
Spread o’er its surface, like a liquid shell.  
Thus might some weary Conqueror, lying there,  
His face to heaven upturned, as one in prayer,  
Himself feel conquered by the hour of rest,  
And, for the moment, on his heaving breast,  
Reflect back hues of glory, from the regions of the  
blest.

Still carrying on his former train of thought,  
Victor, e’er long, to deviations came.  
Travelled from what he lost, to what he sought,  
But found the mournful problem still the same.

‘ Lovely forms are round me,  
‘ Faces pure and sweet ;  
‘ Yet ever, like a meteor,  
‘ Their higher natures fleet,  
‘ And only disappointments  
‘ A nearer knowledge greet.

‘ Ideal woman whispers,  
‘ In nightly dreams, to me :  
‘ She shows me what is holy,—  
‘ What woman ought to be ;  
‘ Mingling a tender ardour,  
‘ With fresh simplicity.

‘ She has a magic beauty,  
‘ Of warmth and softness made ;  
‘ An earnest, serious purpose,  
‘ Casting its thoughtful shade ;  
‘ And a sportive vein of humour,  
‘ By dimples arch conveyed.

‘ I seek her in the daytime,  
‘ And Fancy sees her there :  
—‘ Some girls are so bewitching !  
—‘ Some faces are so fair !—  
‘ But I ever find a blemish  
‘ Which warns me to beware.

‘ Yet is my faith in woman  
‘ As firm as life in me ;  
‘ I know how high her nature  
‘ Ev’n here, on earth, may be,  
‘ Though I may not recognize it  
‘ This side eternity.

‘ Is it in her rich autumn  
‘ That what I seek is found ?  
‘ Only when fruits are ripened,  
‘ And flowers no more abound ?  
‘ And leaves and lives are falling  
‘ Together, to the ground ?’

Something aroused him from his dreaming.

Was it an answer, all unguessed ?

Dolores stood before him, seeming

To hold a trouble in her breast.

She told him all her doubt and care.

Lightly his laugh her heart assured ;

He chided her, that she endured

One moment’s pain which he could spare.

Then blamed himself, for heedless waste

Of time and talents, lingering there !

And planned fresh schemes, with eager haste ;—

How he would travel everywhere !

At once, he wearied for the change,  
 Longing for regions new and strange,—  
 —Nor guessed how chill her heart grew, with despair !  
 They mapped his future, on and on,  
 Till twilight's transient gleam was gone,  
 And the full heavens with starlight shone.  
 She reasoned, " He was right : "  
 And thanked the dark, which hid her face from sight .

## XIV.

' Away ! away !  
 ' This spot is haunted by a dreary train  
 ' Of dull monotonous workings of the brain.  
 ' I cannot stay !  
 ' Here the cramped round of daily life has caught  
 ' My spirit with its wheels :—a Juggernaut,—  
 ' Crushing it out.  
 ' Here, with a nature longing to be free,  
 ' I maunder on, and sink to apathy !  
 ' I cannot doubt  
 ' The voice within me, calling me afar !  
 ' Instincts like mine, true revelations are !  
 ' Away ! away !

‘ Where the skies are blue,  
‘ And the luscious vine,  
‘ With its royal hue,  
‘ Seeks the porch to twine.  
‘ Where the breeze just wakes,  
‘ For an instant’s space,  
‘ The smile that breaks  
‘ O’er the water’s face.  
‘ Where the trickling rills  
‘ From the snow-clad hills  
‘ Ever more forceful grow,  
‘ And the peasants stay  
‘ By the fount, mid-day,  
‘ In the sultry pass below.  
‘ Oh, fresh and fair  
‘ Such regions seem  
‘ To the head of care  
‘ In life’s dulled dream !  
‘ To leave behind  
‘ The weary past,  
‘ And turn to find  
‘ New hopes, at last !

‘ Away ! away !

If scenes seem rugged, and the way seem hard  
‘ At least fresh places win a fresh regard !

‘ I long to stray  
‘ Where paths before me are untried as yet,  
‘ And mere adventure nerves against regret,  
    ‘ Rousing me up  
‘ From the slow lethargy which weighs me here,  
‘ And bracing me with keener atmosphere.  
    ‘ My ‘bitter-cup’  
‘ Shall be a Lethean draught, caught from the skies  
‘ To renovate exhausted faculties !  
    ‘ Away ! away !  
    ‘ Where the mountains grand  
    ‘ O’ertop the cloud,  
    ‘ Till the unknown land  
    ‘ Wears mystery’s shroud.  
    ‘ Where primeval plains,  
    ‘ By foot untrod,  
    ‘ Are the spots where reigns  
    ‘ The awe of God.  
    ‘ Or in many a throng  
    ‘ Where by right over wrong  
    ‘ My powers can win their way.  
    ‘ Where a wider view  
    ‘ Of all theories new  
    ‘ Is held, and the brain has play.  
    ‘ Oh, here is space  
    ‘ For breathing thought !

- ' Where we onward trace,—
  - ' By science taught,—
- ' Grand threads of mind
  - ' Which guide to more,
- ' And thus must find
  - ' Truth's secret store.
  
- ' Knowledge, which stretches o'er all lands
- ' And holds the flying years in bands,
  - ' Whilst, with vast power, it gives supplies
    - ' To Man, of good and gain,—
  - ' His danger also multiplies,
    - ' To pleasure linking pain .
- ' We skim the world around,
  - ' Heedless of earth or sea !
- ' Distance is empty sound,
  - ' Motion, like thought, is free !
- ' Through dense and humid forests ; pathless, dark,—
  - ' Where half in fear, the very savage trod ;
- ' Down unknown rivers, in a fragile bark,
  - ' Where monster trees o'erhead their branches  
nod ;
- ' O'er snowy heights on heights, surmounting all,
  - ' Which overtop the vision and the cloud ;
- ' In the slight pass, where avalanches fall
  - ' If but the frightened whisper rise too loud ;—



‘ Where once the desert barred the pilgrim’s way,  
‘ And blinded Enterprise with sandy waves ;  
‘ In the deep ocean paths, in twilight gray,  
‘ Exploring wonders in its hidden caves !—  
‘ Here,—everywhere !—the adventurous spirit roams,  
‘ Founding new schemes, new duties, and new  
homes.  
‘ Like some Enchanter, roused from restless sleep,—  
‘ Which ever and anon gave life-like signs,—  
‘ Science awakes, with necromancy deep,  
‘ Blends worlds and cycles in one mystic sweep,  
‘ And, with shrewd glance, through speculation  
shines.  
‘ With vocal spell, it speaks along the wires,  
‘ Foretelling stormy winds, and lightening fires ;  
‘ It splits the sunbeam ; burrows deep in mines ;  
‘ And life’s vague boundaries with keen sense de-  
fines ;  
‘ Its quick perception animates a flower ;  
‘ With insight clear, tradition’s mysteries mocks ;  
‘ With memories, or predictions, fills each hour ;  
‘ And rings the knell of ages on the rocks.  
‘ Its gentle whispers, distant nations hear ;  
‘ Electric touches bid time disappear ;  
‘ And steaming wonders rush o’er land and sea,  
‘ Till space is clasped in its immensity !

‘ An old law dies for every new ;  
‘ The Many tramples on the Few ;  
‘ For every gain some loss we find ;  
‘ Each step we take leaves one behind.  
‘ The mental triumphs we attain  
‘ Have snapped the thread of many a brain.  
‘ The world, beneath its thousand wheels,  
‘ Crushes, unmarked, the heart that feels ;  
‘ The motion of its vast machine  
‘ Keeps solitary paths unseen,  
    While the lone sufferer pants and toils  
‘ Within the pressure of its coils,  
‘ And a fresh tribe of ills is brought,  
‘ Of which past ages never thought :—  
‘ Dangers by flights of science wrought,—  
    ‘ Bringing wholesale calamity ;  
‘ Temptations until now unknown ;—  
‘ Disease, from luxury overgrown ;—  
‘ Tastes gratified through crime alone ;—  
    ‘ Sin, child of opportunity.  
‘ The shadows are deep where the ray is bright ;  
—‘ How happy are they who walk only in light !

‘ Yet action, progress,— cannot pause,  
    ‘ Nor human intellect stand still !

' If joy and grief spring from one cause,  
 ' Obeying Nature's higher laws,  
   ' 'Tis by the Almighty's Will .  
 ' We must have change, whate'er the cost,  
 ' Or, with the evil, good is lost .

  ' Yes : thought requires  
     ' Elastic space :  
 ' Exhaustless fires,  
   ' And airs that brace !  
 ' Thus warmed, thus fanned,  
   ' It must be fed  
 ' From many a land :  
   ' Spices and bread,  
 ' Sweet, pungent savours,  
   ' Rich, delicate flavours,  
 ' Sharp, stinging bitters which this life supplies,—  
   ' Brought from all climes,  
   ' All regions, all times,—  
 ' Out of such sustenance grows Enterprise !'

Thus she too feels ; thus longs to be away,—  
 Hungering for change, like him ; yet she must stay !

## XV.

Had I the painter's graphic art  
Time, on his mission, to pourtray,  
I would not leave him stern and bare,  
But picture him in full array.  
For not one moment of his flight,  
From night till morn, from morn till night,  
But some fresh triumph he records  
To stamp the history of the world ;  
In higher ranks displays the flag  
By proud Ambition's ranks unfurled :  
And in each individual life,  
As in some deep-laid game of skill,  
He scores one more toward gain or loss,  
And marks a point, in good or ill.

Time fans us with his cooling wing  
As, hastily, he passes on ;  
He lulls our burning cares to sleep,—  
Bids Memory's torturing wraith be gone ;—  
And o'er hot hearts, his soothing pinions shaking,  
Freshens our powers for some new undertaking.

Time bears a torch, as well as scythe,  
And shows the finished side of deeds.  
He holds the light to character,—  
Dispels the halo which misleads ;—  
And lo ! it was our fancy's bright reflection  
Which we admired with such intense affection !

He waves a banner, blazoned forth  
With purposes fulfilled ;  
He sheds an essence of delight,  
From flowers of thought distilled.

He arms us with a coat of mail,  
—Self-knowledge and reliance,  
And, proof against the shafts of sin,  
We bid the world defiance.

Time, then, is thus a friend :  
We give to him our sorrows ;  
He shows us, in his glass,  
That he has, still, more morrows :  
Behold, the sand is rising !  
Larger the heap is growing !  
Though with an earthward movement,  
In its perpetual flowing :  
Beneath, our past he buries,—  
Seeds of experience sowing.

He breaks some dreams, may be :  
Which prove mere castles of the air !  
And youth's hot agony  
Is changed by him to calm despair.  
But he can also bless  
With other dreams the slumber he induces ;  
Age wears a gala dress,  
While an electric fire its frame suffuses ;  
But with that steady warmth which knows how brief  
life's story,  
And substitutes for earth, Heaven's future sphere of  
glory.

Yet slowly move Time's wings  
With heavy hearts when weighted !  
When tears from bitter springs  
Clog feathers over-freighted ;  
And the changes which he brings  
Seem old thoughts re-created.  
Be patient ! weary though the days may be,  
Each lays up interest for eternity !  
Not there shall careworn spirits flag and fail ;  
But all the happiness which faded here  
Garnered as ripened bliss,—before which pale  
The brightest glories of this nether sphere,—  
—In vivid, endless life, for thee shall reappear.

## XVI.

How do the seasons round Dolores roll ?  
What message does Time whisper to her soul ?

Moonlight in the spring,  
When orchard blossoms quiver,  
Decked in festal wreaths  
Through which mild breezes shiver.  
The teeming odours strong !  
The nightingale in song !  
Light clouds, that skim along !

With passionate throbs she answers Nature's voice,  
Which cries to her, ' Give forth ' ; but not, ' Rejoice ! '   
And gazing upward at the sorceress moon,—  
—Whose influence softens and unnerves her heart,—  
Large tears are gathering on her lashes soon,—  
—Tears which from utter desolation start.

“ The Compline bell now sounds afar  
“ In some wild Roman pass,  
“ Or maidens kneel before the shrines  
“ Where priests repeat the mass.  
“ The rude, untutored peasants there  
—“ Though robbers in their den,—

‘ Count o’er their beads, with muttered words,  
“ In forest, rock, and glen.  
“ Or in the silent hours of rest,  
“ In many a convent cell,  
“ The patient nuns awake, and kneel  
“ At sound of midnight bell.  
“ And thus aroused, though half in dreams,  
“ They lift their voice in prayer ;—  
“ A weary vigil !—for the heart  
“ Is scarcely present there !

“ I have a vigil which I keep,  
“ But need no warning bell  
“ To wake me in night’s solemn hours  
“ To God, my griefs to tell.  
“ My passions,—like the brigands wild,  
“ To one calm moment brought,—  
“ Are tamed into a cry of prayer,  
“ By love and sorrow wrought.  
“ And while the night is beautiful  
“ With silence, stars, and peace ;  
“ I wrestle with the maddened brain  
“ Whose throbbings will not cease  
“ I crush the past ! I strive for hope —  
“ But only meet despair !



“ A weary vigil !—for the heart  
“ Is all too-present there ! ”

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“ Where art thou gone, oh sleep ?  
“ The hours creep slowly, one by one,  
“ Each with a thousand fancies filled,  
“ Peopled with phantoms, brain-distilled,  
“ Relics of hours and deeds long done,  
“ Which from the background peep.

“ Oh ‘ things that might have been ! ’  
“ How those words clothe the form of dark despair !  
“ What, had we spoken but one other word,  
“ Or spoken less ;—or had some break occurred ;—  
“ Might have been friendship kept, which perished  
there,  
“ In some remembered scene !

“ What a deep hush of rest !  
“ Only imagination, tyrant-throned,  
“ More vivid grown with every sense awake,  
“ ‘ Taking the reins o thought, essays to make  
“ Apt conversation clever and high-toned,  
“ With superhuman zest !

“ Ah, sobbing, throbbing heart !  
“ What power divine will exorcise this ghost ?

“ This phantom of dead hopes, half dream, half  
thought,—  
“ When wrestling-strength is lulled,—by memory  
brought,  
“ To challenge Faith with Terror’s spectre host,  
“ Which scarce with morn depart !  
  
“ Let resolution rise !  
“ And wrap in armour my beleaguered soul !  
“ Or let me some clairvoyant power invite  
“ To waft away my watchful mind to-night,  
“ Since calm oblivion may not have control,  
“ To close my mental eyes.”

---

Moonlight in the pride  
Of richness and of summer  
Lavish of its gifts  
To welcome each new comer ;  
Life’s harsh noise suppress ;  
After turmoil, rest ;  
The earth with silence blest.

She stands absorbed and awed by solemn thought.  
What are the lessons lonely hours have taught ?

Is there no hand to point,—no voice to guide,  
 Checking the irritation of her soul ?  
 Must she live on, whilst thus the seasons glide ?  
 So weak !—will nothing break the golden bowl !

“ Oh, what is this thing, Life !  
 “ A burning flame within !  
 “ A furnace-heat of thought,  
 “ Whence potencies begin !  
 “ All power seems given us, would we but be brave  
 “ To dare all we imagine : to work for all we crave !

“ The sun himself is flame  
 “ Round which we but revolve !  
 “ And human vital power  
 ‘ Into his ray we solve  
 “ Our flame of energy,—the mind’s hot sun,—  
 —“ All life it generates, where reason has begun.

“ And that strange gift, the mind  
 “ It has no limit here !  
 ‘ It plunges beyond death,  
 “ Makes heaven itself its sphere,  
 “ Impregnates future years with good or ill,—  
 “ Resuscitates the past to be a present still !

“ For ev’n this wild-rose flower,  
“ Closed for its night’s repose,  
“ Gains thence its deepest spell,—  
—“ Memory within the rose.  
“ For thus its scent, so faint and exquisite,  
“ Respites the present pain in dreams of past delight.”

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“ What has love been to me !  
“ A bubble, circling as it broke !  
“ A dream of stars, and I awoke !  
“ A summer lightning flash, whose glow  
“ Made brilliant all the world below,  
“ Then died eternally.

“ What will my future be ?  
“ I am alone, and feel afraid !  
“ I see a path of thorn and shade  
“ Where I walk backwards, with my gaze  
“ Fixed on the glory of past days,  
“ Now lost eternally.

“ Is this, then, all I see ?  
“ Love is an endless light within,  
“ Showing our powers to fight and win,

“ Making us feel, though joy be gone,  
 “ We know the heart it shone upon  
 “ Can love eternally.”

---

Moonlight on the trees  
 Autumn has made golden,  
 While the purple heath  
 Climbs the mountains olden.  
 Mists that vaguely glide  
 About the river-side,  
 Like spectres beautified.

She listens to the whispering of the woods,—  
 —The distant dashing of the ocean floods :  
 And Nature seems so vast, and she so small  
 And Memory's spectres rise so stern in power,  
 She shrinks from Self ;—but Self is all in all,  
 And will not be denied, in this dark hour.

“ Oh, miserable Self, which haunts me so !  
 “ Forth from my presence, go !  
 “ Vain yearnings !—sad remembrances !—away !  
 “ Come braver thoughts, to-day  
 “ From this, my egotistic trance, I wake,—  
 “ Through its chill stupor break,

“ And seeking in my neighbour’s life to live,  
“ My life, henceforth, I’ll give.

“ They tell me, who have tried,  
“ (Pursued, like me, by grief,)

“ That self, once cast aside,  
“ Its influence will be brief.

“ That cheerfulness and hope  
“ From this alone will spring,

“ And striving to give joy  
“ The greatest joy will bring.

“ Then, for my own dear sake,  
“ To gain this frame of mind,

“ (Self, once-removed from self !)  
“ In others’ good I’ll find

‘ That remedy for grief which leaves such peace  
behind !

“ Just to be blessed myself, seeking to bless mankind !

“ Oh, Thou by whom all lots  
“ Are portioned out and known !

“ Grant me a purer aim  
“ Than selfish peace alone !

“ Alas !—how well I know !—  
“ That all I strive to do

“ For Thine, or duty’s, sake,  
“ Brings me no pleasure too.

" I cannot truly say  
 " Thy Will is my delight !  
 " Though meekly I obey  
 " Knowing that Will is right.  
 " If duty,—love to man,—  
 " Are done, though hard to me,  
 " 'Tis that I love Thee so,  
 " I would do all for Thee !

" Father ! 'tis all I can :—  
 " (For self-deceit were sin !)  
 —" To work on, patiently,  
 " Unlighted from within.  
 " Accept, oh God ! I pray,  
 " Out of Thy love, my love :  
 " Let Thy felt presence come  
 " In answer from above ! "

---

" It is my Autumn ; with the evening shades !  
 " But not with glory on the reddening spray !  
 ' Power after power droops earthward, like the leaves,  
 " Interest, vitality, and hope decay.  
 " And soon,—as moves the blinding conscience-mist,  
 " All loving pride of self must pass away !

I have been nothing ; and my life is void !

“ We all feel these shortcomings when we think !

I have kept nothing which Life promised once,

“ When on its stream I looked, and did not shrink.

“ Its waters, then, with idorescence glowed,

“ I saw no depths of danger from its brink.

“ I have done nothing, though so much was planned !

“ We only know, who plan it, where we fail !

“ I have made nothing of my schemes of good,

“ ‘ Insight,’ and ‘ firmness,’—what did they avail ?

—“ Yet, is there nothing left, but to give in,

“ And, with weak hands, sit idle, and bewail ?

“ Let me give out the youth that lingers yet

“ Within my heart, to sympathise and cheer !

“ A patient listener where young voices pour

“ Their earnest secrets on my waiting ear ;

“ Not the stern censor, but the genial friend,

“ Prepared alike with smile, advice, or tear.

“ We must aim high ; or earthward tendencies

“ Will make our arrow touch a mark too low :

“ Yet if we aim too high,—or stretch too far,—

—“ Miscalculating gifts we claim to know,—

“ We lose small daily opportunities,

“ And of each chance of virtue, make a foe.



“ Hot natures, warmed from youthful veins,  
“ Feel all things in their power ;  
“ ’Tis for mature, and cooler, brains  
“ At life’s demands to cower .  
“ Mind rubs with mind ; and thus a spark  
“ Of brightness, wit, or reason,  
“ Illumes the world ; and from the dark  
“ Lights others, for a season .  
“ On varying theories whilst they muse,  
“ Or store up facts which they may use  
“ For building future fame,  
“ Men prove their strength ;—their weakness,  
too !—  
“ And learn to shape their views anew,  
“ Or fresh foundations frame .  
“ Thus graver themes,—religious needs,—  
“ Find in the test of adverse creeds  
“ A fire which purifies .  
“ Those who, with power, can hold their own  
“ From love of argument alone,  
“ May, even thus, grow wise !  
“ They look more closely round, and see  
“ That even in dregs, some good may be,  
“ Some purposed end may lie :  
“ Evil is analysed ; and there  
“ Appears a perfect law, and fair,

“ To help them to descry  
“ A noble form of brotherhood  
“ In every soul which has withstood  
    “ The tempter at its side :  
“ Let us be thankful, if they gain  
“ Humility, even though through pain,  
    “ And efforts misapplied.  
“ It comes to candid minds, at length,  
“ Which, owning weakness, gender strength.  
“ Youth knows so much !—judges so well !  
“ So little needs what Age can tell !  
“ Its eyes, late opened on the page of science,  
“ Behold so much they merit small reliance !  
    “ Then let the guiding mind  
        “ Its steadying help bestow,  
    “ And sense, by Love refined  
        “ On each fresh volume throw !  
“ A friend is never more in truth a friend  
“ Than when, with tact, devoted to such end.

“ Give me Thy light, oh Lord ! that I may see  
“ How to lead souls that question, up to Thee :  
“ Foolish my wisdom ;—prayerful let me be !  
“ Feeble my aid,—but Thou canst strengthen me.”

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Moonlight o'er the snow.  
 Sparkling, shining, glistening !  
 All the solemn trees  
 Bending, as though listening.  
 Robed in beauty bright,  
 Garments fringed with white,  
 —Raiment for the night.

She tries to look in calmness on each star,  
 And think of suns and worlds spread out afar :  
 To make of science, for the nonce, a friend,  
 —A bosom comforter, inspiring strength ;  
 But the forced aspirations have their end ;—  
 By tears of disappointment drowned at length.

“ Answer me ! Answer me ! midnight clouds !

“ (The earth in shadow lies !)

“ As sweeping past, in ghastly pall,

“ Ye seek to hide the stars from all

“ Who raise to Heaven their eyes !

“ Answer me ! stormy, bitter winds !

“ (The truth is bitter too !)

“ As round and round the earth ye go,

“ With weary moanings, to and fro,

“ The live-long winter through !

“ Answer me ! cold, unyielding ice !  
    “ (The hands which part are cold !  
“ As by his ship high rocks ye rear,  
“ Or shatter avalanches near,  
    “ His pathway, rough and bold !

“ Answer me ! distant specks of flame !  
    “ (Flame, also, burns within !)  
“ As systems, governed by your light,  
“ Revolve with constant day and night,  
    “ And years, to ours akin !—

—“ Oh, is not earth too full of woe ?  
“ And the more love we seek to know,  
“ The more our knowledge, gained through tears,  
“ Is but a challenge to our fears ! ”

---

“ Where the stream and moonlight greet,  
“ And softest airs, like whispers, fleet,  
“ While overhead the white clouds meet ;—  
    “ There will I think of thee :—  
    “ Alas ! and long for thee !

“ Some day, perhaps,—if God so will,—

“ My heart a moment will stand still,

“ And, all my longings to fulfil,

“ Thou wilt return to me ;

“ Ever to stay near me !

“ There is a meeting time for skies,—

“ For rivers, though apart they rise,—

—“ Which blend, thenceforth, their destinies ;—

“ When shall I welcome thee ?

“ For oh, I long for thee !

“ Whatever storms o’erhead may lower,

“ Whatever bitter winds have power,

“ It will be sunshine in that hour,

“ One gleam, at least, for me,—

—“ When thou return’st to me.

“ When the cold moon more cold appears,

“ Watching me in my midnight tears,

“ And, with strange power, their tide uprears,

“ She sees me pray for thee ;

“ Asking God’s help for thee.

“ And thus,—do aspirations blend ?

“ Do thoughts sometimes link friend with friend ?

“ As mutual prayers to Heaven ascend,

“ Wilt thou remember me ?

“ Or mine, bring thee to me ? ”

## XVII.

Once more he came ;—came as the swallows come,  
Who spend the sunny summer and depart.  
Like them, here chose a mate to share his heart,  
Then swept her hence to a more genial home .  
For when he came, he found a face so sweet,  
—Dolores' soul looking through Amie's eyes,—  
He could not choose but passion should arise  
The innocent love which waited him, to meet.  
She to Dolores owed each turn of thought ;  
From her the gladness of her life was caught ;  
By her what happiness she knew, was wrought.  
To her affection clinging, like a child,  
A separate existence she scarce knew ;  
From youth dependent, and by nature mild,  
To her opinions, tastes, and views she grew .  
With brighter looks, and gentle, girlish fun,—  
The soul's dark problems, glad, with trust, to  
shun,—  
Life's graver phases gaily she beguiled,  
And differed mostly that so oft she smiled .  
Victor, for whom each had such charms, was won,  
—It seemed to him that he gained both in one .

## XVIII.

In the churchyard by the sea,  
Where come the breezes, salt and strong,  
The summer has renewed its reign,  
With humming bees, and birds in song.  
The sun between the skimming clouds  
Pours on the tombs his radiant light ;  
The waves send up a sound of peace ;  
And on the path lie blossoms white.  
White are the feathery flakes above,  
White are the stones o'er loved ones near,  
White are the crests of tossing foam,  
White the slim birch-trees tossing near.  
And from the belfry overhead  
A burst of sound its story tells,  
That musical and hopeful peal,  
—The blessing voice of marriage bells.

‘ Listen to our music !

‘ Listen to our message !

‘ Whether gay or mournful

‘ Be our melodies.

‘ We are different speakers,  
‘ With different tones of voices,  
‘ Though we blend together  
‘ In sweetest harmonies .

‘ Life, with interests twofold,  
‘ Also has its voices  
‘ Of a dual nature,  
‘ Speaking to the soul.  
‘ Joy chimes in with sorrow,  
‘ Sorrow summons patience,  
Patience calls down blessings,  
‘ To sanction, or control.

‘ Peals that ring for gladness  
‘ Oft have minor echoes  
‘ In some heart forsaken  
‘ Through all coming years :  
‘ The Requiem that reverberates  
‘ Slowly o’er the mourners,  
‘ Announces a new Angel  
‘ In celestial spheres .’

Strew flowers before the bridal feet,  
Which tread the upland path to-day !  
They tread the future paths of life  
Which, veiled, before them stretch away :



May these be upland, too !—and reach  
That distant point in nature's scene,  
Where earth and heaven together blend  
—The farthest prospect seen.

The bride's-maids following, side by side,  
With blushing smiles the progress grace ;  
The bride is pale, with wistful love  
Upon her sweet and serious face .  
Her maids are decked with rose-bud wreaths :  
While she, above her curtained brow,  
Has only golden waves of hair,  
Where sunlight nestles now.

But by that lonely strangers' grave,  
With trembling smile she turns to stand  
For the rich orange-blossom wreath  
Laid on her by Dolores' hand.  
One loving glance from eye to eye,  
Telling to each the double tale,—  
—Protection here ;—there gratitude ;—  
And she restores the veil.

Then, hand in hand, with solemn prayer,  
Like incense, mounts the votive breath,  
Which binds two hearts, in joy or care,  
Till parted by the hand of Death.

On Victor's happy face the sunbeams fall,  
As he turns to Dolores a glance of pride,  
Her sympathy claiming. Hot tears to hide,  
She has moved away  
To weep and pray.  
And the voice of the robin is heard over all.



PART III.  
FINALE.



I.

What after this?  
Is life all done  
When we turn west  
At set of sun?  
Watching the last  
Of our sole one?  
Like some romance  
Wherein we look  
To see the end,  
Then close the book:  
Its interest gone,  
Is there no more?  
When love is o'er,  
Is life, too, o'er?  
Look in the world around, and see  
The sequel, in reality.

How dull, how hopeless, cold, and dreary  
Each slow remaining day drags on!  
Yet full of thought, though worn and weary,  
With purpose left, but spirit gone:

Striving to gather good ; fresh objects making  
Yet sinking down at every undertaking .

Seeing but failure ; finding all so hollow ;  
Indifferent what result may chance to follow,  
Since all falls short of that still vivid height  
Whence first Ambition showed its lurid light ;  
Meekly, from fruitless efforts past, we turn,  
A lesson in humility to learn .

We must live on ! though dull, prosaic, slow,  
All later life, after its earlier glow.  
We have to speak and move ; to eat and drink ;  
To waken from our prostrate trance, and think !  
To summon action to our aid once more,  
And face the future bravely as before .

Sometimes the Past its icy hand will lay  
On the numbed Present, like a sudden sting :  
In bitter mood, we smile, we cry, we pray,—  
Dreading our dreams, and more our wakening !

If, in such subtle vein  
Of Memory's throbbing brain,  
Dolores, from her wounded spirit spoke ;  
She bore the tempest's brunt,  
She sought the battle's front,  
And nerved herself to conquer when she woke .

- “ The easy-chair beside the fire,  
    “ The curtains closely drawn,  
“ A look of comfort in the books  
    “ Which all the shelves adorn,—  
“ A sense of shutting-in, at eve,  
    —“ Life has its evening, too !—  
“ And calm contentment, even pride,  
    “ The home around to view ;—  
“ The furniture itself, a source  
    “ Of satisfaction known ;  
“ And the ambition to be snug  
    “ No feeling to disown ;—  
“ The intellect allowed to doze ;—  
    “ Mere housekeeping the aim ;—  
“ And a work-basket acting friend ;—  
    —“ Yet life not seeming tame !  
“ A little pottering into shops ;—  
    —“ No lack of charities ;—  
“ A warm, kind heart ; yet not too quick  
    “ Susceptibilities ;—  
“ A little visiting at times ;—  
    “ A little love of ‘ chat ’ ;—  
“ Yet firm in friendship, true as steel,  
    “ And liberal, for all that ;—  
“ No tale censorious prone to hear,  
    “ Without a saving clause ;—



“ And when weak natures lean on praise  
     “ The first to sound applause ;—  
 “ But still so little daily done ;—  
     “ And no great ends in view ;—  
 “ Contentment has absorbed the mind,  
     “ And warped ambition, too !  
 —“ Can natures such as this exist ?  
     “ To whom excitement comes  
 “ But as disturber of the peace,  
     “ An alien in their homes !  
 “ In placid apathy such live ;  
     “ Originating nought,  
 “ And, with a wealth of brain and power,  
     “ Never producing aught !

“ Let me not sink to this !  
     “ Though Grief be Wisdom’s twin !  
 “ And knowledge of this world  
     “ Means knowledge, too, of sin,—  
 “ While fair outsides will hide  
     “ The deepest shades within.

“ In every station will be found  
 “ Some suiting folly flaunt around !  
     “ Some weakening vanity crown all !

“ Yet from dark soils bright flowers may spring ;  
“ And Hope, with tendrils firm, may cling  
“ Like ivy on a ruined wall :  
“ Hope shall be mine ; fair Hope, the evergreen !  
“ Surmounting crumbling castle towers ; on lowliest  
wood-banks seen.

“ Yet some there are who wait  
“ With too much hope elate,  
“ Expecting noble actions where a noble presence  
shows :  
“ And seeing what is kind,  
“ And gentle, think to find  
“ Forbearance, and that charity which no harsh judg-  
ment knows.  
“ In different aspects seen,  
“ As Fate may shift the scene,  
“ A dual life in Man is often found !  
“ Unconsciously he seems  
“ One thing 'neath pleasure's beams,  
“ Another,—when the shadows thicken round.  
“ She but half knows her friend,  
“ Who cannot comprehend  
“ A different phase which some day may appear,  
“ When Time shall press the spring,  
“ And Circumstance shall bring,  
“ New traits of character in each new sphere.

“ The Lady, whom all praise  
“ For social, generous ways,  
‘ Perhaps may be a tyrant, unawares ;  
“ The gilded entrance hall  
“ Is curtained from the small  
And steep ascent pertaining to back stairs.  
“ The patient lady’s-maid,—  
—“ The messengers of trade,—  
Could give a different version from the high and  
noble friends ;  
“ And many a bitter tear  
“ Will follow slight, or sneer,  
“ Of which she scarce is conscious ;—which, may be,  
she scarce intends.  
“ There are back stairs, alas ! in many a home,  
“ Where pride looks down ; and up which heroines  
come.  
“ Young hearts to faith are prone :  
“ Suspicion they disown,  
“ Holding hope’s doctrines fast.  
“ Experience speaks, at last,  
“ Till they, perforce, must hear.  
“ But oh, the spirit is crushed out  
“ When first to love they give a doubt,  
“ And find a bitter failure out,  
“ A friendship insincere !

- “ To many a candid, unsuspecting soul  
     “ Dumb are such lessons of the old-world school ;  
 “ Youth says, ‘ Experience has not taught the whole,  
     “ And quotes each rare exception for a rule .  
 “ It says, ‘ That faith mnst conquer in the end,  
 “ ‘ That patient trusting brings back many a friend .’  
 “ It says, ‘ This one has failed, the next will be  
 “ ‘ True through this life and through eternity !’  
 “ It says, ‘ The links are broken in this chain,  
 “ ‘ But there is purer gold,—try once again !’  
     “ Thus Youth in Man’s perfection still believes,  
     “ And rears an idol of mere crumbling dust ;  
     “ And when it shatters, as it surely must,  
     “ With energy proportioned, mourns and grieves ;  
 “ Yet from hope’s sunbeams a fresh nimbus weaves,  
 “ To deck another hero’s brow, whom, straightway, it  
     receives !
- “ Hope ! can I hold to thee, and hymn thy praise ?  
     “ Deceiver ! let me warn how false thou art !  
 “ The more enticing, that the golden rays  
     “ With which thy webs are laced, hold truth in  
     part :  
 “ Like falsehood, ever with more danger marred  
 “ When Verity acts bait, and throws youth off its  
     guard,

“ Well may thy promised gifts be rich and bold, for  
such  
“ Are in the specious future, where no probing truth  
can touch !

“ Is there no warning on my tongue ?  
“ No watching in my eye ?  
“ Have I forgotten I was young,  
“ Or lost my sympathy ?  
“ Life is so full of holy claims,  
“ That at each set of sun,  
Our moral voice awakes, and blames  
“ Some duty left undone .  
“ In the mid hours of silent night  
“ Sleepless, with restless brain  
“ And aching heart, we pray for light  
“ To make the future plain :  
“ For fortitude to stand upright.  
“ And patience to sustain :  
“ Our mental vision grown intense,  
“ (From scenes distracting freed,)  
“ We question with too keen a sense,  
“ It may be, each day's deed ;  
“ Till fine-strung nerves, to pain awake,  
“ For Conscience, we mistake .

“ Then, Father ! then, to anxious spirits bend !  
“ The dove of peace,—Thy benediction, send !  
    “ An ever-present friend !

“ Silence has its mission,  
    “ Its promise to fulfil,  
“ Ennobling and inspiring,  
    “ In prayerful awe ; and still .  
“ ’Twas in the hush of midnight  
    “ When darkness lay abroad,  
“ That, his first call receiving,  
    “ Young Samuel heard his Lord .

“ How restful are the moments,—  
    “ All fleeting though they be !—  
“ When toil awhile reposes,  
    “ From care and planning free !  
“ An atmosphere of quiet,  
    “ Of trust, and faith restored,  
“ With gentle influence hovers,  
    “ Descending from the Lord .

“ A counsellor within us,  
    “ With voiceless force persuades ;  
“ We, too, receive a message  
    “ Which through all time pervades .

“ We set aside the turmoil  
“ Of life, with glad accord ;  
“ Awaiting, calm and tranquil,  
“ The comfort of the Lord.”

'Twas thus fresh duties sought her,  
So that Dolores knelt,  
And took the charge laid on her,  
As though God's hand she felt,  
In solemn consecration,  
Rest on her thoughtful brow ;  
Where the dark veil of sorrow  
Should mark her sacred vow .  
Awarded thus to Heaven,  
Has she forsworn earth's love,  
Seeking her true affianced  
Only in worlds above ?  
The fir-wood columns round her,  
Her lone cathedral made,  
And springing mosses only,  
Were at its altar laid .  
The moonlight cold shone on her,  
For a lamp above the shrine,  
And running brooks made music,  
In chorus with the pine,

Whose whispering boughs above her,  
Their slow responses gave ;  
Their hands outstretching o'er her  
In benediction grave.  
Unknown to all around her,  
This secret worship poured ;  
A fervent life, the offering,  
She laid before the Lord!

## II.

Go to the close and sultry street  
If you would fain Dolores meet ;  
In some dull, cheerless alley, where  
A smothered heat pervades the air,  
And Sin gives lessons in despair.  
In dark, small rooms, where children lie  
Grown old with forced vitality :  
Or left alone, to droop and die :  
Neglected, ignorant, and keen,  
Familiar with the lowest scene :  
Or innocent from lack of sense,—  
—If idiocy be innocence !



What hand, but hers, comes filled with flowers  
When dappled fields by Spring are drest ?  
And coaxes, in the wintry hours,  
The Sun, a bright, if hasty, guest,  
To share with many a softened breeze,  
In bringing messages of health  
To the lone pallet, where disease  
On aching limbs prevails by stealth ?  
What voice is raised in simple song,  
To which all tender tones belong ?  
Who takes the children on her knee,  
And clasps the little hands in prayer,  
With chosen words for infancy,  
And cheerful reverence in her air ?  
Be sure the frame from pain is free,  
Eager to listen ;—soothed from care ;  
Be sure the holiest name is there !  
And childhood's woes, to her made known,  
Are brought before the Father's throne.  
Hers is the hand held tight in death ;  
Her kiss receives the parting breath ;  
The last dim sight to closing eyes,—  
—Which open next on Angel bands,—  
Her sweet face full of sympathies,  
Radiant with faith from spirit lands.

Softly and gently, with movements of soothing,  
 Over the cradle where infancy sleeps,  
 With slow undulations, (like pine branches waving,)  
 Dolores bends over a baby and weeps.  
 Yet fearing her grieving its slumbers may waken  
 (For the pine branches moan when the tempest  
 is strong !)  
 Sweetly and faintly, in half-dreaming measure,  
 She sets her sad thoughts to a murmuring song.

“ Rock, little cradle, rock !  
 “ But in the baby face—  
 “ My maiden lot to mock !—  
 “ No Father’s looks I trace !—  
 “ With a wife’s fondness, trace !

“ Come, little ones, to me !  
 “ I have no Mother’s claim,  
 “ No child sports at my knee  
 “ And calls me that sweet name—  
 “ That life-remembered name !

“ Move, lonely years ! but Time  
 “ No tiny arms shall twine  
 “ To help my babes to climb  
 “ About this neck of mine,—  
 “ This desert heart of mine !

“ Oh, Motherless and lone !  
“ Whose cradles never knew  
“ A parent of your own,  
“ That heart goes out to you !  
“ What can I do for you ?

“ Perchance, when infants die,  
“ Their little spirits go  
“ To comfort childless souls,  
“ Which longed such love to know !  
“ Ah well ! we cannot know ! ”

But childhood cannot live alone,  
Even when neglected and unknown !  
Dolores finds, increasing still,  
A larger work for heart and will,  
Demanding patience, strength, and skill.  
Sufferers,—and sinners too !—abound :  
And cries for thoughtful help resound,  
To her soul's ear, in all around.  
What time and power are hers, she yields,  
Seeking hope's flowers in wider fields.

To her the oft-told story comes,  
The prosing, dull, and dreary ;  
With detailed circumstance of pain,  
Monotonous and weary.

The girl her love-tale breathes to her,  
Whose past again returning  
Brings cruel force of sympathy,—  
—A heart its relics burning !  
The young man to her safe control  
His secret cares confiding,  
Marvels how readily she reads  
What he held back in hiding.  
Ingratitude, and efforts lost,  
Though oft-recurring, daunt her not,  
She strives again, whate'er the cost,  
With help of prayer, to meet her lot.  
She knows that lot, the lot of all ;  
Where others stand, she may not fall !  
He Whom she serves can conqueror be,  
If patience but work perfectly.

But is she happy? Can she say  
“ This takes the sting of self away ? ”  
Have wretched fancies wholly flown,  
And wild desires less active grown ?  
Ask not ! She struggles to do right,—  
—But struggling is itself a pain !—  
Though Hope shows rainbow-tinted light,  
Hopeless, all turns to mist again .

Often some olden chord is touched,  
And tears scarce keep from falling,  
While listening, with a straying mind,  
Almost beyond recalling :  
So lost amid the living past,  
Whose meshes bright have bound her,  
It is a shock to rouse herself  
To the dead present round her.  
There are, who glance upon the dial,  
The sunny light pursuing ;  
Wondering to find the hours so short  
For living in, and doing.  
There are, who turn to gaze thereon,  
Watching the shadows growing ;  
Wondering how long they linger out,  
So slowly life seems going.  
Alas, alas ! Time drags his wing  
When toil-stained, dulled, and broken,  
And only leaves, his course to show,  
Experience, as a token !

There is a ghost which haunts her life ;  
Vague, yet embodied if she gazes !—  
Strong, and alert for mental strife ;  
Subtle, in thought's conflicting mazes.

She knows it there ! yet thrusts it back,  
A horror ever on her track.  
A moment's pause ;—a breathing space  
From outward duties, active claims,—  
—Its morbid whispers flush her face,  
And half arrest her fresh-sought aims :  
She bends, while doing all for love of God,  
Less o'er his helping staff than 'neath his rod .

Oh, give her pity ! no false umbrage take !  
Perhaps acceptance comes, for the work's very sake !

## III.

Hark ! the echo of the frost !  
The springing whirr of feet !  
Like giddy measures of applause  
When ice and breezes greet !  
A ringing shout  
The skates give out,  
With magic, sliding sweep ;  
While the bracing air  
Blows thought from care,  
And makes dull pulses leap.

Gay, glowing girls glide by,—  
Bright cheek, and sparkling eye  
The spell of pleasure showing on each face :  
As the rapid exercise  
A yet brighter bloom supplies,  
And graceful figures gain another grace.  
Ah, what admiring glances  
From eyes of men are cast,  
As full of force and vigour  
They spin their passage past !  
Skill and fascination,  
Wild exhilaration,  
Like some new sense bewildering, seem to hurry them  
along :  
All hearts quicker beating,  
As if half repeating  
The music of the skating, as it forms a wordless song.

Walking cautiously around,  
On the banks of solid ground,  
From the plain of water seeming all to shrink,  
The timid elders rove,  
Just to watch the forms they love,—  
—Though the wind is chill to lingerers on the brink :—  
Catching glimpses, here and there,  
Of the youth, or maiden fair,  
To them the one attraction in the crowd !

But how doubly lonely she  
Who has no one here to see,  
And welcome with expressions fond and proud !  
Why does she hover, then,  
About this haunt of men  
And maidens, bright and winning in their grace ?  
Ah ! who can name the spell ?  
Herself,—she could not tell !  
You only read the yearning in her face !

## IV.

Throwing the shadow at her back  
From Memory's lingering light,  
Dolores hastened on the track  
Her conscience christened "Right."  
With pace that lingered now no more,  
But was, as fancy, fleet,  
She sought a wretched, unclosed door,  
In a neglected street.  
Within, such squalid life abounded,  
Such rude, discourteous words resounded,  
From many an over-crowded floor,



That as she passed them, higher mounting,  
—Upward steps that mocked at counting!—  
She shuddered at the senseless roar.  
Then, nearing now the attic rafter,  
More distant came the reckless laughter,  
Yet penetrating still ;  
Mingled with smoke, and steamings coarse,  
And women's voices, scolding hoarse,  
Or rising, sharp and shrill.

Entering a room within the roof,  
By kindly distance kept aloof  
From turbulent sounds like these,  
She sought the humble bed of one  
Whose day on earth was almost done,  
Worn by long, slow disease.  
Contrasted with the heat below,  
Thin boards, here, scarce kept out the snow ;  
And cracks let in the breeze :  
Here patient, solemn silence reigned ;  
Or sobs,—by love but half restrained,—  
The loaded breast to ease,—  
Showed where affection strove in vain  
To hold the dying in its chain,  
Down-cast, on prayerful knees.

Thick curtains, by Dolores spread,  
Circled in warmth around the bed,  
    And shut it from the room ;  
Making it as a pilgrim's tent,  
A welcome rest, to one sore spent ;—  
—Or prison, where a soul was pent,—  
    And soon, a silent tomb :  
While ready, thoughtful love had found  
Comforts and kindness to shed around  
    And chase away the gloom.  
Her soft and feeling tones awoke,  
As to the sorrowing child she spoke,  
    Who shrank from nature's doom,  
And feared bereavement ; feared to meet  
The world's rough paths with lonely feet ;  
And shuddered at the unknown sight  
Of Death, approaching through the night.

Dolores lingered, hour by hour,  
    While help and sympathy were needed :  
She gave them with inspired power,  
    And let the time go by, unheeded :  
Not to the dying, who to Heaven will rise,  
But to the mourner, with swollen, blinded eyes,  
Death, oft-times, shuts the view beyond the skies.

Who has not known that waiting,—waiting !—  
When nothing more remains to do !  
Tears are at first so unabating,  
While power to think and weep are new.  
Emotion stretched and strained with tension  
Till even the precious hours seem long ;  
The chill hand held in wild detention,  
Responding not to claspings strong !  
Thoughts which are struggling not to wander  
Off from the heaven-bound spirit near ;  
While yet the fond heart grows still fonder,  
Dreading the last faint sigh to hear.

Kind Stupor waits on Sorrow's touch ;  
They sleep, if young, who weep too much ;  
Grief, long drawn out, brings apathy, at length ;  
And suffering lessens from mere lack of strength.  
Exhaustion will itself exhaust,  
And vivid feeling-power be lost.  
The mind runs loosely on to after-days,  
And works the present, patterned, in :  
On schemes, or consequences, sets its gaze ;—  
—Then wakes,—to feel defection, sin !  
Still listening with the outward ear  
Through dragging hours, half numbed with fear,  
The mourning child, all desolate,

Leaned gladly on one older, stronger ;  
Dolores lingering, ever longer ;  
Sharing her watch, reading her state ;  
Till patient care no more was needed,  
And other help to hers succeeded.

There is no moon to-night.  
Only the snow's cold light.  
So dead ! so white !

Everywhere ! everywhere !  
Blinding, icy, spikes are darting ;  
All the dense and cumbered air  
Into opposition starting.  
Mists so thick with falling snow  
They shut out earth and sky :  
And when a fitful, steamy gust sweeps by,  
The smothering clouds awhile disparting,  
How cuttingly the keen blasts blow,—  
Confusion, all they serve to show !  
Though breathing-space affording,  
No help, no view, according !

There is no hope to-night !  
Only God's inward light ;  
Faith's mental sight !

Homeward bound, across the waste,  
Dolores moves with quickening haste.  
The fog hangs thick and strange,  
Closer, tighter pressing !  
Opaque the vision's range !  
Each breath grows more distressing !  
Like coming blindness, is the stare to see !  
With gasp bewildering, how to struggle free !  
And crushing weight of incapacity !

There is no moon to-night  
The treacherous cliffs to light,  
Shut out the sight !

She would return, were there one ray :  
She would go on but doubts the way :  
She only knows she dare not stay.  
The snow-flakes round her wheeling,  
Confused with giddy feeling,  
She staggers, almost reeling ;  
For now, with indrawn breath,  
A bell she seems to hear,  
Solemn, as full of death,  
Reverberating near :  
Then bursts a marriage peal,  
Distant and faint, but clear ;

And soft chimes, which reveal  
The hour of prayer is here.  
Can it be Fancy's voice,  
Calling from realms ideal?  
Or is their guidance real  
Making her heart rejoice?  
She listens yet again :—" Yes ! they must be,  
" Strange though the hour,—her bells beside the sea !"  
With more determined air,  
She pushes forward. —Where ?  
  
There is no moon to-night,  
That silent form to light :  
So cold ! so white !

## V.

Heard you the Fisherman's faint song  
Floating across the water ?  
Where fairy bays, the shore along,  
Divide the rocks with many a stream  
Which flickered in day's earliest beam,  
As, with his little daughter,

That precious hour of ease he spent  
Which marks life like a monument ;  
And calm, and pure, and white appears  
To show a date to future years.  
If moments such as these are rare,  
The more they stand out, clear and fair ;  
Bright memories, seen through after care  
To warn the weary from despair.

‘ My boat, she dances on the wave,  
‘ Pride of the tossing sea !  
‘ She turns to her home in the white cliff cave  
‘ Where the children wait to see ;  
‘ And there’s never a fish in the offing swims,  
‘ And never a bird through the blue sky skims  
‘ But is like a friend to me.

‘ When stormy winds have kept us out,  
‘ Afraid to near the shore,  
‘ And the heavy clouds rush in rags about,  
‘ And we struggle to land our store ;—  
‘ Together we talk,—my mate and I,—  
‘ Of Him Who rules over sea and sky,  
‘ And our hearts are light, once more.

‘ My child who dances upon my knee !—  
‘ Joy of a Father’s heart !—

‘ And the Mother who watches so anxiously  
‘ With the tears about to start !—  
—‘ Oh, but there’s running and looking at home  
‘ To see the white sail from the black mists come,  
‘ And the terrible storm depart !

‘ My mate and I, silent we sit,  
‘ Thinking the while, may be,  
‘ That soon there will be an end of it,  
—‘ This life of ours at sea ;  
‘ And wondering if, when our cruise is o’er,  
‘ Such a welcome will beam from the heavenly shore,  
‘ As here waits him and me.’

Chanting, deep voiced, this melody,  
(For the Fishers are often a thoughtful race !)  
The boatman sauntered full leisurely,  
With an idle, holiday pace.  
For after the storm had come the lull,  
And after the fog, the sun,  
And the water was low where the hungry gull  
His food-search had begun.  
And Father and Child strolled side by side,  
Following the wake of the ebbing tide ;  
Or running in shore to play hide and seek  
Where boulders skirted some giant peak .



Reaching up and up,  
    Rose mimic towers on high,  
With turrets of white rock,  
    Embattled to the sky.  
Cold, and wild, and wan,  
    Lay pointed stones below,  
With sharpened spear-heads screened  
    Beneath the treacherous snow .

While climbing veins of ivy green  
Formed trailing ladder-links, between  
The ground, and pinnacles scarce seen.

And now a snowball was made, to throw  
    Into the froth of the seething wave ;  
Now, twisted tendrils were pulled, to show  
    How they hid the mouth of some elfin cave :  
Or the Fisherman pointed above, and guessed  
Where the gulls and cormorants made their nest.  
And where sweet streams of purest water  
    Trickled along from the creviced peak,  
He stooped to play with his rosy daughter,  
    And dash its freshness against her cheek :  
While merrily laughed the little maid,  
Startled and shivering,—but not afraid.

What was that mingling red, which gushed  
Where the rill burst into view ?  
The sunburnt face of the seaman flushed  
With emotion sharp and new !  
Striding the boulders, he made his way  
O'er many a fairy lake and bay,  
To where, half hidden by shadows gray,  
He came to softer ground ;  
And there, where the seaweed thickest lay,  
Partly embedded in sand and clay,  
Motionless, twisted, with torn array,  
Dolores' form he found.  
Beside her eagerly he knelt ;  
Straightened her limbs, her pulses felt,  
Gave spirits from his flask ;  
With tender touch, her head he stirred,  
And thanked God, when her groan he heard,  
In answer to his task.

## VI.

A slow and solemn march ! How sad ! How slow !  
Time's funeral note, when bells that tell the hour,  
Are dirges slowly tolled for joys below,  
And mark the death of some long-cherished power ;

Of hopes which into Memory's regions go,  
 Gliding so softly, one can hardly know  
 If they are memories of hopes, or no ;  
 Faint, dreamlike traces, by a lunar bow  
     Of Day's bright arch of promise o'er the shower.  
 The lissom, graceful figure, once a pride,  
     Is now a stooping form, with limping gait ;  
     The face by nature beautified so late,  
 Is drawn by recent agony aside :

    Only those eyes, though now the slaves of pain,  
     Plead for an influence on the world again,  
 And, still unchanged, on others' interests wait.  
 There has been ruin here ! Destruction came  
 And took the cherished charms of face and frame !  
 And Death, to all where he had power, laid claim !  
 Awhile he seemed to carry all before  
 His ruthless will, which aimed at beauty's core,  
 But the high soul looked forth, and said, ' no  
     more !'

What is the martyr-spirit ? Say, ye ghosts  
     Of long-departed saints, who speak through  
     books,—  
 What made ye glory in the torturing rack,—  
     Or meet the fiery death, with radiant looks ?

What is the martyr-spirit ? Say, oh God !—

—When Thou, in all the hush of secret prayer  
Speakest unto the soul that hungers so  
For help and light, its martyrdom to bear !

Where is the martyr-spirit ? Has it fled

Finding Man's soul less noble than of yore ?  
Or is it but a picture of the past,  
Touched-up and mythical, which is no more ?

The sage Philosopher, who through night's gloom

Wrought out his own death-warrant with his fame ;—  
The pale, calm Nun, immured as in a tomb  
O'er which no stone records her altered name ;—  
Earth's hallowed Victims, who, in light of day,  
On the grim scaffold,—scorned, yet glorious !—  
fell

The Patriot, who in rotting dungeon lay,

Pining, but still triumphant, in his cell ;—  
—These,—what supported them ? making them glad  
When counted worthy of the martyr's fate ?  
Shedding forgiveness ; as already clad  
In the pure robes of the eternal state ?

We suffer till the heart is cold and numb,—

Till hope dies out ; and yet no sign we make.

The deepest agony is oftenest dumb,  
Or only murmurs,—‘ When will morning break ? ’  
Neglected, till unused affection rusts,—  
Crushed by the weight of thankless self-denial,—  
By illness weakened, till the soul distrusts,—  
—Can we bear more? The answer is,—Fresh trial !  
Ah, is it, that, having nobly borne so far  
We are advanced to have a higher claim ?  
And those joys lost in spiritual war,  
Mark us as heroes, fighting in Heaven’s name ?  
Perchance new agony new Trust implies,  
Another step towards the eternal hills !  
Till gleams of fellowship beyond the skies  
Fill our whole being with electric thrills.  
The vital breath of Heaven, our spirits draw,  
—An inspiration from the martyr band !  
We see through earth’s dark clouds, as once they saw,  
Where the victorious souls in glory stand  
—A host innumerable, at God’s right hand !  
Thus, by the earth unwitnessed, but in Heaven’s full  
sight,  
The soul’s apotheosis fills each night.

*CUI BONO?*

- ‘ *What is the end of this?—this life of feeling!*  
 ‘ *Is there a moral to this history!*  
 ‘ *As yet, no more than morbid moans revealing,*  
   *And leaving gains and ends a mystery.*  
 ‘ *A weak, self-conscious woman, struggling on*  
 ‘ *With hopeless dreams, which, if Faith only*  
   *shone*  
 ‘ *A moment with her clear, inspiring light,*  
 ‘ *Would shrink away, and leave the horizon*  
   *bright:—*  
 ‘ *Prey to that useless, visionary care*  
 ‘ *Which, not an instant, would Truth’s insight*  
   *bear:—*  
 ‘ *Making new burdens, by mere fancy given,*  
 ‘ *And charging all, with fainting voice, on*  
   *Heaven?’*

*Stay! Other hearts have sunk. One there is,  
saith :*

*' Lord, help mine unbelief,'—' Increase my faith!'*

*Some natures are all hope : some only see*

*Darkly, through glass, in dim obscurity :*

*The great Creator made some sufferers blind.*

*The paths of science, long by sages trod,—*

*The deep philosophy, which probed the mind,—*

*Religion,—revelation,—thought,—combined,*

*Seeking the ways of Providence to find,*

*Answer, ' By searching, who can find out God.'*

*Perchance that hour,—the last of life on earth,*

*The first of Heaven, (where both vitalities  
Blend in the unison of death and birth!)—*

*May show past griefs as bright realities :*

*Seeing their faces in the darkness shine,*

*We then may know them messengers divine ;*

*And find that in the blindness of our cares*

*We have conversed with Angels unawares.*

*Only when fades this world upon our sight,*

*Such come to us in garments shining bright,—*

*With radiant finger, point the upward way,—*

*With foot elastic mount to endless day,—*

*And, shone upon by their own native light,—  
Lift from the cumbered soul its mantling  
veil;  
And out of tribulation,—ghastly pale,—  
Show our wan raiment, pure, celestial white!*

*One instant,—we call death!—the Soul's dim  
eyes shall clear,  
And throw the light of rapture on the sorrows  
suffered here!  
A voice from out the golden mists of ecstasy shall  
come,  
Saying: 'She hath done the best she could.  
Welcome my servant home!'*

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