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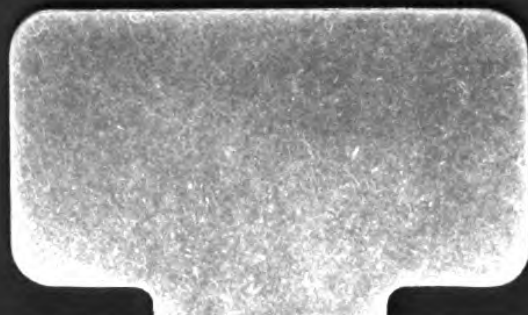


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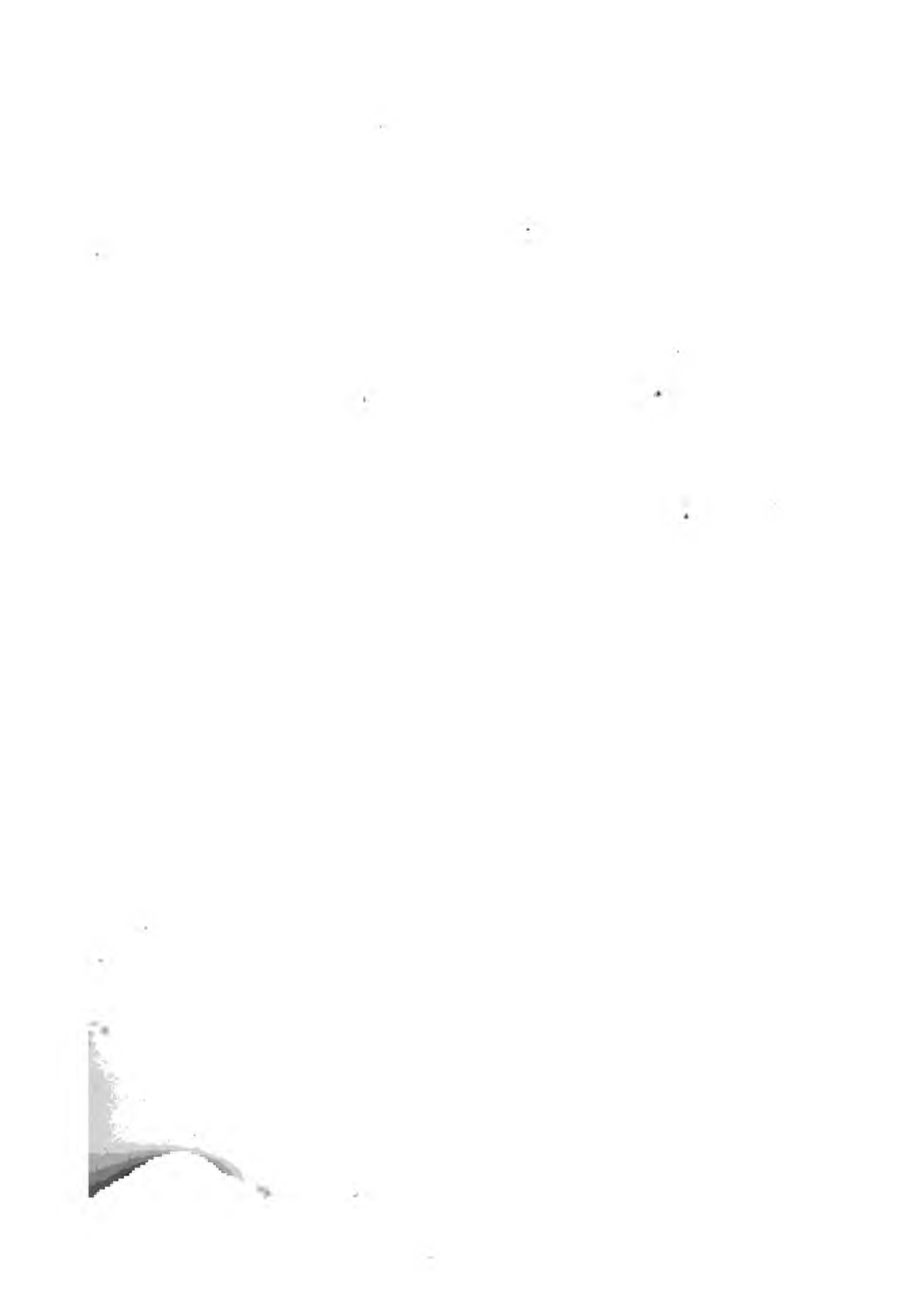




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P O E M S .

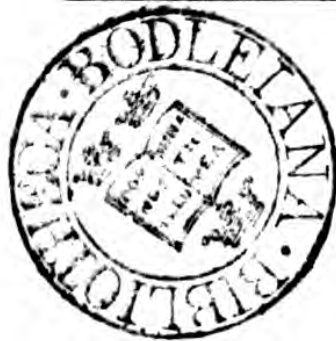
LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

P O E M S

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM LEIGHTON.

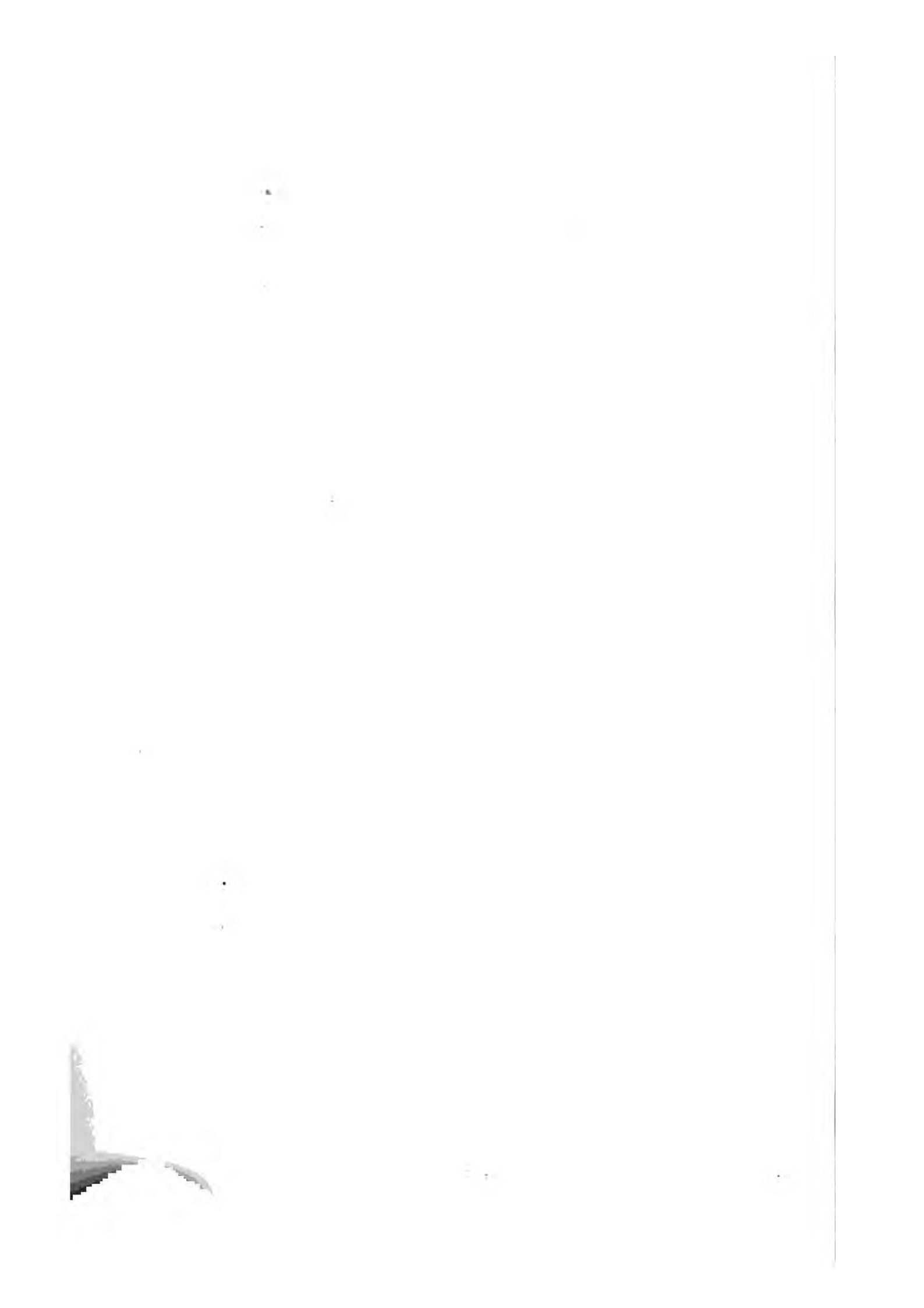
'Gone in the bloom of youth, the flower of life,
Ere yet his morning hours had wholly shone:
Gone from a world of promises how rife!
With all our bright hopes, gone!'



LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1870.

280. n. 74.



P R E F A C E.



THE FOLLOWING POEMS are the productions of a young writer of great promise, whose sudden death in the spring of last year, at the early age of twenty-eight, cast a gloom over a large circle of friends and acquaintances, by whom he was greatly beloved and esteemed. His inherent modesty caused him to hide from most of these his poetical powers, but the few who had knowledge of them anticipated for him a distinguished career. Composed during the leisure hours of an active commercial life, the poems now before the reader, as well as many others not inserted in this first edition, betoken the workings and growth of a genius which would assuredly have produced 'better things' had the author's life been spared.

William Leighton was born at Dundee in 1841. In his seventh year, however, his family removed to Liverpool, where he received his education and where the remainder of his life was spent. At the age of thirteen he was placed in a merchant's office, and in the course of time he attained the position of managing and confidential clerk to an eminent Liverpool firm engaged in the Brazil trade. An assiduous attention to business left him but little leisure for the cultivation of his natural taste for literature, but the greater portion of his spare time was devoted to study and composition. Poetry was his passion, and he was exceedingly well acquainted with the writings of the poets, amongst whom Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Longfellow were his favourite authors.

Mr. Leighton commenced writing verses at a very early age, and the majority of the poems in the present volume were composed before he had completed his twenty-third year. The pieces have been arranged, as nearly as possible, in their chronological order—the first one in the book having been written at the age of fifteen, and the last ('At Death's Door') only the week before he died. Many of the poems have appeared since his death in the 'St. James,' 'New Monthly,' 'United Service,' 'Churchman's Shilling,' 'Church of England,' 'Once a Week,' and other magazines, while some of those which refer to national events (such as the death of the Prince Consort, the celebration of the Shakespeare tercentenary, the marriage of the Prince of Wales, &c.), were, when written, inserted anonymously in the 'Liverpool Mercury.' In addition to the poems, he wrote a considerable number of essays and sketches, which may at some future time be given to the public. A few of these have already appeared in well-known periodicals.

Often pressed by his friends to publish a volume of his poems, Mr. Leighton at length consented to do so, and it was while engaged in preparing them for the press that he met with the severe attack of typhoid fever which caused his death. After an illness which lasted only ten days, he died April 22, 1869.

During his short but useful and virtuous life he exercised a marked and happy influence over all around him : his manners were most gentle, his sympathies tender, his affections deep and lasting, his disposition cheerful and happy, and he was always distinguished by that thoughtfulness and earnestness which spring from deep religious feelings and convictions.

He was a nephew of Mr. Robert Leighton, who died a few days after him, and whose poems have been well received both in this country and in America.

LONDON : *March, 1870.*

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY STANZAS	I
SUMMERS LONG AGO	2
'JESUS WEPT'	5
THOU ART GONE, MY BROTHER	6
TOLL THE BELL	8
ELLA	10
AN INTRODUCTION FOR AN ALBUM	12
SONG	13
BEAUTY	14
IN ABSENCE	15
INTRODUCTION FOR A MANUSCRIPT MAGAZINE	16
THE RIVER OF LIFE	17
SHE CAME—AND WENT	19
WRITTEN IN MY SISTER'S ALBUM	21
A DREAM	23
WHAT SHALL I SING?	27
A THOUGHT	28
FAREWELL TO THE YEAR 1861	28
ON MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY	31
THE CARRIER PIGEON	32
A HUNDRED YEARS AGO	34
STARVED	36
AN OLD MAN'S LOVE SONG	38
MAY DAY, 1862	40
WHITBY ABBEY	42
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO	44
LOVELY IN DEATH	48
THE TRYSTING TREE	50
THE SEA	53
'HOW WILT THOU DO IN THE SWELLING OF JORDAN?'	54
GOD IS EVERYWHERE	55
CALM AND STORM	58
AWAKE	59
'COR UNUM, VIA UNA'	61
MARCH 10TH, 1863	62
THE LEAF OF WOODRUFF	65

	PAGE
MINE	67
THE CLOUD	69
GLENCOE	71
THE SEASONS	75
PEACE, BE STILL	77
LIFE AND DEATH	78
THE DEAD YEAR, 1863	79
A NATION'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT	81
APRIL	83
SHAKESPEARE	84
A HAUNT OF DREAMLAND	89
BABY DIED TO-DAY	92
OUR ANGEL KINDRED	94
THE FALL OF FOYERS	96
IN THE AUTUMN	97
MIDNIGHT	98
REQUIESCAT IN PACE	100
WHEN YOU ARE FAR AWAY, LOVE	102
THE BIRDIES	103
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	104
THY LOVE	105
ON THE BRIDGE	106
PALMERSTON	107
A WHISPER OF THE SPRING	108
GREEN LEAVES	110
FAITH	111
THE LOVERS	112
THE OLD YEAR, 1866	124
THE CUCKOO	126
THOU' ART THE LODE-STAR OF MY LIFE	126
OUR LOST ONE	127
SABBATH CALM	130
TO A CAGED NIGHTINGALE	131
ROSE	132
THE NIGHT COMETH	141
THE GUIDING STAR	142
DREAMS	143
LOVE'S DESPAIR	144
ON THE SHORE	145
MY NEST	146
AT DEATH'S DOOR	147

P O E M S.



COME, Poesie, thou well-belovèd thing,
And make thy home in this wild-beating heart;
Come, tune my tongue, and make me fit to sing
Thy praises : bright and beautiful thou art !

Come, Poesie, thou fountain of delight,
And bathe my soul in thy pellucid stream ;
Come, glide into my being, pure and bright ;
Come, visit me like a delightful dream !

Sweet Poesie, I've seen thee in the day,
And in my dreams by night I've heard thy voice
Speaking unto my soul : thou seemed to say,
' Come with me ; I will make thy heart rejoice !'

Sweet Poesie, O were it not for thee
My life would be a weary life of care,
And this bright world so beautiful to see
A dreary desert full of dark despair.

Introductory Stanzas.

Wild Poesie, put in my hands a lyre,
That, when I sweep my fingers o'er its chords,
My heart may catch some of thine own wild fire
And breathe it forth in all my works and words!

Wild Poesie, O may I hear thy voice
In the sweet rustling of the forest trees ;
O may I hear it in the ocean's noise ;
O may I hear it in the whispering breeze !

Dear Poesie, I'll wear thee near my heart ;
Thou art a pearl of great price to me :
If thou wilt stay with me, my better part
Of life I'll gladly dedicate to thee !

Dear Poesie, bright like the morning come,
And sun my soul in radiance divine :
Come, make within this throbbing heart a home !
Come, I would worship at thy hallowed shrine !

*SUMMERS LONG AGO.*

How sweet to me the memories of happy days of youth,
When my heart was full of gladness and my smile was
full of truth ;
When everything I gazed upon seemed beautiful and fair,
And all the livelong summer day I never knew a care ;

When I could scarcely understand such things as grief
and woe;—
Ah ! those were happy, happy days,—those summers long
ago !

The merry birds sang joyously, the sun shone brighter
then,
The flow'rets grew more fragrantly down in the grassy
glen,
The waters had a brighter flash, and bluer was the sky,
And greener were the forest trees that waved their
branches high,
And sweeter was the gentle breeze that thrilled a music
low
Throughout my heart, and made me love those summers
long ago.

Then, stretched beneath the forest trees, upon the ground
I lay,
And heard the rustling of their leaves through the long
summer day ;
The happy carol of the thrush, the blackbird's whistle
clear,
Like softly whispered melodies fell gently on my ear,
And like Æolian harpings sweet the prattling brooklet's
flow
Gushing and bright came o'er my heart in summers long
ago.

And when the sun with fiery face was sinking fast to
rest,
And evening's dim pale glimmering star was twinkling in
the west,
O how I loved to wander then at twilight's dreamy hour,
To feel the freshness of the breeze, the fragrance of the
flower,—
To gaze in transport at the heavens, and wonder at the
glow—
The purpling glow of eventide in summers long ago !

Ah! those indeed were happy days, my heart knew
nought of guile,
And all God's earth then seemed to me one universal
smile!
And oft amid this stern world's strife my memory ponders
o'er,
And fondly dwells upon those days,—those joyous days
of yore :
The silent stars may cease to shine, and all things fade
below,
But I never, never can forget the summers long ago !



‘*JESUS WEPT.*’

(John xi. 35.)

The Man of Sorrows stood beside the tomb,
 Beneath whose shadow lay the friend He loved,
 And as He gazed into its silent gloom
 Unspoken anguish deep His spirit moved.
 He gazed in pity on the mourning throng—
 Those few sad friends who weeping vigil kept,—
 His loving look on Mary lingered long,
 His trembling bosom heaved, and ‘Jesus wept.’

The Saviour wept! how precious were the tears
 That streamed in sorrow from His holy eyes;
 We think of them and calm our troubled fears;
 We think of them and all *our* sorrow flies!
 Our hearts no longer feel the sickening doubts—
 The darkling gloom that o’er the soul had crept—
 No longer heed the cold world’s haughty flouts,
 Or mark its mockery since the Saviour wept!

Thou sinner, mourning o’er thy evil ways,
 O know there still is pardon offered free!
 Then why not join with those who sing the praise
 Of Him who lived, who wept, who died for thee!

Thou silent mourner, sorrowful and lone,
Weeping o'er joys that long have buried slept
In the sad tomb of Memory, weep on,
For tears are holy things since 'Jesus wept!'



THOU ART GONE, MY BROTHER.

Thou art gone, my brother, from earth away,
To dwell in realms of endless day ;
And the night-winds sigh and the flow'rets wave
Above thy lone and silent grave :
And we miss the sound of thy merry voice
That filled the house with such sweet noise :
Thy sunny smile and thy joyous mirth
Have passed for ever from the earth.

Thou art gone, my brother, to lands above,
Where all is peace and joy and love ;
To bask in everlasting rays,
And hymn the great Eternal's praise :
Where a hand of love and pity dries
The sorrowful tears from weeping eyes ;
Where thousands round the Saviour stand,
With crowns on head and harps in hand.

Thou art gone, my brother, to climes afar,
Where seraphs, saints, and angels are :

Thou art Gone, my Brother.

7

Where fruits and flowers immortal grow,
And silent streams of silver flow ;
Where sweet sounds float on the balmy air,
Where all is pure and bright and fair :
Through the dark portals of the tomb
Thou hast passed to that land of bliss and bloom !

But although thou art gone, my brother dear,
O say dost thou ever linger here?
Dost thou leave that land of joy and bliss
To visit the scenes of thy life in this?
Dost thou ever return to this lowlier earth
And mix with the throng round our happy hearth?
Dost thou join in our sorrows and share our tears?
Dost thou calm our doubts and soothe our fears?

Ah yes ! when we join in our evening prayer,
Thou, bright spirit, art hovering there!
When we sing our nightly song of praise,
With a loving smile thou hear'st our lays :
And in the watches of the night
Thou art standing near with thy wings of light,
And we feel the glory that round thee beams,
And see thy face among our dreams.

And still wilt thou guide us until we stand
Upon the shores of that happy land ;
Still wilt thou watch us by night and day
Till calmly and gently we pass away ;

Then, on thy shining pinions bright,
Thou wilt bear us to realms of love and light,—
And in those regions by angels trod,
We will dwell with thee—we will dwell with God.

*TOLL THE BELL.*

Toll the bell, 'tis Sabbath even,
Let it echo through the air,
Like a voice from yon blue heaven
Calling to the house of prayer.

Speaking gently to our hearts,
Calmly does its cadence fall ;
Softly, softly it imparts
Joy, and peace, and love to all !

Toll the bell then, sweetly, slowly,
Through the still and solemn hour ;
Let the lofty and the lowly
Share alike its soothing power.

Toll the bell, 'tis Sabbath even,
And I would I could reveal
All the longings through me driven,
All the fancies that I feel:—

Toll the Bell.

9

Longings all too deep to utter—
Thoughts that never can be told,
Save in an imperfect mutter,
Feeble, passionless, and cold!

Oh, my heart is well-nigh bursting
With the thoughts I cannot speak,
And my soul is thirsting, thirsting,
For the joys I dare not seek.

Could I, could I e'er inherit
Pens of poets passed away,—
Could I have their brain and spirit
Dwelling in me night and day ;—

Then would I pour forth my numbers
Through the atmosphere of Time,
Like that bell which wakes men's slumbers
With its sweet and soothing chime!

Toll the bell, 'tis Sabbath even,
Let it echo through the air,—
Like a voice from yon blue heaven
Calling to the house of prayer!



ELLA.

She played, a bright and blue-eyed girl,
Before her cottage door ;
Her golden hair in many a curl
Her shoulders fair hung o'er :
From childhood's earliest days she loved
To watch the silvery beam
Of the sweet moon, as light it moved
Along her village stream.

She left her home a blushing bride—
She left her village too ;—
The stately husband by her side
Her feelings never knew :
Nor how a tear stood in her eye
That dimmed its azure gleam :
Nor why she breathed a deep-drawn sigh
At parting with the stream.

She went where form the gay and proud
A world within their own ;
The centre of an envying crowd,
She stood as one alone :
And when on every tongue her grace
And beauty was the theme,
She longed once more the bee to chase
Beside her native stream.

She sought a land which ever smiles
Back to the smiling sun ;
Where odours float from balmy isles,
And streams of silver run :
Yet ev'n 'mid these she longed for night,
For then, in some sweet dream,
She stood again beside her bright
And beauteous village stream !

Again she sought her childhood's home,
But ah ! how changed was she !
For Death had whispered to her, ' Come
And make thy home with me !'
She lingered the long winter through,
And heard the owlet's scream
Among the leafless trees that grew
Beside her village stream.

Slow passed the dreary winter hours ;
The soft winds came once more ;
The sun awoke the early flowers
Before her cottage door :—
But ere the trees began to wave
Their green leaves in his beam,
They laid her in the quiet grave
Beside her native stream.



AN INTRODUCTION FOR AN ALBUM.

Reader, whate'er thy name may be,
 Whate'er thy station, sex, or age,
 Lo! thou must pay the penalty
 And add a trifle to my page!

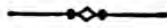
Art thou a maiden young and free,
 Thy fancies teeming fresh and fair,
 Leave not this book until you see
 Your own bright thoughts reflected there!

Art thou a lover, take thy pen
 And write a lay to faithful love—
 The chiefest bliss of lowly men,
 The chiefest joy of saints above.

Art thou a young and bright-souled one,
 Open thy spirit and unfold
 Its thoughts, that we may gaze upon
 The glory-glimpses you behold!

Art thou a man of troubled life,
 Speak of the time when care shall cease.
 Art thou a soldier, tell of strife :
 Art thou a poet, sing of peace.

Art thou a pilgrim old and gray,
Toil-stained and weary of the road,
Yet Heavenward bent, teach us the way
To grasp the outstretched hand of God !



SONG.

I love the blue of the violet fair,
In the beauteous sunshine glowing,
When it sheds its perfume on the air,
All its azure glories showing !
But the bloom forsakes the violet's face,
And its gaudy glory dies,
Whene'er I fondly seek to trace
The depth of thine azure eyes.

I love the blue of the summer sky
When the early lark is singing,
And when the stars are twinkling high,
And the evening bells are ringing ;
But dim to me is the starlight's gleam,
And the softly purpling skies,
When compared to the brightly shining beam
That dwells in thy soft blue eyes.

I love the blue of the mighty deep
When the ocean-waves are flying,

Song.

Or when its breast is hushed to sleep
 And the gentle breeze is sighing ;
 But tame to me is the blue of the sea,
 The violet and the skies,
 Whene'er I fondly gaze on thee,
 And thrill beneath thine eyes.

*BEAUTY.*

Beauty wins all my worship : I can gaze
 Upon a scene of loveliness until
 A blissful rapture through my being plays,
 And both mine eyelids fill,

Rising and setting suns possess the power
 To stir my spirit with their mystic leaven ;
 And in the petals of a simple flower
 I see a glimpse of heaven.

A summer morning melts into my soul ;
 A gurgling streamlet gushes o'er my heart ;
 A happy blaze of sunlight bids the whole
 Of this world's cares depart.

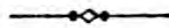
Whate'er in Art or Nature that excels—
 In all things pure, and holy, and refined
 From outward dross of earth—there beauty dwells
 Eternally enshrined !

Its essence permeates the atmosphere ;
To fix its form in stone the sculptor tries ;
And I have drunk its spirit from the clear
Blue depths of pictured eyes.

Therefore I count its sweetness all divine,
And my deep-drawn devotion long to prove,
The while I burn upon its sacred shrine
The incense of my love.

Nor is this love idolatry, for in
The lowliest flower that rises from the sod,
We lose all sense of earthliness and sin,
And stand alone with God !

And while our eyes with tears of rapture swim,
The spirit rises on ecstatic wings,
And yearns for closer intercourse with Him
From whom all beauty springs.

*IN ABSENCE.*

When morning blushes in the sky
And Sol begins his daily duty,
While yet the lark sings loud and high,
And all the Orient glows in beauty,
And every flower is hung with dew
That sparkles bright, I think of you.

Through all the sultry hours of day
 I miss the music of your voice,
 And nurse those memories fond and gay,
 Which make the lonely heart rejoice ;
 And like a river coursing through
 The soul, my thoughts flow on to you.

And when the daylight fades and dies,
 And twilight falls upon the earth,
 And through the dusky evening skies
 Lone Hesper slowly glimmers forth,
 I think of joys which once I knew
 At that sweet dreamy hour with you.

And when the dusk is drowned in dark,
 Through all the still star-spangled night,
 Until the carol of the lark
 Awakes the mist-wrapt world to light,
 And morning's tearless eyes of blue
 Shine sweetly down, I dream of you !



INTRODUCTION

FOR A MANUSCRIPT MAGAZINE.

As some brave ship, launched on the heaving main,
 That carries wealth to distant unknown shores,
 And laden with rich freight of precious stores,
 Bounds swiftly homeward o'er the waves again :—

So do we send thee forth, in simple trust
That thou wilt safely weather every gale
Of critic harshness which may rend thy sail,
Or strain thy timbers with its angry gust.
Bring riches back to heart and mind and brain,
For which Thought in the mines of Knowledge delves;
Our truest wealth is garnered in ourselves,
And giving ever yields the greatest gain !
O may each heart some golden full ear glean
From out the stubble of our Magazine !



THE RIVER OF LIFE.

I stood beside the river,
Where beech-trees moan and shiver,
And waters roar upon the shore,
And waves roll on for ever.

Here oft the low wind sigheth,
The sea all stilly lieth,
And croaking notes from sea-birds' throats
In the far distance dieth.

Yet oft its waters rageth
And all its waves engageth,
And near and far a deadly war
Its boiling billows wageth!

The River of Life.

But when in calm or motion,
With ceaseless strange devotion,
Its rolling tide doth onward glide
Toward the wailing ocean.

On, onward still it goeth,
Nor rest nor respite knoweth,
'Till lulled to sleep in ocean deep,
Where the red coral groweth !

This life is like a river;
Whose waters quail and quiver,
With ceaseless flow they onward go
Toward the great 'for ever.'

Some lives glide sweetly, slowly,
'Mid music soft and holy,
Like moon-light's gleam across a stream
When wavelets ripple lowly.

While some, their crests uprearing
Undaunted and unfearing,
Roll through the sky all wild and high,
The clouds of heaven nearing!

Here some are sighing sadly ;
Here some are moaning madly ;
While now, anon, their sorrows gone,
Some eyes are gleaming gladly.

Despising, hating, loving,
Despair and rapture proving,
The power of soul linking the whole,
They still keep onward moving !

All roll on like the river,
And all their waves deliver
To Him of life the Giver,
'Till in the sea, Eternity,
They sink to rest for ever !



SHE CAME—AND WENT.

She came, as comes the morning light
After a dark and troublous night ;
And hearts that long had swooned in pain,
When she appeared revived again.

She came, as comes the joyous Spring
With light and glory on her wing,
And all who saw her bent to praise
Her beauty, loveliness, and grace.

She came, as come the beauteous flowers,
Opening unseen in summer hours,
And spread around that silent spell
Which made all spirits love her well.

She came—and went.

O had she lingered yet awhile
To bless us with her glorious smile,
Our souls had felt the loving glow!
Our hearts had ne'er been plunged in woe!

She was a star, whose holy light
Gleamed softly through the gloomy night,
Whose beam of glory gladdens yet:—
Alas, that she so quickly set!

She was a bright and glorious dream,
All silvered o'er with beauty's beam;
Whose memory lingers to the last:—
Alas, that she so quickly passed!

She went, as sinks the setting sun,
His bright brief course of beauty run,
When at the loveliest hour of day
He melts in his own light away.

She went, as fades some beauteous star
Set in the firmament afar,
Which when the darkness fades away
Is hidden in the light of day.

She went, as dies the fading rose,
When evening airs whisper repose,
But, like the withered rose's breath,
Her fragrance lingers after death!

Ev'n in the midst of beauty's bloom
She sought the shadow of the tomb :
But had she lived—O who can tell
The hopes of those who loved her well !

Why did she die—so fair, so young—
The varied song of life unsung ?
So bright, so pure—why did she die ?
Alas ! alas ! we know not why !

We can but trust 'tis for the best ;
She now hath found a home of rest !
One flow'ret more from earth is riven !
One flow'ret more doth bloom in heaven !



WRITTEN IN MY SISTER'S ALBUM.

My sister, could an honest prayer
Breathed in an ear which ever hears,
Preserve thy future life from care,
And joyful make the coming years ;

That prayer would pierce Heaven's star-arched zone
And beg the God of Love to bless,
'Till angels standing near the Throne
Would wonder at its earnestness !

Yet well I know that joy and care
Must in each life co-mingled be :—
Would I might all thy sorrows bear,
And leave the joys alone to thee !

But years will come and years will go,
And every year will bring its share
Of joy and sorrow, bliss and woe,
Which all unaided thou must bear ;

And those dear eyes that ever now
Brim o'er with all the joys of youth,
May melt in anguish, and that brow
Forget that it was once so smooth !

But when the world is most unkind,
And Fortune's smiles most fickle prove,
O in that hour be sure to find
A shelter in thy brother's love !

And as each fast-revolving year
Flits o'er our heads on rapid wing,
May each to each but prove more dear,
And each to each the closer cling ;—

Until at last when fades the day—
We, journeying with Heavenward eyes,
May see through twilight lone and gray
The looming towers of Paradise !

A DREAM.

The day was waning in the western sky,
 Above his grave brooded the broadening sun ;
 The twilight's shadows lengthened far and nigh,—
 Another day was done.

All calmly and serene the moon uprose
 After that day of tempest and of grief ;
 But yet the evening brought me no repose,
 The calm brought no relief !

Under my woe I staggered like to faint ;
 My lot seemed harder than I well could bear ;
 Through the pale light went up my impassioned plaint—
 ' Give me surcease from care !'

I gazed from out my window on the red
 And radiant sky where sunk the orb of light,
 Then seized the book of a sweet bard and read
 His ' Voices of the Night.'

I read impetuously—I know not why,
 For the sweet words upon my spirit fell,
 As in the desert bread fell from the sky
 To hungry Israel !

But darkness deepened and the words grew dim
And faded from my faint and fading sight;
I closed mine eyes and slept, and psalm and hymn
Mingled their mystic light :

And in that light I dreamed a dream. Behold,
Two female forms of wondrous beauty rare
Stood o'er me! One was tall and pale and cold,
And dark her flowing hair :

Her dark eyes shone beneath her darker veil
Like twin stars mirrored in tempestuous sea ;
Her form was queenly in its grace, and pale
Her brow did seem to me :

She wore a sombre robe, from head to foot
All fringed with purple fire and flakes of light ;
She spoke in voice as soft and sweet as lute,
And said, ' My name is Night.'

I turned and looked upon the other form
That stood so motionless and silent there,—
Her cheek was rosy bright, her blue eyes warm,
And golden was her hair :

Clad in a flowing robe of snowy white,
Bedeckt with glimmering pearls and silver's sheen,
She stood beside the sombre, shadowy Night
Like some sweet fairy queen !

Then spake the dark-eyed maiden in her low
Soft tones : ' We heard your anguished cry,
And came to grant thee respite from thy woe,—
My sister Peace and I.

' We came from our sweet home afar to bring
Strength to thy soul to battle with its care :
The *fear* of trouble is its fiercest sting.
Go forth and not despair !

' Bear sorrow as the Great-hearts of the earth
Bore theirs,—go forth and meet it as 'tis seen,
And lo ! like moist mirage in desert's dearth,
What seems has never been !

' Face troubles boldly and they fly away !
Keep thy heart pure, thy form and soul erect !
Be strong in knowing man is more than clay ;
Be strong in self-respect !

' Remember also there is One who knows
All things however faint, obscure, and dim :
He will not let a brave heart fail, nor those
That firmly trust in Him !'

Then Peace stooped down and murmured in mine ear
A soft sweet gush of silver-sounding words,
Like prattle of a brooklet calm and clear,
Or song of summer birds.

And I lay in a speechless ecstasy
Drinking in all the sweet words of those twain,
Until I felt the soul-strength within me
Quicken and live again !

At length the soft sounds faded from the sense,
The silence woke me, and I gazed afar
From out my window on the broad immense
Of sky and shimmering star.

And there I sat and pondered o'er my dream,
While stern Resolve came to my fainting soul,
'Till through the troublous clouds there shone a gleam
That showed a glorious goal !

The morrow dawned and died into the night ;
And with it came and went the fierce array
Of troubles that seemed coming like a blight
To crush, destroy, and slay !

They passed like mist before the breath of morn,
Teaching the stern realities of life ;
Showing the fate of every creature born
With care and woe is rife !

And as I sat and felt the perfumed a'ir
That hovered round that dreaded day's decease,
I breathed a blessing on the holy pair,—
Night and her sister Peace !

WHAT SHALL I SING?

What shall I sing? The life of things
 Is hidden from me by a cloud.
 Nothing is known. The moving crowd
 Are full of vain imaginings !

Some simple song at random sung—
 A tale to make the tear-drop start :—
 Vague thoughts are struggling in my heart,
 But find no utterance on my tongue !

The thought that all the world commands—
 That far into the future dips ;
 The poetry of clinging lips ;
 The poetry of clasping hands ;

The throbbing joys that thrill the soul
 With deepest, wildest ecstacies ;
 The longings that like troubled seas
 Across the gulf of Being roll ;—

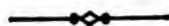
All these I've known and tasted long,
 But cannot give them forth in words ;
 I make a trembling 'mong the chords,
 But cannot catch the soul of song.

What shall I Sing?

When will the dew drop from the sky
 To slake the soul's undying thirst?
 When will this pent-up spirit burst
 Forth in one flood of melody!

*A THOUGHT.*

If flowers could always bloom at eve
 As sweetly as they bloom at morn;
 If joys could ne'er take wing and leave
 Our hearts to languish all forlorn:—
 Then flowers would ne'er seem half so bright,
 And joys would ne'er be half so dear,—
 The sweetest dawn of morning light
 Is that we gaze on through a tear!

*FAREWELL TO THE YEAR 1861.*

Old Year, farewell; thy hours are swiftly flying,
 Thy sands are well-nigh run:
 Old Year, we come to look upon thee dying,
 And welcome in thy son.

And as we see thy dim eyes slowly glazing,
 And hear thy labouring breath;
 Thy voice no vain and useless protest raising
 Against the power of Death,

We almost wonder thus to see thee going
 So peaceful and serene,
When hearts are sad and eyes are overflowing
 For England's widowed Queen,

Whom thou hast ravished of her dearest treasure,
 Leaving her now to feel
A yearning want in every earthly pleasure,
 Which time can never heal.

Old Year, thy death-roll tells a mournful story
 Of useful lives removed;
Forms have been crushed in manhood's pride and glory,
 And hearts are still that loved !

Old Year, above thy passing-bell's sad tolling,
 There sounds as from afar
The muttered under-tone of battle rolling,
 And thunder-note of war.

It comes across the broad Atlantic sweeping—
 That sound so wild and dread ;
'Tis heard above a mighty nation's weeping
 For *him* so lately dead.

And we must leave our peaceful avocations
 To battle for the right,
And prove that England's arm among the nations
 Has still the power to smite.

But, hark ! those bells of late chiming so sadly
 Again salute the ear :
Their silvery voices sounding sweetly, gladly,
 Ring in the fair New Year.

O may those joy-bells be to us a token
 Of what the year will be !
May England's hallowed peace remain unbroken,
 Her people still be free !

Thus, though the old year is rung out with sorrow,
 The new one is rung in
With joy, that speaks of many a bright to-morrow
 When gladness shall begin

To take the place of grief, and cot and palace
 Will hear the joyful strain,
And lips that long have pressed the bitter chalice
 Shall taste the sweet again.

That over all this fair land, sea-surrounded,
 The wail of woe may cease,
And the grim fiend of War may be confounded
 By the sweet angel Peace.



ON MY TWENTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY.

(February 3, 1862.)

I'm twenty-one : the spring-time has gone by,
And now the summer of my life comes on ;
The short-lived summer that will fade and die
As swiftly as the fair glad spring has gone.

But O to leave the fields where I have played
To join the world's eternal jar and strife !
And O to leave the streamlet in the glade
To mingle with the roaring sea of life !

I view the record of my bygone days ;—
The blotted pages tell a mournful tale,
Of murmurs, where there was more need for praise ;
Of failures, where a brave heart could not fail !

What have I done these one-and-twenty years
That I should still encumber thus the ground ?
There falls no answer from the hidden spheres,
And from the silent earth there comes no sound.

Yet, though the seasons of my faded youth
Have failed in that which makes even Duty great,
O Lord, I thank Thee that I know this truth,
'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

THE CARRIER PIGEON.

(An Answer to the Poem of that name by Dora Greenwell, in 'Good Words' for February 1862.)

All rosy bright the sun
 Sinks in the crimson glory of the west ;
 And tired workers now, their labour done,
 Betake themselves to rest.

The twilight shadows fall,
 And silence waits upon the fading day ;
 And in the summer woods the songsters all
 Have ceased their evening lay.

Then wherefore dost thou stay?
 Cleave with swift wing the incense-breathing air !
 Come from the regions of the drooping day
 With that which thou dost bear.

My snow-white messenger !
 This hour I've watched the weary sun decline,
 Thinking each moment that thy wings would stir
 The leafy jessamine :

That thou wouldst enter in—
 Thy snowy plumage ruffled on thy breast,
 And perch upon my bosom, and begin
 To take thy well-earned rest.

And still thou art not here—

The sun has sunk behind the woods afar,
And through the silver twilight, lone and clear,
Looks forth the evening star.

I know that *he* doth sit

Beside his open casement far away,
O'er his pale brow the twilight shadows flit,
As if at merry play ;

The book is on his knee—

He gazes far across the uplands dim ;
His thoughts are in the chamber *here* with me,
While mine are *there* with him.

How wonderful is Thought

When borne upon the rapid wings of Love !
'Tis with the spirit's deepest breathings fraught,
And needs no Carrier Dove

To waft it through the air ;

The heart is flooded by its silent power :
As in dim summer dawns the dewdrops fair
Refresh a thirsty flower !

But now thy journey's past,

My pure-plumed messenger, and here thou art,
I've read his wished-for letter o'er at last,
And pressed it to my heart :

And when a blissful thought
Awakes me in the drowsy hours of night,
I'll kiss the letter o'er which thou hast brought
Beneath thy pinions white.

My thanks I owe to thee,
Thou ever-faithful messenger of Love,
Whose murmurous cooing speaks so tenderly,
My gentle Carrier Dove !



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

The Now into the Past is flitting,
Never again to reappear ;
And solemn Death is ever sitting
Beside the portal of each year ;
And man must also pass away,
And leave this narrow sphere below :
None of those forms are here to-day
That lived a hundred years ago.

Eyes that with love were overflowing,
Hands that were warmly clasped in hands,
Hearts that with tenderness were glowing,
Souls knit in pure affection's bands ;—

All these have floated down the tide
Of time, which runs with ceaseless flow,
And with them all the joy and pride
That graced—a hundred years ago.

And o'er the lapse of years long faded
We look upon the bygone days,—
The world by gloom and mist is shaded,
And all is strange that meets our gaze :
We have no smiles to greet the mirth,
No tears to mingle with the woe,
Of those who lived upon the earth
More than a hundred years ago.

Yet every word which then was spoken,
And every thought that wrung the brow
And strove for utterance faint and broken,
Exert an influence on the Now—
An influence which for ever throws
Its power o'er all, and serves to show
That we are kindred still to those
Who lived a hundred years ago.

Then wherefore should we still endeavour
To mar the wise and God-like plan
Which strives to prove to us for ever
The brotherhood of man to man ?

A Hundred Years Ago.

A thousand echoes ringing loud,
 A thousand voices whispering low,
 Tell what we owe unto the crowd
 Who lived a hundred years ago.

*STARVED.*

'The other day two women died of want and privation in the streets of London. One was discovered by a policeman in the morning, sitting in a crouched-up position on a stair. On removal to a doctor's it was found that she was quite dead.'—*Daily Paper.*

The deep night fell o'er London,
 With its riot and bustle and din—
 It fell o'er the streets of the city,
 It fell o'er the haunts of sin.
 Were there none with hearts of pity
 To take the poor wayfarer in ?

She walked through Christian London,
 Wretched, bare-footed, forlorn ;
 With pleading, hunger-pinched features—
 With aspect weary and worn ;
 And the wild March blast, as it hurried past,
 Fluttered her raiment torn.

No home in all wide London !
She shrank from the chilly air,
She drew her tattered mantle
Round her shoulders cold and bare,
And from the beat of the rain and sleet
She crouched on the lonely stair.

And through the streets of London
The heedless crowd went on ;
No eye saw the friendless woman,
No ear heard her piteous moan ;
No kindly heart that was human
Cared for the homeless one !

Death stalked through the streets of London,
But less unkind was he ;
He saw the woman lying
In her lonesome misery :
He took her hand and in accents bland
Said, ' Come along with me ! '

Day dawned on stately London :
The sun shone warm and bright
On the woman's crouching figure
In its melancholy plight—
On her garments torn and meagre,
On her features still and white.

Starved.

Starved in the streets of London !
 Yet mayhap a mother has smiled
 In the old-time days of happiness
 In the laughing eyes of a child ;—
 Those eyes that now glare with a stony stare,
 And gleam with a radiance wild.

Starved in the streets of London !
 'Midst its wealth and the ceaseless swell
 Of its trade and its commerce rising high
 To the heavens. O ye who dwell
 In the midst of riches and luxury,
 Say—Is it well, is it well ?

*AN OLD MAN'S LOVE SONG.*

Do you forget the joyous time
 When summer woods were green and palmy ?
 When we were in our youthful prime,
 And summer days were bright and balmy ?
 Then wandering through the wooded ways,
 Or couched among the purple heather,
 Screened from the sun's refulgent rays,
 We sang our merry songs together.

Glad was the time : no carking care
Had ever cast a shadow o'er us :
The path we trod was bright and fair,
And life lay bright and fair before us.
So, hand in hand, we journeyed on
With hearts as light as any feather :
Life had a sunny side alone
When you and I sang songs together.

Those days seem far, far distant now—
The way we've wandered long and dreary—
The furrows gather on your brow,
And I am growing worn and weary ;
Along the path that we have trod
We've met dark clouds and stormy weather,
And over many an Ichabod
We've wept our burning tears together.

Yet, close together as of old,
Across the waste we'll still keep moving ;
Years cannot make our hearts grow cold,
Age cannot keep those hearts from loving.
And when we leave this world of care,
Then, far above yon floating ether,
In that bright land where all is fair
We'll sing our joyful songs together.



MAY DAY, 1862.

Glad voices o'er the land
 Ring in loud shouts of joy and thankfulness,
 For, laurel-crowned by Plenty, Peace doth stand
 This happy day to bless.

This day the nations meet—
 Not as of old they met, in warfare rude,
 But every clime is linked in friendship sweet
 And bonds of brotherhood.

And in one stately hall,
 Thronged with the triumphs of man's soaring mind,
 No single separate race is owned, but all
 Are members of mankind,

And as the voice of praise
 Rings through the corridors and fails again,
 Angels are singing as in olden days
 'Peace and goodwill to men!'

A blessing on *his* name
 Whose mind conceived this world-embracing plan
 Of universal love, which shows the claim
 Man ever holds on man ;—

Whose unobtrusive life
Was one still struggle in the cause of peace,
To hasten on the golden day when strife
And enmity shall cease.

A tear for *her* who yet
Mourns for the chosen of her youthful years—
The royal widow, in her deep regret,
Victoria, in her tears.

She weeps for him who stood
So long the partner of her happy reign :
O pathos of her splendid solitude !
O passion of her pain !

Yet though her eyes are dim
With tears, a joy must thrill her soul to-day,
To see crowned with success the work of him,
Her Great-heart, passed away.

Our Albert ! lo, the whole
Wide world unites thy monument to rear,
And in this hall of nations every soul
Doth hold thy memory dear.

Behold, it is the May !
Her voice awakens all the vernal flowers ;
The woods put on their verdure fresh and gay,
And vocal are the bowers.

The perfume-laden breeze
Creeps faintly c'er the land like incense mild ;
A thousand birds sing from a thousand trees
With carol sweet and wild ;

And as the voice of praise
Swells upward to the sky and fails again,
Angels are singing as in olden days,
' Peace and goodwill to men !'



WHITBY ABBEY.

Thou relic of a by-gone generation,
Thou crumbling record of a vanished race,
Towering aloft in lonely desolation,
Like the great guardian spirit of the place :

Thy walls with age are mouldering, gray and hoary,
Where thy long transept lay the grass waves green ;
And scarce a remnant of thy former glory
Remains to tell us what thou once hast been.

Yet here in days of yore a royal maiden
Has ministered upon the sacred shrine ;
And knights and nobles with their symbols laden
Have joined the orisons and rites divine.

Here images of saints in dark-niched spaces
Have peered on black-cowled monks devoid of smiles ;
And meek-eyed nuns, with fair and pensive faces,
Have flitted through the solemn-whispering aisles.

Here oft the sweet strains of an Ave Mary
Have stolen through the twilight, still and clear ;
And the wild cadence of a Miserere
Has struck upon the midnight's startled ear.

And in the frequent pauses of devotion,
When silence brooded o'er the prostrate band,
Was heard the deep-mouthed wailing of the ocean
Beating for ever on the rocky strand.

But all is changed !—no more the night-wind stealing
Through thy dim galleries and vacant nave,
Will catch the sound of music's measured pealing
And bear it far across the moon-lit wave :

No more when morning gilds the eastern heaven
Will early matins rise or organ swell ;
And when the first stars gem the brow of even
No more will sound the sweet-toned vesper bell.

Thy glory has gone by ! and thou art standing
In lonely pomp upon thy sea-washed hill,
Wearing in hoary age a mien commanding,
And in thy desolation stately still !

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-TWO.

If, ages after this, when I
 Have long been lying 'neath the clover,
 These lines should chance to meet the eye
 Of one who'll deign to read them over,—

Mortal, I fain would speak with you
 A while in this imperfect sonnet,
 Of life in eighteen-sixty-two—
 How the 'world wagged' when I was on it.

In History's statements put no trust—
 Historians never are impartial;
 If you read novels, know you must
 That these at best are merely farcial :

But mine will be a faithful tale
 Of simple truth, I do assure you—
 No scenes to make your cheeks turn pale,
 No far-fetched fancies to allure you.

I scarce know how in words to mould
 The struggling thoughts that o'er me gather;
 Yet list, and I'll 'a tale unfold'
 As long as that of Hamlet's father.

Of course, in eighteen-sixty-two
We had not all *your* privileges,
For Art's deep Ocean, broad and blue,
Was only spanned by floating bridges ;

And we were 'cabined, cribbed, confined,'
A rude convention kept us under ;
We chained the lightning, bound the wind,
But never knew the use of thunder !

Eight days our steam-boats took to plough
The Atlantic 'gainst the storm-king's powers—
Why speak of this? No doubt you now
Can cross it in as many hours !

In naval warfare we excelled—
It was no use our ships to fire on,
Armstrong and Whitworth guns they held,
Their hulls were coated o'er with iron.

We learned the secrets of the stars,
Explored the wonders of the ocean,
Burst Education's prison bars,
And set her glorious car in motion.

But not content with what we knew
Of all the varied spheres of science—
In theory and practice too—
With other worlds we sought alliance !

We summoned ghosts in number more
Than those that came to blood-stained Gloster;
To hear from friends lost years before
We'd but to go to Mr. Foster !

The way they came no tongue could tell,
On chairs and stools they used to hammer—
Most had forgot the way to spell,
And very few could speak good grammar !

The ghost of Walter Scott told lies !
But then in life *he* loved romancing :
Heber was given to cards and dice,
And Doctor Watts was fond of dancing !

And all this time great Science strode
With giant strides, we slowly following,
Though oft with open mouths we stood
Some grand delusive fiction swallowing.

Of locomotion I'll not make
My tale to tell, or you'll not scan it,
Since I've no doubt you now can take
A journey to some distant planet !

Of mighty Love we owned the sway ;
We felt the stormy glow of passion ;
We slept all night ; we woke all day ;
We dressed—in the prevailing fashion.

We harboured hate and joy and fear ;
We courted—ah ! you know what that is ;
A tale told in a trellised ear,
Beside a trellised window lattice.

We went to church on Sabbath days,
When solemn Sabbath bells were ringing ;—
Some went to gaze—some went to praise—
Some went ‘ because they liked the singing.’

In riches and in luxury
Thousands of wealthy men were lying ;
While, steeped in abject misery,
As many more of want were dying.

Yet still, amidst Want’s piercing moan,
And busy Labour’s ceaseless humming,
We thought that Joy was hastening on,
And that a better time was coming.

Dreaming we ever could behold
Beyond the midnight’s misty covering,
A happy daybreak, fringed with gold,
Upon the verge of darkness hovering !

Fools ! thus we let the years glide by,
Nor dreamed that they had most of beauty,
Who, spite of Hope’s delusive cry,
Strongly and nobly did their duty.

We seldom thought the solemn Past
Spread its far-stretching shadow o'er us ;
Or that the Future, wide and vast,
Lay, an untrodden waste before us !

We lived as if the world at best
Were but a place of mere transition,
Nor ever deemed that each possessed
In his own sphere a special mission.

Farewell, my friend ! the silent night
Is slowly falling, dim and dimmer,
And through the weird and lonely light
I see your unborn features glimmer !

I seem to grasp your ghostly hand !
All outer human things are banished !—
The Dawn comes creeping o'er the land,
And lo ! thy shadowy form has vanished !



LOVELY IN DEATH.

Still, still and lovely, as some sculptured form,
She lay draped in her shroud of snowy white ;
But cold the cheek that once was purely warm,
And dim the eye that once was proudly bright.

The rich curl-clusters of her golden hair
Hung o'er the pulseless form in careless grace ;
And Death's cold shadow rested on the fair
And placid beauty of the faultless face.

The parted lips still wore a ruby tinge,
And round the mouth a smile yet seemed to play :
The right hand rested on the curtain-fringe,
As if in deep and dreamless sleep she lay :

And once or twice when the faint summer breeze
Fluttered the golden glory of her hair,
Hope smiled above our gathering miseries,
And ' Death,' we said, ' cannot be dwelling there !'

But when the twilight fell in hazy gloom,
And 'neath the window sang the wakeful bird,
A silent horror brooded o'er the room
And all the fountains of our being stirr'd ;

' And she is gone,' we said, ' for ever gone !
That silvery voice can now be heard no more !
No more those half-closed eyes shall meet our own,
Their dark blue depths with warm love running o'er !'

And a wild hunger seized upon our hearts
For all the joys possessed in days of old ;
The clinging lips—where all the life-blood starts !
The clasping hands—where neither hand is cold.

Then as the solemn night chased twilight gray,
We felt a softening influence hovering nigh :
We said, ' Our darling has not gone away :
She is not dead although she seemed to die.

' She still is in our midst, though years may roll
And life be blown away by every breath :
For beauty is immortal as the soul;
And Love can never yield her crown to Death !'



THE TRYSTING TREE.

We stood beneath the trysting tree
One summer evening long ago ;
The leaves were rustling drowsily,
The air was still, the sun was low ;

The songsters in the woods were dumb,
No sound came from the breezy down ;
But, faint and deep, a ceaseless hum
Rose upward from the crowded town.

Her hand I held within mine own :
I saw her bosom fall and rise ;
While lovingly upon me shone
The sunshine splendour of her eyes.

The Trysting Tree.

51

And standing in the twilight there
I carved her name upon the tree ;
She loosed the night of her long hair,
And gave a silken tress to me.

I hid the token in my breast,
My heart leaped up with sudden joy,
And in wild words my tongue confessed
The first love-passion of a boy.

Ah me ! the deep tumultuous bliss
That thrilled my bosom when I felt
Her stooping down to print a kiss
Upon my forehead as I knelt !

And then I vowed though her dear name
Might fade from off the gnarlèd tree,
My love would still remain the same,
And I would never faithless be !

So home we sauntered, while the night
Hung all its star-lamps out on high,
And the moon framed with tremulous light
A silver pathway to the sky.

But often when the leafy wood
Was wrapt in shadowy gloom, I came
To see the place where she had stood
And kiss the letters of her name.

The Trysting Tree.

Her love I cherished in my soul
And deemed that it would ever bloom
In life, and through the years that roll
Their endless course beyond the tomb!

But oh! the world is full of change!
And boyhood's days glide swiftly by;
Our early loves grow cold and strange,
And all youth's bright enchantments fly.

The other day again I stood
Where passed my boyhood wild and free;
I left the town, and sought the wood,
And found the well-remembered tree:

All seemed the same. The woods were dumb,
No sound came from the breezy down,
But faint and deep, a drowsy hum
Rose upward from the crowded town:—

And standing there I thought, 'Ah me!
How soon from youth's fond joys we part!'
The name was blotted from the tree;
The love had withered from my heart.



THE SEA.

What ails thee, O thou Sea,
That thus with mad endeavour
Thou heavest thy waves on the lonely shore,
And beatest thy banks for ever?

Ah! so my weary heart
Throbs with a restless yearning,
For the golden light of the faded days,
And the joys that have no returning.

What means, O tossing Sea,
That wild and awful wailing,
Like the prayer for pity from some lost soul
Which is ever unavailing?

O even so my heart
Doth wail, and pine, and languish,
For a love that can satisfy the soul,
And a peace that can still its anguish.

Wail wilder still, O Sea!
Roar louder yet, ye billows!
And rock the mariners to sleep
As they rest on their lonely pillows!

And heave on high thy waves
 Till the deeps shall seethe and shiver!
 But a day will come when thy wail shall cease
 And thy moan shall be hushed for ever!

And thou, O restless heart,
 Still throb with thy deep emotion;
 And pine beneath thy weight of care
 And pant like the panting ocean!

And toss and tremble and thrill
 Till thine inmost being quiver!
 But a day will come when thy care shall cease,
 And thou shalt be stilled for ever!



*‘HOW WILT THOU DO IN THE SWELLING OF
 JORDAN?’*

(Jeremiah xii. 8.)

Faint not, O Christian! the way may be long,
 And the path for thy feet may seem toilsome and weary;
 Courage, and faint not; be faithful and strong:
 Though days may be dark, and though nights may be
 dreary.

Onward! though mists rise on every hand:
 Upward! though sin weigh thee down like a burden:
 For if thou should'st faint in the still peaceful land,
 ‘How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?’

Faint not, O Christian! the night is far spent,
And the day will soon dawn in its fulness of beauty:
Let the light find thee with steps heavenward bent,
'Toiling along the rough pathway of duty!
What though temptations are thronging the road!
Has not Christ died thy transgressions to pardon?
And if thou should'st wander away from thy God,
'How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?'

Faint not, O Christian! though thick on thy path
Affliction pours down its most pitiless showers:
Thy Father is speaking in love, not in wrath,
And thy griefs will yet scatter thy pathway like flowers!
Courage then, Christian! be of good cheer!
Christ is thy guardian and Heaven is thy guerdon!
For if on this earth thou should'st falter and fear,
'How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?'



GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

Mountains, towering high and proud,
Far above each floating cloud;
Forests, 'mong whose crowded trees,
Moans the frequent midnight breeze;

God is Everywhere.

Ocean, with its solemn roar,
Lashing on the lonely shore ;
Thunder echoing through the air,—
Tell us, God is everywhere !

Flowers of every scent and hue
Pearly with the morning dew ;
Lake whose limpid bosom heaves
In the light that sunset leaves ;
Stars that shine so stilly bright
From the azure vault of night ;
Sunshine with its beauteous glare,—
Tell us God is everywhere !

Spring, with all the flow'rets sweet
Leaping forth to kiss her feet ;
Summer, with her foliage gay,
And the roses on her way ;
Autumn, with his purple skies
And the passion in his eyes ;
Winter, with his woodlands bare,—
Tell us, God is everywhere !

Birds that trill their happy lays
All along the wooded ways ;
Leaves that rustle far aloft,
• Making music sweet and soft ;

Streamlet of the silvery tones
Prattling o'er its smooth gray stones ;
With all sounds of beauty rare,—
Tell us, God is everywhere !

Visions of the morning light ;
Dreams that haunt us in the night ;
Shadowy hands that beckon hence ;
Whisperings we know not whence ;
Hopes that wear angelic wings ;
Beautiful imaginings ;
Yearnings after all things fair,—
Tell us, God is everywhere !

Courage then, O fainting heart,
Worn and weary as thou art !
What though earthly joys fall fast
As the leaves in Autumn's blast !
What though seas of trouble roll
Billowy darkness o'er thy soul !
Thou canst crush the phantom Care,
While thy God is everywhere !

When the shadows round thee fall
Blacker than a funeral pall ;
When the tempest's brooding wrath
Bursts upon thy lonely path ;

God is Everywhere.

In all days of deep distress;
 In all hours of loneliness,—
 Bend the knee and breathe the prayer,—
 For thy God is everywhere !

*CALM AND STORM.*

'Tis only when the ocean lies
 In undisturbed and waveless sleep,
 No breath beneath the bending skies,
 No ripple on the spreading deep,—
 Nothing to mar its slumb'rous rest,
 No fleck upon its limpid blue,
 That, in its broad and placid breast,
 Heaven is reflected pure and true.

So with the heart of human-kind :
 'Tis only when in perfect rest,
 No cloud of doubt upon the mind,
 No dream of ill within the breast,—
 The conscience clear, the faith secure,
 Each thought the pinion of a prayer,
 Each aspiration high and pure,
 That heaven is softly mirrored there.

Yet, even when the tempests sweep
 Tumultuous o'er the tossing sea,

And all the furies of the deep
Meet in uproarious revelry ;
When wild winds rage, and ocean raves,
And thunder-black each billow seems,
Still heaven is mirrored 'neath the waves
In broken and disjointed gleams !

So is it with the heart of man :
When tempests howl and waves are high ;
When faith is growing pale and wan
And hope's last beam about to die ;
No promised calm the soul to cheer,
By winds of passion tossed and driven ;—
E'en then, beneath the storms appear
Distorted gleams and hints of heaven !



AWAKE.

The sun is flooding the eastern sky
With a blaze of silver light ;
The fresh green foliage waving high,
Is fringed with a flame of white ;
And far above, from the topmost air,
The showering lark-notes break ;
And the spirit of beauty floats everywhere—
Sweet my lady, awake !

A slow breeze steals o'er the dewy land,
From its home in the dreamy South,
And scatters a perfume on every hand
As sweet as the breath of your mouth ;
And the tremulous boughs, as they bend and sway,
A murmurous music make ;
And bright on the brooklet the sunbeams play—
Sweet my lady, awake !

The river that lay in its dusky repose
Through the long lone hours of night,
Now laughs in the lustre that sunrise throws
And ripples in rosy light ;
And the hills that loomed like shadowy ghosts
A clearer outline take ;
And the white sails glimmer along the coasts—
Dear my lady, awake !

The violet lifts its eye of blue
To the bending blue above ;
And the roses, bathed in a drench of dew,
Are breathing of beauty and love ;
And the lily stoops its head to kiss
Its shadow within the lake—
O never was morning so lovely as this !
Dear my lady, awake !

Awake ! for a music is flooding the air,
And melting along the deep.

When nature is all awake and so fair,
O, why should my lady sleep?
A passionate sigh begins to start
From the depth of each thicket and brake—
A sigh that finds echo within my heart—
O, sweet my lady, awake !

Awake ! and come where the zephyr moves
In ripples across the grass :
Awake ! and come to the lake that loves
To mirror your form as you pass ;
And come, O come, to the heart that pines
And languishes for your sake ;
And bright eyes shall blind each dew-drop that shines—
Dear my lady, awake !



'COR UNUM, VIA UNA.'

Man's heart doth ever tend towards the right :
We cannot wander from the Perfect Way,
But inward voices whisper in their might,
—Thy feet are turned astray !

No heart but sometimes feels remorseful pangs,
When passion holds its empire, fierce and wild,
Nor bends in sorrow as a mother hangs
Above her wayward child.

No eye so stolid but a tear will steal
 Out of its chambers with resistless force ;
 No heart so stony that it will not feel
 The meltings of remorse !

And all men yet, however fallen and base,
 Possess some traits of true nobility ;
 The heart still whispers from its secret place,
 All they were meant to be !

And knowing this, it is my hope that all
 Shall yet fulfil the human heart's desire,
 And in some region, free from earthly thrall,
 May labour and aspire.

One God to wipe away all guilt and tears !
 One Hope to nerve the mind and soothe the breast !
 One Heart to guide through all the deathless years !
 One Way that leads to rest !



MARCH 10TH, 1863.

Rise, Morning, from thine orient bed,
 By spring-time breezes softly fanned ;
 Come, happy daybreak, gently led
 By hope and joy, across the land.

March 10th, 1863.

63

Let sunshine bathe thy beauteous wing,
Thy form be decked with fairest flowers ;
And let thine incense-breathings bring
A whisper of the summer hours.

Hush all thy hoarse winds into calm ;
No shadow o'er thy features start ;
But let thy beauty break like balm
Of joy upon the nation's heart.

Linger in sweetness everywhere,
But drop thy choicest influence down
Where Denmark's daughter, young and fair,
Weds with the heir of England's crown ;

And two young hearts with hope elate
Upon life's sunny threshold stand,
About to pass the golden gate
Into the future, hand in hand.

A year has scarcely passed away
Since all the land was wrapt in gloom,
And grief's long shadow brooding lay
In blackness over Albert's tomb.

Then all the splendour of the throne
Was hidden by a cloud of woe,
And each heart felt that grief its own
Which bent the Monarch's head so low.

But now a ray of promise comes
 Resplendent o'er the Northern Sea,
To scatter sorrow's lurking glooms,
 And bid the darkness cease to be ;

And England looks with lively hope
 To see the shadows flit away,
O Morn, when thy rich gates shall ope,
 And dawn shall widen into day.

O father of our future King,
 Whose voice on earth is silent now ;
Whose late-known virtues serve to fling
 Intenser glory round thy brow ;

Stoop from thy high and radiant place,
 And breathe upon our Prince to-day
That love and hope and earnestness
 Which charmed and graced thine own brief stay :

That he to royalty may give
 A glory, earthly gloss above ;
That he may live as thou didst live ;
 That he may love as thou didst love !

Then, happy Morn, shine sweetly down !
 Pour forth thy wealth of golden rays !
And in a flood of sunshine drown
 The memory of the winter days !

March 10th, 1863.

65

And whilst the young, fond, loving pair
Pronounce the sacred bridal troth,
With glad acclaim we'll fill the air
And pray for blessings on them both;

That joy may on their path be found,
Whilst duty leads them in the way,
And that their life, by warm love crowned,
May prove one long, long wedding day!



THE LEAF OF WOODRUFF.

I found a leaf of woodruff in a book,
Gone was its scent, and lost its pristine glory;
Each slender bladelet wore a dingy look,
And all was blanched and hoary.

And yet this withered leaf a spell possessed,
Which worked upon me in mysterious measure,
And sent old memories thronging through my breast
Of mingled pain and pleasure.

Of childhood's days that knew no thought of care;
Of hours that passed on wings of rainbow fleetness;
Of odours floating on the wanton air
Sad from their very sweetness;

Of woods that wore a garb of summer green ;
Of knee-deep ferns, and nooks of shady stillness ;
Of streams that glimmered in the full moon's sheen
And mirrored back its fulness ;

Of lazy baskings on the lone hill-side
In the fierce glow of July's sultry weather ;
Of twilight wanderings where the enamoured tide
Crept up to kiss the heather ;

Of voices still beneath the churchyard sod ;
Bright eyes that glistened from behind long lashes ;
Warm beauty early given back to God ;
Red lips that now are ashes !

And many other memories, gay and grave,
The woodruff brought in life-like guise before me ;
Until I marvelled how a leaf could have
Such magic influence o'er me.

Ah, so it is ! all that hath ever been
Experienced by the spirit is immortal ;
Each hope and joy and grief is hid within
The memory's sacred portal.

And yet the soft glow of a moonlight hour,
A strain of haunting music sweet and olden,
A dream, a bird, a bee, a leaf, a flower,
A sunset rich and golden,

Can fling that portal open ; and beyond
Appears the record of each earlier feeling ;—
All hopes, all joys, all fears, all musings fond,
In infinite revealing.

Till all the present passes from the sight—
Its cares and woes that make us weary-hearted,
And leaves us basking in the holy light
Of golden days departed.



MINE.

O let me love thee for my life is lonely,
And fain my heart would hang its faith on thine ;
My soul would thrill with wildest joy, if only
It knew and felt thee mine.

Mine, only mine, to prize with warm devotion,
And cherish with a lover's ceaseless care ;
To smooth this rough world's path of rude commotion
And make it bright and fair.

Mine, only mine, in joy as well as sorrow,
Thy pure heart free from every taint of guile,
To drink fresh hope from those sweet eyes, and borrow
New courage from thy smile.

Mine, only mine, for ever and for ever,
Warm hand in hand, and faithful heart to heart,
In bonds that time is all too weak to sever,
And death must fail to part !

Mine 'midst the clanging din, the wildering rattle,
The glory of this stern world's strife begun ;
Mine in the hazy tumult of the battle ;
Mine when the victory's won !

Mine when this reeling earth is racked and quivering
And worlds are tottering on the verge of night !
Mine when the host of stars, pallid and shivering,
Refuse to yield their light !

Mine through eternity's unnumbered ages,
In the hereafter world of light and bliss,
Where never sorrow reigns, nor tempest rages,
Nor hearts ache, as in this !

Then let me love thee, for my heart is straining
To fly away and rest itself on thine ;
And, passion-tossed, my spirit is complaining,—
O let thy love be mine !

No heart was made for loneliness or sadness ;
Some other beats with true responsive thrill ;
And love, though given all vainly and in madness,
Is sweet and holy still.

It is my faith that those who purely cherish
True love, no matter whether crowned or crossed,
Unite in that bright realm where grief must perish,
But nothing pure is lost.

Then, if not here, perhaps in those high regions,
In the great shadow of the Eternal Throne,
I'll single thee from all the shining legions
And claim thee as mine own !

When those brown tresses wave in richer splendour,
Far from the wasting breath of earthly years ;
And those large eyes so lustrous and so tender,
Shall never dim with tears.

Behold, a glory purples all the meadows !
Thoughts rise as pure as childhood's happy dreams !
And through the twilight's gray far-folded shadows
Heaven's starry radiance gleams.



THE CLOUD.

I saw a little lonely cloud
Hung on the western verge of heaven ;
In twilight's earliest beams it glowed,
And mirrored back the blush of even
No other cloud was in the sky,
It lay in lonely witchery.

The Cloud.

The twilight deepened : one by one
The pale stars trembled through the haze ;
The golden light of eve was gone,
And gone the sunset's lingering blaze ;
Yet still that little cloudlet lay
In mellow beauty, softly gay.

A silence brooded far and nigh,
A stillness burdened all the air,
And the wide welkin stretched on high
In dusky azure everywhere,—
Save that one spot, where, earthward bowed,
Stooped down the solitary cloud !

It looked so lovely as it lay
Becalmed upon the waveless blue!
Its border melting, faintly gray,
Into the sky's diviner hue;
And yet, I know not how nor why,
It brought the teardrop to my eye!

And ever when I think upon
That cloud on the horizon's rim,
Brooding in beauty, rich and lone—
My heart is sad, my eyes grow dim !
And I could long to fly away
To where the little cloudlet lay !

'Tis ever thus! the spirit pants
For all things peaceful, fair and sweet ;
For joys that leave no aching wants ;
For bliss that is not incomplete !
But all these yearnings vague and fond
Must anchor in the great Beyond !



GLENCOE.

Mountain-top o'er mountain rising,
Crag o'er crag, and steep o'er steep ;
Rugged scenes, the heart surprising
With an awe profound and deep ;
Mountain streamlets gliding onward
With a swift unceasing flow—
Rushing, pouring, hurrying downward
To the rivulet below,
Which in mellow music surges
All its rocky channels through :
And along the mountain gorges
Frequent peeps of heavenly blue.
All around the waving heather,
And the rocks so stern and brown ;
Somewhere from the far-off ether
Dulcet lark-notes dropping down :
On yon crag a raven perching ;
And a mist-cloud, wave on wave,

Glencoe.

Brooding like some ghostly arching
O'er the mouth of Ossian's cave.
And I sit and watch the gushing
Of the little rivulet,
With its crystal waters rushing
On in ceaseless foam and fret ;
Beetling crags o'erhanging lonely
Caverns wrapt in thunder-gloom,
Where the mountain-eagle only
In their shadow finds a home ;
Rocks upraised like stately columns ;
Passes where the wild wind plays ;—
I can read them all like volumes
Filled with tales of vanished days.—

'Tis a morning in September,
And a breeze steals down the hill,
Sending all at once a chill
Through the frame, and I remember
I am sitting in Glencoe—
With its scenery enchanting,
With its crags and streamlets haunting—
And my fancy wanders back
To that morning long ago,
When, across the frozen snow,
Echoed o'er the mountains black
Warriors' curses uttered plainly,
Women's voices pleading vainly,

Yells and shouts and frantic crying,
Clanging shocks of angry steel,
And, dealt above the dead and dying,
Blows which strong arms only deal !
I can hear the deadly mutter
From between the clenched teeth,
And upon the snow-clad heath,
Up those hills which darkness drape,
I can see the ghostly flutter
Of woman's clothing in the wind,
Striving vainly to escape
From the home she leaves behind,
Where so calmly she lay sleeping
Only one short hour ago,
And never dreamed that death was keeping
Watch o'er misery-doomed Glencoe !
I behold the figures looming
Strangely through the dusky morning,
And I hear the hollow booming
Of the firelocks of the Campbells,
Striving other sounds to drown,
As, without a word of warning,
Brave McIon is struck down
Like a bullock at the shambles !
Unworthy of the land of Bruce !
Traitor Campbells ! who could lose
In the memory of a feud,
All that chivalrous respect

Which your sires were wont to show
 To an unarmed, trusting foe :
 On women's heads your vengeance wreaked,
 In childhood's blood your hands imbued,
 And—shamed by those of savage life—
 Making the sacred name of *guest*
 A passport to a kinsman's breast
 In which to plunge the assassin's knife !

Slumb'rous peace and awful silence
 Brood above this valley now,
 As if never sounds of violence
 Thrilled its echoing gorges through ;
 Gone the clang of warfare glorious !
 Hushed the pibroch in the glen !
 Perished all the wild uproarious
 Noise and tramp of armèd men !
 Desolation without measure !
 No sweet homestead here and there ;
 No fair cottage with its azure
 Smoke-wreath rising through the air !
 No home sounds to follow after
 Wild goat's bleat, or eaglet's wail—
 Childhood's voice or girlish laughter ,
 Echoing through the quiet vale !
 In one spot the ruins only
 Of the homes of murdered men,

Make the loneliness more lonely,
Add a weirdness to the glen :
And vague thoughts of awful mystery
Overwhelm me like a blast,
Blowing from the page of History
All the horrors of the Past—
As I view the phantoms flitting
From their graves of long ago,
And remember I am sitting
In the valley of Glencoe.

*THE SEASONS.*

O Morn ! by softest breezes fanned,
Pour down thy sunlight in a flood !
The spring is laughing o'er the land,
And dancing in my blood !
I clasp a warm hand, soft and fair,
A strange wild joy my bosom swells ;
And floats upon the happy air
The chime of marriage bells.

The summer sky in beauty glows ;
The summer breezes murmur light ;
And, underneath the blossoming rose,
The dews are glistening bright.

And Summer, fair in every part,
A thing of joy to me has grown,—
I feel the love-warmth of a heart
That beats against mine own !

The leaves are falling sere and dead,
Hushed is the summer's gladsome hum ;
The summer flowers their bloom have shed,
And Autumn-time has come.
The light has passed from sea and shore,
These days are not the days of old ;
I hold the hand I held of yore,
But ah ! its clasp is cold !

O wind of Winter, rave and blow !
Sweep wildly o'er each crested wave !
Howl up the slopes across the snow,
But pause upon her grave !
Wail sadly there : then onward start
With louder gust and wilder moan !—
The joy hath perished from my heart,
And I go forth alone !



PEACE, BE STILL.

When the clouds loom dark and eerie,
And the heavens are fraught with ill,
Flesh is weak and heart is weary—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

When the mighty storm is surging,
Stars are hid and winds are shrill,
Satan striving, passion urging—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

When the waves of Doubt and Terror
Toss me at their own wild will ;
Light seems dark, and truth seems error—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

When affliction's storms are howling,
And its voice my soul doth thrill ;
Earth is black, and heaven is scowling—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

When the shadows round me thicken,
Bitter tears mine eyelids fill,
Spirit faints and senses sicken—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

Peace, be Still.

When the tide of death's cold river
Shocks me with its icy chill,
Body quakes and billows quiver—
Saviour whisper, 'Peace, be still.'

*LIFE AND DEATH.*

Young Life came carolling over the earth ;
Careless and happy and gay was he :—
Courting the sunshine in radiant mirth,
Chasing the shadows in rosy glee :
Flowery and green was the path that he trode ;
Fair sky above him and bright world beneath ;
When at a turn of the winding road,
Muffled and dark stood the form of Death !

Life grew cold in the dreary shade ;
Faded his laughter and ceased his song ;
Over the heavens and across the glade
Brooding shadows fell, black and long !
Motionless—lost in a maze of fear—
Life stood and gazed on the ghastly Thing,
Then with a wild cry, lone and drear,
Sank on the cold earth shuddering.

Death stooped kindly and stilled his moans—
Bore him away from the baleful spot,
Whilst he murmured in tender tones,
‘ Child of the frail world, fear me not !
Mourn not this earth with its languishing bloom ;
Grieve not to go from its darkness and strife ;
Beauty is brighter beyond the tomb !
And death alone leads to perfect life ! ’



THE DEAD YEAR, 1863.

Another wave spent on the shore of Time ;
One more pulse of Eternity's great heart ;
Another echo of that bell whose chime
Tolls deeply, ‘ Dust thou art ! ’

Another year gone down into the dark,
Its muffled footsteps silent in their tread,
Yet leaving prints by which our eyes may mark
Its course toward the dead.

Gone with its joys and woes, delights and fears,
Its radiant promises and blasted hopes ;
Its beauteous dewdrops changed to burning tears,
Its tears to pearly drops.

Gone with its storms, its sunshine and its showers,
Its tearful dawns and its twilight haze ;
Its woodland melodies, its bees and flowers,
That tranced the summer days.

Gone with the balmy kisses of its spring ;
Gone with the blood-flush of its faded eves ;
Gone with its swallow-flight on glimmering wing :
Gone with its fallen leaves.

Gone, ere the echo of its blustering breath
Has ceased to sweep across th' affrighted waves ;
Gone, when long-looked-for eyes are glazed in death,
Down in their ocean graves.

Gone, while as yet the shouts of strife ascend,
And war's red fury flames in brethren's eyes—
When with the pure air yells of passion blend,
And carnage flouts the skies.

Dead year ! where is the promise of thy birth?—
Those splendid streaks which at thy dawn were seen ?
Have Peace and Truth advanced ? and is the earth
Better that thou hast been ?

Such gloom is round us that a gleam of light
Can scarcely through the closed-piled shadows stray.—
And yet I know the darkest hour of night
Is just before the day !

Then sleep, dead year, among thy kindred dust,—
 Though death and tears have marked thy darkened
 reign,
Though war's wild clamours have been thine—we trust
 Thou hast not lived in vain.

And sweep, O Time, along thy silent way,
 Till the last shadow of the Night be gone,
And we behold on the horizon gray
 The laughing light of Dawn !



A NATION'S NEW YEAR'S GIFT.

(January 8, 1864.)

The New Year landed on Albion's shore,
 And stood where her cliffs rise, shelf o'er shelf ;
He greeted the isle with his sunniest smile,
 And thus he kept communing with himself :—
' O what shall I give for a New Year's gift
 To these hardy islanders, brave and free,—
My good will to prove—to merit their love—
 And make them with gladness remember me ?

' I view with sorrow their vacant works ;
 I miss the clack of their empty mills ;
I see their poor at the workhouse door,
 And I bless the pity that succours and fills !

And my heart bleeds when I turn to gaze
On the long black shadow that shrouds the Throne,
Since the nation's pride in his manhood died
And left the Monarch to mourn alone !

'What can I give that will scatter the gloom,
And make the glowings of gladness start !
That will waken a gleam in eyes that stream,
And chase the woe from the mourner's heart ?
I have it ! I have it ! I'll bring, I'll bring,
A son and heir to the island's crown !
And I know, O I know, every heart will glow
With a dear delight which no grief can drown !'

And the Nation takes her new-born Hope,
And cradles it in her warm caress—
While her welcomes rise to the echoing skies
In a pæan of thrilful tenderness !
O babe of the brilliant destinies !
Though thy path through life may all-glorious prove,
Though the glitter and shine of all wealth will be thine—
Thy greatest wealth is the Nation's love !



APRIL.

Gusty March is dead and gone !
April heard his parting sighs,
Smiling through her tearful eyes
At the sweet days coming on.

Nature caught the lustre meek
From her mild eye twinkling blue ;
Caught and kept the pearly dew
Trickling from her tender cheek.

Young leaves laughed to see her come ;
Drowsy streams began to dance ;
Brooks looked up with grateful glance ;
Bees gave forth a happy hum.

Flowers flocked to greet their Queen ;—
Daisies peeped out pure and sweet,
All to kiss her dainty feet
As she tripped across the green.

Swallows twittered 'neath the eaves ;
Sweet buds shed their odorous charms ;
Trees stretched forth their naked arms
Praying to be clad with leaves.

Thus—all earth renewed the while—
Happy April passes by ;
April of the dewy eye !
April of the sunny smile !

Passes on her balmy way—
With large love and tender care,
Weaving garlands for the hair
Of her younger sister May !



SHAKESPEARE.

(April 23, 1864.)

A glittering host of starry-lustred names
Shine in our England's annals : men who wrought
To give us golden truths in fairy frames,
Or weave the rich-hued thought.

Great-hearted ones, who changed life's common things
To forms of luminous beauty, and gave forth
Their dream-born splendours on bedazzling wings
To charm the wondering earth :

Investing fleshless phantoms of the brain
With shapes of radiant immortality ;
Or threading tender words in some sweet strain
To melt men's hearts for aye.

But as the stars, which deep-eyed lustre throw
When night dreams in the welkin weird and dun,
Grow dim and fade before the full-orbed glow,
Of the uprising sun :—

So at a thought of Shakespeare all the throng
Of poet-names that makes our records bright
Are blotted from the firmament of song
By his eclipsing light.

He shines alone in self-created fame—
No brighter for the burnish we would bring—
Drawing our reverence by the threefold claim
Of prophet, priest, and king.

True prophet he ! with calm eyes looking forth
Into the future, and with ears that heard
An echo of the worship of the earth
In farthest ages stirred !

High priest in Nature's temple ! where the walls
Are built of leafy branches, and the hush
Of prayer is broken by the clear low calls
Of linnets, lark, and thrush !

Great king ! whose power still sways the minds of men,
Casting o'er all the magic of his might ;
Holding the Heaven-dowered sceptre of the pen,
And ruling by its right.

He wrote for every station, age, and mood ;
The images and thoughts he lived to weave
Impregnate all our intercourse, and brood
In every air we breathe.

The offsprings of his fancy are our friends ;
We clasp their hands at corners of the street ;
And some vague motion of his spirit blends
With all things that we meet.

'Mong his creations evermore we move.
We hear Cordelia murmuring sweet and low,
Philosophize with Hamlet, and make love
With rash-brained Romeo.

In the weird twilight of the woodland glade
We see his fairies dancing in a ring ;
And where the lone heath lies in baleful shade
We hear his witches sing.

We muse with Jacques among the forest nooks,
While Touchstone's bells come tinkling on the wind ;
We linger by the boskage and the brooks
With bright-eyed Rosalind,

We watch rough battle-harnessed warriors rouse,
And blow their trumpets in dim wintry dawns ;
We hear Venetian lovers breathe their vows
On happy moon-lit lawns.

We listen to Prospero's muttered charms,
Or watch Miranda tripping o'er the green ;
We see the Roman dying in the arms
Of Egypt's swarthy queen.

We hear the hoary Cardinal lament
His own ambition and his king's disdain ;
We see demented Lear with raiment rent,
And head bared to the rain.

Titania dances lightly through our dreams ;
Puck darts a greeting from arch-gleaming eye ;
And Ariel loads the breezes with rich streams
Of rapturous melody.

We weep for gentle Desdemona's fate :
We mourn the fatal anguish of belief
That burdened dark Othello with the weight
Of an o'erwhelming grief.

We shudder as we watch the murderous Thane
Creep stealthily to Duncan's chamber door,
Or hear his wife bewail the drops that stain
Her hand for evermore.

From out some gabled hostel, all the night
Pour shouts of drunken mirth, and just before
The cold dawn strikes the world with sudden light
Falstaff reels from the door.

On hoofs of clattering fury dashes past
The fierce-eyed Hotspur panoplied for war,
While clash of arms and many a bugle blast
Ring faintly from afar.

And in all times and places, to our sight
Fair forms and old familiar faces rise—
The smile of tenderest friendship, and the light
Of laughter-brimming eyes.

The name of Shakespeare is a household word ;
It passes from our lips with liquid flow,
And causes at our hearts where'er 'tis heard
A freshness and a glow !

And here, there, everywhere—before, behind,
Around us and about us evermore—
His spirit broods and hovers, and we find
Beauty unfound before !

Great master of all moods that sway the mind !
Who poured forth truths all fresh and glittering !
Whose God-like love and tenderness could find
Some ' good in everything !'

We cannot speak his praises as we ought ;
Our eyes are dazzled by excess of light :
And on our faltering tongues each feeble thought
Is frozen by his might !

We can but labour fondly to extend
His influence o'er every land and clime,
Till with our praises distant voices blend
Far-heard throughout all time ;

And from this little isle, that boasts his birth,
That nursed his genius, and that holds his grave,
Freedom and peace and love across the earth
Roll like a rolling wave,

That, stretching on and upward, in its spread
O'erwhelms all evil things before it driven,
Its foot based on the wide world, and its head
High reaching unto heaven !



A HAUNT OF DREAMLAND.

Through the dim spheres of slumber I was borne
Upon the wingèd chariot of a vision,
To a fair valley, rich as summer morn,
With sounds and scents elysian.

Above it dreamed the everlasting blue ;
Its bosom glowed with verdure, green and vernal ;
And in the trancèd life of tint and hue
The summer lurked eternal.

No rude sounds came its slumb'rous peace to mar,
No hint of labour's loud and stern commotion ;
Only, as in a dream, was heard afar
The low lash of the ocean :

And air was heavy with the hum of bees ;
The crisp stream clattered o'er its polished pebbles ;
And linnets, lost among thick-foliaged trees,
Trilled forth their lusty trebles.

Far in the west the ruddy sunset glowed,
But never left the blood-red verge of heaven ;
And faint but mellow was the blush that flowed
Through the dim bowers of even.

O what a place, I thought, to build a home,
In this still nook close by the narrow river,
Beneath the eternal sunset, where can come
No sound of strife for ever !

Here weary strugglers sick of earth's alarms
Will wend, new stores of rest and strength to borrow,
And in the haven of its sheltering arms
Sad hearts forget their sorrow !

Then did I seek the dwellers in the place,
And found them gliding in bedazzling brightness,—
Fair shining forms of most celestial grace,
And most ethereal lightness.

But when I longed to win their greeting warm,
They seemed to fade behind a hazy curtain,
And, through the voiceless light, each volant form
Loomed shadowy and uncertain!

In vain I called with loud and piteous moan ;
Stately and silent through the air they floated ;
And in the valley I was left alone,
Unwelcomed and unnoted.

Then, bowed down by this loneliness, I fell,
And cried, 'O give me back earth's lowlier meadows!
Better the noisy world, than here to dwell
Among a host of shadows !

' This solitude oppresses me too much—
The weary, weary hours will lag fear-laden—
No voice of friend, no thrilling at the touch
Of some white-handed maiden.

' No old-world sounds will come mine ears to bless,
Save ocean's lash, the stream's lay, and the twitter
Of birds among the trees, until excess
Of sweet is changed to bitter.

' Give me again the great world's healthful strife,
Its surging myriads and its mighty rattle ;
And let me fight the earnest fight of life,
Or fall in thick of battle!

‘ For who would in this valley fade and droop—
 Bright as it is with hues of heavenly beauty—
 Who could wield falchion in the unflinching troop
 Of ever-conquering Duty!

‘ O lordliest life,—though deafened with the din,
 Though ofttimes faltering feebly in the distance—
 To hold with tyranny and wrong and sin
 A high and brave resistance!’

With that the cold dawn, glimmering clear and sweet,
 Came slowly through its pearly portals breaking :
 And surging life and labour thronged to greet
 On all sides my awaking.

And I rejoiced that in all humble works
 There dwells divinity beyond our dreaming ;
 And that an everlasting beauty lurks
 In deeds of lowliest seeming!



BABY DIED TO-DAY.

Lay the little limbs out straight ;
 Gently tend the sacred clay ;
 Sorrow-shaded is our fate—
 Baby died to-day!

Fold the hands across the breast,
So, as when he knelt to pray ;
Leave him to his dreamless rest—
Baby died to-day.

Voice, whose prattling infant-lore
Was the music of our way,
Now is hushed for evermore—
Baby died to-day.

Sweet blue eyes, whose sunny gleams
Made our waking moments gay,
Now can shine but in our dreams—
Baby died to-day !

Still a smile is on his face,
But it lacks the joyous play
Of the one we used to trace—
Baby died to-day.

Give his lips your latest kiss ;
Dry your eyes and come away ;
In a happier world than this
Baby lives to-day !



* *OUR ANGEL-KINDRED.*

Far in the glories of a fadeless day,
 Amid excess of beauty, and the swell
 Of rich and everlasting melody,
 Our angel-kindred dwell,

No care can reach them in their radiant home ;
 No night can trail its terror o'er their skies ;
 No sin can cast around its baleful gloom ;
 No tears can dim their eyes,

Immortal pleasures crowd the golden hours :
 Undreamed of beauty basks on every hand ;
 And odorous breathings from the lips of flowers
 Fill all the peaceful land.

And bright forms mingling in the holy mirth,
 Pure white-robed dwellers on the blissful shore,
 Our kindred are,—the loved and lost of earth—
 The happy ' gone before !'

Among them cherub shapes of childhood glide ;
 Maidens are there with waving locks of gold ;
 And manhood in its glory and its pride
 And age no longer old !

And he, the last that left us, whose young life—
By laughing, promise-laden breezes driven—
Disdained to meet the rude world's noisy strife
And sought the calm of Heaven.

I dream I see him in his radiant rest,
Among his angel-kindred up on high,
And honoured as befits the latest guest
They welcome to the sky.

Brethren on ministering missions move,
Or guide him where'er Heaven's rich marvels rise,
And sisters look unutterable love
Into his answering eyes.

Ah, blessed spirits in their balmy ease !
No cross of earth can ever chafe them now !
For them no more the trembling hands and knees,
Nor doubt-beclouded brow !

Ours is the darkness; theirs the boundless day;
They drink true life; we draw the laboured breath;
They have eternal sunshine on their way;
We have the gloom of death.

Yet, nearing the cold river, I rejoice
That when I pass its darkness and its roar,
All these will welcome me with heart and voice
Upon the further shore.

THE FALL OF FOYERS.

I stood one morning in summer,
On the rude peak opposite
Where over the rocky Foyers came down
The cataract foaming white.

No sigh in the air above me ;
No song in the woods around ;
A deathlike silence, broken alone
By the hollow and deep-mouthed sound

Of water for ever falling,
And boiling and seething below ;
Now lashing the crags in its furious ire,
Now laving them in its flow.

No change in its deep diapason—
No pause in its passionate dole—
Plaintive and awful, it found and woke
An echo within my soul !

Grand in its eloquent beauty—
Great in its infinite might—
It left its rocky home for my heart,
Overflowing it quite !

Its splendour flooded my spirit !
And, though hundreds of miles away,
As plain as I saw it that summer morn,
I can behold it to-day :

Can lie in the night time and listen
To the splash and the dash of the tide,
And can see the boiling cauldron smoke
Down the cavern yawning wide !

For all that we witness of beauty,
All grandeur melting us most,
Passes into eternal possession,
And can nevermore be lost !



IN THE AUTUMN.

Where are the flowers that blossomed
So fair in the bright days of spring ?
Where are the swallows that skimmed o'er the land
So gaily on glimmering wing ?

Where are the green leaves that whispered
Such marvellous melody ?
And the wandering zephyrs that sighed forth their soul
In odorous kisses to me ?

Where is the friend of my bosom ?
Why cometh he not to my cries ?
So weary am I for the clasp of his hand !
So faint for the light of his eyes !

Ah ! once more the blossoming roses
Their delicate bloom will unfold ;
The swallows will skim o'er the sunshiny land
On their glimmering wings as of old :

The trees will stretch upward to heaven
Their bountiful branches of green ;
And the slumbering zephyrs will waken and sigh
Their mystical music between :

And the passionate kiss of the summer
Will thrill to the heart as of yore :
But the friend that walked with me in days that are gone
Can never come back to me more !

*MIDNIGHT.*

All hail! thou dark-browed and majestic Queen !
I watch thy coming with awe-bated breath ;
Thy beauty is a terror! and thy mien
Is as the mien of death !

And yet I love thee, Midnight, with such love
As steeps my spirit in a dread delight !
A trembling pleasure thrills me as you move,
Dark-splendid in my sight !

I worship, whilst I wonder at the glow
Which shines within thy deep and awful eyes ;
I joy to see thy star-gemmed tresses flow
Across the dusky skies !

I fain would clasp thee to my yearning breast,
Yet fear thy bosom's cold and clammy touch ;
With one wild kiss I'd ease my heart's unrest,
But dread thy lips too much !

A vague strange passion stirs my inmost soul—
My whole frame tingles when I feel thee near,
And o'er my heart's mysterious surgings roll
Tremors of joy and fear !

I marvel, is such beauty, lone and rich,
Devoid of being and the spirit's gleam?
Or knows it not some truer life, of which
Our gross minds may not dream?

But never falls the answer ; and perforce
I stand and watch and wonder from afar,
To see thee sweep on thy majestic course
To meet the morning star !

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

(1864.)

We weep our farewell to the parting year,
Who totters to his grave so worn and hoary;
'Tis meet that we should drop a tribute tear
O'er all his vanished glory.

We'll bid a kind adieu, however brief,
And when he leaves us, sad and weary-hearted,
We'll speak of him in tones of tremulous grief,
As of a friend departed.

What though his garments have been stained with blood,
And his fast-glazing eyes with wrath been lighted;
Though virtue has been trampled on, and good
Been oftentimes blurred and blighted!

What though red Ruin, in the track of War,
Has breathed its fiery breath o'er fertile regions,
While all the world stood wondering from afar,
And watched the battling legions!

What though the hope of years is unfulfilled;
Though o'er us angel-joys have ceased to hover;
And many a brave high-beating heart is stilled,
Its vain life-struggle over!—

We know the Guide of systems and of suns
In all of this world's government engages,
And trust that an all-perfect purpose runs
Through all the wildering ages.

Ah, could our blinded stubborn natures learn
To yield submissively to faith's possessing ;
In present seeming ills we might discern
The germs of future blessing ;

Might trace through all the acts that build the years
The working of some heaven-appointed duty :
Might find in all our sorrows, cares, and fears
A fitness and a beauty :

And, gazing onward but a little way,
Might see an earth all glorious, fair, and vernal—
Love holding o'er each heart its magic sway,
And Peace enthroned eternal :

No cloud of sorrow brooding anywhere ;
No dreaded ill in the dark future folden ;
No sigh save that of the warm summer air
Wafted on pinions golden !

Then pass away, and rest in peace, Old Year—
And while a stranger voice takes up thy story,
We needs must drop the tribute of a tear
O'er all thy gloom and glory.

WHEN YOU ARE FAR AWAY LOVE.

I stand upon the sea-washed strand
And watch the closing day, love,
Where oft we loitered hand in hand
Before you went away, love.

The waters ripple at my feet,
They dart up creek and bay, love,
And dimly dimple cold and sweet,
But you are far away, love.

The home-bound boats, with rounded sails,
Dance o'er the dancing spray, love,
The merry zephyr flouts and fails,
But you are far away, love.

The crescent moon creeps up the east
And wades in vapoury gray, love,
The wild bird's vesper hymn has ceased,
And you are far away, love.

I miss the warm light of your eye,
Your low voice, soft and gay, love,
And therefore I must heave a sigh
That you are far away, love.

And yet I know where'er thou art
Thy thoughts will hither stray, love,
So there is music in my heart
Though thou *art* far away, love.



THE BIRDIES.

A wee bird, weary o' her hame,
Flew far awa' into the west,
An' whaur she thocht nae birdies came,
She built hersel' a lanely nest.

A neibor birdie, cauld an' weet,
Ae day socht shelter i' the tree,
An' near the nestie, low an' sweet,
He sang his luv' fu' tenderly.

She listened wi' a flutterin' breast ;
An' losin' a' her lanely pride,
She bad' him 'till her cosy nest,
An' creepit closely to his side !

An' aye sinsyne, in weal or woe,
The birdies hae been ne'er apart ;
By day they heavenwards singin' go,
By nicht they nestle heart to heart.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

(Assassinated April 14, 1865.)

The world stands tearfully and holds its breath,
Wrapt in a speechless trance of grief and wonder,
To hear the story of a great man's death
In mutterings of thunder.

The sad news hushes shouts of party strife ;
No cold disparagement one murmur raises ;
And those who were his bitterest foes in life
Are first to speak his praises.

An honest, fearless, simple-minded man,
Of purpose firm and earnest high endeavour,
Whose name shall live till history's latest span,
A talisman for ever.

The foremost spirit in his native land,
Framing unflinchingly his great life story ;
Torn from his toil by a base dastard's hand
In his mid-hour of glory,

Labouring to strike the shackles from the slave,
And build a work whose fame shall be eternal :—
Freedom shall lay her chaplet on his grave,
And keep it green and vernal.

We think of him and cannot feel resigned—
Lost to his vast designs when most they need him,
And marvel where his countrymen will find
One worthy to succeed him.



THY LOVE.

Thy love shall tune this harsh world's noise,
And make its tangled wastes rejoice ;
Shall through the darkness cast its ray
To glorify my lonesome way.

Thy love shall elevate my mind
And make me gentler with my kind ;
Shall rule the motions of my blood,
And keep me pure and true and good.

Thy love shall plume my spirit's wings
To soar on high to nobler things ;
Shall be my buckler in the strife,
And nerve me for the shocks of life.

Thy love shall be my firmest faith—
Shall even gild the gloom of death,
And through the future worlds 'twill be
The sweetness of eternity !

ON THE BRIDGE.

I stood upon a little rustic bridge
That o'er a narrow bickering brooklet lay,
And watched the sun go down behind a ridge
Of hillocks far away.

A rosy lustre lived along the skies,
And isled rich streaks of orange-gloried hue ;
While fleecy cloudlets fringed with radiant dyes
Scudded across the blue.

Eastward a pale moon clomb the azure steep ;
A single star looked forth with quivering glow,
And the brook sent its music, lone and deep,
Murmurously from below.

The twilight glory melted through my frame ;
The moon held o'er my blood its mystic sway ;
The mellow murmur of the brooklet came
And charmed my heart away !

And ere the sunset faded from the tips
Of those far hills, some spirit of the eve
Breathed forth a song more sweet than mortal lips
Could frame, or heart conceive !

Still in my soul its low wild echoes live,
Its sweet weird measure makes me oft rejoice,
But ah! strive how I may, I cannot give
Its wond'rous music voice!



PALMERSTON.

Our gray-haired chieftain toiling in the van,
Who linked his country's present to its past;
The merry-hearted, marvellous old man
Is stricken down at last.

'Tis meet that we should mourn him whose firm hand,
Though blanched by eighty winters, still could hold
The helm of state, and guide his native land
'Mid dangers manifold.

His every thought was England's ; prompt to guard
The pride and glory of her pure renown ;
Quick to defend her honour ; wise to ward
All peril from her crown.

His hoary winter seemed to mimic spring
And bear the blossoms of the sunny hours ;
The freshness of the spirit served to fling
Its force o'er all his powers.

The cheery voice ; the hale and hearty form ;
 The friendly faith ; the judgment all elate ;
 The sharp retort ; the tact to quell the storm
 Of turbulent debate :

The courage and the constancy ; the truth
 And earnestness that underlay the crust
 Of outward levity ; the heart of youth ;
 The fervour and the trust :

The rounded life in which there did not lurk
 One wish that was not for his country's weal ;
 The vigorous frame that found a joy in work ;
 The never-tiring zeal :—

All these in him we grieve for held their part :
 Britannia mourns a great and worthy son,
 Since the death-angel stilled the gallant heart,
 And whispered his ' Well done.'



A WHISPER OF THE SPRING.

Shut out from Nature and each natural thing,
 Within the city's dusty purlieus buried,
 I heard to-day a whisper of the spring
 As through the streets I hurried.

A soft low zephyr that had lost its way
Came, rich with balmy odour from far meadows,
And breathed on dingy piles, that all the day
Stand frowning o'er their shadows.

All timidly and sweet it crept along:
A prisoned throstle felt the wafted wonder,
And shrilled a welcome, as if gushing song
Would tear its throat asunder.

And in a moment I was borne away
From the great Babel's mighty din and bustle,
To where through woodland glades the soft winds play
Making the young leaves rustle.

I saw the daisies gemming all the green ;
The hawthorn blossom peeping from the hedges ;
The lazy brooklet purling on between
Long lines of sleepy sedges.

The dew-drops glistened in the sun-glints fair ;
The blear-eyed cattle browsed in grassy hollows ;
The sheep-bells tinkled clear, and all the air
Was jubilant with swallows.

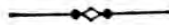
The honeysuckle with the sweet brier wreathed ;
The waving meadows lay in sunny stretches ;
The wooing air its wanton love-sigh breathed
Among the early vetches.

We toil, and rest, and toil—but do not know
 When work will cease and perfect rest begin ;
 We joy and grieve—have happiness and woe—
 We triumph and we sin !

We feel the varied seasons, cold or warm,
 And yield submissively to Nature's laws :
 Are tossed about of tempest—drenched by storm—
 But never know the cause !

But had we pure and perfect faith, to take
 All truth into our hearts confidingly,
 We might move mountains from their place, and break
 The barriers of the sea !

Man's will would prove itself omnipotent,
 Our grovelling souls would from the dust be freed,
 And Nature, at our feet all lowly bent,
 Proclaim us Gods indeed !



THE LOVERS.

AN IDYL OF THE WAR.

The Lady Constance loved Sir Lionel
 With all the warmth and fervour of first love :
 And the young Baron prized her favour more
 Than the hot life-blood pulsing in his heart.

She was the only daughter of an Earl ;
And he the orphan of her father's friend—
Brought by her father, at his orphanage,
To dwell with him within the vast old Hall
And be a playmate to his little girl.
And they had grown together, like two flowers
That, hidden in a leafy solitude,
Together drink the sunshine and the dews,
And watch each other's beauty glow and grow
Till Spring's fresh days give place to Summer's prime.
And ever as their golden youth flew by
The lady loved her lover more and more :
Her every thought, unknown unto herself,
Borrowed its hues from him, and all her life
Became a yearning to possess his heart
And flood his way with beauty and with joy !
But Lionel mourned his own unworthiness,
And mused, ' If I could only do some deed
Of lofty import or triumphant good,
To prove I prize her love beyond all else
Within this breathing universe of God's,
Then would I glory to heap on her head
The grateful tribute of the world's applause,
And throne her on the topmost peak of Fame.
Resolves will wither 'mong these tranquil ways ;
And in this lassitude my nerves will rust.
I must go forth and grapple with the world.'
But evermore upon his musings rose

The vision of a face so pale and meek,
And beautiful in its ethereal peace,
Softening his heart and making him like one
Who, journeying through a strange and unknown land,
Lights on two paths and knows not which to take.

So the days crowded past like happy dreams—
When suddenly a noise of war arose,
And England sent her armies o'er the sea
To fight her battles and uphold her rights.
Then Lionel felt an ardour and a zeal,
Drawn from a line of warlike ancestry,
Quickened and spring to life within his soul,
To go forth with the legions of his land
And meet her foes in the wild crash of war.

Sir Lionel nursed this yearning in his heart,
Till, on a summer evening, when the twain
Walked down the mile-long avenue of elms
Before the Hall, and came upon the sea
Basking in moon-lit peace. Then Lionel said,
'O Constance, I have something on my mind
Which I am sure will cause you grief and pain,
Yet must I speak and tell you what it is.'
She lifted unto him a startled glance
And gazed a moment in his troubled eyes ;
Then, like a bird that seeks its sheltering nest,
Crept to his bosom and this answer made :—

‘Say on, my Lionel, and be not afraid
To tell me all the trouble in your heart ;
Thy Constance fears not any threatened ill
So she can lay her head on this dear breast
And feel that thou art near her evermore.’
Then he :—‘ Ah ! therein lies the bitterness
Which makes the strife ’twixt love and duty sore.
Constance, my love has been a happy one,
And happy might I still be, could I stay
To roam with you about our childhood’s haunts—
The woods, the cliffs, the streamlets, and the hills—
To ride, walk, read with you, and with you tend
The sweet familiar flowers we love so well.
But now I feel I am a boy no more,
And other sterner things put forth their claims
Upon my manhood. I am not so young
That I should stand with women and with babes
And watch the busy workers pressing on
To win the fame that waits on noble deeds,
And never wish to join them in the race,
And struggle forward till I reach the goal !
Many as young as I, with tongue, pen, sword,
Toil in their country’s cause, and help along
The freedom and the welfare of the world.
No charms for me have hustings, senates, courts :
My father was a soldier ; and I feel
The spirit of my father moves me on
To join the glorious chivalry of war,

And wield a true sword in a holy cause.
I therefore purpose shortly to set forth
Across the seas to fight my country's foes,
And do what one man can to crush their power.'

Constance stood mute and listened to the end ;
But when she heard him speaking calmly thus,
And knew that they must part, and that perchance
She ne'er might see his face again, she felt
Like the poor traveller in the sandy waste
Who, with tired footsteps and with parchèd tongue,
Draws near the spot toward which he long hath toiled
And sees the mirage melting into nought.

But Lionel spake of hope and comfort to her,
And of a future crowned with happiness
When he should take her to his heart, and they
Should feel the pure high bliss of hopes fulfilled
And duties nobly done. Then courage came ;
And all the clamorous voices of her heart
Grew quiet as a linnet's callow brood
Fed by the parent bird. She stood erect,
And all the proud blood of her haughty race
Flushed her fair cheeks and mounted to her brow
Like sunrise creeping o'er the pallid dawn.

'Forgive the selfish petulance,' she said,
'Which for a while spread havoc 'mong my thoughts

And made my love so little worthy thine.
'Tis past : and now I do not bid thee stay
To waste the golden promise of thy youth
Longer among these scenes of tranquil rest.
Go forth and smite the haters of thy land.
Well know I that 'tis nobler far to heed
The calls of duty than the voice of love.
My love go with thee o'er the stormy seas,
And be thy buckler on the fields of war.
Though but a simple peaceful English maid,
Some touch of Spartan valour in my veins
Gives me the power to say unto thee—" Go."
God shield thee with His arm from ills and death,
And send thee safely home to me again :
But even should my darkest fears prove true,
And thy dear form should fail from off the earth,
Still proudly would I walk the waste of life
In the dimmed lustre of thy love removed,
Knowing that neither death nor absence can
Destroy that love within us, or prevent
Its full fruition in a purer world.'

She ceased ; and both stood silent, gazing o'er
The moon-lit calm of ocean's waveless plain,
Which, in its constant ripple on the shore,
Seemed ever framing low-voiced calls for each
To leave the peaceful dreamland of their youth
And learn to toil and suffer in the world.

Then homeward, silent still, but with full hearts
That spoke a low love-language each to each,
They passed beneath the whispering elms that threw
A shadowy tapestry about their path.

So ere the languid moon had thrice turned round
Full-faced to gaze upon the dreaming world,
Lionel departed for the seat of war.
Constance stood on the shore, full wistfully
Watching the white-fledged messenger of fate,
Freighted with all her hopes, sail far away,
'Till, on the horizon, like a sea-bird's wing
It gleamed, and dipt into the veiling gray.
Then as she turned she heard within her heart
A whisper like the echo of a bell
That tolls the passing of a soul from earth !
But bravely did she struggle with her grief :
And oftentimes she heard, or deemed she heard,
Low voices murmuring softly in her ear,
'Labour and strive to merit all his love !'
Thoughts of the toilsome life Lionel had chosen—
Its dangers and discomforts—made her own
Seem altogether purposeless and vain :
Whilst out of sorrow for his absence sprang
The wish to minister to others' woes.
No longer did she pass the listless hours
In dreamful lassitude or languid ease,
But all the tenor of her days was changed :

She clothed the wretched, gave the hungry food,
Relieved the suffering, comforted the lorn,
And entered, like a sunbeam, lowly doors
Gladdening all hearts, and bearing with her thence
A blessing richer than the gifts she brought.

Meanwhile the war was raging far away ;
And Lionel, with all ardour, plunged among
The fiery whirl and rush of combatants,
Fleshing right manfully his virgin sword.
Men marvelled at the might of his young arm
And hailed him as a leader yet to be.
Promotion waited him on every field,
And honours rained upon him thick and fast ;
'Till o'er the length and breadth of his own land
His name was bruited as the type and stamp
Of all things noble, chivalrous, and brave.
Constance heard proudly of his growing fame,
And, in sweet day-dreams, welcomed back again
Her hero-lover to the faithful heart
That yearned to be the pillow of his rest !

So two years passed : and Lionel had become
A bronzed and bearded chief : his face was seamed
With many a scar ; and furrowed was his brow
With lines which anxious thought had printed there.
Still from beneath stern brow and burnished helm
Looked as of old the frank and fearless eyes,—

That even a child's small hand had trustfully
Sought the hard palm so used to scatter death !

It chanced one night a fortress of the foe
Had to be stormed ; and Lionel was chosen
To lead a column up to the assault.
All silently the men moved through the gloom,
Approached the frowning walls, and planting there
The scaling ladders, with a sudden shout
Dashed o'er the summit like a whelming wave.
But as a wave that climbs a craggy shelf
Is broken and driven back, and leaves behind
Its scattered crust of foam upon the top—
So, soon o'er-mastered by the enemy,
The British troops were beaten from the hold,
Leaving the beetling ramparts strewn with dead.
Again they formed and rallied, with such force
As made the stubborn foe yield step by step ;
And Lionel, hovering about the van,
Cheered on his men with words of high emprise
And deeds of wondrous prowess, 'till at length
The enemy was hurled across the heights,
And o'er the turrets England's ensign flapped
With ghostly flutter through the murky night.
Then in that rapturous moment of success,
While yet the youthful leader held on high
His reeking blade, and shouted—' Victory,'

A bullet hissing through the folded smoke
Shattered his sword-arm, and he reeled and fell.

His comrades bore him sadly from the place :
The arm was lopped off by the shoulder-blade ;
And faint with suffering and loss of blood,
For weary days he lay like one o'er whom
Life and Death struggle for the masterdom.
Still he revived ; but with a shattered frame,
Wasted and weakened by his wound, and worn
By long exposure to the heat and cold,
And toiling in the trenches night and day ;
So that, ere duty he could well resume,
A fever that was raging in the camp
Seized on him and prostrated him anew.
Then often in his blank deliriousness
He raved of olden things—his boyhood's days—
The dog he hunted with—the horse he rode—
The grim Hall hid among the shadowing elms—
The brook that flashed its dimples in the sun—
The cliffs that looked bare-breasted o'er the main—
The restless heaving sea, that evermore
Whispered its drowsy secrets to the strand :
And with all these was mingled that one name
Whose gentle influence lulled the stormy soul
And beautified delirium's hideous dreams.
Oft too his spirit moved 'mid war's alarms ;

He yelled aloud his furious battle-cries,
Shrieked forth defiance, and his rolling eyes
Were full of the wild frenzy of the fight.

Three weeks the fever lasted : and at length—
When reason dawning in the wildered brain
Left the racked body like a stranded wreck
Cast on a dreary barren shore, and lost
To use and strength and purpose in the world—
Lionel prayed, ‘ Let me see, before I die,
Constance and England, and I die in peace.’
Then they who watched him said among themselves,
‘ Right nobly has he lived and fought and bled ;
Why should we cross his lightest wish in death ?’
And so they bore him to a home-bound ship,
Bade him farewell, and as he sailed away,
They shook their heads and muttered, ‘ All too late,
He ne’er will look on England’s shores again !’

But will and yearning gave his body strength,
And confidence inspired the sick man’s hope.
Oft in the dreamy noontide heat he lay
Upon his pallet on the vessel’s poop,
And watched as in a waking dream the curved
And changeful pathway on the pathless deep.
But thought and fancy wandered elsewhere—
To England’s shores, and to another home
He knew he was approaching day by day.

And Constance daily watched for his return :
But with how changed a feeling from the joy
With which, in bygone days, she had foretold
Her warrior-love's triumphant welcome home.
Still, all the memory of his nobleness,
The glory and the fame that he had won,
His love of country, and his scorn of death,
Came o'er her sad heart like a morning song
And almost changed her sorrow into joy.
'And why,' she thought, 'should we not welcome him
With honour and rejoicing, as a chief
Whose faith and valour have not been in vain ?'
So, when at last he reached his native shore,
The Hall was dressed as for a festival ;
Porches and pillars were festooned with flowers ;
Triumphant arches rose along the way
With 'Welcome,' and with 'Honour to the brave :'
And through the surging, cheering crowds they brought
The dying soldier like a victor home.

Then, on the morrow, Constance deckt herself
In pearls and glistening raiment like a bride,
And seeking Lionel's chamber, with a priest,
They two were bound, at her most earnest wish,
In wedlock's holy and most sacred bonds.
The ceremony over, she arose
And laid aside her gems and glittering robes,
And then, by virtue of her wifhood, moved

About his couch in gentle offices
 Of tender ministrations and fond care.
 But ere a week had passed, one eventide—
 When the low sun looked through the leafy elms
 And filled the chamber with a mystic glow—
 The faint head clasped within the faithful arms
 Sank feebly on the pillow, while a smile
 Broke o'er the features, and the tired soul
 Passed to where all the weary shall have rest.

And so the virgin-wife put on the weeds
 Of widowhood, and for three lonely years—
 In sorrow for her love's untimely fate,
 In pride to bear his dear and honoured name,
 In almsgiving, and in acts of charity—
 She lived, and then Death sought her like a friend
 She wished not for, but welcomed when he came.



THE OLD YEAR, 1866.

The old year is almost dead ;
 He is feeble and withered and gray ;
 We gather around his death-bed
 And watch him passing away :
 We think of the ill he has wrought—
 We speak of the good he has brought—
 And memory her action is plying
 As the old year lies a-dying.

Tempest and havoc and death,
Murrain and shipwreck and grief ;
Pestilence with its poisonous breath ;
Battle bloody, though brief :
Kings of their crowns have been bereft,
Widows and orphans sorrowful left,
And the sounds of sadness and sighing
Greet the old year while a-dying.

But our thoughts are not all sad :
Freedom now claims for her own
Glorious regions where long her glad
Fair presence has been unknown.
Error is tottering on her throne,
Hemispheres have been linked in one,
Words of peace 'neath ocean are flying
As the old year lies a-dying.

We bid the old year good-bye ;
We welcome blessing and ban,
As the lessons sent from on high
Teaching his duties to man.
O may we gird us for the fight,
And in the cause of Truth and Right
Let us be found together vying
As year after year lies a-dying !



THE CUCKOO.

I heard the cuckoo at the evening's close
 Trill its low calls from out a bower of blossom,
 And, at the sound, a thrill of joy arose
 And trembled through my bosom.

A sudden rapture lived in every vein ;
 My heart leaped up to greet the glad new comer ;
 And dreams of childhood danced about my brain
 In whispers of the summer !

Could I translate that thrill of joy to men—
 To weary struggling souls could I but show it
 In sweetness and in tenderness—ah, then
 I might be deemed a poet !

*THOU ART THE LODE-STAR OF MY LIFE.*

Thou art the lode-star of my life,
 My warmest wishes turn to thee ;
 Through all this dim world's dust and strife
 Thy lustre calmly beams on me !

Thou art the sweetest flower that sheds
Its fragrance on my dreary way ;
From thee springs all the joy that spreads
Around my path from day to day !

Ah ! I would toil both soon and late,
Would scale this rough world's thorny steep,
And many a weary year I'd wait,
And many a wakeful vigil keep ;—

Happy, if, when the turmoil past,
A haven smiled of peaceful rest,—
I found the radiant star at last,
I wore the flower upon my breast !



OUR LOST ONE.

We lost our darling years ago,
But have not ceased to mourn him yet :
We ever speak of him in low
And tender tones of deep regret :
Old places bring his image near ;
Old pleasures speak to us of him ;
Old playthings make our eyes grow dim
With memories sorrowful and dear !

We gather round the fire by night,
And tell the tales of long ago ;
And in the weird and ruddy light
We watch each other's features glow :
We sing some gay and jovial air ;
Our laughter shakes the echoing walls ;
But o'er our hearth for ever falls
The shadow of his vacant chair !

And if by chance some one should wake
A merry strain he may have sung,—
Or if his whispered name should break
In trembling utterance from the tongue ;—
A moisture gathers in our eyes ;
A hush falls on us from above ;
And to the yearnings of our love
Again we see his image rise !

We see again the golden hue
Of sunny tresses waving free !
We see from eyes of deepest blue
Long lashes lifted wonderingly !
Gay noises from old corners start ;
Low laughter ringing clear and sweet,
And patterings of little feet
Waken old echoes in the heart !

Poor grovellers still among the dust,
We cannot lift our souls on high,

In purest faith and perfect trust,
 To thee, our lost one, in the sky !
Still earth's delusive hopes we chase ;
 Its vain imperfect pleasures quaff ;
 Half of our love is here, but half
Must reach thee in thy radiant place !

O far beyond our earth-bleared ken,
 In concourse of the good and wise,
Dost thou not view the ways of men
 And all their littleness despise ?
With wonder in thy downward glance
 Dost thou behold our actions here ?—
 Ah, pity thou our guilt and fear,
Our frailty and our ignorance !

When weary of the toilsome road,
 Besprinkled with the dust of care,
Bowed down beneath the weighty load
 Of burdens that we still must bear !
Wondering when all this toil shall cease !
 Yearning to win the promised rest !—
 Stoop from thy home among the blest
With breathings pure of heavenly peace !

Still hover near us on our way ;
 Surround us with thine unseen love ;
Restrain us when we seek to stray,
 And gently raise our hopes above !

And when at last the heavenly land
Shall on our dazzled vision burst,
O angel-brother, be the first
To stretch to us a welcome hand!

*SABBATH CALM.*

Lapt in a dream of peace the Sabbath lay,
The sunshine playing on its placid breast;
All nature seemed to know the sacred day,
And hush its hoarse unrest.

The trees basked moveless in the sunny glow,
The birds skimmed silent through the breezeless air;
The very surge's murmur was as low
As is a whispered prayer.

So placid hung the blue sky stretched above,
So peaceful lay the bright earth spread below;
So gentle was the water's waveless move,
So faint and hushed its flow;—

That I, o'erwearied with this rude world's storms,—
By clamorous week-day tempests tossed and driven,—
Could almost deem I breathed the air that forms
The eternal calm of Heaven!

TO A CAGED NIGHTINGALE.

Is it for joy thou pourest forth thy heart
 In a rich flood of music, loud and long?
 If so, what means the plaint that forms a part
 Of such triumphant song?

What blessedness has made thy spirit glad?
 What unknown grief can in thy breast be bound?
 Ah, sorrow sure did never ring so sad!
 Nor joy more joyful sound!

But thine is not the only breast on earth
 Where clash the two extremes of joy and grief!—
 Nor lone heart to whom pleasure's wildest mirth
 Can bring but poor relief!

Thou long'st to revel in the free sunshine,
 Or nestle in some grove where green leaves play ;—
 And so this weary prisoned soul of mine,
 Like thee, would fly away !



ROSE.

On the margin of the woodland, hidden half by leafy
 shadows,
 There stands a little cottage, ivy-clad and rose-em-
 bowered ;
Before it stretches far and wide a wealth of waving
 meadows,
 Behind it lies the forest with a slumb'rous dark en-
 dowered.

Here, in the sunny days of Spring, from out among the
 bushes,
 Spring-flowers peep on passers-by with bright eyes all
 aglow ;
And through the gloaming's breathless reign the nightin-
 gale in gushes
 Pours forth its plaintive melody all passionate and low.

But it is not the tender flowers that tempt my feet to
 wander
 Down to that cottage through the weird and lonely
 light of even,
Nor are those notes the nightingale's that make me pause
 and ponder—
 Is that wild strain a song of earth or music sent from
 Heaven!

Ah, Rose! the rose blooms on your cheek, your bright
eyes gleam and glisten,
As standing 'mong the dewy flowers you carol clear
and wild;
What can an old man do but stand and strain his ear to
listen,
Till all his heart is flooded and his senses are beguiled!

Strange that a voice has so much power! and yet its
thrilling sweetness
Awakes a slumbering echo of the old delightful days,
When all the warm blood through my veins coursed with
a feverish fleetness,
And Youth and Hope lit up the world with their
bewitching rays.

Again I seem the careless boy before whose raptured
vision
The Future stretched in glittering and iris-gloried
gleams,
And all the beckoning earth was bathed in light that
seemed elysian—
A light that clothed my waking thoughts and coloured
all my dreams.

Again I hear the solemn forest startled with the laughter
Of happy boys and maidens at their pic-nic 'neath
the trees ;

Till all its echoes rouse from sleep, and strange and
hoarsely after
Give forth their ghostly murmurings upon the passing
breeze.

Again I wander through the woods or down beside the
river,
To nurse mysterious yearnings, and to muse on many
things,
To watch the dewy leaflets in the sunshine dance and
quiver,
Or see the sailing swallows skimming on their dusky
wings.

Again a soft hand seeks mine own, and in its trustful
clasping
I count a greater wealth than all the riches of a throne!—
So small and soft!—it seems to melt within my ruder
grasping,
And yet its slightest touch hath power to thrill me to
the bone!

Again we tread the forest-paths while curious leaves are
peering
To catch a glimpse of her sweet face ere light and
shadow part :

Hand locked in hand we pass along in silent bliss, each
fearing

To break with spoken words upon the whisperings of
the heart !

Again I see her standing where her garden roses blossom—
The flow'rets listening to her as she carols all alone ;
And I think, ' When shall I wear thee, O my rosebud, on
my bosom !

O when shall all thy fragrance and thy beauty be mine
own !'

' Mine own !' and yet I sometimes deemed the thought a
wild presumption,

Would plead my dull unworthiness and press her to
forget,—

Until a shower of sunny sparkles chased the mad assump-
tion

From wonder-widened eyes that shone 'neath lashes
long and wet !

Alas ! for all the darling dreams I cherished with a holy
And tender joy ! they seemed not made to melt and
pass away !

Alas ! for all the hopes that died and left me crushed and
lowly,

To weep in wasting anguish o'er their premature decay !

'Tis long ago, and yet my heart will evermore remember
The sad and desolate day that was my darling's last on
earth,
When all the mellow beauties of the many-hued Septem-
ber
Seemed frowning as the winter frowns amid his dreary
dearth!

From early, early morning I had lingered by her dwelling,
But ere the ruthless day had reached its brazen noon—
she died!
Then I rose up, my brain on fire, my breast with tempest
swelling,
And wandered, stunned and tearless, through the
woodlands vast and wide.

Instinctively my footsteps sought a spot where oft together
We rested in the shelter of the shadows cool and deep,
And there I lay me down and hid my face among the
heather,
And prayed my heart might melt in tears,—but no, I
could not weep!

The air was chilly when I rose, and evening's dews were
falling,
The parting sun poured streams of light between the
level boles;

And up among the dark tree-tops the callow rooks were
calling,
Their ghostly wailings sounding like the shrieks of
prisoned souls.

I hastened from the forest, for a sickening dread came
o'er me,
And sent a shiver through my frame,—a cold sweat to
my brow;
I held my breath for very fear, 'till calm and still before me
I saw the village lie, and stood where I am standing
now.

It was an evening such as this; the rosy light was stream-
ing
On many objects, but it left *her* cottage in the shade;
While halfway up the eastern slope the yellow moon lay
dreaming,
And faint sounds floated up from where the village
children played.

The place is little changed since then, but ah! how
changed the feeling
From that with which I stood and gazed upon my
crushing grief;
For then the fount of woe within my breast seemed all
congealing,
But now a flood of tears can come and bring my heart
relief.

Long years have followed that sad day, and yet through
all their changes

Each spot about the village with her spirit seems im-
bued;

I feel her warm breath on my cheek in each faint breeze
that ranges,

I hear her voice in each low sound that stirs the solemn
wood!

And standing here without the hedge while maiden Rose
is singing,

The lingering sunbeams pouring on her head their
golden blaze,

Within my heart the magic bells of memory are ringing,
With a sweet sadness in their swell, the chimes of olden
days!

Ah! other hands are busy 'mong the flowers *she* loved so
dearly,

And other feet trip lightly down the little garden pad!

Where she once sang another voice is warbling wild and
clearly!

Another Rose blooms where she bloomed! yet now I
am not sad!

The village church lies basking in the waning light of even,
I know the glow is fading now from chancel and from
nave;

The tall spire points where she has gone,—up to yon gloaming
heaven,
And I grieve not that its shadow lengthens o'er her
quiet grave!

Nor do I mourn my dreary life with all its lone dejection,
Its lack of sympathy,—its lost delights,—its homeless
hearth;
Since these have only served to lift on high the soul's af-
fection,
And teach the heart to build its love-nest somewhere
far from earth.

Still, often in the twilight, I can feel a Presence near me,—
Can hear the well-belovèd accents whisper as of yore!
I start,—'tis but a dream!—yet even dreams have power
to cheer me,
And I muse and muse upon it till the vision comes once
more!

Am I growing mad? I know not. Am I wearing near my
dotage?
I cannot tell;—but oft the fancy makes my heart rejoice,
That her bright spirit hovers round the dear old ivied
cottage,
And that the twilight songs are echoed by no earthly
voice!

And so each day at eventide when pale stars dusk and
glimmer

Like angel-eyes that strive to pierce through heaven's
all-placid blue,

And light wanes in the western sky, and earth grows dim
and dimmer,

And wanton wild-flowers drop asleep all drunken with
the dew,—

I wander by the forest-skirts and feel her white hands
flinging

Sweet thoughts of comfort o'er my soul to soothe its
lonely care,

While, ever and anon, there comes the fairy music ringing
In sweeps of passionate plaintiveness upon the eddying
air!

And strange thoughts struggle at my heart whene'er I
stand and hear it;

In vain I peer into the gloom,—no glowing form is there!
But I know this body will not long beclod my straining
spirit

That yearns to fly and meet her in the sunny realms of
air!

Sweep on, O barren Day, and bring the hours that will be
sweeter!

Turn on your dusky wheels and pass from the dim
heavens, O Night!

Hasten the moments rich in bliss when I shall spring to
meet her,
And all my darkened life shall merge in everlasting
light!



THE NIGHT COMETH.

The daylight waning and the darkness near :
So little done, and still so much to do !
Before me the long night of cloud and fear,
Without one star to pierce its shadows through.

I hear the rumble of the swaggering wains ;
I hear the burden of the harvest song ;
And, through the hazy light in happy lanes,
I see the sun-browned reapers pass along.

And I must lay my sickle down and go
From the dim fields that look so drear and lone :
Alas! that I have so few sheaves to show !
I shall not hear the Master say, ' Well done.'

With what regret I look back to the past,
When the long shadows loomed so far away ;
And Morning seemed, on every wakening blast,
To waft the whispers of an endless day !

So many misspent moments, wasted hours,
Playing with pebbles on the sea-washed strand,—
Searching for butterflies or gathering flowers,
Instead of toiling in the harvest land.

And now the Night stol'n on me like a thief,
While yet I dreamt that it was scarcely noon,—
Sad that the sunshine is so very brief !
Sad that the shadows fall so very soon !

O for one other hour of God's bright day
In which to work with sinew, heart and will,
Ere yet I leave the fields and pass away
To that mysterious sleep where all is still !

In vain, in vain! no answer to my calls,
When from the gloom my spirit cries for light !
The last faint lingering gleam is gone, and falls
Across the land the chill and starless night !



THE GUIDING STAR.

Sailing o'er life's uncertain sea,
By counter-currents driven and tossed ;
No light to point where havens be ;
My track amid the darkness lost :

The toil-drops trembling on my brow ;
The shadows thickening everywhere ;—
Jesus of Nazareth, be Thou
A star to guide the wanderer !

When tempests wrack my lonely bark,
And timbers strain, and sails are rent,
And billows howl, and heaven is dark,
And cries are vain, and strength is spent:
Death grappling at my plunging prow—
Destruction moaning in the air ;—
Jesus of Nazareth, be Thou
A star to guide the wanderer !

DREAMS.

In dreams we live a strange and mystic life,—
We know not what is false and what is real :
Truth and untruth meet in perpetual strife,
And all things are ideal.

A something-nothing state of nothingness,
Where facts and fancies whirl in wild confusion ;
Where sober life flaunts a fantastic dress
Of mystical illusion !

And yet in dreams we think we move and live,
All things seem actual and ordered duly :
What surety can our waking moments give
That *then* we live more truly ?

I have a fancy that life's fitful gleam,
Where hopes are baffled and where hearts are breaking,
Is nothing but an unsubstantial dream,
And death will be the waking !

*LOVE'S DESPAIR.*

Full of the fever of a hopeless love,
My heart's wild worship still is all thine own :
Unchanged—unchangeable—though doomed to move
O'er life's dim waste alone.

Ah! all too deep for words of mortal breath,
My lonely love is one perpetual smart ;
Fain would I woo the quiet sleep of death
For this unquiet heart !

'Tis death to see thee in thy joyousness—
To meet thine eye, the smile upon thy lips ;
And feel this world a blighted wilderness,
And life a vast eclipse !

So sad and weary ! I would ask no more
Than on thy breast to breathe my latest sigh ;
Like some worn wave that seeks a peaceful shore,
On which to break and die.

*ON THE SHORE.*

I stood on the shore while the sad twilight drew
Its gray veil across the blue heaven ;
And the deep-thoughted stars all looked holily through
The vast bending vault of the even :
And numberless fancies came crowding o'er me
As I gazed on the desolate sea.

I thought of the long sunny days of my youth,
When I dwelt by the murmuring billow ;
Of the yellow-ribbed sands and the pebbles so smooth,
Of the beck that crept down by the willow :
And dreams of my childhood were borne unto me
In the dimple and dash of the sea.

I thought of a flow'ret that bloomed for the sky,
A joy that was nipped in the blossom :
The eloquent glow of a love-lighted eye ;
The heave of a fluttering bosom :
And the dirge of a lost love came sounding to me
In the murmur and moan of the sea.

I thought of a ship sailing into the west ;
Of hearts on her dewy decks grieving ;
Of the tear-burdened eyelid—the quivering breast—
The sigh for the land they are leaving :
And a passionate farewell was wafted to me
In the ripple and rush of the sea.

I thought of wild moments of ruin and wrath ;
Of mad billows boiling and seething ;
Of a proud vessel swept from the tempest's dread path,
Of a low wind above her grave breathing :
And some of Death's secrets were whispered to me
In the howling and hush of the sea.

I thought of the peace of a heavenly shore ;
Of a land where no broad sea can sever ;
Of a glad light which sorrow can darken no more ;
Of a rest to the weary for ever :
And a chorus of angels seemed breathed unto me
In the tremor and thrill of the sea.

*MY NEST.*

The shadows lengthen; the twilight is falling :
The labours and cares of the day are ended :
A peace settles over the city's brawling,
Like the mirrored glow of the sunset splendid.

And sparrow and robin and skylark and throstle
Are silent now in leafy recesses,—
Calmly and warmly and safely they nestle
In the shadowy bliss of soft caresses.

On the skirts of the city *my* nest is waiting,
Warm with a glow that is grateful and tender;
And the world, with its striving and sinning and hating,
Melts in the light of its sacred splendour.
What though my dovecot be poor and lowly?
Love's kingly sway makes the dwelling royal!
Peace, like a cherubim pure and holy,
Fills every heart with a faith life-loyal!

Cosy warm nest! every bounty and blessing
Linger about thee as years o'er thee gather:
Joys bide within thee; and mercies unceasing
Rain from the bountiful hand of the Father!
Hope's budding promises break without number
Rich 'mong thy leaflets, and burst into blossom:
Sweet be thy glad waking hours! and thy slumber
Calm as the sleep of a babe on the bosom!



AT DEATH'S DOOR.

And so the fitful dream is almost over,
And no to-morrow will arise for me!
My spirit ebbs with the low lapsing sun,

And ere the last faint streak of lustrous gray
Is swallowed up of shadow, life must fail,
And darkness shall be my inheritance.
So be it: I can calmly welcome now
The slow up-creeping of the solemn waves
That come to wash me from the bank of Time.

Yet I have wept and murmured at my doom.
It is so sad to fall in the mid race
And watch my fellows all go sweeping by
To win the laurels that I dreamed might wreath
In cooling circlet round my feverish brow: †
A vain ambition, yet the sweetener
Of many a hard day's heavy-thoughted toil.

Ah me! the hours have perished when my heart
Throbb'd thick to the still music of its joy;
And my strong soul, rejoicing in its strength,
Stood on the golden threshold of the morn
And heard the morning breezes whisper low
The promises of a long prosperous day.
I longed to flood the universe with song.
To song I gave myself, even as a maid
Yields all her being up to him she loves.
Nature stored all her riches in my heart,
To spring in flowers of song through aftertime.
The woods had secrets for my special ears,
The waves a melody none else could learn,

The dawn crept through me like a life renewed,
The painted clouds of sunset bore my soul
To spheres untrodden by the foot of man,
And in the lonely night the stars looked down
With wondrous revelations in their gaze.
Now, all is over, and I pass away,
My cherished dreams of glory unfulfilled,
The splendours that I longed to weave unwoven,
And my great purposes gulped like a wreck
Whose scattered fragments, cast upon the shore,
But serve to hint of all the wealth that lies
Down in the silence of the ocean deeps.

Yet might I, like the swan, whose death-hour finds
The mid heart of all music, pour my soul
In one wild gush of intense melody,
So that throughout all time to come the world
Might hang in breathless worship on the echo
Of my last words, then it were sweet to die.

O Poesy ! my mother, lover, friend,
My hope, my joy, my treasure and my god ;
Could I but raise one little shrine to thee
On which might rest a shadow of the light
That dwells within thy deep and holy eyes,
Then gladly would I draw around my frame
The inky cloak of death, and take my way
To the cold region where corruption sits
And darkness finds an everlasting home.

In vain, in vain! Yet wherefore should I weep
To leave this shadowy region's dusky marge
When brighter prospects beckon me away?
For there are other, higher worlds than this,
In which our quenchless lives at length may reach
Perfection's tireless manhood, in a sphere
Where failure never waits on fearless work,
But all the song that strove for utterance here,
And all the thoughts whose travail brought no birth,
Linked to the sweetness of a purer air,
Wed to the language of a nobler tongue,
Rich with a beauty past all mortal dreams,
May, breaking from the heart, bathe every star
And be the music of Eternity!

Behold the sun has bid the land good night,
And mortals hail him in another world.
Like him, my setting hour has come, and soon
Immortal dwellers on a far-off shore
Will give me greeting to their airy home.—
I hear the murmur of ten thousand seas,
I see the glimmer of Angelic wings,
I feel a slumb'rous peace,—Can this be death?

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