

Poems

John L. Stoddard

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Author: John L. Stoddard

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POEMS

BY

JOHN L. STODDARD

1913

CONJUGI CARISSIMAE

PROEM

They called him mad,--the poor, old man,
Whose white hair, worn and thin,
Fell o'er his shoulders, as he played
His cherished violin,
Forever drawing to and fro
O'er silent strings a loosened bow.

At times on his pathetic face
A look of perfect rapture shone,
Intent on some celestial chords,
Discerned by him alone;
And sometimes he would smile and pause,

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As if receiving loud applause.

So, many a humble poet dreams
His songs will touch the human heart,
And full of hope his offering lays
Before the shrine of Art;
Poor dreamer, may he never know
That he too draws a silent bow!

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* * * * *

RACHEL

MY "PROMENADE SOLITAIRE"

Up and down in my garden fair,
Under the trellis where grapes will bloom,
With the breath of violets in the air,
As pallid Winter for Spring makes room,
I walk and ponder, free from care,
In my beautiful Promenade Solitaire.

Back and forth in the checkered shade
Traced by the lattice that holds the vine,
With the glory of snow-capped crests displayed
On the sapphire sky in a billowy line,
I stroll, and ask what can compare
With the charm of my Promenade Solitaire.

To and fro 'neath the nascent green
Which clambers over its slender frame,
With white peaks lighting up the scene,
As snowfields glow with the sunset flame,
I saunter, halting here and there
For the view from my Promenade Solitaire.

In and out through the silence sweet,
Plash of fountain and song of bird

Are the only sounds in my lov'd retreat
By which the air is ever stirred;
It is like a long-drawn aisle of prayer,
So hushed is my Promenade Solitaire.

Onward rushes the world without,
But the breeze which over my garden steals
Brings from it merely a distant shout
Or the echo light of passing wheels;
In its din and drive I have now no share,
As I muse in my Promenade Solitaire.

Am I dead to the world, that I thus disdain
Its moil and toil in the prime of life,
When perhaps a score of years remain
To win more gold in its selfish strife?
Am I foolish to choose the purer air
Of my glorious Promenade Solitaire?

Ah no! From my mountain-girdled height
I watch the game of the world go on,
And note the course of the bitter fight,
And what is lost and what is won;
And I judge of it better here than there,
As I gaze from my Promenade Solitaire.

It is ever the same old tale of greed,
Of robbing and killing the weaker race,
Of the word proved false by the cruel deed,
Of the slanderous tongue with the friendly face;
'Tis enough to make one's heart despair
Even here in my Promenade Solitaire.

They cheer, and struggle, and beat the air
With many a stroke and thrust intense,
And urge each other to do and dare,
To gain some good they deem immense;
But they look like ants contending there
From the height of my Promenade Solitaire.

Backward and forward they run and crawl,
Houses and treasures they heap up high,
Hither and thither their booty haul, ...
Then suddenly drop in their tracks and die!
For few are wise enough to repair
In time to a Promenade Solitaire.

Meantime the Earth speeds on through space,
As the sun for a million years hath steered,
And, an eon hence, the entire race
Will have played its part and disappeared;
But what will the lifeless planet care,
As it follows its Promenade Solitaire?

REINCARNATION

I know not how, I know not where,
But from my own heart's mystic lore
I feel that I have breathed this air,
And walked this earth before;

And that in this, its latest form

My old-time spirit once more strives,
As it has fought through many a storm
In past, forgotten lives.

Not inexperienced did my soul
This incarnation's threshold tread;
Not recordless has proved the scroll
It brought back from the dead.

To certain, special lines of thought
My mind intuitively tends,
And old affinities have brought
Not new, but ancient friends.

What thrilled me in a previous state
Rekindles here its ancient flame;
What I by instinct love and hate
I knew before I came;

And lands, of which in youth I dreamed
And read, heart-moved, and longed to see,
When really visited, have seemed
Not strange but known to me.

When Mozart, still a child, untaught,
Ran joyous to the silent keys,
And with inspired fingers wrought
Majestic harmonies,

There fell upon his psychic ear
Faint echoes of a music known
Before his natal advent here,
In former lives outgrown.

In many a dumb brute's wistful eyes
A dawning human soul aspires,
For thus from lower forms we rise,--
Ourselves our spirits' sires.

Full many a thought that thrills my breast
Is fruit resulting from a seed
Sown elsewhere,--on my soul impressed
By many an arduous deed;

Full many a fetter which hath lamed
My struggling spirit's upward flight
Was once by that same spirit framed,
When further from the Light;

With justice, therefore, comes the pain
That o'er the tortured world extends;
And hopeful is the lessening stain,
As each life-cycle ends.

No changeless, endless states await
The good and evil souls set free;
Each grave is a successive gate
In immortality.

Too long this mighty truth hath slept
Among the darkened souls of men,--
"Ye cannot see God's face, except
Ye shall be born again."

The God-like Christs and Buddhas yearn,

However high their spirits' stage,
For man's salvation to return,
As Saviour or as Sage.

On our benighted, groping minds
Their noble precepts, star-like, shine;
Each soul, that wisely seeks them, finds
The truths that are divine.

Misunderstood and vilified,
Their aims and motives scarcely known,
How many of these Saints have died,
Rejected by their own!

Yet, though their followers miss the way,
In spite of precept and of prayer,
And lead unnumbered souls astray,
Committed to their care,

Upon the lofty spirit-plane,
Where all lies open to their sight,
The Masters know that not in vain
They left the Hills of Light.

TO THE "RING NEBULA"

O pallid spectre of the midnight skies,
Whose phantom features in the dome of Night
Elude the keenest gaze of wistful eyes,
Till amplest lenses aid the failing sight;
On heaven's blue sea the farthest isle of fire,
From thee, whose glories it would fain admire,
Must vision, baffled, in despair retire!

What art thou, ghostly visitant of flame?
Wouldst thou 'neath closer scrutiny resolve
In myriad suns that constellations frame,
Around which life-blest satellites revolve,
Like those unnumbered orbs which nightly creep
In dim procession o'er the azure steep,
As white-winged caravans the desert sweep?

Or art thou still an incandescent mass,
Acquiring form as hostile forces urge,
Through whose vast length continuous lightnings pass,
As to and fro its fiery billows surge?
Whose glowing atoms, whirled in ceaseless strife,
Where now chaotic anarchy is rife,
Shall yet become the fair abodes of life?

We know not; for the faint, exhausted rays
Which hither on Light's winged coursers come
From fires which ages since first lit their blaze,
One instant gleam, then perish, spent and dumb;
How sad the thought that, howsoe'er we yearn
Of life on yonder glittering orbs to learn,
We read no message, and could none return!

Yet this we know:--yon ring of spectral light,
Whose distance thrills the soul with solemn awe,
Can ne'er escape in its majestic might
The firm control of omnipresent law;

This mote descending to its bounden place,
Those suns whose radiance we can scarcely trace,
Alike obey the Power pervading space.

THE WAIF

I sit in my luxurious chair;
Soft rugs caress my slippered feet;
Within, a balmy, summer air;
Without, a wintry storm of sleet.

A favorite book is in my hands,
A thousand others line the walls;
Some souvenir of distant lands
In every nook the Past recalls.

Upon a Turkish tabouret
In Dresden cups of peerless blue
Gleams on a pretty Cashmere tray
The fragrant Mocha's ebon hue.

Two dainty hands prepare the draught,
While loving glances meet my own;
Two lips repeat (the coffee quaffed),
"To-night 'tis sweet to be alone."

Hark! in the court my faithful hound
Breaks rudely on our tete-a-tete;
Too well I understand that sound!
A mendicant is at my gate.

Admit him? Yes; for none shall say
That he who seeks in want my door
Is ever harshly turned away;
His plea is heard, if nothing more.

I leave my comforts with a sigh,
And, passing to the outer hall,
Behold a wanderer doomed to die,--
So ill, I look to see him fall.

I know his story ere he speaks;
And listening to his labored breath,
I trace, with tears upon my cheeks,
His long and hopeless fight with death.

A poor, storm-beaten, lonely waif,
Lured southward from a colder clime
By hope and that unfailing faith
That health will come again in time!

Alas! too late; the dread disease
Hath fixed its roots too firmly there;
And now sick, friendless, at my knees,
He pours forth his heart-breaking prayer.

What are his needs? Before all, food!
Hot soup, bread, wine, until at last
A sense of human brotherhood
Obliterates his cruel past;

Yet not for long; for though well-fed,

With warmer garments than before,
He hath no place to lay his head,
On turning from my friendly door.

I slip some silver in his hand,
('Twill purchase shelter for the night,)
Then, silent and remorseful, stand
To watch his bent form out of sight.

On, on he goes through snow and sleet,
With nothing more of warmth and cheer!
From such a home to such a street!
Ah, should I not have kept him here?

My room is no less bright and warm,
But all its charm and joy have fled;
That lonely figure in the storm
Leaves both our hearts uncomforted.

For this is but one tiny wave
In life's vast, shoreless sea of woe,--
One note in man's hoarse cry to save,
Resounding o'er its ebb and flow;

I ask myself in blank dismay,--
Ought I my little wealth to own?
Yet, should I give it all away,
'Twere but a drop to ocean thrown!

Great God! if what I dimly see,
In this small section of mankind,
Of pain and want and misery,
Can thus bring anguish to my mind,

How canst _Thou_ view the awful _whole_,
As our ensanguined planet rolls
From unknown source to unknown goal
Its freight of suffering human souls?

Permitted pain!--the first and last
Of riddles that we strive to solve,
More poignant ever, and more vast,
As man's mentalities evolve,

I hear thy victims' ceaseless wails,
I view the path my race hath trod,
And at the sight my spirit quails,
And cries in agony to God!

THE SILVER HERONS

Within a home for captive beasts
Whose world had dwindled to a cage,
I noted in their mournful eyes
Such resignation, fear, and rage,
I longed at once to set them free,
And send them over land and sea
To live again in liberty.

For them no more the mountain range,
The desert vast, the jungle's lair!
Their meaner fate through grated bars

To feel the public's hateful stare;
Poor prisoners! doomed henceforth to pace
With stunted strides a narrow space,
And, daily, gaping crowds to face.

At length I stood before a cage,
Where, guarded by a loftier screen,
Were artificial rocks, and pools,
And strips of vegetation green;
There, perched upon some rocky mound,
Or crouching on the miry ground,
A flock of waterfowl I found.

Storks, poised upon a single leg,
Stood dreaming of the eternal Nile,--
The Mecca of their winter flight,
When lured by Egypt's sunny smile;
While ducks and geese, in gabbling mood,
Explored the muddy pond for food,
Attended by their noisy brood.

Their keeper brought their evening meal;
And instantly on broad-webbed feet,
And stilt-like legs, and flapping wings,
The feathered bipeds rushed to greet,
With snaps and cluckings of delight,
The joyful, ever-welcome sight
Of supper at the approach of night.

Yet all came not! Two stood apart,
With plumage like fresh-fallen snow,--
Two "Silver Herons," of a race
As pure and fine as earth can show;
Amid the tumult that was rife,
These loathed the others' greedy strife,
And looked disgusted with their life.

With closed eyes, shrinking from the mass,
They seemed, in thought, removed as far
From all their coarse environment
As sun is separate from star!
The very picture of disdain,
From all such gorging, it was plain,
They had determined to refrain.

The keeper murmured with reproach,--
"Those Silver Herons are too proud!
Why should they not partake of food
Together with the common crowd?
They eat a little from my hand,
But would prefer to starve, than stand
Besmeared by that uncleanly band.

"A month hence, neither will be here;
For both will grieve themselves to death;
And when one falls, its mate expires
With scarcely an additional breath;
And, should there come another pair,
In their turn they the fate will share
Of those two herons standing there."

Poor hapless birds! I see them yet,
Alone and starving in their pride,--
Their glittering plumage still intact,
While standing bravely side by side;

And, although put to hunger's test,
Continuing mutely to protest
Against defilement with the rest.

O Silver Herons, teach mankind
To cherish thus a stainless name!
To shun the vile, ignoble crowd,
Preferring death to smirch and shame!
A foul, unfriendly mob to brave,
And go, unspotted, to the grave,
Is not to _lose_ one's life, but _save_.

TO THE SPHINX

O sleepless Sphinx!
Thy sadly patient eyes,
Forever gazing o'er the shifting sands,
Have watched Earth's countless dynasties arise,
Stalk forth like spectres waving gory hands,
Then fade away with scarce a lasting trace
To mark the secret of their dwelling place:
O sleepless Sphinx!

O changeless Sphinx!
The very dawn of Time
Beheld thee sculptured from the living rock!
Still wears thy face its primal look sublime,
Surviving all the hoary ages' shock:
Still royal art thou in thy proud repose,
As when the sun on tuneful Memnon rose,
O changeless Sphinx!

O voiceless Sphinx!
Thy solemn lips are dumb;
Time's awful secrets lie within thy breast;
Age follows age; revering pilgrims come
From every clime to urge the same request,--
That thou wilt speak! Poor creatures of a day,
In calm disdain thou seest them die away:
O voiceless Sphinx!

Majestic Sphinx!
Thou crouchest by a sea
Whose fawn-hued wavelets clasp thy buried feet:
Whose desert-surface, petrified like thee,
Gleams white with sails of many an Arab fleet:
Whose tawny billows, surging with the storm,
Break on thy flanks, and overleap thy form;
Majestic Sphinx!

Eternal Sphinx!
The Pyramids are thine;
Their giant summits guard thee night and day,
On thee they look when stars in splendor shine,
Or while around their crests the sunbeams play:
Thine own coevals, who with thee remain
Colossal Genii of the boundless plain!
Eternal Sphinx!

YOUTH AND AGE

"I will gain a fortune," the young man cried;
"For Gold by the world is deified;
Hence, whether the means be foul or fair,
I will make myself a millionaire,
My single talent shall grow to ten!"
But an old man smiled, and asked "And then?"

"A peerless beauty," the young man said,
"Shall be the woman I choose to wed.
And men shall envy me my prize,
And women scan her with jealous eyes;"
And he looked annoyed, when once again
The old man smiled, and asked "And then?"

"I will build," he answered, "a home so fine,
That kings in their castles shall covet mine;
The rarest pictures shall clothe its walls,
And statues stand in its stately halls;
It shall lack no luxury known to men;"
But still the old man asked "And then?"

"I will play a role in Church or State
That all mankind shall acknowledge great;
I will win at last such brilliant fame,
That distant lands shall know my name,
For I can wield both sword and pen;"
But again the old man asked "And then?"

"Is your heart a stone," the young man cried,
"Hath all ambition within you died,
That nothing seems to you worth while?
What mean you by that sphinx-like smile?
Of what are you secretly thinking, when
You utter those mournful words,--'And then?'"

Gently the old man said "O youth,
The words I have spoken veil a truth
Learned only through the lapse of years,
And first discerned through a mist of tears;
For youth is full of illusions fair
Which manhood sees dissolve in air.

"Your millions will not make you blest,
They will rob you, instead, of peace and rest:
Your beautiful wife may be the prey
Of a treacherous friend or a skilled rouse;
And the splendid palace that you crave
Will make you Society's gilded slave.

"'Tis a weary road to political fame;
Its price you must often pay in shame;
And the world-known name for which you yearn
On a bulletin board or a funeral urn,
Is scarcely worth the toil and strife
Which poison the peaceful joys of life.

"For be you ever so wise and good,
By some you will be misunderstood,
And fame will bring you envious foes
To spoil for you many a night's repose;
And alas! as your pathway upward tends,
You will find self-interest in your friends!

"The loudest shout of the mob's applause
Will die out after a moment's pause;
And what is the greatest public praise
To one whose form in the earth decays?
The cruel world will always laugh
At the fulsome lie of an epitaph.

"But Spring recks not of Winter's snow,
And you will not believe, I know,
That all those boons that tempt your powers,
If gained, will be like fragile flowers,
Whose freshness wilts in the fevered hand,
Like roses dropped on the desert sand.

"And much of the work you deem sublime
Is like the grain of pink-hued lime
Which once was a coral insect's shell,
But now is a microscopic cell,
Entombed with countless billions more
In a lonely reef on an unknown shore!"

"Alas!" said the youth,--and his eyes were wet,--
"Is old age merely a vain regret,
The retrospect of wasted years,
Of false ideals and lost careers?
Advise me! What must I reject,
And what for my permanent good select?"

"Belovd youth," the old man said,
"All is not vain, be comforted!
Seek not thine own, but others' joy;
Ring true, like gold without alloy;
Waste not thy time in asking Why,
Or Whence, or Whither when we die;

"The actual world, the present hours
Will give enough to tax thy powers;
At no clear duty hesitate;
Serve well thy neighbor and the State;
So shalt thou add thy tiny form
To bind the reef that breasts the storm!"

SUNSET AT INTERLAKEN

The sun is low;
Yon peak of snow
Is reddening 'neath the sunset glow;
The rosy light
Makes richly bright
The Jungfrau's veil of snowy white.

From vales that sleep
Night's shadows creep
To take possession of the steep;
While, as they rise,
The western skies
Seem loath to leave so fair a prize.

The light of day
Still loves to stay
And round that pearly summit play;
How fair a sight

That realm of light,
Contended for by Day and Night!

Now fainter shines,
As Day declines,
The lustrous height which he resigns;
The shadows gain
Th' illumined plane;
The Jungfrau pales, as if in pain.

When daylight dies,
The azure skies
Seem sparkling with a thousand eyes,
Which watch with grace
From depths of space
The sleeping Jungfrau's lovely face.

And when the Light
Hath put to flight
Night's shadows from each Alpine height,
Along the skies
It quickly flies,
To kiss the Maiden's opening eyes.

The timid flush
And rosy blush
Which then from brow to bosom rush,
Are pure and fair
Beyond compare,
Resplendent in the crystal air.

And thus always
By night and day
Her varying suitors homage pay;
And tinged with rose,
Or white with snows,
The same fair, radiant form she shows.

UNDER THE STARS

The breath of summer stirs the trees,
A thousand roses round me bloom,
Whose saffron petals give the breeze
A wealth of exquisite perfume,
As, climbing high, with tendrils bold,
They clothe the walls with cups of gold.

No sound disturbs the silence sweet,
The weary birds have sunk to rest;
For where the snow and sunset meet
The light is fading in the west,
And now the carking cares of day
Slip lightly from my heart away.

The emptiness of social strife,
The pettiness of human souls,
The cheap frivolities of life,
The keen pursuit of paltry goals,—
How small they seem beneath the dome
That shelters my Tyrolean home!

A shining mote, our tiny earth

No furrow leaves in shoreless space!
What is one brief existence worth,
Which disappears, and leaves no trace?
That silent, star-strewn vault survives
The dawns and dusks of countless lives.

Why grieve, dear heart? Oblivion deep
Will soon enshroud both friend and foe,
And those who laugh and those who weep
Must join the hosts of long ago,
Whose transient hours of smiles and tears
Make up earth's wilderness of years.

The sunset's glowing embers die,
The snow-peaks lose their crimson hue,
Through deepening shades the ruddy sky
Burns slowly down to darkest blue,
Wherein a million worlds of light
Announce the coming of the night.

I gaze, and slowly my despair
At human wretchedness and crime
Gives place to hopes and visions fair,--
So much may be evolved by time!
So much may yet men's souls surprise
Beneath the splendor of God's skies!

Some day, somewhere, in realms afar
His light may make all problems plain,
And justice on some happier star
May recompense this planet's pain,
And earth's bleak Golgothas of woe
Grow lovely in life's afterglow.

CORSICA

In Bordighera's groves of palm
I linger at the close of day,
And watch, beyond the ocean's calm,
A range of mountains far away.

Their snowy summits, white and cold,
Flush crimson like a tinted shell,
As sinks the sun in clouds of gold
Behind the peaks of Esterel.

No unsubstantial shapes are they,--
The offspring of the mist and sea;
No splendid vision of Cathay,
Recalled in dreamful revery;

Their solid bastions,--towering high
Though rooted in earth's primal plan,--
Proclaim to every passer by
The cradle of the Corsican.

What martial soul there found rebirth,
When on those cliffs, then scarcely known,
There once more visited the earth
The spirit called Napoleon?

Three islands, like the sister Fates,

His life-thread wove upon their loom
From fair Ajaccio's silvered gates
To Saint Helena's mournful tomb;--

The first, his birthplace; whence appeared
His baleful star with lurid glow;
Next, Elba, where the world still feared
The fugitive from Fontainebleau;

Last, England's lonely prison-block,
Grim fragment 'neath a tropic sky,
Where, like Prometheus on his rock,
The captive Caesar came to die,

O Corsica, sublimely wild
And riven by the winds and waves,
Thy fame is deathless from thy child,
Whose glory filled a million graves.

TO THE VENUS OF MELOS

O goddess of that Grecian isle
Whose shores the blue Aegean laves,
Whose cliffs repeat with answering smile
Their features in its sun-kissed waves!

An exile from thy native place,
We view thee in a northern clime;
Yet mark on thy majestic face
A glory still undimmed by Time.

Through those calm lips, proud goddess, speak!
Portray to us thy gorgeous fane,
Where Melian lovers thronged to seek
Thine aid, Love's paradise to gain;

And where, as in the saffron east,
Day's jewelled gates were open flung,
With stately pomp the attendant priest
Drew back the veil before thee hung;

And when the daring kiss of morn,
Empurpling, made thy charms more fair,
Sweet strains from unseen minstrels borne
Awoke from dreams the perfumed air.

Vouchsafe at last our minds to free
From doubts pertaining to thy charms,--
The meaning of thy bended knee,
The secret of thy vanished arms.

Wast thou in truth conjoined with Mars?
Did thy fair hands his shield embrace,
The surface of whose golden bars
Grew lovely from thy mirrored face?

Or was it some bright scroll of fame
Thus poised on thine extended knee,
Upon which thou didst trace the name
Of that fierce god so dear to thee?

Whate'er thou hadst, no mere delight

Was thine the glittering prize to hold;
Not thine the form that met thy sight,
Replying from the burnished gold;

Unmindful what thy hands retained,
Thy gaze is fixed beyond, above;
Some dearer object held enchained
The goddess of immortal love.

We mark the motion of thine eyes,
And smile; for, heldst thou shield or scroll,
A tender love-glance we surprise,
That tells the secret of thy soul.

MORS LEONIS

When o'er the aged lion steals
The instinct of approaching death,
Whose numbing grasp he vaguely feels
In trembling limbs and labored breath,
He shuns the garish light of day,
And leaving mate and whelps at play,
In mournful silence creeps away.

From bush to bush, by devious trails,
He drags himself from hill to hill,
And, as his old strength slowly fails,
Drinks long at many a mountain rill,
Until he gains, with stifled moan,
A height, to hated man unknown,
Where he may die, at least alone.

Relaxing now his mighty claws,
He lies, half shrouded by his mane,
His grand head resting on his paws,
And heeding little save his pain,
As o'er his eyes, so sad and deep,
The film of death begins to creep,—
The prelude to eternal sleep.

As Caesar, reeling 'neath the stroke
And dagger-thrust of many a friend,
Drew o'er his face his Roman cloak,
To meet, unseen, his tragic end,
So hath this desert-monarch tried
With noble dignity to hide
From others how and where he died.

And now his spirit is serene;
For here no stranger can intrude
To view this last, pathetic scene,
Or mar its sombre solitude;
Prone on the lonely mountain crest,
Confronting the resplendent west,
The dying lion sinks to rest.

Proud king of beasts! thy death should teach
Mankind the cheapness of display;
More eloquent than human speech,
Thy grand example shows the way
To pass from life, unheard, unseen,
And with composed, majestic mien

Death's awful sacredness to screen.

Nay, more! thou didst select a place
Where, unobserved, thy form could rest,
Till Mother Earth with fond embrace
Should hide it in her ample breast;
Like Moses in lone Nebo's land,
Thou hast been sepulchred in sand,
Unseen by eye, untouched by hand.

No pompous tomb shall ever rise
Above thy lonely, sun-bleached frame;
No epitaph of well-turned lies
Shall be inscribed beneath thy name;
No bells for thee a dirge shall ring,
No choir beside thy grave shall sing,
Yet hast thou perished like a king!

A STORY OF THE SEA

Were you ever told the legend old
Of the birth of storms at sea?
You should hear the tale in a Channel gale,
As happened once to me,
On a fearful night off Fastnet Light,
With Ireland on our lee.

In the good old days, which poets praise
As the best that man hath seen,
The storm-king's hand might smite the land,
But the sea remained serene;
Blow east, blow west, its sun-kissed breast
Kept ever its tranquil sheen.

Not a single trace came o'er its face
Of the storms that raged elsewhere;
No misty screen e'er crept between
The sun and its image there;
And its depths at night were gemmed with light
By stars in the crystal air.

The fisherman laughed in his little craft,
If a landsman felt alarm,
For never did gale a ship assail,
Or a sailor suffer harm;
There was nothing to fear, for the skies were clear,
And the ocean always calm.

But on the shore, where more and more
The human race increased,
There were cold and heat, and snow and sleet,
And troubles never ceased;
For wind and rain beat down the grain,
And the plague slew man and beast.

And even worse was the moral curse,
That came like a deadly blight
Through men who seized whate'er they pleased,
On the plea that might makes right,
Till the fatal seed of selfish greed
Made life a bitter fight.

Hence many sighed, as they watched the tide
Glide out to the sunset sea,
And longed to go with its gentle flow
To where they hoped might be
A realm of peace, where sorrows cease,
And souls from pain are free.

At last they said,--"We were better dead,
Than endure this anguish more;
Let us seek relief from care and grief
Far out from the storm-swept shore;
The sea can bring no sadder thing
Than the life we lived before."

So a ship was framed, which they fondly named
"The Peace of the Human Mind,"
And the weary band soon left the land
And its ceaseless strife behind;
But unattained the goal remained
They had so longed to find.

For the souls that came were quite the same
As they were before they sailed;
And, as pride and hate did not abate,
The hope of the voyagers failed;
And, facing alone the great Unknown,
The bravest spirits quailed.

Meanwhile the ship began to dip,
And labored to and fro,
For the sea, though fair, could no more bear
This load of human woe;
And at last the boat, with all afloat,
Sank helplessly below.

Down, down it swirled to the nether world;
While up from the riven main
Came the gurgling sound of those who drowned,
As the vortex closed again;
The sea surged back to its wonted track;
Once more 'twas a sun-lit plain!

But soon men saw, with deepening awe,
That sea grow white with spray;
Its brilliant hue was changed from blue
To a deathlike, leaden gray;
And a sullen roar approached the shore
Whence the ship had sailed away.

Huge waves rolled in with frightful din,
And spat out hissing foam,
And smote the sand along the strand,
And swept off many a home;
And lightnings flashed and thunder crashed
From heaven's ink-black dome.

"Alas!" they cried, "that our brothers died
In the depths of the sea of peace;
They have brought unrest to its quiet breast,
Which nevermore shall cease;
For the peace it lost we must pay the cost;
And behold! our woes increase!"

In truth, since then how many men
Have learned that the mighty deep

Can heave and swell to a seething hell,
When storms its surface sweep!
For its calm hath fled, and countless dead
Are the spoils it loves to heap.

But at its best, when it lies at rest
On a cloudless summer day,
And, tiger-like, forbears to strike,
But, sated, basks at play,
One seems to hear, with the psychic ear,
Its murmuring wavelets say,--

"No real relief from care and grief
Is found o'er distant waves;
The men who sail to find it, fail,
And sink to lonely graves;
In the firm control of man's own soul
Is alone the peace he craves."

OLD HYMN-TUNES

Dear, old-time tunes of prayer and praise,
Heard first beside my mother's knee,
Your music on my spirit lays
A spell from which I should be free,
If lapse of time gave liberty.

I listen, and the crowded years
Fade, dream-like, from my life, and lo!
I find my eyelids wet with tears,--
So much I loved, so well I know
Those plaintive airs of long ago!

They tell me of my vanished youth,
Of faith in what so flawless seemed,
Before the painful quest of truth
Had proved how much I then esteemed
Was other than I fondly dreamed!

They make my childhood live again;
And life's fair dawn grows once more bright,
While listening to the sweet refrain,
Sung in the Sabbath's waning light,--
"Glory to Thee, my God, this night!"

My mother's voice, so pure and strong,
My father's flute of silvery tone,
The little household's strength of song,
The childish treble of my own,--
I hear them once more, but ... alone!

Sweet obligato to some hymn
Whose words those vanished tones recall,
Float o'er me, when earth's scenes grow dim,
And life's last, lingering echoes fall,
Till silence settles over all!

BEFORE A STATUE OF BUDDHA

O Buddha, of the mystic smile
And downcast, dreamful eyes,
To whom unnumbered sacred shrines
And gilded statues rise,

Whose fanes are filled with worshippers,
Whose hallowed name is sung
By myriads of the human race
In every Eastern tongue,

What means thy sweet serenity?
Our planet, as it rolls,
Sweeps through the starry universe
A mass of burdened souls,

Still agonized and pitiful,
Despite the countless years
That man has spent in wandering
Through paths of blood and tears!

O Lord of love and sympathy
For all created life,
How canst thou view thus placidly
The world's incessant strife,

The misery and massacre
Of war's destructive train,
The martyrdom of animals,
The tragedy of pain,

The infamous brutalities
To helpless children shown,
The pathos of whose joyless lives
Might melt a heart of stone?

Preeminently merciful,
Does not thy spirit long
To guard from inhumanity
The weak against the strong?

Thou biddest us deal tenderly
With every breathing-thing,--
The horse that drags the heavy load,
The bird upon the wing,

The flocks along the riverside,
The cattle on the lea,
And every living denizen
Of earth and air and sea;

Yet daily in the shambles
A sea of blood is spilled,
And man is nourished chiefly
From beasts that he has killed!

And hunters still find happiness
In seeing, red with wounds,
A sobbing deer, with liquid eyes,
Dragged down by yelping hounds!

What is the real significance
Of thine unchanging smile?
Hast thou the secret consciousness
That grief is not worth while?

That sorrow is the consequence
Of former lives of sin,--
The spur that goads us on and up
A nobler life to win?

That pain is as impermanent
As shadows on the hills,
And that Nirvana's blessedness
Will cure all mortal ills?

But agony is agony,
And small is the relief
If, measured with eternity,
Life's anguish be but brief.

To hearts that break with misery,
To every tortured frame
The present pain is paramount,
Nirvana but a name.

Moreover, why should former lives
Bequeath their weight of woe,
If with it comes no memory
To guide us, as we go?

If o'er the dark, prenatal void
No mental bridge be cast,
No thread, however frail, to link
The present to the past?

Still silent and dispassionate!
Ah, would that I might find
The key to the serenity
That fills thy lofty mind!

Thou hast a joy we do not feel,
A light we cannot see;
Injustice, sin, and wretchedness
No longer sadden thee;

No doubt to thy sublimer gaze
Life's mystery grows plain,
As finally full recompense
Atones for earthly pain.

THE PILLARS OF HERCULES

Here ends at last the Inland Sea!
Still seems its outlet, as of yore,
The anteroom of Mystery,
As, through its westward-facing door,
I see the vast Atlantic lie
In splendor 'neath a sunset sky.

Above its distant, glittering rim
Streams o'er the waves a flood of gold,
To gild the mountains, bare and grim,
Which guard this exit, as of old,--
The sombre sentries of two seas,
The Pillars reared by Hercules;--

Gibraltar,--on the northern shore,

By conquering Moors once proudly trod,--
And, to the south a league or more,
Huge Abyla, the "Mount of God",
Whence burdened Atlas watched with ease
The Gardens of Hesperides.

How many slow-paced centuries passed,
Before brave sailors dared to creep
Beyond the gloom these monsters cast,
And venture on the unknown deep,
At last resolving to defy
The "God-established" termini!

Yet no fierce gods opposed their path;
No lurid bolt or arrow sped
To crush them with celestial wrath,
And number them among the dead;
The dreadful Pillars proved as tame
As other rocks of lesser fame.

Hence, when before them stretched the sea,
Majestic, limitless and clear,
A rapturous sense of being free
Dispelled all vestiges of fear
The longed-for ocean to explore
From pole to pole, from shore to shore.

Thus all men learn the God they dread
Is kinder than they had supposed,
And that, not God, but Man hath said,--
"The door to freedom must be closed!"
Once past that door, with broadened view,
They find Him better than they knew.

Meanwhile, along the sunlit strait
My ship glides toward the saffron west,
Beyond the old Phœnician gate
To ocean's gently heaving breast,
Whence, on the ever-freshening breeze,
There greet my spirit words like these;--

Sail bravely on! the morning light
Shall find thee far beyond the land;
Gibraltar's battlemented height
And Afric's tawny hills of sand
Shall soon completely sink from view
Beneath the ocean's belt of blue.

Sail on! nor heed the shadows vast
Of fabled Powers, whose fear enslaves!
Their spectral shapes shall sink at last
Below the night's abandoned waves;
Rest not confined by shoals and bars;
Steer oceanward by God's fixed stars!

FRIENDSHIP

'Tis not in the bitterest woes of life
That the love of friends, as a rule, grows cold;
Still less does it melt in the heat of strife,
Or die from the canker of borrowed gold;

For pity comes when they see us grieved,
Or forced to lie on a couch of pain,
And a hasty word is soon retrieved,
And the loan of money may leave no stain.

'Tis oftenest lost through the deadly blight
Of Society's pestilential air,
Which blackens the robe of purest white,
And fouls what once was sweet and fair.

An envious woman's whispered word,
A slander born of a cruel smile,
The repetition of something heard,
The imputation of something vile,

Or possibly even a fancied slight
For a feast declined, or a call delayed,
Or jealousy caused by petty spite,
Or the wish for a higher social grade,--

'Tis one, or all of these combined,
That saps the love of our dearest friends,
And slowly poisons heart and mind,
Till the joy of generous friendship ends.

Last night they were in a cordial mood,
To-day they suddenly seem estranged!
Shall we, then, grieve and sadly brood
O'er the unknown cause that has made them changed?

Ask once, that they make the matter clear,
But ask no more, if the lesson fail;
Let changelings go, however dear,
And shed no tears for a love so frail.

Be not the slave of a friend's migraine,
Nor let him play, now hot, now cold;
The master of thyself remain,
And the key of thine inmost heart withhold!

For they who weep and sue and plead,
Are used and dropped, like a worn-out glove,
And the friends with "moods" are the friends who need
To learn that they are not worth our love.

TO MY DEAD DOG

All is noiseless;
Cold and voiceless
Lies the form I've oft caressed;
Heedless now of blame or praises,
'Neath the sunshine and the daisies
Dear, old Leo lies at rest.

Eager greeting,
Joy at meeting,
Watching for my step to come,
Grief at briefest separation,
Sorrow without affectation,--
These are over,--he is dumb!

Loyal ever,

Treacherous never,
Lifelong love he well expressed;
Ah! may we deserve like praises
When beneath the sun-kissed daisies
We, like Leo, lie at rest!

TO-DAY

"The sun will set at day's decline";
Qu'importe?
Quaff off meanwhile life's sparkling wine!
Of what avail are mournful fears,
Foreboding sighs and idle tears,
They hinder not the hurrying years;
Buvons!

"This fleeting hour will soon be past";
Qu'importe?
Enrich its moments while they last!
To-day is ours; be ours its joy!
Let not to-morrow's cares annoy!
Enough the present to employ;
Vivons!

"These pleasures will not come again";
Qu'importe?
Enjoy their keenest transport then!
If but of these we are secure,
Be of their sweetness doubly sure,
That long their memory may endure!
Rions!

"With time love's ardor always cools";
Qu'importe?
Leave that lugubrious chant to fools!
Must doubt destroy our present bliss?
Shall we through fear love's rapture miss,
Or lose the honey of its kiss?
Aimons!

"The sun will set at day's decline";
Qu'importe?
Will not the eternal stars still shine?
So even in life's darkest night
A thousand quenchless suns are bright,--
Blest souvenirs of past delight;
Allons!

TO THE COUNTESS GUICCIOLI, AFTER READING HER "RECOLLECTIONS OF LORD BYRON"

Like one who, homeward bound from distant lands,
Describes strange climes and visions passing fair,
Yet deftly hides from others' eyes and hands
A private casket filled with treasures rare,
So, favored Countess, all that thou dost say
Is nothing to thy secrets left unsaid;
Thy printed souvenirs are but the spray
Above the depths of ocean's briny bed.
For, oh! how often must thy mind retrace

Soft phrases whispered in the Tuscan tongue,
Love's changes sweeping o'er his mobile face,
And kisses sweeter far than he had sung;
The gleam of passion in his glorious eyes,
The hours of inspiration when he wrote,
Recalled to Earth in sudden, sweet surprise
At feeling thy white arms about his throat;
To have been loved by Byron! Not in youth
When ardent senses tempt to reckless choice,
But in maturer years, when keen-eyed Truth
Reveals the folly of the siren's voice.
Last love is best, and this thou didst enjoy;
Thy happy fate to see no rival claim
A share in what was thine without alloy;
How must the remnant of thy life seem tame!
Yet this thy recompense,—that thou dost keep
Thy friend and lover safe from every change;
For, loyal to thy love, he fell asleep,
And life it is, not death, that can estrange.

THE DEATH OF ANTONINUS PIUS

Through the marble gates of Ostia,
Where the Tiber meets the sea,
And a hundred Roman galleys
Strain their leashes to be free,
Streams a flood of sunset glory
From the classic sea of old,
Till Rome's seven hills stand gleaming,
And the Tiber turns to gold.

Why, indifferent to this splendor,
Do the people throng the streets?
What is everyone demanding
Of the stranger whom he meets?
They have heard alas! the rumor
That, ere dawn regilds the sky,
All the world may be in mourning,
For the Emperor must die.

Search, O Romans, through the annals
Of the rulers of your race,
From the zenith of their glory
To their ultimate disgrace,—
And as earth's most perfect master,
And the noblest of your line,
You will yield your greatest homage
To this dying Antonine.

For he holds a Caesar's sceptre
In a loving father's hand,
And his heart and soul are given
To the welfare of his land;
Through his justice every nation
Hath beheld its warfare cease,
And he leaves to his successor
Rome's gigantic world at peace.

Hence these nations now are waiting
In an anguish of suspense,
For their future is as doubtful,
As their love for him intense;

By the Nile and on the Danube,
From the Tagus to the Rhine,
There is mourning among millions
For the man they deem divine.

Now the sunset glow is fading,
And the evening shadows creep
O'er the ashen face of Caesar,
As he lies in seeming sleep;
But he slumbers not; for, faithful
To his duties, small and great,
He is not alone the sovereign,
But the servant of the State.

Unrebuked, then, his Centurion,
As the sun-god sinks from sight,
Makes his wonted way to Caesar
For the password of the night;
And great Antonine, though conscious
That ere dawn his soul must pass,
As his last, imperial watchword,
Utters "Aequanimitas!"

O thou noblest of the Caesars,
Whose transcendent virtues shine,
Like a glorious constellation,
O'er the blood-stained Palatine,
When the latest sands are running
From my life's exhausted glass,
May I have thy calm and courage,
And thine Aequanimitas!

THE BUTTERFLY

I watched to-day a butterfly,
With gorgeous wings of golden sheen,
Flit lightly 'neath a sapphire sky
Amid the springtime's tender green;--

A creature so divinely fair,
So frail, so wraithlike to the sight,
I feared to see it melt in air,
As clouds dissolve in morning light.

With sudden swoop, a brutal boy
Caught in his cap its fans of gold,
And forced them down with savage joy
Upon the path's defiling mould;

Then cautiously, the ground well scanned,
He clutched his darkened, helpless prey,
And, pinched within his grimy hand,
Withdrew it to the light of day.

Alas! its fragile bloom was gone,
Its gracile frame was sorely hurt,
Its silken pinions drooped forlorn,
Disfigured by the dust and dirt;

Its life, a moment since so gay,
So joyous in its dainty flight,
Was slowly ebbing now away,--

Its too-brief day eclipsed by night.

Meantime, the vandal, face aflame,
Surveyed it dying in his grasp,
Yet knew no grief nor sense of shame
In watching for its final gasp.

At last its sails of gold and brown,
Of texture fine and colors rare,
Came, death-struck, slowly fluttering down,
No more to cleave the sunlit air;

One happy, harmless being less,
To bid us dream the world is sweet!
Gone like a gleam of happiness,
A glimpse of rapture ... incomplete!

Yet who shall say this creature fair
In God's sight had a smaller worth
Than that dull lout who watched it there,
And in its death found cause for mirth?

For what, in truth, are we who claim
An endless life beyond the grave,
But insects of a larger frame,
Whose souls may be too small to save?

Since far-off times, when Cave Men fought
Like famished brutes for bloody food,
And through unnumbered centuries sought
To rear their naked, whelp-like brood,

How many million men have died,
From pole to pole through every clime,--
An awful, never-ending tide
Swept deathward on the shores of Time!

Like insects swarming in the sun,
They flutter, struggle, mate, and die,
And, with their life-work scarce begun,
Are struck down like the butterfly;

A million more, a million less,
What matters it? The Earth rolls on,
Unmindful of mankind's distress,
Or if the race be here, or gone.

Thus rolled our globe ere man appeared,
And thus will roll, with wrinkled crust,
Deserted, lifeless, old, and seared,
When man shall have returned to dust.

And IT at last shall also die!
Hence, measured by the eternal scale,
It ranks but as the butterfly,--
A world, ephemeral, fair and frail.

Man, insect, earth, or distant star,--
They differ only in degree;
Their transient lives, or near or far,
Are moments in eternity!

Yet somehow to my spirit clings
The faith that man survives the sod,
For this poor insect's broken wings

Have raised my thoughts from earth to God.

AFTER THE STORM

The duel of the warring clouds
Hath ended with the day;
Their scintillant, electric blades
Have ceased their fearful play;
The pent up fury of their hate
Hath found at last release,
And o'er the tempest-stricken earth
Broods now the hush of peace.

The passing of the hurricane
Hath swept the sultry skies;
The clearness of the atmosphere
Brings jubilant surprise;
The mountain peaks are glorified
With freshly-fallen snow,
And, stealing o'er their coronets,
Appears the sunset glow.

An hour since, a torrid heat
Oppressed the languid frame;
The wind was as the khamseen's breath,
The solar touch seemed flame;
But now the air rejuvenates,
The breeze refreshment brings,
The lustrous leaves drop diamonds,
The lark with rapture sings.

Fear not, dear heart! life's darkest storms
Shall likewise end in light;
Behind the blackest thundercloud
The sun shines clear and bright;
Once more celestial heights shall wear
Their sheen of spotless snow,
And on the bravely steadfast soul
The smile of God shall glow.

FALLEN

My country! by our fathers reared
As champion of the world's opprest;
Whose moral force the tyrant feared;
Whose flag all struggling freemen cheered;
In clutching at an empire's crest
Thou too art fallen like the rest.

Not in thy numbers, wealth or might,
Proud mistress of a continent!
For rival nations, at the sight
Of thy resources, view with fright
Thy progress without precedent;
Not there is seen thy swift descent.

Reread the story of thy birth!
Recall the years in conflict spent
To prove to a despairing earth

That every Government of worth
Is really based on free consent;
Then view with shame thy present bent!

Thou hadst a place unique, sublime;
In many a land beyond the sea
The victims of despotic crime
In thee, the latest born of Time,
Beheld a land from tyrants free,
The sacred Ark of Liberty.

But now the Old World's lust for lands
Infects thee too; the dread disease
Hath left its plague-spots on thy hands;
Thy monster area still expands;
For, blind to history's Nemesis,
Thou too wouldst alien races seize.

Condemning with profound disdain
All other nations' heartless greed,
How couldst thou buy from humbled Spain
A people struggling to attain
A freedom suited to their need?
Why stultify thy boasted creed?

Thine aid to them thou mightst have given,
As France her aid once gave to thee;
With them thy sons might well have striven,
And their blood-rusted fetters riven;
But why, in Heaven's name, should we
Shoot men aspiring to be free?

I tread the fields where thousands sleep,--
The blood-soaked fields that freed the slave;
What precious memories still they keep
For hearts that mourn and eyes that weep!
Yet for the lives those heroes gave
What have we that they died to save?

A Union? Yes; outstretched in might
From snow to palm, from sea to sea;
But pledged to use its strength aright,
And evermore to keep alight
The torch of human liberty:
Is this the Union that we see?

Where history's Martyr dared to break
The power that held a race in chains,
I see the ghastly lynching-stake,
Where brutal mobs their vengeance take,
And, since no law their course restrains,
Gloat o'er their writhing victim's pains.

Race hatred,--born of groundless fears
And narrow prejudice of caste--,
Now greets the cultured black with sneers
And, barring him from high careers,
Breaks, like a mad iconoclast,
The nation's idols of the past.

No more can we with steadfast eyes
Protest, when tortured races moan
With hands uplifted toward the skies;
Their tyrants answer with surprise
And new-born insolence of tone,--

"These are our lynchings; cure your own!"

Yet hope remains! A path retraced
Is nobler than persistent wrong;
A fault confessed is half effaced;
That land alone can be disgraced
Which is not just, however strong,
Toward those to whom its "spoils" belong.

My country! Would to God that praise
Might leave my lips, instead of blame!
So near the parting of the ways,
Subjected to the eager gaze
Of millions, jealous of thy fame,
Retrace the path that ends in shame!

"AEQUANIMITAS"

Watchword sublime of Rome's imperial sage,
Tersest of synonyms for self-control,
Paramount precept of the Stoic's age,
Noblest of mottoes for the lofty soul,--
Would thou wert writ in characters of light,
At every turn to greet my reverent gaze,
And bid me face life's evils, calm, upright,
Unspoiled alike by calumny or praise!
With all our science we are slaves of Fate;
What is to come we know not, cannot know;
Grief, suffering, death,--all touch us soon or late,
The master question, how to meet the blow.
Grant me, ye Gods, through life a steadfast eye,
And then, with equanimity, to die!

DREAMLAND

I woke from dreams of rare delight
And visions of a joyous land,
Where loved ones, long since lost to sight,
Walked blithely with me, hand in hand:

Where every brow was free from care,
And Youth's sublime ideals shone
Like planets in an Alpine air,
And death's sad mystery was known.

I woke,--and like a bird that waits,
Uncertain where to wend its flight,
My spirit lingered at the gates,
Which close upon that realm of light;

Till, slowly, all around grew clear,
And once again the light of day
Convinced me that I still was here,
Though all my dreams had passed away.

Once more I faced a world of Pain!
Of quivering nerves and sure decay,
Of helpless brutes, by millions, slain
To feed mankind a single day!

Of shivering children, scarred with blows,
Of hunted bird and tortured beast,
Of War, whose hideous programme shows
Its means of homicide increased.

The same old world of greed and hate,
Of selfish act and paltry aim,
Of private fraud and venal State,
Of deeds and doers steeped in shame!

What marvel if the spirit shrinks
From plunging in that turbid stream?
Or if, on waking thus, one thinks
That life was better in his dream?

Sweet, peaceful dreamland! I await
The favored hour, to pass again
Within thine asphodelian gate,
Beyond the miseries of men;

To find old pleasures, long since gone,
Perchance as vivid as of yore,
Or else to sleep,--life's curtains drawn,--
And reawaken ... nevermore.

ROME REVISITED

O sovereign Rome, still mistress of the heart,
As of the world in thy majestic prime,
Grand in thy ruins, peerless in thine art,
Rich in the memories of a past sublime,

Is thine the fault or mine that thou art changed,
And that I tread the new Tiberian shore
Convinced, alas! that we are now estranged,
And that for me thy charm exists no more?

I have grown older, but am not blase,
My hair has whitened, but my heart is young,
Still thrills my pulse the tomb-girt Appian Way,
Still stirs my soul the ancient Latin tongue.

Whence then this transformation, that pervades
Rome's very air, and leaves its blighting trace
Alike upon the Pincio's colonnades
And on the Mausoleum's rugged face?

The fault, dear Rome, is neither thine nor mine,
But that of vandals nurtured on thy breast,
Who, mad as "modern citizens" to shine,
Have fashioned thee like cities of the west.

Thy time-worn face, and figure deeply bowed
By countless sufferings for two thousand years,
Whose proper garment seemed to be a shroud,
Commanding reverence, sympathy and tears,

Are now bedecked with tawdry gems of paste;
Parisian robes thy withered limbs conceal;
Thy wrinkled cheeks are rouged; in vulgar taste
A modern watch-fob holds the Caesar's seal!

Where once imperial Triumphs proudly passed,
Electric cars roll thundering through thy streets;
In Raphael's groves the automobile's blast
Expels the Muses from their calm retreats.

Through sinuous miles of shops with worldly wares
Bewildered pilgrims reach St. Peter's shrine;
Some modern stamp each old piazza, bears;
And freed from weeds, thy burnished ruins shine!

Near Hadrian's massive bridge of sculptured stone,
The Tiber surges 'neath an iron frame,
Across whose ugly beams the tramcars groan,
And brand the river with a bar of shame.

Gods of Olympus, can ye not restore
To outraged Rome her dignity of old?
'Twere better Jove and Juno to adore
Than in their stead to worship only Gold!

Thy glorious statues, cruelly defaced,
Thy crumbling shrines, thy marbles burnt to lime,
The lone Campagna's fever-stricken waste,
Where lizards bask on columns once sublime,--

The Flavian Amphitheatre's gaping wounds,
The Baths of Caracalla's roofless walls,
The Forum's multitude of ruined mounds,
The royal Palatine's abandoned halls,--

All these indeed create a hopeless pain,
When fancy strives to reconstruct the whole,
Yet pathos, wakened by a wreck-strewn plain,
Inspires at least nobility of soul.

But where a Syndic's greed hath left its trail
The picturesque and beautiful take flight;
The Past's inspiring influences fail,
As stars are hidden by electric light.

Yet protests meet derision and disdain;
The fatal madness spreads from land to land;
Peace, Art, and Beauty everywhere are slain
By greedy Traffic's hard, rapacious hand.

We laugh at lessons taught by others' fate,
We see no ending to our prosperous day;
Forgetting that, in turn, each ancient State
Hath passed through bud and flower to decay.

Behold the retrogression of those lands
Whence painting, sculpture and the drama sprung;
See starved Trinacria's outstretched, empty hands,
And all the classic shores by Homer sung!

In what have we surpassed them? We are taught
Their art, their ethics, and their rhythmic speech;
Both Greece and Asia still control our thought,
Their grandest works still far beyond our reach.

The breathless transfer of men, thoughts, and things,
Improved designs for vaster fratricide,--
Are these the leading gifts this century brings,
The twentieth, too, since Christ was crucified?

Yet thoughts that most have influenced mankind
Were not sent broadcast with the lightning's speed;
Nor do the works of Plato lag behind
The myriad books and papers that we read!

And thou, Italia, that for ages played
A role whose majesty can ne'er be told,
Hast thou, like all the rest, thy trust betrayed,
Adored the New, and sacrificed the Old?

Wilt thou for fashion make thy Past forlorn?
Waste precious substance upon useless ships?
Transport to Africa thine eldest born,
And let gaunt hunger blanch thy peasants' lips?

Make poorly paid officials banded knaves?
Drive starving sons by thousands from thy shore,
Or let them rot in Abyssinian graves,
And hide the cancer festering at thy core?

If so, 'tis certain thou must dearly pay
For playing thus the war-lord's pompous part,
And thou shalt feel at no far-distant day
The people's dagger driven through thy heart.

Fain would I find some peaceful Pagan shrine
Unspoiled as yet by vandals of to-day,
Around whose shafts the sweet, wild roses twine,
And on whose marble walls the sunbeams play;

There would I dream of days when life was sweet
With poetry, art, and myths devoid of dread,
When all the Gods in harmony could meet,
And no eternal torment vexed the dead.

Our vaunted age is one of feverish haste,
Of racial hatred and of loathsome cant,
Of gross corruption and of tawdry taste,
Of monster fortunes, with a world in want.

I am not of it, and I will not be!
Its social strife and slavery I despise;
Gone is its shore; I sail the open sea
O'er tranquil waters and 'neath cloudless skies!

ON THE PALATINE

I tread the vast deserted stage
Whereon the Caesars lived and died;
The relics of Rome's golden age
Lie strewn about me far and wide,
Mementoes of an empire's pride,
The homes of men once deified.

What are they now? Stupendous piles
Of mouldering corridors and walls,
On which alike the sunshine smiles
And cold the rain of winter falls;
A wilderness of roofless halls
Whose tragic history appalls!

Below me, like an opened grave,
The Forum's excavations lie,
Where column, arch and architrave
In solemn grandeur greet the eye,
Still guarding 'neath Italia's sky
The glory that can never die.

And here, above me and around,
In part still shrouded by the soil,
A stony chaos strews the ground,
Where patient students delve and toil
To bring to light Time's buried spoil,
And History's tangled threads uncoil.

Halt! where thou standest Rome was born!
These stones by Romulus were placed,
When, on that far-off April morn,
Two snow-white bulls the furrow traced
For Rome's first wall, which, firmly based,
Two thousand years have not effaced.

From these rude blocks how vast the bound
To that huge, labyrinthine mass
Through which the secret pathways wound,
Where emperors, if alarmed, could pass;
Yet even there could find, alas!
The poignard or the poisoned glass.

What ghastly crimes these rooms recall!
Here Nero watched his brother drain
The fatal draught, then lifeless fall;
Here, too, Caligula was slain,
When, shrieking, with disordered brain,
He pleaded for his life in vain.

At every turn some pallid ghost
With haggard features seems to rise
To join the long-drawn, murdered host
That moves with sad, averted eyes,
Like victims to a sacrifice,
To where the Via Sacra lies.

Behold the mighty Judgment Hall,
Where Nero with indifferent air
Remarked the pleading of St. Paul,
Nor dreamed the man before him there
Would soon be read and revered where
The Roman empire had no share!

Where are they all,--those men of pride
Whose palace was the Palatine,
From Romulus the fratricide
To Hadrian, and Constantine,
The last of all the western line
Of Caesars who were deemed divine?

And all the millions who were swayed
By those who dwelt upon this hill,
And who in humble awe obeyed
The dictates of their sovereign will,--
Are they self-conscious beings still,
Or are their minds and bodies ... Nil?

I watch our planet's god decline
Behind the tomb-girt Appian Way;

The old, imperial Palatine
Grows purple 'neath the sun's last ray;
Shades of the Caesars, if ye may,
The mystery of death portray!

Are there in truth Elysian Fields?
And is there life beyond the grave?
Or are the years that Nature yields
Confined this side the Stygian wave?
For those who more existence crave
Is there a Power to help and save?

Alas! no answer; on their hill
The murdered Caesars make no sign;
Their myriad subjects, too, are still,--
Mute as the voiceless Palatine;
Yet overhead the fixed stars shine,
And bid us trust in the Divine!

THE FAREWELL OF THE OLD GUARD AT FONTAINEBLEAU, 1814

Stately court of Fontainebleau,
Nine and ninety years ago
On thy spacious esplanade,
Ranged in formal dress parade,
Stood the Emperor's grenadiers
With their bronzed cheeks wet with tears,
Waiting once again to show
Love for him at Fontainebleau.

Noon had struck above the square,
When adown the Horse Shoe stair
In his well-known coat of gray,
Worn on many a hard-fought day,
Came the man adored by all
As their "Little Corporal,"
Forced by Europe now to go
Far from royal Fontainebleau.

In the ranks a sudden stir
Swelled to shouts of Vive l'Empereur;
Then deep silence reigned, save where
On the peaceful summer air
Choking sobs, but half suppressed,
Came from many a faithful breast
At the overwhelming blow
Dealt them here at Fontainebleau.

Could the rumor, then, be true?
Would he say to them adieu?
Would their idol and their pride,
He whom they had deified,
Leave his royal grenadiers,
Veteran troops of twenty years?
Hark! he speaks in accents low
To his Guard at Fontainebleau:--

"Comrades, brothers, we must part";
(How his lov'd tones thrilled each heart!)
"It were wrong to you and France,
Did I once more say 'Advance';
On the ruins of my State

I at last must abdicate,
And with you no more can know
Happy days at Fontainebleau.

"Valiant soldiers of my Guard,
Thus to part is doubly hard;
Did you silence Prussian guns,
March beneath Italian suns,
Enter Moscow and Madrid,
Fight beside the Pyramid,
And survive grim Russia's snow,--
Thus to yield at Fontainebleau?

"Heroes of great wars, farewell!
You have heard my empire's knell,
Yet no hostile world's decree
Can estrange your hearts from me;
Exiled to a tiny isle,
Through your tears you well may smile
At the realm my foes bestow,--
Elba ... after Fontainebleau!

"Now of all who once were true
I can count alone on you;
Would that each might take the place
Of the eagle I embrace!
Let the tears which on it fall
Move the souls of one and all!
Never have I loved you so
As to-day at Fontainebleau."

Hushed his voice; a moment more,
At the passing carriage door
Gleamed Napoleon's mournful eyes,--
Smouldering flames of sacrifice;
Then his pallid, classic face
Vanished ghostlike into space,
And a dreary sense of woe
Settled over Fontainebleau.

Dead are now those grenadiers;
Quelled are Europe's anxious fears;
By the Seine the Emperor sleeps;
France her watch beside him keeps;
But the lonely Horse Shoe stair
Still preserves its sombre air,
For the light of long ago
Falls no more on Fontainebleau.

JAPAN,--OLD AND NEW

The son of a Japanese lord am I,--
A Prince of the olden time;
My hair is white, though black as night
In my youth and early prime;
And again and again I ask myself,
As the past I sadly scan,
Are we better or worse? Was it blessing or curse
That foreigners brought Japan?

It is barely two score years and ten
Since the epoch-making day

When a foreign fleet, through the summer heat,
Came sailing up our bay;
Still ring in my ears my father's words,
As we watched it breast the waves,—
"If strangers land on Nippon's strand,
We may one day be their slaves."

But the strangers landed, and asked for trade
And a permanent "Open Door,"
And we deemed it best to grant the West
A foothold on our shore;
Their slaves in truth we have not become,
Yet who can fail to find
That Japan obeys in a thousand ways
The will of the western mind?

We sent our sons across the seas
To learn from the Western Powers
Their modes of life and their modes of strife,
And have made them largely ours;
But before all else have we learned from them
That our first great aim, must be
To possess a fleet that can defeat
All rivals on the sea.

Hence, all that the West hath yet devised
For the slaughter of men en masse
We have copied or bought, and have stopped at naught
To make our fleet "first class";
And lest this might not quite suffice,
Should an enemy come in sight,
We have made each man throughout Japan
A soldier trained to fight!

But alas for the change that hath been wrought
In the millions in our fields!
For the costly ships take from their lips
The food that the harvest yields;
They were always poor, but their load was light,
Compared with their load to-day,
For thousands of hands that worked the lands
Are drafted now away.

And sad are the scenes in the sphere of Art
In which we had won such fame;
The fingers left are not so deft
As they were when the strangers came;
For then we toiled for Beauty's sake,
And by time were we never paid;
But now we have sold our art for gold
And the western market's trade.

I never look at the goods now sent,—
So worthless do they seem,—
Without a sigh for the standard high
Which prevailed in the old regime;
When even the hilt of a Daimio's sword
Was a work of months or years,
And the highest reward for a triumph scored
Was praise from the artist's peers.

No, the soul of my people is not the same;
It was formerly sweet and kind,
And happiness reigned in hearts restrained
By an unspoiled, gentle mind;

But now the lusts of the outer world
For power, and lands, and gold,
Our sons deprave, till they madly crave
What others have and hold.

We have borrowed many things from the West,
But one have we left alone;
Of its Christian creed we had no need,
And have thus far kept our own;
For each of its numerous sects affirms
That it has the only way,
And that all the rest should be suppressed,
For they lead mankind astray.

But worse than the claims of rival sects
And the war of clashing creeds,
Is the gulf,--heaven-wide! which we descried
Between their words and deeds;
For He whose sacred name they bear
Was known as the Prince of Peace,
And what He taught, in practice wrought,
Would cause all wars to cease.

They say with truth that we used to fight
For our Lords on sea and coast,
But our soldiers then were as one to ten,
Not a permanent armored host!
Nor do we claim to obey the God
They worship in the West;
But, since they do, is it not true
That they mock at His first behest?

His words were "Love your enemies!"
And never a hostile act
To friend or foe should Christians show,
By whomsoever attacked;
But they are really the best prepared
To attack and to resist;
And the Kaiser who prays is the Kaiser who says,--
"Go! Strike with the mailed fist!"

We look abroad, and everywhere
The spirit of Christ is dead;
Men call Him Lord, but they draw the sword
In defiance of what He said;
And the haughty, white-skinned Christian race
Hates men of a different hue,
And robs and slays in a thousand ways,
With excuses ever new.

In the North and South, in the East and West
In vain do the natives plead;
By the Congo's waves are countless graves,
Where the Paleface gluts his greed;
And China's fate looms dark and grim,
As its people note the means
That Christians take, when gold's at stake,
From the Rand to the Philippines.

We have had to choose between the rule
Of the Sermon on the Mount
And the brutal fact that nations act
With an eye to their bank-account!
And we see that the only way to shun
The clutch of the Western Powers

Is to learn to kill with Christian skill,
And to make their weapons ours.

For we will not, like the others, bend
Our necks to the white man's yoke;
And poor Japan, to her latest man,
Will answer stroke with stroke;
So I watch to-night a solemn sight
On the breast of the moonlit bay,
As our gallant host for a hostile coast
Prepares to sail away.

It is life or death for my native land,
And I fear I may never see
Those ships again, with their noble men,
Return from victory;
And well I know in my heart of hearts,
As the past I sadly scan,
That we are worse, and it was a curse
That foreigners brought Japan.

1904.

THE UNFORGOTTEN HEROES

[The great temple at Miyagi in Japan was recently the scene
of grand funeral observances for the horses slain in the late war
with Russia, the Buddhist priests reading prayers and conducting
services of a most solemn character.]

Hark! how the Orient's bells are proclaiming
Obsequies strange to the shrines of the west--
Services Christendom's cruelties shaming--
Taught by the merciful, Buddha the blest.

Peace on Manchuria's plains has descended;
Tall waves the grass where the chivalrous bled;
Murder and massacre finally ended,
Sadly the living remember their dead.

Requiem masses and prayers without number
Plead for the souls of the Muscovite brave,
While of the Japanese, wrapt in death's slumber,
Tender memorials honor each grave.

But in Gautama's compassionate teaching
Love is not limited merely to man;
Kindness to animals formed in his preaching
No less a part of his merciful plan.

Hence by the Buddhists, in counting the corpses
Heaping with horror the death-trampled plain,
Not unremembered are thousands of horses,
Left unattended to die with the slain.

What did war seem to these poor, driven cattle?
What was their part in the horrible fray
Save to be shot in the fury of battle,
Or from exhaustion to fall by the way?

Dragging huge guns over rocks and through mire,

Trembling with weakness, yet straining each nerve,
Fated at last in despair to expire,
Uncomprehending, yet willing to serve!

Nothing to them were the hopes of a nation;
"Czar" and "Mikado" were meaningless sounds;
None of the patriot's deep inspiration
Softened the agony caused by their wounds.

Not for these martyrs the skill of physician,
Ether for anguish or lint for a wound;
Theirs but to lie in their crippled condition,
Thirsting and starving on shelterless ground.

Hail to these quadrupeds, dead without glory!
Honor to him who their valor reveres!
Spare to these heroes, unmentioned in story,
Something of sympathy, something of tears.

A WINTER'S DAY

Into my garden sweet and fair
Brightly the sun at noonday shines,
Melting the frost from the wintry air,
Warming the trellis of leafless vines.

Basking there in the genial heat,
South of my sheltering vineyard wall,
Strolling, I dream in my lov'd retreat,--
The smile of the sun-god over all.

Far too early a shadow dark,
Cast by the neighboring mountain's crest,
Stealthily creeps across the park,
Bringing a chill from the sombre west.

Little by little my sunlit space
Shrinks to a narrowing path of light;
Further and further with dread I trace
The sure advance of approaching night.

Soon will arrive its twilight pall;
Then, as the potent change is felt,
The fountain's drops will cease to fall
And feathery films refuse to melt.

But still in the solar warmth I wait,
The hand of my lov'd one clasped in mine;
Is that a tear? It is growing late,
And she asks how long the sun will shine.

ON THE PROMENADE

O joyous idler in the sun,
In pity slacken here thy pace!
A lad, whose course is nearly run,
Is watching thee with wistful face.

The glow of health upon thy cheek,

The youthful ardor in thy gait,
Appear to him, so frail and weak,
The bitter irony of Fate.

Thou art to him the vision fair
Of all he once had hoped to be;
What wonder, then, that in despair
His longing glances follow thee?

Let not the gulf too deep appear
Between thy fortune and his own!
Thou didst not see that falling tear,
Nor hear his low, half-stifled moan.

The pang of age compared with youth,
Or hunger with the spendthrift's wealth,
Gnaws not with such a cruel tooth
As that of pain confronting health.

Yet must the strong ship breast the wave,
The wreck lie rotting on the shore;
O hopes that perish in the grave!
O youthful dreams that come no more!

SOLITUDE

Had I but lived when music-loving Pan
Still played his flute amid the whispering reeds,
When through Arcadian groves the dryads ran,
And—symbolizing well man's earlier creeds—
A host of sculptured forms, divinely fair,
Portrayed the gods, and led men's thoughts to prayer,

I would have sought some beautiful retreat,
Remote from cities and the din of men,—
Some tranquil shore where lake and forest meet
By limpid stream or flower-lit, sylvan glen,
And would have reared, where none could e'er intrude,
A shrine to thee, O precious Solitude!

How hath a heedless world neglected thee,
Thou coy divinity, too shy and proud
To sue for followers from those who see
Attraction merely in the strenuous crowd!
For only those can know thee, as thou art,
Who wisely seek and study thee ... apart.

No rapt enthusiast, or mystic sage,
No Asian founder of a faith divine,
No bard, or writer of inspired page
Hath ever failed to worship at thy shrine,
O Nourisher of steadfast self-control,
Of noble thoughts, of loftiness of soul!

Yet no continuous homage dost thou crave,
No anchorite's seclusion wouldst thou ask,
Thou lov'st no misanthrope or sullen slave,
But only those who, faithful to life's task,
Must yet at times look upward from the clod,
And seek through thee acquaintanceship with God.

OUT OF THE RANKS

From the bitter fight I have made my way
To the peaceful crest of a lonely hill,
But the noise and heat of the deadly fray
And the smart of wounds are with me still.

No recreant I to a noble cause,
Nor traitor base to a leader bold;
'Twas a fight where he won most applause
Who captured most of his neighbor's gold;

Where the wounded crawled away to die,
Or, hopeless, ate their bread with tears,
And the only cries that rent the sky
Were the shouts of frenzied financiers.

Alas for the prematurely gray,
Who struggle there through joyless lives
To win the means of more display
For thankless children, thoughtless wives!

Alas for those whose spirits yearn
For leisure, books, and sunlit fields,
Who yet can never pause to learn
The joy that a life of culture yields!

Still sway the mad crowds to and fro!
I hear their groans and panting breath,
The hideous impacts, blow on blow,
The moans of those who are crushed to death!

None stoop to lift up those who fall;
A thousand leap for a vacant place,
Thrust weaker thousands to the wall,
And trample many an upturned face!

But I, however the fight may go,
Have turned my back on the sordid fray,
To face the tranquil sunset-glow,
And hope for the dawn of a better day.

AUTONOMY

Stand forth, my soul, and take thine own!
Though all should blame thee, have no fear!
Self-poised and steadfast, dare alone
Thy self-elected course to steer.

Before thee lies the open sea;
Beyond it is the wished-for shore;
The route that seemeth best to thee
Select, and hesitate no more!

For he who lives the timorous slave
Of social plaudits or disdain,
Drags feebly to a nameless grave
A craven's ever-lengthening chain.

Are thy plans noble, just, and fair?

Pursue them bravely to the end,
Nor pause to question or to care
What says thy foe, or what thy friend.

Succeed, and thou shalt surely find
That those who longed to see thee fail,
And, lingering hopelessly behind,
Spat venom on thine upward trail,

Shall run to reach thee on thy path,
To grasp thy hand and say "'Twas well";
Or, distant, gnaw their lips in wrath,
Their envious hearts a living hell.

Forever, flint-like, set thy face
Against the loss of self-control;
Compel the world to keep its place;
Be thou the captain of thy soul!

ORIENT TO OCCIDENT, 1906

You thought me sunk in lethargy, too deeply drugged with sleep
To notice how your armored fleets kept creeping o'er the deep,
Too indolent to organize, too feeble to resist,
Too timid to return the blow of Europe's mailed fist;
And Asia's conquest seemed to you a matter of such ease
That all your kings knew perfectly the part which each would seize.
Of such a "sluggish, inert mass" why should you be afraid?
You wanted ports and provinces for purposes of trade,
And monster "spheres of influence", whose wealth could be controlled
And plundered by your Governments to fill their vaults with gold;
Hence, since it seemed so probable that none of us would fight,
Why should you even hesitate to prove that Might makes Right?

And yet perhaps it had been well, before you formed your plan,
To study Asia's history from Persia to Japan;
For though the sleeping Orient, like grain before the blast,
May bow its head, it rights itself when once the storm is past.
How often has the Occident invaded our domains
And boasted of its victories! Yet of them what remains?
Seems India exceptional? Fools, judge not by a day!
The horologe of centuries moves slowly in Cathay.
The brilliant son of Macedon saw, crushed and pale with fear,
The vanquished East from Babylon to Egypt and Cashmere;
But though the conquered Orient lay helpless, as his slave,
Of Alexander's influence how much survived his grave?
Of Rome's prodigious armaments, to Asian conquests led,
Where is there now a souvenir save relics of the dead?
And of the vast Crusading hosts, which in their madness rose
And hurled themselves repeatedly upon their Moslem foes,--
What is to-day the net result? A thousand years have passed,
But none of all their vaunted gains proved great enough to last;
The Saviour's tomb, Jerusalem, and all the sacred lands
Connected with the Christian faith are still in Asian hands!

We needed rude awakening to rouse us from our sloth;
It came among our northern isles, whose heroes, nothing loth,
Unbarred their ports to modern fleets, their ancient life forswore,
And learned from greedy foreigners the Christians' art of war.
Behold! the world in fifty years is breathless with surprise,
And Europe's greatest Government has sought us for allies!
That little section of our mass aroused itself, and lo!

Your largest Occidental Power has reeled beneath the blow;
And while our living troops receive men's rapturous acclaim,
Our fallen heroes have attained the Pantheon of fame.
Yet think not we deceive ourselves; you praise, but really dread
The valour of the Orient, if this awakening spread;
Behind this movement of the East you think you hear the low,
Long murmur of the Asians,--"The foreigner must go!"
What wonder that we hate you all? You look on us to-day
As lions look on antelopes,--their heaven-appointed prey;
You know you have no lawful right to lands that you possess;
You gained them all through violence, or lying and finesse;
Your cursed opium alone, despite our prayers and tears,
Has ruined millions of our race for more than two score years,
And when we rose indignantly to right that bitter wrong,
Your heavy guns bombarded us, and you annexed ... Hong Kong!
You force yourselves on us, and ask concessions, favors, mines,
Protection for your mission schools, and grants of railway lines,
But when we cross the seas to you, an entry you refuse,
And curse, illtreat, and harry us with loathing and abuse.
Japan has shown the only way of keeping for our own
The fertile fields which rightfully belong to us alone;
We do not wish to arm ourselves, and fighting we abhor,
But self-protection forces us to learn and practise war.

Hence, if assailed, we shall not shun a struggle with the West;
Not bent on conquest, like yourselves, but, rising to the test
Of "Asia for the Asians", defend our threatened farms
By sending to encounter you a million men in arms.
You think yourselves invincible? Learn something from Japan,
The fever of whose chivalry now spreads from man to man,
Encouraging the Orient to hasten on the day
When all enlightened Asians shall cry "Enough! Away!
Go exploit helpless Africa, where you have shamed the beast,
But understand, your cruel day is over in the East!"
You still have many things to learn, base worshippers of gold;
When you were wild barbarians, our Governments were old!
Your self-conceit and arrogance we therefore laugh to scorn;
We had our laws millenniums before your courts were born.
You talk by electricity, you ride on wings of steam,
You thunder with machinery,--and these you proudly deem
The grandest triumphs of the race, forgetting that mere speed
In transference of men and things is less than one great deed.

You treat us condescendingly, as if our gifts were small,
But do you think Almighty God has dowered you with all?
Earth's greatest continent is ours; her highest mountains rise
In unapproached sublimity beneath our starry skies;
Ours, too, the cradle of the race; and at our Buddha's shrine
Unequalled numbers of mankind adore him as divine.
How dare you speak of Asian thought with pity or a sneer,
When practically all you know originated here?
What had you been, if our ideals, in art and faith expressed,
Had not come down through Greece and Rome to civilize your West?
The great religions of the world are all of Asian birth,
And thence went forth resistlessly to dominate the earth.
Of six we granted one to you; and you profess its creeds,
But what a sorry travesty you make of it in deeds!
The Christ taught love to enemies; His followers to-day
Have trained the whole male Christian world their fellow men to slay!
The very Bible that you prize was writ by Asian hands;
Your prophets, saints, and patriarchs were all of Eastern lands;
The Son of God, as you believe, was born a humble Jew;
The Virgin Mother equally no other parents knew;
Yet you have robbed and tortured Jews, and murdered them at will
Through eighteen Christian centuries,--are killing thousands still!

The "Star of Empire," as you claim, has "westward" made its way;
But what if now in Eastern skies it heralds a new day?
You fondly dreamed its brilliant course had ended there with you,
But on it moves, old lands to greet, and belt the globe anew!
Its kindling rays revivify our nations, which have slept
While round the world our influence through you has slowly crept.
The coming century's great deeds lie not at Europe's doors;
A grander stage awaits mankind,--the vast Pacific's shores;
And we not only skirt that sea from Tokyo to Saigon,
Our coastline fronts the western world from Syria to Ceylon!
Again shall we supply to you the part of life you need;
Again your slaves of strenuous toil shall live at slower speed;
Once more, as pilgrims to a shrine, your chiefs shall come to me,
And learn of my philosophy, as children at my knee.
You cannot cut me from your past, nor cancel what you owe
For all my sages gave to you two thousand years ago;
For after twenty centuries you think, and speak, and pray
Still much as I instructed you in Syria and Cathay.
Keep you, then, the material, I hold the mental, realm;
For you the ship's machinery, for me the guiding helm!

THE CAPTIVE

I opened the cage of my pet canary;
Timid, it faltered a moment there,
Then, at my call, became less wary,
And blithely sprang to the buoyant air.

Brief was its dream of freedom's rapture;
A window barred its sunward flight;
It beat its wings in fear of capture,
But found no way to the world of light.

Out in the park two birds were mating,
Building together their tiny nest;
Keenly the captive watched them, waiting,
Pressing the glass with its throbbing breast.

Leaving at length the window-casing,
Lighting by chance on a neighboring shelf,
It stood before a mirror, facing
The pretty form of its own sweet self.

Falling in love with its own reflection,
Thinking it always another bird,
Bravely it tried to win affection,
Warbling tones I had never heard.

Hopeless alas! its tender wooing,
Vainly it trilled its sweetest note,
Coldly received was its ardent suing,
Silent the mirrored songster's throat.

Wearied at last, it flew off sadly,
Back to the cage's open door,
Back to the home it left so gladly
Only a little hour before.

Dead are the lovers so fondly mated!
Gone is their nest; it was blown away!
But safe in the narrow cage it hated

The captive sings on its perch to-day.

WEARINESS

Snowy sails, silvery sails,
Gleaming in the sun,
Leaving scores of jewelled trails
In the course you run,

On your white wings bear away
All my care and pain;
I would for at least to-day
Be a child again.

Just to thrill with youthful fire,
Kindling heart and brain,
Just to know the old desire
Lofty heights to gain;

Just to hold the simple faith
Into which I grew,
When my God was not a wraith,
And all men were true!

Shadowed sails, clouded sails,
Life hath made me know
That you leave no jewelled trails,
Proudly though you go;

Drops that floods of diamonds seem
Are but dazzling spray,
Fleeting as a happy dream,
Swift to fade away.

Distant sails, waning sails,
Waft me to some shore
Where corroding care prevails
Never, nevermore!

Where the flotsam of the deep
Finds its wanderings cease,
And the shipwrecked sink to sleep
On the strand of peace.

A MAY MONODY

Beside my opened window pane,
Each morning in this month of May
A blackbird sings in dulcet strain
Two liquid notes, which seem to say
"Come again! Come again!"

Alike in sunshine and in rain,
Now loud and clear, now soft and low,
He warbles forth the same refrain,
Which haunts me with its hint of woe,--
"Come again! Come again!"

What bird, whose absence gives him pain,

Doth he thus tenderly recall?
What longed-for joy would he regain
By those two words which rise and fall,--
"Come again! Come again!"

Sometimes, when I too long have lain
And listened to his plaintive air,
An impulse I cannot restrain
Hath moved me too to breathe that prayer,--
"Come again! Come again!"

O vanished youth, when faith was plain,
When hopes were high, and manhood's years
Showed dazzling summits to attain;
O days, ere eyes grew dim with tears,--
"Come again! Come again!"

O friends, whose memory leaves no stain,
O dearly loved and early lost!
Do you your love for me retain
Beyond the silent sea you crossed?
"Come again! Come again!"

Alas! sweet bird, all life moves on;
The seed becomes the ripened grain,
And what is past is gone, is gone!
Cease calling, therefore,--'tis in vain--,
"Come again! Come again!"

MY LOST FRIENDS

One by one they have slipped from Earth,
And vanished into the depths of space,
And I, beside my lonely hearth,
Find none to take their place.

Never a word of fond farewell
Fell from their lips ere they were gone;
Never a hint since then to tell
If after night came dawn!

Latest of all to thus depart,
Still is thy hand-clasp warm in mine;
Wilt thou not tell me where thou art?
Canst thou impart no sign?

Wild are the winds above thy grave;
Cold is the form I loved so well;
But what to thee are storms that rave,
Or the snow that last night fell?

Out in the awful void of night,
Numberless suns and planets roll;
Has one of all those isles of light
Received thy homeless soul?

Mute is the sky as an empty tomb;
Trackless the path, and all unknown;
What means this journey through its gloom,
Which each must make alone?

Vain is the task; I strive no more

To learn the secret of their fate;
Till sounds for me the muffled oar,
I can but hope and wait.

But well I know they have gone from me
Into the silent depths of space,
Across a vast, uncharted sea,
Whose shores I cannot trace.

TO SLEEP AND TO FORGET

To sleep and to forget,—O blessed guerdon!
The day is waning, and the night draws near;
My failing heart grows weary of its burden;
Why should I therefore hesitate or fear
 To sleep and to forget?

Though bright my skies with transient gleams of gladness,
And sweet the breath of many a summer sea,
Yet, under all, a haunting note of sadness
Forever lures me in its minor key
 To sleep and to forget.

Of petty souls whose joy is defamation,
Of malice, envy, cruelty, and greed
Each day supplies its sickening revelation,
And makes imperative my spirit's need
 To sleep and to forget.

Let others bravely plan for death's to-morrow,
And crave fresh progress toward a higher goal!
Appalled by Earth's long tragedy of sorrow,
I humbly ask one favor for my soul,
 When this life's sun is set,—
 To sleep and to forget.

IN SILENCE

She sees our faces bright and gay,
Our moving lips, our laughing eyes,
But scarce a word of what we say
Can pass the zone that round her lies;—

A zone of stillness,—strange, profound,
Invisible to mortal eye,
Upon whose verge the waves of sound
In muffled murmurs break and die.

Across that silent void she strains
To catch at least some winged word,
And, though she fails, still smiles and feigns
The poor pretence of having heard.

That smile! Its pathos wrings the heart
Of many a friend, who yet conceals
The tears that from his eyelids start,
The grief and pity that he feels.

And she, aware of our distress,

And sadly conscious of her own,
Still bravely speaks, nor dares confess
That our real meaning is unknown.

What rapture, when the closing door
Shuts out the world and gives release,
And on her quivering nerves once more
Descends the benison of peace!

No longer forced to dimly read
Men's meanings from their lips and looks,
Her greatest joy, her only need
The sweet companionship of books!

Do we thus ever fully know
The boon of leaving far behind
The world's dull tales of crime and woe,
The gossip of its vacant mind?

What if her loss be really gain,
That zone of silence a defence,
A compensation for her pain,
A quickening of her psychic sense?

Perhaps when fall at last away
The chains which bind her spirit here,
A voice divine will gently say
In tones which reach alone her ear,—

"While others in that world of sin
Heard evil things, to thee unknown,
Apart from that defiling din
Thy spirit grew, in strength, alone.

"They must through other lives return
To slowly earn thy strength of soul;
Through suffering only couldst thou learn
The virtue that hath made thee whole."

AT THE VILLA OF THE EMPEROR FREDERICK III AT SAN REMO

San Remo's palms in beauty stand
Beside the storied sea,
Where azure band and golden sand
Are wedded ceaselessly;
For from the deep, which seems to sleep,
The slow waves, long and low,
Their journeys done, break one by one
In rhythmic ebb and flow.

Before me lies a fair retreat,
Whose every breath brings balm
From plants replete with odors sweet
And many a fronded palm;
Hence at its gate I, spellbound, wait
To feast my gladdened eyes
On buds that wake and flowers that make
A perfumed paradise.

Alas, that love could not avail
To guard this sweet repose!
That strength should fail, and life prove frail

And fleeting as the rose!
So fair! and yet, who can forget
The heir to Prussia's throne,
Who here fought death with labored breath,
And faced the great Unknown?

O Spirit of the Fatherland,
O love that changeth not,
Thy filial hand hath made this strand
A consecrated spot;
For on the wall, where roses fall,
Bronze words recall his fate,--
A sceptre won ... when life was done,
An empire gained ... too late!

"Halt, wanderer from a German shore!"
(Thus runs the sad refrain,)
"Here dwelt thine Emperor, here he bore
With fortitude his pain;
Hear'st thou the lone, low monotone
Of billows tempest-tossed?
In that long roll the German soul
Still mourns for him she lost."

San Remo's stately palms still rise
Beside the storied shore;
But he now lies 'neath northern skies,
At peace forevermore,
In that calm, deep, untroubled sleep,
Whose secret none may know,
While, one by one,--their courses run,--
The long waves ebb and flow.

IN A COLUMBARIUM

The autumn sun still bravely streams
Along the tomb-girt Appian Way,
And warms the heart of one who dreams
Of all its splendor on the day
When Scipio triumphed, bringing home
The spoils of Africa to Rome.

On this same road the conqueror came,
Called "Africanus, the Divine"
By thousands who adored his fame,
And proudly watched the endless line
Of Punic captives in his train,
And trophies, won on Zama's plain.

To-day the vast Campagna rolls
In stately grandeur to the sea,
But where are now the countless souls
Whose dwelling-place this used to be,
When all its space to Ostia's gate
Lay peopled and inviolate?

Ask of the Claudian arches gray
Which stride toward Rome in broken lines;
Ask of the lizards at their play
On relics of the Antonines;
Ask of the fever-blighted shore,
Where Roman galleys ride no more!

Yet some poor traces still remain
Of those who here have lived and died;
For underneath this solemn plain
The Christian catacombs still hide,--
A city of sepulchral gloom,
The martyrs' labyrinthine tomb.

Moreover, in this classic soil,
Where sleeps so much of ancient Rome,
A simple peasant at his toil
Discovered 'neath the upturned loam
The spot to which I now have come,--
A Roman Columbarium.

Down through its modern, open door
A flood of mellow sunshine falls
In golden waves from roof to floor,
Revealing in its moss-grown walls
The "dove-cotes", where one still discerns
The fragments of old funeral urns.

One vacant niche, whose ampler space
Betokens special love and care,
Contained no doubt a sculptured face
Above the hallowed ashes there;
While, just beneath, faint letters spell
A faithful woman's fond farewell.

How often on love's winged feet
She doubtless sought this dear recess,
To deck with floral offerings sweet
Her sepulchre of happiness,
Whose script, despite two thousand years,
Preserves the memory of her tears!

Rome's annals hint not of the name
Of him whose dust lay treasured here,
But could the fleeting breath of fame
Have made him to her heart more dear?
A word of tenderness outweighs
In woman's soul a world of praise.

What though, remote from pomp and state,
At Caesar's court he could not shine?
Less blest had surely been his fate
Upon the lustful Palatine!
And mutual love, wherever viewed,
Is life's supreme beatitude.

Alas! the urn no longer stands
Within the little alcove dim;
Gone also are the faithful hands
That hung sweet roses on its rim;
And vanished even is the bust
Which watched above the sacred dust.

Yet still its words of love survive
The shocks and tragedies of time,
And bid our drooping hearts revive,
Inculcating the faith sublime
That, while the urn in ruin lies,
Love soars immortal to the skies.

DISCOURAGEMENT

"Forward, comrades, ever forward!"
Shout the leaders in the fight;
"Scale the ramparts! Plant the standard
On the citadel of light!

"Break the chains of superstition!
Crush corruption! Free the slave!
Plant the flowers of love and mercy
On the past's ensanguined grave!

"Toward the strongholds of oppression
Lead again the hope forlorn!
See! the night is disappearing;
Lo! the coming of the morn!"

Bravely said; yet men have spoken
Just as bravely long ago,
When the hair had raven blackness
Which is now as white as snow;

And alas! how many thousands
Have responded to that call,
Whose forgotten corpses moulder
By the still beleaguered wall!

Forms have changed and words have altered,
But the things remain the same;
Still doth man enslave his brother,--
Always master, save in name.

Still are God's dumb creatures tortured,
Racial hatreds never cease,
And man's greatest self-delusion
Is the shibboleth of "Peace."

Hence, while youth, with hope and courage,
Loudly vents its noble rage;
Age, profoundly disillusioned,
Sad and silent leaves the stage.

Round the classic Inland Ocean,
Where the Roman world held sway,
Storied shores are iridescent
With the splendor of decay;

Persia, Syria, Egypt, Athens,
Proud Byzantium, Carthage, Spain,--
In their mournful desolation
Hear the old sea's sad refrain:--

"Rising, falling, waxing, waning,
Men and nations come and go;
Reaching glory, then declining,
As the ebb succeeds the flow.

"All floescence is but fleeting:
Each in turn enjoys its day,
Hath its seed-time, bud and flower,
And as surely fades away.

"Growth, maturity, decadence,--

Form mankind's unchanging role,
And the dead past's sombre ruins
Are prophetic of the whole."

"Nay," you cry in bitter protest,
"Shall man have no perfect end,
No millennial culmination,
Toward which all the ages tend?"

"Must all races prove decadent?
Shall not one produce in time
Perfect types of men and women
In a world devoid of crime?"

Scan the lurid past, and tell us
On what ground you base your hopes!
Does an endless line of failures
Warrant brighter horoscopes?

Hath not every race and nation
Sunk from grandeur to decay?
What shall save us, then, from ruin?
Are we better men than they?

"Great inventors", say you? Granted;
Such material gifts are ours;
Every age hath some distinction,
Every race its special powers.

But the progress is not lasting,
And the special powers decline;
Man's advance is never constant
In one grand, unbroken line.

Nor is ground, once lost, recovered;
Greece and Rome are not replaced!
All the sites of pagan learning
Still lie desolate and waste.

What know we,--except in physics--,
That the ancients did not know?
Are we wiser than the sages
Of two thousand years ago?

More devout than Hebrew prophets?
More upright than Antonine?
More accomplished than the Grecians,
Or than Buddha more divine?

And if such men could not hinder
Fate's resistless rise and fall,
How can we expect exemption
From the common lot of all?

Let us frankly face the prospect
That man's progress here may fail;
That the race may never triumph,
But again descend the scale,

Till the last surviving savage
To his glacial cave retires,
And earth's tragic drama closes,
As humanity expires!

And why not? All weaker species

To the stronger yield their place;
May the same law not be needed
Through the boundless realms of space?

By whatever beings peopled,
Worlds that fail to meet the test
May like fruitless blossoms perish;
God will winnow out the best.

Would you know our planet's value?
View the star-strewn dome of night!
In that shoreless sea of splendor
What is one faint wave of light?

Worlds by millions are revolving
Through that vast, unfathomed main;
Should our tiny orb make shipwreck,
Worlds by millions would remain;

Where perchance a real advancement
May prevail from pole to pole,
Without losses, without lapses,
Toward a final, perfect goal.

This at least can not be doubted,--
That our globe will one day roll
Cold and lifeless thro' its orbit,
Like a corpse without its soul.

Will mankind have reached perfection
Ere that epoch has begun,
Or grown bestial, as the heat-waves
Issue feebly from the sun?

None may know. Through blood-stained cycles
We have thus far made our way:
Of the unknown depths beneath us
We are nothing but the spray.

MESALLIANCE

With gentle manners, winsome face,
And forehead fit to wear a crown,
How brilliant might have been her place,
Had she not mated with a clown,--

A Caliban of modern date,
Ill-dressed, ill-shapen, ill at ease,
With halting speech and awkward gait,
And manners certain to displease!

What secret motive could have led
This charming girl her life to stain
By condescending thus to wed
A husband whom she must disdain?

Far worthier men had vainly sought
To win her for herself alone;
What potent spell could Love have wrought
To draw her to a tactless drone?

A palace she might well have graced.

And led its functions like a queen;
Instead, her life has run to waste,
The wraith of what it might have been.

For boorishness hath brought its blight;
Her rare accomplishments are marred,
And every path, with promise bright,
By stupid tyranny is barred.

Yet still she bravely moves through life,
Ignoring her pathetic fall;--
A loveless, broken-hearted wife;
Alas, the pity of it all!

IN A MODERN CITY

Dreary fog and drizzling sleet,
And a lamp-lit track of slime;
Phantoms dim in the misty street,
Vanishing, streaked with grime;
Overhead in a spurious night,
Formed by the vapors dun,
Wraith-like globes of haloed light,
Mocking the hidden sun;--

Children, shod in sodden shoes,
(That is a sight that hurts;)
Women, furrowing filthy ooze
In thin, bedraggled skirts;
Horses, lashed with cruel zest,
Ploughing the fumid fog;
Hark! ... a car, with no arrest,
Killing a howling dog;--

Clanging trams, with haggard men
Forcing their way within,--
Some compressed in a steaming-pen,
Others soaked to the skin;
Smoke and soot in the murky sky,
Death in the tainted air,
Each aware, were he to die,
None in the crowd would care;--

Here and there a carriage fine,
Cleaving the reeking mass;
Scowling faces, ranged in line,
Watching the rich man pass;
Envy's gleam in many an eye,
Hate in many a threat;
Why should he be warm and dry,
And they be cold and wet?

Pictures these of the "Passing Show,"
Scenes in a world gone wrong,
Wretched weaklings, born to woe,
Crushed by the brutal strong!
Breaking hearts that crave release,
Slaves to a ceaseless strife! ...
I will go back to sylvan peace
And a sight of the Source of Life.

MY BORES

I take their hands with placid smile
And words which social rules enforce,
Though sadly conscious all the while
Of something very like remorse,
Because beneath the mask I wear
I really wish they were not there.

Their visits I at heart resent;
The half-read volume haunts my thought;
The urgent note remains unsent,
The verse, unfinished, comes to naught;
And all because, on some pretence,
They waste their time at my expense.

Yet no grim misanthrope am I,
Who fears, distrusts, and hates his race;
I merely wish them to pass by,
And seek some other lounging-place;
For, frankly, I should love them more
A little further from my door.

In vain I make no answering calls;
They blandly smile and come again!
Nay, even bring within my walls
More curious strangers in their train,
"Who wished so much your home to see!"
Why do they never think of me?

The few I want I can invite;
Hence why should others thus intrude?
How dare they give themselves the right,
Unmasked, to spoil my solitude?
And why presume I care to know
More triflers in their world of show?

Their idle life, on pleasure bent,
Their mania for some silly game,
Their hours in stupid gossip spent,--
Would give me self-contempt and shame;
Between us is no common ground
On which a comradeship to found.

A word or two upon the street
Suffice me with the most of men;
Beyond a greeting, when we meet.
I care not if we speak again;
My books and Nature's charming face
Such human consorts well replace.

Not all, indeed; for who but yearns
To call some kindred heart his own?
Some friend to whom he fondly turns,
And with whom he is still alone,
Since each, while absolutely free,
Respects the other's privacy.

To such his pent-up love o'erflows;
With such his soul's seclusion ends;
For each the other's nature knows,
And every motive comprehends;
So perfectly do both agree,

So close their bond of sympathy!

But those who come to wear away
With me the time they deem a bore,
And blithely rob me of a day
Which God Himself cannot restore--
From such, at risk of being rude,
I will preserve my solitude.

Their vapid visits I refuse;
Their forced attachment I decline;
I surely have the right to choose
The friends, whose lives shall blend with mine;
My bark shall gain the open sea
With but the few I love and me.

GRATITUDE

The sun is on the mountain crest,
The sky without a cloud,
The moon is slipping down the west,
The robin's song is loud;
White blossoms crown the apple trees,
The dew is on the thorn,
The scent of roses fills the breeze,--
Thank God, another morn!

The sunset embers smoulder low,
The moon climbs o'er the hill,
The peaks have caught the alpenglow,
The robin's song is still;
The hush of peace is on the earth,
With stars the sky grows bright,
The fire is kindled on my hearth,--
Thank God, another night!

IN TENEBRIS

All the lights have been extinguished
In my closely-curtained room,
Nothing now can be distinguished
In the all-pervading gloom;
And through darkness, so alluring,
I would float away to sleep,
Like a boat that slips its mooring,
And moves gently toward the deep.

How delightful this seclusion
From the garish light of day,--
All its turmoil and confusion
Pushed, a little while, away!
Neither men nor things shall try me
Till to-morrow brings its light;
Let my cares go drifting by me!
I'll not think of them to-night.

Social cant and empty phrases,
Base returns for kindness shown,
Envy's serpent-smile, and praises

Which convey, for bread, a stone,--
What a joy to have rejected
All such griefs, of evil born!
What a boon to feel protected
From their advent until morn!

Moon and stars, without, are gleaming
Over snow-capped peaks sublime,
But to-night I'll give to dreaming,
Nor esteem it wasted time;
Nay, through darkness, so alluring,
I will float away to sleep,
Like a boat that slips its mooring,
And moves gently toward the deep.

TWO MOTHERS

One night two lonely women met
Beside a storm-swept bay;
With tears their mournful eyes were wet,
Their pale lips salt with spray;
They passed; then turned, as though each yearned
Some friendly word to say.

"Poor soul", cried one, "hast thou no fear
To walk this haunted strand?
What hopeless sorrow brings thee here,
Where dead men drift to land?
I too have grief beyond relief;
Speak! I can understand."

"I mourn a son", the other said;
"That ocean is his grave;
My heart will not be comforted,
It breaks with every wave;
Would I might sleep in yonder deep
With him I could not save!

"The wind was raging, as to-night;
Straight on these rocks it blew;
I watched until the dawning light
Disclosed the wreck to view;
From where we stand I saw his hand
Wave me a last adieu!

"He deemed the boat too frail to bear
Another living freight;
'Push off! he said with tranquil air,
'Go first, and I will wait;'
But all the while, despite his smile,
He knew 'twould be too late.

"That heartless crew shall nevermore
God's absolution find!
They watched, like cravens, from the shore
The man they left behind
Go down before the breakers' roar,
The surges and the wind!

"Hence, when such maddened tempests rave,
I cannot rest at home,
For then the billows deck his grave

With flowers of snow-white foam;
And here I pray till break of day
Beneath night's starless dome."

A silence fell; then, faint and low,
The other, weeping, said;
"My heavier woe thou needst not know;
Within his ocean bed
On thy son's name there rests no shame;
Would God that mine were dead!"

AT HOCHFINSTERMUENZ

Once more between its walls of pines
I see the long ravine expand
To where the ice-world's crystal lines
Define the realm of Switzerland.

Once more, a thousand feet below,
I watch the river's silver sheen,
As, foaming in its fettered flow,
It rushes from the Engadine.

Forever young, forever old,
This gorge, where stream with forest blends,
These glittering peaks, these glaciers cold,--
Are all to me familiar friends.

I know, alas, their towering forms
Of unresponsive rocks and snow
Are heartless as their wintry storms,
And heed not if I come or go;

Yet none the less I love to trace
Their stainless crests along the sky,
And, as I greet each well-known face,
Each seems in turn to make reply.

So potent is the subtle spell
That clothes such masses with a mind;
So strong the instincts which impel
Their lover answering love to find!

What if in truth there really be
A soul within them to adore;
Some half-revealed Divinity,
Whose presence haunts us evermore?

Some Power, to read our hearts, and know
How this wild beauty moves our tears;
Some God that, as our spirits grow,
Shall be discerned in after years?

Instinctively did earlier man
See fauns and dryads in the trees,
And find in universal Pan
The soul of Nature's mysteries.

All is divine,--the bird that sings,
The flowers that bloom, the waves that roll;
One Spirit quickens men and things,
And stirs alike the sun and soul.

Great Nature's God! however styled,
I love thee, and upon thy breast
Would gladly lie,--a grateful child,
And, dying, trust thee for the rest.

THE GIFT OF JUNO

Already 'neath the morning star
The shrine, by Juno's favor blest,
Had flashed its whiteness from afar,
Resplendent on a mountain's crest,
Along whose base the ocean rolled
A flood of sapphire, flecked with gold.

In twilight still the shore remained;
But, toiling upward through the night,
A wistful mother had just gained
The summit of the sacred height,
Where Juno's far-famed statue stood,--
Palladium of motherhood.

At her approach the bolts were drawn,
And inward swung the temple gate,
Revealing in the light of dawn
The marble form immaculate,
The effigy of heaven's queen,
Sublime, beneficent, serene.

Slow-moving and with fluttering heart,
The youthful matron onward passed
To where that masterpiece of art
Repaid her arduous toil at last;
As, gazing through a mist of tears,
She realized here the dream of years.

Beside her, one on either hand,
Two little children stood in fear,
Unable yet to understand
The reason of their coming here;
Both beautiful in form and face,
True types of the Hellenic race.

No fairer pilgrims ever came
Within the temple's stately door;
No sweeter picture could it frame
Than that upon its marble floor,
When, in the hush of dawning day,
The lovely trio knelt to pray.

"Immortal goddess, not in vain
Do mothers lift their souls to thee;
Their love, their hopes, their fears, their pain
Thy heart can feel, thine eyes can see;
Deign, therefore, my sweet babes to bless,
O Juno, fount of tenderness!

"To thy divine, all-seeing eyes
The course of every life is clear;
I pray thee, note what future lies
Before these helpless children here;
Then, of the gifts by thee possessed,

Give them but one; choose thou the best!"

She paused, and waited for reply,
While solemn stillness filled the shrine;
Heard something like a gentle sigh,
Or passing of a breath divine;
Then saw their eyes, like petals, close
In death's sweet, statue-like repose.

Repose, unbroken evermore!
The world of suffering still unknown!
Escaping through that peaceful door
From every ill life might have shown.
Heart-broken mother, cease to weep!
The best was given them,—dreamless sleep.

THE AWAKENING

Let me sleep on! I would not waken yet,
Or leave too soon the peaceful realm of dreams!
There, lulled by placid Lethe, I forget
The tumult raging on Earth's roaring streams;
Doubt not that, later, I shall surely meet
With steadfast soul Day's ceaseless, sordid strife,
But now I crave again that strangely sweet
Oblivion of life;—

That tranquil sleep, whose cooling shadow stills
The throbbing forehead and the fevered brain,
Which soothes to rest all sense of present ills,
Of poignant sorrow and persistent pain;
O gift divine, O boon beyond compare,
God's benediction at the evening's close,
The antidote of grief, the cure of care,
The kingdom of repose!

Too late ... the spell is broken ... I awake;
How swift the rush of memory's turning tide,
Whose ruthless waves the will's frail barriers break,
And flood the cells where consciousness would hide!
Alas, how mad and fierce the world appears!
How dark and ominous the future seems!
I rise to face them ... yet recall through tears
The quiet land of dreams.

THE WINE OF LIFE

Earthen jar of quaint design,
Fragile clay and slender mould,
I shall soon have drained the wine
Which you still contrive to hold,—
Wine that sixty years ago
Seemed about to overflow.

Few the draughts that now remain,
And I husband them with care,
For naught ever comes again
That is once exhausted there,
And the emptied jar is cast

To the scrap-heap of the past.

Oh, the wine we rashly waste
When held brimming to the lip!
What a difference in its taste
When we drink it sip by sip,
As a miser counts his gold
On a hearth that leaves him cold!

But why should we feel distress
If the jar be far from filled?
Though its contents may be less,
Yet its essence is distilled,
And the best wine always clears
With the passing of the years.

Fermentation is for youth,
But serenity for age;
For a knowledge of the truth
Men have always sought the Sage,
And though youth may live with zest,
'Tis in age that one lives best.

LIFE'S TRILOGY

Youth dreams of all the years shall hold,--
Of poems writ, of battles won,
Of statues made, of love, of gold,
And honors, added one by one;
How sweet the song of Hope, if sung,
 When life is young!

Man's dreams are stern and few indeed;
His youthful aims he finds despised,
For in a world of strife and greed
Ideals must be sacrificed;
Alas, there is so little time
 In manhood's prime!

Age dreams of what the years have brought,--
The blots upon life's tear-dimmed scroll,
The brave attempts that came to naught,
The unsolved problems of the soul;
How sadly is the tale retold,
 When life is old!

Youth, Manhood, Age,--the fatal Three!
Illusion, Struggle, and Regret!
So hath it been, so shall it be,
And to what end? We know not yet;
Still sweeps the mighty life-flood on,
 Now here, now gone!

Seed, bud, florescence, and decay
In nature, races, nations, men;--
Nay, Earth itself shall fail one day
To feed its freezing brood! What then?
Successive cycles, vast and small,--
 Can these be all?

Do all these swirls of suns and souls,
Of spirit keen and senseless stone,

Speed on to no appointed goals,
Like sand along the desert blown,--
Forever born from out the void,
 To be destroyed?--

Nay, Reason, shocked at anarchy,
Demands an author and an aim,
Seeks ever for the master-key
To solve the mystery,--Whence came
This starlit sea of Evermore,
 Without a shore?

And whence comes Life,--that occult Force,
So rich in its prolific range,
So frail and swift to run its course,
Yet deathless in protean change?
Must we not hope that Death will clear
 The darkness here?

Such hopes appear of little worth
When, peering through our planet's bars,
We picture this, our tiny Earth,
Amid that wilderness of stars!
Yet in those sun-strewn depths of space
 It hath its place.

Its rhythmic motion, tuned to time,
Its awful rush, yet sure return,
Make even our dim orb sublime,
And we at last the truth discern,--
With God is neither small nor great,
 Nor soon, nor late.

Unconscious actors,--it may be
That here we painfully rehearse,
In parts, whose plots we do not see,
Some drama of the universe,--
Advanced, as nobler grow our souls,
 To loftier roles.

MYSTERIES

Bound to the earth in its headlong flight,
Whence and whither we do not know,
Cleaving the awful void of night
With frost above and fire below,
What is the goal toward which we fly?
What does it mean to live and die?

Under our feet a trembling shell,
Pierced by a hundred lurid rents!
Lower still a molten hell,
Seen through its lava-belching vents!
And men, within its blighting breath,
Are charred, like leaves, to a shrivelled death.

Thin is the rind on which we tread;
It shakes, and a thousand lives are lost;
The sea engulfs unnumbered dead;
Each second scores of souls are tossed
Into the stream that sweeps them on ...
Whither? Who knows where they are gone?

Over the earth-crust millions crawl,
Fight for a little gold and grain,
Then in a few years leave it all,
Nevermore to be seen again!
When will the tragic tale be told?
And what of Man when the earth grows cold?

Poised on the planet's rim we stand,
Peering aghast into boundless space;
Infinite depths on every hand,
Never again in the self-same place;
Dragged by the sun itself away
On toward a point in the Milky Way.

Not without companions we;
Here and there gleam other fires,--
Burning ships on a shoreless sea;
Now and again a flame expires,
One last, quivering shaft of light,
Shot through a billion leagues of night.

There in its last volcanic throes
A dying world perhaps dissolves;
Further still, where the sun-mist glows,
A mighty, new-born sun evolves;
Ceaseless change in an endless sky!
What does it mean to live and die?

STAR DRIFT

The glaring sun hath ceased to shine;
The solemn stars invade the sky;
Again the welcome night is mine,
Wherein to view the worlds on high;
The night! when heaven bares its face,
And man with reverent soul can trace
The awful mysteries of space.

Too long the shadeless solar blaze
Hath forced my vision toward the sod;
'Tis night alone that helps us raise
Our thoughts from littleness to God,
And by its darkness sets us free
To gaze across what seems to be
The portal of Eternity.

I watch the stellar hosts ascend
Their devious paths in slow array,
And note the place where millions blend
To form the fabled Milky Way,---
That zone of radiant suns, whose light
Hath needed centuries of flight
To reach our little earth to-night,

Through lenses scanned, its golden haze
Resolves itself to points that glow
In one stupendous, brilliant maze
Of countless orbs, that come and go
On pathways we may never learn,
However long their light may burn,
However ardently we yearn.

Apparently so densely strewn,
But oh! what gulfs those suns divide!
As each pursues its course alone
Beyond an interval as wide
As that which yawns between our own
And any of those star-seeds sown
In astral gardens, still unknown.

Sometimes from that resplendent sheen
A new light gleams across the void,
And, awe-struck, we conceive the scene
Of two vast solar orbs destroyed;
By fearful impact changed again,
Unnumbered miles beyond our ken,
To leagues of blazing hydrogen.

Before such marvels, what are we
To plume ourselves in foolish pride?
Within that dim immensity
How many suns and earths have died!
The tiny mote on which we stand,
However fair and finely planned,
Is nothing but a grain of sand.

To-day, as through the ages gone,
By law impelled, by law restrained,
Suns, planets, systems,—all sweep on
Toward bourns still dark and unexplained;
Some bright with youth, some dull with age,
Their varied colors well presage
Their distance from the final stage.

For all are doomed at last to die!
On heaven's blue sea each isle of fire,
Of all that now enchant the eye,
Must finally in gloom expire;
Though all may still roll on, unseen,
As blackened cinders, while between
Dark, lifeless planets intervene.

And then? The mind sinks back in dread!
Such burnt-out worlds may well appal,
If they must still continue dead,
And universal night end all;
But, one by one, as speed shall fail,
Each may some rival mass assail,
Till nebulas again prevail.

But not for long! A refluent spurge
Shall that destructive course reverse,
And cause those sun-mists to converge
To mould another universe;
Again shall constellations rise,
And suns and planets light the skies,
And man regain his paradise.

For thus with rhythmic sweep sublime
Swings Chaos on to Cosmos; then
In ages, measureless by time,
Rolls Cosmos back to mist again,
In one stupendous ebb and flow,
As aeons come and aeons go,
With all their freight of weal and woe.

Hard, cruel, hopeless? It may be.
We know too little to decide;
Yet hope that o'er that starlit sea
Some steadfast, God-directed tide
Will one day bear us to a shore,
Where we shall find our lost once more,
And what was here unknown, adore.

TYROLEAN

OBERMAIS

Obermais! Obermais!
Charming bit of Paradise,
Where the palm and snow are blended,
Where life's joys seem never ended,
Where the purl of limpid streams
Haunts the traveller's deepest dreams;
Girt by miles of terraced vines,
Birthplace of the purest wines,
Sheltered by imposing mountains,
Musical from countless fountains,
Bathed in sunshine, bright with flowers,
Studded with old Roman towers,
Castles, convents, shrines and walls,
Whose strange history enthalls,—
Jewel of fair South Tyrol,
Thou hast won my heart and soul!

CONTENTMENT

Urge me no more! The mid-day toil is ended,
And shadows lengthen from the radiant west;
The glowing sun, with sumptuous clouds attended,
Sinks to its rest.

I too would rest; an Indian-Summer beauty
Gilds my life's autumn in a charming vale;
No further quest of gold or fame seems duty;
Their splendors pale

Tempt me no more! In vain are spread before me
New plans of battle and rare hopes of gain;
The sweeter airs of love and peace blow o'er me;
I will remain.

Gone is the glamour of the heartless city;
Hateful its traffic and its ceaseless roar;
Slaves of its tyranny, you have my pity;
Urge me no more!

Girdled by mountains, in a land of story,
Nestles the high-walled garden of my home;
Here, book in hand, I feast myself on glory,
Nor wish to roam.

Each dawn brings rose-hued snow-peaks to my vision;
Each eve's enchanting pageant thrills my soul;

Day after day I find yet more elysian
Fair South Tyrol.

Urge me no more! The riches of Golconda
Could not allure me to the old-time task;
Here, till the curtain falls, to live and ponder
Is all I ask.

TO MERAN'S NORTHERN MOUNTAINS

Breathe on my soul your everlasting calm,
Majestic mountains, passionless and cold!
Give to my spirit, drooping 'neath the palm,
The rugged strength your changeless summits hold!

So thin the azure veil that floats between
My tropic flowers and your arctic snows,
That one swift glance reveals to me the sheen
Of your white bastions and my blossoming rose.

Yet, though so near, my feet have never pressed
Your silvered ramparts, etched along the sky:
Untrodden crystal crowns each spotless crest;
On virgin snows the sunset colors die.

So near, yet unattainable! Ye seem
Like awful deities, at whose command
Man's evanescent life,--a fretful stream,
One instant murmurs and is lost in sand.

Splendid in sunshine, steadfast under storms,
Facing the fiercest tempests with disdain,
The blackest clouds that shroud your giant forms,
Leave on your glittering panoply no stain.

The setting sun will turn your gray to gold,
The dawn will find your icy foreheads bare,
And all your glacial armor, as of old,
Will shine resplendent in the upper air.

So from my life may all dark clouds depart!
So may I come unscathed from Fate's worst blows!
Yet with your strength, O Mountains, let my heart
Retain, as well, the sweetness of the rose.

AT SUNSET

Belov'd Meran, supremely fair!
With joy I greet thy peaks anew,
And quaff again the crystal air
That fills thy snow-rimmed bowl of blue.

Once more through miles of trellised vines
The purple bloom of vintage glows;
Once more amid my palms and pines
I breathe the perfume of the rose.

Once more, as snow-crests far and wide
Flush crimson in the Alpine glow,

I sit and muse at eventide
On Roman days of long ago.

Across the valley, steeped in light,
Uplifted toward the western skies,
And flanked by many a snow-crowned height,
The stately "Roman Terrace" lies;

Whose fair expanse hath been a stage
Where actors for two thousand years
Have played, by turns, in every age
Their varying roles of smiles and tears.

Still through its mighty Vintschgau door
The sunset streams in floods of gold;
Still winding o'er its emerald floor,
The river sparkles as of old.

I watch the distant torrent leap
From ledge to ledge, yet hear no sound;
A ghostly path it seems, whose deep,
Swift channel cleaves enchanted ground.

Beside its waves, whose glittering spray
Begems the gorge its flood hath worn,
Rome's conquering legions made their way
A score of years ere Christ was born.

On yonder mound where frowns the wood,
And curves the road with steep incline,
A temple to Diana stood
Before the age of Antonine.

Near Schloss Tyrol's dismantled frame
I see the ancient watchtower stand,
Whence Caesar's guards with smoke or flame
Flashed signals into Switzerland.

And, nearer yet, Forst's stately walls
Loom grandly from the darkening moor,
Where still a dungeon-keep recalls
The last Tyrolean Troubadour.

Belov'd Meran! the splendid dower
That Nature gave to South Tyrol
Cannot alone explain thy power
To captivate both mind and soul;

I love thy sunshine, fruits and flowers,
I love thy mountain-peaks sublime,
But, best of all, thine aged towers,--
The ivied proteges of Time.

Thus favored, while my sun of life
Moves calmly toward a cloudless west,
I crave no more the New World's strife
And ceaseless turmoil of unrest;

Content, within my garden walls,
To let the Present's uproar cease,
While on my tranquil spirit falls
The Past's sweet benison of peace.

POST NUBES LUX

Sink, sullen rear-guard of the storm,
Behind the Laugen's snowy crest!
Already Rotheck's lordly form
Stands spotless in the radiant west;
Blow, winter wind, and clarify
Our crystal air, our sapphire sky!

Shine, Sun God! Give us life once more!
Too long have clouds concealed thy face;
Give to Meran the look she wore,
When to her beauty, light, and grace
I gladly yielded heart and soul,
And made my home in fair Tyrol!

Stupendous source of life and light!
As in thy warmth my pulses thrill,
Before thy glory and thy might
I feel myself a Pagan still,
And in my spirit's inmost shrine
I half adore thee as divine.

THE HOME-COMING FROM ROME

Make haste! There is but one more turning!
The horses cannot go too fast,
So eagerly our hearts are yearning
To see the longed-for home at last!

Here is the shrine, the lamp still burning,
Beside the vineyard's massive wall;
And see, to welcome our returning,
The banners on the flagstaffs tall!

Before the gate, our servants, wearing
Their brightest smiles, together stand,
In quaint, Tyrolean style preparing
To kiss respectfully the hand.

Now, too, the dogs perceive their master,
And rush to meet our carriage wheels;
The loyal Leo first and faster,
The dackels close upon his heels!

How wild the joy, how loud the chorus
Our old, familiar tones excite!
Dear, faithful creatures that adore us,
How genuine their keen delight!

The door is passed, the hall is entered!
How true it is, where'er we roam,
That here alone our hearts are centered,
That no place hath the charm of Home!

Here smile the pictures ranged above us;
Here stand our books, the best of friends;
Here those we love and those who love us
Are happy that our absence ends.

We prize the intellectual treasures

On History's famous sites amassed;
And precious are the varied pleasures
From Art's great glories of the past;

But well we know, when once more seated
Within these rooms with volumes lined,
That,--now the journey is completed--,
The best of Rome is in the mind.

MY GARDEN

Sweet garden, wreathed in fruits and flowers,
And domed by blue Tyrolean skies,
Within thy rose-encircled bowers,
Secluded from all curious eyes,
I find a peaceful paradise.

Without, the world's fierce strife and yearning
In floods of passion ebb and flow;
Within, as in a shrine, is burning,--
Reflecting fires of long ago,--
A stormy life's calm afterglow.

How sumptuous is the golden splendor
Thy yellow roses give my walls!
Like yonder glow, so sweet and tender,
That o'er the snow at sunset falls,
And by its spell the soul enthalls.

How swiftly pass the happy hours
Beside thy palms, beneath thy pines,
As through the fountain's crystal showers
I watch the sunlight gild thy vines
Against the snow-peaks' silvered lines!

I lean upon my loggia's railing
And view the vineyard's saffron sheen,--
Its amber leaves in glory veiling
The purpling grapes, that hang between
Its long arcades of gold and green.

And at the sight my heart is beating
With rapture hitherto unknown,
As with delight I keep repeating
In love's triumphant undertone,--
"All this is mine, my very own"!

Then with a chill, like that which steals
Across the vale at set of sun,
A solemn thought the truth reveals,--
How transient is the prize thus won!
How short a time my lease can run!

Before I thought this garden fair
And from its beauty rapture drew,
How many others breathed its air,
And, glorying in its matchless view,
Had plucked its roses wet with dew!

Where now my vines and violets grow,
And fill the breeze with odors sweet,
Two thousand years and more ago

Some Roman had his loved retreat,
And watched the sun and snow-peak meet.

Rome fell; but, Maia still remaining,
Both Goth and Frank the slope desired,
Through two millenniums still retaining
The longing for what all admired,
The love which ownership inspired.

I sometimes fancy that I see
Those masters of an earlier age,—
A ghostly line preceding me
Across this corner of life's stage,—
The Pagan, Christian, bard and sage.

Each one in turn called thee his own,
And deemed thee his submissive slave;
But, when a few short years had flown,
Of all thy wealth what could he save?
At most thou gavest him a grave!

Ephemeral creatures of a day,
We move like insects on thy soil,
And wear our little lives away
In fleeting pleasures or in toil;
But naught our destiny can foil.

A few more Springs thy buds shall quicken,
A few more Summers bring thy bloom,
A few more Autumn suns shall thicken
The clusters ripening in thy gloom,—
When I for strangers must make room!

When other eyes shall see the vision
Of Rotheck's pyramid of snow,
And watch the roseate hues elysian
Creep over it at evening's glow,
As o'er its crest the sun sinks low.

Another then will pluck the flowers
Whose seeds my loving hand hath sown;
Another, through the mid-day hours,
Will hear the honey bee's dull drone
Where other roses shall have blown.

These mountains then will still be lifting
Their ice-crowned summits to the sky;
The fleecy clouds will still be drifting
Above their peaks and pastures high;
But they will heed not where I lie.

Even thou wilt never miss thy master!
Thy vines and flowers will bloom the same,
The season's round will move no faster,
No bud will quench its torch of flame,
And naught will change here but a name.

Yet all who shall with joy succeed me
In their turn must thy charms resign,
When, as to all who now precede me,
Death shall have made the fatal sign
To join the ever-lengthening line.

We "owners," then, are but thy tenants
Despite our purchase and our pride;

To thee what is our transient presence?
Thou carest not if we abide
Among thy roses, or have died.

Hence, let me drain in fullest measure
Thy cup of pure Tyrolean wine!
To-day at least I hold thy treasure;
To-day with truth I call thee mine;
To-morrow's sun may never shine.

THE MOUNTAINS OF MERAN AT SUNRISE

Like snow-white tents, their tapering forms
 Indent the western sky:
The jewelled gifts of countless storms
 Upon their summits lie.

The sinking moon, with fading scars,
 Hath touched their frosty spires;
Around them pale the wearied stars,
 Like waning bivouac fires.

Stray cloudlets, reddening one by one,
 Like rose leaves half unfurled,
Announce the coming of the sun
 To an awakening world.

The chief peak now hath caught the glow,
 And, soft, o'er sloping walls
And buttresses of dazzling snow,
 The flood of splendor falls;

While miles of tender pink and gold
 Incrust the blue of space,
And bands of amethyst enfold
 Each mountain's massive base.

Gone are the tents that pierced the skies;
 But in their place, more fair,
Transfigured flowers of Paradise
 Bloom in the crystal air.

OSWALD, THE MINNESINGER

A Legend of Schloss Forst, near Meran

PROLOGUE

Oswald von Wolkenstein, the Last of the Minnesingers, loved a beautiful woman, named Sabina, who proved faithless to him, thereby causing the poet great mental suffering. He avenged his wrongs by writing poems on her coquetry and cruelty. Years later, Sabina, who had never forgiven him his satirical verses, became the favorite of the Tyrolese prince, "Frederick, of the Empty Purse", who also hated Oswald for opposing his political plans. Accordingly, Sabina plotted with her lover to induce the poet to come to her under a pretence of renewing their former love. To effect this, she wrote him a letter expressing her undying affection for him, and begging him to meet her near Meran. The plot was

successful, and Oswald fell completely into their power. By Frederick's orders he was at once imprisoned in the dungeon of Schloss Forst, and subjected to tortures which crippled him for the rest of his life.

"Oswald von Wolkenstein!

Last of a gifted line,
Years have gone by since we parted in hate;
What have they taught to me?
This, that all's naught to me
Save what you brought to me,—
Love and love's fate.
Can you that love forget?
Know that I love you yet!
If you my passion share,
Linger no longer there;
Fearless to do and dare,
Come, ere too late!

"Near the old Roman Road
Up which the legions strode,
Where the first vine-covered terraces rise,
Stands a grim fortress tall,
Which, like a mountain wall,
Though scarred by many a ball,
Capture defies!
'Forst' is the name it bears;
Brilliant the fame it wears;
Thither,—our trysting place—,
Ride at your swiftest pace;
Come to my fond embrace!
My love your prize!"

Who could such words suspect?
Who could that call reject?
Surely not Wolkenstein, ardent of soul!
Gone is the pain of years;
Vanished his jealous fears;
Smiles have replaced his tears;
Lost self-control;
Slave to his passion's past,
Vows to the winds are cast;
Faithless, she holds him still;
Absent, she sways his will;
Traitor, with subtle skill
Plays she her role.

Where Etsch and Eisack meet,
Mingling their waters fleet,
Opens the valley that leads to Meran;
As its red cliffs divide,
Castles on either side
(Each a strong chieftain's pride)
Threaten his plan;
Yet, where the shadows sleep
Under each dungeon keep,
Up through the land of wine,
Blest with both palm and pine,
Oswald von Wolkenstein
Rides to Terlan.

Here falls his gallant horse,
Killed by his headlong course;
Is it a warning to halt and retreat?
Yet who, when passion pleads,
Ever such warning heeds?

What though a dozen steeds
Drop at his feet?
Hence, while the peasants stare,
Buys he their swiftest mare;
And, as the pavement rings
With the bright gold he flings,
He to the saddle springs,
Never so fleet!

Now, lover, pause for breath!
Folly may here mean death!
Yon gleam the lights of the capital's towers;
Here let thy pace be slow;
Frederick, thy crafty foe,
Plots there to lay thee low,
Fearing thy powers;
He of the "empty purse",
Stung by thy biting verse,
Using a woman's hate,
Offers a tempting bait;
Both thy approach await,
Counting the hours!

Dark is the starless night;
Only one feeble light
Burns at the grating surmounting the door;
Has his advance been heard?
Was that a whispered word?
What in that shadow stirred?
Shall he explore?
Fie! when a prize so fair
Doubtless awaits him there,
Shall he now hesitate
Here, at Forst's very gate,
Fearing to test his fate?
No, nevermore!

Hark! 'tis a gruff command,
Loosing an ambushed band;
Seizing, they drag him, disarmed, to the court;
Brightly the torches flare,
Flinging a ruddy glare
On a proud, mocking pair,
Watching the sport;
God, can this thing be true?
She with this hostile crew!
"Faithless and shameless one,
Thou hast my life undone!"
"Poet, thy race is run",
Is her retort.

Barred is the iron door!
On the damp dungeon floor
Oswald the Troubadour, gifted and strong,
Lies in a loathsome cave,
Dark as a living grave,
No one to care or save,
Silenced his song;
And while they leave him there,
Crushed by profound despair,
Princelet and paramour,
Knowing their prey secure,
Feeling their vengeance sure,
Laugh loud and long.

Who can in words relate
Oswald's unhappy fate,
Left to these monsters, whose hate was ablaze?
Both on revenge were bent;
He for a menace sent,
She for the merriment
Caused by his lays.
"Dungeon and torture-rack,
These shall now pay thee back!
Minstrel and poet rare,
Rave in thy mad despair,
And in that fetid lair
Finish thy days!"

Vainly he pleads with her;
No prayer succeeds with her;
Useless the joys of their past to rehearse;
For to increase his woe,
Frederick, his jealous foe,
Shares in this cruel show,—
Fit for God's curse;
Shameless and treacherous,
Heartless and lecherous,
Sabine with fiendish glee,
Deaf to his every plea,
Watches his agony,
Quoting his verse!

Broken at last his chain!
Ended the poet's pain!
Freed by a ransom (his relatives' dole),
Humbled by grief and shame,
Injured in name and fame,
Drags he his crippled frame
Back through Tyrol.
Then, in a plaintive song
Chanting his grievous wrong,
Oswald von Wolkenstein,
Last of his gifted line,
Dies in Schloss Hauenstein;
God rest his soul!

AFTER THE VINTAGE

How can my vineyard's charm be told,
As it basks in the autumn haze?
The Frost King's touch, so light and cold,
Like that of the Persian king of old,
Hath turned its roof from green to gold,
Till the hillside seems ablaze.

Threading its maze of arbors fair
Under its saffron bowers,
I watch, in the crisp, November air,
Through vine-framed openings here and there
The ivied walls of castles rare
And ruined Roman towers.

Sapphire blue is the cloudless sky,
White are the mountain walls,
Rainbow-hued are the tints that lie
Lavishly spread on the forests high,

Where leaves by millions flame and die,
As the chill of Autumn falls.

Over the slopes in sun and shade
The terraced vines descend,
Like stately steps of a broad cascade,
Or an amphitheatre's seats, arrayed
In folds of sumptuous, gold brocade,
Where red and amber blend.

I love to see, from the rising sun
Each terrace gain its crown,
When the splendid dawn hath just begun,
From the crest of the mountain it hath won,
To gild the vine-rows one by one,
As the mellow glow creeps down.

And when the day's receding light
Deserts the vale below,
I trace its noiseless, upward flight
Through darkening zones of foliage bright,
Till all the world is lost in night
Save pyramids of snow.

THE PASSING MOON

In my loggia bright I watch to-night
The full moon sailing by;
From a crystal creek in a glaciated peak
It slipped to the open sky,
And now rides free in a clear, blue sea,
With not an island nigh.

Through pearly haze its light displays
Each buttressed mountain side,
And softly shines through stately pines
Where feudal castles hide,
And every height grows dazzling white
In the foam of a silver tide.

From the eastern side of the valley wide
To its snow-capped western rim
It will hold its way, till the dawning day
Shall have made its disk grow dim;
Then, leaving the blue, will drop from view
Behind the mountain's brim.

Whence did it climb on its path sublime,
Ere it left that icy height?
And where will it go, when yonder snow
Is reached in the morning light?
Will its face elsewhere be just as fair,
When here it is lost to sight?

Why should I ask? 'Tis a fruitless task;
Enough that its splendor falls
On me to-night in my loggia bright,
Till the scene my soul entralls;
'Tis a long time yet, ere the moon will set
Behind those glittering walls.

And even when it sinks again

Below that stainless crest,
It will seem at last to have safely passed
To a haven of peace and rest,
Like a happy soul that hath reached its goal
In the kingdom of the blest.

I also know not where I go,
Nor whence I came, or why,
Nor can I guess what happiness
Or strange, new world may lie
Beyond the vale through which I sail,
Beneath another sky;

But as the moon, which all too soon
Sinks down the west for me,
To other eyes appears to rise
And glide on fair and free,
So the frail boat in which I float,
Though tempest-worn it be,
May cross life's brink, and seem to sink,
Yet sail another sea.

AUTUMN IN MERAN

The vintage time is gone, but not its glory;
The grapes are garnered from their leafy gloom;
Yet miles of vineyards, story crowning story,
Cover the hillsides with a golden bloom.

The vine-clad terraces descend the mountains
Like cascades rippling with resplendent gold;
Steeped in the sun, and fed by sweet-voiced fountains,
Tyrolean slopes a paradise unfold.

Above the vines the mountain sides are blending
The oaks' and maples' multicolored glow,
In variegated zones their hues ascending
From radiant roses to eternal snow.

Now here, now there, through brilliant foliage peeping,
A ruined castle seeks its walls to hide,--
High on some lonely crag in silence sleeping,
Left centuries since by history's ebbing tide.

In sparkling foam the beryl-colored river
Laughs in the sunshine between tinted walls;
While on the cliffs the scarlet creepers shiver,
Chilled by the breeze, as sunset's shadow falls.

Still in the valley Summer reigns victorious,
Though Winter's silvery sheen creeps slowly down;
Land of the vine and snow, at all times glorious,
In Autumn wearest thou thy fairest crown.

THE STATUE OF THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH. MERAN

She is seated by the river
In a robe of spotless white,
With her lovely face illumined

By the evening's tender light;
But her eyes are full of sadness,
As if weary of the day,
And her gaze is toward the ocean,
While the river glides away.

At her feet are beds of flowers,
Overhead are stately trees
Whose protecting branches murmur
With the passing of the breeze;
Though her hand retains a volume,
From its page her glances stray,
For her thoughts are with the ocean,
As the river flows away.

As I view her chastened features,
I can feel the rising tears
At the thought of all her anguish
Through a martyrdom of years;
For her joys were writ in water,--
Too impermanent to stay,
And were swept toward sorrow's ocean,
Ere her youth had passed away.

She was captured in the morning
Of her childhood's careless age,
And imprisoned in a palace
Like a linnnet in a cage;
And its gilded bars confined her
To a Court's prescribed display,
Which her simple nature hated,
As the slow years crept away.

Thus her heart grew always sadder,
Till her sorrows, one by one,
Reached at last their tragic climax
In the murder of her son;
And this broken-hearted woman,
As a madman's victim, lay
By Geneva's placid waters,
While her life-blood ebbed away!

Hence her marble face seems troubled,
As she gazes down the stream,
Like an angel who hath wakened
From a fearful, earth-born dream;
She is waiting for the sunset
Of her tempest-darkened day,
But her soul is with the ocean,
Where all rivers wend their way.

THE OUTCASTS

The smile of God was in the air;
Enwreathed in veils of silvery hue,
The valley lay, divinely fair,
Beneath a cloudless vault of blue;
And singing, like a bird set free,
The river hurried to the sea.

Through Alpine ether, crystal clear,
The genial sun of South Tyrol

Diffused its blessed warmth and cheer,
Enriching body, mind and soul,
While music floated o'er the stream,
And made such beauty seem a dream.

Enraptured with the sun's caress
And windless warmth 'mid peaks of snow,
In careless quest of happiness
The gay world sauntered to and fro,
Or, seated on the well-kept strand,
Enjoyed the music of the band.

Upon a bench, remote from those
Whose dress betokened rank or wealth,
Sat two poor waifs, whose weary pose
Betrayed a fruitless search for health,--
An aged couple, near their end,
United, yet without a friend.

But still they bravely tried to smile,
--So warm the sun, so fair the scene!--
They could be happy yet a while,
Ere death's cold shadow crept between;
And music's softly rhythmic flow
Recalled their youth of long ago.

"Begone!" a watchman's voice exclaimed;
"Your rustic garb is much too poor;
How comes it, you are not ashamed
In such a place to play the boor?
From company like this withdraw!
Obey the mandate of the law!"

The startled strangers meekly rose
And moved away with downcast eyes,
Too wonted to such cruel blows
To manifest the least surprise;
Too humbled to inquire why;
Too timid to attempt reply.

Poor outcasts from that joyous stage
Where well-dressed hundreds strolled at ease,
With faltering steps, and bowed with age,
They vanished slowly 'neath the trees;
But neither scanned the other's face,
For fear a falling tear to trace.

Farewell, sweet, music-laden air,
And sunshine on the sheltered strand!
I follow where that outcast pair
Are walking sadly, hand in hand;
For me your vaunted charm hath fled,
While they remain uncomforted.

HEIMWEH

I dwell in a region of valleys fair,
Of stately forests and mountains bold,
Of churches filled with treasures rare,
And storied castles centuries old;
But now and then, when the sun sinks low,
And the vesper bell is softly rung,

I think of the days of long ago,
And yearn for the land where I was young.

I live where the sun shines bright and warm
On feathery palms and terraced vines,
Yet oft I sigh for a boreal storm
And the sough of the wind through northern pines;
And though my ear hath wonted grown
To the accents strange of an alien tongue,
No speech hath half so sweet a tone
As the language learned when I was young.

I live in a land where men are kind,
And friends increase, as the years roll on,
Yet of them all not one I find
So dear as those of the days now gone;
And so I think, as the sun sinks low,
And the curfew bell of my life is rung,
I shall turn to my home of long ago,
And die in the land where I was young.

MY LIBRARY

Shrine of my mind, my Library!
Each morn I greet thee with delight,
When, soul-refreshed, I bring to thee
The benediction of the night;
Encompassed by thy sheltering walls,
'Mid books whose interest enthalls,
Life's shadow from my spirit falls.

Behold! above the wooded height
The sun-god's glittering disk appears,
And at a bound its flood of light
The intervening valley clears;
Enveloped in its noiseless tide,
Each castle on the mountain side
Stands forth in splendor, glorified.

How welcome are the yellow waves
That through the eastern windows pour
And, with a warmth my nature craves,
Transmute to gold the polished floor!
Then mount to gild my desk, my chair,
And e'en the spotless paper there,
Which soon my written thought must bear.

In serried ranks around me rise
Two thousand tried and trusty friends;
Instructive, famous, witty, wise,
Each gladly his assistance lends
To suit, at will, my varying mood;
But none that aid will e'er intrude,
Or break, unsought, my solitude.

Some speak of problems of the soul,—
Profound, insoluble, sublime;
Some tell of Law's supreme control;
And some retrace through distant time
The evolution of mankind,
And in its ever-broadening mind
A hope for future triumphs find.

A few the noble deeds rehearse
Of heroes famed in peace or war;
While many in inspiring verse
Show heights to which the soul may soar;
But all with serious thoughts are filled,
And some hold truths, from life distilled,
Whose power my heart hath often thrilled.

By such companions cheered and blest,
How vapid seems the listless throng
Of those who, tortured by unrest,
Find life too dull and days too long,
And idly frittering time away,
As scandal-mongers, rend and slay
The friends they dined with yesterday!

My Library! to thee I turn,
As turns the needle toward the pole,
And feel my heart within me yearn
For all thou offerest to the soul;
Why should I join in feverish haste
The crowd for which I have no taste,
The precious boon of life to waste?

Yet not as an austere recluse,—
Still less as one who hates mankind—,
Do I thy peaceful precincts choose;
But as a student, who can find
No joys in Vanity's gay Fair
That for an instant can compare
With those thou askest me to share.

Moreover, welcome as the sun
Are friends whose love I prize and hold;
Their visits I would never shun;
To them my heart grows never cold;
And whether they have wealth, or fame,
Or bear a plain or titled name,
To me will always be the same.

Nor am I ever quite alone
When thus ensconced among my books;
A kindred mind there meets my own,
And with me toward the sunset looks;
With blazing logs the hearth is bright,
A treasured volume is in sight;
Hence to the outer world good night!

TOUT PASSE

Once more I watch the crystal stream
I watched in days gone by;
Once more its waves reflect the gleam
Of Autumn's sunset sky;
Again its banks of gold and green
Seem bursting into flame,—
And yet for me the lovely scene
Can never be the same.

The waves that gleamed here long ago
Have reached a distant sea;

The leaves of that first autumn glow
Have fallen from the tree;
The birds which charmed me with their song
Have long since elsewhere flown,
And I amid a careless throng
Am standing here alone.

This sparkling flood can never quite
Replace the stream of old;
These radiant leaves, however bright,
Wear not the old-time gold;
For evening's light can ne'er retain
The splendor of the dawn,
And naught, alas, can bring again
The faces that are gone.

BESIDE LAKE COMO

THE FAUN

Within my garden's silence and seclusion,
In pensive beauty gazing toward the dawn,
There stands, mid vines and flowers in profusion,
A sculptured Faun.

The boughs of stately trees are bending o'er him,
The scent of calycanthus fills the air,
And on the ivied parapet before him
Bloom roses fair.

Beside him laughs the lightly-flowing fountain,
Beneath him spreads the lake's enchanting hue,
And, opposite, a sun-illuminated mountain
Meets heaven's blue.

Across Lake Como's silvered undulation
The flush of dawn creeps shyly to his face,
And crowns his look of dreamful contemplation
With tender grace.

And he, like Memnon, thrilled to exultation,
As if unable longer to be mute,
Has lifted to his lips in adoration
His simple flute.

Ah! would that I might hear the music stealing
From yonder artless reed upon the air,--
The subtle revelation of his feeling,
While standing there!

Perhaps 'tis for the Past that he is sighing,
When Como's shore held many a hallowed shrine,
Where such as he were worshipped,--none denying
Their rights divine.

That Past is gone; its sylvan shrines have crumbled;
From lake and grove the gentle fauns have fled;
Its myths are scorned, Olympus has been humbled,
And Pan is dead.

Yet still he plays,--the coming day adoring,

With brow serene, and gladness in his gaze,
All past and future happiness ignoring
Just for to-day's!

Sweet Faun, whence comes thy power of retaining
Through storm and sunshine thine unchanging smile?
Forsaken thus, what comfort, still remaining,
Makes life worth while?

Impart to me the secret of discerning
The gold of life, with none of its alloy,
That I may also satisfy my yearning
For perfect joy!

I too would shun those questions, born of sorrow,--
Life's Wherefore, Whence and Whither; I would fill
My cup with present bliss, and let to-morrow
Bring what it will.

O Spirit of the vanished world elysian,
Cast over me the spell of thy control,
And give me, for to-day's supernal vision,
Thy Pagan soul!

ISOLA COMACINA

(The only Island on Lake Como, the Lake Larius of the Romans)

There sleeps beneath Italian skies
A lovely island rich in fame,
In days of old a longed-for prize,
And bearing still an honored name,--
A spot renowned from age to age,
An ancient Roman heritage;

A valued stronghold, for whose sake
Unnumbered men have fought and died,--
The Malta of the Larian lake,
Forever armed and fortified,
To Como's shores the master-key,
The guardian of its liberty.

Half hidden in a sheltered bay,
Where tiny skiffs at anchor ride,
How different is the scene to-day
Reflected in its waveless tide,
From that which this historic foss
Showed mailed soldiers of the Cross!

Yet still, across the narrow strait,
Some remnants of the hospice stand,
Whose ever hospitable gate
Met pilgrims from the Holy Land,
Its finely carved, millennial tower
Enduring to the present hour.

One gem alone doth Como wear,
None other need adorn her breast;
'Tis this, her emerald solitaire,
Her unique island of the blest,--
The star beside her crescent shore,
A thing of beauty evermore.

On Comacina's peaceful strand
The coldest heart is moved to pray,
As softly steals o'er lake and land
The splendor of departing day,
And scores of snowy peaks aspire
To sparkle with supernal fire.

Then Lario paints for liquid miles
The white-robed monarchs' glittering crowns,
Transmutes at once to dimpled smiles
The sternest of their glacial frowns,
And often holds, with subtlest art,
Some Titan's likeness to her heart.

Fair Comacina, through whose trees
Earth's feathered songsters flit unharmed,
Where soft-eyed cattle graze at ease,
And every whispering breeze seems charmed,
Can it be true that human blood
Hath ever stained thy limpid flood?

Alas! too often, drenched with gore,
Thy cliffs have witnessed deadly strife,
When hostile feet profaned thy shore,
And each advancing step cost life,
As prince and peasant, side by side,
Beat back the Goths' invading tide.

But why disturb the silent past?
Why rouse the island's sleeping ghosts?
Or see in forms by ruins cast
The phantoms of those warlike hosts?
For centuries the gentle waves
Have rolled oblivion o'er their graves.

And what will now thy future be,
Thou pristine refuge of the brave,
Which Rome's last heroes fought to free,
And vainly gave their lives to save?
Forget not, thou wast once a gem
That graced a Caesar's diadem!

Wilt thou fulfil my fondest hopes?
I sometimes long to check the stream
Of tourists hurrying by thy slopes,
And tell them of my cherished dream,--
To see upon thy storied height
A palace worthy of the site;

Not meaningless, not merely vast,
Nor crudely modern in design,
But something suited to thy past,--
For highest art a hallowed shrine,
A classic home of long ago,
The Tusculum of Cicero.

Then roses, rich in sweet perfume,
Shall wreath with bloom each terraced wall,
And, scattered through the leafy gloom
Of olive-groves and laurels tall,
Shall many a marble nymph and faun
Grow lovelier from the flush of dawn.

So let me dream! I may not see

That stately palace crown thy brow,
Those roses may not bloom for me,
But, as thou art, I love thee now,
Content thy future to resign
To abler portraiture than mine.

Sweet Comacina, fare thee well!
Across the water's placid breast
The music of the vesper-bell
Invites me to my port of rest;
Fair jewel of this inland sea,
May all the gods be good to thee!

THE OLD CARRIER

("Old Lucia", who for many years walked back and forth, every day and in all weathers, between Azzano and Menaggio, a distance of six miles, bearing merchandise of all sorts in a basket on her back, fell to the ground exhausted, as she was nearing her poor home on Christmas Eve, 1907. She died next morning at the age of seventy-three. At the time she fell, she was carrying a load of nearly one hundred pounds!)

Patient toiler on the road,
Bending 'neath your heavy load,
Worn and furrowed is your face,
Slow and tremulous your pace,
Yet you still pursue your way,
Bearing burdens day by day,
With the same pathetic smile,
Over many a weary mile,
As you bravely come and go
To and from Menaggio.

Snowy white, your scanty hair
Crowns a forehead seamed with care,
And a look of suffering lies
In your clear-blue, wistful eyes;
While your thin and ashen cheek
Tells the tale you will not speak,
Of a lodging dark and old,
And a hearth so bare and cold
That you often hungry go
To and from Menaggio.

Never know you days of rest;
Ceaseless is your humble quest
Of the pittance that you ask
For your arduous daily task.
Every morning sees your form
Pass through sunshine or through storm;
Every evening hears your feet
Trudging up the darkened street;
For your gait is always slow,
Coming from Menaggio.

Once your dull eyes gleamed with light;
Once those arms were round and white;
And the feet, now roughly shod,
Lightly danced upon the sod,
As to womanhood you grew
And a lover's rapture knew;
For you once were fair, 'tis said,

Early wooed and early wed,
And your husband long ago
Died in old Menaggio.

Children? Aye, but not one cares
How the poor old mother fares!
You must struggle on alone;
They have children of their own,
And for them, devoid of shame,
All your scanty earnings claim!
Can you walk? Then go you must,
Plodding on through rain and dust,
Summer heat and winter's snow
To and from Menaggio!

Christmas Eve! Through glistening green
Gleams a merry, festive scene;
Trees, with candles burning bright,
Wake in children's hearts delight.
Where such peace and comfort reign,
None observes the window-pane,
Where your wan face sadly peers
Through a mist of falling tears
At a joy you never know,
Carrier from Menaggio!

Much that makes those children gay
You have brought them day by day,
Thankful that you thus could earn
Wood to make your hearthstone bum.
Not for you such food and light,
Clothing warm and candles bright!
You are grateful, if you gain
Bread to stifle hunger's pain.
Ah! it was not always so
In old-time Menaggio!

* * * * *

She has turned to climb the hill.
Stay! why lies she there so still?
Have her old limbs failed at last
In the chilling wintry blast?
Since for threescore years and ten
She has done the work of men,
'Tis not strange that she should fall
Weak and helpless by the wall,
Nevermore to come and go
To and from Menaggio.

Gently lift her old gray head!
Bear her homeward! She is dead.
Fallen, like a faithful horse
At the limit of its course;
Fallen on the stony road,
Uncomplaining, 'neath her load;
And the heart within her breast
For the first time finds its rest,—
Rest that it could never know
Coming from Menaggio!

Sound again, O Christmas bells!
"Peace on Earth" your song foretells.
It has come, in truth, to one
Whose long pilgrimage is done.

Merciful her quick release,
Blessed her eternal peace!
Yet I know that, day by day,
As she no more comes my way,
I shall miss her, as I go
To and from Menaggio.

EVENING ON LAKE COMO

Beside my garden's ivied wall,
Enwreathed in vines of gold and green,
I stand, as evening shadows fall,
And marvel at the matchless scene,
While wavelets make, with rhythmic beat,
Perpetual music at my feet.

The year grows old,--yet on the breeze
Still floats the perfume of the rose;
Still gleams the gold of orange trees,
Regardless of the Alpine snows;
For while, above, Frost reigns as king,
Below prevails the warmth of Spring.

In Tremezzina's sheltered bay
The wintry storms forget to rave;
Without,--the white caps and the spray,
Within,--a shore with scarce a wave,--
A favored spot where tempests cease,
And Heaven whispers, "Here is Peace."

Across the water's purple bloom
Bellagio, bathed in sunset light,
Surmounts the twilight's gathering gloom
With glistening walls of pink and white,--
The wraith of some celestial strand,
The fringe of an enchanted land.

My sweet-voiced fountain softly sings
Its good-night lyric to the lake;
A skiff glides by on slender wings
With scarce a ripple in its wake;
And pleasure-boats, their canvas furled,
Float idly in an ideal world.

The swan-like steamers come and go;
The ruffled water finds its rest;
The snow-peaks catch a ruddy glow
From crimsoned cloudlets in the west;
And, trembling on the tranquil air,
Steals forth the vesper-call to prayer.

Oh, peerless strand! I yearn no more
To mingle with the maddened throng;
Enough for me this wave-kissed shore,
The vesper-bell, the fountain's song,
The sunlit sail, the Alpine glow,
And storied towers of long ago.

Between me and the world's unrest
The lake's broad leagues of water lie;
Above my wave-protected nest
Serenely bends a cloudless sky;

And homeward from life's stormy sea
The dreams of youth come back to me.

DELIO PATRI

(Inscription on an altar-fragment, found on the Island of Lake Como,
1910, and belonging formerly to a temple of Delian Apollo,--the "Delian
Father,"--which no doubt existed there.)

Once more Lake Como's storied isle
Reveals the Roman past!
Again a stone of classic style
The spade hath upward cast;
How can such relics thus endure
Two thousand years of sepulture?

More eagerly than those who toil
For nuggets of mere gold,
We seize and rescue from the soil
This monument of old,--
An altar-fragment, much defaced,
Yet on whose surface words are traced.

With reverent hands we cleanse from grime
The legend chiselled there,
Which now, triumphant over time,
Still proves the sculptor's care,
Engraved when on this wave-girt hill
The Pagan gods were potent still.

'As on their own peculiar page
The fingers of the blind
Decipher truths of every age,
As mind communes with mind,
So, one by one, these letters spell
A name the ancient world knew well.

For "Delio Patri" heads the lines
Inscribed upon this stone,
And instantly the mind divines
What, else, had been unknown,
Since that familiar name makes clear
Apollo once was worshipped here;

Perhaps because the spot suggests
That other tiny isle,
Upon whose shore forever rests
The Sun-God's tender smile,--
Fair Delos, where, one fabled morn,
Both he and Artemis were born.

Beneath, the donor's name is placed,
And lower still we read
In characters, now half effaced,
The motive for his deed;--
"Onesimus this altar reared
To One he gratefully revered."

Faith, grateful reverence,--these are traits
Worth more than rank or fame,
And what this brief inscription states
Does honor to his name,

And makes us wish still more to know
Of him who built here long ago.

"And is this all?" the cynic sneers,
"The remnant of a shrine?"
Alas for him who never hears
Or heeds the world divine
And in this fragment fails to see
A stepping-stone to Deity!

The Sun-God's shrines in ruins lie,
But not the glorious sun!
A thousand transient faiths may die.
All prototypes of One,
Since under every form and name
Their essence still remains the same.

ACQUA FREDDA

By Acqua Fredda's cloister-wall
I pause to feel the mountain breeze,
And watch the shadows eastward fall
From immemorial cypress trees.

Like arms outstretched to bless and pray,
Those dusky phantoms downward creep
To where, by Lenno's curving bay,
The peaceful village seems to sleep;

While mirrored peaks of stainless snow
Turn crimson 'neath the farther shore,
And here and there the sunset glow
Threads diamonds on a dripping oar.

But now a tremor breaks the spell,
And stirs to life the languid air,--
It is the convent's vesper-bell,--
The plaintive call to evening prayer;

That prayer which rises like a sigh
From every sorrow-laden breast,
When twilight dims the garish sky,
And day is dying in the west.

Ave Maria! we who miss
A mother's love, a mother's care,
Implore thee, bring us to that bliss
We fondly hope with thee to share!

How sweet and clear, how soft and low
Those vesper orisons are sung,
In Rome's grand speech of long ago,
Forever old, forever young!

And those who chant,--that exiled band,
Expelled from France with scorn and hate,
How fare they in this foreign land?
Is life for them disconsolate?

Have they escaped the sight of pain,
Of social strife, of hopeless tears?
Does life's dark problem grow more plain,

As pass in prayer the tranquil years?

I know not; dare not ask of them;
Their souls are read by God alone;
But he who would their lives condemn,
Should pause before he cast a stone.

So full is life of hate and greed,
So vain the world's poor tinselled show,
What wonder that some souls have need
To flee from all its sin and woe?

I would not join them; yet, in truth,
I feel, in leaving them at prayer,
That something precious of my youth,
Long lost to me, is treasured there.

THE POSTERN GATE

I chose me a lovely garden,
Beneath whose ivied wall
A lake's blue wavelets murmur
As evening shadows fall,--

A garden, whose leafy windows
Frame visions of Alpine snow
On peaks that burn to crimson
In sunset's afterglow.

And there, in its sweet seclusion,
I built me a mansion fair,
With many a classic statue
And Eastern relic rare,

And volumes, whose precious pages
Hold all that the wise have said,--
The latest among the living,
The greatest among the dead.

And I sat in those fragrant arbors
Of laurel and palm and pine,
And held in the tranquil twilight
My darling's hand in mine;

And said "We will here be happy,
And let the mad world go;
Its gold no longer tempts us,
Still less do its pomp and show;

"No more shall its cares annoy us,
And under these stately trees
With Nature and Art and Letters
Our souls shall take their ease."

But a brood of griefs pursued us,
Like evil birds of prey;
They lodged in the trees' tall branches,
They shadowed the cloudless day;

They flew to the darkened casement,
And beat on the wind-swept shade,
And oft in the sleepless midnight

We listened and were afraid;

And daily came the tidings
Of folly and crime and woe,
And one by one kept dying
The friends of long ago.

For the Past is ever one's master,
And Memory mocks at space,
And Trouble travels with us,
However swift our pace;

And envy is always envy,
Though called by a foreign name,
And perfidy, greed, and malice
Are everywhere the same.

I thought I had left behind me
That gloomy realm of care,
But really one never leaves it,
Its shadow is everywhere.

So I learned at last the lesson
That walls, and gates, and keys
Can never exclude life's sorrows;
They enter as they please.

And if we ever acquire
The perfect life we crave,
A subtle warning tells us
Its background is the grave.

Perhaps I have almost reached it,
For when I am walking late,
I see a shrouded stranger
Beside my postern gate;

And a sudden chill creeps o'er me
At sight of that figure grim,
For I fancy that he is waiting
For me in the twilight dim;

And I know he will one day beckon
With gesture of command,
And I shall follow him mutely.
Away to the Silent Land,

And all that I here have treasured
In fountain, and tree, and stone
Will pass to the hands of others,
Whom I have never known.

Hence over his sombre features
There flickers a ghostly smile,
As if he would say, "What matter?
Your cares are not worth while;

"The trouble which gives you anguish,
The woes o'er which you weep,
Will all be soon forgotten
In my long, dreamless sleep.

"Enjoy the fleeting moment;
I cannot always wait,
And the glow of the coming sunset

Is gilding the postern gate."

UNDINE

Spirit of Como, whose rhythmical call
Murmurs caressingly under my wall,
Why are thy feet, though the hour be late,
Mounting the moon-silvered steps of my gate?
What is the cause of this passionate strain,
Voiced by thy wavelets again and again?

Near to the lake, and surmounting the lawn,
Sculptured Undine sits facing the dawn;
White, on the rocks of the fountain below,
Glistens her form, like a statue of snow;
Smiling, she listens, entranced, to the call,
Sung so alluringly under my wall.

Leaf-woven ladders of ivy-wreathed vines
Fall from the rampart in undulant lines;
Silken and slender, they swing in the breeze,
Tempting the lover to clamber with ease
Up to the garden, to woo and to take
Lovely Undine away to the lake.

Boldly Love's wavelets now leap to the land,
Swiftly they scale every tremulous strand,
Lightly they sway with the wavering screen,
White gleam their feet on its background of green;
Yet the old parapet, mossy and gray,
Never is reached by their glittering spray.

Hear you that music, half song and half sigh?
Sylph-like Undine is making reply:--
"Though I so motionless sit here above,
I am not deaf to thy pleadings of love;
Others regard me as passionless stone,
Only to thee shall my nature be known.

"Men who behold me, praise merely my art,
Never suspecting I too have a heart;
Under the marble the world cannot see
All I am keeping there only for thee;
Secrets of love are of all the most sweet;
Mine I will whisper to thee when we meet.

"Under the wall thou hast bravely assailed,
Under the vines, where thy wavelets have failed,
Passes this fountain; though cradled in snows,
Straight to thy waters it secretly flows;
Leaving my cold, marble counterpart here,
On that swift current I come to thee, dear!"

Hushed is the lover's importunate call;
Silence and mystery brood over all;
Still my Undine sits facing the dawn;
'Tis but a mask, for her spirit is gone,--
Gone on that crystalline path to the deep,
Lured there to ecstasy, lulled there to sleep.

JANUARY IN THE TREMEZZINA

Day by day,
As if in May,
We sail Azzano's beautiful bay;
High and low
The mountains show
Luminous fields of stainless snow,
But the air is soft, and the sun is warm,
And the lake is free from wind and storm.

Far and nigh,
Deep and high,
The Alps invade both lake and sky;
Base to base
Their forms we trace,
These in water, those in space,--
Duplicate peaks on single shores,
As shadow sinks, and substance soars.

To and fro
We idly go,
Bidding our oarsmen lightly row;
Here and there
Halting where
The vision seems supremely fair;
Happy to let our little boat
In a flood of opaline splendor float.

Far away
Seems to-day
The clamorous world of work and play;
Ours indeed
A different creed
From that of the modern god of Speed,
Whose converts suffer such grievous waste
In strenuous labor and feverish haste!

East or west,
A tranquil nest,
When curfew rings, is always best,
A landscape fair,
A volume rare,
And a kindred heart, one's peace to share,--
What is there better from life to take
In a sweet retreat on the Larian lake?

THE WANDERER

Wandering minstrel at my gate,
Shivering in the winter gloaming,
How appalling seems your fate,--
Destined to be always roaming,
Singing for a bit of bread
And a shelter for your head!

Your sweet voice is all you own,
Save the poor, thin clothes you're wearing,
And you are not quite alone,
For a dog your crust is sharing;
Yet o'er many a weary mile

You have brought ... a song and smile!

I, who have abundant land,
Home with comforts beyond measure,
Gardens, loggias, and a strand
Where a boat awaits my pleasure,
Wonder what would be your story,
Were I tramp, and you signore!

Would you weary of control?
Long to slip your gilded tether,
And with Leo once more stroll,
Heedless of the wind and weather?
You could hardly do that all,
Once ensconced behind my wall.

Every one must make a choice,
Life is based on compensation;
You have nothing but your voice,
I have more, ... but more vexation!
Minstrel, you at least are free;
Give your smile to slaves like me!

SECLUSION

Shut out the World, shut in the Home!
The sea is deeper than its foam;
Retain the gem, reject the paste;
Withdraw from Mammon's feverish haste,
Its tumult and its senseless waste.

Within are love, and books, and flowers,--
Creators of life's happiest hours;
Without are those whose baneful call,
If once they pass within thy wall,
May blight the beauty of it all.

Think not they come for love of thee!
They seek from ennui to be free,
To ask some boon, or tell some tale
Which, true or false, will rarely fail
To leave behind a poisoned trail.

What else indeed can such as they
Invent to pass their time away?
Their thoughts revolve round sport and dress,
Their reading is the daily press,
Their mental life a wilderness.

What though their dwellings rise near thine?
Propinquity is not a sign
Of loyal hearts or kindred views;
Thou surely hast a right to choose
Whom thou wilt welcome, whom refuse.

Decline to let those mar thy joy,
Whose manners wound, and words annoy;
The vapid, heartless throng eschew;
Admit alone,--alas, how few!--
The really kind, the really true.

Yet when did ever a recluse

Escape the baffled crowd's abuse?
The social world will ne'er condone
Thy preference to live alone
Amid resources of thine own.

Well, let it scoff, malign, or ... worse!
Thou hast an independent purse;
Alike to thee its smile or sneer,
It hath no power to cause thee fear,
Nor is its censure worth a tear.

Hence, 'mid thy flowers, books, and trees
Strive not the multitude to please;
Regard its humors as the spray
Which winds blow lightly o'er the bay;
Live thine own life, and win the day!

ONE MORE

With a smile and a kiss he went away;
At the gate he turned and waved his hand,
Then plunged once more in the sordid fray,
Whose strain she could not understand.

She really thought that she loved him well,
But she loved herself and children more,
And realized only when he fell
What all his friends had known before.

He had always hid his own distress,
And answered us with a brave "Not yet,"
For boys must play and girls must dress,
As do their mates in the social set.

At least she claimed that this was so,
And he too dearly loved them all
To spoil their place in the passing show,
And so rode on for a fatal fall.

He had earned enough for a simple life,
If only they a word had said,
So weary was he of the strife;
But they were dumb, and he ... is dead!

Yes, he is gone, and they are here;
And now the purse he died to fill
Will keep them well for many a year,--
Of course submissive to "God's will"!

One victim more in the cruel race
With rivals he himself despised,
For children who can ne'er replace
The father whom they sacrificed.

UNDER THE PLANE TREE

Under my wall
And plane-tree tall
The lake's blue wavelets rise and fall;

In they creep,
Out they sweep,
And ever their rhythmic measure keep,
As the light breeze over the water steals,
And fills the sails of a score of keels.

Soft and low,
In the evening glow,
Murmurs the fountain's ceaseless flow;
Clear and sweet,
Fair and fleet,
It came from the mountain, the lake to meet,
And here, where ivy and roses twine,
Streamlet and lake their lives combine.

One by one,
In shade or sun,
Each river of life its course must run;
Slow or fast,
Small or vast,
All come to the waiting sea at last,--
The source from which they first arose,
The home in which they find repose.

"CONJUGI CARISSIMAE"

Marble fragment, freed at last
From thy prison of the past,
By a spade-thrust brought to light
After centuries of night,--
Let me take thee in my hand,
And thy legend understand.

On thy mutilated face
It is difficult to trace
All that once was graven here;
But at least two words are clear,--
Reading still, as all agree,
"Conjugi Carissimae."

"To my well-beloved wife";--
Only this; but of her life,
Rank or title, age or name,
Or the place from which she came,
Nothing further can be known
Than is taught us by this stone.

Touching words they are, which tell
Of a husband's last farewell;
Cry of a despairing heart
That has seen a wife depart
On death's dark, uncharted sea;--
"Conjugi Carissimae!"

Was this lady still a bride,
Or a matron, when she died?
Had she children? Was she fair?
Bright with joy, or bowed with care?
Ah, pathetic mystery!
"Conjugi Carissimae."

Yet, in truth, what matters all,

Save the fact these words recall?
She was loved,--a consort mourned
In the home she had adorned;
And her husband long ago
Left the words which tell us so.

Strange, that these alone remain,--
Words of mingled love and pain!
Time, which broke or blurred the rest,
Tenderly has spared the best;
For what better could there be?
"Conjugi Carissimae."

Ancient relic, white and pure,
May thine epitaph endure,
While the lake with dimpled smile
Mirrors this historic isle!
Precious are thy words of old,
Worthy of a script of gold!

Soon upon this island's shrine
Shalt thou like a jewel shine,--
Dearest of its treasure-trove,
Emblem of a deathless love
From its sepulchre set free,--
"Conjugi Carissimae."

THE PAGAN PAST

What sylvan god was worshipped here?
What nymph once made this grove her home,
And bathed within its fountain clear,
When Caesar ruled the world at Rome?

Did Pan frequent this charming site,
So hidden from the haunts of men?
Did nymphs and satyrs dance at night
Within this moon-illuminated glen?

Ah, who can doubt it, when these vines
Form trellised screens for distant snow,
And trace in arabesque designs
Their profiles on the Alpine glow?

So sure were Dryads to select
A region thus supremely fair!
So apt were mortals to erect
In such a place a shrine for prayer!

The two millenniums have not brought
Diminished splendor to this bay;
The strand which Pliny loved and sought
Is no less beautiful to-day.

Hence, while the fragrant rose-leaves fall,
And white magnolia-blossoms gleam
Above my wave-lapped garden wall,
I seem to see, as in a dream,

The kneeling forms of those who laid
Their floral offerings on that shrine,
And here their grateful tribute paid

To beauty, rightly deemed divine.

Doth some Divinity each morn
Cast over me its ancient spell,
That this sweet landscape seems forlorn
Without the gods who loved it well?

Men tell me they are dead and gone,
But when my soul is moved to pray,
I feel, beside my sculptured Faun,
They are not very far away.

For I, who love this classic lake,
And cruise along its storied shores,
See Roman galleys in my wake,
And hear the stroke of phantom oars.

It matters not which way I steer,
Or if my course be slow or fast,
The Pagan world seems always near;
I sail, companioned by the Past.

RETIREMENT

Spirit of solitude, silence, and rest,
Take me once more, like a child, to your breast!
Weary of worldliness, turmoil, and hate,
Welcome me back, if it be not too late,
Back to the realm of ideals and dreams,
Hush of the forest and cadence of streams!

What have I found in life's whirlpool of haste?
Pitiful poverty, limitless waste,
Sad disillusionments, losses of friends,
Traucherous methods for fraudulent ends,
Idle frivolity, senseless display,
Youth without reverence, faith in decay.

Gladly I turn from the roar of the crowd,
Hand of the beggar, and purse of the proud,
Gladly go back to the humming of bees,
Carols of birds, and the whisper of trees,
Gladly dispense with the voices of men,
Thankful to hear only Nature again.

Out from the mob with its furious pace
Into the cool, quiet reaches of space;
Rid of Society's glittering chains,
Fleeing a prison and finding the plains;
Far from the clangor of murderous cars,
Losing the limelight, but gaining ... the stars!

Others may live in the turbulent throng,
Others may struggle to rectify wrong,
Strive with the strenuous, laugh with the gay,
I too have striven and laughed in my day;
But of life's blessings I crave now the best,--
Freedom for solitude, silence, and rest.

IN NOVEMBER

Under my trees of green and gold
I stroll in the soft, autumnal days,
With never a hint of winter's cold,
Though the mountain sides are a brilliant maze
Which spreads from the gleaming lake below
To gild the edge of the distant snow.

Closed are the stately inns once more;
Flown, like the birds, is the latest guest;
Many have gone to a southern shore,
Some to the east and some to the west;
But the smiling landlords count their gains,
And we know well that the best remains.

For the walls are lined with precious books,
And the hearth and home are always here,
And the garden hath a score of nooks,
Where flowers bloom throughout the year;
And now that the restless crowd is gone
I hear the flute of my rustic Faun.

Why should I grieve, if from my trees
The gorgeous leaves fall, one by one?
Through the clearer space with greater ease
I feel the warmth of the genial sun;
And though the plane-trees stand bereft,
The pines and cypresses are left.

Does the gay world leave us? Well, good-bye!
It will come again--perhaps too soon!
We have the mountains, lake, and sky,
And solitude is a precious boon.
Yet the falling leaves, so fair and fleet,--
Their memory, after all, is sweet.

THE CALL OF THE BLOOD

Over the water the shadows are creeping,
Lost are the lights on Bellagio's shore,
Goddess and Faun in the garden are sleeping,
Only the fountain sings on as before.

Low as its murmur, when daintily falling,
Sweet as its plaintive, mellifluous song,
Voices of absent ones seem to be calling:--
"Come to us! Come! thou hast waited too long."

Vainly I call it a childish delusion,
Vainly attempt to regard it with mirth,
Still do I hear in my spirit's seclusion
Voices I loved in the land of my birth.

Ever recurrent, like tides of the ocean,
Sad are these cadences, reaching my ear,
Waking within me a mingled emotion,--
Partly of ecstasy, partly of fear;

For of the friends who once gathered to greet me
Many, alas! will await me no more;
Few are the comrades remaining to meet me,

Cold are the arms that embraced me before!

Over Life's river the shadows are creeping,
Dim and unknown is the opposite shore,
But in the fatherland some are still keeping
Lights in the window and watch at the door.

THE CASCADE

From the mountain gray
It has made its way
To my garden green and cool,
And there, from the edge
Of a rocky ledge
Leaps down to a crystal pool.

With a plunging flash
It falls, to dash
That crystal into foam;
And then at a bound
Slips under ground
To the lake,--its final home.

In the morning light,
In the silent night,
When the moonlight gems the scene,
It laughs and sings,
And a light spray flings
O'er stately walls of green.

For in and out,
And round about,
Grow flowers, plants, and trees,
From the lowly moss
To the boughs that toss
Their leaves in the passing breeze.

On its outer zone
Of massive stone
Two marble statues stand,--
The silver sheen
Of the pool between,--
One form on either hand.

One of the pair
Is a woman fair,
With parted, smiling lips;
For her each hour
A honied flower,
And she the bee that sips.

The other, a faun,
From whom is gone
The power to frankly smile;
For whom each day,
As it drags away,
Makes life still less worth while.

The face of the one
Is like the sun,
With its warmth, and light, and cheer;
But the faun looks down

With ugly frown,
And his lips retain a sneer.

Youth and age,
Child and sage!
The former with life unknown;
The latter burnt
By lessons learnt,
With a heart now turned to stone.

Yet the torrent speeds,
And never heeds
The statues' smiles or sneers;
They come and go,
But the water's flow
Has lasted a thousand years.

BIRD SLAUGHTER

Poor, little bird! the chase is ended;
No longer hast thou cause for fear;
Within these walls thou art befriended;
No sportsmen can molest thee here.

Without, they doubtless still await thee,
And scan with eager eyes the sky;
Sweet, winsome thing! how can they hate thee?
Why should they wish to see thee die?

So limp and helpless! wilt thou never
Recover from thy fear and flight?
How breathless was thy last endeavor
To reach this shelter, when in sight!

Thou tremblest still, as I approach thee;
Do I, too, seem like all the rest?
Thy timid, liquid eyes reproach me ...
Alas! there's blood upon thy breast.

Nay, fear not, birdling! let me gently
Uplift and hold thee in my hand;
Thou gazest on me so intently,
Thou must my motive understand.

Thy downy breast is pierced and bleeding;
This wing will never rise again;
In vain thy look, so wild and pleading!
I cannot cure or ease thy pain.

Too well the hunters have succeeded;
Thy little life is ebbing fast;
My presence now is all unheeded;
'Tis over; ... thou art dead at last.

Yet thus, within my garden dying,
Thy fate hath caused me less regret
Than that of all thy comrades, lying
Half dead and mangled in the net!

Where are they all, who crossed so gladly
The lofty Alps to seek the sun?
Still lives thy mate, to mourn thee sadly,

Or is her life-course also run?

Within the voiceless empyrean
No birds are passing on the breeze;
No songster lifts its joyous paean,
And silent stand my empty trees;

For at the base of every mountain,
Where southward-moving birds repose,
In every grove, at every fountain,
Lurk merciless, insatiate foes.

With cruel craft those foes surround them,
Ensnaring hundreds in a day,
Indifferent if they tear and wound them,
Proud only of the heaps they slay.

What care these brutes if songs of rapture
From thrush and lark are no more heard?
What matter if their modes of capture
Denude the land of every bird?

Whole regions, where they once abounded,
Are now as silent as the tomb;
The birds have vanished,--slain or wounded,
Pursued, by thousands, to their doom.

Meanwhile, since Earth itself is blighted,
The Nemesis of Nature wakes;
Her flawless balance must be righted;
If Ceres gives, ... she also takes!

Still worse, a moral degradation
Thus cradled, vitiates the race;
Among the rising generation
A lust for slaughter grows apace.

Even children kill the birds thus captured,--
And, since none censures or withstands,
They seize the tiny skulls, enraptured
To crush them in their blood-smeared hands!

See yonder lad with tethered linnnet,
Its frail legs raw from rasping strings!
A carriage comes,--he flings within it
The tortured bird ... to sell its wings!

And off as it may be rejected,
The little victim, mad with thirst,
Is jerked back, well-nigh vivisected,
Till pain and hunger do their worst.

Beware, harsh man and heartless woman!
Beneath you swells a threatening flood;
If you and yours remain inhuman,
It yet may drown you in your blood.

You smile, and call this sentimental;
You will not smile in later times!
For cruelty, so fundamental,
Already breeds the worst of crimes.

THE IRON CROWN

On the classic shore of Como,
'Neath a headland steep and bold,
Which, though leaden at the dawning,
In the sunset turns to gold,
Nestles beautiful Varenna,
Still invested with renown
By the legend that connects it
With the Lombards' Iron Crown.

Far above it on the mountain
Stands the castle, old and gray,
With its battlements in ruin
And its towers in decay;
But a subtle charm still lingers
Round that residence sublime,
And the beauty of its story
Is triumphant over time.

As we trace its ancient pavement,
As we tread its roofless halls,
How alluring is the figure
Which this castle still recalls!
For 'tis Queen Theodelinda
Whom its ruined arches frame,
And the passing breeze seems laden
With the music of her name.

As we gaze from ivied ramparts
On the storied lake below,
We forget the world about us
For the world of long ago,
When the Lombards had descended
From the mountains to the plain,
And all Italy lay mourning
For the thousands of her slain;

When their brave, ambitious leader,
Not content to make his home
By these northern lakes of beauty,
Had resolved to capture Rome!
For no longer could her legions
His resistless course withstand,
And the road lay open, southward,
To the conquest of the land.

When his valiant host stood ready
And impatient for the start,
What reversed their king's decision?
What so changed the warlord's heart?
'Twas the passionate entreaty
Of his wife,--a Christian queen;
'Twas the conquest of the pagan
By the lowly Nazarene.

Through her prayers Rome's aged Pontiff
From the threatened doom was freed;
By her aid the Church was strengthened
As the king professed its creed;
And Saint Peter's great successor,
Thus preserved from grievous loss,
Gave to her, his faithful daughter,
A true relic of the Cross.

What to pious Theodelinda
Could be recompense more sweet
Than the nail, forever sacred,
That once pierced her Saviour's feet?
Which, when rounded to a circlet,
(To fine wire beaten down,)
Then became the precious basis
Of the Lombards' Iron Crown.

Through the ages that have followed
What a line of the Renowned
Have been proud to wear this emblem,
As they, each in turn, were crowned!
Charlemagne, Charles Fifth, Napoleon,
German Kaisers by the score,
And at last poor King Umberto,
Basely slain at Monza's door!

Since that coronet was fashioned
Fifteen centuries have passed
O'er the castle by Lake Como,
Where the good queen breathed her last;
But the Crown is still at Monza,
And its iron basic line
Tells the world of human glory
And the death of the Divine.

CONTRASTS

The wind is roaring down the lake,
The clear, cold moon rides high,
The mountains, crystal to their crests,
Indent the starlit sky;
The wild sea beats my garden-wall,
And all its peace transforms;
Dear Heart, how different is the lake
When swept by Alpine storms!

My soul to-night is dark and sad
From proofs of hate displayed,
From envy and rapacity,
And kindness ill-repaid;
The baseness of humanity
Hath spoiled a cherished dream;
Dear Heart, how different is the lake
When Evil reigns supreme!

The gale hath blown itself to rest,
The sun turns all to gold,
Once more the crystal mountain-sides
A waveless plain enfold;
And some will laugh, and lightly say
The storm hath left no stain,
But in my park one perfect rose
Will never bloom again!

IN MY PERGOLA

Beyond the blue-robed, sleeping lake,

I watch the flush of morning rise,
While birds and flowers once more wake,
To share with me my paradise.

Within this waveless bay of rest
The Alpine winds contend no more,
But skim, like gulls, its dimpled breast,
And sink to silence on its shore.

The breath of dawn descends the hills,
And round me, as I greet the day,
I hear the lilt of laughing rills
And songs of fountains at their play.

Tall, whispering trees their shadows fling
Athwart the trellised path I tread,
And incense-breathing roses swing
Their pendent censers o'er my head.

What Moorish ceiling e'er excelled
This arbor, roofed with cups of gold?
What Eastern casket ever held
The perfume which their leaves unfold?

Fair chalices of bloom, swing low,
And touch my lips with odors sweet!
Enfold me in your ardent glow,
While petals flutter to my feet!

Let, for to-day, the dream remain
That life is rose-hued, like this aisle,--
A fragrant pathway, free from pain,
With every sun-kissed flower a smile!

EVANESCENCE

Passing ships! Passing ships!
The white foam sparkling at your lips
And countless jewels in your wake
Proclaim your progress o'er the lake,
While on your decks a smiling throng
Surveys this realm of sun and song.

Slipping by! Slipping by!
O'er waves that duplicate the sky
I watch you daily come and go,
But rarely is there one I know
Of all who at your railings stand,
To view with joy this storied land.

On ye pass! On ye pass!
At times I follow through my glass
Your silent course from sunset light
To meet the dusky veil of night,
As swiftly round the curving shore
Glide faces I shall see no more.

Sailing on! Sailing on!
The transient voyagers now are gone;
Yet though the hills their features hide,
One memory of them will abide,--
The thought of their enraptured gaze

In this the gem of Larian bays.

Gliding by! Gliding by!
Why is it that I look, ... and sigh?
What makes my heart thus vaguely yearn
For strangers who will ne'er return?
I would not really have them stay,
Yet grieve to see them fade away.

Hail-farewell! Hail-farewell!
Those passing steamers seem to tell
That all ships, whether slow or fast,
Will cross life's little bay at last,
While we who linger on the strand
Must daily mourn some vanished hand.

LAKE COMO IN AUTUMN

From Como's curving base of blue,
To where the snow lies cold and clear,
Ascends in steps of varied hue
The pageant of the passing year,
As scores of mountain-sides unfold
Their gorgeous robes of red and gold.

Meanwhile, where shore and lake unite,
I see, projected far below,
A counterpart in colors bright,
Of snows that gleam and woods that glow,--
Two pictures of an ideal land,
Divided by a single strand.

O matchless view, thus doubly fair,
Impress thy beauty on my heart,
That, when no longer really there,
I still may see thee as thou art!
Alas, that they should ever go,--
Those steps of light, those thrones of snow!

The day declines, the colors pale,
The peaks will soon be ashen gray;
Yet, though the shades of night prevail,
The darkness hath not come to stay;
And if no leaves of gold remain,
The sun will bring the Spring again.

TO THE PORTRAIT OF NAPOLEON, AS FIRST CONSUL

Painted by Andrea Appiani, in 1803, and at present in the Villa Melzi,
Bellagio.

Brilliant as Lucifer, Son of the Morning,
Rises this reincarnation of Mars!
Youth at its apogee, precedent scorning,
Genius ascending its path toward the stars!

Never was Bonaparte's Consular glory
Treated by Art so superbly as here;
Never a phase of his marvellous story

Handled more deftly, or rendered more clear.

Italy's effigy lies 'neath his fingers,
Lombardy rests in the fold of his hand,
While on his lips an expression still lingers,
Stamped by a character born to command.

Hero of history, what art thou scheming,
Spanning thus easily so much of Earth,
Holding tenaciously, too, in thy dreaming
Wave-beaten Corsica, isle of thy birth?

All that thou dreamest of paramount power
Fate shall concede to thee, chieftain sublime!
Yet shall it prove but the joy of an hour;
Fortune avenges her favors ... with time!

Aye, even now, although millions adore thee,
Hailing as godlike thy dominant name,
Nemesis stands in the shadow before thee,
Waiting with Waterloo, exile, and shame.

Waiting is also that island of anguish,
Destined to crush thy proud spirit at last,
Doomed amid pigmy tormentors to languish,
Facing forever its measureless past!

Yet when at length on that rock in mid-ocean
Merciful Death shall have broken thy chain,
Millions will hail thee again with devotion,
Building thy tomb by the banks of the Seine!

Face of Napoleon, nobly recalling
Days of the mythical heroes of yore,
Oft wilt thou haunt me when shadows are falling,--
Beautiful gem of the Larian shore.

DAY AND NIGHT

Twilight is falling on lake and on land,
Softly the wavelets steal in to the strand,
Fisher-boats, floating like sea-gulls at rest,
Glow in the lingering light of the west,
Far-away vesper-bells hallow the air,
Ave Maria! the world seems at prayer.

One more immaculate sunset exposed,
One chapter more of life's history closed,
One more bead told on the chaplet of time,
One further stride in Earth's orbit sublime;--
Linked to the measureless chain of the past,
One added day, ... to so many their last!

Slowly the colors diminish and die,
Slowly the stellar hosts people the sky,
Lost is the light on the fishermen's sails,
Sweet is the exquisite peace that prevails,
Silence and solitude brood o'er the deep,
Ave Maria! the world seems to sleep.

One more magnificent pageant to face,--
Numberless systems in infinite space;

Once more our planet in majesty rolls
On through the darkness its burden of souls;--
Linked to the limitless chain of the past,
One added night, ... to so many their last!

PASSING AND PERMANENT

Stately boats, with happy crowds,
Passing up the lake,
Leaving, under sunset clouds,
Jewels in your wake,
From my garden's sheltered strand
I can watch you glide,
As through some enchanted land
On a silver tide.

To your eyes, O joyous throng,
All this scene is new;
Like a burst of seraphs' song,
Comes its matchless view;
You have traversed land and sea
For this wondrous sight,
Which the gods vouchsafe to me
Every day and night!

One long, serial pageant this
Of supreme content!
Every face suffused with bliss,
Every eye intent;
Griefs and troubles slip away
On this charming shore,
And throughout a transient stay
Will return no more.

Yet beware! Gardens fair,
Lake, and snow-capped crest
For a while may banish care
From the saddest breast;
But it quickly, even here,
Finds the heart again,
With the old-time sigh and tear,
And the well-known pain.

Careless crew, I envy you!
You will grieve to go,
But, believe me, if you knew,
You would choose it so;
Leave the lake while still you laugh;
Be content to pass;
Though its wine be sweet to quaff,
Do not drain your glass!

TRIPOLI

Hear the singing on the boats,
As they halt beside the pier!
Ah, those fresh Italian throats,
How they cheer!
Yet the words they sing so loud

Bring depression to my heart,
As I watch the youthful crowd
Thus depart.

"We are going o'er the sea!
Loyal sons of Italy,
We are bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!"

See that lad of twenty years,--
Who is stretching out his hand
Toward his mother there in tears
On the strand!
Should he perish in the strife
Under Afric's burning sky,
There were nothing left in life--
She must die.

Yet he's going o'er the sea!
At the call of Italy,
He is bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

Now the plank is pulled to land,
And the last farewell is o'er,
As the steamer, at command,
Leaves the shore;
There are shouts and ringing cheers,
For the boys are brave and strong,
Yet one feels that there are tears
In their song:

"We are going o'er the sea!
Loyal sons of Italy,
We are bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!"

Ah, that mother who is left!
She is weeping now alone,
Like a Niobe bereft
Of her own;
And at length I dare to speak
To the woman seated there,
With the tears upon her cheek,
In despair.

He has gone across the sea!
Who so dutiful as he?
He is bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

"Nay, good mother, do not weep!
Since the summons comes from Rome,
Can we really wish to keep
Sons at home?"
"And why not?" she made reply;
"We have no invading foe;
I would send my son to die,
Were it so."

But he's gone across the sea!
Gone with thousands such as he!
He is bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

"What is Africa to me,
If it swallow up my child?
What care I for Tripoli,
Spot defiled!
Did not Abyssinian sand
Drink sufficiently our gore?
Must we stain that fatal strand,
As before?"

Yet he's gone across the sea,
Who more valorous than he?
He is bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

"Have we no great uses _here_
For the millions we outpour?
Are our consciences quite clear
In this war?
Are there no more roads to build,
Schools to found, and farms to work.
That we let our boys be killed
By the Turk?"

Yet we send them o'er the sea!
Youthful sons of Italy,
They are bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

"We are hungry, yet behold,
How the price of food goes higher!
And the nights will soon be cold
Without fire!
Who will earn for me my bread?
Who my little home will save,
When he lies there cold and dead
In his grave?"

But he's gone across the sea!
Who so good and kind to me?
He is bound for Tripoli,
Tripoli!

To the churchyard, near the bay,
Went the mother in her grief,
For her soul was moved to pray
For relief;
And deep sobs convulsed her breast,
As she knelt upon the sod,
Where her husband lay at rest,
Safe in God.

For the boy was o'er the sea,
Whom she rocked upon her knee;
He had gone to Tripoli,
Tripoli!

She was buried yesterday
With her husband, side by side;
Ere two months had passed away
She had died!
For one morning she had read
Of her son among the slain,
And they saw her old gray head
Sink in pain.

Nevermore across the sea
Will he come to Italy!
He was killed in Tripoli,
Tripoli!

There was nothing more to tell
Of a lad so little known;
He was reckoned "one who fell,"
That alone.
Was he wounded? Did he lie
Long ill-treated by the foe?
And not know!

Yes, he lies beyond the sea!
(Can it be that that is he?)
In the sands of Tripoli,
Tripoli!

She had asked for nothing more,
But in silence slowly failed,
Dreaming ever of the shore,
Whence he sailed.
Till her face, so wan and white,
Flushed at last with sweet surprise,
And a strangely tender light
Filled her eyes.

Then for her was "no more sea!"
She had found the soul set free
From the sands of Tripoli,
Tripoli!

INFLUENCE

We know not what mysterious power
Lies latent in our words and deeds,—
Sweet as the perfume of a flower,
Strong as the life that sleeps in seeds;
But something certainly survives
The passing of our fleeting lives.

A look, a pressure of the hand,
A sign of hope, a song of cheer,
May journey over sea and land,
Outliving many a sterile year,
To find at last the destined hour
When they shall leap to bud and flower.

We write, we print, then—nevermore
To be recalled—our thoughts take flight,
Like white-winged birds that leave the shore,
And scattering, lose themselves in light;
For good or ill those words may be
The arbiters of destiny.

Perchance some fervid plea may find
A heart to rise to its appeal;
Some statement rouse a dormant mind,
Or stir a spirit, quick to feel;
Nay, through some note of gentler tone
Even love may recognize its own.

Fain would I deem not wholly dead
The spoken words of former years,
And every printed page, when read,
A source of smiles, instead of tears;
That friends, whom I shall never see,
May, for a time, remember me.

LEO

I made a journey o'er the sea,
I bade my faithful dog good-bye,
I knew that he would grieve for me,
But did not dream that he would die!
And how could I explain
That I would come again?

At first he mourned, as dogs will mourn
A life-long master they adore,
Till in his mind the fear was born
That he should never see me more.

Ah! then, on every boat intent,
He watched the crowd upon the pier,
While every look and motion meant
"Will _he_ not come? Is _he_ not here?"

At last he merely raised his head,
To see the steamers passing by,
Then sank again upon his bed,
And heaved a long-drawn, plaintive sigh;
For how could one explain
That I would come again?

I hastened back by sea and land,
Forced homeward by remorse and fear;
But no glad barking swept the strand,
Nor did he meet me on the pier!

I climbed the steps with footsteps fleet,
And then beheld him near the wall,
Though tottering, still upon his feet,
And creeping toward me down the hall.

No wish had he to sulk or blame,
Nor did he need to understand,
But simply loved me just the same,--
In silence licking face and hand.

In silence? What could this portend?
Such muteness he had never shown;
Was he so very near the end?
Ah, Leo, had I only known!

For his grand eyes, so large and bright,
Though turned, through sound, my form to find,
Were totally devoid of sight;
He faced me in the darkness ... blind!

What could such gloom have been to him,
As weeks and months had crept away,
While all the outer world grew dim,
Till endless night eclipsed the day!

What had it meant to him to wake
And mid familiar things to grope?
To hear old sounds on shore and lake,
Yet wander darkly without hope!

But now, his head upon my knee,
He tried in various ways to show
That, though my face he could not see,
He knew the voice of long ago.
Yes, now it was quite plain
That I had come again.

Within my arms he breathed his last,
In my embrace his noble head
Drooped back, and left to me ... the Past,
With tender memories of the dead.

He lies beneath the stately trees,
Whose ample shade he loved the best,
Mid flowers, whose perfume every breeze
Wafts lightly o'er his place of rest.

Yet somehow still I watch and wait
For him, as he once watched for me;
At every footstep near my gate
I look, his bounding form to see.

Good-night? ... Good-bye! for I must leave thee,
My boat is waiting on the shore;
May I not hope that it will grieve thee,
When thou shalt see me here no more?

Such thoughts, I know, to-day are flouted;
"Have statues souls?" the cynic sneers;
But I am happier to have doubted,
And loved thee thus these many years.

Behind the form is the ideal,
Forever high, forever true;
Behind the false exists the real,
Known only to the favored few.

Not all can hear the music stealing
From out that lightly-lifted flute;
To those devoid of kindred feeling
Its melody is always mute.

But thou to me hast been a token
Of classic legend, wrought in stone;
In thee the thread of Art, unbroken,
Made all the storied past mine own.

And I have felt, still brooding o'er thee,
The old-time Genius of the Place,
Aware of those who still adore thee,
Unchanged by time, or creed, or race.

Through thee came also inspiration
For many a rare, poetic thought;
And oh, how much of resignation
Thy sweet, unchanging smile hath taught!

Though thine own past hath had its sorrow,
Though all thy sylvan friends have fled,

Thou still canst smile at every morrow,
For Nature lives, though Pan is dead.

Thou didst not grieve with futile wailing
When altars crumbled far and near,
When gods were scoffed, and faith was failing,
And worship lessened year by year.

Above thee still rose lofty mountains,
Before thee lay the lake divine,
Around thee sang the crystal fountains,--
With all these treasures, why repine?

Religions changed, and shrines were banished,
Years slipped away, men came and went,
But thou, whatever pleasures vanished,
With what thou hadst wast still content.

Not thine our fatal strain of sadness,
As cherished fancies fade away;
For thee the simple soul of gladness,--
The careless rapture of to-day!

Farewell! within my heart abiding
I hear thy music, gentle Faun,--
The wounds of disillusion hiding,
The prelude to a happier dawn.

WAKEFULNESS

Drifting, idly drifting, where thought's varied streams
Meet at last and mingle in the realm of dreams,
Gladly would I join them in oblivion's deep!
 Sleep, so dear to me,
 Sleep, come near to me,
 Sleep, sweet sleep!

Toward the night's Nirvana groping for the way,
Striving, ever striving to forget the day,
Waves of dreamless slumber, o'er my spirit creep!
 Sleep, so dear to me,
 Sleep, come near to me,
 Sleep, sweet sleep!

By the stream of Lethe, fettered to the brink,
Longing for the breaking of the last, frail link,
Eager for its billows o'er my mind to sweep,
 Sleep, so dear to me,
 Sleep, come near to me,
 Sleep, sweet sleep!

Waiting, ever waiting for thy soothing call,
And the welcome darkness that envelops all,
If no more to waken, then no more to weep,
 Sleep, so dear to me,
 Sleep, come near to me,
 Sleep, sweet sleep!

It stands where darkly wooded cliffs
Slope swiftly to the deep,
And silvery streams from ledge to ledge
In foaming splendor leap,--
A broad expanse of saffron walls,
A wilderness of mouldering halls.

The torrent's breath hath spread its blight
On every darkened room,
And oozing mosses drip decay
Through corridors of gloom,
While Ruin lays a subtle snare
On many a yielding rail and stair.

There seats, which beauty once enthroned,
In tattered damask stand;
In gray neglect a faun extends
A mutilated hand;
And silence makes the festal board
Mute as the stringless harpsichord.

The boldest hesitate to tread
Those gruesome courts at night;
'Tis whispered that a spectral form
Then haunts the lonely height;
For he who built this home apart
Had stabbed his rival to the heart.

Oblivion's boon is vainly sought
Amid those scenes sublime;
Forever lurked within his breast
The nemesis of crime;
Not all that flood of limpid spray
Could wash the fatal stain away.

Yet certain fearless souls have dwelt
Within that haunted pile;
Among them she, whose portrait still,
With enigmatic smile,
Lights up the mansion, like a gem
Set in a tarnished diadem;--

The princess, at whose thrilling call
Unnumbered patriots rose
To drive from fettered Lombardy
Her immemorial foes,--
A woman, loved from sea to sea,
As Liberty's divinity.

But now the old, historic site
Lives only in the past;
Neglected and untenanted,
Its life is ebbing fast;
Each crumbling step, each mossy stone
Is marked by Ruin for her own.

Yet one mysterious charm abides,--
The spring, whose ebb and flow
Were praised in Pliny's classic prose
Two thousand years ago,--
A fountain, whose perennial grace
Millenniums could not efface.

Thrice daily in their polished cup

Its crystal waters sink;
Thrice daily do they rise again
And overflow the brink,—
Since Pliny's day no more, no less,
Unchanged in rhythmic loveliness.

Sweet Larian lake, and sylvan cliffs,
Cascade, and storied spring,
Ye are the same as when he loved
Your varied charms to sing;
'Tis man alone who sadly goes!
The lake remains, the fountain flows.

Like drops in its exhaustless flood,
Our little lives emerge,
Swirl for an instant, and are gone,
Sunk by another surge!
Whence come they? Whither do they go?
O Roman poet, dost thou know?

POINT BALBIANELLO

From Lake Como's depths ascending,
With embankments steep
Stands a wooded headland, bending
With majestic sweep
Till its rugged shores, expanding,
Join two charming bays,
Now, as formerly, commanding
Universal praise.

Years ago a papal Primate
Built a hospice here,
Which, from its delightful climate,
Mild throughout the year,
Soon became for convalescence
A renowned retreat,
Where pure air and strict quiescence
Made all cures complete.

"Villa Balbi",--appellation
Of the Primate's seat--,
Gave its name to this location
In a form more sweet,--
Soft, sonorous "Balbianello",
Spoken, as if sung
In the speech, so smooth and mellow,
Of the Latin tongue.

Balbianello, Balbianello!
Point of liquid name,
With thy walls of golden yellow
And thy flowers of flame,
When thy varied charms enthrall me
Under summer skies,
Tenderly I love to call thee
Como's Paradise.

From thy base, where in profusion
Countless roses bloom,
To thy crest, where sweet seclusion
Reigns in leafy gloom,

All is beauty, uncontested
By a rival claim,
All is symmetry invested
With a storied fame.

Cool the paths, by plane-trees shaded,
Which thy slopes ascend;
Grand the loggia, old and faded,
Where those pathways end;--
Noble arches, well recalling
Mighty works of old,
Columns which, when night is falling,
Turn to shafts of gold.

In that loggia, fringed with roses,
All my soul expands;
Every arch a view discloses
Of historic lands;
Southward lies fair Comacina,
Famed in classic lore,
Northward Pliny's Tremezzina
And Bellagio's shore.

Miles of liquid opalescence
Stretch on either hand,
Curving into lovely crescents,
Each with sylvan strand;
While on Alpine peaks lie sleeping
Realms of stainless snow,
Whence the milk-white streams come leaping
To the lake below.

Many a far-off promontory
Melts in silvery haze,
Many a scene of song and story
Tells of Roman days;
Real and unreal, past and present,
Make the vision seem
Like the rapture evanescent
Of a happy dream.

Yet this point, so well selected,--
Peerless in its day--,
Now, abandoned and neglected,
Sinks to slow decay;
Sculptured saints, with broken fingers,
Line the ancient walls,
Like a loyal guard that lingers
Till the rampart falls;

Vases, o'er the portal standing,
Crumble into lime;
Steps, ascending from the landing,
Show the touch of time;
And its one lone gardener, weeping
As he tells his fears,
Faithful watch has here been keeping
Many, many years!

Even he must leave it lonely,
When the night grows late;
Then the mouldering statues only
Guard its rusty gate;
Then no eye its charm discovers,
And its moonlit bowers

Wait in vain for happy lovers
Through the silent hours.

Will no champion protect thee,
Fairest spot on earth?
Doth a busy world neglect thee,
Careless of thy worth?
Even so, thy site elysian
Still remains supreme,--
Acme of the painter's vision
And the poet's dream.

AT LENNO

By Lake Como's sylvan shore,
Where the wavelets evermore
Seem to rhythmically murmur of the classic days of yore,
Cease, O boatman, now to row!
While the Alpine summits glow,
Let me dream that I am floating on the lake of long ago.

Where the Tremezzina ends,
And the bay of Lenno bends
Till the shadow of the mountain to its placid wave descends,
On this strand of silver foam
Stood the Younger Pliny's home,
When the world at last lay subject to the dominance of Rome.

Here he passed his sweetest hours
'Mid his statues, books, and flowers
With a life and list of pleasures not dissimilar to ours,
For the city's rush and roar
Never reached this tranquil shore,
And his writings prove completely that he yearned for them no more.

Here, as scholar, poet, sage,
He filled many a pliant page
With the philosophic wisdom and refinement of his age,
And his letters to his peers
Through a life of smiles and tears
Make me often quite forgetful of the intervening years;

For the beauty of the bay
And the magical display
Of its coronet of mountains have not altered since his day,
And the lake of which he wrote
At that epoch so remote
With the same caressing murmur laps my undulating boat.

Hence the subtle, tender spell
Of the place he loved so well
Holds me captive and enchanted, as these waters gently swell,
And a vague and nameless pain
Makes me long for,--though in vain--,
That delightful classic era, which will never come again.

Since the Goths' invading tide
Wrecked Rome's potency and pride,
Something wonderful has vanished, something exquisite has died;
And in spite of modern fame
And the lustre of its name,
Even beautiful Lake Como can be never quite the same.

So beside its sylvan shore,
Where the wavelets evermore
Seem to rhythmically murmur of the classic days of yore,
Cease, O boatman, now to row!
For, while Alpine summits glow,
I would dream that I am floating on the lake of long ago.

PERSONALLY ADDRESSED

LINES

written for a Golden Wedding, 1883

Just fifty years ago to-night,
When earth was mantled deep with snow,
The stars beheld with tender light
The fairest scene this world can show.

Two graceful forms stood side by side,
Two trembling hands were clasped as one,
Two hearts exchanged perpetual faith,
And love's sweet poem was begun.

For suns may rise and suns may set,
And tides may ebb and tides may flow,
Love is man's greatest blessing yet,
And honest wedlock makes it so.

"Father" and "Mother",--sweetest words
That human lips can ever frame,
We gather here as children now
To find your loving hearts the same.

Unchanged, unchangeable by time,
Your love is boundless as the sea;
The same as when our childish griefs
Were hushed beside our mother's knee.

Years may have given us separate homes,
Friends, children, happiness and fame,
But oh! to-night our greatest wealth
Is that we call you still by name.

God bless you both! for fifty years
You've journeyed onward side by side;
And still, for years to come, God grant
Your paths may nevermore divide;

But, just as sunset's golden glow
Makes Alpine snows divinely fair,
So may the setting sun of life
Rest lightly on your silvered hair!

Yes, suns may rise and suns may set,
And tides may ebb and tides may flow,
We are your loving children yet,
And time will ever prove us so.

TO THE WALKING-STICK OF MY DEAD FRIEND

To my hand thou com'st at last,
Wand of ebon, tipped with gold,--
Often carried in the past
By a hand that now lies cold
In his grave beyond the sea,
Many thousand miles from me.

Faithful staff! for many years
Thou didst travel far and wide
Through a life of smiles and tears,--
Rarely absent from his side,
As the light of day for him
Grew pathetically dim.

When with thee he walked abroad,
Every crossing, every stair
By thy touch was first explored,
Ere his feet were planted there,
With a sort of rhythmic beat
On the pavement of the street.

Hence, when brought to face the gloom
Of a way, to all unknown,
Called to leave his sunlit room
For death's darkness, quite alone,
He instinctively again
Called to mind his faithful cane.

To whose grasp should it descend,
Since with him it could not go?
Surely no one save a friend
Would receive and prize it so!
Thus to me wast thou bequeathed,
To console a heart bereaved.

Friendship's gift, beloved wand!
Thou shalt likewise go with me
To the shore of the Beyond,
To the dark, untravelled sea;
Only left upon the strand,
When my bark puts forth from land.

TO C....

Behind a laughing waterfall
There lies a little fount of tears,
Deep, dark, and rarely seen at all
By those the sparkling torrent cheers.

Beneath a suit of armor bright,
Shaft-proof and burnished, hard and cold,
There beats, concealed from common sight,
A tender woman's heart of gold!

To Mr. and Mrs. A.H.S., Brussels

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

Two homeless birds, fatigued by flight,
Have rested on the Belgian shore;
And now, at the approach of night,
Must spread their wings, and fly once more.

Two others, when they saw them come
From out the dark and stormy west,
Conveyed them to their pleasant home,
And fed and warmed them, breast to breast.

Dear Birds of Brussels, do not crave
The long, long route by which we came;
More safe than any restless wave
The sheltered nest of Auderghem.

Henceforth, however far we roam,
'Neath clouds that chill, or suns that burn,
The memory of your lovely home
Will make us certain to return.

For, stronger than the subtle spell
That homeward draws the carrier-dove,
Are the sweet bonds that clearly tell
Of Friendship welded into Love.

TO M.C. OF ATHENS

Son of the race that gave the world its best,
Of ancient Greece a noble type thou art,--
An Attic spirit transferred to the West,
The blood of Hellas pulsing at thy heart;
In homage to thyself and to thy land,
Accept, I pray, these simple lines of mine;
To one I offer both my heart and hand,
Before the other kneel, as at a shrine.

TO J.B.

Within an Old World, classic vase
She blossomed like a flower,
And made Italian summer days
Seem fleeting as an hour;
Then left the antique vase in gloom,--
Yet o'er its edges climb
Some petals, with a sweet perfume
That triumphs over time.

TO M.P.

The Critic grieves at Virtue's loss,
And rails at Evil's stride,
But Love still holds aloft the Cross,
And shows the Crucified.

One, safe in a secure retreat,
Disdains the maddened throng;
The other braves the seething street,
And strives to right the wrong.

Self shudders at the angry waves,
And dreams of what should be,
But Love the sinking sinner saves,
And stills the stormy sea.

TO MISS MARY C. LOW

A thousand eyes, by thee made bright,
Have read thy cheering lines;
A thousand hearts have felt the light
That through thy poetry shines;
Thou dost not know them all, 'tis true,
But they all wait for thee,
As wait the rosebuds for the dew,
Queen of the Christmas Tree!

IN MEMORIAM. G.M.M.

His letter lies before me here,
Scarce written ere the hand grew cold
That traced the lines so fine and clear,
Which still of love and friendship told.

This fragile film of black and white,--
A traveller over land and sea--,
Is all the bond I have to-night
Between the friend I loved and me.

I know not where his form may rest,
Yet well I know Death cannot take
His memory from the Central West
And its proud city by the lake.

But where are now his loyal soul,
His loving heart and gifted mind;
Do they survive--a conscious whole--
The dwelling they have left behind?

Beyond this tiny orb we tread
Who can the spirit's pathway trace,
Or find a haven for our dead
In seas of interstellar space?

O silent stars, that flash and burn
Across the bridgeless vault of blue,
Ye may receive, but ne'er return,
The dead we sadly yield to you.

In vain we urge the old request;
In vain the darkness we explore;
Light lie the turf above thy breast,
O friend, whom I shall see no more!

TO C.M.D.

If it be true, as some have dreamed,
That all have lived and loved before,
I cannot wonder it hath seemed
That on some other shore,
In former ages long ago,
Our souls had met and learned to know
The truths that now upon the sea
Establish our affinity.

Heart leaps to heart and mind to mind:
A look, a word, a smile, a phrase,--
And we at once a kinship find,
A relic of those days,
When we both watched the sunset kiss
The storied Bay of Salamis,
Or paced beside the classic stream
That borders Plato's Academe.--

Perhaps our spirits met again,
When Virgil wrote his deathless lines,
And Horace praised, in lighter vein,
His farm amid the Apennines;
Or else we walked this old, old Earth
When Grecian learning found new birth,
And arm in arm watched Giotto's tower
Rise heavenward, like a peerless flower.

Enough that we have surely met,
No matter in what land or age;
For, if such trifles we forget,
We share a common heritage:
And though in this brief life stern Fate
Shall bid us once more separate,
O brother poet, it must be
That kindred spirits such as we
Shall sail another ocean blue,
Still you with me and I with you.

Sent with a Copy of "Red Letter Days Abroad"
To J.C.Y.

Book of my youth, I send thee to a friend
Met, comprehended, loved, alas! too late,--
Too near the sad, inevitable end
Decreed by life's inexorable fate;
Yet though an ocean's billows roll between,
And two great continents our paths divide,
The unseen subtly triumphs o'er the seen,
We walk in spirit, ever side by side;
He on the stately Mississippi's shore,
I 'mid the snow and roses of Tyrol,
But in my heart he dwells forevermore,--
Beloved friend, and double of my soul.

To HON. JESSE HOLDOM OF CHICAGO,

on receipt of his picture and that of his baby in his arms.

Far from the great lake's pride,
Over the ocean vast,
Two faces picture, side by side,
The future and the past.

On one is the flush of dawn
And the light of the morning star;
On the other a shade, from knowledge drawn
And the dusk of the sunset bar.

One brow has the spotless sweep
Of a page that is white and fair;
The other forehead is graven deep
With lines of thought and care.

The eyes of the child look out
On a world all pure and sweet;
But those of the man are sad from doubt
And a knowledge of men's deceit.

To the baby's dainty ears
Only love's accents flow;
Through the man's alas! have surged for years
Stories of crime and woe.

Held in the infant's grasp
Is a tiny, lifeless toy;
In the father's firm yet tender clasp
Is his last great hope,--his boy!

Wisely the parent peers
Through the future's unknown skies,
For knowledge of life has awakened fears
Of the storms that may arise

When his darling boy no more
Can cling to his father's breast,
But when on the strand of the silent shore
That father shall be at rest.

Ah me! could the wisdom won
Through the father's fateful years
Be but transmitted to the son,
There were little need for fears.

But each must tread alone
The wine-press of his life;
Into each cup by Fate is thrown
The bitter drops of strife.

Forth from that fond embrace
Must the little stranger go;
For the rising sun must mount through space.
And the waning sun sink low.

TRANSLATIONS

THE KISS TO THE FLAG

Ta ra! Boom boom! A regiment is coming down the street;
From every side an eager throng is hurrying to greet
From overflowing sidewalk and densely crowded square,
A brilliant, uniformed cortege whose music fills the air;
For such a gorgeous spectacle is not seen every day;
It gives the town a festival to view the fine array;
All hearts are filled with happiness, and no one seems to lag,
When he has thus a chance to see the soldiers ... and the flag.
The old retired officers, their hats like helmets worn,
Have thrust them gaily on one side at sound of drum and horn;
The eldest, whose brave heart is stirred by that familiar strain,
Summounts, with stifled sigh, his chair, a better view to gain;
Cafes, salons, mansards alike their windows open throw,
And pretty girls wear radiant smiles to greet the passing show.
Ah, here they are! Yes, here they come! preceded by the boys,
Who imitate in fashion droll, yet with no actual noise,
But merely by the gesturing of finger or of hand,
The cymbals, flute, and (best of all) the trombones of the band.
The babies even laugh and crow, upheld in nurses' arms,
And have no fear of trumpets loud, or the bass-drum's alarms.
The pavement of the boulevard is struck in perfect time;
Six hundred echoes blend in one, and make the scene sublime;
Six hundred hearts are throbbing there, imbued with martial pride;
Twelve hundred feet with rhythmic beat make but a single stride.
United, too, are all the hearts of those whose eyes pursue
With admiration every line now passing in review.
But when a gallant regiment appears thus on parade,
A little vain of its fine looks, and conscious of its grade,
Each soldier, (since a time of peace allows him to be gay),
Aspires to be attentive to the ladies on the way,
And stares at every pretty face, with no wish to be rude,
But, then, you know, a regiment is never quite ... a prude!
And this explains why Captain Short has said to Captain Tall,
Despite the order which enjoins strict silence upon all,

"A lovely girl!" "Is that so? Where?" "Beside the window there."
"By Jove! I'd like to know her. She is divinely fair!"
Then both a little thoughtfully move on with some regret,
And now the entire regiment the lovely girl has met;

Across the broad, resplendent ranks she looks now left, now right,
Now straight before her, but as yet no smiles her features light;
More than one mounted officer, with flashing sabre, wheels
His well-groomed horse, and calls to him the sergeant at his heels;
And makes excuse of some detail, endeavoring the while,
Perhaps half consciously, to win the favor of a smile.
In vain; the glance he hopes to gain, as hero of her heart,
Comes not; but rank forbids delay, he must at once depart.
The Colonel even has remarked this charming thoughtful girl,
And gives to his fine gray moustache the customary twirl;
A handsome man, with uniform whose gilded lustre shines
From clanking spur to epaulette with stars and golden lines;
He knows how potent is the spell such ornaments impart
To make of soldiers demi-gods in woman's gentle heart.
"The Flag! The Flag!" The crowd is thrilled to see it now advance!
Hail, Colors of the Fatherland! Hail, Banner of Fair France!
Hail, wounded emblem of the brave; blood-red, and heaven's blue,
And purest white,—the noble Flag, now waving in our view!

Standard sublime, that moves all hearts, as now thy form unrolls,
Our dead seem shrouded in thy folds, stirred by the breath of souls!
The color-bearer, young as Hope, and still a charming boy,
In rhythm to the beating hearts and symphony of joy,
Sways gently, as he bears it on, the emblem of a land

Whose sons will in united ranks all enemies withstand.
The young lieutenant, on whose face the standard's shadow falls,
Knows well it makes him pass admired between those human walls,
And that its presence lifts him high above the rank and file,
And gains for him a sentiment worth many a pretty smile.
"That girl has smiled", the Colonel thinks, "but on whom'? Who can tell?"
"It is the bearer of the flag, on whom her favor fell",
Exclaims the Captain, who then adds, "Great Heavens! worse than this,
She has not only smiled, but now she really throws a kiss!"

The Colonel, somewhat bent with years, sits up and swells his chest;
"A charming girl" a sergeant cries, and tries to look his best;
Each soldier, if a comrade laughs, a rival seems to fear;
The chief of a battalion looks, and makes his charger rear.
While several soldiers thus assume an air of martial pride,
The color-bearer, whom the band has quite electrified,
Caresses with a trembling hand the down upon his lip,
In doing which he rashly lets the tattered banner dip.
But she has seen within its folds, thus torn with shell and shot,
The soul of one she dearly loved, who, dead at Gravelotte,
Returned no more, but sleeps to-day within an unknown grave ...
The maiden's kiss was for the Flag, the death-shroud of the brave.

(Translated from the poem by Jean Aicard, entitled "Le Baiser au Drapeau".)

EMILY'S GRAVE

Idly one day in a foreign town
In a churchyard's shade I sat me down
By the side of a little cross of stone
On which was a woman's name alone.
A cypress whispered in my ear
That all was now neglected here;
"Emily's Grave" was all I read;
Nothing more on the cross was said;
Neither a name, nor Bible verse,
Nor date relieved the inscription terse,--
"Emily's Grave".
So strange this seemed, my blood turned cold
At thought of a tragedy never told.
The flowers, the grass, and the humming bees
Were blithe and gay in the sun and breeze,
Yet no kind hand had ever strewn
Sweet flowers, where only weeds had grown,
And nothing brightened the lonely mound
Whose edge was lost in the trodden ground.
At length to the churchyard gate I went,
And asked of a woman old and bent,
"Who was the girl, whose cross of stone
Bears nothing save these words alone,--
'Emily's Grave'?"
"Alas!" she answered, "many a year
Hath passed since I beheld her bier;
She was young, and came from a humble nest,
And credulous too, like all the rest;
So a stranger met her here one day
And caught her in his net straightway.
He said he was rich, and she should shine
Like a queen in his castle by the Rhine,
And, winning her love, he took her hence
To where she found it was all pretence.
He had basely lied to the simple maid,

And, wearying soon of a girl betrayed,
Abandoned her; then home once more
She came, to sink at her mother's door.
Of shame and grief she was quickly dead,
For here she could no more lift her head;
And her mother, wishing to efface
All memory of her child's disgrace,
Reared that small cross, to which she gave
The title only,--'Emily's Grave'".

(From the German.)

SERENADE TO NINON

Ninon, Ninon, what life canst thou be leading?
Swift glide its hours, and day succeeds to day;
How dost thou live, still deaf to Love's sweet pleading?
To-night's fair rose to-morrow fades away.
To-day the bloom of Spring, Ninon, to-morrow frost!
What! Thou canst starless sail, and fear not to be lost?
Canst travel without book? In silence march to strife?
What! thou hast not known love, and yet canst talk of life?
I for a little love would give my latest breath;
And, if deprived of love, would gladly welcome death!
What matter if the day be at its dusk or dawn,
If from another's life our own heart's life be drawn?
O youthful flowers, unfold! If blown o'er Death's cold stream,
This life is but a sleep, of which love is the dream;
And when the winds of Fate have wafted you above,
You will at least have lived, if you have tasted love!

(From the French of Alfred de Musset.)

THE RED TYROLEAN EAGLE

Eagle, Tyrolean eagle,
Why are thy plumes so red?
"In part because I rest
On Ortler's lordly crest;
There share I with the snow
The sunset's crimson glow."

Eagle, Tyrolean eagle,
Why are thy plumes so red?
"From drinking of the wine
Of Etschland's peerless vine;
Its juice so redly shines,
That it incarnadines."

Eagle, Tyrolean eagle,
Why are thy plumes so red?
"My plumage hath been dyed
In blood my foes supplied;
Oft on my breast hath lain
That deeply purple stain."

Eagle, Tyrolean eagle,
Why are thy plumes so red?
"From suns that fiercely shine,

From draughts of ruddy wine,
From blood my foes have shed,--
From these am I so red."

(From the German of Senn.)

ANDREAS HOFER

In Mantua in fetters
The faithful Hofer lay,
Condemned by hostile soldiers
To die at break of day;
Now bled his comrades' hearts in vain;
All Germany felt shame and pain,
As did his land, Tyrol.

When through his dungeon grating
In Mantua's fortress grim
He saw his loyal comrades
Stretch out their hands to him,
He cried: "God give to you his aid,
And to the German realm betrayed,
And to the land Tyrol!"

With step serene and steadfast,
His hands behind him chained,
Went forth the valiant Hofer
To death which he disdained,--
That death, which by his valor foiled
Had oft from Iselberg recoiled,
In his loved land, Tyrol.

The noisy drum-beat slackened,
And silenced was its roar
When Andreas the dauntless,
Stepped through the prison door;
The "Sandwirt", fettered still, yet free,
Stood on the wall with unbent knee,--
The hero of Tyrol.

When told to kneel, he answered:
"That will I never do;
I'll die, as I am standing,
Die, as I fought with you;
Here I resist your last advance,
Long live my well-loved Kaiser Franz,
And with him his Tyrol!"

The soldier takes the kerchief
Which Hofer will not wear;
Once more the hero murmurs
To God a farewell prayer;
Then cries: "Take aim! Hit well this spot!
Now fire! ... How badly you have shot!
Adieu, my land Tyrol!"

(From the German.)

STREAM AND SEA

A river flowed through a desert land
On its way to find the sea,
And saw naught else than glaring sand
And scarcely a shady tree.

The distant stars looked down by night,
And the burning sun by day,
On the crystal stream, so pure and bright;
But the sea was far away.

Sometimes at night the little stream
Would sigh for the sea's embrace,
And oft would see, as in a dream,
The longed-for ocean's face.

At last one day it felt a thrill
It had never known before,
As it reached the brow of a lofty hill,
And saw the wave-lapped shore.

And it flung itself with a mighty leap
From the crest of the hill above,
Till its waters mingled with the deep;--
And the name of the sea was Love.

* * * * *

RACHEL

'Twas sunset in Jerusalem; the light
Still lingered on the city's walls, and crowned
Mount Olivet with splendor, while below,
Among the trees of dark Gethsemane
And on the Kedron gloomy shadows lay,
As if but waiting for the death of day
To rise and mantle Zion in a shroud.
To one who watched it in that golden light,
Across the gulf between the sunlit hills,
The city seemed transfigured, lifted high
Above the gloom and misery of earth,--
A fit abode for Israel's ancient kings.
The broad plateau, where Abram once had knelt,
And where the hallowed Temple of the Jews
Had glittered gorgeous with its gems and gold,
Now bore, 'tis true, the stately Moslem mosque,
But bore it as a captive bears his chains,
Whose spirit is not crushed, but borne aloft
By thrilling memories of a noble past.
The rays of dying day yet half illumed
A dreary spot outside the city walls
Where sat, apart, an old man and his child.

Beside them rose the cherished blocks of stone
Which once had graced the Temple's sacred court;
It was the "Day of Wailing", and the Jews,--
A poor scant remnant of their outcast race--,
Had gathered there, as is their weekly wont,
To read of all the glories they have lost,
And count their endless list of shattered hopes.
Some moaned at thought of their contrasted lot,

Some plucked their beards in anguish and despair,
Some turned their tear-stained faces to the wall,
And mutely kissed the precious blocks, as if
The historic stones held sentient sympathy.
Their lamentations ended, all had gone
To their poor dwellings, sadly, one by one,
Save these two lingering mourners, who still sat
With downcast eyes and slowly-dropping tears.
At length the old man raised his head, and spoke;--

"Our Fathers' God! whose all-protecting hand
Led us, Thy people, to this chosen land,
Through the cleft waters of a distant sea,
That we might rear a temple here to Thee;
Thou, who on Zion hadst Thy favorite shrine,
And in Thy majesty and power divine
Wast daily by our suppliant race adored
As sovereign Jehovah, peerless Lord;
Why hast Thou cast us off to toil and die
In foreign countries' harsh captivity?
Our race is scattered now the wide world o'er;
Our wailings rise to Thee from every shore;
Baited or banished by the Christian Powers,
Cursed by the Moslem mid our ruined towers,
Like pariah dogs, an execrated race,
We crouch to-day within our 'Wailing Place',
Beggings, and paying dearly for, the right
To bathe with tears this consecrated site.
How long, O Israel's God, shall this endure?
Are not Thy promises to Jacob sure?
Oh, speed the day when once again Thy name
Shall here be worshipped, and the sacred flame
Of pure, atoning offerings shall rise,
And smoke ascend from daily sacrifice!"

Tears choked his utterance, and the old man wept,
His meagre frame convulsed with mighty sobs,--
Pathetic tokens of a broken heart.
His daughter crept beside him, drew his head,--
Adorned with thin, white hair,--upon her breast,
And soothed him as a mother might her child;
Then, when his grief abated, took his hands,--
So worn and white,--within her own soft palms,
And chafed them gently with a loving care;
Then pressed them to her lips, and lightly lay
Her warm cheek next his own, while murmuring words
Of tender, filial love in that old tongue
Which once had rung in triumph on this spot,
When poets of her race in glowing words
Had sung their glorious, prophetic strains.

"Father," she whispered, "shall we now despair,
When we at last inhale the sacred air
Of our ancestral glory, and have come,
Despite long years of waiting, to our home?
Didst thou not say, when far beyond the sea,
In our dark days of want and misery,
That thou hadst but one prayer,--to go to die
Upon the hill where Zion's ruins lie?
Now this is granted, and thou hast attained
Thy dearest wish, with ample wealth retained
To keep us here from want, till on the breast
Of Olivet's gray slope in death we rest."

She paused, and faintly smiled, while at her voice

Her father turned his tear-dimmed eyes to hers,
As one who hears soft music with delight.
The sunset glow fell full upon her face,--
A rich, dark oval, crowned with raven hair;
Her lustrous eyes were shrines of tenderness,
Large, dark, profound, and tremulously bright,
And fringed by lashes of the deepest hue,
Which swept the downy smoothness of her cheek;
While her full lips, inimitably arched
And exquisitely mobile, told her thoughts,
Ere their soft motion framed them into speech;
Divinely there had Beauty set her seal;
As who should say,--"Behold a perfect type
Of southern loveliness, in whose warm veins
The blood of good, ancestral stock runs pure,
Maintained through centuries of Spanish suns."
The old man fondly took her hands in his,
And, bending forward, kissed her broad, fair brow;
Then in a faint and weary voice replied;--

"Rachel, my well-belov'd, I have in thee
The only blessing left on earth to me,
The one sweet solace in my dreary life
Of fourscore years of racial hate and strife;
Dear Comforter, 'tis true, our feet now stand
Within the limits of our people's land;
Behind us are the obloquy and pain
Endured in cruel, persecuting Spain,
Yet feel I still more keenly here than there
The degradation which our people share;
Each object here speaks sadly to the Jew
Of all the grandeur which his race once knew.
But let that pass; there is another pain
Which hurts me sorely, Rachel, and in vain
I seek a remedy; it is that thou
Hast now new lines of sorrow on thy brow.
'Tis true, thou art a Jewess, and must know
The shame which constitutes thy people's woe;
But I detect the signs of some new grief
For which the lapse of time brings no relief;
Thy cheek hath paled since our arrival here,
And often on its pallor gleams a tear."

At first she spoke not; but at length her lips
Moved, quivering as in pain, while o'er her face
An ashen paleness came, which whiter seemed
From startling contrast with her ebon hair;
"Father", she murmured, "speak of that no more!
I shared thy coming to this Syrian shore,
And here shall die, for nothing more I crave
Than on these lonely hills to find a grave.
My life, though like a flower deprived of light,
Hath yet known moments so divinely bright,
So full of rapture, that I then forgave
The insults we endured, and still could brave
Existence in Seville, if thou wouldst stay;
But in thy absence how could I betray
My dying mother's trust and farewell prayer
That I henceforth thy lonely life should share?"

She paused, and from her lips a stifled moan
Revealed the torture that her soul had known.
Her father noted it, and with a sigh
Of self-reproach attempted a reply;--
"Dear child, thy love for me hath cost thee much;

For young Emanuel,--shrink not from my touch!--
Was dear to thee; I knew it, and confess
That I, to consummate thy happiness,
Had given thee to him with full consent,
(Who with Emanuel would not be content?)
Had not my vow and purpose of long years
Compelled me to depart despite thy tears.
I knew the struggle, Rachel, in thy heart,
I felt the anguish of thy soul to part
From one for whom thy love was so intense;
In truth, for weeks I suffered in suspense,
Lest thy impetuous temperament might lead
Even thee to leave me, in my hour of need,
Infirm with years, to sail alone from Spain,
Go unattended on the stormy main,
And lay my poor, worn body in a grave
Unknown, uncared for, by a foreign wave.
God bless thee, Rachel, that thy noble soul
Could make this filial choice, and thus control
A love which, though supreme, could not efface
Thy duty, as a daughter of thy race;
Thy ancestors were princes on this hill!
Within thy veins their blood runs nobly still!"

Rachel sat motionless, with outstretched hands,
And fingers interlocked; her steadfast eyes
Had hopeless sorrow in their stony gaze,
As though they read Fate's sentence of despair.
At length she turned her face; the light had fled
From her young features, just as in the west
The glow had faded from the sky, and left
A wintry coldness in the unlit clouds.
She seemed about to speak, when, sweet and clear,
From out the shadow of the ancient wall
Soft vocal music stirred the evening air,
With plaintive passion thrilled,--a proof that love
Inspired the words that floated into song,--

Light of the glorious, setting sun,
Gilding the Syrian shore,
Ere the bright, lingering day be done,
Guide me to her whose heart, well won,
Holds me forevermore.

Moon, that hath spanned the silvered plain,
Olivet's brow to kiss,
Lead her by memory's golden chain
Back to the olive groves of Spain;
Back to our days of bliss!

Star of the evening's darkening sky,
Gemming the lonely hill,
Whisper to her that I am nigh,
Waiting in hope for her reply;
Tell her I love her still!

The song had ended; Rachel stood erect,
Her pale lips parted breathlessly, her head
Bent forward to receive the words, which came
Like grateful raindrops to a drooping flower;
Her slender form was quivering with delight
And sudden rush of feeling; she scarce knew
If this were all a dream, or if in truth
She heard Emanuel's welcome accents there;
Her heart for that brief moment wanted naught

To supplement its rapture; 'twas enough
To stand thus in expectancy, and know
The idol of her soul was drawing near.
At length her father touched her hand, and spoke;--

"'Tis he, my Rachel; thy sweet power hath drawn
Thy lover o'er the sea! Again the dawn
Of love and hope is kindled in thy face;
The concentrated beauty of thy race
Illumes thy features; now alas! I know
That thy self-sacrifice hath cost thee woe
Intenser than I thought; I too rejoice
To hear the music of Emanuel's voice,
Although I tremble lest his purpose be
To lure thee, Rachel, far away from me."

His daughter, even in the thrill of bliss
Which filled her throbbing heart, yet saw the pain
That marked his closing words; and, turning, twined
Her arms about the old man's drooping neck;
"Dear Father, fear not that," she gently said;
"Though it be true that ardent love hath led
Emanuel to this distant Syrian shore,
Thy lot shall still be mine forevermore;
Doubt not thy faithful child, for none the less
'Twill be thy Rachel's greatest happiness
At thy dear side to minister to thee;
For only death can come 'twixt thee and me!"

She paused, and hid her face upon his breast;
Her father clasped her fondly in his arms,
And bent his cheek to hers, his whitened locks
On her dark tresses glistening like the snow.
'Twas thus Emanuel found them; silently
He stood before them in a dread suspense;
His very soul seemed poised upon the word
Which left at last his trembling lips,--"Rachel!"
She raised her head, and their bright, ardent eyes
Exchanged the voiceless language of the soul;
A joy ineffable diffused its flush
O'er both their faces; yet she did not speak,
But only clung the closer to her sire,
As if in fear to lose her self-control.
At length Emanuel spoke in tones so charged
With deep emotion that the very air
Seemed tremulous with thoughts transcending speech;--

"Rachel, my more than life! Canst thou forgive
The momentary thought that I could live
Without thee? See, our separation ends!
Henceforth I know no country, home or friends
Save thine, my love! I gladly leave them all,
Obedient to a higher, nobler call,--
The cry of my whole being to be near
Thee, thee, my Rachel, now so wholly dear,
That life without thee is but lingering death!
Already with thee a diviner breath
Of inspiration lifts my soul to gain
The purest, loftiest heights I can attain!
Not to entice thee from thy father's care,
Have I come hither, but to seek a share
In that dear filial duty, and to give
Love, loyalty and homage, while I live,
To him, the honored hero of our race,
Beside whom here I also crave a place.

Not only do I plead my love anew,
But also thus lay open to thy view
The dearest wishes of my soul, and wait
To learn thy answer. Do I come too late?"

In doubt, 'twixt hope and fear, she raised her eyes
To read her fate in her lov'd father's face;
Who, taking her fair hands within his own,
Advanced with her to where Emanuel stood,
And laid them in her lover's eager grasp.
With softened radiance, from their lonely paths,
The far-off stars beheld their kneeling forms,
While, with his hands in benediction raised,
The old man stood absorbed in silent prayer.

* * * * *

The old, old story, ever new
Alike in Gentile and in Jew;
For Love remains man's sovereign yet
In Eden and on Olivet.

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