

# Convict Once

## And Other Poems

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1885**

Convict Once.

## Proëm.

I HYACINTH, of whom she wrote, now write:  
Not from the hope of fame, or wish for praise;  
But that, in waning of her latter days,  
She willed her warning tale should see the light,

And whispered with her fading breath that I  
Should soften nothing that she did reveal,  
But charter her confession with a seal  
Of manual pardon — as I do hereby.

And ere ye scorn her troubles, passion-fed,  
Her wilful choosing of the crooked path,  
And ere ye make a virtue of your wrath,  
I pray you all, remember — she is dead.

Forgive the passions that she could not curb,  
The heaving trouble of a fevered breast.  
She's very quiet now. She hath her rest:  
And there is none can wake her, none disturb.

I, who have most to pardon, pardon all,  
As I myself beseech forgiving grace;  
And live in hope that I shall her face,  
Even as an angel's, at the Judgment call.

## Part First.

### I.

FREE again! Free again! eastward and westward, before me, behind me,  
Wide lies Australia! and free are my feet, as my soul is, to roam!  
Oh joy unwonted of space undetermined! No limit assigned me!  
Freedom conditioned by nought save the need and desire of a home!

\* \* \* \* \*

### II.

#### 1

Wrought even to pain with emotions long-prisoned and ardours volcanic,  
Great with the promise of things that have grown in the silence of  
years,  
Seems to me now that my soul should be mother of issue Titanic.  
Drunken with Freedom I leap, as a inaddened steed plunges and rears.

#### 2

Seven retributive years have not left my tried spirit unshaken,  
Vulture-like tearing me, harpy-like soiling me, blinding my eyes.  
Yet from the depths I emerge; like a giant refreshed I awaken,  
Strong for the purpose of life, for the struggle, the victory, the prize.

#### 3

Ah! I must calm me, nor triumph too soon with exultant delirium:  
Silence, and patience, and foresight, to these is the victory given:  
Life's raging sea is not cloven at the sound of the timbrel of Miriam;

But at the touch of the red of the SEER the dark waters are riven.

4

Yes, I must calm me, remembering that Freedom restores me to Duty —  
Not to the license and rapture of such as have struggled and won.  
Passion hath proved itself fatal, and fatal the magic of beauty;  
I must try wisdom and prudence, contented to walk ere I run.

5

Have I not found what I longed for? Already my star is propitious.  
Heaven hath found me a home where life's sweetest amenities smile;  
Lowly indeed, but unmerited, poor to a spirit ambitious;  
Yet a sweet oasis-fountain whereat I may linger awhile.

6

Here I behold it, my long-cherished dream of a home in the wild wood:  
Here I shall hide my reproach, and my name shall be MAGDALEN  
POWER.  
Never again shall I utter the name that I bore in my childhood;  
Know it shall none, save the Angel that watched at my christening  
hour.

7

Now I begin life again; but a clearer, a stronger beginning:  
Not as a child, but a woman — a teacher of children not mine.  
What can *I* teach them? *My* lesson? Repenting is longer than sinning?  
Nay; I can read; I can write; I can moralize line upon line.

8

Branded no more as a felon : — but hush! let such phrases be banished!  
Let me recall the old precepts that moulded my innocent youth!

Knowledge, and Beauty, and Goodness, thank God, have not utterly vanished:

Quick to perceive them as ever; alive to the glory of Truth.

**9**

No more abasement! I'm weary and blind with the tears of repentance:  
Though it was wrong, and I know it, yet surely such weeping is vain.  
Have I not borne to the full all the pangs of my terrible sentence?  
Shall there no harvest arise from this plentiful penitent rain?

**10**

Worshipping sorrow it seems, thus to sacrifice life on its altar;  
Petting my error it is, thus to water it evening and morn:  
Cherishing aye in my breast, as a fetish, a scarce escaped halter —  
This is the culture of Terror — Idolatry worthy of scorn!

**11**

I will no more of it. — Twenty-three years have I lived; and my labour  
Vanity, fruitless regret, and a secret that may not be told,  
Honour-imperilling, head-overhanging, like Damocles' sabre,  
Swinging and threat'ning my new-donned propriety scarce a day old.

**12**

Ha! I must clothe me with armour; yet not in the garb of defiance:  
Panoply brazen flings back every incident ray of the sun:  
Darkly encased I shall be in a corslet of quiet reliance;  
Shield I shall carry of triple propriety; sword I'll have none.

**13**

Is this hypocrisy? Is it a refuge 'twixt seeming and being?  
Self-enforced virtue (who knows?) may develop from habit to love.

Heedless of obstacles, patient for ends, strong of heart, and far-seeing,  
I may be wise as the serpent, yet innocent still as the dove.

**14**

Die then, sad memories, leaving behind you no token nor relic!  
Hark how the tremulous night-wind is passing in joy-laden sighs!  
Soft through my windows it comes, like the fanning of pinions angelic,  
Whispering to cease from myself, and look out on the infinite skies.

**15**

Out on the orb-studded night, and the crescent effulgence of Dian;  
Out on the far-gleaming star-dust that marks where the angels have  
trod;  
Out on the gem-pointed Cross, and the glittering pomp of Orion,  
Flaming in measureless azure, the coronal jewels of God.

**16**

Luminous streams of delight in the silent immensity flowing,  
Journeying surgelessly on through impalpable ether of peace,  
How can I think of myself when infinitude o'er me is glowing,  
Glowing with tokens of love from the land where my sorrows shall  
cease?

**17**

Oh, summer-night of the South! Oh, sweet languor of zephyrs love-  
sighing!  
Oh, mighty circuit of shadowy solitude, holy and still!  
Music scarce audible, echo-less harmony joyously dying,  
Dying in faint suspirations o'er meadow, and forest, and hill!

**18**

I must go forth and be part of it, part of the night and its gladness.  
But a few steps, and I pause on the marge of the shining lagoon.  
Here then, at length, I have rest; and I lay down my burden of sadness,  
Kneeling alone 'neath the stars and the silvery arc of the moon.

**19**

Peace-speaking night of the South, will thine influence last through my  
sleeping,  
Dream with my dreaming, awake with my waking, and blend with the  
morn?  
Or shall I start as of old, and my pillow be wet with my weeping,  
Victim alternate of self-accusation and impious scorn?

**20**

Have I so cast out myself that the morrow's meridian shall find me  
Lightly esteeming the earth, and with spirit affianced to heaven?  
Have I said, once and for ever, "Proud Lucifer, get thee behind me!  
Leave me to die in the desert, if only my sin be forgiven"?

**21**

Let me not hoodwink myself. Of the many desires that come  
thronging —  
Demons they may be, or angels of brightness, I hardly know  
One I retain unto death, one supreme irresistible longing;  
Heaven without it were poor, and earth with it ineffably rich.

**22**

Can it be wrong? It was God, and not I, who created me woman,  
And on my woman's heart portrayed the nobler ideal of man;  
Dowered me with instincts of love, that shall rule till I cease to be  
human:  
Shall the Creator require of the creature beyond what she can?

Ah! but the soft, subtle voice of the Night whispers, "First be thou worthy:

Vaunt not thyself till the work of thy hands is recorded above:  
Gird thee for labour; and if, being earthly, thou needs must be earthy,  
Pray that through Duty alone thou attain to the pleasance of love."

### III.

#### 1

PLEASANTLY, almost too pleasantly, blendeth to-day with to-morrow.

Hours are as moments: a twinkle of white wings, and, lo, they are gone!

Day bringeth work without bondage, and night bringeth dreams without sorrow:

Pleasantly, almost too pleasantly, life is meandering on.

#### 2

Precious my charge, and delightsome: three spirits all joyous and tender —

Children of nature and innocence, breathing the freshness of flowers.  
Love-tokens are they from Paradise, warm from the kiss of the Sender,  
Blossoms of promise still rich with the glow of the Amaranth Bowers.

#### 3

Hyacinth, Lily, and Violet — pleasant conceit of their christening:

Hyacinth, darkly embowered in the riches of clustering curls;  
Slenderly delicate Lily, a lily transfigured and glistening;  
Violet, lowly and meek, yet the joy of my garland of girls.

#### 4

Happy their lot — in themselves, in their sire, in a mother's affection;  
Happy in mutual love all the merry bright round of the years,  
Little they reckon of the travailing world, with its nameless dejection;  
Even their sighs are the surfeit of joy, laughter-laden their tears.

5

Lofty things move them to worship; adoring they wonder, but fear not;  
Little things minister pleasure, as ever it fares with the good;  
Nature to them utters low subtle voices that other ears hear not;  
Marvellous harmonies greet them from river, and mountain, and wood.

6

Down in umbrageous retreats, chosen haunts by the shadow-flecked river,  
Drinking delights from the murmur of streams and the flutter of wings,  
Streams as they murmur, bright wings as they flutter, green leaves as they quiver,  
All have strange music for them, and a tale of invisible things.

7

Almost I fancy them other than human; great Nature's own daughters,  
Beings of Fable that only the rapture of Fancy conceives,  
Naiad-like, laving white feet in the dimpled disturbance of waters,  
Dryad-like, peering bright-visioned thro' tremulous umbrage of leaves.

8

Otherwhile mounted on steeds and in madness of motion careering,  
Fitfully seen thro' far vistas, and mazy divergence of trees;  
Elfin-revealings of fleetness and liberty sudden appearing,  
Vanishing whither they list, uncontrolled as the libertine breeze.

9

Train them and form them! Ah me! it is they who, unconscious, have wrought me

Back to the form that I bore when I bloomed as the darling of home.  
*I* their preceptress! Ah me! with their innocent smiles they have taught me

Lessons more glorious than Greece, aspirations more lofty than Rome.

10

Mine is the lore of dark ages, of empires convulsed and war-wasted,  
Rapine and bloodshed, the ebb and the flow of perpetual strife;  
*I* of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and of Evil have tasted;  
Fitter for *them* were the fruit of the Tree, angel-guarded, of Life.

#### IV.

1

HYACINTH loves . . . I have noted of late the mysterious transition;  
Soft silken-footed approaches of something that whispers a change;  
Chrysalis-stirrings that herald the full-winged and perfected mission;  
Timid assumptions of woman-demeanour unwonted and strange;

2

Beautiful sequence of vermeil suffusions and paleness unbidden;  
Dream-lustred eyes that look inward on something to others unseen;  
Reveries sudden, and maidenly languor, and sighs but half-hidden;  
Pensive reserve over-drooping the virginal grace of her mien.

3

Saddened, yet listlessly happy; ah, well I remember the token!  
Well I remember the oxymel mingling of pleasure and pain!  
Some face hath gleamed upon hers, and the sleep of her childhood is  
broken;  
Hardly she knows as yet whether to rise or to slumber again.

## V.

### 1

WANDERING to-day by the river where refuge is greenest and coolest,  
Watching beneath me the moving mosaic of shadow and sheen,  
Came I on Hyacinth, radiant, elated, her bloom at the fullest,  
Rapt, like a vision-filled soul that hath quaffed of divine Hippocrene.

### 2

No need of words to interpret those moist lips halfparted and glowing,  
Nor the luxurious droop of the eyelid with pleasure opprest,  
Nor the strewn wealth of her tresses, in careless dishevelment flowing,  
Nor the warm crimson that blushed thro' the gossamer folds on her  
breast.

### 3

Heedless and hearing not, trance-like — the sun thro' the bowerage  
above her,  
Scattering broken effulgence, like largesse of gold, on her charms, —  
Stood the flushed impress of maidenhood fresh from the kiss of a lover,  
Fervid in recent release from the passionate entwinement of arms.

### 4

Such I divined, with an eye and an instinct for love's hidden history;  
Thrilled by ineffable sympathies, every sweet token I knew,  
Gathered in fancy the fluttering threads, and unravelled the mystery,  
Read, like a scroll, the yet lingering signs of reluctant adieu.

5

Lower her eyelids drooped, closing; then rose, and the sensuous present  
Broke once again into verdure and song, on her eye and her ear;  
But the entrancement of vision was gone, and the bloom evanescent  
Passed into sorrowful paleness, and died in the track of a tear.

6

Then, while her ringlets, in silken compliance and rich adaptation,  
Rounded each movement with graces, as music the words of a lay,  
Stooped she a moment, and, fluttering still with Love's sweet trepidation,  
Caught up a scroll from the grass at her feet, and moved, sighing,  
away.

7

And, till the sun set, empurpling the glorified hills with its splendour,  
Lone in her chamber sat Hyacinth, writing the words on her soul;  
Then, as the glory died, yielding to radiance more softened and tender,  
Forth from her chamber came Hyacinth, singing the song of the  
scroll:

8

“Ever thou speakest of angels, my love, and I fear me, I fear me,  
Thou art too heavenly pure to commèrce with such grossness as  
mine.”  
“Angels are lower than God, and when thou art anear me, anear me,  
Godhead looks into mine eyes, for thy kinship, through grace, is  
Divine.”

9

“Ah, but the angels will find thee in sleep, and will take thee, will take  
thee,

Bearing thee far from me, leaving me weary, forsaken, and old.”  
“Yea, but thou likewise shalt sleep, and my singing shall wake thee, shall  
wake thee,  
Over the crystalline sea, by the city of jasper and gold.”

**10**

“Ah, but the angels are better than I! and will love thee, will love thee,  
Teaching thee music I know not, and whispering secrets of bliss.”  
“Yea, but though angels, no angel I'll cherish above thee, above thee;  
Nought, till thou come to thy love, save the feet of my God, shall I  
kiss.”

**11**

“Ah, but the angels, the iris-winged angels, will hate me, will hate me,  
Soiled with the touch of corruption, and swathed in the cerements of  
sin.”  
“Nay, at the glistening portals of pearl I'll await thee, await thee,  
Bearing thee radiant attire for the joy of thine entering in.”

**12**

“Ah, but the angels, the aurioled angels, adoring, adoring,  
Will they not mock us, faint-quiring the notes of our penitent strain?”  
“Nay, for our hymns have a theme of Redemption, high-soaring, high-  
soaring,  
Far o'er the music of angels, the song of the Lamb that was slain.”

\* \* \* \* \*

**13**

“Where hath she learned it?” quoth one; and “Who wrote it? who gave  
it?” another:  
Hyacinth answered with silvery laughter, and sought her lone room.  
“Surely my child has some secret at heart,” said the wondering mother.  
I alone knew why she brooked not the question of whence or by

whom.

14

All the night long in her slumber I heard the unconscious out-pouring  
Of her young spirit in jubilant thoughts from the dream-broken strain;  
Ever she murmured — “a theme of Redemption high-soaring, high-  
soaring,  
Far o'er the music of angels, the song of the Lamb that was slain.”

## VI.

1

PLEASANTLY,” said I? Yea, pleasantly, Three summer months of  
contentment,  
Bright with bright faces, and sweet with sweet voices, or sleeping in  
smiles.  
Here the green earth is the heaven-domed temple of poet's presentment,  
Manifold harmonies rolling for ever thro' long forest aisles.

2

Softly I've moved through the time with the echo-less footfalls of Duty,  
Wearing the garments of meekness and schooling my heart to  
constraint,  
Shunning my mirror for dread of the slumbering demon of Beauty:  
Puritan I in my plainness of garb, in demeanour a saint.

3

All I resolved I have done; much in spirit, and wholly in letter;  
Faultless my conduct and converse . . . but where is the sign of  
return?  
See, I have prisoned my life in routine till my soul is no better  
Than the grey ashes that lie in the coldly-symmetrical urn.

4

Am I then weary of well-doing, deeming it fruitless endurance?

Nay, but my spirit is cloyed with the feast of perpetual sweets.  
I was not moulded for peace, or the dreamless repose of assurance.  
Oh, I am faint with the opiate breath of these woodland retreats!

5

This is not life, to be bowed in the heart-hush of worship for ever,  
Softly asleep on my shadow to glide o'er a summer-lit sea.  
Life is not passionless calm, but the turbid delight of the river.  
Give me the billowy Jordan! . . . enough now of blue Galilee.

6

All my young dream was of heroes; my play was Olympian frolic,  
Venus, Minerva, Alecto, alternate — love, wisdom, and gall.  
What is the mood of my life-music now? Why, a piping bucolic.  
Babbling melodious of pastoral peace and content; that is all.

7

Soul cannot march to the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle.  
Rather the war-blast of passion were thrilling again in mine ears!  
Oh for a touch of the palpitant world! for the glory of battle!  
Show me once more the proud wave of the banners, the gleam of the  
spears!

8

What would I conquer? Myself? So I might; but such war were  
inglorious.  
How should it yield me the rapture that only the conqueror feels?  
What were the spoils of the slain? To what Capitol march when  
victorious?  
Whom should I drag thro' the dust, captive-bound at my chariot-  
wheels?

9

Oh, I am sick of unlaurelled self-conquest! A region fire-smitten  
Lies at the feet of the victor, unworthy the cost of the strife.  
What is the fruit of my summer of meekness? Behold, I have *written!*  
Ink! where the blood should have been, and the dust of the battle of  
life!

10

Stay. Let me question myself. Whence this change of mood? Yesterday  
only  
All in my heart was the hush of the temple, conventual calm.  
Yesterday quickening Nature sufficed me; alone, but not lonely,  
Breathing concordant with all things, embraced in the infinite psalm.

11

Now all this musical silence but frets me. I live, but I sing not,  
Save in harsh discords that jar with the tender discourse of the  
flowers.  
Soft airs are wooing my brow with their winnowing wings, but they  
bring not  
Tribute of hope. Time's too smooth, and I chafe at the impotent hours.

12

What hath unfellowed me thus from the spirits of beauty beside me?  
Why do I turn from the honey of life to the blood-kindling wine?  
Yesterday, heaven was opened: I saw, but its bliss was denied me,  
Saw it in Hyacinth's eyes with the Demon of Envy in mine.

13

Even as she passed from my sight, while the branches yet shook from her  
presence,

Rose in unblest resurrection the sepulchred passions of yore.  
*I* to go dreaming of life while this novice is drinking its essence!  
*I* to be almost content with the dregs, while her cup runneth o'er!

**14**

Say, were an angel cast down by mischance at the great consummation,  
Would not his sharpest distress be the gleam of his home in the skies?  
Even the shadow of heaven were worse torment than hell's conflagration:  
What then for me was the reflex of Eden in Hyacinth's eyes?

**15**

Shut out from life and from love by hard circumstance, not from  
unmeetness,  
Can I untempted look on while another sits down to the feast?  
Why must I drag through the hours when this Hyacinth leaps to  
completeness,  
Leaps to her queenly meridian, still flushed with the roseate east?

**16**

“It is because thou hast sinned.” Oh emaciate ghost of repentance!  
Thou here again with thine offerings of sackcloth, and ashes, and  
tears!  
Pointing thy skeleton finger at Law! See, I point to the Sentence,  
Paid to the uttermost farthing by weary fulfilment of years.

**17**

What-then? Shall envy inherit me wholly? A thousand times Never.  
It hath but waked me once more from the spell of a somnolent hour,  
Stirred up the thorns in the nest, struck a spur in the flank of endeavour:  
I am the old self again. I am. . . . Nay, I am Magdalen Power.

**VII.**

1

STRANGERS to-day; a momentous event in this slumb'rous seclusion:  
Lily and Violet sadly impatient of precept and books:  
Hyacinth calmer, but fluttering dove-like with pretty confusion;  
Something of mystery, too, in those quick interrogative looks.

2

“Are they from far?” I ask carelessly. “Not from a very great distance,”  
Violet answers; “but oh! 'tis so seldom they visit us now.  
There was a quarrel, you know,” she continues with prattling persistence,  
All unaware of the shadow that gathers on Hyacinth's brow.

3

“Something I don't understand, about cattle, and buying, and selling;  
Arthur Trevelyan was rude, and dropped words about ‘ill-gotten  
gear;’  
Father was angered, and said that no Convict should darken his dwelling:  
But he repented, and wrote to both father and son; so they're here.”

4

“What is a Convict?” she asks me; “Trevelyan's a Convict, they tell me.  
It must be something, I'm sure, to be proud of, if Raymond is one.”  
Ah, cruel question that would to my own definition compel me!  
Hyacinth comes to my rescue: “A Convict! Young Raymond is none!”

5

“Tell me,” she said, and I mark the unwonted and quivering passion,  
“Can it be just that a son should inherit a father's disgrace?”  
Gladly I catch at the turn of the theme, and reply, “ 'Tis a fashion  
That were best honoured by breach.” There's a story in Hyacinth's  
face.

## VIII.

1

OFT hath it pleased me in day-dream and night-watch to mould an ideal:  
Is not my heart-wish incarnate, new risen or dropt from above?  
One sudden gleam of a face, and my cherished ideal is real!  
There moved my miracle, there passed my Fate, whom to see is to  
love!

2

Somewhere I've read that the gods, waxing wroth at our mad  
importunity,  
Hurl us our boon, and it falls with the weight of a curse at our feet:  
Perilous thing to intrude on their lofty Olympian immunity!  
"Take it, and die," say the gods, and we die of our fondest conceit.

3

Is it so now with myself? I have riven the night-watches asunder,  
Murmuring "Give me to see him," and fretting the beautiful skies.  
Lo, I have seen him! And now, I shrink, trembling with impotent  
wonder,  
Pondering, Is it the blessing I craved, or a curse in disguise?

4

Yes, I have seen him; and envious murmur and fretful rebellion  
Pause as I muse on a possible future, and gird up my strength.  
How my wild spirit was hushed when I looked on this Raymond  
Trevelyan!  
Prince of my dreams, by the throb of this heart, thou art come  
— come at length!

**IX.**

1

DOWN in the vines he is sitting, the fruitage, leaf-shadowed above him,  
Lending concomitant charm to the ripeness that flushes his cheek.  
There is the glory of summer about him. I see him, and love him,  
Asking not why. I but know that the strong one is come to the weak.

2

Down in the vines he is sitting; and radiance leaf-softened and golden  
On the broad calm of his brow through the veil of the vintage is shed.  
Blest be each bough that enshrines him! Henceforth I am ever beholden  
Unto the slenderest, tenderest leaflet that shelters his head.

3

Down in the vines he is sitting; I see him leaf-circled and Faun-like,  
Such as I've seen in my dreams, in like halo of amber and green,  
With those same love-seeking glances, so placidly, dreamily, dawn-like,  
Quiet as the birth of the dew, as the star of the morning serene.

4

Dream, heart, no more of thy lyre-lauded heroes, and demi-gods storied!  
Open thine eyes on the breathing fulfilment of beauty and strength!  
Down in the vines he is sitting; I see him leaf-girt, and leaf-gloried;  
Prince of my dreams, by the throb of this heart, thou art come  
— come at length!

## X.

1

ONLY two syllables uttered — “Goodnight;” a conventional  
Nay, not so much — a mere meeting of finger-tips formally deigned.  
Nothing for heart to interpret; no look to remember and treasure:  
Lovingly courteous to others; to me alone coldly constrained.

2

Yet he is mine. I have marked him for mine. Am I fantasy's minion?  
Slave to a self-born philosophy? victim of doating conceit?  
Or, am I privileged priestess, beholding dark things Eleusinian,  
Piercing the thought of the gods, and fore-casting the way of their  
feet?

3

Gods, gods, and gods! I am weary of gods! I have looked on humanity,  
Living, and breathing, and glowing, and burning — limb, body, and  
face!  
Time that my dreams become touch, that I cease from this bodiless  
vanity,  
Wistfully rounding my vacuous arms to the shape of embrace!

## XI.

1

OVER my mirror. 'Tis time that I look to my weapons and armour.  
Keener than ever, I fancy, the penetrant edge of my glance.  
I can remember a fuller-orbed cheek, and a rose-blushing warmer;  
But on my brow is no line sorrow-furrowed, no wake of mischance.

2

Loves he dark tresses, I wonder, in sinuous subtlety twining?  
Loves he dark eyes, fired with love, and star-sympathied passion of  
night?  
Loves he the long drooping eye-lash, half secret half story combining?  
Loves he the lithe grace of undulous ease, and imperial height?

3

This is the reflex of beauty I gaze on, the beauty I've hidden,  
Most from myself, and have struggled thro' years of control to forget,  
Deeming it e'en as a perilous thing, and a weapon forbidden,  
Piercing the hand of the user, and dealing but shame and regret.

4

Wherefore should beauty be evil? and that which in lilies and roses  
Men deem most gracious and holy be fatal in woman alone?  
Why should the flower seek the light, while the woman in cloister  
reposes,  
Sealed down by vows from the eyes that were made to drink love at  
her own?

5

Beauty, like Knowledge, is Power; what of Beauty and Knowledge  
colleaguings,  
Guided by keen-visioned Prudence to work to one ultimate goal?  
Not Cleopatra herself, 'mid the lurements of Tarsus intriguing,  
Boasted this tri-une endowment concluded in body and soul.

6

Not as my past is my present. No more as a child shall I stumble,  
Hastening the end by false measures, and grasping the fruit immature:  
I shall be patient. The time may be long, and the means may be humble,  
But he is mine; I have marked him for mine; and the triumph is sure.

7

This idle curl that I smooth even now betwixt finger and finger,  
Silkenly circling his own shall he press upon amorous lips;  
Yea, on the yielding delight of this breast shall that conquered head  
linger,  
And 'neath the veil of these tresses lie hid in enamoured eclipse.

8

But my lamp pales as I gaze; and I feel the weird tremor that thrilleth  
Brain, heart, and limb, when the night seems to yield up its soul unto  
day.

Now to mine orisons. Shall I then speak as the spirit not willeth?

Nay: I must couch me unshriven. To-night I am powerless to pray.

## XII.

1

WAS it a chance or a Providence brought me once more to the river?

Wandering whither I knew not, and cared not, I came as before  
Unto the spot. It was ever my solace to wander; and ever  
Seem I allured to the stream: for the rush and the musical roar,

2

Rhyming and chiming in mystic agreement with that which works in me,  
Bravely concurring with thoughts of wild action and furious delight,  
Win me from baleful contentment, from dreamy oblivion win me,  
Call me to live and to dare, re-endow me with motion and might.

3

How I have smiled at my school-bred compatriots languidly viewing  
Iyy-clad relics caducous, and morbidly learned in decay!  
Give me the bountiful rush of my river, its ever-renewing  
Life and festivity, song, dance, and revel by night and by day!

4

Surely 'twas this and not espionage guided my fanciful wandering,  
Drew me thro' bosky entanglement e'en to the ripple-wooded marge;  
Couched me in ready concealment, and set me conjecturing, pondering,  
Ever on life, and on *my* life; when, lo, by the mangroves a barge,

5

Fairy-like, noiselessly gliding! Or ever I saw him I knew him.

Knew by the sudden rebound of my blood, and the quiver of limb!  
Knew, too, that rustling of leaves, and the gleam of white vesture that  
drew him

Unto the haven appointed — the heaven of Hyacinth and him.

6

Then the old story, the Adam-old story, the Eve-old love story:

Rapture of lips, and entwining of arms, and commingling of sighs,  
Heart-to-heart clingings, and glad jets of tears; all the glow and the glory  
Of a ripe summer of love sunned in splendour of amorous eyes.

7

Was it in generous forbearance I bore me so calmly, so mildly,

Marking the kiss-dented lips, and sweet license of zephyr-blown hair?  
Who could have dreamed of young Hyacinth clasping and clinging so  
wildly?

She of the angels! In sooth such embracement is not of the air.

8

Well: 'tis enough. A new obstacle. Sometimes the ghost of it haunted me,

Breathing on sparks of suspicion that now are enkindled to flame.  
Phantom no more: I have seen, and the glare of the truth hath not daunted  
me;

Truly, forewarned is forearmed, and I grow but the more to mine aim.

9

She is a child; I a woman; and he! could he fill up the measure

Of the great longing I read in his eyes with a kiss or a song?  
Greatness of heart soon outgrows the milk-dainties of infantile pleasure.

Weak silly-winning young ways are poor wiles for the wise and the strong.

**10**

It is not ivy he needeth, the boughs of his manhood caressing,  
Ivy that drains what it clings to, and sappeth the life of the tree.  
It is the earth for the roots, and the blood of the storm, and the blessing  
Wrapt in the rolling of vapours, and born of the sun and the sea.

**11**

These would I give him, a closer embrace than poor parasite-clinging,  
Being his meat, and his drink, and his strength, and his light, and his  
breath!  
Is not this better than daintiest love-lore of sighing and singing?  
Hyacinth! Hyacinth! It is not you, it is I . . . his till death!

**12**

Yea, though I saw you to-day in the rapture of parasite-clinging,  
Luring the strength from his heart, and suspiring a mutual breath,  
Practising daintiest love-lore of kissing, and sighing, and singing,  
Hyacinth! Hyacinth! . . . it is not you . . . it is I . . . his till death!

**XIII.**

**1**

LET me be justified in my own sight. She is young, and before her  
Lies all the wide world to choose from. Would God that it were so  
with me!  
Hers is blind impulse: she cannot have chosen: and Raymond reigns o'er  
her  
Only by right of first comer. Not such would my fealty be!

2

Not with the eye of a child do I measure those opulent merits —  
Frame of Antinöus, utterance of Pericles, heart of “The Just.”  
All the more mine do I claim him because of the taint he inherits:  
This were a shame unto her in high places of blue-veined disgust.

3

Shall I invoke higher motives, and sanction my purpose by duty?  
Well, an I would, so I might, and no more than my duty fulfil.  
Am not I Hyacinth's keeper, aedile of this temple of beauty,  
Bound by my service and honour to watch and to guard? . . . And I  
*will*.

#### **XIV.**

1

LINGER, oh Sun, for a little, nor close yet this day of a million!  
Is there not glory enough in the rose-curtained halls of the West?  
Hast thou no joy in the passion-hued folds of thy kingly pavilion?  
Why shouldst thou only pass through it? Oh rest thee a little while,  
rest!

2

Why should the Night come and take it, the wan Night that cannot enjoy  
it,  
Bringing pale argent for golden, and changing vermilion to grey?  
Why should the Night come and shadow it, entering but to destroy it?  
Rest 'mid thy ruby-trailed splendours! Oh stay thee a little while, stay!

3

Rest thee at least a brief hour in it! 'Tis a right royal pavilion.  
Lo, there are thrones for high dalliance all gloriously canopied o'er!

Lo, there are hangings of purple, and hangings of blue and vermilion,  
And there are fleeces of gold for thy feet on the diapered floor!

4

Linger, a little while linger. To-morrow my heart may not sing to thee:  
This shall be Yesterday, numbered with memories, folded away.  
Now should my flesh-fettered soul be set free! I would soar to thee, cling  
to thee,  
And be thy rereward Aurora, pursuing the skirts of To-day!

5

Shall I not doat on to-day that hath brought me the earnest of blessing,  
Young buds of friendship whose promise the coming of time shall  
fulfil?  
First the green blade; then the ear, from the green to the yellow  
progressing;  
Then the full corn in the ear, golden waving, to reap when I will.

6

For, as it fell out to-day, I was sought and was found of young Raymond;  
And he hath told me his story, beseeching my counsel and aid:  
Closest of friends, we are Pythias out-Pythias'd and Damon out-  
Damon'd;  
Man unto man is as nought to our friendship of young man and maid.

7

All this is well. It is something to nourish a secret between us.  
All this is well. There are meetings, and moon-light and star-light in  
store.  
Ah, my poor "mournful OEnone," dost think there is pity in Venus  
When she contends with her peers for the prize? Such have I, and no  
more.

8

This is not new in the love-lore of woman — love's messenger pleading  
Subtly and warily, making the cause of another her own;  
Skilfully pouring in shaft upon shaft, till the love that lies bleeding  
Turns to the smiter for help, and finds rest in her bosom alone.

9

Didst thou not dream then, my love, when I proffered a guerdonless  
traffic  
'Twixt that poor dove and thyself, that thy trust was most sweetly  
beguiled?  
Didst thou then deem me so icy-angelic, so snowy-seraphic,  
That I but gazed on thine eyes to reflect back their light on a child?

10

Ah me! this turmoil of heart! Is it truly a change for the better?  
Once I remember a setting of sun, yea, and settings of suns,  
Which I all-hailed, when, as warder, and order, and grating, and fetter,  
Passed into darkness and silence — twin-heaven of the spirit that  
shuns

11

Daylight and audible life. Oh my soul! the delight, the delicious  
Pressing together of arms, and up-gathering of knees to the chin,  
And the spent air breathed for warmth 'twixt the breasts, while the  
darkness propitious  
Softer than wool wrapt me round with a dreamless oblivion of sin!

12

Which is the better? — the torpid collapse of spent penitence crouching  
Into the darkness and solitude, hugging the joy of the night,  
Or the fierce gladness of day that would hinder the sun from his  
couching,

Mad with the bitter-sweet wine of desire, and the pain of delight?

**13**

Is there no midway for such one as I am 'twixt being and doing?  
Is there no choice save the lotus of sleep or the apple of strife?  
Is there no bliss that is neither dull rest nor a fevered pursuing?  
Is there no twilight dividing the noon-flame and night of my life?

**14**

Well, what I am, that I am. It is better to scheme than to slumber.  
What was this goodness that sometime I strove for? Supineness,  
constraint,  
Mortification of spirit, and crosses and thorns without number,  
Pride in abasement, and sombre complacence of embryo saint.

**15**

That is all over; and, saving some fitful remembrance of pity  
Piercing the joints of the harness, to break as it reaches the heart,  
All is as erst. . . . Touching Hyacinth, she must to school, to the city.  
This I advise for her good — for her good (perhaps mine, too, in  
part).

**XV.**

**1**

VASTNESS of verdurous solitude, forest complexity boundless,  
Where is no stir save the fall of a leaf, or the wave of a wing:  
Lone sunny regions where virginal Nature roams ceaseless and  
soundless,  
Rich with the richness of summer, yet fresh with the freshness of  
spring:

2

Where is no stir save of leaf in its falling, or bird in its winging,  
Or the unfrequent sweet idyll low-murmured by devious streams;  
Where is no passion, or sign of desire, save the infantile clinging  
Of the young tendrils, or opening of flowers to a morning of beams.

3

That was but yesterday. Comes a brief journey . . . a sleep . . . and the  
morrow  
Wakes on the City, with issuing forth of tumultuous life —  
Wakes upon quickening footsteps, and faces acquainted with sorrow,  
Hurried uptaking of burdens, and voices familiar with strife.

4

Marvel of contrast, that seems like the swift incoherence of vision!  
As peradventure it may be; for who can say more than “It seems”?  
Surely all life is a dream, mis-begot of Olympian derision,  
And the divided strange courses of men are but dreams within  
dreams.

5

Let me dream on, then. Of late I confess I have dreamed somewhat  
pleasantly.  
Last night I dreamed of a school in a convent. And Hyacinth and I  
Came to the gate. So we knocked at the gate, and it opened, and  
presently  
Hyacinth passed from my sight, and I heard a voice sobbing “Good-  
bye.”

6

Poor little Hyacinth! But it was better, assuredly better.  
You'll be too busy to think, and too much with the angels to care.  
Now you are safe from the freaks of young fantasy — safe as your letter

Is *not* to pass from my hand into his. You'll forget him in there!

## **XVI.**

### **1**

BACK to my woods; back to Lily and Violet; back to the daily  
Track of the wheels, and the hidden rotation of wheels within wheels.  
But there is hush in the home all unwonted. Where three voices gaily  
Sang to one tune, there is silence, save whispers, and wordless  
appeals

### **2**

From sad young eyes unto mine, as the last who have seen and have  
kissed her,  
Fretting my soul with unspoken entreaty and inquest of truth,  
Seeming to ask with sharp scrutiny, "What hast thou done with our  
sister?  
Art thou more cruel than death, that thou grudgest the years of her  
youth?"

### **3**

Give me a woman to strive with, a man, or a demon, or angel!  
When did I tremble or cringe, when the proud and the strong were my  
foes?  
But from the weaklings of Christ, from the delicate lambs of Evangel,  
From the lorn looks of young innocents — save me, oh save me from  
those!

## Part Second.

### I.

1

EVEN as water to him who thirsts wayfaring, dust-dry and burning,  
After sore heat and long stumbling in courses with never a rill,  
Weary with counting of ridges, and barren result of much turning,  
Tempted to curse God and die, let the afterward be what it will;

2

Even as the brimming delight of the wine-cup by fair hands commended  
Unto hot lips that are sanguine from onslaught and stiff-set from ire,  
With the undoing of baldrick and panoply heavy and splendid,  
Changed for a girth of white arms, and the softness of silken attire;

3

Even as pressure of ministering hands on the fevered and aching  
Brow of the sorrowful, morrow-full sire and provider of bread,  
Wherein is grace of sweet solace and peace, and a virtue awaking  
Unexplained hope, and discernment of bliss all around and o'erhead;

4

Even as green rivage with homestead, rose-garden, and grass-lawn trim-  
shaven,  
Unto eyes weary with wide waste of waters and seething sea-foam,  
Changing the spirit of heaviness into the joy of the haven,  
And the long vigils of storm to the rest and observance of home;

5

Even as the stirring of leaves on the bough after breathless unbroken  
Months of dead drought, when the earth is as iron, and heaven as  
brass,  
When the rain-argosy cometh, and sendeth a sigh for a token,  
And there is hope in the flowers, and a wave on the languishing grass;

6

Even as the coming of dawn to the pilgrim in trackless wild places,  
Lighting up landmarks of old, and confirming his face to the south  
Zionward, — even to Jerusalem the Golden, where rest is and grace is,  
Whither he toils, angel-tended, with Songs of Degrees in his mouth;

7

Even as the coming of night to the premature children of labour,  
Smit to the heart of their youth with the curse of the iron and steel —  
Night with re-unions of home, or sweet converse of neighbour with  
neighbour,  
Proffering the peace of her stars for the wildering whirl of the wheel;

8

Even as all golden moments, all joyance of welcome transition,  
Gathered from all the wide circuit of life and concluded in one; —  
So to Love's fever and fret, its sore travail and thirsting ambition,  
Comes what my lips and my heart knew to-day at the set of the sun!

## II.

1

HE is not faithless or fickle, and had he all shamelessly yielded

At the first stroke, I had spurned him, and left him ignobly to die:  
Or I had dallied a little, and played with the potency I wielded —  
Kissed him perchance, and then loathed him, and branded his love  
with a lie.

2

I might have gazed on his eyes till the light of allurements had quenched  
them;  
Suffered a violent brief little bondage of manly embrace;  
This way and that way have parted his hair with my fingers, then  
clenched them,  
And with the scorn of a woman have smitten him full on the face.

3

But he is noble and virtuous, patient of evil appearance;  
Charity in him is sovereign; it suffereth long and is kind.  
“She may seem wholly estranged; all is darkness; but time bringeth  
clearance,  
And I will grope in my darkness, content for her sake to be blind.”

4

Long months of silence, and agonized waiting, and ever-increasing  
Substance of wonder still found him believing the message would  
come:  
Yet not as mine could his suffering be, a hid torture unceasing,  
Knowing the cause, yea, and *being* the cause, and yet wilfully dumb.

5

Ah, those poor letters of his and of hers! Like things murdered they  
haunt me.  
Dead things have power on me, though with the quick I be fearless  
and brave.  
Surely the fire would consume them! But how if the sight of them daunt  
me?

And should I open my desk, it would seem as I opened a grave.

**6**

There are some things even I cannot do. False I could not declare her;  
Nor could I ruthlessly slander a living love never withdrawn.  
How could I rail at poor Hyacinth, knowing her purer and fairer  
In the well-springs of her soul than the opaline deeps of the dawn?

**7**

Thanks to her father, her blundering father, who spoke of her marriage,  
Right in the hearing of Raymond, as something quite fixed and at  
hand:  
Vulgarly boasted of fortune in store for her, “servants and carriage,”  
And of the change of her name to a name that is known in the land.

**8**

Thanks to her father, who knows not the obstacle, knows not the  
wayward  
Heart of a girl that no arbiter brooks in the gift of her youth;  
Sees not, gold-dazzled, the scorn of the world when December looks  
Mayward;  
Thanks to her father mistaking his easy consent for the truth.

**9**

Hyacinth seen, and admired, and desired — this I knew, and concealed  
it;  
Fain would have shaped it to something, and profited somehow  
thereby;  
Made it available, made her seem saleable, subtly revealed it:  
Thanks to the old man again, who has saved me the crime of a lie.

**10**

This was the spark. It was not of my lighting. Mine only to breathe on it.  
Ready the fuel, long-dried by suspense, to flame into a hell!  
Mine but to watch the dark cauldron of agony bubble and seethe on it,  
Then to sing soft incantations that loosen and alter the spell.

**11**

Wherefore record them: the wiles and the low-whispered counsel, the  
honeyed  
Words of feigned comfort, the maxims of wisdom, the fanning of  
pride,  
Praises disguised as dispraise of alliances landed and moneyed —  
Damning excuses, replete with exposure, while seeming to hide?

**12**

Wherefore? There are, and myself am of such, who are slaves to an  
inward  
Devil of self-contemplation that drinks its own blood and own breath,  
Lapping insatiate at all streams alike be they Godward or sinward;  
Making good evil, bad worse: self-consuming, yet frugal of death.

**13**

Even as the shedder of blood ever fleeing the dread scene of slaughter,  
Yet by centripetal charm ever drawn to the spot where the hand  
Points from the shuddering earth, or the sodden white face on the water  
Stares its unsinking appeal till his days be cut off from the land, —

**14**

So do I circle and hover, so flee, and yet circle and hover  
Round my past deeds, and past purpose, and central arcana of sin.  
When shall I know the great sigh of relief, the “Thank God, it is over”?  
Ah, could I think death were better, how soon should I slumber  
therein!

15

Strange I should love to record what, already too luridly lettered,  
Burns on the tablets within me in lines of unquenchable fire.  
Strange there is respite in singing of self, that the Demon sleeps fettered,  
When of my passion-strained heart-strings I make me and wake me a  
lyre.

16

Even as I've seen in fair Italy, where the weird mystical mountain  
Travailing mightily foams with red ruin from summit to base;  
Seen there the cunning in art, ere destruction is quenched at its fountain,  
Take of the lava, and make of it things of adornment and grace;

17

Yea, of the spume of convulsion make things to be worn on the bosom,  
Out of the travail of darkness bring issue of beauty to light,  
Fashion a dove in its tenderness, simulate softness of blossom,  
Lips that subdued the Immortals, or brows of Olympian might;

18

So do I take of my sin, and my suffering, and labour of passion,  
Mould them to semblance of beauty of Nature, or classic conceit,  
Smooth them, and lose me the body of pain in the sense of the fashion,  
Binding distress itself captive to art in the linking of feet.

19

Yet, to re-track all the wiles one by one — nay I cannot, I may not.  
Under the web is complexity, subtle, and hopeless to trace.  
Raymond is blameless. How could he be else? There are things that I say  
not  
Which would redeem him in eyes the severest from ban of disgrace.

**III.**

1

DID not I dream that true happiness sat in the throne of attainment,  
Crowned with the crown of victorious endeavour, and sceptred with  
palm?  
Did not I see Fate herself flower-subdued, and in rosy enchainment,  
And the importunate problem of life lying stifled in balm?

2

Is it the way of high Heaven to mock us with tokens of favour,  
Lavish of sunshine to ripen the growth of our dearest device;  
Then to deceive us with harvests that nourish not, fruits without savour,  
Hemlock and hebenon clothed with the semblance of balsam and  
spice?

3

Is the high God of Evangel more cruel than gods of old fable?  
Tantalus only *beholds*, never touches, the fruit ere it slips:  
But this Jehovah — He filleth our hands with it, heapeth our table;  
Then laughs in heaven when it changes to ashes and fire on our lips!

4

Yes; turn on Heaven! Call the gods, then the God of gods, scornful and  
cruel!  
Rail at the pitiless Triads that rule us, and mock us, and curse!  
Call up thine ancient despair, challenge Nemesis' self to the duel!  
Arm thee with Greek old-world blasphemies! . . . Feel'st thou then  
better, or worse?

5

Thou hast the wish of thine heart. Would'st have more? See, 'twixt finger  
and finger,

Lo, how he twineth thy hair, and then lifts it to amorous lips!  
See, on the yielding delight of thy breast doth the conquered head linger,  
And 'neath the veil of thy tresses lies hid in enamoured eclipse!

6

Wherefore the fret? Is it surfeit of pleasure or surfeit of sinning?  
Would'st thou have appetite grow with the feeding? the lust of the  
eyes  
Ever renewed with the gazing? And knew'st thou not from the beginning  
That, when sin hath its desire, the desirableness thereof dies?

7

Is it God's way that in nature He suffereth His own disappearance,  
Leaves it to work to its end in the groove of immutable rule;  
But that in things of the spirit He willeth direct interference,  
Giving the crown to the simple, and meting out grace to the fool?

8

Is this His sovereign and awful prerogative: joy He retaineth  
Absolute, in His own hands, to bestow, to withhold, to destroy?  
What shall it profit a man that he prosper, if joy *He* restraineth  
Who can give joy without cause, and a bounteous cause without joy?

9

I am a fool to indulge me in sadness of spirit-communing.  
Thought is all sadness; but night is all kindness: the stars are on high.  
It is the hour. I will rush to him, cling to him, revel to swooning  
In the dear love of him. Eat, drink, be merry, To-morrow we die!

IV.

1

WHAT have I gained? One grand moment, one moment supreme and delirious.

Something hath perished from earth and from heaven since that eve when he spoke:

That one prime eve, when the moon was a sun, and the brightness of Sirius

Glowed in the tiniest star, and the palpitant firmament broke

## 2

Everywhere into confusion of glory, and sordid conditions,

Earthy and palpable, clean fell away from our feet and our eyes,  
And in the mid air we seemed, ether-fed with unspeakable visions,

And there was none save us twain in the lands, or the seas, or the skies!

## 3

Now is no life at my heart save the life of the serpent that hisses,

Coiled round its roots, giving slime for all moisture, and poison for dew.

Now I but mourn o'er a grace unrenewed. All in vain do his kisses

Press on a passionless cheek, that is cold as the conscience I slew.

## 4

One supreme moment; no more. And the joy of it died with the using:

One sublime bound to the copestone of bliss, then the chilling recall:

One sudden sense of a crown, then the sting of the thorns of accusing:

One sudden draught of the nectar, that turned as I drank into gall.

## 5

What shall I curse? The poor hands that lie lifelessly lax when he takes them

Into his own? Or the arms that are flaccid and powerless to cling?  
Or the set lips without fervour? The eyes whose effulgence forsakes them?

Or the thin, quavering, passionless voice that refuses to sing?

6

There is no good thing, I think, 'neath the sun. And yet somehow it seems to me,

When I saw *her*, that true happiness shone like the sun from her face  
As he drew near to her. Glimpses of Hyacinth come in my dreams to me,  
Radiant, elated, and clothed on with joy as an angel of grace.

7

All for young Raymond — my Raymond too! But there's a curse on my loving;

Curse of an inward recoiling, and curse of an outward decline;  
Curse of an outward supineness, and curse of an inward reproving;  
Cursed most of all in that memory of intercourse other than mine!

8

What shall the end be? Ah me, my wrecked reason refuseth conclusions.

Lacks there but madness to fill up my cup of reproach to the brim?  
God! send me rather the sharp fires of hell than the reign of delusions!  
This is the one thing I ask Thee, to slay me ere judgment grows dim!

V.

1

WHY walk we softly and whisper to-day, as if one in a fever  
Slept, and life lay in the stifling of sound, and the batement of breath?  
Know we not well that no step can awake her, no dissonance grieve her?  
Know we not well the omnipotence of the last febrifuge — Death?

2

Surely we know she is dead to our reverence and muffled dissembling,  
Past all our little proprieties, in unprofanable spheres;  
Yet we walk softly, and whisper, and do our least office with trembling,  
As if the vibrating air yet made converse of sound in her ears.

3

This is the riddle of Death: while she lived, no such reverent seeming  
Silkened our ways. She is dead, and we whisper, move softly, and weep;  
As if our delicate walking would rhyme with the peace of her dreaming,  
As if the music of whispers would deepen the hush of her sleep.

4

Surely we know all must die: yet we cherish and hoard up our reverence,  
Until the known are unknown; then subside to unechoing feet.  
Were it not wiser and better to count on the moment of severance,  
And pay the dues of the tomb in the house, in the mart, in the street!

## VI.

1

HYACINTH'S mother. . . . One question appals me. When spirits are bounded

No more by straight circumscription and narrow availment of brain,  
When they are done with all mediums wherewith our dull nature is rounded,

Can they then look, soul to soul, on the secrets of such as remain?

2

Then she knows all; and my heart like a scroll lieth open before her,  
And I am read as I am in the merciless noonlight of truth,  
As the high-priestess of craft, the arch-scorner, the self-god adorer,  
As the contemner of innocence, and the deceiver of youth!

3

Hush! This is dotage of morbid timidity, fruit of long waking,  
Offspring of death-bed anxieties, weak suicidal despair.  
I will throw off superstition, arise when the daylight is breaking,  
Look on the body, and touch it, and breathe in the death-laden air.

4

I will be friendly with death, and familiarly handle and think of it,  
Call its deep peace a delight, and its etiolation a grace.  
Surely 'tis wise now and then just to sip at the cup ere we drink of it,  
Wise to strip Doom of its terror by looking it full in the face.

## VII.

1

LO, where it lies, not yet wholly cut off from the land of the living.  
What is there in it should haunt me, and thrill with mysterious awe?  
Is it not matter as I am, obedient to sunlight, and giving  
Even in its shadow the tenebrous token of natural law?

2

Yea, by the shadow it casts one might reckon the hour of the morning.  
It is then subject of time, and the changing relations of space.  
Is it then other than I, save the fashion of outward adorning,  
Other than I, save the shroud, and the flowers, and the hue of the  
face?

3

Oh, who will read me this Death? Who will read me this stranger Life-  
mystery,

Pierce to its primary subtlety, seize it, and drag it to light,  
Show me its essence, its fount, its transmission, its law, and its history?  
Oh, who will teach me what Day is, ere yet I go down unto Night?

4

Ever the problem besets me, in labour, in sorrow, in laughter:  
Mystery of mysteries, too wide for conception, too deep and too high!  
Imbecile! What doth it profit to gaze on the mists of Hereafter?  
Turn me away from them. Eat, drink, be merry, To-morrow we die!

## VIII.

1

AH, but to-morrow we die not. For morrow, and morrow on morrow,  
Each with a cry of awakening, and stretching importunate hands,  
Rending the garments of sleep, and unveiling new danger and sorrow,  
Bursts on the soul of the schemer, and bids it take heed how it stands.

2

Hyacinth cometh. No delegate Fury of wrath unrelenting  
Ever tracked mortal as tracks me the pallid reproach of her face.  
Yet even one tear is denied me. I find me no place for repenting,  
Cast forth all lawless and lonesome beyond the attraction of grace.

3

Oh, there are deep and dark places on earth where I fain would be lying,  
Fain would be sleeping unrecked of, and hidden away from the sun,  
Where is no next, and no imminent, where even death is past dying,  
Where is no doing or undoing, where all is done and undone!

4

What have I done that the heaven frowneth o'er me, and earth reeleth under?

Hypocrite heaven, and hypocrite earth, as if sin were yet young,  
And it behoved you to trumpet the marvel with tempest and thunder!  
Ye who have smiled upon sin since the song of Creation was sung!

5

Have ye not smiled upon all the seven sins, yea, on seventy times seven,  
That ye must blare out your wrath at *my* deeds with tempestuous din?  
Were ye not glowing in greenness, oh earth, and in azure, oh heaven,  
When the fair hand of our mother was laid on the key-note of sin?

6

Was your complaining thus thunderous, the hue of your vesture thus sable,  
When the fell Serpent hissed hideous triumph with pestilent breath?  
Were ye so fruitful of gloom when the life-blood of innocent Abel  
Wrote on the flowers of the field the first line of the annals of death?

7

Where were your flood-gates of anger when Ammon-encompassed  
Uriah,  
Victim of lust, in the fore-front of battle fell prone to the earth?  
Hid ye your beauty with sackcloth and weeping when Queen Athaliah  
Spared not the innocent souls whose one crime was the fount of their  
birth?

8

Can I not picture you glorious in verdure, and azure, and amber,  
When the proud Tullia swerved not her wheels from the corse of her  
sire?  
Can I not conjure the sunshine that gilded the porphyry chamber,  
When the blind son of Irene lay moaning his eyelids of fire?

9

Ha, ye must flash! ye must bellow! Yet have ye no potence to scare me.  
Full in the face of your fury I tell you my life is my own;  
And I shall end it to-day, let your thunderous futility dare me  
Even as it will. I am I — I am mine, God-forsaken, alone!

10

Yes, and I know it is sin, and as sin I yet dare it, and do it.  
Death is a light thing, and death is your inmost, your utmost, your all!  
And if the wages of sin is but death, see, I crave it, I sue it;  
Sue it as wages, for worse thing than life is can never befall.

11

Oh for the Sea! 'Twere so easy to cease in its yielding embracement,  
Caught like a rain-drop, and merged in the hugeness of infinite rest,  
Only the laugh of a ripple o'erbubbling the dimpled displacement,  
Then the great level of calm, and the hush of the passionless breast.

12

Curse on those undulous pastures, and far vista'd woods unavailing,  
Scant of contiguous umbrage, unmeet for the tomb that I crave!  
Oh for the dark-curtained sleep of the Sea, for her kindly, unfailing  
End of all dolorous things in the bliss of the kiss of the wave!

13

Would that my oft-haunted river were deep as the concave of ocean,  
Tideless as Euxine, and true to the secrets of final despair!  
God! it would wake me, methinks, to be dragged in its libertine motion;  
Stranded, perchance, to be flouted once more by the sun and the air.

14

I do remember that once in my wanderings I noted a lakelet,  
Strangely sequestered, and high on a ridge unfrequented and steep.  
Green things drank lovingly of it, and lightly in many a flakelet  
Floated shed tribute of lilies thereon, a sweet refuge — and deep.

15

Thither I'll hie me, and lay down my burden of sin and of sorrow;  
Cast me therein with one instant and ultimate thrill of release;  
And the great world shall go round to renewing of days; but to-morrow  
I shall be deep in the heart of the hills, at the centre of peace!

## Part Third.

### I.

1

IT was a fever, they tell me: to me 'twas a sleep and a waking;  
Yet not a sleep without dreams: if indeed they were dreams that I saw.  
Never, I think, shall I call it a dream: but the truth and the breaking  
Up of all dreams, and a glimpse of superlative being and law.

2

Sweet, passing sweet, is this light of the morning, by green leaves made  
tender,  
Tender and mellowed on lids fever-folded, yet sick of repose;  
Even as this leaf-mellowed glow to the flood of meridian splendour,  
So is the life that we live to the life that such visions disclose.

3

Sweet is this dance of the shadows of leaves on my coverlet, ever  
Shifting and changing, yet silent, impalpable, fretting no fold;  
Even as this shadowy dance to the forest's tumultuous quiver,  
So is the life that we live to the life that in vision is told.

4

As I lie here on the dubious bank betwixt waking and slumber,  
Life on earth seems but a window that straitens our view of the skies;  
And all our fluttering joys and life's things of desire without number  
Are but the lattice-leaves, tempering God's light to our infantile eyes.

5

I have beheld what hath changed me, I know not in body or spirit,  
Far in a region where leagues are no measure, and time is no bound;  
Up in the realms imperturbable, which the high spirits inherit;  
Out of the reach of all seasons; beyond the last echo of sound.

6

First there came one like a storm-cloud, and bore me high up on the  
mountain,  
Showed me the kingdoms of earth, and the glory thereof, and the  
power;  
Ope'd me the well-springs of Love, drew the wine of Desire from its  
fountain:  
“Bow down and worship,” it said, “and all this will I give for thy  
dower.”

7

Then came, all star-girt, another, and caught me away, and I know not  
Whither he bore me, because of the pure inaccessible ray,  
Save that it was in the land where the beams of eternity flow not  
From any sun, and no morning or evening divideth the day.

8

As in a chrysolite sea I beheld the great cycles of story,  
Circling and widening afar at each pulse of the will of the King:  
But where I stood there was darkness that marred the immaculate glory;  
Shadowed therein I beheld me, a guilty and shuddering thing.

9

And while I stood all estranged, without welcome, or greeting, or token,  
There was a voice in my soul, “Thou must weep, if thy spirit would

live.”

Came a great longing for tears, and the spell of the vision was broken,  
And on my bed I lay tremulous, weeping, and crying “Forgive.”

## 10

Lo, by my side, all in white! it was Hyacinth, fair as the morning;  
And on her face were the meekness and peace of an angel of heaven.  
Keener than anger is pity, and love than the weapons of scorning!  
Lifting her finger, she smote me with — “Hush! All is known, and  
forgiven.”

## II.

### 1

LITTLE by little the tale of the stroke and the fever I gather,  
As I lie bridging oblivion, and weaving her words into form;  
How I was found as one dead, on a hill-side, by Hyacinth's father,  
Struck by the uppermost boughs of a tree that was wrecked in the  
storm.

### 2

How, after days of the semblance of death, there came fever and raving;  
How the brain's anarchy loosened the tongue from its wonted control;  
How I spoke wildly and darkly of Raymond and Hyacinth, craving  
Death for my body because of them, uttermost death for my soul.

### 3

How it was deemed as a duty to one whom no care could recover,  
Freely to search for some token of kindred, or trace of a friend;  
How in the scrutiny Hyacinth chanced on the words of her lover,  
Read and knew all, yet forbore to add woe to my imminent end.

4

How, too, at length I had rest, and the burden of heavy complaining  
    Changed to the sighing of rapturous vision, and trancëd repose.  
Well: it is over. Where now is the passion that knew no restraining?  
    But is the evil past? Will the shed petals return to the rose?

5

Full of crushed fragments my hands are. Ah me, can I e'er re-unite them  
    Into the sacrament cup of the love I have broken and spilt?  
How they two clung as the vine and the elm ere I saw, but to blight them!  
    Is there a river of tears that can cleanse out the mildew of guilt?

6

Is there no way? Ah, no way! From my raving her father, astonished,  
    Gathered a part of poor Hyacinth's story, sufficient for wrath;  
Led her away from me, questioned her, threatened, upbraided,  
admonished,  
    Tyrant and father by turns; till, unpurposed, their devious path

7

Ceased at the grave of her mother. Which seeing, the old man, with  
weeping,  
    Knelt, and made Hyacinth kneel on the verge of the flowerless sod:  
“Now, by my dead, hear me swear; by the heart of thy mother here  
sleeping” —  
    And he uncovered his head, and uplifted his hands unto God.

8

And as he raised them the gleam of the known wedding-ring on his  
finger,  
    Catching his eye as it glittered, gave form to the words of his oath:  
“See it,” he said; “it was hers; and by all the pure memories that linger  
    Round it, I make it the sign and the seal of a covenant for both.

9

“When I shall offer this ring as a sacred and covenant token  
Unto a convict, the choice of thy father: then love where thou wilt.  
Can I more fitly say Never? Enough. When my purpose is broken,  
Go thou to Raymond, and make thyself kin to dishonour and guilt.”

10

Could he more fitly say Never? I know him, a puritan cleaving  
Unto the letter of covenant, a word-clinging Jephthah in vows.  
He will go down to the grave with his vow in his right hand, believing  
He hath done well by his children, his honour, his name, and his  
house.

### III.

1

I AM not done with my shame. As a garment it clingeth around me.  
Even as a shroud it doth cover me paralysed, swathed in disgrace.  
Fast in the folds of obstruction, as one of the dead it hath wound me,  
Holding me motionless: and as a face-cloth it covereth my face.

2

What shall I do with my life, now I live? Could there be restitution,  
Then were there something to live for, a guerdon to strive for and  
win.  
Is there no hope, and must life be henceforward a slow dissolution,  
Passive and tearful purgation of soul from unspeakable sin?

3

In the old days there was refuge in orisons, vigils, and fasting,

Cloistered retirement, and matins, and vespers, and garments of grey;  
Wherein the broken in spirit caught glimpses of joy everlasting,  
Turning their life into night that the night might inherit the day.

4

Queens, and Kings' daughters, and delicate damsels, their pride and their  
beauty

Laid on the altar of Jesus. I think of such things and am fain.  
Faugh! It was cowardice all, and the sickly evasion of duty!  
Shame may be turned to a snare, and repentance made fruitless and  
vain.

5

I shall not cease to upbraid me. My burden is fixed. I will bear it.  
Yet must this bondage of shame be unwound that my soul may  
respire.  
Hid 'neath the vesture, and next to the flesh, as a chain I will wear it,  
As did the monarch of old that was stained with the blood of his sire.

6

So may I fight as he fought, with the iron memorial cherished  
Under all kingly array, until life was laid gloriously down:  
Also the world holds him kindly, and tearfully tells how he perished:  
His was a crown and a chain; oh, may mine be a chain and a crown!

## IV.

1

I HAVE made all my confession; the truth, and the whole, and truth  
only;  
Made it with anguish of spirit, and weeping, and hiding of face.  
But I have justified *him*. So far well. Single-handed and lonely  
I must begone with my burden. My guilt over-shadows the place.

2

Raymond is far from us. Driven from his peace by my fitful demeanour,  
Sudden he leaped at a chance of adventure, and passed from his  
home.  
He too must know. Then my spirit may yield to a sorrow serener,  
Seeking some token of duty to beckon me whither to roam.

3

Hyacinth fighteth against my new purpose. His love is for ever  
Closed against *her*, so she reasons. The oath of her father endures.  
Also she pleads her worth poor; "If in you he has found what I never  
Could have been unto him, let the means pass; not the less is he  
yours."

4

Piteous dove! though thy pardon extend unto seventy times seven,  
I shall not strain the advantage; thy loving is better than mine:  
Clinging like Sterope unto a mortal, like her I lose heaven.  
Now through repentance and duty I look to a union divine.

5

Surely God loves thee, thou sweet one! The Psyche that moves in thy  
moving,  
Looks through thine eyelids, and breathes in thy breath, is some angel  
of grace!  
Kiss me, oh Hyacinth! that the sweet sense of forgiving and loving,  
Some little fifth of thy nectar, may pass from thy lips to my face!

V.

1

ONCE again out in the breeze and the sun-light, heaven o'er me, earth under!

Grown unfamiliar by reason of sickness, all beautiful things  
Meet me with hundred-fold welcome, each green leaf a jubilant wonder,  
And the old throb of delight in the music of fluttering wings.

2

Now I can smile with the flowers; for to-day I have learned what hath brought me

Nearer akin to them. Ere this same summer hath numbered its hours,  
I shall be mixed with their roots. There came one here to-day who hath taught me

How there is that in my heart which shall lay me ere long with the flowers.

3

Science hath uttered its sentence. I own to a transient terror;

Only a little at first, then a sense of unspeakable rest.  
Taken away from the evil to come! The long bondage of error  
Soon shall be over! I carry my ransom about in my breast.

4

Ah, it is well. For I know my own heart: had I lived, I had striven

With a too violent haste and much stumbling to seize on the prize.  
Now I am cast back on mercy, content to be simply forgiven,  
Beggared of righteousness, pleading but needfulness, Magdalen-wise.

5

Yet it is strange I should smile with the flowers. I was wont to dissever

Nature and Grace. Behold Grace lends to Nature a kindlier charm.  
All things are bright with a glorious light of redemption, and never  
Seemed all the verdurous umbrage so gracious, the rose-blush so warm!

6

Once on a time, to me beauty seemed only a beautiful dying,  
Like to the moribund glow of the doomed one, illusive as sweet.  
Death! I had deemed it the end of all beauty, the hid underlying  
Worm at the root of all loveliness, making each grace a deceit.

7

This from afar. But now, nearer, I hail it the needful condition  
Of the superlative life; not a pause, but a step, and a birth;  
As but a yew-shadowed avenue leading to splendid fruition,  
And the fulfilment of that which is writ on the flowers of the earth.

8

It is but closing the eye for repose, ere we wake to the wonder  
Waiting our vision through slumber made strong to behold the  
Divine.  
It is but turning the web we have seen as yet only from under,  
That we may look on the tissues of life in completed design.

9

'Tis but the fall of the seed when the season of blossom is over,  
Dying to spring up anew from the womb of its burial clod.  
'Tis but the clasp of the die on the coin, which the mould must once  
cover,  
Ere it shine forth with the bright superscription and image of God.

10

Once in mine agony, once in my darkness of purpose I sought it,  
Wilfully blind to its issues, and caring for respite alone;  
Trampling the jewel of life under foot that was His who hath bought it;  
Lord, re-unite the poor fragments, and set them at last with Thine

own!

**11**

Not with Thine amethysts, not with the emerald, sapphire, and ligure,  
Lest I be shamed into nought, as a star when the sun is on high;  
Not with the Urim and Thummim, of Light and Perfection the figure,  
For I am dark and imperfect; no gem of Thine worthless as I.

**12**

Oh, if it be that a pearl is a tear, as a pearl do thou set me  
Where infant-angels shall point to me, asking the meaning of pain.  
So in the day when Thou gatherest Thy jewels Thou wilt not forget me,  
Though I be dim with remembrance, and shades of old sorrow  
remain.

**VI.**

**1**

STRANGELY I wake to high thoughts, and beneath them a quiet  
gratulation,  
Like a hid brook whisper-quiring the lordly old music of pines;  
And, around all, as a glory, an incense of sweet consecration  
Wraps me in mists of devotion that soars beyond visible signs.

**2**

Through the thin wall that divides us I hear the low breath of the sleeper,  
All whose blest dreaming is worship, whose veriest breathing is  
prayer.  
Oh to be like her! so meet for the Master, so ripe for the Reaper,  
Clothed on with gentleness, full of sweet amnesties, stainlessly fair.

**3**

Let me but look on her. 'Twill be a sacred and privileged portal  
Unto new day, but to mark how the stages of crimsoning morn  
Quicken the life in her cheek — how the mortal that shrines the immortal  
Grows out of darkness from grace unto grace, reilluminated, re-born.

4

Peace to this chamber. Now kneeling I gather the breath of her purity.  
See how the delicate pinions of dawning seem fondly to sweep  
Over faint outlines and twilight suggestions of shapely obscurity,  
Brushing the tokens of night from the maiden-white marvel of sleep.

5

Seems as Aurora were groping for beauty, and, lo! having found it,  
Flushes with roseate rapture, and, bounteous, hastes to unfold  
All the rare gifts she hath gathered from orient, and lavish around it  
Various profusion of homage in amber, and crimson, and gold.

6

Not on the mountain-tops only the glad things of dawning are treasured,  
Not in the vaporous magic with bright dreams bewitching the air,  
Not by proud eminence only the scope of her bounty is measured;  
Sweetest it lies on my sweet, on her face, and her aureoled hair.

7

Soft sits the light on her beautiful brow; no such radiance is given,  
In the morn's kiss, unto uppermost leafage or eastern-most peak:  
There is no hue on the rainbow-winged messengers floating in heaven,  
Like the ethereal pigments that blend in the bloom of her cheek.

8

What are thy visions, fair slumbering sister? What alchemy hidden

Orbeth the tremulous dream-drop that pearls the dark fringe of thine  
eye?  
Oh, if thou sorrowest even in sleep, by thy sleep am I chidden:  
There was no tear in the peace of thy dawn ere my shadow passed by.

**9**

I should go from thee; from all that is thine; and yet fondly I linger,  
Thinking some providence yet may redeem the foul wrong that I  
weep.  
May not some juncture of good, like an angel with beckoning finger,  
Wave me the way of redress, and establish thy joy ere I sleep?

**10**

Oft where the clouds gather darkest, the star of our comfort is shining.  
Black though the night of our sorrow, who knows but the dawn may  
be nigh?  
I will not speak of my secret of death, till the signs of declining  
Warn me to flee to the city: to choose me a home where to die.

## Part Fourth.

### I.

1

“I HAVE no heart and no time to go forth to the world, there to choose me

One who may be to my children a mother in room of the dead.  
Soil-rooted, I am no more of society. I should but lose me  
In its mad vortex. And yet, it behoves me to choose, and to wed.

2

“No more for love. As thou seest, I am old, and my summer is over.  
Yet 'tis for love, too, the love of a father who fears for his own.  
It is for them. Mark, I plead not in guise of a passionate lover.  
Plain in my speech, what I offer are honour and duty alone.

3

“Beauteous I see thee; yet 'tis not thy beauty that tempts me to sue thee:  
'Tis that I've noted thee faithful in many things, weighty and small.  
Gifted I know thee; yet not thy attainments could tempt me to woo thee:  
Nought I behold save that *thou* lovest *them*, and *they thee* — this is  
all.

4

“If I should say I am rich and thou poor, this were little to claim thee.  
If not for love of my little ones, let my poor quest be as nought.  
Cast it aside as unseemly, incongruous: I shall not blame thee.

Better my children left motherless than a false motherhood *bought*.

5

“Ponder it. Give me thine answer in peace. Be it joyous or grievous,  
Thou hast my blessing: thy will shall be sacred as heaven's decree.  
If thou rebukest my haste, 'tis because thou art purposed to leave us,  
Therefore I speak ere thou goest; and what are the world's ways to  
me?”

## II.

1

THOU then declinest to answer me openly, till thou hast pleaded  
(Well, too, thou pleadest) the cause of my child. Would my will were  
my power!  
Mightier things than all words for the same have in vain interceded —  
*Her* dim sad eyes, and the cheeks that are blanching from hour unto  
hour.

2

“But, from my youth up, my word has been sacred. The roots of mine  
honour  
Must be upturn ere I yield to the breaking of covenant vow.  
Yet my heart weeps for my darling, yea, bleeds to have mercy upon her!  
And I have pleaded with heaven that a way might be shown, even as  
thou.

3

“Yes, were the brand of the law on *thy* name — shall the mere words  
offend thee? —  
As I have done, even thus would I do, for the love of my child.  
Could thou but show me a way, it were token that heaven did send thee  
That my pledged faith and her heart-wish should meet and

embrace — reconciled.”

### III.

#### 1

DOTH the excess of joy kill? When the chalice of pleasure o'erfloweth,  
Is it the time of the end? I am sick unto death of delight.  
Why should I tarry when life is fulfilled, and no longer bestoweth  
Anything better than that which hath been. Let me sleep. It is night.

#### 2

No sleep for joy! When he brought them together, and blessed them in  
union,  
There was a note in my heart that rang death. As I write, once again  
Quivers the welcome vibration that rings in the heavenly communion.  
Oh Thou that comest, come quickly, triumphant o'er death and o'er  
pain!

#### 3

'Tis but the heart of my flesh that doth flutter. Thine infinite merit  
Helpeth me mightily o'er the dark mountains that Thou too hast trod.  
Into Thy hands I commend me, eternal and merciful Spirit.  
Come Euthanasia! Let it be kneeling. . . . My Lord and my God!

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## Miscellaneous Poems.

## My Chinee Cook.

THEY who say the bush is dull are not so very far astray,  
For this eucalyptic cloisterdom is anything but gay;  
But its uneventful dulness I contentedly could brook,  
If I only could get back my lost, lamented Chinee cook.

We had tried them without number — cooks, to wit — my wife and I;  
One a week, then three a fortnight, as my wife can testify;  
But at last we got the right one; I may say 'twas by a fluke,  
For he dropped in miscellaneous-like, that handy Chinee cook.

He found the kitchen empty, laid his swag down, and commenced;  
My wife, surprised, found nothing to say anything against;  
But she asked him for how much a year the work he undertook —  
“Me workee for me ration,” said that noble Chinee cook.

Then right off from next to nothing such a dinner he prepared,  
That the Governor I'm certain less luxuriously fared;  
And he waited, too, in spotless white, with such respectful look,  
And bowed his head when grace was said, that pious Chinee cook.

He did the work of man and maid — made beds and swept out rooms;  
Nor cooled he in his zeal, as is the manner of new brooms:  
Oh, he shed celestial brightness on the most sequestered nook,  
For his mop and pail were everywhere — my cleanly Chinee cook.

We got fat upon his cooking; we were happy in those days,  
For he tickled up our palates in a thousand pleasant ways.  
Oh his dinners! Oh his dinners! they were fit for any duke!  
Oh delectable Mongolian! Oh celestial Chinee cook!

There was nothing in creation that he didn't put to use,  
And the less he got to cook with, all the more he could produce.  
All nature was his kitchen range, likewise his cook'ry book —  
Neither Soyer nor Meg Dod could teach that knowing Chinee cook.

And day by day upon my wife and me the mystery grew,  
How his virtues were so many and his earnings were so few;  
And we laid our heads together to find out by hook or crook,  
The secret of the cheapness of that priceless Chinee cook.

And still the sense of mystery grew on us day by day,  
Till it came to be a trouble, and we wished him well away;  
But we could not find a fault in one so far above rebuke —  
Ah, we didn't know the value of that valuable cook.

But one day when I was out he brought my wife a lot of things,  
Turquoise earrings, opal bracelets, ruby brooches, diamond rings,  
And he ran their various prices o'er as glibly as a book,  
And dirt cheap, too, were the jewels of that jewel of a cook.

I returned, and just in time to stop the purchase of the lot,  
And to ask him where on earth those costly jewels he had got,  
And when I looked him in the face, good gracious how he shook!  
And he says, says he, "Me bought him" — did that trembling Chinee  
cook.

And I a justice of the peace! O Fortune! how unkind!  
For a certain Sydney robbery came rushing to my mind.  
"You bought them! Ah, I fear me, John, you paid them with a hook!  
I am bound to apprehend you, oh unhappy Chinee cook!"

So the mystery was solved at length; the secret now we saw;  
John had used us as a refuge from the clutches of the law;  
And now, alas, too late would I his frailty over-look!  
He is gone, and I am left without my skilful Chinee cook.

Oh, could I taste again of those delicious luscious things,  
I could pardon him the robbery of other people's rings;  
I exaggerated principle, my duty I mistook,  
When I handed over to the law my peerless Chinee cook.

What would I give just now for one of his superb ragouts,  
His entremets, his entrées, his incomparable stews?  
Oh, art and taste and piquancy my happy board forsook,  
When I came the J.P. over my lamented Chinee cook.

Take away the hated letters. 'Twas my "justice" robbed my "peace";  
Take my name from the commission, and my matchless cook release.  
But I fear my Johnny's dead, for I am haunted by a spook,  
With oblique eyes and a pigtail, like my lost, my Chinee cook.

## My Other Chineese Cook.

YES, I got another Johnny; but he was to Number One  
As a Satyr to Hyperion, as a rushlight to the sun;  
He was lazy, he was cheeky, he was dirty, he was sly,  
But he had a single virtue, and its name was rabbit pie.

Now those who say the bush is dull are not so far astray,  
For the neutral tints of station life are anything but gay;  
But, with all its uneventfulness, I solemnly deny  
That the bush is unendurable along with rabbit pie.

We had fixed one day to sack him, and agreed to moot the point  
When my lad should bring our usual regale of cindered joint,  
But instead of cindered joint we saw and smelt, my wife and I,  
Such a lovely, such a beautiful, oh! such a rabbit pie!

There was quite a new expression on his lemon-coloured face,  
And the unexpected odour won him temporary grace,  
For we tacitly postponed the sacking-point till by-and-bye,  
And we tacitly said nothing save the one word, "rabbit pie!"

I had learned that pleasant mystery should simply be endured,  
And forebore to ask of Johnny where the rabbits were procured!  
I had learned from Number One to stand aloof from how and why,  
And I threw myself upon the simple fact of rabbit pie.

And when the pie was opened, what a picture did we see!  
They lay in beauty side by side, they filled our home with glee!  
How excellent, how succulent, back, neck, and leg, and thigh!  
What a noble gift is manhood! What a trust is rabbit pie!

For a week the thing continued, rabbit pie from day to day;  
Though where he got the rabbits John would ne'er vouchsafe to say;  
But we never seemed to tire of them, and daily could descry  
Subtle shades of new delight in each successive rabbit pie.

Sunday came; by rabbit reckoning, the seventh day of the week;  
We had dined, we sat in silence, both our hearts (?) too full to speak;  
When in walks Cousin George, and, with a sniff, says he, "Oh my!  
What a savoury suggestion! what a smell of rabbit pie!"

“Oh, why so late, George?” says my wife, “the rabbit pie is gone;  
But you *must* have one for tea, though. Ring the bell, my dear, for John.”  
So I rang the bell for John, to whom my wife did signify,  
“Let us have an early tea, John, and another rabbit pie.”

But John seemed taken quite aback, and shook his funny head,  
And uttered words I comprehended no more than the dead;  
“Go, do as you are bid,” I cried, “we wait for no reply;  
Go! let us have tea early, and another rabbit pie!”

Oh, that I had stopped his answer! But it came out with a run:  
“Last-a week-a plenty puppy; this-a week-a puppy. done!”  
Just then my wife, my love, my life, the apple of mine eye,  
Was seized with what seemed “mal-de-mer,” — “sick transit” rabbit pie!

And George! By George, he laughed, and then he howled like any bear!  
The while my wife contorted like a mad “convulsionnaire;”  
And I — I rushed on Johnny, and I smote him hip and thigh,  
And I never saw him more, nor tasted more of rabbit pie.

And the childless mothers met me, as I kicked him from the door,  
With loud maternal wailings and anathemas galore;  
I must part with pretty Tiny, I must part with little Fly,  
For I'm sure they know the story of the so-called “rabbit pie.”

## To a Black Gin.

DAUGHTER of Eve, draw near — I would behold thee.  
Good Heavens! Could ever arm of man enfold thee?  
Did the same Nature that made Phryne mould thee?

Come thou to leeward; for thy balmy presence  
Savoureth not a whit of *mille-fleurescence*: —  
My nose is no insentient excrescence.

Thou art not beautiful, I tell thee plainly,  
Oh! thou ungainliest of things ungainly;  
Who thinks thee less than hideous doats insanely.

Most unaesthetical of things terrestrial,  
Hadst thou indeed an origin celestial? —  
Thy lineaments are positively bestial!

Yet thou my sister art, the clergy tell me;  
Though, truth to state, thy brutish looks compel me  
To hope these parsons merely want to *sell* me.

A hundred times and more I've heard and read it;  
But if Saint Paul himself came down and said it,  
Upon my soul I could not give it credit.

“God's image cut in ebony,” says some one;  
'Tis to be hoped some day thou may'st become one;  
The present image is a very rum one.

*Thy* face “the human face divine!” . . . Oh, Moses!  
Whatever trait divine thy face discloses,  
Some vile Olympian cross-play pre-supposes.

Thy nose appeareth but a transverse section:  
Thy mouth hath no particular direction, —  
A flabby-rimmed abyss of imperfection.

Thy skull development mine eye displeases;  
Thou wilt not suffer much from brain diseases;  
Thy facial angle forty-five degrees is.

The coarseness of thy tresses is distressing,  
With grease and raddle firmly coalescing,  
I cannot laud thy system of “top-dressing.”

Thy dress is somewhat scant for proper feeling;  
As is thy flesh, too, — scarce thy bones concealing:  
Thy calves unquestionably want re-*vealing*.

Thy rugged skin is hideous with tattooing,  
And legible with hieroglyphic wooing —  
Sweet things in art of some fierce lover's doing.

For thou some lover hast, I bet a guinea, —  
Some partner in thy fetid ignominy,  
The *raison d'être* of this piccaninny.

What must *he* be whose eye thou hast delighted?  
His sense of beauty hopelessly benighted!  
The canons of his taste how badly sighted!

What must his gauge be, if thy features pleased him?  
If lordship of such limbs as thine appeased him,  
It was not “*calf-love*” certainly that seized him.

And is he amorously sympathetic?  
And doth he kiss thee? . . . Oh my soul prophetic!  
The very notion is a strong emetic!

And doth he smooth thine hours with oily talking?  
And take thee conjugally out-a-walking?  
And crown thy transports with a tom-a-hawking?

I guess his love and anger are combined so;  
His passions on thy shoulders are defined so;  
“His passages of love” are *underlined* so.

Tell me thy name. What? . . . Helen? . . . (Oh, OEnone,  
That name bequeathed to one so foul and bony  
Avengeth well thy ruptured matrimony!)

Eve's daughter! with that skull! and that complexion?  
What principle of “Natural Selection”  
Gave thee with Eve the most remote connection?

Sister of L. E. L. . . . of Mrs. Stowe, too!  
Of E. B. Browning! Harriet Martineau, too!  
Do theologians know where fibbers go to?

Of dear George Eliot, whom I worship daily!  
Of Charlotte Brontë! and Joanna Baillie! —  
Methinks that theory is rather “scaly.”

Thy primal parents came a period later —  
The handiwork of some vile imitator;  
I fear they had the devil's *imprimatur*.

This in the retrospect. — Now, what's before thee?  
The white man's heaven, I fear, would simply bore thee;  
Ten minutes of doxology would floor thee.

Thy Paradise should be some land of Goshen,  
Where appetite should be thy sole devotion,  
And surfeit be the climax of emotion; —

A land of Bunya-bunyas towering splendid, —  
Of honey-bags on every tree suspended, —  
A Paradise of sleep and riot blended; —

Of tons of 'baccy, and tons more to follow, —  
Of wallaby as much as thou couldst swallow, —  
Of hollow trees, with 'possums in the hollow; —

There, undismayed by frost, or flood, or thunder,  
As joyous as the skies thou roamest under,  
There shouldst thou . . . Cooley! . . . Stop! She's off. . . . No wonder.

## A Piccaninny.

LO by the “humpy” door a smockless Venus!  
Unblushing bronze, she shrinks not, having seen us,  
Though there is nought but short couch-grass between us.

She hath no polonaise, no Dolly Varden;  
Yet turns she not away, nor asketh pardon;  
Fact is, she doesn't care a copper “farden.”

Ah yet, her age her reputation spareth;  
At three years old pert Venus little careth,  
She puts her hand upon her hip and stareth;

All unabashed, unhaberdashed, unheeding,  
No Medicean, charmingly receding,  
But quite unconscious of improper breeding.

'Tis well; it smacks of Eden ere came sin in,  
Or any rag of consciousness or linen,  
Or anything that one could stick a pin in.

Could boundaries be neater? posture meeter?  
Could bronze antique or terra cotta beat her?  
Saw ever artist any thing completer?

A shade protuberant, beyond contesting,  
Where this day's 'possum is just now digesting,  
But otherwise, all over interesting;

Trim without trimming, furbelow, or bow on;  
Was ever sable skin with such a glow on?  
So darkly soft, so softly sleek, and — so on?

Did ever fingers scratch a head so woolly?  
Took ever child the outer world so coolly,  
Though Fahrenheit's at ninety-seven fully?

Was ever known so dark, so bright an iris,  
Where sleep of light, but never play of fire is —  
Where not a soupcon of a wild desire is?

Oh swarthy statuette! hast thou no notion  
That life is fire and war and wild commotion?  
A burning bush, a chafed and raging ocean?

Hast thou no questioning of what's before thee?  
Of who shall envy thee, or who adore thee?  
Or whose the jealous weapon that shall score thee?

Hast thou no faint prevision of disaster —  
Of dark abduction from thy lord and master —  
Of aliens fleeing, kindred following faster?

No faint forehearing of the waddies banging,  
Of club and heelaman together clanging,  
War shouts, and universal boomeranging?

And thou the bone of all the fierce contention —  
The direful spring of broken-nosed dissension —  
A Helen in the nigger apprehension?

Nay, my black tulip, I congratulate thee,  
Thou canst not guess the troubles that await thee,  
Nor carest who shall love or who shall hate thee:

Recking as little of the human passions  
As of the very latest Paris fashions,  
And soaring not beyond thy daily rations!

Die young, for mercy's sake! If thou grow older,  
Thou shalt grow lean at calf and sharp at shoulder,  
And daily greedier and daily bolder;

A pipe between thy savage grinders thrusting,  
For rum and everlasting 'baccy lusting,  
And altogether filthy and disgusting.

Just such another as the dam that bore thee —  
That haggard Sycorax now bending o'er thee!  
Die young, my sable pippin, I implore thee!

Why shouldst thou live to know deterioration?  
To walk, a spectre of emaciation?  
To grow, like that, all over corrugation?

A trifle miscellaneous like her, too,  
An object not “de luxe” and not “de vertu” —  
A being odious even to refer to?

Her childhood, too, like thine, was soft and tender;  
Her womanhood hath nought to recommend her;  
At thirty she is not of any gender.

Oh, dusky fondling, let the warning teach thee!  
Through muddiest brain-pulp may the lesson reach thee,  
Oh, die of something fatal, I beseech thee!

While yet thou wear'st the crown of morning graces,  
While yet the touch of dawn upon thy face is —  
Back, little nigger, to the night's embraces!

Hope nought: each year some new defect discloses;  
As sure as o'er thy mouth thy little nose is,  
Thy only hope is in metempsychosis.

Who knows but after some few short gradations,  
After a brace or so of generations,  
We two may have exchanged our hues and stations?

Methinks I see thee suddenly grow bigger,  
White in the face, and stately in the figure,  
And I a miserable little nigger!

Should this be thus — oh come not moralising!  
Approach not thou my humpy poetising!  
Spare thine Iambics and apostrophising!

Let subtle nature, if it suit her, black me,  
Let vesture lack me, bigger niggers whack me,  
Let hunger rack me, let disaster track me,  
And anguish hoist me to her highest acme —

Let me bear all thine incidental curses,  
Nor share the smallest of thy scanty mercies,  
But put me not — oh, put me not in verses!

She grins. She heedeth not advice or warning,  
Alike philosophy and triplets scorning.  
Adieu, then. Fare thee well. Ta-ta. Good morning.

## “Big Ben.”

DIED AT YAAMBA CREEK, JULY, 1872.

DE mortuis nil ni-  
Si bonum: R.I.P.: —  
    No more upbraid him: —  
Nay, rather plead his cause,  
For Ben exactly was  
    What Nature made him

Not radically bad,  
He naturally had  
    No leaning sinwards;  
But Nature saw it good  
One life-long crave for food  
    Should rack his inwards.

According to his lights,  
And to the appetites  
    In him implanted,  
He did his level best  
To feed — and all the rest  
    He took for granted.

Ere birth he was *laid* low,  
And yet no man I know  
    For high birth matched him:  
Apollo was his sire,  
Who with life-giving fire  
    *Ab ovo* hatched him.

Just over Capricorn  
This same Big Ben was born,  
    A feeble lizard;  
But with the years came strength,  
And twenty feet of length —  
    The most part gizzard.

By Fitzroy's rugged crags,

Its "sawyers" and its snags,  
    He roamed piscivorous;  
Or watching for his prey,  
By Yaamba creek he lay,  
    In mood carnivorous.

Unthinking little hogs,  
And careless puppy-dogs  
    Fitzroy-ward straying,  
Were grist unto his mill. . . .  
His grinders now are still,  
    Himself past *preying*.

Whether in self-defence,  
Or out of hate *preense*,  
    Or just for fun shot,  
Are things beyond my ken —  
I only know Big Ben  
    Died of a gunshot.

It was a sorry case;  
For Ben loved all our race,  
    Both saint and sinner;  
If he had had his way,  
He would have brought each day  
    One home to dinner: —

Loved with that *longing* love,  
Such as is felt above  
    The Southern Tropic: —  
Small chance was ever his,  
But his proclivities  
    Were philanthropic.

There are who would insist  
He was misogynist, —  
    'Tis slander horrid;  
For every nymph he saw,  
He would have liked her — raw,  
    From toe to forehead.

Then let his memory be;  
No misanthrope was he;  
    No woman-hater;  
But just what you may call,  
Take him for all in all,

An *alligator*.

## Adelaide Ironside.

*(Australian Painter. Born at Sydney, 17th November, 1831. Died at Rome, 15th November, 1867.)*

[GUARDIAN ANGEL.]

KNOWEST thou now, Oh Love! Oh pure from the death of thy summer of sweetness!

Seest thou now, Oh new-born Delight of the Ransomed and Free!  
We have gathered the flower for the fruit; we have hastened the hour of thy meetness;

For thou wert sealed unto us, and thine Angel hath waited for thee.

Not in disdain, Oh Love! Oh Sweet! of desires that are earthly and mortal,

Not in the scorn of thine Art, whose beginning and end is Divine,  
So soon have we borne thee asleep through the glow of the uttermost portal,

But in the ruth of high souls that have travailed with longings like thine.

Nothing is lost, Oh Love! Oh mine! and thy seemingly broken endeavour

Here re-appeareth, transfigured as thou; yet the Art of thy youth;  
And the light of the Spirit of Beauty is on it for ever and ever;

For Art is the garment of Praise, and the broidered apparel of Truth.

Seest thou now, Oh Love! how Art, in a way to mortality nameless,

Liveth again, soul-informed, love-sustained, self-completing, for aye?  
How thy heart's purpose was good, and the dream of thy maidenhood blameless, —

How thy fair dawn is fulfilled in the light of ineffable day?

Seest thou now, Oh Love! Oh Fair! how the high spirit-life is Art regnant —

Art become bliss, and harmonious response to the Infinite Will?  
Fused and transfused into Love, with the germs of eternity pregnant —

Crowned as the law of the beauty of Holiness; throned, yet Art still?

Not then in vain, Oh Love! thy dawn, nor the dream of thy holy ambition;

Never a trace of thy finger hath witnessed for Beauty in vain;  
In the bloom of the noon of thine ardour thy soul became fair for  
fruition;

We have smitten the green into gold but to spare thee the harvest of  
pain.

Nothing that came from thy hand, Oh Love, made void, cut off,  
evanescent, —

From the infantile essay that strove with the weapon of outline alone,  
To the Angels thou lovedst to portray with luminous plumes iridescent,

Till thy soul drew so near unto us that we took thee for one of our  
own.

Now may'st thou trace, Oh Heart! Sweet Heart! from on high all the way  
I have led thee,

From the youth of a world in the Seas of the South to unperishing  
Rome;

For the lure of thy following soul was the sheen of my wings that  
o'erspread thee,

Flushing with reflex of glory the path of thy pilgrimage — home.

By the way of the age of the world I have chosen to lead thee to glory;

Of the wine of the might of the world have I given thee to drink ere  
thou slept;

Where the Masters have walked I have laid thee, ensphered with the  
darlings of story;

I have waked thee a perfected spirit; matured, yet thine innocence  
kept.

There, too, I led thee to feed thee with prescience and keen imitation

Of the art-adjuvant Grace that hath given thee, a love-gift, to me;  
By the work of my hands did I wake in thee foretaste of  
Transfiguration, —

For thine Angel once wrought upon earth as thou; and his work thou  
did'st see.

Now is thy spirit, Oh Love, in mine. In thy heart I behold thou dost know  
me.

I looked for thy glad recognition; no converse of aliens is this;  
Oft when thy longings went upward, thy soul, like a mirror below me,  
Caught my own loveliest visions in shapes of Elysian bliss.

Name me not now, Oh Love! Oh mine! for the name of my days of  
wayfaring

Still hath the note of a fevered desire, and an echo of pain.  
Come thou, Oh Gift of long hope, to the home of thine Angel's

preparing!

There I shall show thee the mercy of God, and the things that remain.

## The Dark Companion.

THERE is an orb that mocked the lore of sages  
Long time with mystery of strange unrest;  
The steadfast law that rounds the starry ages  
Gave doubtful token of supreme behest.

But they who knew the ways of God unchanging,  
Concluded some far influence unseen —  
Some kindred sphere through viewless ethers ranging,  
Whose strong persuasions spanned the void between.

And knowing it alone through perturbation  
And vague disquiet of another star,  
They named it, till the day of revelation,  
“The Dark Companion” — darkly guessed afar.

But when, through new perfection of appliance,  
Faith merged at length in undisputed sight,  
The mystic mover was revealed to science,  
No Dark Companion, but — a speck of light.

No Dark Companion, but a sun of glory;  
No fell disturber, but a bright compeer;  
The shining complement that crowned the story;  
The golden link that made the meaning clear.

Oh, Dark Companion, journeying ever by us,  
Oh, grim Perturber of our works and ways,  
Oh, potent Dread, unseen, yet ever nigh us,  
Disquieting all the tenor of our days —

Oh, Dark Companion, Death, whose wide embraces  
O'ertake remotest change of clime and skies —  
Oh, Dark Companion, Death, whose grievous traces  
Are scattered shreds of riven enterprise —

Thou, too, in this wise, when, our eyes unsealing,  
The clearer day shall change our faith to sight,  
Shalt show thyself, in that supreme revealing,  
No Dark Companion, but a thing of light.

No ruthless wrecker of harmonious order;  
No alien heart of discord and caprice;  
A beckoning light upon the Blissful Border;  
A kindred element of law and peace.

So, too, our strange unrest in this our dwelling,  
The trembling that thou joinest with our mirth,  
Are but thy magnet-communings compelling  
Our spirits farther from the scope of earth.

So, doubtless, when beneath thy potency swerving,  
'Tis that thou lead'st us by a path unknown,  
Our seeming deviations all subserving  
The perfect orbit round the central throne.

\* \* \* \* \*

The night wind moans. The Austral wilds are round me.  
The loved who live — ah, God! how few they are!  
I looked above; and Heaven in mercy found me  
This parable of comfort in a star.

## The Southern Cross.

(A FRUSTRATION.)

FOUR stars on Night's brow, or Night's bosom,  
Whichever the reader prefers;  
Or Night without either may do some,  
Each one to his taste or to hers.  
Four stars — to continue inditing,  
So long as I feel in the vein —  
Hullo! what the deuce is that biting? Mosquitos again!

Oh glories not gilded but golden,  
Oh daughters of Night unexcelled,  
By the sons of the north un beholden,  
By our sons (if we have them) beheld;  
Oh jewels the midnight enriching,  
Oh four which are double of twain!  
Oh mystical — bother the itching! Mosquitos again!

You alone I can anchor my eye on,  
Of you and you only I'll write:  
And I now look awry on Orion,  
That once was my chiefest delight.  
Ye exalt me high over the petty  
Conditions of pleasure and pain —  
Oh Heaven! here are these maladetti Mosquitos again!

The poet should ever be placid.  
Oh vex not his soul or his skin!  
Shall I scare them with chemical acid?  
It is done, and afresh I begin.  
Lucid orbs! — that last sting very sore is;  
I am fain to leave off, I am fain;  
It has given me uncommon dolores — *Simpliciter*, pain.

Not quite what the shape of a cross is —  
A little lop-sided, I own —  
Confound your infernal proboscis,  
Inserted well nigh to the bone!

Queen-lights of the heights of high heaven,  
    Ensconced in the crystal inane —  
Oh me! here are seventy times seven Mosquitos again!

Oh horns of a mighty trapezium!  
    Quadrilateral area, hail!  
Oh bright as the light of magnesium! —  
    Oh hang them all, female and male!  
At the end of an hour of their stinging,  
    What shall rest of me then, what remain?  
I shall die as the swan dieth, singing, Mosquitos again!

Shock keen as the stroke of the levin!  
    hey sting, and I change in a flash  
From the peace and the poppies of heaven  
    To the flame and the firewood of — dash!  
Oh Cross of the South, I forgot you!  
    These demons have addled my brain.  
Once more I look upward. . . . Od rot you! You're at it again!

There! stick in your pitiless brad-awl,  
    And do your malevolent worst!  
Dine on me, and when you have had all,  
    Let others go in for a burst!  
Oh silent and pure constellation,  
    Can you pardon my fretful refrain?  
Forgive, oh forgive my vexation — They're at it again!

Oh imps that provoke to mad laughter,  
    Winged fiends that are fed from my brow,  
Bite hard! let your neighbours come after,  
    And sting where you stung me just now!  
Red brands on it smitten and bitten,  
    Round blotches I rub at in vain!  
Oh Crux! whatsoever I've written, I've written in pain!

Ye chrysolite crystalline creatures,  
    Wan watchers the fairest afield,  
Stars — and garters, are these my own features  
    In the merciless mirror revealed!  
They are mine, even mine, and none other,  
    And my hands how they slacken and strain!  
Oh my sister, my spouse, and my mother! I'm going insane!

## A Brisbane Reverie.

MARCH, 1873.

AS I sit beside my little study window, looking down  
From the heights of contemplation (attic front) upon the town —  
(Attic front, per week — with board, of course — a sov'reign and a  
crown); —

As I sit — (these sad digressions, though, are much to be deplored) —  
In my lonely little attic — (it is all I can afford;  
And I should have mentioned, washing *not* included in the board); —

As I sit — (these wild parentheses my very soul abhors) —  
High above the ills of life, its petty rumours, paltry wars —  
(The attic back is cheaper, but it wants a chest of drawers); —

In the purpling light of half-past six before the stars are met,  
While the stricken sun clings fondly to his royal mantle yet,  
Dying glorious on the hill-tops in reluctant violet, —

Just the time that favours vision, blissful moments that unbar  
The inner sight (assisted by a very mild cigar),  
To behold the things that are not, side by side with those that are, —

Just the very light and very time that suit the bard's complaint,  
When through present, past, and future, roams his soul without  
restraint —

When no clearer are the things that are than are the things that ain't; —

With a dual apperception, metaphysical, profound,  
Past and present running parallel, I scan the scene around —  
(Were there two of us the attic front would only be a pound). —

Beneath mine eyes the buried past arises from the tomb,  
Not cadaverous or ghostly, but in all its living bloom —  
(I would rather pay the odds than have a partner in my room).

How the complex *now* contrasteth with the elemental *then!*  
Tide of change outflowing flow of ink, outstripping stride of pen!  
(Unless it were . . . . but no . . . . they only take in *single* men).

Where trackless wilderness lay wide, a hundred ages through —  
I can see a man with papers, from my attic point of view,  
Who for gath'ring house assessments gets a very decent screw.

Where forest-contiguity assuaged the summer heats,  
It is now an argued question, when the City Council meets,  
If we mightn't buy a tree or two to shade the glaring streets.

Where no sound announced the flight of time, not even crow of cock,  
I can see the gun that stuns the town with monitory shock,  
And a son of that same weapon hired to shoot at one o'clock.

Where the kangaroo gave hops, the “old man” fleetest of the fleet,  
Mrs. Pursy gives a “hop” to-night to all the town's *élite*,  
But her “old man” cannot hop because of bunions on his feet.

Where the emu, “at its own sweet will,” went wandering all the day,  
And left its bill-prints on whate'er came handy in its way,  
There are printed bills that advertise “The Emu for the Bay.”

Where of old with awful mysteries and diabolic din,  
They “kippered” adolescents in the presence of their kin,  
There's a grocer selling *herrings* kippered, half-a-crown per tin.

Where the savage only used his club to supplement his fist,  
The white man uses his for friendly intercourse and whist,  
Not to mention sherry, port, bordeaux, et cetera — see list.

Where dress was at a discount, or at most a modest “fall,”  
Rise “Criterion,” “Cosmopolitan,” and “City Clothing Hall,”  
And neither men nor women count for much — the dress is all.

Where a bride's trousseau consisted of an extra coat of grease,  
And Nature gave the pair a suit of glossy black apiece,  
Now the matrimonial outfit is a perfect golden fleece.

Where lorn widows wore the knee-joints of the late lamented dead,  
We have dashing wives who wear their living husbands' joints

Yea, their vitals, for embellishment of bosom, neck, and head.

Where the blacks, ignoring livers, lived according to their wills,  
Nor knew that flesh is heir to quite a lexicon of ills,  
Five white chemists in one street grow rich through antibilious pills.

Where the only bell was the bell-bird's note, now many mingling bells  
“Make Catholic the trembling air,” as famed George Eliot tells  
Of another town somewhere between more northern parallels.

(But in case the name of Catholic offend protesting ear,  
Let Wesleyan or Baptist be interpolated here.  
Or that bells make Presbyterian the trembling atmosphere.)

Where the savage learned no love from earth, nor from the “shining  
frame,”  
And merely feared the devil under some outlandish name,  
There are heaps of Britishers whose creed is — very much the same!

Where the gin was black — (methinks 'tis time the bard were shutting  
up:  
The bell is ringing for the non-inebriating cup,  
And even attic bards must have their little “bite and sup.”)

## A Lost Chance.

[IT is stated that a shepherd, who had for many years grazed his flocks in a district in which a rich tin-mining town in Queensland now stands, went mad on learning of the great discoveries made there.]

JUST to miss it by a hair's breadth! Nay, not miss it! To have held it  
In my hand, and oftentimes through my fingers run the swarthy ore!  
Minus only the poor trick of Art or Science that compelled it  
To unveil for others' good the hidden value, and to pour  
On a thousand hearts the light of Hope, that shines for *me* no more!

To have held it in my hand in vacant listlessness of wonder,  
Taken with its dusky lustre, all incurious of its worth —  
To have trod for years upon it, I above, and Fortune under —  
To have scattered it a thousand times like seed upon the earth!  
Who shall say I am not justified who curse my day of birth?

To have built my hovel o'er it — to have dreamed above it nightly —  
Pillowed on the weal of thousand lives, and dead unto my own!  
Planning paltry profits wrung from year-long toil, and holding lightly  
What lay acres-wide around me, naked bright, or grass-o'ergrown —  
Holding lightly — and for that I curse — no, not myself alone!

For a youth made vain with riot, for the golden graces squandered,  
Home forsaken, dear ones alienated, Love itself aggrieved,  
I had sworn a full atonement, to the ends of earth had wandered,  
Drunk the dregs of expiation, unbelauded, unperceived —  
Heav'n alone beheld, and — mocks me with what “might have been”  
achieved!

All the cold suspicion of the world I took for my demerit,  
Its deceit my retribution, its malignity my meed:  
When Misfortune smote, unmurmuring I bowed my head to bear it,  
Driven to minister to brutes in my extremity of need —  
Who shall say *now* it delights not Heaven to break the bruised reed?

In the round of conscious being, from the rising to the setting  
Of Thine imaged self, Thy merciless, unsympathizing Sun,  
Was there one from hard Disaster's hand so piteously shrinking

Whom this boon had more advantaged? God, I ask Thee, was there one?

In Thy passionless immunity, Thou knowest there was none!

To the wrongs the world hath wrought me, to its coldness and disfavour,  
To the wreck of every venture, to enduring unsuccess,  
To the sweat of cheerless toil, the bread made bitter with the savour  
Of the leaven of regret, and tears of unforgetfulness,  
Hadst Thou need to add Thy mockery, to perfect my distress?

For I hold it cruel mockery in man, or God, or devil,  
To assign the poor his blindfold lot from weary day to day,  
In the very lap of Affluence, on Fortune's highest level,  
Then upon the brink of revelation, trick his steps away,  
And flash the truth upon him when the chance is gone for aye!

I had soothed repulse with hope, matched disappointment with defiance,  
Or opposed a pliant meekness to the driving storms of Fate:  
But — the merely “coming short!” Oh, what remedial appliance,  
What demeanour of resistance shall have virtue to abate  
The nameless woe that trembles in the echo of Too Late!

Oh, the might have been! the might have been! the sting of it! the madness!

What a wave of the Inexorable chokes my fitful breath!  
What a rush of olden echoes voiced with many-sounding sadness!  
What a throng of new despairs that drive me down the path of death!  
Who is there in heaven who careth? Who on earth who comforteth?

They on earth but seek their own. In eager crowds they hasten thither  
Where I trod so late unconscious on futurities untold.  
And I! I, whose all is gone! The curse of desolation wither —  
Whom? — Myself, who, year-worn, turned again unto the sin of old?  
Or the fiends who sold me poison for my little all of gold?

Both! All men! Yea, Heaven! But chiefly those who prosper where I languished!

Those who reap the ripe occasion, where in many a wandering line  
The old traces of my footsteps, worn in fevered moods and anguished,  
Now are paths of rich expectancy for other feet than mine!  
Can I breathe without upbraiding? Shall I die without a sign?

It was mine! *Is* mine, by Heaven! Consecrated to me only,  
By the sacred right of service, by the pledge of weary years!  
By the bond of silent witness, by communion dumb and lonely,  
By the seal of many sorrows, by the sacrament of tears!

Mine! — The echoes laugh, and the fiends of hell are answering with jeers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Where am I? and who are these? — Nay, nay! Unhand me! Let me go, sirs!

I am very very rich! I've miles on miles of priceless ore!  
I will make your fortunes — all of you! — and I would have you know, sirs —

There is not a single sheep amissing — Loose me, I implore!  
It is only sleep that ails me — let me sleep — for evermore!

## The Squatter's Baccy Famine.

IN blackest gloom he cursed his lot;  
His breath was one long weary sigh;  
His brows were gathered in a knot  
That only baccy could untie.  
His oldest pipe was scraped out clean;  
The deuce a puff was left him there;  
A hollow sucking sound of air  
Was all he got his lips between.  
He only said, "My life is dreary.  
The Baccy's done," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary;  
By Jove, I'm nearly dead."

The chimney-piece he searched in vain,  
Into each pocket plunged his fist;  
His cheek was blanched with weary pain,  
His mouth awry for want of twist.  
He idled with his baccy-knife;  
He had no care for daily bread: —  
A single stick of Negro-head  
Would be to him the staff of life.  
He only said, "My life is dreary.  
The Baccy's done," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary;  
I'd *most as soon* be dead."

Books had no power to mend his grief;  
The magazines could tempt no more;  
"Cut Gold-Leaf" was the only leaf  
That he had cared to ponder o'er.  
From chair to sofa sad he swings,  
And then from sofa back to chair;  
But in the depth of his despair  
Can catch no "bird's-eye" view of things.  
And still he said, "My life is dreary.  
No Baccy, boys," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary;

I'd *just as soon* be dead."

His meals go by he knows not how;  
    No taste in flesh, or fowl, or fish;  
There's not a dish could tempt him now,  
    Except a cake of Caven-dish.  
His life is but a weary drag;  
    He cannot choose but curse and swear,  
    And thrust his fingers through his hair,  
All shaggy in the want of shag.  
And still he said, "My life is dreary.  
    No Baccy, boys," he said.  
He said, "I am aweary, aweary;  
    I'd *rather far* be dead."

To him one end of old cheroot  
    Were sweetest root that ever grew.  
No honey were due substitute  
    For "Our Superior Honey-Dew."  
One little fig of Latakia  
    Would buy all fruits of Paradise;  
    "Prince Alfred's Mixture" fetch a price  
Above both Prince and Galatea.  
    Sudden he said, "No more be dreary!  
    The dray has come!" he said.  
He said, "I'll smoke till I am weary, —  
    And then, I'll go to bed."

## **The Antipodes.**

A TOWN, a river, hills and trees,  
Blue-bounded by the boundless sky —  
Is this the strange antipodes  
That baffled young credulity?

Once on a time, of childhood's dreams  
This was the very cap and crown;  
But now how natural it seems  
That down is up, and up is down!

Things on the whole don't look askew:  
It's "all serene," somehow or other;  
And yet 'tis veritably true  
That I am treading on my mother!

Oh, mother dear, forgive the act,  
Great Nature's laws my steps control: —  
Love leaps o'er all; we are, in fact,  
Now more than ever sole to sole!

## Spirit and Star.

THROUGH the bleak cold voids, through the wilds of space,  
Trackless and starless, forgotten of grace, —  
Through the dusk that is neither day nor night,  
Through the grey that is neither dark nor light —  
Through thin chill ethers where dieth speech,  
Where the pulse of the music of heaven cannot reach,  
Unwarmed by the breath of living thing,  
And for ever unswept of angel's wing —  
Through the cold, through the void, through the wilds of space,  
With never a home or a resting-place,  
How far must I wander? Oh God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

Once on a time unto me was given  
The fairest star in the starry heaven —  
A little star, to tend and to guide,  
To nourish and cherish and love as a bride.  
Far from all great bright orbs, alone,  
Even to few of the angels known,  
It moved; but a sweet pale light on its face  
From the sapphire foot of the throne of grace,  
That was better than glory and more than might,  
Made it a wonder of quiet delight.  
Still must I wander? Oh God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

On the starry brow was the peace of the blest,  
And bounteous peace on the starry breast;  
All beautiful things were blossoming there,  
Sighing their loves to the delicate air:  
No creature of God such fragrance breathed,  
White-rose-girdled and white-rose-wreathed:  
And its motion was music, an undertone,  
With a strange sad sweetness all its own,  
Dearer to me than the louder hymn  
Of the God-enraptured seraphim. —  
How far must I wander? Ah Heaven, how far?

I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

In a round of joy, remote and alone,  
Yet ever in sight of the great white throne;  
Together we moved, for a love divine  
Had blent the life of the star with mine: —  
And had all the angels of all the spheres  
Forecast my fate and foretold my tears,  
The weary wand'ring, the gruesome gloom,  
And bruited them forth through the Trump of Doom —  
Hiding a smile in my soul, I had moved  
Only the nearer to what I loved.  
Yet I must wander! Oh God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

Ah, woe the delusive demon-light  
That beckoned me, beckoned me, day and night!  
The untwining of heartstrings, the backward glance,  
The truce with faith, and the severance!  
Ah, woe the unfolding of wayward wings  
That bore me away from all joyous things,  
To realms of space whence the pale sweet gleam  
Looked dim as a dimly-remembered dream —  
To farther realms where the faint light spent  
Vanished at length from my firmament;  
And I seek it in vain — Ah God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

On sleepless wing I have followed it  
Through the star-sown fields of the Infinite;  
And where foot of angel hath never trod  
I have threaded the golden mazes of God;  
I have pierced where the fire-fount of being runs,  
I have dashed myself madly on burning suns,  
Then downward have swept with shuddering breath  
Through the place of the shadows and shapes of death,  
Till sick with sorrow and spent with pain  
I float and faint in the dim inane!  
Must I yet wander? Ah God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

Oh could I find in uttermost space  
A place for hope, and for prayer a place,  
Mine were no suit for a glittering prize  
In the chosen seats of the upper skies —

No grand ministration, no thronèd height  
In the midmost intense of unspeakable light.  
What sun-god sphere with all-dazzling beam  
Could be unto me as that sweet, sad gleam?  
Let me roam through the ages all alone,  
If He give me not back my own, my own!  
How far must I wander? Oh God, how far?  
I have lost my star, I have lost my star!

In the whispers that tremble from sphere to sphere,  
Which the ear of a spirit alone can hear,  
I have heard it breathed that there cometh a day  
When tears from all eyes shall be wiped away,  
When faintness of heart and drooping of wings  
Shall be told as a tale of olden things,  
When toil and trouble and all distress  
Shall be lost in the round of Blessedness.  
In that day when dividing of loves shall cease,  
And all things draw near to the centre of peace,  
In the fulness of time, in the ages afar,  
God, oh God, shall I find my star?

## **New Chum and Old Monarch.**

“Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.”  
— CANNING.

CHIEFTAIN, enter my verandah;  
Sit not in the blinding glare;  
Thou shalt have a refuge, and a  
Remnant of my household fare.

“Ill becomes thy princely haunches  
Such a seat upon the ground:  
Doubtless on a throne of branches  
Thou hast sat, banana-crowned.

“By the brazen tablet gleaming  
On the darkness of thy breast,  
Which, unto all outward seeming,  
Serves for trousers, coat, and vest; —

“By the words thereon engraven,  
Of thy royal rank the gage,  
Hail! true King, in all things save in  
Unessential acreage.

“Such divinity doth hedge thee,  
I had guessed thy rank with ease —  
Such divinity — (but edge thee  
Somewhat more to leeward, please).

“Though thy lineage I know not,  
Thou art to the manner born;  
Every inch a king, although not  
King of one square barleycorn.

“Enter, sire; no longer linger;  
Cease thy signals grandly dumb;  
Point not thus with royal finger  
To thy hungry vacuum.

“Though thy pangs are multifarious,

Soon they all shall pass away:  
Come, my begging Belisarius —  
Belisarius, I should say.

“Fear not; I am the intruder;  
I, and white men such as I:  
Simpler though thou art, and ruder,  
Thou art heir of earth and sky.

“Thine the mountain, thine the river,  
Thine the endless miles of scrub:  
Shall I grudge thee, then — oh never! —  
Useless ends of refuse grub?

“Lay aside thy spears — (I doubt them);  
Lay aside thy tomahawk;  
I prefer thee, sire, without them,  
By a somewhat longish chalk.

“Lay aside thy nullah-nullahs;  
Is there war betwixt us two?  
Soon the pipe of peace shall lull us —  
Pipe a-piece, *bien entendu*.

“Seat thee in this canvas chair here;  
Heed not thou the slumbering hound;  
Fear not; all is on the square here,  
Though thou strangely lookest round.

“Or if thou, my chair deriding,  
Follow thine ancestral bent,  
To the naked floor subsiding  
Down the groove of precedent, —

“If the boards have more temptation,  
Wherefore should I say thee No,  
Seeing caudal induration  
Must have set in long ago?

“Take thou now this refuse mince-meat;  
Pick this bone, my regal guest:  
Shall a fallen-warrior prince meet  
Other welcome than the best?

“Treated like a very rebel,  
Chased from town at set of sun,  
Wert thou ev'n the debbil-debbil,

Thou shouldst eat — when I am done.'

On the bare floor sat the sable  
Chieftain of a fallen race,  
Two black knees his only table,  
“Wai-a-roo” his simple grace.

Stood I by and ruminated  
On the chief's Decline and Fall,  
While his highness masticated  
What I gave him, bone and all.

“Chief,” said I, when all had vanished,  
“Fain am I thou shouldst relate  
Why thou roam'st discrowned and banished  
From thy scrub-palatinatē.”

Stared the chief, and wildly muttered,  
As if words refused to come;  
“Want him rum,” at length he uttered;  
“Black f'lo plenty like him rum!”

“Nay! 'Twill make thee mad — demoniac!  
Set thee all a-fire within!  
Law forbids thee rum and cognac,  
Though in mercy spares thy gin.

“Come; thy tale, if thou hast any.” —  
Forth the chieftain stretched his hand,  
Stood erect, and shouted “Penny!”  
In a voice of stern command,

“Out upon thee! savage squalid!  
Mine ideal thus to crush,  
With thy beggary gross and solid,  
All for money and for lush!

“Out upon thee! prince degenerate!  
Get thee to thy native scrub!  
Die a dog's death! — or at any rate,  
Trouble me no more for grub;

“At him, Ginger! Up and at him!  
Go it, lad! On, Ginger, on!  
King, indeed! the beggar! . . . Drat him!  
One more fond illusion gone.”

## Off The Track.

OH where the deuce is the track, the track?  
Round an' round, an' forrard, an' back!  
“Keep the sun on yer right,” they said —  
But, hang it, he's gone an' got over my head!

“Make for a belt of apple trees;” —  
Jist so. But where's yer belt, if ye please?  
By gum, it's hot! This child 'ill melt,  
An' there ain't no apples, nor ain't no belt.

“Keep clear o' the timber-getters' tracks,”  
But wich is wich, I'd beg to ax?  
They forks and jines, the devil knows how —  
I wish I'd a sight o' either now!

“Leave the track,” sez they, “when you sees  
Some yards to the right two big grass trees.”  
Two! It's dozens on dozens I pass —  
Most on 'em big, an' all on 'em grass.

Oh where the deuce is the track, the track?  
I'm fairly taken aback, aback.  
“Keep tow'rd the river. You can't go wrong.”  
Whew? Can't I, though! That was rayther strong.

“Follow the lay o' the land,” sez they;  
But, Lord, this flat ain't got no lay!  
Whew! Ain't it hot on the pint o' the nose?  
An' the more I mops the hotter I grows.

“An' when you comes to the foot o' the range” —  
WHEN! That's the p'int. But ain't it strange,  
That the further I goes, to left or right,  
The more there ain't no range in sight.

Gum trees, gum trees, slim an' high,  
Timber green an' timber dry,  
Blackened stumps an' fallen logs —  
Lively work as on we jogs!

Oh the devil an' all take the flat, the flat!  
I'm one myself for the matter o' that.  
I'm mazed, an' so is the brute I rides,  
An' the sun's getting over the left besides.

Dash it, I'll follow my nose, my nose!  
Step out, straight forrard, here goes, here goes!  
Let the sun be left, or the sun be right,  
Summat or other must come in sight.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, well! If this ain't too bad by half!  
Lor', how the beggars 'll laugh an' chaff!  
Back, to my startin' point? Yes; 'tis so.  
I put up them slip-rails six hours ago.

## The Headless Trooper.

NO; not another step, for all  
The troopers out of hell!  
I'll camp beside this swamp to-night,  
Despite the yarns you tell.  
I'm dead beat, that's a solid fact;  
The other thing's a sell."

And Ike gave in — good, easy Ike;  
Though now and then he stole  
A glance across that dismal swamp,  
Lugubriously droll;  
'Twas plain that Headless Trooper lay  
Heavily on his soul.

And, ere he slept, again he told  
That tale of bloody men;  
And how the Headless Trooper still  
Rode nightly in the fen;  
And then he slept, but in his sleep  
He told it all again.

I cannot rest beside a man  
Who mutters in his sleep;  
It makes the chilly goose-flesh rise,  
The epidermis creep —  
('Tis no objection in a wife —  
You get her secrets cheap).

I put a hundred yards between  
The muttering Ike and me:  
I lay and thought of things that were,  
And things that yet might be:  
I could not sleep; I know not why;  
My hair rose eerily.

I rose and sat me on a log;  
And tried to keep me cool;  
I thought of "Hume on Miracles,"

And called myself a fool;  
But still the proverb racked my soul,  
“Exceptions prove the rule.”

The moon was full; the stars were out;  
I tried to fix my eye  
Where Night laid shining love-gifts  
On the bosom of the sky; —  
But well I knew that all the while  
The Thing was standing by.

How tall this pine tree on my left!  
How graceful in its height!  
Its topmost branches seem to touch  
The very brow of Night; —  
But all the while I knew the Thing  
Was panting at my right.

The 'possum leaves his hollow tree;  
The bandicoot is glad;  
It is the human heart alone  
The still night maketh sad; —  
And all the while the Headless Thing  
Was wheezing there like mad.

How ghostly is the mist that crawls  
Along the swampy ground!  
The Headless Thing here cleared its throat  
With most unearthly sound!  
And then I heard a gurgling voice,  
But dared not glance around.

“They shot me; Was it not enough?  
Look, darn you! Here's the hole!  
Was this not passage amply wide  
For any human soul?  
But, no! the blasted convict gang  
Must likewise take my poll!”

I turned; looked up; and at the sight  
My heart within me sunk:  
'Twas new to me to find myself  
In such a mortal funk; —  
But newer still to fraternise  
With a bifurcated trunk!

Above the neck no trooper was;  
But formless void alone;  
There physiognomy was *nil*,  
Phrenology unknown;  
Where head had been there but remained  
The frustum of a cone!

Nay; I retract the "formless void;"  
The case was otherwise;  
For on the clotted marge there spun  
A living globe of flies!  
When one is dealing with the truth  
One can't be too precise.

The loathsome whirling substitute  
Buzzed in the vacant space,  
And a thousand thousand little heads  
Of one head took the place: —  
And oh, the fly expression  
Of that rotatory face!

The breast was bare; the shirt thrown back  
Exposed the wound to view:  
The bullet in its course of death  
Had cleared an avenue: —  
Oh Gemini! I saw the Twins  
Distinctly shining through!  
And those same Twins are shining still  
To prove my story true.

In breeches, boots, and spurs arrayed  
The nether Trooper stood;  
The soundless phantom of a horse  
Grazed in his neighbourhood, —  
At all events went through the form  
Of hoisting in his food.

"What would'st thou, Headless Trooper,  
On the night's Plutonian shore?"  
I took it from Poe's Raven  
I had read not long before;  
And I more than half expected  
He would answer "Nevermore!"

But the Trooper only answered  
By a perfect storm of sighs,

Which through his crater issuing,  
    Played Hades with the flies, —  
As I have seen Vesuvius  
    Blow ashes to the skies.

“O wherefore, Headless Trooper,  
    With the living intermix?  
Since thou art dead, and hast no head,  
    Why kick against the pricks?  
Why dost thou not, as others do,  
    Get clear across the Styx?”

The Trooper cleared his cone of flies,  
    And through his crater said,  
“ 'Tis true I have no business here;  
    'Tis true that I am dead;  
And yet I cannot cross the Styx —  
    They've fixed a fare *'per head!'*”

“Fain would I cross as others do —  
    Fain would I pay my shot!  
They only mock me when I ask  
    For leave to go to Pot!  
How *can* I pay so much *'per head'*  
    When I no head have got?

“Yet what could I, thus headless, do  
    In that last Land of Nod?  
It is not that the thing is dear,  
    So much as that it's odd; —  
They only charge an obolus,  
    A sort of Tommy Dodd.

“I've tried the ferryman with gold —  
    With every coin that goes;  
He merely cries, ‘Oh, go *a-head!*’  
    And, laughing, off he rows.  
He can't twit me, at all events,  
    With paying through the nose!

“A drachma once I offered him,  
    Six times the fare in Greek;  
He merely cursed my ‘impudence,’  
    And pushed off in a pique: —  
I didn't think a faceless man  
    Could be accused of cheek.

“From day to day, from night to night,  
My prayer the wretch denies;  
Yet even in this headless breast  
Some grateful thoughts arise —  
For though he's blasted all my hopes,  
He cannot blast my eyes.

“I know not where the convict crew  
My missing head consigned,  
But I am doomed to walk the earth  
Till that same head I find.  
Oh, could I come across it,  
I would know it though I'm blind, —  
The bump of amativeness sticks.  
So strongly out behind!

“The mouth extends from ear to ear;  
The hair is fiery red;  
Perchance it might attract thine eye  
Who art not blind or dead;  
I pray thee help me to obtain  
My disembodied head!”

“Oh Headless Trooper, fain would I  
With thee the search begin,  
But ere the day I must away,  
And trudge through thick and thin;  
For I am bound to Stanthorpe town,  
And time with me is tin.

“But ere upon my pilgrimage  
With dawn's first streak I go,  
I fain would do what in me lies  
To mitigate thy woe.  
If I can serve thee anywise,  
I pray thee let me know.”

The Trooper thought a little space,  
His body forward bowed,  
With plenteous sighs dispersed the flies,  
And once more spoke aloud: —  
“ 'Tis long since I have tried the weed;  
I'd like to blow a cloud.”

“How canst thou, headless man, who hast  
No lips wherewith to puff?”

Here deprecatingly he waved  
His hand, and said, "Enough.  
Myself will guarantee the how,  
If thou supply the stuff."

I took a meerschaum from my pouch;  
A meerschaum clean and new,  
As white as is undoctored milk,  
As pure as morning dew: —  
I pray you mark that it was white;  
'Twill prove my story true.

I passed it to him, filled and lit,  
Still wondering in my mind.  
"Thanks, generous colonial,  
Thou art very, very kind.  
Now pick a thickish waddy up,  
And plug my wound behind."

I picked a thickish waddy up;  
And did as I was bid;  
And right into the bullet-hole  
The amber mouth he slid;  
And then! — You never saw the like!  
At least *I* never did.

Like a forge bellows went his chest,  
And upward from his cone  
There shot a vaporous spire, like that  
From Cotopaxi blown.  
The flies unglobed themselves, and fled  
With angry monotone.

So fierce the blast, the pipe was void  
Ere one might reckon ten;  
And then with gesture wild he signed  
To fill the bowl again;  
The which I did, till he had smoked  
Enough for fifty men.

Hour after hour he drew and blew,  
Till twist began to fail,  
Till all the sky grew dim with smoke,  
And all the stars grew pale;  
Till even the seasoned stomach turned  
Of him who tells the tale.

The smoke mixed darkly with the mists  
On the adjacent bogs,  
And roused the hoarse remonstrant wail  
Of semi-stifled frogs;  
The 'possums all within a mile  
Went home as sick as dogs.

But suddenly the phantom steed  
Neighed with sepulchral sound,  
And where both man and horse had been  
Nor man nor horse was found!  
I stood alone; the meerschaum lay  
Before me on the ground.

The meerschaum lay upon the ground —  
This much *I* may avouch;  
I took it, and with trembling hand  
Replaced it in my pouch;  
And overcome with nausea  
I sought my grassy couch.

The sun was up when I awoke,  
And in his gladsome beams  
I mocked the things of yesternight,  
And laughed away my dreams:  
Disciples of the School of Doubt  
Are always in extremes.

But when I roused me from my couch  
To take my morning smoke,  
Like lightning flash the verity  
Upon my laughter broke; —  
The scarcity of 'bacoy proved  
The thing beyond a joke.

And when my pouch I opened next —  
(Now check the wanton jeer) —  
My pipe, my new, fresh meerschaum pipe —  
('Tis true as I am here) —  
My pipe was "*coloured!*" as if I  
Had smoked it for a year!

My pipe was coloured! — no, not brown,  
But black — as black as jet.  
You don't believe it? — Man alive,  
The pipe is coloured yet!

Look here — why, here's the best of proofs —  
The pipe, videlicet.

## King Billy's Skull.

THE scene is the Southern Hemisphere;  
The time — oh, any time of the year  
Will do as well as another; say June,  
Put it down likewise as the full of the moon,  
And midnight to boot, when churchyards, they say,  
Yawn in a most unmannerly way;  
And restless ghosts in winding-sheets  
Go forth and gibber about the streets,  
And rehearse old crimes that were better hid  
In the darkness beneath the coffin-lid.  
Observe, that I merely say, *on dit*;  
But though it never happened to me  
To encounter, either in-doors or out,  
A posthumous gentleman walking about,  
In regulation sepulchral guise,  
Or in shirt, Crimean or otherwise,  
Or in hat and boots and usual wear,  
Or, save for a cloud, unbecomingly bare,  
Or in gaseous form, with the stars shining through him,  
Beckoning me to interview him —  
On mission of solemnest import bound,  
Or merely a constitutional round,  
Beginning at twelve as books declare,  
And ending at first sniff of morning air; —  
Though all such things, you will understand,  
Have reached me only at second-hand,  
Or third, or fourth, as the case may be,  
Yet there really did occur to me  
Something which I perforce must call  
Ultra-super-natural; —  
In fact trans-ultra-super-preter-  
Natural suits both truth and metre.

There is an Island, I won't say where,  
For some yet live who mightn't care  
To have the address too widely known;  
Suffice it to say: South Temperate Zone.

In that same Isle, thus precisely set down,  
There's a certain township, and also a town —  
(For, to ears colonial, I need not state  
That the two do not always homologate). —  
And in that same town there's a certain street;  
And in that same street, the *locals* to complete,  
There's a certain Surgery, trim and neat,  
Kept by —— well, perhaps it were rash  
To call him other than Doctor Dash.

At midnight, then, in the month of June  
(And don't forget the full of the moon),  
I sat in that Surgery, writhing with pain,  
Having waited fully two hours in vain  
For Doctor Dash, who, I understood,  
Was engaged in the questionable good  
Of adding one to the sum of woe  
That includes all creatures here below, —  
Especially those whose particular dolour,  
As mine was then, is a rotten molar!

Have you noted that midnight's final stroke  
Has a way of solemnizing folk?  
Though, goodness knows, in my special case,  
With a cheek that was quite a three-quarter face,  
There needed no solemnizing power,  
No eerie vibration of midnight hour,  
Chilling through heart, and thrilling through limb,  
To put me *en rapport* with all things grim,  
With all things dreary and dismal and dim,  
The whole Night side of Nature (see Crow — not Jim).

Hardly was tolled the day's decease  
From the ormolu clock on the mantelpiece,  
When a running fire of perplexing knocks  
Seemed to proceed from a rosewood box,  
That stood on a table whereon were laid  
The horrible tools of the surgical trade.  
Somewhat slowly the notes began  
With minims, and then into crotchets ran, —  
From crotchets to quavers, then faster they grew,  
Gallop, gallop, gallop, thirty-two  
Beats to the semibreve — doubling once more  
To a semibreve split into sixty-four,  
Till failing to follow so rapid a rate,

I gave in at a hundred and twenty-eight.

I was scared, I confess, but the wish to know  
Was stronger than terror of ghostly foe;  
And stealthily, stealthily nearing the knocks,  
I pressed my ear on the rosewood box,  
And fancied I could discern beneath  
The peculiar rattle of chattering teeth;  
Which, as need hardly be said or penned,  
Set each particular hair on end,  
Froze all my young blood in a moment of time,  
And curdled my bile, and my chyle, and my chyme!

But though terror undoubtedly gained the day,  
Yet curiosity too had its way,  
And the first had no sooner sung out Avaunt!  
When the second cried Stay! what the deuce do you want?

Often as I have told the tale,  
This particular part is so “like a whale,”  
That I always feel an apology due  
For insisting upon it as perfectly true,  
This is what followed, — a grinding noise,  
A friction of bones that grew to a voice;  
And I heard these words (on my honour, I did),  
“Hi! . . . Cooeey! . . . You fella . . . Open 'm lid!”

Trembling all over from foot to head,  
“How shall I open it, Spirit?” I said;  
“Lies there, oh lies there no key about?  
For how can I open the coffer without?”

A kind of an audible ossified grin,  
A gnashing of laughter, came from within,  
And little by little I understood,  
“You fella. . . . new chum. . . . You no good;  
White fella. . . . crawler. . . . you no go,  
Key in 'm lock. . . . my word. . . . 'tis so.”

It was so indeed. I opened, and lo!  
An afrit? A goblin? A bottle-imp?. . . . No;  
Simply a Human Skull, enshrined  
In rosewood, padded and velvet-lined, —  
A low type of skull, as one could see  
From the brutish depression where forehead should be;  
Yet surely precious in some degree

To judge from the case, not to mention the key  
And the lock by a well-known patentee.

All was still for three minutes at least;  
Knocks and voices alike had ceased;  
There lay the skull as silent and dumb  
As Lot's wife's salted cranium.  
Had it been all a gross mistake  
In the frenzy begotten of molar-ache?  
Was the whole affair but a fancy freak,  
Forged in the heat of a throbbing cheek?  
Was it all — but rather than wait the event,  
I determined to make the experiment.  
So summoning courage a query to frame,  
I boldly inquired, “You there, what name?”  
Which, to supply explanation due,  
Is the Lingua-Nigra for “Who are you?”

This is what followed — a grinding noise,  
A friction of bones that grew to a voice;  
And a slight elevation I certainly saw  
Of the skull as if raised on the under jaw;  
And this time beyond the chance of mistake,  
My senses about me, and wide-awake,  
No victim of frenzy, no fancy's gull,  
I heard the words — “Me King Billy's Skull!”

Alas, poor Billy, I knew him well,  
In his full corporeal *personnel*,  
But a man might give his own father the go-by,  
Were there only his brain-pan left to know by.  
And this was Billy! the last of his race!  
That sightless mask was his regal face!  
How oft from the cavity within  
Those fangs now set in ghastly grin,  
Had I seen the curling smoke proceed  
Of the eleemosynary weed —  
A cavity even now displayed  
Through a gap for his pipe expressly made!

Here, where the Kingly glance shot through,  
Two eyeless sockets appal the view;  
And where flourished the fibre of Cocoa-nut  
Is an utterly towless occiput! —  
But scant was the time to moralize,

For soon a light in the place of the eyes,  
A wild-looking, diabolical spark,  
Like the eye of an angry cat in the dark,  
Came and went, and went and came —  
The spirit of Billy, perhaps, aflame:  
And deeming it such, “What would you, pray?”  
I asked in a stammering, tremulous way;  
“What is your will, oh, William, say?  
William, rex dei gratia!”

This is what followed, — a grinding noise,  
A friction of bones that grew to a voice;  
“You take me out. . . . go long o'street. . . .  
You come place where three road meet. . . .  
S'pos'n keep middle till come to bridge. . . .  
Cross over creek, an' go up ridge. . . .  
Up on 'im top lie down hollow tree. . . .  
Lift up big sheet o' bark. . . . you see  
Bones of brother belongin' to me. . . .  
Take 'im up head. . . . put mine fella down. . . .  
You fetch 'im brother head back to town. . . .  
Put 'im in box. . . . lock 'im up like o' here. . . .  
Dash no do *me!*. . . . my oath!. . . . No fear!”

What COULD it all mean? — Three days ago  
I had seen this monarch in earth laid low:  
How had his fleshless skull returned  
From the grave where I saw him so “quietly inurned?”  
And what upon earth was the drift of the dark  
Allusion to Dash in his closing remark?  
And what could import a mission so strange —  
This visit to death, this mysterious exchange?  
And wherefore of all men should *I* be selected  
To. . . . pending an answer I did as directed,  
And in less than an hour the exchange was effected.  
King Billy supplanted, the box closed once more,  
And myself fleeing forth from the surgery door!

Time and the hour, as Shakespeare says,  
Run through the very roughest of days: —  
(Forgive misquotation — the letter kills;  
The spirit, at all events, is Will's)  
Time and the hour having run their race,  
I found myself back in the self-same place,  
Dash standing by with a smiling face,

Wiping his weapon with dainty grace,  
Myself no longer a surgical case,  
But relieved (to the tune of twenty bob),  
With the molar transferred to my trouser fob.  
I could now look around me; the box was there,  
Done up in canvas, and labelled "with care;"  
And Dash, beholding my steadfast stare,  
Said with Mephistophelian grin,  
That looked like the very triumph of Sin,

"Bet you twenty to one in gold,  
You never will guess what that box doth hold . . .  
Not bet? . . . Well, listen while I unfold  
A neat little tale of a neat little prank,  
Played by myself upon Doctor Blank,  
The Hospital Surgeon, who, as you know,  
Is my open friend, but my secret foe,  
Well, to begin *ab initio*,  
King Billy, whom we saw laid low  
In his mother earth some days ago,  
The last of the Aborigines,  
Had long been dying of lung disease.  
The melancholy fact was known  
To Doctor Blank and myself alone,  
And each of us watched with wary eye,  
Patiently waiting till Billy should die."

(Here I ventured to ask him the reason why.)  
"Why? Don't you see? this man, as the last  
Of a great island race of the perished past —  
(Save one old gin, from whom can be  
No further scion, as all can see)  
Is a wonderful curiosity:  
And Blank and myself had sworn an oath,  
Secret from each, yet known to both,  
To achieve some scientific note  
In catalogue or anecdote,  
By the munificent presentation  
Of King Billy's Skull to the British Nation!

Fancy the honour, the kudos, the fame!  
A whole museum athrill with one's name.  
Fancy the thousands all crowding to see  
'Skull of the last Aborigine,  
Presented by Asterisk Dash, M.D.'!!

A couple of men not sufficing to fix  
The numbers on all the umbrellas and sticks,  
And every voice in the eager crowd  
Pronouncing the name of Dash aloud!  
Fancy the honour, the kudos, the fame!  
But fancy the everlasting shame,  
If in place of Dash the name should be Blank!  
The Quack! the Charlatan! Mountebank!

“But to proceed. To daily view  
Weaker and weaker His Majesty grew.  
I tended him kindly, went out of my way  
To see how he fared from day to day:  
But all my kindness, in pill or potion,  
Showed small by the side of Blank's devotion;  
All my kindness in potion and pill  
Only made Blank show kinder still.  
Well, one dark day (which ill betide)  
Returning home from a country ride,  
I found, to my sore astonishment,  
That Blank had had the patient sent  
To the Hospital Nigger-ward — to die  
Beneath my antagonist's very eye!  
(Knew you ever such treachery?) —

I owe him one, to myself I said;  
Let him have the body, I'll have the head,  
By hook or by crook, let what will come —  
By fair or by foul, I'll have my thumb  
On that potentate's caput mortuum!  
I bribed a wardsman to let me know  
When the patient should be *in articulo*;  
And, accordingly, one afternoon I got  
A letter to say King Billy was not.  
I suddenly found I had been remiss  
In my social duties to Blank, and this  
Induced me to write him to give us to tea  
The pleasure of his company.  
Blank took the bait, came, found — not me,  
But himself alone with Mrs. D.,  
Who very much regretted to say  
How the Doctor was suddenly called away,  
Much, to be sure, against his will,  
But Mrs. . . a . . Harris was very ill: —

In an hour or so he would return: —  
Edith, tell Mary to bring the urn.

“Ere Blank sat down with my woman-kind,  
I had slit Billy's head above and behind.  
When Blank was requested to say a grace,  
There was no skull behind Billy's face.  
When Blank was just about to begin,  
One skull was out and another skull in.  
Ere Blank had buttered a morsel of toast,  
The job was three-quarters through almost.  
Ere Blank had sipped of his second cup,  
The flesh was spliced, and the head tied up:  
And before he had drunk it to the dregs,  
I had done him, as sure as eggs are eggs!

“And he knows it too; but, all the same,  
He hasn't blown it as yet for shame.  
Let him publish it now as soon as he may,  
He will find himself rather late in the day,  
For this very night the treasure will be  
Severed from Blank by leagues of sea.  
Think of it, Sir, and congratulate me —  
‘Skull of the last Aborigine,  
Presented by Asterisk Dash, M.D.’!!”

\* \* \* \* \*

In a certain Museum, I won't say where,  
But it's not very far from Russell Square,  
Should the gentle Reader e'er happen to see  
“Skull of the last Aborigine,” —  
And find, perchance, some poetical gull  
Crooning the theme of a Monarch's skull,  
Tell him to lay his theme on a shelf,  
On peril of being a numskull himself;  
Or to modulate his Parnassian whim  
To the tune of “Brother belongin' to him”!!

## Macaulay's New Zealander.

IT little profits that, an idle man,  
On this worn arch, in sight of wasted halls,  
I mope, a solitary pelican,  
And glower and glower for ever on Saint Paul's: —  
Will no soft-hearted mortal be so very  
Obliging as to row me o'er the ferry!

Here three-and-thirty years\* I've stood estranged,  
A dream of ruin all around me stretching;  
And centuries shall see me yet unchanged,  
Ever in act to sketch, but nothing sketching;  
Mutely immutable, constrain'dly still,  
With nought to stand against, except my will.

A wondrous lot is mine; ye bide your doom  
Till men say Vixit: mine begins ere birth;  
A lonely ghost projected from the womb  
Of Time-to-come, I linger now on earth.  
Ye vertebrates date back, while I commence  
My weary present in the future tense.

A weird eidolon; a born paradox;  
A fixture framed of incorporeal particles;  
Yet dropped in many an Editorial box,  
Blown thence in squibs, or hurled in Leading Articles;  
A Nomad, though my permanent address is  
In Volume Second of Macaulay's Essays.

I was not born of woman (see Macduff —  
Nor stare to hear my lore so far extends;  
The sire who bore me trafficked in such stuff,  
And had his Shakespeare at his finger-ends:  
The quitch is in the blood — such blood as ghost has;  
I know as much as he; at least, almost as).

I was not born of woman; gave no pain;  
Through no preliminary stage did pass;  
But sprang, a Pallas, from Macaulay's brain,

Though not, like her, with spear and helm of brass;  
My spear, a pencil of Queensland plumbago;  
My casque, a felt one — latest from Otago.

And therein lies the sting of all I bear —  
That after brooding ages on mine arch,  
And treasuring what the centuries prepare,  
And noting what ye proudly term the March  
Of Progress, and assimilating all  
“The long result of Time,” see “Locksley-hall;” —

That after seeing all that mortal can,  
That after learning all that man can learn,  
This forecast shade, already more than man,  
Must go and be a baby in its turn!  
I've got to go and be a little kid,  
When old perhaps as Cheops' Pyramid!

I've got to wear a little purpled cap;  
Pass through, perchance, some brutal mode of swaddling;  
To gather tissue from a bowl of pap;  
To undergo no end of molly-coddling;  
To be brought up by hand, or, worse and worse,  
To be a parasite upon a nurse.

And in due course this cultured soul of mine  
Must learn its Catechism by easy stages;  
And sundry rods shall yet be steeped in brine,  
To stimulate the heir of all the ages;  
And men shall file away with prose and rhyme  
To sharpen *me*, the foremost file of time.

I pray you, purist, faint not at the word;  
For in the distant day whereof I speak,  
Your chastened phrases shall be held absurd;  
What you call slang shall be our Attic Greek;  
And every man be file, or bloke, or cove;  
And bloods make oath by Gum, instead of Jove!

For standing here, immovable and dumb,  
An arch-Stylites, birth, not death, awaiting,  
Faint inklings reach me of the time to come,  
Beneath the loud To-day reverberating;  
And I could tell of things so strange and wild,  
Your wisest don would feel himself a child; —

Could show up many a now-belauded quackery;  
    Could play the deuce with half your saints and sages;  
Could settle for you whether Boz or Thackeray  
    Shall be the admiration of the ages;  
And whether Morris, Swinburne, and Rossetti  
Shall number with the great, or with the petty; —

Could tell how empire shall have changed its place,  
    But must not “blow,” *although* an Australasian;  
Could tell you which shall be the ruling race,  
    But may not shock the orthodox Caucasian,  
Nor dare your curiosity assuage,  
Lest I should make half-castes become the rage; —

Could tell you quite a fairy tale of science,  
    And wonders in Political Economy,  
That set your time-worn statutes at defiance,  
    And hold them out of date as Deuteronomy:  
The darky, boss; the trashy white, a “brudder;”  
Man at the prow, and woman at the rudder; —

How all shall go by natural selection;  
    No man allowed to live unless good-looking;  
How love shall vent itself in vivisection,  
    And charms be rated subsequent to cooking;  
How girls, instead of knitting sofa-covers,  
Shall spend their leisure in tattooing lovers;

And how magnetic belts with dazzling hues  
    Shall draw unwilling arms around the waist;  
How damsels to enhance their lips shall use  
    Odylic force condensed into a paste;  
And woo the bashful from his slow simplicity  
With cakes of desiccated electricity; —

How education, as a general rule,  
    Shall be conducted by familiar spirits;  
How “circles” shall be formed in every school,  
    And rappings shall reward superior merits;  
And how the spectroscope, applied to spectres,  
Shall re-enact all history, on reflectors; —

And how your vaunted patents and inventions  
    Shall be for playthings to the great hereafter;  
And all your philosophical pretensions  
    Be themes of inextinguishable laughter;

Your engineering form for future times  
The droll machinery of pantomimes.

Your steam — your boast! What is it but a vapour?  
Or what more fleeting simile will do:  
'Twill be effete as — let me see — what paper?  
Eureka! — say, the “Saturday Review!”  
Whose name, indeed, shall live — simply because  
These lines give token such a paper *was*.

For there be those whose memory shall rot,  
And pass, and be as it had never been;  
Of such my famed progenitor's is not;  
Valhalla holds him in the high serene: —  
My Prospero! Oh may he prosper where he is,  
Untouched by that unenviable caries!

For though I dumbly execrate the day  
When first he chained me here, a lorn eidolon,  
To be a literary popinjay,  
And market-stock for every sucking Solon,  
Be Hyperborean calm his long reward!  
I'm proud of him; you know, he was a lord.

Mundanes, I say Good-bye, as on ye march;  
I fain would shake your hands, but can't get at you, —  
My prison-ruin waiting in the arch,  
As in the marble waits the future statue.  
I hate you, London-bridge! And if Saint Paul is  
A name I loathe, the fault is Lord Macaulay's.

Witlings, a word: bring me no more to book;  
And take not any more my name in vain;  
Cast, if ye will, one final, loving look,  
As upon one ye ne'er shall see again.  
Behold me — let it be the last occasion —  
Served up in verses for “The Australasian.”

\* Macaulay's New Zealander dates from 1840.

## The Power of Science.

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,  
    Whatever stirs this mortal frame,"  
Are but the legacies of apes,  
    With interest on the same.

How oft in studious hours do I  
    Recall those moments, gone too soon,  
When midway in the hall I stood,  
    Beside the Dichobune.

Through the Museum-windows played  
    The light on fossil, cast, and chart;  
And she was there, my Gwendoline,  
    The mammal of my heart.

She leaned against the Glyptodon,  
    The monster of the sculptured tooth;  
She looked a fossil specimen  
    Herself, to tell the truth.

She leaned against the Glyptodon;  
    She fixed her glasses on her nose;  
One Pallas-foot drawn back displayed  
    The azure of her hose.

Few virtues had she of her own —  
    She borrowed them from time and space;  
Her age was eocene, although  
    Post-tertiary her place.

The Irish Elk that near us stood,  
    (Megaceros Hibernicus),  
Scarce dwarfed her; while I bowed beneath  
    Her stately overplus.

I prized her pre-diluvian height,  
    Her palaeozoic date of birth,  
For these to a scientific eye  
    Had scientific worth.

She had some crotchets of her own,  
My sweet viviparous Gwendoline;  
She loved me best when I would sing  
Her ape-descent and mine.

I raised a wild pansophic lay;  
(The public fled the dismal tones); —  
I struck a chord that suited well  
That *entourage* of bones.

I sang the very dawn of life,  
Cleared at a bound the infinite chasm  
That sunders inorganic dust  
From sly-born protoplasm.

I smote the stiffest chords of song,  
I showed her in a glorious burst  
How universal unity  
Was dual from the first.

How primal germs contained in one  
The beau-ideal and the belle;  
And how the “mystery of life”  
Is just a perfect cell.

I showed how sense itself began  
In senseless gropings after sense; —  
(She seemed to find it so herself,  
Her gaze was so intense.)

And how the very need of light  
Conceived, and visual organs bore;  
Until an optic want evolved  
The spectacles she wore.

How headless molluscs making head  
Against the fashions of their line,  
On pulpy maxims turned their backs,  
And specialized a spine.

How landward longings seized on fish,  
Fretted the type within their eggs,  
And in amphibian issue dif-  
Ferentiated legs.

I hopped the quaint marsupials,  
And into higher mammals ran,

And through a subtle fugue I stole  
From Lemurs up to Man.

How tails were lost — but when I reached  
This saddest part of all my lay,  
She dropped the corners of her mouth,  
And turned her face away.

And proud to see my lofty love  
So sweetly wince, so coyly shrink,  
I woke a moving threnody —  
I sang the missing link.

And when I spake of vanished kin,  
Of Simian races dead and gone,  
The wave of sorrow from her eyes  
Half-drowned the Glyptodon.

I turned to other, brighter themes,  
And glancing at our different scales,  
I showed how lady beetles are  
Robuster than the males.

I sang the Hymenoptera;  
How insect-brides are sought and got;  
How stridulation of the male  
First hinted what was what.

And when — perchance too fervently —  
I smote upon the chord of sex,  
I saw the tardy spark of love  
Blaze up behind her specs.

She listened with a heightened grace,  
She blushed a blush like ruby wine,  
Then bent her stately head, and clinked  
Her spectacles on mine.

A mighty impulse rattled through  
Her well-articulated frame;  
And into one delighted ear  
She breathed my Christian name.

And whispered that my song had given  
Her secret thought substantial shape,  
For she had long considered me  
The offshoot of an ape.

She raised me from the enchanted floor,  
And, as my lips her shoulder met,  
Between two asthmas of embrace  
She called me marmosette.

I strove to calm her down; she grew  
Serener and serener;  
And so I won my Gwendoline,  
My vertebrate congener.

## The Story of a Soul.

WHO can say "Thus far, no farther," to the tide of his own nature?

Who can mould the spirit's fashion to the counsel of his will?  
Square his being by enactment — shape his soul to legislature —  
Be himself his law of living, his own art of good and ill?

Who can sway the rhythm of breathing? Who can time his own heart-beating?

Fix the pitch of all soul music, and imprison it in bars?  
Who can pledge the immaterial affinities from meeting?  
Who can make him his own orbit unrelated to the stars?

I had marked my path before me, not in flowery lane or by-way,  
Unbeguiled of all bird-singing, by no voice of waters won;  
And across life's silent glacier I had cut a clear cold highway,  
Little recking of the avalanche, or all-dissolving sun.

I had said unto my soul, Be thou the lord of thine own Reason;  
Get thee face to face and heart to heart with everlasting Truth; —  
Thou art heir of all her beauty if thou dare the lofty treason  
To clasp her and to kiss her with the valiant lips of youth.

Not in outer courts of worship, not by darkly-curtained portal,  
But within her inmost chamber, in the glory of her shrine,  
Shalt thou seek her and commune with her, a mortal made immortal  
By the breathing of her presence, by her fervid hand in thine.

With no garment-clinging vassalage, unawed of all tradition,  
Alone, alone of mortals shalt thou gaze upon her face;  
And the years shall pass unheeded in the wonder of the vision,  
And her attributes unfolding make thee free of time and space.

So I left the dewy levels, and with upward-pointing finger  
Marked my goal among the snowy peaks o'er pleasure and o'er pain;  
And the shining arms of Aphrodité beckoning me to linger  
By her side amid her rosy bowers were stretched for me in vain.

And I heard the world pass by me with a far-off dreamy cadence  
Of an alien music uninformed with meaning to mine ears;  
And all sweet melodious laughter in the voice of men and maidens

Come with distance-saddened undertone, a mockery of tears.  
Till alike the throb of pleasure and alike the great o'er-flowings  
Of the springs of sorrow seemed to be forgotten things of yore;  
Till the world passed from beneath me, and the rumour of its goings  
Far diffused into the silent ethers reached my soul no more.  
And the bodiless and shadowless mute ghosts of contemplation,  
Charmed from spells of bookish lore, were my companions on my  
way;  
And their flake-light footfalls cheered me to a dreamy exaltation  
Where the soul sat with the godheads, unassailable as they.  
I had lost the glow of Nature; and the pride of clearer seeing  
Was to me for all elation, for the sunset and the flowers,  
For the beauty and the music and the savour of all being,  
For the starry thrills of midnight, for the joy of morning hours.  
Down the slopes I left behind me fled the creeds of many races,  
Fled the gnomes of superstition, fled rebuking fiends of fear,  
And I smiled as I beheld them from the calm of my high places  
Cast integument and substance, melt in mist and disappear.  
So I held my way unwavering in dismal mountain-passes,  
Though a voice within my soul was loud, in vain, and all in vain!  
And I heard the unassuaging streams far down in deep crevasses,  
And I stumbled snowblind 'mid the boulders of the long moraine.  
Still I said, I will not falter, not revisit earth for ever,  
Who have breathed the breath of deity and lived Olympian hours!  
—When the summer smote the glacier, and the ice became a river,  
And I found me in the valley clinging wildly to the flowers!  
Clinging wildly, clinging fondly, in a mad repentant fashion,  
To the blossoms long forsaken, to the graces long foregone,  
Paying lavishly in tears and sighs the long arrears of passion,  
And re-wedded to the joy of earth by one fair thing thereon!  
Fools and blind are we who think to soar beyond the reach of Nature!  
Fools and blind who think to bid the tide of feeling from its flood!  
Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature?  
Or compel the summer fervours from the solstice of the blood?  
Not “as gods.” Not yet. Our roots are in the earth that heaves beneath  
me:  
With her rhythm we move and tremble, with her starry dance we  
whirl.

Lo, she laughs when I would fly to where her arms shall not enwreath  
me,

Draws me back with chords of golden hair, o'erthrows me with a girl!

What was I to deem it duty thus to sunder Truth and Beauty —

Thus to die among the living, and to live among the dead?

Ah, the hands of Truth are boonless, and the lips of Truth are tuneless,

When we sever her from Love, and throne her coldly overhead!

Now I know her drawing nearer in a fairer light and dearer

Than in wastes of icy solitude or page of weary tome —

In the gleam of golden tresses, in the eye that smiles and blesses,

In the glowing hand that presses Love's approved conviction home.

Truth is sphered in sweet communion. Truth is life and love in union.

Hand in hand from spiritual founts we catch the circling thrill.

We are not compact of reasons. There are changes in our seasons;

And the crescent orb of youth has many phases to fulfil.

## Quart Pot Creek.

*(Australasian.)*

ON an evening ramble lately, as I wandered on sedately,  
Linking curious fancies, modern, mediaeval, and antique, —  
Suddenly the sun descended, and a radiance ruby-splendid,  
With the gleam of water blended, thrilled my sensitive physique —  
Thrilled me, filled me with emotion to the tips of my physique,  
Fired my eye, and flushed my cheek.

Heeding not where I was going, I had wandered, all unknowing,  
Where a river gently flowing caught the radiant ruby-streak;  
And this new-found stream beguiling my sedateness into smiling,  
Set me classically styling it with Latin names and Greek,  
Names Idalian and Castalian, such as lovers of the Greek  
Roll like quids within their cheek.

On its marge was many a burrow, many a mound, and many a furrow,  
Where the fossickers of fortune play at Nature's hide-and-peek;  
And instead of bridge to span it, there were stepping-stones of granite,  
And where'er the river ran, it seemed of hidden wealth to speak.  
Presently my soul grew stronger, and I, too, was fain to speak: —  
I assumed a pose plastique.

“Stream,” said I, “I'll celebrate thee! Rhymes and rhythms galore await  
thee!

In the weekly ‘poet's corner’ I'll a niche for thee bespeak:  
But, to aid my lucubration, thou must tell thine appellation,  
Tell thy Naiad-designation — for the journal of next week —  
Give thy sweet Pactolian title to my poem of next week.  
Whisper, whisper it — in Greek!”

But the river gave no token, and the name remained unspoken,  
Though I kept apostrophising till my voice became a shriek; —  
When there hove in sight the figure of a homeward veering digger,  
Looming big, and looming bigger, and ejecting clouds of reek —  
In fuliginous advance emitting clouds of noisome reek  
From a tube beneath his beak.

“Neighbour mine,” said I, “and miner,” — here I showed a silver shiner —

“For a moment, and for sixpence, take thy pipe from out thy cheek.  
This the guerdon of thy fame is; very cheap indeed the same is;  
Tell me only what the name is — ('tis the stream whereof I speak) —  
Name the Naiad-name Pactolian! Digger, I adjure thee, speak!”

Quoth the digger, “Quart Pot Creek.”

Oh, Pol! Edepol! Mecastor! Oh most luckless poetaster!  
I went home a trifle faster in a twitter of a pique;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living rhyming being  
Ever yet was cursed with seeing, in his poem for the week,  
Brook or river made immortal in his poem for the week, With such name  
as “Quart Pot Creek!”

\* \* \* \* \*

But the river, never minding, still is winding, still is winding,  
By the gardens where the Mongol tends the cabbage and the leek;  
And the ruby radiance nightly touches it with farewell lightly,  
But the name sticks to it tightly, — and this sensitive physique,  
The already-mentioned (vide supra) sensitive physique, Shudders still at  
“Quart Pot Creek!”

## “Our Hope.”

[MACKAY, *November 20*. — Captain O'Dwyer, of the “Morning Light,” reports finding, yesterday, seven miles south of Cape Palmerston, a boat of about six tons, evidently built from materials of a large ship. The words “Our Hope” were painted on bows and stern, and carpenters' tools, provisions, and patent log were found in her. The boat is not much damaged, and is canvassed over and partly coppered. No traces of names of crew or human remains were found, and the boat appears to have only been beached a short time. — *Courier* telegram, November 21.]

A WIND-BORNE shred of that mysterious scroll  
Wherein the secrets of the deep are writ:  
An echo of the warfare of the soul:  
A stranded hope; “Our Hope” — so runneth it.

So runneth it; a tale of manful aim,  
Of clinging trust, of hope that would not die,  
Shrunk to the piteous legend of a name,  
That lingers in baptismal mockery.

“Our Hope!” Poor chronicle unsouled of sense!  
Drear ghost of shattered hope! — but potent yet  
With wail of sea-sepulchral eloquence  
To wake conjecture, and confirm regret!

Brief words and few; but needs no more to tell  
Of hope from shipwrecked hope through toil renewed;  
And how from some lone isle with glad farewell  
THEY launched upon the awful solitude.

How day by day they stared at ocean's rim  
With straining eyes, for sail, or cliff, or tree,  
Till all things paled, and ev'n “Our Hope” grew dim,  
And dark-winged night came brooding o'er the sea.

Or how beneath a fateful sky o'ercast,  
'Mid panting silence of deceitful calms,  
The long sore shrift of prayerful vigils passed,  
With heaven-turned faces and uplifted palms.

Or how, when quivering up the orient slope  
Of dawn, the opal splendors thrilled and spread,  
Glad in the joy of hope renewed, "Our Hope"  
With homeward throb across the waters fled.

How day brought night, and night reluctant morn,  
Till hope deferred became a wild despair,  
And shoreless sunsets laughed their dreams to scorn,  
And Doom hung lurid on the burdened air.

How one by one, no more by hope beguiled,  
Fed the hot winds with taint of dying breath,  
Until the last lone lingerer, fever-wild,  
Arraigning Heav'n, leaped madly into death.

Is this the last of hope? — An empty shell  
The bitter end of many a toil-drawn sigh?  
"Why make we such ado?" Were it not well  
To fold our robes about us, and to die?

To build — put forth — and cease: Is this our tale?  
Shall baffled effort mock us evermore?  
Come forth, oh brighter Faith, with golden sail,  
And bring us tidings from the further shore!

Shine forth, oh Faith, from out the viewless scope  
Of rich fulfilment far o'er mortal dreams!  
Shine forth with joyous tidings of "Our Hope"  
Home-haven'd by the marge of crystal streams!

## From An Upper Verandah.

WHAT happier haunt could the gods allot  
For loftiest musing to sage or bard? —  
Yet I would that this upper verandah did *not*  
Look down on my beautiful Neighbour's Back-yard!

I stir the afflatus: Descend, oh ye Nine!  
Let the crystalline gates of the soul be unbarred!  
No. My thoughts *will* keep running in one fixed line —  
The clothes-line that hangs in my Neighbour's Back-yard!

Let me gaze on the hills; let me think of the sea;  
Of the dawn rosy-fingered — the night silver-starred: —  
(What dear little feet must the owner's be  
Of those stockings that hang in my Neighbour's Back-yard!)

Let me tune my soul to a measure devout: —  
Ah, the musical mood is all jangled and jarred,  
While things with borders, and things without,  
Keep flutt'ring down there in my Neighbour's Back-yard!

Are the True and the Good and the Beautiful dead,  
That I win not one gleam of Pierian regard?  
(Does she suffer, I wonder, from cold in the head? —  
Such a lot of *mouchoirs* in my Neighbour's Back-yard!)

Comes the fit. While it sways me, high themes would I sing!  
Prometheus! Achilles! Have at you! *En garde!*  
Alexander the Great — (oh that *I* were a string  
On that apron hung out in my Neighbour's Back-yard!)

I will shut my eyes fast — I have hit it at last,  
Now my purest Ideals flit by me unmarred;  
And odours of memory rise from the past,  
(And an odour of suds from my Neighbour's Back-yard!)

Ah, yes, when the eyelids together are prest,  
Every vestige of earth we throw off and discard.  
(These are flannels, I think. Is she weak in the chest? —  
There! I'm looking again at my Neighbour's Back-yard!)

Since the Muses back out, left Philosophy in:

Let me ponder its problems cold and hard.

Ah, Philosophy dies in a celibate grin

At that bolster-case down in my neighbour's Back-yard!

Oh shame on my rapidly silvering hairs!

Oh shame on this veteran battered and scarred!

*I* to be witched with these frilled — affairs!

Confound my neighbour! Confound her Back-yard!

Why seek for the blossoms of Auld Lang Syne,

When the boughs where they budded are blasted and charred? —

Faugh! the whole concern's too alkaline —

It's washing day in my Neighbour's Back-yard.

## Opening Hymn.

[Sung at the Opening of the Queensland National Society's Exhibition,  
1876.]

WHILE nations joining gifts  
Their fanes of Art adorn,  
Hear, Lord, the lowly voice that lifts  
The song of the youngest-born.  
The gifts of the youngest-born,  
We spread them forth to Thee, —  
What toil hath wrought, what skill hath taught,  
What Freedom hath brought the free.

No storied name we vaunt,  
Nor martial trophies raise;  
No battle-riven banners flaunt  
The triumphs of other days.  
But triumphs of peaceful days  
Adorn our jubilee:  
Here toil and skill Thine ends fulfil,  
With hands that from blood are free.

We pile the arms of Peace,  
Her trophies manifold,  
Her ploughshare swords, her shields of fleece,  
Her armour of bloodless gold.  
Our treasures of fleece and gold  
We consecrate to Thee,  
With choicest yield of fruitful field,  
And spoil from the forest-tree.

We bless Thee for our land,  
Broad streams and gladdening rills,  
For flocks that roam on ev'ry hand,  
For herds on a thousand hills.  
From all its thousand hills  
Our land doth call to Thee,  
Still do Thou bless with happiness  
This youngest of the free.

## **Australian Anthem.**

MAKER of Earth and Sea,  
What shall we render Thee?  
    All ours is Thine: —  
All that our land doth hold,  
Increase of field and fold,  
Rich ores and virgin gold,  
    Thine — Thine — all Thine!

What can Thy children bring?  
What save the voice to sing  
    “All things are Thine?” —  
What to Thy throne convey?  
What save the voice to pray  
“God bless our land always,  
    This land of Thine?”

Oh with Thy mighty hand  
Guard Thou the Motherland;  
    She, too, is Thine.  
Lead her where honour lies,  
We beneath other skies  
Still clinging daughterwise,  
    Hers, yet all Thine.

Britons of ev'ry creed,  
Teuton and Celt agreed,  
    Let us be Thine.  
One in all noble fame,  
Still be our path the same,  
Onward in Freedom's name,  
    Upward in Thine!

## The Dominion of Australia.

(A FORECAST.)

1877.

SHE is not yet; but he whose ear  
Thrills to that finer atmosphere  
Where footfalls of appointed things,  
Reverberant of days to be,  
Are heard in forecast echoings,  
Like wave-beats from a viewless sea —  
Hears in the voiceful tremors of the sky  
Auroral heralds whispering, “She is nigh.”

She is not yet; but he whose sight  
Foreknows the advent of the light,  
Whose soul to morning radiance turns  
Ere night her curtain hath withdrawn,  
And in its quivering folds discerns  
The mute monitions of the dawn,  
With urgent sense strained onward to descry  
Her distant tokens, starts to find Her nigh.

Not yet her day. How long “not yet?” . . .  
There comes the flush of violet!  
And heavenward faces, all aflame  
With sanguine imminence of morn,  
Wait but the sun-kiss to proclaim  
The Day of The Dominion born.  
Prelusive baptism! — ere the natal hour  
Named with the name and prophecy of power.

Already here to hearts intense,  
A spirit-force, transcending sense,  
In heights unscaled, in deeps unstirred,  
Beneath the calm, above the storm,  
She waits the incorporating word  
To bid her tremble into form.  
Already, like divining-rods, men's souls  
Bend down to where the unseen river rolls; —

For even as, from sight concealed,  
By never flush of dawn revealed,  
Nor e'er illumed by golden noon,  
Nor sunset-streaked with crimson bar,  
Nor silver-spanned by wake of moon,  
Nor visited of any star,  
Beneath these lands a river waits to bless  
(So men divine) our utmost wilderness, —

Rolls dark, but yet shall know our skies,  
Soon as the wisdom of the wise  
Conspires with nature to disclose  
The blessing prisoned and unseen,  
Till round our lessening wastes there glows  
A perfect zone of broadening green, —  
Till all our land, Australia Felix called,  
Become one Continent-Isle of Emerald; —

So flows beneath our good and ill  
A viewless stream of Common Will,  
A gathering force, a present might,  
That from its silent depths of gloom  
At Wisdom's voice shall leap to light,  
And hide our barren feuds in bloom,  
Till, all our sundering lines with love o'ergrown,  
Our bounds shall be the girdling seas alone.

## Nonsuited.

“DEAR RICHARD, come at once;” — so ran her letter;  
The letter of a married female friend:  
“She likes you both, and really knows no better  
Than I myself do, how her choice will end.  
Be sure of this, the first who pops will get her.  
*He's* here for Chris——” Whatever else was penned  
Dick never knew: nor knows he to this day  
How he got drest, and mounted — and away!

Like arrow from the bow, like lightning-streak,  
Including thunder following fierce and quick,  
By ridge and flat, through scrub and foaming creek  
Dick galloped like a very lunatic;  
Whipped, jerked, and spurred, but never word did speak,  
Although his thoughts rushed furious and thick,  
Headed by one he strove in vain to wipe out,  
The fear that this same “he” might put his pipe out.

And faster yet, and ever faster grew  
The maddening music of the pace, until  
The station-roofs gleamed suddenly in view,  
Quivering in noon-heat on the vine-clad hill:  
When all at once his bridle-rein he drew,  
But not from craven fear or flagging will, —  
Though, truth to tell, his heart a moment sank  
To see the river nearly “bank and bank.”

For Bowstring was the choice of all his stud,  
And *he* at least had no fair bride to win;  
And wherefore should he risk *him* in the flood? —  
A question Bowstring also asked within:  
For though he was a squatter's horse by blood,  
And held the grazing interest more than kin,  
He eyed the huge logs wheeling, bobbing, bowling,  
As if his soul objected to “log-rolling.”

And by that curious telegraphic force,  
Outspeaking half-a-dozen formal speeches,

That works its quick inexplicable course  
Through saddle-cloth, pigskin, and buckskin breeches,  
Until the dumb opinion of a horse  
Its sympathetic rider's spirit reaches —  
Dick, feeling under him the strong flanks quiver,  
Knew that his thorough-bred would funk the river.

A moment more, Dick from his seat had leapt,  
Ungirthed, uncurbed, unreined his trembling steed;  
Who straightway vanished from his sight, nor kept  
The high tradition of a loyal breed,  
But quickened by no stimulus except  
His own unbridled (and unsaddled) greed,  
Before a man had time to reckon two,  
Was gorging in fresh fields and pastures new.

Then Dick threw off his boots, undid his belt,  
Doffed — here we shirk particulars. In brief,  
When nought remained but his primeval pelt,  
He tied his garments in his handkerchief;  
Then feeling as “the grand old gardener” felt.  
(After the apple), crouching like a thief,  
Down to the stream did this lorn lover slink,  
And threw his bundle to the further brink.

Nor longer paused, but plunged him in the tide,  
A hero and Leander both in one;  
Struck the entangling boughs from either side,  
And held his head up bravely to the sun;  
Dodged the huge logs, the torrent's strength defied; —  
To cut it short, did all that could be done;  
Touched land, and uttering a fervent “Thank . . .”  
— Just then his bundle floated by, and sank.

Take Yarra-bend, take Bedlam, Colney Hatch,  
And Woogaroo, and mix them weight for weight,  
And stir them well about — you could not match  
Dick's madness with the whole conglomerate.  
If the Recording Angel did but catch  
One half his ravings against Heaven and Fate,  
And rising creeks and slippery banks, some day  
Poor Dick will have a heavy bill to pay.

Was ever lover in so lorn a case?  
Was ever lover in so wild a mood?

He nearly pulled the beard from off his face;  
He would have rent his garments, *if he could*.  
How could he woo a dame his suit to grace,  
Who had *no* suit, save that wherein he stood?  
Oh what were youth, wealth, station in society,  
Without the textile adjuncts of propriety!

When oaths and half-an-hour were spent in vain,  
It dawned on Dick that he might slyly crawl  
From tree to tree across the wooded plain,  
And gain “the hut,” that stood a mile from all  
The other buildings — whence some labouring swain,  
Unscared by nudity, might come at call,  
And lend, for thanks, or promissory payment,  
Whatever he could spare of decent raiment.

From one variety of Eucalypt  
Unto another, blue gum, spotted gum,  
Black-butt, etcetera, Dick crawled or skipped,  
Bitten and blistered like the newest chum;  
Till, marking where the open level dipped,  
Distracted with mosquito-martyrdom,  
He rushed, and plunged — and not a bit too soon —  
Into the coolness of a quiet lagoon.

No, not a bit too soon; for something white,  
Topped by a parasol of lustrous pink,  
At this same perilous moment hove in sight,  
And glided gently to the water-brink;  
The while in thickest sedge the rueful wight  
Hid his diminished head, and scarce dared wink, —  
No more a gallant daringly erotic,  
But consciously absurd, and idiotic.

'Twas she; his ove; — and never had he thought  
Her face so beautiful, her form so stately;  
Ophelia-like she moved, absorbed, distraught;  
'Twas plain to Dick she had been weeping lately;  
And now and then a weary sigh he caught,  
And once a whisper that disturbed him greatly,  
Which said, unless his ears played him a trick,  
“What in the world can have come over Dick?”

And presently, through his aquatic screen,  
His hated rival he beheld advance,

With airy grace and captivating mien,  
And all the victor in his countenance:  
And too, too late he learned what *might have been*,  
When at her watch he saw the lady glance,  
And heard her say, "Here's Fred. The die is cast!  
I gave poor Dick till two; 'tis now half-past."

And then Dick closed his eyes, his ears he stopped;  
Yet somehow saw and heard no whit the less, —  
Saw that the lover on his knees had dropped,  
And heard him all his tale of love confess;  
And when the question had been duly popped,  
He heard the kiss that sealed the answering "Yes!" —  
'Twas rough on Dick: ah me! 'twas mighty rough:  
But he remained true blue (though all in buff), —

And never winced, nor uttered word or groan,  
But gazed upon the treasure he had lost,  
In agony of soul, yet still as stone,  
The saddest man since first true love was crossed:  
And when at length the mated birds had flown,  
He waited yet another hour, then tossed  
His modesty unto the winds, and ran  
Right for the hut, and found — thank Heaven! — a man.

\* \* \* \* \*

On that same evening, in his rival's coat,  
Waistcoat and things, Dick sat among the rest;  
And though he could have cut their owner's throat,  
He kept his feelings underneath his vest,  
And proved by some mendacious anecdote  
That he was there by chance — a passing guest.  
One boon at least stern Fate could not refuse:  
He stood that evening *in his rival's shoes*.

## The Courtship of the Future.

(A PREVISION.)

(A.D. 2876.)

HE.

WHAT is a Kiss?" — Why, long ago,  
When pairs, as we, a-wooing sat,  
They used to put their four lips .. so. . . .  
And make a chirping noise. . . . like that.  
And strange to say, the fools were pleased;  
A little went a long way then:  
A cheek lip-grazed, a finger squeezed,  
Was rapture to those ancient men.

Ah, not for us the timid course  
Of those old-fashioned bill-and-cooers!  
One unit of *our* psychic force  
Had squelched a thousand antique wooers.  
For us the god his chalice dips  
In fountains fiercer, deeper, dearer,  
Than purling confluence of lips  
That meet, but bring the Souls no nearer.

Well; 'twas but poverty at worst:  
Poor beggars, how could they be choosers!  
Not yet upon the world had burst  
Our Patent Mutual Blood-Transfusers.  
Not yet had Science caught the clue  
To joy self-doubling, -squaring, -cubing, —  
Nor taught to draw the whole soul through  
A foot of gutta-percha tubing.

Come, Lulu, bare the pearly arm; —  
Now, where the subtle blue shows keenest,  
I hang the duplex snake-like charm,  
(The latest, by a new machinist).  
And see, in turn above my wrist  
I fix the blood-compelling conduits . . .  
Ah, this is what the old world missed,

For all the lore of all its pundits!

I turn the tap — I touch the spring —  
Hush, Lulu, hush! our lives are blending.  
(This new escapement's quite the thing,  
And very well worth recommending).  
Oh circuit of commingling bliss!  
Oh bliss of mingling circulation!  
True love alone can merge like this  
In one continuous pulsation.

Your swift life thrills me through and through:  
I wouldn't call the Queen my mother:  
Now you are I, and I am you,  
And each of us is one another.  
Reciprocally influent  
The wedded love-tide flows between us: —  
Ah, this is what the old fables meant,  
For surely, love, our love is venous.

Now, now, your inmost life I know,  
How nobler far than mine and grander;  
For through *my* breast *your* feelings flow,  
And through my brain your thoughts meander.  
I feel a rush of high desires  
With sweet domestic uses blending,  
As now I think of angel-choirs,  
And now of stockings heaped for mending.

And see — myself! in light enshrined!  
An aureole my hat replacing!  
Now, amorous yearnings half-defined,  
With prudish scruples interlacing.  
Next, cloudlike floats a snowy veil,  
And — heavens above us! — what a trousseau!..  
Come, Lulu, give me tale for tale;  
I'll keep transfusing till you do so.

SHE.

Oh, love, this never *can* be you!  
The stream flows turbid, melancholic;  
And heavy vapours dull me through,  
Dashed with a something alcoholic.  
The elective-forces shrink apart,  
No answering raptures thrill and quicken;

Strange feelings curdle at my heart,  
And in my veins vile memories thicken.

I feel an alien life in mine!

It isn't I! It isn't you, Sir!

This is the mood of Caroline!

Oh, don't tell *me!* I know the brew, Sir!

Nay, nay, — it isn't “the machine”!

This isn't you — this isn't I, Sir!

It's the old story — you have been

Transfusing elsewhere on the sly, Sir.

## On a Fork of Byron's.

[One of a set in the possession of C. W. Pitts, Esq., Stanthorpe.]

LIKE any other fork. — No mark you meet with  
To point some psychological conceit with.  
An ordinary fork. A fork to eat with.

No individuality of fashion:  
No stamp of frenzy fine, or poet-passion:  
An article in no respect Parnassian.

No muse “with ivy never sere” hath decked it:  
In fact, it would be foolish to expect it.  
I question if the muses recollect it.

A plain straightforward fork; yet interesting,  
As to the world in general attesting  
That poetizing hinges on digesting.

A fork not standing on its merits merely,  
But, being Byron's, testifying clearly  
That verse and victuals are related nearly.

Quite genuine; crest and all; a fork to swear by:  
Some poet-stories doubtless hanging thereby, —  
Associations such as gold can ne'er buy.

For 'twixt the fork and the divine afflatus  
The links are perfect; there is no hiatus;  
Fork, stomach, brain, pen, — all one apparatus.

So when the food that on the fork ascended  
Grew into verse as with the brain it blended,  
The fork wrote just as truly as the pen did.

For though the fork the earlier resource is,  
Between the two no violent divorce is, —  
I hold them to be correlated forces.

Perchance the unsuspected ministration  
Of this same fork first set in circulation

The coinage of his rich imagination.

Perchance this very fork could give the clue to  
What many of the famous thoughts were due to,  
That now are part of me, and part of you too.

And if its prongs administered the fuel  
That working duly unto brain-renewal  
Kindled the thoughts that even yet fire *you* all, —

This very fork, — (unless I quite astray be,  
And you of unimpressionable clay be), —  
A factor in *your* moral product may be.

And musing thus, does not this fork begin to you  
To seem as consanguineously akin to you  
As if the bard himself had stuck it into you?

'Tis ever thus: what Genius consecrateth  
The nearest with the most remote collateth,  
Till meanest use on highest issue waiteth.

This salad, now, in which the fork I'm pressing,  
Wherein are all sweet savours coalescing —  
What subtle shoot of genius efflorescing

Flowered in the flavour of so rich a blessing?  
Is it that Byron's fork, some charm possessing,  
Transmutes the — stop a bit — Who did the dressing?

## Cape Byron.

UPON the orient utmost of the land,  
    Enfranchised of the world, alone, and free,  
I stood; before me, and on either hand,  
    The interminable solace of the sea.

A white-winged hour of heaven, a fugitive  
    Of which the angels wist not, hither fled,  
Whose plummy, rustling whispers bid me live  
    Its length of moments as if grief were dead.

Oh memorable hour of beauteous things!  
    The heaving azure melting into light;  
The chequered sport of fleet o'ershadowings;  
    The nearer emerald curling into white;

The shoreward billows merging each in each,  
    To sunder yet again, fold, and unfold;  
The shining curve of far-receptive beach;  
    The silvery wave-kiss on the gladdened gold;

The grandeur of the lene old promontory;  
    The distant bourne of hills in purple guise,  
Athrob with soft enchantment; high in glory  
    The peak of Warning bosomed in the skies!

Oh all too fair to be so seldom seen,  
    This shadowy purple on the mountains sleeping —  
This sapphire of unutterable sheen —  
    This beauty-harvest ever ripe for reaping!

For what high end is all this daily boon,  
    Unseen of man, in sightless silence spent?  
Doth lavish Nature vainly importune  
    The unconscious witness of the firmament?

Or is it that the influent God, whose breath  
    Informs with glory sea and shore and hill,  
His infinite lone rejoicing nourisheth  
    Upon the beauteous outcome of His will?

Or is it but a patient waiting-while  
    Against a day when many an eye shall bless,  
From lowly cottage and imperial pile,  
    This wide tranquillity of loveliness; —

Against a day of many-thronging feet,  
    Of virtues, valours, all that builds and saves —  
Of human loves responsive to the sweet  
    Melodious importunity of waves?

I only know that this empurpled range,  
    This golden shore, this great transcendent sea.  
Are now a memory that will not change  
    Till I become as they — a memory.

## For My Sake.

*(Written in aid of the Children's Hospital.)*

MATTHEW XXV. 40.

INASMUCH as ye gave ear unto the sighing  
Of the least of these the children of my care, —  
Of your love from death redeemed them, or in dying  
Stood between them and the shadow of despair; —

“Inasmuch as when the little ones did languish,  
Ye put forth the hand to make their burdens light; —  
Inasmuch as when they lay on beds of anguish,  
Ye were with them in the watches of the night; —

“All the joy ye brought to light when sorrow hid it  
Now awaits you, an exceeding great reward.  
As ye did it unto these, to ME ye did it;  
Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

“Lord, when sought we out the children that did languish?  
When put forth the hand to make their burdens light?  
Lord, we wist not when they lay on beds of anguish,  
And we slept throughout the watches of the night.

“For our lives were full of trouble and of labour,  
And the night followed hard upon the day:  
Had we lingered with the children of our neighbour,  
Our own little ones had perished by the way.”

“Inasmuch as though ye might not touch or tend them,  
Ye were with them in your love, to heal and save, —  
And were hands and feet to those who did befriend them,  
By the gold and by the silver that ye gave, —

“Find your treasure where your ransomed ones have hid it;  
Take it back a thousandfold for your reward.  
As you did it unto these, to ME ye did it;  
Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

## The Boy Crusader.

OH father, is that Jerusalem —  
Those walls and towers so strong?”  
“Ho, boy, we are yet in our own fair France,  
That is only Avignon.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, are these the Jordan's banks?  
Let us rest in those vineyards fair.”  
“Ho, boy, these are only the banks of the Rhone,  
And we may not linger there.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, I fear them — the waves! the waves!  
Is Jerusalem over the sea?”  
“Ay, over the sea and then over the hills —  
But cling, my boy, to me.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, is that Jerusalem,  
Like a shell of gold in the bay?”  
“Nay, it is only Palermo, boy;  
And this is Saint Rosalie's day.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, I feared the sea, but more  
I fear this burning sand.”  
“Good cheer, my boy; take heart of grace;  
We tread upon Holy Land.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, can it be Holy Land,  
With all this blood and death?”  
“That was Acre we stormed, my boy;

Now let us to Nazareth.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, the hills are so high — so high!

Is Jerusalem very far?”

“Hush, hush, my boy, and I'll tell you the tale.

Of the Kings who followed the Star.”

“Oh father, the hills are so steep — so steep!

Will Jerusalem soon be near?”

“Boy, what had it been had you carried the cross,

Instead of your father's spear!”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh father, I am weary and faint.

This must be Calvary!”

“Good cheer, my boy; but one hill more:

Jerusalem is nigh.

“The men-at-arms have passed the ridge.

Hark, boy, how the warriors sing!”

“I only hear the sound of harps,

And waters murmuring.”

“Wake, boy, this is no time to fail!

Oh best of happy hours!

Behold at length Jerusalem —

Its gates, and domes, and towers!”

“Father, I see Jerusalem,

Ah, nearer than you deem!”

“Your eyes are closed, you see it not,

Or see it in a dream!

“Your eyes are closed, my boy, my boy!

Your face is to the West!”

“Father, I see it overhead,

And, oh, so full of rest!

“There are little children clothed in white,

And angels leading them;

There are streets of gold and gates of pearl!

At last — Jerusalem!

“And our little Marie is beckoning me,

In her hand a diadem.  
Father, I must go on before:  
We'll meet in Jerusalem.”

## The Goths in Campania.

*(Placidia, in the Tent of Adolphus.)*

I.

I AM not a Roman when he looks upon me  
With those mild eyes of unaccustomed blue;  
Woman, not Roman, when his strong embraces  
Crush me with rugged promises of love,  
Time was, ere yet the Gothic trump had broken  
The dream of that inviolate majesty  
Whose very sleep was empire — Rome its pillow —  
Its couch, the world — its overhanging, heaven;  
Time was, when only words of courtly homage  
Brought to mine ear the import of such praise  
As had bestirred Divinity to wonder  
That men should deem it of so high account,  
When careful speech of long premeditation  
Lost grace and aptitude in present awe;  
When lips, late ruddy with the blood of Caesars,  
Grew white in rash petition for such boons  
As gods had smiled at — unrewarding favour,  
A word, a look, yea, even indifference,  
As if in me the fear of adverse fortune  
Had recognized some godhead of caprice.  
But when the sun shone in the palace garden,  
And May was in the roses and in me,  
And all my soul cried out for what it had not,  
To crown the life of summer and my own,  
Honorius' sister, Theodosius' daughter,  
Placidia, I, of Roman maidens first,  
Had welcomed fellowship and clasped intrusion; —  
Yet no man asked my heart, no man my love.  
None to the longing of my life made answer;  
None broke the still Imperial solitude  
With sweet audacity of hardy wooing;  
None wronged the princess by the woman's right.  
Such time had been, until this bold Adolphus  
With warrior-laugh o'erleaped prerogative,

And caught me for a spoil beneath his buckler,  
The princess captive, but the woman free.  
A dreary code of law inscribed in purple  
Had been the record of Placidia's years,  
But that this Goth from out the Boreal lustre  
Of his blue eye shed heav'n upon the page,  
And wrote in crimson characters of triumph  
The story of a glad captivity.  
For in restraint of foot I leaped to rescue  
From golden chains and regal servitude;  
And this my durance is a fond redemption  
That makes me free to love, and to be loved.

## II.

Yet there are moments, when as now he slumbers  
Beside my feet, 'mid these disorder'd spoils  
That make my prison-tent a Roman rain —  
Fierce moments of resurgent memory,  
Full of rebuke of race and name forsaken,  
And peopled with the spirits of the past.  
Oh, it doth wrench me when his heedless fingers,  
Circling the chalice in Faternian dreams —  
The golden chalice that my father drank of,  
Enriched with his own emblems, priceless work,  
Gazing whereon his well-instructed spirit  
Enhanced the vintage with the pride of art —  
Relax and glide adown the rare embossment,  
Until they touch that laurelled head, whose nod,  
More than of Jove, shook not Olympus only,  
But Jove himself, and all his kindred gods.  
Then daughter, sister, princess, rise within me,  
A trinity abhorrent of itself —  
That other self, which, when Adolphus sleepeth,  
Sleeps, and, when he awaketh, wakes to him.

## III.

Why should the spirit of my father vex me?  
Or what allegiance owe I unto him  
Who dwells apart, inglorious in Ravenna,  
And could not, if he would, renew my state?  
I see them not, and wherefore should I deem me  
So much beholden to the unbeheld?  
I hear them not; shall I be answerable

To irresponsive death and voiceless sloth?  
They touch me not; can unembracing shadow  
With close assurance compass me about?  
Nor eye, nor ear, nor any sense declares them,  
Unseen, unechoing, uncomfoting:  
But eye, and ear, and every sense is captive,  
And thrall for ever to the comely Goth.  
Why should the spirit of my father vex me?  
Behold, I give to him a worthier son!  
And though he be barbarian who woos me,  
The Roman bride shall wed his heart to Rome.

#### IV.

One thing I owe — beyond all ransom precious —  
To father, brother, and Imperial name,  
The chastity that makes me worth the winning,  
A virgin love unstained of force or guile.  
For this I thank thee, Theodosius, father;  
For this, Honorius, thy fraternal name;  
Nor thee the less, thou sleeping soul of honour,  
That no barbarian art in sense of law.  
For this, to silk and purple, crowns historic,  
Goblets of gold and priceless spoil of pearl —  
To all the glories of the cunning workman,  
Sculptured, or graven, or inlaid with gems —  
To all the glittering legacies of triumph,  
And hoarded trophies of a thousand years —  
To all the wealth of harvest, pasture, vintage,  
To corn and cattle, oil, and spice, and wine —  
Yea, to the sacred things of God, most welcome!  
Since thou hast kept *me* sacred, even from thee.  
The noon consumes me in the thick pavilion,  
Yet I am fain of close-drawn solitude,  
Lest I should look upon the godless riot,  
That, once seen, haunts me like a dream of shame.  
For all around the large-limbed Goths were lying  
Beneath the plane-trees — yet but half-perceived  
'Mid soft entanglement of arms and tresses  
By captive beauty wreathed around its lords;  
The pride of Romans, daughters of great houses,  
Hiding their faces from my pitying gaze  
In hideous refuge of barbarian bosoms . . .  
God pardon them the wrong He hindered not!

God take my thanks for what is more than empire,  
And speed the warrior whom no greedy haste  
Hath spurred beyond the pace of loyal loving,  
The pure caress, and broken utterance  
Of mingling tongues half-learnt in march of conquest —  
To which the ordered flow of Roman speech  
Is feeble — rich in sweetest hesitations,  
And wishful voids of tongueless eloquence.  
He stirs, and this pavilion's girth becometh  
My orb of lands, and hallowed round of love.  
He wakes, and country is a dream forgotten:  
Where thou, Adolphus, art, there is my Rome.

# Marsupial Bill

A CHRISTMAS STORY. \*

1

IT was the time when geese despond,  
And turkeys make their wills;  
The time when Christians, to a man,  
Forgive each other's bills;  
It was the time when Christmas glee  
The heart of childhood fills.

2

Alas! that, when the changing year  
Brings round the blessed day,  
The hearts of little Queensland boys  
Wax keen to hunt and slay, —  
As if the chime of Christmas time  
Were but a call to prey.

3

Alas! that when our dwellings teem  
With comfits and with toys —  
When bat and ball and wicket call  
To yet sublimer joys —  
Whatever can't be caught and killed  
Is stale to certain boys.

4

Strange that, with such instructive things  
From which to pick and choose,  
With moral books and puzzle maps  
That “teach while they amuse,”  
Some boys can find no pleasure save  
In killing kangaroos.

5

Where Quart Pot Creek to Severn's stream  
Its mighty tribute rolls,  
There stands a town — the happiest town,  
I think, betwixt the poles;  
And all around is holy ground;  
In fact, it's *full* of holes.

6

And there, or thereabouts, there dwelt  
(Still dwells, for aught I know)  
A little boy, whose moral tone  
Was lamentably low;  
A shocking scamp, with just a speck  
Of good in embryo.

7

His name was Bill; to wallabies  
He bore an evil will;  
All things that hop on hinder legs  
His function was to kill,  
And from his show of scalps he won  
The name, Marsupial Bill.

8

His face and form were pinched and lean,  
And dim his youthful eye:

'Tis well that growing Queensland boys  
Should know the reason why; —  
My little lads, 'twas all along  
Of smoking on the sly.

**9**

Through this was William small and lean,  
Through this his eye was dim,  
Nor biceps rose on nerveless arm,  
Nor calf on nether limb; —  
Ye growing boys and hobbledehoyes,  
Be warned by me — and him.

**10**

His elevated shoulders stood  
But little way apart;  
His elbow joints — Oh, poor avail  
Of mere descriptive art!  
I would I had an artist man  
To show them William's “carte”!

**11**

And should you ask how such a one  
A mighty hunter grew,  
So many flying does outsped,  
So many boomers slew —  
Bill owned a canine mate, to which  
His victories were due.

**12**

A brute so complex that he set  
“The fancy” all agog;  
Of breed that ne'er found name in exhibition catalogue!  
Oh, would I had an artist man

To show them William's dog!

**13**

On Christmas-eve, at set of sun,  
A hollow tree he sought;  
A match, a scratch, a puff, and Bill  
Was lost in smoke and thought,  
And “all his battles o'er again”  
In fervid fancy fought.

**14**

No ha'penny thing, no penny thing,  
No thing of common clay  
Such brilliant memories evoked,  
With hopes as bright as they —  
It was his father's Sunday pipe  
That Bill had stolen away.

**15**

For many a time and oft had he  
Admired the wondrous bowl,  
The stem, the mouthpiece, and the *tout*  
*Ensemble* of the whole,  
Until desire of it had grown  
A portion of his soul —

**16**

Until desire o'ergrew the fear  
Of kick, or cuff, or stripe.  
That eve, when Bill stepped forth from home  
The guilty scheme was ripe —  
His right-hand trouser-leg concealed  
His father's Sunday pipe.

17

And now within a heaven of smoke  
Against the tree he leant,  
The while the mellow influence  
Through all his vitals went,  
And for the first time in his life  
He knew what meerschaum meant.

18

So subtly stole the influence  
His inmost being through,  
He did not mark the sudden bark  
That signalled kangaroo,  
Nor noted that his constant mate  
Had vanished from his view.

19

His mind and eye were on the pipe,  
And he had just begun  
To count how many scalps would go  
To purchase such a one, —  
When turning round his head, he saw,  
Against the setting sun,

20

A Boomer! . . . and, as when the waves  
Close o'er a drowning head,  
Sudden the whole forgotten past  
Before the soul lies spread,  
And all the charge-sheet of a life  
In one brief glance is read —

21

Ev'n so in instant tumult thronged,  
About his wildered mind,  
A thousand shapes of wounded things,  
Of every size and kind;  
And some were scalped, and some were maimed,  
And some were docked behind.

22

The kangaroo, the wallaroo,  
The wallaby was there;  
The 'possum jabbered in its fright,  
Sore wept the native bear;  
The stricken paddamelon moaned  
Its ineffectual prayer;  
The battered 'guana fixed on him  
Its dull remonstrant stare;  
While tail-less lizards swarmed and crawled  
About him everywhere;  
And limbless frogs denounced him with  
The croaking of despair;  
And tortured bats with ghostly wings  
Clung to his stiffened hair; —  
But suddenly the vision passed,  
And Bill became aware  
That he was in the Boomer's arms,  
And bounding through the air.

23

Hop, hop, they went o'er broken wilds,  
Where, stacked in many a mound,  
The hoards of clay-embedded ore  
Rose grimly all around: —  
Unheeding miners' rights, they jumped  
A claim at every bound.

24

Then on o'er wastes so very bare  
That even "stripping" ceased;  
And as they neared the hill countrie  
The frightful pace increased;  
Nor granite slope nor timbered ridge  
Told on the tireless beast.  
The sun went down, the full-orbed moon  
Came swimming up the East,  
Nor yet the "old man" slackened speed,  
Nor yet his prey released.

25

Still on and on, till from a cliff  
A sentry challenged near, —  
Though what the challenge or reply  
No mortal man may hear;  
We only know that for a sign  
Each drooped his dexter ear.

26

Whate'er it meant, the "old man" checked  
His onward course thereat,  
Dropped Bill, and dragged him by the wrists  
Across a wooded flat,  
To where the KANGAROO-GEMOT  
In full assembly sat.

27

Ringed by the fathers of the tribe,  
Surrounded yet alone,  
The Bossaroo superbly posed  
Upon a granite throne —  
A very old "old man" who had  
Four generations known.

28

Upon his mournful eye the woes  
Of all his race were writ;  
Yet age and sorrow had not dimmed  
His majesty a whit; —  
And, oh, his metatarsal bones  
Displayed the real grit!

29

Nor unattended sat the sires;  
Behind them crouched their mates;  
Nor kangaroos alone composed  
The Congress of the States,  
But all proscribed marsupial breeds  
Had sent their delegates.

30

Lo, at a signal from the boss  
The serried ring gave way,  
And through an opening in the throng  
The captor dragged his prey,  
Bowed to the chair, then called to aid  
A strapping M.L.A.

31

And thus, betwixt a double guard,  
The prisoner found his place;  
And all around were wrathful eyes  
Without a gleam of grace; —  
One wide concatenated scowl  
Was focussed on his face.

32

Now hitherto poor Bill had been  
As dumb as dumb could be,  
But at that pandemoniac scowl  
His struggling tongue got free;  
He lifted up his voice and cried,  
“Oh, please, it wasn't me!”

33

A tumult rose; but with a sign  
The boss the riot checked,  
Then cleared his throat and bade the guard  
The prisoner's clothes inspect: —  
“Ay, ay, Sir!” came the prompt reply,  
Or words to that effect.

34

They spake the language that was heard  
While yet the world was young;  
And he who knows it knows all speech  
That out of it hath sprung: —  
(With compliments to Dr. Hearn,  
It was the Aryan tongue).

35

And should you ask how Bill was up  
To every word they said,  
And how such antiquated lore  
Had got into his head —  
'Twas his pre-natal memory  
That served him in such stead.

36

They searched the prisoner's clothes, and first  
They brought the pipe to view, —  
For though it is a mystery  
To me as well as you,  
It is a solemn fact that Bill  
Had stuck to it all through.

**37**

Then one by one his poor effects  
Were collared by his guards, —  
Peach-stones, fig-chew, a catapult,  
A greasy pack of cards,  
A half-cut cake of cavendish  
(Prime quality — Gaujard's);

**38**

But when from out a leathern sheath  
A blood-stained knife they drew,  
All round the court, from hand to hand,  
They passed it in review:  
Each sniffed the blade in turn, and each  
In turn said — “Kangaroo.”

**39**

And last, a printed document  
Their simple souls perplexed;  
Each eyed the paper learnedly,  
And passed it to the next;  
But not an Aryan of them all  
Could even guess the text.

**40**

At length they summoned to their aid  
An old and learned clerk,

Who, as tradition told, had been  
    With Noah in the ark —  
Though possibly tradition here  
    Had overshot the mark.

41

And while a murmur of applause  
    Through all the Congress ran,  
Bowed with the weight of many years  
    Hopped forth that gray “old man,”  
Mounted his ancient spectacles,  
    Sneezed thrice, and thus began: —

42

“Whereas it is expedient to  
    Encourage the destruction  
of marsupial animals —  
    (Sensation and a ruction  
in the court, with groans and cries  
    From joey, doe, and buck) —

43

“Be it enacted therefore by  
    The Queen's most Excellènt  
— er — Majesty — er — by and with  
    The advice and the consent  
Of Council and Assembly of  
    Queensland in Parliamènt —

44

“In the construction of this Act — ”  
    But here arose a sort  
Of interruption from the Right,  
    Betwixt a cough and snort;

While from the less fastidious Left  
Came cries of "Cut it short!"

45

Then clause on clause, with careless haste,  
The learned clerk despatched;  
But when he read, "The scalps whenshown  
Must have the ears attached,"  
The whole assembly rushed the guard,  
And at the prisoner snatched.

46

But when the reader raised his voice,  
And thus gave forth the sense,  
"For kangaroo scalps ninepence each,  
For wallabies' *three* pence,"  
Division rose amongst his foes,  
And stayed their violence.

47

For those at ninepence each, elate  
At such a mark of fame,  
Drew back, and left the threepenny mob  
To do the deed of shame;  
But the low-quoted wallabies,  
Disgusted, dropped the game.

48

Bill strove to speak; his voice was drowned  
With catcall, groan, and hiss,  
Until the Bossaroo, with slow  
Judicial emphasis,  
Said, "Capias-nisi-prius — Boy,  
What say you to all this?"

49

Then silence fell upon the peers,  
And on the threepenny mob,  
The while this wicked little boy  
Said, snivelling through a sob,  
“Oh please, I never done it, sir —  
No, never; sepmebob!

50

“I am a gentle orphan boy,  
Nor never jines no row:  
My father is a tributer,  
My mother keeps a cow:  
We always lives respectable:  
We tries it, anyhow:  
The bill as that old bloke has read  
I never seen till now;  
And that 'ere blood 's on that 'ere knife  
Since father killed the sow.”

51

Then spake the Boss: — “The quality  
Of mercy is not strained;  
Yet there is still a point or two  
We'd like to have explained,  
Ere we absolve you from the charge  
Whereon you stand arraigned.

52

“But since the law is merciful,  
And hastes not to condemn,  
If witnesses to character  
Exist, go, fetch us them:

The court will sit to-morrow night  
At nine fifteen, p.m.

**53**

“And since without your father's pipe  
You dare not home return, —  
(Our ancient brother with the specs  
Has twigged the whole concern;  
And, truly, what he doesn't know  
Ain't worth your while to learn): —

**54**

“And further, since the oath of man  
Is but of scant avail,  
And few like Regulus return  
Spontaneously to jail —  
(My fit is coming on; I feel  
The symptoms in my tail) —  
We will dispense with oaths, and keep  
The meerschaum as your bail.

**55**

“To-morrow — (oh my vertebrae!) —  
To-morrow night at eight,  
At the Wheal Edith, by the flume,  
A corp'ral's guard will wait;  
These shall escort your witnesses,  
Blindfolded. Don't be late.

**56**

“And this remember — (oh my joints!) —  
Not one of all the race  
Whose leaders boss this scalping job  
May stand before my face;

The witness of a Britisher  
Will prejudice your case.

57

“Now he who brought you will reverse  
The process — (oh my toe!) —  
Your downward path is up above,  
Your upward down below:  
Stand not upon the order of  
Your going, sir; but go.

58

“And take this for thy dowry, boy,  
‘Existence is a sell,’  
I once was bitten by a dog,  
Since which I am not well.  
Methinks my speech already shows  
Symptoms of doggerel.”

\* “MARSUPIAL BILL” was preceded in the *Queenslander* by the following paragraph, which is here quoted, in order to show that the story is not altogether without foundation in fact: — “We (*Stannum Miner*) are indebted to Mr. James Warrell, of Sugarloaf, a gentleman on whose veracity we place the best reliance, for the following account of a most extraordinary occurrence. We give the statement as nearly as possible in Mr. Warrell's own words: — ‘I give you the details of a very rare occurrence. A boy of mine, about 11 years old, was sent a message last Saturday week, about 1 o'clock p.m. About half-way between my place and Connolly's, on a well-used road, a kangaroo came from behind, took him up, and carried him, without stopping, to the Maryland Company's ground — about a mile-and-a-half — over some very rough country. The lad got back home about dusk, his face bloody, and seemingly half mad. He soon became sensible, however, and by the time I got home — an hour afterwards — he was sufficiently recovered to be interviewed. “Well, Willie, did you not see the kangaroo before he caught you?” “No, he was just on to me before I knew.” “Were there any more kangaroos?” “Not then, but about half-way there was a big mob of kangaroos, and we all went together.” “I suppose you were crying?” “Yes, all the way.” “When he dropped you, what did he do?” “Nothing;

stood and looked at me for a minute, and then went off with the mob.” “What did you do then?” “I don't remember anything after that. After sundown I found myself at the Lincolnshire mine, near where the engine was, and then I made for home.” I think the lad must have been crazy for awhile; his coat was split open down the back, but, although his face was covered with blood when he got home, there was not a scratch on him. The kangaroo must have been a good-sized one to carry him (about 65 lbs. weight) so far, and without a spell; and it seems strange that in the act of jumping he did not strike the boy with his feet. I have not the slightest reason to doubt the truth of the boy's statement. What was the motive that prompted the action? Some say that if there had been any water convenient he would have drowned the boy. I have a notion that the kangaroo was one that had lost its joey, and was making ‘an attempt to adopt one.’ Moral: When a child of tender years goes alone where kangaroos may be, a dog, large or small, is very good company.”

## Marsupial Bill: Part Second.

1

FAST flew the hours. We may not tell  
Of William's weary quest,  
How round the outskirts of the town  
He roamed like one possessed —  
Nor with what guileful arts he plied  
The foreign interest.

2

Enough that at the appointed hour,  
With backers at his back,  
He faced the noble Bossaroo,  
(Still hypochondriac) —  
And introduced his witnesses,  
A yellow and a black;

3

A placid-eyed Mongolian  
From sandy Pechelee,  
Who'd stimulate an inch of soil  
To do the work of three,  
Or make a metamorphic rock  
Sprout into cabbage;

4

A big buck nigger next; who once

Bowed down to stocks and stones  
(For years digested captives formed  
The tissue of his bones),  
But now he is an Anglican,  
Who a live "Bissop" owns,  
Besides a gorgeous suit of slops,  
And the proud name of Jones.

5

Slow rose the lordly Bossaroo,  
And bade unveil their eyes;  
And, when those aliens gazed around  
On all that dread assize,  
They howled in unison and made  
Night hideous with their cries.

6

For Bill had lured them lyingly —  
But why should we explain;  
The whole thing was exceptional,  
And can't occur again.  
Besides, to poke at mysteries  
Is wanton and profane.

7

With single will they turned on Bill,  
And blazed his evil name;  
With double tongue their charge they flung,  
And swore unto the same;  
With treble spite did both unite  
To spoil his little game.

8

"Me see him catchee kangaloo,"

Deponed on oath Ah Chee;  
“Me see him — hi! hst! — soolem dog,  
No mind my cabbagee —  
Me lose hap clown, him knockee down  
Ten twenty lettucee!”

9

“Massoopy Bill, him wicked boy,”  
Deponed the South Sea swell;  
“Two moon, come Bissop preach in church,  
Him loaf outside an' yell;  
Me run — him run — me catch — him say  
‘Tree scalp if you no tell.’

10

So, when the learned clerk had both  
Their depositions read,  
The judge drew forth his judgment cap,  
And put it on his head,  
And sentenced poor Marsupial Bill  
To hang till he was dead.

11

“But since” — so spake the Bossaroo —  
“From evidence we know  
That many a scalped and gory head  
This night through him lies low,  
We'll scalp him first!” — and all the house,  
*Nem. con.*, cried “Be it so!”  
And as a sign and seal of doom,  
Turned down the right thumb-toe.

12

“With his own knife,” the Boss resumed,

“Ah Chee shall do the deed —  
The gods poetic justice love —  
And make the assassin bleed  
By his own proper instrument.  
Mongolian, proceed.”

13

What followed next, who gave the word  
For mate to link with mate,  
Nor Bill, nor Jones, nor yet Ah Chee  
Can very clearly state;  
But that 'twas a corroboree  
All three corroborate.

14

In vain poor William prayed — in vain  
His suppliant knees he bowed,  
And by a pile of sacred names  
For mercy cried aloud —  
The point was at his occiput,  
When, lo! from out the crowd

15

Stepped forth a rare and radiant dame,  
The Boss's pride and stay,  
(The dam of Bossárovitch,  
Still young, though somewhat gray,  
An elegant marsupial,  
Well-mannered, *bien née*) —  
Stepped forth before them, and remarked  
Seductively, “Belay!”  
Then, kneeling by the judgment seat,  
Thus sweetly said her say: —  
“Most Noble Grand, have you forgot  
That this is Christmas Day?”

16

“Beseech you, bid that heathen hand  
    Withhold the bloody knife!  
Recall your fearful words of doom —  
    Nay, turn not from your wife,  
But give me as a Christmas Box  
    The little captive's life.”

17

Then quickly from his granite throne  
    Down leaped the Noble Grand,  
And, kneeling, kissed right courteously  
    His royal lady's hand;  
Then, as he raised her up, pronounced  
    The joyful countermand;  
Whereat the rest turned up their toes,  
    That Bill might understand  
The Congress willed his days should yet  
    Be long upon the land.

18

Then raged the revelry anew,  
    With sound of drum and fife;  
The Boss himself forgot his woes,  
    And danced as if for life;  
While the old clerk forgot *himself*,  
    And kissed the Boss's wife,

19

And when there fell a weariness  
    On all the panting throng,  
And Bossaroo and ancient clerk  
    Alike had nigh “gone bong,” —  
Amid a jaded pause was heard  
    A call for “Joey's Song!”

20

And presently a little head,  
As from a little nest,  
Peeped o'er a snug maternal pouch,  
And sang its little best,  
(The song is very rare, and full  
Of antique interest): —  
“What does little Joey say  
In his pouch at peep-of-day?  
'Let me hop,' says little Joey;  
'Mother, let me hop away.'  
'Joey, rest a little longer,  
Till the little legs are stronger.'  
So he rests a little longer,  
Then he gaily hops away.”

21

He ceased; the pre-diluvian clerk  
Rose on his quivering shanks,  
And with a well-turned compliment  
Proposed a vote of thanks —  
Just then a breathless picket broke  
All gory through the ranks!

22

But ere his trembling tongue had time  
To tell his tale of woe,  
And why thus grimly he disturbed  
The happy *status quo*, —  
With giant bound, Bill's faithful hound  
Leaped madly on the foe!

23

Ah, then and there was sudden scare,  
The swiftest took the lead;  
Ah, there and then — but oh, the pen  
Is impotent indeed!  
Oh, would I had an artist man  
To show the Great Stampede!

24

What next befell may somewhat strain  
The limits of belief;  
But where so many marvels are,  
Why boggle at the chief?  
'Twere shame if lack of faith should cause  
Our moral come to grief.

25

From all the flying ruck the dog  
Had singled out the Queen;  
Another instant, and the Boss  
A widower had been,  
When — (that's a pithy saw that bids  
Expect the unforeseen) —

26

BILL CALLED HIM OFF! The dog drew back,  
And on a boulder leant.  
'Twas months ago, and still that dog  
Is pondering the event,  
And even to this very hour  
Can't fathom what it meant;  
It was a thing so utterly  
Without a precedent.

27

But Bill, the Chinaman, and Jones,  
The Queen, and you, and I,  
*We* know the secret of the change,  
*We* know the reason why;  
And — may I be allowed to add? —  
The moral hangs thereby.

28

But since nor boy nor man receives  
Advice without a pang,  
And this narrator's muse has failed  
To catch the proper twang, —  
The moral hanging plainly there,  
Suppose we let it — hang.

## The Great Pig Story of the Tweed.

HANDS off, old man!" the young man cried —  
They stood beside the Tweed,  
Where still the name of Murdering Creek  
Records some bloody deed.

The old man seized the hapless youth,  
With frantic grasp and rough,  
By what is popularly called  
(But vulgarly) the scruff;

And shouted as he twirled him round,  
And shook him to and fro;  
"Was them consignments pigs? . . Great Scott!  
Was them things pigs or no?"

Wild-eyed and gaunt, and grim he stood,  
Beneath the scorching noon, —  
Cantharides P. Roebuek, late  
Of the steamboat Arakoon.

He was an ancient mariner,  
A Yankee skipper he,  
Whom winds of adverse destiny  
Had blown across the sea; —

Whom hither still had Fate pursued,  
And served with many a trick,  
Till now he roamed the Tweed, a one-  
Idea'd lunatic; —

Whom all men shunned, for whosoe'er  
Upon his beat might chance,  
Was bound to hear his tale in each  
Minutest circumstance.

A tale that haunted such as heard,  
Nor left them night or day;  
A torturing enigma, too,  
That turned their wits astray; —

For ofttimes they, like him who told,  
Would vaguely wandering go,  
And cry, "Was them consignments pigs?  
Was them things pigs or no?"

"Hands off!" again the young man cried.  
"It's this way, boss, you see,  
We've come a stretch of thirty mile,  
Her uncle, her, an' me.

"You see it's this way. Parson comes  
Our road but once a year —  
We lives at Yougerbungaree,  
Just thirty mile from here; —

"At sundown yesterday I spied  
The parson ridin' past;  
I runs to Sue's, an' 'Sue,' says I,  
'Our chance is come at last!'

"This morning to his camp we goes,  
Us three, an' mother, four;  
'Splice us,' says we, but parson, he  
Puts in his blessed oar.

" 'Fill up this form,' says he. We fills.  
'Hullo!' he cries, 'my dear!  
Father alive? You under age?  
Me marry ye! No fear.'

"(Don't throttle, boss!) — Says parson then,  
'Go, seek a magistrate;  
Get his consent; an' hurry back;  
I leave to-night at eight.'

"So off we starts, ten mile an hour —  
(For heav'n's sake let me speak!)  
You see, it's this way, boss; they've gone  
To square it with the beak.

"I'm only hangin' round. I fixed  
To meet them there at one;  
An' if I fail, my pretty Sue  
Will think I've cut an' run." —

"Was them things pigs?" — "Oh drat the pigs!  
It's this way, boss, — we're late.

Think, thirty mile! the mokes dead beat!  
An' parson off at eight!"

'Twas all in vain; and when at length,  
Exhausted, limp, and pale,  
He gave reluctant ear, 'twas thus  
The skipper told his tale.

"I took the things on board as pigs,  
As pigs I signed for them;  
I passed an entry on them — pigs!  
Pigs, sar, from starn to stem.

"Wal, wal; I little guessed that Fate  
Would play it down so low.  
Was them things pigs, d'ye hear! . . . But how  
The [Hades] should you know!

"It was the steamboat Arakoon,  
A craft of coasting fame;  
Cantharides P. Roebuck, sar,  
Was skipper of the same.

"The iserlated cusses here  
Was runnin' all to seed  
When first the steamboat Arakoon  
Come tradin' to the Tweed.

"Pigs, pigs, all sprung (mark that) from two,  
They fetched them by the score,  
An' nary strain had crossed the breed  
For twenty year an' more.

"I cleaned the settlement of pigs,  
Upp'd steam an' tore for town,  
Nor guessed that them all-fired galoots  
Had been and done me brown.

"An' sech a voyage! grunt and squeak!  
(Pard, never load with swine.)  
Whate'er the durned abortions wur,  
The grunt was genu-ine.

"A hundred thousand times I swore  
To drown them in the sea;  
But, lord, they had an idiot look  
That fairly gravelled me.

“We made the port. Upon the wharf  
A Brisbane butcher sot,  
An' through the roarin' of the steam,  
He hollered, ‘What ye got?’

“ ‘Got pigs,’ sez I, ‘like bullocks, sar!’  
Cries butcher, ‘I'm your man,’  
An' clewin' up his apron, slick  
Along the plank he ran.” —

(But here the youth renewed his plaint;  
“Have mercy on me, mate!  
It's thirty mile! the mokes dead beat!  
An' parson leaves at eight!”)

“He eyed the brutes,” the tale flowed on,  
“An' tossed his cussèd head;  
An' turnin' on his heel, sez he,  
‘I thought 'twas *pigs* you said.’

“ ‘An' ain't *them* pigs?’ — but he was gone.  
Wal, though I biled at this,  
I tried my level best to see  
The p'int's he took amiss.

“But 'cep' a kinder cur'ous smile  
That sqintin' didn't mend,  
An' an appealin' way they had  
Of settin' up on end, —

“An' 'cep' about the snout a tech  
Of Native Porkypine,  
I couldn't see no reason why  
That parcel wasn't swine.

“Wal, stranger, just as I had cuss'd  
My liver into tune,  
Another bloomin' butcher stepped  
On board the Arakoon.”

(But here at sound of distant hoofs  
The captive writhed anew;  
“That's them!” he cried. “They've giv'n me up!  
Oh curse your pigs and you!”)

“No, pard — it ain't no use to squirm.  
Whar was I? le'mme see.

Another butcher jumps aboard;  
‘Good marnin' sar,’ sez he.

“ ‘Got any p——?’ — But here he stuck.  
The critturs caught his eye.  
Sakes! how he stared as one by one  
The things meandered by.

“At length sez he, astoopin' down,  
The better to survey,  
‘I wonder now what day o' the week  
The Lord created they!

“‘What name, mate?’ ‘Pigs, sar, PIGS!’ I yelled.  
‘As prime as ever growed!  
D'ye know pigs when you see them, sar?’  
‘Oh, *pigs,*’ sez he, ‘be blowed.’

“Pard, should you come across him, say  
That I apologize,  
For, oh, I banged that butcher's head  
Agin the smokestack guys!

“I sought an old an' trusted friend,  
A butcher in the town;  
I struck his diggins, seized him, hailed  
A shay, an' jerked him down.

“I carried him aboard — he was  
A heavy man an' slow —  
‘Now on your naked oath,’ sez I,  
‘Air them things pigs or no?’

“He made no sign, he made no sound,  
But something in his eye  
As plain as signal-lights declared  
The contract was awry.

“At last sez he, consid'rin' like,  
An' strokin' down his jaws,  
‘Cantharides P., it seems to me  
Them pettitoes is claws!’

“ ‘Great Neptune!’ — that was all I said,  
And fell down in a swoon,  
A broken wreck upon the deck  
Of the steamboat Arakoon.

“But twurn't Finis yet, old hoss,  
For at the smell of gin  
Cantharides P. Roebuck's soul  
Jumped back into his skin.

“ ‘Go, fetch me a zew-ologist!’  
I thundered as I rose.  
‘Let's see what larnèd science makes  
Of them 'ere pettitoes!

“ ‘Who knows of one?’ — The fireman's son  
Sez, ‘Captin, if you please,  
If what you mean stuffs beastises,  
I'll fetch you wan o' these.’

“ ‘Go, bub!’ I cried. ‘Make tracks to onst,  
An' ketch him out or in! —  
This butcherin' conspiracy  
Is just a trifle thin.’

“Wal, pard, the great man came. I slipped  
A sov'rin in his hand,  
Which, though he 'peared almighty skeered,  
He seemed to understand.

“Sez I then, as he stooped an' spread  
His hands upon his knees,  
‘Illustrious zew-elogist,  
What articles air these?’

“A wild surprise lit up his eyes  
As through his specs he blinked, —  
‘Dear me,’ sez he, ‘I always thought  
That griffins wur extinct!’

\* \* \* \* \*

“From that to this is blank — all blank;  
But if 'tis true they say,  
I ordered round the vessel's head,  
An' ran her down the Bay.

“An' there, in spite of mate an' crew,  
An' cook an' fireman's son,  
I slung the critturs overboard,  
An' drowned them every one.

“An' now beside this blessed Tweed  
I wander day an' night,  
An' vainly ask of airth an' heaven  
To read the riddle right.

“I ask the sea, I ask the skies,  
I ask it high an' low, —  
Was them 'ere shipments pigs? . . Great Scott!  
Was them things pigs or no?”

\* \* \* \* \*

That night at Yougerbungaree,  
The house clock striking ten,  
Into a maiden's presence burst  
The most distraught of men.

“Oh, Ned, he's gone!” the maiden wailed.  
“How could you treat me so?” —  
For all reply there came the cry,  
“Was them things pigs or no?”

## Drought and Doctrine.

COME, take the tenner, doctor . . . yes, I know the bill says “five,”  
But it ain't as if you'd merely kep' our little 'un alive;  
Man, you saved the mother's reason when you saved that babby's life,  
An' it's thanks to *you* I ha'n't a ravin' idiot for a wife.

Let me tell you all the story, an' if then you think it strange  
That I'd like to fee ye extry — why, I'll take the bloomin' change.  
If yer bill had said a hundred . . . I'm a poor man, doo, an' yet  
I'd 'a' slaved till I had squared it; ay, an' still been in yer debt.

Well, you see the wife's got notions on a heap o' things that ain't  
To be handled by a man as don't pretend to be a saint;  
So I minds “the cultivation,” smokes my pipe, an' makes no stir,  
An' religion an' such p'int's I lays entirely on to her.

Now, she's got it fixed within her that, if children die afore  
They've been sprinkled by the parson, they've no show for evermore;  
An' though they're spared the pitchforks, an' the brimstun', an' the smoke,  
They ain't allowed to mix *up there* with other little folk.

So when our last began to pine, an' lost his pretty smile,  
An' not a parson to be had within a hunder mile —  
(For though there is a chapel down at Bluegrass Greek, you know,  
The clargy's there on dooty only thrice a year or so) —

Well, when our yet unchristen'd mite grew limp an' thin an' pale,  
It would 'a' cut you to the heart to hear the mother wail  
About her “unregenerate babe,” an' how, if it should go,  
'Twould have no chance with them as had their registers to show.

Then awful quiet she grew, an' hadn't spoken for a week,  
When in came brother Bill one day with news from Bluegrass Greek.  
“I seen,” says he, “a notion on the chapel railin' tied;  
They'll have service there this evenin' — can the youngster stand the ride!

“For we can't have parson here, if it be true, as I've heard say,  
There's a dyin' man as wants him more'n twenty mile away;  
So” — He hadn't time to finish ere the child was out of bed

With a shawl about its body an' a hood upon its head.

“Saddle up,” the missus said. I did her biddin' like a bird.  
Perhaps I thought it foolish, but I never said a word;  
For though I have a vote in what the kids eat, drink, or wear,  
Their sperritual requirements are entirely *her* affair.

We started on our two hours' ride beneath a burnin' sun,  
With Aunt Sal and Bill for sureties to renounce the Evil One;  
An' a bottle in Sal's basket that was labelled “Fine Old Tom”  
Held the water that regeneration was to follow from.

For Bluegrass Creek was dry, as Bill that very day had found,  
An' not a sup o' water to be had for miles around;  
So, to make salvation sartin for the babby's little soul,  
We had filled a dead marine, sir, at the family waterhole.

Which every forty rods or so Sal raised it to her head,  
An' took a snifter, “just enough to wet her lips,” she said;  
Whereby it came to pass that when we reached the chapel door  
There was only what would serve the job, an' deuce a dribble more.

The service had begun — we didn't like to carry in  
A vessel with so evident a carritur for gin;  
So we left it in the porch, an', havin' done our level best,  
Went an' owned to bein' “mis'nable offenders” with the rest.

An' nigh upon the finish, when the parson had been told  
That a lamb was waitin' there to be admitted to the fold,  
Rememberin' the needful, I gets up an' quietly slips  
To the porch to see — a swagsman — with our bottle at his lips!

Such a faintness came all over me, you might have then an' there  
Knocked me down, sir, with a feather, or tied me with a hair.  
Doc, I couldn't speak nor move; an' though I caught the beggar's eye,  
With a wink he turned the bottle bottom up an' drank it dry.

An' then he flung it from him, bein' suddintly aware  
That the label on't was merely a deloosion an' a snare;  
An' the crash cut short the people in the middle of “A-men,”  
An' all the congregation heard him holler “Sold again!”

So that christ'nin' was a failure; every water-flask was drained;  
Ev'n the monkey in the vestry not a blessed drop contained;  
An' the parson in a hurry cantered off upon his mare,  
Leavin' baby unregenerate, an' missus in despair.

That night the child grew worse, but all my care was for the wife;  
I feared more for her reason than for that wee spark o' life. . . .  
But you know the rest — how Providence contrived that very night  
That a doctor should come cadgin' at our shanty for a light. . . .

Baby? Oh, he's chirpy, thank ye — been baptized — his name is Bill.  
It's weeks an' weeks since parson came an' put him through the mill;  
An' his mother's mighty vain upon the subjick of his weight,  
An' reg'lar cock-a-hoop about his sperritual state.

So now you'll take the tenner. Oh, confound the bloomin' change!  
Lord, had Billy died! — but, doctor, don't you think it summut strange  
That them as keeps the Gate would have refused to let him in  
Because a fool mistook a drop of Adam's ale for gin?

## In a 'bus.

(A SPRING CONTRAST.)

A QUARTER of a century agone,  
Just such a face as this upon me shone,  
    And in a 'bus too;  
And then, as now, it was the warm springtide;  
And then, as now, there was no soul inside  
    Excepting us two.

There are the same blue eyes, the delicate nose,  
Same rosebud mouth, and cheeks of blushful rose,  
    Same chin bewitching;  
Same throat of sheeny white and perfect mould,  
Same light-brown hair, with scattered threads of gold  
    The brown enriching.

Ah! how this present beauty's counterpart  
Woke instant tumult in my fluttering heart —  
    Pain, pleasure, blended!  
Yet this one is as beautiful as that . .  
Dear me! why don't my heart go pit-a-pat  
    Now, as it then did?

One glance of *those* bright eyes, and all was o'er:  
I wished to die; at least I cared no more  
    For life without her: —  
*These*, glancing on me now, are quite as fair;  
Yet, strange to say, I did not seem to care  
    One bit about her.

I wished I were a glove upon that hand —  
The eardrop in her ear, the zone that spanned  
    Her waist so trimly;  
And now, in view of equal charms, the bliss  
Of such astounding metamorphosis  
    I see but dimly.

Well I recall the mad desire to hear

*Her* name who turned the common atmosphere

To heavenly ether: —

Why is it that I do not now, as then,  
Care twopence if the name be M. or N.,  
Or both, or neither?

Well I remember how I longed to pay

Her fare, or in some other lordly way

Impress her duly: —

Why is it, then, though not less generous grown,  
I'm better pleased this symph should pay her own  
Than mulot "yours truly"?

And how quick-soaring hope as quickly fell

When I descried a military swell

Her brooch portrayed in;

Why is it, then, 'twould leave me undistressed  
If a whole regiment adorned the breast  
Of this fair maiden?

And how my anguish, when she drew her glove,

And showed the plain gold sign of wedded love,

Refused assuagement: —

Why is it that I do not care a jot  
If this one wears such fateful ring, or not —  
Plain, or engagement?

Is it because my taste hath changed its style,

And now prefers, in place of Venus' smile,

The frown of Pallas?

Ah no: Minerva, too, has lost her sway;

I met her antitype this very day,

And felt quite callous.

Is it the climate? Ah, if vernal airs

Incline the heart to amorous affairs,

This Austral season

Should stir in every vein, when beauty's by,

The throb of lusty youth! Oh no; the cli-  
mate's not the reason.

Is it the place? Still, no; this threepenny 'bus

Is much the same as rolled the twain of us

Through Piccadilly;

And fitter place, when all is said and done,

There could not be for "bussing." (Pass the pun;

I know it's silly.)

Is it that I have learned their sweetest smiles  
And airs and graces are but “wanton wiles,”  
And mere pretences?  
Or is it that the naked eye of youth  
Sees all through glamour, while I see the truth  
Through convex lenses?

But wherefore beat about the bush, old man  
You know that you can give, if any can,  
Reasons in plenty.  
Must I, then, own it? . . 'Tis — because — because —  
I am not quite — not quite — the man I was  
At five-and-twenty!

An empty socket shows where passion burned;  
My sense of beauty now, alas, has turned  
Pure intellectual,  
And to arouse a tumult in the brain,  
Or thrill the system with delicious pain,  
Quite ineffectual.

So, I may gaze on her, and gaze my fill. . . .  
D'ye know, I think I'm somewhat human still;  
I like her, rather;  
But oh, how things are changed from what they were!  
For all she is so fair, I feel to her  
Just like a father.

She dowers me with a smile from lip and eye;  
And while I wonder what she meaneth by  
The sweet bestowment,  
“Please pass my fare,” comes from her beauteous lips,  
And, as I take the coin, our finger tips  
Meet for a moment.

A thrill! A thrill! I do declare, a thrill!  
Upon my honour, I believe I'm still  
*Intensely* human!  
I pause and ponder what I mean to do.  
Methinks I'd better scuttle home unto  
My own old woman.

## Once More.

“INTERMISSA DIU BELLA.”

I HAD not thought again to be  
    A dreamer of such dreams as these.  
The springtime is no more for me;  
    My summer died beyond the seas.  
From what untimely source begin  
These stirrings of the life within?

I had not thought again to taste  
    The bitter sweet, the joyous pain.  
I dreamed that I had trodden waste,  
    Beyond the power of sun or rain,  
The soil that grew the passion fruit; —  
Then, whence this blossom underfoot?

I had not thought again to see  
    Beyond the homely pale of truth; —  
The lights and shapes of witchery,  
    That glorify the skies of youth,  
I only knew as perished things; —  
Whence, then, this flash of angel wings?

How spend the day, yet save the hours?  
    I had my day; the hours are fled.  
How eat the fruit, yet hold the flowers?  
    I ate the fruit; the flowers are dead.  
Oh, what divine or fiendish art  
Hath twined fresh tendrils round my heart?

I said, 'tis good to be alone,  
    No alien hand to urge or check.  
I said, my spirit is my own,  
    To loose or bind, to save or wreck.  
I trod on Love, called Reason lord; —  
Lo, whence this subtle silken cord?

Oh, who shall tell if this be strength

Re-risen, or ghost of old defect?  
The truth of manhood come at length,  
Or weakness born of purpose wrecked?  
I only know it is the whole  
Arch-craving of a hungry soul.

I only know that all the hordés  
Of buried hopes and jealousies  
Are risen again and crossing swords,  
And that 'twas but an armistice,  
A breathing time 'twixt strife and strife,  
Which I had deemed a peace for life.

Oh, who shall tell where duty lies —  
To urge, repress, advance, or stay?  
To grasp at Good in Beauty's guise,  
Or brush the pretty lure away,  
Ere doubtful war of hopes and fears  
Consume the hoarded strength of years!

## The Dominion.

(1883.)

[Originally inscribed, in the "Australasian," to Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith.]

OH, fair Ideal, unto whom  
Through days of doubt and nights of gloom  
Brave hearts have clung, while lips of scorn,  
Made mock of thee as but a dream —  
Already on the heights of morn  
We see thy golden sandals gleam,  
And, glimmering through the clouds that wrap thee yet,  
The seven stars that are thy coronet.

Why tarriest thou 'twixt earth and heaven? . . .  
Go forth to meet her, Sisters seven!  
'Tis but your welcome she awaits,  
Ere, casting off the veil of cloud,  
The bodied Hope of blending States,  
She stand revealed, imperial, proud;  
As from your salutation sprung full-grown,  
With green for raiment, and with gold for zone.

From where beneath unclouded skies  
Thy peerless haven glittering lies;  
From where o'er pleasant pastures rove  
The flocks from which thy greatness sprang;  
From vine-clad slope and orange-grove:  
From "grave mute woods" thy Minstrel sang;  
From Alpine peaks aglow with flush of morn,  
Go forth to meet her, thou, the eldest-born.

From where, reverberant at thy feet,  
The billows of two oceans meet;  
From where the rocks thy treasures hide;  
From mart and wharf, and harbour-mouth;  
From where the city of thy pride  
Ennobles all the teeming South —  
To meet her, thou with loftiest zeal inflamed,

Go forth, Victoria, queen and queenly named.

And thou, the youngest, yet most fair,  
First to discern, and first to dare;  
Whose lips, sun-smitten, earliest spoke  
The herald words of coming good,  
And with their clarion-summons broke  
The slumber of the sisterhood —  
Foremost of all thy peers press on to greet  
Her advent, strewing flowers before her feet.

And thou, around whose brow benign  
Vine-leaf and olive intertwine;  
Upon whose victories the Star  
Of Peace looks down with no rebuke;  
The weapons of whose warfare are  
The ploughshare and the pruning-hook —  
Take with thee gifts of corn, and wine, and oil,  
To greet thy liege with homage of the soil.

Thou, too, whom last the morning-beams  
Wake from thy sleep by peaceful streams  
Slow westering to the Indian main —  
Thou, too, beneath thy later sun  
Conspire with these in glad refrain  
Of welcome to the coming One,  
And from thy fragrant forests tribute bring  
Of grateful incense for thine offering.

And thou, Pomona of the South,  
Ruddy of cheek, and ripe of mouth,  
Who from thy couch of orchard-bloom  
With fearless foot art wont to stray  
By mountain-lakes, or in the gloom  
Of forest-depths unknown of day —  
Be thy shrill greeting borne upon the breeze  
Above the thunder of thy girdling seas.

Nor thou delay, who dwell'st apart,  
To join thy peers with gladsome heart —  
Whether the summons thee o'ertake  
On icy steep or fruitful plain,  
Or where thy craggy bulwarks break  
The onslaught of the warring main,  
Or find thee couched within some ferny lair,

Flax-flower and hyacinth mingling with thy hair.

Bind ye the sevenfold cord apace;  
Weave ye the sevenfold wreath, to grace  
The brow of her whose avatar  
The mighty Mother waits to bless;  
In sevenfold choir be borne afar  
The music of your joyfulness.  
Till o'er the world's disquiet your song prevail —  
“Australia Foederata! Hail! all hail!”

## The Angel of the Doves.

THE angels stood in the court of the King,  
And into the midst, through the open door,  
Weeping came one whose broken wing  
Piteously trailed on the golden floor.

Angel was she, and woman, and dove:  
Dove and angel all womanly blent  
With the virginal charm that is worshipped of love,  
On the hither side of the firmament.

Where a rainbow hideth the holiest place,  
Thither she moved, and there she kneeled;  
And fain with her wings would have veiled her face,  
Ere the bow should be lifted, and God revealed.

'Tis the angels' wont; and afresh she wept,  
As with maimed pinion she strove in vain,  
And tremor on tremor convulsively swept  
O'er her plumes in a shuddering iris of pain.

And the angels who dwell from sorrow remote  
Gazed on her woe as a marvellous thing;  
For they wist but of pain from its echoes that float  
In the strange new songs that the ransomed sing.

“Sister,” at length said a shining one,  
“To whom earth's doves for a care were given,  
What hast thou done, or left undone,  
That grief through thee should be known in heaven?”

“When together for joy the angels sang,  
Calling the new-made world to rejoice,  
Sweeter than all hosannas that rang  
Was the trembling rapture that thrilled thy voice.

“For thine was the grace to minister there —  
Oh, favoured child of the heavenly host! —  
To the sacred and lovely lives that wear  
The mystic shape of the Holy Ghost.

“And we marked thy flight as the flight of a dove,  
Till the luminous vapours around thee curled,  
And we said, ‘She is glad in her errand of love,  
To the happy glades of the new-born world.’

“And now thou returnest woe-stricken as one  
That hath fallen from grace and is unforgiven.  
What hast thou done, or left undone,  
That grief through thee should be known in heaven?”

Faint was her voice as an echo heard  
From the past by the soul in dreamful mood;  
Sweet and sad as the plaint of a bird  
Mourning forlorn in solitude.

“I tended my doves,” she said through her tears,  
“By day and by night, in storm and calm.  
Happily flew the uncounted years  
In bowers of myrtle and groves of palm.

“Many, alas, were the beautiful dead,  
But the life of the race was always new,  
For, ever ere one generation fled,  
Out of its love another grew.

“And many a dove for man's sake died,  
Noted in heaven with none offence,  
Save when the heart of the cruel took pride  
In slaying the witness of innocence.

“When countless seasons had come and gone,  
Come and gone as a happy dream,  
One noon of summer I lingered upon  
The eastward marge of a sacred stream.

“And lo, 'mid a crowd on the further side,  
That stood in the stream or knelt on the sod,  
I saw — though a veil of flesh did hide  
The splendour of Godhead — the Son of God.

“And ev'n as I gazed, the azure above  
Burst into glory that dimmed the sun;  
And the Spirit of God in the form of a dove  
I saw descend on the Holy One,

“I deemed that my task was over then;  
‘ 'Tis the dawn,’ I said, ‘of the reign of love;

Henceforth my doves will be safe with men,  
Since God hath hallowed the form of the dove.'

"Then I soared aloft, but again returned;  
For I said in my heart, 'I will not cease  
From my care, till man from His lips hath learned  
That the birds have a share in the Gospel of Peace.'

"And it chanced on a day in the soft springtide,  
When birds were joyous and love was sweet,  
I saw the Lord on a mountain side,  
And with Him were twelve, who sat at His feet.

"And I heard Him say, 'Not a sparrow doth fall  
To the ground but your Father taketh note,'  
Then all the air grew musical,  
And song awoke in each warbling throat.

"For into bird-music the message passed,  
And from choir to choir in melody ran;  
And I said, 'My mission is over at last.  
Farewell, my doves. Ye are safe with man.'

"Weeping, yet gladsome, I soared aloft,  
Being fain of the glories of other spheres,  
Whose beckoning lustre had lured me oft  
In starry midnights of bygone years.

"And on seas of ether and isles of light  
Through ages of joy I floated or trod,  
Till I chanced on an angel in upward flight,  
Bearing an infant home to God.

"And a waft of earth from the flowers that lay  
On the young dead breast came sweet and faint;  
And again, dream-echoed from far away,  
I heard in the woodlands the turtle's plaint.

"For memory woke at the flowers' sweet breath,  
And my spirit yearned to the earth again,  
And I cried, 'Canst thou tell, oh angel of death,  
How fare my doves at the hands of men?'

" 'Sad is their lot,' the angel sighed;  
'For the pleasure of man they suffer pain;  
And the heart of the cruel taketh pride  
To slay thy doves and to number the slain.'

“I knew no more till the vapours of earth  
Clung to my wings, and a peeling sound  
Smote on mine ear, and voices of mirth;  
And beneath me a dove fell dead to the ground.

“Leave me with God; for ye cannot know  
How death takes shape in the human hand,  
Nor the subtle devices that work for woe;  
But the Lord will hear and will understand.

“And if, as I clove my unseen way  
Between my doves and the deadly rain,  
It was given unto me to become as they,  
To share their wounds and to know their pain —

“Surely the rather will God give ear  
To one who knoweth what He hath known;  
Surely the rather will Jesus hear,  
Who suffered, as I, for love of His own.

“Can it be that the great Lord doth not know  
How Christ is needed on earth again?  
Rise, lingering curtain! that I may show  
The wounds of my doves, and may pray for men.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Slowly the rainbow rose, parting in twain;  
And, lo, in the midst of the throne of love  
There stood a Lamb as it had been slain;  
And over the throne there brooded a Dove.

## The Famine in Ireland,

1879–80.

THEY *shall* not perish! Not if help can save  
Our hunger-stricken brethren from the grave!  
They *shall* not perish! With no impious breath  
We vow that Love shall stronger prove than Death!

Say not, 'Tis vain to strive against the Hand  
That writeth Judgment o'er a mourning land! —  
Say not, 'Tis Heav'n that worketh good or ill;  
And if our brother die — it is God's will; —  
Say not, if He is pleased to hide His face,  
'Tis ours and theirs to wait returning grace;  
Nor, listless, into prayerful chambers creep,  
And be content to weep with those who weep; —  
Say not that Nature but fulfils her plan,  
Through righteous retribution teaching man;  
Nor round your easy acquiescence draw  
The curtain of inexorable Law.

Say rather, *We* are now the hands of God  
To pour our fruits upon their fruitless sod!  
Say rather, *We* are God's incarnate Will  
To feed His lambs, His children's mouths to fill,  
And in our very plenty read the sign  
That we are chos'n as instruments Divine!  
Say rather, if His face be darkened there,  
'Tis ours to light the darkness of despair,  
And through the tears that dim their sorrowing eyes  
Show God reflected from our happier skies!  
And what though Nature in her changelessness  
Works out her ends through cycles of distress, —  
*We* too are Nature! and, enthroned above  
All other law, we own the Law of Love!

Therefore they *shall* not perish! — Oh sad Isle,  
Endure thy burden yet a little while —  
Yea, but a little while, for bounteous Heaven  
The lightning for our messenger hath given,  
To flash from cape to cape, o'er ocean's bed,

The word that for thy need becometh bread!

Oh grief-worn father, gazing on the soil  
That mocks thy husbandry; whose fruitless toil  
Provides no answer to the children's cry;  
Who turn'st aside lest thou should'st see them die;  
Lo, God hath not forsaken ev'n thy least.

Turn yet again: Help cometh from the East!

Oh drooping mother, bowed with hopeless cares  
That labour lightens not, nor tears, nor prayers, —  
Who spread'st ev'n now before thy famished brood  
The scanty remnant of unwholesome food, —  
Once more let hope awake within thy breast.

Be of good cheer: Help cometh from the West!

Ye little ones, whose raiment, rent and old,  
Scarce hides the forms that tremble in the cold;  
Whose play is silenced; all whose frolic wiles  
Are turned to weariness; whose sunny smiles  
Have vanished from the hunger-wasted mouth, —  
Be warmed and fed: Help cometh from the South!

Say we too much? Nay, less than this would shame  
Alike our hearts, our honour, and our name.

Nothing too much while Famine stalks abroad,  
And Winter grips the shivering lambs of God!  
Nothing too much while weeping kindred cry  
To happier kindred, "Save us, or we die!"  
Nothing too much while we whose bread is sure  
Have hearts to pity, hands to help, the poor, —  
And eyes in Ireland's hour of need to see  
Queensland's, Australia's, opportunity!

## Mute Discourse.

“Fulmina. . . . coelo nulla sereno.”

— LUCRETIVS.

GOD speaks by silence. Voice-dividing man,  
Who cannot triumph but he saith, Aha —  
Who cannot suffer without Woe is me —  
Who, ere obedience follow on the will,  
Must say, Thou shalt — who, looking back, saith Then,  
And forward, Then; and feebly nameth, Now,  
His changing foothold 'twixt eternities;  
Whose love is pain until it finds a voice —  
Whose seething anger bubbles in a curse —  
Who summarizes truth in party-cries,  
And bounds the universe with category, —  
This word-dividing, speech-preëminent man,  
Deeming his Maker even as himself,  
Must find Him in a voice ere he believe.  
We fret at silence, and our turbulent hearts  
Say, “If He be a God He will speak out.”  
We rail at silence, and would fain disturb  
The duly ordered course of signless years.  
We moan at silence, till our quivering need  
Becomes incarnate, and our sore desire  
Passes into a voice. Then say we, “Lo,  
He is, for He hath spoken; thus and thus  
He said.”

So ever radiating self,  
Conditioning a God to our degree,  
We make a word the top of argument —  
Fond weaklings we, whose utmost scope and goal  
Is but a pillared formula whereon  
To hang the garlands of our faith and love.  
Well was it in the childhood of the world  
To cry for open vision and a voice:  
But in the riper time, when we have reached  
The kindly heart of universal law,

And safe assurance of essential good,  
Say, rather, now that had there been *no* God,  
There had been *many* voices, freaks of sound,  
Capricious thunders in unclouded skies,  
Portentous utterance on the trembling hills  
And Pythian antics in oracular caves —  
Yea, signs and wonders had been multiplied,  
And god succeeded god, the latest ever  
Lord-paramount, until the crazèd world  
Had lost its judgment 'mid contending claims.  
Oh men! It is the child's heart in the man's  
That will not rest without a lullaby —  
That will not trust the everlasting arm  
Unless it hear the voice in tale or song.  
It is the child's heart in the man's that seeks,  
In elements of old Semitic thought,  
And wondrous syllables of Grecian tongue,  
Recorded witness of another way  
Of things than that which God hath willed to be  
Our daily life. And if in times of old  
The child-heart caught at wonder, and the charm  
Of sundered system — if untutored faith  
Found confirmation in arrested suns,  
And gnomon-shadows of reverted hours,  
And in the agonized Thus saith the Lord  
Of mantled seers with fateful burden bowed —  
We, children of a clearer, purer light  
(Despising not the day of smaller things,  
Nor calling out to kick the ladder foot  
Because our finger-tips have verged on rest) —  
We, youths, whose spring brings on the lawful hope  
To loose the girdle of the maiden Truth, —  
We, men, whose joyous summer morn hath heard  
The marriage bell of Reason and of Faith —  
We, turning from the windy ways of the world,  
And gazing nearly on the silent march  
Of love in law, and law in love, proclaim  
“In that He works in silence He is God!”  
So, from the very permanence of things,  
And voiceless continuity of love,  
Unmixed with human passion, fretted not  
By jealousy, impatience, or revenge,  
We gather courage, and confirm our faith.  
So, casting back the scoffer's words, we say,

Even because there is no fitful sign,  
And since our fathers fell asleep all things  
Continue as at first — this wonder of no change  
Reputes the God, to whom a thousand years  
Are as one day. Yea, to the willing ear,  
The dumb supremacy of patience speaks  
Louder than Sinai. And if yet we lack  
The witness and the voucher of a voice,  
What hindereth that we who stand between  
The living Nature and the living God,  
Between them, yet in both — their ministers —  
By noble life and converse pure, should be  
Ourselves the very voice of God on earth,  
Living epistles, known and read of all?

Oh Brothers! Were we wholly soul-possessed  
With this Divine regard — would we but soar  
Beyond the cloud, and centralize our faith  
Upon the stable sun — would we reject  
Kaleidoscopic views of broken truth  
Distorted to the turn of perverse will —  
Make daylight through traditionary ranks  
Of intervening hells, and fix the eye  
Upon the shining heart of Supreme Love, —  
Would we . . . But why prolong the bootless “would”? —  
I, who know all the weakness and the fear.  
The weary ways of labyrinthine doubt,  
The faintness on the dizzy height — who lack  
The Gabriel-pinion wherewithal to range  
The unsupported medium of pure sky —  
Who know the struggle of the natural soul,  
Breathing a finer ether than its own —  
Who, venturing on specular power too vast,  
Scathed by my own reflector, fall down blind;  
Who, at the least wind of calamity,  
Drag shiftlessly the anchor of my hope,  
And, shrieking from the waves, catch gladly at  
A Name and Sake wherewith to close a prayer!

Yet though I faint and fail, I may not take  
My weakness for the Truth, nor dare misread  
The manual sign of God upon the heart,  
The pledge, beyond the power of any voice,  
Of sure advance unto the perfect whole;  
Nor treat the tablet-tracing of His hand  
As it were some old tombstone left apart

In grave-yard places for the years to hide  
Deep in irrelevant and noxious growth.  
Oh, Brothers! push the weeds aside, lay bare  
The monument, and clear the earthy mould  
From the Divine intaglio. Read thereon  
The uncanceled charter of your native hope,  
Nor crave articulate thunders any more.  
Read there the universal law of good;  
Unqualified evangel; blessedness,  
The birthright of all being; peace, that lends  
No weak subscription unto sin, and yet  
Disarms despair. Read, and believe no more  
In final triumph of concreted sin  
In any soul that cometh forth from God,  
And lives, and moves, and hath its being in Him.  
Read thus, and pray the while that he who writes  
Reck his own rede.

Oh, Sister! would I bruise  
The snowy petals of thy prayerful faith,  
Or chill the tendril-twinings of thy hope  
With evil influence of wintry scorn?  
Would God that any faith of mine could give  
Such quiet stability unto my feet  
As thine to thine! Oh, if thy kneeling wakes  
A smile at all, 'tis Heaven that smiles because  
Thou ask'st so little! God will o'erfulfil  
Thy dreams of silver with unmeted gold.  
Oh, Sister, though thou dost believe in wrath,  
Though shapes of woe flit through thine imagery,  
Though thou hast ta'en the cloud into thy faith,  
The little rift of blue that breaks thy dark  
Brings thee more comfort and more fixèd hope  
Than unto me this cloudless open vast  
Wherein my soul floats weary and alone!

Yet think not we are voyaging apart  
To different havens. Truth is one. Yet One  
Alone hath reached it in straight course. Each soul  
Hath its own track, its currents, and its gales;  
And each toward sequel of attainment must  
Fetch many a compass. Some keep land in view —  
The beacon-hills of old authority —  
And draw assurance from a shore defined,  
Though it be dire with cloud, and capes of wrath;  
While some shoot boldly into perilous seas —

Pacific-seeming seas, yet not without  
A weary loneliness of land forsook,  
And fear of sudden cyclone, and still more  
Deceitful calm. Or, if the metaphor  
Be yet too cruel for a sister's heart,  
Oh, think that in the common way of love  
We are never out of hearing; but may each,  
Whene'er we will, join hand with each and say,  
"God — Father — Love," the triune sum of truth,  
And Watchword of the universal Christ.

Sister, I think, and in the thought take heart,  
That when the Day of Reconcilement comes,  
As come it will, the all-transmuting Truth  
May find affinities in things that seem  
To us the very elements of war.

Dost thou remember how, in childhood's days,  
One gave us wit to recognize the south  
By turning faceward to the mid-day sun;  
And we believed, and took the facile plan  
For unexceptioned law? But even now  
I hear the chime of Austral noon, and, lo,  
The sun is in the north! Yet 'tis the same  
Bright sun that shone and shines upon us both,  
On me the evil, and on thee the good;  
Yea, more, it is the same, noon-glaring here,  
That now with hints of orient twilight steals  
Over the stillness of thy morning dreams.

Dost thou remember how in those old days,  
The dear old days that ne'er may come again —  
Though love, like history, repeats itself,  
But with the larger feature, stronger hand,  
And keener sense, evoked of common grief —  
When we would scan the circling mountain-cope  
That made our little valley all a world,  
One taught our young unlearnèd lips to say,  
"The Sensible Horizon;" then dissolved  
Our bounded dream, and showed our widening minds  
That this was not the limit of the truth,  
But grew from our own petty finitude; and far  
In unconceived remote another line,  
Yet only in concession named a line,  
"The Rational," made space intelligible,  
And gave relation to the stars. Yet not  
The less our early, mountain-narrowed sky

Was still *the* sky to us, cloud, storm, and all.  
Oh take my parable, and fondly think  
That though the years have brought me wider range,  
And shifting zeniths been my law of life,  
Did thou and I yet tread the native vale,  
I not the less, beneath that homely sky,  
Would point to it whene'er we spoke of heaven.  
Oh bear my parable; and if it be  
Within permitted bounds of reverence  
To round a solemn theme with gentle jest,  
The mingling import of familiar words  
May bridge our difference, since in daily speech  
The sensible and rational are one.

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