

BLOOMS OF THE BERRY.

BY

MADISON J. CAWEIN.

“ I fain would tune my fancy to your key.”—*Sir John Suckling.*



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PROEM.

WINE-WARM winds that sigh and sing,
Led me, wrapped in many moods,
Thro' the green sonorous woods
Of belated Spring ;

Till I came where, glad with heat,
Waste and wild the fields were strewn,
Olden as the olden moon,
At my weary feet ;

Wild and white with starry bloom,
One far milky-way that dashed,
When some mad wind o'er it flashed,
Into billowy foam.

I, bewildered, gazed around,
As one on whose heavy dreams
Comes a sudden burst of beams,
Like a mighty sound.

If the grander flowers I sought,
But these berry-blooms to you,
Evanescent as their dew,
Only these I brought.

JULY 3, 1887.

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I.—BY WOLD AND WOOD.

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BY WOLD AND WOOD.

THE HOLLOW.

I.

FLEET swallows soared and darted
 'Neath empty vaults of blue ;
Thick leaves close clung or parted
 To let the sunlight through ;
Each wild rose, honey-hearted,
 Bowed full of living dew.

II.

Down deep, fair fields of Heaven,
 Beat wafts of air and balm,
From southmost islands driven
 And continents of calm ;
Bland winds by which were given
 Hid hints of rustling palm.

III.

High birds soared high to hover ;
 Thick leaves close clung to slip ;
Wild rose and snowy clover
 Were warm for winds to dip,
And one ungentle lover,
 A bee with robber lip.

IV.

Dart on, O buoyant swallow !
Kiss leaves and willing rose !
Whose musk the sly winds follow,
And bee that booming goes ;—
But in this quiet hollow
I'll walk, which no one knows.

V.

None save the moon that shineth
At night through rifted trees ;
The lonely flower that twineth
Frail blooms that no one sees ;
The whippoorwill that pineth ;
The sad, sweet-swaying breeze ;

VI.

The lone white stars that glitter ;
The stream's complaining wave ;
Gray bats that dodge and flitter ;
Black crickets hid that rave ;
And me whose life is bitter,
And one white head stone grave.

BY WOLD AND WOOD.

I.

GREEN, watery jets of light let through
The rippling foliage drenched with dew;
Bland glow-worm glammers warm and dim
Above the mystic vistas swim,
Where, 'round the fountain's oozy urn,
The limp, loose fronds of limber fern
Wave dusky tresses thin and wet,
Blue-filleted with violet.
O'er roots that writhe in snaky knots
The moss in amber cushions clots;
From wattled walls of brier and brush
The elder's misty attars gush;
And, Argus-eyed, by knoll and bank
The affluent wild rose flowers rank;
And stol'n in shadowy retreats,
In black, rich soil, your vision greets
The colder undergrowths of woods,
Damp, lushy-leaved, whose gloomier moods
Turn all the life beneath to death
And rottenness for their own breath.
May-apples waxen-stemmed and large
With their bloom-screening breadths of targe;
Wake robins dark-green leaved, their stems
Tipped with green, oval clumps of gems,

As if some woodland Bacchus there
 A-braiding of his yellow hair
 With ivy-toed had idly tost
 His thyrsus there, and so had lost.
 Low blood root with its pallid bloom,
 The red life of its mother's womb
 Through all its ardent pulses fine
 Beating in scarlet veins of wine.
 And where the knotty eyes of trees
 Stare wide, like Fauns' at Dryades
 That lave smooth limbs in founts of spar,
 Shines many a wild-flower's tender star.

II.

The scummy pond sleeps lazily,
 Clad thick with lilies, and the bee
 Reels boisterous as a Bassarid
 Above the bloated green frog hid
 In lush wa and calamus and grass,
 Beside the water's stagnant glass.
 The piebald dragon-fly, like one
 A-weary of the world and sun,
 Comes blindly blundering along,
 A pedagogue, gaunt, lean, and long,
 Large-headed naturalist with wise,
 Great, glaring goggles on his eyes.
 And dry and hot the fragrant mint
 Pours grateful odors without stint

From cool, clay banks of cressy streams,
Rare as the musks of rich hareems,
And hot as some sultana's breath
With turbulent passions or with death.
A haze of floating saffron; sound
Of shy, crisp creepings o'er the ground;
The dip and stir of twig and leaf;
Tempestuous gusts of spices brief
From elder bosks and sassafras;
Wind-cuffs that dodge the laughing grass;
Sharp, sudden songs and whisperings
That hint at untold hidden things,
Pan and Sylvanus that of old
Kept sacred each wild wood and wold.
A wily light beneath the trees
Quivers and dusks with ev'ry breeze;
Mayhap some Hamadryad who,
Culling her morning meal of dew
From frail accustomed cups of flowers—
Some Satyr watching through the bowers—
Had, when his goat hoof snapped and pressed
A brittle branch, shrunk back distressed,
Startled, her wild, tumultuous hair
Bathing her limbs one instant there.

ANTICIPATION.

WINDY the sky and mad ;
Surly the gray March day ;
Bleak the forests and sad,
Sad for the beautiful May.

On maples tasseled with red
No blithe bird swinging sung ;
The brook in its lonely bed
Complained in an unknown tongue.

We walked in the wasted wood :
Her face as the Spring's was fair,
Her blood was the Spring's own blood,
The Spring's her radiant hair.

And we found in the windy wild
One cowering violet,
Like a frail and tremulous child
In the raked leaves bowed and wet.

And I sighed at the sight, with pain
For the May's warm face in the wood,
May's passions of sun and rain,
May's raiment of bloom and of bud.

But she said when she saw me sad,
"Tho' the world be gloomy as fate,
And we yearn for the days to be glad,
Dear heart, we can afford to wait.

“ For, know, one beautiful thing
On the dark day’s bosom curled,
Makes the wild day glad to sing,
Content to smile at the world.

“ For the sinless world is fair,
And man’s is the sin and gloom;
And dead are the days that were,
But what are the days to come?

“ Be happy, dear heart, and wait!
For the past is a memory:
Tho’ to-day seem somber as fate,
Who knows what to-morrow will be? ”

* * * * *

And the May came on in her charms,
With a twinkle of rustling feet;
Blooms stormed from her luminous arms,
And honey of smiles that were sweet.

Now I think of her words that day,
This day that I longed so to see,
That finds her dead with the May,
And the March but a memory.

A LAMENT.

I.

WHITE moons may come, white moons may go,
She sleeps where wildwood blossoms blow,
Nor knows she of the rosy June,
Star-silver flowers o'er her strewn,
The pearly paleness of the moon,—
Alas! how should she know!

II.

The downy moth at evening comes
To suck thin honey from wet blooms;
Long, lazy clouds that swimming high
Brood white about the western sky,
Grow red as molten iron and lie
Above the fragrant glooms.

III.

Rare odors of the weed and fern,
Dry whisperings of dim leaves that turn,
A sound of hidden waters lone
Frothed bubbling down the streaming stone,
And now a wood-dove's plaintive moan
Drift from the bushy burne.

IV.

Her garden where deep lilacs blew,
Where on old walls old roses grew
Head-heavy with their mellow musk,
Where, when the beetle's drone was husk,
She lingered in the dying dusk,
 No more shall know that knew.

V.

When orchards, courting the wan Spring,
Starred robes of buds around them fling,
Their beauty now to her is naught,
Once a sweet passion, when she fraught
Dark curls with blooms that nodding caught
 Impulse from the bee's wing.

VI.

White moons may come, white moons may go,
She sleeps where wildwood blossoms blow;
Cares naught for fairy fern or weed,
White wand'rings of the plummy seed,
Of hart or hind she takes no heed;
 Alas! her head lies low!

DISTANCE.

I.

I DREAMED last night once more I stood
Knee-deep in purple clover leas;
Your old home glimmered thro' its wood
Of dark and melancholy trees,
Where ev'ry sudden summer breeze
That wantoned o'er the solitude
The water's melody pursued,
And sleepy hummings of the bees.

II.

And ankle-deep in violet blooms
Methought I saw you standing there,
A lawny light among the glooms,
A crown of sunlight on your hair;
Wild songsters singing every where
Made lightning with their glossy plumes;
About you clung the wild perfumes
And swooned along the shining air.

III.

And then you called me, and my ears
Grew flattered with the music, led
In fancy back to sweeter years,
Far sweeter years that now are dead;
And at your summons fast I sped,
Buoyant as one a goal who nears.
Ah! lost, dead love! I woke in tears;
For as I neared you farther fled!

ASPIRATION.

GOD knows I strive against low lust and vice,
Wound in the net of their voluptuous hair;
God knows that all their kisses are as ice
To me who do not care.

God knows, against the front of Fate I set
Eyes still and stern, and lips as bitter prest;
Raised clenched and ineffectual palms to let
Her rock-like pressing breast!

God knows what motive such large zeal inspires,
God knows the star for which I climb and crave,
God knows, and only God, the eating fires
That in my bosom rave.

I will not fall! I will not; thou dost lie!
Deep Hell! that seethest in thy simmering pit;
Thy thousand throned horrors shall not vie,
Or ever compass it!

But as thou sinkest from my soul away,
So shall I rise, rolled in the morning's rose,
Beyond this world, this life, this little day—
God knows! God knows! God knows!

SPRING TWILIGHT.

THE sun set late, and left along the West
One furious ruby rare, whose rosy rays
Poured in a slumb'rous cloud's pear-curdled breast,
Blossomed to peachy sprays.

The sun set late, and wafts of wind arose,
And cuffed the blossom from the blossoming quince;
Shatter red attar vials of the rose,
And made the clover wince.

By dusking forests, thro' whose fretful boughs
In flying fragments shot the evening's flame,
Adown the tangled lane the quiet cows
With dreary tinklings came.

The sun set late; but hardly had he gone
When o'er the moon's gold-litten crescent there,
Clean Phosphor, polished as a precious stone,
Pulsed in fair deeps of air.

As from faint stars the glory waned and waned,
The fussy insects made the garden shrill;
Beyond the luminous pasture lands complained
One lonely whippoorwill.

FRAGMENTS.

I.

STARS.

THE fields of space gleam bright, as if some ancient
giant, old
As the moon and her extinguished mountains,
Had dipped his fingers huge into the twilight's sea of gold
And sprinkled all the heavens from these fountains.

II.

GHOSTS.

In soft sad nights, when all the still lagoon
Lolls in a wealth of golden radiance,
I sit like one enchanted in a trance,
And see them 'twixt the haunted mist and moon.

Lascivious eyes 'neath snow-pale sensual brows,
Flashing hot, killing lust, and tresses light,
Lose, satin streaming, purple as the night,
Night when the storm sings and the forest bows.

And then, meseems, along the wild, fierce hills
A whisper and a rustle of fleet feet,
As if tempestuous troops of Mænads meet
To drain deep bowls and shout and have their wills.

And once I see large, lustrous limbs revealed,
Moth-white and lawny, 'twixt sonorous trees;
And then a song, faint as of fairy seas,
Lulls all my senses till my eyes are sealed.

III.

MOONRISE AT SEA.

With lips that were hoarse with a fury
Of foam and of winds that are strewn,
Of storm and of turbulent hurry,
The ocean roared, heralding soon
A birth of miraculous glory,
Of madness, affection—the moon.

And soon from her waist with a slipping
And shudder and clinging of light,
With a loos'ning and pushing and ripping
Of the raven-laced bodice of Night,
With a silence of feet and a dripping
The goddess came, virginal white.

And the air was alive with the twinkle
And tumult of silver-shod feet,
The hurling of stars, and the sprinkle
Of loose, lawny limbs and a sweet
Murmur and whisper and tinkle
Of beam-weaponed moon spirits fleet.

THE RAIN.

WE stood where the fields were tawny,
Where the redolent woodland was warm,
And the summer above us, now lawny,
Was alive with the pulse winds of storm.

And we watched weak wheat waves lighten,
And wince and hiss at each gust,
And the turbulent maples whiten,
And the lane grow gray with dust.

White flakes from the blossoming cherry,
Pink snows of the peaches were blown,
And star-fair blooms of the berry
And the dogwood's flowers were strewn.

And the luminous hillocks grew sullied,
And shadowed and thrilled with alarm,
When the body of the blackness was gullied
With the rapid, keen flame of the storm.

And the birds to dry coverts had hurried,
And the musical rillet ran slow,
And the buccaneer bee was worried,
And the red lilies swung to and fro.

Till the elf-cuirassiers of the showers
Came, bright with slant lances of rain,
And charged the bare heads of the flowers,
And trampled the grass of the plain.

And the armies of the leaves were shattered,
Their standards drenched, heavy and lank;
And the iron weed's purple was spattered,
And the lily lay broke on the bank.

But high in the storm was the swallow,
And the rain-strong voice of the fall
In the bough-grottoed dingle sang hollow
To the sky-blue flags on its wall.

But the storm and its clouds passed over,
And left but one cloud in the West,
Wet wafts that were fragrant with clover,
And the sun low sunken to rest;

Soft spices of rain-studded poppies,
Of honey unfilched of a bee,
And balm of the mead and the coppice,
And musk of the rain-breathing tree.

Then the cloud in the West was riven,
And bubbled and bursten with gold,
Blown out through deep gorges of heaven,
And spilled on the wood and the wold.

TO S. McK.

I.

SHALL we forget how, in our day,
The Sabine fields about us lay
 In amaranth and asphodel,
 And bubbling, cold Bandusian well,
Fair Pyrrhas haunting every way?
In dells of forest faun and fay,
Moss-lounged within the fountain's spray,
 How drained we wines too rare to tell,
 Shall we forget?

The fine Falernian or the ray
Of fiery Cæcuban, while gay
 We heard Bicchantes shout and yell,
 Filled full of Bacchus, and so fell
To dreaming of some Lydia;
 Shall we forget?

II.

If we forget in after years,
My comrade, all the hopes and fears
 That hovered all our walks around
 When ent'ring on that mystic ground

BLOOMS OF THE BERRY.

Of ghostly legends, where one hears
By bandit towers the chase that nears
Thro' cracking woods, the oaths and cheers
Of demon huntsman, horn and hound;
If we forget.

Lenora's lover and her tears,
Fierce Wallenstein, satanic sneers
Of the red devil Goethe bound,—
Why then, forsooth, they soon are found
In burly stoops of German beers,
If we forget!

MORNING AND NIGHT.

FROM "THE TRIUMPH OF MUSIC."

. . . Fresh from bathing in orient fountains,
In wells of rock water and snow,
Comes the Dawn with her pearl-brimming fingers
O'er the thyme and the pines of yon mountain;
Where she steps young blossoms fresh blow. . .

And sweet as the star-beams in fountains,
And soft as the fall of the dew,
Wet as the hues of the rain-arch,
To me was the Dawn when on mountains
Pearl-capped o'er the hyaline blue,
Saint-fair and pure thro' the blue,
Her spirit in dimples comes dancing,
In dimples of light and of fire,
Planting her footprints in roses
On the floss of the snow-drifts, while glancing
Large on her brow is her tire,
Gemmed with the morning-star's fire.

But sweet as the incense from altars,
And warm as the light on a cloud,
Sad as the wail of bleak woodlands,
To me was the Night when she falters
In the sorrowful folds of her shroud,
In the far-blowing black of her shroud,

O'er the flower-strewn bier of her lover,
The Day lying faded and fair
In the red-curtained chambers of air.
When disheveled I've seen her uncover
Her gold-girdled raven of hair—
All hooped with the gold of the even—
And for this sad burial prepare,
The spirit of Night in the heaven
To me was most wondrously fair,
So fair that I wished it were given
To die in the rays of her hair,
Die wrapped in her gold-girdled hair.

THE TOLL-MAN'S DAUGHTER.

ONCE more the June with her great moon
Poured harvest o'er the golden fields;
Once more her days in hot, bright shields
She bore from morn to drooping noon.
A rhymer, sick of work and rhyme,
Disheartened by a poor success,
I sought the woods to loll the time
In one long month of quietness.
It was the time when one will thrill
For indolent fields, serener skies;
For Nature's softening subtleties
Of higher cloud and gullied rill.

When crumpled poppies strew the halls
Of all the East, where mounts the Dawn,
And in the eve the skyey lawn
Gold kingcups heap 'neath Night's gray walls.
The silver peace of distant wolds,
Of far-seen lakes a glimmering dance,
Fresh green of undulating hills,
Old woodlands silent with romance.
Intenser stars, a lazier moon,
The moonlit torrent on the peak,
And at one's side a maiden meek
And lovely as the balmy June.

The toll-gate stood beside the road,
The highway from the city's smoke ;
Its long, well white-washed spear-point broke
The clean sky o'er the pike and showed
The draught-horse where his rest should be.
The locusts tall with shade on shade
The trough of water cool beneath,
From heat and toil a Sabbath made.
Beyond were pastures where the kine
Would browse, and where a young bull roared ;
And here would pass a peeping hoard
Of duck and brood in waddling line.

A week flew by on wings of ease.
I walked along a ruddy lane ;
I stopped to list some picker's strain
Sung in a patch of raspberries.
Upon the fence's lanky rails
I leaned to stare into great eyes
Glooming beneath a bonnet white
Bowed 'neath a chin of dimpled prize.
Phœbe, the toll-man's daughter she ;
I knew her by a slow, calm smile,
Whose source seemed distant many a mile,
Brimming her eyes' profundity.

Elastic as a filly's tread
Her modest step, and full and warm
The graceful contour of her form

Harmonious swelled from foot to head.
And such a head!—You'd thought that there
 The languid night, in frowsy bliss,
Had curled brown rays for her deep hair
 And stained them with the starlight's kiss.
A face as beautiful and bright,
 As crystal fair as twilight skies,
 Lit with the stars of hazel eyes,
And lashed with black of dusky night.

She stood waist-deep amid the briers ;
 Above in twisted lengths were rolled
 The sunset's tangled whorls of gold,
Blown from the West's mist-fueled fires.
A shuddering twilight dashed with gold
 Down smouldering hills the fierce day fell,
And bubbling over star on star
 The night's blue cisterns 'gan to well,
With the dusk crescent of his wings
 A huge crane cleaves the wealthy West,
 While up the East a silver breast
Of chastity the full moon brings.

For her, I knew, where'er she trod,
 Each dew-drop raised a limpid glass
 To flash her beauty from the grass ;
That wild flowers bloomed along the sod,
Or, whisp'ring, murmured when she smiled ;
 The wood-bird hushed to hark her song,

Or, all enamored, from his wild
 Before her feet flew flutt'ring long.
 The brook droned mystic melodies,
 Eddied in laughter when she kissed
 With naked feet its amethyst
 Of waters stained by blooming trees.

THE BERRIERS.

MORN.

DOWN silver precipices drawn
 The red-wine cataracts of dawn
 Pour soundless torrents wide and far,
 Deluging each warm, floating star.
 A sound of winds and brooks and wings,
 Sweet woodland-fluted carolings,
 Star radiance dashed on moss and fern,
 Wet leaves that quiver, breathe, and burn;
 Wet hills hung heavily with woods,
 Dew-drenched and drunken solitudes
 Faint-murmuring elfin canticles;
 Sound, light, and spicy boisterous smells,
 And flowers and buds; tumultuous bees,
 Wind-wafts and genii of the trees.
 Thro' briers that trammel, one by one,
 With swinging pails comes laughing on

A troop of youthful berriers,
Their wet feet glitt'ring where they pass
Thro' dew-drop studded tufts of grass:
And oh! their cheers, their merry cheers,
Wake Echo on her shrubby rock,
Whom dale and mountain answering mock
With rapid fairy horns, as if
Each mossy hill and weedy cliff
Had its imperial Oberon,
 Who, seeking his Titania hid
In bloomy covert, shun,
 In kingly wrath had called and chid.

EVENING.

Cloud-feathers oozing rich with light,
Slow trembling in the locks of Night,
Her dusky waist with sultry gold
Girdled and buckled fold on fold.
High stars; a sound of bleating flocks;
Gray, burly shadows fall'n 'mid rocks,
Like giant curses overthrown
By some Arthurian champion;
Soft-swimming sorceries of mist
Haunting glad glens of amethyst;
Low tinklings in dim clover dells
Of bland-eyed kine with brazen bells;
And where the marsh in reed and grass
Burns angry as a shattered glass,

The flies blur sudden blasts of shine,
Like wasted draughts of amber wine
Spun high by reeling Bacchanals
 When Bacchus breeds his curling hair
 With vine-leaves, and from ev'ry lair
Voluptuous Mænads lovely calls.
They come, they come, a happy throng,
The berries with gibe and song;
Deep pails brimmed black to tin-white eaves
With luscious fruit kept cool with leaves
Of aromatic sassafras,
 'Twixt which some sparkling berry slips,
Like laughter, from the purple mass,
 Wine-swollen as Silenus' lips.

HARVESTING.

I.

NOON.

THE tanned and sultry noon climbs high
Up gleaming reaches of the sky ;
Below the balmy belts of pines
The cliff-lunged river laps and shines ;
A down the aromatic dell
Sifts the warm harvest's musky smell.
And, oh ! above one sees and hears
The brawny-throated harvesters ;
Their red brows beaded with the heat,
By twos and threes among the wheat
Flash their hot sickles' slenderness
In loops of shine ; and sing, and sing,
Like some mad troop of piping Pan,
Along the hills that swoon or ring
With sounds of Ariel airiness
That haunted freckled Caliban :

“ O ho ! O ho ! 'tis noon, I say ;
The roses blow.
Away, away, above the hay
The burly bees to the roses gay
Hum love-tunes all the livelong day,
So low ! so low !
The roses' Minnesingers they.”

II.

TWILIGHT.

Up velvet lawns of lilac skies
 The tawny moon begins to rise
 Behind low blue-black hills of trees,
 As rises from faint Siren seas,
 To rock in purple deeps, hip-hid,
 A virgin-bosom'd Oceanid.
 Gaunt shadows crouch by rock and wood,
 Like hairy Satyrs, grim and rude,
 Till the white Dryads of the moon
 Come noiseless in their silver shoon
 To beautify them with their love.
 The sweet, sad notes I hear, I hear,
 Beyond dim pines and mellow hills,
 Of some fair maiden harvester,
 The lovely Limnad of the grove
 Whose singing charms me while it kills :

“O deep! O deep! the twilight rare
 Pales on to sleep;
 And fair, so fair! fades the rich air.
 The fountain shines in its ferny lair,
 Where the cold Nymph sits in her oozy hair
 To weep, to weep,
 For a mortal youth who is not there.”

GOING FOR THE COWS.

I.

THE juice-big apples' sullen gold,
Like lazy Sultans laughed and lolled
'Mid heavy mats of leaves that lay
Green-flatten'd 'gainst the glaring day ;
And here a pear of rusty brown,
And peaches on whose brows the down
Waxed furry as the ears of Pan,
And, like Diana's cheeks, whose tan
Burnt tender secresies of fire,
Or wan as Psyche's with desire
Of lips that love to kiss or taste
Voluptuous ripeness there sweet placed.
And down the orchard vistas he,—
Barefooted, trousers out at knee,
Face shadowing from the sloping sun
 A hat of straw, brim-sagging broad,—
Came, lowly whistling some vague tune,
 Upon the sunbeam-sprinkled road.
Lank in his hand a twig with which
 In boyish thoughtlessness he crushed
Rare pennyroyal myriads rich
 In pungent souls that warmly gushed.
Before him whirled in rattling fear
The saffron-bellied grasshopper ;

And ringing from the musky dells
 Came faint the cows' melodious bells,
 Where whimp'ring like a fretful hound
 The fountain bubbled up in sound.

II.

Yellow as sunset skies and pale
 As fairy clouds that stay or sail
 Thro' azure vaults of summer, blue
 As summer heavens the violets grew ;
 And mosses on which spurts of light
 Fell laughing, like the lips one might
 Feign for a Hebe or a girl
 Whose mouth heat-lightens up with pearl ;
 Limp ferns in murmuring shadows shrunk
 And silent as if stunned or drunk
 With moist aromas of the wood ;
 Dry rustlings of the quietude ;
 On silver fronds' thin tresses new
 Cold limpid blisters of the dew.
 Across the rambling fence she leaned :
 A gingham gown to ankles bare ;
 Her artless beauty, bonnet-screened,
 Tempestuous with its stormy hair.
 A rain-crow gurgled in a vine,—
 She heard it not—a step she hears ;
 The wild rose smelt like delicate wine,—
 She knew it not—'tis he that nears.

With smiles of greeting all her face
Grew musical; with rustic grace
He leant beside her, and they had
Some parley, with light laughter glad;
I know not what; I know but this,
Its final period was a kiss.

SONG OF THE SPIRITS OF SPRING.

I.

WAFTED o'er purple seas,
From gold Hesperides,
Mixed with the southern breeze,
Hail to us spirits!
Dripping with fragrant rains,
Fire of our ardent veins,
Life of the barren plains,
Woodlands and germs that the woodland inherits.

II.

Wan as the creamy mist,
Tinged with pale amethyst,
Warm with the sun that kissed
Vine-tangled mountains
Looming o'er tropic lakes,
Where ev'ry air that shakes
Tamarisk coverts makes
Music that haunts like the falling of fountains.

III.

Swift are our flashing feet,
Fleet with the winds that meet,
Winds that, blown, billow sweet,
 And with light porous,
Boom with the drunken bees,
Sigh with the surge of seas,
Rush with the rush of trees,
Birds and wild wings and of torrents sonorous.

IV.

Stars in our liquid eyes,
Stars of the darkest skies,
And on our fingers lies
 Starlight; and shadows,
Unmooned, of nights that creep
Hide in our tresses deep,
And in our limbs white sleep
Dreams like a baby in asphodel meadows.

V.

Music of many streams,
Strength of a million beams,
Fire and sainted dreams,
 Murmuring lowly,
Pulse on hot lips of light,
Which, what they kiss of blight,
Quicken and blossom white,
Raise to be beautiful, perfect, and holy.

VI.

Oh, will you sit and wait,
When fields, erst desolate,
Now are intoxicate
 With life that flowers?
Purple with love and rife
With their fierce budded life,
Passion and rosy strife
Drained from warm winds and the turbulent showers?

VII.

Nay! at our feet you'll lie:
For the winds lullaby,
For our completest sky,
 And largess flying
Of pinky pearls of blooms,
For the one bee that booms,
And the warm-spilled perfumes
Forget for a moment already we're dying!

THE SPIRITS OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

[VOICES SINGING.]

FIRST CHORUS.

ERE the birth of Death and of Time,
 Ere the birth of Hell and its torments,
 Ere the orbs of heat and of rime
 And the winds to the heavens were as garments,
 Worm-like in the womb of Space,
 Worm-like from her monster womb,
 We sprung, a myriad race
 Of thunder and tempest and gloom.

SECOND CHORUS.

As from the evil good
 Springs like a fire,
 As bland beatitude
 Wells from the dire,
 So was the Chaos brood
 Of us the sire.

FIRST CHORUS.

We had lain for gaunt ages asleep
 'Neath her breast in a bulk of torpor,
 When down through the vasts of the deep
 Clove a sound like the notes of a harper;

Clove a sound, and the horrors grew
Tumultuous with turbulent night,
With whirlwinds of blackness that blew,
And storm that was godly in might.
And the walls of our prison were shattered
Like the crust of a fire-wrecked world;
Like torrents of clouds that are scattered
On the face of the Night we are hurled.

SECOND CHORUS.

Us, in unholy thought
Patiently lying,
Eons of violence wrought,
Violence defying.
When on a mighty wind,—
Born of a godly mind
Large with a motive kind,—
Girdled with wonder,
Flame and a strength of song
Rushed in a voice along,
Burst and, lo! we were strong—
Strong as the thunder.

FIRST CHORUS.

We lurk in the upper spaces,
Where the oceans of tempest are born,
Where the scowls of our shadowy faces
Are safe from the splendors of morn.

Our homes are wrecked worlds and each planet
Whose sun is a light that is sped ;
Bleak moons whose cold bodies of granite
Are hollow and flameless and dead.

SECOND CHORUS.

We in the living sun
Live like a passion ;
Ere all his stars begun
We and the sun were one,
As God did fashion.
Lo! from our burning hands,
Fung like inspired brands,
Hurled we the stars, like sands
Whirled in the ocean ;
And all our breath was life,
Life to those worlds and rife
With ever-moving strife,
Passion for motion.

FIRST CHORUS.

Our beds are the tombs of the mortals ;
We feed on their crimes and the thought
That falters and halts at the portals
Of actions, intentions unwrought.
We cover the face of to-morrow ;
We frown in the hours that be ;
We breathe in the presence of sorrow,
And death and destruction are we.

SECOND CHORUS.

We are the hope and ease,
Joy and the pleasure,
Authors of love and peace,
Love that shall never cease,
Free as the azure.
Birth of our eyes—the might,
Power and strength of light,
Victor o'er death and night,
Flesh and its yearnings :
And from our utt'rance streams
Beauty with burnings
After completer dreams,
Fuller discernings.

Morning and birth are ours,
Dew that is blown
From our light lips like flowers;
Clouds and the beating showers,
Stars that are sown ;
Song and the bursting buds,
Life of the many floods,
Winds that are strown.

Ye in your darkness are
Dark and infernal ;
Subject to death and mar !
But in the spaces far,
Like our effulgent star,
We are eternal !

TO SORROW.

I.

O TEAR-EYED goddess of the marble brow,
 Who showerest snows of tresses on the night
 Of anguished temples! lonely watcher, thou
 Who bendest o'er the couch of life's dead light!
 Who in the hollow hours of night's noon
 Rockest the cradle of the child,
 Whose fever-blooded eyeballs seek the moon
 To cool their pulses wild.
 Thou who dost stoop to kiss a sister's cheek,
 Which rules the alabaster death with youth;
 Thou who art mad and strangely meek,—
 Empress of passions, couth, uncouth,
 We kneel to thee!

II.

O Sorrow, when the sapless world grows white,
 And singing gathers on her springtide robes,
 On some bleak steep which takes the ruby light
 Of day, braid in thy locks the spirit globes
 Of cool, weak snowdrops dashed with frozen dew,
 And hasten to the leas below
 Where Spring may wandered be from the rich blue
 Which rims yon clouds of snow.
 From the pied crocus and the violet's hues,
 Think then how thou didst rake the bosoming snow,
 To show some mother the soft blues
 Of baby eyes, the sparkling glow
 Of dimple-dotted cheeks.

III.

On some hoar upland, hoar with clustered thorns,
Hard by a river's wind-blown lisp of waves,
Sit with young white-skinned Spring, whose dewy morns
Laugh in his pouting cheeks which Health enslaves.
There feast thee on the brede of his long hair,
Where half-grown roses royal blaze.
And cool-eyed primroses wide-diskéd bare,
Frail stars of moonish haze,
Contented lie wound in his breathing arms:—
'Tis meet that grief should mingle with the wan,
That blue of calms and gloom of storms
Reign on the burning throne of dawn
To glorify the world.

IV.

Or in the peaceful calm of stormy evens,
When the sick, bloodless West doth winding spread
A sheeted shroud of silver o'er the heavens
And brooches it with one rich star's gold head,
Low lay thee down beside a mountain lake,
Which dimples at the twilight's sigh,
Couched on plush mosses 'neath green bosks that shake
Storm fragrance from on high,—
The cold, pure spice of rain-drenched forests deep,—
And gorge thy grief upon the nightingale,
Who with the hush a war doth keep
That bubbles down the starlit vale
To Silence's rapt ear.

THE PASSING OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

ON southern winds shot through with amber light,
 Breeding soft balm, and clothed in cloudy white,
 The lily-fingered Spring came o'er the hills
 Waking the crocus and the daffodils.
 O'er the cold earth she breathed a tender sigh,—
 The maples sang and flung their banners high,
 Their crimson-tasseled pennons, and the elm
 Bound his dark brows with a green-crested helm.
 Beneath the musky rot of Autumn's leaves,
 Under the forest's myriad naked eaves,
 Life woke and rose in gold and green and blue,
 Robed in the star-light of the twinkling dew.
 With timid tread adown the barren wood
 Spring held her way, when, lo! before her stood
 White-mantled Winter wagging his white head,
 Stormy his brow, and stormily he said:—
 "Sole lord of terror, and the fiend of storm,
 Crowned king of despots, my envermeiled arm
 Slew these vast woodlands crimsoning all their bowers!
 Thou, Spirit of Beauty, with thy bursting flowers,
 Swollen with pride, wouldst thou usurp my throne,
 Long planted here deep in the waste's wild moan?
 Sworn foe of beauty, with a band of ice
 I'll strangle thee tho' thou be welcomer thrice!"
 So round her throat a band of blasting frost,
 Her sainted throat of snow, he coiled and crossed,

And cast her on the dark, unfeeling mold ;
Her tender blossoms, blighted in the fold
Of her warm bosoms, trembling bowed their brows
In holy meekness, or in scattered rows
Huddled about her white and silent feet,
Or on pale lips laid fond last kisses sweet,
And died : lilacs all musky for the May,
And bluer violets, and snow drops lay
Silent and dead, but yet divinely fair,
Like ice gems glist'ning in Spring's lovely hair.
The Beautiful, so innocent, sweet, and pure,
Why must thou perish, and the evil still endure ?
Too soon must pass the Beautiful away !
Too long doth Terror hold anarchal sway !
Alas ! sad heart, bow not beneath the pain,
Time changeth all, the Beautiful wakes again !
We can not question such ; a higher power
Knows best what bud is ripest in its flower ;
Silently plucks it at the fittest hour.

A NOVEMBER SKETCH.

THE hoar-frost hisses 'neath the feet,
And the worm-fence's straggling length,
Smote by the morning's slanted strength,
Sparkles one rib of virgin sleet.

To withered fields the crisp breeze talks,
And silently and sadly lifts
The bronz'd leaves from the beech and drifts
Them wadded down the woodland walks.

Reluctantly and one by one
The worthless leaves sift slowly down,
And thro' the mournful vistas blown
Drop rustling, and their rest is won.

Where stands the brook beneath its fall,
Thin-scaled with ice the pool is bound,
And on the pebbles scattered 'round
The ooze is frozen; one and all

White as rare crystals shining fair.
There stirs no life: the faded wood
Mourns sighing, and the solitude
Seems shaken with a mighty care.

Decay and silence sadly drape
The vigorous limbs of oldest trees,
The rotting leaves and rocks whose knees
Are shagged with moss, with misty crape.

To sullenness the surly crow
All his derisive feeling yields,
And o'er the barren stubble-fields
Flaps cawless, wrapped in hungry woe.

The eve comes on: the teasel stoops
Its spike-crowned head before the blast;
The tattered leaves drive whirling past
Like skeletons in whistling troops.

The pithy elder copses sigh;
Their broad blue combs with berries weighed,
Like heavy pendulums are swayed
With ev'ry gust that hurries by.

Thro' matted walls of tangled brier
That hedge the lane, the sumachs thrust
Their scarlet torches red as rust,
Burning with flames of stolid fire.

The evening's here—cold, hard, and drear;
The lavish West with bullion bright
Of molten silver walls the night
Far as one star's thin rays appear.

Wedged toward the West's cold luridness
The wild geese fly 'neath roseless domes;
The wild cry of the leader comes
Distant and harsh with loneliness.

The pale West dies, and in its cup
Bubble on bubble pours the night:
The East glows with a mystic light;
The stars are keen; the moon is up.

THE WHITE EVENING.

FROM gray, bleak hills 'neath steely skies
Thro' beards of ice the forests roar ;
Along the river's humming shore
The skimming skater bird-like flies.

On windy meads where wave white breaks,
Where fettered briars' glist'ning hands
Reach to the cold moon's ghastly lands,
Hoots the lorn owl, and crouching quakes.

With frowsy snow blanched is the world ;
Stiff sweeps the wind thro' murmuring pines,
Then fiend-like deep-entangled whines
Thro' the dead oak, that vagrant twirled

Phantoms the cliff o'er the wild wold :
Ghost-vested willows rim the stream,
Low hang lank limbs where in a dream
The houseless hare leaps o'er the cold

On snow-tressed crags that twinkling flash,
Like champions mailed for clanking war,
Glares down large Phosphor's quiv'ring star,
Where teeth of foam the fierce seas gnash.

Slim o'er the tree-tops weighed with white
The country church's spire doth swell,
A scintillating icicle,
While fitfully the village light

In sailow stars stabs the gray dark ;
Homeward the creaking wagons strain
Thro' knee-deep drifts; the steeple's vane
A fitting ghost whirls in its sark.

Down from the flaky North with clash,
Swathed in his beard of flashing sleet,
With steeds of winds that jangling beat
Life from the world, and roaring dash,—

Loud Winter! ruddy as a rose
Blown by the June's mild, musky lips;
The high moon dims her horn that dips,
And fold on fold roll down the snows.

SUMMER.

I.

NOW Lucifer ignites her taper bright
To greet the wild-flowered Dawn,
Who leads the tasseled Summer draped with light
Down heaven's gilded lawn.
Hark to the minstrels of the woods,
Tuning glad harps in haunted solitudes!
List to the rillet's music soft,
The tree's hushed song:
Flushed from her star aloft
Comes blue-eyed Summer stepping meek along.

II.

And as the lusty lover leads her in,
Clad in soft blushes red,
With breezy lips her love he tries to win,
Doth many a tear-drop shed:
While airy sighs, dyed in his heart,
Like Cupid's arrows, flame-tipped o'er her dart.
He bends his yellow head and craves
The timid maid
For one sweet kiss, and laves
Her rose-crowned locks with tears until 'tis paid.

III.

Come to the forest or the musky meadows
 Brown with their mellow grain;
 Come where the cascades shake green shadows,
 Where tawny orchards reign.
 Come where fall reapers ply the scythe,
 Where golden sheaves are heaped by damsels blithe:
 Come to the rock-rough mountain old,
 Tree-pierced and wild;
 Where freckled flowers paint the wold,
 Hail laughing Summer, sunny-haired, blonde child!

IV.

Come where the dragon-flies in coats of blue
 Flit o'er the wildwood streams,
 And fright the wild bee from the honey-dew
 Where it long-sipping dreams.
 Come where the touch-me-nots shy peep
 Gold-horned and speckled from the cascades steep:
 Come where the daisies by the rustic bridge
 Display their eyes,
 Or where the liliated sedge
 From emerald forest-pools, lance-like, thick rise.

V.

Come where the wild deer feed within the brake
 As red as oak and strong;
 Come where romantic echoes wildly wake
 Old hills to mystic song.

Come to the vine-hung woodlands hoary,
Come to the realms of hunting song and story;
 But come when Summer decks the land
 With garb of gold,
 With colors myriad as the sand—
A birth-fair child, tho' thousand summers old.

VI.

Come where the trees extend their shining arms
 Unto the star-sown skies;
Displaying wrinkled age in limb-gnarled charms
 When Night, moon-eyed, brown lies
Upon their bending lances seen
With fluttered pennons in the moon's broad sheen.
 Come where the pearly dew is spread
 Upon the rose;
 Come where the fire-flies wed
The drowsy Night flame-stained with sudden glows.

VII.

Come to the vine-dark dingle's whispering glens
 White with their blossoms pale;
Come to the willowed weed-haired lakes and fens;
 Come to the tedded vale.
Come all, and greet the brown-browed child
With lips of honey red as a poppy wild,
 Clothed in her vernal robes of old,
 Her hair with wheat
 All tawny as with gold;
Hail Summer with her sandaled grain-bound feet!

NIGHT.

LO! where the car of Day down slopes of flame
 On burnished axle quits the drowsy skies!
 And as his snorting steeds of glowing brass
 Rush 'neath the earth, a glimmering dust of gold
 From their fierce hoofs o'er heaven's azure meads
 Rolls to yon star that burns beneath the moon.
 With solemn tread and holy-stoled, star-bound,
 The Night steps in, sad votaress, like a nun,
 To pace lone corridors of th' ebon-arched sky.
 How sad! how beautiful! her raven locks
 Pale-filleted with stars that dance their sheen
 On her deep, holy eyes, and woo to sleep,
 Sleep or the easeful slumber of white Death!
 How calm o'er this great water, in its flow
 Silent and vast, smoothes yon cold sister sphere,
 Her lucid chasteness feathering the wax-white foam!
 As o'er a troubled brow falls calm content:
 As clear-eyed chastity in this bleak world
 Tinges and softens all the darker dross.

See, where the roses blow at the wood's edge
 In many a languid bloom, bowed to the moon
 And the dim river's lisp; sleep droops their lids
 With damask lashes trimmed and fragile rayed,

Which the mad, frolic bee—rough paramour—
So often kissed beneath th' enlivening sun.
How cool the breezes touch the tired head
With unseen fingers long and soft! and there
From its white couch of thorn-tree blossoms sweet,
Pillowed with one milk cluster, floating, swooning,
Drops the low nocturne of a dreaming bird,
Ave Maria, nun-like, slumb'ring sung.
See, there the violet mound in many an eye,
A deep-blue eye, meek, delicate, and sad,
As Sorrow's own sad eyes, great with far dreams,
When haltingly she bends o'er Lethe's waves
Falt'ring to drink, and falt'ring still remains.
The Night with feet of moon-tinged mist swept o'er
Them now, but as she passed she bent and kissed
Each modest orb that selfless hung as tho'
Thought-freighted low; then groped her train of jet
Which billowing by did merely waft the sound
Of a brief gust to each wild violet,
To kiss each eye and laugh; then shed a tear
Upon each downward face which nestled there.

She weeping from her silent vigil turns,
As some pale mother from her cradled child,
Frail, sick, and wan, with kisses warm and songs
Wooed to a peaceful ease and tranquil rest,
When the rathe cock crows to the graying East.

DAWN.

I.

MIST on the mountain height
 Silvery creeping;
 Incarnate beads of light
 Bloom-cradled sleeping,
 Dripped from the brow of Night.

II.

Shadows, and winds that rise
 Over the mountain;
 Stars in the spar that lies
 Cold in the fountain,
 Pale as the quickened skies.

III.

Sheep in the wattled folds
 Dreamily bleating,
 Dim on the thistled wolds,
 Where, glad with meeting,
 Morn the thin Night enfolds.

IV.

Sleep on the moaning sea
 Hushing his trouble;
 Rest on the cares that be
 Fled in Life's bubble,
 Calm on the woes of me. . . .

V.

Mist from the mountain height
Hurriedly fleeting;
Star in the locks of Night
Throbbing and beating,
Thrilled with the coming light.

VI.

Flocks on the musky strips;
Pearl in the fountain;
Winds from the forest's lips;
Red on the mountain;
Dawn from the Orient trips.

JUNE.

I.

HOTLY burns the amaryllis
With its stars of red ;
Whitely rise the stately lilies
From the lily bed ;
Withered shrinks the wax May-apple
'Neath its parasol ;
Chilly dies the violet dapple
In its earthly hall.

II.

March is but a blust'ring liar,
April a sad love,
May a milkmaid from the byre
Flirting in the grove.
June is rich in many blossoms,
She's the one I'll woo ;
Health swells in her sunny bosoms,
She's my sweetheart true.

THE JESSAMINE AND THE MORNING-GLORY.

I.

ON a sheet of silver the morning-star lay
Fresh, white as a baby child,
And laughed and leaped in his lissome way,
On my parterre of flowers smiled.
For a morning-glory's spiral bud
Of shell-coned tallness slim
Stood ready to burst her delicate hood
And bloom on the dawning dim:
A princess royal in purple born
To beauty and pride in the balmy morn.

II.

And she shook her locks at the morning-star
And her raiment scattered wide;
Low laughed at a hollyhock's scimeter,
Its jewels of buds to deride.
The pomegranate near, with fingers of flame,
The hot-faced geraniums nigh,
Their proud heads bowed to the queenly dame
For they knew her state was high:
The fuchsia like a bead of blood
Bashfully blushed in her silvery hood.

III.

Ali wit that this child of the morning light
 Was queen of the morn and them,
 That the orient star in his beams of white
 Was her prince in a diadem ;
 For lavish he showered those pearls that flash
 And cluster the front of her smock ;
 From his lordly fingers of rays did dash
 Down zephyrs her crib to rock.
 But a jessamine pale 'neath the arbor grew,
 Meek, selfless, and sweet, and a virgin true.

IV.

But the morning-glory disdained her birth,
 Of her chastity made a scorn :
 " I marvel," she said, " if thy mother earth
 Was not sick when thou wast born !
 Thou art pale as an infant an hour dead—
 Wan thing, dost weary our eye !"
 And she weakly laughed and stiffened her head
 And turned to her love i' the sky.
 But the jessamine turned to the rose beside
 With a heavy glance and but sadly sighed.

V.

And the orient grew to a wealth of bars
 'Neath which foam-fires churned,

And the princess proud saw her lord of stars
 In a torrid furnace burned ;
And the giant of life with his breath of flame
 Glared down with one red eye,
And 'neath his breath this gorgeous dame
 In her diamonds did wilt and die ;
But the jessamine fragrant waxed purer with light ;
For my lady's bosom I culled it that night.

THE HEREMITE TOAD.

A HUMAN skull in a church-yard lay ;
 For the church was a wreck, and the tombstones old
 On the graves of their dead were rotting away
 To the like of their long-watched mould.

And an heremite toad in this desolate seat
 Had made him an hermitage long ago,
 Where the ivy frail with its delicate feet
 Could creep o'er his cell of bone.

And the ground was dark, and the springing dawn,
 When it struck from the tottering stones of each grave
 A glimmering silver, the dawn drops wan
 This skull and its ivy would lave.

* * * * *

The night her crescent had thinly hung
 From a single star o'er the shattered wall,
 And its feeble light on the stone was flung
 Where I sat to hear him call.

And I heard this heremite toad as he sate
 In the gloom of his ghastly hermitage,
 To himself and the gloom all hollowly prate,
 Like a misanthropic sage :

“ O, beauty is well and is wealth to all,
 But wealth without beauty *makes* fair ;
 And beauty with wealth brings wooers tall
 Whom she snares in her golden hair.

“ Tho' beauty be well and be wealth to all,
 And wealth without beauty draw men,
 Beauty must come to the vaulted wall,
 And what is wealth to her then? . . .

“ This skeleton face was beautiful erst ;
 These sockets could mammonites sway ;
 So she barter'd her beauty for gold accurs'd—
 But both have vanished away.

“ But beauty is well when the mind it reveals
 More beautiful is than the head ;
 For beauty and wealth the tomb congeals,
 But the mind grows lovelier dead.”

And he blinked at the moon from his grinning cell,
 And the darnels and burdocks around
 Bowed down in the night, and I murmured “ Well ! ”
 For I deemed his judgment sound.

THE HEART OF SPRING.

I.

WHITEN, O whiten, ye clouds of fleece!
 Whiten like lilies floating above,
 Blown wild about like a flock of white geese!
 But never, O never; so cease! so cease!
 Never as white as the throat of my love!

II.

Blue-black night on the mountain peaks,
 Blacker the locks of my maiden love!
 Silvery star 'mid the evening streaks
 Over the torrent that flashes and breaks,
 Brighter the eyes of my laughing love!

III.

Horn of a new moon golden 'mid gold,
 Broken, fluted in the tarn's close skies;
 Shattered and beaten, wave-like and cold,
 Crisper my love's locks fold on fold,
 Cooler and brighter where dreaming she lies!

IV.

Silvery star o'er the precipice snow,
 Mist in the vale where the rivulet sings,
 Dropping from ledge to ledge below,
 Where we stood in the roseate glow,
 Softer the voice of her whisperings!

V.

Sound o' May winds in the blossoming trees,
Sweeter the breeze my love's breath brings!
Song of wild birds on the morning breeze,
Song o' wild birds and murmur o' wild bees,
Sweeter my love's voice when she sings!

VI.

To the star of dawning bathed with dew,
Blow, moony Sylph, your bugle of gold!
Blow thro' the hyaline over the blue,
Blow from the sunset the morning lands thro',
Let the star of love of our love be told!

THE OLD HOUSE BY THE MERE.

FIVE rotten gables look upon
Wan rotting roses and rank weeds,
Old iron gates on posts of stone,
Dim dingles where the vermin breeds.
Five rotten gables black appear
Above bleak yews and cedars sad,
And thence they see the sleepy mere
In lazy lilies clad.

At morn the slender dragon-fly,
A burnished ray of light, darts past ;
The knightly bee comes charging by
Winding a surly blast.
At noon amid the fervid leaves
The quarreling insects gossip hot,
And thro' the grass the spider weaves
A web with silver shot.

At eve the hermit cricket rears
His vesper song in shrillful shrieks ;
The bat a blund'ring voyage steers
Beneath the sunset's streaks.
The slimy worm gnaws at the bud,
The katydid talks dreamily ;
The sulen owl in monkish hood
Chants in the old beech tree.

At night the blist'ring dew comes down
And lies as white as autumn frost
Upon the green, upon the brown,
You'd deem each bush a ghost.
The crescent moon with golden prow
Plows thro' the frothy cloud and 's gone ;
A large blue star comes out to glow
Above the house alone.

The oozy lilies lie asleep
On glist'ring beds of welt'ring leaves ;
The starlight through the trees doth peep,
And fairy garments weaves.
And in the mere, all lily fair,
A maiden's corpse floats evermore,
Naked, and in her raven hair
Wrapped o'er and o'er.

And when the clock of yon old town
Peals midnight o'er the fenny heath,
In haunted chambers up and down
Marches the pomp of Death ;
And stiff, stiff silks make rustlings,
Sweep sable satins murmuringly ;
And then a voice so sweetly sings
An olden melody.

And foam-white creatures flit and dance
Along the dusty galleries,

With long, loose locks that strangely glance
 And demon-glaring eyes.
 But in one chamber, when the moon
 Casts her cold silver wreath on wreath,
 Holds there proud state on ghastly throne
 The skeleton Death.

SUBSTRATUM.

HEAR you no music in the creaks
 Made by the sallow grasshopper,
 Who in the hot weeds sharply breaks
 The mellow dryness with his cheer?
 Or did you by the hearthstones hear
 The cricket's kind, shrill strain when frost
 Worked mysteries of silver near
 Upon the casement's panes, and lost
 Without the gate-post seemed a sheeted ghost?

 Or through the dank, dim Springtide's night
 Green minstrels of the marshlands tune
 Their hoarse lyres in the pale twilight,
 Hailing the sickle of the moon
 From flag-thronged pools that glassed her lune?
 Or in the Summer, dry and loud,
 The hard cicada whirr aboon
 His long lay in a poplar's cloud,
 When the thin heat rose wraith-like in a shroud?

The cloud that lids the naked moon,
And smites the myriad leaves with night
Of stormy lashes, livid strewn
With veins of branched and splintered light;
The fruitful glebe with blossoms white,
The thistle's purple plume; the tears
Pearling the matin buds' delight,
Contain a something, it appears,
'Neath their real selves—a poetry that cheers.

Nor scoff at those who on the wold
See fairies whirling in the shine
Of prodigal moons, whose lavish gold
Paves wood-ways, forests wild with vine,
When all the wilderness with wine
Of tipsy dew is dazed; nor say
Our God's restricted to confine
His wonders solely to the day,
That yields the abstract tangible to clay.

Ponder the entrance of the Morn
When from her rubric forehead far
Shines one clean star, and the dead tarn,
The wooded river's red as war:
Where arid splinters of the scar
Lock horns above a blue abyss,
How roses prank each icy bar,
While piled aloft the mountains press,
Fling dawn below from many a hoary tress.

The jutting crags, all stubborn-veined
 With iron life, where eaglets scream
In dizzy flocks, and cleave the stained
 Mist-rain bows of the mountain stream;
 Thus you will drink the thickest cream
Of nature if you do not scan
 The bald external; and must deem
A plan existent in a plan—
As life in thrifty trees or soul in man.

ALONG THE OHIO.

A THWART a sky of brass rich ribs of gold;
A bullion bulk the wide Ohio lies;
Beneath the sunset, billowing manifold,
The purple hill-tops rise.

And lo! the crescent of a crystal moon,
And great cloud-feathers flushed with crimson light
Drifting above the pureness of her lune,
Rent from the wings of night.

A crescent boat slips o'er the burnished stream;
A silver wake, that broadens far behind,
Follows in ripples, and the paddles gleam
Against the evening wind.

So, in this solitude and evening hush,
Again to me the Old Kentucky glooms
Behold the red man lurking in yon bush
In paint and eagle plumes.

And now the breaking of the brittle brush—
An altered forehead hirsute swells in view,
And now comes stealing down the river's gush
The dip of the canoe.

The wigwams glimmer in night's settling waves,
And, wildly clad, around the camp-fire's glow
Sit long-haired chieftains 'mid their wily braves,
Each grasping his war-bow.

But now yon boat on fading waters fades;
The ostrich-feathered clouds have lost their light,
And from the West, like somber sachem shades,
Gallop the shades of night.

The broad Ohio wavers 'neath the stars,
And many murmurs whisper 'mid the woods—
Tumultuous mournings of dead warriors
For their lost solitudes.

And like a silver curl th' Ohio lies
Among the earth's luxuriance of hair;
Majestic as she met the red man's eyes—
As beautiful and fair.

No marvel that the warrior's love waxed flame
Fighting for thee, Kentucky, till he wound
Inseparably 'round thee that old name
Of dark and bloody ground!

But peace to those wild braves whose bones are thine!
And peace to those rude pioneers whose moon
Of glory rose, 'mid stars of lesser shine,
In name of Daniel Boone!

“Peace! peace!” the lips of all thy forests roar;
The rivers mutter peace unto thy strand:
Thy past is dead, and let us name thee o’er,
THE HOSPITABLE LAND!

THE OHIO FALLS.

HERE on this jutting headland, where the trees
Spread a dusk carpet for the sun to cast
And count his golden guineas on, we’ll stay;
For hence is the best prospect of the Falls,
Whose roar no more astounds the startled ear,
As when we bent and marked it from the bridge
Seething beneath and bounding like a steed—
A tameless steed with mane of flying spray—
Between the pillars rising sheer above.
But mark how soft its clamor now is grown,
Incessant rush like that of vernal groves
When, like some sweet surprise, a wand’ring wind,
Precursor of the coming rain, rides down
From a gray cloud and sets their leafy tongues
A-gabbing of the fresh, impending shower.

There runs the dam, and where its dark line cuts
The river’s sheen, already you may see
The ripples glancing to the fervid sun,
As if the waves had couched a hundred spears

And tossed a hundred plumes of fleecy foam
In answer to the challenge of the Falls,
Blown on his bugle from the battlements
Of his subaqueous city's rocky walls.
And now you see their maddened coursers charge,
Hear wavy hcof-strokes on the jagged stones,
That pave the pathway of the current, beat,
While billowing they ride to ringing lists,
With shout and yell, and toss their hundred plumes,
And shock their riply spears in tournament
Upon the opposing billows' shining shields.
Now sinks a pennon, but 'tis raised again ;
There falls or breaks a spear or sparkling sword ;
A shattered helmet flies in flakes of foam
And on the frightened wind hisses away :
And o'er it all you hear the sound, the roar
Of waves that fall in onset or that strive.

On, on they come, a beautiful, mad troop !
On, on, along the sandy banks that fling
Red pebble-freckled arms far out to stay
The riotous waves that ride and hurl along
In casque and shield and wind their wat'ry horns.

And there where thousand oily eddies whirl,
And turn and turn like busy wheels of steel,
Is the Big Eddy, whose deep bottom none
As yet have felt with sounding plummet-line.
Like a huge giant, wily in its strength,

The Eddy lies; and bending from the shore
The spotted sycamores have looked and looked,
Watching his motions as a school-boy might
A sleeping serpent coiled upon his path.
So long they've watched that their old backs have grown
Hump'd, gnarl'd, and crooked, nor seem they this to
heed,

But gaze and gaze, and from the glossy waves
Their images stare back their wonderment.
Mayhap they've seen the guardian Genius lie
At its dark bottom in an oozy cave
Of shattered rock, recumbent on his mace
Of mineral; his locks of dripping green
Circling a crown of ore; his fishy eyes
Dull with the monotony of his aqueous realms.

But when the storm's abroad and smites the waves
With stinging lashes of the myriad rain,
Or scars with thunder some ancestral oak,
Sire of a forest, then he wakes in wrath,
And on the dark foundations of the stream
Stands monarch of the flood in iron crown,
And murmurs till the tempest fiends above
Stand stark with awe, and all the eddy breaks
To waves like those whose round and murky bulks,
Ribbed white with foam, wallow like battened swine
Along yon ridge of ragged rock o'erstrewn
With petrifications of Time's earliest dawn;
Mollusks and trilobites and honey-combs

Of coral white; and here and there a mass
Of what seems writhing reptiles there convolved,
And in one moment when the change did come,
Which made and unmade continents and seas,
That teemed and groaned with dire monstrosities,
Had froze their glossy spines to sable stones.

There where uprises a dun knoll o'erstrewn
With black and rotten stumps in the mid river,
Erst rose an island green and beautiful
With willows, beeches, dappled sycamores;
Corn Island, on whose rich and fertile soil
The early pioneers a colony
Attempted once to found, ere ever this
Fair "City of the Falls"—now echoing to
The tingling bustle of its busy trade—
Was dreamed of. Here the woodman built
His rude log cabin; here he sowed his maize;
Here saw it tassel 'neath the Summer's smile,
And glance like ranks of feathered Indians thro'
The misty vistas of the broken woods;
Here reaped and sheaved its wealth of ivory ears
When Autumn came like a brown Indian maid
Tripping from the pink sunset o'er the hills,
That blushed for love and cast beneath her feet
Untold of gold in leaves and yellow fruit.
Here lived the pioneer and here he died,
And mingled his rough dust with the raw earth
Of that long isle which now disparted stands,

And nothing save a bed of limestone rock,—
Where in the quarry you may see the blast
Spout heavenward the dust and dirt and stone,
And flap and pound its echoes 'round the hills
Like giant strokes of some huge airy hammer,—
And that lone mound of stumpy earth to show
That there once stood an isle as rich and fair
As any isle that rises up to kiss
The sun and dream in tropic seas of balm.

There lies the other half of what was once
Corn Island; a broad channel flows between.
And this low half, mantled with a dwarf growth
Of what was once high brakes and forest land,
Goose Island now is named. In the dim morn,
Ere yet the East assumes her faintest blush,
Here may you hear the melancholy snipe
Piping, or see her paddling in the pools
That splash the low bed of the rocky isle.

Once here the Indian stole in natural craft
From brush to brush, his head plumes like a bird
Flutt'ring and nodding 'mid the undergrowth;
In his brown hand the pliant, polished bow,
And at his back his gaudy quiver filled
With tufted arrows headed with blue flint.
And while the deep flamingo-colored West
Flamed on his ruddy cheek its airy fire,
Strung his quick bow and thro' the gray wild goose,

That rose with clamor from the rushy pool,
Launched a fleet barb, crested with quills—perchance
Plucked yestere'en from its dead mate's gray wing
To decorate the painted shaft that should
Dabble to-day their white in its mate's blood;—
It falling, gasping at its moccasined feet,
Its wild life breathed away, while the glad brave
Whooped to the sunset, and yon faint blue hills
Answered his exultation with a whoop.

THE RUINED MILL.

THERE is the ruined water-mill
With its rotten wheel, that stands as still
As its image that sleeps in the glassy pool
Where the water snake coils dim and cool
In the flaky light of the setting sun
Showering his gold in bullion.
And the languid daisies nod and shine
By the trickling fall in a starry line;
The drowsy daisies with eyes of gold—
Large as the eyes of a queen of old
Dreaming of revels by day and night—
Coyly o'erdropped with lashes white.
The hawk sails high in the sleepy air,
The buzzard on wings as strong and fair
Circles and stoops 'neath the lazy cloud,
And crows in the wood are cawing aloud.

Will ye enter with me this ruined mill
When the shades of night its chambers fill,
Stand and lurk in the heavy dark
Like scowling fiends, each eye a spark,
A spark of moonlight shot thro' gloom?
While a moist, rank, stifling, dead perfume
Of rotting timbers and rotting grain,
And roofs all warped with the sun and rain

Makes of the stagnant air a cell,
In the haunted chambers broods like a spell?
A spell that makes the awed mind run
To the thoughts of a hidden skeleton,
A skeleton ghastly and livid and lank
'Neath the mossy floors in a cellar dank,
Grinning and glow'ring, moisture wet,
In its hollow eyes a mad regret.

Or with me enter when the evening star
In the saffron heaven is sparkling afar,
In all its glory of light divine,
Like a diamond bathed in kingly wine.
Or when the heavens hang wild and gray,
And the chilly clouds are hurrying away
Like the driven leaves of an Autumn day;
When the night-rain sounds on the sodden roof,
And the spider lulls in his dusty woof;
When the wet wind whines like a hound that's lashed,
'Round the crazy angles strongly dashed,
Or wails in a cranny—'tis she who plays
On her airy harp sad, olden lays,
And sings and moans in a room above
Of a vague despair and a blighted love.
You will see her sit on the shattered sill,
Her sable tresses dropped loose at will;
And down in the West 'neath the storm's black bank
A belt of wild green, cold, livid, and lank,
And a crescent moon, like a demon's barque,

Into the green dips a horn from the dark,
While a lurid light of ghoulish gold
On the eldrich creature falls strangely cold.
Her insane eyes bulge mad with desire,
And her face's beauty is darkly dire ;
For she sees in the pool, that solidly lies
'Neath the mill's great wheel and the stormy skies,
Her murdered lover lie faint and white,
A haunting horror, a loadstone's might
Drawing and dragging her soul from its seat
To the glimmering ice of his ghastly feet.

FROST.

WHITE artist he, who, breezeless nights,
From tingling stars jocosely whirls,
A harlequin in spangled tights,
His wand a pot of pounded pearls.

The field a hasty pallet; for,
In thin or thick, with daub and streak,
It stretches from the barn-gate's bar
To the bleached ribbon of the creek.

A great geometer is he;
For, on the creek's diaphanous silk,
Sphere, cone, and star exquisitely
He's drawn in crystal lines of milk.

Most delicate, his talent keen
On casement panes he lavishes,
In many a Lilliputian scene
Of vague white hives and milky bees,

That sparkling in still swarms delight,
Or bow the jeweled bells of flowers;—
Of dim, deep landscapes of the night,
Hanging down limpid domes quaint showers

Of feathery stars and meteors
Above an upland's glimmering ways,
Where gambol 'neath the feverish stars
The erl-king and the fleecy fays.

Or last, one arabesque of ferns,
Chrysanthemums and mistletoe,
And death-pale roses bunched in urns
That with an innate glory glow.

In leafless woodlands saturnine,
Where reckless winds, like goblins mad,
Screech swinging in each barren vine,
His wagship shapes a lesson sad:

When slyly touched by his white hand
Of Midas-magic, forests old
Dariuses of pomp then stand
Barbaric-crowned with living gold. . . .

Patrician state, plebeian blood
Soon foster sybarites, and they,
Squand'ring their riches, wood by wood,
Die palsied wrecks debauched and gray.

INVOCATION.

I.

O LIFE! O Death! O God!
 Have I not striven?
 Have I not known thee, God,
 As thy stars know Heaven?
 Have I not held thee true,
 True as thy deepest,
 Sweet and immaculate blue,
 Of nights that feel thy dew?
 Have I not *known* thee true,
 O God that keepst?

II.

O God, my father, God!
 Didst give me fire
 To rise above the clod,
 And soar, aspire!
 What tho' I strive and strive,
 And all my life says live,
 The sneerful scorn of men
 But beats it down again;
 And, O! sun-centered high,
 O God! grand poet!
 Beneath thy tender sky
 Each day new Keatses die,
 And thou dost know it!

III.

They know thee beautiful!
They know thee bitter!
And all their eyes are full,
O God! most beautiful!
Of tears that glitter.
Thou art above their tears;
Thou art beyond their years;
Thou sittest, God of Hosts,
Among thy glorious ghosts,
So high and holy;
And canst thou know the tears,
The strivings and the fears,
O God of godly peers!
Of such so lowly?

IV.

They who were fondly fain
To tell what mother pain
Of Nature makes the rain;

They who were glad to know
The sorrow of her snow,
Of her wild winds the woe;

The magic of her light,
The passion of her night,
And of her death the might;

They who had tears and sighs
For every bud that dies
While the dew on it lies ;

They who had utterance for
Each warm, rose-hearted star
That stammers from afar ;

The demon of vast seas,
The lips of lyric trees,
Lays of sonorous bees ;

The fragrance-fays that dower
Each wildwood bosk and bower
With its faint musk of flower ;

Of Time the feverish flight ;
Earth, man, and, last, man's right
To thee, O Infinite !

FAIRIES.

ON the tremulous coppice,
From her plenteous hair,
Large golden-rayed poppies
Of moon-litten air
The Night hath flung there.

In the fern-favored hollow
The fire-flies fleet
Uncertainly follow
Pale phantoms of heat,
Druid shadows that meet.

Hidden flowers are fragrant;
The night hazes furl
O'er the solitudes vagrant
In purple and pearl,
Sway-swinging and curl.

From moss-cushioned valley
Where the red sunlight fails,
Rocks where musically
The hollow spring wails,
And the limber fern trails,

BLOOMS OF THE BERRY.

With a ripple and twinkle
Of luminous arms,
Of voices that tinkle,
And feet that are storms
Of chaste, naked charms,

Like echoes that revel
On hills, where the brier
Vaults roofs of dishevel
And green, greedy fire,
'They come as a choir.

At the root of the mountain
Where the dim forest lies,
By the spar-spouting fountain
Where the low lily dies,
With their star-stinging eyes.

They gather sweet singing
In voices that seem
Faint ringing and clinging
In dreams that we dream,
In visions that gleam.

Sweet lispings of kisses,
Dry rustle of hair;
A footfall that hisses
Like a leaf in the air
When the brown boughs are bare.

The music that scatters
From love-litten eyes;
The music that flatters
In words and low sighs,
In laughter that dies :

“ Come hither, come hither,
In the million-eyed night,
Ere the moon-flowers wither
And the harvester white,
Morning reaps them with light.

“ Come hither, where singing
Is pleasant as tears,
Or dead kisses, clinging
To the murdering years,
In memory's ears.

“ Come hither where kisses
Are waiting for you,
For lips and long tresses,
As for wild flowers blue
The moon-heated dew.

“ Come hither from coppice
And violet dale,
The mountain whose top is
In vapors that sail
With pearly hail pale.

“Why tarry? come hither
 While the molten moon beams,
 Ere the golden spark wither
 Of the glow-worm that gleams
 Like a star in still streams!”

THE TRYST.

HAD fallen a fragrant shower;
 The leaves were dripping yet;
 Each fern and rain-weighed flower
 Around were gleaming wet;
 On ev'ry bosky bower
 A million gems were set.

The dust's moist odors sifted
 Cool with the summer rain,
 Mixed with the musk that drifted
 From orchard and from plain;—
 Her garden's fence white lifted
 Its length along the lane.

The moon the clouds had shattered
 In curdled peaks of pearl;
 The honeysuckle scattered
 Warm odors from each curl,
 Where the white moonlight, flattered,
 Hung molten 'round a girl.

Then grew the night completer
With light and cloud and air ;
Aromas sweet blew sweeter,
Sweet flowers fair, more fair ;
Fleet feet and fast grew fleeter
Thro' that fair sorceress there.

AN ANTIQUE.

MILDEWED and gray the marble stairs
Rise from their balustraded urns
To where a chiseled satyr glares
From a luxuriant bed of ferns ;

A pebbled walk that labyrinths
'Twixt parallels of verdant box
To where, broad-based on grotesque plinths,
'Mid cushions of moss-padded rocks,

Rises a ruined pleasure-house,
Of shattered column, broken dome,
Where, reveling in thick carouse,
The buoyant ivy makęs its home.

And here from bank, and there from bed,
Down the mad rillet's jubilant lymph,
The lavish violet's odors shed
In breathings of a fountain nymph.

And where, in lichened hoariness,
The broken marble dial-plate
Basks in the Summer's sultriness,
Rich houri roses palpitate.

Voluptuous, languid with perfumes,
As were the beauties that of old,
In damask satins, jeweled plumes,
With powdered gallants here that strolled.

When slender rapiers, proud with gems,
Sneered at the sun their haughty hues,
And Touchstone wit and apothegms
Laughed down the long, cool avenues.

Two pleated bowers of woodbine pave,
'Neath all their heaviness of musk,
Two fountains of pellucid wave,
With sunlight-tessellated dusk.

Beholding these, I seem to feel
An exodus of earthly sight,
An influx of ecstatic weal
Poured thro' my eyes in jets of light.

And so I see the fountains twain
Of hate and love in Arden there;
The time of regal Charlemagne,
Of Roland and of Oliver.

Rinaldo of Montalban's towers
Sleeps by the spring of hate ; above
Bows, spilling all his face with flowers,
Angelica, who quaffed of love.

A GUINEVERE.

SULLEN gold down all the sky,
In the roses sultry musk ;
Nightingales hid in the dusk
Yonder sob and sigh.

You are here ; and I could weep,
Weep for joy and suffering.
“ Where is he ? ” He'd have me sing ;—
There he sits asleep.

Think not of him ! he is dead
For the moment to us twain ;
He were dead but for this pain
Drumming in my head.

“ Am I happy ? ” Ask the fire
When it bursts its bounds and thrills
Some mad hours as it wills
If those hours tire.

He had gold. As for the rest—
Well you know how they were set,
Saying that I must forget,
And 'twas for the best.

I forget! but let it go!—
Kiss me as you did of old.
There! your kisses are not cold!
Can you love me so,

Knowing what I am to him
Sitting in his gouty chair
On the breezy terrace where
Amber fire-flies swim?

“Yes?”—Your cheek a tear-drop wets,
But your kisses on my lip
Fall as warm as bees that sip
Sweets from violets.

See! the moon has risen white
As this bursten lily here
Rocking on the dusky mere
Like a silent light.

Let us walk. We soon must part—
All too soon! but he may miss!
Give me but another kiss;
It will heat my heart

And the bitter winter there.
So; we part, my Launcelot,
My true knight! and am I not
Your true Guinevere?

Oft they parted thus they tell
In that mystical romance.
Were they placed, think you, perchance,
For such love in hell?

No! it can not, can not be!
Love is God and God is love,
And they live and love above,
Guinevere and he!

I must go now. See! there fell,
Molten into purple light,
One wild star. Kiss me good-night;
And, once more, farewell!

CLOUDS.

ALL through the tepid Summer night
The starless sky had poured a cool
Monotony of pleasant rain
In music beautiful.

And for an hour I'd sat to watch
Clouds moving on majestic feet,
Had heard down avenues of night
Their hearts of thunder beat;

Saw ponderous limbs far-veined with gold
Pulse fiery life o'er wood and plain,
While scattered, fell from monstrous palms
The largess of the rain;

Beholding at each lightning's flash
The generous silver on the sod,
In meek devotion bowed, I thanked
These almoners of God.

NO MORE.

I.

THE slanted storm tossed at their feet
The frost-nipped Autumn leaves ;
The park's high pines were caked with sleet
And ice-spears armed the eaves.
They strolled adown the pillared pines
To part where wet and twisted vines
About the gate-posts flapped and beat.
She watched him dimming in the rain
Along the river's misty shore,
And laughed with lips that sneered disdain
"To meet no more !"

II.

'Mong heavy roses weighed with dew
The chirping crickets hid ;
Down the honeysuckle avenue
Creaked the green katydid.
The scattered stars smiled thro' the pines ;
Thro' stately windows draped with vines
The rising moonlight's silver blew.
He stared at lips proud, white, and dead,
A chiseled calm that wore ;
Despair moaned on the lips that said
"To meet no more."

DESERTED.

A BROKEN rainbow on the skies of May
 Touching the sodden roses and low clouds,
 And in wet clouds like scattered jewels lost :
 Upon the heaven of a soul the ghost
 Of a great love, perfect in its pure ray,
 Touching the roses moist of memory
 To die within the Present's grief of clouds—
 A broken rainbow on the skies of May.

A flashing humming-bird amid strange flowers,
 Or red or white ; its darting length of tongue
 Sucking and drinking all the cell-stored sweet,
 And now the surfeit and the hurried fleet :
 A love that put into expanding bowers
 Of one's large heart a tongue's persuasive powers
 To cream with joy, and ruffled, so was gone—
 A flashing humming-bird amid strange flowers.

A foamy moon which thro' a night of fleece
 Moves amber-girt into a bulk of dark,
 And, lost to eye, rims all the black with froth :
 A love of smiles, that, tintured like a moth,
 Moved thro' a soul's night-dun and made a peace—
 More bland than Melancholy's white—to cease
 In blanks of Time zoned with pale Memory's spark—
 A foamy moon that brinks a storm with fleece.

A blaze of living thunder—not a leap—
Momentary spouting balds the piled storm,
The ghastly mountains and the livid ocean,
The pine-roared crag, then blots the sight's commotion :
A love that swiftly pouring bared the deep,
Which cleaves white Life from Death, Death from white
 Sleep,
And, ceasing, gave a brain one blur of storm—
Blank blast of midnight, love for Death and Sleep.

THE DREAM OF CHRIST.

I SAW her twins of eyelids listless swoon
 Mesmeric eyes,
Like the mild lapsing of a lulling tune
 On wide surprise,
While slow the graceful presence of a moon
 Mellowed the purple skies.

And had she dreamed or had in fancy gone
 As one who sought
To hail the influx of a godly dawn
 Of heavenly thought,
Trode trembling o'er old sainted hill and lawn
 With intense angels fraught ?

Sailed thro' majestic domes of the deep night
By isles of stars,
Wand'ring like some pure blessing warm with light
From worldly jars
To the high halls of morning, pearly white,
And heaped with golden bars.

Past temples vast, deluged with sandy seas,
Whose ruins stand
Like bleaching bones of dead monstrosities
Crushed to the land,
Stupendous homes of cursed idolatries
Fallen to dust and sand.

Ugly and bestial gods caked thick with gold—
Their hideousness
Blaspheming Christ—'mid shattered altars rolled
To rottenness,
Their slaves abolished and their priests of old
Trodden to nothingness.

Thro' Syrian plains curtained with curling mist
The grass she trailed,
Where the shy floweret, by the dew-drop kissed,
Sweet blushing quailed;
And drowned in purple vales of amethyst
The moon-mad bulbuls wailed.

On glimmering wolds had seemed to hear the bleat
Of folded flocks;

Seen broad-browed sages pass with sandaled feet
 And hoary locks,
While swimming in a bath of molten heat
 A great star glorious rocks.

In fancy o'er a beaming baby bent—
 Cradled amiss
In a rude manger—on its brow to print
 One holy kiss,
While down the slant winds faint aromas went
 And anthems deep of bliss. . . .

And then she woke. The winter moon above
 Burst on her sight;
And with strange sweetness all her dream was wove
 In its far flight,
For jubilant bells rocked booming "peace and love"
 Down all the aisles of night.

TO AUTUMN.

I OFT have met thee, Autumn, wandering
 Beside a misty stream, thy locks flung wild;
 Thy cheeks a hectic flush more fair than Spring,
 As if on thee the scarlet copse had smiled.
 Or thee I've seen a twisted oak beneath,
 Thy gentle eyes with foolish weeping dim,
 Beneath a faded oak from whose tinged leaves
 Thou woundedst drowsy wreaths, while the soft breath
 Of Morn did kiss thy locks and make them swim
 Far out behind, brown as the rustling sheaves.

Oft have I thee upon a hillock seen,
 Dream-visaged, all agaze at glimpses faint
 Of glimmering woods that glanced the hills between
 With Indian faces from thy airy paint.
 Or I have met thee 'twixt two dappled hills
 Within a dinged valley nigh a fall,
 Clasped in thy tinted hand a ruddy flower,
 And lowly stooping where the leaf-dammed rills
 Went babbling low thro' wildwood's arrased hall,
 Where burned the beech and maples glared their power.

Oft have I seen thee in a ruined mill,
 Where basked the crimson creeper serpentine;
 Where fallen leaves did stir and rustle chill,
 And saw thee rest beneath a wild grape-vine.

While Echo, sad amid his deep-voiced mountains—
More sad than erst—did raise a dreamy speech
And call thee to his youthful, amorous arms,
Where splashed the murmuring forest's limpid fountains ;
And tho' his words thy pink-shell ears did reach,
Thou wouldst not heed or guile him with thy charms.

Once saw thee in a hollow girt with trees,
A-dream amid the harvest's tawny grain ;
Thy plushy cheek faint flushing in the breeze,
In thy deep eyes a drowsy sky's blue stain.
And where within the woodland's twilight path
The cloud-winged skies did peep all speechless down,
And stirred the gaudy leaves with fragrant breath,
I've seen thee walk, nor fear the Winter's wrath ;
There drop asleep clad in thy gipsy gown,
While Echo bending o'er dropp'd tears upon thy wreath.

AN ADDRESS TO NIGHT.

LIKE some sad spirit from an unknown shore
Thou comest with two children in thine arms :
Flushed, poppi'd Sleep, whom mortals aye adore,
Her flowing raiment sculptured to her charms.
Soft on thy bosom in pure baby rest
Clasped as a fair white rose in musky nest ;
But on thy other, like a thought of woe,
Her brother, lean, cold Death doth thin recline,
To thee as dear as she, thy maid divine,
Whose frowzy hair his hectic breathings blow
In poppi'd ringlets billowing all her marble brow.

Oft have I taken Sleep from thy vague arms
And fondled her faint head, with poppies wreath'd,
Within my bosom's depths, until its storms
With her were hushed and I but mildly breath'd.
And then this child, O Night ! with frolic art
Arose from rest, and on my panting heart
Blew bubbles of dreams where elfin worlds were lost,
Until my airy soul smiled light on me
From some far land too dim for day to see,
And wandered in a shape of limpid frost
Within a dusky dale where soundless streams did flee.

Welcome to Earth, O Night the saintly garbed!
Slip meek as love into the Day's flushed heart!
Drop in a dream from where the meteors orbed
Wander past systems scorning map or chart;
Or sit aloft, thy hands brimmed full of stars,
Or come in garb of storms 'mid thunder jars,
When lightning-frilled gleams wide thy cloud-frowned
dress,
Then art thou grand! but, oh, when thy pure feet
Along the star-strewn floors of Heaven beat,
And thy cool breath the heated world doth bless,
Thou art God's angel of true love and gentleness!

THE HERON.

EVENING.

AS slaughter red the long creek crawls
From solitary forest walls,
Out where the eve's wild glory falls.
One wiry leg drowned in his breast,
Neck-shrunk, flame-gilded with the West,
Stark-stately he the evening wears.

NIGHT.

The whim'ring creek breaks on the stone ;
The new moon came, but now is gone ;
White, tingling stars wink out alone.
Lank specter of wet, windy lands,
The melancholy heron stands ;
Then, clamoring, dives into the stars.

A DIRGE.

I.

LIFE has fled ; she is dead,
Sleeping in the flow'ry vale
Where the fleeting shades are shed
Ghost-like o'er her features pale.
Lay her 'neath the violets wild,
Lay her like a dreaming child
'Neath the waving grass
Where the shadows pass.

II.

Gone she has to happy rest
With white flowers for her pillow ;
Moons look sadly on her breast
Thro' an ever-weeping willow.
Fold her hands, frail flakes of snow,
Waxen as white roses blow
Like herself so fair,
Free from world and care.

III.

Twine this wreath of lilies wan
'Round her sculptured brow so white ;
Let her rest here, white as dawn,
Like a lily quenched in night.

Wreath this rosebud wild and pale,
Wreath it 'mid her fingers frail;
On her dreamless breast
Let it dreaming rest.

IV.

Gently, gently lay her down,
Gently lay her form to sleep;
Gently let her soul be blown
Far away, while low we weep.
Hush! the earth no more can harm her
Now that choirs of angels charm her!
Dreams of life are brief;
Naught amendeth grief.

V.

Speed away! speed away!
Angels called her here to sleep;
Let us leave her here to stay:
Speed away! and, speeding, weep.
Where the roses blow and die,
'Neath them she a rose doth lie
Wilted in the grass
Where the shadows pass.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

I.

THE shadows sit and stand within its door
Like uninvited guests and poor,
And all the long, hot summer day
A dry green locust whirs its roundelay,
And the shadows halt at the door.
The sheeted iron upon the roof
Stretches its weary hide and cracks ;
The spider weaves his windy woof
In dingy closet cracks,
And all a something lacks.
The freckled snake crawls o'er the floor,
Tongues at the shadows in the door,
And where the musty mosses run
Basks in the sun.

II.

The children of the fathers sleep
Beneath the melancholy pines ;
Earth-worms within grim skulls forever creep
And the glow-worm shines ;
The orchards in the meadow deep
Lift up their stained, gnarled arms,
Mossed, lichened where limp lizards peep.
No youth swells up to make them leap

And cry against the storms;
 No blossom lulls their age asleep,
 Each wind brings sad alarms.
 Big-bellied apples gold or bell-round pears
 No maiden gathers now;
 The moistures drip great reeking tears
 From each old, crippled bough.

III.

The orchards are yellow and solitary,
 The winds beat down their hands;
 The sunlight is sad and the moonlight is dreary,
 The hum of the country is lonesome and weary,
 And the bees go by in bands
 To other happier lands.
 The grasses are rotting in walk and in bower;
 The orchards smell dank and rank
 As a chamber where lay for a lonely hour
 A corpse unclad in the taper's glower,
 Chill, white, and lank.
 So the bees go by in murmurous bands,
 Drowsily wand'ring to happier lands
 Where the lilies draggle the bank.

IV.

In the desolate halls are lying,
 Gold, blood-red, and browned,
 Shriveled leaves of Autumn dying,

And the shadows o'er them flying
Turn them 'round and 'round,
Make a dreary sound
Thro' the echoing chambers crying
In the haunted house.

V.

Gazing down in her white shroud
From the edging cloud
Comes at night the dimpled moon,
Comes, and like a ghost is gone
'Neath the flying cloud
O'er the haunted house.

PERLE DES JARDINS.

WHAT am I, and what is he
Who can cull and tear a heart,
As one might a rose for sport
In its royalty?

What am I, that he has made
All this love a bitter foam,
Elown about a life of loam
That must break and fade?

He who of my heart could make
Hollow crystal where his face
Like a passion had its place
Holy and then break!

Shatter with insensate jeers!—
But these weary eyes are dry,
Tearless clear, and if I die
They shall know no tears.

Yet my heart weeps;—let it weep!
Let it weep in sullen pain,
And this anguish in my brain
Cry itself to sleep.

Ah! the afternoon is warm,
And yon fields are glad and fair;
Many happy creatures there
Thro' the woodland swarm.

All the summer land is still,
And the woodland stream is dark
Where the lily rocks its barque
Just below the mill.

If they found me icy there
'Mid the lilies and pale whorls
Of the cresses in my curls
Wet of raven hair—

Fool and coward! are you such?
Would you have him thus to know
That you died for utter woe
And despair o'ermuch?

No! my face a marble bust!
As the Sphynx, impassioned, stern!—
Passions hid, as in an urn,
Burnt to bitter dust!

And I'll write him as he wrote,
Making, with his worded scorn,
Tyrant,—crowned with stinging thorn,—
His cold, cruel note.

“ You’ll forget,” he says, “ and I
 Feel ’tis better for us twain :
 It may give you some small pain,
 But, ’twill soon be by.

“ You are dark, and Maud is light ;
 I am dark ; and it is said
 Opposites are better wed ;—
 So I think I’m right.”

“ You are dark and Maud is fair !”
 I could laugh at this excuse
 If this aching, mad abuse
 Were not more than hair !

But I’ll write him as a-glad
 Some few happy words and light,
 Touching on some past delight,
 That last year we had.

Not one line of broken vows,
 Sighs or hurtful tears unshed,
 Faithless lips far better dead,
 Nor a withered rose.

But a rose, this *Perle* to wear,—
Perle des Jardins delicate
 With faint fragrant life elate,—
 When he weds her there.

So ; 'tis finished ! It is well !
Go, thou rose ! I have no tear,
Kiss, or word for thee to bear,
And no woe to tell.

Only be thus full of life,
Cold and calm, impassionate,
Filled with neither love nor hate,
When he calls her wife !

OSSIAN'S POEMS.

HERE I have heard on hills the battle clash
Roar to the windy sea that roared again :
When, drunk with wrath, upon the clanking plain
Barbaric kings did meet in war and dash
Their mailéd thousands down, heard onset crash
Like crags contending 'gainst the battering main.
Torrents of helms, beaming like streams of rain,
Blue-billowing 'neath the pale moon's fitful flash ;
Saw the scared moon hang over the black wood
Like a pale wreath of foam ; shields, spears, and swords
Shoot green as meteors thro' the steely flood,
Or shine like ripples 'round their heathen lords
Standing like stubborn rocks, whence the wild wave
Of war circled in steel and foamed out brave on brave.

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II.—IN MYTHIC SEAS.

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IN MYTHIC SEAS.

IN MYTHIC SEAS.

'**N**EATH saffron stars and satin skies, dark-blue,
Between dim sylvan isles, a happy two,
We sailed, and from the siren-haunted shore,
All mystic in its mist, the soft gale bore
The Siren's song, while on the ghostly steeps
Strange foliage grew, deeps folding upon deeps,
That hung and beamed with blossom and with bud,
Thick-powdered, pallid, or like urns of blood
Dripping, and blowing from wide mouths of blooms
On our bare brows cool gales of sweet perfumes.
While from the yellow stars that splashed the skies
O'er our light shallop dropped soft mysteries
Of calm and sleep, until the yellower moon
Rose full of fire above a dark lagoon ;
And as she rose the nightingales on sprays
Of heavy, shadowy roses burst in praise
Of her wild loveliness, with boisterous pain
Wailing far off around a ruined fane.
And 'round our lazy keel that dipped to swing
The spirits of the foam came whispering ;

And from dank Neptune's coral-columned caves
Heard the Oceanids rise thro' the waves;
Saw their smooth limbs cold-glimmering in the spray,
Tumultuous bosoms panting with their play;
Their oozy tresses, tossed unto the breeze,
Flash sea-green brightness o'er the tumbled seas.
'Mid columned isles, glance vaguely thro' the trees,
We watched the Satyrs chase the Dryades;
Heard Pan's fierce trebles and the Triton's horn
Sound from the rock-lashed foam when rose the Morn
With chilly fingers dewing all the skies,
That blushed for love and closed their starry eyes.
The Naiad saw sweet smiling, in white mist,
Half hidden in a bay of amethyst
Her polished limbs, and at her hollow ear
A shell's pink labyrinth held up to hear
Dim echoes of the Siren's haunting strains
Emprisoned in its chords of crimson veins.
And stealing wily from a grove of pines
The Oread in cincture of green vines,
One twinkling foot half buried in the red
Of a deep-dimpled, crumpled poppy bed—
Like to the star of eve, when, lapsing low,
Faint clouds that with the sunset colors glow
Slip down in scarlet o'er its crystal white,
It shining, tear-like, partly veils its light.
Her wine-red lips half-parted in surprise,
And expectation in her bright blue eyes,
While slyly from a young oak coppice peers

The wanton Faun with furry, pointed ears.
He leaps, she flies as flies the startled nymph
When Pan pursues her from her wonted lymph.
Diana sees, and on her wooded hills
Stays her fair band, the stag hounds' clamor stills.
Already nearer glow the Oread's charms;
To seize them Faunus strains his hairy arms—
A senseless statue of white, weeping stone
Fills his embrace; the Oread is gone.
The stag-hounds bay, Dian resumes the chase,
While the astonished Faun's bewildered face
Paints all his wonderment, and, wondering,
He bends above the sculpture of the spring.

We sailed; and many a morn of breathing balm,
Purpureal, graced us in that season calm;
And it was life to thee and me and love
With the fair myths below, our God above,
To sail in golden sunsets and emerge
In golden morns upon a fretless surge.
But ah, alas! the stars that dot the blue
Shine not alway; the clouds must gather too.
I knew not how it came, but in a while
Myself I found cast on an arid isle
Alone and barkless, soaked and wan with dread,
The seas in wrath and thunder overhead,
Deep down in coral caverns my pale love,
No myths below, no God, it seemed, above.

THE DEAD OREAD.

HER heart is still and leaps no more
With holy passion when the breeze,
Her whilom playmate, as before,
Comes with the language of the bees,
Sad songs her mountain ashes sing
And hidden fountains' whispering.

Her calm, white feet, erst fleet and fast
As Daphne's when a Faun pursued,
No more will dance like sunlight past
The dim-green vistas of the wood,
Where ev'ry quailing floweret
Smiled into life where they were set.

Hers were the limbs of living light
Most beautiful and virginal,
God-graceful and as godly white,
And wild as beautiful withal,
And hyacinthine curls that broke
In color when a wind awoke.

The wild aromas weird that haunt
Moist bloomy dells and solitudes
About her presence seemed to pant,
The happy life of all her moods;

Ambrosial smiles and amorous eyes
Whose luster would a god surprise.

Her grave be by a dripping rock,
 A mossy dingle of the hill,
Remote from Bacchanals that mock,
 Wine-wild, the long, mad nights and still,
Where no unhallowed Pan with lust
May mar her melancholy dust.

APHRODITE.

A POLLO never smote a lovelier strain,
 When swan-necked Hebe paused her thirsty bowl
 A-sparkle with its wealth of nectar-draughts
 To lend a list'ner's ear and smile on him,
 As that the Tritons blew on wreathed horns
 When Aphrodite, the cold ocean-foam
 Bursting its bubbles, from the hissing snow
 Whirled her nude form on Hyperion's gaze,
 Naked and fresh as Indian Ocean shell
 Dashed landward from its bed of sucking sponge
 And brancing corals by the changed monsoon.

Wind-rocked she swung her white feet on the sea,
 And music raved down the slant western winds;
 With swollen jowls the Tritons puffed the conch,
 Where, breasting with cold bosoms the green waves,
 That laughed in ripples at Love's misty feet,
 Oceanids with dimple-dented palms
 Smote sidewise the pale bubbles of the foam,
 Which wove a silver iris 'round her form.
 Where dolphins tumbling stained the garish arch
 Nerëides sang, braiding their wet locks,
 Or flung them streaming on the broken foam,
 Till evetide showed her loveliest of stars—
 Lost passion-flower of the sinking sun—

In the cool sheen of shadowy waters deep,
That moaned wild sea-songs at the Sirens' caves;
Then in a hollow pearl, o'er moon-white waves,
The creatures of the ocean danced their queen,
Till Cytherea like a rosy mist
Beneath the star rose blushing from the deep.
On the pearled sands of a moon-glassing sea
Beneath the moon, narcissus-like, they met,
She naked as a star and crowned with stars,
Child of the airy foam and queen of love.

PERSEPHONE.

O HADES! O false gods! false to yourselves!
 O Hades, 'twas thy brother gave her thee
 Without a mother's sanction or her knowledge!
 He bare her to the horrid gulfs below,
 And made her queen, a shadowy queen of shades,
 Queen of the fiery flood and mournful realms
 Of grating iron and the clank of chains.

On blossomed plains in far Trinacria
 A maiden, the dark cascade of whose hair
 Seemed gleaming rays of midnight 'mid the stars,
 Rays slowly bright'ning 'neath a mellow moon,
 She 'mid the flowers with the Oceanids
 Sought Echo's passion, loved Narcissus pale,
 Ghast staring in the mirror of a lake,
 Whose smoothness brake his image, flickering seen,
 E'en with the fast tears of his dewy eyes.
 A shape there rose with iron wain and steeds
 'Mid sallow fume of sulphur and pale fires;
 Its countenance meager, and its eyes e'en such
 As the wild, ghastly sulphur. In its arms,
 Its sooty arms, where like to supple steel
 The muscles rigid lay, unto its breast,
 Such as its arms, it rushed her fragile form
 As bosomed bulks of tempest in their joy

With arms of winds drag to their black embrace
A fairy mist of white that flecks the summer
With shadeless wings of gauze, and 'tis no more
Heaved on the rapture of its thundering heart.

The snowy flowers shuddered and grew still
With withered faces bowed, and on the stream—
Where all the day it was their wont to stand
In silent sisterhood down-gazing at their charms—
Withered and limp and dead laid their fair brows.
Flames hissed aloft like fiery whips of snakes
Blasting and killing all the fragrant sprites
That make the dewy zephyrs their dim haunts.

O foam-fair daughters of Oceanus!
In vain you seek your mate and chide the flowers
For hiding her 'neath their broad, snowy palms;
Nor is she hidden in that pearly shell,
Which, like a pinky babe cast from the sea,
Moans at your pallid feet washed with white spray.
But, sitting by the tumbling blue of waves,
Mourn to your billows on the foamy sands
The falseness of the god who grasps the storm!

DEMETER.

DEMETER sad! the wells of sorrow lay
Eterna! gushing in thy lonely path.

 Methinks I see her now—an awful shape
Tall o'er a dragon team in frenzied search
From Argive plains unto the jeweled shores
Of the remotest Ind, where Usha's hand
Tinged her grief-cloven brow with kindly touch,
And Savitar wheeled genial thro' the skies
O'er palmy regions of the faneless Brahm.

 In melancholy search I see her roam
O'er the steep peaks of Himalayas keen
With the unmellowed frosts of Boreal storms,
Then back again with that wild mother woe
Writ in the anguished fire of her eyes,—
Back where old Atlas groans 'neath weight of worlds,
And the Cimmerian twilight glooms the soul.
Deep was her sleep in Persia's haunted vales,
Where many a languid Philomela moaned
The bursting sorrow of a bursting soul.
I see her nigh Ionia's swelling seas
Cull from the sands a labyrinthine shell,
And hark the mystery of its eery voice

Float from the hollow windings of its curl,
Then cast it far into the weedy sea
To view the salt-spray flash, like one soft plume
Dropped from the wings of Eros, 'gainst the flame
Of Helios' car down-sloping toward his bath.
I see her beg a coral flute of red
From a tailed Triton; and on Ithakan rocks
High seated at the starry death of day,
When Selene rose from off her salty couch
To smile a glory on her face of sorrow,
Pipe forth sad airs that made the Sirens weep
In their green caves beneath the sodden sands,
And hoar Poseidon clear his wrinkled front
And still his surgy clamors to a sigh.

This do I see, and more; ah! yes, far more:
I see her, 'mid the lonely groves of Crete,
The wild hinds fright from the o'ervaulted green
Of thickest boscage, tangling their close covert,
With horror of her torches and her wail,
"Persephone! Persephone!" till the pines
Of rugged Dicte shuddered thro' their cones,
And Echo shrieked down in her deepest chasms
A wild reply unto her wild complaint:
As wild as when she voiced those maidens' woe,
Athenian tribute to stern Minos, king,
When coiling grim the Minotaur they saw
Far in his endless labyrinth of stone.

DIONYSOS.

“O DIONYSOS! Dionysos! the ivy-crowned!
O let me sing thy triumph ere I die!”

Within my sleep a Maenad came to me :
A harp of crimson agate strung with gold
Wailed 'neath her waxen fingers, and her heart
'Neath the white gauze, thro' which a moonlight shone,
Kept time with its wild throbbings to her song.

“Aegeus sleeps, O Dionysos! sleeps
Pale 'neath the tumbling waves that sing his name
Eternally at my dew-glist'ning feet.
And so he died, O Dionysos! died!
O let me sing thy triumph ere I die!

“With the shrill syrinx and the kissing clang
Of silver cymbals clashed by Ethiopes swart,
O, pard-drawn youth, thou didst awake the world
To joy and pleasure with thy sunny wine!
Mad'st: India bow and the dun, flooding Nile
Grow purple in the radiance of the wine
Cast from the richness of Silenus' cup,
Whiles yet the heavens of heat saw dances wild
Whirl mid the redness of the Libic sands,
Which greedy drank the Bacchanalian draught

Spun from the giddy bowl, a rose-tinged mist,
O'er the slant edge, red twinkling in the eye
Of brazen Ra, fierce turning overhead.
What made gold Horus smile with golden lips?
Anubis dire forget his ghosts to lead
To Hell's profoundness, and then stay to sip
One winking bubble from the wine-god's cup?
What made Osiris, 'mid the palms of Nile,
Leave Isis dreaming, and the frolic Pan's
Harsh trebles follow as a roaring bull,
Far as the gleaming temples of Indra,
And mourned in Memphis by his tawny priests?
It was thy joys, sun-nourished fire of wine!
The brimming purple of the hollow gold
They tasted and they worshiped—gods themselves!

“ Wan Echo sat once in a spiral shell;
She, from its sea-dyed mazziness of pearl,
Saw the mixed pageant dancing on the strand,
Where Nereus slept upon an isle of crags,
And o'er the slope of his far-foaming head
The strangeness of the orgies wildly cried,
Till the frore god shook many a billow curl,
Serened his face and stretched a welcome hand
With civil utt'rance for the Bacchus horn.
But now there tarries in her eye-balls' disks
That nomad troop, and naught her tongue may say
Save jostling words that haunt her muffled ears
Like feeble wave-beats in a deep sea-cave.

“ Ah! the white stars, O Dionysos! now
 Have dropped their glittering blossoms slowly down
 Behind the snowy mountains in the West.
 Aegæus sleeps, hushed by my murmuring harp,
 And I have sung thy triumph; let me die!”

HACKELNBERG.

WHEN down the Hartz the echoes swarm
 He rides beneath the sounding storm
 With mad “halloo!” and wild alarm
 Of hound and horn—a wonder,
 With his hunter black as night,
 Ban-dogs fleet and fast as light,
 And a stag as silver white
 Drives before, like mist, in flight,
 Glimmering 'neath the bursten thunder.

The were-wolf shuns his ruinous track,
 Long-howling hid in braken black;
 Around the forests reel and crack
 And mountain torrents tumble;
 And the spirits of the air
 Whistling whirl with scattered hair,
 Teeth that flash and eyes that glare,
 'Round him as he chases there
 With a noise of rains that rumble.

From thick Thuringian thickets growl
Fierce, fearful monsters black and foul;
And close before him a stritch-owl
 Wails like a ghost unquiet:
Then the clouds aside are driven
And the moonlight, stormy striven,
Falls around the castle riven
Of the Dumburg, and the heaven
 Maddens then with blacker riot.

THE LIMNAD.

I.

THE lake she haunts lies dreamily
'Neath sleepy boughs of melody,
And far away an olden sea,
 An olden sea booms mellow ;
And the sunset's glammers smite
It's clean water with strong light
Wov'n to wondrous flowers, where fight
Breezy blue and winking white,
 Ruby red and tarnished yellow.

II.

'Mid green rushes there that swing,
Flowering flags where voices sing
When low winds are murmuring,
 Murmuring to stars that glitter ;
Blossom-white with purple locks,
'Neath unfolded starry flocks,
In the dusky waves she rocks,
Rocks and all the landscape mocks
 With a song most sweet and bitter.

III.

Low it comes like sighs in dreams ;
Tears that fall in burning streams ;
Then a sudden burst of beams,
 Beams of song that soar and wrangle,
Till the woods are taken quite,
And red stars are waxen white,
Lilies tall, bowed left and right,
Gasp and die with very might
 Of the serpent notes that strangle.

IV.

Dark, dim, and sad on mournful lands
White-throated stars heaped in her hands,
Like wild-wood buds, the Twilight stands,
 The Twilight standing lingers,
Till the Linnad coming sings
Witcheries whose beauty brings
A great moon from hidden springs,
Mad with amorous quiverings,
 Feet of fire and silver fingers.

V.

In the vales Auloniads,
On the mountains Oreads,
On the meads Leimoniads,
 That in naked beauty glisten ;

Pan and Satyrs, Dryades,
Fountain-lisping Naiades,
Foam-lipped Oceanides,
Breathless 'mid their seas or trees,
 Stay mad sports to look and listen.

VI.

Large-limbed, Egypt-eyed she stands—
Night on dim and ghostly lands,
And in rapture from her hands
 Some wild molten stars are shaken.
Let her stand and rushes swing ;
Let lank flags dip murmuring,
Low, lost winds come like a wing ;
They will waken though she sing,
 But one mortal ne'er will waken.

THE MERMAID.

THE moon in the East is glowing ;
I sit by the moaning sea ;
The mists down the sea are blowing,
Down the sea all dewily.

The sands at my feet are shaking,
The stars in the sky are wan ;
The mists for the shore are making,
With a glimmer drifting on.

From the mist comes a song, sweet wailing
In the voice of a love-lorn maid,
And I hear her gown soft trailing
As she doth lightly wade.

The night hangs pale above me
Upon her starry throne,
And I know the maid doth love me
Who maketh such sweet moan.

From out the mist comes tripping
A Mermaiden full fair,
Across the white sea skipping
With locks of tawny hair.

Her locks with sea-ooze dripping
 She wrings with a snowy hand;
Her dress is thinly clipping
 Two breasts which perfect stand.

Oh, she was fair as the heaven
 On an autumnal eve,
And my love to her was given
 When I saw how she did grieve.

Amort o'er the sea came speeding
 This sea sprite samite-clad,
And my heart for love was bleeding,
 But its beating I forbade.

On the strand where the sand was rocking
 She stood and sang an air,
And the winds in her hair kept locking
 Their fingers cool and bare.

Soft in her arms did she fold me,
 While sweet and low she moaned;
Her love and her grief she told me,
 And the ocean sighed and groaned.

But I stilled my heart's wild beating,
 For I knew her love was dim;
Full coldly received her greeting,
 Tho' my life burnt in each limb.

In my ear right sweet she was sighing
With the voice of the pink-veined shells;
Her arms 'round my neck kept tying,
And gazed in mine eyes' deep wells.

With her kisses cold did she woo me,
But I dimmed my heart's wild beat;
With the stars of her eyes did she sue me,
But their passion did mine defeat.

With the cloud of her sea-dipped tresses
She veiled her beautiful face;—
And oh! how I longed for her kisses
And sighed for her soft embrace!

But out in the mist she went wailing
When the dawn besilvered the night,
With her robes of samite trailing
In the foam-flowers sad and white.

Like a spirit grieved went moaning
In a twilight over the sea,
And it seemed the night was groaning,
And my heart beat wild in me.

But I hushed my heart's fierce beating,
For a Mermaid false was she;
Yet I sighed at her faintly fleeting
Across the dim, dark sea.

The moon all withered is glowing,
 The mist and she are gone ;
 My heart to ice is growing,
 And I sob at the coming dawn.

THE PUNISHMENT OF LOKE.

THE gods of Asaheim, incensed with Loke,
 A whirlwind yoked with thunder-footed steeds,
 And, carried thus, boomed o'er the booming seas,
 Far as the teeming wastes of Jotunheim,
 To punish Loke for all his wily crimes.

They found him sitting nigh a mountain-force,
 Which flashing roared from crags of ribbed snow,
 Lamenting strange and weird in rushing notes
 Of the old Strömkarl, who therein smote a harp
 And sang in mystic syllables of runes.
 For 'tis the wild man's harp and voice you hear :
 He sits behind the crackling cataract
 Within a grotto dim of mist and foam,
 His long, thin beard, white as the flying spray
 Flung to the midnight in a sounding cave
 By the blind fish that leap against the winds ;
 Gemmed with the large dews of the cataract,
 Swings in the sucking breeze, and swinging beats

Time to his harp's strains quav'ring soft and sad
Beneath the talons of his pale, lean hand.
And all the waters, leaping, tingling shake
Like shivering stars within the frozen skies,
When as the Giants of Frost rule o'er the deep,
And nip their buds with fingers hoar of ice.

Here banished found they mischief-making Loke
Beneath the faint arch of young Bifrost sate,
His foxy face between large, naked knees;
Deep, wily eyes fixed on the darting fish
In seeming thought, but aye one corner wan
Flashed at the Asas where they clustered fair,
Soft on a mountain's aged locks of snow,
Their tawny tresses ruddy in the wind.

Then great-limbed Thor sprang wind-like forth:—
Red was his beard forked with the livid light,
That clings among the tempest's locks of bale,
Or fillets her tumultuous temples black,
And drops with wild confusion on the hills;
And thro' his beard, like to the storm's strong voice,
His sullen words were strained, and when he spake
The oldest forests bowed their crowns of leaves,
And barmy skulls of mead half-raised were stayed
Within Valhalla, and heroes great were dumb.

As when, the horror of the spear-shock o'er,
And all the plains and skies of Thule are gorged

With gore and screams of those that fight or die,
The Valkyries in their far-glimmering helms
Flash from the windy sunset's mists of red
Unto the chalk-faced dead,—whose beaten casques
And sea-swol'n shields, with sapless, red-hewn limbs,
Wave 'mid the dead-green billows, stormy-browed,
That roar along the Baltic's wintry coast,
And wail amid the iron-circled coves,—
To cull dead heroes for the hall of shields,—
Where yells the toast and rings the tournament,—
A dumbness falls upon the shattered field ;
The clinging billows 'mid the restless dead
Moan o'er their wide-stretched eyes and glassy sleep ;
And all the blood-blurred banners, gustless, dark
Hard ashen faces waiting for the choice.

The thunderer did Loké shrewd ensnare,
Incensed for pristine evil wrought on him,
When erst dark Loke deflowered his spouse, fair Sif
The blue-eyed, of her golden, baby locks.
Him the Asas dragged beneath a burning mount
Into a cavern black, by earthquakes rent
When Earth was young to heave her spawn of Trolls,
The vermin which engendered in the corpse
Of Ymer huge, whose flesh did make the world.
Here where the stars ne'er shone, nor nature's strains
Of legendary woodlands, peaks, and streams
Ere came, they pinned him supine to the rocks,
Whose frigid touch filed at his brittle bones,

And tore a groan from lips of quiv'ring froth,
That made the warty reptiles cold and huge
Hiss from their midnight lairs and blaze great eyes.

Lone in the night he heard the white bear roar
From some green-glancing berge that stemmed dark seas
With all its moan of torrents foaming down
The ice-craggs of its crystal mountain crests.
And 'neath the firry steep a wild swine shrieked,
And fought the snarling wolf; his midriff ripped
With spume-flaked ivories where the moss was brok'n
Far down within the horror of a gorge;
And once he saw souls of dead mortals whirl
With red-strown hair within the Arctic skies,
And all his stolid face was eddied o'er
By one faint smile, which grimly flash'd and pass'd,
And he knew not its stonyness had changed.
And all was rock above him, rock beneath:
And all the clammy crawling things that spat
Black venom at him from deep dens of rock,
And that swart boundless flood of flowing death,
Which with its sooty spray clung to a cliff
And slid beside his marble gaze, to him
Were as the rock that curled above and hung;
Were as the rock that spread beneath and pierced;
For as to the blind to him were lidless eyes.

And pity 'twas not darker than it was,
And crammed with terrors populous as Hel's

Or that cursed dome of corpses, Naastrand dire,
Whose roofs and walls of yawning serpents slick
Hang writhing down, flat heads—reed-beds of snakes—
From whose red, hissing fangs flow slimy streams
Of blis'tring venom, gath'ring to a flood,
Wherein the basest shades eternal wade
And feel the anguish crawling down the neck,
Or glue the hair, or glut the dull, dead ear,
Or choke the blasted eye until it swims
In lurid pain and blazes 'gainst the source.
The roar of waters and the wail of pines
When whirlwinds roll the granite boulders down
From flinty crags of storm to bellowing seas—
On noisome winds the howls of torture roll,
And rising die, cause the live dome to writhe,
And swift pour down a tempest steep of woe.

Huge Skade, of Winter daughter, giantess,
One twisting serpent hung above Loke's head,
So that the blistering slaver might splash down
Upon his chalky face, and torture him,—
For so the Asas willed for his vast crimes.

But Loké's wife, Sigin, endured not this,
And brooked not to behold her husband's pain.
She sate herself beside his writhen limbs,
And held a cup to cull the venom'd dew
Which flamed the scowling blackness as it fell.
To him she spake, who swelled his breast and groaned

E'en as some mighty sea, when 'neath its waves
The huge leviathan by whalers chased,—
Cleaving thick waters in his spinning flight,
The barbèd harpoon feasting on his life,—
Rolls up pale mounded billows o'er black fins
Far in the North Atlantic's sounding seas:—

“O Loké! lock those wide-drawn eyes of thine,
And let white silver-lidded slumber fall
In the soft utterance of my low speech!
And I will flutter all my amber curls
To cast wind currents o'er thy pallid brow!—
Drink deepest sleep, for, see, I catch thy doom!—
So pale thy face which glimmers thro' the night!
So pale! and knew I death as mortals know
I'd say that he mysterious had on thee
Laid hands of talons and so slain thy soul!
So still! and all the night bears down my heart!
So pale!—and sleep is lost to thee and me!—
Sleep, that were welcome in this heavy gloom!—
It clings to me like pestilential fogs!
I seem but clodded filth and float in filth!
It chokes my words and claws them from my tongue
To sound as dull confusèd as the boom
Heard thro' the stagnant earth when armies meet
With ring of war-ax on the brazen helms,
And all the mountains clash unto the sound
Of shocking spears that splinter on gray ore!
For by dead banks of stone my words are yelled

While yet they touch the tongue to grasp the thought;
And all the creatures huddled in their holes
Creep forth to glare and hiss them back again!
Yet, for thy love, O Loké, could I brave
All trebled horrors that wise Odin may
Heap on, and, suff'ring, love thee all the more!

“ For thou dost love me, and this life is naught
Without thy majesty of form and mind,
For, dark to all, alone art fair to me!
And to thy level and thy passions all
I raise the puny hillock of my soul,
Tho' oft it droops below thy lofty height,
Far 'mid the crimson clouds of windless dawns
Reaching the ruby of a glorious crest.
And then aspire I not, but cower in awe
Down 'mid low, printless winds that take no morn.—

“ At least my countenance may win from thee
A reflex of that alabaster cold
That stones thy brow, and pale in kindred woe!
And when this stony brow of thine is cleft
By myriad furrows, tortures of slow Time,
And all the beauties of thy locks are past,
Now glossy as the brown seal's velvet fur,
Their drifts of winter strown around this cave
To gray the glutton gloom that hangs like lead,—
For Idunn's fruit is now debarred thy lips,
And thou shalt age e'en as I age with thee!—

Then will the thought of that dread twilight cheer
The burthen of thy anguish; for wilt thou
Not in the great annihilation aid
Of gods and worlds, that roll thro' misty grooves
Of cycled ages to wild Ragnaroke?
Then shalt thou joy! for all those stars which glue
Their blinking scales unto old Ymer's skull
In clots shall fall! and as this brooding night
Sticks to and gluts us till we strangling clutch
With purple lips for air—and feel but frost
Drag laboring down the throat to swell the freight
That cuddles to the heart and clogs its life,
So shall those falling flakes spread sea-like far
In lakes of flame and foggy pestilence
O'er the hot earth, and drown all men and gods.

“ But, oh, thy face! pale, pale its marble gleams
Thro' the thick night! and low the serpent wreathes
And twists his scaly coils that livid hang
Above thee alabaster as a shrine!—
Oh, could I kiss the lips toward which he writhes
And yield them the last spark of living flame
That burns in my wan blood, and, yielding—die!
Oh, could I gaze once more into large eyes
Whose liquid depths glassed domes of molten stars,
And see them as they glowed when Morning danced
O'er scattered flowers from the rosy hills
That lined the orient skies beneath one star!
When first we met and loved among the pines,

The melancholy pines that plumed the cliffs
And rocked and sang unto the smooth fiords
Like old wild women to their sleeping babes!
Then could I die e'en as the mortals die,
And smile in dying!—But the reptile baulks
All effort to behold, or on white lips
To feast the ardor of my vain desire!
Thy face alone shines on my straining sight
Like some dim moon beneath a night of mist,—
And now the creatures come to feel at me—
The serpent swings above and darts his fang,
And I can naught but hold the cup and breathe."

Then thro' the blackness of the dripping cave
Tumultuous spake he, rage his utterance;
Large as the thunder when it lunging rolls,
Heavy with earthquake and portending ruin,
Tempestuous words o'er everlasting seas
Dumb with the silence of eternal ice;
His eyes in horrid spasms, and his throat,
Corded and gnarled with veins of boisterous blood,
Swollen with fury, and stern, wintery lips
Flaked with rebellious foam and agony
For thwarted rage and baulkment of designs.
Rash vaunter of loud wrath, one brawny fist,
Convulsed with clenchment in its gyve of ore,
Clutched mad defiance and bold blasphemy,
Headlong for battle-launching at all gods
That bow meek necks before high Odin's throne;

Yet all unhurled and vain as mists of morn,
Or foam wind-wasted on the sterile sands
Of rainy seas where Ran, from whistling caves
Watching the tempest ravened dragon wreck,
Feels 'twixt lean miser fingers slippery
Already oily gold of Vikings' drowned.
Reverberated, the loud-scoffing rock
All his unburdened blasphemies again
Flung back a million fold from riotous throats
In which demoniac laughter howled and roared,
Bellowing tremendous tumult, till his ears,
Flooded and gorged with maniac curses, grew
Stunned, deaf and senseless, and the rebel words,
Erst rolled and thundered in his godly speech,
Recoiled in oaths that, shrunk in serpent loops,
Coiled mad anathemas of violence,
Voluminous-ringed, about his heart of ice,
That now in wasted wrath of bitter foam,—
Which burst and bare big ineffectual groans,
Wretched and huge with infinite weariness,—
Spent all its storm of ponderous misery.

Her sorrow found some vent in rain of tears,
And all the cave was dumb and dead with night,
Unbroken save of Sigin's heaving sobs,
Or the baulked god's deep groans where chain'd he lay
To see the spotted serpent crisp above
And aye gape poison at his lidless eyes.

And when her bowl was brimmed till one more drop
Had cast the filth white o'er the scorching edge,
Into the black, deep flood beside she poured
Its stagnant torture; one second's tith the time—
The reptile's bale blurs all his milky cheek,
Burns to his bones; he starting fell, stiff twists
The sinewy steel that hugs his massive limbs
And shrieks so loud within those solitudes,
The caverns yawn unto the stormy skies,
The orey mountains rock and groan for fear,
High spew their fiery thunders, smoke, and stones.

And this all in a mist-land dim and numb,
Where giants reign, rude kings in holds of ice
Based crag-like on high vivid frozen cliffs,
The bandit castles of the Northern wastes.
Beneath the shimmering dance of Arctic lights,
Which lamp them on, they storm to fight the gods;
Swathed in their stubborn mail of sleet and snow,
Embattled 'mid the clouds with fiends of ruin,
In militant throng-legions scorn the gods;
From yawning trumpets wrought of whirling clouds
Snarl war to Thor, who, in his goat-dragged wain,
Hurls thundering forth to fight their lowering troops,
That lift black 'scutcheons of tempests orb'd,
Great brands of wind, and slings of whistling storm,
From which are flung their hurricanes of hail.
With such they oft withstand the strength of Thor's
Dwarf-stithied mace, Mjolner, when he rings

To find admittance to their brains of mist,
And, cleaving, drives them to their barren realms,
Where echoes of lost wars and wars to be
Rumble 'mid ruined icebergs to the caves,
Or clang with northern shock of icy spears;
While Balder, from the abyss of deathful fogs
Restored, smiles kindlier on the whit'ning lands.

Here Loke is doomed to lie in tortures chained
Until that last dread twilight of the gods,
Wild Ragnaroke, when Odin's self shall pass:
The moon and sun consumed, the fiery host
From Muspelheim shall flaming split the heavens,
Blot out the stars with lustre of their arms;
And down the squared legions led by Surt
Swift whirl in fogs of flame to war with gods;
Nor Thor avail, but suffocated fall
In contest with the Midgard serpent vast.
All men and gods abolished with the world,
Which into an abyss of fume and flame
Sinks like a meteor of the Summer night,
That slides into the gold of burning eve
And with eve's gold is burning, blent and lost.
But, like an exhalation, from the wreck
A new and lovelier world with juster gods
And better men shall rise, and soar away
On wings of Love thro' skies where Truth displays
The glory of her form, Wisdom her eyes.—
Behold! the Golden Age again returns!

SEA DREAMS.

I.

O HI, to see in the night in a May moon's light
 A nymph from siren caves,
 With a crown of pearl, sea-gems in each curl
 Dance down white, star-stained waves!
 Oh, to list in the gloam by the pearly foam
 Of a sad, far-sounding shore
 The strain of the shell of an ocean belle
 From caves where the waters roar!
 With a hollow shell drift up in the moon
 To sigh in my ears this ocean tune:—

II.

“Wilt follow, wilt follow to caverns hollow,
 That echo the tumbling spry?
 Wilt follow thy queen to islands green,
 Vague islands of witchery?
 O follow, follow to grottoes hollow,
 And isles in a purple sea,
 Where rich roses twine and the lush woodbine
 Weaves a musky canopy!”

III.

Oh, to float in the gloam on the bubbly foam
With her lily face above!
Oh, to lie in a barque and a wild song hark,
And a billow-nymph to love!
I'd lie at her feet and my heart should beat
To the music of her sighs;
But the stars in her face my passion should trace,
Unseen all the stars of the skies.

IV.

Away, away with the witch of spray
To her Aidenn islands far;
And the blue above, drunk-mad with love,
Dance down each singing star.
Leave, leave to the heaven its morning star
In a cloud of bolted snow,
To laugh at the world and herald far
Our wedlock and joy below.

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III.—IN THE GARDENS OF FALERINA.

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IN THE GARDENS OF FALERINA.

FALERINA.

THE night is hung above us, love,
With heavy stars that love us, love,
With clouds that curl in purple and pearl,
And winds that whisper of us, love :
On burly hills and valleys, that lie dimmer,
The amber foot-falls of the moon-sylphs glimmer.

The moon is still a crescent, love ;
And here with thee 'tis pleasant, love,
To sit and dream in its thin gleam,
And list thy sighs liquescent, love :
To see thy eyes and fondle thy dark tresses,
Set on warm lips imperishable kisses.

The sudden-glaring fire-flies
Swim o'er the hollow gyre-wise,
And spurt and shine like jostled wine
At lips on which desire lies :
Or like the out-flashed hair of elf or fairy
In rapid morrice whirling feat and airy.

Up,—all the blue West sundering,—
A creamy cloud comes blundering
O'er star and steep, and opening deep
Grows gold with silent thundering :
Gold flooding crystal crags immeasurable,
Lost Avalons of old Romance and Fable.

The bee dreams in the cherry bloom
That sways above the berry bloom ;
The kaydid grates where she's hid
In leafy deeps of dreary gloom :
The forming dew is globing on the grasses,
Like rich spilled gems of some dark queen that passes.

The mere brief gusts are wrinkling ;
A thousand ripples twinkling
Have caught the stars on polished spars
Their rustling ridges sprinkling :
And all the shadow lurking in its bosom
Is touched and bursten into golden blossom.

Stoop! and my being flatter, love ;
With sudden starlight scatter, love,
From the starry grace of thy rare face,
Whose might can make or shatter, love !
Come, raiment love in love's own radiant garments,
And kirdle all my soul to rapturous torments !

Bow all thy beauty to me, love,
Lips, eyes, and hair to woo me, love,
As bows and blows some satin rose
Snow-soft and tame, that knew thee, love,
Unto the common grass, that worshiping cowers,
Dowering its love with all her musk of flowers.

THE DREAM.

MY dream was such :

It seemed the afternoon
Of some deep tropic day, and yet a moon
Stood round and full with largeness of white gleams
High in a Heaven that knew not a sun's beams ;
A vast, still Heaven of unremembered dreams.
Long, lawny lengths of perishable cloud
Hung in a West o'er rolling forests bowed ;
Clouds raining colors, gold and violet
That, opening, seemed from hidden worlds to let
Down hints of mystic beauty and old charms
Wrought of frail creatures fair with silvery forms.
And all about me fruited orchards grew
Of quince and peach and dusty plums of blue ;
Wan apricots and apples red with fire,
Kissed into ripeness by some sun's desire,

And big with juice; and on far, fading hills,
Down which it seemed a hundred torrent rills
Flashed leaping silver, vines and vines and vines
Of purple vintage swollen with cool wines;
Pale pleasant wines and fragrant as the June,
Their delicate life robbed from the foam-fair moon.
And from the clouds o'er this sweet world there dripp'd
An odorous music strange and feverish lipped,
That swung and swooned and panted in mad sighs,
Invoking at each wave sad rapturous eyes
Of limpid, willowy beings fair as night,
Decked spangly with crisp flower-like stars of white;
Dim, honeyed booming of the boisterous bee
In purple myriads of faint fleurs-de-lis;
Of surf far-foaming on forgotten strands
Of irrememorial seas in fairy lands
Of melting passion, who, with crimson lips
Of many shells laid to each swell that dips,
Sigh secret hope of unrequited love
In murmurous language to wan winds above.

HAWKING.

I.

I SEE them still, when poring o'er
Old volumes of romantic lore,
Ride forth to hawk in days of yore,
By woods and promontories;
Knights in gold lace, plumes and gems,
Maidens crowned with anadems,—
Whose falcons on round wrists of milk
Sit in jesses green of silk,—
From bannered Miraflores.

II.

The laughing earth is young with dew;
The deeps above are violet blue;
And in the East a cloud or two
Empearled with airy glories:
And with laughter, jest and singing,
Silver bells of falcons ringing,
Hawkers, rosy with the dawn,
Gayly ride o'er hill and lawn
From courtly Miraflores.

III.

The torrents silver down the crags ;
Down dim-green vistas browse the stags ;
And from wet beds of reeds and flags
 The frightened lapwing hurries ;
And the brawny wild-boar peereth
At the cavalcade that neareth ;
Oft his shaggy-throated grunt
Brings the king and court to hunt
 At royal Miraflores.

IV.

The May itself in soft sea-green
Is Oriana, Spring's high queen,
And Amadis beside her seen
 Some prince of Fairy stories :
Where her castle's ivied towers
Drowse above her budded bowers,
Flaps the heron thro' the sky,
And the wild swan gives a cry
 By woody Miraflores.

LA BEALE ISOUD.

I.

WITH bloodshot eyes the morning rose
 Upon a world of gloom and tears;
 A kindred glance queen Isoud shows—
 Come night, come morn, cease not her fears.
 The fog-clouds whiten all the vale,
 The sunlight draws them to its love;
 The diamond dew wash ev'ry dale,
 Where bays the hunt within the grove.
 Her lute—the one her touch he taught
 To wake beneath the stars a song
 Of swan-caught music—is as naught
 And on yon damask lounge is flung.
 Down o'er her cheeks her hair she draws
 In golden rays 'twixt lily tips,
 And gazes sad on gloomy shaws
 'Neath which had often touched their lips.

II.

With irised eyes, from morn to noon,
 And noon to middle night she stoops
 From her high lattice 'neath the moon,
 Hoping to see him 'mid the groups

Of mail-swathed braves come jingling by.
 And once there came a dame in weft
 All pearl besprent, as when the sky
 A springtide day hath wept and left
 A stormy eve one flash of gems.
 "Mid neatherds he's a naked waif
 Unwitted," said she, liping scorn:
 And shook deep curls with a weak laugh
 Til' clinked the gold thick in them worn.

III.

"How long to wait!" and far she bent
 From her tall casement toward the lawn;
 A prospect of a wide extent
 Glassed in her eyes and hateful shown.
 Along the white lake windy crags
 Blue with coarse brakes and ragged pines;
 A bandit keep with trembling flags;
 And barren scars, and waste marsh lines,
 And now a palfried dame and knight.
 Deep deer-behaunted forests old,
 Whose sinewy boughs dark blocked the cave
 Of Heav'n o'er Earth; a blasted hold
 'Mid livid fields; a torrent's wave.
 And o'er the bridge whose marble arched
 The torrent's foam, dim in the dew
 Of morning, one all glimmering marched
 In glittering steel from helm to shoe,
 With lance whose fang smote back the dawn.

IV.

Selled on a barb whose trappings shone
 Red brass,—a morning star of jousts
 Upon the dawning beaming lone
 Burst from the hills' empurpled crusts.
 A lying star, whose double tongue
 Was slave to gold: "I saw him die!—
 'Tis ruth, for he was brave and young,—
 I saw him in the close clay lie."
 Then passed he rattling from the court. . . .
 So grief in furrows ploughed her front's
 Smooth surface wan, and toward the eve,—
 The bloodshot eve upon the mounts,
 Who o'er day's flow'ry bier did grieve
 And bow her melancholy star,—
 O'er teenful eyes she bent the light
 Of her crown-crescent's gem, and far
 She lingered till the full-mooned night
 Showered ripple-stars the gray mere o'er.

V.

"And I'm like her who trims a flame
 Of sickly color, bowing low
 To balk the wind; in wanton game
 One stoops in secret toward her brow
 With wind-bulged cheeks, a quick breath sends—
 And then the world is blind with gloom,
 And filled with phantoms and with fiends,
 That strain huge eyes and jibe her doom."

Thus thought Isoud in her despair.
 Of Launcelot then thoughts grew on,
 And Arthur's lovely queen away
 In castled courts of Caerleon,
 And all their joy and dalliance gay.
 Until she could have thawed the spars
 Of her clear-fountained eyes to tears,
 And gush wild grief long-seared by wars
 Of passionate anguish and great fears:
 "Oh Tristram gone! oh death in life!"
 Soft down below in the thick dark
 A fountain throbb'd monotonous foam,
 Unseen within the starlit park,
 Deep in the tower's shadowed dome.
 "And thus my heart drums frigid life
 In hateful gloom of fear and woe!
 One flood of sorrow, cataract-rife,
 My full-flush heart streams come and go
 Since Tristram's gone and I'm alone!"

VI.

Then sunk the moon, and far away,
 Beside the bickering lake, the towers
 Of bandit braves shone tall and gray,
 Like specters in her lonely hours.
 And 'twixt the nodding grove and lake
 A glimmering fawn stalked thro' the night;
 And with full brow the musks did take,
 Then bowed to drink—she veiled her sight

And moaning said, "Death is but life!
The fawn 'mid lilies from the mere
 Sucks genial draughts to dull its thirsts;
O fondest spirit, art thou near?
 Draw to thy soul this soul that bursts!
The vivid lilies to the stars
 Clasp their white eyes and sink to sleep:
O anguish, to thy burning wars
 Lock my sad heart and drag it deep!"—
Albeit she slept, she dreamed in grief.

BELTENEHBROS AT MIRAFLORES.

I.

THE quickening East climbs to yon star,
 That, cradled, rocks herself in morn;
 The liquid silver broad'ning far
 Dawn drencheth cliff, holt, down and tarn.
 The trembling splendors gild the sky,
 Breath'd from her tawny champion's lips;
 The clear green dews above me lie,
 Their lustre the dark eyelash tips
 Of Oriana sitting by.

The crested cock 'mid his stout dames
 Crows from the purple-clover hill;
 His glossy coat the morn enflames,
 And all his leaping heart doth thrill.
 His curving tail sickles the plume
 That rosy nods against his eye.
 Laughs from deep beds of twinkling bloom
 The liliated East when wand'reth nigh
 My Oriana in the gloom.

The rooks swarm clatt'ring 'round the tow'rs;
 The falcon jingles in the air;
 The bursting dawn around him show'rs
 A clinging glory of wan glare.

From the green knoll the shouting hunt
With swollen cheeks clangs his alarms;
Mayhap I hear the bristler's grunt:
But where my Oriana charms
The wood, hushed is its ev'ry haunt.

The willowed lake is cool with cloud
Breaking and dimming into shreds,
Which gauze the azure, thinly crowd
The mist-pink West with hazy threads.
A wild swan ruffles o'er the mere
Soft as the drifting of a soul;
A double swan she doth appear
In mirage fixed 'twixt pole and pole
When Oriana singeth near.

II.

Spring high into the shuddering stars,
O florid sunset, burning gold!
Flash on our eyeballs lurid bars
To beam them with air-fires cold!
The blowing dingles soak with light,
The purple coppice hang with blaze;
But where we stand a meeker white
Bloom on us thro' the hill's soft haze,
For Oriana stars the night!

Float from the East, O silver world,
Unto the ocean of the West;

And the foam-sparkles upward hurled,
That fringe the twilight's surging crest,
Snatch up and gather 'round thy brow
In lustrous twine of rosy heat,
And rain on us its starry glow,—
O fragment of the evetide's sheet,—
And Oriana's eyes o'erflow.

O courting cricket, with thy pipe
Now shrill true love thro' the warm grain
O feathered buds, that nodding stripe
The blue glen's night, sigh love again!
Thou glimmering bird, that aye doth wail
From some wind-wavered branch of snow,
Sweep down the moonlit, hay-sweet dale
Thy bubbled anguish, swooning low,
For Oriana walks the vale!

The moon comes sowing all the eve
With myriad star-grains of her light;
The torrent on the crag doth grieve;
The glittering lake is smooth with night.
O mellow lights that o'er us slide,
O wrinkled woods that ridge the steep,
O bearded stems that billowing glide,
With laughing night-dews happy weep,
For Oriana 'll be my bride!

THE IDEAL.

THEE have I seen in some waste Arden old,
A white-browed maiden by a foaming stream,
With eyes profound and locks like threaded gold,
And features like a dream.

Upon thy wrist the jessied falcon fleet,
A silver poniard chased with imageries
Hung at a buckled belt, while at thy feet
The gasping heron dies.

Have fancied thee in some quaint ruined keep
A maiden in chaste samite, and her mien
Like that of loved ones visiting our sleep,
Or of a fairy queen.

She, where the cushioned ivy dangling hoar
Disturbs the quiet of her sable hair,
Pores o'er a volume of romantic lore,
Or hums an olden air.

Or a fair Bradamant both brave and just,
Intense with steel, her proud face lit with scorn,
At heathen castles, demons' dens of lust,
Winding her bugle horn.

Just as stern Artegal; in chastity
A second Britomart; in hardihood
Like him who 'mid King Charles' chivalry
A pillared sunbeam stood.

Or one in Avalon's deep-dingled bowers,
On which old yellow stars and waneless moons
Look softly, while white downy-lippèd flowers
Lisp faint and fragrant tunes.

Where haze-like creatures with smooth houri forms
Stoop thro' the curling clouds and float and smile,
While calm as hope in all her dreamy charms
Sleeps the enchanted isle.

And where cool, heavy bow'rs unstirred entwine,
Upon a headland breasting purple seas,
A crystal castle like a thought divine
Rises in mysteries.

And there a sorceress full beautiful
Looks down the surgeless reaches of the deep,
And, bubbling from her lily throat, songs lull
The languid air to sleep.

About her brow a diadem of spars,
At her fair casement seated fleecy white
Heark'ning wild sirens choiring to the stars
Thro' all the raven night.

And when she bends above the glow-lit waves
 She sees the sea-king's templed city old
Wrought from huge shells and labyrinthine caves
 Ribbed red with rusty gold.

But nor the sirens' nor the ocean king's
 Love will she heed, but still sits yearning there
To have the secret bird that vaguely sings
 Her aching heart to share.

TREACHERY.

I.

CAME a spicy smell of showers
On the purple wings of night,
And a pearl-encrusted crescent
On the lake looked still and white,
While a sound of distant singing
From the vales rose sad and light.

II.

Dripped the musk of sodden roses
From their million heavy sprays,
And the nightingales were sobbing
Of the roses amorous praise
Where the raven down of even
Caught the moonlight's bleaching rays.

III.

And the turrets of the palace,
From its belt of ancient trees,
On the mountain rose romantic
White as foam from troubled seas;
And the murmur of an ocean
Smote the chords of ev'ry breeze.

IV.

Where the moon shone on the terrace
And its fountain's lispings foam;
Where the bronzen urns of flowers
Breathed faint perfume thro' the gloam,
By the alabaster Venus
'Neath the quiet stars we'd roam.

V.

And we stopped beside the statue
Of the marble Venus there
Deeply pedestaled 'mid roses,
Who their crimson hearts laid bare,
Breathing out their lives in fragrance
At her naked feet and fair.

VI.

And we marked the purple dingles
Where the lazy vapors lolled,
Like thin, fleecy ribs of moonlight
Touched with amethyst and gold;
And we marked the wild deer glimmer
Like dim specters where they strolled. . . .

VII.

But from out those treach'rous roses
Crept a serpent and it stung,

Poisoned him who'd tuned my heart-strings
Till for him alone they sung,
Froze the nerves of hands that only
From its chords a note had wrung.

VIII.

Now the nightingales in anguish
To cold, ashen roses moan ;
Now a sound of desolate wailing
In the darkened palace lone
From a harp Æolian quavers
Broken on an empty throne.

ORLANDO MAD.

I.

IN mail of black my limbs I girt,
 Angelica!
And when the bugles clanged the charge,
The rolling battle's bristling marge
Beheld me a black storm of war
 Dash on the foe;
While Durindana glitt'ring far
Made many a foeman mouth the dirt
 In bleeding woe:—
For thou didst fire me to the war
'Mid many a Paynim scimeter,
 Angelica!

II.

No more the battle fires my blood,
 Angelica!
No more gay lists flaunt all their guiles,
And chivalry's charge, and beauty's smiles!
I wander lone the thistly wold
 When night-snows fall,
And crispy frosts the wild grass hold.
Great knights go glimmering thro' the wood,
 The clarion's call

Wakes War upon his desert wold—
 I see the dawning breaking cold,
 Angelica!

III.

When Southern winds sowed all the skies,
 Angelica!
 With bloom-storms of the flowering May;
 When all the battle-field was gay
 With scented garb of sainted flowers,
 I found a stream
 Cold as thy heart to paramours!
 Deep as the depth of thy blue eyes!
 And like a dream
 I found a grotto 'mid the flowers,
 Cool 'mid the sunlight-sprinkled bowers,
 Angelica!

IV.

My casque I dofft to scoop the fount,
 Angelica!
 With beaded pureness bubbling cool—
 It clashed into the purling pool;—
 Thy name lay chiseled in the rock,
 And underneath—
 And then meseemed deep night did block
 My steel-chained heart in one huge mount
 Foreshadowing death!—

Medoro deep in every rock !
The Moorish name my soul did mock,
 Angelica !

V.

No more wild war my veins ensteeps,
 Angelica !
No more gay lists flaunt all their guiles !—
White wastes before me miles on miles
With one low, ruby sunset bound—
 Thou fleest before,
I follow on : a far off sound
Of oceans gnawing at dark steeps
 Swells to a roar.—
'Mid foam thou smil'st : I spurn the ground—
I sink, I swim, waves hiss around—
Oh, could I sink 'neath the profound,
 And think of thee no more !

THE HAUNTED ROOM.

ITS casements' diamond disks of glass
 Stare myriad on a terrace old,
 Where urns, unkempt with ragged grass,
 Foam o'er with frothy cold.
 The snow rounds o'er each stair of stone;
 The frozen fount is hooped with pearl;
 Down desolate walks, like phantoms lone,
 Thin, powd'ry snow-wreaths whirl.

And to each rose-tree's stem that bends
 With silver snow-combs, glued with frost,
 It seems each summer rosebud sends
 Its airy, scentless ghost.
 The stiff Elizabethan pile
 Chatters with cold thro' all its panes,
 And rumbling down each chimney file
 The mad wind shakes his reins.

* * * * *

Lone in the Northern angle, dim
 With immemorial dust, it lay,
 Where each gaunt casement's stony rim
 Stared lidless to the day.

Drear in the Northern angle, hung
With olden arras dusky, where
Tall, shadowy Tristrams fought and sung
For shadowy Isolds fair.

Lies by a dingy cabinet
A tarnished lute upon the floor ;
A talon-footed chair is set
Grotesquely by the door.
A carven, testered bedstead stands
With rusty silks draped all about ;
And like a moon in murky lands
A mirror glitters out.

Dark in the Northern angle, where
In musty arras eats and clings
The drowsy moth ; and frightened there
The wild wind sighs and sings
Adown the roomy flue and takes
And swings the ghostly mirror till
It shrieks and creaks, then pulls and shakes
The curtains with a will.

A starving mouse forever gnaws
Behind a polished panel dark,
And 'long the floor its shadow draws
A poplar in the park.
I have been there when blades of light
Stabbed each dull, stained, and dusty pane ;

I have been there at dead of night,
But never will again. . . .

She grew upon my vision as
Heat sucked from the dry summer sod;
In taffetas as green as grass
Silent and faint she trod;
And angry jewels winked and frowned
In serpent coils on neck and wrist,
And 'round her dainty waist was wound
A zone of silver mist.

And icy fair as some bleak land
Her pale, still face stormed o'er with night
Of raven tresses, and her hand
Was beautiful and white.
Before the ebon mirror old
Full tearfully she made her moan,
And then a cock crew far and cold;
I looked and she was gone.

As if had come a sullying breath
And from the limpid mirror passed,
Her presence past, like some near death
Leaving my blood aghast.
Tho' I've been there when blades of light
Stabbed each dull, stained, and dusty pane;
Tho' I've been there at dead of night,
I never will again.

SERENADE.

BY the burnished laurel line
Glimmering flows the singing stream ;
Oily eddies crease and shine
O'er white pebbles, white as cream.

Richest roses bud or die
All about the splendid park ;
Fountains glass a wily eye
Where the fawns browse in the dark.

Amber-belted through the night
Floats the alabaster moon,
Stooping o'er th' acacia white
Where my mandolin I tune.

By the twinkling mere I sing
Where lake-lilies stretch pale eyes,
And a bulbul there doth fling
Music at the moon who flies.

With a broken syrinx there,
From enameled beds of buds,
Rises Pan in hoof and hair—
Moonlight his dim sculpture floods.

The pale jessamines have felt
The large passion of her gaze ;
See ! they part—their glories melt
Round her in a starry haze.

THE MIRROR.

AN antique mirror this,
I like it not at all,
In this lonely room where the goblin gloom
Scowls from the arrased wall.

A mystic mirror framed
In ebon, wildly carved ;
And the prisoned air in the crevice there
Moans like a man that's starved.

A truthful mirror where,
In the broad, chaste light of day,
From the window's arches, like fairy torches,
Red roses swing and sway.

They blush and bow and gaze,
Proud beauties desolate,
In their tresses cold the sunlight's gold,
In their hearts a jealous hate.

A small green worm that gnaws,
For the nightingale that low
Each eve doth rave, the passionate slave
Of the wild white rose below.

The night-bird wails below ;
The stars creep out above ;
And the roses soon in the sultry moon
Shall palpitate with love.

The night-bird sobs below ;
The roses blow and bloom ;
Thro' the diamond panes the moonlight rains
In the dim unholy room.

Ancestors grim that stare
Stiff, starched, and haughty down
From the oaken wall of the noble hall
Put on a sterner frown.

The old, bleak castle clock
Booms midnight overhead,
And the rose is wan and the bird is gone
When walk the shrouded dead.

And grim ancestors gaunt
In smiles and tears faint flit ;
By the mirror there they stand and stare,
And weep and sigh to it.

In rare, rich ermine earls
With rapiers jeweled rare,
With a powdered throng of courtiers long
Pass with stiff and stately air.

With diamonds and perfumes
In ruff and golden lace,
Tall ladies pass by the looking-glass,
Each sighing at her face.

An awful mirror this,
I like it not at all,
In this lonely room where the goblin gloom
Scowls from the arrased wall.

THE RIDE.

SHE rode o'er hill, she rode o'er plain,
She rode by fields of barley,
By morning-glories filled with rain,
And beechen branches gnarly.

She rode o'er plain, she rode o'er hill,
By orchard land and berry ;
Her face was buoyant as the rill,
Her eyes and heart were merry.

A bird sang here, a bird sang there,
Then blithely sang together,
Sang sudden greetings every where,
“ Good-morrow!” and “ good weather!”

The sunlight's laughing radiance
Laughed in her radiant tresses ;
The bold breeze set her curls a-dance,
Made red her lips with kisses.

“ Why ride ye here, why ride ye there,
Why ride ye here so merry ?
The sunlight living in your hair,
And in your cheek the cherry ?

BLOOMS OF THE BERRY.

“ Why ride ye with your sea-green plumes,
Your sea-green silken habit,
By balmy bosks of faint perfumes
Where squats the cunning rabbit ?”

“ The morning’s feet are wrought of gold,
The hunter’s horn is jolly ;
Sir Richard bold was rich and old,
Was old and melancholy.

“ A wife they’d have me to his bed,
And to the kirk they hurried ;
But now, gramercy ! he is dead,
Perdie ! is dead and buried.

“ I ride by tree, I ride by rill,
I ride by rye and clover,
For by the kirk beyond the hill
Awaits a better lover.”

THE SLEEPER.

SHE sleeps and dreams; one milk-white, lawny arm
Pillowing her heavy hair, as might cold Night
Meeting her sister Day, with glory warm,
Subside in languor on her bosom's white.

The naked other on the damask cloth,—
White, smooth, and light as the light thistle-down,
Or the pink, fairy, fluffy evening moth
On June-drunk beds of roses red,—lies thrown.

And one sweet cheek, kissed with the enamored moon,
Grown pale with anger at the liberty,
While, dusk in darkness, at the favor shown
The pouting other frowns still envy.

Hangs fall'n in folds the rich, dark covering,
With fretfulness thrust partly from her breast;
As through storm-broken clouds the moon might spring,
From this the orb of one pure bosom prest.

She sleeps; and where the silent moonbeams sink
Thro' diamond panes,—soft as a ghost of snow,—
In wide, white jets, the lion-fur seems to drink
With tawny jaws its wasted, winey glow.

Light-lidded sleep and holy dreams to her,
 Unborn of feverish sorrow or of care,
 Soft as the gust that makes the arras stir,
 Tangling gold moonbeams in her fragrant hair.

A MELODY.

I.

THERE be Fairies bright of eye,
 Who the wild-flowers warders are ;
 There be Fairies subtly
 Nourished in a blossom's star ;
 Fairies tripping merrily
 Singing in faint echoes far,
 Singing fairy melodies
 Murmured by the burly bees,
 By the wild brown bees.

II.

Well I wot that Fairies be there,—
 Fairies, Fairies that at eve
 Lurking in a blossom-lair,
 In some rose-bud's scented hair
 From white beams of starlight weave

Glinting gown and shining shoe.
I have proven sure and true
Fairies be there, fays of dew,
Lying laughing in its spark
Floating in a rose's sark ;
Singing fairy melodies,
When asleep the dusty bees
Can not steal their melodies,
Fairy melodies.

THE ELF'S SONG.

I.

WHERE thronged poppies with globed shields
Of fierce red
Warrior all the harvest fields
Is my bed.
Here I tumble with the bee,
Robber bee of low degree
Gay with dust:
Wit ye of a bracelet bold
Broadly belting him with gold?
It was I who bound it on
When a-gambol on the lawn—
It can never rust.

II.

Where the glow-worm lights his lamp
There am I;
Where within the grasses damp
Crickets cry.
Cheer'ly, cheer'ly in the burne
Where the lins the torrents churn
Into foam,

Leap I on a whisp of broom,—
Cheer'ly, cheer'ly through the gloom,—
All aneath a round-cheeked moon,
Treading on her silver shoon
 Lightly o'er the gloam.

III.

Or the cowslip on the bent
 Lift her head,
Or the glow-worm's lamp be spent,
 Whitely dead ;
'Neath lank ferns I laughing lie,
'Neath the ferns full warily
 Hid away,
Where the drowsy musk-rose blows
And a fussy runnel flows,
Sleeping with the Faëry
Under leafy canopy
 All the holyday.

THE NIXES' SONG.

VAGUE, vague 'neath darkling waves,
With emerald-curving caves
For the arched skies,
Red-walled with dark dull gold
The Nixes' city old
Deep-glimmering lies.

And thro' the long green nights the spangling spars
Twinkle like milky stars.

Where the wind-ripple plays
On tufts of dipping sprays
Sparkling we rock ;
With blooming fingers bare
Comb down our golden hair
In many a lock ;

While, poured o'er naked ease of cool, moist limbs,
An amber glamour swims.

Or in the middle night
When cold damp fire-flies light
Pale flitting brands
Down all the woodland aisles,
With swift mysterious smiles
Link we white hands,

And where the moonlight haunts the drowsy lake
Bask in its silver wake.

Come join, come join our dance
While the warm starbeams glance,
 And the kind moon
Spills all her flowers of light
At the dark feet of Night,
 And soon, full soon,
Thou'lt sleep in shadowy halls where dim and cold
Our city's walled with gold.

"THE FAIRY RADE."

I.

AI me! why stood I on the bent
When Summer wept o'er dying June!
I saw the Fairy Folk ride faint
Aneath the moon.

II.

The haw-trees hedged the russet lea
Where cuckoo-buds waxed rich with gold;
The wealthy corn rose yellowly
Endlong the wold.

III.

Betwixt the haw-trees and the mead
"The Fairy Rade" came glimmering on;
A creamy cavalcade did speed
O'er the green lawn.

IV.

The night was ringing with their reins;
Loud laughed they till the cricket hushed;
The whistles on their coursers' manes
Shrill music gushed.

V.

The whistles tagged their horses' manes
All crystal clear ; on these a wind
Forever played, and waked the plains
Before, behind.

VI.

These flute-notes and the Fairy song
Took the dim holts with many a qualm,
And eke their silver bridles rung
A far-off psalm.

VII.

All rid upon pale ouphen steeds
With flying tails, uncouthly seen ;
Each wore a scarf athwart his weeds
Of freshest green.

VIII.

And aye a beam of silver light
Fairer than moonshine danced aboon,
And shook their locks—a glimmering white
Not of the moon.

IX.

Small were they that the hare-bell's blue
Had helmeted each tiny head ;
Save one damsel, who, tall as two,
The Faeries led.

X.

Long tresses floated from a tire
Of diamond sparks, which cast a light,
And o'er her white sark shook, in fire
Rippling the night.

XI.

I would have thrown me 'neath her feet,
And told her all my dole and pain,
There while her rein was jingling sweet
O'er all the plain.

XII.

Alas! a black and thwarting cock
Crew from the thatch with long-necked cry—
The Elfin queen and her wee flock
In the night did die.

IN AN OLD GARDEN.

THE Autumn pines and fades
Upon the withered trees ;
And over there, a choked despair,
You hear the moaning breeze.

The violets are dead ;
Dead the tall hollyhocks,
That hang like rags on the wind-crushed flags,
And the lilies' livid stocks.

The wild gourd clammers free
Where the clematis was wont ;
Where nenuphars waxed thick as stars
Rank weeds stagnate the font.

Yet in my dreams I hear
A tinkling mandolin ;
In the dark blue light of a fragrant night
Float in and out and in.

And the dewy vine that climbs
To my lady's lattice sways,
And behind the vine there come to shine
Two pleasant eyes and gaze.

And now a perfume comes,
A swift Favonian gust;
And the shrinking grass where it doth pass
Bows slave-like to the dust.

In dreams I see her drift
A mist of drapery;
In her jeweled shawl divinely tall,
A Dian deity.

The moon broods high and full
O'er the broken Psyche cold,
And there she stands her dainty hands
And thin wrists warm with gold.

But lovers now are dead,
The air is stung with frosts;
And naught may you find save the homeless wind,
Dead violets' ghosts and ghosts.