

The Balance of Pain and Other Poems

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The Balance of Pain.

SCENE I.

THEODORE.

PAIN and still pain! pain at each turn of being!
Pain at life's opening and the last dark hour!
Pain in the flesh and in the soul's vague depths -
Pain as the law of growth - the due of change -
Pain as the needful attribute of life.
Where shall it end? With body and with form?
Not so, e'en joy itself must come to man
Temper'd with pain; beauty, the more intense,
The keener, thrills us with the pleasure-pang.
Music and love, ay, holiness itself,
Hold pain for ever in their essence bound.
From first to last no hope and no escape!
Yet could I bear it, were the throes assign'd
In equal measure to each human soul.
But 'tis not thus; on one the woes are heap'd,
While others pass with strange immunity
From all save that engrain'd in very living.
It is a grand injustice of the Lord
In whom, alike, all move and have their being.

AGATHA.

Nay, speak not thus. The righteous judge is true,
Creative author of the mortal world.
Why should He love one creature more or less
When all are His, the work of His own hands?

THEODORE.

Yet it is so. I stand as witness here.
Look at me now, a man deform'd and maim'd;
From birth misshapen, from my fellows set
Apart, so each may point at me with scorn,
Or, pitying, turn their head the while they pass.
What do I know but pain? From early morn
My wrenched form, wrong set to Nature's laws,
Must weary ache. Ne'er can I know the spring

Of beaming health which makes mere being bliss.
E'en my poor brain, e'er acted on by nerves
Misplaced and strain'd, no peaceful force can know;
But overwrought and restless, in short gleams
Of fitful power alone can work, then sink
Back into morbid fancyings, which oft wind
Its tension'd fibres unto anguish height,
Yet yield forth naught of service to my kind,
And turn me mad with pain of baffled aim.

Nor have I riches, which could gain me power
And love of men. My weary faculties
Must spend their little strength in gaining that
Which scarce is daily bread - no margin left
For pleasure, Art; no hope of rest to come.

What are my joys? What have I to compare
With yon rich dullard, fair, and strong of form,
Who has not brain to prize his favour'd gifts ?

AGATHA.

I dare not argue. I am all too weak.
A woman poor in speech, unlearn'd in art,
Who cannot shape in words the truths she knows,
Nor prove their reasons and conclusions wide.
Still do I feel with strong instinctive power
That what thou say'st is wrong, against the wont
Of God and Nature. Judge this by ourselves!
We are blind mortals; still had we loved sons
And power to dower each man, and shape his life,
Say, would we give to one all fairest gifts,
And leave another naught but pain and care?
Should we not weigh and measure out in love
The outward and the inward; balancing
Circumstance 'gainst disposition - compensate
For earthly pleasure by the inner wealth?
And pain itself, that sanctifying cross,
Where that was given in greater measure, there
Should also be intenser depth of joy.
Or if we felt that hot, rash youth would need
The tempering dew of grief, then should we give
Sadness in early years, and leave old age
Clear as the noon-day. While to those whose youth
Was bright as spring, their share of sorrow, then,
Should gloom as autumn, making them less loth
To shed the leaves of life, and gladsome yearn
With ripen'd soul's fruit for the Harvest Home.

Thus should we act, impartial love our guide,
Leaving the bold and strong to fight alone;
Bearing the babes (yet not so lovingly
As God doth hold in "everlasting arms")
With mother's pity ever tenderly;
Shielding the weak ones, softening their woe,
Though still constrain'd to chasten each, nor spare.

And if *we* thus, how tenfold more our God,
Father and Mother, Creator, knit in One,
And Source of love - how can He be but just
To those He made, not, not alone, for Time,
But for Eternity!

THEODORE.

I hear and own.
Would that I could believe it! You speak well.
But mine own self, so rack'd in flesh and mind,
Seemeth a contradiction. Could you prove
Your words to me, thenceforth would I adore
The God I ne'er can worship, love, the while
I feel He hath unjustly marr'd my being.

AGATHA.

This may we do ? Henceforth each leisure day
Shall we go forth in various disguise
To read the history of our fellows' lives -
In various scenes and classes searching out
The pain, the joy, the secrets of each soul ?

THEODORE.

A better way there is. You are a seer,
And I have corresponding power to make you sleep,
And by mesmeric power to cause the state
Well named clairvoyant. In the spirit then
Might you thus pierce through human walls, unseen
View diverse scenes, and picture them to me,
That I might frame in words, and to my heart
Take home, your teachings.

AGATHA.

Gladly I consent;

Too bless'd if my poor power, so useless long,
Should be the means to bear conviction home,
And give you faith in God's great providence.

SCENE II.

THEODORE.

WAVE the passes slowly, strongly,
 Eye to eye and breath to breath.
Will that sleep shall hold the body
 Fast as in the bonds of death.
While the soul, from sin escaping
 For one bless'd supernal hour,
Pierces through all earthly barriers
 With ethereal essence power -
And by space nor matter trammell'd,
 Gains awhile a seraph's dower.

Gently now the eyes are closing -
 Respirations long and deep -
One wave more - she lieth dreaming,
 Wrapp'd in strange mesmeric sleep.
Far her soul's eyes now are piercing
 Far beyond the senses' ken;
Still the mortal lips may show us
 Visions real of living men.
 Soul of Agatha, where art thou ?
 Speak, and tell thy dreamings now.

AGATHA.

How came I 'mid such scenes? 'Tis night.
Within a chamber richly dight
I see a lady jewell'd, fair,
With costly robes and stately air.
Naught can she know of struggling life,
Her home with every luxury rife;
Rare pictures hang about each wall,
Sculpture and music, books, and all
That soothe the senses, thrill the mind
With magic touch, are here combined.
But yet her look is sad! she sighs,
And Care's dark circles shade her eyes.
Ne'er heeds she these rich works of art
Which, had we *one* such, to our heart

The thing of beauty we would take,
New joy in our poor home to wake.

She waits alone. The guests long gone,
I hear the great clock chiming one.
She rises, listens, passes now,
A weary look upon her brow,
Through empty halls, into a room
Where one faint night-lamp lights the gloom.
She lays her lace and jewels by;
Rich, yet so lonely, with a sigh
The Countess sits anear the bed
And on the pillow lays her head
Beside a pale boy's sleeping face
Whose features bear a woman's grace -
The prophecy of early death.
Poor mother! short that heaving breath!

Again she rises. Hark! some sounds!
Wheels passing through the garden grounds.
Adown the staircase swift she goes,
Opens the door; too well she knows!
A young man staggers in. With calm
Sad dignity she lends her arm
To help her son, and moans, "Again!
Oh to be spared this humbling pain!"

She leads him to his room. "No eye
Shall see him there degraded lie;
Enough for me to know, and then
With smiles to screen my woe from men,
While I am envied - I! who fain
Would give my riches, all, to gain
Health for my darling, or to win
His father's heir from paths of sin,
And save from ruin - worse, disgrace -
An honour'd name, an ancient race!"

I watch her yet. No soft rest creeps
Through silken curtains - still she weeps;
"The widow's burden none may share:
Too hard, my God! this cross to bear."

THEODORE.

So sayeth each, and counts his own one cross
More heavy than all others, more beyond
His feeble strength to lift. Why is it so?

Because the bearer feels, and he alone,
The weight on his own shoulders - knows the ache
Its pressure brings on some most tender nerve.
Or glancing round, as merely looker-on,
Sees but the outward mien, and deems that he
Who walks more bravely, or whose burden seems
Of easier form, or richer fashion, is
Therefore more favour'd by the Lord, who gives
To each as He thinks best.

So have I thought,
And envied those whose life is more enrich'd
By beauteous surroundings. Yea! this man
Who breaks his mother's heart, I coveted
The strong, rich dullard's lot, and long'd to change!
But Agatha speaks. 'Mid other scenes she glides;
I see it by her smile.

I listen, wife.

AGATHA.

The bells are all ringing, they merrily chime;
The young leaves are budding on beech-tree and lime,
The day's eyes peep out from the green grassy blades,
The baby-fac'd primroses nestle in glades;
While the violets breathe from their cradle of leaves,
And the gossamer o'er them a coverlet weaves.
The birds their love-melodies woingly sing,
As I wander and dream in the glad Easter spring.

The bells are all ringing, they merrily peal,
For the true hearts now plighted for woe or for weal -
For the weal that they hope for, the woe they can bear
And transform to a joy when together they share.
A brave man and fair maid, I watch them now come,
And pure from God's altar go forth to their home.
Poor, lowly, that dwelling, yet smiling with pride,
On her new life enters the happy bride.

The bells are not ringing; they only chime
To mark the flight of the passing time.
I enter the house where the wedded dwell;
Five summers have fled, and yet "it is well;"
For a fair babe lies on the young wife's breast:
With sweet, lisping voices the father is blest.
Though worn with labour the bride has grown,
'Mid the music of home-love the hard days have flown.

The deep bells are sounding, they solemnly toll,
And the autumn wind wails for the widow's dole;
For long has lasted the sunny "weal,"
And the woe-shadows now o'er her life must steal.
But she weeps not alone, for her brave sons vow,
As their holy charge they will guard her now.
Ere their silver wedding he lieth at rest;
But his children rise up and call her blest.

THEODORE.

A pleasant picture, hallow'd for all time -
A humble home, few wants, and only cares
Such as the brow's sweat and the good wife's thrift
May daily conquer; children growing up
In fear of God, to face a life of toil
Such as their fathers led, with few desires
And simple pleasures: troubled not with aims,
Ambitions, aspirations, evermore
Flitting from out their grasp. Content they dwell,
Stepping on, day by day; nor look beyond,
Save to one broad great heaven that they care
Never to analyze. Such homes are nests
Whence rise the working men of England. But
I could not bear such narrow limits, love
Such dull prose of existence, unadorn'd
By flowers of life. However great the peace,
The ugliness of poverty would fret
My soaring soul.

I need great thoughts, and Art,
Ennobling Art, my being to fulfil.
Could I but gain the power through form and sound
To pour out my pent soul and sway the minds
Of men with mine own passion, then would I
Ne'er crave aught else.

She hears my voice,
And sees perchance some answer to my thought.

AGATHA.

Dim in the twilight the shadowing arches
Gloom o'er the vista of narrowing aisle.
Tomb-like and silent the old church is brooding,
Time-worn and ancient, a historied pile.
Cross-legg'd crusaders in stone-rest are sleeping,
Where centuries past they had kneeled in prayer;

Thoughts of the past in the old carvings linger;
The souls' praise of ages still censes the air.

Deep is the stillness and eerie the gloaming,
When through the silence there suddenly steal
Tones of rich music, that rising crescendo
Upward in volumes of harmony peal.
Through the dark arches and quaint-fretted vaulting
Beethoven's symphonies sonorous roll -
Weirdly sweet whisperings tenderly echo,
Unknown sad requiems tremulous toll.

How come these sounds from the organ-loft wailing ?
Ghostly hand can it be wakens such strains,
Or a sad human soul pouring its heart-blood,
Drowning in rapture life's discords and pains ?
See, now, the moon, on the great Eastern window,
Beams through a saint's form on pillar and stone,
Lighting the chancel and faintly revealing
Dim figures twain in the darkness alone.

One a young man, with his eyes sadly drooping,
But features illumined with peace-breathing smile,
Sits, with thin hands o'er the organ-keys straying,
And thoughts in a far-away ecstasy; while
Panting, yet happy, a fair little maiden
Works at the bellows, contented to yield
Joy to the brother, to whom, in his blindness,
All pleasures, save music, are evermore seal'd.

Changed is the scene; and in Norwich Cathedral
Sits the same player, no longer alone;
For through a listening multitude thrilleth,
Instinct with genius, each depth-stirring tone.
Sway'd as one wave are the music-thrall'd thousands,
Human with passion the organ fugues grow,
As sound-wrought creations, seer born of the sightless,
In tumults of harmony, quivering, flow.

Moment of triumph! worth ages of vision;
Joy of all joys, when the master-soul gains,
E'en through its sorrow, Art's guerdon of glory,
Uplifting the mortal through God-reveal'd strains.
Closed is the eye to the bright waves of sunshine,
That subtler vibrations may rapture the ear;
Clouded one sense, that divine chords of being,
Spirit-touch'd in the darkness, may echo more clear.

Ended the music; yea, suddenly, strangely,

Just as the human stop peal'd forth its cry.
Where the musician ? - elated and joyful,
Conscious of power? Ah, nay, with a sigh,
Sorrowful, anger'd, abruptly he ceases,
And on the dumb keys his flush'd face down lays,
O'erwrought with strivings and baffled endeavour
To pour forth in sound his heart-burnings of praise.

Why weeps he now - at the zenith of glory ?
Pain, and still pain! e'en through triumph inwrought;
Worship of men but piercing more keenly
The soul's sense of failure to render its thought.
Still, still as ever the wing'd god's conception
Is foil'd, unexpress'd by the poor human clay -
Ever the unreach'd Divine heights o'ershadow
Man's utmost ascent in his brief mortal day.

THEODORE.

Yet one had thought the subtle joy of triumph -
The sense of power, through sound's transcendent art,
To lift poor earth-bound souls to higher worlds
Of thought and life - would surely be enough
To yield forth bliss, and fully compensate
For other ills; and yet it seems not so.
But melody is evanescent, vague -
A wind-born tongue, whose alphabet alone
Is known to mortals, but the fuller voice
Reserved for seraphs. Painting were the same.
What hand but One could tint the varying sky,
Or blend the hues that deck one springtide field ?
No, God alone can mould and colour life,
Or temper light and shade. All man's attempt
Must be at best a feeble mockery
Of the warm real. But words are man's own realm,
Wherein the mind's most deep imaginings
Can surely be express'd. Could one but wear
The poet's crown, or wield the author's pen,
Thrilling great thoughts through hundred, thousand homes.
Naught else could mar the joy.

AGATHA.

An attic room; bare windows to the sky,
Whence pale stars glimmer through the dust-fleck'd panes;
No sign of comfort, but a table strewn

With written sheets. The summer twilight wanes,
The midnight comes, then sickening with the dawn,
The night-lamp yellow burns ; yet moves he not,
The man with contour young but features worn,
Who lost in thought now rests and dreams awhile,
Then writes apace once more with flickering, raptured smile.

The pages fill - rich images outflash
In living words from out the poet's brain.
The hand is weary, but the genius' fire
No sweat can quench nor failing flesh restrain.
Still glides the pen. The roseate sunlight streams
Athwart the paper. Starting from reverie
He rises, watches, till the last red beams
Have glared to whiteness. Then adown he lies,
And Nature's healing sleep steals o'er the fever'd eyes.

The poem is finish'd. E'en the author's sense
Glowes with the pride of good work, nobly wrought
From grand conceptions. "This must gain me fame!"
Not fame alone! for yet another thought
Has spur'd him on to wring out his soul's best:
"When the world crowns, I with my love will crown.
Show forth life's utmost ere that life be blest:
'Not with a knight unproven will I wed!'"
So his heart's ideal, Maude, in calm disdain had said.

A cold prosaic office. A hard man,
Business in every face-line, sitting stern
'Mid piles of manuscripts. There enters now
A young man diffident. "I come to learn
Your verdict, sir, upon a poem I sent
Some long time since," "Verses! Ha! what's the name?"
"The Titan's Weird." " Yes. I remember - meant
To have sent you answer. We dare not engage
To publish. Good, no doubt; but quite beyond the age!"

A bland "Good morning," - nothing more! - with pale
Calm lips Claude answers; goes him on his way
With *only* youth's hopes wreck'd, and fame and love
Lost - yet for ever ? . . . Many a weary day,
And month, and year have pass'd. Fair Maude has wed
Another suitor. By an unknown name
The author writes - alas ! for daily bread,
Not laurels now - I see him sit, ah me! -
Working 'gainst time, 'gainst thought, in weary drudgery.

He moans his plaint: "Oh, for the weaver's toil,
Mechanic's labour, where the skilful hand

Obeys a dull routine! Far easier that,
 However great the toil, than thus to stand
At Heaven's portal, grasping at her beams
 To light the earthly fire, though failing, yet
Striving to fix for gain the fleeting gleams
 Of genius, till seems quench'd the sacred light,
 Though on, on, uninspired, soul-darken'd we must write."

Again, a few more years, I see a book
 In thousand homes. With rhythm'd music's grace,
Its glorious thoughts are stirring human hearts.
 Won now at last the poet's rightful place
E'en by the work whereby long years ago
 He hoped to earn the crown which now is his,
Yet by those fever'd brows may nevermore be worn.
 Too late for him the long'd-for guerdon came.
 In life the poet's pain; in death alone the fame.

THEODORE.

Still no escape ? However bright the gift
Bestow'd on man, as surely comes the cloud
To mar his life's horizon. Can there be
No phase of earthly being where calm content
And perfect peace were found ?

 I see it now.

Perchance the grand mistake in all the lives
Reveal'd to me is, that they tried to find
Their joy in self and self's own; strove to grasp
Fruit for themselves and theirs, nor cared to note
The need of those outside.

 The better way

Carlyle expresses: "*Say to every kind
Of happiness 'I can do without thee.'
With self-renunciation life begins.*"

The saints of old, they held the secret when
They bid the faithful, leaving all, to spend
Their every power in work for God and man.
Agatha, my wife, I would that you should show
The working of such a life.

AGATHA.

Far away in mutter'd thundering
 Sounds the battle's awful roar;
Each loud volley winging thousands

To their soul's rest evermore;
Striking down the young and ardent,
Laying low the veteran brave,
Just that o'er some Naboth's vineyard
One poor batter'd flag may wave.

Solemnly the sun is setting,
Red as earth whereon it shines;
Ended now the long day's conflict,
And in weary broken lines
Conquerors, conquer'd, sad are bearing
Wounded comrades from the field
To the tent where healing mercy
Roughest comfort yet can yield.

Sorrowful the scene! - the dying
Passing without friend to soothe;
Nay, not quite, for tender nurses
Softly 'mid the sufferers move.
One with grey robe, chasten'd features,
Gently lifts the aching head,
Binds the wounds with skilful touches,
Kneels beside the dying bed.

Day and night untir'd, though wearied,
Comfort in her hand she bears;
Cheerfully all self renouncing,
Bravely works and coarsely fares.
And in many a grateful "Thank you,"
In the sense of true help wrought,
In the very ministration
Mingleth joy undream'd, unsought.

Now again, in crowded alleys,
'Mid a stricken city's poor,
Passes the same woman, carrying
Succour, food from door to door;
Heeding not the fell infection,
Tending those from whom have fled
E'en their very nearest, dearest,
Ere they count them with the dead.

Loathsome oft the work, yet never
Shrinketh she, though wingèd death
Flies abroad, and young and aged
Fall beneath the poison breath.
Scathless yet the sister toileth
Till well-nigh the plague is stay'd,
Then her care-worn frame succumbing

On a lonely bed is laid.

Dieth she a holy martyr,
 Memoried long for gentle deeds?
Ah! not so; far nobler, harder
 Sacrifice the Father needs.
Rises she, for ever alter'd,
 Seam'd and marr'd the gentle face
Whose sweet features aided, answer'd
 Erst the Mercy Spirit's grace.

Human, e'en the ministering angel!
 Some few tears that poor cheek wet,
Then self's latest remnant spurning,
 Heart and soul to God's will set,
Takes she up her cross. Too truly
 Is some power of comfort fled.
Not so quickly love is yielded.
 Dimmer sunshine can she shed.
Hard at first the change, but gently
 Ordereth God his servant's ways;
Gradually, with love outpouring,
 Seeking not return or praise,
Finds she in the mere "sweet service"
 Satisfaction full and deep,
And peace-lines of chasten'd beauty
 O'er pain's marring furrows creep.

Now I see her, old and grey-hair'd,
 Sinking to a well-earn'd sleep.
Who are these that, standing round her,
 As for some lov'd mother weep?
Kithless, kinless is the woman,
 Yet her children call her blest.
They - the sick, the sorrowing, tempted -
 Hush her to a hallow'd rest.

THEODORE.

A noble end; joy gain'd at last, but still
Through pain, though God chang'd pain, almost divine
In self-transcendent power. But to all
It is not given to leave the daily world
Of usual work and love, and dwell apart
From all save those who, suffering, seem to want
Our care the most. Some few such ministering saints
Are necessary - fill a holy place
In the great human plan - and blest are they

Thus, chosen, fitted, with their healing balm,
To fill the void that else would aching yearn
For comfort found not.

But the young and strong,
The rich uninteresting, or prosaic poor,
They need their angels too. Moreover, earth
Calls for bread-winners, who must dree their weird,
Selfish though it may seem, and low of aim,
Yet still ordain'd.

But where were this same world
Were e'en all nobler souls to turn aside
From that life-path, common howe'er it be,
Which straight before them lies? The God who form'd
Society as it stands, and gave to man
Ambitions, instincts, and the gentle ties
Of earthly kinship, surely never meant
That these should be ignored. I would that I
Could see some picture where through filial love
Joy great as that of the sweet Saint is won -
Simply by taking up the quiet cross
That circumstance provides.

She reads my wish!
I see it - by the eager, far-off gaze.

AGATHA.

In the city's darkest quarter, where the brave sun's wintry beams
Scarce can pierce the murky vapours, shining pale in fleeting gleams,
Stands a dwelling, poor and crumbling, propp'd against an old church wall,
Nestling by a sculptured tower, whence the solemn shadows fall.

Dark the room and coarsely sanded; dreary want is painted there -
One bare table, wooden settle, naught else but a great arm-chair,
Carven, cushion'd, wornly telling of full many a gentle sire
Sitting by a hearth - ah, different to this chilling, scanty fire!

Only one rich glory lumines now and then the cheerless room,
The old wall whereon it resteth yielding joy amid the gloom,
When the sun athwart the ruins pierces long and slanting rays,
And one ancient window gloweth with the hues of cloister'd days.

All the rest are barest outline, which no pictured traceries fill,
But this one in shelter'd angle holds its crystal glory still.
Deep-toned glass with gem-like setting, frames an image of our Lord,
Pointing upwards, while his features beckoning glow with sweet accord.

Cometh from the inner chamber an aged man of gentle mien,
Face and form still proving culture, though in garments worn and mean;

Bowed is he, and, faintly moving, scarce can totter to his chair,
And his reverend face is furrow'd with deep lines of want and care.

Shivers he, and feebly seeketh for a faggot. Not one more!
Now, as oft, the old man lacketh food, and warmth he needeth sore;
But no sigh he utters, only lifts his face as if in prayer -
Lo, the evening sun outshineth; Christ the sufferer gloweth there.

Hark! a click ! the latch uplifted, and within the narrow room
Steps a maiden, fair and fragile, golden-hair'd, with tender bloom,
While her thin shawl, crimson, snow-fleck'd, clings around her slender form.
From her daily work she cometh, weary, cold, through drenching storm.

Lovingly the old man greets her, will nor cold nor pain confess;
Then her stores, hard-earn'd, though scanty, brings she from her cloak recess.
Soon a tiny fire is blazing, wheel'd her father's arm-chair near,
And in loving converse share they coarsest food with thankful cheer.

And when dark'ning shadows gather, by a dim and flickering light,
Sits she at her father's footstool, nestling, far into the night;
With her busy fingers flying o'er the work that gains them bread,
While the Christ in moonlight radiance beams o'er white, and golden head.

Happy in each other dwell they, though so changed their life's estate.
He, who once was rich and noble, exiled now; while early, late,
Must his tender daughter labour. How can they un murmuring bear?
See! God's love-beams through the darkness show the beckoning comfort there!

THEODORE.

God's glorious light seen through pure manhood's form,
Beaming on self-devotion! - hallow'd lines,
Transfiguring sadness, and Christ's beckoning hand,
Leading through sorrow to the bliss divine!

Enough, enough! Methinks I dimly see
The one sole secret whereby earthly pain,
Balanced though it may be in actual force,
Equally portion'd to each human being,
May yet be overcome, till one life grows,
Radiant in peace, 'mid circumstances such
As would o'erwhelm another, who not yet
Had found the talisman whose power can change
The rod of grief as to a blossoming joy.

Agatha, my wife, I need no more!
Come back to me from out the land of dreams
And know what thou hast taught.

AGATHA.

Am I awake?

Where have I been? 'Mid other lives than these,
And yet I have not moved from where we sat
And mused together on the ways of God,
While you were sorrowful and could not see
The thread of love run through the woof of pain.
But you are happier now ? I scarce can see
The old sad, bitter smile, so wont to mar
The features that I love.

THEODORE.

Because at last

The bitterness is past. I read in faith
God's dealings with his children. He is just,
And gives to all some cross. 'Tis *in themselves*
There lies the power of turning to a joy,
Or bearing, as a fretting load, the pain
To each appointed as his human test.
But yesterday I murmuring long'd to change
With other men, whose lot appear'd more blest
To my dim eyes; and now I would not dare
To take my life into my own weak hands,
Which blunder in the dark, while the All-wise
Sees, moves, and orders in His own best way.

AGATHA.

Thankful I am, my husband, that my gift
Could show you this. Now happy may we be
With life, ourselves, and God's great Fatherhood!
Yea, but before ourselves, His little ones
To help and comfort whensoever they pass
Anear our pathway; our own weariness
Ever forgetting for their tender sakes.

THEODORE.

And yet this body, crippled, dwarf'd, misform'd,
So much must hinder me, and constant pain
Will mar my temper, making the poor flesh
Oft roughly war against the spirit's will,
Rendering its efforts vain.

AGATHA.

Not so God works.
For suffering endured, and every phase
Of grief or trial, may it not be hail'd
As a new gift, enabling us to feel
More fully with some fellow? Christ must needs
Pass through all ills of earthly life, that He
Might comprehend and sympathize in love
With his poor mortal children, sparing not
Himself, so He should leave no anguish deep
Unfathom'd by His pitying human heart.
So with us, too, in poor and less degree,
May it not be the same, and each new pang
Bring us one step still nearer to the Christ,
Through deeper power of helpfulness to man ?

THEODORE.

If it be so, how lighteneth the scale
Of human pain, o'erbalanced by the love
Of Him who weigheth all things, leaving not
One void, unevenness, in His whole world
Of just proportion!

AGATHA.

Then with quiet heart,
So will we take and bend to best account
The life which God appoints - live, love, and toil
With eyes e'er watching for His pointing hand;
Weep still sometimes - 'tis human! - oftener smile
Growing each day in faith and thankfulness,
Measuring the blessings, not against earth's ills,
But our unworthiness: with cheerful hope
Accepting all the present, be it bright
Or whilom clouded, offering evermore
Unto the Lord the sacrifice of self
Raising to Him, through fire of conquer'd pain,
The sacred incense of a holy joy.

The Explorer's Message.

GOLDEN, crimson, glows the sunset o'er the wild Australian scene,
Gilding e'en the lonely desert with a glory-tinted sheen,
Purple, purple, gloom the mountains towering in their distant height,
And the blushing air is quivering with the joy of rosy light.
Glorious beauty! - heavenly radiance! beaming o'er the barren earth,
While the weary land is stricken with a life-destroying dearth.
But no joy that glory bringeth - ominous that sunset blaze,
Telling but of rainless sunshine, burning on through cloudless days -
Parch'd, the thirsty ground is gasping for one shower of cooling rain -
Shadeless trees stand gaunt and withering on the grassless and arid plain -
Not a sound of living creature, not one blade or leaf of green!
E'en the very birds have vanish'd from the desolated scene!

Hark! what sound of coming footsteps breaks the silence of the air?
Can it be a human being all alone that rideth there?
Jaded, drooping, horse and rider slowly wend their dreary way,
Toiling on as they have toil'd through many and many a weary day,
Wan the rider, wan and fainting - mind and body overwrought;
Worn the steed, and gauntly fleshless, perishing of bitter drought -
"Water, water! oh, for water!" Now the horse sinks to the ground;
And the faithful beast here resting a last halting-place has found;
Now the last, last link is broken! e'en the poor dumb friend is gone!
And the pioneer must turn his eyes unto a heavenly bourn.

But six months a gallant band, the brave explorers had set forth,
Resolute to pierce the mysteries of Australia's unknown north.
Strove they nobly, daring danger, hardships cheerfully endured!
Recking not of death or failure, still by patriot hopes allured.
Onward they had pressed adventurous, till, by want and sickness tried,
One by one their ranks had thinn'd, lost, or spear'd, or famish'd, died.
Each day saw a martyr added, each night heard some dying moan,
Till at last *one* man was left in that great wilderness - alone -
Solitary, all untended; none, none left behind to mourn,
Now the last of the explorers lies on dying bed forlorn.
Faint the lonely man is growing, yet before he turns to die,
With one strong expiring effort, with one long-drawn weary sigh,
Draws he from his breast a locket - with onstalking death he fights,
While, upon a slip of paper, painfully he trembling writes -
"Mary, loved one, in the desert my last thought is still of you.
God be with you, guard and bless you. To my memory still be true."
His last signature he signeth, gazing lovingly and long
On the face within that locket - tender memories o'er him throng
As he folds the tiny letter, mournfully to parch'd lips press'd -
Clasps it in the golden casket, lays it to his loving breast;

Then with one deep prayer for mercy - ere the last glow leaves the skies,
Resting on his Father's bosom, calm the lone explorer dies.
None are near to close the eyelids - none weep o'er that bronzed face -
Only night is stealing softly, shrouding him with tender grace.

Springs have fled, and summers faded, ten long years have come and gone;
Mary's face still wears its sweetness, though with long, long waiting worn;
Many a one has sought to win her - clear her answering words and few -
"I my love long since have plighted - to that love I will be true."
Brave men, searching, have gone forth upon the last explorers' track
Unsuccessful, disappointed, they have aye returned back:
Yet, within the maiden's bosom, hope 'gainst hope will quenchless burn,
Still his death is all unproven - still the wanderer may return!
"Let me know his fate," she prayeth, "only one small token send,
Then my heart in resignation to God's holy will shall bend."

Ride two horsemen through the wild lands where man's foot scarce trod before,
"We, the pioneers," they murmur, "we now first this land explore."
Ah! but see what is it then, that on the plain is gleaming there?
Hush'd and lonely is the desert - motionless the silent air,
As with solemn pace the travellers to the hallow'd spot draw nigh,
Where a famish'd lone explorer years ago lay down to die;
By him close his steed is lying - skeleton with harness trapp'd,
While in life's worn mouldering garments still the master is enwrapp'd.

Awe-struck gaze they on the ruins whence a brother's soul has fled;
Then, all loth to leave a comrade nameless on his desert bed,
Search the men for note or journal - some faint clue to name and fate,
Not a trace or record find they - not one letter, word, or date!
'Least a grave they will make for him! Gleameth now a yellow sheen,
And amid the quiet ashes, where the faithful breast has been,
Shining lies a golden locket, with a simple name engraved.
Ah, that name! long mourn'd and honour'd - now from cold oblivion saved!
Eagerly they ope the locket - in that dreary desert place
Beams there now upon these rough men, sweetest, gentlest woman's face,
Image of some cherish'd loved one; *who*, perchance these words may tell;
See! here lies a tiny letter, - the explorer's last farewell.

Anxiously, yet almost doubting lest a sacrilege it prove,
Strangers now unfold the message from the martyr to his love;
Trembling is the pencill'd writing, but the touching words are clear;
Mists cloud o'er the eyes now reading, e'en the strong men drop a tear
On that tender last love-letter - warm voice from the quiet dead
Reverently they gently lay it on that face he would have wed,
And they vow to rest nor linger till that relic they have placed
In the keeping of the maiden by such love so deeply graced.

Autumn wanes and winter cometh; Mary's hair is tinged with grey;
But her eye is beaming softly with calm resignation's ray.

Loving cares have left their traces on the peaceful gentle face,
And youth's beauty now has soften'd to a sweet diviner grace.
Still her plighted troth she keepeth, bears no ring of circling gold,
But one ornament she weareth, of a fashion quaint and old,
For a golden locket lieth on her bosom evermore.
One alone that true heart loveth - one who long that relic wore
While his message in its dearness to her soul is ever new
"God be with you, guard and bless you - to my memory still be true."
Ah ! that blessing seems to follow e'en where'er her footsteps go,
While his monument she buildeth in the homes of want and woe.
Dedicated, all unfetter'd, ever sister, never wife
To God's suffering poor she yieldeth the devotion of a life.
Lonely to the world she seemeth, all unknown her gentle fame,
But in lowly homes soft blessings gather round her well-loved name,
And the lost explorer's lone death, and the maiden's anxious pain
To full many a sick and sad one have proved yet a deeper gain.
Soon shall come life's golden sunset, and the evening shall close in,
And to heaven's distant mountains Mary then her way may win.
There, perchance, in perfect beauty, free from earthly taint or tie,
We cannot tell, we know not how - her love may be fulfill'd on high.

Two Children and Two Fates.

A Contrast and a Question.

IN lordly chamber lies a new-born child,
And on his advent kindly Fate has smiled,
For loving hopes and tender anxious care
Dwell round his cradle and his way prepare.
A noble father looks on him with pride,
And prays for strength those tender feet to guide;
And while he lies in first earth-sleep of rest
Sweet woman's kisses on his brow are press'd;
Or if he wakes with the world-troubled cry
The tenderest hands those first-grief tears will dry.
And yet a babe he seems - nor less nor more
Than any human child of lowliest poor;
A simple child, undower'd, save by Fate,
Wherefore on him should many hands thus wait?

But now the nurses robe in dainty clothes,
And then his high-born rank the baby shows;
For though the simply-contour'd childish face
As yet could scarcely prove one noble trace,
And rounded limbs tell of no ancient race,
The grand surroundings goldenly proclaim
The scion of a race, the rich man's heir,
The first-born darling of a mother fair.

The boy grows up in luxury's peaceful halls,
His childhood guarded by love's sheltering walls.
By gentle mother first sweet lessons taught,
The germs of good are in his nature wrought,
And faith and love unconsciously are sown
By heritage and teaching made his own.
He does no ill, for he scarce knows of sin,
Save that which lies his human breast within;
And this unwaked, uncall'd forth by life's light,
As yet lies almost slumbering out of sight.

Then while the soul lies like a pure white sheet
With writing, yet invisible, replete,
(And daily traced and scored with unseen ink
That still into its substance deep will sink),
The brain with care is exercised and proved,
While sluggish powers to activeness are moved;
And teachers skill'd are brought from far and wide

The boy's young faculties to train and guide.
So art, and love, and circumstance combine
His opening mind to elevate, refine.

Amid this golden glow life's morning breaks -
The youth to manhood's hopes and powers awakes.
Before him lie the fields of honour wide,
And flowers of pleasure bloom on every side;
Caress'd and flatter'd, owning many friends,
Along a broad smooth road his way he wends.
Yielding to youthful fire and restless will,
Perhaps he strays awhile in paths of ill,
But striving back, with scarce a care or pain,
Quickly the rich man can his place regain;
For him the world its judgment harsh will wave,
And so he enters life unweighted, brave.

A leader now, by right of power and birth,
The lord becomes a ruler on the earth;
Makes laws for others, bears an honour'd name,
And lightly rises to the height of fame.
By kindest fortune eminently placed,
With easy virtues all his life is graced;
And though temptation's darts will enter, yet
By shield of cultured power they may be met;
With deep wrought good, and principles instill'd
From earliest youth, the great man's soul is fill'd -
Transmitted pride, and codes of honour high
Balance temptation and its strength defy;
And though the heart may gloom all dark within
The outward life seems innocent of sin.
The man is *just* a Christian, nothing more -
To holier heights he may, or may not, soar;
Yet he is still respectable and great,
Oft not by choice, but by decree of fate.

Child the Second.

IN attic dark another infant lies,
With piteous wailing hungrily it cries,
As cover'd with some rags, thin, scant, and old,
Its tiny limbs, so blue and pinch'd with cold,
Are laid upon a wretched pallet bed,
While from the air all life and light seem fled.
No loving hopes illumine *his* new-born life:
He enters on a world of sin and strife,
An unblest'd heritage of woeful need,
And dower'd with instincts dark and crimeful seed,

Which, nurtured in a too congenial soil,
The germs of good will overgrow and foil.

Ah, o'er this babe bends no fond mother fair,
But a sad woman, aged and sear'd with care,
Who bears in reddened eyes and dead-pale face
The signs of drink, that mars all woman's grace.
The father, too, feels no soft glow of pride;
To his low depths he soon the boy will guide.
To him a child is but a child, no more -
A mouth to feed where food was scarce before -
Another soldier for the ranks of sin,
Who by dark deeds his daily bread must win.

And so the babe is born 'mid scenes of woe,
In dark foul air he e'en must live and grow;
In thievish den, unlit by love or hope,
His bleach'd and blighted life-buds slowly ope.
God-planted soul-flowers strive to bloom, but die,
While Satan's weeds grow thick and rank and high.
No careless play or childish sport he knows,
His education but consists of blows
And hateful oaths, in drunken fury shower'd,
And by dark lessons his young mind is lower'd,
Till he learns patience, aye, and cunning, too,
His fellow-men and parents to out-do.

Then is it strange that 'mid such scenes as this
The boy the road of right and truth should miss?
He has ne'er known God's holy law and name,
Save in dark blasphemy or mocking game;
No knowledge, principle, in him is wrought,
No self-control or good has he been taught -
How should he know the evil to refuse?
What wonder then the man should early choose
All unresisting to contented dwell
Amid the paths he knows so sadly well?
Ever and ever in temptation led -
Fraud, thieving, are to him his daily bread;
He knows no joys or aspirations high,
To drink alone for pleasure he can fly.

Ah, shall we dare to trace his downward course,
By steps so gradual, easy, that remorse
His conscience blind for blackest deeds scarce knows,
So used to night his darken'd soul's eye grows.
Across his path may fall a saving ray,
Some loving hand may show a better way,

Perhaps God's love may reach him at the last,
Repentant, he his sins away may cast,
Though hard it is the upward way to win
From such low depths and dwelling-place of sin.
But, likelier still, a felon he may die,
His mind too gross to catch the light from high;
And men, good men, in judgment harsh, condign,
His soul to endless fire, in thought, consign.

Sad, saddest end, too sad - if 'twere the end!
Will a good God that soul to torture send?
A chanceless life he led, and will he still
A hopeless round of misery yet fulfil?
Ah, he was once as pure and sweet a child
As the great man on whom all beings smiled!
Had circumstance allowed, might he not e'en
A fuller Christian, nobler man, have been?
Yes; he, a felon now, might he not then
Have led the right-born leaders among men?
Great sinners oft are saints who miss'd the way,
Or never saw the Heavenward guiding ray.
Why should they thus be set in darken'd ways,
While others safely walk in light's full blaze?
And shall blind wanderers be for ever lost,
Because no star their troublous path has cross'd?

Deep questions, strange; what answer can we give,
Save, This is NOT the end: *again* we live!
Before us lies a nobler, juster world,
Where Fate's mysterious scroll shall be unfurl'd,
And we shall surely see that life on earth
Is but a prelude to the higher birth,
Or e'en, perchance, but *part* of the great scheme -
(Though all important at the time it seem).
A small, small part, not e'en the first or last,
And insignificant when once 'tis past,
Save as a portion fitting in the whole,
A few steps on the journey to the goal.

Well said St. Paul, through glass we darkly see,
Like children guessing at the great "To be!"
We know not how, we cannot tell the way,
But still we feel that in some far-off day
The saddest still will know some joyous hours,
All men will yet work out earth-blighted powers,
And compensating bliss will then enhance
The joy of those who fail'd through lack of chance;
That naught but dust is buried in the ground,

So what was lost on earth shall yet be found,
And men will work out in a nobler sphere
The thoughts, the aims, that seem'd to perish here,
While, rising by gradations long and slow,
The soul at last to purest heights may grow;
That vanquish'd in the end by loving grace,
Evil and sin may vanish from all space.
The universe from taint will then be pure,
The world-disease will find an endless cure,
And, like the peace which follows after pain,
The ministry of earth may prove a gain,
And throw up by its darksome sad relief
The glory of a world where love is chief -
That in millenniums of eternity
A thousand million worlds, then one, shall see
Like men awaken'd from a darksome dream,
Their several places past in the great scheme,
And gather'd in, by means we know not now,
In one great sinless union deep shall bow,
Before the fount of joy and mercy seat,
Where conquering love and ransom'd justice meet.

And is this doctrine then to many hard?
Will any say, "Then good has no reward;
Has sin no penance undeserved or just?
Is there no 'will' nor 'ought,' but only 'must?'"
Do fate and circumstance then rule the soul?
Are we but parts of a resistless whole?"
Nay, nay, a mighty power but shapes our ends,
Each several present act on will depends.
For those who knew the good and did not choose,
Hard purifying stripes their souls shall bruise;
But gentler punishment, and stripes but few,
Shall fall upon the souls that scarcely knew
The good from ill - whose adverse circumstance
Darken'd their free will, and obscured their chance.

How this shall be wrought out we cannot know,
The where, the how-much, of post-mortal woe,
Or whether sin shall prove its own deep hell:
But still we feel that a good God so pure,
No *endless* ill or misery could endure;
And therefore, at the last, all evil slain,
The God of Love o'er blissful realms shall reign.

From the Clyde to Braidwood.

A WINTER morn. The blue Clyde river winds
'Mid sombre slopes, reflecting in clear depths
The tree-clad banks or grassy meadow flats
Now white with hoary frost, each jewell'd blade
With myriad crystals glistening in the sun.

Thus smiles the Vale of Clyde, as through the air
So keen and fresh three travellers upward ride
Toward the Braidwood heights. Quickly they pass
The rustic dwellings on the hamlet's verge,
Winding sometimes beside the glassy depths
Of Nelligen Creek, where with the murmuring bass
Of running water sounds the sighing wail
Of dark swamp-oaks, that shiver on each bank;
Then winding through a shady-bower'd lane,
With flickering streaks of sunlight beaming through
The feathery leaves and pendant tassels green
Of bright mimosa, whose wee furry balls
Promise to greet with golden glow of joy
The coming spring-tide.

Now a barren length
Of tall straight eucalyptus, till again
A babbling voice is heard, and through green banks
Of emerald fern and mossy boulder rocks,
The Currawong dances o'er a pebbly bed,
In rippling clearness, or with cresting foam
Splashes and leaps in snowy cascade steps.
Then every feature changes - up and down,
O'er endless ranges like great waves of earth,
Each weary steed must climb, e'en like a ship
Now rising high upon some billowy ridge
But to plunge down to mount once more, again
And still again.

Naught on the road to see
Save sullen trees, white arm'd, with naked trunks,
And hanging bark, like tatter'd clothes thrown off,
An undergrowth of glossy zamia palms
Bearing their winter store of coral fruit,
And here and there some early clematis,
Like starry jasmine, or a purple wreath
Of dark kennedea, blooming o'er their time,
As if in pity they would add one joy
Unto the barren landscape.

But at last
A clearer point is reach'd, and all around
The loftier ranges loom in contour blue,
With indigo shadows and light veiling mist
Rising from steaming valleys. Straight in front
Towers the Sugarloaf, pyramidal King
Of Braidwood peaks.

Impossible it seems
To scale that nature-rampart, but where man
Would go he must and will; so hewn from out
The mountain's side, in gradual ascent
Of league and half of engineering skill
There winds the Weber Pass.

A glorious ride!
Fresher and clearer grows the breezy air,
Lighter and freer beats the quickening pulse
As each fair height is gain'd. Stern, strong, above
Rises the wall of mountain; far beneath,
In sheer precipitancy, gullies deep
Gloom in dark shadow, on their shelter'd breast
Cherishing wealth of leafage richly dight
With tropic hues of green.

No sound is heard
Save the deep soughing of the wind amid
The swaying leaves and harp-like stems, so like
A mighty breathing of great mother earth,
That half they seem to see her bosom heave
With each pulsation as she living sleeps.
And now and then to cadence of these throbs
There drops the bell-bird's knell, the coach-whip's crack,
The wonga-pigeon's coo, or echoing notes
Of lyre-tail'd pheasants in their own rich tones,
Mocking the song of every forest bird.

Higher the travellers rise - at every turn
Gaining through avened vista some new glimpse
Of undulating hills, the Pigeon-house
Standing against the sky like eyrie nest
Of some great dove or eagle. On each side
Of rock-hewn road, the fern trees cluster green,
Now and then lighted by a silver star
Of white immortelle flower, or overhung
By crimson peals of bright epacris bells.

Another bend, a shelter'd deepening rift,
And in the mountain's very heart they plunge -

So dark the shade, the sun is lost to view.
Great silver wattles tremble o'er the path,
Which overlooks a glen one varying mass
Of exquisite foliage, full-green sassafras
The bright-leaf'd myrtle, dark-hued Kurrajong
And lavender, musk-plant, scenting all the air,
Entwined with clematis or bignonia vines,
And raspberry tendrils hung with scarlet fruit.

The riders pause some moments, gazing down,
Then upward look. Far as the peeping sky
The dell-like gully yawns into the heights;
A tiny cascade drips o'er mossy rocks,
And through an aisle of over-arching trees,
Whose stems are dight with lichen, creeping vines,
A line of sunlight pierces, lighting up
A wealth of fern trees; filling every nook
With glorious circles of voluptuous green,
Such as, unview'd, once clothed the silent earth
Long milliards past in Carboniferous Age.

A mighty nature-rockery! Each spot
Of fertile ground is rich with endless joys
Of leaf and fern; now here a velvet moss,
And there a broad asplenium's shining frond
With red-black veinings or a hart's-tongue point,
Contrasting with a pale-hued tender brake
Or creeping lion's-foot. See where the hand
Of ruthless man hath cleft the rock, each wound
Is hidden by thick verdure, leaving not
One unclothed spot, save on the yellow road.

Reluctant the travellers leave the luscious shade
To mount once more. But now another joy -
An open view is here! Before them spreads
A waving field of ranges, purple grey,
In haze of distance with black lines of shade
Marking the valleys, bounded by a line
Of ocean-blue, o'er whose horizon verge
The morning mist-cloud hangs. The distant bay
Is clear defined. The headland's dark arms stretch
(Each finger-point white-lit with dashing foam)
In azure circlet, studded with rugged isles -
A picturesque trio, whose gold rock sides glow
In noonday sunlight, and round which the surf
Gleams like a silvery girdle.

The grand Pass

Is traversed now, the inland plateau reach'd,

The last sweet glimpse of violet peaks is lost,
An upland rocky stream is pass'd, and naught
But same same gum-trees vex the wearied eye
Till Braidwood plain is reach'd.

A township like
All others, with its houses, church, and school -
Bare, bald, prosaic - no quaint wild tower,
Nor ancient hall to add poetic touch,
As in the dear old land - no legend old
Adds softening beauty to the Buddawong Peak,
Or near-home ranges with too barbarous names.
But everything is cold, new, new, too new
To foster poesy; and famish'd thought
Looks back with longing to the mountain dream.

The Emigrants.

A Cantata.

NELLIE - Soprano.
FATHER - Bass.
ROBERT - Tenor.
MOTHER - Contralto.
CAPTAIN - Baritone.

ACT I.

SCENE I. - In an English City.

CHORUS OF MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.

No work, no work, and drear the chill winds wail!
No work, no work, and anxious faces pale,
As cruel winter lays her icy hand
On shivering town and sunless northern land.

CHILDREN.

No bread! no bread! Dear father give us bread!
"Wait, wait, a little while," this morn ye said,
But supperless we hunger yet, and cry -
Ah, give us food ere famishing we die.

MEN.

No work! no work! yet we are strong and brave,
And fain would earn the food our children crave;
Labour, not alms, we ask, yet hopeless bide,
With willing hands their manhood's right denied.

WOMEN.

No fire! no fire! the little hands are cold,
And scanty rags the tender limbs unfold;
No work! Oh, Maker of this world of care,
Help Thou, ere we are harden'd to despair!

MEN AND WOMEN.

No work, no food! We cannot bear the wail
Of babes that weep and careworn hearts that fail;
We will go forth to far Australia's main,
Where sunshine beams and peace and plenty reign.

Song.

Away, away, from the snowy North,
Away o'er the beckoning sea,
The land where the peach and the orange bloom,
And the paths are untrodden and free!

Away from the night world of sorrow and care
To the isle of the rosy morn,
Where the sunshine beams from a cloudless sky
O'er fields of the golden corn.

There hope shall blossom and youth rebloom,
For the fullness of life shall abound;
There work shall be found and honest toil
With its rightful meed be crown'd.

FATHER.

The die is cast, and ere another moon
We sail for distant shores.

NELLIE.

One month! so soon?
My father, must I go and leave the one
Who but yest'reen has craved my heart-love's boon?

ROBERT (*lover*).

Nay, take her not away, but let me strive
To work for all till brighter days shall come!

MOTHER.

Child, my first-born, cherish'd darling,
Hard the choice for thy young heart.
We must speed, for hunger presses
Wilt thou go, or must we part?

FATHER AND MOTHER (*in duet*).

Kindred ? - lover ? - free we leave thee,
Nor by one reproach shall grieve thee;
If thy parents' soul thou wringest,
While to newer love thou clingest.

NELLIE.

Love, my love, I love thee truly;
Mother, yet I cleave to thee;
Shall the one who earliest cherish'd
By the child forsaken be?

Thou wilt need a daughter's comfort,
Strange upon the lone wild sea;
Little ones would miss my tending -
Mother mine, I follow thee!

ROBERT.

Claims the true love then no duty
From the maid's betrothed heart;
With the lips still warm with pledges
Canst thou doom that we should part?

Duet.

ROBERT.

Part? part? and must we part?

NELLIE.

Part, part, yes, we must part!

Duet.

Part, awhile, but not for ever;
Holier calls though we obey,
Faithful hearts shall be united,
Love at last shall find a way!

SCENE II.

The Scene changes to Plymouth Harbour. Enter Chorus.

The ship lies moor'd with sails all furl'd,
Like bird before the flight;
To England's shores her children bid
Their sad, their last, good night.

Anchor Song heard in Forecastle.

Then FATHER and MOTHER sing mournfully:

Farewell, thou mother-land that could not give
Thy hungry sons their daily bread;
So rich and great, yet powerless to help
The souls whence hope has fled.
Farewell!

Farewell, thy hands are bare, thy breast is cold,
Yet memory clings with tender tear
To scenes of youth and early wedded joy -
The "sweet home" ever dear.
Farewell!

NELLIE.

Farewell! for me a twice-told sad farewell
To world of life's first blissful dream.
Alas, I care not for a summer's clime,
'Tis here my light doth beam.
Farewell!

Farewell, the pain of winter's hungry cold
'Twere bliss to stay with thee to bear,
Then want were warmth, but plenty, famish'd care,
With love not nigh to share.
Farewell! farewell!

Chorus.

Old England, fading from our straining eyes,
The dearer in our hearts to dwell;
Across the waves shall steal like plaintive knell
The Emigrants' farewell, the Emigrants' farewell!

Decrescendo refrain.

ACT II.

SCENE I. - At Sea.

Chorus.

OVER the waves we dance and toss,
And merrily on we go;
Now lifted high on a watery ridge,
Then plunged to the deeps below.
The air blows fresh with the scent of brine,
And our cheeks by the spray are kiss'd;
Old care has fled 'fore the ocean breeze,
And hearts may bound as they list.
For over the billows we dance and toss,
And cheerily onward go.

FATHER.

A month has passed, the broad Atlantic rolls
'Twixt us and home; already has the glow
Of life and health relit in children's eyes.

MOTHER.

Save one, our tender boy, whom Nellie loves
To cherish, while she sits alone and sings, -
Methinks she dreams of Robert and her love.

NELLIE (*softly*).

When first I wake to meet the day
Of sun or cloud, whate'er it be,
E'en ere the dreams have sped away
I breathe a prayer for thee.

At eventide, when fades the light
With tender blushes o'er the sea,
The aching sigh for past delight
I lull in prayer for thee.

But most at night, when shines each star
That look'd so oft on "thee and me,"
'Tis saddest then to be so far,
But sweet to pray for thee.

If in my heart there mingles aught
Of selfish plaint 'gainst God's decree,
I will not breathe that murmuring thought,
But only pray for thee.

For half I hope this grace to win -
That love thy guardian power may be;

Perchance a shield from pain or sin
Those prayers may prove to thee.

NELLIE.

Mother, the infant sleeps, and yet the tiny face
Too strangely quivers, and like marble grows.

MOTHER.

The baby dies, convulsed! so help me God!
Too late for him has come the light of life;
The tender frame, long pinch'd with cold and want,
Has faded with the dawning of the spring.

SCENE II. - Funeral Service at Sea.

Organ symphony. Enter Chorus.

Solemnly, plaintively, chant we the dirge,
Echo'd and answer'd by fathomless surge -
One more is added to dark ocean's graves,
One more o'erwept by the sorrowing waves.

Yielding our beloved to Thee -
Holy dust to lonely sea -
From the deep we cry to Thee,
Miserere, Domine.

Borne is the soul to the Haven of Calm,
Nestled and warm in the Messenger's arm
Lay we the little one safe to its rest,
Hidden and rock'd 'neath the deep-sobbing breast,
Sleeps our babe alone with thee,
Mournful passing o'er the sea,
From the deep we cry to Thee,
Miserere, Domine.

[They lower the bier. Recitative.]

"The sea shall give up her dead. And this mortal
Shall put on immortality. O Grave, where is thy
Victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"

SCENE III.

CAPTAIN.

A gale, a gale! and the waves mount high;
The scud flies swift o'er the angry sky;
Reef in the topsails, head to the west,
The good ship's timbers this night will test.

A storm, a storm! and the torn sails fly!
All hands to the halyards - your ropes stand by;
Have faith, fear not, for each smoking crest
The tight craft "Triton" can bravely breast.

SAILORS.

Hurrah, hurrah! for the wind is fair;
Then little for danger Jack Tar will care.
And the gale may blow and the waves may roar,
But we jolly sailors will sing the more -
 Hurrah, hurrah! for the wind is fair,
 And the hurricane's fury we laughing dare.

MOTHER.

What that line of purple, bounding
 Far away the distant West,
Like a stroke of God's great pencil,
 'Twixt the sky and ocean crest?

Can it be the Southern mainland,
 Weary eyes at last may see?
Or a mocking isle of cloud-land
 Moving o'er the endless sea?

CAPTAIN.

Land on view to the westward!
 Sailors! a hearty cheer!
For the voyage will soon be ended -
 The land of promise is near.

FATHER.

'Tis the land, and hope arises
 Brave within each wanderer's soul;
Soon success our life shall brighten
 When we reach the Southern goal.

NELLIE.

Land? the shore? E'en in my bosom,
Wherefore, whence, I cannot tell,
Thoughts of love-lit hours are rising,
Springs of joy and sweetness well.

FATHER.

Farther, nearer, sail we ever,
While the shades of evening close,
But anon a light there shineth,
Glimmers now, then brighter glows.

Voices from mainmast.

Sydney light to the starboard!
Another ship is in sight.

CAPTAIN.

Steer three points to the northward!
Stand out to the sea for the night!
Emigrants, make ye ready
To land with the morning light.

SCENE IV.

ROBERT (*who has arrived in Sydney by the ship sighted by the "Triton."*)

Beaming lies the Sydney harbour,
Like a liquid eye of blue
Set in face of virgin Austral,
Or 'neath brow of maiden true.

Moves a ship with white sails spreading,
O'er the track this morn we pass'd;
Toils she slowly, knowing never
Wings of love had sped more fast.

Could I bide in chilly norlands,
With the light fled from my eyes?
When she meets her parted lover
Will she flush with sweet surprise?

SCENE V.

NELLIE (*on the "Triton," which is arriving*).

Hear the heavy anchor dropping -
Each one now some friend will meet;
We alone, as exile strangers,
No loved face can joyful meet.

But - how strange! - what form now neareth ?
Is it real, or do I dream?
Were he not in distant England
Robert's smile indeed 'twould seem.

ROBERT.

Nell! no dream! I could not rest me!
Ere the ship one day had sped
Left I all, to cast my fortune
Where thy guiding star had led.

NELLIE *and* ROBERT.

Love! indeed a way thou findest;
Hearts have met to part no more,
But with clasped hands to labour
Happy on the sunny shore.

ACT III.

SCENE I

An Australian Homestead.

SOFTLY breathes the Southern morning,
Sweet with aromatic scent;
Clear the deep-hued sky is glowing,
Warmth and balmy freshness blent.

All around the sheltering mountains
Rise through misty bays of blue;
In the vale there peeps a verdure
To the savage wildness new.

See our tiny homestead, standing
Nestled mid the dark-leaved trees
Rough, but rich with warmth and plenty,
Bright with love and quiet peace.

MOTHER.

As now I look upon our smiling home,
The patch of land that each man loves to own,
How far away the troubled past years seem -
The morning light has chased the darken'd dream

FATHER.

No hunger more, nor aching cares to fear!
But I must speed, for Robert's voice I hear.

ROBERT.

Come, mount ye your horses, away let us ride,
For we've many a mile ere the eventide;
The cattle have stray'd to the distant plain,
We must drive them in ere we draw the rein.

So we're off, we're off, we're off,
With the stockwhip in our hand,
And oh, for the fun of a cattle-hunt
With a rollicking bushman band!

Across the gully and over the range,
With a plunge through a creek for a cooling change;
Now over a log or a rock we leap,
O'er hill and on level our pace we keep.

With a gallop, a gallop, a gallop,
And a jolly song on our lips,
To the tune of the hoofs and the crashing boughs,
And the ringing crack of the whips.

See the wild young scrubbers come tearing in,
Then away they head, but the tail-mob win;
The horses swerve, and there's many a spill,
But the muster goes on with a shout and a will.

With a yeh, hallo, ya-eh!
And danger full in the face,
And the rageful charge of a snorting bull,
But giving zest to the chase!

NELLIE.

Mother, I hear the tramp of horses' feet;
May I go forth the home-comers to meet?

MOTHER.

Ay, ay. So one will light from off his horse,
And through the glen ye two will wend your course!

ROBERT and NELLIE (alternately).

ROBERT.

Love! my own! the months are speeding;
Tell me, when wilt thou be mine?

NELLIE.

When thou will'st, with maiden tremblings
I will lay my hands in thine.

ROBERT.

Ere another moon has risen
Thou shalt wear love's golden chain.

NELLIE.

Thence our souls, in tender union,
Through life's blended years shall reign.

Duet.

Sweet 'twill be, in love-home dwelling,
Every thought and work to share,
Come there care, or come there sorrow,
Life is joy if thou art there.

SCENE II. - Rough Bush Church, in which the Wedding has just taken place.

Quartette.

NELLIE.

No wedding bells! Through virgin stillness
Falls each hallow'd nuptial sound.

FATHER.

No wedding bells! In lonely wildness

Time-worn blessing words are heard.

MOTHER.

No wedding bells! Yet through the mem'ry
Tones of far-off joy-bells flit.

ROBERT.

No wedding bells! Yet all as closely
Hearts in holy bonds are knit.

Four voices.

No wedding bells! no wedding bells!
Yet deep with love each bosom swells;
The heart its joyous measure tells,
And rings its own sweet wedding bells,
Rings out, rings out, its wedding bells!

[Soft symphony of bells.]

FATHER and MOTHER.

May every blessing wait upon ye twain,
And holy peace in God-knit bosoms reign.

Chorus.

Australia! Blessings on thy welcoming shore!
We bid thee hail, our haven evermore!
Hungry we came, and thou hast given us bread;
Cold and despairing, thou to peace hast led;
Lone Emigrants to patriot children grow,
As on thy foster-breast fresh youth they know.

"No work, no bread!" we cry not here, nor weep,
But honest hands their plenteous harvest reap;
The stars are changed, but God unchanged on high,
Above the Southern Cross aye dwelleth nigh.

Old England still we love, yet cannot grieve,
As in the fair new world home ties we weave;
Sweet ties, whereby the wilderness is blest,
And exile changeth to a happy rest.

Lost in the Bush; or, The Shepherd's Blessing.

SOFT gloams the twilight o'er valley and mountain,
Gently the pale dews of evening are falling,
Day's eyes are closing as night stealeth onward,
Sleep to her bosom her children is calling.

Safely the lambs are all gather'd and folded,
Nature her flowers in slumber is steeping;
Warm 'neath the mother's wing young birds are nestling,
Peaceful all dumb things are restfully sleeping.

Only one lamb has been lost and forgotten,
Only one nestling no warm breast doth cherish -
One of God's children is lone in the darkness -
Helpless, unshelter'd, and left out to perish.

Deep in the wild bush a poor babe is sitting,
Holding a chill hand and piteously weeping.
"Wake up! oh, speak to me, Mammie!" she cryeth;
Still, all unanswer'd, her watch she is keeping.

"Mother, I'm hungry, oh, wake up and feed me!
Hungry and frighten'd! so dark it is growing!"
Still not a motion, no answering whisper -
Faster and faster the child's tears are flowing.

Cold lies the mother on deathbed so rugged,
Touchingly, sadly, her poor lamb is bleating;
Fatherless, motherless, lost in the forest,
E'en while a spirit the angels are greeting.

Day after day that lone widow had wander'd,
Seeking a pathway, and hoping and praying:
Wearily, wearily, journeying forward,
Farther and farther from home ever straying.

Bearing the sharp pangs of desperate hunger,
Yet her own famishing almost unheeding:
Brave for her child's sake, pressing on - onward,
With her last morsel the little one feeding.

Till at last, worn out, she sank down all fainting,
With gnawing hunger and hopelessness sighing:
Sick with deferr'd hope, and longing to rest her,
Only the mother's love burning undying.

Heavy with sorrow her last prayer had echo'd,
With its sad accents the lone stillness cleaving,
As with her last breath the mother had cried -
"Father, to Thee my poor bairnie I'm leaving!

"Take the wee lamb to Thine own loving bosom,
Jesus, thou Shepherd, so pitiful tender!
Left in the wilderness helpless and lonely -
Trusting to Thee, I now dying commend her!"

Heard was that prayer in the regions of heaven;
By loving angels those struggles were heeded -
Ne'er shall the shorn lamb be lost and forgotten -
Never in vain has the poor mother pleaded.

Succour shall come in the Lord's blessed season,
Though the poor bairn is still lonely and weeping -
Fear not, thou mother, from heaven down-looking,
God's angels o'er her their watch are all keeping!

Cometh a shepherd across the wild forest,
E'en as the first star in night's vault is blinking -
For his lost sheep he is wand'ring and seeking,
Of his own loneliness drearily thinking.

"Oh for the sweet sound of bright children's voices!
Lonely - too lonely - the life I am leading!
Ever alone, without human companion,
Something to cherish, my sad heart is needing."

So, by a strange sound his ear is now startled.
Seemeth it like to a little child's crying.
Wand'ring, God's messenger cometh and findeth
Where the poor mother in death's sleep is lying.

Gently the cold face he rev'rently cov'reth -
Still that low wailing the poor bairnie maketh;
The collie dog dumbly the wee hand is licking -
The child to his bosom the lone shepherd taketh.

As the light burden he tenderly lifteth
Soft arms around his rough neck she entwineth -
Dreaming, she murmureth softly "My father!"
Joy'd, with a kiss the adoption he signeth.

Poor was the home the lone shepherd could offer,
But to his bark hut his blessing he beareth;
Few were the comforts and scanty the faring
Which with his darling he evermore shareth.

Soon with the food and the warmth half reviving,

"Put me to bed," she now dreamily sayeth;
But ere the man on the rough bed has laid her,
Folds she her hands, and in lisp'ing words prayeth.

Waketh she voices long, long ago silent!
While to the child's simple prayer he is list'ning
No longer lonely - God's message has reach'd him!
Soft tears of peace in his dim eyes are glist'ning.

Night has closed in, and the sheep are all folded,
None are forgotten - no lost one has perish'd!
God has the mother's prayer lovingly answer'd -
Blessing and blessed, her sweet lamb is cherish'd.

The Two Selves; or, The Angel and the Demon of the Soul.

"AM I fiend or angel? I know not.
Such diverse powers seem striving in my depths
That oft I feel as if two beings fought
For mastery within me; or two minds,
One holy, God-breathed, and one Satan-born,
Dwelt in this body with divided reign:
Sometimes the one is victor, and I soar,
Seraph-like, in thought to very realms of bliss,
And my whole self yearns up to godliness;
Then rises that dread other, and I sink
Lower than ever, while sin's tainted air
Intoxicates each sense with baleful fumes.
"Oh! that these powers were separate! - bound no more
In one frail form, too weak to bear the strain,
But each set free to work out its own bent
In some appropriate vessel! So at last
Peace might be found in human souls, and though
The demon might descend more swift to death,
The angel, wasting power no more in strife,
By very force of unmarr'd purity,
Would rise to its own level of God's love."

So speaks the man, and moaning still he prays,
Closing his weary eyes -

And lo, a vision!
Within a rainbow's melting circlet stands
An angel robed in hues of sunrise cloud,
With eyes that smite with keen reproachful light
The while his tones in pitying cadence fall: -

"Mortal, we have watch'd thy struggles,
Heard thy murm'ring cry for rest;
To the Throne thy prayer have carried,
Pleading there on thy behest.
It is granted - if thou darest
To endure the deathful pain
That thy riven soul shall suffer
When its parts are cleft in twain!
While the demon and the angel,
Nevermore one flesh to fret,
Separate shall hold existence,
In twin-bodies henceforth set -

Forms so like in outward seeming
That no human eye can tell
This wherein the Satan essence
Or the breath divine shall dwell."

The earth-man shudders - though desire may soar,
Shrinketh the flesh from thought of unknown change,
And severing wrench of birth to two-fold being.

"Poor the wish, if slight the suffering -
For fulfilment thou canst dare!
If thou wilt'st not what thou askedst,
Take again thy mocking prayer.
Bear on still without complaining
Thine appointed single life;
Thou art wise - the IS is better,
E'en with all its weird of care,
Than the MIGHT BE, untried, awful
Deep with unkenn'd mystery rife!"

The Vision moves - the iris rainlight faints
To ghostly white of mist. One moment more
And the great chance will be for ever miss'd.
"I take the boon, nor count the price of pain."

Once more the Presence blushes into sight,
And a soft breath, like passing zephyr-tone,
Whispers a warning - "Think yet once again!"
But still he murmurs, "Tired, so tired am I
Of warring struggle, that I heed not pain,
If haply it may win the quiet meed!"
Soundeth a voice of solemn organ depth,
Striking the mortal prone 'neath waving hands: -

"Spirits ever in disunion,
Lock'd within one riven breast,
Come forth from the frame of Hermes,
Who from Heaven this gift has wrest -
That his good and evil genius
Diverse lives should hence fulfil,
As twin entities existing,
Held by one great soul-bond still!"

No answer, save a piteous quivering cry,
As on the earth the prostrate Hermes writhes
Convulsed - e'en so tenaciously each power
Holds to its natural home of mortal clay.
One instant now a gleam of heavenly joy
'Lumines the eyes with pure ethereal light,

As the soul-angel bids its last farewell;
And then an utter sadness, for it grieves
To part with that which through resisting love
It e'er had hoped to save.

A radiance

Of clear life-essence rises from the form,
Hovering like music-cloud in listening air,
Waiting the end - not yet. The anguish'd face
Terrific grows the while the demon holds
Fearful possession, striving to resist
The parting summons, clinging to the flesh,
Long loved with lowering strength, and interwove,
Fibre by fibre, with its very being.
It cannot leave - so firm the ties of earth! -
Till calls a thunder-tone. Then, with a flash
Of turgid flame, it leaps like fiery wraith
From out the man, who with a weary moan
Sinks in death-slumber, ashening into dust.

A darkness and black gloom! - the shrouding pall
Covers the earth, and deadly silence broods;
Yet breathes the air chill with a ghostly sense,
And qualming nature stills her very throbs
As from the region of two dewy stars
Th' uplifting voice is heard: -

"Live again, thou mortal Hermes.
Here the boon which thou hast craved!
See the twin-like forms arising,
Both with thy past image graved.
Enter in, thou blessed angel,
Work henceforth unmarr'd by ill;
Go thy way, O demon-spirit,
Unrestrain'd by holier will,
For one year of first probation
Each thy several part fulfil."

The darkness flees, the glorious light re-blooms,
Bearing no more the Presence, but there stand
Two Hermes, each to each in semblance like
As reflex image to the mirror'd face.

* * * * *

The slumbering seer half wakes, yet holds the dream
Clear in his senses, wondering, marvelling
If he is still himself or cleft in twain;
Then in half-trance he gains a consciousness

That his one soul may watch th' embodied selves,
And note the working of their alien guides -
The evil he will heed not - it must sink
Inevitably, but the Breath of God,
How will the strifeless life evolve its powers?

Anxious he looks upon those brother-forms,
Girding their loins for the great worldly race -
Though none else know, he by some subtle sign
Discerns the difference which each moment grows
More deeply mark'd as spirit shapes the flesh.

* * * * *

A year has pass'd. The judging-day has come.
The Presence stands again before the seer,
Calls back the dual selves, and bids the soul
List to the witness of its sever'd powers.

Can these be those who stood short time ago
As very twins in semblance? Like are they
Still in each feature, but to deeper view
Awful in difference.

One, Angelo, stands
Beaming with peace-light, his clear lineaments
Child-like in freedom from the lines of care,
A beauteous type of spotless angelhood,
Clad in a mortal body. Yes. But what
Lacketh there still? Why wakes that face no throb -
Such as the pain-worn traits of struggling saints?
Where is the martyr's high ecstatic joy,
Gain'd through the wounds which smote, yet fined the clay?
No gleam of this - perfect the reigning calm
Depicted on th' angelic countenance.
But 'tis the peace of babes - no fire, no strength,
Adds noble fervour, and a tameness marks
The conqueror crown'd without the soldier's pains.
And what the work he bringeth as his proof?
Little but his own white unsullied robes.
The soul that father-like throughout that year
Hath watched its Parts, with sorrowing regret
And bitter disappointment, knows too well
The coming answer, when the Presence asks -
"Didst thou not tend the sick?"

"I went to them
In love, and spoke of patience; but they found

No sympathy in my words. 'Patience!' they said,
'Preach patience to the whole; our flesh is weak!'"

"Didst thou not help the poor?"

"I gave my goods,
And told how sin brought all their utter woe -
Why did they leave it not, and win true peace?
It was so easy - where the charm of ill?
Thus did I speak to one, and strive to hold
Him from a fearful course. He did not list,
But well nigh rush'd to deadly crime. But one,
Soil'd like himself, from prison newly freed,
Fell on his neck, besought him to return,
Whisper'd she knew how hard it was to stand
Against temptation; told how she had fail'd,
Yet reach'd at last the sweeter path of right;
And he was saved - but I had helpless stood."

"Could'st thou not teach by pure example's force?"

"I walked right purely, but none follow'd me,
Nor even thought their path the same as mine.
I was cut off from all; my fellow men
Like sentinels stood on guard against some foe
Which I knew not. Often they vanquish'd lay,
Or idly left their post and laid down arms
For days together, but the nobler gain'd
Glorious victories o'er the inward fiend
Yea, e'en the weakest recognized the war,
And fought at times, from every combat gain'd
Fresh strength and faith, each struggle bringing forth
New qualities and sinews of the soul.
How could such tread in quiet steps of one
Who had no need to fight, but ever lived
One and the same, nor felt his dormant powers
Wrought into action, quicken'd, intensified
By fury of the battle, and ne'er found
New life evolved by opposition's fire?"

"All envied me, and yet they half despised
The man who, unmolested, thus could march
Straight to the Portals; and the sages deem'd
My goal of Heaven could never prove as sweet
As if won hardly with keen martyr-throes.
Almost I do believe them, and could hate
The peace that yearns not to a loftier height!"
"Enough, enough!"

Then crawls Demonias forth -
A fearful sight! Where is the likeness fled?
The features are the same, but marr'd and lined
By hideous passion, furrow'd by fierce unrest.
Furtive, the eyes glance from their turbid depths;
Still human is the shape, but every limb
Beareth expression savouring of the beasts,
Suggesting retrogression, that in time
Must reach the lower type. No Heaven for him!
Such earthly earth, if raised to rarer air,
Through very grossness would down-weighted fall
Back to its lower deeps.

"No need to ask
What was thy mission, Tempter! But thy power
Of evil, by its very evilness,
Has yet been hinder'd; men must, shuddering, turn
Ever from Ill Incarnate, and will yield
Rarely to sin which bears no goodly mask;
Else but to grant a murmuring mortal's prayer
Ne'er wert thou launch'd upon a human world."

So speaks the Vision. Then to Hermes turns:
"Mortal, thou hast seen the working
Of the boon which thou besought.
Hast thou learn'd the truth-set lesson
By the sever'd soul-powers taught?
Each upon his separate mission
Shall these now go forth again?
Or within thine own one bosom
Wilt thou bear the battle's pain?"

"Nay, I repent. This hath thy lesson shown -
That God is wise; the ills, the very flaws
Which seem to mar, have each their helpful place
Fity appointed in the general plan.
For in the universe, as in the soul,
Darkness evolveth light and evil good -
Abstract the one, the other is as naught:
Each is required in the imperfect world.
And as the spheres move through opposing force,
So in the microcosm of the soul
Between two opposites is the orbit found.
Struggle is needed to bring forth the strength,
Even as wrestling to develop thews;
And conquer'd sin, yea more than innocence,
Lifts up the victor to the God-like heights.
No more I murmur, but will henceforth know
The way ordain'd must prove the deeper right.

Therefore with joy I take back to my soul
The alien powers, Spirits of Good and Ill,
To war unto the death. The King will give
Arms for the combat, and will crown the soul
With meed of glory measured to the throes,
And at the last in His own Perfect Realm,
The endless peace may come and rest be won."

With look ineffable, and deep content
Of one whose mission finds the end desired,
The Vision passes to the Home of Truth.

The Beacon Child; or, The Angel of the Tempest.

THE tempest howls with awful might -
It is a wild terrific night;
The gale storms up from sou'-sou'-west,
And raging rollers heave their breast;
The storm winds shriek, the mad waves dash,
Black darkness follows lightning flash,
And Heaven's groans and Ocean's roar
Resound in elemental war.

A child stands on the wave-worn strand,
And holds a lantern in her hand;
And braving night, and storm, and rain,
She strains her eyes across the main.
For by the lightning's fitful glare
She sees a frail boat struggling there
Amid the waves, the wind, the gloom,
With none to save from watery doom.

The child's arm aches - 'tis icy cold!
Her hands are numb, yet her heart is bold:
For in that boat, her lov'd ones dear
Now strive their cottage home to near.
So brave she holds her light on high,
And "Good God, help them!" is her cry.
"Save Thee and me, there's none to guide
My father through the raging tide!"

And from afar the fishers sight
The glimmer of that beacon light;
And beckon'd homewards by its ray,
With hope renew'd they plough their way.
O, weary hours! O, failing nerve!
Cold, drench'd, and worn-out, will she swerve?
Exhausted nature makes her call -
The uplifted aching arm must fall!
In answer, now, the lightning clear
Reveals the boat - to shore 'tis near!
One long strong pull! - a moment more!
And then the maiden's task is o'er.
To land! to land! the fishers spring,
And cries of joy through wild winds ring.

Then, glowing with love's radiance mild,

They see their guardian angel child,
With light down dropt, but clasp'd hands raised,
Murm'ring "Saved! saved! oh God be praised!"
The lantern glimmering by her side
Casts upward glance on eyes ope'd wide;
The raindrops glitter in her hair;
Like saintly vision shines she there!
God's flashing glance illumines all,
And Heaven's glories round her fall.

The men with bow'd heads rev'rent bide,
Then haste to reach their darling's side.
As one entranc'd, their "little love,"
With outstretch'd arms - no strength to move -
Now greets them all without a word;
Their loving praise seems all unheard.
The father wraps her in his coat,
The brothers following leave their boat;
Anon they lay upon the bed
Her shivering limbs and burning head.
Oh! have their lives with hers been bought?
Worse, worse than shipwreck is that thought!

For many weary days and nights
Death for that life right fiercely fights.
The rude men nurse their little one,
For in that home is mother none.
But power in need does Heaven send;
No women could more gently tend.
Through nights of craz'd delirium wild
They gently soothe the fever'd child,
And when in sleep she drops her head
All soft as maiden's is their tread.
Ah, 'tis a tender, touching sight!
E'en Death, in pity, takes his flight.

But yet, alas! that vigil lone
Into her very brain has grown;
The lightning flash, on nerves o'erstrung,
The mind has from its balance wrung.
A child for ever she will be,
And life's full light can never see;
Her brain is turn'd - yet Heavenward turn'd,
As if the soul more brightly burn'd,
As mind and mem'ry gently wane,
In saintly madness Godward sane.
To that sweet maid does God ne'er seem
The cold, vague phantom of a dream;

But a real living present Power,
With Whom she dwells from hour to hour,
Like child of old on Jesu's knee,
Prattling to God in childish glee,
Till men with her fresh faith all fired,
With holier thoughts become inspired:
With reverence to her sweet words list,
A beacon "child set in the midst!"

Gentle the maiden is, and sweet;
With meek compliance does she meet
The lightest wish of loving friend;
Obediently will ever bend.
Yet when the sky is black and wild
No power can curb the frenzied child;
And aye when'er the storm winds blow
She to the beach again will go.
Again throughout the livelong night
Will hold aloft the guiding light;
Again will strain those wistful eyes,
Again breathe forth those prayerful sighs,
Again the tempest's wrath will brave
In hope some perill'd lives to save.
Ah! never wasted, ne'er in vain
Is that lone watch and weary pain;
For when the night is gruesome dark
Each fisher in his lonely bark,
Catching the glimmer of that star,
Is guided homeward from afar,
And grateful blessings, love, and prayer
Halo the beck'ning angel there.

Her task is done, her star has waned,
And a new angel Heaven has gain'd!
The Beacon Child so deeply blest
Has reach'd the haven of her rest,
And many a seaman's heart is sore -
Men weep that never wept before;
In every home dwells sad regret,
E'en strangers' eyes with tears are wet.
They lay her close beside the shore,
Where she will wait and watch no more;
And on the spot where oft she stood
The fishers raise a cross of wood:
A mighty cross of towering height,
Crown'd by a gleaming signal light,
The child's lov'd fishermen to guide
Across the darksome cruel tide.

So while that prayerful voice is still'd
The maiden's mission is fulfill'd;
And sailors bless the tempest wild
That first inspir'd the Beacon Child,
And guard the memory of that night
That gave to them the "Angel's Light."

The Quiet Dust.

THE quiet dust lay on the tranquil breast
Of Mother Earth, all peacefully at rest;
The gentle breezes kiss'd it, and the dew
A veil of moisture o'er its slumbers threw;
The rain and wind swept o'er its sleeping face,
Yet scarcely stirr'd it from its resting place;
For grassy fibres e'en had bound it fast
And round each grain embracing roots had cast.
The soil, unconscious, nourishing green blades,
Fulfill'd its silent work through long decades -
And so the quiet dust was blest - in quietness it lay at rest.

The Maker took the dust within His hand,
In human shape He form'd the grains of sand,
In His own image wrought the humble clay,
With breath Divine He warm'd it for life's day.
The dust awoke! it lived, it spoke, it moved,
It learnt ambition - struggled, strove, and - loved.
Created pure, by sin becoming marr'd,
Discordant passions in its members warr'd;
Earth clung to earth, while impulses Divine
Yearning to soar, held down, would restless pine;
And so the quicken'd dust, distrest, in fever'd living knew no rest.

The Father look'd with pity on the strife,
He noted all the care and pain of life,
And sending Death with tender healing powers
Cut short the span of the long trial-hours.
He bid the soul, untrammell'd, soar on high,
And quit its prison frame with weary sigh;
He drew the breath from out the tired clay,
And on its mother's breast again it lay;
And life return'd to Life, with ransom paid,
And earth to earth in peacefulness was laid -
And so the quiet dust was blest - in quietness once more at rest.

The Emigrant's Plaint.¹

Song to the Air of "The Night is Closing Around."

I'M far away from ye all, mother,
And the world is strange and new;
Not a well-known place, not one dear homeface!
O'er the sea I weary for you.

The sky is sunny and bright, mother,
For this Southern land is fair;
There is room for all, and no hunger is known,
But little I reckon or care.

The cold and want of the past, mother,
Were easier far to bear
Than this aching want in my lonely heart,
And this plenty with none to share!

Why did I leave my home, mother?
I was wilful, and thoughtless, and wild -
I long'd to be free, a woman I'd be!
Yet I weep as a motherless child.

I'm no one's daughter or pet, mother,
But "one of the emigrants" here.
I must do my duty, and work, without
One friend to counsel or cheer.

Oh, how I long for a kiss, mother,
Or a kind touch on my brow!
I wish you were here to scold me e'en, -
It would seem like a blessing now!

The letters will soon be here, mother;
How welcome each word will be!
Will you pluck a primrose sometimes, and send
A bit of Old England to me?

Good-bye - so sorry I am, mother!
As long as I e'er should live,
I would grieve ye no more, could I enter that door.
- Ask father if he'll forgive!

Suggested by the words of an emigrant as she lay sick in the Sydney Infirmary.

The Rising Wind.

(Written for music.)

A NEW-BORN air came whispering through the dawn,
On wings of rosy mistlets flying,
It touch'd the leaves and kiss'd the wakening flowers,
And pass'd away in wistful sighing, -
 Breathing low in softest sighing,
 Rising, falling, sweetly dying.

A breezy wind rose with the noontide sun,
And rock'd the boughs with soothing hushing,
In sweet love-wishings woo'd the summer blooms,
And rustled by with fitful gushing, -
 Whistling low and softly gushing,
 Rising high in hurried rushing.

A gale storm'd up before the evening red,
With lightning flash and rain down-pouring,
While shrieking blast and crashing roll
Resounded loud in awful warring -
 Elements in tumult warring,
 Howling wind and thunder roaring!

* * * * *

The storm has lull'd as tranquil night draws on,
The moon shines out behind a silvery fleece,
And stillness reigns, as through the silent air
The stars gleam softly in a dream of peace.
 After storm and sorrows cease
 Cometh deep and restful peace.

Nearly.

NEARLY, nearly, ever nearly,
But never, ah! never *quite*.
Striving, struggling, but just missing
The one path of right.

Nearly a Christian, but only
A weak and fainting child,
Groping for light, but often
By mirage of earth beguil'd.

Nearly as pure as the angels,
But tarnish'd and stain'd with sin,
Bearing the form of the Father,
While nourishing Satan within.

Almost His teaching believing,
And longing for faith devout;
Yet never the full truth grasping,
And baffled and torn by doubt.

Nearly possess'd of the guerdon,
But losing it at the last;
Trying to make the future
Atone for the wasted past.

Gaining a little, then falling
Back in the sad old ways;
Striving to catch the moments,
Missing whole precious days.

Starting with ideal purpose,
Then taking a lower aim;
Going forth with a noble courage,
Coming home with the halt and lame.

Setting out for the conquest of Heaven,
Stopping half-way in the world;
Though meaning to be a hero
When first the banner unfurl'd.

"Nearly, so nearly! but never,
Rarely, too rarely, quite!"
This is the cry of the vanquish'd,
Who thought to have won the fight.

This is the world's one burden,
The plaint of each human soul,
When it finds that so near it draweth,
But never can *reach* its goal.

The Sweeping Tide.

TWO children play'd in spring-tide hours
Upon a sea-girt strand,
And wrote in laughing heedless joy
Their names upon the sand.

The sun shone sweetly on the words
There written side by side,
But, wave by wave, with steady force
Uprose the ruthless tide.

The happy children hied them home,
And came the morrow morn;
Alas! the beach was smooth and clear,
The sand-writ names were gone!

* * * * *

A youth and maiden stood once more
Upon that self-same shore,
Again they wrote the very names
There traced long years before.

The summer sunbeams gently kiss'd
Each love entwined word,
But still, like life and time, the waves
Swept on, unseen, unheard; -

Unheard as yet by dreamers twain,
Who stood in love's sweet trance, -
"To-morrow shall our names be one!"
Soft answer - loving glance.

The tide crept on, the waters cold
Pass'd o'er those words again;
The sun went down with hope-red glow -
The morrow comes in vain!

No lovers stand beside the sea,
Nor write upon the shore;
But far apart their lots are cast,
In life they meet no more.

Two names on earth they ever bear,
Life's floods their hopes divide,
Their sand-writ vows are overswept
By Fate's resistless tide.

But to one isle they journey still
O'er Time's tempestuous sea,
And in one book their names are traced -
The Book of Joy-to-be.

So "L'homme propose et Dieu dispose,"
And, all is for the best,
For e'en the waves that quench our hopes
May bear us to our rest.

The Weatherboard Fall.

A MIGHTY crescent of grim cavern'd rock,
Red-grey, or gold-brown, with black broken rifts
Upon the bare face of the circled walls,
That bold uprise from out a sloping wealth
Of foliage rich, that in moist shadow'd depths
Revel in shelter, spread out happy leaves,
To be for ever kiss'd by dewy drops
Light-wafted from the murmuring waterfall.

Ah, who can show the beauty of the scene?
Above, the wooded mountain summit, green,
Now gently falling into softer banks,
Emerald with fern, gleichenia, grass-tree bright,
Yet bolden'd, strengthen'd, by rough aged crags,
In bare wild outline, amber-tinged, or streak'd
With hoar grey lichen, yet oft holding too, -
Like touch of child-love in a cold stern breast, -
Cherish'd in clefts, some tender verdant nests
Of velvet moss, lone flowers, and grasses soft.
Beyond - seen 'twixt two guardian cliffs that cast
Black giant shadows on the tree-clad slopes -
An inland sea of mountains, stretching far
In undulating billows, deeply blue,
With here and there a gleaming crest of rock,
Surging in stillness, fading into space,
Seeming more liquid in the distance vague,
Transparent melting, till the last faint ridge
Blends with clear ether in the azure sky
In tender mauve unrealness; the dim line
Of mountain profile seeming but a streak
Of waving cloud on the horizon's verge.

A few steps further - comes in fuller view
The stream that o'er the mountain summit winds,
Forcing its way with many a cascade step,
And hurrying to the rampart's brow, from which
Adown a thousand awful feet it falls,
Changing from gleaming water to white foam,
Then all dissolving into separate sprays,
Like cluster'd columns white of moving light,
Or April shower of diamond-gleaming rain,
Whereon the sun plays with his rainbow hues,
Till hid in shadow oft it disappears
Into the grateful coolness of the depths;
Resigning centred beauty for awhile,

Yet showing forth its presence by the tints
So rich enhanc'd by the bedewing love
That with soft tears refreshes budding leaves
And calls forth life.

With artist-instinct true,
Longing to fix the beauty in his soul,
To tell to others what himself has loved,
In art to utter the impression grand,
Now Templar sits and striveth to portray
The glorious scene. Alas! No paint can match
The varying hues, no pencil may express
The foaming fall, grand amphitheatre
Of range on range in distance fairy-like,
Mark'd ever and anon by sun and shade,
And white light glint of rock bits! Down
He lays the brush in weary baffled pain,
And then essays to write. Nay, poorer yet,
The power of words to speak out Nature's soul,
Or tell her wondrous colours. E'en one rock
Has twenty divers tints for which one name
Must all suffice; no written sign can show
The glancing light of water, blend the shades
And trace the outlines fine of distant view.

And were there power to mark the endless traits,
Still who could paint the ever-varying moods?
Ere one effect is seized another comes
To transform every aspect; memory fails
To hold the past, and human cunning seems
Too slow to follow the swift-moving scenes.
Vain, vain attempt! Better in calm to watch
The "beauty as it flies, nor bend it down"
To mock by words.

So ceases he to strive,
But sits entranced, soul-sooth'd to harmony
With Nature's glorious work, by peaceful sounds,
Crescendo, decrescendo, of the fall
Down-pouring with a solemn sonorous bass
To rippling treble of the upland stream.

Silent, unalterable, stands the scene,
A monument of everlasting power,
By strength embuing strength, a protest grand
Against the mutability of life.
A protest? Ay, but in its *form* alone.
For changeable as man is Nature's face.
The substance, outline, firmly stand the same,
Yet seem not so; for every passing light
Varies its aspect, hides some salient points,

Or brings in prominence a new detail.

Sometimes the bay of mountain-rippled blue
Lies clear in smiling sunshine, shadeless fair,
Till in the vault above the light clouds fly;
Then swift the pure unbroken smile is gone,
And fitting frowns pass o'er earth's countenance,
Or some great storm-cloud rises, shrouding part
Of Heaven's light, and straightway half the world
Of dreamy blue is black with angry gloom,
While some near peak glows laughing still in light.

Yea, even bravest outlines seem to change,
As upward mounts the sun and 'lumes or shades
The various ridges, pencilling in one slope
To clear curved line, or rounding off some cliff
That hours before stood bold against the sky.

So doth the Maker, while He sets the stamp
Of steadfast strength, yet vary all His work
With changeful joys of light and purple gloom,
Or cloud-reflected folds of soothing grey -
By vast resource of tinted picturing
And endless nature-language, e'en as much
As by His mightier powers, transcending aye
The utmost skill of art, and baffling all
The efforts vain of imitative man,
Who fain must still aspire, but - hopeless aim!
Can ne'er express in his poor human words
The glorious works of God.

Morning, Night and Endless Morning.

FROM my window I look'd at early morn, and the earth lay glist'ning green,
While the sunshine glow'd with the light of joy on a gleaming spring-tide scene,
Where the buttercups shone in a golden maze, and the tender harebell blue
In a quiver of love hung down its head and smiled through its tears of dew.
While the river wound with embracing arms round the emerald-glancing fields,
And the purple hills in the distance cast no shade on the glowing wealds.
Then the soft wind pass'd with a wooing sigh o'er a world that seem'd so still'd,
That none could tell how its pulses throbb'd and its hidden bosom thrill'd
With the stirring joy of the springing buds and the thoughts of the yet-to-be.
But the air grew quick with essential life, and hope breathed it out to me,
And e'en as I felt its warm spring breath, the joy cords of my soul were strung,
And my life-blood warm'd, and my heart was stirr'd, and I knew that I was YOUNG.

I look'd again in the dead of night, and the valley was hid in cloud,
And the sweet spring-fields that had gleam'd so green were wrapp'd in a cold white
shroud,
While the morning buds that had thrill'd with love had bloom'd through the livelong
day,
And some were asleep and some were pluck'd and many had faded away.
E'en the stars were dim, and the moon shone out with such chill and loveless light,
That the beams that fell on the face of the earth but paled it to ghostlier white,
While the mountains, black as threatening doom, their lengthening shadows cast,
And quench'd all hopes and flickering joys, with the gloom of a darkening past;
For the day was gone, and the night had come, and the morning was slow to break,
And 'twas hard to feel that from sleep so deep the earth could ever awake.
Then I gazed on the lifeless scene, and felt the grey air death-cold;
My pulses stay'd, and my soul grew chill, and I felt that I was OLD.

I will look beyond, to a far-off world, to the promised Land of Peace,
Where the sun shall glow with life-warm hues, and the morn-tide shall never cease!
There the buds of earth shall bloom anew, in a fairer lovelier strand,
And none shall fade, and none shall be pluck'd by a cold destroying hand;
For the River of Life will glistening flow through the endless-flowery fields,
And the soul shall thrill with the rapture deep that perfection's beauty yields.
Then, then shall be Spring! Then, then shall be youth, and the fulness of love and
life!

Not ebbing and changing, and growing old, but ever and ever rife
With growing, deep, and increasing joy, and the everlasting bliss
Of faith fulfill'd and perfected hope that its guerdon no more can miss.
There Love shall reign from sphere to sphere, and His endless praise be sung,
By the earth-old souls that again shall be for ever and ever, YOUNG!

The Angel's Call.

ON her death-bed lay a woman
Long with weary suffering worn,
And her brows throb with the anguish,
Yet with Christ-like patience borne,
 Lo! a sudden joy breaks o'er her,
 Though her strength is nearly spent,
 And her eye in upward rapture
 Is on some bright vision bent.
 Oh! to her the Heavens are open'd
 E'en before her soul takes wing!
 Angel choirs to her are calling
 As in joyous tones they sing: -

Come home! come home! we have called you long,
And your place is prepar'd mid the angel throng!
And the victor's crown shall encircle the brow
That with earthly wounds is all bleeding now!
 Come home! come home! for the day is done,
 The strife is past and the victory won!

Come home, to the land where your loved ones dwell;
'Twas but for a while that you bid them farewell,
And they wait for you now with the welcome sweet
Of souls that a new-found angel greet.
 Come home! come home! for your way is won
 To the mansion prepared by the Holy Son!

The babe of your bosom is waiting here,
See its arms stretch'd out to its mother dear!
And the helpmeet that vanish'd and left you alone
Will join you again by the Crystal Throne.
 Come home! come home! for your race is run!
 We are longing to welcome the weary one.

The friends too are here that you loved erewhile,
And the father with dear remember'd smile;
While the brother whose lot was so sad on earth
Knows all the joy of the soul's new birth.
 Come home! come home! for life's partings are done,
 And in joy you shall meet each cherish'd one!

An end, an end, to all sorrow and woe!
No hearts shall ache and no tears shall flow;
But endless peace and absorbing joy,
And love in its pureness from selfish alloy.

Come home! come home! for the goal is won,
The haven is reach'd and the rest has begun!

Here the weary souls find a holy rest
And the suffering ones are doubly blest,
For the Lamb lifts off the burden of sin,
So the lowliest wretch may enter in.

Come home! come home! for you pardon is won,
And the Lord of the Portal refuses none!

All the hopes for which life was then too brief,
All the strivings that ended in bitter grief,
With the frost-nipp'd buds and the untried powers,
May yet be fulfill'd in eternity's hours.

Come home! come home! for the sands are outrun,
And time is conquer'd and sin undone.

All the good that was marr'd shall come forth in its might,
E'en the spark that was quench'd shall burst forth into light,
And faith shall be sight, and sin's troubling shall cease,
And the worn, weary pilgrim shall rest him in peace.

Come home! come home! for the day is done,
And the morning shall beam with brighter sun!

Here the fulness of beauty is richly reveal'd,
And all hidden knowledge shall be unseal'd;
Here the perfect archetypes are found
Whose reflections fall dimly on earthly ground.

Come home! come home! a new day has begun,
No longer midst shadows your race shall be run.

But the "joy all other joys beyond,"
And the holiest, truest, deepest bond,
Is the presence of GOD in His Holy place
And the fulness of Christ's all-saving grace.

Come home! come home! for sin's work is undone
By the offer'd blood of the Holy Son!

Of its glorious depths we dare hardly speak
E'en Angels' words are too poor and weak,
But the souls whose sins are wash'd whiter than snow
In their last long Home shall its fulness know.

Come home! come home! your reward has begun;
To His servant the Master saith, "Well done!"

Then come! then come and forget all your pain;
Short, short is the struggle, and endless the gain!
Oh! your dim eyes are closing - your last breath is drawn -
Earth's sorrows and toils are forever o'erborne!

Come home to the Father and risen Son,

And the Holy Spirit! Three in One!

In Memoriam.

Commodore Goodenough.

SLOWLY the long procession moves, with solemn muffled sound,
As one of England's noblest men is laid in new-world ground.
Yea, bear him to the sailor's grave with every mourning rite;
Perish'd he yet more bravely than hero in the fight!
For when the utmost yet is done that public grief can show,
Not half express'd the deep respect that in each heart must flow.
Ah, truly by such holy dead our virgin earth is blest!
We pray our sons may worthy be one day by him to rest!

Another martyr added to the heathen's cruel score;
One who, within the sailor's heart, Christ's healing mission bore.
A man *of* whom, nor yet *from* whom, ne'er one unloving word,
Throughout his pure peace-breathing life, by human ears was heard.
Not long he dwelt among us; but noble natures spread
Their influence quickly, and on all their hallowing radiance shed.
Of those who loved him, who can tell the burden of their cross?
And those who knew not, still, must mourn the country's deep-felt loss.

God of the world, Thy ways are strange! Thou takest thus the man
Whose noble life would seem the most to help in Thy great plan
Of good for all Thine erring children - one whose very face
Spoke of strong Godward aim, with calm soul-winning grace -
A chief who held as holy charge all those beneath his power,
Who judged their *souls* - not mere machines - with the immortal dower
Of choice 'twixt right and wrong, and led them on straight for the right,
Sparing not self, so he might guide by pure example's light.

And yet, oh Lord! Thou makest bare the place which none can fill,
But leavest those for lengthen'd years who, more than useless, still
Blight by their evil contact! No, we cannot see the Why,
The Wherefore, of Thy work. Earth's shadows dim our mortal eye;
We can but trust the all-wise Father; and e'en by that death
Of peace and love - when, Christlike to the end, with ebbing breath
He all forgave his foes - perchance some waken'd hearts were blest,
Whom their loved Commodore shall watch with joy from his far Rest.

Bodalla.

A Glimpse of England Amid Australian Hills.

AMID the range that nears the southern coast
Bodalla lies - a smiling valley green;
So green, that to home-loving eyes it seems
E'en like a quiet dream of England hid
And nestled in the wild Australian hills.
There gleam the still blue lake and winding stream,
The golden corn-fields and the sunny slope;
While here and there are cottage homes and farms,
With browsing herds in clover pastures fed;
And furrow'd land o'er which the plough has pass'd,
In winter readiness for English seed,
That here, unconscious of an alien soil,
With old-world freshness still will spring and grow.

The very air of all this peaceful land
Is soft and still, for sheltering mountains rise,
And, glooming blue and dark with varying shade,
Shut out the blighting winds, that restless blow
Yet cannot pass the tree-clad ramparts high;
While all the moisture steaming from the earth,
Held in, though rising, turns to dewy mist
And veils th' enclosing hills in sweet revenge;
Thus softly soothing all their rugged lines,
Deep'ning their shadows - adding richer glow.

And through alluvial flats the Tuross winds;
At first a serpentine silver stream,
But widening with blue waters to the sea
And overhung by blossoming wattles green;
Or like a liquid pathway glancing broad
Between a solemn avenue of oaks -
Swamp-oaks, with fibrous fir-like leaves, that droop
Till dark reflections quiver in the deeps,
And thro' whose chords the gentlest wind will sigh
With soft AEolian sounds, that lull the soul,
Yet stir its depths with longings vague and sweet.

A happy vale! that any man might love
To call his own and cherish to his heart!
See, in the midst, upon a rising slope
Beneath the shelter of the Bumbo Mount,
There gleams the homestead - gabled cottage white,

With creeping vines and garden flowers bright;
While on one side stand gold-brown stacks of hay,
The dairy and surroundings of the farm,
The clustering village of the workers' homes,
The quick steam-engine and the blacksmith's forge,
Then in the front, o'er mignonetted beds,
The eye looks on a meadow rich and broad,
Its glistening tints in double greenness shown
And thrown out by the fringing ranges dark;
While round the fields the bending river flows
And almost makes an island of the spot,
Which seems so English-like, that we could look
And half believe ourselves again at home,
Or think this were a memory, taking form,
A reminiscence sweet, or waking dream!

Ah, Comerang! shall I picture thee at morn,
While still the valley sleeps in robe of mist.
And lowing cows of varied hue and form
Thro' frosty fields are driven to the sheds,
Where childish milkmaids, rosy-faced and bright,
With skilful hands press out the creamy milk?

Or shall I paint thee in the golden hues
Of evening light - which, e'er the sun has set,
Floods all the fields with tinted radiance soft
And glances bright through lengthening shadows deep;
While in the west the purpling mountains glow,
Or faintly redden with a parting blush,
As day's king, ling'ring o'er his last good night,
Illumes the heights o'er which his glory sinks?

Nay, there is still a sweeter, holier time!
The sacred stillness of the Sunday morn,
When all the sounds of industry have ceased,
And labour's garments for a while put off,
The people answer to the echoing bell
That calls them to the work of prayer and praise.
Now, like a family gather'd in the hall -
The homestead hall with church-like hangings deck'd,
They listen to the words, and pray the prayers
That thousand brethren e'en are lifting up
In distant churches at the self-same hour;
And music sweet and joyous hymns resound,
In men's deep bass and children's voices high,
Rising, thro' country air so pure and still,
To the Great Father of the fruitful earth.

A Plea for the Ragged Schools.

THE city of Sydney lies smiling fair
In the beams of a winter morn,
And the murmuring voices of busy men
On the southern breeze are borne.

The peaceful face of the harbour glows
With a joy of heavenly blue,
A tender thought and a touch of love
Shine forth in each changing hue.

The spires point up to the God who paints
The beauty and joyous life,
For He is worshipp'd sometimes amid
The hurry of care and strife.

The streets are gay and the wharfs are lin'd
With a fleet of laden ships:
The buildings are grand and the citizens rich,
"Gold! gold!" the word on their lips!

No sign of poverty; all is bright,
For the capital waxes great;
No misery here as in older lands;
No need for our pity, - but wait!

Step back from the broader thoroughfare
And pass through some narrow lane,
And find - too many a noisome street,
With its dwellings of want and pain.

There are dens where crime and sorrow reign
Uncheck'd in their fearful sway -
There are homes that dare not to bear the name -
There are scenes - but we may not say.

Here the drunken father will cruelly beat
A slatternly red-eyed wife,
While hunger is known and squalor is found,
And sickness and fever are rife.

"Their own fault? There is work for all, -
Why need they our charity claim?"
Nay, not for them; for the babes we plead,
In the God of mercy's name!

For the helpless children, who made not the homes
Wherein they are doom'd to grow

What God ne'er meant - and their innocent souls
To be stamp'd with marring woe.

See that girl with face so childish-fair,
Or the boy with the kindling eye;
What a sweet pure woman she yet might make
Were she train'd to her mission high!

While he, with that talent, a noble life
In his energy strong he could weave;
But already 'tis turn'd to account, and he learns
Too quickly - to lie and to thieve.

And those little ones with the scanty clothes,
That toddle midst dirt and grime,
Unsullied as yet; could no power reach
Those tender young lambs in time?

Yes; one power there is. 'Mid the city's dens
A homely building doth stand,
Through its doors the children are crowding in,
In tatter'd and shivering bands.

No matter how ragged, or poor, or stain'd,
They are welcom'd all within,
Where the gentle women with Christ-like wiles
Their love and their confidence win.

Then they hear for the first time some tender words,
And God's loving-kindness learn,
While lessons are taught that may help them in time
An honest living to earn.

See them now, as they stand in the Ragged School,
Oft hungry, with bare cold feet;
How sweetly they join in the chorus'd song,
And with smiles the teachers greet!

In those happy hours who knows what seed
May be sown in each human soul? -
What starlight may shine on the midnight sea?
What soldiers the Lord may enrol?

The task is holy, the work is brave,
And the children come flocking in,
Yet they are but a tithe of those that remain
Outside in the haunts of sin.

'Tis *now* these infants may yet be saved
And not in the after time,
When the habits are form'd, and the mind has known

No contact save that of crime.

'Tis late, late then. If ye leave a plant
To grow in its own wild way,
When it waxes a tree 'tis in vain to prune,
And its gnarls and its twists to stay.

Ah, ye who have cherish'd pets of your own,
For whom ye so anxiously care!
While ye are blessed, God's children to leave
In ruin unsought will ye dare?

There are luxuries go from your table that might
Bring light to those childish eyes;
The body is weak, and 'tis hard to learn
When the little one breakfastless sighs.

At times some food to the children sent
Might "the cup of cold water" prove,
And would add an incentive to bring them there
To list to the lessons of love.

Give that and give help. In these prosperous days,
When the earth is yielding her store,
Spare a part to your fellow-citizen babes -
To the children who cry at your door.

Funereal Rites.

HOW shall we bear unto the grave
Our lov'd ones gone, our holy dead?
How honour most the dear cold forms
Whence God's warm breath of life has fled?
How shall we show the tend'rest love
For parent, brother, children lost? -
The grandsire worn with toilsome years,
The babe whom sin nor care has cross'd?

Not with the pomp of sable plumes -
"Weepers," unweeping badge of woe,
Slow-pacing mutes, sad-faced for hire,
Mocking the grief they cannot know.
No cruel hearse in lonely state
Shall on the last long journey bear
The dear one whom till life's last hour
We cherish'd close with watchful care.

Who thus the awful Real of death,
With hollow show should dare profane,
The relics of a heathen age
That knew no Resurrection's gain?
And when the chastening hand of grief
Strikes rich and poor with levelling power,
Should emulation's vain display
And pride pollute the hallow'd hour?

Nay, nay; before death's veiled face
May human custom stand aside.
Let love each funeral rite suggest,
And love alone the mourners guide.
Then will the dead be carried forth
By sorrowing friends who held him dear;
And flowers, hope's emblem, fitly deck
With tender grace the Christian's bier.

The Buddawong's¹ Crown.

A True Parable.

A BUDDAWONG seed-nut fell to earth
In a cool and mossy glade,
And in spring it shot up its barb'd green swords
Secure 'neath the myrtle's shade.

'Mid a carpet of softest maiden-hair
Its glossy young palm leaves grew,
So strong, that they pitied the tender fronds
Which bent as each zephyr blew.

Till it wax'd at last a goodly plant
And its coral fruit did bear;
With a prickly kiss it woo'd the brake
That waved near its rocky lair.

Then its stem grew mossy and bulbous with age,
Till one day, in its moist, warm nest,
A bird's-nest fern² germ there fell, and struck
Deep roots in its pithy breast.

And the parasite fed upon its heart,
Encurling its broad rich leaves,
Till the vivid wealth of shining green
Eclipsed the dark zamia sheaves.

And a creeping fern that from earth had gazed,
With love on the bird's-nest's face,
Crept up and hung out its waving fronds
All pendent with drooping grace.

And together they dwelt, together twined,
And in two-fold beauty grew,
But the Buddawong loved not the close embrace,
Which its own life-blood outdrew.

So it languish'd and pined, and was nigh to death,
In the gully's silence deep,
And the bell-bird tinkled its passing knell,
While the pitying myrtles weep.

But ere the last breath there came a sound,
Rarely heard in the shelter'd glen,
The gentle treble and deep-toned bass
Of the voices of women and men.

Close, closer, into the buddawong's home
The steps of the strangers drew,
They have reach'd it now, and they pause with delight
As the bright fern-glory they view.

As it hears their tunes of admiring glee
E'en the dying zamia thrills
With joy that its stem should the beauty bear
That with pleasure each mortal fills,

"We will bear it home." What mean those words?

Oh horror! a crashing sound,
Its last last palms are cut away,
And there aches a bleeding wound.

Yet the parasite stands untouch'd and bold
With its loving creeper-friend,
While now at the buddawong's root sharp strokes
Its trunk from the earth doth rend.

And the poor poor palm has died indeed;
But little the strangers care;
"There are zamias in plenty more," they say,
"But the crown is a beauty rare."

A martyr unto a vampire fern,
For the sake of its parasite now,
The buddawong's trunk they carry away
In a cherish'd home-garden to grow.

There the children watch it with eager eyes,
While the mother eye tends it with care,
And of human life and of human joy
A daily part it will bear.

What stories that child of the glen could tell
Ere many long years have gone,
The green youth-fronds will o'ergrow the old
And the new of the aged be born.

While the poor old stem is almost forgot
In the life that from out it springs,
Though its perishing fibre yields the food
That such wealth of verdure brings.

But grieve not for this. 'Tis God's own way
That the future the present destroy,
That the gone-by should nourish fresh leaves of hope
And the dead past should blossom in joy.

And the tree that half-fruitless has died in its prime
To nourish a fairer blade,
Has fulfill'd its end in the beauty it adds
To the world by the Joy-God made.

Buddawong is the native name for the zamia palm, growing in great numbers on the coast ranges of New South Wales.

Bird's-nest fern - parasite growing on trunks or in forks of trees.

Blind Little Joe: The Unconscious Missionary

ONLY a poor, blind, helpless child!
Only a ragged boy!
And yet those darken'd eyes are bright,
And his heart is full of joy.

Poor is his lot and scant his food,
Few pleasures can he know,
His face is pale and pinch'd with want,
Yet smiles upon it glow!

Throughout the long, long summer days
In darkness still he dwells;
His hours are lone, his look is grave,
No sadness still it tells!

For aye a gentle, holy calm,
A sweet and tender grace,
A far-off look, all earth beyond,
Illumes that touching face.

The men are rough with whom he dwells,
The women harsh from woe,
But hardest men and cross'est dames
Speak soft to little Joe.

And children, though untaught and rude,
Will ever leave their play
And gently take the blind boy's hand
To lead him on his way.

Within his poor and lowly town
Just ten long years agone
A widow'd mother died, and left
A sightless babe forlorn.

But human pity still beat strong
In hearts o'ercharged with care:
Though times were hard and food was scarce,
Each neighbour gave a share.

One mother took him to her home
To cherish with her own,
And e'en the poorest strove to help
The orphan babe so lone.

No home he had, yet every home
Was open to that child;

And as he grew, on every side
All love and pity smiled.

And now, where'er his footsteps pass,
He seems to bring a ray
Of holier light from other worlds
To gild life's weary way.

For though his earthly eyes are dark,
Through days of sunless night,
His soul's eye seems to look beyond,
And see with vision bright.

The Heaven that seems to others dim,
He dreams of, night and day.
There he will SEE! - what glorious sights
No mortal tongue can say!

And so a strange, unearthly charm
Dwells round the afflicted boy;
Mid alleys dark and wretched homes
He moves - a living joy.

His presence seems to soothe the sick,
Bring hope to hearts of woe,
And boldest sin stands gently shamed
By innocent Blind Joe.

And thus the mercy shown to him
Is sevenfold return'd -
The lone babe cherish'd by the poor
Is to their blessing turn'd.

Dear Joe, blind Joe, so poor and weak,
No earthly wage can win;
And yet a nobler work he does
In homes of want and sin.

An angel still, though clad in rags,
The child-saint from above
In simple faith and sweetness proves
GOD'S messenger of love.

Only a poor, blind, helpless child,
Only a sightless boy!
And yet to darken'd souls he brings
A gleam of hallow'd joy.

Mourning and Unmourned.

I PASS'D through the dreary workhouse ward,
And a lonely woman sat weeping;
And I thought, "At least on a human grave
Such a wealth of woe she is heaping."

But no! it was only a terrier dog
For whose loss she was tenderly grieving;
It was only at thought of a mongrel cur
That those heartfelt sighs were heaving.

Nay, smile not, stranger, and pass not by
That sorrow all coldly unheeded;
As deep as for stricken mother, sad,
Your tears for this woman are needed.

It was foolish, perchance, to weep for a dog,
And such love to be uselessly flinging
O'er the lifeless corpse of a creature dumb;
But the human heart is clinging!

'Twas the last, last thing she had left to love.
She was old, and lorn, and weary;
And poor "Nip" was all - her friend, her child.
Now, the poorhouse was doubly dreary;

For that dog had loved her, and her alone;
And when she was sad or ailing
He would soothe her heart with his sympathy dumb
And watch her with care unfailing.

She had shared her all with her faithful friend,
And to him her best had given;
And she was content to be hungry, cold,
If he on her food had thriven.

Alas, there was none to beg from her more,
And in lonely plenty she fareth;
There is none to caress or to warm her now,
No doggie her hard bed shareth.

Ah me! she is dower'd with that strange gift,
The mother-love that pineth,
And if childless, still its hungry roots
Round some dumb thing entwineth.

* * * * *

I pass'd through the crowded hospital ward,
And none, and none were weeping,
Though a woman that hour had pass'd away,
And for ever, unmourn'd, was sleeping.

'Tis sad that poor souls in a world so bright,
Should live and die so lonely!
Fair sisters, could ye not spare to them
Some few short love-hours only?

The Two Beaches - Manly.

Ocean.

THUNDERING rolls the storming ocean, foaming on the golden sand,
Rising high in purple anger, frowning on the silent land;
Ridge on ridge of heaving billows, buoy'd upon a giant breast
Palpitating with a passion of eternal fierce unrest.
Manlike in its daring fervour, grand in savageness of force,
That must break or self be broken by whate'er shall mar its course:
Now its utmost force it gathers, deep a mighty sob resounds,
In one surging arc of waters, res'lute to o'erburst its bounds.
Vain! The war-plumed heads must lower, Nature's law shall be obey'd:
"Thus far, never farther!" conquers; prone the haughty waves are laid,
Humbled, frothing with the struggle, sweeping in, then backward drawn,
Leaving but the tiny furrow that their utmost throes have worn.

See, the western sun is sinking, grim the stolid headlands gloom,
Rising dark above the spray-smoke and the loud attacking boom
Of the cannonade of waters, lit with fire of sunset gold,
While the glory-mists of evening bays and hillsides sweet enfold.
Glare the rocks their salt-tear'd parting, earth in quiet slumber rests,
Yet th' impatient waves are fretting, still they lift their wrathful crests,
Moving black with ghostly aureoles, like a mighty spirit doom'd
Ne'er to cease its warring struggle while the endless ages loom'd,
So it lasheth; seething, panting, with one deep despairing roar,
Image of the world's unquiet, knowing peace for nevermore.

Harbour.

Calmly, gently, rock the waters, smiling in a maze of blue,
Womanlike, in love reflecting every changing light and hue;
Sometimes creeping into shadow, near a strong protective head,
Then in glistening joy of ripples into wooing sunshine led.
Or like a child at sport with lions, casting silvery shower of spray,
On hard-featured rocks that, moveless, stem resist their graceful play.

Pass the wavelets careless sweetly o'er the lake's still-breathing breast,
Troubled whiles at Ocean's portals by the billow's threatening crest,
Then once more their smile regaining, dancing on with gladsome speech,
Till they lay their emerald crescents fondly on the haven'd beach.
Storming not, nor scarcely whispering, but with kiss and lapping feet,
Rise the waters to their tide-height, with unnoted swiftmess meet,
Rarely leaving mark or token where the crystal steps have been,
Yet fulfilling all their portion with a noiseless strength unseen;
Ebbing, flowing, as the Ocean in its due appointed hour,

But like force of love contrasted with the rage of restless power.

Sunlight's tints have paled to neutral, toned to hues of soothing grey,
And in hallow'd trance of stillness Nature ends her chequer'd day;
Black th' embracing lands are profiled clear against the evening sky,
Throwing up by darksome setting lucent deeps which quivering lie
Like a liquid sea of opal, hoarding every dying beam,
And with answering light reflecting early stars that faintly gleam,
Till the goodnight darkness falleth, and with breath of rippling sound,
Dreaming wavelets, slumb'rous murmuring, 'neath the spell of sleep are bound.

The Old Path and the New.

A Serio-Satire.

I.

"KEEP to the beaten path, my boy!"
So spake a grandsire grey;
"There's nothing like the good old road -
The safe well-trodden way;
'Twill lead you clear and quick and right,
And save you many a fall and fight.

"But all those strange new-fangled gaits,
Those tracks and by-paths queer,
Like every short-cut, they will lead
To sorry grief, I fear.
Eschew them, then, and trudge along
Contented with the steady throng."

II.

"But, grandsire, some one must begin -
Some one must first explore!
If every man kept to the paths
His fathers trod before
New worlds would never have been found -
Earth's fairest spots were unknown ground.

"I would be a discoverer great,
E'en at the risk of pain!
My young heart burns to cut new roads
By which the world may gain;
Of barrier gates I'd find the keys -
No stale old land my soul could please."

I.

"That some may lead and show the way
Is very, very true;
Some fools must suffer for the rest,
But why should it be you?
You gain no thanks, believe me, lad,
But wiser men will call you mad."

II.

"Mad! Mad! 'Tis better to be mad
Than only dull and tame;
And as to sneers and snubs, of course
They line the road to fame.
But those at whom their compeers sneer
Are heroes to a later age."

I.

"Don't strive to be a hero, boy,
But be a man of sense,
And walk straight on, not gallop off
O'er each establish'd fence;
So shall your worldly goods increase,
And honour'd you will dwell in peace."

The youth he heeded not those words,
But buckled on his shoes,
And though the grandsire shook his head,
Sage arguments did use.
He started off with aspect gay,
And 'gan to carve himself a way.

The track led into unknown lands
Where none before had trod,
To reach it first he fought and fell'd
Full many a worldly god;
Each fetish in its temple gold
He spurn'd as worn-out idol old.

Then up rose his friends in anger and grief,
And disown'd him at once and for all;
And down came his rivals with laugh and with scorn,
Predicting his ruin and fall;
While the cowards, astonish'd, they ask'd, "How he dare?"
And the sage and the learned they bid him "Beware!"

Soon the clergy declared him a heretic sad,
While the doctors pronounced him insane;
The women all shudder'd, yet pitied him, too;
Said the lawyers, "Ah, naught will he gain!"
Some friends *would* have helped and stood by him still,
But alas, they'd no power, but only the will.

The youth he heard those angry sounds,

Yet never turn'd his head,
But bravely struggled thro' his work
Although his poor feet bled,
Until the road grew broad and fair
And new-found flowers blossom'd there.

He gave those blossoms to the world
To light the earthly gloom;
Their silent seeds were unknown shed
In hearts and homes to bloom;
Still none knew whence those germs were sown,
But held the new joy as their own.

Long years went on, and day by day
That brave explorer toil'd,
Poor, hungry, lone, and sick at heart,
With tatter'd garments soil'd ;
At last worn-out, adown he lay
Beside that wise old grandsire grey.

None wept for him, and fewer knew,
The noble fight he fought;
One poor friend only raised a stone
Beside the path he wrought,
And on it 'graved the simple name
Of him who earn'd, but reach'd not fame.

* * * * *

A decade pass'd - a decade more -
The martyr slept unknown,
But still his work lay, mark'd and broad,
By wild thought-flowers o'ergrown;
Yet none knew where its windings led -
Men, doubting, scorn'd to try and tread,

Until a noble DON espied
Th' unheeded course, one day -
Survey'd its bearings and its aim,
And clear'd some weeds away;
Then straight proclaim'd in solemn tone
A grand discovery of his own -

"An orthodox, most goodly path -
A right ennobling road -
A short-cut thro' perplexing lands
To many a blest abode;
Come, people all, and ye will find
A resting-place for heart and mind!"

Then up started the world, with a shake and a smile,
And girding them all without fear,
Followed after the Don with admiring awe,
And easy conviction clear.
They walk'd and they drove, and they gather'd new spoils,
Unthinking, unheeding the pioneer's toils.

The Don was raised to honour'd place,
His name on history's page
With meed of thanks was blazon'd forth
The Hero of his age,
While he who for that work had died
Forgotten lay, with crown denied.

Hymns.

The King's Highway.

(A Wide Paraphrase.)

SEE, there comes a pilgrim army!
On they march, a valiant band!
Saints of every age and nation,
Gathering in from every land.
Worn and footsore, poor and weary,
Toiling onward day by day,
Laden with the Cross of Jesus,
Marching on the King's Highway.

These are they who, self-denying,
Heedless of all earthly loss,
Dared to follow Jesus only
On the pathway of the Cross.
Through the world's enclouding darkness,
Led by faith's unerring ray,
Laden with the Cross of Jesus,
Marching on the King's Highway,

They are marching, mounting upward,
By the steep and narrow road,
Bearing each his GOD-sent burden,
Lightening oft a brother's load.
Up life's hill and through death's valley,
Nearer to the end each day,
Laden with the Cross of Jesus,
Marching on the King's Highway!

Pressing on mid care and danger,
By an unseen Captain led;
Fighting all the powers of evil,
Yielding not to fear or dread!
Wounded, humbled, often vanquish'd,
Yet still striving to obey,
Laden with the Cross of Jesus,
Marching on the King's Highway!

Fresh recruits are joining daily,
Taking up the Christ-like weight -
Some are young and some are aged -
All are welcome, - none too late!
Tried and proven, often fainting,
Gaining strength but for the day,
Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

Marching on the King's Highway!

Christian soldiers, let us join them!

With the pilgrim army go!

Dauntless follow saints and martyrs,

On through pain and on through woe.

"Now the time," the Leader calleth,

"Wherefore halt and why delay?"

Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

March along the King's Highway!

Christ's whole life was one long sorrow,

Ending in the shameful Cross:

Will ye then seek ease or honour?

Dare ye count the pain or loss?

Give up all, and rise and follow!

What can with His ransom weigh?

Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

March along the King's Highway!

Pain will come, and with it blessing,

Joy denied will bring forth peace;

While for those who chose the earthly,

Earthly hopes with earth will cease.

Of your free will lift your burden,

Bear it in GOD'S chosen way,

Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

Marching on the King's Highway!

They who will not *choose* the suffering

Must e'en find it in the end;

He who flings away one burden,

'Neath a heavier Cross may bend.

Better then to take it bravely,

Neither saying yea nor nay,

Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

Marching on the King's Highway.

For the Cross can never leave thee;

It is bound within each breast,

And it goeth with thee ever,

From thyself thou canst not rest.

Self is only lost in loving,

Rest is gain'd when souls obey,

Laden with the Cross of Jesus,

Marching on the King's Highway.

Cease, then, cease all murm'ring struggle!

Take whate'er the Father sends,

Thankful when external trouble
The earth-clinging heart-string rends.
Patience, patience for a little!
Soon will come the restful day,
Meanwhile with the Cross of Jesus,
March along the King's Highway!

Soon, at last, how soon we know not,
Shall the goal before us shine!
Then the pilgrimage all ended,
We our crosses may resign.
Sorrow vanquish'd, darkness over!
Endless gain for earthly loss!
Crowns for pilgrims o'er the glorious
Highway of the Holy Cross!

The Army of Unknown Martyrs.

FROM the day that Stephen perish'd,
Striving nobly for the truth,
Ranges the great martyr-army -
Aged saint and tender youth;
Men whose names on History's tablets.
In emblazon'd colours glow,
Women, too, whose faith ecstatic
Conquer'd pain and vanquish'd woe.

Won they well their meed of glory,
Rightly earn'd the martyr's dower.
Shine they forth as high ensamples
Of the Faith's o'erconquering power.
And whene'er we read of sufferings
Which the frailest thus could dare,
Own we then their fame the greatest
That earth's chequer'd annals bear.

But another band has gather'd
Through the ages' vista long;
Nameless, silent, unremember'd,
Stands another suffering throng.
Countless are their hidden numbers,
Dating from Time's earliest days;
Fight they still in God's great battle,
And their unseen battle raise.

This the host of UNKNOWN MARTYRS,
Who have wrought and fought alone,
Doing deeds of love and patience
Which no history's page shall own.
Living for God's cause right bravely,
Dying, if the need should call,
Working quietly their mission
Wheresoe'er their lot shall fall.

March they, not in earth's great high-roads,
But in lowly hidden ways,
Bearing much, but saying little,
Seeking neither fame nor praise.
Knowing not that they are martyrs,
Dreaming not of crown or grace,
Simply treading where God leadeth,
Passing on with noiseless pace.

Bound not to the stake of torture,
But, with worries' daily sting,
Nail'd by round of daily duty,
To some unknown cross they cling.
Offering *self's* dear hopes and wishes
To the fire of sacrifice,
Pour they out their very heart-blood,
Counting not the anguish-price.

Shines their light not glory tinted
But as starry nebulae,
Trembling with a modest glimmer,
Though each one a sun may be.
So these pure ones e'er are shedding
Peace upon their own love-sphere,
Lighting just that one home-circle
With a tender radiance clear.

Thus it has been, is, and will be,
While the human world shall roll,
And each unknown martyr addeth
Light unto God's glorious Whole.
And the soldiers who have striven,
Not to die, but patient live,
Though they ask it not, nor heed it,
God to them His crown shall give.

Evening Hymn at Sea.

NOW darkness o'er the sea
Its gloom is shedding fast,
From death and danger free,
Another day is past.
O'er the wild waves riding,
Trusting to Thy guiding,
In Thy care confiding,
Plunge we into night.

Oh! should wild storms arise,
Our faltering faith to try,
Say to our trembling hearts,
"Fear not, for it is I!"
Or should this night prove lasting,
Our bark of life dismasting,
Our hopes on Jesus casting,
Yield we our souls to Thee!

As we're sailing onward,
O'er the boundless sea,
So may we be drawing
Still ever nearer Thee!
And though often swerving,
Adverse breezes serving,
Thou our powers nerving,
Lead us right at last!

And midst wind and billow,
Storm and deadening calm,
Watch thou round our pillow,
And keep us safe from harm.
When no breeze is stirring,
When, sin's tack preferring,
We are widely erring,
Guide us back to Thee!

In our voyage of life
Oh! may we ever tend,
Amid earth's wavering strife,
Unto a heavenly end.
Answer our beseeching
By Thy heavenly teaching;
So our haven reaching,
We may rest in Thee.

We are helpless children,
Alone in the great deep,
Who can find a pathway?
Ah! dare we sink to sleep?
Though the gloom is nearing,
Hush all faithless fearing -
See! our darkness cheering,
It is the Lord who steers!

On board "La Hogue."

Good Friday.

DEEP the gloom of death is brooding
Dark o'er all a guilty world,
Christ upon the cross is dying,
Satan's latest dart is hur'l'd.

Hush'd is e'en the voice of Nature,
Very ground in awe doth quake,
Stars from out their place are falling,
Earth's foundations trembling shake.

Black the vault of heaven is shrouded,
Turns the sun his face away,
Rent the veil before the Holiest -
Last great Sacrificial day!

Hell's wide portals now are open'd,
Ghostly powers walk abroad,
Elements convulsive shuddering,
Mourn their slain and suffering Lord.

Easter Eve.

ERE the joy the vigil cometh
 Bend we low in watchful prayer,
Faithful biding till the Saviour
 Build again His Temple fair.

Interlude of solemn meaning -
 Waiting worlds expectant still'd -
Pause between two dispensations
 Ere the promise is fulfill'd.

Ended is the day of vengeance,
 Pass'd away the justice-law,
Retribution is accomplish'd,
 Sin atoned for evermore.

Sleeps the body in earth's bosom,
 Seed of life enwrapp'd in death,
Soon to wake to full fruition
 'Neath the Resurrection breath!

Easter Day.

SEE, the light of Heaven is breaking!
Night has merged in endless day!
Prison-bands are burst asunder!
GOD has conquer'd mortal clay!

Christ from out the grave has risen,
Glorious life immortal gain'd!
Joy! GOD'S scheme is rich completed,
Reign of mercy aye attain'd!

Nature joins in deep rejoicing,
Earth with hallelujahs rings!
For the Eden-curse has vanish'd:
Human spirit gains its wings!

Out of sin hath come forth blessing,
Life has blossom'd forth from death;
Man re-lives to fuller being
Breathed in by th' Eternal Breath!

Vanquish'd Grave, where now thy conquest?
Where, O Sin, thy deathful sting?
Christ in rising proves thy victor!
Loud hosannas echoing ring!

Whitsuntide.

AGES past, when first the Spirit
Moved upon the face of earth,
When all other works were finish'd,
Came the primal human birth.

God the Father, in His power,
Moulded first that perfect form;
Noblest clay it stood before Him,
But not yet with being warm.

Like the Maker, yet resembling
Creatures dumb of lower race.
What can add the grand distinction?
What can bring the crowning grace?

Breathed God then into his nostrils
Holy breath of life divine;
Living soul the dust becometh,
Bearing deep the birthright sign.

This the Spirit's first outpouring,
This the earliest Whitsuntide;
Lord of earth and heir of heaven
Stood man, pure in worthy pride.

But the human heart, too weakly,
Fell from out the first estate,
And the breath of God was quenched,
Overworn by fleshly weight.

Cometh then the second breathing
Of the soul-requick'ning power;
God the Son in endless mercy
Bringeth back the holy dower.

On the faithful few assembled
On the Pentecostal morn
Fell the Holy Ghost with power;
Once again mankind was born.

And a Whitsuntide there cometh
Evermore to hearts prepared;
Hence, by every ransom'd sinner
God's great comfort full is shared.

* * * * *

Holy Spirit, moving ever
On the human waters' face,
Prompting, guiding, thought inspiring,
Source of holy life and grace.

Thou from whom alone there floweth
Power to keep Thine image clear,
Come, although with fire of suffering;
To our blinded souls appear;

Purify, and mould, and help us
To fulfil our high Ideal;
Then on Thy design accomplish'd
Set the Heaven-accepted seal.

Watch and Pray.

HEARKEN to the summons sounding,
From the crowing of the cock
Until evening in its shadows
All the weary world doth lock -
"Watch and pray!"

In the garden of His anguish
Sounded first the solemn word,
To His slumbering followers spoken,
Heeded not and scarcely heard -
"Watch and pray!"

"Rise ye, rise ye, rise from slumber!
Watch ye on from hour to hour,
Lest, your guard unfaithful keeping,
Fall ye 'neath temptation's power -
"Watch and pray!"

"Sleeping? sleeping? ye are sleeping?"
Though a thousand years have pass'd,
Still that questioning voice of warning
Soundeth from the hallow'd past -
"Watch and pray!"

Now as then He speaketh to us,
By the Holy Spirit's breath;
Still his followers prove unfaithful,
Yet in patient words He saith -
"Watch and pray!"

In the hour of mirth and gladness,
In the hour of pain and woe,
In the hour of doubting darkness,
Looking up, though kneeling low -
"Watch and pray!"

When life's flowers are brightly opening
And your heart is beating high,
When the lonely seed-time cometh
And the end is drawing nigh -
"Watch and pray!"

Yielding up your hopes and strivings,
Giving up your restless will,
Simply Christ's command obeying,
Fighting on and hoping still -

"Watch and pray!"

Watch, although the heart is willing;
Pray, for still the flesh is weak,
From the cup of sorrow turn not,
Only strength to drink it seek -
"Watch and pray!"

Watch and pray, but still be working
In the Father's earthly field;
Though in tears and sorrow sowing,
Golden sheaves your seed may yield -
"Watch and pray!"

Praying eye will aid the working,
Watching will help on the end,
Till at last the love-dew'd promise,
'Neath fulfilment's fruit may bend -
"Watch and pray!"

For the lonely night-time cometh
When the working hours are gone,
Then, with earth-won sheaves all waiting,
Bide ye the Eternal Morn -
"Watch and pray!"

Lord, we pray that when the Bridegroom
Cometh with awakening light
We may then be found all watching -
Dwell for ever in Thy sight -
In endless day!
