

KENTUCKY POEMS

The Author's thanks are due to Mr. R. H. RUSSELL,
of New York, for kind permission to reprint
from *Shapes and Shadows* four of the
poems published in this volume.

KENTUCKY POEMS

BY

MADISON CAWEIN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

EDMUND GOSSE



NEW YORK

E. P. DUTTON & CO.

1903

NOTE

THE poems included in this volume have been selected from the following volumes of the author: *Moods and Memories*, *Red Leaves and Roses*, *Poems of Nature and Love*, *Intimations of the Beautiful*, *Days and Dreams*, *Undertones*, *Idyllic Monologues*, *The Garden of Dreams*, *Shapes and Shadows*, *Myth and Romance*, and *Weeds by the Wall*. None of the longer poems have been included in this selection.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PROLOGUE	I
FOREST AND FIELD	5
SUMMER	18
TO SORROW	24
NIGHT	28
A FALLEN BEECH	31
A TWILIGHT MOTH	35
THE GRASSHOPPER	38
BEFORE THE RAIN	41
AFTER RAIN	43
THE HAUNTED HOUSE	47

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OCTOBER	52
INDIAN SUMMER	56
ALONG THE OHIO	58
A COIGN OF THE FOREST	61
CREOLE SERENADE	63
WILL O' THE WISPS	67
THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER	70
THE BOY COLUMBUS	73
SONG OF THE ELF	76
THE OLD INN	79
THE MILL-WATER	81
THE DREAM	84
SPRING TWILIGHT	87
A SLEET-STORM IN MAY	89
UNREQUITED	92
THE HEART O' SPRING	94

CONTENTS

	PAGE
' A BROKEN RAINBOW ON THE SKIES OF MAY ' .	96
ORGIE	99
REVERIE	101
LETHE	106
DIONYSIA	109
THE NAIAD	116
THE LIMNAD	119
INTIMATIONS	123
BEFORE THE TEMPLE	128
ANTHEM OF DAWN	130
AT THE LANE'S END	134
THE FARMSTEAD	146
A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS	155
THE FEUD	159
LYNCHERS	162
DEAD MAN'S RUN	164

CONTENTS

	PAGE
AUGUST	168
THE BUSH-SPARROW	172
QUIET	176
MUSIC	178
THE PURPLE VALLEYS	181
A DREAM SHAPE	184
THE OLD BARN	186
THE WOOD WITCH	189
AT SUNSET	192
MAY	194
RAIN	196
TO FALL	198
SUNSET IN AUTUMN	200
THE HILLS	203
CONTENT	206
HEART OF MY HEART	209

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OCTOBER	211
MYTH AND ROMANCE	214
GENIUS LOCI	218
DISCOVERY	222
THE OLD SPRING	224
THE FOREST SPRING	226
TRANSMUTATION	228
DEAD CITIES	229
FROST	232
A NIGHT IN JUNE	234
THE DREAMER	237
WINTER	238
MID-WINTER	240
SPRING	242
TRANSFORMATION	243
RESPONSE	245

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE SWASHBUCKLER	247
SIMULACRA	249
CAVERNS	251
THE BLUE BIRD	253
QUATRAINS	254
ADVENTURERS	258
EPILOGUE	260

INTRODUCTION

SINCE the disappearance of the latest survivors of that graceful and somewhat academic school of poets who ruled American literature so long from the shores of Massachusetts, serious poetry in the United States seems to have been passing through a crisis of languor. Perhaps there is no country on the civilised globe where, in theory, verse is treated with more respect and, in practice, with a greater lack of grave consideration than America. No conjecture as to the reason of this must be attempted here, further than to suggest that the extreme value set upon sharpness, ingenuity and rapid mobility is obviously calculated to depreciate and to condemn

INTRODUCTION

the quiet practice of the most meditative of the arts. Hence we find that it is what is called 'humorous' verse which is mainly in fashion on the western side of the Atlantic. Those rhymes are most warmly welcomed which play the most preposterous tricks with language, which dazzle by the most mountebank swiftness of turn, and which depend most for their effect upon paradox and the negation of sober thought. It is probable that the diseased craving for what is 'smart,' 'snappy' and wide-awake, and the impulse to see everything foreshortened and topsy-turvy, must wear themselves out before cooler and more graceful tastes again prevail in imaginative literature.

Whatever be the cause, it is certain that this is not a moment when serious poetry, of any species, is flourishing in the United States. The absence of anything like a common impulse

INTRODUCTION

among young writers, of any definite and intelligible, if excessive, *parti pris*, is immediately observable if we contrast the American, for instance, with the French poets of the last fifteen years. Where there is no school and no clear trend of executive ambition, the solitary artist, whose talent forces itself up into the light and air, suffers unusual difficulties, and runs a constant danger of being choked in the aimless mediocrity that surrounds him. We occasionally meet with a poet in the history of literature, of whom we are inclined to say, Charming as he is, he would have developed his talent more evenly and conspicuously,—with greater decorum, perhaps,—if he had been accompanied from the first by other young men like-minded, who would have formed for him an atmosphere and cleared for him a space. This is the one regret I feel in contemplating, as I have done for years

INTRODUCTION

past, the ardent and beautiful talent of Mr. Cawein. I deplore the fact that he seems to stand alone in his generation ; I think his poetry would have been even better than it is, and its qualities would certainly have been more clearly perceived, and more intelligently appreciated, if he were less isolated. In his own country, at this particular moment, in this matter of serious nature-painting in lyric verse, Mr. Cawein possesses what Cowley would have called 'a monopoly of wit.' In one of his lyrics Mr. Cawein asks—

'The song-birds, are they flown away,
The song-birds of the summer-time,
That sang their souls into the day,
And set the laughing hours to rhyme?
No cat-bird scatters through the hush
The sparkling crystals of her song ;
Within the woods no hermit-thrush
Trails an enchanted flute along.'

To this inquiry, the answer is : the only hermit-

INTRODUCTION

thrush now audible seems to sing from Louisville, Kentucky. America will, we may be perfectly sure, calm herself into harmony again, and possess once more her school of singers. In those coming days, history may perceive in Mr. Cawein the golden link that bound the music of the past to the music of the future through an interval of comparative tunelessness.

The career of Mr. Madison Cawein is represented to me as being most uneventful. He seems to have enjoyed unusual advantages for the cultivation and protection of the poetical temperament. He was born on the 23rd of March 1865, in the metropolis of Kentucky, the vigorous city of Louisville, on the southern side of the Ohio, in the midst of a country celebrated for tobacco and whisky and Indian corn. These are commodities which may be consumed in excess, but in moderation they make glad the

INTRODUCTION

heart of man. They represent a certain glow of the earth, they indicate the action of a serene and gentle climate upon a rich soil. It was in this delicate and voluptuous state of Kentucky that Mr. Cawein was born, that he was educated, that he became a poet, and that he has lived ever since. His blood is full of the colour and odour of his native landscape. The solemn books of history tell us that Kentucky was discovered in 1769, by Daniel Boone, a hunter. But he first discovers a country who sees it first, and teaches the world to see it; no doubt some day the city of Louisville will erect, in one of its principal squares, a statue to 'Madison Cawein, who discovered the Beauty of Kentucky.' The genius of this poet is like one of those deep rivers of his native state, which cut paths through the forests of chestnut and hemlock as they hurry towards the south and west, brushing

INTRODUCTION

with the impulsive fringe of their currents the rhododendrons and calmias and azaleas that bend from the banks to be mirrored in their flushing waters.

Mr. Cawein's vocation to poetry was irresistible. I do not know that he ever tried to resist it. I have even the idea that a little more resistance would have been salutary for a talent which nothing could have discouraged, and which opposition might have taught the arts of compression and selection. Mr. Cawein suffered at first, I think, from lack of criticism more than from lack of eulogy. From his early writings I seem to gather an impression of a Louisville more ready to praise what was second-rate than what was first-rate, and practically, indeed, without any scale of appreciation whatever. This may be a mistake of mine; at all events, Mr. Cawein has had more to gain from the

INTRODUCTION

- passage of years in self-criticism than in inspiring enthusiasm. The fount was in him from the first; but it bubbled forth before he had digged a definite channel for it. Sometimes, to this very day, he sports with the principles of syntax as Nature played games so long ago with the fantastic caverns of the valley of the Green River or with the coral-reefs of his own Ohio. He has bad rhymes, amazing in so delicate an ear; he has awkwardness of phrase not expected in one so plunged in contemplation of the eternal harmony of Nature. But these grow fewer and less obtrusive as the years pass by.

The virgin timber-forests of Kentucky, the woods of honey-locust and buck-eye, of white oak and yellow poplar, with their clearings full of flowers unknown to us by sight or name, from which in the distance are visible the domes of the far-away Cumberland Mountains, this seems to

INTRODUCTION

be the hunting-field of Mr. Cawein's imagination. Here all, it must be confessed, has hitherto been unfamiliar to the Muses. If Persephone 'of our Cumnor cowslips never heard,' how much less can her attention have been arrested by clusters of orchids from the Ocklawaha, or by the song of the Whippoorwill, rung out when 'the west was hot geranium-red' under the boughs of a black-jack on the slopes of Mount Kinnex. 'Not here,' one is inclined to exclaim, 'not here, O Apollo, are haunts meet for thee,' but the art of the poet is displayed by his skill in breaking down these prejudices of time and place. Mr. Cawein reconciles us to his strange landscape—the strangeness of which one has to admit is mainly one of nomenclature,—by the exercise of a delightful instinctive pantheism. He brings the ancient gods to Kentucky, and it is marvellous how quickly they learn to be at

INTRODUCTION

home there. Here is Bacchus, with a spicy fragment of calamus-root in his hand, trampling down the blue-eyed grass, and skipping, with the air of a hunter born, into the hickory thicket, to escape Artemis, whose robes, as she passes swiftly with her dogs through the woods, startle the humming-birds, silence the green tree-frogs, and fill the hot still air with the perfumes of peppermint and penny-royal. It is a queer landscape, but one of new natural beauties frankly and sympathetically discovered, and it forms a *mise en scène* which, I make bold to say, would have scandalised neither Keats nor Spenser.

It was Mr. Howells,—ever as generous in discovering new native talent as he is unflinching in reproof of the effeteness of European taste,—who first drew attention to the originality and beauty of Mr. Cawein's poetry. The Kentucky

INTRODUCTION

poet had, at that time, published but one tentative volume, the *Blooms of the Berry*, of 1887. This was followed, in 1888, by *The Triumph of Music*, and since then hardly a year has passed without a slender sheaf of verse from Mr. Cawein's garden. Among these (if a single volume is to be indicated), the quality which distinguishes him from all other poets,—the Kentucky flavour, if we may call it so,—is perhaps to be most agreeably detected in *Intimations of the Beautiful*. But it is time that I should leave the American lyrist to make his own appeal to English ears, with but one additional word of explanation, namely, that in this selection Mr. Cawein's narrative poems on mediæval themes, and in general his cosmopolitan writings, have been neglected in favour of such lyrics as would present him most vividly in his own native landscape, no visitor in spirit to

INTRODUCTION

Europe, but at home in that bright and exuberant West—

Where, in the hazy morning, runs
The stony branch that pools and drips,
Where red-haws and the wild-rose hips
Are strewn like pebbles; where the sun's
Own gold seems captured by the weeds;
To see, through scintillating seeds,
The hunters steal with glimmering guns.
To stand within the dewy ring
Where pale death smites the bone-set blooms,
And everlasting's flowers, and plumes
Of mint, with aromatic wing!
And hear the creek,—whose sobbing seems
A wild man murmuring in his dreams,—
And insect violins that sing!

So sweet a voice, so consonant with the music of the singers of past times, heard in a place so fresh and strange, will surely not pass without its welcome from the lovers of genuine poetry.

EDMUND GOSSE.

PROLOGUE

*There is a poetry that speaks
Through common things : the grasshopper,
That in the hot weeds creaks and creaks,
Says all of summer to my ear :
And in the cricket's cry I hear
The fireside speak, and feel the frost
Work mysteries of silver near
On country casements, while, deep lost
In snow, the gatepost seems a sheeted ghost.*

*And other things give rare delight :
Those guttural harps the green-frogs tune,
Those minstrels of the falling night,
That hail the sickle of the moon*

PROLOGUE

*From grassy pools that glass her lune :
Or,—all of August in its loud
Dry cry,—the locust's call at noon,
That tells of heat and never a cloud
To veil the pitiless sun as with a shroud.*

*The rain,—whose cloud dark-lids the moon,
The great white eyeball of the night,—
Makes music for me ; to its tune
I hear the flowers unfolding white,
The mushroom growing, and the slight
Green sound of grass that dances near ;
The melon ripening with delight ;
And in the orchard, soft and clear,
The apple redly rounding out its sphere.*

*The grigs make music as of old,
To which the fairies whirl and shine*

PROLOGUE

*Within the moonlight's prodigal gold,
On woodways wild with many a vine :
When all the wilderness with wine
Of stars is drunk, I hear it say—
' Is God restricted to confine
His wonders only to the day,
That yields the abstract tangible to clay ?'*

*And to my ear the wind of Morn,—
When on her rubric forehead far
One star burns big,—lifts a vast horn
Of wonder where all murmurs are :
In which I hear the waters war,
The torrent and the blue abyss,
And pines,—that terrace bar on bar
The mountain side,—like lovers' kiss,
And whisper words where naught but
grandeur is.*

PROLOGUE

*The jutting crags,—all iron-veined
With ore,—the peaks, where eagles scream,
That pour their cataracts, rainbow-stained,
Like hair, in many a mountain stream,
Can lift my soul beyond the dream
Of all religions ; make me scan
No mere external or extreme,
But inward pierce the outward plan
And learn that rocks have souls as well as man.*

FOREST AND FIELD

FOREST AND FIELD

I

GREEN, watery jets of light let through
The rippling foliage drenched with dew ;
And golden glimmers, warm and dim,
That in the vistaed distance swim ;
Where, 'round the wood-spring's oozy urn,
The limp, loose fronds of forest fern
Trail like the tresses, green and wet,
A wood-nymph binds with violet.
O'er rocks that bulge and roots that knot
The emerald-amber mosses clot ;
From matted walls of brier and brush
The elder nods its plumes of plush ;
And, Argus-eyed with many a bloom,
The wild-rose breathes its wild perfume ;

FOREST AND FIELD

May-apples, ripening yellow, lean
With oblong fruit, a lemon-green,
Near Indian-turnips, long of stem,
That bear an acorn-oval gem,
As if some woodland Bacchus there,—
While braiding locks of hyacinth hair
With ivy-tod,—had idly tost
His thyrsus down and so had lost :
And blood-root, that from scarlet wombs
Puts forth, in spring, its milk-white blooms,
That then like starry footsteps shine
Of April under beech and pine ;
At which the gnarled eyes of trees
Stare, big as Fauns' at Dryades,
That bend above a fountain's spar
As white and naked as a star.

The stagnant stream flows sleepily
Thick with its lily-pads ; the bee,—

FOREST AND FIELD

All honey-drunk, a Bassarid,—
Booms past the mottled toad, that, hid
In calamus-plants and blue-eyed grass,
Beside the water's pooling glass,
Silenus-like, eyes stolidly
The Mænad-glittering dragonfly.
And pennyroyal and peppermint
Pour dry-hot odours without stint
From fields and banks of many streams ;
And in their scent one almost seems
To see Demeter pass, her breath
Sweet with her triumph over 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
Borne over bosks of sassafras
By winds that foot it on the grass ;

FOREST AND FIELD

Sharp, sudden songs and whisperings,
That hint at untold hidden things—
Pan and Sylvanus who of old
Kept sacred each wild wood and wold.
A wily light beneath the trees
Quivers and dusks with every breeze—
A Hamadryad, haply, who,—
Culling her morning meal of dew
From frail, accustomed cups of flowers,—
Now sees some Satyr in the bowers,
Or hears his goat-hoof snapping press
Some brittle branch, and in distress
Shrinks back ; her dark, dishevelled hair
Veiling her limbs one instant there.

II

Down precipices of the dawn
The rivers of the day are drawn,
The soundless torrents, free and far,

FOREST AND FIELD

Of gold that deluge every star.
There is a sound of brooks and wings
That fills the woods with carollings ;
And, dashed on moss and flow'r and fern,
And leaves, that quiver, breathe and burn,
Rose-radiance smites the solitudes,
The dew-drenched hills, the dripping woods,
That twitter as with canticles
Of shade and light ; and wind, that smells
Of flowers, and buds, and boisterous bees,
Delirious honey, and wet trees.—
Through briers that trip them, one by one,
With swinging pails, that take the sun,
A troop of girls comes—berriers,
Whose bare feet glitter where they pass
Through dewdrop-trembling tufts of grass.
And, oh ! their laughter and their cheers
Wake Echo 'mid her shrubby rocks
Who, answering, from her mountain mocks

FOREST AND FIELD

With rapid fairy horns; as if
Each mossy vale and weedy cliff
Had its imperial Oberon,
Who, seeking his Titania, hid
In coverts caverned from the sun,
In kingly wrath had called and chid.

Cloud-feathers, oozing orange light,
Make rich the Indian locks of night;
Her dusky waist with sultry gold
Girdled and buckled fold on fold.
One star. A sound of bleating flocks.
Great shadows stretched along the rocks,
Like giant curses overthrown
By some Arthurian champion.
Soft-swimming sorceries of mist
That streak blue glens with amethyst.
And, tinkling in the clover dells,
The twilight sound of cattle-bells.

FOREST AND FIELD

And where the marsh in reed and grass
Burns, angry as a shattered glass,
The flies make golden blurs, that shine
Like drops of amber-scattered wine
Spun high by reeling Bacchanals,
When Bacchus wreathes his curling hair
With vine-leaves, and from every lair
His worshippers around him calls.
They come, they come, a happy throng,
The berries with gibe and song ;
Their pails brimmed black to tin-bright
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.

FOREST AND FIELD

III

The tanned and tired noon climbs high
Up burning reaches of the sky ;
Below the drowsy belts of pines
The rock-ledged river foams and shines ;
And over rainless hill and dell
Is blown the harvest's sultry smell :
While, in the fields, 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 scythes ; behind them
 press
The binders—men and maids that sing
Like some mad troop of piping Pan ;—
While all the hillsides swoon and ring
Such sounds of Ariel airiness
As haunted freckled Caliban.

FOREST AND FIELD

'O ho! O ho! 'tis noon I say.

The roses blow.

Away, away, above the hay,

To the tune o' the bees the roses sway;

The love-songs that they hum all day,

So low! So low!

The roses' Minnesingers they.'

Up velvet lawns of lilac skies

The tawny moon begins to rise

Behind low, blue-black hills of trees,—

As rises up, in Siren seas,

To rock in purple deeps, hip-hid,

A virgin-bosomed Oceanid.—

Gaunt shadows crouch by tree and scaur,

Like shaggy Satyrs waiting for

The moonbeam Nymphs, the Dryads white,

That take with loveliness the night,

And glorify it with their love.

FOREST AND FIELD

The sweet, far notes I hear, I hear,
Beyond dim pines and mellow ways,
The song of some fair harvester,
The lovely Limnad of the grove,
Whose singing charms me while it slays.
'O deep! O deep! the earth and air'
 Are sunk in sleep.
Adieu to care! Now everywhere
Is rest; and by the old oak there
The maiden with the nut-brown hair
 Doth keep, doth keep
Tryst with her lover the young and fair.'

IV

Like Atalanta's spheres of gold,
Within the orchard, apples rolled
From sudden hands of boughs that lay
Their leaves, like palms, against the day ;

FOREST AND FIELD

And near them pears of rusty brown
Lay bruised ; and peaches, pink with down,
And furry as the ears of Pan,
Or, like Diana's cheeks, a tan
Beneath which burnt a tender fire ;
Or wan as Psyche's with desire.
And down the orchard vistas,—young,
A hickory basket by him swung,
A straw-hat, 'gainst the sloping sun
Drawn brim-broad o'er his face,—he
strode ;
As if he looked to find some one,
His eyes far-fixed beyond the road.
Before him, like a living burr,
Rattled the noisy grasshopper.
And where the cows' melodious bells
Trailed music up and down the dells,
Beside the spring, that o'er the ground
Went whimpering like a fretful hound,

FOREST AND FIELD

He saw her waiting, fair and slim,
Her pail forgotten there, for him.

Yellow as sunset skies and pale
As fairy clouds that stay or sail
Through azure vaults of summer, blue
As summer heavens, the wildflowers grew ;
And blossoms on which spurts of light
Fell laughing, like the lips one might
Feign for a Hebe, or a girl
Whose mouth is laughter-lit with pearl.
Long ferns, in murmuring masses heaped ;
And mosses moist, in beryl steeped
And musk aromas of the wood
And silence of the solitude :
And everything that near her blew
The spring had showered thick with dew.—
Across the rambling fence she leaned,
Her fresh, round arms all white and bare ;

FOREST AND FIELD

Her artless beauty, bonnet-screened,
Rich-coloured with its auburn hair.
A wood-thrush gurgled in a vine—
Ah! 'tis his step, 'tis he she hears;
The wild-rose smelt like some rare wine—
He comes, ah, yes! 'tis he who nears.
And her brown eyes and all her face
Said welcome. And with rustic grace
He leant beside her; and they had
Some talk with youthful laughter glad:
I know not what; I know but this
Its final period was a kiss.

SUMMER

SUMMER

I

HANG out your loveliest star, O Night! O
Night!

Your richest rose, O Dawn!

To greet sweet Summer, her, who, clothed
in light,

Leads Earth's best hours on.

Hark! how the wild birds of the woods

Throat it within the dewy solitudes!

The brook sings low and soft,

The trees make song,

As, from her heaven aloft

Comes blue-eyed Summer like a girl along.

SUMMER

II

And as the Day, her lover, leads her in,
 How bright his beauty glows !
How red his lips, that ever try to win
 Her mouth's delicious rose !
And from the beating of his heart
Warm winds arise and sighing thence depart ;
 And from his eyes and hair
 The light and dew
 Fall round her everywhere,
And Heaven above her is an arch of blue.

III

Come to the forest, or the treeless meadows
 Deep with their hay or grain ;
Come where the hills lift high their thrones
 of shadows,
Where tawny orchards reign.

SUMMER

Come where the reapers whet the scythe ;
Where golden sheaves are heaped ; where
 berriers blythe,
 With willow-basket and with pail,
 Swarm knoll and plain ;
 Where flowers freckle every vale,
And beauty goes with hands of berry-stain.

IV

Come where the dragon-flies, a brassy
 blue,
 Flit round the wildwood streams,
And, sucking at some horn of honey-dew,
 The wild-bee hums and dreams.
Come where the butterfly waves wings of
 sleep,
Gold-disked and mottled over blossoms
 deep ;

SUMMER

Come where beneath the rustic bridge
The green frog cries ;
Or in the shade the rainbowed midge,
Above the emerald pools, with murmurings flies.

v

Come where the cattle browse within the
brake,
As red as oak and strong ;
Where far-off bells the echoes faintly
wake,
And milkmaids sing their song.
Come where the vine-trailed rocks, with waters
hoary,
Tell to the sun some legend or some story ;
Or, where the sunset to the land
Speaks words of gold ;
Where ripeness walks, a wheaten band
Around her hair and blossoms manifold.

SUMMER

VI

Come where the woods lift up their stalwart
arms

Unto the star-sown skies ;

Knotted and gnarled, that to the winds and
storms

Fling mighty rhapsodies :

Or to the moon repeat what they have seen,
When Night upon their shoulders vast doth
lean.

Come where the dew's clear syllable

Drips from the rose ;

And where the fire-flies fill

The night with golden music of their glows.

VII

Now while the dingles and the vine-roofed
glens

Whisper their flowery tale

SUMMER

Unto the silence ; and the lakes and fens
 Unto the moonlight pale
Murmur their rapture, let us seek her out,
Her of the honey throat, and peachy pout,
 Summer ! and at her feet,
 The love of old
 Lay like a sheaf of wheat,
And of our hearts the purest gold of gold.

TO SORROW

TO SORROW

I

O DARK-EYED goddess of the marble brow,
Whose look is silence and whose touch is
night,
Who walkest lonely through the world, O thou,
Who sittest lonely with Life's blown-out light;
Who in the hollow hours of night's noon
Criest like some lost child ;
Whose anguish-fevered eyeballs seek the moon
To cool their pulses wild.
Thou who dost bend to kiss Joy's sister cheek,
Turning its rose to alabaster ; yea,

TO SORROW

Thou who art terrible and mad and meek,
Why in my heart art thou enshrined to-day?
O Sorrow say, O say!

II

Now Spring is here and all the world is white,
I will go forth, and where the forest robes
Itself in green, and every hill and height
Crowns its fair head with blossoms,—spirit
globes
Of hyacinth and crocus dashed with dew,—
I will forget my grief,
And thee, O Sorrow, gazing on the blue,
Beneath a last year's leaf,
Of some brief violet the south wind woos,
Or bluet, whence the west wind raked the snow;
The baby eyes of love, the darling hues
Of happiness, that thou canst never know,
O child of pain and woe.

TO SORROW

III

On some hoar upland, sweet with clustered
 thorns,
 Hard by a river's windy white of waves,
I shall sit down with Spring,—whose eyes are
 morns
 Of light; whose cheeks the rose of health
 enslaves,—
And so forget thee braiding in her hair
 The snowdrop, tipped with green,
The cool-eyed primrose and the trillium fair,
 And moony celandine.
Contented so to lie within her arms,
 Forgetting all the sear and sad and wan,
Remembering love alone, who o'er earth's
 storms,
 High on the mountains of perpetual dawn,
 Leads the glad hours on.

TO SORROW

IV

Or in the peace that follows storm, when Even,
 Within the west, stands dreaming lone and far,
Clad on with green and silver, and the Heaven
 Is brightly brooched with one gold-glittering
 star.

I will lie down beside some mountain lake,
 'Round which the tall pines sigh,
And breathing musk of rain from boughs that
 shake

 Storm balsam from on high,
Make friends of Dream and Contemplation high
 And Music, listening to the mocking-bird,—
Who through the hush sends its melodious cry,—
 And so forget a while that other word,
 That all loved things must die.

NIGHT

NIGHT

Out of the East, as from an unknown shore,
Thou comest with thy children in thine
arms,—
Slumber and Dream,—whom mortals all adore,
Their flowing raiment sculptured to their
charms :
Soft on thy breast thy lovely children rest,
Laid like twin roses in one balmy nest.
Silent thou comest, swiftly too and slow.
There is no other presence like to thine,
When thou approachest with thy babes divine,
Thy shadowy face above them bending low,
Blowing the ringlets from their brows of snow.

NIGHT

Oft have I taken Sleep from thy dark arms,
And fondled her fair head, with poppies
wreathed,

Within my bosom's depths, until its storms
With her were hushed and I but faintly
breathed.

And then her sister, Dream, with frolic art
Arose from rest, and on my sleeping heart
Blew bubbles of dreams where elfin worlds
were lost ;

Worlds where my stranger soul sang songs to me,
And talked with spirits by a rainbowed sea,
Or smiled, an unfamiliar shape of frost,
Floating on gales of breathless melody.

Day comes to us in garish glory garbed ;
But thou, thou bringest to the tired heart
Rest and deep silence, in which are absorbed
All the vain tumults of the mind and mart.

NIGHT

Whether thou comest with hands full of stars,
Or clothed in storm and clouds, the lightning
bars,

Rolling the thunder like some mighty dress,
God moves with thee ; we seem to hear His feet,
Wind-like, along the floors of Heaven beat ;

To see His face, revealed in awfulness,
Through thee, O Night, to ban us or to bless.

A FALLEN BEECH

A FALLEN BEECH

NEVERMORE at doorways that are barken
Shall the madcap wind knock and the moon-
light ;
Nor the circle which thou once didst darken,
Shine with footsteps of the neighbouring
moonlight,
Visitors for whom thou oft didst hearken.

Nevermore, gallooned with cloudy laces,
Shall the morning, like a fair freebooter,
Make thy leaves his richest treasure-places ;
Nor the sunset, like a royal suitor,
Clothe thy limbs with his imperial graces.

A FALLEN BEECH

And no more, between the savage wonder
Of the sunset and the moon's up-coming,
Shall the storm, with boisterous hoof-beats,
under

Thy dark roof dance, Faun-like, to the humming
Of the Pan-pipes of the rain and thunder.

Oft the Satyr-spirit, beauty-drunken,
Of the Spring called ; and the music measure
Of thy sap made answer ; and thy sunken
Veins grew vehement with youth, whose pressure
Swelled thy gnarly muscles, winter-shrunken.

And the germs, deep down in darkness rooted,
Bubbled green from all thy million oilets,
Where the spirits, rain-and-sunbeam-suited,
Of the April made their whispering toilets,
Or within thy stately shadow footed.

A FALLEN BEECH

Oft the hours of blonde Summer tinkled
At the windows of thy twigs, and found
 thee
Bird-blithe ; or, with shapely bodies, twinkled
Lissom feet of naked flowers around thee,
Where thy mats of moss lay sunbeam-sprinkled.

And the Autumn with his gypsy-coated
Troop of days beneath thy branches rested,
Swarthy-faced and dark of eye ; and throated
Songs of roaming ; or with red hand tested
Every nut-bur that above him floated.

Then the Winter, barren-browed, but rich in
Shaggy followers of frost and freezing,
Made the floor of thy broad boughs his kitchen,
Trapper-like, to camp in ; grimly easing
Limbs snow-furred and moccasined with lichen.

A FALLEN BEECH

Now, alas! no more do these invest thee
With the dignity of whilom gladness!
They—unto whose hearts thou once confessed
 thee
Of thy dreams—now know thee not! and sadness
Sits beside thee where, forgot, dost rest thee.

A TWILIGHT MOTH

A TWILIGHT MOTH

ALL day the primroses have thought of thee,
Their golden heads close-haremed from the
heat ;

All day the mystic moonflowers silkenly
Veiled snowy faces,—that no bee might greet
Or butterfly that, weighed with pollen, passed ;—
Keeping Sultana-charms for thee, at last,
Their lord, who comest to salute each sweet.

Cool-throated flowers that avoid the day's
Too fervid kisses ; every bud that drinks
The tipsy dew and to the starlight plays
Nocturns of fragrance, thy wing'd shadow
links

A TWILIGHT MOTH

In bonds of secret brotherhood and faith ;
O bearer of their order's shibboleth,
Like some pale symbol fluttering o'er these
pinks.

What dost thou whisper in the balsam's ear
That sets it blushing, or the hollyhock's,—
A syllabled silence that no man may hear,—
As dreamily upon its stem it rocks ?

What spell dost bear from listening plant to
plant,
Like some white witch, some ghostly ministrant,
Some spectre of some perished flower of phlox ?

O voyager of that universe which lies
Between the four walls of this garden fair,—
Whose constellations are the fireflies
That wheel their instant courses everywhere,—

A TWILIGHT MOTH

'Mid fairy firmaments wherein one sees
Mimic Boötes and the Pleiades,
Thou steerest like some fairy ship-of-air.

Gnome-wrought of moonbeam fluff and gossamer,
Silent as scent, perhaps thou chariotest
Mab or King Oberon ; or, haply, her
His queen, Titania, on some midnight quest.—
Oh for the herb, the magic euphrasy,
That should unmask thee to mine eyes, ah me !
And all that world at which my soul hath
guessed !

THE GRASSHOPPER

THE GRASSHOPPER

WHAT joy you take in making hotness hotter,
In emphasising dulness with your buzz,
Making monotony more monotonous !
When Summer comes, and drouth hath dried
the water
In all the creeks, we hear your ragged rasp
Filling the stillness. Or,—as urchins beat
A stagnant pond whereon the bubbles gasp,—
Your switch-like music whips the midday
heat.
O bur of sound caught in the Summer's hair,
We hear you everywhere !

THE GRASSHOPPER

We hear you in the vines and berry-brambles,
 Along the unkempt lanes, among the weeds,
 Amid the shadeless meadows, gray with
 seeds,
And by the wood 'round which the rail-fence
 rambles,
Sawing the sunlight with your sultry saw!
 Or,—like to tomboy truants, at their play
With noisy mirth among the barn's deep straw,—
 You sing away the careless summer-day.
O brier-like voice that clings in idleness
 To Summer's drowsy dress!

You tramp of insects, vagrant and unheeding,
 Improvident, who of the summer make
 One long green mealtime, and for winter take
No care, aye singing or just merely feeding!
Happy-go-lucky vagabond,—'though frost

THE GRASSHOPPER

Shall pierce, ere long, your green coat or your
brown,

And pinch your body,—let no song be lost,

But as you lived into your grave go down—

Like some small poet with his little rhyme,

Forgotten of all time.

BEFORE THE RAIN

BEFORE THE RAIN

BEFORE the rain, low in the obscure east,
 Weak and morose the moon hung, sickly gray ;
Around its disc the storm mists, cracked and
 creased,
 Wove an enormous web, wherein it lay
 Like some white spider hungry for its prey.
Vindictive looked the scowling firmament,
 In which each star, that flashed a dagger ray,
Seemed filled with malice of some dark intent.

The marsh-frog croaked ; and underneath the
 stone

The peevish cricket raised a creaking cry.

BEFORE THE RAIN

Within the world these sounds were heard alone,
Save when the ruffian wind swept from the
sky,
Making each tree like some sad spirit sigh ;
Or shook the clumsy beetle from its weed,
That, in the drowsy darkness, bungling by,
Sharded the silence with its feverish speed.

Slowly the tempest gathered. Hours passed
Before was heard the thunder's sullen drum
Rumbling night's hollow ; and the Earth at last,
Restless with waiting,—like a woman, dumb
With doubting of the love that should have
clomb
Her casement hours ago,—avowed again,
'Mid protestations, joy that he had come.
And all night long I heard the Heavens explain.

AFTER RAIN

AFTER RAIN

BEHOLD the blossom-bosomed Day again,
With all the star-white Hours in her train,
Laughs out of pearl-lights through a golden ray,
That, leaning on the woodland wildness, blends
A sprinkled amber with the showers that lay
Their oblong emeralds on the leafy ends.
Behold her bend with maiden-braided brows
Above the wildflower, sidewise with its strain
Of dewy happiness, to kiss again
Each drop to death ; or, under rainy boughs,
With fingers, fragrant as the woodland rain,
Gather the sparkles from the sycamore,
 To set within each core
Of crimson roses girdling her hips,
Where each bud dreams and drips.

AFTER RAIN

Smoothing her blue-black hair,—where many a
tusk

Of iris flashes,—like the falchions' sheen
Of Faery 'round blue banners of its Queen,—
Is it a Naiad singing in the dusk,
That haunts the spring, where all the moss is musk
With footsteps of the flowers on the banks?
Or just a wild-bird voluble with thanks?

Balm for each blade of grass: the Hours prepare
A festival each weed's invited to.
Each bee is drunken with the honied air:
And all the air is eloquent with blue.
The wet hay glitters, and the harvester
Tinkles his scythe,—as twinkling as the dew,—
That shall not spare
Blossom or brier in its sweeping path;
And, ere it cut one swath,
Rings them they die, and tells them to prepare.

AFTER RAIN

What is the spice that haunts each glen and
glade ?

A Dryad's lips, who slumbers in the shade ?

A Faun, who lets the heavy ivy-wreath

Slip to his thigh as, reaching up, he pulls

The chestnut blossoms in whole bosomfuls ?

A sylvan Spirit, whose sweet mouth doth breathe

Her viewless presence near us, unafraid ?

Or troops of ghosts of blooms, that whitely wade

The brook ? whose wisdom knows no other song

Than that the bird sings where it builds beneath

The wild-rose and sits singing all day long.

Oh, let me sit with silence for a space,

A little while forgetting that fierce part

Of man that struggles in the toiling mart ;

Where God can look into my heart's own heart

From unsoiled heights made amiable with grace ;

And where the sermons that the old oaks keep

AFTER RAIN

Can steal into me.—And what better then
Than, turning to the moss a quiet face,
To fall asleep? a little while to sleep
And dream of wiser worlds and wiser men.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

I

THE shadows sit and stand about its door
Like uninvited guests and poor ;
And all the long, hot summer day
The grating locust dins its roundelay
In one old sycamore.
The squirrel leaves upon its rotting roof,
In empty hulls, its tracks ;
And in its clapboard cracks
The spider weaves a windy woof ;
Its cells the mud-wasp packs.
The she-fox whelps upon its floor ;
The owlet roosts above its door ;
And where the musty mosses run,
The freckled snake basks in the sun.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

II

The children of what fathers sleep
 Beneath these melancholy pines ?
The slow slugs crawl among their graves
 where creep
 The doddered poison-vines.
The orchard, near the meadow deep,
 Lifts up decrepit arms,
Gray-lichened in a withering heap.
No sap swells up to make it leap
 As once in calms and storms ;
No blossom lulls its age asleep ;
 Each breeze brings sad alarms.
Big, bell-round pears and apples, russet-red,
 No maiden gathers now ;
The worm-bored trunks weep gum, like tears,
 instead,
 From each decaying bough.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

III

The woodlands around it are solitary
And fold it like gaunt hands ;
The sunlight is sad and the moonlight is
dreary,
And the hum of the country is weary, so
weary !
And the bees go by in bands
To other lovelier lands.
The grasses are rotting in walk and in
bower ;
The lonesomeness,—dank and rank
As a chamber where lies for a lonely hour
An old-man's corpse with many a flower,—
Is hushed and blank.
And even the birds have passed it by,
To sing their songs to a happier sky,
A happier sky and bank.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

IV

In its desolate halls are lying,
Gold, blood-red and browned,
Drifted leaves of summer dying ;
And the winds, above them sighing,
Turn them round and round,
Make a ghostly sound
As of footsteps falling, flying,
Voices through the chambers crying,
Of the haunted house.

V

Gazing down in her white shroud,
Shroud of windy cloud,
Comes at night the phantom moon ;
Comes and all the shadows soon,
Crowding in the rooms, arouse ;
Shadows, ghosts, her rays lead on,

THE HAUNTED HOUSE

Till beneath the cloud
Like a ghost she 's gone,
In her gusty shroud,
O'er the haunted house.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER

I oft have met her slowly wandering
Beside a leafy stream, her locks blown wild,
Her cheeks a hectic flush, more fair than Spring,
As if on her the sumach copse had smiled.
Or I have seen her sitting, tall and brown,—
Her gentle eyes with foolish weeping dim,—
Beneath a twisted oak from whose red
leaves
She wound great drowsy wreaths and cast them
down ;
The west-wind in her hair, that made it swim
Far out behind, deep as the rustling sheaves.
Or in the hill-lands I have often seen
The marvel of her passage ; glimpses faint

OCTOBER

Of glimmering woods that glanced the hills
between,

Like Indian faces, fierce with forest paint.

Or I have met her 'twixt two beechen hills,

Within a dinged valley near a fall,

Held in her nut-brown hand one cardinal
flower ;

Or wading dimly where the leaf-dammed rills

Went babbling through the wildwood's arrased
hall,

Where burned the beech and maples glared
their power.

Or I have met her by some ruined mill,

Where trailed the crimson creeper, serpen-
tine,

On fallen leaves that stirred and rustled chill,

And watched her swinging in the wild-grape
vine.

OCTOBER

While Beauty, sad among the vales and moun-
tains,
More sad than death, or all that death can
teach,
Dreamed of decay and stretched appealing
arms,
Where splashed the murmur of the forest's foun-
tains ;
With all her loveliness did she beseech,
And all the sorrow of her wildwood charms.

Once only in a hollow, girt with trees,
A-dream amid wild asters filled with rain,
I glimpsed her cheeks red-berried by the
breeze,
In her dark eyes the night's sidereal stain.
And once upon an orchard's tangled path,
Where all the golden-rod had turned to
brown,

OCTOBER

Where russets rolled and leaves were sweet
of breath,

I have beheld her 'mid her aftermath

Of blossoms standing, in her gypsy gown,

Within her gaze the deeps of life and death.

INDIAN SUMMER

INDIAN SUMMER

THE dawn is a warp of fever,
The eve is a woof of fire ;
And the month is a singing weaver
Weaving a red desire.

With stars Dawn dices with Even
For the rosy gold they heap
On the blue of the day's deep heaven,
On the black of the night's far deep.

It's—' Reins to the blood !' and ' Marry !'—
The season's a prince who burns
With the teasing lusts that harry
His heart for a wench who spurns.

INDIAN SUMMER

It's—' Crown us a beaker with sherry,
To drink to the doxy's heels ;
A tankard of wine o' the berry,
To lips like a cloven peel's.

'S death ! if a king be saddened,
Right so let a fool laugh lies :
But wine ! when a king is gladdened,
And a woman's waist and her eyes.'

He hath shattered the loom of the weaver,
And left but a leaf that flits,
He hath seized heaven's gold, and a fever
Of mist and of frost is its.

He hath tippled the buxom beauty,
And gotten her hug and her kiss—
The wide world's royal booty
• To pile at her feet for this.

ALONG THE OHIO

ALONG THE OHIO

ATHWART a sky of brass long welts of gold ;
A path of gold the wide Ohio lies ;
Beneath the sunset, billowing manifold,
The dark-blue hilltops rise.

And westward dips the crescent of the moon
Through great cloud-feathers, flushed with
rosy ray,
That close around the crystal of her lune
The redbird wings of Day.

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

ALONG THE OHIO

Was it the boat, the solitude and hush,
That with dead Indians peopled all the
glooms?
That made each bank, meseemed, and every
bush
Start into eagle-plumes?

That made me seem to hear the breaking brush,
And as the deer's great antlers swelled in
view,
To hear the arrow twang from cane and rush,
That dipped to the canoe?

To see the glimmering wigwams by the waves?
And, wildly clad, around the camp-fires'
glow,
The Shawnee chieftains with their painted
braves,
Each grasping his war-bow?

ALONG THE OHIO

But now the vision like the sunset fades,
The ribs of golden clouds have oozed their
light ;
And from the west, like sombre sachem shades,
Gallop the shades of night.

The broad Ohio glitters to the stars ;
And many murmurs whisper in its woods—
Is it the sorrow of dead warriors
For their lost solitudes ?

The moon goes down ; and like another moon
The crescent of the river twinkles there,
Unchanged as when the eyes of Daniel Boone
Beheld it flowing fair.

A COIGN OF THE FOREST

A COIGN OF THE FOREST

THE hills hang woods around, where green, below
Dark, breezy boughs of beech-trees, mats the
moss,

Crisp with the brittle hulls of last year's nuts ;
The water hums one bar there ; and a glow
Of gold lies steady where the trailers toss
Red, bugled blossoms and a rock abuts ;
In spots the wild-phlox and oxalis grow
Where beech-roots bulge the loam, protrude across
The grass-grown road and roll it into ruts.

And where the sumach brakes grow dusk and
dense,
Among the rocks, great yellow violets,

A COIGN OF THE FOREST

Blue-bells and wind-flowers bloom ; the agaric
In dampness crowds ; a fungus, thick, intense
With gold and crimson and wax-white, that sets
The May-apples along the terraced creek
At bold defiance. Where the old rail-fence
Divides the hollow, there the bee-bird whets
His bill, and there the elder hedge is thick.

No one can miss it ; for two cat-birds nest,
Calling all morning, in the trumpet-vine ;
And there at noon the pewee sits and floats
A woodland welcome ; and his very best
At eve the red-bird sings, as if to sign
The record of its loveliness with notes.
At night the moon stoops over it to rest,
And unreluctant stars. Where waters shine
There runs a whisper as of wind-swept oats.

CREOLE SERENADE

CREOLE SERENADE

UNDER mossy oak and pine
Whispering falls the fountained stream ;
In its pool the lilies shine
Silvery, each a moonlight gleam.

Roses bloom and roses die
In the warm rose-scented dark,
Where the firefly, like an eye,
Winks and glows, a golden spark.

Amber-belted through the night
Swings the alabaster moon,
Like a big magnolia white
On the fragrant heart of June.

CREOLE SERENADE

With a broken syrinx there,
 With bignonia overgrown,
Is it Pan in hoof and hair,
 Or his image carved from stone ?

See ! her casement's jessamines part,
 And, with starry blossoms blent,
Like the moon she leans—O heart,
 'Tis another firmament.

SINGS

The dim verbena drugs the dusk
 With lemon-heavy odours where
The heliotropes breathe drowsy musk
 Into the jasmine-dreamy air ;
The moss-rose bursts its dewy husk
 And spills its attar there.

CREOLE SERENADE

The orange at thy casement swings
Star-censers oozing rich perfumes ;
The clematis, long-petalled, clings
In clusters of dark purple blooms ;
With flowers, like moons or sylphide wings,
Magnolias light the glooms.

Awake, awake from sleep !
Thy balmy hair,
Down-fallen, deep on deep,
Like blossoms there,—
That dew and fragrance weep,—
Will fill the night with prayer.
Awake, awake from sleep !

And dreaming here it seems to me
A dryad's bosom grows confessed,
Bright in the moss of yonder tree,
That rustles with the murmurous West—

CREOLE SERENADE

Or is it but a bloom I see,
Round as thy virgin breast ?

Through fathomless deeps above are rolled
A million feverish worlds, that burst,
Like gems, from Heaven's caskets old
Of darkness—fires that throb and thirst ;
An aloe, showering buds of gold,
The night seems, star-immersed.

Unseal, unseal thine eyes !
O'er which her rod
Sleep sways ;—and like the skies,
That dream and nod,
Their starry majesties
Will fill the night with God.
Unseal, unseal thine eyes !

WILL O' THE WISPS

WILL O' THE WISPS

BEYOND the barley meads and hay,
What was the light that beckoned
there?

That made her sweet lips smile and say—
'Oh, busk me in a gown of May,
And knot red poppies in my hair.'

Over the meadow and the wood
What was the voice that filled her ears?
That sent into pale cheeks the blood,
Until each seemed a wild-brier bud
Mown down by mowing harvesters? . . .

WILL O' THE WISPS

Beyond the orchard, down the hill,
The water flows, the water whirls ;
And there they found her past all ill,
A plaintive face but smiling still,
The cresses caught among her curls.

At twilight in the willow glen
What sound is that the silence hears,
When all the dusk is hushed again
And homeward from the fields strong men
And women go, the harvesters ?

One seeks the place where she is laid,
Where violets bloom from year to year—
'O sunny head ! O bird-like maid !
The orchard blossoms fall and fade
And I am lonely, lonely here.'

WILL O' THE WISPS

Two stars burn bright above the vale ;
They seem to him the eyes of Ruth :
The low moon rises very pale
As if she, too, had heard the tale,
All heartbreak, of a maid and youth.

THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

SHE stood waist-deep among the briers :
 Above in twisted lengths were rolled
 The sunset's tangled whorls of gold,
Blown from the west's cloud-pillared fires.
And in the hush no sound did mar,
 You almost heard o'er hill and dell,
Deep, bubbling over, star on star,
 The night's blue cisterns slowly well.
A crane, like some dark crescent, crossed
 The sunset, winging towards the west ;
 While up the east her silver breast
Of light the moon brought, white as frost.

THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

So have I painted her, you see,
The tollman's daughter.—What an arm
And throat was hers! and what a form!—
Art dreams of such divinity.
What braids of night to hold and kiss!
There is no pigment anywhere
A man might use to picture this—
The splendour of her raven hair.
A face as beautiful and bright,
As rosy fair as twilight skies,
Lit with the stars of hazel eyes
And eyebrowed black with pencilled night.

For her, I know, where'er she trod
Each dewdrop raised a looking-glass
To flash her beauty from the grass;
That wild-flowers bloomed along the sod,
And whispered perfume when she smiled;
The wood-bird hushed to hear her song,

THE TOLLMAN'S DAUGHTER

Or, all enamoured, tame, not wild,

Before her feet flew fluttering long.

The brook went mad with melody,

Eddied in laughter when she kissed

With naked feet its amethyst—

And I—I fell in love ; ah me !

THE BOY COLUMBUS

THE BOY COLUMBUS

AND he had mused on lands each bird,—
That winged from realms of Falerina,
O'er seas of the Enchanted Sword,—
In romance sang him, till he heard
Vague foam on Islands of Alcina.

For rich Levant and old Castile
Let other seamen freight their galleys ;
With Polo he and Mandeville
Through stranger seas a dreamy keel
Sailed into wonder-peopled valleys.

THE BOY COLUMBUS

Far continents of flow'r and fruit,
Of everlasting spring ; where fountains
'Mid flow'rs, with human faces, shoot ;
Where races dwell, both man and brute,
In cities under golden mountains.

Where cataracts their thunders hurl
From heights the tempest has at mercy ;
Vast peaks that touch the moon, and whirl
Their torrents down of gold and pearl ;
And forests strange as those of Circe.

Let rapiered Love lute, in the shade
Of royal gardens, to the Palace
And Court, that haunt the balustrade
Of terraces and still parade
Their vanity and guile and malice.

THE BOY COLUMBUS

Him something calls diviner yet
Than Love, more mighty than a lover ;
Heroic Truth that will not let
Deed lag ; a purpose, westward set,
In eyes far-seeing to discover.

SONG OF THE ELF

SONG OF THE ELF

I

WHEN the poppies, with their shields,

Sentinel

Forest and the harvest fields,

In the bell

Of a blossom, fair to see,

There I stall the bumble-bee,

My good stud ;

There I stable him and hold,

Harness him with hairy gold ;

There I ease his burly back

Of the honey and its sack

Gathered from each bud.

SONG OF THE ELF

II

Where the glow-worm lights its lamp,
 There I lie ;
Where, above the grasses damp,
 Moths go by ;
Now within the fussy brook,
Where the waters wind and crook
 Round the rocks,
I go sailing down the gloom
Straddling on a wisp of broom ;
Or, beneath the owlet moon,
Trip it to the cricket's tune
 Tossing back my locks.

III

Ere the crowfoot on the lawn
 Lifts its head,
Or the glow-worm's light be gone,
 Dim and dead,

SONG OF THE ELF

In a cobweb hammock deep,
'Twixt two ferns I swing and sleep,
Hid away ;
Where the drowsy musk-rose blows
And a dreamy runnel flows,
In the land of Faëry,
Where no mortal thing can see,
All the elfin day.

THE OLD INN

THE OLD INN

RED-WINDING from the sleepy town,
One takes the lone, forgotten lane
Straight through the hills. A brush-bird brown
Bubbles in thorn-flowers, sweet with rain,
Where breezes bend the gleaming grain,
And cautious drip of higher leaves
The lower dips that drip again.—
Above the tangled trees it heaves
Its gables and its haunted eaves.

One creeper, gnarled and blossomless,
O'erforests all its eastern wall;
The sighing cedars rake and press
Dark boughs along the panes they sprawl;
While, where the sun beats, drone and drawl

THE OLD INN

The mud-wasps ; and one bushy bee,
Gold-dusty, hurls along the hall
To buzz into a crack.—To me
The shadows seem too scared to flee.

Of ragged chimneys martins make
Huge pipes of music ; twittering, here
They build and roost.—My footfalls wake
Strange stealing echoes, till I fear
I'll see my pale self drawing near,
My phantom face as in a glass ;
Or one, men murdered, buried—where?—
Dim in gray stealthy glimmer, pass
With lips that seem to moan ' Alas.'

THE MILL-WATER

THE MILL-WATER

THE water-flag and wild cane grow
'Round banks whereon the sunbeams sow
Fantastic gold when, on its shores,
The wind sighs through the sycamores.

In one green angle, just in reach,
Between a willow-tree and beech,
Moss-grown and leaky lies a boat
The thick-grown lilies keep afloat.

And through its waters, half awake,
Slow swims the spotted water-snake ;
And near its edge, like some gray streak,
Stands gaunt the still fly-up-the-creek.

THE MILL-WATER

Between the lily-pads and blooms
The water-spirits set their looms,
That weave the lace-like light that dims
The glimmering leaves of under limbs.

Each lily is the hiding-place
Of some dim wood-imp's elvish face,
That watches you with gold-green eyes
Where bubbles of its breathing rise.

I fancy, when the waxing moon
Leans through the trees and dreams of June,
And when the black bat slants its wing,
And lonelier the green-frogs sing ;

I fancy, when the whippoorwill
In some old tree sings wild and shrill,
With glow-worm eyes that dot the dark,—
Each holding high a firefly spark

THE MILL-WATER

To torch its way,—the wood-imps come :
And some float rocking here ; and some
Unmoor the lily leaves and oar
Around the old boat by the shore.

They climb through oozy weeds and moss ;
They swarm its rotting sides and toss
Their firefly torches o'er its edge
Or hang them in the tangled sedge.

The boat is loosed. The moon is pale.
Around the dam they slowly sail.
Upon the bow, to pilot it,
A jack-o'-lantern gleam doth sit.

Yes, I have seen it in my dreams !—
Naught is forgotten ! naught, it seems !—
The strangled face, the tangled hair
Of the drown'd woman trailing there.

THE DREAM

Rose-apricots and apples streaked with fire,
Kissed into ripeness by the sun's desire
And big with juice. And on far, fading hills,
Down which it seemed a hundred torrent rills
Flashed rushing silver, vines and vines and vines
Of purple vintage swollen with cool wines ;
Pale pleasant wines and fragrant as late June,
Their delicate tang drawn from the wine-white
moon.

And from the clouds o'er this sweet world there
dripped

An odorous music, strangely feverish-lipped,
That swung and swooned and panted in mad
sighs ;

Investing at each throb the air with eyes,
And forms of sensuous spirits, limpid white,
Clad on with raiment as of starry night ;
Fair, faint embodiments of melody,
From out whose hearts of crystal one could see

THE DREAM

The music stream like light through delicate
hands

Hollowing a lamp. And as on sounding sands
The ocean murmur haunts the rosy shells,
Within whose convolutions beauty dwells,
My soul became a vibrant harp of love,
Re-echoing all the harmony above.

SPRING TWILIGHT

SPRING TWILIGHT

THE sun set late ; and left along the west
A belt of furious ruby, o'er which snows
Of clouds unrolled ; each cloud a mighty breast
Blooming with almond-rose.

The sun set late ; and wafts of wind beat down,
And cuffed the blossoms from the blossoming
quince ;
Scattered the pollen from the lily's crown,
And made the clover wince.

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

SPRING TWILIGHT

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,
 Burned in fair deeps of air.

As from faint stars the glory waned and waned,
 The crickets made the oldtime garden shrill ;
And past the luminous pasture-lands complained
 The first far whippoorwill.

A SLEET-STORM IN MAY

A SLEET-STORM IN MAY

ON southern winds shot through with amber
light,

Breathing 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-tasselled 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 starlight of the twinkling dew.

A SLEET-STORM IN MAY

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 :

‘ The God of Terror, and the King of Storm,
Must I remind thee how my iron arm
Raised my red standards ’mid these conquered
bowers,
Turning their green to crimson?—Thou, with
flowers,
Thou wouldst supplant me! nay! usurp my
throne!—

Audacious one!’—And at her breast he tossed
A bitter javelin of ice and frost ;
And left her lying on th’ unfeeling mould.
The fragile blossoms, gathered in the fold
Of her warm bosom, fell in desolate rows
About her beauty, and, like fragrant snows,

A SLEET-STORM IN MAY

Covered her lovely hands and beautiful feet,
Or on her lips lay like last kisses sweet
That died there. Lilacs, musky of the May,
And bluer violets and snowdrops lay
Entombed in crystal, icy dim and fair,
Like teardrops scattered in her heavenly hair.

Alas! sad heart, break not beneath the pain!
Time changeth all; the Beautiful wakes again.—
We should not question such; a higher power
Knows best what bud is ripest or what flower,
And silently plucks it at the fittest hour.

UNREQUITED

UNREQUITED

PASSION? not hers, within whose virgin eyes
All Eden lay.—And I remember how
I drank the Heaven of her gaze with sighs—
She never sighed, nor gave me kiss or vow.

So have I seen a clear October pool,
Cold, liquid topaz, set within the sear
Gold of the woodland, tremorless and cool,
Reflecting all the heartbreak of the year.

Sweetheart? not she whose voice was music
sweet ;
Whose face was sweeter than melodious prayer.
Sweetheart I called her.—When did she repeat
Sweet to one hope or heart to one despair ?

UNREQUITED

So have I seen a rose set round with thorn,
Sung to and sung to by a bird of spring,
And when, breast-pierced, the bird lay all forlorn,
The rose bloomed on, fair and unnoticed.

THE HEART O' SPRING

THE HEART O' SPRING

WHITEN, oh whiten, O clouds of lawn !

Lily-like clouds that whiten above,
Now like a dove, and now like a swan,
But never, oh never—pass on ! pass on !
Never so white as the throat of my love.

Blue-black night on the mountain peaks

Is not so black as the locks o' my love !
Stars that shine through the evening
streaks

Over the torrent that flashes and breaks,

Are not so bright as the eyes o' my love !

THE HEART O' SPRING

• Moon in a cloud, a cloud of snow,
Mist in the vale where the rivulet sounds,
Dropping from ledge to ledge below,
Turning to gold in the sunset's glow,
Are not so soft as her footstep sounds.

Sound o' May winds in the blossoming trees,
Is not so sweet as her laugh that rings ;
Song o' wild birds on the morning breeze,
Birds and brooks and murmur o' bees,
Are harsh to her voice when she laughs or sings.

The rose of my heart is she, my dawn !
My star o' the east, my moon above !
My soul takes ship for the Avalon
Of her heart of hearts, and shall sail on
Till it anchors safe in its haven of love.

A BROKEN RAINBOW

‘A BROKEN RAINBOW ON THE SKIES OF MAY’

A BROKEN rainbow on the skies of May,
Touching the dripping roses and low clouds,
And in wet clouds its scattered glories lost :—
So in the sorrow of her soul the ghost
Of one great love, of iridescent ray,
Spanning the roses dim of memory,
Against the tumult of life’s rushing crowds—
A broken rainbow on the skies of May.

A flashing humming-bird among the flowers,
Deep-coloured blooms ; its slender tongue and bill
Sucking the syrups and the calyxed myrrhs,
Till, being full of sweets, away it whirrs :—

A BROKEN RAINBOW

Such was his love that won her heart's rich
bowers

To give to him their all, their honied showers,
The bloom from which he drank his body's fill—
A flashing humming-bird among the flowers.

A moon, moth-white, that through long mists of
fleece

Moves amber-girt into a bulk of black,
And, lost to vision, rims the black with froth :—
A love that swept its moon, like some great
moth,

Across the heaven of her soul's young peace ;
And, smoothly passing, in the clouds did cease
Of time, through which its burning light comes
back—

A moon, moth-white, that moves through mists
of fleece.

A BROKEN RAINBOW

A bolt of living thunder downward hurled,
Momentary blazing from the piled-up storm,
That instants out the mountains and the ocean,
The towering crag, then blots the sight's com-
motion :—

Love, love that swiftly coming bared the world,
The deeps of life, 'round which fate's clouds are
curled,

And, ceasing, left all night and black alarm—
A bolt of living thunder downward hurled.

ORGIE

ORGIE

ON nights like this, when bayou and lagoon
Dream in the moonlight's mystic radiance,
I seem to walk like one deep in a trance
With old-world myths born of the mist and moon.

Lascivious eyes and mouths of sensual rose
Smile into mine ; and breasts of luring light,
And tresses streaming golden to the night,
Persuade me onward where the forest glows.

And then it seems along the haunted hills
There falls a flutter as of beautiful feet,
As if tempestuous troops of Mænads meet
To drain deep bowls and shout and have their
wills.

ORGIE

And then I feel her limbs will be revealed

Like some great snow-white moth among the
trees ;

Her vampire beauty, waiting there to seize
And dance me downward where my doom is
sealed.

REVERIE

REVERIE

WHAT ogive gates from gold of Ophir wrought,
What walls of Parian, whiter than a rose,
What towers of crystal, for the eyes of thought,
Hast builded on far Islands of Repose ?
Thy cloudy columns, vast, Corinthian,
Or huge, Ionic, colonnade the heights
Of dreamland, looming o'er the soul's deep
seas ;
Built melodies of marble, that no man
Has ever reached, except in fancy's flights,
Templing the presence of perpetual ease.
Oft, where o'er plastic frieze and plinths of spar,—
In glimmering solitudes of pillared stone,—

REVERIE

The twilight blossoms with one violet star,
With thee, O Reverie, I have stood alone,
And there beheld, from out the Mythic Age,
The rosy breasts of Cytherea—fair,
Full-cestused, and suggestive of what
loves

Immortal—rise ; and heard the lyric rage
Of sun-burnt Poesy, whose throat breathes
bare
O'er leopard skins, fluting among his
groves.

Oft, where thy castled peaks and templed
vales
Cloud—like convulsive sunsets—shores that
dream,
Myrrh-fragrant, over siren seas whose sails
Gleam white as lilies on a liliated stream,

REVERIE

My soul has dreamed. Or by thy sapphire sea,
In thy arcaded gardens, in the shade
Of breathing sculpture, oft has walked with
thought,
And bent, in shadowy attitude, its knee
Before the shrine of Beauty that must fade
And leave no memory of the mind that
wrought.

Who hath beheld thy caverns where, in heaps,
The wines of Lethe and Love's witchery,
In sealéd Amphoræ a sibyl keeps,
World-old, for ever guarded secretly?—
No wine of Xeres or of Syracuse!
No fine Falernian and no vile Sabine!—
The stolen fire of a demigod,
Whose bubbled purple goddess feet did bruise
In crusted vats of vintage, where the green
Flames with wild poppies, on the Samian sod.

REVERIE

Oh, for the deep enchantment of one draught !

The reckless ecstasy of classic earth !—

With godlike eyes to laugh as gods have
laughed

In eyes of mortal brown, a mighty mirth.

Of deity delirious with desire !

To breathe the dropping roses of the
shrines,

The splashing wine-libation and the blood,
And all the young priest's dreaming! To
inspire

My eager soul with beauty, 'til it shines

An utt'rance of life's loftier brotherhood !

So would I slumber in the old-world shades,

And Poesy should touch me, as some bold

Wild bee a pulpy lily of the glades,

Barbaric-covered with the kernelled gold ;

REVERIE

And feel the glory of the Golden Age
Less godly than my purpose, strong to dare
Death with the pure immortal lips of love :
Less lovely than my soul's ideal rage
To mate itself with Music and declare
Itself part meaning of the stars above.

LETHE

LETHE

I

THERE is a scent of roses and spilt wine
Between the moonlight and the laurel coppice ;
The marble idol glimmers on its shrine,
White as a star, among a heaven of poppies.
Here all my life lies like a spilth of wine.
There is a mouth of music like a lute,
A nightingale that singeth to one flower ;
Between the falling flower and the fruit,
Where love hath died, the music of an hour.

II

To sit alone with memory and a rose ;
To dwell with shadows of whilom romances ;
To make one hour of a year of woes
And walk on starlight, in ethereal trances,

LETHE

With love's lost face fair as a moon-white
rose.

To shape from music and the scent of buds
Love's spirit and its presence of sweet fire,
Between the heart's wild burning and the
blood's,
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

III

There is a song to silence and the stars,
Between the forest and the temple's arches;
And down the stream of night, like nenuphars,
The tossing fires of the revellers' torches.—
Here all my life waits lonely as the stars.—
Shall not one hour of all those hours suffice
For resignation God hath given as dower?
Between the summons and the sacrifice
One hour of love, th' eternity of an hour?

LETHE

IV

The shrine is shattered and the bird is gone ;
Dark is the house of music and of bridal ;
The stars are stricken and the storm comes on ;
Lost in a wreck of roses lies the idol,
Sad as the memory of a joy that's gone.—
To dream of perished gladness and a kiss,
Waking the last chord of love's broken lyre,
Between remembering and forgetting, this
Is part of life and of the soul's desire.

DIONYSIA

DIONYSIA

THE day is dead ; and in the west
The slender crescent of the moon—
Diana's crystal-kindled crest—
Sinks hillward in a silvery swoon.
What is the murmur in the dell ?
The stealthy whisper and the drip ?
A Dryad with her leaf-light trip ?
A Naiad o'er her fountain well ?—
Who with white fingers for her comb,
Sleeks her blue hair, and from its curls
Showers slim minnows and pale pearls,
And hollow music of the foam.
What is it in the vistaed ways

DIONYSIA

That leans and springs, and stoops and sways?—
The naked limbs of one who flees?
An Oread who hesitates
Before the Satyr form that waits,
Crouching to leap, that there she sees?
Or under boughs, reclining cool,
A Hamadryad, like a pool
Of moonlight, palely beautiful?
Or Limnad, with her liliated face,
More lovely than the misty lace
That haunts a star and gives it grace?
Or is it some Leimoniad
In wildwood flowers dimly clad?
Oblong blossoms white as froth,
Or mottled like the tiger-moth;
Or brindled as the brows of death,
Wild of hue and wild of breath:
Here ethereal flame and milk
Blent with velvet and with silk;

DIONYSIA

Here an iridescent glow
Mixed with satin and with snow :
Pansy, poppy and the pale
Serpolet and galingale ;
Mandrake and anemone,
Honey-reservoirs o' the bee ;
Cistus and the cyclamen,—
Cheeked like blushing Hebe this,
And the other white as is
Bubbled milk of Venus when
Cupid's baby mouth is pressed,
Rosy to her rosy breast.
And, besides, all flowers that mate
With aroma, and in hue
Stars and rainbows duplicate
Here on earth for me and you.

Yea ! at last mine eyes can see !
'Tis no shadow of the tree

DIONYSIA

Swaying softly there, but she!—
Mænad, Bassarid, Bacchant,
What you will, who doth enchant
Night with sensuous nudity.
Lo! again I hear her pant
Breasting through the dewy glooms—
Through the glow-worm gleams and glowers
Of the starlight ;—wood-perfumes
Swoon around her and frail showers
Of the leaflet-tilted rain.
Lo! like love, she comes again
Through the pale voluptuous dusk,
Sweet of limb with breasts of musk.
With her lips, like blossoms, breathing
Honeyed pungence of her kiss,
And her auburn tresses wreathing
Like umbrageous helichrys,
There she stands, like fire and snow,
In the moon's ambrosial glow,

DIONYSIA

Both her shapely loins low-looped
With the balmy blossoms, drooped,
Of the deep amaracus.

Spiritual, yet sensual,

Lo, she ever greets me thus

In my vision ; white and tall,

Her delicious body there,—

Raimented with amorous air,—

To my mind expresses all

The allurements of the world.

And once more I seem to feel

On my soul, like frenzy, hurled

All the passionate past.—I reel,

Greek again in ancient Greece,

In the Pyrrhic revelries ;

In the mad and Mænad dance ;

Onward dragged with violence ;

Pan and old Silenus and

Faunus and a Bacchant band

DIONYSIA

Round me. Wild my wine-stained hand
O'er tumultuous hair is lifted ;
While the flushed and Phallic orgies
Whirl around me ; and the margs
Of the wood are torn and rifted
With lascivious laugh and shout.
And barbarian there again,—
Shameless with the shameless rout,
Bacchus lusting in each vein,—
With her pagan lips on mine,
Like a god made drunk with wine,
On I reel ; and in the revels
Her loose hair, the dance dishevels,
Blows, and 'thwart my vision swims
All the splendour of her limbs . . .

So it seems. Yet woods are lonely.
And when I again awake,
I shall find their faces only

DIONYSIA

Moonbeams in the boughs that shake ;
And their revels, but the rush
Of night-winds through bough and brush.
Yet my dreaming—is it more
Than mere dreaming? Is a door
Opened in my soul? a curtain
Raised? to let me see for certain
I have lived that life before?

THE NAIAD

THE NAIAD

SHE sits among the iris stalks
Of babbling brooks ; and leans for hours
Among the river's lily flowers,
Or on their whiteness walks :
Above dark forest pools, gray rocks
Wall in, she leans with dripping locks,
And listening to the echo, talks
With her own face—Iothera.

There is no forest of the hills,
No valley of the solitude,
Nor fern nor moss, that may elude
Her searching step that stills :

THE NAIAD

She dreams among the wild-rose brakes
Of fountains that the ripple shakes,
And, dreaming of herself, she fills
The silence with 'Iothera.'

And every wind that haunts the ways
Of leaf and bough, once having kissed
Her virgin nudity, goes whist
With wonder and amaze.

There blows no breeze which hath not
learned
Her name's sweet melody, and yearned
To kiss her mouth that laughs and says,
'Iothera, Iothera.'

No wild thing of the wood, no bird,
Or brown or blue, or gold or gray,
Beneath the sun's or moonlight's ray,
That hath not loved and heard ;

THE NAIAD

They are her pupils ; she can say
No new thing but, within a day,
They have its music, word for word,
Harmonious as Iothera.

No man who lives and is not wise
With love for common flowers and trees,
Bee, bird, and beast, and brook, and breeze,
And rocks and hills and skies,—
Search where he will,—shall ever see
One flutter of her drapery,
One glimpse of limbs, or hair, or eyes
Of beautiful Iothera.

THE LIMNAD

THE LIMNAD

I

THE lake she haunts gleams dreamily
'Twixt sleepy boughs of melody,
Set 'mid the hills beside the sea,
 In tangled bush and brier ;
Where the ghostly sunsets write
Wondrous things in golden light ;
And above the pine-crowned height,
Clouds of twilight, rosy white,
 Build their towers of fire.

II

'Mid the rushes there that swing,
Flowering flags where voices sing

THE LIMNAD

When low winds are murmuring,
 Murmuring to stars that glitter ;
Blossom-white, with purple locks,
Underneath the stars' still flocks,
In the dusky waves she rocks,
Rocks, and all the landscape mocks
 With a song most sweet and bitter.

III

Soft it sounds, at first, as dreams
Filled with tears that fall in streams ;
Then it soars, until it seems
 Beauty's very self hath spoken ;
And the woods grow silent quite,
Stars wax faint and flowers turn white ;
And the nightingales that light
Near, or hear her through the night,
 Die, their hearts with longing broken.

THE LIMNAD

IV

Dark, dim and sad o'er mournful lands,
White-throated stars heaped in her hands,
Like wildwood buds, the Twilight stands,
 The Twilight dreaming lingers ;
Listening where the Limnad sings
Witcheries, whose beauty brings
A great moon from hidden springs,
Pale with amorous quiverings
 Feet of fire and silvery fingers.

V

In the vales Auloniads,
On the mountains Oreads,
On the leas Leimoniads,
 Naked as the stars that glisten,
Pan, the Satyrs, Dryades,
Fountain-lovely Naiades,

THE LIMNAD

Foam-lipped Oceanides,
Breathless 'mid their seas and trees,
Stay and stop and lean and listen.

VI

Large-eyed, Siren-like she stands,
In the lake or on its sands,
And with rapture from the hands
Of the Night some stars are shaken ;
To her song the rushes swing,
Lilies nod and ripples ring,
Lost in helpless listening—
These will wake that hear her sing,
But one mortal will not waken.

INTIMATIONS

INTIMATIONS

I

Is it uneasy moonlight
On the restless field, that stirs ?
Or wild white meadow-blossoms
The night-wind bends and blurs ?

Is it the dolorous water,
That sobs in the woods and sighs ?
Or heart of an ancient oak-tree,
That breaks and, sighing, dies ?

The wind is vague with the shadows
That wander in No-Man's Land ;
The water is dark with the voices
That weep on the Unknown strand.

INTIMATIONS

O ghosts of the winds that call me !
O ghosts of the whispering waves !
As sad as forgotten flowers
That die upon nameless graves !

What is this thing you tell me
In tongues of a twilight race,
Of death, with the vanished features,
Mantled, of my own face ?

II

The old enigmas of the deathless dawns
And riddles of the all immortal eyes,—
That still o'er Delphic lawns
Speak as the gods spoke through
 oracular leaves—

I read with new-born eyes,
Remembering how, a slave ;
They buried me, a living sacrifice,
Once in a dead king's grave.

INTIMATIONS

Or crowned with hyacinth and heli-
chrys,

How, towards the altar in the marble
gloom,—

Hearing the magadis

Dirge through the pale amaracine per-
fume,—

'Mid chanting priests I trod,

With never a sigh or pause,

To give my life to pacify a god,

And save my country's cause.

Again : Cyrenian roses on wild hair,

And oil and purple smeared on breasts
and cheeks,

How, with mad torches there,—

Reddening the cedars of Cithæron's
peaks,—

INTIMATIONS

With gesture and fierce glance,
Lascivious Mænad bands
Once drew and slew me in the Pyrrhic
 dance,
With Bacchanalian hands.

III

In eons of the senses,
My spirit knew of yore,
I found the Isle of Circe
And felt her magic lore ;
And still the soul remembers
What I was once before.

She gave me flowers to smell of
That wizard branches bore,
Of weird and sorcerous beauty,
Whose stems dripped human gore—

INTIMATIONS

Their scent when I remember
I know that world once more.

She gave me fruits to eat of
That grew upon the shore,
Of necromantic ripeness,
With human flesh at core—
Their taste when I remember
I know that life once more.

And then, behold ! a serpent,
That glides my face before,
With eyes of tears and fire
That glare me o'er and o'er—
I look into its eyeballs,
And know myself once more.

BEFORE THE TEMPLE

BEFORE THE TEMPLE

I

ALL desolate she sate her down
Upon the marble of the temple's stair.
You would have thought her, with her eyes of
brown,
Flushed cheeks and hazel hair,
A dryad dreaming there.

II

A priest of Bacchus passed, nor stopped
To chide her ; deeming her—whose chiton hid
But half her bosom, and whose girdle dropped—
Some grief-drowned Bassarid,
The god of wine had chid.

BEFORE THE TEMPLE

III

With wreaths of woodland cyclamen
For Dian's shrine, a shepherdess drew near,
All her young thoughts on vestal beauty, when—
She dare not look for fear—
Behold the goddess here !

IV

Fierce lights on shields of bossy brass
And helms of gold, next from the hills deploy
Tall youths of Argos. And she sees *him* pass,
Flushed with heroic joy,
On towards the siege of Troy.

ANTHEM OF DAWN

ANTHEM OF DAWN

I

THEN up the orient heights to the zenith that
 balanced the crescent,—
Up and far up and over,—the heaven grew
 erubescant,
Vibrant with rose and with ruby from hands of
 the harpist Dawn,
Smiting symphonic fire on the firmament's
 barbition ;
And the East was a priest who adored with offer-
 ings of gold and of gems,
And a wonderful carpet unrolled for the inacces-
 sible hems

ANTHEM OF DAWN

Of the glittering robes of her limbs ; that, lily
and amethyst,
Swept glorying on and on through temples of
cloud and mist.

II

Then out of the splendour and richness, that
burned like a magic stone,
The torrent suffusion that deepened and dazzled
and broadened and shone,
The pomp and the pageant of colour, triumphal
procession of glare,
The sun, like a king in armour, breathing
splendour from feet to hair,
Stood forth with majesty girdled, as a hero who
towers afar
Where the bannered gates are bristling hells and
the walls are roaring war :

ANTHEM OF DAWN

And broad on the back of the world, like a
Cherubin's fiery blade,
The effulgent gaze of his aspect fell in glittering
accolade.

III

Then billowing blue, like an ocean, rolled from
the shores of dawn to even :
And the stars, like rafts, went down : and the
moon, like a ghost-ship driven,
A feather of foam, from port to port of the cloud-
built isles that dotted,
With pearl and cameo, bays of the day, her
canvas webbed and rooted,
Lay lost in the gulf of heaven : while over her
mixed and melted
The beautiful children of Morn, whose bodies
are opal-belted ;

ANTHEM OF DAWN

The beautiful daughters of Dawn, who, over and
under and after

The rivered radiance wrestled; and rainbowed
heaven with laughter

Of halcyon sapphire.—O Dawn! thou visible
mirth,

Thou hallelujah of heaven! hosanna of Earth!

AT THE LANE'S END

AT THE LANE'S END

I

No more to strip the roses from
The rose-boughs of her porch's place!—
I dreamed last night that I was home
Beside a rose—her face.

I must have smiled in sleep—who knows?—
The rose aroma filled the lane ;
I saw her white hand's lifted rose
That called me home again.

And yet when I awoke—so wan,
An old face wet with icy tears!—
Somehow, it seems, sleep had misdrawn
A love gone thirty years.

AT THE LANE'S END

II

The clouds roll up and the clouds roll down
Over the roofs of the little town ;
Out in the hills where the pike winds by
Fields of clover and bottoms of rye,
You will hear no sound but the barking cough
Of the striped chipmunk where the lane
 leads off ;

You will hear no bird but the sapsuckers
Far off in the forest,—that seems to purr,
As the warm wind fondles its top, grown hot,
Like the docile back of an ocelot :

You will see no thing but the shine and shade
Of briars that climb and of weeds that wade
The glittering creeks of the light, that fills
The dusty road and the red-keel hills—
And all day long in the pennyroy'l
The grasshoppers at their anvils toil ;

AT THE LANE'S END

Thick click of their tireless hammers thrum,
And the wheezy belts of their bellows hum ;
Tinkers who solder the silence and heat
To make the loneliness more complete.
Around old rails where the blackberries
Are reddening ripe, and the bumble-bees
Are a drowsy rustle of Summer's skirts,
And the bob-white's wing is the fan she flirts.
Under the hill, through the iron weeds,
And ox-eyed daisies and milkweeds, leads
The path forgotten of all but one.
Where elder bushes are sick with sun,
And wild raspberries branch big blue veins
O'er the face of the rock, where the old spring
 rains
Its sparkling splinters of molten spar
On the gravel bed where the tadpoles are,—
You will find the pales of the fallen fence,
And the tangled orchard and vineyard, dense

AT THE LANE'S END

With the weedy neglect of thirty years.
The garden there,— where the soft sky clears
Like an old sweet face that has dried its
tears ;—
The garden plot where the cabbage grew
And the pompous pumpkin ; and beans that
blew
Balloons of white by the melon patch ;
Maize ; and tomatoes that seemed to catch
Oblong amber and agate balls
Thrown from the sun in the frosty falls :
Long rows of currants and gooseberries,
And the balsam-gourd with its honey-bees.
And here was a nook for the princess-plumes,
The snap-dragons and the poppy-blooms,
Mother's sweet-williams and pansy flowers,
And the morning-glories' bewildered bowers,
Tipping their cornucopias up
For the humming-birds that came to sup.

AT THE LANE'S END

And over it all was the Sabbath peace
Of the land whose lap was the love of these ;
And the old log-house where my innocence
 died,
With my boyhood buried side by side.

Shall a man with a face as withered and gray
As the wasp-nest stowed in a loft away,—
Where the hornets haunt and the mortar drops
From the loosened logs of the clap-board
 tops ;—

Whom vice has aged as the rotting rooms
The rain where memories haunt the glooms ;
A hitch in his joints like the rheum that gnars
In the rasping hinge of the door that jars ;
A harsh, cracked throat like the old stone flue
Where the swallows build the summer through ;
Shall a man, I say, with the spider sins
That the long years spin in the outs and ins

AT THE LANE'S END

Of his soul, returning to see once more
His boyhood's home, where his life was poor
With toil and tears and their fretfulness,
But rich with health and the hopes that bless
The unsoiled wealth of a vigorous youth ;
Shall he not take comfort and know the truth
In its threadbare raiment of falsehood?—Yea !
In his crumbled past he shall kneel and pray,
Like a pilgrim come to the shrine again
Of the homely saints that shall soothe his pain,
And arise and depart made clean from stain !

III

Years of care can not erase
Visions of the hills and trees
Closing in the dam and race ;
Not the mile-long memories
Of the mill-stream's lovely place.

AT THE LANE'S END

How the sunsets used to stain
Mirror of the water lying
Under eaves made dark with rain !
Where the red-bird, westward flying,
Lit to try one song again.

Dingles, hills, and woods, and springs,
Where we came in calm and storm,
Swinging in the grape-vine swings,
Wading where the rocks were warm,
With our fishing-nets and strings.

Here the road plunged down the hill,
Under ash and chinquapin,—
Where the grasshoppers would drill
Ears of silence with their din,—
To the willow-girdled mill.

AT THE LANE'S END

There the path beyond the ford
Takes the woodside, just below
Shallows that the lilies sword,
Where the scarlet blossoms blow
Of the trumpet-vine and gourd.

Summer winds, that sink with heat,
On the pelted waters winnow
Moony petals that repeat
Crescents, where the startled minnow
Beats a glittering retreat.

Summer winds that bear the scent
Of the iron-weed and mint,
Weary with sweet freight and spent,
On the deeper pools imprint
Stumbling steps in many a dent.

AT THE LANE'S END

Summer winds, that split the husk
Of the peach and nectarine,
Trail along the amber dusk
Hazy skirts of gray and green,
Spilling balms of dew and musk.

Where with balls of bursting juice
Summer sees the red wild-plum
Strew the gravel ; ripened loose,
Autumn hears the pawpaw drum
Plumpness on the rocks that bruise :

There we found the water-beech,
One forgotten August noon,
With a hornet-nest in reach,—
Like a fairyland balloon,
Full of bustling fairy speech.—

AT THE LANE'S END

Some invasion sure it was ;
For we heard the captains scold ;
Waspish cavalry a-buzz,—
Troopers uniformed in gold,
Sable-slashed,—to charge on us.

Could I find the sedgy angle,
Where the dragon-flies would turn
Slender fittings into spangle
On the sunlight ? or would burn—
Where the berries made a tangle—

Sparkling green and brassy blue ;
Rendezvousing, by the stream,
Bands of elf-banditti, who,
Brigands of the bloom and beam,
Drunken were with honey-dew.

AT THE LANE'S END

Could I find the pond that lay
Where vermilion blossoms showered
Fragrance down the daisied way?
That the sassafras embowered
With the spice of early May?

Could I find it—did I seek—
The old mill? Its weather-beaten
Wheel and gable by the creek?
With its warping roof; worm-eaten,
Dusty rafters worn and weak.

Where old shadows haunt old places,
Loft and hopper, stair and bin;
Ghostly with the dust that laces
Webs that usher phantoms in,
Wistful with remembered faces.

AT THE LANE'S END

While the frogs' grave litanies
Drowse in far-off antiphone,
Supplicating, till the eyes
Of dead friendships, long alone
In the dusky corners,—rise.

Moonrays or the splintered slip
Of a star? within the darkling
Twilight, where the fire-flies dip—
As if Night a myriad sparkling
Jewels from her hands let slip :

While again some farm-boy crosses,—
With a corn-sack for the meal,—
O'er the creek, through ferns and mosses
Sprinkled by the old mill-wheel,
Where the water drips and tosses.

THE FARMSTEAD

THE FARMSTEAD

Yes, I love the homestead. There
In the spring the lilacs blew
Plenteous perfume everywhere ;
There in summer gladioles grew
Parallels of scarlet glare.

And the moon-hued primrose cool,
Satin-soft and redolent ;
Honeysuckles beautiful,
Filling all the air with scent ;
Roses red or white as wool.

THE FARMSTEAD

Roses, glorious and lush,
Rich in tender-tinted dyes,
Like the gay tempestuous rush
Of unnumbered butterflies,
Clustering o'er each bending bush.

Here japonica and box,
And the wayward violets ;
Clumps of star-enamelled phlox,
And the myriad flowery jets
Of the twilight four-o'-clocks.

Ah, the beauty of the place !
When the June made one great rose,
Full of musk and mellow grace,
In the garden's humming close,
Of her comely mother face !

THE FARMSTEAD

Bubble-like, the hollyhocks
 Budded, burst, and flaunted wide
Gypsy beauty from their stocks ;
 Morning glories, bubble-dyed,
Swung in honey-hearted flocks.

Tawny tiger-lilies flung
 Doublets slashed with crimson on ;
Graceful slave-girls, fair and young,
 Like Circassians, in the sun
Alabaster lilies swung.

Ah, the droning of the bee ;
 In his dusty pantaloons
Tumbling in the fleurs-de-lis ;
 In the drowsy afternoons
Dreaming in the pink sweet-pea.

THE FARMSTEAD

Ah, the moaning wildwood-dove !
With its throat of amethyst
Rippled like a shining cove
Which a wind to pearl hath kissed,
Moaning, moaning of its love.

And the insects' gossip thin—
From the summer hotness hid—
In lone, leafy deeps of green ;
Then at eve the katydid
With its hard, unvaried din.

Often from the whispering hills,
Borne from out the golden dusk,—
Gold with gold of daffodils,—
Thrilled into the garden's musk
The wild wail of whippoorwills.

THE FARMSTEAD

From the purple²-tangled trees,
Like the white, full heart of night,
Solemn with majestic peace,
Swam the big moon, veined with light ;
Like some gorgeous golden-fleece.

She was there with me.—And who,
In the magic of the hour,
Had not sworn that they could view,
Beading on each blade and flower
Moony blisters of the dew ?

And each fairy of our home,—
Firefly,—its taper lit
In the honey-scented gloam,
Dashing down the dusk with it
Like an instant-flaming foam.

THE FARMSTEAD

And we heard the calling, calling,
Of the screech-owl in the brake ;
Where the trumpet-vine hung, crawling
Down the ledge, into the lake
Heard the sighing streamlet falling.

Then we wandered to the creek
Where the water-lilies, growing
Thick as stars, lay white and weak ;
Or against the brooklet's flowing
Bent and bathed a bashful cheek.

And the moonlight, rippling golden,
Fell in virgin aureoles
On their bosoms, half unfolden,
Where, it seemed, the fairies' souls
Dwelt as perfume,—unbeholden ;—

THE FARMSTEAD

Or lay sleeping, pearly-tented,
 Baby-cribbed within each bud,
While the night-wind, piney-scented,
 Swooning over field and flood,
Rocked them on the waters dented.

Then the low, melodious bell
 Of a sleeping heifer tinkled,
In some berry-briered dell,
 As her satin dewlap wrinkled
With the cud that made it swell.

And, returning home, we heard,
 In a beech-tree at the gate,
Some brown, dream-behaunted bird,
 Singing of its absent mate,
Of the mate that never heard.

THE FARMSTEAD

And, you see, now I am gray,
 Why within the old, old place,
With such memories, I stay ;
 Fancy out her absent face
Long since passed away.

She was mine—yes ! still is mine :
 And my frosty memory
Reels about her, as with wine
 Warmed into young eyes that see
All of her that was divine.

Yes, I loved her, and have grown
 Melancholy in that love,
And the memory alone
 Of perfection such whereof
She could sanctify each stone.

THE FARMSTEAD

And where'er the poppies swing--
 There we walk,—as if a bee
Bent them with its airy wing,—
 Down her garden shadowy
In the hush the evenings bring.

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS

BEE-BITTEN in the orchard hung
The peach ; or, fallen in the weeds,
Lay rotting, where still sucked and sung
The gray bee, boring to its seed's
Pink pulp and honey blackly stung.

The orchard-path, which led around
The garden,—with its heat one twinge
Of dinning locusts,—picket-bound
And ragged, brought me where one
 hinge
Held up the gate that scraped the ground.

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS

All seemed the same : the martin-box—
Sun-warped with pigmy balconies—
Still stood, with all its twittering flocks,
Perched on its pole above the peas
And silvery-seeded onion-stocks.

The clove-pink and the rose ; the clump
Of coppery sunflowers, with the heat
Sick to the heart : the garden stump,
Red with geranium-pots, and sweet
With moss and ferns, this side the
pump.

I rested, with one hesitant hand
Upon the gate. The lonesome day,
Droning with insects, made the land
One dry stagnation. Soaked with hay
And scents of weeds the hot wind fanned.

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS

I breathed the sultry scents, my eyes
Parched as my lips. And yet I felt
My limbs were ice.—As one who flies
To some wild woe.—How sleepy smelt
The hay-sweet heat that soaked the skies!

Noon nodded; dreamier, lonelier
For one long, plaintive, forest-side
Bird-quaver.—And I knew me near
Some heartbreak anguish. . . . She had
died.

I felt it, and no need to hear!

I passed the quince and pear-tree; where,
All up the porch, a grape-vine trails—
How strange that fruit, whatever air
Or earth it grows in, never fails
To find its native flavour there!

A FLOWER OF THE FIELDS

And she was as a flower, too,
That grows its proper bloom and scent
No matter what the soil: she, who,
Born better than her place, still lent
Grace to the lowliness she knew. . . .

They met me at the porch, and were
Sad-eyed with weeping.—Then the room
Shut out the country's heat and purr,
And left light stricken into gloom—
So love and I might look on her.

THE FEUD

THE FEUD

Rocks, trees and rocks ; and down a mossy stone

The murmuring ooze and trickle of a stream

Through bushes, where the mountain spring lies

lone,—

A gleaming cairngorm where the shadows

dream,—

And one wild road winds like a saffron seam.

Here sang the thrush, whose pure, mellifluous note

Dropped golden sweetness on the fragrant

June ;

Here cat—and blue-bird and wood-sparrow wrote

Their presence on the silence with a tune ;

And here the fox drank 'neath the mountain

moon.

THE FEUD

Frail ferns and dewy mosses and dark brush,—
 Impenetrable briers, deep and dense,
And wiry bushes,—brush, that seemed to crush
 The struggling saplings with its tangle, whence
Sprawled out the ramble of an old rail-fence.

A wasp buzzed by; and then a butterfly
 In orange and amber, like a floating flame;
And then a man, hard-eyed and very sly,
 Gaunt-cheeked and haggard and a little lame,
With an old rifle, down the mountain came.

He listened, drinking from a flask he took
 Out of the ragged pocket of his coat;
Then all around him cast a stealthy look;
 Lay down; and watched an eagle soar and
 float,
His fingers twitching at his hairy throat.

THE FEUD

The shades grew longer ; and each Cumberland
height

Loomed, framed in splendours of the dolphin
dusk.

Around the road a horseman rode in sight ;

Young, tall, blonde-bearded. Silent, grim, and
brusque,

He in the thicket aimed—The gun ran husk ;

And echoes barked among the hills and made

Repeated instants of the shot's distress.—

Then silence—and the trampled bushes
swayed;—

Then silence, packed with murder and the
press

Of distant hoofs that galloped riderless.

LYNCHERS

LYNCHERS

At the moon's down-going, let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree. . . .

The red-rock road of the underbush,
Where the woman came through the summer
hush.

The sumach high and the elder thick,
Where we found the stone and the ragged stick

The trampled road of the thicket, full
Of footprints down to the quarry pool.

The rocks that ooze with the hue of lead,
Where we found her lying stark and dead.

LYNCHERS

The scraggy wood ; the negro hut,
With its doors and windows locked and shut.

A secret signal ; a foot's rough tramp ;
A knock at the door ; a lifted lamp.

An oath ; a scuffle ; a ring of masks ;
A voice that answers a voice that asks.

A group of shadows ; the moon's red fleck ;
A running noose and a man's bared neck.

A word, a curse, and a shape that swings ;
The lonely night and a bat's black wings. . . .

At the moon's down-going, let it be
On the quarry hill with its one gnarled tree.

DEAD MAN'S RUN

DEAD MAN'S RUN

HE rode adown the autumn wood,
A man dark-eyed and brown ;
A mountain girl before him stood
Clad in a homespun gown.

'To ride this road is death for you !
My father waits you there ;
My father and my brother, too,—
You know the oath they swear.'

He holds her by one berry-brown wrist,
And by one berry-brown hand ;
And he hath laughed at her and kissed
Her cheek the sun hath tanned.

DEAD MAN'S RUN

'The feud is to the death, sweetheart ;
But forward will I ride.'—
'And if you ride to death, sweetheart,
My place is at your side.'

Low hath he laughed again and kissed
And helped her with his hand ;
And they have ridd'n into the mist
That belts the autumn land.

And they had passed by Devil's Den,
And come to Dead Man's Run,
When in the brush rose up two men,
Each with a levelled gun.

'Down ! down ! my sister !' cries the one ;—
She gives the reins a twirl.—
The other shouts, 'He shot my son !
And now he steals my girl !'

DEAD MAN'S RUN

The rifles crack : she will not wail :

He will not cease to ride :

But, oh ! her face is pale, is pale,

And the red blood stains her side.

‘ Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart !

The road is rough to ride !’—

The road is rough by gulch and bluff,

And her hair blows wild and wide.

‘ Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart !

The bank is steep to ride !’—

The bank is steep for a strong man’s leap,

And her eyes are staring wide.

‘ Sit fast, sit fast by me, sweetheart !

The Run is swift to ride !’—

The Run is swift with mountain drift,

And she sways from side to side.

DEAD MAN'S RUN

Is it a wash of the yellow moss,
Or drift of the autumn's gold,
The mountain torrent foams across
For the dead pine's roots to hold ?

Is it the bark of the sycamore,
Or peel of the white birch-tree,
The mountaineer on the other shore
Hath followed and still can see ?

No mountain moss or leaves, dear heart !
No bark of birchen gray !—
Young hair of gold and a face death-cold
The wild stream sweeps away.

AUGUST

AUGUST

I

CLAD on with glowing beauty and the peace,
Benign, of calm maturity, she stands
Among her meadows and her orchard-lands,
And on her mellowing gardens and her trees,
Out of the ripe abundance of her hands
Bestows increase
And fruitfulness, as, wrapped in sunny ease,
Blue-eyed and blonde she goes
Upon her bosom Summer's richest rose.

II

And he who follows where her footsteps lead,
By hill and rock, by forest-side and stream,
Shall glimpse the glory of her visible dream,

AUGUST

In flower and fruit, in rounded nut and seed :
 She, in whose path the very shadows gleam ;
 Whose humblest weed
Seems lovelier than June's loveliest flower,
 indeed,
 And sweeter to the smell
Than April's self within a rainy dell.

III

Hers is a sumptuous simplicity
 Within the fair Republic of her flowers,
 Where you may see her standing hours on
 hours,
Breast-deep in gold, soft-holding up a bee
 To her hushed ear ; or sitting under bowers
 Of greenery,
A butterfly a-tilt upon her knee ;
 Or lounging on her hip,
Dancing a cricket on her finger-tip.

AUGUST

IV

Ay, let me breathe hot scents that tell of
you ;

The hoary catnip and the meadow-mint,
On which the honour of your touch doth
print

Itself as odour. Let me drink the hue
Of iron-weed and mist-flow'r here that hint,
With purple and blue,
The rapture that your presence doth imbue
Their inmost essence with,
Immortal though as transient as a myth.

V

Yea, let me feed on sounds that still assure
Me where you hide : the brooks', whose happy
din

Tells where, the deep retired woods within,

AUGUST

Disrobed, you bathe ; the birds', whose drowsy
lure

Tells where you slumber, your warm nestling
chin

Soft on the pure,
Pink cushion of your palm. . . . What better cure
For care and memory's ache
Than to behold you so, and watch you wake !

THE BUSH-SPARROW

THE BUSH-SPARROW

I

ERE wild-haws, looming in the glooms,
Build bolted drifts of breezy blooms ;
And in the whistling hollow there
The red-bud bends, as brown and bare
As buxom Roxy's up-stripped arm ;
From some gray hickory or larch,
Sighed o'er the sodden meads of March,
The sad heart thrills and reddens warm
To hear you braving the rough storm,
Frail courier of green-gathering powers ;
Rebelling sap in trees and flowers ;
Love's minister come heralding—
O sweet saint-voice among bleak bowers !
O brown-red pursuivant of Spring !

THE BUSH-SPARROW

II

' Moan ' sob the woodland waters still
Down bloomless ledges of the hill ;
And gray, gaunt clouds like harpies hang
In harpy heavens, and swoop and clang
Sharp beaks and talons of the wind :
Black scowl the forests, and unkind
The far fields as the near : while song
Seems murdered and all beauty wrong.
One weak frog only in the thaw
Of spawny pools wakes cold and raw,
Expires a melancholy bass
And stops as if bewildered : then
Along the frowning wood again,
Flung in the thin wind's vulture face,
From woolly tassels of the proud,
Red-bannered maples, long and loud,
' The Spring is come ! is here ! her Grace !
her Grace ! '

THE BUSH-SPARROW

III

‘Her Grace, the Spring! her Grace! her
Grace!

Climbs, beautiful and sunny browed,
Up, up the kindling hills and wakes
Blue berries in the berry brakes :
With fragrant flakes, that blow and bleach,
Deep-powders smothered quince and peach :
Eyes dogwoods with a thousand eyes :
Teaches each sod how to be wise
With twenty wildflowers to one weed,
And kisses germs that they may seed.
In purest purple and sweet white
Treads up the happier hills of light,
Bloom, cloudy-borne, song in her hair
And balm and beam of odorous air.
Winds, her retainers ; and the rains
Her yeomen strong that sweep the plains :

THE BUSH-SPARROW

Her scarlet knights of dawn, and gold
Of eve, her panoply unfold :
Her herald tabarded behold !
Awake to greet ! prepare to sing !
She comes, the darling Duchess, Spring !'

QUIET

QUIET

A LOG-HUT in the solitude,
A clapboard roof to rest beneath !
This side, the shadow-haunted wood ;
That side, the sunlight-haunted heath.

At daybreak Morn shall come to me
In raiment of the white winds spun ;
Slim in her rosy hand the key
That opes the gateway of the sun.

Her smile shall help my heart enough
With love to labour all the day,
And cheer the road, whose rocks are rough,
With her smooth footprints, each a ray.

QUIET

At dusk a voice shall call afar,
A lone voice like the whippoorwill's ;
And, on her shimmering brow one star,
Night shall descend the western hills.

She at my door till dawn shall stand,
With gothic eyes, that, dark and deep,
Are mirrors of a mystic land,
Fantastic with the towns of sleep.

MUSIC

MUSIC

THOU, oh, thou !
Thou of the chorded shell and golden plectrum,
 thou
Of the dark eyes and pale pacific brow !
Music, who by the plangent waves,
Or in the echoing night of labyrinthine caves,
Or on God's mountains, lonely as the stars,
Touchest reverberant bars
Of immemorial sorrow and amaze ;—
Keeping regret and memory awake,
And all the immortal ache
Of love that leans upon the past's sweet days
In retrospection !—now, oh, now,
Interpreter and heart-physician, thou

MUSIC

Who gazest on the heaven and the hell
Of life, and singest each as well,
Touch with thy all-mellifluous finger-tips,
Or thy melodious lips,
This sickness named my soul,
Making it whole
As is an echo of a chord,
Or some symphonic word,
Or sweet vibrating sigh,
That deep, resurgent still doth rise and die
On thy voluminous roll ;
Part of the beauty and the mystery
That axles Earth with music ; as a slave,
Swinging it round and round on each sonorous
 pole,
'Mid spheric harmony,
And choral majesty,
And diapasoning of wind and wave ;
Speeding it on its far elliptic way

MUSIC

'Mid vasty anthemings of night and day.—

O cosmic cry

Of two eternities, wherein we see

The phantasms, Death and Life,

At endless strife

Above the silence of a monster grave.

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

FAR in the purple valleys of illusion
I see her waiting, like the soul of music,
With deep eyes, lovelier than cerulean pansies,
Shadow and fire, yet merciless as poison ;
With red lips sweeter than Arabian storax,
Yet bitterer than myrrh. O tears and kisses !
O eyes and lips, that haunt my soul for ever !

Again Spring walks transcendent on the moun-
tains :
The woods are hushed : the vales are blue with
shadows :
Above the heights, steeped in a thousand splen-
dours,

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

Like some vast canvas of the gods, hangs burning
The sunset's wild sciography : and slowly
The moon treads heaven's proscenium,— night's
stately

White queen of love and tragedy and madness.

Again I know forgotten dreams and longings ;
Ideals lost ; desires dead and buried
Beside the altar sacrifice erected
Within the heart's high sanctuary. Strangely
Again I know the horror and the rapture,
The utterless awe, the joy akin to anguish,
The terror and the worship of the spirit.

Again I feel her eyes pierce through and through
me ;

Her deep eyes, lovelier than imperial pansies,
Velvet and flame, through which her fierce will
holds me,

THE PURPLE VALLEYS

Powerless and tame, and draws me on and on-
ward

To sad, unsatisfied and animal yearnings,
Wild, unrestrained—the brute within the
human—

To fling me panting on her mouth and bosom.

Again I feel her lips like ice and fire,
Her red lips, odorous as Arabian storax,
Fragrance and fire, within whose kiss destruction
Lies serpent-like. Intoxicating languors
Resistlessly embrace me, soul and body ;
And we go drifting, drifting—she is laughing—
Outcasts of God, into the deep's abysm.

A DREAM SHAPE

A DREAM SHAPE

WITH moon-white hearts that held a gleam
I gathered wild-flowers in a dream,
And shaped a woman, whose sweet blood
Was odour of the wildwood bud.

From dew, the starlight arrowed through,
I wrought a woman's eyes of blue ;
The lids that on her eyeballs lay,
Were rose-pale petals of the May.

Out of a rosebud's veins I drew
The fragrant crimson beating through
The languid lips of her, whose kiss
Was as a poppy's drowsiness.

A DREAM SHAPE

Out of the moonlight and the air
I wrought the glory of her hair,
That o'er her eyes' blue heaven lay
Like some gold cloud o'er dawn of day.

I took the music of the breeze
And water, whispering in the trees,
And shaped the soul that breathed below
A woman's blossom breasts of snow.

A shadow's shadow in the glass
Of sleep, my spirit saw her pass :
And thinking of it now, meseems
We only live within our dreams.

For in that time she was to me
More real than our reality ;
More real than Earth, more real than I --
The unreal things that pass and die.

THE OLD BARN

THE OLD BARN

Low, swallow-swept and gray,
Between the orchard and the spring,
All its wide windows overflowing hay,
And crannied doors a-swing,
The old barn stands to-day.

Deep in its hay the Leghorn hides
A round white nest ; and, humming soft
On roof and rafter, or its log-rude
sides,
Black in the sun-shot loft,
The building hornet glides.

THE OLD BARN

Along its corn-crib, cautiously
As thieving fingers, skulks the rat ;
Or in warped stalls of fragrant timothy,
Gnaws at some loosened slat,
Or passes shadowy.

A dream of drouth made audible
Before its door, hot, smooth, and shrill
All day the locust sings . . . What other
spell
Shall hold it, lazier still
Than the long day's, now tell :—

Dusk and the cricket and the strain
Of tree-toad and of frog ; and stars
That burn above the rich west's ribbéd
stain ;
And dropping pasture bars,
And cow-bells up the lane.

THE OLD BARN

Night and the moon and katydid,
And leaf-lisp of the wind-touched boughs ;
And mazy shadows that the fireflies thrid ;
And sweet breath of the cows,
And the lone owl here hid.

THE WOOD WITCH

THE WOOD WITCH

THERE is a woodland witch who lies
With bloom-bright limbs and beam-bright
 eyes,
Among the water-flags that rank
The slow brook's heron-haunted bank.
The dragon-flies, brass-bright and blue,
Are signs she works her sorcery through ;
Weird, wizard characters she weaves
Her spells by under forest leaves,—
These wait her word, like imps, upon
The gray flag-pods ; their wings, of lawn
And gauze ; their bodies, gleaming green.
While o'er the wet sand,—left between
The running water and the still,—
In pansy hues and daffodil,

THE WOOD WITCH

The fancies that she doth devise
Take on the forms of butterflies,
Rich-coloured.—And 'tis she you hear,
Whose sleepy rune, hummed in the
ear

Of silence, bees and beetles purr,
And the dry-droning locusts whirr ;
Till, where the wood is very lone,
Vague monotone meets monotone,
And slumber is begot and born,
A faery child beneath the thorn.
There is no mortal who may scorn
The witchery she spreads around
Her din demesne, wherein is bound
The beauty of abandoned time,
As some sweet thought 'twixt rhyme
and rhyme.

And through her spells you shall behold
The blue turn gray, the gray turn gold

THE WOOD WITCH

Of hollow heaven ; and the brown
Of twilight vistas twinkled down
With fireflies ; and in the gloom
Feel the cool vowels of perfume
Slow-syllabled of weed and bloom.
But, in the night, at languid rest,—
When like a spirit's naked breast
The moon slips from a silver mist,—
With star-bound brow, and star-wreathed
 wrist,
If you should see her rise and wave
You welcome—ah ! what thing could save
You then ? for evermore her slave !

AT SUNSET

AT SUNSET.

INTO the sunset's turquoise marge
The moon dips, like a pearly barge
Enchantment sails through magic seas
To fairyland Hesperides,
Over the hills and away.

Into the fields, in ghost-gray gown,
The young-eyed Dusk comes slowly down ;
Her apron filled with stars she stands,
And one or two slip from her hands
Over the hills and away.

Above the wood's black caldron bends
The witch-faced Night and, muttering,
blends

AT SUNSET

The dew and heat, whose bubbles make
The mist and musk that haunt the brake
Over the hills and away.

Oh, come with me, and let us go
Beyond the sunset lying low,
Beyond the twilight and the night
Into Love's kingdom of long light
Over the hills and away.

M A Y

MAY

**THE golden discs of the rattlesnake-weed,
That spangle the woods and dance—
No gleam of gold that the twilights hold
Is strong as their necromance :
For, under the oaks where the woodpaths lead,
The golden discs of the rattlesnake-weed
Are the May's own utterance.**

**The azure stars of the bluet bloom,
That sprinkle the woodland's trance—
No blink of blue that a cloud lets through
Is sweet as their countenance :
For, over the knolls that the woods perfume,
The azure stars of the bluet bloom
Are the light of the May's own glance.**

MAY

With her wondering words and her looks she
comes,

In a sunbeam of a gown ;

She needs but think and the blossoms wink,

But look, and they shower down.

By orchard ways, where the wild bee hums,

With her wondering words and her looks she
comes

Like a little maid to town.

RAIN

RAIN

I

AROUND, the stillness deepened ; then the grain
Went wild with wind ; and every briery lane
Was swept with dust ; and then, tempestuous
 black,
Hillward the tempest heaved a monster back,
That on the thunder leaned as on a cane ;
And on huge shoulders bore a cloudy pack,
That gullied gold from many a lightning-
 crack :
One great drop splashed and wrinkled down the
 pane,
And then field, hill, and wood were lost in rain.

RAIN

II

At last, through clouds,—as from a cavern hewn
Into night's heart,—the sun burst, angry roon ;
And every cedar, with its weight of wet,
Against the sunset's fiery splendour set,
Frightened to beauty, seemed with rubies
strewn :

Then in drenched gardens, like sweet phantoms
met,

Dim odours rose of pink and mignonette ;
And in the East a confidence, that soon
Grew to the calm assurance of the moon.

TO FALL

TO FALL

SAD-HEARTED spirit of the solitudes,
Who comest through the ruin-wedded woods !
Gray-gowned with fog, gold-girdled with the
 gloom
Of tawny twilights ; burdened with perfume
Of rain-wet uplands, chilly with the mist ;
And all the beauty of the fire-kissed
Cold forests crimsoning thy indolent way,
Odorous of death and drowsy with decay.
I think of thee as seated 'mid the showers
Of languid leaves that cover up the flowers,—
The little flower-sisterhoods, whom June
Once gave wild sweetness to, as to a tune

TO FALL

A singer gives her soul's wild melody,—
Watching the squirrel store his granary.
Or, 'mid old orchards I have pictured thee :
Thy hair's profusion blown about thy back ;
One lovely shoulder bathed with gypsy black ;
Upon thy palm one nestling cheek, and sweet
The rosy russets tumbled at thy feet.
Was it a voice lamenting for the flowers ?
A heart-sick bird that sang of happier hours ?
A cricket dirging days that soon must die ?
Or did the ghost of Summer wander by ?

SUNSET IN AUTUMN

SUNSET IN AUTUMN

BLOOD-COLOURED oaks, that stand against a sky of
gold and brass ;
Gaunt slopes, on which the bleak leaves glow of
brier and sassafras,
And broom-sedge strips of smoky-pink and pearl-
gray clumps of grass
In which, beneath the ragged sky, the rain pools
gleam like glass.

From West to East, from wood to wood, along
the forest-side,
The winds, — the sowers of the Lord, — with
thunderous footsteps stride ;

SUNSET IN AUTUMN

Their stormy hands rain acorns down ; and mad
leaves, wildly dyed,
Like tatters of their rushing cloaks, stream round
them far and wide.

The frail leaf-cricket in the weeds rings a faint
fairy bell ;
And like a torch of phantom ray the milkweed's
windy shell
Glimmers ; while, wrapped in withered dreams,
the wet autumnal smell
Of loam and leaf, like some sad ghost, steals over
field and dell.

The oaks, against a copper sky—o'er which, like
some black lake
Of Dis, bronze clouds, like surges fringed with
sullen fire, break—

SUNSET IN AUTUMN

Loom sombre as Doom's citadel above the vales
that make
A pathway to a land of mist the moon's pale feet
shall take.

Now, dyed with burning carbuncle, a limbo-litten
pane,
Within its walls of storm, the West opens to hill
and plain,
On which the wild-geese ink themselves, a far
triangled train,
And then the shuttering clouds close down—and
night is here again.

THE HILLS

THE HILLS

THERE is no joy of earth that thrills
My bosom like the far-off hills !
Th' unchanging hills, that, shadowy,
Beckon our mutability
To follow and to gaze upon
Foundations of the dusk and dawn.
Meseems the very heavens are massed
Upon their shoulders, vague and vast
With all the skyey burden of
The winds and clouds and stars above.
Lo, how they sit before us, seeing
The laws that give all Beauty being !
Behold ! to them, when dawn is near,
The nomads of the air appear,

THE HILLS

Unfolding crimson camps of day
In brilliant bands ; then march away ;
And under burning battlements
Of twilight plant their tinted tents.
The truth of olden myths, that brood
By haunted stream and haunted wood,
They see ; and feel the happiness
Of old at which we only guess :
The dreams, the ancients loved and knew,
Still as their rocks and trees are true :
Not otherwise than presences
The tempest and the calm to these :
One, shouting on them all the night,
Black-limbed and veined with lambent
light ;
The other with the ministry
Of all soft things that company
With music—an embodied form,
Giving to solitude the charm

THE HILLS

Of leaves and waters and the peace
Of bird-begotten melodies—
And who at night doth still confer
With the mild moon, that telleth her
Pale tale of lonely love, until
Wan images of passion fill
The heights with shapes that glimmer by
Clad on with sleep and memory.

CONTENT

CONTENT

WHEN I behold how some pursue
Fame, that is Care's embodiment
Or fortune, whose false face looks
true,—
An humble home with sweet content
Is all I ask for me and you.

An humble home, where pigeons coo,
Whose path leads under breezy lines
Of frosty-berried cedars to
A gate, one mass of trumpet-vines,
Is all I ask for me and you.

CONTENT

A garden, which all summer through,
The roses old make redolent,
And morning-glories, gay of hue,
And tansy, with its homely scent,
Is all I ask for me and you.

An orchard, that the pippins strew,
From whose bruised gold the juices
 spring ;
A vineyard, where the grapes hang blue,
Wine-big and ripe for vintaging,
Is all I ask for me and you.

A lane that leads to some far view
Of forest or of fallow-land,
Bloomed o'er with rose and meadow-rue,
Each with a bee in its hot hand,
Is all I ask for me and you.

CONTENT

At morn, a pathway deep with dew,
And birds to vary time and tune ;
At eve, a sunset avenue,
And whippoorwills that haunt the moon,
Is all I ask for me and you.

Dear heart, with wants so small and few,
And faith, that 's better far than gold,
A lowly friend, a child or two,
To care for us when we are old,
Is all I ask for me and you.

HEART OF MY HEART

HEART OF MY HEART

HERE where the season turns the land to gold,
Among the fields our feet have known of old,—
When we were children who would laugh and run,
Glad little playmates of the wind and sun,—
Before came toil and care and years went ill,
And one forgot and one remembered still ;
Heart of my heart, among the old fields here,
Give me your hands and let me draw you near,
Heart of my heart.

Stars are not truer than your soul is true—
What need I more of heaven than than you ?
Flowers are not sweeter than your face is sweet—
What need I more to make my world complete ?

HEART OF MY HEART

O woman nature, love that still endures,
What strength has ours that is not born of yours?
Heart of my heart, to you, whatever come,
To you the lead, whose love hath led me home.
Heart of my heart.

OCTOBER

OCTOBER

LONG hosts of sunlight, and the bright wind
blows

A tourney-trumpet on the listed hill ;
Past is the splendour of the royal rose
And duchess daffodil.

Crowned queen of beauty, in the garden's
space,
Strong daughter of a bitter race and bold,
A ragged beggar with a lovely face,
Reigns the sad marigold.

And I have sought June's butterfly for days,
To find it—like a coreopsis bloom—

OCTOBER

Amber and seal, rain-murdered 'neath the blaze
Of this sunflower's plume.

Here drones the bee; and there sky-daring
wings

Voyage blue gulfs of heaven; the last song
The red-bird flings me as adieu, still rings
Upon yon pear-tree's prong.

No angry sunset brims with rubier red
The bowl of heaven than the days, indeed,
Pour in each blossom of this salvia-bed,
Where each leaf seems to bleed.

And where the wood-gnats dance, like some
slight mist,
Above the efforts of the weedy stream,
The girl, October, tired of the tryst,
Dreams a diviner dream.

OCTOBER

One foot just dipping the caressing wave,
One knee at languid angle ; locks that drown
Hands nut-stained ; hazel-eyed, she lies, and
grave,
Watching the leaves drift down.

MYTH AND ROMANCE

MYTH AND ROMANCE

I

WHEN I go forth to greet the glad-faced Spring,
Just at the time of opening apple-buds,
When brooks are laughing, winds are whispering,
On babbling hillsides or in warbling woods,
There is an unseen presence that eludes :—
Perhaps a dryad, in whose tresses cling
The loamy odours of old solitudes,
Who, from her beechen doorway, calls, and leads
My soul to follow ; now with dimpling words
Of leaves ; and now with syllables of birds ;
While here and there—is it her limbs that
swing ?
Or restless sunlight on the moss and weeds ?

MYTH AND ROMANCE

II

Or, haply, 'tis a Naiad now who slips,
Like some white lily, from her fountain's
glass,
While from her dripping hair and breasts and
hips
The moisture rains cool music on the grass.
Her have I heard and followed, yet, alas !
Have seen no more than the wet ray that dips
The shivered waters, wrinkling where I pass ;
But in the liquid light where she doth hide,
I have beheld the azure of her gaze
Smiling ; and, where the orbing ripple plays,
Among her minnows I have heard her lips,
Bubbling, make merry by the waterside.

MYTH AND ROMANCE

III

Or now it is an Oread—whose eyes
Are constellated dusk—who stands confessed,
As naked as a flow'r ; her heart's surprise,
Like morning's rose, mantling her brow and
breast :
She, shrinking from my presence, all dis-
tressed
Stands for a startled moment ere she flies,
' Her deep hair blowing, up the mountain crest,
Wild as a mist that trails along the dawn.
And is 't her footfalls lure me ? or the sound
Of airs that stir the crisp leaf on the ground ?
And is 't her body glimmers on yon rise ?
Or dogwood blossoms snowing on the lawn ?

MYTH AND ROMANCE

IV

Now 'tis a satyr piping serenades
On a slim reed. Now Pan and Faun advance
Beneath green-hollowed roofs of forest glades,
Their feet gone mad with music: now, per-
chance,
Sylvanus sleeping, on whose leafy trance
The nymphs stand gazing in dim ambuscades
Of sun-embodied perfume.—Myth, Romance,
Where'er I turn, reach out bewildering arms,
Compelling me to follow. Day and night
I hear their voices and behold the light
Of their divinity that still evades,
And still allures me in a thousand forms.

GENIUS LOCI

GENIUS LOCI

I

WHAT wood-god, on this water's mossy curb,
Lost in reflections of earth's loveliness,
Did I, just now, unconsciously disturb?
I who haphazard, wandering at a guess,
Came on this spot, wherein with gold and flame
Of buds and blooms the season writes its
name.—

Ah me! could I have seen him ere alarm
Of my approach aroused him from his calm!
As he, part Hamadryad and, mayhap,
Part Faun, lay here; who left the shadow warm
As a wood-rose, and filled the air with balm
Of his wild breath as with ethereal sap.

GENIUS LOCI

II

Does not the moss retain some slight impress,
Green-dented down, of where he lay or trod ?
Do not the flow'rs, so reticent, confess
With conscious looks the contact of a god ?
Does not the very water garrulously
Boast the indulgence of a deity ?
And, hark ! in burly beech and sycamore
How all the birds proclaim it ! and the leaves
Rejoice with clappings of their myriad hands !
And shall not I believe, too, and adore,
With such wide proof?—Yea, though my soul
perceives
No evident presence, still it understands.

III

And for a while it moves me to lie down
Here on the spot his god-head sanctified :

GENIUS LOCI

Mayhap some dream he dreamed may linger,
brown

And young as joy, around the forest side ;
Some dream within whose heart lives no disdain
For such as I whose love is sweet and sane ;
That may repeat, so none but I may hear—
As one might tell a pearl-strung rosary—
Some epic that the leaves have learned to
croon,

Some lyric whispered in the wild-flow'r's ear,
Whose murmurous lines are sung by bird and
bee,
And all the insects of the night and noon.

IV

For, all around me, upon field and hill,
Enchantment lies as of mysterious flutes ;
As if the music of a god's goodwill
Had taken on material attributes

GENIUS LOCI

In blooms, like chords ; and in the water-gleam,
That runs its silvery scales on every stream ;
In sunbeam bars, up which the butterfly,
 A golden note, vibrates then flutters on—
 Inaudible tunes, blown on the pipes of Pan,
That have assumed a visible entity,
 And drugged the air with beauty so, a Faun,
Behold, I seem, and am no more a man.

DISCOVERY

DISCOVERY

WHAT is it now that I shall seek
Where woods dip downward, in the hills ;
A mossy nook, a ferny creek,
And May among the daffodils.

Or in the valley's vistaed glow,
Past rocks of terraced trumpet-vines,
Shall I behold her coming slow,
Sweet May, among the columbines ?

With red-bud cheeks and bluet eyes,
Big eyes, the homes of happiness,
To meet me with the old surprise,
Her hoiden hair all bonnetless.

DISCOVERY

Who waits for me, where, note for note,
The birds make glad the forest trees?
A dogwood blossom at her throat,
My May among th' anemones.

As sweetheart breezes kiss the blooms,
And dewdrops drink the moonlight's gleam,
My soul shall kiss her lips' perfumes,
And drink the magic of her dreams.

THE OLD SPRING

THE OLD SPRING

I

UNDER rocks whereon the rose
Like a strip of morning glows ;
Where the azure-throated newt
Drowzes on the twisted root ;
And the brown bees, humming homeward,
Stop to suck the honey-dew ;
Fern and leaf-hid, gleaming gloamward,
Drips the wildwood spring I knew,
Drips the spring my boyhood knew.

II

Myrrh and music everywhere
Haunt its cascades ;—like the hair

THE OLD SPRING

That a naiad tosses cool,
Swimming strangely beautiful,
With white fragrance for her bosom,
For her mouth a breath of song :—
Under leaf and branch and blossom
Flows the woodland spring along,
Sparkling, singing flows along.

III

Still the wet wan mornings touch
Its gray rocks, perhaps ; and such
Slender stars as dusk may have
Pierce the rose that roofs its wave ;
Still the thrush may call at noontide
And the whippoorwill at night ;
Nevermore, by sun or moontide,
Shall I see it gliding white,
Falling, flowing, wild and white.

THE FOREST SPRING

THE FOREST SPRING

PUSH back the brambles, berry-blue :
The hollowed spring is full in view :
Deep-tangled with luxuriant fern
Its rock-embedded, crystal urn.

Not for the loneliness that keeps
The coigne wherein its silence sleeps ;
Not for wild butterflies that sway
Their pansy pinions all the day
Above its mirror ; nor the bee,
Nor dragon-fly, that passing see
Themselves reflected in its spar ;
Not for the one white liquid star,
That twinkles in its firmament ;
Nor moon-shot clouds, so slowly sent

THE FOREST SPRING

Athwart it when the kindly night
Beads all its grasses with the light
Small jewels of the dimpled dew ;
Not for the day's inverted blue
Nor the quaint, dimly coloured stones
That dance within it where it moans :
Not for all these I love to sit
In silence and to gaze in it.
But, know, a nymph with merry eyes
Looks at me from its laughing skies ;
A graceful glimmering nymph who plays
All the long fragrant summer days
With instant sights of bees and birds,
And speaks with them in water words,
And for whose nakedness the air
Weaves moony mists, and on whose hair,
Unfilleted, the night will set
That lone star as a coronet.

TRANSMUTATION

TRANSMUTATION

To me all beauty that I see
Is melody made visible :
An earth-translated state, may be,
Of music heard in Heaven or Hell.

Out of some love-impassioned strain
Of saints, the rose evolved its bloom ;
And, dreaming of it here again,
Perhaps re-lives it as perfume.

Out of some chant that demons sing
Of hate and pain, the sunset grew ;
And, haply, still remembering,
Re-lives it here as some wild hue.

DEAD CITIES

DEAD CITIES

OUT of it all but this remains :—
I was with one who crossed wide chains
Of the Cordilleras, whose peaks
Lock in the wilds of Yucatan,
Chiapas and Honduras. Weeks—
And then a city that no man
Had ever seen ; so dim and old,
No chronicle has ever told
The history of men who piled
Its temples and huge teocallis
Among mimosa-blooming valleys ;
Or how its altars were defiled
With human blood ; whose idols there
With eyes of stone still stand and stare.

DEAD CITIES

So old the moon can only know
How old, since ancient forests grow
On mighty wall and pyramid.
Huge ceibas, whose trunks were scarred
With ages, and dense yuccas, hid
Fanes 'mid the cacti, scarlet-starred.
I looked upon its paven ways,
And saw it in its kingliest days ;
When from the lordly palace one,
A victim, walked with prince and priest,
Who turned brown faces toward the east
In worship of the rising sun :
At night ten hundred temples' spires
On gold burnt everlasting fires.

Uxmal ? Palenque ? or Copan ?
I know not. Only how no man
Had ever seen ; and still my soul
Believes it vaster than the three.

DEAD CITIES

Volcanic rock walled in the whole,
Lost in the woods as in some sea.
I only read its hieroglyphs,
Perused its monster monoliths
Of death, gigantic heads ; and read
The pictured codex of its fate,
The perished Toltec ; while in hate
Mad monkeys cursed me, as if dead
Priests of its past had taken form
To guard its ruined shrines from harm.

FROST

FROST

MAGICIAN he, who, autumn nights,
Down from the starry heavens whirls ;
A harlequin in spangled tights,
Whose wand's touch carpets earth with
pearls.

Through him each pane presents a scene,
A Lilliputian landscape, where
The world is white instead of green,
And trees and houses hang in air.

Where Elfin gambol and delight,
And haunt the jewelled bells of flowers ;
Where upside-down we see the night
With many moons and starry showers.

FROST

And surely in his wand or hand
Is Midas magic, for, behold,
Some morn we wake and find the land,
Both field and forest, turned to gold.

A NIGHT IN JUNE

A NIGHT IN JUNE

I

WHITE as a lily moulded of Earth's milk
That eve the moon bloomed in a hyacinth sky ;
Soft in the gleaming glens the wind went by,
Faint as a phantom clothed in unseen silk :
Bright as a naiad's leap, from shine to shade
The runnel twinkled through the shaken
brier ;
Above the hills one long cloud, pulsed with
fire,
Flashed like a great enchantment-welded blade.
And when the western sky seemed some weird
land,
And night a witching spell at whose command

A NIGHT IN JUNE

One sloping star fell green from heav'n; and
deep
The warm rose opened for the moth to sleep;
Then she, consenting, laid her hands in his,
And lifted up her lips for their first kiss.

II

There where they part, the porch's steps are
strewn
With wind-blown petals of the purple vine;
Athwart the porch the shadow of a pine
Cleaves the white moonlight; and like some
calm rune
Heaven says to Earth, shines the majestic moon;
And now a meteor draws a lilac line
Across the welkin, as if God would sign
The perfect poem of this night of June.
The wood-wind stirs the flowering chestnut-tree,

A NIGHT IN JUNE

Whose curving blossoms strew the glimmering
grass

Like crescents that wind-wrinkled waters
glass ;

And, like a moonstone in a frill of flame,

The dewdrop trembles on the peony,

As in a lover's heart his sweetheart's name.

THE DREAMER

THE DREAMER

EVEN as a child he loved to thrid the bowers,
And mark the loafing sunlight's lazy laugh ;
Or, on each season, spell the epitaph
Of its dead months repeated in their flowers ;
Or list the music of the strolling showers,
Whose vagabond notes strummed through a
twinkling staff,
Or read the day's delivered monograph
Through all the chapters of its dædal hours.
Still with the same child-faith and child regard
He looks on Nature, hearing at her heart,
The Beautiful beat out the time and place,
Through which no lesson of this life is hard,
No struggle vain of science or of art,
That dies with failure written on its face.

WINTER

WINTER

THE flute, whence Summer's dreamy finger-tips

Drew music,—ripening the pinched kernels
in

The burly chestnut and the chinquapin,
Red-rounding-out the oval haws and hips,—
Now Winter crushes to his stormy lips,

And surly songs whistle around his chin ;

Now the wild days and wilder nights begin
When, at the eaves, the crooked icicle drips.

Thy songs, O Summer, are not lost so soon !

Still dwells a memory in thy hollow flute,

Which unto Winter's masculine airs doth

give

WINTER

Thy own creative qualities of tune,
Through which we see each bough bend
white with fruit,
Each bush with bloom, in snow commemora-
tive.

MID-WINTER

MID-WINTER

ALL day the clouds hung ashen with the cold ;
And through the snow the muffled waters
fell ;
The day seemed drowned in grief too deep to
tell,
Like some old hermit whose last bead is told.
At eve the wind woke, and the snow clouds
rolled
Aside to leave the fierce sky visible ;
Harsh as an iron landscape of wan hell
The dark hills hung framed in with gloomy
gold.
And then, towards night, the wind seemed some
one at

MID-WINTER

My window wailing : now a little child
Crying outside my door ; and now the long
Howl of some starved beast down the flue. I
sat
And knew 'twas Winter with his madman song
Of miseries on which he stared and smiled.

SPRING

SPRING

FIRST came the rain, loud, with sonorous lips ;
 A pursuivant who heralded a prince :
 And dawn put on her livery of tints,
And dusk bound gold about her hair and hips :
And, all in silver mail, the sunlight came,
 A knight, who bade the winter let him pass ;
 And freed imprisoned beauty, naked as
The Court of Love, in all her wildflower shame.
And so she came, in breeze-borne loveliness,
 Across the hills; and heav'n bent down to
 bless :
 Above her head the birds were as a lyre ;
And at her feet, like some strong worshipper,
 The shouting water pæan'd praise of her
 Who, with blue eyes, set the wild world on fire.

TRANSFORMATION

TRANSFORMATION

It is the time when, by the forest falls,
The touch-me-nots hang fairy folly-caps ;
When ferns and flowers fill the lichened
laps
Of rocks with colour, rich as orient shawls :
And in my heart I hear a voice that calls
Me woodward, where the hamadryad wraps
Her limbs in bark, and, bubbling in the
saps,
Sings the sweet Greek of Pan's old madrigals :
There is a gleam that lures me up the
stream—
A Naiad swimming with wet limbs of
light?

TRANSFORMATION

Perfume that leads me on from dream to
dream—

An Oread's footprints fragrant with her
flight?

And, lo! meseems I am a Faun again,
Part of the myths that I pursue in vain.

RESPONSE

RESPONSE

THERE is a music of immaculate love,
That beats within the virgin veins of
Spring,—
And trillium blossoms, like the stars that
cling
To fairies' wands ; and, strung on sprays above,
White-hearts and mandrake blooms—that look
enough
Like the elves' washing—white with
laundering
Of May-moon dews ; and all pale-opening
Wild-flowers of the woods are born thereof.
There is no sod Spring's white foot brushes
but

RESPONSE

Must feel the music that vibrates within,
And thrill to the communicated touch
Responsive harmonies, that must unshut
The heart of Beauty for Song's concrete kin,
Emotions—that are flowers—born of such.

THE SWASHBUCKLER

THE SWASHBUCKLER

SQUAT-NOSED and broad, of big and pompous
port ;

A tavern visage, apoplexy haunts,

All pimple-puffed : the Falstaff-like resort
Of fat debauchery, whose veined cheek flaunts
A flabby purple : rusty-spurred he stands

In rakehell boots and belt, and hanger that
Claps when, with greasy gauntlets on his
hands,

He swaggers past in cloak and slouch-plumed
hat.

Aggression marches armies in his words ;

And in his oaths great deeds ride cap-à-pie ;

THE SWASHBUCKLER

His looks, his gestures breathe the breath of
swords;

And in his carriage camp all wars to be :—

With him of battles there shall be no lack

While buxom wenches are and stoops of sack.

SIMULACRA

SIMULACRA

DARK in the west the sunset's sombre wrack
Unrolled vast walls the rams of war had
split,
Along whose battlements the battle lit
Tempestuous beacons; and, with gates hurled
back,
A mighty city, red with ruin and sack,
Through burning breaches, crumbling bit by
bit,
Showed where the God of Slaughter seemed
to sit
With Conflagration glaring at each crack.—
Who knows? perhaps as sleep unto us makes

SIMULACRA

Our dreams as real as our waking seems
With recollections time can not destroy,
So in the mind of Nature now awakes,
Haply, some wilder memory, and she dreams
The stormy story of the fall of Troy.

CAVERNS

CAVERNS

WRITTEN OF COLOSSAL CAVE, KENTUCKY

AISLES and abysses ; leagues no man explores,
Of rock that labyrinths and night that
drips ;
Where everlasting silence broods, with lips
Of adamant, o'er earthquake-built floors.
Where forms, such as the Demon-World adores,
Laborious water carves ; whence echo slips
Wild-tongued o'er pools where petrification
strips
Her breasts of crystal from which crystal
pours.—
Here where primordial fear, the Gorgon, sits
Staring all life to stone in ghastly mirth,

CAVERNS

I seem to tread, with awe no tongue can
tell,—

Beneath vast domes, by torrent-tortured pits,
'Mid wrecks terrific of the ruined Earth,—
An ancient causeway of forgotten Hell.

THE BLUE BIRD

THE BLUE BIRD

FROM morn till noon upon the window-pane
The tempest tapped with rainy finger-nails,
And all the afternoon the blustering gales
Beat at the door with furious feet of rain.
The rose, near which the lily bloom lay slain,
Like some red wound dripped by the garden
rails,
On which the sullen slug left slimy trails—
Meseemed the sun would never shine again.
Then in the drench, long, loud and full of cheer,—
A skyey herald tabarded in blue,—
A bluebird bugled . . . and at once a bow
Was bent in heaven, and I seemed to hear
God's sapphire spaces crystallising through
The strata'd clouds in azure tremolo.

QUATRAINS

QUATRAINS

POETRY

Who hath beheld the goddess face to face,
Blind with her beauty, all his days shall go
Climbing lone mountains towards her temple's
place,
Weighed with song's sweet, inexorable woe.

THE UNIMAGINATIVE

Each form of beauty's but the new disguise
Of thoughts more beautiful than forms can
be ;
Sceptics, who search with unanointed eyes,
Never the Earth's wild fairy-dance shall see.

QUATRAINS

MUSIC

God-born before the Sons of God, she hurled,
With awful symphonies of flood and fire,
God's name on rocking Chaos—world by world
Flamed as the universe rolled from her lyre.

THE THREE ELEMENTS

They come as couriers of Heaven : their feet
Sonorous-sandalled with majestic awe ;
In raiment of swift foam and wind and heat,
Blowing the trumpets of God's wrath and law.

ROME

Above the circus of the world she sat,
Beautiful and base, a harlot crowned with
pride :
Fierce nations, upon whom she sneered and spat,
Shrieked at her feet and for her pastime died.

QUATRAINS

ON READING THE LIFE OF HAROUN ER RESHID

Down all the lanternd Bagdad of our youth
He steals, with golden justice for the poor :
Within his palace—you shall know the truth !—
A blood-smeared headsman hides behind each
door.

MNEMOSYNE

In classic beauty, cold, immaculate,
A voiceful sculpture, stern and still she stands,
Upon her brow deep-chiselled love and hate,
That sorrow o'er dead roses in her hands.

BEAUTY

High as a star, yet lowly as a flower,
Unknown she takes her unassuming place
At Earth's proud masquerade—the appointed
hour
Strikes, and, behold ! the marvel of her face.

QUATRAINS

THE STARS

These—the bright symbols of man's hope and
fame,
In which he reads his blessing or his curse—
Are syllables with which God speaks his name
In the vast utterance of the universe.

ECHO

Dweller in hollow places, hills and rocks,
Daughter of Silence and old Solitude,
Tip-toe she stands within her cave or wood,
Her only life the noises that she mocks.

ADVENTURERS

ADVENTURERS

SEEMINGLY over the hill-tops,
Possibly under the hills,
A tireless wing that never drops,
And a song that never stills.

Epics heard on the stars' lips?
Lyrics read in the dew?—
To sing the song at our finger-tips,
And live the world anew!

Cavaliers of the Cortés kind,
Bold and stern and strong,—
And, oh, for a fine and muscular mind
To sing a new-world's song!

ADVENTURERS

Sailing seas of the silver morn,
Winds of the balm and spice,
To put the old-world art to scorn
At the price of any price !

Danger, death, but the hope high !
God's, if the purpose fail !
Into the deeds of a vaster sky
Sailing a dauntless sail.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

I

O LIFE! O Death! O God!
Have we not striven?
Have we not known Thee, God
As Thy stars know Heaven?
Have we not held Thee true,
True as thy deepest,
Sweet and immaculate blue
Heaven that feels Thy dew!
Have we not *known* Thee true,
O God who keepst.

II

O God, our Father, God!—
Who gav'st us fire,

EPILOGUE

To soar beyond the sod,
To rise, aspire—
What though we strive and strive,
And all our soul says 'live' ?
The empty scorn of men
Will sneer it down again.
And, O sun-centred high,
Who, too, art Poet,
Beneath Thy tender sky
Each day new Keatses die,
Calling all life a lie ;
Can this be so—and why ?—
And canst Thou know it ?

III

We know Thee beautiful,
We know Thee bitter !
Help Thou !—Men's eyes are dull,
O God most beautiful !

EPILOGUE

Make thou their souls less full
Of things mere glitter.
Dost Thou not see our tears ?
Dost Thou not hear the years
Treading our hearts to shards,
O Lord of all the Lords ?—
Arouse Thee, God of Hosts,
There 'mid Thy glorious ghosts,
So high and holy !
Have mercy on our tears !
Have mercy on our years !
Our strivings and our fears,
O Lord of lordly peers,
On us, so lowly !

IV

On us, so fondly fain
To tell what mother-pain
Of Nature makes the rain.

EPILOGUE

On us, so glad to show
The sorrow of her snow,
And all her winds that blow.

Us, who interpret right
Her mystic rose of light,
Her moony rune of night.

Us, who have utterance for
Each warm, flame-hearted star
That stammers from afar.

Who hear the tears and sighs
Of every bud that dies
While heav'n's dew on it lies.

Who see the power that dowers
The wildwood bosks and bowers
With musk of sap and flowers.

EPILOGUE

Who see what no man sees
In water, earth, and breeze,
And in the hearts of trees.

Turn not away Thy light,
O God!—Our strength is slight!
Help us who breast the height!
Have mercy, Infinite!
Have mercy!