

Lyric Moods

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Lyric Moods

**Melbourne
Thomas C. Lothian
1909**

Heart-easer thou, sweet Poesy! alone
Have I with thee into oblivion gone
And drunk the nectar of the gods apart,
As from the bowl of a mysterious art
In that strange air, lapped in Elysian ease
As by the murmur of immortal seas;
And lying rapt in wonder thus have heard
As one in sleep might hear a mystic word:
*He only shall a poet sit and sing
Who is at heart as Jove, the heavenly king.*

Lyric Moods

Proem.

I only knew one poet in my life.

— BROWNING.

I have not known a poet but myself,
If I'm indeed one, as I ought to be,
Considering how these many years I've made
The Muse now such a woman in my life.
No flesh and blood could put to proof the art
With which I wooed her; ay, and woo her still,
Though, as I deem, ere this she has been won.

I have not known another, as I say,
Who could be called a poet, or has been
Acclaimed such by the not too wise in wit
Who label literature's itinerants —
Professed discerners (as in every art
With sheer cock-surety there be those who
Deem their diploma Fame's own warranty);
Who in this journal or in that take stock
O' the issue of thought's making — song at best
A poor result, not to much tending (or if
Esteemed, good, e'en though flawed in some way still).
So these crumb-gatherers for the multitude
Still dole their wit or wisdom week by week,
'Piece out our imperfections,' choose, elect
In this or that craft him or her as first,
Second, or third, whatever the degree
Arrived at in the inkling of a whim;
And so with their diploma set the seal
To the rank world's preferment, failing which,
Mere poets must have a bad time of it!

Or haply some one in song's craft himself
Elects himself the chief musician, and
The other nine and ninety jugglers, who
Jig ape-like in the halo of his vogue.
'Tis then song does become ridiculous,
And the proud name of poet poor indeed.

Proud name? Alas! the power of pride is gone,
And the dull world's humility is theirs;
The new bards who, unlike the old, gauge not
The grandeur of the office they fulfil —
The old knight-errantry of Song who rode
Triumphant with God's targe in the world's eye,
Emblazoned with the heraldry of soul
In this wise or in that — the squires of Truth,
Love's worshippers or Beauty's votaries,
Whose mere life was the melody of all.

It may, in fact, be song at best is but
The rind of this life's apple, not its core,
And the chief singers still but mendicants
Of the world's love; and yet it is in sooth
The one thing sweet to its own votary;
As to the painter his art, too, is all,
And to the sculptor his. Ay, though but rinds
At best, allowed, of our life's apples here,
Yet the rind, no less than the core, is part
O' the perfect fruit — more toothsome than the core,
So the white flesh is eaten with it — so
Song includes life, as life, including song,
Retains the sweetness of its strength, and yields
To all sustainment and fruition too;
Though, as within the earthy fruit, thought's pulp
Is th' first thing still, and failing which indeed
The eater then deems his enjoyment null:
Song without life is such a withered fruit.
Ah! but thou sayest that song's subserviency
To life, the mere foot on the daily fact
Treading, not the imaginary air,
But the mire of the actual, breeds alloy
Too gross for beauty; that 'tis not in these —
The soilure of the animal, the slag
Of the material, or custom's pack, —
Ay, not in these the effluent wings dilate,
The breath diviner has its issue, nor
Spirit to heaven finds the nearest way!
And rightly sayest: Life in these is all,
And has with these its ending too; but song,
That more than life of which the poet sings
With power authentic in each syllable,
As the moon sends a gleam down watery glooms

To hint of heaven — song, as it were, unwraps
All the dense folds of life, one by one, so
To find a spark of the divine; or tears
The bodily vesture from the breathing man,
And on the soul's escape pursuing sings
Of th' more than life, which 'neath the earthy rags,
For years it may be blind and deaf and dumb,
Was so uncognisant that God was near —
That heaven was possible, and the escape
So easy when His *sesame* was said!

As thou, I then on song this value set,
That it can leaven life, — a yeast of soul
So quickening us, we are not mere dough, but
Dough with a resurrection in it here,
And capable of any miracle! —
At that we'll let it stand; sometime elsewhere
With other eyes and other ears we may
Perceive a higher meaning in it all;
Song-perfect then, or so life-perfect, we
Shall *be* the song, not make it any more.

At the Back of the Brain.

At the back of the brain a picture lies
Of all we have been and done,
And ever and then a color flames
In the shadow of thought's sun.

At the back of the brain our life-tale's writ
In wondrous words and fine,
And poet and painter but mimic it,
Your life, my friend, and mine.

They are God's spies it may be, yet
They lack the art to limn
The back of the brain of a man that moves
And makes a dream of him.

Urania's Lover.

O poet, thou art called to tread her ways,
Hers, mistress of the soul, Urania fair.
(Ah God! how fair, how all adorable,
But those who have wooed her can tell!)
All of thy nights and days,
All of thy light and air,
Hers only, so thy soul shall haply win
Grace in those eyes
That goddess-wise
Smile in that heaven man's highest have enter'd in.

Thou'rt called to Love's high hest, soul-wooer thou
Of the divinest beauty man may know —
Soul-wooer and soul-winner, so thy feet
Fail not nor falter, so earth's cheat
Clip not thy burning brow
With its chill wreath, and so
Darken the heavenly light within the brain;
But let thy forehead be
Starred with pure poesy,
So thou to her high mystery attain.

Thy love a Goddess and her heaven thy home!
By the ethereal beauty in those eyes,
O poet! bless the loss of all things here
So but thy soul in that fine sphere,
Beloved of her, may roam
No more with wandering cries —
At last may bow before her face, and be,
Though woman-born, divine,
When all of hers is thine,
And thou a star of God's ascendancy.

Ah! through that heaven shall not the wonder trail
Of thy first worship, like a comet's hair
Leagues on leagues floating from the flying star?
Shall not thy first faint steps afar

Move like a being pale
Amid the glory there
Up to the voiceless beauty of her brow,
As thou dost see, as 'twere,
Thy whole life with her there —
See from that height the depth where thou art now?

The Ghost Ship.

Behold her on the silent sea,
Yon vessel like a spirit there!
Moved in a dream's reality,
As if she trod the air.
None can tell from what creek or bay
She sailed out, or by night or day;
They watch her like a vision gone
Over the sea's oblivion.

And, lo! she fades a spectre thin,
Part of the moonlight and the sea;
As if the waves and stars met in
A moment's phantasy!
Or is it they stand hushed apart
And listen to her breathing heart,
As if the ghostly pulses stirred
To the voice of a faery bird.

A bird that chaunts somewhere between
The waters and the starry skies
A mystic song of what has been
Seen not of human eyes
Since when the world grew into birth,
And the white Moon enamoured Earth:
And she as in a vision gone
Moves to the music on — and on.

The Isles of Sleep.

The opiate isles upon time's sea
In the dream-dark
Rise with their harbours silently
Before each day-abandoned bark,
And the worn mariner anchors there
Till thought, new-waked in the dewy air,
Sings like a lark.

The silent isles with their dream-shores
On the waves float,
Whereto the faint-eyed mariner oars
Within the dusk his eerie boat;
All care put by, like one who knows
No tide there turns and no wind blows,
Near or remote!

From day to day upon time's main
We sail on so,
Sure every night some port to gain
In the dream-dark where no winds blow;
Until we too this sea have cross'd
E'en like the galleons that were tost
Here long ago.

Some seem each day to sail so far,
They reach that shore
So very soon where all things are
As they will be for evermore;
Some for so many a night and day
Have to drift on their lonely way
Ere all is o'er.

But all sails touch the land at last:
The slowest come
As in a mist out of the past —
The last dream-isle fades on the foam,
The last stars rise, the last stars set,
And there is but the last day yet

'Tween them and home.

Love in Hades.

I saw Love pass with Charon down
The pale infernal tide,
To visit in the starless town
All who for him had died.

The gay God and the old Ghost came
Slow to that sleepy shore,
And a dead passion burned like flame
Before each true-love's door!

Into this place and that he stept:
The eyes still held their tears,
Though some had their strange sorrow kept
More than ten thousand years.

He saw the old and young who went
Devoid of life, yet who,
Though all their joys on earth were spent,
Were to their dream-loves true.

He saw all who had worshipped him
Before thought's light withdrew,
Until the ages seemed to swim
Round him there dying too!

And he could feel his faint heart beat
A ghostly tune with theirs,
As he, too, might cease to compete
With the decaying years.

Ay! though a God, he went aghast
From the mysterious shore,
And Charon smiled when he at last
Touched time with him once more.

Song.

Love, love me only,
 Love me for ever;
My life's been lonely,
 A joyless endeavor.
Though earth were heaven,
 I in it for ever,
Of thee bereaven —
 I'd love again never.

The Storm.

*“Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed.”*
— KEATS.

I can hear the great boughs swing
Through the stormy night,
Each a dryad-haunted thing
With its dark delight,
As within an old-world air
When the Gods were everywhere.

All the wood seems to be up
At some eerie play,
Wild as Bacchanals whose sup
Had all through the day
Been a deep one, as they roar
With the waves upon the shore.

'Tis in sooth as Pan, too, mad
For fair Syrinx fled,
Had from Hades come, and had
Brought with him the dead
Who of old had worshipped him
To a midnight revel grim.

Or is it that Syrinx too,
From the reed restored,
Romps it as the satyrs do
With her now-loved lord?
And is this the night of nights,
And are these their marriage rites?

Who shall say? The great boughs swing,
As Time in a whirl
Did to the dark forest bring
The goat-god and his girl,
With the earth-enamoured crew
For a mystic hour or two.

Till amid the tumult I
 Fall asleep, like one
Who had put the ages by
 In a dream begun
Far back in another sphere,
Ere my 'wildered soul came here!

Ah! the dream that may indeed
 Outlive all I know,
When like one whom Fate has freed
 I through Hades go,
And see the great vision cast
On the future by the past.

A Memory.

She had an other-worldly air,
So like a flower she grew,
As if her thoughts and feelings were
The only life she knew.

She moved in other ways apart,
As in a secret place,
And the emotion of her heart
Seemed breathing in her face.

It was as if a faery power
Had charmed her with its mood,
And graced her with the dreamy dower
Of earthly angelhood.

And when Death touched her starry brow,
It seemed as if it were
The dream she was became somehow
Another dream of her.

Song.

Have I not touched thy spirit?
Have I not heard it sing?
And can my love inherit
A purer, sweeter thing?

Alas! I am so earthy,
Yet e'en God's love might be
Less dear to thee, less worthy
Than my humanity.

The Gleaners.

They sang, that were the young world's gleaners,
Like birds on a bough,
Reaping the first-fruits of love's sowing;
The reapers now
Are sad, as they to harvest going
Voice love's vow.

So much of thought has made us weary,
We cannot sing
Now only of the heart's sweet meaning
In everything,
As they who in the young world gleaning
Went caroling.

The Lyric Rose.

What other work in the world have I
Than but to sing my song, and die?

No other work of hate or love
For hell below or heaven above!

As if it were the one thing true
For me, whatever others do,

My days and nights to this tune set
As Romeo to Juliet,

I put all else within time by;
For this do live — for this would die,

If that but haply on my tomb
A lyric rose should bud and bloom,

The which some passer-by might swear
Was precious in its beauty there,

And, kneeling, might a petal take
And love it for the Singer's sake!

A Girl's Desire.

For love I, too, could die (she said) nor fear it,
Such love as some of the dead queens have had
Whose sorrow matched their beauty. I could bear it,
And I think die too, to have been so glad.

With the sweet wonder in a great light lying
I would not e'en upbraid the deadly dart,
But gazing in the eyes of my Love, dying,
Passion my beauty in his aching heart.

Beyond the shadow of my own renewal
So to have set my beauty like a flame,
Quivering as Helen's — ah! that Trojan jewel,
Where all love's pride and sorrow has a name —

I, too, would take time's grandeur to the dust,
And haply in Hades smile as lovers must.

Song.

Love's but to be had this way:
Reverent you must be with her,
Letting your heart night and day
Dreamy in her beauty stir.
God has set her to a tune
You may never match until,
Like the moonlight in the moon,
You with her own passion fill.

Is she worth this to you, worth
All that you can think or say —
The one flower of life on earth?
If not, put your dream away!
Close the portals of your speech,
Let not e'en a fancy stir,
If your rapture can but reach
To her beauty — not to her.

Dies Irae.

The last great Day it may be near,
Or Man may pass ere it comes here.

There may be nothing but weeds and flowers
Over the Earth in her dying hours;

Men, beasts and birds may all be gone
Ere the world's disaster shall come on;

Or there may be neither grass nor trees,
But stony wastes round the ashen seas —

No life to take when the days are dead,
And God is doing the thing He said;

Nothing but Desolation's wing
Like a sunless mist o'er everything!

And all the millions long, long gone,
To ashes turned in Oblivion;

And the last great Day shall but consume
The bones of a world in its fiery tomb,

As God puts by for ever and aye
The thought of the sorrow that's passed away!

The Poem.

These bones have life, and this heart knows
The poem that this hand has writ
The wind of God within it blows,
The light of God, too, shines in it.

Gather the words as sands, and cast
Them in the silence of the sphere,
The imaginary sound shall last
Till thought grows deaf to all things here

Ay! then regather, word by word,
The wonder of the mystic pen,
And ye shall hear a lonely bird
Singing within the hearts of men.

A form, a color, light and air,
'Tis like the soul — a phantasy
Which men may picture anywhere
Till God becomes a memory!

An Aspiration.

Music, with the tears in it,
Through my soul is ringing,
Moods like bodies flame and flit
Through the spirit's singing;
Dream-birds half-articulate,
Which no charms can capture,
Come by twos and nest and mate
In a moment's rapture.

Now I seem to be upborne
On a starry pinion
Where the poet's hope forlorn
Has divine dominion —
Where he sees the clouds of earth
Gather light and cluster,
As babes on the dawn of Birth
Watch the visions muster!

All that thought and feeling share
In a soul's possession
To my singing seems to bear
A divine confession;
As within my dreaming brain
Lips of inspiration
Breathe the beauty gone again
On a new creation.

Winged Words.

The wingéd words, they pass
Still everywhere,
Seeds of the spirit-grass
The dream-winds bear
From that heart-field to this,
Where thought as feeling is;
There's not a seed will miss
Life, once sown there.

They pass, the faery words,
In shade and shine,
As they were magic birds
This heart of mine
Gave shape and color to,
As in the light and dew
The primal creatures grew
From germs divine.

Life's Eden.

'Tis in sooth life's Eden,
We within it;
Love put all the seed in
To begin it,

Made the air to fan it,
Light illumine,
Then put on the planet
Man and woman —

Us with our twin-nature
Dreamy framéd,
One with every creature
Thought has naméd.

Though the fiend find Eden,
Shall he find us?
In the heart so hidden
Love has shrined us,

By no earthly portal
May they enter
Where the life immortal
Has its centre —

Paths that are forbidden
Sin and sorrow,
In the heart of Eden
Love's to-morrow

Walks with feet that trod in
God's endeavor,
With the life of God in
Ours for ever!

At Camelot.

Her maiden eyes were redolent of love,
Warm-bosomed as she breathed the passioned air
Of old romance, and did in fancy move
'Mong the gay knights who died for ladies fair;
Until she heard the thunder of the press,
And so became a lover: her heart rang
The note of Love's alarm, his tenderness,
When in the onset all the tourney sang;
And she was one of the dead ladies, who,
In beauty's blazon, to his rushy bower
With Launcelot, when the Queen was gone, withdrew
Under the shadow of the tourney tower;
And liling to him through the gloaming, made
His heart a lyre whereon her passion played.

The Passion of Love's Power.

Touch me, from out your breast of love,
 With such white hands that be
As beautiful as a dream of
 Your lips' virginity;

Or else look pity on my hope,
 And that sweet sorrow shall
With the pang of departure cope,
 And make amends for all.

Post Mortem.

When I have passed the bourne of ear and eye,
 And thou my whereabouts no more canst tell;
When all I am is but a phantasy,
 Seen in thy heart, to none else visible:
When haply slow time shall have faded then,
 And thee too brought to thy departure here,
But call me in the spirit, and again
 My soul, that was thy mate, shall answer, dear!
Then from the confines of that shadowy clime
 As in a visionary light I'll come
To where, within the fading fields of time,
 Thy soul waits mine, with whom to journey home
Till, with thy hand in mine, we take our way
Where all that we have been is ours for aye.

At the Last.

The sky grows white with the moon,
And the sea yearns up to the night
As the soul to an unknown height,
Drawn thence by a starry rune.
Only a lost wind strays,
Like the breath of Passion blown
In the vault of the night unknown;
And the heart in me sobs and says:
“After a while we, too,
Shall rest as the stars above,
When we have no more to do
With the dream of life and love.”

O Time! thy feet that run
Over the hills and waves,
Over the cradles and graves,
From the first to the final sun!
Some day thou too shalt cease —
Some way there'll come to thee
Death's white tranquility,
The boon of an awful peace —
When the latest grief shall flow
With the surge that drifts away,
And the Night shall no more go
In her endless chase of Day.

Then shall the worn heart rest,
Then shall the sad Sea yearn
No more for the Moon's return,
Like a bird on its frozen nest
Dead, with her young ones dead
Under her breast on the bough,
Where nothing can wake them now —
Not the Dawn with its golden tread:
Where Death has been good to all,
Good to the mother and young,
And the dreams are beyond recall,

And the songs have all been sung.

So, at the last, to sleep!

So, at the last, to be

Still as the dead still sea!

Never to wake and weep,

Never to know Love's pain,

Never to yearn on for

What is gone for evermore;

To be as we were again

Ere we came o'er the bourne of birth,

Ere we knew of the fading flowers,

Of love and of life on Earth

And the hearts that were not ours!

The Hamadryad.

Last night I was like one who prayed
 Beneath a mystic tree
Whose windless leaves a murmur made,
 As if it there might be
A spirit in the sap that laid
 Its spell on them and me.

A creature who, invisible,
 In sorrow and in mirth,
Through summer's heat or when the chill
 Is on the dreaming Earth,
Sings as in sleep divinely still
 The secret of its birth.

(And as it sings, possessed, apart
 From all things far and near,
The music of its own strange heart
 Is all it seems to hear,
As if its ardour made an art
 Of its own atmosphere.

Still none who come there hear the song
 Until their souls are bowed
Beneath the mystic boughs, among
 Whose living leaves a crowd
Of spirit voices, weak and strong,
 Sing all that God allowed).

Oh! wondrous was that faery strain,
 Too holy to be heard
But by the soul with no profane
 Imagination stirr'd —
Like a seer when his heart and brain
 Are in the coming word,

And he bows low before the breath
 Of that which, as a flame,
All that he is illumineth

And calls him as by name,
When one to him are Life and Death,
One honour and one shame.

Ah! so possessed I heard them sing,
The many voices who
Were the sense of a secret thing
That with the tree-life grew,
As it did from the same seed spring
And a dream-breath from it drew —

The mystic life which God had shut
Within the dark seed's core,
Diverse from all that He had put
In others evermore —
No hint of death behind it, but
Of life that is before!

The tree-life in more lives than this —
Of that it sings for aye —
And as I listened the world's hiss
In silence died away,
And the perfect life for all that is
Like a dream on me lay.

A Song of the Sea.

Here within the half-light 'tween the night and day
Upon the sands I lie, with thoughts that idly stirr'd
Seem, as in a dream, with life and death to play,
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird.

In my heart I hear it, the murmur of the sea,
Ah! and memories of other lives are stirr'd,
As somewise there came a mystic voice to me
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird.

Who but knows that in me is a ghost that hears
A voice it heard of old in the primeval word —
A memory so dim, it like a dream appears
As o'er the sea there flits a pale white bird!

Autumn.

I in the autumn of my days
Stand by a place of tears,
And hear the unborn children weep
Within the unborn years;
And feel how all God's sorrow must
Go wailing on until
Man's autumn, too, is past, and he
May winter from all ill.

* * * * *

A pale light in the fading wood,
The sob of dying leaves —
A lorn bird lying in the dusk
Of life that wakes and grieves!
O mournful heart whose love is dust,
In the decaying wood
Death's deepening mystery will cling
Round thee like solitude.

In the Grass.

'Tis as if I saw it all — sat now in the grass, and heard
The soft warm wind in my ears like the lilt of a lonely bird;
Sat now in the grasses so — saw, but said never a word.

The two of them in the wood, below me there by the rill;
He with the light on his brow, she in the shadow still;
And a cloud so white goes over the blue on the gleaming hill.

My nest in the grass was good: they deemed that none might see —
Ah God in heaven! my eyes looked out of the hell in me,
As his arm went round her waist, and his lips where mine might be —

Touched hers, as her face drew up like a flower in the light to his —
Touched hers, as I felt her soul shine out in a dream of bliss;
While mine with the pangs of hell was alive in a world like this!

I dared not move, nor could I shut my eyes to it all;
And still they clung and kissed: I heard the waterfall,
I heard the warm wind sing till the day began to pall.

And then they rose, the twain who had taken my life from me;
I did not rise, but lay where none might hear or see,
In the grass in the dark and sobbed, “Would God that the end might be!”

The years have come since then, and the years have gone but I,
Though the fever of death was strong upon me, did not die;
And though I am old and weak as upon my couch I lie,

'Tis as if I saw it all — sat still in the grass, and heard
The soft warm wind in my ears like the lilt of a lonely bird;
Sat still in the grasses so — saw, but said never a word.

The Hill.

The holy lamps of Evening shine
Sheer in the West — the air is still —
As I sit with this heart of mine
At the foot of Parnassus' hill.

Through my life's day I've reached to this —
To see where the immortals trod,
Winding up the dark height, I wis,
Till they came on the light of God.

Ah! I, a pilgrim with tired feet,
Have touched the verge of their renown,
As I look up on Homer's seat
And know the bards may not come down.

Still on those peaks, as powers apart,
They breathe the air now breathed by me,
For each has climbed the human heart —
The deathless hill of Poesy!

God's Rest.

I saw God in a dream go by,
As if He trod the phantom air
Within a hushed eternity,
Dead worlds around Him everywhere.

No sign of life — and God asleep!
All things absorbed in Him at last;
Nothing for Him to care for, keep,
Since thought from everything had passed.

A mystic vision on its way
His image filled the awful gloom,
As if His work were o'er for aye —
Himself His own creation's tomb!

As if, when sleep fell on Him, all
Sensation with a tremor ceased,
As all things felt the weird recall,
And the gigantic strain released.

The worlds stayed still without a breath,
Entranced within the phantom air,
Since God had done with life and death
And ta'en Himself from everywhere.

This was His Sabbath. In the past
'Tis said He rested for a day;
But this was a sleep that would last,
Since He had done with all for aye.

By the Sea.

The heat is on the sea, and Noon
Has hushed the sounds upon the shore;
There is a silence evermore
That with the heart is so in tune
That ear and eye their senses steep
As if within a dreamy dew,
As charmed as when the bells of Sleep
To Night's church, Sweet, are calling you.

A sail far off hushed in the light
Comes into view and fades, as 'twere
Something that rose from slumber there:
E'en as a blind man musing might
Image a bird upon the wing,
The picture seems to us the same,
The whole bright noon around the thing,
As if it with the silence came.

And still we lie in the warm grass,
Our senses on the shining sea,
While thought like a sweet lethargy
Counts not the moments as they pass;
As time itself had ceased to stir,
The glamour here on everything
Grows one with us, as all things were
Where now no winds are wandering.

Ever and Only.

Be with me ever and only,
 No other in thought with you;
Only without me lonely,
 Ever in this way true.
So will I be yours only,
 Whatever I dream or do,
Only without you lonely,
 Ever in this way true.

Towards the Close.

Time grows upon us until we exhaust
 Hope's possibilities, and then we die
Who thus of life each make a holocaust,
 Till all we have in nature is put by.
No one survives himself, and none can so
 Reclaim the sentiment of youth, that he
Would, like a fallen leaf, new-budded grow
 On the bare boughs of joy's mortality.
Oh! in what charms may Death himself reveal
 When the life-instinct turns at last to him,
Then for all succour for the power to heal
 That sickness of our days when all grows dim!
More fragrant than than roses, sweeter far,
The airs that come from the old darkness are.

Night-Bound.

Comes the night that brings me rest,
Comes the dark that folds me in
This of all my nights the best,
Nights of virtue, nights of sin.

I can hear a water moan,
And it seems no mortal tide,
But my own grey life that's gone
With the darkness to abide.

Ah! beyond the veil I pierce —
See my pain and pleasure done
In a mouldering universe
Without stars and without sun!

Through my warm red veins the chill
Of Death's coming seems to creep,
Till the world grows ghasty still
To me in my lonely sleep

So I cease: this night is mine;
Other nights for other things!
Comes the gloom that is divine
With the peace for me it brings.

The Poet's Songs.

*Ingenio arbusta ubi nata sunt,
non insita.*

— Naevis.

The copse-wood merely sows
Itself, not planted;
And so it is with those
Strange and enchanted
Moods that have taken root,
Bloomed, and e'en borne fruit,
Or e'er the poet knew't,
Beauty-haunted.

The little songs that fly,
When the lips parted
Let dreams of ear and eye
Forth, so warm-hearted:
Be it a joy or pain,
Each to chaunt is fain
What in the parent brain
Soothed or smarted.

This is the poet's dower,
None, none completer;
As if 'twere Love's own flower,
Than all flowers sweeter,
Which, as the seer saith,
Still breathes a faery breath
Where Beauty smiles, though Death
May come to meet her.

Marriage Morn.

Fades the moonlight on the sea,
And the dawn is coming in —
What will this day bring for me,
This of all days, Evelyn?

Ah! to-day our hands we plight;
Life or death is in the vow;
All that earth knows of delight
Or of grief is round me now —

While the dawn-light limns the shore,
And thou in thy lonely sleep
Dream'st thy maiden dreams before
Hymen's mystery shall steep

Thy heart's fancies in mine own,
And the pulse of passion stir
With the ecstasy that's known
Only to Love's worshipper.

Early Summer.

The light is silent on the greeny sward,
And from a bough above the wild dove's coo
Steals on the ear like a dream-dewy word,
Or the voice of one of a faery crew.

The warmth within the azure of the hills
Breathes like the picture of a perfect thing,
Which some supernal artist limning has
Made mystical with love's remembering.

Now the faint murmur of the coming tide
Grows like a spirit in the quiet cove,
While with a drowsy murmur kin to it
The brown bees among the sweet flowers rove.

Here where the heart could fold itself, and sleep
As if within a shining century,
Naught seems to change but thought, and even it
Makes every change a tender melody.

All here is so remote from the world's care,
As if it were a dream that would not fade,
Amid so much that man has ruined here
Like some old-world divineness that has stayed.

Spirit Fear.

I look with half unfriendly eyes
 Into the casual eyes I meet,
As if my spirit feared surprise,
 Dim-remembered with some old defeat.

In a far life it may be, when
 It breathed in a monastic cell,
And found a fallacy in men
 More sad than any tongue can tell

Or flashing in a warrior's fame
 A sword for friendship fiercely drew
But turned to dust an honored name
 And made life's mead a bitter brew.

And still like an ancestral stain
 The memory on the spirit lies,
And still it fears to meet again
 The light of those accusing eyes

The Bride.

Her bridal dawn! her heart was fed
Last night with eerie food,
As, one by one, her lovers dead
Came in the solitude,
And shared the last sad feast with her
In Beauty's grave, as if it were
To-morrow, white and cold,
The ghost of all that she had been
Would pass away for e'er, as e'en
Their dreams had died of old.

Each, with his sigil of despair,
Moved in the eerie room,
For all were cognisant (as e'er
All are beyond the tomb)
That one night more the virgin tie
Which had bound them would be put by,
As she felt passion's stir
Throb in her maidenhood, until
All that she was, for good and ill,
Became a dream to her.

And so with mystic eyes and ears
They came to say good-bye,
Who had been her bright girlhood's peers
And knew e'en love must die —
That it must be a shadow, too,
As life had long been in the blue
And golden light above;
And as each pledged her in the dim
Remoteness, there came over him
The last desire of love.

The Glove of the Live Lady.

Her glove! It was rare Ben who sung it,
That best of gloves of the lady dead!
Another's here, as one had flung it
In anger at her lover's head.
Was it but this that it was made for,
One of a pair perhaps he'd paid for,
To have it favored in this fashion?
But gloves are gloves, and passion's passion!
And he, it may be, liked her better
For her rich anger as she threw it:
'Twas worth a glove to so upset her
And know he had the power to do it,
So he might kiss the white hands after
Her passion turned to tears and laughter!

Song.

They have been here and had this light
Who in their graves are lying,
And e'en the youngest life to-night
Is gradually dying.
Our birth's a kind of death we have
When we upon time waken,
A step still nearer to the grave
With every breath is taken.

We are doomed being born, as 'twere
Decay within us breeding,
Or e'en as time did groan and bear
But death's immortal seeding;
For we are made of stuff that goes
So easy to decaying,
'Tis at the best the spirit's clothes
In which it goes a-Maying.

The Flower.

I.

The flower in its own scent breathes till it dies
As if the scent its very birth-breath were
(As love is life's) which, while it occupies

Like a mesmeric light the living air,
Feeds every portion of the tender hue
In which it manifests so subtly fair

The faery form, which as in a dream grew
Out of the dark earth with ethereal power
Quickening its limbs, as those of a babe who

Draws from its mother's life a vital dower
Of warmth and beauty, thrilling breast and brain
Till it too comes to birth — a perfect flower

With its own aura, like a subtle strain
Which must vibrate to every joy and pain.

II.

The seeing eye and hearing ear are fed
With nature's nurture, and the mind imbues
Earth and all things within it, even the dead,

With its own sap that with thought's mystic hues
Bourgeons in every waking hour, and e'en
When sleep does all the inner life transfuse

With its own radiance, and the unseen
Becomes a part of us too, as we were
Back in some other sphere where we had been

Before the new thought breathed in the old air,
And the new body budded into birth,
Making us all that we are now who bear

The signs in us of all the woe and mirth
That came and has gone on with man on earth.

III.

Far back in the unstoried past, whose rune
No sage has ciphered and no bard has sung,
In the beginning of the sun and moon

When e'en the oldest hill was very young —
Ah! then perchance the seed that was us first
Took root in th' mystic soil whence we have (Unclear:)

Under the very hand of God, and burst
Into the secret being it has had,
All through the enchanted aeons strangely nursed

From death to life between the good and bad;
E'en as it were a spirit-germ that grew
By some mysterious process, and was clad

E'en like the flowers with varying form and hue,
Till it ends in what all may end in too!

The Retreat.

Against my lonely latter years
I'll build a faery home for me —
Proof against sorrow with its fears,
And age with its adversity.

Within a region bosomed high
Above the ways of worldly men,
In a demesne where by-and-by
I oft shall come and go again.

Ah! there my home in a green nook
Shall sweetly stand the siege of time,
Where Thought may read his riddle-book
As to the murmur of old rhyme.

And faery footings still shall lead
My feet among mesmeric ways,
Where life is like a dream indeed,
And all the days are summer days.

But sylphs and fays and simple things
Shall murmur in my pensive ear,
Until the change shall come that brings
Me and my world to ruin here.

Her Glass.

Her glass yet holds, or seems to hold her!
But now she visioned herself here;
Her glass spoke truth, and fondly told her
What a man might, a man's lips near
The shell of her soft ear.

But too cold thing that could not capture
The blush of beauty, as it were!
When a man's heart with dreamy rapture
Would at the least, least touch of her
Feel all his pulses stir.

A River Isle.

A little island in the river
There is, round which the breezes quiver
 Like sweet birds that would stay
 A moment on their way,
So green it is with leaves and grass,
And chequered by the clouds that pass
Far over in the blue above:
As sweet with flowers as life with love,
 And breathing of a mood
That, like a wild bird in the city's din,
Though far from all its kith and kin,
 Sustains its solitude.

At Love's Beginning.

I might not have it then — I might not, yet
She was so near to me, could I forget
She might be nearer? There was in her eyes —
What shall I say? — a hint of the sunrise
Of her heart's day: would it then break on me
In my life's glory, or should I but see
The malediction of that morning pour
Disaster on my heart for evermore?
I did not know, and all I was became
A hush, a wonder. I scarce breathed her name,
Scarce dared to read her eyes too deeply, lest
Wrath in their tenderness should be exprest;
When suddenly love's lightning ran a streak
Up the white throat into the pallid cheek;
Her eyes took wonder too — and even thus
What we to either were, revealed to us,
Rose like God's heaven, at once, in such a way
For aye; and her eyes fell as mine took sway
Upon the moment when she knew it all,
And knew in knowing it beyond recall
Was the confession which her heart had made
With eyes, not lips, ere lips to mine were laid —
That mystic moment, when all she was drew
Out of herself, as all that I was too,
Emptied of self, then found itself in her.

Shakespeare?

And what think ye of Shakespeare? 'Twas not he
Of Stratford is the lord of England's lyre;
Ay, not the rustic lad, whoe'er it be,
Momentous in his doing and desire.
But little Latin and less Greek? Ah, no!
It was a teeming scholar who enwrought
The wondrous pages where the wisest go
For th' culmination of the life of thought.
No jovial actor, no mere Shakescene who
Found it so hard his dear name to indite,
The marvellous pictures of our nature drew
And limned the universe in his delight.
We do not know the man; but 'twas not Will
Whose hand is on the lyre of England still.

Madrigal.

What needs it, then, we stand so long a-gazing,
And do not our lips mingle,
Since our hearts, so long single,
Have married as if in a dream amazing?
Our lips in such a joy should follow suit,
And on each other feed as on Love's fruit.

The Old Gods.

O ye gods, if you could tell us
 What ye are — if banned or blest —
Ye that reigned of old in Hellas!
 Ye that ruled the radiant West!
Old-born gods! The Past still flashes
 In the eyes of Greece and Rome;
Ye are not mere dust and ashes
 Urned for all the years to come.

Ye that ruled in heavenly places,
 And the faith of mortals won!
Gods created by old races
 Perished from beneath the sun;
Born of faith, and with it blended,
 Ye shall yet the world inspire
Till the last breath has ascended
 From the latest altar fire.

All the hopes and invocations
 Breathed by lips of heroes dead,
All the genius of the nations
 Who the march of Freedom led —
Though your temples broke and fell as
 Dusty fanes of little worth —
These will keep you, gods of Hellas!
 Still alive upon the earth.

Song.

Never remember what love's been,
That is the sorrow the world knows;
Forget it, or the heart too keen
Will ache and ache to the weary close.

Harden the heart even to love,
Or the change in the tender eyes
Will more than hate or passion move
The tears to fall, the wrath to rise.

Once the change comes, dare to forget
The sweetest truth you've dreamed of her,
Or the heart will so fret and fret
That it will have no comforter.

Turn not on love in the heart's despair,
For e'en her smiles were bitter then,
When all her faith is light as air,
And all her ways are hers again.

Spring.

“Let the light rain on her, the sweet Spring, till
She teems with greenery in the warm air,
Flower-hued, and vocal with the tender joy
Of bleating lambs and young birds on the wing.”

Thus on the cold hill doth the herdsman pray
Beneath his frozen star; the milkmaid, too,
As her raw hands take up the milking-pail,
And the wind freezes in the red dawn near: —

“Come, Spring, earth's sap, and mount in me until
I bloom, a rose of love: smile in mine eyes
Till my love from his wintry hill shall see
The star of youth, and leap into my arms!

O Spring, sweet Spring! but hear my prayer, and I
Shall build thee bowers of roses on the hill,
And all the summer there with bird and bee
Shall joy feast in the beauty of our love!”

Thus do they chant the wintry time away
In hill and vale, the two who look to when
The warmth of beauty takes life's wonder on,
And the rose of the flesh shall bloom for them.

Night.

The wings of Evening, spread like phantom sails
Athwart the waning west,
Now as the last thin streak of crimson fails,
Seem as with sleep possessed.

Now hope is changed to memory, and time
Becomes eternity,
As thought were chaunting to a runic rhyme
In some old mystery.

The shadows deepen, and the Night's weird stir
Seems like a spirit still
To tremble in the silence, as with her
Death walked invisible.

The heart can ken, e'en like an echo dead,
The eerie things they say
Who have come from a coast where none may tread
Within the dream of Day.

Night and her paramour — the last of things
That touch the soul with fear,
As that which deems that it is deathless clings
To its own shadow here.

The Old Unrest.

That which made us seems to fret
Like a pang within us yet,
As if we unfinished were,
Such blind gropings in us stir,
As light in an eye grown dim
That can no more finely limn
All the senses would impart
To the sad, mysterious heart,
Or an ear grown taut that can
No more tune the tones of man.
We are still such troubled elves,
As we were beside ourselves —
One with Him, it may be, who
Is as vexed as we are too
With a mystic malady
Running through Eternity!

Madrigal.

Because our life is brief
Let us laugh!
Because for joy and grief
We may quaff
Death's nepenthe soon —
Because this is life's boon
Let us laugh.

Three in a Shade.

Here we sit, and blind Desire
Plays his spinet in the shade.
How is it our fancies tire?
Why is it our hearts afraid,
Cower, as with trembling wing
'Neath the grey hawk Time that flies
Where the phantom colours cling
To the ever-fading skies?

Is it with all things but thus?
In our hearts when we were born
Young Desire laughed with us,
So, so old now and forlorn
As he sits, an eerie elf
In the wizard airs that stir,
With a man so like himself
And the ghost of what you were.

Charon.

Who goes across those waters
On which the Moon ne'er shone,
With the passenger he came for
As in a dream moved on?

Cypress and yews o'ershadow
The verge on either side,
Within whose boughs for ever
The winds of woe abide.

And all the air is haunted
With a wail that seems to flow
From the living lips of Sorrow
As the ages come and go.

The boatman, dumb and hoary,
Pulls with a steady pull,
And the dead man seems to listen
To voices beautiful.

And it may be the weird River
Has sights we cannot see,
And the far shore burns its signals
Of eerie mystery.

And Charon knows each signal —
Above the River's rim
The spectral lights that glimmer
Are pilot-stars for him.

Ay me! he knows the water
As few, few boatmen know;
'Tis not the first he's taking
Down where we all must go!

The Charm.

O touch her with thy heavenly beams,
Bright Moon! that she may know
Within his paradise of dreams
Love died not long ago.

Though Helen's eyes are dust, and she
No more in Ilion sighs,
Love still is Love (tell her) and we
Are but his late allies!

We bear his burning shield and spear,
True knights in Beauty's war —
We who are women's offspring here,
And made for women are.

A Father's Fear.

The little feet that run to me,
The little hands that strive
To touch me at the heart, and find
The heart in me alive:

Oh God! if hands and feet should fail,
If Death his mist should fling
Between my heart and the touch of
The little living thing!

Egoism.

Not as mine their thoughts who pass:
Each has his life's looking-glass
Limning therein the light and shade
His own entity has made.

I have my life's vision still
Coloured for me, good or ill,
And my point of view must be
But my own immortally.

Could I guess at theirs, or know
What shapes in their vision go.
Lift the veil by day and night
That's laid on another's light, —

They might with a fancy free
Get, too, at the gist of me,
And with a plebeian shout
Turn the Gods I worship out,

To be in a concourse lewd
Jeered at by the multitude,
While I with a reeling brain
Talked with Demons in the fane!

Fate.

O Thou, who knowest whence we came, and can
Endow a moment with the mood of Man,
 When my wan moment like a dream is gone,
Destroy or take me then where I began.

If it be in that moment I have err'd
A thousand times, remember I'm a word
 Which Thou hast spoken, and its echoes have
All from Thine own intensity occur'd.

I am no other than what Thou hast made,
Apprenticed to Thy purpose, like a trade,
 I know not why; and if I care or no,
'Tis to Thy purpose, too, how I am paid.

Song.

We have this life, this love only —
Kiss me on the mouth, my own!
Dust we'll soon be through the ages,
And who'll reck when we are gone?

Let us take what love can give us;
We'll find naught more sweet and true
In this life-time and this love-time,
In Time's dreamland, I and you.

What is after's so uncertain,
Love's the one thing Life has known;
And, while we have its dream in us,
Kiss me on the mouth, my own!

Her Grave.

The flowers on her grave scarce breathe,
So sweet a flower lies hid beneath;
As if they feared their growth might stir
The sleepy earth that covers her.

Thought's Garden.

I have within Thought's garden sat
And played with this sweet flower and that,
And touched my lute till each soft string
Was tuned to Love's remembering.

Then in the grass I've laid me down
And woven my heart a faery crown,
As one who in a dream might be
Intoxicate with poesy.

Until I felt my being grow
Pure as a flower, as white as snow,
Though through it did a rosy streak
The passion of my love bespeak.

And I would feed on fancies then
Till I came back to time again,
Like one who on a fragrant way
Had parted with the golden Day;

And in the twilight wandering home
Did then as to Love's cabin come,
And found within a mate who made
A glory of the coming shade!

Isolation.

He came by unknown ways, and stood
At evening in the fading wood,
Which when the glowing hills were gone
Would as in a dream murmur on,
As he beside his camp-fire's glare
Sat as if in a vision there,
And felt the silence like a thing
In which his soul was functioning.

He was a poet maybe who
The world's impression dreamy drew
From his own heart in that strange air,
Like one who had been everywhere
And with the stars and fire-lit trees
Did blend a thousand memories,
Making that speck of light his home
Until the dewy dawn should come.

He well had seemed a phantom at
Some mystic work as lone he sat
Within his ring of charmed light,
Who might step out into the night,
And in a mischief-making mood
Perturb the starry solitude
Until his fire burnt out, and then
Might creep back to his camp again,
And wrapped within his blanket be
A thought-deserted entity.

Love's Vision.

I am one with thee, and thou
Art a vision of me now,
Which love, and not life, has made;
It with life, then, may not fade,
But like lightning, swiftly gone,
Breathe a more immortal tone
Than the dull light of the day
That is slow to pass away.

Rondel.

The mist is in the town to-night,
 And all the streets are dumb and drear;
 The passers-by as ghosts appear,
Or things whose souls have taken flight
As they drift by in the weird light,
 Each on its shadowy career —
The mist is in the town to-night,
 And all the streets are dumb and drear.
A dead town were less sad a sight
 With its dead men and women here,
 So one might see them passing near
Beyond the death of love's delight!
The mist is in the town to-night,
 And all the streets are dumb and drear.

Mors Dei.

Me thought I saw God dying, and
The millions round His bed;
And all in every planet knew
They'd pass when He was dead.

In a wan light He lay somewhere,
Where all was strange and dim,
And one by one each living thing
Felt the life leaving Him.

The fiercest creatures lost their power,
The brightest eyes grew pale;
A weakness spread through every star
Like a funereal tale.

Through Heaven and Hell a tremor passed;
The fiends and seraphim
Had hushed their cries and songs, and came
To share their doom with Him.

And o'er the Eyes that looked on all
A deathly glamour passed,
And He knew all that He had made
Was one with Him at last;

As with His final breath a boom
Crashed through the worlds, and He
Let go the awful stress He'd kept
On Life's immensity.

At Juliet's Tomb.

This fair woman who is dead
 (Sung so sweet of long ago)
Lies not in a mortal bed —
 Song has made her couch to grow
With all sweet things, as they stir
 Like unfading growths that cling
 In an everlasting spring
Round her Poet's dream of her.

Time is dead — she has not died!
 All the light of beauty stays,
As if the sweet lips replied
 To whate'er her lover says
O'er the tomb to her, as he
 Fingers her undying hair:
 Such is death when Love is there,
Love that lives in poesy.

Inspiration.

There's a wind that sweeps through the day and night,
And like the lightning goes,
But none have heard the sound of its wings,
And none know whither it blows;
But where'er it comes the thoughts of men
Are like clouds together hurled,
As they are carried with mystic speed
Over the crazy world.

We see no waving of leafy boughs,
Nor heave of the purple sea;
When this wind its fiercest blows, the Earth
May be still as the dead men be;
But the spirit feels its fiery breath
And the souls of men are stirr'd,
As o'er the mesmeric lines of life
Is flashed the magic word.

The gale from the Spirit-land blows in,
And they who feel it glow
With an ecstasy and ardour like
The seers of long ago —
The vital and inspiring breath
With which ideas are sown,
Like visioned seeds, in the mystic soil
Where the spirit-flowers are grown!

Before Actium.

Life is up and takes the morning;
 Why should love still lie abed?
Lo! the charms of slumber scorning,
 Tramps the troop that must be led.

Thousands come from hill and valley
 Loud the town with clamour fill;
Why must then their leader dally,
 Couched with Cleopatra still?

Life's awake — let Duty waken!
 Love's a snare at such a time,
When Mars' harness should be taken
 And the hearts of heroes chime.

Let the leader leave the lady!
 Cupid is not lord of these,
Now the War-god ranks them ready
 To post over land and seas.

Done with power's imperial pity,
 Oh the hearts to-day must die —
Romans in an alien city
 Pledged to death for Antony!

Her Face.

There is a something in her face
Which in no other I can trace,
And feelings sweet as music stir
 When I gaze in her dreamy eyes,
And breathe a perfume, as it were,
 From flowers in Paradise.

At morn, at noon and night it seems
As if I moved by faery streams,
A strange light on the leaves and grass;
 As if her life-breath were the air
Through which the magic moments pass
 In her dream-beauty there.

It is thought's paradise which she
Inhabits like a mystery,
Through which my feelings come and go
 Like tunes which to her pulses stir;
And my life day by day, I trow,
 Is one sweet dream of her.

Bereavement.

The little feet have left the house,
The little voice is still:
Without, the wan wind-weary boughs;
Within, the will
To go and hear the wee feet tread
Within the garden of the dead.

Womanhood.

She feels the world, it touches her
Like a weird thing she needs must know,
While all her fears and fancies stir
As in a death-dream long ago.

She has passed from her youth to this —
A woman grown with misty eyes,
Knowing the world no nunnery is
For the heart stripped of its disguise.

Her feet now pace a thorny path
Where mournful hopes like fiends confer,
And e'en the power her beauty hath
Seems one with what would ruin her.

Song.

You, too, shall know that I have prayed
 Beneath the mystic tree
Whose branches at the first were made
 Out of God's memory.

Beneath those boughs my soul has knelt,
 And each leaf bending down
Stirred with my heart, as it had felt
 A rapture like its own.

I dared not touch the holy thing,
 But made my prayer a breath
Intense as is the passioning
 Of lover gone to death —

Who sees the dark flood he must cross
 Without his love afar,
And bears with him that bitter loss
 “Where the Eternal are.”

The Unborn.

Ah God! for those who are coming,
The millions who yet must be!
Thine Earth like a hive has been humming
So long with anxiety:
Such a deal of confusion and trouble,
Thousands so poor and unfed
They are coming to starve on the stubble
Where hosts of the ages are dead!

Queen and Clown.

Cleopatra: Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there, that kills and pains not?

Clown: Truly I have him; but I would not be the party that should desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal: those that do die of it do seldom or never recover.

* * * * *

Asps in a basket for the Queen!
The pretty worm of Nile
Will charm her from what might have been,
And make Death smile.

So soft an end for one so fair,
Her Roman lying low —
The other Roman finds her there,
Beyond him so!

Falling Stars.

Only a falling star!
 What was it to him
If millions of mortals were
 Hurled down the dim
Dark void to the abyss?
His world was this.

Only a falling star!
 The Earth was sure
To outlive him at least:
 Whatever were
Their fates who yonder passed,
His star would last!

Only a falling star!
 What if some day
The Earth, as in a flash,
 Too, passed away,
Would, say, a Mars-man sigh
As we flamed by?

Only a world gone out
 With all its care —
God! but a speck at most
 In Thy great air,
As 'twere an insect's breath
Breathed out in death.

Song.

I wonder if, when done with
Is all earth's pain and care,
When we at length are one with
The Dead, and with them bear
Our part in the new life that
Is now beyond our ken —
If we shall then remember
Our loves, or love again.

Will, when the flesh is over
And all its needs are gone,
The souls of loved and lover
As in a dream love on?
Or will they live, but mingle
No more in the new sphere,
As they had done for ever
With all that they were here?

Will father then and mother,
Or lover then and friend,
Be nothing to each other
When here we make an end
Of all that we have lived for?
Or shall our sprites above
Indeed attain themselves in
The entity of love?

Sea-Weeds.

The sunlight piercing through the blue wave feeds
The joyous growths that, clustered from the air,
Throw forth their fibres to the Power that breeds
Love in the lives above of all things fair —
The ever-living Sun, that through man's days
Is as the breath of all the thinks and says.

Light streams down to them in that watery mist,
E'en as thought's splendor in a human mood
Life-filling, like a glorious amethyst
Among the mountains in their solitude;
And the sea-things drink in at every pore
The nurture of the light till life is o'er.

Till life is o'er, and Death within the ooze
Then hides them from the joyous light and air;
E'en as, too, in the mind the flaming muse
Burns down to ashes in a world made bare
With want and woe, and the pain whose defeat
Must be by death — when death alone is sweet.

Love's Reveller.

Hard have you won her, and must hold as fast!
She is Love's reveller — those tawny eyes
Are up and down still in warm passion cast,
And woe betide the soul whom they surprise!

Yet is she yours — you deem not for a while.
But have you felt the fiery stress of her?
It is a woman's, yet a serpent's smile
A Cleopatra yields her worshipper.

The cruel sweetness of her beauty lurks
In all her lovers' ruin; none may dare
To toy with her but love like poison works
To madness or the sorrow of despair: —

And you — the Antony of her desire?
Her love is still as a consuming fire.

Ghosts.

They look in with dim eyes
And faces sweet and sad,
Upon the life that dies —
Shades who have had
Their part in all things here,
The mortal hope and fear,
Till, as now from the bier
But one remove,
They hark the still hours chime
Within the Tower of Time
As to the sad, sweet rhyme
Of life and love.

They see more than we know,
They hear more than we may,
Who ever come and go
Like stars on a cloudy way:
And they grow sad to ken
The mortal life of men,
In the vesper light again
As they look in
And feel the phantom thrill
Of all the good and ill,
Of love and beauty still
And pain and sin.

And then with faces wan
They to each other turn,
Dreaming of what is gone,
E'en as they yearn
Perchance to lift the veil
With fingers thin and pale
Showing the no avail
Of so much here,
And how all things are cast
As in a dream at last,
When the future as the past

Shall disappear.

Haikai.

Flannel-flowers dancing
To the Dawn on the hill-tops ...
The Vision of Spring!

Madrigal.

When morn is wandering on the seas,
And birds are singing in the trees,
And all the time is flushed with flowers,
And youth is in these hearts of ours —
 How sweet then 'tis to love!
 How sweet then 'tis to prove
How much a man can be to a maid
In the greenwood shade!

The Bond.

Love me for Love's sake till the dream is done,
And when we waken let us part for aye!
No bond but this; it is the better way,
For life spun so may easy be unspun,
The gain or loss directly reckoned on
What is and was; since marriage is no more
When either heart is like a sapless core
That has no sense of the maturing sun.

All comes at last to this, and surely we
Shall never waken if the dream is true,
Never put by the heart's reality,
Nor either ever find another who
Shall take from us the tender poesy
Which you have found in me, and I in you.

A Night in Babylon.

We whom to-night Love keeps awake
For his own joy, may one day break
Our fast in some Lethéan cave,
When we but a faint memory have,
Or none, of such dear nights as this.

Sweetheart! thy lips again to kiss,
Thy limbs to fold, though all ends thus
And time makes such poor wrecks of us,
Who feast to-night on Love's own food
As in a heavenly solitude,
And drink his wine, — this bliss of ours
Which makes our bodies bloom like flowers,
In whose quick scents our souls escape
We know not where — each wingéd shape
That haply shall elude the curse
When we have lost the universe
In this night's Babylonian heart —
Have then lost all that may impart
Life to the dead, the lust of that
On which the purple heart grows fat,
And thrills to prove that it can be
The bourne of its own ecstasy
Within a paradise whose skies
Have never known the sun to rise
Nor all the moony rapture wane!

Clasp me, Sweetheart! and kiss again
Until we have so drunk the light
Of this delirious sweet night
Our souls may nevermore be dry,
Though death our bodies may deny
The power to appease that thirst
Which Love's heat raised within us first
Ere he had taugth our lips and eyes
The purport of his paradise,
And made the trembling senses take

The night for day, and keep awake
With all the strange delights that are
Under our Babylonian star
That came from chaos, it may be,
To guard our first night's mystery,
And let his cloak of glory lie
Over us, dear, who would not die.

Ah, Sweetheart! if all comes to this,
And we must lose the sum of bliss
(When we lie by the Lethéan wave
And know that nothing Love can save)
We may forget ourselves, and be
Content with Death's tranquillity.

Song.

In the hour when Day reposes
Like a vision on the sea,
When thought his tired pinion closes,
One with hope and memory, —
On the sand by the sea-roses
My heart breathes of thee.

I can gather then from sorrow
And from joy what dreams may be
Sweet as those which Love would borrow
For the tender melody,
Which like the light of to-morrow
My heart breathes of thee.

Echo.

Here, Echo, was thy reign of old,
Among these hills, a mystic crowd
Whose thunder rolled
When they speak loud
Still shocks the sea: here thy hair grew
Long as a cloud whose shadow drew
Itself o'er chaos, ere Time rose
With life and death and all of those
Who live and die, whose weakest word
Thine ears have heard;
Still as thou sitt'st with sightless eyes
On a bright cloud in the lone vale,
Or leaning o'er a mountain rill
Dost hark the ebbing roar
Of a dead sea on some primeval shore,
Whose unrecorded memories
Are like the language of old gods who fell
From some starred pinnacle
In the lost years — as all things will
Too fall at last, and the great tale
Of Time be never more retold;
Ay, e'en when chaos is re-rolled
O'er the opprest and the oppressor, thou
(Unseen, and but a word within that wail)
Shalt pass as in a trance where thought may go
When all is lying low.

Entranced.

A trance upon my spirit fell;
It seemed as I were hurled
Through aeons like an atom dark
Beyond the flaming world:

From void to void without a breath,
As in a weird unknown
Where Death had done his oldest work,
And God himself was gone!

Summer Dawn.

Come with thy feet to the water, and bathe
Thy beauty here in the stream that will not pass!
The soft green leaves with their shadows swathe
The either bank, and under the ferns and grass
The dreamy crickets chirp in the dewy dawn,
Now that the light of the stars has grown
Into a thin pale mist in the night unknown;
The small birds twitter, whose senses quite
Have not yet out of their dreams withdrawn —
Here where my heart too waits for the light
Under the cloudy hills that soon will run
With bright feet in the ways of the sun,
As if they were but chained to the air:
Come to me now so fresh and fair —
Now that the reign of Sleep is done —
With twinkling feet in the dewy dawn!
O love, as grass comes to the lawn,
As day comes to the East, come thou —
Come to me now!

The Fruit of Love's Desire.

The fruit of love's desire is sweet
For any man and maid to eat.

However ripened in time's air,
No other can with it compare.

'Tis like those apples "of such price,
No tree can ever bear them twice;"

And only two may share it, so
That they would all its sweetness know.

It is so fine and fair a thing
And eaten with such passioning,

The eaters seem themselves to be
Fed on each other's mystery;

And when they have the sweet thing ate
Sigh for the lack of all things yet,

For once 'tis bitten to the core
The dearest dream of life is o'er,

And man and maid within time's waste
Another such may never taste.

Love's Bower.

On the white bosom, 'tween the breasts
Of Helen Love has made his bower,
As in a sweet and secret tower
Where mid the world's decay he rests —
A bridegroom in his dream's desire
With the imperial bride whose brow
Is great with beauty now,
Whose eyes have the old fire
That in their passion's joy
Burnt to a cinder on the towers of Troy!

All youths and virgins may go there,
And thence their hearts as torches light,
Fragrant and fresh as new-born air
In the old world's serenest might —
May learn from Love and his warm mate
The secret of the tender tune
Of that long honeymoon,
That like the fire of Fate
Still in their passion's joy
Burns to a cinder on the towers of Troy!

In Verona.

Juliet will never rise
In her passion's paradise;
Dust is in her ears and eyes.

And time too, as all men know,
Has put by, with beauty's woe,
What remains of Romeo.

In that grave within the green
Since the dawn of death was seen
Nothing has been changed, I ween;

Nor shall their praise be unsown,
Like a bud each year new-blown
While Verona's name is known;

And the hearts of men shall come
To where Love has made his home
In their beauty's martyrdom.

Ah! the two that are so one
Since the dream of life was done: —
Would another life begun

With its dream for them too be
Mid the world's humanity
Like this in Love's history?

Quatrain.

Water is wine when lovers kiss;
The moisture of the eyes
Which brims up in love's rapture is
The mist of Paradise.

The Sea of Time.

On that strange sea
Where Man's bark moves as toward eternity,
What sails put forth that are not seen again!
.... Joyous it may be, or in pain,
The mariner doth drive still on and on
Beneath no mortal star,
And to no mortal port — as one
Who may but anchor somewhere so afar,
Not himself reckes if he shall reach no more
In that tremendous sea another shore:
He is so like a wave himself at last,
He would toss through the future as the past —
But tethered as a whale is to a wave,
So he might still the one life have
Through all the changes that may be
On that tremendous sea!

Antony's Friend.

Bring me my robes and crown!
I must make a brave end,
Charmian, fitting the renown
Of Antony's friend.

Caesar shall find me so,
'Tired like a royal bride,
When he comes in, and the lights are low,
And I'm by Antony's side —

Wedded in Death's bright hall
Beyond the Egyptian air,
My crown and robes on me, and all
The love that made me fair.

My women! sooth to tell
Soft is the aspic's bite:
It would have pleased my Roman well
So to have said good-night.

Earth Rune.

I heard the Earth within me sing
As if it were a tranced thing,
Or as if under thought's control
All things were chaunting in my soul.

I was the centre of the sphere,
And made the imaginary year,
Whose seasons four were each a mood
Like God's within His solitude.

The unborn may dream of our life
As we still dream of death, until
Its shadow falls upon our strife,
As the birth-light on the unborn will
When they emerge as from a tomb
Within the antenatal gloom.

Ah! they may guess at what we know,
May picture what *their* lives will be
When they into time's essence flow
And take on thought's reality,
As we may deem of death, who pass
Like shadows o'er the shining grass.

The Soul.

A soul came up to God, and said:
“Give me not human birth
Again — oh! send me not to tread
The solitude of Earth;
Whatever else may be denied,
Let me not be so sorely tried.

“It is so weird and wan to think
Again of bone and breath,
And to be made an aching link
In th' chain of birth and death —
To feel the clammy senses bring
Me into touch with everything.

“Oh, let me be tried so no more!
Redeemed at such a price,
Thou know'st how near I was before
To have lost all. — O Wise
And Merciful! but let me be
A shadow in the light of Thee.

“In yon strange clouds, ghostlike apart
From all the glory here,
Let me, though with a human heart,
Abide for many a year,
Lost in the mist.” — God heard and bowed,
And the soul passed into a cloud.

And in that cloud a thousand years
The spirit dwelt, and heard
The ceaseless fall of human tears
And cries on Earth that stirr'd,
But never strain of angel's song
Came to her, lonely there so long.

Until the thousand years had died,
When, weary-worn and weird,
Like one herself had terrified,

Before God she appear'd,
And weeping, bowed in spirit, said:
"Again on the Earth let me tread!

"I was nigh lost, but I have seen
Some who were lost indeed,
And yet were saved — as Magdalene
Who from such doom was freed,
And now as a bright angel burns,
Watering the flowers in Heaven's urns.

"But I was weak to doubt the worst,
Who had found love so strong,
And my brief mortal grief so nursed
I feared the human throng
Like fiends would tear my soul from Thee;
But what is now my soul to me?

"Rather let me a thousand times
Be born again and die,
As some who still in many climes
Their many lives put by,
Until they yearn, as I now crave,
Others, and not themselves, to save.

"To lose self thus, and find it so
In the fulfilment still
Of all Thou art — this is to know
All we are meant to, till
The utter knowledge comes. Oh, fain
Am I to go to Earth again.

"Here am I: send me! Down, down there
I haply shall recall
The angel with the burning hair
And the glory over all." —
And as she prayed, God gave her birth
With a young pair new-wed on Earth.

And it must even be ten years
Now since she did renew
Her intercourse with smiles and tears: —
Men deem that she but grew
Here for the first time, but *we* know
What she has been through long ago.

Song.

The dew fell on her upturned brow
That is as white's the lily;
The moonlight in her yellow hair,
In her hand a daffodilly;
The violet's perfume in her breath,
Her cheeks like roses grew,
And as I prest her milky hand
I murmured, "I love you!"

She looked at me with eyes that shone
Like stars among the roses,
While my heart like a dream-bird sang
Quick in the dewy closes;
And with a tone that sweetly thrill'd
The while I held her hand,
She whispered, "I have loved you long,
And now I understand."

Evening.

The light is drawn out of the leaves and grass,
And the sweet flowers grow pale in the gray air,
As if their beauty's essence e'en did pass
With the departing light from all things fair,
As the sap in the trees when summer's fled
Draws back to the earth, leaving the leaves dead.

The sky becomes a cloud, the hills a shade,
As the mysterious darkness fills the sphere,
A monstrous elf whose tentacles are laid
In silence upon all things far and near;
Now the bats flit about the mothy damp
In which the spiders weave their airy camp.

I, too, could fill as 'twere a dreamy bed
Under the green leaves in the darkness now,
And watch the evening planet overhead
Like a dewdrop upon the airy bough
Of heaven tremble — till my soul too grew
Like liquid light in water, shining through.

And I can feel that which the dead inherit —
Peace, and the power to forego the pain
That like a vulture on the human spirit
Draws its fine essence from the fading brain,
Till every sense contracts, and the slow breath
Oozes away in the desire of death.

So from me slips the day's disquietude,
And I am made one with the night, as those
Who pass from thought into a faery mood
On Lethe's wharf, whenas old Charon goes
Into the dusk of that eternal eve
Where all must go when the earth-light they leave.

Loss.

She gave the day its heart of fire,
She gave the night her soul of flame;
The sun and moon translated through
Her love as gods became.

She filled me with unearthly strength,
A power not of my own was mine;
She passed, and crumbled into dust
And ashes my divine.

The Night knows not how fair she is
Before the stars come in the sky:
It is the light within ourselves
We see ourselves and others by.

The Re-awakening.

Pan's not dead: the earth but waiteth
The burst of new life through the old;
In this way the God still createth
The sparks that animate the mould,
Though the dead be so cold.

From Winter's womb the young year springeth
When winds and rain away are rolled,
As the sprite to the body wingeth
It may be from the starry fold,
Though the dead be so cold.

A Bridal Song.

Love that art enlargéd
As the sun!
Shine upon the bride-life
Here begun,
And upon his, too, that stirs
Now within the breath of hers —
No more two, but one.

Touch her beauty, quickening
With the spell
Of her girlhood passing:
Favor well
All his ways with her, that she
May deem this day's mystery
Was thy miracle.

Pass now, Love! upon them
In this light,
Till the magic of them,
Touch and sight,
Fades as either's lone life-story
Into all the grace and glory
Of their joy to-night!

Love Litanies.

I.

I, too, have come to feel and see
How little in the world can be
 Ours, as we pine and pass —
How all we long for, know of, love,
As in a dream from us remove,
Till each becomes the shadow of
 A light that was.

II.

We must all somehow be made
One with time, that fleeting shade;
Until we within the dust
Wither as sweet violets must
In their own scent, as they lie
Like a virgin memory
Trembling with its sweetest breath
In the mystery of death.

Song.

The past is in us, and we find
The burden of our being there,
Who have been built up as the wind
From dreamy air.

Still all we touch on near and far
Has had an old beginning, and
A flower is mystic as a star
To understand.

The Wind O' Death.

Oh! we hae a' to die, dear,
 We're a' to gang awa';
We, when Death's wind blows by, dear,
 Like apples hae to fa';
Howe'er we may be clinging,
Be green or rosy hinging,
When we hear the wind singing
 A glamour's over a'.

We drap unto the ground, dear,
 Each frae the boughs we fa',
When we hear the wind sound, dear,
 The voice in the wind ca'!
It comes through leagues o' heaven,
A dream-joy to it given,
It comes at morn or even
 Wi' the glamour over a'.

We'll wait for it to blow, dear —
 How sweet the birdies ca'!
The flowers come and go, dear,
 There's peace atween us twa:
The love-light round us clinging,
'Tis sweet, together hinging,
To wait for the wind's singing
 Wi' the glamour over a'.

Jove.

Jove himself moves in the abyss
As in the heights he goes;
The God is so in all that is,
Yet is what no one knows.

Threnody.

Dark Pine that moanest long,
Sad, solitary tree!
As if the world's wrong
A tongue had found in thee,
Sad as when Ariel
Cursed by the witch's spell
Endured his pitiable
Period of misery.

When will time's Prospero
Come with his cure for thee?
The world in weary woe
Wails for its liberty.
Till it shall look above
Unto the heavenly Love
Nothing the world may move,
Sin-shut in Sorrow's tree!

The Chase.

There is in us a hue and cry,
The hart of Life is up;
But when the chase is done, we'll lie
Where we with Death shall sup.

Song.

I have brought thee all the faith
That a man can give,
I have sheltered thee with love,
O life's fugitive!
Round thy feet in the dank night
Death his snare had cast:
Haply in the future thou
Wilt forget the past.

From the cruel thing that would
E'en have ta'en thy breath
I have lifted thee in love
'Yond the doom of death.
Lean thy breast upon my brain,
Let thy faint heart beat
Near me, near me, nearer now,
O my own, my sweet!

To a Baby.

I.

Two hands that hold the world in fee,
So tender, yet so bold:
Whatever life has now for me,
Two hands that hold.

What magic lies in them enroll'd —
What wondrous alchemy
Transmuting thus life's lead to gold!
Until that thought shall cease to be,
Until my heart is cold,
I'd only clasp (how tenderly!)
Two hands that hold.

II.

Two soft blue eyes whose light has lit
Two hearts, as stars that rise —
Love's lights within the infinite,
Two soft blue eyes.

No fancy may their charm surmise,
But those who have felt it
Breathe as it were in Paradise.
Life's meanings there like shadows flit,
As in a dream's disguise
Two spirits lurked in them — to wit,
Two soft blue eyes.

Love's Own.

Ah, that hair no age can dye
That is golden in Love's eye,
And that face time cannot touch
On which Love has gazed so much.
Other hair and faces may
Take on changes and decay:
Hers, if Love endures, must be
Sure of immortality,
Since no changes can occur
In the dream he's made of her.

Dream Death.

There is a breath at midnight that comes in
Sad as a sigh, for then the Day is dead,
And the young Morrow doth his course begin,
Sowing new dreams in many a dreamer's head.
And there are two have waked in one dark bed
Just as the last stroke fades in lonely air,
And having whispered half-awake, have sped
With silent feet into Sleep's poppied lair.
She with the morning wakes, but he is gone:
Her tears and kisses are of no avail —
Perchance it was his good-bye murmured on
The midnight in Death's visionary dale.
Ah woe! She thought 'twas in Sleep's fairyland
When in the dark he prest her warm, soft hand.

Cleopatra.

“Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep

Shakespeare.

The asp, her baby, on her breast,
She falls asleep,
Ever, like Antony, to rest
While Nile shall keep
Its course, and Egypt be a name
Whose utterance stirs
The shadow on the Roman's fame,
His love and hers.
Out of the mire and mirth of Time,
By thought removed,
The life that might have shone sublime,
Nor unbeloved —
A doting mallard when her sail
From Actium flew,
He knew her love was, passion-pale,
The sword that slew!
Ah! even though her love was lust,
The swarthy Queen,
When her babe gave the mortal thrust,
A woman's mien
Wore, as her Circean eyes their last
Looked on the slave
And with her fatal witchery passed
Into the grave.
She yet shall stand in Beauty's list
A thing superb,
The Roman's light in Egypt's mist —
A lover's verb
That through his moods and tenses toned
A royal way,
And took Death rather than be loaned

To Caesar's sway.

The Finer Spirit.

'Tis when the wits I have are gone
The finer powers appear;
The spirit of phantasy leads me on,
And gives my heart her cheer.
The all-licensed fool the mad king had
Was but the light of Lear,
His soul's familiar, motley clad,
That told him no lies here.

Song.

Two words or three
The bird sings in the tree:
My love was all to me
 When life was young.
I lie within the green:
There is not heard or seen
The light of what has been,
 The song that's sung.

To Lynette.

God knows that I love you, I love you, and yet
He knows, too, I'm weary, Lynette, O Lynette!
He gave me the love-feeling, the tired feeling, too;
Will He take them together, and part me from you?
Could I sleep for a hundred sun-seasons, and then
Wake ... would you be waiting to kiss me again?
To live still and love you, life-weary ... and yet
Would even Death charm me without you, Lynette!

On Olympus.

(The society of Olympus is pictured as on the model of human society. Zeus is the father and supreme god. Hera is his wife, is often jealous, and quarrels ensue. — *Greek Myths*).

The high noises,
The great voices,
 They of the sky
In the clouds wrangle,
Jar it and jangle
 Till Death shall die.

In the bright houses
With their false spouses
 The high ones rave —
Gods in a passion,
As those in their fashion
 Who go to the grave.

Out of the portal
Where never a mortal
 Has climbed or been,
Their insane thunder
Comes to us under
 The holy demesne.

The Stream.

God but knows what path
 This small stream must take,
Through what gleams and glooms
 Which the years shall make.
In what ways austere
 May these waters glide
Ere they have their part
 In the timeless tide!

In Nineveh.

As he of Joppa sought to 'scape
The utterance of the given word,
And dared to get him from the Lord
In a ship down to Tarshish, — know
Thou canst not any burden throw
That was ordained for thee to bear
Though faith may make it light as air.

Though thou within the dust may rave,
Within the dust may rave and curse
Thy being and the universe,
He sends His lightnings still abroad,
Yet plants for thee the shadowy gourd,
And comes so near He leaves a trace
Of beauty on thy bitter face.

Thou canst not lose thyself: thou art
The given word; its utterance too
Is in all thou dost dream and do:
All men must hear it, hearing thee:
Thou canst not 'scape the prophecy
Of thy life here, howe'er thou rave
Between the cradle and the grave.

What if thou wert He, being here —
So much of Him made flesh as can
Find its conception in a man;
Thy very breath His own, and thou
The veriest utterance of Him now?
It is His work: — let thyself be,
And He will cry in Nineveh!

Natural Magic.

I have put by the schoolmen,
The seeming great and sage;
Nor will I taste the vintage
Brewed in the vats of Age;
But I will sip the dewdrops
On the lily's leaves unfurl'd,
And list the wild birds warble
The wisdom of the world.

But this shall be my learning:
Whate'er the pundit knows
Has the dust of doubt upon it
As to the grave it goes.
The truths that I would gather
Are different in kind,
Touched with a natural magic
No artifice can find.

Ere time, a weird, wild creature,
Had been ensnared and thrall'd
By any human meaning,
The gods in thunder call'd
Among the heights and hollows,
Like syllables that sent
Into the moods of Nature
Aerial wonderment.

And this shall be my learning,
And to this tune I'll grow
As to a magic rarer
Than all the schoolmen know;
Within the ways that hint of
The heathen joys that roam —
The simple things that come to
The heart, and find a home.

Birth and Death.

I who have known thee, Birth, must know Death too:
As old, old men their children's children fold
In their gaunt arms, and though their blood be cold
Feel their own youth burn in them as they view
The features that were theirs — each sign so true
To their own breath and blood, 'tis as retold
Their very youth was, when they are so old,
By those who nothing of their childhood knew.
So even Death but a new birth may be,
And in some other star beyond to-day,
When we have put the use of Earth away,
E'en like those old men's children's children we
May see ourselves rise from our own decay,
The very offspring of our verity.

Of Woman's Love.

Of all the loves the heart can hold
The love of woman's first;
It was this one love that we had
Or e'er the world was cursed.
Then other loves — our passions — threw
Their shadows on the brain,
And like ill weeds they grew and grew
Amid the golden grain.

Ah! woman's love's the one thing true
In a world of lures and lies,
As if it were man's heaven that had
Survived his paradise!
Our other loves are but the dross
That to the soul must cling
Till we've forgot life's every loss
In Love's remembering.

Fragments.

Thought.

How mystical is thought! We do but think,
Be it of heaven or hell, and we are there!
Such feet has phantasy, more fleet than light,
We flash ourselves away where'er we will,
And in a wink return we know not how.
It is our Genius haply makes it all —
The vision of the things we seem to see,
Which yet are not, or were not, had we not
The miracle of thought within us still,
Like Love's begetting, making all things new,
And still unmaking all we have done with;
So with creative joy as in a dream
Folding us in ourselves, as if it were,
Who are still one with all that we have made,
Revisioning the mystic entities
As each one reads as with undying eyes
The hyacinthine wonder of the soul,
As if alone in an enchanted isle
On the meridian of his own desire.

Sleep Compared To The Sea.

The tide comes in, a surge from the great sea,
And every little muddy creek and inlet
Now sweltering in the heat, will soon be filled
With the salt sweetness; even as sleep comes
After a term of toil to the tired brain,
A-surge from out the infinite, and fills
All of life's inlets with a dewy ease.

Father and Lover.

My father was a god before you came;
Now in another shrine I bow the knee,

E'en as my mother in her own love-dream
Did from her father turn to worship mine.

Poetic Emotion.

The heart's throb makes the music: words are air,
A mortal breath, if no emotion thrills
The subtle syllables; and all men own
The poesy, the passion, and the power
When that the Poet's fiery fingers touch
The lyre immortal. 'Tis from him alone
The accents of life's mystery are heard,
As the harmonious numbers take the soul
And the unearthy in us answers him.

Love's Mesmerism.

When you are with me I put by the world
In having you. When I can hear and see you,
All else is dark and dumb; or is it, Sweet,
You then are all, and I the dreamer know
No life but yours? But when that you are gone,
All things do image you, they do live then
For me, and in a thousand lights and shadows
A thousand voices echo you, until
Your presence dumbs and darkens them again:
Love has so made you, dearest, one with all
In and without me.

Quiet Joy.

No Lethean ease, but such a mood as craves
For naught in earth and heaven, just to breathe
The simple air of our reality
Like creatures of the season, — earthy, and
Made for the earth, at one with all things here;
So in the generation of ourselves
To have the certainty of peace, and find
The natural favour of our functioning
Sufficient till the end ensue.

Morality.

Evil itself may be but good disguised,
As many a virtue now was once a vice,
Or held to be such by the moralists;
Or as even in the eyes of foreigners
Our virtues may be vices, theirs to us
As vicious too. We make us new laws still,
And hold that finable and barred to-day
That was but yesterday allowable.
Our neighbours haply no such laws enact,
And privilege what we make punitive.
So right and wrong are still conditional,
And there's no absolute morality
In all the world; for conscience herself is
Full oft but Custom's creature, whom he keeps,
Who sees with him, and hears with him, and acts
As by his power of attorney still.

Mind.

Without us and within us mind is all;
The truth of life and knowledge still are one,
And though all be a dream, yet in the dream
All is true to the after and before,
And ourselves but the shade or mirror of
The what has been or is to be, who still
Remembering and forgetting co-exist
With the mysterious One, and through ourselves
Attain prevision of the soul's escape
In some strange eyrie 'bove the flux of all,
E'en as the termites ere the great rains rear
Their termitariums in the tallest trees
To 'scape the deluge. 'Tis the eye within
That has the potency of light: We see
But by foreseeing, even as it were
The soul's prismatic radiancy imbued
Life's rose with an interior loveliness
For beauty's summer in another sphere.

Death.

The natural death we each night undergo
Should teach us that our passing's but a sleep,
Which we beyond the body's shadow may,
Even as a garment of the day we doff,

Put off for ever, being then no more
Nor less, indeed, than we have been before.

Before Execution.

The sun is set, and all the stars are come,
Stars I shall no more see; the air is still,
And my life waits the ruin so near now.
A little space, and I shall have done here.
Ah, God! twelve hours, twelve little hours, and, lo!
The air and these lips part, day becomes night,
Earth nothing, time a skeleton, and I
An angry ghost, or a tired phantom laid
With many others in oblivion.
Twelve hours, twelve little hours, and I shall have
A wondrous change — feel one fierce pang, and then
Fade off I know not where, or like a star
Shot fearfully from the zenith singe my way
Through chaos haply for some aeons till
I reach another air, a lower sky,
And maybe with a baleful influence
Burn in Pluto's reign.

Linnet-Like.

The joy of God gets into us, and we
Hum with the intuition of His power;
Even as a linnet, like a thing inspired,
Throats his love-lyrics in the dewy leaves.

Love's Messengers.

He came from her, and though rough and uncouth,
It seemed her tenderness breathed out of him
As he re-worded her sweet sentences.
Even as a stony place, clothed with sweet flowers,
Seems itself to breathe perfume, and to be
Instinct with tenderness, so, fresh from her,
The roughness of his quality was charmed:
Love makes those lovable that deal with him.

Christian Burial.

No Christian burial? Ah, he'll sleep as sound
As the old Jew who, by Beth-Peor, had
God for a sexton.

Counsel in Sorrow.

How poor is comfort when the loss is great,
And vain all counsel to assuage a tear!
A light affliction it may medicine;
But when deep Nature groans all words are air,
And, like the aboriginal instrument,
Return on the comforter. 'Tis but a wind
That in the desert sows the germless sand,
Which by the whirlwind reaped is but sand still.

The Sundowner.

So He will at the last, too, gather all,
As in the bush a traveller for his fire
Sticks and dry leaves, as eerie the light fades;
Till from those sticks and leaves there comes a flame,
Beside which in a weird infinity
The man will sit and gather lonely thoughts.
So He will at the last, too, gather all,
The great Sundowner in a painless sphere.

A Mother's Loss.

When I did name her little lost one, she
Brushed from her eyes the precious drops of love,
As if her memory with his sweet name shaken
Trembled, and shed its dew.

Truth.

We sometimes hap on truth in a strange attire,
As even the gods were wont for their designs
To take on bestial forms; subduing so
Their natures, even their divinity,
To the achievement of a mortal thing.

Love.

E'en her own eyes tell Beauty she is fair;
And Love need know no language save his own
In any clime to read the heart's desire;
The Titicacan and Caucasian's his —
All tongues the theatres and temples where
He plays or prays while e'er the world endures,
And sun and moon, and night and day are true
To their beginning.

Sleep and Death.

Sleep puts sin by, as the grave life's despair;
And though bad dreams in sleep may come, the soul
Is tainted not with error, being then
Beyond the body's shade, as in a sphere
Like that to which death may remove us when
The flesh itself is past pollution too.
It is the waking thought that we must answer,
When the whole man is up, and the will has play;
Not any drowsy essence that contrives
As with an ultramundane faculty
To act within us when the reason's gone,
And that, our temporal government, laid aside,
Our kingdom is left open, as it were,
Without a deputy, to all the worlds,
Whose mystic coursers may by stealth enact
Their wills upon us.

Youth's Inexperience.

He is too young yet to know life's demands;
Being no natural philosopher,
He must from cause and custom draw that art
Which some of Nature have, the primal gift
Of all her treasury — the open thought
That climates in all circumstances, and breathes
A native ease in everything; fear-proof,
Even as a wild bird's weather-proof, being born
And bred light as the leaves he habits in;
Unlike his brother housed and finely reared
With magisterial care, whom every change
Affects like a distemper, as if he
Had lost his nature's ancient art, and grew
Like an exotic with a borrowed life.

Maiden's Heart.

The sweet, fresh, red rose of a maiden's heart
That opes in the dewy ecstasy of love.

Honey-Suckles.

The sweet dew in the honey-suckle flowers
Tastes of the morning; to Love's palate still
Are tender thoughts so all-delicious too.

Thought's Austerity.

Alas! in this bare life thought is austere,
And only when the dream-clouds cover us
And we breathe phantasy's sweet airs, we take
Contentment, though 'tis visionary, on,
And find some miracle of beauty still
To charm us from the savour of ourselves.

Theory and Practice.

He has ta'en on a theory, and into it
Striven to work his life — a false affair;
For every thought and feeling cannot be,
Like a mosaic, cut and trimmed to suit
Any particular design, however
Grand or beautiful.

Spring.

It is the courier of the Seasons come,
September's squire, with dreamy gusts and gleams,
Who posts a vision round the changing sphere,
An ancient meaning in his lovely eyes.
Ah! how the freshness of his coming strews
A charm on all things now, as in a dream
We couch alone together, love, and hark,
Like dewy echoes from a faery world,
The sweet wood-pigeons in the green leaves coo,
Delicate lovers soft as a girl's heart.
And tender as the airs that by the river
Move among the roses.

The Blind Reader.

His blindness lends a magic to his fingers,
As if his seeing subtlety were sensed
In them, and his wits left his eyes to work
In the nimble digits as they read for him.

Spiritual Education.

Within time's stress, amid the facts of life,
Not in monastic solitudes, we find
A way to that is higher than ourselves.

Barbarians.

As the crinoid star-fish to the sea-base
By his stem fixed draws bare subsistence in
His straitened sphere, as in the sunless ooze
He turns on his long jointed pedicle,
So are half-bruted men, barbarian-brained,
Endued with scarce more power to see and hear
The visions and the rumours of the world,
So poorly apt to think and feel and know,
As each turns on his dark time-pivot in
A universal ignorance, as it were
Far back in the beginning of the world;
Disjointed and dismembered in the mind,
And in the spirit so confused and foul,
With no sign of truth's authenticity,
As nature in their origin had jarred
The primal tone of man.

Beauty.

Her beauty is the bourne thought cannot pass;
And the angel of the heart's intelligence,
Young Love, might deem that boundary infinite,
So he within the glamour of her eyes,
As in some ether too thin to be weighed,
Might breathe for ever.

Business and Pleasure.

He'll have his all; and though his heart is great,
Ay, prodigal of kindness, yet is he
A very Shylock in his bargaining.
Those soft, mild eyes of his grow hard as iron
To gauge the too, too little or too much,
When commerce puts his temper to the touch.

Achievement.

In life's exigencies men have been known
To pass themselves, and to attain to more
Than hope; as if in combat with the gods
The god in them secured supremacy.

In Egypt.

Speak softly, wake her not! We all must die.
This is a sleep that wraps her in secure
From Caesar's luck. Yet is that veiny bosom
Warm where now love's despair wrought life's undoing,
Or it may be life's parting, love's renewing,
So all's not over yet. See you, and how
She sleeps in his esteem, and he in hers,
Conjoined in Song's immortal monument;
While Caesar triumphs on through Syria,
And these two lie in Egypt — so together,
And, through the working of a worm, for ever.

Bottom's Dream.

Bottom's dream had no bottom; ours may, too,
Have no foundation. We may wake, indeed;
But all seems such a vision, none can say
(If aught's real) where reality begins.
What if we were dead now — if this were death,
And we had been alive long, long ago,
And here and now were in an after-life!
Thought sets us to a tune that we can sing;
But, like the rustic waked in fairyland,
It's all too hard for us to understand.

Deliberation.

Within the mist of argument men lose
Ofttimes the thread of reason, and the fume
Of thought, until its urgency subsides,
So cloudeth counsel, that on a debate
Time should avail for meditation ere
The matter comes to judgment.

Women's Eyes.

The eyes of women, those star-tabernacles where
Love keeps his old and holy things, inspired
With beauty and the reverence that leads
Men to perfection.

The Joy of Life.

I have the man's-heart in me, and 'tis noble
To be alive, to think, to feel, to have
My part in all the precious come-and-go
Of all things here. My very blood's a-tune
With the sweet air; my brain is musical;
And every appetite, a healthy maw,
Is satisfied, not cloyed. It is so fair
A world, so good to be alive. O Time!
To dance unto the piping of desire,
To feast each fancy with material fare,
And then to heaven as in a wink, and be
Immortal in the paradise of power!

True Love.

It is the very tune of hearts, and rhythms
To all occasions truly musical.
He sticks as fast to her each whim as does
The scarabaeus to its curious ball,
As if life's very destiny were in it;
And as the thing would rather die than part
With what occasions her so much turmoil,
I swear by what I now of true love know,
He'd dare even death rather than banished be
From her who has become a part of him.

Mutation.

The peaceful years, and then the stormy time
When the perturbed Earth moans, and Death himself
Seems ready to seize all his prey, "to smite
Once and to smite no more." Not yet the end,
And still the labour of the God goes on:
Time sows and reaps, and men are born and die;
Moons wax and wane, and all is changing still
As in the dream of some mysterious Power,
A dream of joy and woe, obscure as life —
That vagrant melody still lapsing down
The aeons to our doom!

Religion.

Priests indeed may prate
This side o' death, but 'yond the bourne
Their service fails.

Self-Harmony.

Ourselves within ourselves, we then are free
To touch the world at every turn, and take
The moods of men and mingle them with ours;
But ourselves out of ourselves, we are slaved
To every passing rumour, loose our hold,
And slipping in the flood of circumstance
Are whirled away.

Life and Death.

We come like bats that out of a dark cave
Have suddenly been scared into the day,
Blear-eyed and vexed as here and there they flap,
Unnatural denizens of such a world.
So seem we all, as this were not our home,
And we, as aliens in these elements,
Move here and there, purblind, heart-weary, and
Possessed with many fears, till Death's new dark
Shows us our passage back to the old cave,
Whence Birth before may have affrighted us.

Patriotism.

We die for home and country; dying thus,
The welfare of our land shall live with us.

The Rustic Life.

Happy are ye who can put by the stress
Of so much of the trouble worldlings know;
Ye who seem almost creatures of the woods,
Now animal and now bird-like amid
The quiet pleasance of your leafy lives;
Though sorrow may be yours, and Death will come
Even like a pilgrim o'er the hills to you.

Old-Fashioned Child.

He was born old; they who got him were grey,
And quaint as things that long had seasoned here
When that he came — a too true vintage of
The lateness of the brewing blood and brain;
Even as in their whims and ways he had
Existed, an imaginary thing,
Twin-lived in him and her e'en long before
They were united in the dream of love.
And therefore comes it that his young life wears
So old a countenance, that he in sooth
Is so too grown-up in his ways and whims;
Unlike the youngling of an early pair,
Who's ta'en the freshness of their favour on,
And is as frisky as the youth of love.

Half-Views.

It is the half-views are disastrous still;
But size a thing up fully, seize the whole,
And reason then has ground to go upon
For its acceptance or rejection; but
What is half-known, like undigested food,
Ferments, and sourly taints the mental gorge
Until it rises; ignorance so heaves
His good things with his bad into the ditch.

Men and Women.

It is not that I love you — nay! and yet
Had I a lover, he would have your eyes,
Your lips, and be in all like you. Sir, see
This is a rose the winds have harried. Oh!
Here is a violet marred, a lily there.
Poor girls, their love or lover was too cruel;
And we are like them — we you men call flowers;
We, too, like these, are hurt with love, and lie
On the sweet earth so forsaken.

Gold.

Ah, Gold! 'tis filthy lucre, honour's shame,
For which so many a Judas still sells truth!
It is the devil's lure; yet good men use it,
And many a dove for sacrifice within
The temple's been sold for it.

Youth and Age.

The last fruit off a tree is oft more sweet
And finely flavoured than the first, and so
Within life's autumn men may pleasures pluck
As sweet as youth's, and more sufficing than
The rank and rare enjoyments of the boy.

The Orator.

He has a charm that sets each thought to music,
So rare an utterance, whoso hears him feels
Even a prosy theme has poesy
When a magician takes its study on.
So setting every subject to the tune
Of a due and endowed delivery,
The matter and the manner seem to steal
Like meeting music on the listening ear,
And crowded benches lurk to linger on
His latest note, as if a siren sung;
So sweet a fascination has the power
Of language when used by an orator.

Lethe.

The waves of Lethe wash till we forget
Our earthy life and love; and 'twould appear
Before Time's tune possessed us, before we
Let fall the shadow of our meaning here —
Oh, it would seem that in another Lethe
We had been dipped as Death will dip us, to
Wash out the memory of ourselves, as though
Each stage had its own livery, and we threw
Off the old meaning, like the garments that,
Worn and occasion-soiled, men doff when they
Have to look natural in another sphere.

Cheery Old Age.

The old man is not miserable, nay, cheery
For such a grey old fellow. Life's still good,
And he at many points is yet in touch
With the material; and what if now
He has not the old energy to sling
The passion of his nature off, he can
Beat many a fancy from its ambush; tease
A knotty problem with the best; in fine,
Go up and down the thoroughfares of thought,
And nobly don a holiday attire
To suit the season.

The Poet's Hope.

The wild hope of the poet finds a home
In the immaterial, as he clothes himself
In visionary raiment far off, where
The echoes of eternity are heard
And the immortal entities appear.

Maiden Lips.

O Sweet, thy lips, how sweet their kisses are!
Rarer than rosy dewdrops amorous
That in the lily's tender bosom fall,
So magical with beauty they so breathe of thee.

Beauty.

He came upon her with a soul athirst
For Beauty, and she unveiled all to him,
As if in an imaginary light
Revealing all her wondrous rarity,
As in her arms with swooning powers he breathed
The ecstasy of love. All, all was his,
The warmth, the wonder, and the sweetness, that
So permeated with the mystery
Of all her loveliness, so filled with her,
He breathed as if on an ethereal couch
The airs of passion and their poesy.

The Comic Preacher.

“What proof have you the good man is a fool,
Or that the folly does not rather lie
With those who mock him?”

“Common sense, sir, must
Have some weight even in religious things;
And when a prophet turns comedian,
God's out of favour.”

Life's Offices.

Most of life's offices may overlap,
And form a covert for the growth of thought;
But there are some no thought and no device
May ever join; or if perchance they do,
Or this or that will soon unsightly warp,
Like green material, and give recourse
To the disastrous airs of circumstance.

Poet and Priest.

The poet's born, the priest is made: at last
Shall come a day when all men at the shrine
Of poesy shall pay their vows, and know
The oracles of Nature are divine,
And but the inspired have authority.

Good and Evil.

Good thoughts, 'tis said, are no more than good dreams

Save they be into action put, and that
On opportunity depends. Alas!
If place and power cohered, what good were done
Which else, a babe still-born, has no way here,
But in the womb of good intention fails,
The heart's abortion! Ay, and thuswise too,
Full many a foul intent in that it has
No power or place of action is debarred
A monstrous birth. So nature haply does
In some mysterious way we do not know
Still hold the balance 'tween the good and ill
Of thought in action here, and we become
(In spite of our own selves full oft indeed)
Dispensers of a higher equity
Than the bare law of reason would allow.

The Recuperative Power of Youth.

She has hope's remedy in being young:
When age is on, and life has such a fall,
The efficacy has left that medicine
Which in youth is so vital.

Wisdom.

There are some things in life are very poor,
And some unpriceable: our wisdom is
To know our rubbish and our riches here;
To, as it were, sort out ourselves, and blow
The world's dust off the jewels that we have,
Revealing them.

Natural Gifts.

The gifts o' the gods; not all men have them, ay,
And some indeed that have them know it not;
And some that have them not, deem that they have,
And there's the mischief: it is this that makes
So many failures, tempts men to betray
Their proper selves, and on a false surmise
Of what they are or will be, lures them to
Their own undoing; as pirate lights decoy
Unwary mariners to ruin on

A monstrous shore.

Experience.

Experience is a stern pace-maker, and
'Tis on the road to wisdom, that rough way,
So many fall.

Wrongs unrepented and unpunished breed
More deadly growths of that pernicious seed.

Were all men equal, were all dull or keen,
Ulysses or Ajax had never been.

Even as men shut their doors to unkind airs.
Misery in poverty unpitied fares.

I hate effeminate men, she frowning cried;
And I a mannish woman, he replied.

The one white violet's the innocence
A maid knows not she had — until it's gone.

An unclean thought still like an ulcer eats
The life immortal.

Life at the best is what it makes of hope;
Its use or its abuse is all.

Our sweet sins have their own sour medicine,
And that must cure us.

Women.

Alas! we women are the fools of you:
You mould us and you mar us — we are yours,
And ever have been since the birth of love,
Flowers cherished for a while, soon to be cast
As weeds away; and yet as weeds in the mire
Our fading hues breathe to the last of you.

Love.

The small, white, soft hand of a maid can shoot
A bolt will bar a giant's way; and, oh!
The dreamy Love is a unique magician,

That, tender as the maiden's lily hand,
Is yet as sinewy retentive as
The bolt that bars the giant's way.

Work.

For thyself work, not for another, so
'Tis possible; else all thy worth is his
Whose maybe paltry payment scarce serves to
The base sufficing of thy bed and board:
And all thy days to this sad use are given,
Till age or sickness shall subdue thy pith,
And put thee on the Jewish mercy of
The monstrous world, ere like a brute's, alas!
Thy poor remainder finds a burial.

Impetuosity.

His over-hot desire itself defeats,
And where mere prudence had attained, he fails
For lack of self-retention; as on ice
A ravening wolf, when his prey swerves, o'ershoots
The mark, and, floundering in his fury, slides
On the smooth floor.

Thought's Assiduity.

Be not afraid of facts; they must be faced,
And thought must in the affairs of circumstance
Untangle many a knotty point, decide
Grave issues, and so tend life's business that
She runs not into debt with hope and fear,
Doubt's brokers or emotion's merchants, and
So bankrupt's her estate that, inly poor,
Not all conceit or custom's bravery
Can long ward off the wretched hour that gives
Her beggary, like an evil odour, to
The casual air, and taints the time with her.

Life, A Language.

Life is a language every man must use,
Some with a wondrous faculty, and some

So blindly that they seem like Caliban
Or e'er the good and great magician took
Pity upon his impotence, and made
The discord of his reason musical.

Noonday Hills.

The silent blue haze in the noonday hills
Is deep with glory, as the very air
Were an alembic.

On Marriage.

Whom Love has joined no man may put asunder,
And he has never joined those who *can* part:
Marriage is this, no more, howe'er priests moan;
The rest is words, mere words, and custom's vapour
The heart will brush aside as easily
As fancy paints a picture.

Homo Sum.

The hearts of men are like mine, therefore it
Must laugh and weep with them.

Insect.

We do not grasp ourselves, but still drift on
As aimless as a mote in the warm air,
Whose senses take the sweetness of the time,
And in a moment let existence go,
Its tiny death-squeak an indefinite thing
Recorded in the general ear of God.

Butterfly.

In the fierce light the butterfly wings free —
So delicate, and yet so fibred to
Withstand the stress a giant would faint under.

Truth.

The simple truth indeed is after all

The ablest agency a man can have.

Opportunity.

I can believe it, that we each do have
One opportunity, and on it hangs
It may be all.

Love.

There is so much in us is godlike still,
Love lifts us to heaven that is ours.

Beauty, its Effect.

I have been touched with her, and have ta'en (Unclear:)
The acquaintance of her beauty like a dream,
Or as it were a flower of Faerie breathed
By an immortal; for the light and air
Of life and love so, so endue her, she
Puts on and off the sweetest favours like
The momentary raiment that
A goddess dons and doffs.

Bigotry.

How often our beliefs more than our doubts
Ruin and mar us here, clog the soul's feet,
And shackle the heart's best impulses so,
That for Heaven's love we do inhuman things,
And with a (Unclear:) quietude
Hear babes moan in the everlasting fire!

Supernatural Discernment.

If we could spy into each other, ken
The heathen aims and the familiar evils
That in the seeming good and virtuous reign;
If we could only pierce the fallacy
Each of the other, strip convention off,
And in our nakedness strut up and down
For thought's perusal — what a world 'twould be,
If then, like God all-seeing, we could come

Straight to the truth of others and ourselves!

Healthy Labour.

The charm of labour is health's appetite,
For lack of which the clammy sinew is
A joyless power, and, like a hopeless heart,
Throbs to a sickly tune.

The Song-God.

The Song-god helps me mightily, and runs
Before life's purpose like a primal power,
Spirit in sense of all that I am still;
Whose flame burns in the heart, consuming there
The growth of that desire whose grossness would
Darken a dedicated soul, until
Within a sensuous lethargy it grew
Void of the God whose utterance is all.

This Life.

This life that glides away
As in a night and day —
This that is shade and shine from Night brought forth
To Night returning on a cloudy wing,
As if it took with it out of the earth
Everything!
A specimen of Time — a fact
Which hope and fear have verified,
Whate'er the after aeons may enact,
Whate'er has been or will be thought of here;
Something that must still in itself abide
As if in its own sphere.
Oh! who can sing it — the immaterial I,
One with the earth, one with the sky?
It is so brief, so everlasting too,
So all apart from Him and You —
This that within itself contains
The first and last of all we hear and see,
Time centred in Eternity
With all its joys and pains,
Its hopes and fears through all the years

That still like an ethereal dew
Fall on the senses, which therethrough
Still gloom and gleam — This that is as apart
As the Universal Heart,
That re-absorbs itself, as if it were,
Beyond all praise and prayer
Within its own immensity —
This patent, yet impalpable ME
Like a divine thing in a mystic mart
Trading on its own authenticity ...
It cannot sing itself, self-dumb
'Mid the world's hum,
Though vocal in all else, as thought
Embodied in itself all things,
Yet left the Thinker by himself apart
As in a region whose
Shadows and lights confuse
The semblances of his identity
With mystic movements, eerie vanishings;
Until his being seems to be
A very dream, imbued
With some primeval mood
In which weird pictures of the soul appear,
Grotesque and crude
As the first rude
Conceits of the untutored eye and ear
In prehistoric breathings fraught
With all the little there was then
Divine in thought.
It cannot sing itself, and yet
Pourtraying the world's heart
It has, as if it were, command
Of an interior land
Untraced on any mortal chart,
Beneath a sky whose sun has never set
Since first Thought's eastern curtains drawn
Let in the dawn
Of the illusive light by which we know
That we are here, and go
To a most certain end not far away!

Notes.

Page 16. — Concerning “The Ghost Ship,” “Marriage Morn,” “Charon,” etc., Mr. A. G. Stephens wrote: “That is a very promising lot of verses — a bit thin: moonlit rather than sunlit, but sweet, and having the glamour of poetry.”

Page 19. — “For the permanency of his name and fame Henley relies on his poems, and unluckily his poems are no better than clever man's verses — or say very clever man's verses. What is it, this mysterious something that, for all minds tuned to it, so distinctively sets apart poetry from verse? One does not know — it is indefinable — an influence subtilising clarifying, suddenly piercing the veil 'twixt you and the Poet, and setting you tingling at his will. One does not know — Henley has heat enough and light enough, yet somehow from his furnace of passion thought, phrase, image, there does not arise that white flame which vivifies all it leaps upon. He is like those alchemists who, with all the ingredients, vainly sought the elixir, panting for the incommunicable secret of the combination. So Kipling. So Buchanan. So Stevenson. So a dozen other men of noble impulse, of high capacity, with the fullest knowledge of what they seek, the models and precedents at their fingers' ends, the hot stir at their hearts — yet unable to crystallise, impotent to create. And comes along some rude, unlettered rogue of ballad-maker, with not a tithe of their learning, (Unclear:) of their talents — a touch, and the thing's done! A word added or deducted, or a relationship taken (Unclear:) given, and lo, a Poem! One does not know — it (Unclear:) some mystery of the molecules. But the results are as clearly divided as the sheep from the goats of the legendary Judgment-Day. Henley writes: —

Stoop to my endeavor,
O my love, and be
Only and for ever
Sun and stars to me.

That is verse. And an unknown Australian writes —

Love, love me only,
Love me for ever,
My life's been lonely,

A joyless endeavour.
Though earth were heaven,
I in it for ever,
Of thee bercaven
I'd love again never.

That is poetry.” — A. G. Stephens, on the Red Page, *Bulletin*.

Page 21. — “A Memory” is a lovely gem. It reminds me of Hood's “Death-bed” and Wordsworth's “Three years she grew,” but it is quite original. The most that could be said would be to consider it their child, worthy of the parents, with more delicacy and charm. It proves you are a poet.” — Arthur A. D. Balydon.
