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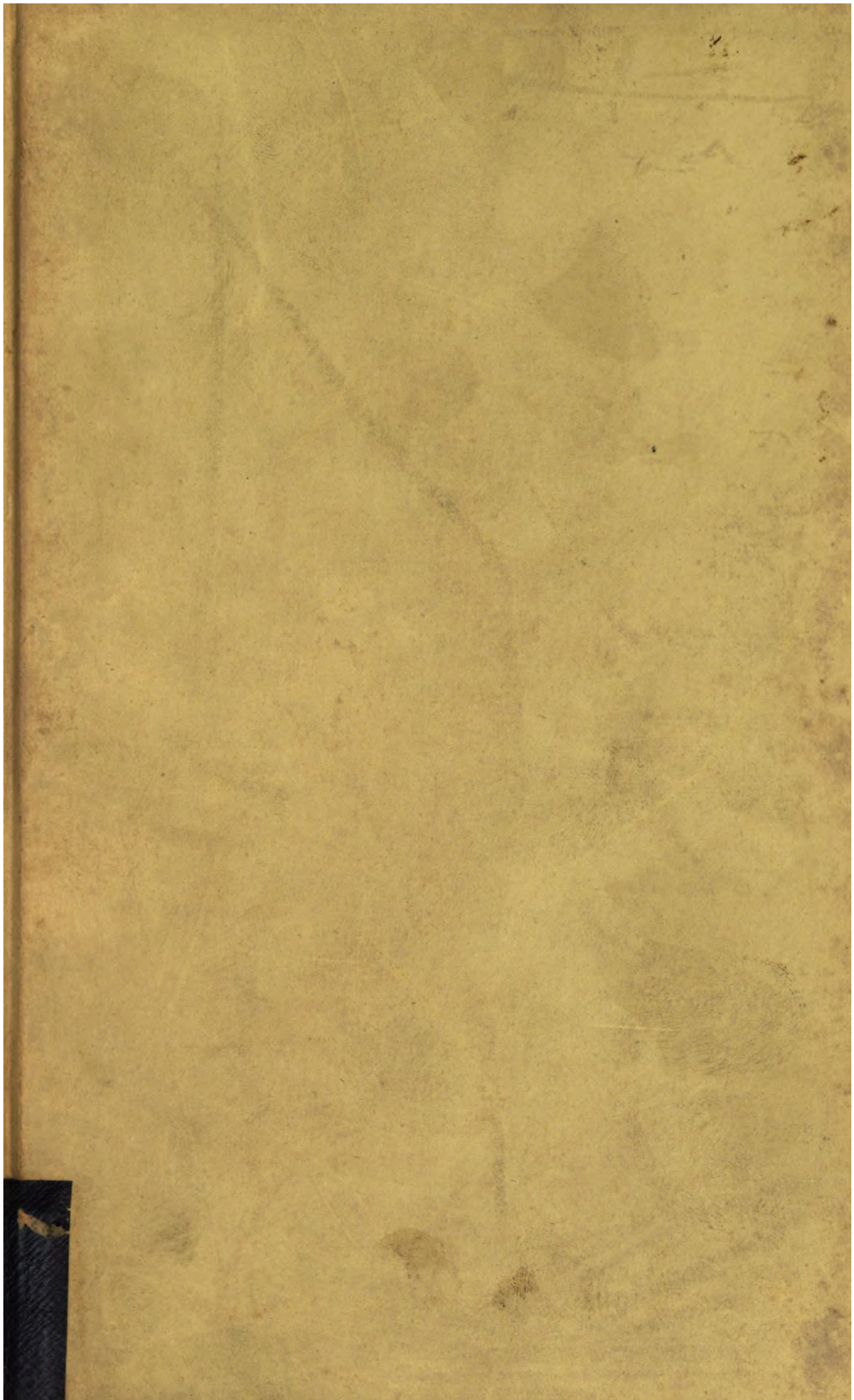
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STUDIES IN VERSE

Now ready, Second Edition, 8vo.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE CHARM AND THE CURSE

A TALE

DRAMATISED FROM THE EDDA.

STUDIES IN VERSE

BY CHARLES GRANT

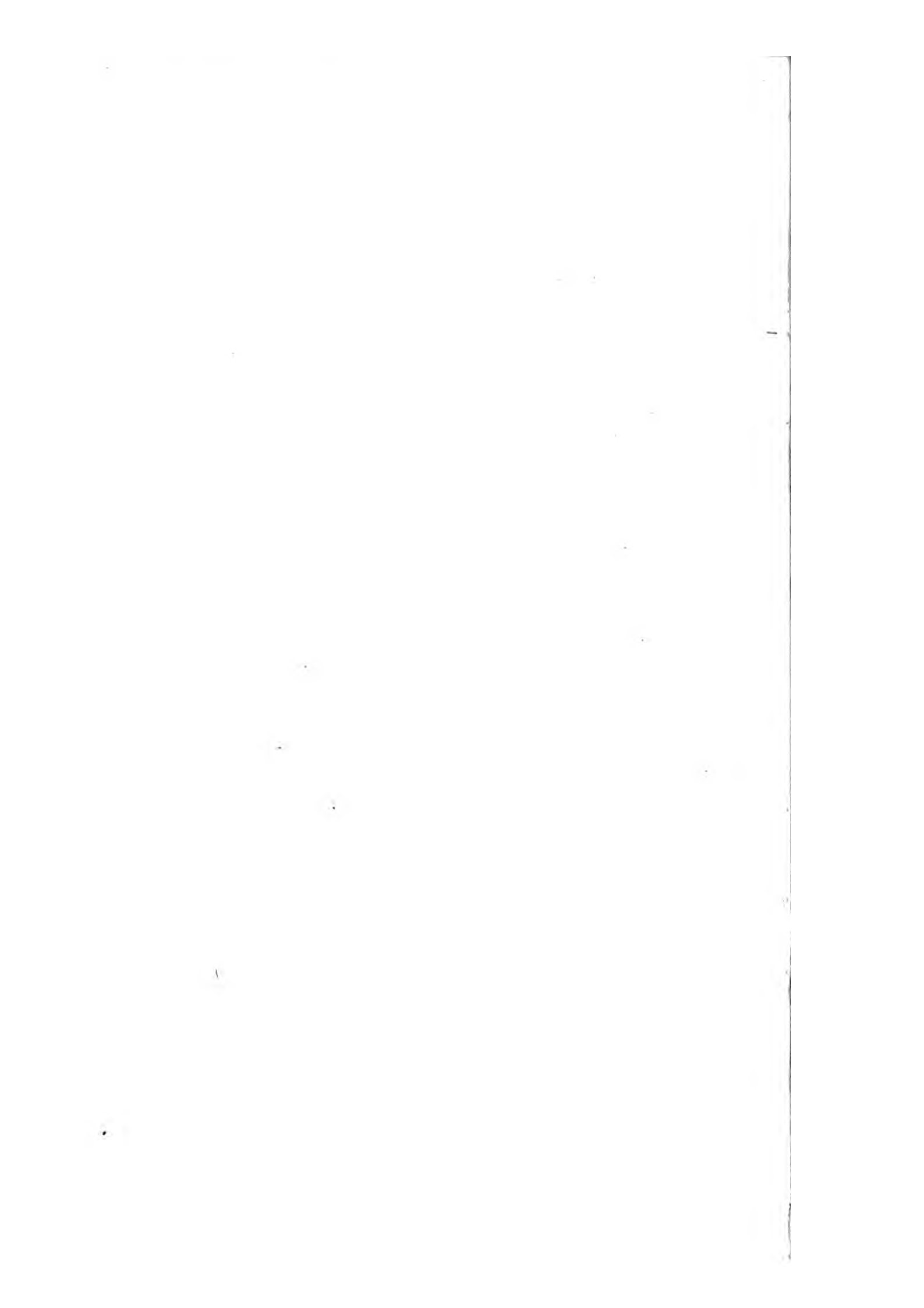


LONDON

JOHN PEARSON YORK STREET COVENT GARDEN

1875

280. j. 435.



DEDICATION

TO H. B——.

I scarcely know if you will care
To read the verses that I send,
Will like a passage here and there,
And feel "the writer is my friend."

Mere studies they from art and life,
A woodland dream, a breeze of song,
A wave-watched peace, scenes in the strife
Of human souls with sin and wrong,

Chance things that thrill'd me with delight,
Like broken strains of melody,
Half heard in a tempestuous night
Through all the turmoil of the sea ;

Which thus I roughly sought to draw,
Even as they faded from my view,
They are the visions that you saw,
And so I send my book to you.

However small its worth may be,
'Twill speak of things you used to praise
And whisper to your memory
A kindly thought of other days.

NAPLES, *December* 1874.

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STUDIES IN VERSE

THE WHITE WITCH

“ O WHAT have you seen, my son, my son,
That your eyes are so wild and bright ?
Or what have you heard in the eerie woods,
‘Twixt the gloaming and the night ?”

“ I have met a witch, a white white witch,
My mother, mother dear ;
The glamour of earth is on my eyes,
And its music in my ear.

“ For we are deafen’d by angry words,
Are blinded by tears of woe,
But she has garner’d the secret joys
That only the genii know ;—

“ Has learn’d from the voice of the fern-hid stream
Where all sweet thoughts abide,
And the violets have told her how they dream
In the quiet eventide ;

“ And they fancy, mother, the world above
Where the baby cloudlets play
Yearns down to the earth in mystic love
That shall never pass away.

“The greenwood knows it ; of this sweet thought
Its murmuring tunes are made,
And the strange wild tale that is ever wrought
Through its sunshine and its shade.

“And the holy moon, as she moves along
From star to star on high,
Pours forth her light as a bridal song
And a tender lullaby.

“O mother, my mother, mother dear,
Who may the white witch be ?
She has heard the things we cannot hear,
She has seen what we cannot see ;

“The beauty that comes in fitful gleams,
That comes, but will not stay,
The music that steals across our dreams
From a region far away ;

“What vainly I sought in pain and doubt,
The light, the form, the tone,
At a single glance she has found them out,
And made them all her own.

“And with all the music we cannot hear,
The beauty we cannot see,
O mother, mother, my mother dear,
She has wrought a charm on me.”

LITTLE WILLIE

'Twas good St. John's, and the mountain woods
Were gay with summer sheen,
A mother wept for her little Willie,
All in his grave so green.

'Twas Yule, and on the mountain-side
The wind was shrill and cold ;
The mother wept for her little Willie,
Who lay within the mould.

O cold, cold is a winter grave,
O but a shroud is thin—
A wee hand tapp'd upon the door,
“O mother, let me in.”

“I dare not let thee in, Willie,”
The sister up and said,
“For mother's away at Jane's lykewake,—
Go to thy graveyard bed.”

“O cold and lonely is the night,
Madly the fierce winds rave ;
How should I sleep ?—The shroud is wet
That wraps me in the grave.”

She sign'd the cross upon her brow,
 The cross upon her breast,
 With :—" Avoid thee, ghost, and aroint thee, ghost,
 And get thee to thy rest."

'Twas midnight, brightly glow'd the hearth,
 The wind howl'd down the lin ;
 A wee hand tapp'd upon the door,
 " O mother, let me in."

Up sprung the father to his feet,
 And many a cross sign'd he,
 With :—" Angels defend us from thee, child,
 And from the like of thee."

" O cold, cold is the winter snow,
 That drifts adown the steep,
 But colder far this clammy shroud
 Which will not let me sleep."

The wind had swept away the clouds,
 But still its laugh was wild ;
 Before the father slept, he pray'd
 The saints to ban his child.

Ah ! who shall help a houseless soul ?
 What refuge shall it win ?
 Again the hand tapp'd on the door :
 " O mother, let me in."

Quick was her ear to catch the cry,
Her foot upon the floor,
Her hand to draw away the bolt,
And open wide the door.

“Come in, come in, thou child of mine,
Right welcome unto me,
Come in, and warm thee in the breast
That erewhile suckled thee.”

She took him up within her arms
Or ere a word was said,
She set him down before the hearth,
All wan and damp and dead.

“Cold was the snow that beat on me,
The grave that let me out,
O take away this wet wet shroud
That wraps me round about.

“Your tears fall on my face, mother,
Your tears fall on my feet,
Your tears drip through the coffin-lid
Upon my winding-sheet.

“Now weep no more for me, mother,
It lets me in my rest,
But wrap me in another shroud
And warm me in thy breast.”

The sister peep'd from out her bed,
Her face was pale with fear,—
“O mother, give him nought of mine
Or I shall die this year.”

Out spoke the father from his bed,
Harsh was his voice and wild,—
“O woman, take not aught of mine,
To wrap about the child.”

A strange strange smile was on her lips,
But ne'er a word she said ;
Her best seem'd hardly good enough
To wrap around the dead.

She bore him to and fro, and sang
Old songs and lullabies ;
He laid his hands upon her cheeks
And smiled into her eyes.

'Twas good St. John's, and the mountain woods
Were gay with summer sheen,
The mother slept with her little Willie
All in the grave so green.

LITTLE ANNIE

REFLECTIONS

GROWN up people are so stupid,
Dolly dear,
Now sit still and don't be frighten'd,
No one's near,

And they will not come to fetch us ;
They will call ;—
Well, I'm out of patience with them,
One and all.

There's papa now ;— if he wish'd it
He might play,
Yet he reads, and writes, and ciphers
All the day.

And mamma, when no one's looking,
You should see,
Only takes one lump of sugar
In her tea.

Now, if I were big, Miss Dolly,
Do you think
I would look at nasty paper,
Pens, and ink ?

I would scamper through the greenhouse,
Chase the cat,
And I'd live on sugar-candy,
Think of that !

EXPECTATION

My sixth birthday comes to-morrow,
Dolly, O how glad you'll be
If you had a friend, you'd borrow
Something, dear, and give it me.

Well, you must remember clearly
When we wake up what to say :
" Dear, I wish you most sincerely,
Such a happy, happy day."

And, just fancy, I've been peeping ;
And what, think you, did I see ?—
Such a lovely dolly sleeping,
And I'm sure she's meant for me.

But we will be friends for ever,
None shall come between us two,
I will never, never, never,
Love her half as well as you.

LOOKING FOR THE FAIRIES

1.

Now be very quiet, Dolly,
So that we may get away
To the green-wood, while they fancy
We are sitting safe at play.

For the butterfly that circled
Round about my head at morn
Told me, told me most distinctly
That I was a Princess born.

I must go to find my kingdom,
We must both be strong and brave
And if any evil happens,
A great Prince will come and save.

He will bring us to my palace,
All our troubles will be past,
We will both be married to him,
Dearest Dolly, and at last

We'll return to those that love us,
 Dress'd in pearls, and lace, and gold,
 Being greater in our childhood
 Than they are, though they are old.

2.

We are safe, and now, you know,
 We must find a wonder-flower ;
 In the deepest woods they grow,
 Blossom but a single hour.

Brightest birds and insects hover
 O'er the meadows where they stand,
 And who finds one shall discover
 Just the way to fairy-land.

3.

I am rather tired and lonely,
 Dolly, how are you ?
 If some little bird would only
 Tell us what to do.

That, when we had done it duly,
 We this flower might find,
 We would do it—O so truly,
 And be—O so kind.

Dolly, Dolly, you are naughty
Are you hungry? so am I:
We must learn to bear our hunger,
And we mustn't cry.

The great Prince may come to seek us,
He would come if he but knew;
And if he should find us crying,
That would never do.

O good woman, will you kindly
Take me to papa again?
I've been wandering through the forest
All my seeking was in vain:

I'm so hungry, I have eaten
Not one bit the livelong day;
I went out to find the fairies,
But I think I've lost my way.

LOVE'S TRIUMPH

A TALE IN SONGS



PART I.

IN ENGLAND

I.

THE world was full of noise and dust
That deafen'd, vex'd, and blinded me ;
What wonder that I could not trust
In God, until I gazed on thee ?

But now a light is on the cloud,
A dream upon the summer sea,
The music in my heart is loud ;
I need not trust, I hear and see.

II.

Beneath my eyes, as thought to thought replying,
Beam those deep eyes of thine ;
I read them through, I feel thy dear hand lying
Thus trustfully in mine.

If thou should'st guess all I am now concealing,
 If thou indeed should'st see
 How every thought I have and every feeling,
 Is passion full of thee,

Would'st thou, with sudden lights of girlish laughter,
 Sharp shafts of girlish scorn,
 Mock the dark night that dares to sorrow after
 The brightness of the morn ?

Would'st thou, indeed, since thou art tender-hearted,
 Pity a love so vain,—
 With scornful pity ?—Yet we should be parted,
 And never meet again ;

Thou nevermore would'st yield, for all my sighing,
 Those clear frank eyes of thine ;
 I nevermore might feel thy dear hand lying
 Thus trustfully in mine.

III.

I would not have you love me, dear,
 I am too sad and old ;
 My brightest hope is half a fear,
 My warmest kiss is cold, my dear,
 My warmest kiss is cold.

I only ask to love you, dear,
 And do whate'er you will,
 I cannot choose, but year by year
 Must love and love you still, my dear,
 Must love and love you still.

IV.

Thy soul is sad—I must not seem to know it ;
 I know of comfort—dare not tell it thee ;
 I read thy heart, although thou would'st not show it,
 I see there is no place in it for me.

But what of that ?—The passion that thou fearest
 Is silent—shall remain so to the end ;
 Trust what is greatest in thee—trust me, dearest,
 Be brave enough to take me for a friend.

V.

Fear not to trust me, though thou hear from some
 That my past life was wild ;
 The love of thee, dear friend, has made my heart
 Pure as a three-years' child.
 I have no other wish but to become
 What thou would'st have me be,
 To understand more fully all thou art,
 And to be nearer thee.

VI.

To-day has been a festival to me,
One of the god-lit moments which transcend
The common years that bear us wearily
On to the hidden goal to which we tend ;
To-day you call'd me 'friend.'

In all these years I could not find a name
By which to call myself ; I durst not bend
To my low use the poet's sacred fame
And yet to earn it was my only end :
But now I am your 'friend.'

A new land opens up before my feet,
New depths to fathom, mountains to ascend,
New aims, new struggles, and in all the sweet
New strength and comfort that your trust will lend,
Now that I am your 'friend.'

VII.

Thy soul is as sweet music set to mine,
For my best thoughts are but the paltry words
That gain new meanings from the full accords
Of thy great nature. Let the praise be thine,

If anything I think, or do, or say,
 Appear not worthless ; if a distant sound
 Of nobleness in word or deed be found,
 It comes from thee, with thee must pass away.

VIII.

'Tis not for thy silken hair
 Or thy dreamy eyes,
 For thy face so pure and fair
 Or thy soft replies.

Not for any part of thee
 That I love thee so ;
 All that thou hast been to me
 Thou canst never know.

All that I have felt for thee
 Words can never tell :
 If thou art but true to me,
 All shall yet be well.

IX.

In the wood beneath the beeches,
 You may hear the thrush's song,
 And the tune the brooklet teaches
 To the ferns it hides among.

Honeysuckle, bramble-roses,
 Heap'd before a mossy seat
 You may find, the woodland posies
 That I scatter'd round her feet.

And if something stranger, dearer,
 Than all summer sweets befel ;
 If our lips drew near and nearer
 As our hearts did, who can tell ?

X.

Sweet is the evening, when from the hedges
 The shadows lengthen across the grass,
 And through the trees on the river-edges,
 The lights and tones of the water pass ;
 When, pale with their love, light clouds lean over
 The wan white face of the rising moon,
 And full of the scent of the new-mown clover
 Are the hawthorn lanes, in the month of June.

Sweet is the evening ; for thou, O dearest,
 Who art the sweetness of every sweet,
 Hast lent thy tones to the tones that are clearest,
 And the meadows are bright with the trace of thy feet.
 O the light of the presence that hovers round me,
 O the voice more sweet than the wild birds' tune,
 O the joy of my life that at length has found me,
 O the hawthorn lanes in the month of June !

XI.

While the golden moon is beaming
O'er the mountain's distant height,
And the tiny waves break gleaming
Into showers of silver light,

Do the beech-trees murmur lowly,
Strange old dreamings, half-awake,
As we glide beneath them slowly
O'er the forest-girdled lake ?

Happy dreams of summer weather,
When it seem'd, they know not how,
That two lovers dream'd together,
As we two are dreaming now.

XII.

We two could find in all the world
No dearer spot than this,
Nought fonder than each other's eyes,
Nought sweeter than our kiss.

The hills are high and hard to climb,
The sea is broad and deep ;
Yet one must wander forth alone,
And one must stay and weep.

PART II.

IN ITALY

I.

I SMILE to think how great their care and vain
To part us, dear,
For my great loss is still their little gain ;—
Thou art not near ;

I am a stranger in a stranger land,
Banish'd from thee ;
I may not read thine eyes, nor touch thy hand,
Nor hear, nor see

All that grows music, beauty where thou art ;
I am alone,
Yet still thy soul is near me, and my heart
Is all thine own.

And thou wilt not forget me, wilt not let,
 Rude chances sever
 The sacred ties that bind thee to me yet,
 My friend, for ever.

II.

A NIGHT AT SEA

I.

We push'd from shore, the moon was high,
 There was no ripple on the sea ;
 The stars beam'd faintly from the sky,
 The night was sweet with dreams of thee.

My heart was full ; I seem'd to hear
 Once more the words thou once didst say,
 Last night it seem'd thou wert so near—
 So near, and yet so far away.

2.

We sat and talk'd of life and art,
 What sages said and poets sung ;
 Thy form kept watch within my heart,
 Thy thought was glowing on my tongue.

We spoke of all that makes our life
 Great as a choral ode, and then
 Of the vain discord and the strife,
 The vulgar cares of common men.

“They strive for might, for wealth, for fame,”
 Said one, “for things that only seem,
 The hollow echo of a name,
 The empty shadow of a dream ;

“They plough the sea, they break the sod,
 They gain their purpose and repine ;
 But truth is still the bread of God,
 Beauty his sacramental wine.

“Quicken’d by these, we may rejoice
 Mid every passing cloud of ill.”
 I thought upon thy wondrous voice,
 Thy wondrous eyes, and I was still.

3.

They slept ; nought but the plashing oar
 Broke the deep silence of the sea,
 The lights shone faintly from the shore,
 I sat alone, and dream’d of thee.

31

4.

Thou hast laid a charm on the starry sky,
A charm on the moonlit sea,
On the pale white cloud that hovers by,
And the headlands bold and free ;
Thou hast laid a charm on the waves that sing
Their old, old melody,
And on every great and lovely thing
To make it speak of thee.

5.

The moon shone clear upon our right,
Upon our left the morning star ;
The deepest silence of the night
Was thrill'd with music from afar.

Music so wild, so full, so deep,
No sinful man shall ever hear ;
It seals our human sense with sleep,
It falls like silence on the ear.

Thy soul was on me, so I stood
In the pure moonlight free from blame ;
I felt, I heard, I understood ;—
Its fullest concord was thy name.

6.

The morning dawns ; behind, the sea
 Brightens to violet, while before,
 Beneath the rocks, it seems to be
 An ebon silver'd. On the shore,

Veil'd in light haze, the mountains stand
 Dreaming above a dreaming deep ;
 The very picture of a land
 Lull'd by a wizard's charm to sleep.

The morning breaks ; the golden light
 Is flash'd upon the kindling sea ;—
 So didst thou rise upon my night,
 So did my spirit wake to thee.

7.

O wide expanse of azure sea,
 O mighty rocks, and tiny bays
 In which the lucid water dreams,
 Or, waking into gladness, plays
 In rainbow hues and lightning gleams,
 How dull ye are ! How full would be
 Your joyance, were she here with me !

III.

Brightly the sun sets : isle and mountain
 Pile up their purple upon the sea,
 While, from the valley, the silver fountain
 Flashes through orange and ilex-tree ;
 Brightly the glad sea gleams and changes
 From the setting sun to the rising moon ;—
 But, woe is me, my fancy ranges
 Far, far away, to another June.

Brightly by day the blue waves lighten,
 Brightly at night the full stars shine,
 But where are the eyes that used to brighten ?
 The hand that used to be held in mine ?
 Greenly the beech-boughs broaden over
 The seat where we listen'd the thrush's tune,
 And sweet is the scent of the English clover
 In the hawthorn lanes, in the month of June.

IV.

A MESSAGE.

Forget not me, forget not me
 Whose cheeks are wet with tears,
 For want of thee, for want of thee,
 In all these lonely years.

Though gay they be, though gay they be
 Who now would charm thine ears,
 Forget not me, forget not me
 Whose cheeks are wet with tears.

V.

AN ANSWER.

O dream not I forget thee
 Whose cheeks with tears are wet,
 O dream not I forget thee,
 Or ever can forget.

Those who have known the gladness
 Of converse sweet as thine,
 Those who have felt the madness
 Of passion deep as mine,

If they, indeed, be parted
 From whom they love by fate,
 Must wander, broken-hearted,
 Alone, and desolate.

To them come changeful sorrow,
 Vain hope, and vain regret ;
 But no returning morrow
 Can teach them to forget.

VI.

In the night I sit alone
Mid the rocks beside the sea,
And I listen to the tone
Of the ocean's melody.

And while all the night is fill'd
With the music of the sea,
Voices that have long been still'd
Seem again to speak with me ;

Lips I now shall kiss no more
Seem again to smile on me,
And they murmur o'er and o'er
Still the same old melody.

And along the rocky shore
The sad waves sigh mournfully ;—
“Never, never, never more,
Shall the past return to thee.”

VII.

When the winds in wailings low
Come and go,
And the waves with sobbings vain
Moan their pain,

Do I feel within my heart
 All thou art,
 And how lone the years must be
 Void of thee.

VIII.

There is but one, the eternal Love, who knoweth
 The fond-eyed hopes we bury silently ;
 He knows the graveyard where the violet groweth,
 He knows the graveyards too of memory.

There blooms no violet, there no lamp is burning,
 No priest shall pray for these poor souls' release;—
 Be thou the priest, O Lord, and stay their yearning,
 Speak thou the word, O Lord, and grant us peace.

IX.

Over the mountains and over the sea
 Thy letter hath found out its way to me,
 And the lone years fled at the sound of the line :
 "Come to me, dearest, I am thine."

In the passionate heaven the glad sun glows,
 While the world unfolds like a budding rose,
 For my spring hath come in the year's decline,
 And I and the springtide both are thine.

X.

Life has grown a fairy story ;
Through the pearly haze,
Hill and headland watch the glory
Of the silver bays.

On the deck I lie and ponder,
While they glimmer by,
And the summer clouds that wander
Through the moonlit sky

Like a dream of vanish'd sorrow
Fade into the sea ;
And to-morrow, love, to-morrow,
I shall be with thee.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

UPON the uplands, where the forests cease,
And the soft verdure of the meadow green
Breaks into patches of anemones,
Hid from the village by the circling woods,
But not too far above it for the sound
Of sabbath bells to pierce the leafy hum
Of summer ; 'neath a humble cottage roof,
Anna was born. While she was still a child
Her father died ; the mother, from her youth
Used to hard fare and patient toil, bore up
Against her sorrows, met her poverty
In cheerful guise, and labour'd as she might
To gain an honest living for her child.
The world, a stern but righteous taskmaster,
Paid her her due. Even when the times were hard,
Anna ne'er wanted bread, though oftentimes
Her mother's heart misgave her as she view'd
The shortening loaf, and with a care-worn sigh
She cut her own piece thinner than the need
Of constant toil demanded. When the work
Of harvest brought into their cottage home

A transient plenty, she would count her gains,
 And taking from the smallness of her store
 The utmost she could spare, would hasten forth
 To buy a frock or riband for her child.
 Then proudly Anna at her mother's side
 Would toddle down the shady mountain-ways
 Next Sunday to the church, or pause awhile
 To see her splendours mirror'd in the pool,
 And laugh aloud for very joy of heart
 And childish vanity, or run before
 And play around her mother's slower steps,
 Or in and out the wood, a very ray
 Of sunshine in dark places. At the church
 She sat demurely quiet, peeping round
 To note if others mark'd her finery,
 And on their homeward way the neighbours paused
 To praise her beauty, knowing it would please
 The mother, whom they honour'd. Day and night
 The two were still together. To the moors
 They went to stack the peat, on summer days,
 And while the mother work'd, the child would build
 A score of tiny houses, gather flowers,
 Or sit and babble to the babbling brook
 That turn'd her mimic wheels, and when the deep
 Full lights of June were heavy on the hills,
 She play'd beside her mother as she toil'd
 Amid the new-mown grass, toss'd it on high,
 And caught the fragrant shower upon her head,
 Or kittenlike coil'd-up amid the ricks,

She slept away the sultry noon, and woke
And play'd at working, with her little hands
Spreading the grass abroad or heaping it
In pigmy hillocks, and it often chanced
The farmer passing by would pat her head
Or pinch her rosy cheek, and now and then
Give her a penny in a generous mood,
Calling it wages for her useless work.
And of long winter evenings, when the snow
Fell noiselessly without upon the pines,
She sat and watch'd her mother as she spun,
And listen'd to the stories that she told
Of cruel stepmothers, and little maids
That suffer'd patiently a thousand wrongs,
Till a prince came to save them from their griefs.
And Anna ponder'd o'er the tales, and oft
Relived their joys and sorrows in her sleep,
Dreaming herself a wretched little maid,
Beaten and hungry, and sent forth alone
To wander barefoot through the winter woods
Till a prince came at last and wedded her.
And thus she lived and throve from day to day
In childish ignorance, mid want and care,
Safe as a nestling in a thorny nest.

The village schoolmaster, a crabb'd old man
Whose churlish ways belied a tender heart,
Was gentle with her, praised her daily tasks,
Smiled as he chid her for the frolic tricks

That fill'd the schoolroom with a sudden peal
Of boisterous laughter, and forbore to blame
Too harshly what he saw and could not praise.
And she was quick at learning all that pleased
Her fancy, and had soon outstripp'd her peers
And grown the model of the school, could read
And write and figure better than the rest,
And from her seat beside the master's chair
Look'd down upon the curly-headed rows
Of puzzled boys and maidens, as a queen
Benignly smiles upon a lower race.
Her pride was pretty, and the master smiled
To note it ; he himself was proud to show
Her knowledge when the clergyman appear'd,
And pleased to have a scholar to his mind.
He kept her when the rest had left the school,
And told her tales of heroes and of kings,
Of strange adventures amid savage men,
And noble ladies smiling as they pass'd
To torture and to death. These things she mark'd,
And pondering on them in her solitude,
She wove them into strange fantastic dreams ;
At times she seem'd the maid that rescued France,
Breaking the plumed ranks of mighty knights
With a tempestuous onset, and at times
The noble lady standing all alone,
But unappall'd, above the shrieking crowd
That clamour'd for her blood : but then she changed
The tragic ending : when all hope was gone,

A prince appear'd, a thousand armed knights
 Broke through the crowd, he clasp'd her hand in his
 And, as they pass'd, heroes with bended knees
 Greeted their prince's bride.

Lost in such dreams,
 Or poring o'er the books her teacher lent,
 She oft forgot her humble household tasks ;
 Her mother, coming weary from the field,
 Would find her lost in idle reveries,
 The house unswept, no evening meal prepared,
 And sighing "Youth is thoughtless," or "She still
 Is busy with her tasks," would do the work
 Herself, and call her in without reproof
 When all was finish'd. Then the wayward child
 Would prattle of her lessons, and repeat
 The stories she had listen'd to, and speak
 Of the wild world of dreams in which she lived :
 And when her mother answer'd by a piece
 Of village gossip she had heard, or broke
 Her story with a question as to things
 Irrelevant, it grated on her ear
 And she shrunk back, as one who in the dark
 Stretches his hand undoubtingly to meet
 A warm and friendly hand, and grasps a cold
 And senseless stone ; so by degrees there rose
 A dim and baleful mist between the two,
 Vague, undefined, thin and impalpable,
 But damp and chill.

As Anna's years increased

She grew in beauty. Strangers when they pass'd
 Would pause to gaze upon her as she came
 Out of the church, or trod the mountain-ways
 Firm-footed as a creature of the rocks,
 And say ;—"The mountains have the loveliest flowers,
 "And she is of them." At the village dance
 Her step was lightest, and the country songs
 Gather'd a deeper pathos from her tones,
 So that old eyes would oft-times fill with tears
 When she was singing.

On the mountain side

Were many youths that loved her, but she check'd
 Their wooing with light shafts of girlish wit
 And merry peals of laughter, for she scorn'd
 The narrow limits of her mountain home,
 And shared its toil and mirth but from afar,
 As if she were a princess in disguise.
 Her heart was in the city, she had fed
 On the sweet poison of ambitious dreams,
 Till simple pleasures, while they pleased her, seem'd
 But coarse and tasteless. So for months she teased
 Her mother, whom she ruled in other things,
 To let her go as other girls had gone
 To gain a living in the town.

At length,

Unwillingly, her mother gave consent
 Against her better judgment, sore at heart
 To think her child should thus neglect her love,
 And pondering, "Is it but a selfish fear

Of the long, lonely and laborious days
 That are in store for me when she is gone,
 Or prudence and an instinct sent from God,
 That makes me dread this journey ? It may be,
 If I give way, her wish to go will change
 Like a mere childish whim, or she will find
 No chance of leaving, or that after all
 Her heart may soften in the parting hour,
 And she repent and still remain with me :
 Or, at the worst, when she has eat the bread
 Of strangers, and has felt the bitterness
 Of work unsweeten'd by the sense of love,
 She will return to me again, and God
 Is there as well as here. Why do I doubt ?"
 So she consented.

Anna wrote at once
 To a far-distant city, begging work
 At a great factory ; and in due time
 Received an answer bidding her to come.

The mother took the money she had saved
 Out of her scanty earnings year by year,
 And carefully laid in a drawer apart
 To pay for her own burial, that her child
 In that sad hour might have no lesser cares
 To break the holiness of sacred grief,
 And bought her clothes, and gave her what remain'd
 To take her to the town, and help her through
 Her earliest needs, and as she pack'd the box

She dropp'd on its contents her tears, and thought ;—
 “ This is an earlier parting than I dream'd,
 And one more bitter to me ;” but her child,
 Exulting in the splendour of her dreams,
 Saw not her grief, or would not seem to see.

So the last evening came and all was done,
 And as they sat before the door she said ;—
 “ My daughter, I have many things to say,
 Now hear my words, and then depart in peace.
 It may be we shall meet no more on earth,
 And this is a sad parting, to my heart
 Bitter, with all the bitterness of death ;
 For eighteen years we two have been as one,
 In all my thoughts you have had a part, and now
 I think I have no wish but for your good.
 Next Michaelmas, it will be fifteen years
 Since your poor father died, a strong hale man
 Struck down by fever in the prime of life ;
 He wander'd long, but when his end drew near,
 He knew me as I sat beside his bed,
 And knew that he was dying, and his mind
 For your sake and for mine was ill at ease ;
 But I knelt down beside him, took his hand,
 And said, ‘ Be of good comfort, for as long
 As God does grant me strength she shall not want,
 And for her sake and thine I will not wed,
 And He, the father of the fatherless,
 Will be our friend.’ The vow was on my lips

Even as he pass'd ; and from that day to this
It has been kept, or, if indeed I fail'd,
It was not from a want of earnestness.
I oft have hunger'd that you might be fed,
And borne the cold to see you warmly clad,
And God has help'd us. Till the other day
I thought I had done William's will in all,
But now I cannot tell if I am right
To let you go ; till then I did not think
That you would leave me till you wed, or till
God took me, for I hoped that you would be
The comfort of my age, that I should watch
Your children playing as you used to play
About my feet ; and I am growing old
And sometimes long for rest. But you, my dear,
Have will'd it otherwise. I anger'd you
Sometimes I know with foolish talk—nay, love,
Indeed I would not vex you, and I know
That you have loved and love me. Let us part
Only with tender feelings, you have been
A good and clever child, and I was glad
And proud to have you near me ; but you wish
To go and see the world—then go, my child—
But sometimes think of me, for you can tell
What I am doing every hour, and know
That none will pass when you will not be miss'd ;
And I shall pray for you. Remember God
Is there as here, and often think of him.
And should we never meet on earth again,

Come back once more to look upon the house
 Where we have lived together, and the grave
 Where stranger hands have laid me, and may God
 Be with you—O my daughter.”

Then she fell

Upon her daughter's neck, and wept aloud
 And Anna's heart was soften'd till she wept
 And kiss'd her mother. For a little while
 She waver'd in her purpose, but her heart
 Was full of hopeful visions, so she coax'd
 Her mother into seeming cheerfulness
 Oft times repeating ; “ Do not doubt but I
 Will come again to comfort you in age.”
 And so they slept, and woke, and it was morn,
 And thus they parted.

To her wonted work

The mother went, and labour'd all day long,
 And then return'd in utter loneliness.
 Meanwhile, her daughter journey'd on until
 She reach'd her destination. There she stood
 Amid the noise and hurry of the town,
 Confused and frighten'd, sad and sick at heart.
 O how unlike the city of her dreams
 Was this dark mass of houses ! She could see
 No grandeur in the throng'd and narrow streets ;
 The sallow sunken faces, and the eyes
 Eager for gain that pass'd her fill'd her soul
 With vague and formless dread : a consciousness
 Of utter solitude, she had not felt

In the green woods or on the mountain side,
 Descended on her. As she hurried on
 She saw a woman with a shameless face,
 And tawdry dress, and haggard weary eyes,
 And shudder'd, feeling that an evil thing
 Was near, and passing, found a street that seem'd
 More wretched than the last. Pale women stood
 At doors and windows, and beside their feet
 And at their breasts were wither'd joyless babes
 And careworn children, cursing as they play'd
 On heaps of refuse. Ere her walk was done
 She would full fain have woke and found that all
 Was but a frightful dream, and she was safe
 Within her mountain dwelling, as of old
 She started from the horrors of the night
 To find her mother sleeping by her side,
 And hear the old clock ticking on the wall.

At last she reach'd the workshop, where she found
 The place appointed for her in a room
 Long, hot, and narrow. Many girls were there
 Who bent above their work with blood-shot eyes
 And fallen cheeks, pale faces, void of joy,
 And youthful lips forgetful of a smile.
 The master beckon'd one of these to go
 With Anna, and to seek her out a room
 Where she might dwell.

High, in a narrow street,
 They found a chamber. On the dusky panes,

The fervid sun on summer afternoons
 Glared sultrily, and standing there you saw
 A little strip of cloud, or cloudless sky,
 O'er which by night the stars pass'd, and the moon
 Glided in silence. Comfortless the place
 According to the coarse and sordid use
 Of loveless poverty, the slave of need,
 That has no time for beauty, grace, or joy.
 Much Anna's heart misgave her as she view'd
 The homeless home before her ; but the poor
 Have little right of choice, and she was sick
 Of seeking, so she said that it was well,
 Thanking her guide, who left her. Then she sat
 Her down upon the chair beside the bed,
 And bent her head upon her hands, and wept.

The days pass'd by in utter weariness,
 In wearing toil, and lonely joyless rest,
 For her heart shrunk from the companionship
 Of those around her ; but from week to week
 She laid a portion of her earnings by
 With patient resolution, purposing
 To leave the city and return again
 Unto her mother. 'Twas a weary task
 But almost done, when one day, as it chanced,
 She met an old acquaintance who had been
 A playmate of her childhood, and was glad
 In all her loneliness to call her friend.

So they were much together. Fanny lived
Lightly and gaily, and she coax'd and teased
Her friend to come, if only for a night,
Where there was dancing. For a day or two
Anna resisted, but her own young heart
Craved eagerly for some re-taste of joy,
And so she yielded. To her simple eyes
The gaudy room seem'd wondrous, and the light
And music flash'd through all her youthful frame
A sense of life and gladness. In a week
She went again, and yet again. Her gains,
So hardly saved and hoarded, soon were spent ;
But Fanny had a friend who readily
Supplied her wants, since she too had been young.
And more and more the music and the light
Became a need to Anna, and she feared
To sit alone, and dared not face her thought.
So week by week her work grew worse and worse ;
She was dismiss'd, then Fanny kept away,
Her creditors were clamorous, none was near
To counsel or to save. She was in want,
Hungry, and cold, and fearful ; she had now
Nothing but debts, and there remain'd but one
Sad way to pay them,—and the debts were paid.

Then came the weariness of listless days
And nights of joyless mirth, the fever'd craving
For more and more excitement, and the need,
Not now of joy, but self-forgetfulness.

But on a night it chanced that in a dream
 She saw her mother dying, and awoke
 Breathless with terror, and could sleep no more.
 Then in the silent watches of the night
 She held communion with her soul, and saw
 All that she was and all that she had been,
 And loathed her sin, and loathed herself, nor found
 One hope of rescue. When the day was come
 She rose and clad her in her meanest dress
 And wander'd forth, unheeding where she went,
 And came unto a church with open doors,
 And enter'd ; but the women as she pass'd
 Shrank back before her, even though she chose
 The lowest place. Then did the clergyman
 Begin to read :—" I will arise and go
 Unto my Father," and she heard no more,
 For all the loneliness of her despair
 Lay in those words. But when the prayers were done
 And all the rest were gone, they turn'd her out.
 Sobbing and weeping she stood there, and then
 Her soul cried out ;—" I also will arise,
 And leave my sin and all it earn'd behind,
 And go unto my mother, if I may ;
 For she perchance in pity will entreat
 The good God to forgive me." So she went,
 Nor turn'd again into her house, nor paused,
 Till she had left the city far behind.

Long, sad, and very weary was the way ;

And oftentimes she stopp'd to beg, and oft
Was answer'd harshly, but a few were found
To help her, so when many days were done,
She came unto her home, and it was night.

Then long she stood and trembled, and would fain
Have turn'd away, but durst not ; so she knock'd,
And hastily her mother came to her,
And Anna said ;—" O mother, I have sinn'd,
God knows that I have sinn'd, I am not fit
To be your daughter." But her mother cried ;
" My daughter yet, dear daughter," and she kiss'd
Her lips, and hung upon her neck, and wept.

Again they dwelt together as of old
For many years, until the mother died ;
Then Anna dwelt alone, and she was meek
And humble, very diligent in work,
And kind and helpful to the sick or such
As were in need or trouble, so that they
Had joy in her, and thank'd God for her sake ;
And when she died, the country-people said ;—
" Christ call'd her ; she has gone to rest with him."



A MAN'S CHOICE

A MAN'S CHOICE

And so you were surprised to find me here,
 And doubtless thought, although your courtesy
 Forbade the words ;—" How one may err in men !
 We took him for a genius in his youth
 And were mistaken."

Maybe it was so,

Perhaps not quite so. Other lives appear
 Such simple matters to us, to be summ'd
 Just in the one word, failure or success,
 Evil or good, when it may suit our mood
 To point a moral. Yet the simplest man
 Finds in his own a realm of mystery,
 Conflicts that often verge on the sublime,
 And sorrows fraught with pathos. The result
 Of mine, you think, is poor compared with all
 That once I hoped. I might join issue there,
 And say that I have prosper'd in the world :
 This sunny sweep of daisied pasture-land,
 Engarlanded by hedgerows, down to where
 Yon clump of alders frets the brook with shade,
 Is mine, and mine the upland farm you praised ;

And sons and daughters have been born to me,
 Who all are doing well. This has been gain'd,
 Mark you, by no long years of carking toil
 Amid the noise and squalor of a town,
 But in the open face of heaven, the lark's
 Clear song above me, and the fields around.

Now, have not great men been accounted wise
 Who chose the very life that I have led,
 Instead of honours, wealth, and rule?—Nay more,
 Which of us two comes nearer to the mood
 Of highest art—of Mozart, let us say,
 Or Goethe—I who calmly live my days,
 Kept sane by constant patient intercourse
 With Nature, with my health and senses sound,—
 Who find in every hedgerow that I pass
 Matter for thought,—in every common sight—
 The mother knitting at her cottage-door,
 And prattling to the babe upon her knee
 Nonsense that bears the whole significance
 Of untold love : two lovers at the well
 Who see life mirror'd in each other's eyes,
 And know at once that it is beautiful :
 The wide-eyed child a-wonder at the world :
 The aged man that feeds its heart with tales
 Of the old time—in every common sight,
 A source of joy—who see that it is good,
 Even as the good God did when he had done
 His six days' work, which you and many more

Think but a sorry matter after all ;—
 Or Schumann, pouring out the whole intense
 Might of his soul in wild and broken strains
 Of sweetest madness, great and desolate ?

“ Ay, but,” you say, “ the anguish of a world,
 Fever'd and restless, sick unto the death,
 Found utterance in the passion'd wail that came
 Up to the very throne of God himself,
 Mellow'd by distance, till to him it seem'd
 As is the moaning of a pain-rack'd child
 Unto its mother ; though the man is dead,
 His wild complaint shall ring through centuries,
 A revelation of the abysmal depths
 Of human woe, and teach thus much at least,
 Man is not wholly dust, since he can feel
 Such woe as this !”

I know your theory ;

Yes, I have read your books. You hold that this
 Is the great meaning of our life, that mind
 Should here declare itself, and thus assert
 God, its great author. Though, I must confess,
 I do not greatly trust in theories,
 I let yours pass, and then I say ; I chose
 The life I lead, and still, in truth, I hold,
 Not that it is the best, but best for me.

You wish to hear the story of my choice ;
 It is the story of my life. It takes

Some five-and-sixty years to live such tales,
Some half-an-hour to tell them. Let me see.—

It seems but yesterday, the bright June morn
When I and Lizzie sat beside the brook,
Under the hazels, with our bare brown feet
Deep in the sunny water, and she said ;—
“ When we are big, Fred, will you marry me ?”
And I said, “ Yes,” and so we turn'd and kiss'd
As children do, and straight were off to catch
A spangled butterfly that floated past,
With all the joy of childhood in our hearts,
And all the brightness of the earth around.

One autumn day, we found within the woods
A blind old fiddler, whom we coax'd and teased
Until he play'd to us. Then up and down
We gamboll'd to the music, and his tune
Grew wilder still and wilder, till I sank
Breathless upon the moss, but Lizzie flew
Backwards and forwards o'er the forest glade,
In changeful circles, like an autumn leaf
Toss'd on a storm of song. Her tiny arms
Quiver'd with every movement as she caught
The passion of the music, her loose hair
Now glow'd within the sunlight, and then gleam'd
Through the sun-litten shade, her eyes were wild,
Her bosom heaved ; it seem'd as if a soul
That was not hers were wrought to form in her,

As wildly whirling through the light she flew ;
 Until at length with a low eerie cry
 She flung herself upon me, clasp'd her hands
 Around my neck, and pour'd upon my lips
 A storm of kisses ; then outstretch'd she lay
 Silent beside me, folded in my arms.
 And still the old man play'd, but now his notes
 Grew softer still and softer, till there woke
 Something within all that undream'd before ;
 It seem'd as if the woods had taken voice,
 As if the trees were whispering to my heart
 Of summer secrets, far too sweet for speech :
 That, sir, was the first time I ever felt
 The might of music.

Ere the next time came
 I might be ten years old. One winter night,
 I know not why, there was a festival,
 And many guests were bidden to our house,
 With them the fiddler. All the day my heart
 Was glad with expectation ; 'twas so strange
 To see our barn deck'd out with holly-boughs
 And laurel ; then there came the noise, the light,
 The sound of gathering guests. I sprung about,
 Laughing and joyous. Suddenly a change
 Came over me ; for, as the fiddler play'd,
 All that was round me vanish'd from my sight
 I seem'd to lie within the summer woods
 Silent by Lizzie, and to hear the trees
 Talking together. Then upon me came

A longing, sad, sweet, indescribable,
 So that I crept away, and hid myself
 In a dark corner, weeping there alone.
 My mother miss'd and found me ; when she saw
 My eyes were fill'd with tears, "What ails thee, child,
 She said, and I sobb'd ;—" Let me go to her,
 Send me to Lizzie."

Lizzie, sir, had left
 Our country-side more than a year before ;
 Her father met with troubles. I had thought
 About her only as such children think
 Of playmates who are absent. How I came
 To long for her that night I cannot tell.

My mother kiss'd and soothed me, with the tact
 Of mothers, left me then to dream alone.—
 O what a night it was ! I still can feel
 The music quiver through me, the delight
 That throb'd like pain, the yearning of my heart
 For what I knew not.

So I fell asleep,
 And dream'd that I was soaring like a lark
 Through morning's golden sunlight, and the vast
 Blue depths of heaven.

From that night I resolved
 To be a fiddler, and I made my plans
 In my own childish way. One morning-tide,
 I wander'd out to seek the old man's house,
 Which lay some three miles off amid the furze,

And came to it at noon, and found him there,
 And said ;—" I'm come to live with you, and I
 Will lead you by the hand when you go out,
 And wait on you in all things, and be good,
 And you shall teach me how to play." He smiled
 But not unkindly, talk'd about my plan
 But put me off, bid me go home and wait,
 And he would fetch me when the time was come :
 So I went home and waited.

How it was

My father ever yielded to my wish,
 I cannot guess. He was a hard-work'd man,
 Stout-hearted, honest, frugal of his time
 And money, just and stern, without a touch
 Of love for music or for gaiety.
 He held that children should be children, kept
 In their own proper places, fed and clothed
 Well, but according to their elders' taste,
 Be merry at the proper time, and grave
 When they were bid, and he consider'd life
 A weighty matter, not to be enjoy'd
 But borne : the God he served, a task-master
 Severe, but not ungenerous, who set men
 To do his work, would make advances, weigh
 Every excuse most justly, give them time,
 And yet demand a strict account at last.

Well, sir, he yielded ; the old fiddler came
 And gave me lessons. Then my life began,

The life that was my life, that is so still,
 Though I have never bask'd in the serene
 Light of its fullest heaven, and now can catch
 But distant glimpses of it in my dreams.

I do not think I was a clever boy ;
 At school they call'd me stupid, I had not
 A facile talent ; it was difficult
 For me to learn the things that best I liked ;
 But my soul throbb'd to music, so I learn'd
 With pains at first, and afterwards with ease
 All that my teacher knew, then more and more,
 Saving my pence to buy the newest piece
 Of German music.

So the years pass'd by
 Until my eighteenth spring. My play had grown
 The neighbour's marvel, afterwards a thing
 To be accepted like the summer sun
 We do not care to praise for what he brings,
 Nor greatly notice, save perhaps to curse
 When he may scorch us. Why should we give
 thanks ?
 Has he no joy in shining ?

All these years,
 I only lived in music, for the time
 I spent at school or work, in talk or play
 Dropp'd from my life like that I pass'd in sleep.
 But music brought me rapture, noble pains
 And sweetest consolations, dreams that glow'd

With more than life's reality to me,
 And yet were fair. Ah could I now play out
 What then I felt, you would not count the time
 You spent in coming to me wholly lost.

I heard that Lizzie had return'd again,
 But heedlessly ; it was a part of things
 That did not touch me nearly ; when they said ;—
 “ Her father died and left her penniless,
 She is ill treated,” it was sad, I thought ;
 But then there is much sadness in the world
 Where we may yet be joyous ; I dream'd on.

My purpose was to save by any means
 A hundred pounds, when that was done to go,
 In spite of all my father might object,
 To some great German master, tell him all,
 And ask his counsel ; so I set to work
 And learnt your language, not an easy task,
 But done at those spare hours when the night
 Hinder'd my practice, which my father now
 Forbade at home, except at certain hours.
 But with the earliest dawning, I arose
 And hasten'd through the meadows to the wood,
 And play'd and play'd, until indeed it seem'd
 That all the sweet things of the lovely earth
 Found utterance through me.

'Twas from such a dream

I started to behold a maiden stand,

With deep brown eyes that brighten'd, and a breast
 That wildly heaved beneath its scanty veil,
 Tremulous, passionate, drinking the joy
 Of all my music. As I look'd I knew
 That it was Lizzie, and with one wild cry
 We rush'd upon each other. Breast to breast
 And mouth to mouth we stood, quenching all thought
 In kisses.

O the passionate delight
 Of love's first dawn, when on our narrow life
 God breaks in sudden splendour, and behold !
 All things are made anew, when soul and sense
 Are one, and nothing is as it has been.
 What man can pause or reason, when a word,
 A casual touch, an unexpected glance,
 Can flash wild throbs of gladness through his frame
 And kindle life to passion, when fond lips
 Are close to his, when—O, not I—not I.
 I spread my sail to passion's fiercest storm
 Nor sought to guide it, without thought or will
 Borne wildly, dreamily, I knew not how
 Through unknown heavens. All that is sweet in life,
 And all the bitter that attends the sweet
 Had come upon me, and my heart was full
 'To breaking, but a voice was given me
 To tell of all I felt, and as I play'd,
 I knew my art was growing, like my life,
 Deeper and fuller than it erst had been.
 Once more the neighbours marvell'd, and my fame

Was noised abroad. The country people said
 My music helped to fill the village church
 More than the Vicar's preaching, I was bid
 To all festivities for miles around,
 And then to distant towns. On such a trip,
 I met you, sir, the German connoisseur,
 With good Lord Burton. You were pleased to praise
 My playing, and you know he offer'd me
 A competence to study where I would
 For five long years.

You left. Exultantly

I hasten'd home, glad as the peasant boy
 In fairy tales, who bears within his hand
 All he has long'd for after nameless griefs.
 What could the whole world give but only this,
 The right to live for music, and to try,
 Unfetter'd by low wants and common cares,
 How much in me could mould itself to song ;
 And now, I thought, since this is granted me,
 Let God judge of me as I shall succeed,
 Not in the eyes of men, but in his sight.

Ah, sir, you know not what a poor man gains
 When he can say ;—' I have a right to live
 A year, a month, a week, nay but a day
 For what is best in me—to let my soul
 Be free to do the bidding of her lord.'

On my return, I told my father all ;

He sat in thought awhile, and then he said ;—

“ My son, you are of years, and you must choose
 The life you wish to lead, for you must bear
 Its troubles, neither I nor any man
 Can bear them for you. Therefore make your choice ;
 I will not urge my wishes, though in truth
 I have work'd long and hard, and oftentimes
 Denied myself my wishes for your sake ;
 My father's father dwelt upon this land,
 And I have held it as a sacred trust,
 And done my best that when it came to you
 It should be better for me. It is vain
 To run away from duty. Everywhere
 Pain finds us out, and grief, and cherish'd hopes
 Are disappointed. But when we can say,
 ‘ I stand where God has placed me, ’ we are strong
 To bear our troubles, and to do our work,
 And that is much. You think the life we lead
 Is poor and dull ; it seems a splendid thing
 To be a lord's retainer. For my part,
 The crust I earn is sweeter to my tongue
 Than dainties I must beg for. Those who take
 The rich man's gifts become the rich man's slave,
 And even golden chains weigh heavily
 On those that bear them. He who is content
 With what he has, though poor, is strong and free.
 Then think upon the sorrows of the world,
 Its grief, and pain, and sin—Is this a place

Where any earnest man would wish to pass
His life in fiddling? Think this over well
And then do as you will."

I was too glad
To note my father's sadness, and I went
Silently from him.

With the dawn of day
I hasten'd out into the autumn woods
To talk with Lizzie. The October mist
Was heavy in their branches, and the air
Was moist and chill. Leaning against a tree,
I found her, with pale cheeks, imploring eyes,
And a pathetic patience in her face
That touch'd me to the heart. She did not speak,
She scarce return'd my kiss. I did my best
To comfort her. At last, she threw her arms
Around my neck, and with her head bent down
Upon my shoulder, weeping bitterly,
She told me all.

Then, sir, I made my choice ;
I knew how much it meant, I saw it all
In that one moment, all that I might be,
All that I must be, for I felt at once
How I must choose. I could not let that child,
The mother of my babe that was to be,
Bear all the shame and anguish of my sin ;
I could not leave them in the cold hard world,
Robb'd of all joy, and go myself to drink
My fill of joyance. So I press'd her cheek

Closer to mine, and whisper'd in her ear :—
 “Trust in me, Lizzie.” Then there came a gleam
 Of love through all the sadness of her eyes,
 Low broken words, and kisses long and fond,
 But different to those we kiss'd of yore.

Then I return'd into my father's house,
 And all day long consider'd in what way
 'Twere best that I should break my mind to him,
 That I might seem submissive to his will
 Yet gain my end, for much I fear'd his wrath.

But when I saw his face, my mind was changed,
 And I said ;—“Father, I have ponder'd well
 All that you said last night, and though I yield—
 Nay more, because I yield my dearest wish,
 I first must speak to you as man to man
 The simple truth. You cannot understand
 What music is to me. I cannot feel
 In all things as you feel—God made us so :
 And I must lead my life as I think best,
 And take what comes of it, and I would go ;
 But, father—Lizzie—I must marry her.”
 And so I told him all.

He stood awhile
 In silence, and about his lips there moved
 Something that look'd not like a smile or sneer,
 Before in a low husky voice he said ;—

“ My son, God saves you now against your will :
 Yet, surely it is well that you should feel
 You must do right, rather than have your wish,
 Nor will I hinder you in any way ;
 Go—do your duty—marry—she shall be
 To me as is a daughter, but at last
 Earnestly settle down to honest work,
 And leave your fiddling.”

From that moment forth

I and my father understood the love
 That each bore to the other, though we felt
 Much was in each we could not understand.

Thus, in due time, my marriage-day came round,
 And Lizzie was my wife, and so we stood
 Alone within our chamber, hand in hand,
 And then for the first time I told her all
 'That I have told you of my choice, and she
 Was silent for awhile, and then she sigh'd,
 And answer'd ;—“ You have given much for me,
 Too much, dear love, but I will do my best
 That you may not repent it.”

And in truth,

I never have repented.

God shall find,

In his due time, another man, I think,
 To give expression to the dreams that come,
 Like the sad ghosts of unborn melodies
 Crying to me to lend them life in sound,

When the clear dawn is grey behind the elms,
Or amber deepens in the western skies ;
And for the soul he gave into my hand,
I have not lost it, nor the gentle face,
But treasured them, and kept them in his name.

OUR LADY OF THE SEA

*THE LEGEND OF OUR LADY
OF THE SEA*

PART I.

Hail, blessed Mary, I begin,
Pray that our weakness and our sin
May be forgiven : when we die
Be with us in our agony.
And if, in telling this thy tale,
In anything I chance to fail,
That pardon too, and strengthen me,
For surely I have need of thee!

There was an island far away,
But where, the story does not say,
As fair as any that the sun
From his blue home may smile upon,
With groves, and hills, and meadow-land.
There did primeval forests stand,
Mossy and vast, the clear-voiced streams
Fill'd all their solitudes with dreams
Of the cool uplands ; but no oar
Was heard along the rocky shore,

Or in the coves, but there the sea
Bewail'd its old woe dreamily.

A simple and a quiet race
Had this fair land for dwelling-place :
They thought the sea that circled round
Their islet was the wide world's bound,
Nor knew they aught of war or strife,
Or bitter need : a peaceful life
Was theirs. Yet sin and pain were there,
And weeping eyes, and fretful care ;
Nor knew they of a rest to come
When we have reach'd our father's home,
And all that now we bear shall be
A tale to talk of smilingly.

Now, in that land, in ancient days,
A young king dwelt who had great praise
Of all the people, for his sway
Was mild and just ; but on a day
It chanced great longing on him fell
For what sweet thing he could not tell,
But to his own sad heart it seem'd
That in the silent night he dream'd
Of some great joy, a vision full
Of nameless gladness, beautiful
With unknown beauty, but no thought
Remain'd of what his dream had wrought
When he awaken'd, save the dim

Vague yearning that took hold of him
 For that untried felicity,
 That something that might never be.

Yet, day by day, that longing grew
 Upon him, till no rest he knew,
 Nor could find joy in anything ;
 But most men vex'd him, arguing
 With weighty mien and foolish noise
 Of senseless work and empty joys.
 Therefore he sought the silent woods,
 And in their greenest solitudes,
 It seem'd as if the trees did know
 Of the great joy that grieved him so,
 As if the murmur of the stream
 Were musical with his lost dream,
 And all this soothed him ; so he lay
 There in the gloaming of the day
 And dream'd again, or really heard
 'Mid those sweet sounds, the whisper'd word ;—
 “ Across the sea, across the sea
 There cometh one that loveth thee.”

Next dawn, within a rocky bay,
 A goodly ship at anchor lay,
 And those who first the marvel saw
 Gazed on it, pale with fear and awe,
 Thinking, “ This monstrous beast hath come
 To desolate our quiet home.”

And straightway they made haste to bring
 The weighty tidings to the king ;
 But suddenly he did uprise,—
 New hope made beautiful his eyes,
 Old longing made his footsteps light,
 For at the news of that strange sight,
 His glad heart whisper'd ;—“ Thus hath she,
 Whom I have long'd for, come to me.”

So, fearless and unarm'd, he pass'd
 Through the pale crowd of men aghast
 At that new terror, and alone
 He sprung from off the sea-wash'd stone
 And reach'd the goodly vessel's side
 Breasting the waves, and loudly cried ;—
 “ Behold I come ;” but when no sound
 Made answer, climb'd the deck and found
 Great store of wonders, new and fair,
 And, as he thought, within the air
 Soft music hover'd, and the tone
 Of distant bells, but yet alone
 On all that goodly ship he was.
 Uncheck'd his eager feet did pass
 On to the cabin, but deep awe
 Fell on his spirit when he saw
 Upon a carven altar stand
 Six tapers, three on either hand,
 And by their saintly radiance shown,
 A pictured lady on a throne,

With soft sweet eyes, and bearing mild ;
 Upon her knees she held a child
 Of strangest beauty ; from the deep
 Blue heaven above, as cloudlets sleep
 In our low quiet summer skies,
 Fair childish faces, with fond eyes,
 And silent gladness, dimly gleam'd ;
 Then all the joy that he had dream'd
 O'ercame him ; bending low, he said ;—
 “ O mother, fairer than a maid,
 O lovely Lady of the Sea,
 What may I do to welcome thee ? ”

But when no word she answer'd him,
 His heart grew faint, his eyes were dim
 With very longing, but he thought ;—
 “ Truly some wonder should be wrought
 In reverence of her, would I might
 Read those sweet looks of hers aright ;
 For never can my heart be glad
 Except in pleasing her, or sad
 But if I grieve her, or she goes,
 And leaves me in this world of woes ;
 But surely she will stay with me,
 Since she has come across the sea.”
 So, straightway he return'd to land,
 And to his people gave command
 To build a stately house, that there
 His love might dwell, and everywhere

To seek for rich and lovely things
 To be their bridal offerings.
 And each man went upon his way,
 But he in the same place did stay,
 Nor dared again to gaze upon
 The lovely face till all was done,
 When having seen that it was good,
 He knelt before the carven wood,
 And the six tapers, with bow'd head,
 And in a humble voice he said ;
 " Come, take my gift and dwell with me,
 O soft-eyed Lady of the Sea."

Soon as he reach'd the land, a sleep
 Fell on him, dreamless, soft, and deep ;
 But when he woke to gaze upon
 His dearest joy, the ship was gone.
 The happy careless waves did play
 Around the borders of the bay,
 The happy sunlight shone upon
 The distant mountains : she was gone.
 Wild was his grief, and yet in nought
 He wrong'd her, nor complain'd in aught
 Save thus :—" If thou indeed didst know
 How great my love, how deep my woe,
 Thou surely hadst not gone from me,
 My long-loved Lady of the Sea."

Then he arose and pass'd along

The ways, where erst with dance and song
 He hoped to bring her, till at last
 The threshold of her house was pass'd,
 And there he saw the altar stand,
 The tapers, three on either hand,
 And in their soft and sacred light
 His vanish'd love, his lost delight :
 And there, with bended head and knee,
 He said ; " I am not fit to stand
 Beside thee, nor to touch thy hand.
 Yet stay awhile and dwell with me ;
 I will not vex thee, nor draw nigh
 Thy sacred place irreverently ;
 Stay and command me still, and I
 Will never wed for love of thee,
 O gracious Lady of the Sea."

In sooth, I have no art to tell
 The wondrous joyance that befel
 The happy land from that day forth,
 Nor of the king's exceeding worth ;
 This only am I taught to say
 That every morning he would pray ;—
 " Teach me to act as if I knew
 In all what thou wouldst have me do."
 And every evening ;—" Sweetest bliss,
 Forgive what I have done amiss,
 Help me indeed thy slave to be,
 And do not go away from me."

But all sweet things to sadness turn
 That, haply, we the more may yearn,
 When heavy-laden and distress'd,
 For him who gives the weary rest.
 So here it chanced. A sickness fell
 Upon the king who ruled so well,
 Which greater grew day after day
 Till senseless on his bed he lay,
 And all men felt that he must die ;
 Then, starting with a sudden cry,
 He said ;—" Behold ! my death is come,
 Now rise and bear me to her home,
 That I before I die may see
 Once more the face that loveth me."

So through the sad heart-stricken crowd
 Of men who sobb'd and wept aloud,
 They bore him to her house, and there
 Beneath the carven altar, where
 Unspent the waxen tapers shone
 Before the lady on the throne,
 They set him down, and e'en as was
 His bidding, mournfully did pass
 Into the outer court, and sore
 Their weeping was, for nevermore
 They thought his well-loved voice to hear.
 But he they left, with many a tear,
 And word half broken to a moan,
 Said ; " All my gladsome days are flown,

And thus I come again to thee,
O lovely Lady of the Sea.

“ For, though my years of happiness
Have ending in this sore distress,
Though all my former joy seems vain
In this new wretchedness and pain,
The love of thee endureth still,
Nor does it cease my soul to fill
With sweetest comfort. Thanks and praise
I give to thee, that thy sweet face
Has dwelt beside me all these years ;
But now, if looking on my tears,
And on this bitter woe of mine,
Thou feelest pity, make some sign,
Or speak some gentle word to me,
O lovely Lady of the Sea.”

Scarce had he spoken, when a sleep
Fell on him, restless still but deep,
And then once more old dreams return'd,
Once more for unknown joy he yearn'd,
And once again he seem'd to hear
A low voice breathing in his ear ;—
“ Across the sea, across the sea,
There cometh one that loveth thee.”

PART II.

That evening, when the minster bell
Was tolling vespers, in his cell
Amid the mountains bleak and cold,
A grey-hair'd hermit, weak and old,
Knelt down to pray as God commands,
And slowly through his wither'd hands
Let fall the brown beads one by one
Until the last of them was done,
And then arose, and sat in thought
Of the great deeds good men have wrought
In many countries, by the grace
Of her whom angels love to praise ;
Then in a faltering voice he said ;
“ O Virgin mother, spotless maid,
All these by deeds of worthy fame
Have glorified thy gracious name,
But I no service render thee,
Though thou art all in all to me.”

Then with some sadness he lay down
And slept, but when the distant town
Was hush'd to silence by the night,
Around him shone a sudden light,
And in that glory, by his bed
The blessed Virgin stood, and said :—
“ Lorenzo, rise, and follow me ;
At length I have a need of thee.”

So he arose and follow'd. Down
The hill, and through the sleeping town,
Our Lady led : he, rapt the while
By the remembrance of her smile,
Took note of nought, but follow'd where
Her robe, the glory of her hair
Made the night lovely, till at last,
When to the white sea-sands they pass'd,
He knelt and kiss'd her garment's hem,
For there a boat awaited them
Which thus they enter'd. From the shore,
Without a sail, without an oar,
It glided : by the helm on high
She sat in her sweet majesty
And he lay quiet at her feet ;
What need of question and reply
When never doubt could vex him more ?
She smiled upon him from her seat.
I know our earthly joys are sweet,
But which of them if used aright,
Can shadow forth his great delight ?
This haply—Some who vainly loved
Have not been scorn'd, but unreprieved
In the loved presence durst abide ;
Such, maybe, on a mountain-side,
Or in the fragrance of a wood,
Have felt as if they understood,
With her beside them, all the vast
Glad hope that now is overpast,

She smiled upon him, and his rest
 Grew quiet in her smile, and so
 She pass'd, nor might Lorenzo know
 The manner of her going. There
 Her altar stood, but she was gone ;
 Yet, in the rapture of his prayer,
 He did not feel himself alone,
 For still the memory of her smile
 Gladden'd his spirit. For awhile
 With bended knee and humble head
 Silent he pray'd, but then he said ;—
 “ How shall we praise thee, when we bless
 Thy name in our great thankfulness
 Whom for his mother Jesus chose ?—
 We call thee star, we call thee rose,
 But what thy glory shall express ?
 What fitly tell thy graciousness ?”
 With that the king awoke, and there
 He saw him kneel, and heard his prayer,
 And “ Who art thou, old man ?” he cried :
 Lorenzo rose, and then replied,
 Pointing with lean and wither'd hand
 To where the pictured Queen did stand ;—
 “ I am her servant, king, and she
 This day hath sent me unto thee.”

Then did the king arise, and know
 That he was heal'd of all his woe,
 “ Her servant, then my lord,” he said :

"Over my body and my soul
 Her might extends, who from the dead
 Hath led me back, and made me whole.
 Be thou my lord, rule over me,
 But tell, I pray thee, who is she
 Whom I have loved so constantly
 And call'd the Lady of the Sea?"

Surely there is no need to tell
 That good Lorenzo taught him well,
 Nor how that folk received the faith
 And held it truly unto death.
 Long did Lorenzo live without
 A murmur, for, "Beyond all doubt,"
 He used to say, "or there or here,
 'Tis heaven to know she holds me dear.
 So let me do my work, that when
 God calls me from the midst of men,
 I once again that face may see
 Bent with a gracious smile on me."

And thus the story makes an end.
 O holy Mary, be our friend,
 Our advocate, that we may see
 Thy face, and dwell at last with thee.

STRAY THOUGHTS AND POEMS

STRAY THOUGHTS AND POEMS

LIFE'S LOSS

Of all sad things in life, this seems to me
The saddest ; when the heavy-footed years
Bear in at length the harvest of our tears,
They do not find us as we used to be.

For as thought ripens, and the hasty flame
Of fancy deepens to a steadfast glow,
Our bodies fail us, and our wills are slow
In word or deed our being to proclaim :

Or this : when we are rescued from the wave,
Snatch'd from the passion'd anguish of the storm,
We can but view a brother's sinking form,
And have no might to counsel or to save.

Each man must bear his spirit's agony
In solitude, and when the weary years
Bear in at last the harvest of his tears,
They do not find him as he used to be.

THE POEM OF LIFE

ERE a babe is born to its bliss or harm
God takes the naked soul on his arm,
And whispers a great word in its ear,
So that it cannot choose but hear.

In whatever land that babe shall grow,
Whether the world will hear or no,
If he be strong, or if he be weak,
No other word his soul shall speak.

If the time be ripe, and he doth succeed,
In speaking the word in a noble deed,
With illumined fires, and loud-peal'd bells,
We say :—" In our land a hero dwells."

If in colour or music he breathe it out,
Each soul respondeth, and none shall doubt
That this is indeed the very word
Which before his birth from God he heard.

But alas ! our human tongues are slow,
And the world is fill'd with the noise of woe,
And seldom amid the din is heard
Clearly and loudly God's own word.

But when each soul shall fully speak
In its own accent, strong or weak,
The discord shall melt into music sweet,
And the poem of God shall be complete.

THE JOYS OF LIFE

As when across that splendour of the moon
A long thin rack of summer clouds is driven,
And each becomes a wonder in the heaven,
And gleams, and glows, and fades away as soon

As it has pass'd that brightness, and is nought
But a grey streak upon the midnight sky,
So doth each gladness of our life pass by,
A dream, a joy, the phantom of a thought.

And we, like children who indeed suppose
That each doth of its very virtue burn,
Stretch out our hands, and cry to each in turn
And vainly seek to stay it as it goes.

They are but damp cold mists ; O heart of mine,
Be still, and wait, and trust that when the last
Of all that strange and glimmering train has past,
Then shall the moon in spotless splendour shine.

FATHER AND MOTHER

EARTH is our mother, and her rarest joys
She casts into our laps, the childish toys
We cry for, play with, break and throw away ;
But God our Father watches us at play,
Nor chides our doting mother's lavishment ;
Yet, well he knows, though all her store were spent,
She should not find in it a single bliss
That long could satisfy a child of his.

Seldom we note him, for our eyes are full
Of our bright playthings or, it may be, dull
With eager angry tears, if one be lost,
Or some poor foolish whim of ours be cross'd ;
But yet sometimes it chances that a child
Looks up, and sees the face so calm and mild,
And runs up to him, clings about his knee,
And says ;—“ O Father, Father, pity me,
I've lost the pretty plaything Mother gave.”

And then he bends his head down, and in grave
But loving tones doth speak such tender things
That child shall need no other comfortings ;
And those whom thus he talks to find it sweet
To sit and dream for hours beside his feet.

And oftentimes he stretcheth out his hand
Where one of these his little ones doth stand,
And takes its toy, and at his touch is wrought
A wonder ; for not even in our thought
Can we conceive of such a joy as he
Can make the smallest gift of Earth to be ;
Nor shall that gladness ever pass away,
For still it grows in beauty day by day ;
Or if, indeed, the outward form be broken,
Yet is it as a sweet word fondly spoken.

O Father, Father, take this joy of mine,
This broken joy, in that strong hand of thine,
That it may grow a bright and tender star
To lead me to the heights where angels are.

THE SOUL'S RITUAL

WHEN we have anything to say,
We have no rest by night and day,
But seek through earth, and sea, and air,
For everything that's rich and rare,
Till we have found a fitting dress
To body forth its loveliness.

But he, the Man who meekly trod
Our earth, the human Son of God,
Did deepest mysteries consign
To simplest symbols :—bread and wine,
The common need, the common good,
That were his hearers' daily food.

And thus he gives to great and small
A sacred daily ritual,
For e'en the coarsest claims of Earth,
If duly paid, surpass in worth
The brightest vision we can dream
By violet bank or liliated stream.

Of all our duties, there is none
So small that, if 'tis truly done,
With simple heart and pure intent,
It shall not be a sacrament.

THE PAST

I call'd the Past fond names ;—" O dear, dear Past,"
I said, " O matron with the tender eyes,
And lips attuned to soothing lullabies,
Sing me to sleep that I may rest at last,
O dear, dear Past.

" O wise and gentle nurse, upon thy knees
Let me weep out my sorrow ; soothe thy child
With ancient tales, with ballads sweet and wild,
And the soft notes of solemn litanies.
Upon thy knees,

" Let me forget, O mother (while thy hand
Turns from caressing thy beloved dead
To linger for one moment on my head),
This vain vain strife to act or understand,
Soothed by thy hand."

But, as I spoke, came Love, in girlish guise,
 Smiling upon me, in her clearest tone
 A world of beauty yet undream'd, unknown,
 A heaven of sweetest music in her eyes ;
 O wondrous eyes !

And then I cried :—“ O foolish, foolish Past,
 Mumbler of dreary songs and senseless tales,
 In this bright light thy borrow'd glory pales,
 By these deep glooms thy gloom is overcast,
 O foolish Past.”

But she, arising, stretch'd her hand and said ;
 “ Behold, vain dreamer, she is all my own,
 My lips shall gather sweetness from her tone,
 The brightness of her locks shall crown my head,
 Shall crown my head.”

And so I call the past fond names ;—“ Dear Past,”
 I say, “ O matron with the tender eyes,
 And lips attuned to soothing lullabies,
 Sing me to sleep ; bring me in dreams at last
 To her, dear Past.”

POLAND

TO — —

We had talk'd of the weather, and dwelt
On the wonders of Nature and Art,
On the rapture we often had felt
In gazing on beauty, the free
Boundless beauty of mountain and sea,
That quiets and strengthens the heart.

Then we rose and pass'd on ; all around
Was joyous, and careless, and bright,
In the pause of the music, the sound
Of jesting and laughter was heard,
And we caught here a thought, there a word,
As we turn'd from the talk and the light
To mark how the full stars were beaming,
And the far lights were fitfully gleaming
In the silence and beauty of night.

Then you spoke, and I thought that your breast
 Heaved slightly, I thought that your tone
 Quiver'd somewhat ;—" You see that the rest
 Are lost in their mirth and their glee,
 They will leave us an hour all alone,
 And so, if you wish, you can see
 The pictures we spoke of." Your tone
 Said more than in words was express'd.

So we sat, and you show'd them ; but lo
 The sound of the music and laughter
 Died away in my ear, and the glow
 Died away in my heart, and I heard
 In its stead the wild music that stirr'd
 The dark woods of Poland, the low
 Sad wailing that followeth after
 The dead who return not : their woe
 Grew great in my heart : on my eyes
 Rose a mist as of tears, and their sighs
 Seem'd nearer to me than the laughter.

Would you know what I dream'd, what I thought,
 While I sat there so still by your side,
 The question to which I then sought,
 Though vainly, a hopeful reply,
 As I heard the fierce passionate cry
 Of a nation that rose and defied
 The wrongs that her tyrants had wrought ?

Take the pictures, and I will unfold,
If I can, what they said to my heart ;
But the words of a poet are cold,
Are dull, when compared with the light
Of swords flashing out on the night.
And the far-vaunted magic of art
Is weak, when compared with the might
Of an oath sworn in secret, the wild
Loud weeping of mother and child,
Or the low sighs when exiles depart ;
And these you have heard from of old.

BERLIN, *May*, 1872.

INTRODUCTION

More than all nations of the earth
Is Poland like unto the Lord,
Who came, although his name was Love,
To bring no olive, but a sword.

Kings give their servants ease and power,
Honours and boundless wealth ; but he,
Gave to the men whom most he loved,
The martyr's raptured agony.

And Poland's gift to those who fought,
Too brave to bear, too weak to save,
Is endless heartbreak, fruitless tears,
An exile's lot, a nameless grave.

IN POLAND

There is woe in the land, and the loud voice of
wailing

Goes up from the homesteads of Poland, and keen
Are the heart-rending moaning and sobs ; unavailin
The wild parting struggle at midnight has been.

They have taken the bravest, the noblest are taken,
And those who relied on their manhood are left ;
The widow's last trust in the future is shaken,
The maiden of lover and brother bereft.

No more, with gay laughter, returning from roaming
Through forest and moorland, shall mothers behold
Their light-hearted hunters ; no more, in the gloaming,
The maiden await him who woo'd her of old.

The stables are still, and the wolf-hounds are sleeping,
The bear and the wild-cat may fearlessly play ;
But the mothers and sisters are loud in their weeping
For those whom the Russians have drafted away.

IN A CHAMBER

A MOTHER SPEAKS.

WHY seek to comfort ?—Let me be—
 My son is gone ;
 My joy is turn'd to woe.—Ah, me !
 The years run on,
 But what good can they do me now ?
 Slowly they grow to desert years,
 Mark'd only by my falling tears,
 And deepening furrows on my brow.

The boy I nursed upon my knee,
 He loved me so,
 And women live by love—ah, me !
 In youth, you know,
 Men love us lightly, call us fair
 But love in age is far to seek ;
 Who now will kiss the wither'd cheek ?
 Who gently smooth the whitening hair ?

God of the lone, I cry to thee,
Hear thou my call.
They name thee Love, and yet—ah, me—
Thou seest it all ;
Thou seest the anguish, wrong, and woe,
And dost not save.—O God, I pray,
Deal with these rulers, even as they
Have dealt with me—no worse, but so.

IN A SMITHY

THE SMITHS SPEAK.

WHEN the woods are still,
And the night is dark,
Here we work for good or ill,
Pausing when the lark
Wakes the morning grey and chill.

Though they think her dead,
Poland forges here
Of her wrongs a purpose dread,
Of the scythe a spear :
Night is dark, but dawning red.

Long and sad is night,
Let us blow the spark
Till it glows from red to white,
Flaming through the dark
On the lands a signal light.

IN A COTTAGE

A WOMAN SPEAKS.

HUSH, my babe, the wind is loud,
Darkly drifts the passing cloud,
But the light shines full and clear
On his form and thine, my dear.

Baby, hush, our dream of joy
Turns to sadness and annoy ;
Which is stronger, love or fate ?
We must watch, and we must wait.

Hark, upon the window-pane
Something struck :—it taps again :
Love is stronger far than fear ;—
Poland calls : awake, my dear.

If I loved thee less,
I would bid thee stay,
Dreaming in one long caress
Life away.

But I love thee so
I can part from thee,
Poland calls thee, dearest ; go,
Trust in me.

I will do my part,
Do thou thine,
And I know, where'er thou art
Thou art mine.

Words and tears are vain ;
May God keep thee well,—
Turn and kiss me yet again,
So, farewell.

Hush, my babe, for father's gone,
Thou and I are left alone ;
Baby, hush, my baby, sleep,
While I weep, while I weep.

IN THE WOODS

The stars are quench'd, across the moon
 Drifts heavy cloud on cloud,
And mid the darkness of the woods
 The wind is fierce and loud.

But where to-night a ray of light
 May cast its fitful sheen,
By rock or stream, the answering gleam
 Of burnish'd steel is seen.

And where to-night the tempest's might
 Is hush'd, no voice of bird,
But low yet dread, the measured tread
 Of gathering bands is heard.

IN A VILLAGE

A MAIDEN SPEAKS.

HIDE thee, O hide thee ; the wound on thy brow,
And thy dark flashing glances betray thee, and thou
Wilt be slain if they find thee.

Hide thee, I love thee ; I hid it of yore,
There is hope in the future—O linger no more,
Death hastens behind thee.

Hide thee, O hide thee ; adown thy pale cheek
The red blood is streaming, thus wounded and weak
Hide, and wait till to-morrow.

Hide thee, I love thee ; will tend thee, and yet,
My smiles and my kisses shall make thee forget
Our land and her sorrow.

A YOUTH SPEAKS.

It is past, love ; we must part,
Thou and I,
Gentle face and tender heart,
I must die.

Thou wilt weep, dear, for awhile,
That I know,
Till a new love wakes thy smile,
Better so.

In the spring-tide of new years
Love shall wake,
Drying up these bitter tears
For my sake.

Hush, no vow, dear, so 'tis best,
Best for thee,
Be thy love and children blest,
Blest of me.

We had each a cross to take,
Thou and I,
Mine is this for Poland's sake,
I must die.

So I chose, dear ; if amiss
Can I tell ?
With this first, last, only kiss,
Fare thee well.

IN A CASTLE

A MAN SPEAKS.

HOLD the door !
I can hear them on the stair,
Pray—in half an hour, no more
There will be an end of prayer :—
Pray to God beneath your breath,
Pray to die, the best is death.

A CHILD SPEAKS.

WHY does papa stand at the door ?
And why does mamma grow still and pale ?
And why do you stop, grandma, before
You've finish'd half your tale ?

We both have been good the whole day long,
 I did not cry when nurse comb'd my hair,
 And I learnt my tasks, and I sung the song
 About Poland bold and fair.

Then why do you stop? Papa says "Pray,"
 When I rose I pray'd, and I spoke quite plain—
 Ask nurse, and when I'm sent away
 I'll say my prayers again.

Shall I say them now? O Queen of Heaven,
 Pray to thy Son for my friends and me,
 Pray that our sins may be forgiven,
 And make our country free.

A MOTHER SPEAKS.

O CHRIST, if that the faith I hold
 Be not a priestly lie,
 If thou wert scourged, and crown'd with thorns,
 If thou didst love and die,

If thou hast promised thou wilt hear
 All who shall cry to thee,
 O keep thy word, and rescue now
 These helpless babes and me.

A GRANDMOTHER SPEAKS.

O CHRIST, my Lord, why fruitless woe
Is sent us, thou alone dost know.

I do not ask thee to restrain
Our foes—to make thy love more plain ;

But by thy birth and by thy death,
By Calvary and Nazareth,

In anguish and in agony,
Lord, give us grace to trust in thee.

IN THE RUINS

THE flames are burnt out ; on the fair woodland stand
The dark heaps of ruin ; the scythe and the plough
Lie still in their places, uncared for, for now
When the shield has been cleft, and within the strong
hand
The sharp sword is broken,

Who cares for the harvest ? In silence and dread
The peasants are working, are bearing away
The wreck of their homesteads ; they pause as to pray
When they lift from the rubbish the forms of the dead,
But no word is spoken.

They lay them together upon the damp ground,
The charr'd mangled corpses : their beauty and pride
Have pass'd ; man and master repose side by side,
But wherever a torn Polish riband is found,
That is kept as a token.

IN A COTTAGE

A WOMAN SPEAKS.

Shadows come, and shadows go,
But the flame burns still and red,
And my tears perforce will flow,
In this weariness and dread ;
Weeping so,
When the garish sun is high,
When the quiet woodlands sleep,
That a man may love and die,
While we only love and weep.

Thus I fashion one by one
Bullets of the harmless lead,
When shall the sad task be done,
And my heart be comforted ?
There is none
With me when the sun is high,
Or the quiet woodlands sleep ;
Those we cherish love and die,
We can only love and weep.

None but baby ; when the low
Sad wind moaneth—hush, my dear !—
Shadows come, and shadows go,
I am faint with care and fear,
Can I know
Who beneath the midnight sky
Moans as sadly—baby, sleep !—
Since a man must love and die,
While we only love and weep.

IN THE WOODS

A MAN SPEAKS.

WE are the last, I think the last
 Of all who stood for Poland's right,
 Her star that erewhile shone so bright
 Sinks, by the storm-clouds overcast :—
 We are the last.

The Russian balls fall thick and fast ;
 See, where but now a comrade stood,
 That heap of flesh, that pool of blood ;
 Another hour and all is past,
 We are the last.

Some loved our Poland when she cast
 Sweet smiles around, with flattering breath
 They praised her ; in this bitter death
 We love her, now all hope is past,
 True to the last.

A YOUNG MAN SPEAKS.

WE are the last, all hope is past,
 But not with faltering breath
 Ill luck divining,
 With slow resigning,
 And sad repining,
 We'll meet our death.

Not sadly, coldly, but gladly, boldly,
 As 'twere a bridal, we'll greet the morn,
 In joyous seeming,
 With bright swords gleaming,
 And young eyes beaming
 In pride and scorn.

Sing—the ball hisses ; sharp are thy kisses,
 Poland ; yet sweet is thy coming through dread,
 They bought, and they sold thee,
 Our weak arms enfold thee,
 Our strong hearts uphold thee,
 O welcome thy dead !

ALL THE POLES SING.

THOUGH the word of doom be spoken,
 Though our faithful ranks be broken,
 Be our death a living token
 That our Poland is not dead.

Tyrants wasted and malign'd her,
Cowards doubted and resign'd her,
Banded nations mock and bind her,
But our Poland is not dead.

Witness years of yearning sadness,
Witness homes bereft of gladness,
Still despair and raging madness,
That our Poland is not dead.

Witness love for her neglected,
Joy and hope for her rejected,
Life despised and death accepted,
That our Poland is not dead.

THE END.



