

The Explorers and Other Poems

Martin, Catherine (1848-1937)

University of Sydney Library

Sydney

1999



<http://setis.library.usyd.edu.au/ozlit>

© Copyright belongs to University of Sydney Library.

The texts and Images are not to be used for commercial purposes without
permission

Source Text:

Prepared against the print edition published by George Robertson
Melbourne, 1874

All quotation marks retained as data
All unambiguous end-of-line hyphens have been removed, and the trailing
part of a word has been joined to the preceding line.

First Published: 1874

821.89 *Australian Etexts poetry women writers 1870-1889 verse*

23rd February 1999
Creagh Cole Coordinator
Text Additions

The Explorers and Other Poems

Melbourne

George Robertson

1874

DEDICATION.

To A.L. Mackay, Of Port Darwin

DEAR A.,—To your advice and encouragement is owing, in a great measure, the appearance of this, my first work, in its present form. If you were at all cynically inclined, I think you would consider it rather hard to be made a scapegoat of to such an extent; but, as you will, notwithstanding the many shortcomings of the book now inscribed to you, be only gratified that you were thus instrumental in its completion, I need say no more on that score.

You may remember an incident which is told of an orator of olden times who, upon being warmly applauded by a large assembly, asked one near if he had said anything very foolish. I am afraid there are few of us who would be so impervious to enthusiastic approbation as to make a similar inquiry under like circumstances. Still more limited is the number of authors, who can turn their literary offspring adrift on the world, without much anxious solicitude as to their fate. Poetry, like virtue, it has been said, should be its own reward. It may be so; yet, it is hard to attain to the stoicisin of the Greek orator. Nevertheless, in whatever way the present work may be received by the general public, the knowledge that it will meet with your approval and indulgence, inspires me with confidence that it will not be unacceptable to those whose opinion I would most highly prize. To you and them, then, I may say, in all sincerity—

“An euch nur dacht', ich wenn ich sann und schrieb,
Euch zu gefallen war mein hbehster Wunsch,
Euch zu ergetzen war mein letzter Zweek.
Wer nicht die Welt in seinen Freunden sieht
Verdient nicht dass die Welt von ihm erfahre.”

M. C.

MOUNT GAMBIER,
April, 1874.

The Explorers

**A CHRONICLE OF THE BURKE AND WILLS
EXPEDITION.**

In Four Parts.

(The Explorers) Part First

THE sound of many voices fills the air,
A festal look people and city wear;
And all around, the tread of hurrying feet
Rings ceaselessly along each thronged street.
The sun is shining from a cloudless sky,
Glad expectation beams in every eye,
And now and then a burst of laughter loud
Breaks through the hum of small talk in the crowd.
Towards one spot in haste it seems to tend,
In one quick moving stream the masses blend.
Then one who joined the crowd with searching gaze,
Seemed to regard the scene with deep amaze;
He was a stooped grey man in bush costume,
Guiltless of gloves, or studs, or rare perfume;
Bronzed was his face with an Australian sun,
And as he went he turned to speak to one
Who walked beside him: "Say, friend, I pray,
Why are the people crowding all this way?"
This one answered — "In what distant spot
Hast thou been living, that thou knowest not
Of the great Expedition now sent forth
To explore our mighty isle from south to north?"
The Bushman's eyes lit with a twinkling gleam,
"Within the Bush life passes like a dream
In strange oblivion of the wondrous strides
The world at large is making. He who bides
Through many years within the drowsy shade
Of lonely haunts, will find the great world fade
In mem'ry's tablets, till such far-off hum,
And scraps of information, as may come
Through newspapers, and rumours unto him,
From its unceasing whirl, will seem as dim
And vague, as the faint lines trac'd by a hand
Long, long returned to dust.

Unto this land

I came from England, fifteen years ago.
The Yarra passed as now, with even flow,
From Baw Baw's shady heights; Macedon's brow
Was dark with the same trees that shade it now;
But in the place of this great stately town,
(This city, rather), gleaming like a crown,
Superbly fair, for these far Southern lands,
Set by the mighty ocean, by the hands

Of sturdy toil, with its grand streets and squares,
 And round it, many a home that proudly wears
 The aspect of great wealth, there were rude huts
 And tents, and where we walk were gaping ruts,
 Over which rumbled laden bullock-drays,
 Instead of landaus, with sleek prancing greys;
 And where soft knuckled dandies lisp and drawl,
 And would-be exquisites, at snail's pace crawl,
 With eye-glass fixed, in idiotic stare,
 And locks front parted with stupendous care,
 Who think the tasks of life have been well done
 When they a ballet-dancer's smiles have won;
 Whose fittest duties are to guard the pets
 Ladies call poodles, from life's jars and frets,
 And to proclaim a luckless tailor's skill
 When sallying forth, (unfit to think or till,)
 In Dent's best kids, to keep their hands from harm, —
 There stalked the digger with his brawny arm,
 The hardy pioneer, who, with his axe,
 Hew'd trees as quickly as the fire melts wax.
 In place of dainty Dames, in silk and lace,
 Who flirt in drawing-rooms, with well-bred grace,
 Whose weightiest care is, how to dress the hair,
 And wear a shawl with a becoming air;
 Whose fate the milliner holds in her hands
 When she decides on puffs, or rigid bands;
 Whose version of a man's chief aim and end,
 Is purring flattery, with a courtly bend —
 You then might see helpmates in word and truth,
 Who staggered not at work, hard and uncouth;
 The foremost article of whose homely creed
 Was not, that God gave hands in very deed,
 To serve them as soft-jewelled toys through life,
 But to do battle in the daily strife
 Of a prosaic, and hard-working world,
 Instead of jingling tunes, ribboned and curl'd.
 Truly the change is great, but greater still
 The tireless energy, unflinching will
 That wrought such changes, in so short a time.
 I have liv'd ere now in many a clime — ”

Here, as the garrulous and stooped old man
 Spoke with uplifted hand, a youth who ran
 With unthinking haste, push'd him aside
 And stopped his speech. The people ran, and cried,
 And jostled onward, in a mighty throng
 Unto the verdant glades, where the glad song

Of birds is heard the livelong summer day;
Where from the turmoil of the dusty way,
And the loud grating noises of the street,
A wearied soul might find a quiet retreat,
Till wand'ring in the gum-tree's lengthened shade,
The feverish discords of life might fade
From the tired heart, while, softly as the kiss
Prest by fond lips, that fear to break the peace
Of a dear sleeper, the warm slumbrous breeze
Strays dreamily amid the stately trees.
But none of this unnumbered multitude
Have sought the leafy Park for solitude;
Yet all the discord, and the jarring strife
That oft mar the highest purposes of life,
Were on this day laid aside, forgotten,
While gazing on the group of stalwart men
That were to venture forth upon this day,
On the danger fraught, and toilsome way,
(Till they should reach the strange and far-off shore,
Where mortal foot had never trod before,)
Through unknown hardships, through unrecked-of pain.
It was no narrow question of mere gain
That prompted the enterprise. From the first
Lone pioneers that gained this shore, none durst
Pierce the vast and trackless realms that lay
Wrapped in mystery from day to day.
If fertile regions, or vast deserts bare,
Bleached by the great fierce sun's insatiate glare;
If fair watered vales, or plains of sand,
Formed the interior of this mighty land —
These were the questions men were wont to ask,
In vague conjecture. Now, the arduous task
Of solving these was to be carried out,
Points long disputed placed beyond a doubt;
The man of science and of busy trade,
And the philanthropist, who long had made
The cause of humanity his first care,
To all the enterprise deep interests bear.

But see! Among the crowd one rises now,
Earnestly speaking, with uncovered brow.
His voice is broken with emotion deep —
“Ay, they are pledged, through every change to keep
The memory of this day, within their heart,
Whate'er privations yet may be their part;
Howe'er the expedition yet may end,
As through unknown realms their way they wend,

The enthusiasm of this mighty crowd,
The ringing echoes of their plaudits loud,
The mighty cheer — the tremulous God-speed,
Will urge them to success, through pain and need,
Until the goal of all their hopes is won,
And the great work on which they are bent is done.”
Thus spake the leader, then upon their way
Through the vast crowd, the Explorers passed away.
Now, pressing to the front, the old man went,
And on the passing train his keen gaze bent,
And said aloud — “A score in all but three
Of men, and thirty camels; if on me
Rested the weighty burden of command,
I should have chosen a much smaller band.
Ah, I can see, Robert O'Hara Burke,
That ere success is thine, thou hast thy work
To do. And those same camels — friend dost think,”
(This to one near, for bushmen do not shrink
From strangers — nor stand on etiquette,
Nor let formalities their souls much fret.)
“Those animals should be so much esteemed?
From what I've seen of them, they seemed
(Away from the Bedouin's skilful hand,
And the accustomed routes o'er burning sand)
To be most obstinate.”

“There I agree

With you,” the stranger said. “Aye, I foresee
No little trouble to be laid in store
For our Explorers by the brutes. The lore
Of Eastern lands has thrown a marvellous haze
Around them, so that when one fain would gaze,
And judge them with impartial eyes, a train
Of childish, crude beliefs rises again
From memory's mystic realms, and we perceive
Them, not as they are, but as we believe
They ought to be. But, notwithstanding this,
I feel sure our Explorers will not miss
The aim in view. There is my young friend Wills —
His presence in the expedition fills
Me with confidence. I daresay you deem
My judgment over fond, and that I seem
To overrate his worth. Ah, if you knew
How courageous and brave, how leal and true,
How modest, yet determined — but I know
When I speak of him, that my words will grow,
Despite, myself, too warm, I would that all
Who start were like him! I don't wish to pall

The general joy, with auguries of dark ill,
Nor play the raven, 'mid glad birds — but still
Incompetence and self-will have ofttimes been
The ruin of great purposes, and I ween
Such fatal qualities are not wanting here.”

The crowd surged onward, and now loud and clear
The last cheer floated to the sunny skies:
And thousands gazed, with eager, wistful eyes
On the retreating forms, that slowly wound
Out from the city, while each clamorous sound
Quietly died away, as out of sight
The Explorers passed. Then in the fading light
Of that first evening, lit their first camp fire.
While sitting round one said; — “Ere we retire
(That I believe is the genteelest phrase)
On the long nights, we might recite some lays
And stories of the Bush as a pastime.”
To which all were agreed; of these in rime
A few are here set down.

First Tale

The Pearl Cutter

O yes, the workmanship is very fine,
Carved from a shell without the slightest flaw;
A meaning seems to lurk in every line;
The hand that wrought was not unskill'd nor raw.
I'll tell you how it first came to be mine
(Come, Pam, keep down your big intrusive paw),
But, then, it is a real botheration, —
I'm such a duffer, when I try narration.

But, after all, there's not so much to tell:
I'll call my tale the history of a pen:
Whether I tell my story ill or well,
To this much I can safely swear, my men,
It owes no interest to fond fancy's spell:
I give it as I really heard it, when
I went to seek my luck at Nicol Bay,
From an old man, whose head was bent and gray.

Now that I'm more at ease, in fact grown bolder
Than when I began to tell my story,
Let me admit, I should have said pen-holder,

Though the error should impair my glory
As an author, let it pass, we're colder

In such matters when our heads are hoary;
And though my tale an hour away may wile,
I don't pretend to have much grace of style.

Let me proceed then. It was while in Perth
I look'd for such small lions as might roar
Within that city. Doubtless, there's a dearth
Of antique art on an Australian shore,
Far from the favour'd regions of the earth,
Which I have hardly ever seen before;
But "the proper study of mankind is man,"
And, in truth, I study him whene'er I can.

And though there were no vast cathedrals, old,
With marvellous pictures from a master hand,
No massive ruins, with past centuries' mould,
Rising above the gleaming range of sand —
No statues from the hands of sculptor bold,
In honour of the heroes of the land;
Yet the town with great interest was rife
For one who cared to study convict life.

For me the subject had not many charms,
But on the evening of the first strange day,
As through the streets I went with folded arms
To reach the river, in the twilight gray,
I heard a bell peal forth quick, deep alarms;
And then I saw men hurrying fast away,
Till, where a goodly multitude had been,
When the bell ceased hardly a soul was seen.

I saw them as they passed, with deep amaze,
Artisans, labourers, and men of wealth,
None of them returned my searching gaze,
Quickly they went, as if in fear and stealth.
It was to me, an utterly new phase,
To see men hurry home in robust health
At close of day, whene'er the great wild clang
Of a noisy bell, on the quiet air rang.

Then one who saw my wonder said, "I grieve
To shock the feelings of a young new chum,
But those you saw so early take their leave
With downcast eyes, and faces mute and glum,
Are gents, well known here, as 'ticket-of-leave.'" "What, all?" I cried, and then I grew quite dumb,
Felt in my pockets with a nervous motion,

And wish'd myself on t'other side the ocean.

“And then,” went on my suave, obliging friend,
“There are hundreds who are still in prison,
And as we wish profit with pain to blend,
(Turnkey in the stockade, is my mission,)
We make them work at many crafts, and bend
The stubborn back and will with incision.
They are an awful lot, I speak in sorrow,
But pray come and see them all to-morrow.”

And so I went, it was a dreary place,
The very click of the great pond'rous gate,
That was opened with a tardy grace,
Seemed to speak, the dread and hopeless fate
Of those within, while each downcast face,
Spoke only of past crimes, and of deep hate,
And bitter wretchedness, as if the past,
Its withering influence around them cast.

Delicate ornaments for ladies' hair,
Costly nick-nacks, that flashed a thousand dyes,
With quaint devices, worked with art and care,
By skilful fingers, and sad patient eyes;
Fantastic creatures, that would make one stare,
More wondrous than aught that crawls or flies,
And all wrought from the pearls of the great sea,
Such were the samples of native industry.

Then as I turned to leave, I noticed one
With shrunken stooping form, and low bent head;
My presence there, no glance from him had won,
I looked upon him with a kind of dread,
He wrought as if his task would ne'er be done,
As though he noted not the hours that sped;
His face was as if carved in rigid stone,
As if he lived through life wholly alone.

I saw his hands were shapely, white, and long,
His brow was high, his hair was thin and grey;
The desecrating brand of a great wrong
Was graven on his face; I turned away
To pass again out from the motley throng,
But a strong impulse moved me, “Friend, I pray,
(Pardon the question, but I fain would know)
Why you are here, ere from the place I go.”

As though my hand had struck a brutal blow
He started, and the pearl from his hand fell

On which he wrought, with patient care and slow;
He looked into my face, I could not tell
If wrath or woe dwelt in his heart, in low
And measured tones he said, "Doubtless 'tis well
To probe the anguish of a sad crushed soul,
For moral lessons, when one's well and whole.

"It is so easy, in our youthful years,
To judge the wretches who are steep'd in crime,
To preach repentance, and to waken fears
Of coming judgment, from a height sublime;
To note the terror, and remorseful tears,
And write a tract to warn mankind in time.
Aye, set upon the darkest crimes a price,
When neatly bound, to warn mankind from vice.

"But *I* am not repentant; the disgrace
That blights my soul and life, has no power
To quench revengeful hate; the holy grace
Which grants forgiveness, like a lowly flower
That sweetest smells when crush'd, findeth no place
Within this breast, since the dark, awful hour
That saw my being blighted, life a weight,
And all my better feelings turn'd to hate.

"Yes, let me tell my story. It is more
Than eighteen years, since on this shore I trod
In heavy fetters, while, behind, before,
Chained in a gang, were convicts, whose abode
Was mine, from day to day — aye, ever more,
Though then I knew it not. Oh, gracious God!
How have I cried for death; yet all in vain,
Through days of anguish, nights of mortal pain.

"But let me not the calm of years forget.
While I relate my history with truth,
And tell what brought me to this place and state.
I was an orphan from my early youth;
But wealth was mine, and blest I deemed my fate,
In possessing Heaven's best gifts. In sooth,
That pearl of priceless worth — a faithful wife —
I dreamt was mine, to bless and cheer through life.

"And yet another prize I counted mine,
The love of one who long had called me friend.
What need had I at fortune to repine,
When I possessed the best gifts she could send?
Long had I bow'd at friendship's sacred shrine
With faith and gratitude — but to what end

Do I dwell upon this? Dark sin and shame
And treachery, in place of this soon came.

“Trust not in woman's love, nor in man's faith,
Is the dread meaning life for me has borne:
Men talk of failure, poverty and death, —
Of man's contumely, undeservèd scorn,
As the worst ills we meet, while we draw breath;
But those are trifles to the soul forlorn,
Who stands bereft of faith in human love,
Of goodness on the earth, and righteousness above.

“But what availeth sorrow? — words are vain:
All, all is vain, when those we held as true
As heaven's own light are blacken'd with the stain
Of foul dishonour, and life holds to view
Naught but the shattered cisterns hew'd with pain —
Only to find the broken fragments strew
The path we tread, with torn and bleeding heart,
When journeying through life lone and apart.

“When first the truth burst on my burning brain,
My senses reel'd; insensible I lay
For weary days and nights; and when again
Reason return'd, on a quiet summer's day,
Seeing each well-known spot, when I would fain
Kneel down, in my great grief, I could not pray
Nor weep; but, with fierce, wild words I vow'd
If e'er we met, alone or in a crowd,

“At midnight's hour, or in the day's broad glare,
My hand would smite him for the base, dark deed.
I heeded not the scenes, so calm and fair,
That spoke of former bliss; I could not rid
My mind of thoughts of vengeance; with the stare
Of searching hate, away I longed to speed
Far from the place that I had called my home,
Weigh'd as with Cain's deep curse, homeless to roam.

“At last we met, neither remorse nor fear
Weighed down his head; swiftly reached his side,
He saw my haggard face, ‘Draw not so near,’
He said, unknowing who I was, aside
I turned one moment, then I whispered, ‘Here
Wilt thou answer for my wrong; the ceaseless tide
Of busy life, that surges where we stand,
Will not avail to save thee from my hand.’

“As the lithe tiger springs upon his prey

When he has fasted long, so then I flew,
Blinded with fury, on that long-past day,
At my once-trusted friend, and then I grew
Delirious, mad with wrath, till borne away
By strong resistless hands. For days I knew
No more, until at length my awful doom
Burst on me, lying in a prison's gloom.

“Tried for attempting thus to take the life
Of a God-fearing and reproachless man;
The strangest speculations were set rife
As to my motives. They had seen me, wan,
Rush on this man, without the plea of strife,
Or smallest provocation, when they ran
To save him from me, they had heard me vow,
No aid from Heaven or earth could save him now.

“Might it not be that I was quite insane?
Not so, said my *friend's* counsel, this strange act
Was the result of cherished hate — with pain
He made the statement, but, in truth, the fact
Could not now be hidden, though he fain
Would have conceal'd it — though his heart was rackt,
He then must state the truth — a *fancied wrong*
Led me to attack his client in the throng,

“After the lapse of years. Now it was clear,
Urged my friend's counsel, that my only thought
Had been to take his client's life. Must fear
And deadly danger on a man be brought
Without redress; and would the jury hear
Of such an outrage on a man who sought,
Through all his life, to benefit mankind,
To feed the hungry and to house the blind?

“What chance had I of being judged aright —
A haggard stranger, standing there forlorn,
Guilt-laden, unrepentant, in the sight
Of obtuse men? Granted that they were sworn
To judge impartially; yet say, what light
Could so illumine their minds, that a soul torn
With monstrous injustice, should be known
From one who callous through great crimes had grown?

“I heard my sentence, all unmov'd and still —
For fifteen years transported to this land,
For having assaulted with intent to kill,
And injuring grievously, a man whose hand
Had ne'er been raised but to befriend and heal

His fellow-man. After I reach'd this strand,
I seem'd for years like one whose soul is dead,
From whom each hope and joy of life has fled.

“Then in the course of time there came a change —
I know not in what day, nor in what hour,
It matters not, and who could think it strange
That one, who still knew life's meridian pow'r,
Should find his thoughts at length begin to range
Beyond the misery of his life? A flower
Quivering in sunlight, or a bird's glad note
May break grief's ice, and bid the freed soul float

“Once more to hope's bright realms. My spirits rose
In strong defiance of Fate's deadliest blow.
My soul had pined beneath the deepest woes
That man may know, but e'en as twigs will grow
Upon the scarr'd trunk when winter's snows
And chilling frosts have fled, beneath the glow
Of summer's sunshine, so the human soul,
Though torn and bleeding, may yet through the roll

“Of speeding years bear fruit anew. My time
Of banishment was shorten'd by six years,
Now but one had to run, each hour's quick chime
Bade me reflect, “The hour now swiftly nears
That sets me free.” And just then to this clime
There came from England, one whose anxious fears
And sorrow, at my most unhappy fate
Had my sole solace been: he knew my state,

“He knew the measure of my fault and grief,
And through the weary years of my exile
His letters reached me, laden with relief,
With loving counsel, with much that might wile
Grief heavy as was mine. He was, in brief,
The kind of friendship that when men revile
The most will wax most steadfast and most strong;
And now I was to join him when those long

“Dread years were past. I aided him when young
And all obscure, he struggled up the steep,
Rugged ascent, which all whose names have hung
Upon a nation's lips, must climb through deep
And earnest toil. The world had long since flung
The laurels at his feet. But they who reap
Fame's empty harvest oftenest turn with scorn
From the world's shallow verdicts. Thus, when torn

“With anguish and despair at the disgrace
Which shadowed my life, he was the first
To break my prison's gloom, and in his face
I read unshaken faith. Although accurst
I then held all mankind, the fostering grace
Of the living sympathy which durst
Thus pierce a felon's cell, awoke a ray
Of hope, which, though long wan, ne'er died away

“Till fann'd by time into a steady flame.
As I have said, but one year had to run
Ere I might claim my freedom, when there came
One high in power to the place. The sun
Was sloping to the west, the day his name
First fell on my ear. It seems that he had ‘done,’
As the phrase runs, all that was worth his sight
In Perth, and now had come to gain more light

“As to the convict system. Words must fail
To tell the feelings that rushed through my mind
When, prosperous, smiling, near to the spot
Where I stood, *that man* again I saw. Blind,
Sick, I stood with passion, while the blood, hot
As rushing lava swelled my veins. “I find
The prisoners kindly treated, and content,”
He suavely said, while all before him bent.

“Yes, he stood there before me, by his side
A newly wedded wife, young, fair — not *her*
Who lost her soul for him — no — let her hide
In nameless dens, while upon him no slur
May rest — sleek hypocrite, *he* may abide
Amid the sanctities of life, and purr
His satisfaction at the moral way
In which the state reforms those gone astray!

“Think you 'twas strange I acted as I did?
I reeked not whether it was strange or wild.
In one fierce moment, I had sprung to rid
My sight of such a monster; as he smiled
And turn'd to go, once more with the wild speed
Of madd'ning hate, I held him; weak as a child
He seemed in my fierce grasp; ere those around
Could save him, I had hurled him to the ground.

O madman that I was — but pardon me
I have wearied you, naught more remains to tell
But that I am here *for life*. Here you may see
The marks of irons on my limbs,” — Then fell

A warning note upon my ears; sadly
I rose to go, again as though a spell
Lay on him, the man turned once more to toil
On a pen-holder. "Thou feard'st not to soil,"

He slowly said, "thy hand by touching mine;
There dwells a gleam of kindness in thine eyes;
Let this, as a memento, then be thine,
Of one whose scathing sorrows, and whose sighs
Will soon be over; keep it and let each line
Teach thee compassion, for each soul that lies
In deepest woe. If thou shouldst ever part
Therewith, O let it be to one whose heart — "

He stopped, and laid aside the pointed tool
With which he wrought. I took his gift in silence,
For my mind was heavy, my heart too full
Of sad and bitter thoughts, to speak; intense
Pity made me dumb, I have since learnt to school
My feelings better, but the bitter sense
Of wrong and deep injustice, which this man's doom
Woke in me, still at times steeps my mind in gloom.

Second Tale

"Silent Jim"

WE got up a party on spec, to explore
The country that now is well known as Gipps Land;
I had never set eyes upon Jim before
The day we engaged him as an extra hand.
In truth he was rather an odd-looking man,
With deep set sleepy eyes, in build somewhat thin,
It was seldom he laughed, and he never ran,
Nor seemed flurried at all in the greatest din.

He did all his work in a leisurely way,
Very often when one of us spoke to him,
He would answer — not with a yea or a nay, —
For this reason, we dubbed him "Silent Jim."
I oft rode by his side through the live-long day,
And he moved not his lips, but to hum and croon,
"O life it is sweet, but 'twill soon pass away,"
Or similar words, to a nondescript tune.

When past the confines of civilized life,
One regular scorcher, we camped before noon
In a spot where umbrageous gum-trees were rife,

Round a somewhat spreading and muddy lagoon.
We kindled a fire, brewed our quart pots of tea,
Then hobbled our horses, and laid down in the shade;
“Silent Jim,” standing near me, said unto me,
“I’ll go and lie down in yon cool-looking glade.”

With his cabbage-tree hat well over his eyes,
He sauntered away with his dreamy face,
None would have thought of expressing surprise
At aught he would do. At his leisurely pace
He reached the dim gully, that just to the right
Was steeped in the shadows of saplings and trees,
Intertwisted so thickly that e’en the light
Could scarce make its way through, or a straying breeze.

I threw a mosquito-net over my head,
And I very soon slept the sleep of the just;
When I awoke, the sun in the west was red,
And such a clatter was round me, that at first
I quite thought the niggers had made an attack,
And were roasting our party; but when I turned round,
With wond’ring gaze, I saw it all. At my back,
On a gum log, sat Silent Jim, 'mid the sound

There of noisy inquiries, only intent
On feeding and nursing a small, elfish child,
With a pinch'd, sun-browned face. Above it, Jim bent
With a pannikin of tea (that seemed very mild),
Of which the child drank with such eager haste
As took Jim's breath away. Then he turned unto me —
“Think of this wee mortal alone in the waste,
Picking up bits of gum I could hardly see!”

“But how came you by her?” arose in a chorus,
And that little dot leant her face against Jim.
At the sound of strange voices. “Don’t make such a fuss,”
He cried, very testily. “You see that dim
And thick wooded gully, just away to the right?
Well, I thought I would reach it, to lie in the shade,
And there at its outskirts, just where the warm light
Was subdued by the shadows, there sat this wee maid.

“I can't give a guess as from where she has come,
Unless there's a hut somewhere round in the wood.”
This was all Jim's story. One said it was “rum,”
And another said, “Yes; it *was* rather good.”
“Hang it, Jim,” said Grant, the head of our party,
“We did not engage you to act as wet-nurse.”
“Well, you didn't exactly,” said Jim, “my hearty;

Yet you might have gone farther, and fared much worse.”

By this the wee maiden had dropped asleep,
With a mantling flush on her smooth little cheek.
Jim made of his blankets a comical heap,
And laid her thereon. One began then to speak
In a somewhat loud tone, but Jim, with a look
Of unspeakable warning, whispered, “*Be still,*
Or you'll waken her up.” And then said our cook,
“You had better be tramping o'er dale and hill
“To find out the people from whom she has strayed,
For there must be a hut not so far away.”
“Indeed,” answered Grant, “I am somewhat afraid
Our search may be vain, but the rest of the day
We can just do our best to discover some clue
To this singular find.” We wandered about
All searching in vain, a disconsolate crew —
While naught but the woods echoed cooey and shout.

But we saw no sign, and we found not a trace
Of a human presence; and then as the light
'Gan to wane we returned. I saw by Jim's face
He was not in the least downcast. It was night
When to camp we got back. The little maiden
Had long wakened up, and was sitting there,
With great wondering eyes, her small heart laden
With a deep unrest, while her sunny hair

Hung in tangled curls round her. As her eyes fell
On her friend Silent Jim, a radiant smile
Flitted over her face. He said softly — “Well,
My wee girl, you see we have search'd a long while
To find out your home, but our searching was vain:
How your little feet bore you from day to day
Through such wilds I can't tell.” A strange look of pain
Fell upon the child's face, and then passed away,

While she crept very close to her big quiet friend.
“I tay wis you,” she said, while her sunny head
Rested on Jim's arm. Then to see him low bend
O'er his newly-found treasure! “Pease put me to bed,”
Was the neat, grave edict. Then Silent Jim's eyes
Became very solemn, while he looked around,
As if in amazement, and wondering surprise
At his new duties, then at last on the ground,

Near the camp-fire, he placed an opossum rug,
In smooth folds, saying, “Come now, my little maid,

See the nice bed I've made for you, warm and snug,
Here you'll sleep more soundly than in yon lone glade.”
“Lord, what a chatterbox is Silent Jim now,”
Said Grant, laughing loudly, while every gaze
On the quaint nurse was fixed. Then the child's fair brow
Was quietly upturned, and there, while a haze

Seemed all at once falling across my sight,
She reverently knelt, with an upraised hand,
In the wood-fire's wavering and eerie light,
While a great silence fell on the noisy band
Of rough, careless men. One then turned him away,
As though the fire shone too bright; another lit
His pipe in great haste, and he then straightway
To smoke quite forgot; with a cough some seemed smit.

“Our Sader in heaven,” here the child at Jim
Looked wistfully, knowing naught farther to say,
While he looked down at her, with eyes growing dim;
'Tis most likely that Jim had been wont to pray
Like others when young, but had now quite forgot
The words long since lisped by a fond mother's knee:
“Amen,” then he whispered, he really could not
At the moment recall more from memory.

The little one after him, whispered “Amen,”
With a sceptical look on her upturned face.
Jim then laid her down gently, while all the men
Looked in quiet on the form that now bore the trace
Of great want and pain, till at last one began
To tell a long tale concerning a child,
Who one sunny evening, playfully ran
To chase a great emu away through the wild;

And returned never more to her lonely home,
And was seen never more, although hundreds went
In the search that was made. The niggers who roam,
Say some, steal away babes when on mischief bent,
As a means of revenge; and so this wee girl
Had, mayhap, thus been left. So we talk'd till late.
I saw Jim that night, ere I slept, smooth each curl,
And with tender care on the little one wait.

On the morrow, the first thing when I awoke
That I saw, was Jim nursing this babe of the wood,
Silent no longer, he laughed and he spoke
At a marvellous rate, and whatever mood
He was in, the moment her young joyous voice,
With its baby prattle, fell upon his ear,

'Twas the signal for Silent Jim to rejoice,
Ever soothing each sorrow, hushing each fear.

By day on his horse he held her before him,
And she archly pretended to hold the reins,
As he told her long tales — it was like a dream
That he erst had been silent — Oh, the tireless pains
With which he attended this gracious elf,
And humoured each fancy; ay, took to sewing,
And darning and stitching, I've seen him myself
Sit up washing and mending till near morning.

But the skilfullest needle scarcely could make
One wee thin dress serve long, so you see at last,
This young lady's round arms began to break
Through her sleeves on each side; Jim to make them fast,
Drew them together, but in such a fashion,
That her hands (which had now grown so much more stout)
Could not really pass through. "Oh, botheration!"
Cried poor Jim; and he then 'gan to cast about,

Whate'er he should do in this serious strait;
Four months must elapse, ere we then hoped to rest
'Neath a roof. I saw Jim that night, grim as Fate,
Sit pondering, when all but he had long prest
Their unyielding pillows. Then at dawn of day
When I awoke, I found Jim still sitting there; —
"What yet sewing!" I cried " Yes, 'tis said make hay
While the sun shines," he answered with a sage air.

"And I think it still wiser, to sew by night,
When the mind is more free from distracting thought,
To ravel the mysteries, that upon one's sight,
Are so apt to break, after one has long wrought,
Only to find, that a bag instead of a skirt
Has been made." Here Jim held up a frock in his hand,
Which I knew had been made from a crimean shirt,
With a breadth of sleeve, unsurpassed in the land.

On that morning, Jim strove, but in vain to hide
(As with the new frock he invested his charge,)
His conceit in his handiwork, and his deep pride
When she stood therein dress'd. "Just a trifle large,"
He said, while the young lady, true to her sex,
Overjoy'd with her dress, said to Grant, "So pitty!"
Then Grant solemnly said, "I don't wish to vex
Your feelings, but Jim," — "You must try to be witty,"

Interrupted Jim; "No, sir, merely to ask

Where you went shopping when in such a smart dress
You armed this lady for fresh conquests. Your task
Has been wondrously done.” Grant bent to caress
The vain puss, who then sought for pastures new
To display her grand gear. She went to the cook
With undisguised pride; but he only said, “ Phew!”
Looking up from chopping to give a sly look

As Jim's Wood-babe (the name by which she now went)
Stood by him array'd in her new-made costume;
But he then made believe to be most intent
On his chopping till Wood-babe began to fume,
“Ooo sud 'ook,” she said sulkily, turning away.
“O, wait till I've time,” said cook, fanning the fire —
Then turned round and exclaimed, “How superbly gay!
Now you are surely dress'd to your heart's desire.

“Pray, who made you that dress?” Answered Wood-babe, “Dim.”
“Then,” said our cook slowly, “I'd just like to know”
(And here his expression became very grim),
“Why the Lord made women, except for our woe?” —
“Come, you'd better invest in a tub, old Di,”
Cried Gray, who was sitting with studious face,
There painting a bit of most gorgeous sky
In some native pigments, with artistic grace.

We found some good country, and then we turned back.
On our homeward journey, Jim's deepest care
(Of suitable dress stuff there being great lack),
Was that Wood-babe's new dress unto rags would wear
Ere another were got, but most happily
This dreaded catastrophe was averted.
When we had reach'd Sydney, Jim said unto me —
“We had better have a notice inserted

“Just in one of the Sydney papers to tell
Whereabouts, and how, we found the wee elf,
And see if one comes to claim her — if so — well,
I'll have to resign her. I know I myself
Would tramp o'er the whole country if she were lost;
Those she belonged to must have gone well nigh mad
When she wandered away.” In the morrow's “Post”
I saw the brief notice Jim inserted had.

But none came to claim her. “My impression is
That the child is an orphan, who strayed from some hut
And was never sought after,” said Jim. Be this
As it may, he was glad when none claimed, but
What now to do with her? I — “send her to school

And there leave her until she is of an age
To be useful." "In truth I'm not such a fool,"
Said Jim with great emphasis, quite in a rage.

"What, send her to learn how to flirt and to dance,
To crack one's head with fantasias, and to work
Monstrous figures in wool, and now and then glance
At German declensions, talk slang like a Turk,
And converse in strange French? I can't understand
The mania that some have for foreign tongues,
As though, friend, the language of their native land
Was not quite enough to give play to their lungs."

Well, Jim's great dilemma at last was solved
By his getting, just then, a snug legacy
Left by some one at home, on which he resolved
To return to old England. "There, friend, you see,
My own mother will care for her well," he said,
Looking down on Wood-babe with moistening eye.
Thus I saw the last of the sweet little maid
That so strangely was found beneath the lone sky.

Third Tale

MY turn, is it, to tell a tale? If so,
It cannot be one of colonial life;
Only in Melbourne, have I liv'd, and know
Naught of the strange occurrences so rife
Within the bush. But there is a legend
Of my native land, which may be new
To you, although well known from end to end
Of Germany. How such strange legends grew,
Or how much of the truth they may contain,
Is more than I, or wiser men, can tell;
But that their moral oft is very plain,
You will admit, if I my tale speak well.

"The Mouse Tower" (A German Legend)

"In the city of Mentz, a Bishop dwelt,
Who was rich and selfish, cruel and proud.
No tale of dire want could his hard heart melt,
Though his prayers he said, so long and so loud;
His hands he would readily stretch to bless,
And lift them most solemnly up to pray;
But, alas! a fellow-creature's distress
Never made them move in another way.

Then a mighty famine scourged the land,
And the starving poor came around him to die.
All hungry and lean at his doors they stand;
Yet his heart is hard and his pride is high.
Till at his palace, a clamour so loud
Of mingled entreaties and curses rose,
That he opened a granary, call'd the crowd,
And bade them enter to lighten their woes.
In, in they flocked, the young and the old,
With their thin pinch'd limbs and their hollow eyes;
But they found the granary was bare and cold,
And their joy was turned to awful cries
When the door was shut, and the flames spread fast,
For that was the Bishop's remorseless plan —
He set fire to the barn, and cried, "at last
I am rid of that mob, each child and man."
Then loud he laughed at each terrible shriek,
And cried to his trembling servile train:
"Now list to these mice, how shrilly they squeak,
As they greedily eat the Bishop's grain."
The fire raged on till each groan was hush'd,
And dark rose the smoke to the midnight sky,
From the charr'd posts that the bodies crush'd,
As if calling for vengeance from on high.
Then was he cursed, that ruthless prelate,
And an awful judgment upon him fell;
He repented sore when it was too late,
And within his palace he could not dwell.
For over it swarmed, in countless hordes,
Mice hungry-eyed, with glistening teeth;
They gnawed the arras, crept through boards,
They ate each morsel above and beneath.
Walking and reading, at board and in bed,
They came to the Bishop with noiseless tread;
Never was man so fearfully plagued —
Their number was that of the murder'd dead.
Then he fled to his castle of Ehrenfels,
By the side of the mighty, glorious Rhine,
But, ah! even there, as the legend tells,
Followed famishing swarms, without decline.
In at the gateway, and over the wall,
All silent as death, and all grim as fate,
They went on their way through chamber and hall,
With those terrible eyes of deadly hate.
Then the Bishop again, in mortal fright,
Was forced to flee from his fair abode;
To escape the mice he took to flight,

But he found them in shoals on every road.
Then he built him a tower high and strong,
In the tide to secure his salvation;
But still in legions around him they throng,
And drive him to utter desperation.
They swam the river, scaled the tower,
While he met his fate in hopeless despair;
In fiercely they rushed like a July shower,
And came around him with pitiless stare.

* * * * *

In after years was his skeleton found,
(Close beside it lay also his mitre),
Men bore it off to the burial-ground,
And a coffin never weighed lighter.
Such was the fate of this Bishop of Mentz,
But even yet, at the still midnight hour,
He comes as a fog, dark, solemn, and dense,
And rests on his ancient 'Mouse-Tower.'”

Fourth Tale

On The Tramp

WE were bound for the Darling River, my brother Dick and I;
We had travelled two hundred miles or so, we thought no soul was nigh,
Save our black boy Jack, when we camp'd that night, on a dry and whitened plain,
We were taking stock to a distant run, my head was racked with pain,

So we made our fire by a billabong, I watch'd the sun go down
Across great ranges, 'mid purple clouds, with a dark and lurid frown;
I had been ailing for some days past, but nothing to speak of, you know,
One cannot lay up in the bush, although one may feel but so so.

“We must camp early here,” Dick said, “just to give you a little spell,
And I'll make you some famous gruel, to make you jolly and well,”
And so he did in the billy, well stirring it up with a stick,
Then he flavoured it with sugar, although somewhat lumpy and thick,

It was not at all bad stuff, and I really thought it did me good;
I lay beside the blazing fire, high heaped with logs of red gum wood:
There was not much upon that plain, but we had found a decayed tree,
And Jack set to, to make a fire, it would have done you good to see.

It blaz'd upon that spreading plain, with a glimmering strange and eerie,
Amid the dense darkness all around. As I was ill and weary,

I was to rest through all the night. The first watch was taken by Jack —
That black was a lithe, knowing youth, and had often been on the track.

I think I must have slept some hours, but I never could clearly tell
Whether I was asleep or awake, when I thought I heard a yell
Borne on the rising midnight wind, as of one in mortal fear;
My heart for a moment ceased to beat, as it fell upon my ear.

I started up in a moment, and anxiously peered around:
Jack was heading the cattle, for there I could hear the distant sound
Of their rapid and heavy tramping, when I heard I felt no fear —
“It was that young jackanapes shouting, at a runaway cow or steer.”

My brother lay soundly sleeping wrapped up in his 'possum rug,
The heavens were darkened with heavy clouds, but all was quiet and snug.
The flames were leaping wildly high, their light shone upon Dick's quiet face,
On the open brow, the bushy beard, his form with its manly grace.

His face became troubled in his sleep, he muttered and then he woke,
He looked with a startled glance around, and then he slowly spoke —
“I saw her beside me kneeling as in the long-flown days of yore,
O I heard the voice that is silent, and now hush'd for evermore!”

I knew he meant our mother, but I answered him never a word,
For I felt so strangely lonesome, and my heart with grief was stirred,
When I thought of that grass-grown grave, far away on a far-off shore;
Then my eyes with sleep became heavy, for my head was dull and sore.

Once more I woke after midnight, and I thought I had heard a moan.
“What is the matter?” I cried, in fear, in a low and altered tone.
My brother slowly answered me, “It is but a troubled dream.”
He was sitting all silently alone, in the firelight's fitful gleam.

“And where is Jack, just now?” I questioned. “O he is fast asleep;
Aye, he is stretched in dreamless slumber, unbroken, sound, and deep.”
Then once again upon my senses, sleep's witching influence stole;
But the great weight of coming anguish, lay heavily on my soul.

Strange, dim phantoms hovered near me; I seemed to hear a wailing sore —
At last a moan; and then in fear I woke, as I had done before.
The moon was hurrying dimly on. “Did I not hear a shuddering groan?”
“Your sleep is troubled,” said my brother, still sitting all alone.

I thought his voice was strangely husky, and as I looked on him,
I saw his face was deadly pale, and that his joyous eyes were dim.
The clouds were swiftly sweeping on, paling each radiant star;
And then I saw Dick held his pistol, while his gaze was fix'd afar.

The drear night wind went moaning sadly across the ghostly plain;
The long white grass was shivering, as if in fear, or mortal pain;
My head was throbbing painfully, and my pulses seemed on fire;—

And yet there sat Richard movelessly, as though he could not tire.

I heard the birds begin to chirp, and then I saw the dawning grey
Broadening slowly in the east, passing into perfect day.
I heard the cattle lowing, they seemed to stray towards the west,
And still Dick seemed all unheeding, with one hand across his breast.

I said, "Now I will rise and light the fire," and still Dick answered not,
While his sad gaze seemed to be resting upon some distant spot;
"And when I rise to make the fire, you must lie down in my place."
He said, "No, not just now, old fellow," while he turned away his face.

Then at last he crept beside me, laid his hand upon my brow,
O God, it was so deadly cold, again I seem to feel it now,
His breath came thick and quickly then, and when he spoke he gave a gasp,
His cold hand wandered down to mine, and held it in a tight'ning clasp.

At last he turned to me his face, and as I looked into his eyes
I saw that they were dim and heavy, and I saw with wild surprise,
His hands and breast were stained with blood, my heart gave one tumultuous throb;
And when I fain would speak to him, the words died hoarsely in a sob.

Upon his fearless brow there rested, and upon his eyes there lay
The shadow of a deadly pain, that never more might pass away:
"It was about the midnight hour, when from a troubled sleep I woke,
For I thought our mother's voice in prayer the soundless silence broke.

"I could hear the cattle tramping, but yet Jack did not return,
Then at length I rose to find him, and at watching take my turn;
So I wrapped my poncho round me and went whistling on my way,
Till at last I thought I heard a moaning, not very far away.

"Then I stood and gave a coo-ey, but I got no answer back,
Still I seemed to hear a moaning, and at length I shouted 'Jack';
But I saw no form approaching, in the light the pale moon cast,
I looked well to my revolver, then I saw it all at last —

"I saw Jack, our black boy, lying in a silent grassy glade;
Quickly I knelt down beside him, softly I lifted up his head;
'Strange blackfellow, take um cattle,' was all that he dying said;
The treacherous blow had been unerring, and there poor Jack lay dead.

"Then as I rose, sorely bewildered, eagerly gazing far and near,
I heard a whizzing in the air, it was a swiftly speeding spear;
I turned aside, but all in vain — nay, nay, my brother, do not weep,
It pierced me deeply through the breast, but when I saw you fast asleep,

"With your face so worn and weary, by you I waited till the light
Should break across the distant woods, and scare away the silent night.
And thus I kept my watch beside you, on the last night of my life,
For brother, ere the sun has set, I shall be free from earthly strife.

“But you must get assistance now, that you may drive the cattle back,
Those wretched niggers took one-half, but you can follow on their track —
The rest are straying near us yet, now we can ride to Wamboroo,
It is the nearest station here, on Rollo, I can go with you.”

The blood seemed frozen round my heart, I could neither weep nor pray;
I saddled both our horses, and we went upon our lonely way.
His life-blood was trickling slowly, and yet not one moan of pain
Escaped his lips, but as we went, he strove to cheer me all in vain.

Slowly, slowly, through the shadows of the solemn wood we went;
At times it seemed like a vain dream; I rode with tearless eyes down bent,
Thinking of nought but the still days, when he and I were wont to stray
Around our childhood's happy home. At length, when the fair light of day

Was fading softly in the sky, we quietly rode up to the door
Of the home station that we sought. We entered in, but never more
Fell Richard's voice upon my ear. No mortal aid his life could save,
And ere another sun had set, I stood beside his lonely grave.

Fifth Tale

'T WAS in a lonely wayside inn
I saw the man, haggard and lean,
Moaning upon a low flock bed,
With a strange look of awful dread
Upon his face. He held me fast,
And his sad story spoke to me,
As it was ended, then at last
A look of peace, most strange to see,
Fell on his face. Ere light had fled,
His wearied soul from earth had sped.

The Confession

DRAW down the curtains thick and long,
Bar out the light with shutters strong;
For slanting down the burning west,
Above yon mountain's sombre crest
With awful haste, the blood-red sun
Is numbering out the hours to me.
With his last rays my soul must flee,
When this bright summer day is done,
And the broad waves of golden light,
Like molten lead, fall on my sight,
And waken in my throbbing brain
Dark memories of mortal pain.
Once more let me my deep thirst slake,

And sit by me, for Christ's dear sake,
Although my soul thou canst not shrive,
Nor loose the chain, nor break the gyve
That fetters me to the dread past;
Yet, list while I thy hand hold fast.
What though my heart lacks grace and faith,
I cannot close mine eyes in death
Until, unto my fellow-man,
I tell the tale. Like a fierce ban,
That drives one to some lonely lair
Amid a desert's arid glare,
So a great crime has driven me
Far from my kind, in agony.
O God! shut out those moody beams
That on my aching eyes are glowing,
Like gold and blood together flowing
In some far region in great streams.

I cannot tell how long a time
Has passed, since that shriek on my ear
Fell, which I ever seem to hear
Like some great never-silent chime,
Until I walk as one that dreams,
And all around unreal seems.
How often in the sultry noon
Resting beside the broad lagoon,
When the hot earth and hotter sky,
With never a breeze nor cloud on high
Seemed to lie in a deadly swound,
Have I much doubting gazed around,
Asking if this indeed were true,
Until my soul delirious grew
And I lay down with a reeling brain,
My early life to live again!
To pace the retreats so cool and dim,
Where I wove so many a dream
Of future power and future fame
When men should learn to know my name,
And I should wield the author's power
To live through many a coming hour.
But the fond hopes of my early life
The resolve to win in the strife
That men wage with their fellow-men,
Were dispelled and forgotten, when
The drooping lids of violet eyes,
The trem'lous sound of low-breath'd sighs
Overwhelmed me, with such a sense

Of languorous joy and somnolence
As he who long hath fought might feel
When joyous notes arise and steal
Upon his ears, while he is led
Far from the dying and the dead,
Through dancing fountains, summer bowers,
O'er pavements strewn with perfum'd flowers,
To marble chambers warm and dim,
Where censers with rare incense gleam,
And lamps with softened lustre shine;
Mere jewels flash, and purple wine
Is shed for him in goblets rare,
By soft cool hands divinely fair,
Till thoughts of strife have passed away,
And he becomes — not light or gay,
But with a drowsy joy opprest,
Until he only sighs for rest,
And all the laurels of renown
With which men valiant warriors crown
Should seem but trifles light as air,
Compared to tresses of bright hair,
In which the glories of the sun
Seem in bright living threads to run.

Why dwell upon a hackneyed story?
King Solomon in all his glory
And great renown for wisdom high,
Bent to strange idols, at the sigh
Of an Egyptian, whose deep eyes,
Upon God's altars lit strange fires.
I was, alas! no greater sage
Than others at my time and age,
And what were musty tomes and books
Compared to her sweet thrilling looks?
O, she could sweetly smile and smile,
And bind my trusting heart the while,
In fetters, that might ne'er unclasp
Until the arch-fiend, in his grasp,
So closely held my seared, warped soul,
That on my ears, his whispers stole,
Till with the deadly brand of Cain
Imprinted on my burning brow,
I wandered in such mortal pain,
As devils know, and now — and now,
I am dying, — leave me not yet,
Stay till the fiery sun has set;
'Ere my eyes glaze, ere my strength fail

Let me to thee unfold the tale.
I flung my early hopes aside,
The student's peace, the author's pen,
I mingled with my fellow-men,
As one whose loftiest aims were bound
By burrowing underneath the ground
In search of gold.

Among the crowd,
One fatal day, I heard my name,
In deep amazement, called aloud —
“So you have come to make your fame,
With pick-axe, in a guernsey-shirt,
By shovelling the Australian dirt.
Well, never mind, I'm heartily glad —
Though, on my word, you look but sad —
To meet, among this rout and scum,
One whom I hail as an old chum.”
Thus Hargraves spake, and clasp'd my hand,
And asked for friends in the old land.
I answered but in sullen mood.
Well known was his power to mislead,
And seem unconscious of the deed
Which he had prompted: for no good
Would he, with his deep face of guile,
Claim friendship, with his ready smile.
But soon the loneliness of heart,
Which, in that scene, was aye my part,
Made me condone the deeds I knew
So many hearts had beat to rue.

We worked together, he and I,
For many a day, and still no gold
Gladdened our sight, until at length
Our all was spent. And then we sold
Our claim to one whose wond'rous strength
Seemed superhuman. He had worked
For weary months by day and night.
Around his mouth a deep greed lurked,
And in his eyes a strange dull light,
As if his sight were dazed and dim,
Looking in vain for the deep gleam
Of virgin gold. He paid us well
To work for him. We could not tell
What lured him on from day to day
To toil in vain. Time sped away,
And still no gold. Hargraves fell sick
And lay in pain for many a week.

Alone I laboured with that man
(Men knew him by the name of Dan),
Through days of intense heat and glare,
While on my heart fell deep despair.
The slain Ideal of my life
Rose up amid the jarring strife
With unquiet eyes, out of the grave,
Where I had laid it, when with mad
And wild unthinking haste I had
Left all most dear, to toil and slave
For her sole sake — for tho' her love
She said was mine, I was too poor —
Not for her own sake, to be sure,
But for her sire's, who far above
Aught great or noble on the earth
Prized the high comforts of much wealth.
Now deep mistrust within my mind
A resting place began to find.

The days sped on, and still I wound
The creaking windlass round and round,
Drawing up buckets full of earth,
While Dan worked in the mine alone.
About this time, whether my strength
Failed I knew not, but like a stone
He seemed to weigh, when from the mine
I drew him up, while each deep line
Seem'd to have deepened in his face.
His brows met in an eager frown,
As if from looking ever down,
To find of ruddy gold the trace.
Hargraves grew better, and one night
As we sat in the flickering light
Of a bush lamp, Dan sauntered in.
Upon his face, puckered and lean,
Sat a strange look of glad content.
He stood up in our narrow tent
And gazed around, “ Poor as church mice
Are we poor devils,” chuckling low,
He looked at us, then in a glow —
“Come to my crib just for a trice.”
In a deep maze we followed him
Into his tent, dreary and dim.

“See here,” he cried, and slowly drew
Divers bags of a dingy hue
From a hollow beneath his bed.
Then he went with a stealthy tread

To the slit that served for a door;
Narrowly looked around before,
Came back, and then, with trembling grasp,
Opened the bags. With a great gasp,
I saw a heap of glittering gold.
He was master of wealth untold!
Said Hargraves, with a hoarse, low laugh,
“You should give us at least one half.”
In an instant Dan's brow was wet
With trembling beads of clammy sweat,
With nerveless hands, trying in vain
To cover his treasure up again.
Fiercely he growled, “Come, none of that,”
While by the shining heap he sat,
Sliding one hand within his breast.
“O come, old fellow, I spoke in jest.”
Dan made answer very slowly, —
“There are many things too holy
To be fit subjects for light mirth.”
Hargraves gazed at me with a look
Of strange inquiry. A great dearth
Of words fell on us all. I shook
As with an ague, and my brow
Throbbled heavily, as it does now.
At last we rose, and went away.
Hargraves began to hum a gay
And lively air, but very soon
The words fell hoarsely out of tune.
I lay awake until the grey
First flush of dawn proclaimed the day.
Hargraves muttered in his sleep,
“That he should thus the harvest reap
Of all our pains!” And then he woke,
And looked at me. I turned my head
Aside. Again aloud he spoke,
Half rising from his lowly bed;
“If there is law in earth or heaven,
The half to us should now be given.
No soul, but we two here, doth know
Of his great wealth.” In whispers deep
He spoke what then made my flesh creep.
My breath began to come and go
In fitful gasps; for the great fiend
Rose up as strongly in my soul,
As the great waves that dash and roll
Above a wreck, when the last cry
Of drowning souls has died on high.

I felt his grip upon my heart
Like a great eagle's clutching claw.
In fear I crept away, apart,
Unheeding aught I heard or saw;
For I was faint and sick with fear.
I thought to reach a sea-port near
And hasten to old England's shore,
But in the wilds I lost my way,
And being weary and footsore
I lay me down, and heavily slept
Until the evening shadows crept
Through the great woods so still and grey.

I knew not where to stay or go,
I knew not what to do or say,
But as I went upon my way
I reach'd a creek, whose noiseless flow
Was hidden by the tall rank grass
And clumps of dense brown undergrowth
Which bent above it, as if loth
To let the light in. One might pass
Quite near it, and not see the gleam
Nor hear the murmur of that stream.
And now the light had well nigh fled;
The sun in setting smote the trees
With lingering rays of burning red.
The stars rushed out. A straying breeze
Vext the dull mass of leaves that bent
Above the creek, which as it went
Sullenly, on its lonesome way,
(Its waters were not clear but grey,)
Began to whisper wickedly,
And mutter awful things to me
Out of the depths of its great shade,
Until I grew so much afraid
That I could hear my heart's loud beat,
Like the quick fall of hastening feet.
I turned in terror, caring not
Where I might go. Far from that spot
I wandered on. A pale young moon
Rose in the sky: then very soon
I saw the wanly, placid light
Of the quiet sky, lost in a flush
That deepen'd, with an angry rush
Of flaring rays. I bent my flight
Towards their gleam. A mighty hum,
As when great armies marching come,

Fell on my ears; it was the camp.
Jaded and reckless, fierce and worn
I reached my tent; an ill-trimm'd lamp
Shed a great light. My clothes were torn,
My hands were bleeding, down I threw
Myself upon my low, hard bed.
But the unceasing, restless tread
Kept me awake.

As my eyes grew
Less dazzled in the flaring light,
I saw a something, square and white,
Upon my box, and I arose;
Then long I stood, as one who knows,
And in his inmost heart doth feel,
That underneath a simple seal
Lies his whole fate through life and death.
I open'd it with quick-drawn breath.

O! hers was a sharp, ready pen,
With sportive wit, and graceful play,
And raillery light, and now and then
A barb'd blow, beneath a gay
And airy jest. In altered strain
Did she write now; for heavy grief,
To which no words could give relief,
Had filled her heart with such deep pain,
That all those arts were laid aside.
“O! must she be another's bride,
At a stern father's stern command?
Must she but live to curse the age
Whose influence cankered every land,
Till honour, genius, wisdom sage
Were all alike — of no avail,
Unless the chink of metal base
Were found therewith? But to her tale:
A suitor, rich in land and gold,
Sued for her hand. By love made bold,
She had refused his love with scorn:
Was not her faith already sworn?” —
A heavy step sounded without,
Then Hargraves entered with a shout,
“Gold, gold! more gold!” His face was flush'd;
Within his eyes *that* evil light
Was gleaming. Swiftly down I crushed
The dainty letter out of sight.
But though my hand more swift had been,
His practis'd eyes were all too keen.

“Ah, in your absence letters came;
Think you 'tis not an utter shame,
That being such a love-lorn knight,
You should have taken so to flight,
Upon the eve the mail arrived?
Well, — the great shock we have survived,
Of finding that you thus had flown, —
Nay, Dan has so much richer grown,
That though the sun himself forgot
To rise in heaven, he'd mind it not;
For with such heaps of lustrous light,
Pray, who would ever miss the sight
Of empty sunbeams on the earth?
But, by the way, there is no dearth
Of news to-night. Our friend Long Dick
Fell down the mine. The rope broke just
As his mate hauled him up. When first
The diggings start, an awkward trick
By unsafe ropes is often played.”
His eyes from mine at this point strayed.
Wildly my heart began to leap,
As when one seems in troubled sleep
To stand upon a precipice
And sees a fathomless abyss,
Yet lacks all power to speak or pray,
And lacks all power to move away:
So did I hear those words accurst;
My throat was parch'd as if with thirst.
The boisterous sounds of reckless mirth,
And odour of the fresh-turned earth
Came on the air, and in and out
The moths were flitting, round about,
The wildly flaring light they went.
In heavy silence, head down bent,
I sat, I could not say a word.
In the great woods I heard a bird
Trilling some strange sweet melody,
And on the air there came to me
The breath as of a violet,
When with the morning dew 'tis wet,
Or gleaming after July showers.
I know full well that no such flowers
Were growing there, that to no ear
Save unto mine, those notes were clear;
My mother's spirit hovered near,
And she, holding my soul most dear,
Drew to me thus, away to scare

The fiend who with resistless stare
Fix'd my lost heart upon that gold
For which Iscariot had sold
The Christ of Nazareth ere then.

 The mid-day sun
Streamed down with a dull coppery hue;
Within the tents lay stalwart men,
Upon that day no work was done.
But as the shadows longer grew,
The hum of life arose again,
And on my heart, and on my brain,
Lay a great throbbing weight of pain,
And all that day, when I would fain
Have spoken to my fellow-man,
My burning tongue clave to my mouth,
My lips were baked, as if with drouth.
Swiftly as now the fierce sun ran
Through angry heaps of blood-red clouds,
And then all round in noisy crowds,
With eager eyes men rose refreshed.
Slowly I turned the windlass round,
I saw no face, I heard no sound,
Fierce glaring lights flashed in my eyes;
Instead of peaceful evening skies
A rayless darkness seem'd to loom
Above me, silent as the tomb.
And then a far-off murmur stole
Upon my ear, like the great roll
Of waves high toss'd, and that was all
That I could hear, and naught I saw,
And still there was no cry, nor fall,
And "Oh!" I said, "mayhap that flaw
May work no ill!" and then the thought,
Tears to my eyes, of gladness brought.

 O what a dread eternity,
Those awful moments seem'd to me!
At last, I heard a low, sharp creak,
An ominous tug, and then a shriek
That rose and filled the great quiet sky
And floated, floated, up on high,
Until the whole wide universe
Seemed to take up that hopeless moan —
That frenzied wail of wild distress,
Which comes and comes when all alone,
Or hurrying through the crowded street,
At midnight's hour, or noonday heat,

And drags me down, and down, and down —
O what were her fond smile or frown, —
Ay, what were hell's great agony
To me, if that one hour might be
Mine once again!

For weeks I lay,
Sunk in such deep unconsciousness
As ne'er again my soul may bless.
“The gold shall be between us twain,”
He whispered, with his evil smile.
I rose and curs'd him to his face;
“Nay, friend, pray do not so revile.”
I answer'd naught, I rose and sped
Unto the woods. The leaves long dead
Rustled faintly beneath my feet;
Then on my brain in madd'ning heat,
And on my soul in creeping fear,
And on my eyes, wet with no tear,
As a shadow that weighed them down
More at men's smile, than at men's frown,
Lay the mem'ry of that dead face,
Scaring away each thought of grace.
I knew so plainly in that hour
That neither Heaven nor earth had pow'r
To cleanse my crime, for God's own hand
Could not undo the awful past,
Nor that foul deed far from me cast.
I knew that in each earthly land,
Each still retreat, and far-off shore,
That face would haunt me evermore;
That never towards God's glad skies
My heart in prayer would dare to rise;
That ne'er upon my guilty breast
A guiltless head would dare to rest;
I knew that neither love nor gain
Could ever soothe the burning pain,
Nor drown the furious dark remorse
Which since that hour has gnawed my heart.

* * * * *

Draw those thick folds once more apart,
My lips are white, my speech is hoarse —
Ah see — what depths of stirless peace —
The very realms of endless bliss
Seem to be slowly opening there.
And look — how grandly calm and fair,

In the flusht west, yon great white star
Is slowly rising, in a sea
Of stainless jasper; while afar,
Like ships that homeward swiftly flee
Some snowy cloudlets softly stray,
To pass into the sky's quiet grey.
My soul is calm, as with a gleam
Of heaven's love, mine eyes wax dim,
Yet is my heart at peace —

* * * * *

Oh, God!
Is it — that I, in thy abode ——

(The Explorers) Part Second

THE sun is shining from a mid-day sky,
Over great woods which in strange silence lie,
Over vast wastes, (shaded by seas of leaves)
Around whose still retreats, no legend weaves
Its mystic terrors; all wrapped in repose,
While Time's unbroken river calmly flows.
Unnoted pass the days, unmarked the years,
That elsewhere come, laden with hopes and fears.
Millions may tremble at a tyrant's frown,
And despots plot to trample freedom down,
Kingdoms may rise, empires be overthrown,
Nations be conquered when enfeebled grown —
The passions of mankind may fiercely rage,
And peace or war their feverish thoughts engage,
Famine or plague in cities may be rife
Stalking abroad to feast on joyous life,
The great unresting world may laugh or weep,
Here but dim shadows fall, and onward creep.
No changes, save of tranquil nature's moods
Pass over those unbounded solitudes;
The mysterious stars and radiant moon,
Are mirror'd in the creek and dark lagoon;
The tall grey emu, with its piercing eyes,
May swiftly pass along with strange harsh cries;
The curlew may be heard with plaintive wail,
Telling the voiceless shades a piteous tale;
And where the nardoo in profusion grows,
And undried creek, with gladdening murmur flows,
There might be seen at times, perchance a trace,
Or wandering tribe, of the degraded race,
Naked and homeless, roaming in quest of food,
Or tracking out a foe, in savage wood.
These, and these only, are the sounds that break
The quiet intense, and answering echo wake.
But in the course of time, there came a day
When, treading through those wilds its silent way
A band of Pioneers persistent went,
With haggard faces, worn frames weakly bent,
With pain and famine following like blood-hounds,
To hunt them down, within strange distant grounds.
Scorched through the day with the fierce sun's fierce heat,
Which made the sand as coals beneath their feet;
Chilled through the night with the chill winds that blew,

While daily their provisions scantier grew —
A bloodless conflict, more appalling far
Than any fought when nations meet in war.
The hope of victory, in the wildest fray,
Will nerve each hand when drawn in close array;
But oh! to struggle on, from day to day,
When hope and strength are fleeting fast away;
When closing round them, like a living grave
The sombre foliage stretches, wave on wave
Rising for countless leagues on every side
Against the sky. Slowly the days on glide;
Slowly their lonely journey they pursue;
Despairingly, with wearied eyes they view
The changeless woods, the arid ground's scorch'd hue,
O'er which mute birds, with drooping pinions flew;
Dangers threaten them on every hand,
Yet on they pass, a stern, sad, silent band.

They were as one, who journeys all alone
Upon an unknown shore, when day has flown;
Who hastening on to gain a friendly door,
Hears cry of starving wolves, behind, before, —
Feels their hot breath upon his pale cold cheek,
And in his terror, scarce may breathe or speak;
Yet knowing, that a friendly roof is near
Hastes warily on, despite his growing fear.
So Famine, like those wolves, all lean and gaunt,
Pursued them swiftly, with quick laboured pant;
And they, with hopes fixed on the distant spot
Where help and succour needs must be their lot
Crept slowly on, through days and nights of gloom,
Hoping to flee the dark and dreaded doom
That filled with terror each foreboding heart,
Though each so bravely played his noble part.
What need to tell, this lonely forlorn band
Of four, that passed through the lone silent land
Was all now found, to struggle to the end
Of the Explorers, whom we erst saw bend
Their way unto these realms, amid the cheers
Of an assembled people, without fears
Or thought of failure?

Pause we now to tell
Of the events which on the way befell.
Two moons had scarcely waned when signs of strife
Amid the Expedition became rife.
Then some, ere the great task had well begun
Resigned their post, and by that act have won

Such measure of esteem as those deserve
Whose feet from duty's paths aside will swerve,
At the unworthy promptings of a heart
Unable e'er to act, a nobler part
Than that of self-interest. At Menindie
Burke left in charge of Wright, (as we shall see,
His choice of Wright to a post of command
Was in truth disastrous), a second band,
Which was to follow on to Cooper's Creek
When re-inforced. And now we need not seek
To trace their footsteps, as from day to day
Still strong and hopeful they passed on their way.
Now through great tracts, fertile in trees and grass,
Traversed by creeks, which as they onward pass
Widen into lagoons, then disappear
As though exhausted quite; anon in clear
Cool rills to rise again, shaded by trees
Of unknown name, o'er which the summer breeze
Swept with its sad refrain. Dense marshmallows,
Salt bushes, drooping shrubs o'er wide shallows
And small creeks, (which in those realms abound),
Cast an unbroken shade, the only sound
The cries of water-birds, that from afar
Sought those still banks. The light of moon and star
Replaced the beams of day; the circling year
Sped swiftly on, yet brought no changes here.

Then on by stony rises, lofty peaks
Redden'd, sun-scorched, where the lean dingo seeks
His prey in vain, where birds with drooping wings
And eyes fast waxing dim, seek for the springs
Long parched with drought. On over spreading plains
Clothed with rank verdure — here, when kindly rains
Have fallen in their seasons, countless streams
Marked by dark lines of timber (through which beams
Of sunlight vainly seek to pass), are seen
On every hand. Plains clothed with vivid green,
Where bright plumaged birds their songs may sing
And starry flowers, with gorgeous dyes may spring;
And shoals of water-birds, with shrill loud cries,
Make their abode.

Still on, through arid regions, gauntly bare,
Shrivelled beneath the sun's remorseless glare:
Tracts of drear desolation, where the grass
Lay in bleached heaps, o'er which no creatures pass
On earth or air, saving great snakes that glide
With lustrous folds along. Here fissures wide

Rent the hot earth. Where water once had streamed
Naught save red-margined empty courses seamed
The ground. No sound of life around was heard,
No smoke of camp-fire seen. No bird was scared
By the unwonted ring of passing feet;
No shade of rustling leaves broke the fierce heat
Of the sand-laden air. Here naught drew breath.
All, all around wore the wan hue of death —
A burning heaven, above burning wastes,
Lit by the lurid sun, which onward hastes
Unto the blood-red west, as if to fly
The desolation of earth, air and sky, —
To cool his molten beams in Northern seas,
Margined by snow-clad heights and sombre trees —
To slake his maddening thirst where icebergs sail,
And the north winds unresting round them wail.
Then in the east, with wild, redoubled might,
To rise, scaring away pitiful night,
That o'er those regions scarr'd, her mantle drew.
On still, until again the country grew
Smiling and fertile. Thus through this great land
The Explorers past, a strong, vigorous band,
As yet exempt from want. At Cooper's Creek
They formed a depôt, and through many a week
They waited for Wright's coming. Day by day
In deep suspense, chafing at the delay,
They scanned the wide horizon, but no trace
Of nearing forms was there, and then each face
Grew worn and anxious as the days sped on.

Then Burke and Wills, knowing the time thus flown
Was passing precious, could no longer brook
The wearying, long delay. "If we took" —
(Thus Burke one evening, when he long had stood
Gazing across the boundless, silent wood,
With Wills beside him), "If we took two men,
Six camels, and a horse with us, why then
I think that you and I might safely gain
The goal of all our hopes. Hardships and pain
May be our lot, but then, with Brahe here
Awaiting our return, we need not fear.
And I feel sure Wright will have gained the Creek
Ere our return. At all risks we must seek,
To compass the great aim we have in view."

Wills stood some moments silent: "If we knew,"
He answered slowly, "whether Wright's delay
Proceeds from some mishap! But day by day

Drags on its weary length, and still no sign
Nor tidings come — Yes, let us resign
The Depôt unto Brahe, that we may
Pass on to-morrow, on our destined way
Equipped as you have said.” Upon that night,
They sat around the camp-fire's flickering light,
Preparing for their journey. “Three moons may wane,”
The Leader said, “ere we return again,
But Wright may join you now, at any hour,
And though great dangers round our path may lower,
Yet knowing for our coming you will wait
We will not fear, although forlorn our state
May be, ere we return unto this spot,
Where succour and relief will be our lot.”

And thus at dawn, on the succeeding day
The small devoted band went on its way.
Once more o'er spreading plains, by winding creeks
And sombre forests, where the scarr'd tree speaks
Of the great havocs, wrought by the fierce fire,
Which oftentimes made a lofty, leafy pyre
Of the wide branching gum. Verdant and fair
Now were the realms o'er which they went; though care
And dark uncertainty, weighed on each mind
At times, yet were they overjoy'd to find
How goodly were the regions which they trod —
How fitted to become the fair abode
Of affluence and health. With gladden'd eyes
They passed fresh vales, where winding creeks arise
And flowers bloom, and countless birds loud sing,
While the dark foliag'd trees' wide branches fling
Deep shadows ever round. Solemn and strange
It was to pass, where life's unpitying change
And garish restlessness, were all unknown
Since the first day, that found the great waves flown
In sudden panic, from the mighty isle,
Wide and far reaching, which was seen to smile
Amid the ocean's swell. Then as days fled,
And they in hurried marches onward sped;
They left luxuriant pastures, and arrive
At great sand ridges, which now seem to strive
To block their way, with abrupt heights and bare.
Water they sought in vain amid the glare
Which dazed the wearied gaze on every hand.
Yet onward still, pressed the undaunted band,
Scanning with eager eyes the parch'd up ground
That broke beneath their feet, with grating sound;
Then turned they to the west — an earthy plain,

Streaked with dark timbered channels — where in vain
They seek for water — lay before them there.
When they had pass'd this plain, again steep bare
Sand ridges met their view. Creek and lagoon
Were wholly parch'd; and thus a second noon
Still found them toiling on. Evening drew near
And saw them grazing round in doubt and fear,
As o'er a gaunt sand-ridge the sun's last rays
Were streaming redly, through a coppery haze
That in one sullen tint wrapp'd earth and sky.
And still no rising cloud was seen on high;
No wakening breeze swept through the sombre mass
Of foliage, which on the hueless grass,
Cast but a blurred uncertain shade. And still
No trace of water found in swamp or rill.

With dim dazed eyes the Explorers paused to rest.
The crimson sun had left upon the west
A blood-red gleam, fierce as deep passion's glare
Upon a wild swart face. All — all was bare.
No sound of life the heavy silence broke,
And in that lonely group, no one yet spoke;
For each feared to give words to the great dread
That weighed upon him. Two long days had sped
Since they had entered on this sterile waste.
Could they pursue their journey? Should they haste
Backward or forward? Debating thus they stood,
When through the gloaming, (low across the wood
That stretched unto the north), with plaintive cries
A flock of doves rose up to the quiet skies;
And still another flock upon their wake
Flew swiftly on; with joy the Explorers take
The course the flying doves thus pointed out
With their unerring instinct. Fear and doubt
Still lingered near them, as through weary hours
They passed o'er dreary flats, while deep night lowers
Above those death-still realms. This Christmas Eve
(For such it was), will surely with them leave
Strange memories, for all coming festal times.
When they mayhap may hear, in far-off climes
The joyous peals that hail the natal day
Of Christ of Nazareth, will they not stray
On fancy's wings, unto each silent spot
That they explored? Varied may be their lot,
Yet at this holy season evermore,
They will remember, how in need and sore
Perplexity, the wood doves in their flight
Led them on safely, as the beacon light

That brightly gleams above the rugged cliff,
To warn the mariner how near the reef;
For in the dawning of that Christmas morn
Which found them tramping on, weary and worn,
They saw afar, lit by the deepening glow
Of coming day, a creek with even flow
Straying through verdant pastures. When they gain
Its banks, forgetful of their toil and pain,
They drink of the deep gladd'ning stream
Bordered with densest shrubs, and trees which seem
To screen its crystal depths with jealous care,
From the insatiate sun's fierce thirsty glare.

And there they stayed to celebrate the birth
Of our most Blessed Lord. There was a dearth,
Doubtless, of noisy mirth and dainty cheer —
And on each heart weighed the unspoken fear
As to their future fate, but the story,
Grandly simple, of the Son of Glory,
Which they had heard, when on a mother's breast
The wondrous tale had lulled them to quiet rest,
Came back on that still day with soothing power,
Recalling there the strange and solemn hour
When in the eastern sky a great lone star
Led the gift-laden magi from afar,
Unto the virgin-mother with her child,
To gaze upon the babe, benignly mild,
To bow the knees in adoration meet,
And lay their costly offerings at his feet.
Through the long hours of that bright summer day,
Which in those woods so quietly sped away,
Past Christmas memories fondly they recall
Beneath the shades which round them softly fall.
And so they sat, until the fading light
Had given place to the chill shades of night,
Still dwelling on the memories of the past,
While all around fantastic shades were cast
By the great wood fire's flames, that leapt on high
With a strange glow, beneath the star-lit sky.

Ah! those unclouded festive days of yore;
Those happy faces, gone for ever more —
Or strangely changed — with sad care-laden brow —
Those gladsome voices, hushed and silent now,
Or speaking alien tongues in distant lands!
The home is silent, and the sacred bands
Of household love are torn. Perchance alone,
Beside a silent hearth, making her moan

Unto the great white throne, a mother kneels
Pleading for those afar. Ah! well she feels,
Low kneeling there, with sorrow-riven soul,
That ne'er again the circle will be whole
Which clustered round her knees in bygone years,
With beaming eyes, undimm'd by sorrow's tears.

Next day at dawn, once more their steps they bent
O'er fertile varied realms. Again they went
By winding creeks, o'er spreading well grass'd plains
And clayey flats, on which the recent rains
Yet lingered in still pools. And now they drew
Near to their journey's goal. Then the way grew
Well nigh impassable, from heavy falls
Of rain. Water fowls, with strange loud calls
In hundreds, on the spreading marsh were seen.
Lagoons o'erflooded, strips of vivid green
Beside broad channell'd creeks, with palms, whose shade
Of oriental curves, o'er shrub-strew'd glade
Fell picturesquely cool.

And now alone,
(The way unsafe and dang'rous having grown)
Onward pressed Burke and Wills on foot. One horse
They with them led. Their weary way they force
O'er flooded flats, sandstone rock, and quicksand,
Until they reach some open tableland
With shallow gravelly soil, cloth'd with swamp gum.
Which leaving, next unto a plain they come
Covered with water, here with pain and toil
They stumble on, over uneven soil
(Amid great tufts of grass), wet to the knee.
Through this for many miles, and then they see
A great dim forest, with o'erarching trees
That shut out sun, and light, and cold. The breeze
Passed with faint shiver through their limbs, then died
In a low moan, while fluttering on each side
The crimson gum leaves circling fell. Around
The Explorers gazed, till a mysterious sound
Of distant mingled notes, now low, now shrill,
Broke the vast solitude. With a great thrill
Those two worn lonely men, now standing there,
Heard the hoarse murmur borne upon the air,
Then whispered in low tones:—"The sea! The sea!"
The circling sea-birds high above them flee,
As they press onward, in the evening light,
Until the ocean burst upon their sight.
Ay then, they knew they had travers'd the land

From shore to shore. Burke grasp'd his comrade's hand;
"Thank God!" each murmured, with o'erflowing eyes,
As with bared brow they looked unto the skies.
Then again on the sea while the sun stole
Unto his rest. Majestic was the roll
Of the grand ocean, round the mighty rocks
That sentinelled the land, and met the shocks
Of foaming billows, with the unmoved front
Of fearless vet'rans, who long in the brunt
Of war have stood. O'er them the fierce waves break,
And in great caverns, mystic echoes wake —
Around for aye is heard, the ocean's wail,
Breaking against the shore. No snowy sail
Was ever seen to gleam across the waste
Of boundless waters. Nought but sea-birds haste,
With drooping wings, unto those hoary cliffs,
Or pause to rest upon the giant reefs,
Against which breakers, with eternal knell
Rise up, with frenzied wrath and ceaseless swell.
Long the Explorers gazed with thankful joy:
As the victorious shout anew will buoy
The wounded soldier, when his comrades rush
To victory, so now, in the calm hush
Of placid evening, in that lonely spot
This sight nerved them afresh. Aye, though their lot
Might be uncertain, and their future fate
Wrapped in obscurity — though dangers wait
Upon their path on every side, yet this
Ardently longed-for moment, bears the bliss
Which a great work accomplished, needs must bring
Unto the soul, that dares aside to fling
The meaner cares of life for one great aim.
Their task was done! Obloquy or high fame
Might be their portion — yes, their bones might lie
Whitening, mayhap, beneath the sunny sky,
Yet Fate's most deadly shaft could ne'er undo
The work they had achiev'd. Full well they knew
How great the dangers that now o'er them lower,
Yet, gratitude and joy, in that proud hour,
Unmixed were theirs, as on the shore they stood,
Upon the borders of the dark vast wood,
Within whose sheltering shade, they camped that night;
Then ere the cloud-wrapped east was tinged with light,
The two retraced their slow and toilsome way,
And reached their comrades on the second day.

And now began that conflict stern and long,

While man's most deadly foes around them throng,
And follow in their wake. Famine and cold,
Heat, nakedness, and weariness untold
All met them, in gaunt pitiless array,
Yet, each with desperate strife, they kept at bay.
They had miscalculated time and strength,
With scant food, long marches, till at length
Their camels all had perished, saving two;
Daily, their lagging footsteps slower grew,
From morn till night, they walked with stiff'ning limbs,
Weary and faint, beneath the scorching beams
That o'er them beat. Anon the way grew wet,
And heaven was darkened, with the armies met
Of sable clouds, above the dark still woods
Which, even under nature's gentlest moods,
Looked stern and sombre in their changeless green,
Varied by leafless trees in gaunt groups seen;
Bare skeleton forms, with each twisted limb,
Seeming to whisper of some secret grim, —
Some awful deed, of savage bloody crime,
Whose mem'ry clung and haunted, through all time
The spot that witnessed, and the trees whose shade
A sheltering covert, for the deed had made.
Rising at times into a shuddering moan,
Then passing, in a wailing monotone
The wind crept coldly over them, through days
And nights of chill discomfort. A grey haze
Wrapped earth and sky. Their clothes in wretched rags
Now hung around them, and as each day drags
O'er them in its wearying hours, their stores wax less;
Yet being confident, their dire distress
Would be relieved, when they the spot should gain
Where succour waited them, despite their pain,
Their want and weariness, their souls with hope
Were still upheld, albeit now they cope
With foes that daily wax more fierce and strong,
As they wax weaker. Ah, what dark fears throng
At times through each sad mind, as each long day
Found them more worn and helpless!

At length Gray

Lags wearily behind. He strives in vain
To struggle on, till overcome with pain
One morn he speechless sank, with failing breath;
There was no need to whisper, "This is death!"
There was no need to practise secret wiles,
No need to hide the truth with feign'd smiles.

The gum-trees' branches o'er them darkly droop,
A gauntly haggard, weak, and lonely group —
There were no fretful murmurs, tears, nor sighs,
But yet they feared to meet each other's eyes;
Over them an appalling silence fell,
And loneliness, of which no words may tell.
It was a calm, clear morning, long and loud
Rose the glad notes of birds, with brows low bow'd
The Explorers sat; while sad thoughts of the past —
Of far distant homes, come hurrying fast;
Of those peaceful mornings, when light broke
Softly through folding curtains, as they woke
With joy to find another day begun,
And dew gemm'd meadows glistening in the sun —
Thoughts of each well-known haunt, and early friend —
Then of the fond face that was wont to bend
O'er them at nights, when wearied with glad play
They sank to dreamless slumber. O those gay,
Unclouded days, when mind and body droop
Beneath Fate's darkest frown, how do they troop
Through the worn soul, and bid the past anew
Its blossoms o'er our rugged pathway strew.
Ay, like the rainbow, spanning a dark sky
And flushing gloomiest clouds with radiant dye,
Such mem'ries come, with a God-given power,
To soothe the spirit through the darkest hour.

There, as the creeping shadows eastward lay,
The long sore wearied soul had pass'd away.
And now the sorrow-stricken, worn-out band
Perform the last sad rites with trembling hand;
They laid him gently, in his dreamless sleep,
Where the sad sheoak's shade would o'er him creep
Through sunny peaceful days, and where afar
The curlew's notes would hail the evening star.
There was no epitaph, nor flower, nor stone
To mark his place of rest. The fitful moan
Of the night breezes through the ghostly woods,
Above which solitude unbroken broods,
Rose like a dirge above that lonely grave;
The moonbeams stole, as through a solemn nave,
O'er stately trees, through which the grave starlight
Falls dimly round it, through the stirless night;
When summer winds the sheoak's branches kiss,
They seem to sigh, "Wanderer, rest in peace!"

(The Explorers) Part Third

THREE times has night her soothing shadow thrown
Over the world's unrest, thrice has night flown
At the approach of day, since from the tomb
Where they had laid their comrade, in the gloom
Of a great forest, the Explorers went,
Still toiling on their way. Infirm and bent
They totter'd on. Their eyes had become dim, —
They spoke but in hoarse whispers, and each limb
Was growing nerveless. Thus on the fourth day
Since Gray had died they still press on their way,
And though the mid-day's beams around them beat
They do not pause to rest. Unto their feet
Hope lent fresh energy, for pain and grief
Were banished with the thought that now relief
And succour would be theirs ere day was done.
Yes, they would rest in safety ere the sun
Would set. Like those who mid the sea
Might hear the waves over their wreck'd ship flee,
Yet through the foaming mist and angry roar
Discern far off a peaceful shelt'ring shore,
Which, when once reached, will succour sure afford,
And nourish them until strength is restored.
So on they went, hopeful though struggling sore,
Nearing the spot which held new life in store.
Then kindling joy lit up their faces wan,
And wakening hope, as eagerly they scan
The boundless woods that there before them lie —
(Great, silent realms, beneath a silent sky),
For traces of the comrades, who await
Their long-delayed approach. Forlorn their state
As was that of the Jews, when with sad gaze,
They looked across the desert's reddish haze,
To catch a glimpse of the fair Promis'd Land,
Gleaming like Eden o'er the sun-parch'd sand.

“Ah, now I see a tent plainly from here,”
Cried Burke, at last, in accents loud and clear,
And pointed forward with a trembling hand.
Then the three, breathless with emotion, stand.
Were their eyes dimm'd by the sand-laden air,
Or did the distance mock with vacant stare?
Ah, no; it must not be! They gaz'd anew,
And to the spot in utter silence drew.
They could not speak, each breath was a great sob;

Each heart beat loudly, with a bursting throb.
The snowy speck, which, like a phantom, rose
In the dim distance, now less vivid grows,
Until at last, it wholly fades away,
And they can neither weep, nor speak, nor pray,
Until they gain the spot, with tottering feet.
The sun's declining rays around them beat,
And they are faint and blind, with a great fear.
Ah God! they are deserted — lo, see here
The letters are fresh cut upon the tree —
“Dig,” and they dug, only alas! to see
That they had sealed their agonizing fate,
By being a few fleeting hours too late.
Burke for a moment longer look'd around,
Then with a wild deep cry fell to the ground,
No shame to manhood, that he wept aloud,
While Wills and King with tearless grief were bow'd.

What use in idle tears or words, and yet,
Who could repress the words of wild regret,
When in that fateful and soul-crushing hour,
Helpless, forsaken, by the tree they cower?
If Brahe had but stayed another day —
If they had risked no needless vain delay —
But he had gone, and they were left alone,
And Heaven was deaf to piteous cry and moan;
The bitterness seemed more than that of death,
As they sat speechless there, with failing breath,
And bow'd their heads, in wordless deep despair,
When they had seen the fierce unpitying glare,
Which the vast wilderness around them wore,
While even hope seemed dead for evermore.

As though the mariners, who had seen afar
A succouring isle, across the waves' fierce war,
Should struggle wildly, straining every nerve
To gain the shore, nor e'en a hair-breadth swerve
From the right course, though wild waves roar around,
And they are deafened, with the awful sound
Of seething billows, that with dirge-like ring
A hoarse wailing requiem, seem to sing,
Till by the rushing waters they are thrown
Upon the isle, only to find it strown
With the sad relics of a lonely band,
Who erst in vain sought refuge on that strand —
To find great rocks above the ocean's swell,
Whose barren peaks of parching sun rays tell;
A drear abode, all bare of herb and tree,

Swept by the billows of that savage sea,
Where they might cling to life a few days more,
Until the waves should wash them from the shore.
O cruel fate: O strange and awful hour,
When life's most dreaded ills above us lower,
When all the joys and hopes of former years
Leave us but ashes strewn with bitter tears;
When from the future that we deemed so bright,
And saw encircled with celestial light,
We turn away with horror-stricken cries,
With shuddering fear and heavy tearless eyes;
When the high purpose of a life is cast,
(Smitten like Jonah's gourd by one fell blast,
Prone to the earth, beneath each careless foot —
When the fair blossoms wither, that had root
Within our inmost heart, and we are left
Naked, unsheltered, of all aid bereft.
Such was the hour which found the Explorers bent
In wordless anguish. Strength, provisions, spent —
The meagre store of food that had been left
But mocked their state and need. Yet thus bereft,
Deserted, by the men upon whose faith
They had relied as comrades, true to death —
The glorious spirit that is found to stand
By man, through seasons when no mortal hand
May bring relief — whose radiant presence shone
Through the far ages, where'er misery's moan
Unheeded rose — she who, with fearless eyes
And guiding hand, uplifted to the skies,
Leads the crush'd soul from its great agony,
With glowing visions, passing fair to see,
Of the fair hours the future holds in store —
The angel Hope, who with her saintly lore
And radiant wings, which earth may never soil,
Still faithful to the human heart, through toil
And suffering, stood beside them now,
And whispered comfort, with her pure broad brow
Circled with heavenly light.

Thus once again

When they had rested, and the numbing pain
That bound their limbs had partly passed away,
With faltering steps they went upon their way.
Familiar is the tale as one long told
Round hearths in the old country, when the cold,
Keen blast of a harsh northern clime, without,
Rises in troubled moans. In growing doubt
We waited for the coming of the band

That had gone forth to traverse the great land
Our fathers made their own. We waited through
Long days of dark suspense, until hope grew
Into a sickening fear. Still they came not
For whom we looked and waited, and their lot
During those cruel days was all unknown —
We waited till the lingering days had flown
Through which they looked for succour all in vain;
While still, despite their agony and pain,
They struggled weakly on, — from day to day,
Hoping against all hope. Twice from the way
Which would have led them to their fellow-men,
Their weakness and gaunt famine drove them. Then
In their hour of deepest need and dire distress,
The dusky sons of those wilds round them press,
With gentle pity, and with kindly aid
For a few passing days.

 Within the shade,
Of the great trees, which spread beside a creek
Where nardoo grew in plenty, for a week
They camped. Then he, the hero-hearted Wills,
Grew weak and helpless, and as each day steals
Its dreary course along, his life and strength
Are ebbing fast away, until at length
He can no longer rise, no longer cope
With hunger or with pain. Now their chief hope
Of succour rested on the savage race,
Whose tribes in those great wilds, in war and chase
Are wont to waken echoes, although now
No sign of their approach was seen. The sough
Of the low wind when murmuring through the trees,
The cries of some lone bird that swiftly flees
Unto its nest, beside a great still marsh,
Are all that break the quiet. Then keen and harsh
The night-wind smote upon them, through the hours
Of the cold nights. Fierce rays and driving showers
In turn assailed them, while their garments hung
In thin worn rags. And still to life they clung,
While daily Burke and King the nardoo-seed
Gather and crush for food.

 “Men soon must speed
To us with help,” Burke hopeful still would say,
“And even now, Wright must be on the way,
And may arrive at any hour.” Alas!
For the deluding hopes, which as days pass,
Still fainter wax. Then, when the light had flown
One sombre evening, and great clouds lay strown

In troubled masses, over east and west,
Wills, who had seemed all day as if opprest
By an unspoken grief, looked on the light
Of the pale moon, and murmur'd, "This one night
Longer mine eyes upon my fellow-man
May rest." He turned his face, then sadly wan,
In silence to his comrade. Ere Burke laid
Him down to rest that night, Wills slowly said,
"Upon the morrow, when the morning breeze,
Warm with the sun's rise, passes through the trees,
Burke, you must leave me, while you yet have strength
To seek for help. Yes, friend, the hour at length
Has come that bids us part — nay, hear me speak;
It is our last one chance. Worn out and weak,
I feel my life is ebbing fast away;
And I must wax more helpless day by day,
Unless soon succoured; therefore, for my sake,
Should you at once, the journey undertake;
For life is sweet, and I would fain still cling
To it, O friend."

As when the night winds bring
Across the seething, fiercely troubled waves,
Faint signals of distress, from those whose graves
Await them in the deep — to friends who stand
Helpless to save, upon the rock-bound land —
So fell those words upon the sinking heart
Of him who heard them. Silently apart
He turned, and musing for a long sad while
He paced beneath the trees. Faint as the smile
That lingers wanly on a dying face,
The moonbeams fell upon the still vast space
That lay in sombre shadows on each side.
"It must not be, — whatever may betide
I cannot leave him thus to die alone" —
Burke bent his head with a low bitter moan
Of helpless anguish. Oh to see that form
Wasted, unsheltered, from the sun and storm —
Intently gazing on it, Burke stood long
With tearless wistful eyes. Then mid the throng
Of sad thoughts, full of bitter doubt and fear
Which filled his mind, this one rose sharp and clear —
"Though I should now remain beside him, he
Must die, unless soon rescued; upon me
Then rests his only hope of life" —

Wills woke
Here suddenly, slowly, half rose, then spoke
In a low faltering tone — "Ah! you are yet

Beside me then — nay, think not I regret
The purpose I have formed, but as I slept
I dreamt that you had gone.” Burke quietly crept
Nearer to Wills, but answered not. The sky
Was overcast; the wind rose cold and high,
And keenly swept through the frail tenement
Of rustling boughs, beneath which they sat bent
And silent. Then Wills quietly spoke again:
“It avails not that we conceal the pain
And anxious fear which must weigh on each heart
When soon in sad uncertainty we part —
Each greatly worn and weak. Let us not seek
To hide our thoughts, as those who dare not speak
Nor whisper them, from overwhelming shame.”

“Oh, but I fear, my boy, that though our name
Cannot be linked with aught unworthy those
Chosen for a great task, that as time shows
What fell disasters met us on the way,
There will be no lack of those who'll say —
‘Poor fellows! one was rash, the other young;
When the fate of such an undertaking hung
On such a pair, what wonder that success
Did not attend them.’ Harsh and merciless
Will be some men's speech. O! I seem to hear
The shallow pratings of those who make clear
The course we should have taken, and the cause
Why danger and distress were ours. The flaws
Of our policy will be passing plain
To the most obtuse intellect. The pain,
The anguish, and the dull wearying care,
Which weighed on us, while none were found to share
Our aims and wishes, in the Exploring band,
That still decreasing, we led through the land —
All may be little heeded, and less known:
To you as unto me, life must have shown
That failure is an error, deem'd by men
More culpable than sin. We know that when
Its shadow falls on man or enterprise,
The qualities, which are lauded to the skies
When allied with success, are in this case
But ground for bitter blame. Few pause to trace
The adventitious accidents which place
The crown upon the victor's brow. The race
We know, is not at all times to the swift,
Yet he who lags behind, need never lift
His eyes with hope to the loud-shouting mob,

Whose plaudits seem to make the great sky throb.

“Ah well, what boots it all, we two alone
Upon this last sad night, need not make moan
As to the world's opinion. You least of all
Whom love of gain, nor fame, could not enthrall
From the pursuit of science. For my part
I know that love of fame found in my heart
A favoured resting-place. E'en as a boy
I well remember yet, it was my joy
To hear of doughty deeds, done in old times
By my forefathers in far distant climes.
How often in the rapturous day dreams,
In which the youth of ardent soul, oft seems
To be uplifted from prosaic life,
Have I gone forth, to wage immortal strife —
To win the conqueror's resplendent crown,
And leave my name, embalmed in the renown
That lives in history, and the poet's song,
As one whose life, above the common throng
Was fruitful in great deed, and noble aim!
How oft our early aspirations shame
The records of our life! How oft the prize,
More coveted than aught beneath the skies,
Seems to elude our over-eager hands!

“When grown to man's estate in foreign land
Following a soldier's life I lived. At last
I sought this country. Do you know the past
Rises with a strange vividness to night
Before me. And the events which the flight
Of years has hurried out of mind, again
Seem fresh as scenes of yesterday. How vain
Our dearest hopes at such an hour as this
Appear! Man at the height of earthly bliss
Seems still but the mere puppet of blind chance;
One moment revelling 'mid wine and dance —
The next groping in the charnel-house of grief,
Without a hope, a joy, or a belief,
Beyond a rigid form, which in its shroud
Will never heed the voices, low or loud,
That rise in the hoarse accents of despair
Beside it. Death and pain, and wearying care
Seem ever lurking round man's toilsome way.”

Thus Burke wiled the sad, lingering hours away,
Till he had sunk to sleep. But all that night
Wills lay with throbbing brow awake. The light
Of the returning day now broke the gloom.

Stern and mysterious the great woods loom
Again around. At last the hour drew near
For Burke and King to leave. Undimmed and clear
The sun once more made summer in the sky,
And shadow in the woods. The moments fly
Apace. Doubts crowd anew into Burke's mind —
But on Wills' patient face, calm and resigned,
There was no cloud of fear. Yet in his heart
The thought was strong, that when he now would part
With his two comrades, he would never hear
The sound of human speech again. Burke rose
To go. His pallid cheek more pallid grows.
In vain he strives to speak a last farewell
In quiet and measured words: his low tones fell
And trembled, and at last he looked away;
But all around was strangely blurred and grey.
Then, for some moments as he thus stood there,
The crushing weight of dark and wild despair
Fell on his soul. Love, faith, and trust in God
Were scattered in that hour, like an abode
That safely stands beneath an Alpine rock
Till a great avalanche, with thundering shock
Sweeps it to ruin. Or, as waves might roar
With tidal force across a shore,
Sweeping each ancient landmark from the way,
While naught is heard but cries of birds of prey
That flap their ominous wings above the dead,
Greedy gazing on the banquet spread:
So, hopeless doubt and dark rebellion swept
Over his tortured soul. And still he kept
His wistful eyes fixed on the wilds around,
As though in that last hour, the sight and sound
Of nearing forms might break the dreary blank.
Again his gaze upon his comrade sank:
No aid from God or man was drawing near —
No hand to rescue and no voice to cheer,
And he must thus be left — alone, alone —
Without a soul to heed his dying moan;
Alone with famine, pain, and nakedness;
Alone, in the last hour of dire distress.

At last, Wills softly said, “Delay is vain,
The day is wearing on.” Now once again
Burke grasps his comrade's hand, then turned away
Slowly, as one, that in a deadly fray,
Has been sore smitten, and who fain would creep
Unto some spot, where peaceful shadows sleep,

To hide the pangs of failure and of pain,
Knowing that cry for help must be in vain.
Thus, spirit-broken Burke went on his way,
With faltering steps; but on the third day
After he had left Wills, all strength was spent.
Till the last hour was past, King by him bent.
He died as he had lived — brave, fearless, true:
Naught, save the trees, a shadow o'er him threw;
He lay alone beneath the lonely sky,
Unpall'd, uncoffined. With his last faint sigh,
He breathed a prayer of resignèd faith
Unto his God. And lying thus in death,
King left him, and in awful loneliness
Wandered for many days. But his distress,
His sufferings, and rescue, have been told,
And are well known to all.

(The Explorers) Part Fourth

UNRUFFLED, night's mysterious curtain hung,
Till in the east its great calm folds were flung
By rising beams aside. Like a young face
Upon which grief has left no sign or trace,
The early light stole through the gloom and mist
Brightening softly in the dusky east,
Until it spread into the deepening dawn
Which onward crept, like to a timid fawn
That leaves the covert of great solemn trees
And runs, half startled by a straying breeze.
Wave after wave the glorious light roll'd on,
Till in a panic night's last shade had flown;
And freshly jubilant, another day
Rose on the world, as joyous and as gay
As when primeval light dawned on the earth,
And choirs of sinless spirits hailed its birth.
Gladly the dancing sunrays danced and flew
Over the great still forests, that now grew
Vocal with chirp of insects, song of birds,
Which rose to heaven like adoring words,
From Nature's pure and ever holy shrine,
To Him, the Great Creator, Lord Divine.
The night has fled and it is day again!
The darkest sorrow and the deepest pain
That ever crush'd man's heart, or bowed his head,
No shadow on the joyous morn may spread,
Nor dim the brightness of the great glad sun,
Until his tireless radiant course is run.
But who can tell the deep and marvellous power
Borne on the wings of the fresh morning hour,
To heal and soothe the souls by anguish bowed,
When the awakening rush of life, loud
Fresh and joyous, scareth dark fears away,
And gaunt despair is cheated of its prey,
When with returning light, fresh hope is given
To lead the erring soul anew to Heaven?
With what a gush of joyous thankfulness
Do happy souls the light unclouded bless!
Childhood, with merry laughter runs to play,
Age, bows its head in gratitude to pray:
Like costly incense from a temple rare,
The sounds of happy tones float on the air.

But leave we now the busy haunts of life,

The scenes of high ambition, joy and strife,
And stand once more within the forest dim;
Draw near this tree, with its o'er-arching limb
Bending across a covert made of boughs,
Through which the restless wind now moans and soughs,
As if it roamed the woods in wordless pain
Never to find a resting-place again.
Hark! is not that a long and faint-drawn moan,
As of a soul in anguish all alone?
What being crouches in this strange abode?
Is that a human form? Pitiful God!
What eye may gaze unmoved upon that face,
Which in each haggard line bears the gaunt trace
Of famine and despair? The new-born light
Fell on *his* aching eyes, and from the sight
He turned with a great moan, for on his soul
An awful darkness lay, which could not roll
Away, like the dark morning mists that cling
Until the birds their griefless matins sing,
Then pass in golden light. At midnight's hour
On the foregoing night, sleep's magic power
Had stilled his grief. As once across the sea,
Whose shrieking waves in seething fury flee,
Christ's voice arose, bidding the tempest cease,
So sleep, to his tost soul had brought great peace.
And as he slept the last sleep which in life
Should close his eyes, the agony and strife,
The awful solitude at length seemed past;
Went, and each earthly pain aside was cast.
As though the mariner who, long forlorn,
Has struggled on a raft, with watching worn,
Should swiftly pass from a tumultuous ocean
And reach at length, with strangely placid motion
Some blessed zone of never-ruffled calm,
With clustering fruits and flow'rs, and waving palm,
Where brightly arching over hill and glade
Stretch summer skies, unsaddened by a shade;
So now, sweet visions of his early days
Lulled his vexed heart to rest. Again he strays
Amid the scenes unto his boyhood dear, —
Beside the winding stream, limpid and clear,
Upon whose banks, flecked with sweet English flowers,
He had been wont to stray through sunny hours.
He weaves those splendid visions once again
Which rise to mock us, when the deep dull pain
Of disappointment and of failure wring
The hearts, to which no after hours can bring

The bounding hopefulness of those blest years
That sped, free from all carking cares and fears;
When the bright future loomed, mystic and grand
As mountain peaks, that in the distance stand,
With a warm flush upon the snow-clad heights
That pierce the clouds and shimmer in the lights
Of the uprising sun. He sees once more
His childhood's happy home. Like the weird lore
But half remembered of an alien race,
Or a stray thought of a long-vanished face,
The mem'ry of his utter loneliness,
And bitter hours of want and dire distress
Flitted across his mind, again to fade
Like shadows, that stray summer clouds have made
When flitting o'er the sun. O wondrous power
Of dreams! Thus in the last and bitterest hour
Of life, to recreate the ghostly past,
And dull-eyed misery away to cast
From the lone heart, where joy reigns once again,
And happy tones, without a note of pain
Fall like celestial music on the ear,
And banish every grief and lurking fear.

O lightly breathe, ye Winds, that pass along,
And softly sing, ye Birds, your morning song,
And droop, ye dark-leaved Branches down between
The sun, and his worn eyes, as a soft screen,
That so his soul may quietly pass away
Into the endless light of endless day,
And he may waken from his dreams of bliss,
To find them vanished, in high Heaven's own peace;
As the soft radiance of a starlit sky
Is lost in perfect light, when seen on high,
The mighty sun begins his tireless race.
But see! A straying sunbeam smites his face —
His bosom rises in a long-drawn sigh,
His eyes unclose, and with a startled cry
He strives to rise. With doubting anguished eyes,
He sees the sombre woods, the smiling skies:
And he is dying thus, then, all alone!
What wonder that he turned, with a great moan,
From the glad light, that seemed to mock him there,
And overwhelm his soul with such despair
As few hearts may conceive — no tongue may speak.
In vain the mind for images may seek
To picture forth his doom, whose lot was such,
That misery could not add a single touch

To make it more forlorn.

“My God, it was a dream!”

Wills whispered slowly, and the last faint gleam
Of hope of rescue died within his breast,
And his eyes closed again, as if in rest.
But heart and brain throbbed with a great dull pain,
Unbearable as that caused by the chain
Which binds a captive to the dungeon's wall,
When floating high, he hears the fearless call
Of comrades gathering to the battle-field,
Where they may fall in death, but never yield!
And this then was the end. He was to die
Without a soul to heed his moan or sigh?
Yet what of that? Why should man whine and cower,
And raise a piteous wail, because the hour
That frees his soul approaches, which must cast
The stale inanities of life at last
Aside? Alone! Yes, wholly, but what then?
Still lonelier they, who, for their fellow-men,
Have given life, and all in life most dear;
Yet have been doom'd, ere death approached, to hear
The watchword that should herald Freedom's light,
Serve as the watch-word for Tyrannic might.
It was not loneliness, nor death, nor pain;
It was, that these would all be met in vain:
It was not that the rapturous acclaim,
The passing noisy rout, which men name fame,
Must be for aye forgone. Who on the brink
Of eternity, would dare pause to think
Of the small, vain distinctions, which men deem
The highest gifts of Heaven? The first faint gleam
That reaches us of the unclouded light,
Within which spirits pass to infinite
Perfection, must perforce to us reveal,
That the long worshipp'd gods, we deem'd could heal
The heart's worst griefs, are monsters of dark lust,
Low lying, Dagon-like, prone in the dust,
Though we have placed them high above God's ark,
With impious hands, when serving in the dark
Unholy temples, where the world's vain throng
Bows down with adulation's false, loud song.
It was not failure, but that the success
They had achieved in spite of fate, was less
To be desired than failure. Of what avail
Were all their pangs? Like to an idle tale
Their names would pass away, while none might know
The agonies of suffering, and the woe

Through which they fought their way and gained the shore
Where foot of man had never stood before.

The anguish prostrated his weakened frame;
Unconscious he lay, until there came
A strangely vivid vision to his soul.
Over those pathless wastes, across the roll
Of the Atlantic, to his native land
Fancy had borne him. Then on every hand
He saw great cities, with their ceaseless roar
Of restless life, and as he gazed, before
Him rose, a piteous and awful sight:
Of human beings, whom the day's sweet light
Seemed but to mock with its untarnished beam
As it fell round them. They were bent and grim
With care and want, and neither fear nor hope
Seemed much to move them. They had ceased to cope
With the great crushing burdens, that were laid
Upon them from their birth. Then half afraid
Of those dark sullen faces, whose dim eyes
Were never turned in hope to God's glad skies
He passed aside, until upon his ear
The hum of countless voices, rising near
Fell like the frenzied ocean's muffled roar,
When wreathed with foam it dashes on the shore.
Onward it came, the panting, eager crowd
In feverish haste, with plaudits hoarse and loud:
Unlike the sightseers who went of old
To see the Baptist, those had sheen of gold
And stones most precious on which to rest
Their eager gaze. Onward they crush'd and prest,
And ever louder swelled the high acclaim,
And as Wills gazed he heard one loud exclaim:—
“We are the loyalest people upon earth.”
He was a stout, smug Citizen, with no dearth
Of shining trinkets on his ample front;
Long had he rushed, and shouted in the brunt
Of this most loyal fray. Now, flushed and warm,
He stood to breath and rest. Then on that swarm
Of women shame bereft, and men unmanned,
Wills looked with curious eyes, and as he scanned
He saw one with a hungry wolfish look
Mutter deep curses, then another crook
His body in obeisance, whose fierce smile
Seemed but assumed in fear and deepest guile:
While hundreds there, in stolid apathy,
Which was, in truth, most pitiful to see,

Did as they saw those nearest to them do,
As though they scarcely cared, and scarcely knew
What that should be. Blessings or curses deep —
To cringe to greatness, or its dwellings heap
In ruins to the ground. Like a machine
Which while guided by a hand (that in the din
Of fiercely-flying wheels, is firm and strong)
Will work beneficently, but once set wrong,
(Either by having in its springs some flaw,
Some mad inversion of great Nature's law;
Or by the meddling of an unskilled hand,)
Will work remorseless mischief, slip each band
And whirl to swift destruction. Now such cry
“All Hail!” because no voice shouts “Crucify!”

Denser the crowd became, more loud the cries,
Until they seem'd to rend the vaulted skies;
And see the cortege slowly nearing now,
And see that queenly form, with noble brow
Weighed with the pressure, which a crown must leave
When rightly worn, with lines which those who grieve
For a loss Time may never heal must bear.
A face and brow, that through all time will wear
In a great nation's galleries and homes, —
In humblest hamlets, beneath stateliest domes,
The revered impress of a true pure soul.
The years may bring strange changes as they roll,
And Time will doubtless smite with wan decay
The glory of earth's greatest. What to-day
Commands deep homage, from each lip and heart,
May ere the century's close, be set apart
From active life, like a rare ornament,
Too costly for prosaic use. Men bent
On stern utility, may fail to see
Why to high pomp, mankind should bow the knee;
But while the higher sanctities of life
Are held beyond all price, while in the strife
Of clashing interests, the sacred name
Of a reproachless wife and mother claim
Our deepest love, thy name, O peerless Queen!
Will live with undimmed lustre. Though ne'er seen
By us, thy distant subjects, have we not
Rejoiced and sorrowed with thee? In each spot,
That proudly claims thy laws and element sway,
Wherever men lift up the heart to pray,
Is not thy name heard on the faltering tongue?
'Tis not the splendour of a crown that flung

Such halo round thy head! 'Tis not the light
Of a great throne, that smites our dazzled sight
It is the record of the noble deeds —
The story of the true great life, which needs
No borrowed glow, to gain the homage deep
Of all true hearts, that in the world would keep
With jealous care, upon the loftiest shrine
The Faith and Purity that e'er were thine.

Such were the thoughts that as he stood to gaze
Upon his Queen moved Wills, when he would raise
The lusty cheer, his eyes were dim and wet,
And in his dream, when the Queen's calm gaze met
His own he prayed, "May God's high holy peace
Rest on thy royal head." Then a low hiss
Of mingled pain and hate fell on his ear,
And when he turned, he saw one lying near
Crushed by hurrying feet, and as he bent
To raise the prostrate form, the people went
Shouting upon their way, till in the press
He lost his footing and in dire distress
He struggled 'mid the crowd, till he was seen
And promptly aided by the Citizen
Who had stood to rest. "My friend, I pray beware
'Mid such a mob." "Thanks for thy kindly care,"
Wills made reply. And both then stood aside
From the great throng which surged as doth the tide
In swift resistless haste. Then as they ran
And cried, Wills said, "Yon wretched fallen man
Will be crushed unto death." "Beyond a doubt,"
The Citizen said, and then he turned about,
And searched his pockets with a wrathful brow, —
"Thus are they served, who fain would venture now
To play the Good Samaritan. My chain
Is snapt, my watch is gone. 'Twas worse than vain
To venture in the midst of such a mob,
Whose only calling is to beg and rob."
"But the poor wretch?" — "Yes, yes, it might have been;
An oft-repeated trick — O, I have seen
So much of such imposters. Friend, you seem
A stranger here, I would not you should deem
That I speak thus from callousness of heart,
Or hatred of the masses. For my part
I patronize most charities extant,
And heartily abominate the cant
So much in vogue, of speaking with deep scorn
Of charitable schemes. Though these men born

In abject misery, and bred in crime,
Are hopeless subjects, in what happy clime
Do we find so much done as in our own
To lessen wretchedness? It is unknown
How much is yearly spent by Church and State
And individuals, to alleviate
The sin and want that in our midst abound.”

While thus the Citizen spoke, Wills look'd around
Upon dark haunts of vice and gaunt despair —
Foul alleys, where one breath of God's sweet air
Would seem as wondrous as an angel's face —
Courts reeking with impurities, where no trace
Of humanizing culture might be found;
Sickening obscenity the only sound
That met the ear. Unclad children in troops,
Unsexed women in strange unkempt groups
With reckless eyes. Men to whom crushing need
Clung like a curse, from which no help could rid
Their lives.

“O friend,” said Wills, “of what avail
Are all your vaunted schemes, if the deep wail
Of breadless children upon every hand
Smites on the ear, and if through all the land
Such men as these are found? Men from whose brow
Has fled all trace of human worth, till now
They seem no better than grim brutes of prey
Who lurk in ambush till the light of day
Has sped.”

“And yet what hand has wrought them wrong?”
“O give good heed, that the unthinking throng
Which has been bred in vice for ages back,
And whose eyes have been dimm'd from birth, by lack
Of food, and all that sweetens life, should cease
To make such clear distinctions. If they miss
All the God-given rights of all mankind,
And stagger dumbly, with the weights which bind
Their fates so cruelly, to the cruel past;
Then wonder not, if they should rend at last,
With callous heart, and grimy, clutching hand,
The ancient landmarks of an ancient land!”

“Nay, a just Heaven will such woe prevent,
Through all the Bibles and the tracts we sent,
In lavish numbers, to each haunt of sin.”

“Did ye, in truth, expect from these to glean
A plenteous harvest of fair lives and deeds?”

What, that a seed dropp'd 'mid the rankest weeds
(A seed which learned men, in every age,
Have taught us to believe, needs wisdom sage,
And tender culture, and a world of care,
To make it bloom, even in regions fair),
Haphazard, in a sterile, untill'd field,
Should struggle into healthful life, and yield
Most precious flower and fruit! False, false belief,
And falser Prophets, who, to heal the grief
Of those who grope in misery, stand and cry
Upon the watch-tower, 'God's own peace is nigh
To all mankind.' Complacent messengers,
Who prate statistics, and would silence fears,
By quoting glibly-worded mission tales,
From Southern Islands, and from fertile vales
In great Cathay."

 "Is it not right and wise
That we should succour those whose country lies
In idolatrous darkness?"

 "Ay, and speed
To swarthy tribes, because, forsooth, *our* creed
Says that the Goblin of eternal fire
Must be the portion of each child and sire,
Till they adopt the formulas of *our* faith,
And cherish *our* pet dogmas to the death,
While in our midst Ignorance, Crime, and Want
(Fierce blood-hounds), follow ever, with mad pant,
To mangle and destroy the helpless souls
That perish in our midst. And time still rolls,
As though it heeded nought, in its swift flight,
Of the brute wrongs that, in high Heaven's sight,
Crush unto death men's lives, "O Lord, how long?"
The wailing cry still rises from a throng
Innumerable, as the futile tears
That Misery has shed, through countless years.

In the far past, men crush'd by tyrannous wrong,
Looked for the time when the exulting song
Of ransom'd souls should rise, where Pagan rites
Were won't to soil the earth, and through long nights
And days of terror, when the fierce, mad light
Of Persecution, rose to vanquish Right,
Men braved its deadly glare without a fear,
Deeming the blessed hour was drawing near
When in the faith of the ascended Lord
The nations should rejoice with one accord,
And the grand tenets of a pure belief

Should triumph o'er oppression, heal the grief
Of earth's down-trodden sons. But, alas! now
The holiest emblem gleams upon the brow
Of the stern Despot; and the darkest deed
Of fierce injustice and rapacious greed,
Wrought by the hand of crown'd victorious Might,
Is hailed with loud Te Deums in God's sight.
Men glibly talk of peace and Christian love, —
Of modern progress, and yet far above
The grandest efforts of philanthropy,
And noblest sacrifice for good, we see
Brute force enthroned.”

Then the Citizen, “You seem in truth, my friend,
To be most captious. To what doth tend
All that you now have urged? What, are we then
No juster, kindlier, than the ruthless men
Of barbarous ages? And are all our high
Unselfish charities a painted lie?
And our vast schemes for good a whited tomb
Most fair without, but full of charnel gloom
Within?”

To which Wills sadly made reply,
“Once in the trackless bush, I heard a cry,
That thrilled my soul with ne'er forgotten dread;
Again it rent the air, and then I sped
Unto the spot, from whence the cry had come;
And since that hour, amid the noisiest hum,
The densest concourse of the densest street,
Where eager men pass on with hurrying feet,
I seem to see the sight which met my view
In that lone spot. Where the slim saplings grew
So thickly intertwined, that a ray
Of sunlight scarce was to be seen, there lay
A dying haggard man, in whose gaunt face,
With its wild pleading eyes, was left no trace
Of reason. A lone stranger, he had lost
His way, when he would fain have crost
A patch of whip-stick scrub. Almost within
A stone-throw of relief, being hemmed in
As by a living tomb, reason gave way
And with great moans hopelessly fierce he lay
Before me, dying there, alone and mad.
It was so strangely, pitifully sad,
That his face to my sight, through years has clung,
And through each changing scene, his cry has rung
Upon my ears. And thus in the same way
Where'er in this great land, my feet should stray;

Those want-pinched faces, with their hungry eyes
And strange appalling hopelessness would rise
To haunt me. Ay, though all the bounty given
By every man and woman under Heaven,
Should rise before me, high as Babel's Tower,
Still would I seem to see, the forms that cower
In homeless wretchedness, on bitter nights,
On doorsteps, and in arches where the lights
Of great cities shine not. As if by stealth,
In the gay haunts of Fashion and of Wealth,
Thronged with fair women, dowered with ev'ry grace
Of Nature — even there before my face
Would rise those half-clad forms, with tangled hair
And with unholy eyes, whose reckless glare
Would fill me with disquiet. In every haunt
Sacred to Art and Learning, lowering gaunt
With restless hands, still I would seem to see
Men without faith or love, looking at me
With a fierce consciousness of wrong and power
Intoxicating them.”

With mocking voice

The Citizen said, “How to make them rejoice,
And happy in this world and in the next,
You doubtless can disclose. Pray, choose your text,
And air your theory.”

Then Wills, in low

Sad tones, but with a rising flush and glow
Of kindling hope: “I have no theory
Nor text to choose, but England yet must see
Where her true greatness lies — Not in the fleet
That proudly sweeps the seas, when nations meet
In war — Not in her revenue, nor trade,
Nor wealth, though these may doubtless long have made
The sons of Mammon worship her — No, each
Is valueless, unless our help can reach
The realms of pauperism, haunts of crime.
O England! in the dark and troublous time
That in the future looms, and year by year
Is drawing nearer, fraught with woe and fear —
When Monarchies will reel, and the hoarse cry
Of unbelief and Anarchy, on high
Will rise, be this thy self-appointed task,
To war with vice and need, and to unmask
The cruelty, black treachery, deep hate
And barbèd malice, that e'er lie in wait,
Draped with hypocrisy's fair seeming robe

In the most Christian countries of the globe.
Care for thy children with a parent's care
Not blinded by the smoke and fiery glare
Of Avarice's vast forges. Dost thou lack
(As thy wave-girded shores, lack'd centuries back
When the Mayflower, from thy green cliffs sped,)
For thy children, a breathing space and bread?
Ah! there are boundless fertile realms that lie
(Under thy sway) beneath a sunny sky,
O'er which the century-aged trees have shed
A stirless shade, while years unnoted fled.
Across those realms, my wearied feet have trod
Exploring that vast land. I thank my God
That neither want nor pain, nor fear of death
Marred that great enterprise. Plenty and health
In those still regions, in that gold-seamed strand
Are waiting, for Toil's willing heart and hand.
Ay, as I see wan men and women gasp
In foetid alleys, in the ruthless grasp
Of penury and disease, and as I see
The eyes of breadless infants, fix'd on me,
My heart o'erflows with gratitude, that I
Have open'd up a realm, where the faint sigh
And plaints of hunger never need ascend
To vex the sapphire skies, that brightly bend
Above great woods.

Where the grey emu roams,
Great golden harvests, and quiet happy homes
Will yet be seen — the vine around the door,
Large udder'd cows at pasture, fruit-trees hoar
With heavy blossoms; wooded vales that ring
With the glad tones of men, who work and sing,
Low answered by the mother voice that croons
Soft lullabies, in blest content, through noons
And eyes of slumbrous warmth o'er the sweet face
Of babes. Thank God, there's room and breathing space
For millions there, o'er whom want never more
Need tyrannize, who, on that new-found shore
May live, a race, free, happy, and content,
The offspring of the men, who long were bent
Beneath a yoke, more curst than that which weigh'd
Africa's sons — ”

Upon the air there stray'd
The harsh discordant cry of some strange bird
(Which in those lonesome woods might oft be heard),
Breaking bright Fancy's spell. Wills woke again,
His spirit freed from grief, his limbs from pain.

The joyous birds that half distraught with mirth
Had sung all day, were well nigh still. The earth,
Languid with intense heat, lay like a child
That wearied, sinks to rest. White clouds lay piled
Against the purple sky, in the far west,
Like a great fleet, that, bound in waveless rest,
Might lie becalmed in breezeless Southern seas.
The topmost branches of the dark-leaved trees
Were crown'd with burnished gold — smit with the beams
Of the low sun. Fairer than childhood's dreams,
Or the enchanted realms of Eastern lore,
Gleamed the broad west; as if the inner door
Of the eternal dwelling had been flung
Wide open there. A waveless ocean hung
Of gleaming jasper, o'er the placid sky.
And where the sun was swiftly drawing nigh
The chambers of his rest, vast vistas spread
Of such refulgent light, as might be shed
By the great presence of the Holy One,
Before whose brow, the light of moon and sun
Wax faint and dim. Saving the drowsy hum
Of insect life, nor cries nor voices come
To break the quiet. Silence as of the tomb
Reignèd around. Silence in the great gloom
Of those forests, wrapped in sunless shade;
Silence over each plain and grassy glade,
Over each trackless range and shaggy height,
And sombre gully, where the mid-day's light
Scarce dares to come. Silence in that lone place
Where the last sunbeams fell upon a face
Wan with the hue of death, wan with the throng
Of rushing thoughts, yet lit up with the strong
Clear fervour of a deathless faith. "No dream
Was this," he murmured, while the dying gleam
Of the faint light, fell round his lifted brow
In a halo. "I thank Thee, God, that now
I feel and know, I do not die in vain;
And, knowing this, my loss I count but gain."
Slowly the words were spoken, while the eyes
Of clear calm grey were lifted to the skies.

What need had he, the great heroic soul,
As death's chill shadow o'er him slowly stole,
Of priestly ministrant, or priestly voice,
To bid him at approaching joys rejoice?
To speak with triumph of unfading palms,
And of the rapturous, unending psalms —
Of the radiant crown upon each brow

That sin nor anguish never more might bow —
Of the unsullied streets of shining gold,
The soft voluptuous tale, so often told,
As if such images could clearly show
The mystic joys that for immortals flow?
From him the deeper meaning was not hid
Which lies beneath the tales that children need
To shadow forth the glorious after-life
That breaks upon the soul, when the dull strife
And the petty aims of our ambition
Have past away, like an unfounded vision.

In that great solitude, the sun's last ray
Fell softly on the silent form, that lay
With a still face, turned to the glowing west,
And hands enfolded, evermore at rest.

Miscellaneous Poems

Lord Hector

(A Ballad).

In Three Parts

Part I.

LORD HECTOR's arms are gleaming bright,
He sings a lusty roundelay,
Lord Hector's laugh is gay and light
As he rideth upon his way.

Behind him ride three yeomen bold,
A valiant squire is by his side:
Not for the love of land or gold
Has this knight travelled far and wide.

When he in sickness long did pine,
He swore upon the Holy Rood
That he would go to Palestine,
There to uproot the Paynim brood.

Many a doughty deed, I ween,
Hath been wrought by his fearless hand,
For he has fought the Saracen,
Far away in the Holy Land.

Ay, he has set the captive free,
And broken the Moslem power;
Now, once again, in his own countree,
He hastes to his Lady's bower.

The Lady Maud is fair to see
As she kneeleth down to pray:
“Hail, Virgin Queen! I plead with thee
For the knight who is far away.”

The Lady Maud rose from her knees
With a calmly radiant face,
The peaceful fields around she sees,
Clad with summer's unsullied grace.

And there upon the leafy trees
The happy birds with rapture sing,
But, ah! her heart is o'er the seas,
When, hush! what distant noises ring?

The mavis' notes are loud and clear
As they rise in ecstatic bliss;
The brawling stream is dancing near,
But, hark! no woodland sound is this.

The snowy May shines in the light
Of the joyous midsummer beams,
But no flower can be so bright
As a weapon that far off gleams.

The Lady Maud is fair to see,
As she stands before Lord Hector's sight;
“O, Lady Maud, wilt wed with me?
Long hast thou been my life's sole light.

“My limbs are wearied with the mail
That I have worn in distant lands;
I have been saddened with the wail
Of those who pine in captive's bands.

“I knelt beside our Saviour's tomb,
I bear deep scars upon my brow,
I languished in a prison's gloom,
And I would fain be rested now.”

“O, I have sat in grief and fear
At midnight's hour and break of day,
Thinking on thee, my lord, most dear,
Upon thy dark and perilous way.

“And I have plac'd the earliest flowers
Upon Our Blessed Lady's shrine,
Praying that through each day and hour,
Her gracious face on thee might shine — ”

“Then thou wilt wed with me I trow,
And bring me bliss without alloy.”

“O, ere I plight my marriage vow,
And ere I know deep bridal joy —

“I would that thou wouldst succour bring
Unto a maiden true and fair,
Who in my bowers was wont to sing,
But pineth now in deep despair.

“For she is near to me of kin —
The lovely Alice, of Bertrand;
Her grandsire holds her now I ween,
Fast fetter'd in a captive's band.

“And he hath sworn that she must wed

The cruel Lord of Heyling Towers,
But sooner far would she lie dead
Beneath the summer's fading flowers.

“A messenger sped yesterday,
With bidding for each bridal guest,
The cruel Lord is on his way
Within her grandsire's halls to rest.”

Lord Hector's eyes are dim yet bright,
Bending before the Lady there;—
“I vow it by this hand so white,
To free the hapless maiden fair:

“I vow it by the pledge I've worn
Far in a strange and distant land,
When lying wounded and forlorn,
Upon the Eastern desert's sand.”

Lord Hector drew out of his breast
A silken lock of golden hair,
That symbol on his lofty crest
For ever more he now will wear.

Part II.

“WHAT aileth thee, my nurse, so dear?
Why are thine eyes so dim and sad?
Thy hands are trembling as with fear
Though thou in festal robes art clad.

“Didst thou not bid my maidens haste
To dress my hair, and deck my brow?
Dost thou not know that o'er the waste
Lord Hector swiftly rideth now?

“For he has sent his yeoman bold
To claim me as his bride to-day,
Fast, fast he rode through heat and cold —
He came before the dawning gray.

“Now, I await my own true knight,
Who swiftly comes to wed with me
Ere this day's light hath taken flight —
Then say, my nurse, what aileth thee?”

“O, Lady Maud, my limbs are weak,
And aged eyes are prone to weep,
And if the truth I now must speak,
I saw a vision in my sleep —

“And on my heart its weight doth lie
Through all this sunny bridal day,
Ah! on my bed I heard a cry
That all my senses scared away.

“For, on the night thy mother died,
I heard that cry, my winsome child.
Why should it rise to greet a bride,
That wailing moan, so strangely wild?

“And then I saw a vision dread,
Which filled my aged heart with fears;
It was a vision of the dead —
Nay, Lady Maud, forgive my tears.”

“My nurse, hold now thy foolish speech,
And pluck with me the roses red — ”
“Hark! was not that a raven's screech? — ”
“Methinks thy senses must have fled!

“The day is wearing on apace,
Come, pluck with me the lilies fair — ”
“Now, Blessed Virgin, send us grace!
What dirge is rising on the air?”

“Nay, the poor head must be distraught,
It is the wedding guests that throng;
On this sweet day I can hear naught
Saving the wood-wele's joyous song.

“Now twine for me the bridal wreath,
And deck for me the nuptial bower;
Lord Hector hastes across the heath,
My own true knight, in knightly power.

“His body has been racked with pain,
The captive's grief has filled his soul;
To war he goeth not again,
And I must make him well and whole.

“I'll lay his head upon my breast,
I'll shield him with those loving arms,
For he must have unbroken rest
Free from all strife and wild alarms.”

The Lady pluckt the roses red,
The aged nurse croon'd by her side,
Scatt'ring sere leaves that long were dead,
Looking across the heath so wide:

“Red is the rose, but redder still

Are the life-drops that trickle slow,
From the wound which no art can heal,
When the eyes dim and sightless grow:

“White is the lily, but whiter far
Is the shroud that enwraps the corse,
When the light of the evening star
Rouses the cry of owlets hoarse — ”

“What song is that thou singest nurse?
It fills my soul with shrinking fear,
Is it the echo of a curse?”
“Nay, heed it not, my Lady, dear —

“It is a strange and ancient lay,
The words are dark, the air is wild;
I would my song had been more gay,
But fear thou not, my own dear child.

“Thy guests await thee in the hall,
The shadows onward swiftly creep;
Methinks I hear a distant call, —
I'll bid thy page his watch well keep.”

Part III.

The Abbot is a patient man,
He paceth up the sombre aisle;
His well-read missal he doth scan,
The lagging hours away to wile.

The vesper hour is drawing nigh,
And still Lord Hector cometh not;
The evening star is seen on high,
The swelling chimes now upward float.

The wedding guests are silent all,
The Lady Maud is strangely pale;
She sits within the darkening hall,
Arrayed in bridal wreath and veil.

Within her heart a great dull pain,
Upon her eyes a shadow deep;
She calleth to her page again,
Whom she hath set a watch to keep.

“Tell me, my page, what thou dost see —
What thou dost hear from the great tower?”
“I see the clouds that swiftly flee,
And high above the castle lower:

“I see the mountains misty heights
Smit with the blood red evening ray,
I see the waning summer lights,
Changing to vapour dim and gray.

“I hear the raven's croaking cry,
I hear him flap his sable wing, —
I hear the winds that moan and sigh,
I hear the vesper bells that ring —”

“Go back, my page, and watch and gaze,
And when thou see'st Lord Hector's steed
Come through the evening's misty haze,
O reach my side with joyous speed.”

The wedding guests begin to frown,
The wedding guests are waxing wroth,
The Lady Maud is looking down,
To weep or sigh she is most loth.

She calleth for the yeoman bold,
Who hath Lord Hector's message brought —
He who rode fast through heat and cold,
And by his Lord hath stoutly fought.

“O yeoman bold, each word recall
That unto thee Lord Hector spoke.”
“We paused beside a ruin'd wall,
When my dear lord the silence broke.

“‘Ride on, my yeoman bold,’ he cried,
‘And bid the Lady Maud prepare,
For I will soon be by her side
To claim her as my bride most fair.

“‘Tell her the cruel lord is slain,
And Alice of Bertrand is free!’
He seemed to be in deadly pain,
As thus Lord Hector spake to me —

“For fiercely he had fought, and long,
With the false Lord of Heyling Towers;
Aye, pressing through the thickest throng,
Where arrows fell like April showers.”

The wedding guests are silent all;
The Lady Maud is strangely pale,
Sitting within the darkening hall,
Arrayed in bridal wreath and veil.

But see! the page comes hurrying in,

He bows his head, he bends his knee;
Without was heard a rising din —
“O Lady Maud, I haste to thee,

“For I have seen Lord Hector's steed
Come slowly through the misty haze,
No rider urged him on with speed,
And as I looked, in deep amaze,

“I saw a slowly-winding train
After the charger softly tread.
Each head was bent, as if in pain,
And when I saw, to thee I sped.”

The Lady Maud spake not a word,
She flung her bridal veil aside;
No voice is in the courtyard heard,
Where dark-robed forms in silence glide.

While in the midst, with sombre pall,
A bier is resting on the ground.
The evening shadows softly fall,
The sad retainers stand around.

What form comes in the twilight there,
With rigid face, and snow-white dress?
The Lady Maud is passing fair,
She hastes her bridegroom to caress.

She knelt beside the cold, cold bier,
She looked unto the Heavens above,
She neither shrieked nor shed a tear,
She only said “My love, my love.”

She pressed such kisses on his face
As might recall from Paradise
A soul clad with angelic grace,
But ah! he opened not his eyes.

She chafed his hands, now cold and white,
She pressed his cheek against her own —
Strong, bearded men sobbed at the sight —
She bent her head with a great moan.

“O Lady Maud, arise, arise!”
But, when they touched her, she was dead.
She lay beneath the silent skies,
And thus the Lady Maud was wed.

Heimweh

“Hast, Mutter, du nie vom Heimweh gehört?”

IT has been a regular roaster, and I have been out all day,
Tramping about to get shearing — they say that I'm given to stray.
First I crossed the Stony Ranges, then away by the Tea-Tree Flat;
I stood now and then by a gum tree, to fan myself with my hat.

I took a long spell in a gully, down by the Kangaroo Creek;
Its course was baked into fissures; it must have been dry for a week:
I felt somewhat sold when I saw it; I thought I should get a sup —
Even water that's rather muddy, seems sweet when one is knocked up.

There a very lean old bullock seemed also to share in my plight,
He came staggering up to the creek, his old carcass weighed but light.
You may think I am spinning a yarn, but the tears were in his eyes;
And as I watched the old duffer, they came into mine likewise.

Whether for myself, or the bullock, 'tis hardly worth while to guess;
Perhaps from a fellow feeling, and perhaps from something less.
He stood by the dusty channel, you could count his ribs at a glance;
His legs then began to totter; he laid down as if in a trance.

He stretched his old limbs very wearily, and soon he ceased to weep;
He twitched his ears for a moment, then I think he fell asleep —
I thought I would do the same; so I threw down my billy and swag;
(You see I'm a bit of a spendthrift, or else I might have a nag).

I lay 'neath the shade of a wattle, with blossoms golden and thick,
I laid my head on my swag, I was really as dry as a stick,
Yet the moment I shut my eyes — how it was I cannot quite tell,
I seemed to walk by a river, I can still remember full well.

Among the green hills of old Scotland it goes on its joyous way,
By mist-shrouded vales and grey ruins, to the sea's eternal spray;
Like the voices of sinless spirits, like the words of a well-lov'd song,
Fell the low purl of its waters on my ear as they swept along.

They seem'd to have pow'r, like Bethesda pool, to make me well and whole,
Washing the sins and sorrows of past years from my wearied soul;
Recalling the days of my childhood, and filling my heart with joy,
As I seemed to see again the dear vales I had trod when a boy.

I was strolling once more with my brother, a fishing-rod in my hand,
(In my dream I was quite unconscious I had left my native land),
But as I was gleefully running, methought I fell on my head,
And there as I slowly rose again it felt as heavy as lead.

Then I hasted home to my mother, she laid her hand on my brow,
Covered it with healing kisses, yet it ached full sore, I trow;
I fretfully groaned with the pain, as I pushed her hand aside,
Then raised my head from her lap, and arose with a hasty stride.

“How hot is the sun, O my mother,” I cried in a peevish tone,
Then I look'd around me with horror, and laid me down with a moan.
O God! the awaking was bitter, in that desolate gully alone,
Lying faint, and weary, and thirsty, my head against a great stone.

Nor mother nor kindred near me — the length of the world lay between,
Not e'en the smoke of a mia-mia, nor trace of a soul to be seen;
The sun, with a lurid redness, was slanting away to the west,
The sand-flies were round me in crowds — they are always a horrid pest.

Instead of daisy-fleck'd meadows, mountains snow-crown'd, and far hills,
Broad moors with sweet-scented heather, rock-circled lakes, and clear rills,
There lay ragged and sombre ranges, brown woods, and white plains around,
All wrapped in a solemn stillness, unbroken by human sound.

I felt rather queer for a moment — my head was hurt, as you know,
I cried like a girl, where I sat — 'tis not often that my tears flow,
And, when I had wiped them away, I called myself a great muff;
When a fellow is knocking about, his speech is apt to be rough.

I reeled when I lifted my swag, then stood for a minute or so;
What was the use of crawling about? I hardly knew where to go;
The nearest station was five miles off, the sheds were long since filled;
Shearing began a month ago — in the art I never was skilled.

The air was hot as a furnace, my lips were blistered with thirst;
I would like to have slept and ne'er wakened; I would like to have died, if I durst;
But a chap may feel rather mopish, yet struggle on to the last,
I started to tramp it once more, the shadows were deepening fast.

When I reached the Condamore station 'twas just an hour after dark,
I made straight for the shearers' hut, the men were having a lark;
The sound of their talking and laughter broke the deep stillness of night,
Through the open doors and windows was streaming a cheerful light.

I received a bushman's welcome, and the best of bushmen's fare,
But neither the one nor the other was able to lighten my care;
Sad thoughts of my kindred and home filled me well nigh with despair,
I had left them long years ago, when life seemed all bright and all fair.

My illusions had long since flown, as did those of the prodigal son,
(Still I think he was rather soft to run home when the fun was done).
Two summers have come and gone since I got my mother's last letter,
I'll write her an answer just now, I'm sure I cannot do better.

“God Guard The Ship Upon Her Way”

I HEAR the tread of restless feet,
The sound of voices in the street;
I hear the tireless hum of life
That speaks of toil, of joy and strife;
And still I cannot choose but hear
The swell of waves as if full near,
And ever as I hear I say —
“God guard the ship upon her way.”

I see the woods of sombre hue
Against the sky of sunny blue;
I see the flush of blossoms bright
That shimmer in the spring's warm light;
And still I cannot choose but see
That snowy sail so dear to me;
And murmur while my thoughts all stray —
“God guard the ship upon her way.”

I feel the clasp of tender hands,
Yet still my heart to far-off lands
Is following across the main
The speeding ship, for which I fain
Would daily pray with earnest cry,
For favouring gale and tranquil sky,
Through storm and calm, by night and day,
“God guard the ship upon her way.”

Guard her from pestilence and pain,
Let dangers threaten her in vain,
From raging fire and hidden reef,
From sudden fear, from death and grief,
Till o'er the boundless ocean's breast
She safe may sail unto her rest:
When waves arise in wrath or play,
“God guard the ship upon her way.”

When the first flush of coming day
Startles the lingering night away,
And when the deepening shadows creep
Across the hills in silence deep,
When mingling in the noisy throng,
Or listening to the festal song;
Oh, ever still, I hourly pray!
“God guard the ship upon her way.”

Evening

I NEVER believed in ghosts, and I cannot do so now
With the furrows of sixty summers resting on my brow;
And yet it was passing strange, I know it was not a dream
Though age is given to musing, and fancies oft real seem.

I was sitting alone in the twilight, all around was still,
When a form seemed to hover near that made me shiver and thrill;
There was no rustle nor footfall, I heard no voice nor call —
But over the curtain'd window a shadow seem'd to fall.

Could it have been all fancy, that face with its glad surprise
As it looked at me, long years ago, with those loving eyes?
The sheen of delicate robes but a strange, fleeting illusion,
The glance of starry eyes a mocking and cruel delusion?

I turned away for a moment, and then I looked again —
The passion flowers and the roses were drooping against the pane;
Sombre masses of foliage, stretched away out of sight,
Tinged in the far-off west with a waning roseate light;

But no shadow nor vision, nor mystic presence was there,
Naught save the whispering leaves broke the calm of the garden fair:
Out from the solemn woods came the curlew's murmuring plaint,
While the languid summer wind was laden with wattle scent.

I leant my head on my hands, and mused for a long hour's space,
The buried years arose, with their tender beauty and grace;—
The light of a vanished love shone again in its early truth,
To the lone room came back, the hopes of my passionate youth.

Like the sight of the Nazarene's tomb to the weary pilgrim's eye —
Like an exile's dreams of his home beneath an alien sky,
The mem'ries came in that hour, of my first and only choice,
The clasp of my lost love's hand — the cadence sweet of her voice —

The voice I dreamt should be mine, through all the days of my life,
To lighten each sorrow and gloom, through all the long wearisome strife;
'Tis hushed for ever and aye, and thousands of leagues away,
Lies a grave with a simple stone, in a churchyard old and grey.

It happen'd so long ago, that often it seems like a tale
Which has been told in childhood's days, to still a petulant wail;
But again it is keen and fresh, all the sorrow and wild regret —
O the unbearable grief, that gnaws my heart even yet!

But life's evening is closing fast, and the tale is often told,
Of a city radiant and blest, whose streets are paved with gold;

Mayhap from the shining throng, by whom those streets are trod,
Her spirit stole quietly here, to beckon me home to God.

A Fragment

THE clouds were heavily laden, and the wind
Arose at times into a shuddering moan,
Then died away, like a deep pleading tone,
Suppress'd in anguish. In my wearied mind,
The dirge-like sound awakened strange unrest.
I watched the woods in tossing masses lie,
Sombrely grey, beneath a sombre sky;
The pliant branches sank, then like the crest
Of waves wind-driven, rose in angry might,
Then quietly paus'd, like one who dumbly stands
In agony, with supplicating hands,
And soul sore riven, in grief's rayless night.
There was no gleam of sunshine on the leaves
Swirled through the clustering bushes, torn and red;
Borne by the wind from nooks where they lay dead,
To flutter against windows and high eaves,
Finding no refuge, driven to and fro,
While their frail forms more meagre hourly grow.
And thus I said, the joys of former years
Flutter around us, like the leaves whose bloom
Is lost with summer hours in winter gloom.
Ah, how oft we gaze back with blinding tears,
Wistfully yearning for some vanished face —
Some precious voice, that from our life has flown;
Listening for footsteps that afar are gone;
Musing in sadness on the forms, whose place
In home and heart, are vacant evermore.
What though the glowing hopes of early youth —
Fond dreams of fame — were all fulfilled in truth;
It is as though one stood upon a shore
With gleaming heaps of gold, with the deep ray
Of priceless jewels, while the great fierce waves
Have swept dear comrades to unnoted graves:
Or, as the son of Nun (who, on their way,
Led Israel's children), may have paused at last,
To gaze with sad, dim eyes, from lonely height,
While the long Promised Land appears in sight,
Safe from the parching drought, the cold keen blast.
There are the fruitful fields for which he sigh'd;
The gleaming rivers, and the lofty towers;
The heavy-laden vines, the peaceful bowers;—
Calmly the shadows sleep, the waters glide.
But while he looks, the long passed desert's glare

Rises on his sight, till heart and soul opprest,
He moans, "What though these realms are fair and blest;
Do they not lie in regions far and bare,
Whose names are dearest to my tired soul?"
When the great cedar casts its thickest shade,
And the pomegranate gleams in the cool glade;
When Jordan's waters onward calmly roll, —
Will he not hear the helpless moaning cries,
Will he not see the pleading, wistful eyes,
Of those who sank in deadly want and pain,
And prayed to reach the Promised Land in vain!

A Reminiscence

A SPRAY of lilac blossoms, against a mould-stain'd wall
Above a nook in a garden, where early rose-leaves fall,
The breath of hidden violets scenting the languid breeze
That strayed with slumb'rous murmur by heavily-budded trees.

It seems like a dream or picture that scene so long pass'd away,
Seen by the light unclouded of an early day in May —
An unconscious child at play, through the sunny fleeting hours
Winding a tangled skein round freshly-gathered flowers;

Watching the feathery clouds, that slowly sail out of sight,
Vanishing softly away into beams of tremulous light.
“They are angels fair,” said the child, flying back to Heaven;
I wish they would come to me and stay to play till even!”

Then she heard with childish awe the great city's muffled roar,
That seemed in the distance heard like breakers against the shore;
“’Tis the sound,” said the child, “of voices and footsteps in each street,
Where tired men and women daily and hourly meet.

“I shall always live in a garden fragrantly cool and bright,
Where the trees will always blossom, and birds sing day and night;
Where the tramp of wearied feet can only be heard afar,
And the flowers will ever bloom, bright as the evening star.”

Then she smiled in glad contentment, resting beneath the shade
That the drooping laurustinus and myrtle bushes made,
The restless leaves of the poplar whispered a lullaby,
While airy castles were built, undissolved by a care or sigh.

Alas! for our childish dreams, those radiant plans of yore,
That pass like meteor lights, and are gone for ever more!
We still recall them with sorrow, dream them over again,
When time with its many changes fills us with bitter pain.

We have left the enchanted garden, sacred to Childhood's feet,
Dusty, travel-stained pilgrims, toiling on in the heat,
Looking with saddened eyes for some sheltering verdant spot,
Haunted with vain aspirations — repining at our lot;

Voices around us and footsteps, the eager hum of life,
But those that we fain would hear are lost in the pitiless strife.
We listen with aching hearts for the well-known step and tone,
“Will they *never* come again?” we ask with a piteous moan;—

“Will the tangled threads of life be rendered smooth and whole?
The inner communion of spirit refresh the pent-up soul?”

Are the stricken withered gourds that never reach fruition,
Emblems sent in love of a Heavenly Father's tuition?"

O heart much vexed with doubt! O mind perplexed with inquiry!
Is not the gold of Ophir purged in furnaces fiery?
Though the joys of life should pass like the visions children weave,
Should we fold sackcloth round us, and live but to sigh and grieve?

What though our eyes are made heavy with bitter tears unshed,
And our dreams of rose-strewn bowers may for ever have fled,
Life has higher aims than comfort, or ease, or pleasure,
Earth is too narrow to hold an incorruptible treasure.

Despite our fears and griefs, and the wide dominion of evil,
Our lives may truly be such as will shame the flesh and the devil.
Lonely we may be — condemned by the shallow test of the crowd,
At least we escape the temptation of prizing its praises loud.

As the Hebrews were led from bondage, with hopes of a fruitful land,
They never saw in its glory, nor tilled with a willing hand,
So may the joys illusive we saw in the distance loom,
Have served to loosen the fetters that fix the bondsman's doom.

Instead of the fields of Canaan, we find a desert bare,
But the Tyrant's rod is broken, we breathe in purer air;
Then, shame on our craven spirits if we sigh for Egypt's food,
When once our unmanacled feet on Freedom's heights have stood.

A Battle-Cry

ON, on, through the din and the roar
Of cannons around and before,
Repeat but one paternoster,
Pray God our cause He may foster;
Then pause not to sigh or to think
How near may be the grave's dark brink:
 For with us is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

Now we go to conquer or die,
For our God's great limitless sky
Is too narrow to span the spot
Where the slave's doom may be our lot;
We pause not till the foe is met,
As we rush through sword and bayonet:
 For with us is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

“Will the strife and the mortal pain,
Our wild struggle, be all in vain?” —
Pause not to question or to doubt,
But raise the defiant shout
Of the heroes who never yield,
Who must win or die in the field.
 With us there is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

“ — And the wives who are left to weep,
The fair harvests we may not reap,
The children we see not again —
Oh, God! do we leave all in vain?”
Think on the captives who languish,
On then, heed but their sore anguish,
 Cry, “With us is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!”

Now, by the great God above us,
The Saviour crucified for us,
By the graves of the sacred dead,
Not a drop of the blood now shed,
Will stain our Fatherland in vain.
Comrades, whether we lose or gain,
 With us there is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender.

Though no battles by us were won,
Though our bones may bleach in the sun,
And the colours our fathers bore
May float on the fierce Tyrant's shore,
The swords by our right hands driven,
The Despot's great chains have riven.
 Then with us is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

Each blow we have dealt in the strife
For the Freedom dearer than life,
Will rouse through all time in the breast
Of the Freeman the fierce unrest
That cannot brook the cruel wrong,
Oft wrought on the weak by the strong.
 Then with us is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

On, where the bugle is calling,
On, though our comrades are falling,
On, where our colours are glowing,
On, though our life blood is flowing,
On, though last words are low spoken,
On, though our weapons are broken;
 With us there is no surrender,
 Whate'er terms our foes may tender!

The Lake Of The Wailing Child

Part I.

THERE rests a mist on the mountain's height,
Pale is the gleam of the dying light,
The dull leaden clouds across the sky
Like spirits unresting swiftly fly;
Through the tall larches and sombre pines,
The desolate wind now sobs and whines —
Say, dwells there a soul here in deadly pain,
That would fain be human once again,
Turned by a cruel enchantress' power,
To a waving tree in an evil hour?
Away with such idle thoughts and dreams —
See yon distant cross that brightly gleams,
Hear the vesper chimes that softly ring,
And thoughts of prayer, to each heart bring!
See the peaceful hamlet by the Lake,
Where rushing streamlets murmurs wake,
And the waveless waters calmly sleep,
So strangely blue and so strangely deep.
This is the village of Banishmere,
And the stirless lake so blue and clear,
Is called "The Lake of the Wailing Child;"
The lays of the peasants, quaint and wild,
Tell why a piteous helpless wail,
Once wildly rose on the midnight gale.

There is ice upon the river,
The gaunt leafless trees now shiver,
The wan moon is riding high
Upon a grey and troubled sky;
The far stars are shining down
On the woods that darkly frown,
On great heights with crowns of snow
That never dim nor sullied grow —
On the hamlet small and still
By the lake beneath the hill,
On that cot whose gleaming light
Shines out upon the silent night,
On the face whose aged eyes
Are watching now in deep surprise,
Standing in the open door,
Gazing in fear around, before.

“O, Jesu Maria, send us grace,
All, all is silent as the dead;
I would that I could see his face,
For now the midnight hour has sped.
O! would that I could hear the voice
Which makes my aged heart rejoice!”
Then while the aged Dame thus spoke
A sound the intense silence broke —
When the wind beareth blinding sleet
It is joy and pleasure I ween,
To hear the tramp of coming feet
And see the dear one entering in;
When the soul is sick with waiting
And the light is well-nigh done,
It is good to hear one singing,
As the well-loved home is won.
But ah! a moaning of deep woe,
And the sight of tears that flow,
Maketh a mother sorely weep,
And filleth her heart with sorrow deep.
“My son, O tell thy grief to me,
And say thou now what aileth thee?”
“O mother, I fell by the glassy lake,
Where the murmuring streams an echo wake.”
“Now, say my son,” the mother cried,
“Why dost thou seek the lake's steep side,
At midnight hour and dawning grey? —
Is it to sleep, to weep, or pray?”

“Mother, I go from day to day
Sleeplessly there to watch and pray.”
“And dost thou tarry there alone?”
The son made answer with a moan,
And on his hand he leant his head.
His mother saw with wild surprise
His face was ashen as the dead;
She checked her tears and heavy sighs.
Three-score winters lie on her brow,
Her form is stooped with the weight of years;
But firm and erect she standeth now —
On her face there is no trace of tears.

“In the name of the Holy Trinity;
In the name of the Virgin Queen, —
I charge thee, my son, to tell to me,
Is it the weight of a mortal sin —
The awful stain of innocent blood,
That cannot be cleansed by fire or flood,

Which rives thy soul, and bows thy head,
While thy face is ashen as the dead?"

"Mother, I swear by the heavenward chime
Of the bells that call us to pray,
At the dawning grey, and the close of day,
That my soul is free from crime.
But on my heart a dull deep grief,
To which no words may bring relief,
Lies, like the burden of a knell,
Borne on the ocean's moaning swell."

"I fear that some unholy power
Enchained thee in an evil hour:
For say, my son, why shouldst thou seek
With eager eye, and ashen cheek
At such an hour that lonely place?
Why dost thou leave thine own betrothed,
As if she lack'd each charm and grace,
As if her face by thee were loath'd —
Why dost thou leave thy plighted bride
In such a spot thus to abide?
Art thou not sworn with her to wed
Ere the coming summer has sped?"

"And I will keep my plighted vow —
But, O mother, let me rest now."

Part II.

The rosy flush of summer light
Lightly smites the mountain's height,
Till like a martyr's crown of glory,
Gleams each peak, lofty and hoary.
With a soft slumbrous lullaby,
Low as a sleeping infant's sigh,
The wind is murmuring to the trees,
Tales of bright isles in Southern seas,
And straying, to the flowers that press
With shining leaves through the young grass,
To close their eyes with a caress.
O'er the still lake the last rays pass
With a warm glow, and then afar,
In the quiet west, the evening star
Looked out with its sweet radiance there,
So calmly peaceful and so fair,
That one who gazed upon the sight,
Might doubt if in its holy light,
Unholy thoughts would dare to rise.

Is it the wind that moans and sighs
Through the tall reeds, that growing near
The glassy lake, bend as with fear?
And hush! what wondrous melody
Is rising there? What strange sweet strain
Without a note of earthly pain,
Floating as joyously and free
As the clear carol of a bird
That in a leafy wood is heard,
When the flowers first dare to show
Their opening petals' virgin glow?
And as it ceased a low deep moan
Broke the great calm: "Here, all alone,
For the last time, O hear my cry!
Queen of my soul, here I would die
Most gladly for one fleeting look.
Appear! appear! I cannot brook
The awful stillness of this place,
Let me once gaze upon thy face.
Through the long nights of winter drear —
Through the warm haze of summer hours,
Amid the still lake's sylvan bowers,
Have I not prayed and pleaded here
That once before my aching sight,
Like a fair visitant of light,
Thou wouldst appear? Yet, all in vain
Have been my prayers and my pain.

I hear thy pure angelic voice,
And know that on my aching breast
Thy glorious head may never rest.
The maiden of my early choice
Must be to-night my wedded bride,
I dare not longer here abide;
Give me one glance, for evermore
To treasure in my inmost soul, —
One fleeting look, that nevermore
Through the sad years' dull onward roll
Will be forgot. O hear me now
I pray to thee with bended brow."
The words came on the evening air —
"My soul is moved at thy despair,
But know, that to no mortal eye
Which sees the light of the glad sky,
Have I ere this revealed my face;
Say, why should I vouchsafe to thee
What was denied to all thy race?"

He kneeling still: "O ask of me
My heart's best blood, ask of me aught
That men hold dearest on the earth,
I'll give thee all, deny thee naught
I may possess until my death."

The tall reeds rustled in the wind;
One moment he was white and blind
With the fierce joy and eagerness
That now at last the sight should bless
His longing soul, for which he prayed;
The next he stood, faint and dismayed,
And horror-struck, with failing breath.
God! could this hag, so gaunt and gray,
With wrinkled brow, and evil smile,
Be she who drew him, day by day,
With siren song, and luring wile,
To leave his love and home by stealth?

He turned away: "O, hag, begone!
And do not torture thus my soul
With dark suspense." The form had flown
Ere he thus spoke, and then there stole
A sweet faint whisper on his ear,
Which in his heart woke sickening fear:
"Rash youth, I hold thy plighted vow
But go, — thy bride awaits thee now!"

Part III.

The noonday's shadows softly rest,
A mother hushes on her breast
A laughing child, whose sunny eyes
Are clear and blue, as the deep skies
Seen through the rifts of clouds that shed
Pitying tears, for roses dead
'Mid the bright flush of summer bowers.
The mother sat through silent hours,
Singing soft lays, with head down bent
Above her babe in glad content:—

 "O rest thee, sweet child,
 There is nought to dread,
In deep or in wild
 For thy fair young head.
 O babe, what's to fear
 While mother is near?"

“Feel the tender clasp
Of her shielding arm,
Feel the loving grasp
That will guard from harm.
O babe, what's to fear
While mother is near?”

“Let the wild waves rise
Let the fierce wind moan,
When o'ercrest the skies,
Thou art not alone.
O babe, what's to fear
While mother is near?”

“Now pillow thy cheek
On her loving heart,
She will never seek
From thee to part.
O babe, what's to fear
While mother is near?”

“Across the calm bay
Steals a snowy sail,
Which startles away
The sea-fowls that wail.
O babe, what's to fear
Now father draws near?”

“His boat is laden,
His heart it is gay,
No nymph or maiden
May lure him away.
O babe, what's to fear
Now father draws near?”

“The rays burning red
Of the setting sun,
Now sink overhead,
And the day is done:
O babe do not fear
Thy father is here.”

With beaming eye and bronzed cheek,
The fisherman enters his cot;
No need has he his joy to speak —
No need to say how blest his lot.
In the quiet sanctity of home,
From which his thoughts no longer roam,
The great wild passion which had cast

Its spell around him in the past
Was all forgotten. Yet this night,
When sunk in slumber, there arose
A ghastly form upon his sight,
While these words fell upon his ear,
Curdling his heart's blood with fierce fear;—
“Why is it that my presence throws
Such nameless horror on thy soul?
And didst thou deem thy reckless vow,
And prayer, on the still lake's shore —
Through the sad years' dull onward roll,
Would be forgotten evermore?
O fool! I claim thy promise now!”
Up he arose in wild affright,
The moon's unclouded calming light
Lit up the room, and that was all
That he could see: no voice, nor call
Fell on his ear. “’Twas but a dream,”
He whispered faintly; but a dread
And mortal terror fell on him.
He knelt beside the small soft bed,
In which his child was wont to sleep.
“Oh, God!” he whispered, “guard and keep — ”
His voice then hoarsely died away,
In place of what he fain would say,
The impious words rose to his mind,
Which had been borne upon the wind
When he had knelt with lifted brow,
And spoken his unblestèd vow.
Oh, those haunting mem'ries that steal
From the years that are buried and gone —
From the past that for aye has flown,
And rise when most lowly we kneel
Like accusing spirits of doom,
Crushing down the soul with the gloom
Of dark unbelief and of fear!

Hark! what rang now so shrilly clear,
Breaking the peace of this still hour?
The father bent to caress his child;
But see, — why so haggard and so wild,
Does he start back? Why does he cower
With outstretched arms, and anguish'd eyes,
Hearing again those wailing cries?

Part IV.

“O Mother of Sorrows! I look to Thee,
In my great anguish, do Thou pity me,
For o'er my soul, the billows of despair
Surge now so wildly, that I do not dare
So much as look unto the great white throne,
And when I fain would pray, a piteous moan
Is all that breaks the stillness where I kneel.

“The stillness! O my God! once more to feel
The clasp of those fond arms around my neck,
Once more to hear that voice the silence break,
Once more to hush my boy to peaceful rest,
With his fair brow, against my aching breast,
Once more to listen for the joyous beat
Of those unresting, busy little feet,
And hear the childish prattle, oddly wise,
So full of questioning, and vague surprise.
I stretch my arms out in the silent night,
Tearlessly praying for returning light;
And then I dream, for a short blissful space
That I still hold the sunny, bright-eyed face
Within my sheltering arms. O! the fierce pain,
The wild regret, to know that ne'er again
While the glad streams shall flow, the bright flowers bloom,
And summer's brightness scare the winter's gloom,
Those tones shall fall upon my wearied ear!
O pity me, my Saviour! for so dear
Was he to me, that the great universe
Now, to my tortured heart, seems valueless,
Compared to one bright curl of his fair hair,
Or crumpled garment he was wont to wear.

“Dear Lord! thou art so pitiful and kind;
And yet how can I pray to be resigned?
I took him from Thy hands with trembling joy:
New founts of love and hope, when on my boy
I looked for the first time, awoke to life.
It was so strangely blissful, 'mid the strife —
The carking cares, the petty aims of life —
To know this sinless and immortal soul,
Fresh from the Maker's hand, to me was given;
To live for him, and love him through the roll
Of coming years; to fit him for high heaven,
And worthy place among his fellow-men.
Ah me! how oft and gladly I sat, then,
When he was fast asleep upon my knee,
And lifted up my heart in thanks to Thee
For Thy great gift!

“I cannot see Thy face, nor gracious hand.
As one who stands upon an alien strand,
Looking in vain for a far-distant home,
And seeing naught, but the wild waves that foam
In boisterous wrath, so on this earthly shore
I stand, bow'd down, bereavèd, never more
To gaze upon the joyous loving face
That o'er my life shed such alluring grace,
Vanish'd like a dream ——”

Away from the sound of the moans
That break from the mother's heart,
Away from the broken tones,
That are now the mother's part,
Crept the father, in fierce despair,
With a heavy tearless eye:
“Sorrow and pain, I well might bear,
But, O Thou that dwellest on high!
Let not the sinless bear the wrong —
Nor the weak suffer for the strong.”

* * * * *

Again he stood beside the Lake
Where murmuring streams an echo wake;
Twice has the sun been lost to view
Behind the rugged, snow-crown'd blue
And distant mountains, since the wail
As of a child, rose on the gale
In the still night. Once more alone,
A form is bending with great moan
In that lone spot.

“Mortal arise,
Thy cry has mounted to the skies.
Arise, if thou wilt dare to meet
The horror, which will ever greet
The soul that dares to wage the strife
With powers of darkness, and to slay
The enthroned idol of man's life —
The Demon Self, to which men bow
When they have deck'd its hideous brow
With passion flowers, and called it Love,
Or laurel wreaths, and named it Fame; —
That Dagon, long plac'd high above
The holiest altar, highest name.”

A wail came low across the lake,
An awful form rushed through the brake,
A great wild shriek rose on the air,

Then all was still once more and fair.

The wooded heights were growing gray,
The morning star was waxing dim;
Across the heaving ocean's spray,
And on the breast of the still stream
A crimson blush began to rise,
And notes of birds, to the flush'd skies
Rose loud and clear. The night was done.
Then in the early light went one
Whose head was bent, the while he bore
A child that smiled in placid sleep.
"My life, now open wide the door;
Dost thou thy lone sad vigil keep?
Nay, mourn no longer, lo! see here
Thy son is safe, thou need'st not fear."
The child is claspt to the mother's breast,
Strong is her heart, and loving her arm,
To shield it from danger, and from harm;
Quietly the father lies down to rest;
Healed is the heart that was worn and sore,
Healed, and at peace for evermore!

To A Kitten

(Under A Garden-Hedge)

IN thy snowy coat thou art softly curled
Under the hedge, where the threats that are hurled
At thy mother and sire by a harsh world

Never disturb thy untroubled repose.
Beside thee the red rose fragrantly grows,
And some mignonette just under thy nose.

Thy back is warm with the sun's hot beams,
Thou art softly purring thy kittenish hymns,
Thy sleep is harassed by no evil dreams.

Thy round, wondering eyes were never stained
With a tear of sorrow, thy heart ne'er pained
With the thought of joys that could not be gained.

Thou wert never bored with sermons and saws,
Never troubled by duns, and thy innocent paws
Upon mouse or bird never fastened their claws.

Thy conscience, as yet, has never been seared
By butter or cream, surreptitiously cleared,
Or cold fowl that has strangely disappeared.

Thou hast never known the infatuation
Of spending thy days in dissipation;
Chasing thy tail is thy chief recreation.

We, thy big cousins, have lost that appendage
Because (Darwin says), we no longer engage
In arboreal pursuits. Who knows, if each sage,

King, and philos'pher could still spend their hours
In so artless a manner, among leafy bow'rs,
Whether half of the ills which this life now sours

Would not soon vanish? Howe'er this may be,
What mortal just now would not envy thee,
Who thy peace and happiness here would see?

The senator vexed by emigration,
The philanthropist plagued with education,
The trader worried at imitation,

The woman unable to match her hair, —
In sooth, ev'ry being whose load of care

Has almost become too heavy to bear,
Would watch thy gambols with longing eyes.
Is not thine, in truth, the priceless prize
Which has ever been sought beneath the skies —

By each nation, Aryan or Semitic,
Ethiopian, Mongolian, or Japetic,
By the friends and enemies of Psammitic;

E'en those who worshipped the Scarabeus,
And owned the sway of Psammenitus,
Alike with the subjects of Jannaeus?

From the plains of Indus to Ammon's shrines,
From the homes of the Sinae to Austral's mines,
From Cimmerian skies to Italia's vines —

Through each past age, in each alien tongue,
Of happiness still each poet has sung.
Oh, the infinite changes that have been rung

On this seemingly inexhaustible theme!
How, in the name of creation's vast scheme,
May a furred thing like thee thus lap of the cream

Of existence, while we, perforce, must say grace
O'er its skimmed milk with a sadly wry face?
We, who so faithfully keep up the chase

In pursuit of the phantom, only to find
That Fortune is fickle, Justice quite blind,
And the state that is happiest left behind!

And will this be thy fate, when, thy kittenhood past,
Thy mother spits fiercely, until at last
(She would ne'er study Malthus) thou art cast

Upon the cold world, to make place, alas,
For divers brothers? Shall it come to pass
That thou wilt be left alone on the grass,

A butt for street Arabs and mongrel curs?
Will thy velvety coat become like the furs
Of the feline robbers whose conduct stirs

Our souls with deep wrath? Nay! e'er such a fate
Should be thine, sweet puss, I will bear the weight
Of thy lodging and keep. Do thou here wait

Until older grown, then through coming years
Thou wilt live with me. At this point my fears

Bid me stop, in dread of my publisher's shears.

The Curse

SHE stood by me all yesternight,
With roses on her brow;
I saw them gleaming red and white,
I seem to see them now:
Vainly I strove to look away
From that slight form in white array.

Her eyes were fixed upon my own,
She neither spoke nor smiled;
I hid my face with a great moan,
For I with fear was wild.
She stayed until the dawning grey,
Then noiselessly she sped away.

O God, that I once more were free
From those accusing eyes,
That still seem gazing upon me
In wondering surprise,
And ever through the day and night,
Still haunt my wearied aching sight!

The swallows build above her grave,
Beneath the old church's eaves;
Afar is heard the creeping wave,
Around fall rustling leaves.
With hands enfolded on her breast
She lies, eternally at rest.

They fastened back her golden hair,
I saw her lie in death;
Her face — ah! it was passing fair,
I looked on her by stealth.
Quite calmly lay each blue-veined lid
On eyes that neither wept nor chid.

Across the snowy, rigid brow
Fresh gathered roses lay;
And when beside her I would bow,
I could not weep nor pray;
I could but look upon the face,
So peaceful, with its girlish grace.

I saw, and then I crept away,
I reached the waves' loud roar,
I wandered in the twilight grey
Upon the lonely shore;

The moon looked out from a wan cloud
That wound around it like a shroud,

And one by one the stars forth gleam
Upon the cold grey sky.
I heard, like one in a strange dream,
The breakers sob and sigh;—
I met a woman grey and old,
Her lips were white, her hands were cold,

There steadfastly she looked at me,
And when I fain would go —
“A mother's curse will rest on thee,
And work thee pain and woe!”
Her haggard face was strangely white,
And mine was whiter at the sight.

Why do the words ring in mine ears,
So full of frantic pain?
Why do they waken such strange fears,
Those words so wildly vain?
O God, how oft I hear the moan
Of her fierce grief when all alone!

Can frenzied words wield magic power,
And live all through a life,
To haunt the soul to the last hour
With an unholy strife —
To cast the grave-clothes of the dead
Around a hopeful living head?

She trusted to my plighted vow —
But why all this recall?
Why rise those haunting mem'ries now,
To stifle like a pall,
That round a silent form is thrown
Ere life has altogether flown?

Let me forsake each well-known scene,
And each familiar spot;
Those eyes and words, full well I ween,
Afar must be forgot.
Away, away across the sea,
They cannot, dare not, follow me!

Wrecked!

WAS it a dream? I cannot tell —
I seem to see it all again;
It holds me as with magic spell,
I try to shut it out in vain:
Again, again I seem to hear
That cry of horror and of fear.

I saw a man stand all alone
Upon a rock within the sea, —
He uttered neither cry nor moan,
He watched the seething breakers flee,
With furious might and savage roar
Around the rocks, gaunt, bare, and hoar.

The shrieking sea-fowls sought their rest,
Circling above the barren heights,
While the great sun sank in the west
Amid fierce crimson throbbing lights,
Which faded from the sky away
Until all heaven was cold and grey.

And all around those barren cliffs
The waves rose up to meet the sky;
Upon a line of hungry reefs
Some broken masts lay bleach'd and dry;
And ever with a thundering swell
The heaving ocean rose and fell.

And still with gaze fast fixed afar
Unmovèd stood that silent form,
Until the solemn evening star
Rose high above each earthly storm:
Save for the wail of bird and wave
The spot was silent as the grave.

Over the waste the moonbeams fair
Fell like a peaceful dream,
The man alone in still despair
Stood in their placid gleam.
“Wrecked for all Time!” The awful cry
Ascended to the star-lit sky.

What gleams in the mysterious light
Of moon and stars upon the ocean?
What flutters nearer strangely white
With an uncertain rapid motion?

Thank God! at last, a sail, a sail
Flying before the driving gale !

The silvery light was overcast
With a stray fleecy cloud,
That round the moon as on it past,
Wound closely like a spotless shroud;
And nearer still that snowy sail
Flew on before the driving gale.

“Help ho!” the man cried loud and long,
No answer came to his wild call,
But far-off sounds as of a song
Upon the boundless waters fall:
Sounds as of strange unearthly pain
That rose and fell, and rose again.

Once more the man cried loud and long,
The startled sea-fowls made reply;—
The moon crept from its silvery shroud,
The foam-wreathed breakers rose on high;
And then the sail unto the rock
Stole without grating sound or shock.

The sail was long and broad and white,
And underneath its shadow there —
O God! it was an awful sight —
A woman lay, surpassing fair,
In anguish, like a spirit lost,
With golden hair around her tost.

The man looked on that ashen face,
His gaze met those strange sleepless eyes, —
A wail for Christ's high pardoning grace
Rose to the calm unpitying skies;
The sobbing of the waves around,
Prolonged the deep despairing sound.

The sail was long and broad and white,
And underneath its shadow there —
O God! it was an awful sight —
A man lay writhing in despair.
The words rose high above the sea,
“Wrecked! wrecked! through all eternity!”

By The Blue Lake Of Mount Gambier

GUARDED by rugged banks and drooping trees
Beneath whose shade, far down, the waters sleep,
Clear as a mirror, countless fathoms deep,
Ne'er stirred by aught, saving the straying breeze
That warily passes, as by stealth, to meet
The rising ripples that with sapphire gleam,
Come softly, as one moving in a dream,
And on the grey old rocks untiring beat —
Glancing like priceless pearls in the still noon,
When smit by the great sun's too ardent rays;
Mirroring back at night the queenly moon,
When through grand legions of calm stars she strays, —
Peaceful, yet never still, they fall and rise
With a low strain, broken by slumb'rous sighs.
How oft and gladly have I sought the scene
To sit alone upon the sheltered bank,
While wearying cares into oblivion sank,
As the grand calmness of those depths serene
Fell with a healing power upon my heart,
Till the trite nothings that men hold so dear —
Cherish with gratitude, and guard with fear,
As if in them they held the better part,
Shrank into utter emptiness away!
Majestic Nature's peace there I have sought
And found, and there the unchecked flow of thought
Has led my soul afar. There day by day
I heard the twitter of the fearless birds,
Building their nests and singing griefless songs,
Within white blossomed bushes, in gay throngs,
Safe from discordant noises, jarring words.
And thus one day, as lying in the shade,
With head uplifted, resting on my hand,
I saw with dreamy rapture the fair land
That summer's presence fairer still had made.
The golden harvest fields from east to west
Stretch'd, fram'd by the still woods, while far and near
Lay peaceful homesteads. Anon sweet and clear
Came sound of bells from pastures, where to rest
And browse the tired oxen strayed. On hill
And dale December's golden presence shone
In the great gifts she had so largely strown.
Then when my grateful eyes had gazed their fill,
A weakly chirping fell upon my ear,

And half wonderingly I looked around,
To see a small brown bird upon the ground,
Hopping with fluttering wings and notes of fear;
Its ruffled feathers and its glazing eyes
Told that its end was drawing very near;
And still it pecked 'mid leaves that were long sere,
While ever and anon, with shrill, weak cries,
It looked upon a spreading prickly bush,
That with its honey-scented bloom grew nigh,
From which at last I heard a piping cry,
And idly thought — “The dying bird must wish,
With those shrill cries, to waken its dull mate,
That seems to doze within yon leafy screen.”
Then as I watched the bush I saw between
Two curving twigs a nest; within it wait
Three half-fledged birds, whose beaks were open'd wide,
While with big wondering eyes they look'd around;
Then as they heard the chirping weakly sound
Made by the parent bird, from side to side
They turned with hungry eyes, until at last
They saw her with weak drooping wings arise;
But now she falls, and yet again she tries
To fly unto her nest, and ever cast
Piteous looks towards her callow brood,
Holding the while a morsel in her beak;
With a last effort, and a low shrill squeak
She fluttered to the nest, and proudly stood
Upon its edge, giving to each a share;
But ere one happy moment thus had sped
She trembled, backward swayed, and then fell dead.
The young ones piped for food, but she lay there
With upward pointing, stiffening little claws,
And spreading ruffled wings, that never more
Would float upon the air. Then, very sore
At heart, I said — “For fear unholy paws
Of prowling cats may desecrate thy rest,
Here, noble mother, will I make a grave
(Where the clematis' blossoms gladly wave)
For thee, just underneath the little nest
That thou mad'st in the spring.” But there, above
The mother's tomb, the young ones piped for food,
Until I sadly thought — “It was not good
To lay the mother there, for her great love
Was such, that even in the cloudless clime
Where her freed spirit floats in sunny bliss,
Those cries will reach her, and destroy her peace.”
And then I formed a plan — I look'd some time,

Till a few worms I found, with which I fed
The hungry orphans. Then from day to day
I gave them food till they had flown away
On vigorous wings. There ever as I sped
To my young noisy charges, beauties new
Disclosed themselves, around the calm grand lake
That softly bright, as heaven's own blue doth break
Beneath great banks and trees upon the view.
In the sweet hush of morn, when sun rays stole
Athwart it from the east with rosy glow,
While the trees and bushes jubilant grow
With hymns of countless birds, that upward roll
O'er hum of insects, fluttering of leaves:—
When in the ecstatic hour of fervid noon,
The sun-embrac'd earth lies, as in a swoon
Of overwhelming bliss: through silent eves
Of solemn gladness, when tones from afar
Of home returning labourers, through the hush
Is heard, when the day's heat and eager rush
Once more is past, and the great evening star
Is brightening in the gold-swath'd west: in each
And every hour the long known, well loved scene
A holy sanctuary to me has been,
Where lessons, that no mortal tongue could teach,
Nor any book unfold, upon my soul
Have sunk. Full well I know no other spot
More dear to me may be; although my lot
May yet be cast afar, yet through the roll
Of coming years, forgetfulness' dull mist
Will never cloud the scene — never efface
The picture of the gleaming, amethyst,
Clear, rippling depths, o'er which with tender grace
The grandly swelling banks stoop proudly round,
As if to guard the Lake from each rude sound,
And keep inviolate the holy peace
That seems like a foretaste of Heaven's bliss.

My Love Gave Me.

MY love gave me a crimson rose,
 Beneath the linden tree,
Fairer it was than ought that grows
 Under God's sky to me.

My love gave me a golden ring,
 Beside the meadow stream,
Dearer it was than words can sing,
 Or mortal soul may dream.

My love gave me a singing bird,
 When he went o'er the sea;
Its song, the sweetest ever heard,
 It sang all day for me.

The fragrance of the rose has fled,
 Its beauteous dye is gone;
The pallid leaves lie sere and dead
 As grass that is long mown.

The ring of gold is worn and thin,
 The years have half effaced,
The quaint sweet words that out and in,
 A cunning hand had traced.

The singing-bird's sweet song is stilled;
 No more at eve or morn
The joyous notes will rise, that filled
 With hope a heart forlorn.

And still my love returns not yet
 Back to his own again;
Ah no, he never can forget,
 Ye tempt me thus in vain.

The rose may fade, the gold may wear,
 The singing-bird may die,
But neither time, nor grief, nor care,
 Can e'er make true love fly.

A Stately Ship Went Sailing.

A STATELY ship went sailing
Out from the peaceful bay,
A stately ship went sailing
To lands, far, far away.

A stately ship went sailing
Across the cruel main,
That heedeth not man's wailing,
Nor moans of mortal pain.

A maiden from her window
Looked out at eve and morn;
Many ships return and go,
But she is still forlorn.

The summer's blossoms faded —
The birds of passage fled;
Her face with grief was clouded,
Two years have come and sped.

And thus she sat one even,
And saw the sunset's glow
In the still azure heaven,
O'er the great ocean's flow;

She sat there waiting, waiting —
She saw the sea-gulls rise,
She heard the far waves wailing,
She closed her weary eyes.

“A stately ship went sailing,”
She murmured in her pain —
“A stately ship went sailing
She comes not back again;

“A stately ship went sailing
Unto a far-off shore,
And I, long worn with waiting,
May see her never more!”

The last quivering sun-beams
Fell on the maiden's face;
Vanish'd are her earthly dreams
In Heaven's joy and grace.

Translations

Salas Y Gomez.

(From the German of
CHAMISSO).

SALAS Y GOMEZ towers above the swell
Of the quiet sea, a rock most bare and drear,
Whose burnt peaks of vertical sun-rays tell,

A stony height, bare of herb, grass, and tree,
Chosen by shoals of birds as resting-place
Within the bosom of the restless sea.

Thus it arose to sight as we drew near,
When in the *Rurik* "Land to westward! Land!"
Came from the main-top loud upon each ear.

Then as we nearer drew to that lone land,
We saw the countless flocks of sea-birds, and
There saw their hatching places on the strand.

And as fresh nourishment we needed sore,
It was decreed to venture the attempt
Of reaching in two boats the cheerless shore.

Forthwith the task by choice upon me fell.
The horror which the spot to me revealed
I fain would now with words unvarnished tell.

There we lay to, and well provided went
Into the boats then launched, swiftly put forth,
And rowing through the surf our way we bent.

In a spot shelter'd upon every hand,
By an o'erhanging group of clustering rocks
We first set foot, upon the firm white sand.

Some to the left, and others to the right,
The men went on, parting upon the shore;
But I ascend the steep and rocky height,

Scarce moving from my feet as I drew near,
The birds, having no knowledge of their risk,
With outstretched necks look'd at me without fear.

The summit was attained, the slaty ground
Burning beneath my feet, and I the while
Gazed long upon the great horizon round.

When I had scann'd the waste of sea and sky,
And again earthward turn'd my gaze, a sight
Which made all else forgotten met my eye.

For in that spot the hand of man had placed
The impress of his spirit; on the stone
Whereon I stood letters — words were traced.

The cross full fifty times was graven there.
Long seemed the sacred signs to have been cut,
But all the words a newer aspect wear.

Yet none might read them! Plainly now I find
The trace of footsteps, hiding them from view —
Yea, upward there a footpath seemed to wind.

In a declivity was place of rest,
There lay shells of eggs where food was eaten!
Who was, who is of this dread waste the guest?

Then searching, listening over naked peaks,
I took my way unto another rock
That bent to catch the light's first dawning streaks.

And then, when I, who thought the solitude
Unbroken, climbed the last steep slaty height,
Which high between me and a deep slope stood:

Lo! there an aged man before me lay,
Whose age I reckoned at a hundred years,
Who seemed to lie beneath death's silent sway.

Naked, stiff stretchèd was each giant limb,
His beard and hair down reaching past his loins,
Like to a silvery veil enfolded him;

His head supported by the rocky crest,
Rested in rigid stillness, while the hands
Were crosswise laid over the mighty breast.

I stood in terror, moved with wondering fears,
Steadfastly gazing upon that grand face,
Until unconsciously fast flowed my tears.

As from a dream, that sense and soul enthral,
At last I woke, and to my comrades cried;
Quickly they came together at my call.

With noisy footsteps to the spot they prest,
Then quickly silenced, quietly circled round,
In pious reverence of man's last rest.

Yet see, he moves, he draws a feeble breath,
The weary eyes are opened and the head
Is upward raised we deemed was still'd in death.

He looked at us with doubting, and amazement,
He strove to speak with livid rigid lips, —
In vain! the flame of life was wholly spent.

Then the physician, who was on the ground,
Kneeling beside him, said: "He is no more!"
But we stood praying in a circle round.

There lay three slaty tablets written o'er:
I took from this son of the wilderness
His legacy, and only earthly store.

Then when, all eagerly, I paused to read
The words well written in the Spanish tongue, —
We heard a signal to return with speed.

A second signal, and a third recalled
The boats in haste. As he before had lain,
We left him lying, neither tombed nor pall'd.

The rock on which he suffered, served the dead
As a last resting place and monument.
At last, O son of pain, thy griefs have fled!

Thy body to the elements is given!
Gleaming above thee nightly, the bright rays
Of the Southern Cross will shine from Heaven;
Thy sufferings will be told us in thy lays.

The First Tablet

It was —
With deep pride and joy my bosom swell'd,
As there in thought, the treasures of the world
Gathered from far, before me I beheld.

The light of costly stone, the pearl's soft ray,
And richest garments from far India's strand,
There all before her feet now I could lay.

And gold, the mammon of this mighty earth,
In whose light age aye loves to sun itself,
I then brought to my grey-hair'd father's hearth.

And for myself now I had won repose,
Cooled was my youthful ardour for great deeds;
As tardy winters pass deep patience grows.

No more would she reproach my wild unrest;
Pain and ambition would be all forgot,
When claspt in her soft arms unto her breast.

And when our father would his blessing speak;
Joy as of Paradise my home would fill,
Further to roam, my heart would never seek.

Thus forward sped my thoughts in foolish dreaming;
By night I lay alone upon the deck,
And saw the stars between the cordage gleaming.

There high and cool the wind around me blew,
Filling the sails, until across the waves
Swifter than e'er before, our good ship flew.

A strange shock roused me from my blissful dream,
Resounding through our wooden tenement;
Then above all there rose an awful scream.

A second shock, a third; loud crashing fast
The planks beneath our feet were torn asunder;
Thundering the billows came, then all was past.

A lone lost swimmer in the breakers high!
Struggling with youth's strength amid the waves,
While o'er me gleamed the stars in the quiet sky.

I felt myself with violence upward borne,
Then sank as in a chasm, powerless, worn,
To Heaven I cast one last long look forlorn.

Then my strength broke in the wild waters' strife;
I gave myself to death in the vast waste,
And bade farewell for aye, to day and life.

And then oblivion sank upon my soul —
A sleep from which it seemed I could not rise,
Although reviving life to my heart stole.

And then I struggled with this strange deep sleep,
And memory came, I looked around and found
I had been cast on shore by the great deep.

At last I rose as from the clasp of death,
With toiling steps, I sought to gain the height,
To see the land on which I still drew breath.

I saw the heritage that fell to me,
Standing alone and naked on the rock,
Around which, lone and bare, met sky and sea.

And there, where waves in foaming fury break
Against the far-off reef, I saw it loom
Where it has lain for years — the bleaching wreck,

To me unreachable! And the wind blowing
In stormy gusts, swept off the masts and sails,
Until they sank where waves are ever flowing.

And then I thought: not upon such a spot
Wouldst thou thy comrades envy long if saved,
But rather count their fate the happier lot.

To me alone the waves brought no relief!
The eggs of birds were all that I could find,
To lengthen out my life and my great grief.

Thus with my agony I lived alone,
While with a broken shell the words I write
Upon this more than I long-suffering stone:
“I have no hope that death will quickly smite.”

The Other Tablet

Upon —
The rocks I sat before the sun arose,
The waning stars foretold the day's approach,
As in the far horizon each dim grows.

And veiled yet with shadows the east lay
Before me, but the luminous great waves
Came rolling to my feet in uncheck'd sway.

It seemed, as though the night would ne'er take flight;
My rigid gaze lay on the ocean's edge,
Where soon the sun would rise up in his might.

The birds within their nests, as in a dream,
Raised up their voices; pale and paler
The foaming crests of the great breakers gleam;

Again I saw where sky and water met;
In the deep blue the hosts of stars were lost;
I knelt in prayer and mine eyes were wet.

And now in glory rose the sun on high;
Within my wounded heart the sight woke joy,
As I looked up to watch the kindling sky.

A ship! a ship! flying with outspread sails
Before the strong fresh gale unto this rock:
A God lives still to hear my piteous wails.

O God of love, thy strokes are always mild!
Scarce in repentance had I knelt to thee,
When thou didst look in pity on thy child;

Thou led'st me to the grave to guide anew
My fainting soul back to the haunts of men,
To live and know once more love warm and true.

And high upon the rock's extremest peak
I watched the distant ship, trembling and pale;
My fear lest she should pass no tongue may speak.

The nearing ship waxed large, as did the strife
Of agonizing doubt within my heart;
Upon a passing glance hung death and life.

No smoke! no flag! naked and bare I wait,
My only signal was my outstretched arms!
Merciful God, thou know'st, thou feel'st my fate!

And peacefully I saw the vessel haste
With wind-swelled waves across the heaving deep,
And lessen between her and me the waste.

And now! if mine ear doth not betray me
I hear the master's trump borne on the wind;
The welcome sound I drank in eagerly.

How will the blissful sound of man's glad voice
Denied to me through the long weary years,
Once more my aged heart make to rejoice!

Have they beheld me standing thus on high?
They turn the sails as if with the intent
To change their course. O God, to whom I cry!

Unto the South? — Well! they must fear to cope
With the great surges, o'er yon jagged reef.
O safely steer, thou bark of all my hope!

Now it were time! O my great agony!
Look! look toward me! lay to! send out the boat!
There leeward a safe landing place ye see!

But quietly speeding o'er the ocean's flow
No boat drew near with guiding hand to save;
They were unheeding of my state and woe.

Then dumbly I beheld the vessel haste
With wind-swelled waves across the heaving deep,
Increasing between her and me the waste.

And as I raised my gaze up from the sea
Which lay before me, a blue empty waste,
And knew the sail had but deluded me;

Wildly I cursed myself, and cursed my God,
Upon the barren rock I struck my brow,
Maddened and mocked upon my drear abode.

Three days and nights thus lay I in despair,
Like one, whose soul with madness has been bound,
My heart gnawed with fierce wrath and blackest care.

On the third day tears came to my relief,
And then at last up I arose again,
The pangs of hunger, despite deadly grief,
Forced me once more nourishment to obtain.

The Last Tablet

Patience! The sun has in the east ascended,
Westward he sinks unto the ocean's rim,
His daily course once more has been ended.

Patience! Southward again hastes the great sun,
The mid-day shadows again lengthen on;
A year has passed, another has begun.

Patience! Onward the years unwearied run;
No more thy hand their flight with cross may mark,
The fiftieth is traced, thy task is done.

Patience! Thou waitest dumbly on the shore,
Fixedly gazing on the great blue waste,
Listening to the waves that o'er those great rocks roar.

Patience! Let sun and moon and stars course round,
By turns let showers and sun rays beat upon thee,
And still through all let patience abound!

'Tis light to bear the elements' great rage,
Surrounded by the light of cheerful day,
With active eyes and with unsleeping courage.

But dreams torment, when sleep has sealed the eyes,
And still more through the dreary sleepless night,
Those phantoms of the brain before us rise:

They hold their dreaded watch through the long night
Speaking words which waken utter madness —
Away! away! what gave ye such strange might?

Why are thy locks upon the night wind borne?
I know thee, O thou wild ungoverned youth!
My pulses cease, my heart with anguish torn.

Thou art myself, when I was young and brave
Deluded with fair hopes, ere bowed by age;
I am thyself, the picture of thy grave.

What dost thou say of beauty, goodness, truth,
Of love, of hate, of thirst of fame? thou fool!
See here, I am, what thy dreams were in sooth!

And dost thou rise before me in my pain?
O woman, leave me, thou art long renounced!
In ashes thou awakenest flame again!

Not thus did the sweet gaze rest on my face!
The eyes' soft light and the voice's tender tone,
How has death's sway effaced each charm and grace!

Out of thy hollow, fleshless skull behold
No more a heaven of surpassing bliss;
The world has fled, to which I fain would hold!

A powerless captive, I have watch'd the flight
Of mighty Time upon those barren rocks
In awful solitude from human sight.

Why should life's dreams of happiness thus stay
With those who are already claimed by death?
Flee ye back into nothing, it is day!

Rise up, O sun! let thy bright beams make flee
Back to their rest, those comrades of the night,
End thou the warfare that destroyeth me.

He gleameth forth, and they have sunk to rest —
I am once more alone, again I hold
The children of my brain within my breast.

O bear me, ye age-stiffen'd limbs, and sore,
Unto the spot, where lie the sea-fowls' nests;
There may ye rest to rise up never more.

Though to my will, ye would not deign to bend,
Where torturing grief was powerless to slay!
Hunger, at length, at length the strife will end.

The storm has died that raged within my breast,
And here, where I have suffered and repined,
Here I have sworn to lie in my last rest.

Thou, Lord, through whom I have resignèd grown,
Forbid that man or ship should reach this rock,
Till my last moan of pain to thee has flown!

Here unwept and at peace when life has fled
Let me repose. Of what avail were it
To wander like a ghost among the dead?

They sleep within the last cold dreamless bed,
Who fain would hail my entrance to the world,
From earth all knowledge of me long has sped.

Lord, I have suffered, and done penance meet, —
To return a stranger to my home — No!
Through wormwood is the bitter not made sweet.

Here, world-forsaken, let me die alone,
Trusting in thy great mercy and thy grace!
From the still heaven when my soul has flown
Let the calm southern cross gleam on my face.

Footnote p.207: Name of the vessel in which the poet made the voyage round the world, in the years 1815 till 1818.

The Rescue Of Vienna

12th September, 1683.

(Aus dem Festkalender).

A FALCON spies from dizzy height
Far far across the land;
He spies to east and spies to west
Above, along the strand.

The falcon is Count Stahremberg
High on Saint Stephen's Tower,
He sees but Turks and Turks alone
Draw near in hostile power.

Then cried he, full of wrath and care,
“God, I am here forlorn,
My helpless state I now deplore,
Left to the Turk's deep scorn.

“Now I plant on Saint Stephen's Tower
The flag with Holy Cross,
And when it sinks all Christendom
May mourn our fatal loss.

“If that sign sinks from Stephen's Tower
May God our helper be,
Then fold it as a gory shroud
Round Stahremberg the free!”

The Sultan cried to Stahremberg:
“By Allah, have a care:
I'll pluck the cross from Stephen's Tower,
And plant the crescent there.

“I'll make of Vien a Turkish town,
A mosque of Saint Stephen;
I'll tear the maiden from her home,
And slay the brother then.”

The Sultan and Count Stahremberg
Spake not another word,
Only the sound of deadly fray
On either side is heard.

Ah, Stephen, holy man of God,

Long since they stoned thee dead;
Now danger on thy house they brought,
With many a bolt that sped!

This day, O Vien, thy best defence
Is Stahr'mberg's mighty breast;
He raised his gleaming sword on high,
Above his lofty crest!

And by him there stood Kollonits,
A Bishop good and true,
Whose gentle hand bound up each wound
When faint the hero grew.

The colours upon Stephen's Tower,
Through sixty long days stand,
He held them fast, brave Stahremberg
With his true steadfast hand.

The colours upon Stephen's Tower,
At last began to droop;
God, what can one brave wounded man,
Do 'mid such fiendish troop!

The colours upon Stephen's Tower,
Sank, fell, and downward rolled;
"Now help us, God!" cried Stahremberg,
"I cannot longer hold!"

Then cried the Turk with haughty joy:
"Allah, the day is thine!
Now fallen is the Kaiserstadt!
The Kaiser throne is mine!"

From bugles and from trumpets rang,
A sudden call from far:
"Hail, Kollonits! Hail, Stahremberg!"
Thus rose the song of war.

It rose as glad, and rose as clear,
As call to dance and wine:
That is the German knighthood there,
From the Elbe, Main, and Rhine.

It rose as mighty, rose as deep,
As rising rushing storms:
From Austria's heroic strength,
Bavaria's princely forms.

It rose like the wild dash of waves,
Against a barren strand:

Great Sobieski's form is there,
Well known through many a land.

The Turk in anguish heard the call,
Filled with revengeful ire,
Then in cold blood the captives slew —
Each helpless son and sire.

Now haste, ye heroes, hasten on
To combat stern and hard;
The rescue of all Christendom,
Will be your high reward!

Inflamed with holy courage all,
The Christians onward went,
They broke through the great Turkish horde,
Like lightning from God sent.

There the Lothringen was the first,
The Pole went on his way, —
But none may count the Heroes o'er
Of that great glorious day.

The Turks courageous stood at first,
Then backward swiftly rushed,
The Christians with unfaltering strength,
Their impious purpose crushed.

A wide, wide burial field then spread
Around Donau's wide vales;
The Turk's great pride now sank in dust,
And there his dead he wails.

With sounds of trumpets and of drums,
With bonfires' joyous gleam,
The Christians laurelled with success
Through rescued Vien now stream.

Yet ever since on Stephen's Tower
The holy cross has gleamed,
To tell, how by united strength,
Vien was that day redeemed.

“Erlkönig's Tochter”

(From The German Of
Herder).

COUNT OLUF rode full late and long,
Bidding his friends to his bridal throng,

There danc'd the wood nymphs o'er the verdant land,
Erlkönig's Tochter reached him her hand.

“O welcome, Count Oluf! why haste from here?
Step thou in the ring and dance without fear.”

“O, I dare not dance, and I cannot stay,
For to-morrow is my wedding day.”

“Now hear me, Count Oluf! dance thou with me,
And two golden spurs I will give to thee;

“And a shirt of silk most fine and white,
Which my mother bleached by pale moonlight.”

“O, I dare not dance, and I cannot stay,
For to-morrow is my wedding-day.”

“Now hear me, Count Oluf! dance thou with me,
And a heap of gold I'll give to thee.”

“A heap of gold I would take with glee,
But ere I dance, it may stay with thee.”

“If thou wilt not, Count Oluf, dance with me,
Then sorrow and sickness will follow thee.”

She struck him a blow across the heart,
Never before had he felt such smart.

She raised him livid upon his steed:
“Ride home to thy lady dear with speed.”

And when he came before the door,
His mother saw him with anguish sore.

“Hear me, my son, quick tell thy tale,
O why is thy face so strangely pale?”

“Ah, well may my face be strangely pale,
Erlkönig's Tochter has wrought my bale.”

“Hear me, my son, so loved and dear,
What shall I say thy bride to cheer?”

“Tell her I went to the woods for an hour,
With horse and dog, to prove their power.”

On the morn, when day scarce shone in the west,
There came the bride and each wedding guest.

She poured them mead, she poured them wine:
“Now, where is Count Oluf, that bridegroom mine?”

“Count Oluf went to the woods an hour,
With horse and dog, to prove their power.”

The bride raised up the robe so red,
There lay Count Oluf, and he was dead.

The Minstrel's Curse

(From The German of
Uhland)

A PALACE stood in ancient times towering o'er rock and tree;
It gleamed in stately splendour far over land and sea,
A fragrant garden round it bloomed, like a garland fresh and fair,
A limpid spring within it gushed, shaded from noonday glare.

Here lived a haughty monarch, of wealth and high renown,
He sat upon his lofty throne, upon his brow a frown;
His every look spoke madness, his thoughts dire terror move,
His laws in blood were written, he spoke but to reprove.

Once to this kingly palace came two minstrels good and true,
One with hair all scant and grey, the other locks of golden hue;
The elder with his much-loved harp sat on a trusty steed,
The younger by his side walked on, each at a goodly speed.

The elder to the younger spake: — “Now be prepared, my son,
Think on our songs most touching, on the words that all have won;
On the tale that wakens sorrow, and bids the tear to start,
To-day it may be ours to rouse, this monarch's stony heart.”

Soon in a chamber stood the two, 'twas lofty, long and wide,
The king sat on his costly throne, his Consort by his side;
He in his grandeur terrible, like a baleful northern light,
She in her womanly softness, like the moonlight pure and white.

Then he struck the strings with magic, that man so old in years,
And richer, ever richer, fell the strains on ravished ears;
Then with a heavenly clearness, did the younger's voice arise,
Clear as the strains of angels, floating calm above the skies.

They sang of love and spring-tide — of the days that all should bless —
Of high valour, worth, and freedom — of faith and holiness;
They sang of all that's noblest — of all that man should prize —
Of thrilling deeds of daring — of the nobly great and wise.

The courtiers in a circle stood, while each forgot to jeer;
Lowly the bravest soldier stood — in each eye gleamed a tear.
The Queen sat there enraptured, yet with sorrow sore opprest;
Then threw the minstrels roses, that had gleamed upon her breast.

“Ye have long seduced my people, would ye now corrupt my wife?”
Then cried the King, with frenzy, and rose for mortal strife;

He stood beside the youth, and in his heart he plunged the sword:
The golden bowl was broken, loosed was the silver cord!

Then from the storm in horror, fled all the courtly swarm;
The youthful singer has expired, clasped in his master's arm,
He wrapped him in his mantle, and bound him on his horse;
He passed beyond the castle walls, beside the blood-stained corse.

Then alone beyond the gateway, stood the minstrel old,
He lifted up his precious harp, its value was untold,
Against a marble pillar, he dashed it in pieces small,
Then cried with tones of anguish that rang through court and hall:—

“Woe to ye halls so haughty, ne'er let sweet words nor tones,
Nor soft melodious music re-echo through your stones!
Only deep groans and sighing, and the captive's anguished wail,
Until decay and ruin, in just vengeance end the tale.

“Woe to thee, fragrant garden, that sleeps in spring's warm bloom,
To this foul deed bear witness, with eternal shade and gloom:
Let all thy bowers be desolate, thy springs be parched and dry,
In deep unbroken stillness, through all future ages lie!

“Woe, woe to thee, O murderer! this act shall blast thy name,
All vainly hast thou striven, to wreath it with fearful fame:
Thy very name forgotten, shall sink in endless night,
Thy life and death unmentioned, shall pass from mortal sight.”

Thus spake the aged minstrel, his words were heard by Heaven,
The polished marble buried lies, that skilful hands had graven.
But one of the great columns, that erst stood in lofty pride,
Is left to mark that castle's site, upon the heath so wide.

Where once the flowery garden bloomed, lies sterile bare heath land,
No tree bears tender leaf or bud, no spring flows through the sand;
The name of that ungodly king, nor song nor book can yield,
'Tis lost in dark oblivion, and the minstrel's curse fulfilled!

Harold

(From the German of
Uhland)

HE rode before his followers brave,
Harold the hero bold;
They rode on in the moonlight pale
Through a wood wild and cold.

They carried many captured flags,
Which in the wind high hang,
They sang full many a war-song,
That through the mountains rang.

What rustles listen in each bush?
What rocks upon the tree?
What sinks so lightly from the clouds
Into the stream's light spray?

What throws the flowers round and round?
And what so sweetly sings?
What dances through the soldier bands?
What on the horse now swings?

What held so warm and kiss'd so sweet?
And what so softly prest?
What took the sword and scared the horse?
And left no quiet nor rest?

It is the Elves, the wanton swarm
Whom none may here withstand.
Soon are the soldiers all therein,
Ay, all in Fairy land:

And only he, the best, held back,
Harold the hero bold.
He whom from head to sole of foot
Cold armour doth enfold.

Now all his warriors are enticed,
There lay each shield and sword,
The horses through the great wood went
A wild unguided horde.

Harold the hero rode from thence
In sad and haughty mood,

He rode alone in the moonshine
All through the wide wild wood.

From rocks it rippled fresh and clear —
As quick as glancing beam,
He took his helmet off his head
Drank of the cooling stream.

But when his thirst was scarcely quenched,
Nerveless grew leg and arm;
He sank upon the rock to rest,
The draught wrought deadly harm.

He slumbered on the self-same stone
Through many centuries' fray,
His head down sunk upon his breast,
With hair and beard all gray.

When lightnings flash, and thunders roll,
And storms rush through each fold,
He grasps his sword though in a dream,
Harold the hero bold.

The Castle By The Sea

(From the German of
Uhland)

HAST thou e'er that castle seen,
That castle by the sea?
Rosy and golden have been
The clouds that o'er it flee.

And downward it may seek to stoop
To the glass clear waves below;
Or upward soar to the troop
Of clouds with their evening glow.

“Truly I have beheld it,
That castle by the sea,
O'er it I saw the pale moon flit
Through mist that would not flee.”

Did the wind and the waves' soft sighing
Rise in a sweet fresh strain?
Came the sound of song and harping
From halls undimm'd by pain?

“The wind and the great billows all,
Lay in unbroken rest;
A cry of woe out of the hall
Woke anguish in my breast.”

Didst thou not behold them pace
The King and his Consort there,
With their robes of royal grace,
And the crowns of gold they wear?

Led they not with proud delight
A maiden surpassing fair,
Beauteous as the sunlight,
Radiant with golden hair?

“Truly I saw the parents twain,
But no golden crowns they bear,
In black robes of woe and pain;
The maiden was not there.”

Otto I. and Henry

(From the German of
Muehler.)

FROM Quedlinburg's Cathedral resounds the peal of bells,
While from the mighty organ a solemn anthem swells;
Within there sat the Kaiser with all his knights in state,
With lowly adoration Christ's birth to celebrate.

High above all the circle, he sat with princely air,
With eye quick as the lightning, and golden flowing hair;
When men had named him Lion it was not in idle joke,
Full many had borne witness how true the rumour spoke.

He had now but late returned from a victorious war,
But not with foreign foes had he thus waged strife afar,
It was with his own brother who long in revolt doth fly,
Who thrice with fraud uplifted the blood red banner high.

E'en now he lurks within the land, with plotting, rebel train,
This caused the noble Kaiser anguish and heart-felt pain;
The evil feud full often he had bewailed with woe:
"O Henry, thou my brother, why art thou aye my foe!"

Through Quedlinburg's Cathedral resounds the solemn sound
Of priests who minister at mass, low bowing to the ground;
Their knees were bent full humbly each head was lowly bowed,
Deep prayers in that holy hour rose heavenwards from the crowd.

Then opened were the portals, a man stood in the throng,
Whose mighty limbs were hidden with robes of sackcloth long,
He cried unto the Kaiser and down before him fell,
Clasping his knees, while on his face remorse and sorrow dwell:

"O brother! My great faults, they burden me full sore!
Here low lying at thy feet, thy pardon I implore;
From deeds of blood and rapine, God's grace can make me clean,
Forgive, O mighty Kaiser, forgive, thy brother's sin!"

Then to his erring brother the Kaiser harshly turned:
"Twice have I thee forgiven, my mercy thou hast spurned!
Now spoken is the sentence, which I will not recall,
Lo, after three days have passed, thy guilty head must fall!"

Pale, pale then grew Prince Henry, pale grew the nobles brave,
Silence on the circle fell, as of the stirless grave,

One might have heard a leaf fall though it were sere and grey,
But no hand would dare to rob the lion of his prey.

The Abbot to the Kaiser turned with grave earnest looks,
And in his hand he held the eternal Book of books.
He read the sacred words distinctly, loudly, slowly,
Upon each heart they fell like God's own voice most holy:

“And Peter spake to Jesus: Say now, suffice it, Lord,
If I my erring brother grace seven times accord?
And Jesus made him answer: Not seven times alone,
But seventy times seven, if thou the Lord wilt own!”

The Kaiser's sternness melted in fast unconscious tears,
He claspt his brother to his heart without mistrust or fears;
Through the vast Cathedral rang a cheer from side to side —
Ne'er was it holier kept the blessed Christmas-tide.

Edward

(From the German of
Herder)

“How is thy sword with blood so red,
Edward, Edward?

Thy sword how is it with blood so red,
And goest so sadly thither? — O!”

“O I have stricken my falcon dead,
Mother, Mother!

O I have stricken my falcon dead,
And like it I have no other — O!”

“Thy falcon's blood is not so red,
Edward, Edward!

Thy falcon's blood is not so red.
My son confess anew — O!”

“O I have stricken my bay horse dead,
Mother, Mother!

O I have stricken my bay horse dead,
And he was proud and true — O!”

“Thy horse was old, thou hadst no need,
Edward, Edward!

Thy horse was old, thou hadst no need,
That has not caused thy smart — O!”

“O I have stricken my father dead,
Mother, Mother!

O I have stricken my father dead,
And woe woe fills my heart — O!”

“And what penance wilt thou do now?
Edward, Edward!

And what penance wilt thou do now?
My son, confess to me — O!”

“On earth my feet will never rest,
Mother, Mother!

On earth my feet will never rest;
I will go far o'er the sea — O!”

“And what will become of thy court and hall,
Edward, Edward?

And what will become of thy court and hall,
So lordly and so fair; — O?”

“I let them stand till they sink and fall,

Mother, Mother!
I let them stand till they sink and fall,
I will not see nor care — O!”

“And what will become of thy wife and child,
Edward, Edward?
And what will become of thy wife and child,
When thou afar wilt flee? — O!”

“The world is large, let them beg therein,
Mother, Mother!
The world is large, let them beg therein,
No more will I them see — O!”

“And what wilt thou leave thy mother dear?
Edward, Edward!
And what wilt thou leave thy mother dear
My son that say to me — O!”

“A curse will I leave you and fire of hell,
Mother, Mother!
A curse will I leave you and fire of hell,
For you, you counselled me! — O!”

Lorelei

(From the German of
Heine)

O I KNOW not what it can mean,
That I am now so sad;
A strange legend of old I ween,
Serves not to make me more glad.

The wind blows cool, it is even,
And quietly flows the Rhine;
The mountain's height against heaven
Gleams in the late sunshine.

A lovely maiden is sitting
Away there strangely fair,
Her jewels of gold are gleaming,
She combs her golden hair.

She combs it with a comb of gold
The while she sings a song;
Whose notes are sweet and manifold,
As they rise loud and long.

The mariner in his small boat
Listens with deep wild pain;
The jagged reef he seeth not,
He looks not from the height again.

I trow the current swept away
The man and boat at last;
This the Lorelei with her gay
Sweet strain did in the past.

Iphigenia In Tauris

(From the German of
Goethe)

First Act — First Scene.

Iphigenia. — Here beneath your shadow, breezy summits
Of the ancient, holy, leaf-clothed grove,
As in the Goddess' silent sanctuary,
Do I tread now, moved with the shuddering awe,
Which weighed my heart when on ye first I gaz'd,
And here my spirit is an alien still.
Through many years have I been here concealed
By a high will, to which I am resigned;
Yet I am ever strange, as at the first.
The sea divides me from each loving heart,
And on the shore I stand through long, long days,
Seeking the land of Greece with wearied soul;
And to my heavy sighs only the waves
Reply with wailing tones and boisterous wrath.
Woe unto him that far from kindred pines
Passing through life alone! Consuming grief
From his lips snatches dearest joys away.
Backward his thoughts are ever wandering
Unto his father's halls, where the glad sun
First unlocked Heaven unto him, and where
His brothers play, faster and faster knit
Together with the tender bonds of love.
I dispute not with the Gods' decrees; alone
The state of women is to be deplored.
At home and in the field is man the ruler,
And in the midst of strangers self-reliant.
Possession gives him joy; conquest crowns him;
An honourable death on him awaits.
What narrow limits bound a woman's bliss!
Obedience to an uncouth consort
Is her first duty and sole consolation,
How much more miserable when her fate
Is heavy exile in a far-off land!
Thus Thoas holds me here — a noble man,
Fast bound with sacred and unyielding bands.
With bitter shame do I admit that I,

O Goddess, serve thee with unwilling heart.
Thou, my Saviour! To thee my life
Should of my own free will be dedicated.
Yet I have ever trusted and still trust
In thee, Diana, thou who barest me,
The fated daughter of the mighty King,
To safety, in thy sacred sheltering arms.
Yea, daughter of Zeus, when the great-souled man,
Whose child thou didst demand, was filled with woe;
When the lofty god-like Agamemnon,
Who brought his best beloved unto thine altar,
Was guided by thee, crowned with high renown,
From Troja's ruined walls unto his home,
Unto his consort and unto his children,
Still I was safely guarded by thy hand.
Then, give me to my kindred back again,
Save me, once saved by thee from death, also
From my life here, which is but second death.

Phedre

(From the French of
Racine)

First Act — First Scene

Hippolytus — Theramenes.

Hippolytus. — It is decreed — I go, Theramenes!
I separate from beautiful Troezen;
I cannot bear to tarry idle longer,
In those dark doubts, that sorely harass me.
Six moons have waned now since my father left;
And still no tidings have been borne of him —
Naught of the spot that hideth his dear head.

Theramenes. — And where, O Prince, wilt thou to seek him go?
To give thee peace, already I have crossed
Both the seas that lave the Isthmus' shores!
For Theseus I asked, upon the shore
Where Acheron disappear'd in rayless gloom;
Elis have I searched through, then Taenaros
As I returned; yea, even on the sea
Have I been driven, to which Icarus
Gave its name. — What hopest thou, then, farther?
In what happy zone of heavenly calm
Dost thou think traces of him now to find?
Yea, how know we, whether the King doth not
His sojourn purposely from us conceal,
And thus, while we are trembling for his life,
May he not in the bonds of new found love delight?

Hip. — Stop, friend, and speak with reverence of the King!
An unworthy cause does not delay him;
He has renounced the wildness of his youth;
Phèdre has fettered his erst fickle mind,
And never need she fear a rival more.
Enough, I seek him, I perform my duty,
And flee this spot, that so disquieteth me.

Ther. — How, Prince, since what hour fearest thou danger
In this peaceful land, that to thy childhood

Was so dear, to which thou camest gladly
When thou fleddest from tumultuous Athens!
What can threaten thee or sicken here?

Hip. — Friend, those blest days have now for ever fled;
All wears a wholly different aspect now,
Since here the mighty Gods sent unto us
The daughter of Minos and Pasiphae.

Ther. — Prince, I comprehend, I feel what pains thee.
Thy grief is that thou seest Phèdre here;
Stepmother in her hate, scarce had she seen
Thee, when she sought how she might work thee ill;
Her first work was to have thee banished.
But this great hate, that she has sworn to thee,
Is now much lessened, if not wholly dead.
And what evil can a woman bring thee,
Who is dying and is resolved to die?
The wretched one who pines a hapless prey
To some deep woe, she obstinately hides;
She is weary of the light and of her life;
How can she then work mischief unto thee?

Hip. — It is not her powerless hate I fear,
From a far different foe would I fain flee:
I now confess it is Aricia,
The last one left of that unhappy race,
Who endless enmity against us swore.

Ther. — Wouldst thou too persecute her, Prince? The fair
Sister of the wild Pallantides, has she
Ever shar'd the dark mutiny of her race?
And canst thou the guiltless fair one hate?

Hip. — If I hated her, I would not flee her.

Ther. — Prince, dare I venture to explain thy flight?
Thou art, mayhap, the strong Hippolytus
No more; the fearless foe of all-subduing love,
The courageous despiser of a yoke
Beneath which Theseus oft so gladly bent?
Has Venus, now so long of thee disdained,
Redeemed thy father's honour from thy scorn?
She has placed thee in the list of those
Who worship her, with costly offerings,
— Prince, thou lovest?

Hip. — Friend, what speech holdest thou?
Thou, who hast known each thought since I drew breath,

Demandest thou that I disown the noble pride
Which has been ever known to my free heart?
Not only from the Amazonian breast
Of her who bore me, drew I in this pride;
But I, myself, so soon as conscious grown,
Strengthen'd the noble impulse of my mind.
Thou wert the friend, the guider of my youth;
Oft spak'st thou to me of my father's deeds;
Thou knowest how I listen'd, how my heart
Beat at the mention of his noble acts —
When thou describ'st to me the fearless hero,
How to the world he stood in place of Hercules,
Warring with dreaded monsters, smiting robbers;
How he struck down Procrustes, Sinis slew,
Wrested from Periphetes his great club,
Conquered Cercyon, and with the blood
Of the fierce Minotaur dyed Creta's soil.
But when thou spakest of his lesser glories,
The lightly-spoken oaths of changing love,
The faith, so often praised, so often broken —
When Spartan Helen thou didst name to me,
Torn from her own away, — Periboa
Left at Salamin in her heavy grief, —
And all who, without number, were betrayed,
Who to his vows too easily gave heed,
Whose very names by him were all forgotten —
Ariadne, who to the deaf sea shore
Bewailed her wrong; and her sister, Phèdre,
Like her, too, wronged, yet happier than her —
Thou knowest how painful the recitals were
For me to hear, how glad when they were ended!
How earnestly I wished, such a grand life
Had been free from all less glorious deeds!
And shall I see myself now fettered fast?
A God has willed I should so deeply fall!
I, whom no foe yet slain has clothed with honour,
Who with no noble and heroic deeds
Have won the right, like Theseus, to be weak!
And must this haughty heart so deeply feel?
Must it be Aricia that conquers me?
Forgot I wholly, in my blissful dream,
The eternal obstacle that severs us?
Is she not guarded by my father? A stern decree
Forbids me from reviving, ever more,
The race of the fierce hating Pallantides.
In her shall it be utterly annulled.
Under control must she remain till death.

Never may Hymen's torch be lit for her?
Dare I defy my father, and demand
Of him her hand, and all her ancient rights?
To such folly has youth urged me on —

Ther. — Ah, Prince, when thine hour came there was no God
To ask as to thy state! Theseus himself
But made the glance more keen he fain would seal;
The heart rebels against all force, his hate
But clothed the lov'd one with supream charms.
Why should tender love, which brings great joy,
Affright thee? Dost envy to thyself the bliss?
Vanquish the shy fear! Can one go astray
Following the path that Hercules trod?
What haughty hearts ere this has Venus tamed!
Thou thyself, who striv'st against her might,
Where wert thou, if the Goddess' pow'r had been
By Antiope through all time withstood,
Nor ever felt the tender flame of love?
But, Prince, why make parade with idle words?
Admit thou art thy former self no more!
Long since much seldomer than of yore hast thou,
Proud and unbending, guided thy chariot,
And taken part in Neptune's noble art,
And curbed the wild steed with a mighty hand.
Much seldomer resoundeth wood and vale
With our cries in the chase. A hidden grief
Has overcast thy strong and fearless brow.
Yes, yes, thou lovest, thou art sick from love,
A fire consumes thee, which thou fain wouldst hide!
Admit, thou lovest Aricia!

Hip. — I — depart
To seek out my father, Theramenes!

Ther. — Prince, wilt thou not see Phèdre ere thou goest?

Hip. — Such is my purpose. Bring her these tidings.
Let us seek her at the decree of duty.

Third Scene.

Phèdre — OEnone.

Phèdre. — OEnone, we go not further; let us rest.
I can no longer stand, my strength has fled;
I am pain'd by the unwonted light of day;

My knees begin to tremble under me.
Alas!

OEnone. — O mighty Gods, behold our bitter tears!

Phèdre. — How I am burdened with this heavy veil
In empty pomp! What unbidden hand
Hath, with such artfulness, entwined my hair,
With thankless trouble in those heavy coils
Upon my brow? Must all and each conspire
To sicken, to torment me, endlessly?

OEnone. — Thus is she ever with herself at strife!
It was thyself, O Queen, bethink thee now,
Who, in striving to recall thy sadness,
Quickened our willing hands to deck thee thus,
To gaze upon the light of the great sun —
Thou seest it now, only to hate its gleam.

Phèdre. — Radiant founder of my hapless race!
Thou, whom it was my pride to name grandsire!
Who now, mayhap, doth look with utter shame
Upon my error — O mighty Sungod,
For the last time I see thy genial rays.

OEnone. — Woe me, O Queen, why dost thou cherish thus
The woful purpose of renouncing life?

Phèdre (in a reverie). — O that I sat without in the green woods!—
When will mine eyes upon the dusty path
Follow the course of his fast-fleeting chariot?

OEnone. — How, Queen? What dost thou say?

Phèdre. Ah, I am
Sunk in thought. What have I said, OEnone?
I know not what I wish, or what I say;
By a God have I been robbed of reason —
Feel, how my cheeks are burning now, OEnone!
I betray my weakness to thee too much,
And against my will my tears burst forth.

OEnone. — If thou must blush, blush at thy guilty silence,
At thy immovable, strange concealment,
Which lends barbèd arrows to thy secret grief.
Wilt thou, unmovèd by our strong entreaties,
Obstinately thrust all help away from thee,
And suffer thy life helplessly to decay?
What madness thus before its time has set
An early mark? What strange and deadly charm,

What secret poison worketh thee such torment?
Three times has night darkened the great sky,
Since slumber on thy weary eyelids sank,
And three times has light chased night away,
Since without nourishment, thy body pines.
To what awful resolve dost thou give room?
Darest thou purpose to destroy thyself?
That were defiance to the Gods, treachery
To thy Consort to whom thy faith is sworn,
Treachery to thy children, the guiltless souls
Whom thou wouldst thus condemn to slavery's yoke.
The day that seeth them bereft of thee,
Think of it, Queen, gives back his hopes again
Unto the son of her, the Amazon,
Unto the haughty foe of all thy race,
Unto the stranger, to this Hippolytus——

Phèdre. — Ye Gods!

OEnone. — Rouseth the truth of this reproach thy heart?

Phèdre. — Unhappy one! whom didst thou mention now?

OEnone. — Rightly art thou thus moved. I rejoice
That this hated name enrageth thee!
Therefore, live! Let love, let duty prevail
With thee! Live! Suffer not this Scythian
To bind thy children with the hated yoke!
The barbarian to rule the noblest
Blood of Greece. But haste thee now, each moment
That thou delayest, brings thee nearer death —
Wait no longer, to quicken failing nature,
While the flame of love still strengtheneth thee —
Which is anew enkindled in thy heart.

Phèdre. — I have cherished a guilty life too long.

OEnone. — Does thy heart charge thee with some hidden guilt?
Is it a crime that agonizes thee?
Have thy hands been stained with guiltless blood?

Phèdre. — My hands are pure. Would that my heart were so!

OEnone. — And what atrocity lives in thy heart,
That thou art thus so strangely horrified?

Phèdre. — I have said enough. O spare me! I die
To conceal from all the unblessed truth!

OEnone. — Then die! Continue thy defiant silence!
But seek thou another hand to close

Thine eyes in death! Mayhap thy life
Will not have flitted from thy whit'ning lips,
Ere I in death before thee pass away.
Thereto a thousand paths lead weary man;
My grief will choose the speediest way to flee.
Cruel one, when did I betray thy trust?
Forgettest thou who tended thee in childhood?
Who for thy sake left friends, left fatherland
And child? And thou rewardest thus my love!

Phèdre. — What dost thou hope to gain with thy entreaties?
If I broke the silence, thou wouldst flee from me.

OEnone. — What canst thou name to me more terrible
Than thus to see thee die before mine eyes?

Phèdre. — Though thou wouldst know my wretchedness and guilt,
Thou couldst not save, but guiltier I would die.

OEnone (falling before her). — By all the tears that I have shed for thee,
By thy trembling knees, which I thus clasp,
Bring my despair, my anguish, to an end!

Phèdre. — Thou willest it. Rise up.

OEnone. — O speak, I hear.

Phèdre. — Gods! what will I say to her, and how?

OEnone. — With thy doubts thou sick'nest me. End them!

Phèdre. — O heavy wrath of Venus! Mighty vengeance!
To what madness didst thou drive my mother!

OEnone. — Speak not thereof! Forgetfulness eternal
Should cover that unblestèd crime!

Phèdre. — O Ariadne, sister, what a fate
Has love prepared thee, on a barren shore!

OEnone. — What dost thou mean? What frenzy drives thee thus
To probe anew the wounds of all thy race?

Phèdre. — Thou willest it, Venus! And I, the last
Of all my kin, must now the deepest fall!

OEnone. — Thou lovest?

Phèdre. — The whole madness dwells in me.

OEnone. — Whom lovest thou?

Phèdre. — Be thou prepared for horror.
I love — my heart beats unto death; I shudder

To speak it out — I love —

OEnone. — Whom?

Phèdre. — The youth, him, whom I persecuted long,
The son of the Amazon —

OEnone. — Hippolytus? Righteous Gods!

Phèdre. — Thou namest him, not I.

OEnone. — Gods! All my blood is frozen in my veins.
O grief! O strangely criminal house
Of Minos. Unblessed, most unhappy race,
O journey thrice unblessed, that we should
Land upon this dark unhappy shore!

Phèdre. — Earlier still began my wretchedness.
Scarce was my faith plighted to Ægeus' son,
When my joy seem'd to me so surely grounded,
My happiness so certain, then I first
Beheld my haughty foe in Athens.
I saw him, I crimsoned, my face burned
Before his glance, upon my spirit fell
Endless perplexity, before me all
Was dim, my voice died in a falt'ring sigh,
Terror and passion seized upon my mind,
I felt the violence of great Venus' might,
And all the pangs, that, when enraged, she sends.
With pious offerings I hop'd to appease her,
I built a temple for her, costly, rare,
Hecatombs before her at my bidding fell,
In blood of beasts I sought the reason
Of which a God had robbed me. Powerless
The strife against the might of Venus! In vain
I burnt rare incense upon costly altars;
Hippolytus reigned solely in my heart,
When with my lips I to the Goddess pray'd.
I saw him above all and him alone,
When kneeling low before the smoking altar
He was the god of all my sacrifice.
What availed it, that I shunned him more
Than all — O most unhappy destiny! —
When in the father's face I found him still?
In agony I warred against my love;
With breaking heart, I persecuted him.
A stepmother's deep hatred I assumed,
To exile from me the beloved foe.
I rested not, till he was sent afar;

I stormed the father with unceasing prayers,
Till I had sent his son from his fond arms.
Again OEnone, I breathed in peace and freedom,
My tranquil days flew on in innocence,
My grief lay buried in my inmost heart;
Meekly subject to each wifely duty,
I tended the pledges of our hapless union!
Fruitless efforts! O fatal prank of fate!
My consort brought me here unto Troezen;
Again must I see him I banished far,
The ne'er extinguished flame burst out anew.
It is a hidden smouldering fire no more;
Venus in wrath with madness overwhelms me.
I shudder back myself from my great guilt,
I condemn myself and hate my life,
In silence I would fain go down to death,
In the deep grave my crime I would conceal —
Thy prayers constrained me and I have reveal'd
All unto thee, nor will I repent thereof
If thou henceforth thy unjust reproaches
Wilt spare the dying, nor with fruitless care
Seek to give back my life to me again.

Wallenstein

(From the German of
Schiller)

Second Act. Second Scene. Of Second Part.

Wallenstein. Max Piccolomini.

Max (advancing to Wallenstein). — My General —

Wallenstein. — That I am not,
If thou namest thyself the Emperor's officer.

Max. — Thou art resolved, thou wilt leave the army?

Wall. — I have renounced the Emperor's service.

Max. — And wilt leave the army?

Wall. — Nay I hope to
Bind it now still closer unto me.

(He sits)

Yes, Max. I would not reveal it unto thee,
Until the hour for action had arrived.
Youth with its joyous freshness is quick to seize
Upon the right, yet often it is well
To prove and use one's private judgment, where
To enlighten pure example may be found;
Still, when between two certain evils we
Must choose one amid conflicting duties,
Where the heart is powerless wholly to decide,
There it is well indeed to have no choice,
A favour then necessity becomes.

— Such is the present crisis. Look not back!
It can now avail thee naught. Look forward!
Pause not to judge! Only prepare to act!
— The Court on my destruction has resolved,
Therefore I would be foremost in the field.
— We will bind ourselves unto the Swedes.
They are a valiant people, and good friends.
— I have surprised thee. Do not answer me.
I will grant thee time now to collect thy thoughts.

Max. — My General! — Thou mak'st me of age to-day.

For till this hour I have been spared the task
Of finding for myself the path of duty.
Implicitly I followed thee. I needed
But to see thee and the right path was sure.
To-day for the first time thou referrest
Me unto myself, and forcest me to
Strike a choice between thee and my heart.

Wall. — Thy Fate cradled thee softly till to-day;
Thou couldst thy duties playfully perform,
Following every amiable impulse,
Ever acting with undivided heart.
This cannot longer be. In enmity
The ways divide. Duty with duty strives.
Thou must choose a side now in the war
Which between thy Emperor and thy friend
Has been enkindled.

Max. — War! is that the name?
War is horrible as Heaven's plague;
Yet it is good, like that it is decreed.
But is this a worthy war which thou wilt wage
Against the Emperor, with his own hosts?
O God of Heaven, what a change is this!
Do these words become me unto thee,
Thou who hast been to me the rule of life,
Steadfast and true as the bright Polar Star!
O what a cleft dost thou make in my heart!
The reverence which has grown with my years,
The sacred habit of obedience,
Must I learn to renounce them at the last?
No, turn not thou thy face thus unto me!
Ever like a god's count'nance it has been
To me, nor quickly can it lose its power;
Already thy intentions are made known,
The burdened soul was quick to free itself!

Wall. — Max, hear me out!

Max.- Do it not! O do it not!
See, thy pure and noble features know
As yet nought of this most unhappy deed.
Only thy thoughts have been defiled therewith,
Guiltlessness will not be driven away
From thy fearless lofty countenance.
Cast it away, the foe, the deed of darkness.
Then will it be but as an evil dream
To warn the virtue that is too self-sure.

Only so much the world thereof may know;
Thy better spirit must the victory win.
No, thou wilt not end thus, the deed would bring
Discredit in men's sight on each great soul,
And upon every mighty intellect;
Give a show of right to the delusion
Of the common herd, that careth nought
For the nobility of Freedom, and trust
Only to weakness for a victory.

Wall. — Harshly the world will blame. I look for it.
I have said to myself all thou canst urge.
Who would not avoid, if it were possible,
The utmost measure! But here there is no choice,
I must suffer or use violence —
Thus stands the case. Naught else remains to me.

Max. — So be it then! Avow thee in thy post
A rebel, rise up against the Emperor,
If it must be, in undisguised revolt!
I cannot praise, but I can pardon that;
Yea I will share though I cannot approve;
Only — turn thou not traitor! That word has been
Uttered; I repeat, turn thou not traitor!
The first is no irremediable step, no error
In which the strength of courage runs astray.
But this; O this is different — This is black,
Black as hell!

Wall. — Youth is ever ready with the word
Which falls as heavily as an edged sword;
In its hot blood it measureth all things,
And sits in judgment self complacently.
Quickly it nameth all worthy or evil!
Ill or good — and what the imagination
Fantastically labels thus, straightway,
Therewith it burdens life and action.
The world is narrow but the brain is wide.
Great thoughts and schemes are lightly housed together;
But matter is hard jostled in scant room,
Where this finds place the other must make way;
He who would not be driven then must drive;
There strife rules and only the strong can conquer.
— Yes, he who goes through life without a wish,
May doubtless aye forswear each aim, and live
Scathless in fire with the Salamander,
And remain pure in a pure element.
Nature of coarse material created me,

And my desires draw me unto the earth.
To the spirit of ill belongs the earth,
Not to the good. What the heavenly powers
Send us from above are common blessings;
Their light gladdens yet it can make none rich,
In their domain none may obtain possessions.
The precious stone, the gold most highly prized,
Man must win from the Powers of Falsehood,
That from the light of day are darkly housed.
Not without sacrifice are they propitious,
And he lives not, who from their service takes
And holds his soul in its first purity.

Max. — O fear, fear thou these Powers of Falsehood!
They keep no promise! They are lying spirits,
Do not trust them! I warn thee, O return
Back to thy duty. Yes, in truth thou canst!
Send me to Vienna. Yes, do this. Let me
Go and with the Emperor make thy peace.
He doth not know thee, but I know thee well,
And he will see thee pure as with my eyes,
His confidence I will bring back to thee.

Wall. — It is too late. Thou knowest not what has happened.

Max. — If it were too late — if the rent were so wide
That only a crime might save thee from ruin,
Then fall! fall worthy as thou long hast stood.
Resign the command. Retire from the scene.
Thou canst with honour, do it with innocence.
— Thou hast lived much for others, live at last
Once for thyself! I will accompany thee;
Nor ever part my destiny from thine —

Wall. — It is too late. Whilst thou wastest words,
Milepost after milepost is left behind
By those who bear my orders to Prague and Eger.
— Resign thyself thereto, we act as we are forc'd.
Let us worthily perform that which is
Inevitably thrust on us — What do I worse
Than that Caesar did, whose name is held to-day
In highest honour throughout all the world?
He led the mighty legions against Rome,
That Rome for her defence entrusted to him.
Had he thrown his sword away he had been lost,
As I would be if I would now disarm.
I follow on his footsteps as I may.
Give me his luck! The reproach I will bear.

The End
