

SONGS

UNSUNG

SONGS UNSUNG

NUMBER OF
THE
PAGES

EDITION

SONGS

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Title: Songs Unsung

Date of first publication: 1883

Author: Lewis Morris (1833-1907)

Date first posted: Aug. 27, 2021

Date last updated: Aug. 27, 2021

Faded Page eBook #20210864

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SONGS UNSUNG

BY
LEWIS MORRIS

OF PENBRYN

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KNIGHT OF THE REDEEMER OF GREECE, ETC., ETC.

“FIDE ET AMORE”

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1883

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P R E F A C E .

AFTER a silence of more than three years, due to other engrossing occupations, the writer once more appeals to his readers with a volume in which the leading features of his former works will probably be found combined. The story of "Odatis" is derived from Athenæus. That of "Clytæmnestra in Paris" follows accurately, in all matters of fact, the evidence given in the well-known Fenayrou trial of August, 1882. The "Three Breton Poems" are from the "Barzaz Breiz." One of them, "The Foster Brother," has, as the author has learnt since his version was written, already appeared in a volume of Translations from the same source, published some years ago.

PENBRYN, CARMARTHEN,
October, 1883.

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SONGS UNSUNG.

PICTURES—I.

ABOVE the abysmal undivided deep
A train of glory streaming from afar;
And in the van, to wake the worlds from sleep,
One on whose forehead shines the Morning-Star.

Long-rolling surges of a falling sea,
Smiting the sheer cliffs of an unknown shore;
And by a fanged rock, swaying helplessly
A mast with broken cordage—nothing more.

Three peaks, one loftier, all in virgin white,
Poised high in cloudland when the day is done,
And on the mid-most, far above the night,
The rose-red of the long-departed sun.

A wild girl reeling, helpless, like to fall,
Down a hushed street at dawn in midsummer;
And one who had clean forgot their past and all,
From a lit palace casement looks at her.

A young man, only clothed with youth's best bloom,
In mien and form an angel, not in eye;
Hard by, a fell worm creeping from a tomb,
And one, wide-eyed, who cries, "The Enemy!"

A lake of molten fires which swell and surge
And fall in thunders on the burning verge;
And one a queen rapt, with illumined face,
Who doth defy the Goddess of the place.

Eros beneath a red-cupped tree, asleep,
And floating round him, like to cherubim,
Fair rosy laughter-dimpled loves, who peep
Upon the languid loosened limbs of him.

A darkling gateway, thronged with entering ghosts,
And a grave janitor, who seems to say:
“Woe, woe to youth, to life, which idly boasts;
I am the End, and mine the appointed Way.”

A young Faun making music on a reed,
Deep in a leafy dell in Arcady:
Three girl-nymphs fair, in musing thought take heed
Of the strange youth’s mysterious melody.

A flare of lamplight in a shameful place
Full of wild revel and unchecked offence,
And in the midst, one fresh scarce-sullied face,
Within her eyes, a dreadful innocence.

A quire of seraphs, chanting row on row,
With lute and viol and high trumpet notes;
And, above all, their soft young eyes aglow—
Child angels, making laud from full clear throats.

Some, on a cliff at dawn, in agony;
Below, a scaly horror on the sea,
Lashing the leaden surge. Fast-bound, a maid
Waits on the verge, alone, but unafraid.

A poisonous, dead, sad sea-marsh, fringed with pines,
Thin-set with mouldering churches, old as Time;
Beyond, on high, just touched with wintry rime,
The long chain of the autumnal Apennines.

A god-like Presence, beautiful as dawn,
Watching, upon an untrodden summit white,
The Earth's last day grow full, and fade in night;
Then, with a sigh, the Presence is withdrawn.

A sheer rock-islet, frowning on the sea
Where no ship sails, nor ever life may be:
Thousands of leagues around, from pole to pole,
The unbounded lonely ocean-currents roll.

Young maids who wander on a flower-lit lawn,
In springtide of their lives as of the year;
Meanwhile, unnoticed, swift, a thing of fear,
Across the sun, a deadly shadow drawn.

Slow, hopeless, overborne, without a word,
Two issuing, as if from Paradise;
Behind them, stern, and with un pitying eyes,

Their former selves, wielding a two-edged sword.

A weary woman tricked with gold and gem,
Wearing some strange barbaric diadem,
Scorn on her lips, and, like a hidden fire,
Within her eyes cruel unslaked desire.

Two aged figures, poor, and blurred with tears;
Their child, a bold proud woman, sweeping by;
A hard cold face, which pities not nor fears,
And all contempt and evil in her eye.

Around a harpsichord, a blue-eyed throng
Of long-dead children, rapt in sounds devout,
In some old grange, while on that silent song
The sabbath twilight fades, and stars come out

The end of things created; Dreadful night,
Advancing swift on sky, and earth, and sea;
But at the zenith a departing light,
A soaring countless blessed company.

THE LESSON OF TIME.

LEAD thou me, Spirit of the World, and I
Will follow where thou leadest, willingly;
Not with the careless sceptic's idle mood,
Nor blindly seeking some unreal good;

For I have come, long since to that full day
Whose morning mists have fled and curled away—
That breathless afternoon-tide when the Sun
Halts, as it were, before his journey done.

Calm as a river broadening through the plain,
Which never plunges down the rocks again,
But, clearly mirrored in its tranquil deep,
Holds tower and spire and forest as in sleep.

How old and worn the metaphor appears,
Old as the tale of passing hopes and fears!
New as the springtide air, which day by day
Breathes on young lives, and speeds them on their way.

The Roman knew it, and the Hellene too;
Assyrian and Egyptian proved it true;
Who found for youth's young glory and its glow
Serener life, and calmer tides run slow.

And then oblivion takes, and those before,
Whose very name and race we know no more,
To whom, oh Spirit of the World and Man,
Thou didst reveal Thyself when Time began,—

They felt, as I, what none may understand;
They touched through darkness on a hidden hand;
They marked their hopes, their faiths, their longings fade,
And found a solitude themselves had made;

They came, as I, to hope which conquers doubt

They came, as I, to hope which conquers doubt,
Though sun and moon and every star go out;
They ceased, while at their side a still voice said,
“Fear not, have courage; blessed are the dead.”

They were my brothers—of one blood with me,
As with the unborn myriads who shall be:
I am content to rise and fall as they;
I watch the rising of the Perfect Day.

Lead thou me, Spirit, willing and content
To be, as thou wouldst have me, wholly spent.
I am thine own, I neither strive nor cry:
Stretch forth thy hand, I follow, silently.

VENDREDI SAINT.

THIS is Paris, the beautiful city,
Heaven's gate to the rich, to the poor without pity.
The clear sun shines on the fair town's graces,
And on the cold green of the shrunken river,
And the chill East blows, as 'twould blow for ever,
On the holiday groups with their shining faces.

For this is the one solemn day of the season,
When all the swift march of her gay unreason
Pauses a while, and a thin mask of sadness
Is spread o'er the features of riot and madness,
And the churches are crowded with devotees holy,
Rich and poor, saint and sinner, the great and the lowly.

* * * * *

Here is a roofless palace, where gape
Casements in rows without form or shape:
A sordid ruin, whose swift decay
Speaks of that terrible morning in May
When the whole fair city was blood and fire,
And the black smoke of ruin rose higher and higher,

And through the still streets, 'neath the broad Spring sun,
Everywhere murder and rapine were done;
Women lurking, with torch in hand,
Evil eyed, sullen, who soon should stand
Before the sharp bayonets, dripping with blood,
And be pierced through and through, or shot dead where they stood.

* * * * *

This is the brand-new Hôtel de Ville,
Where six hundred wretches met death in the fire;
Ringed round with a pitiless hedge of steel,
Not one might escape that swift vengeance To-day

Not one might escape that swift vengeance. To-day
The ruin, the carnage, are clean swept away;
And the sumptuous façades, and the high roofs aspire,

And, upon the broad square, the white palace face
Looks down with a placid and meaningless grace,
Ignoring the bloodshed, the struggle, the sorrow,
The doom that has been, and that may be to-morrow,
The hidden hatred, the mad endeavour,
The strife that has been and shall be for ever.

* * * * *

Here rise the twin-towers of Notre Dame,
Through siege, and revolt, and ruin the same.
See the people in crowds pressing onward, slowly,
Along the dark aisles to the altar holy—
The altar, to-day, wrapt in mourning and gloom,
Since He whom they worship lies dead in the tomb.

There, by a tiny acolyte tended,
A round-cheeked child in his cassock white,
Lies the tortured figure to which are bended
The knees of the passers who gaze on the sight,
And the people fall prostrate, and kiss and mourn
The fair dead limbs which the nails have torn.

And the passionate music comes from the quire,
Full of soft chords of a yearning pity
The mournful voices accordant aspire
To the far-off gates of the Heavenly City;
And the soft clear alto, soaring high and higher,
Mounts now a surging fountain, now a heavenward fire.

Ay, eighteen centuries after the day,
A world-worn populace kneel and pray,
As they pass by and gaze on the limbs unbroken.
What symbol is this? of what yearnings the token?
What spell this that leads men a part to be
Of this old Judæan death-agony?

And I asked—Was it nought but a Nature Divine

And I asked, was it thought out a Nature's crime,
That for lower Natures consented to die?
Could a greater than human sacrifice,
Still make the tears spring to the world-worn eye?
One thought only it was that replied, and no other:
This man was our brother.

* * * * *

As I pass from the church, in the cold East wind,
All its solemn teachings are left behind:
Here, once again, by the chill blue river,
The blighted buds on the branches shiver;
Here, again, are the holiday groups, with delight
Gaping in wonder at some new sight.

'Tis an open doorway, squalid and low,
And crowds which ceaselessly come and go.
Careless enough ere they see the sight
Which leaves the gay faces pallid and white:
Something is there which can change their mood,
And check the holiday flow of the blood.

For the face which they see is the face of Death.
Strange, such a thing as the ceasing of breath
Should work such miraculous change as here:
Turn the thing that we love, to a thing of fear;
Transform the sordid, the low, the mean,
To a phantasm, pointing to Depths unseen.

There they lie, the dead, unclaimed and unknown,
Each on his narrow and sloping stone.
The chill water drips from each to the ground;
No other movement is there, nor sound.
With the look which they wore when they came to die,
They gaze from blind eyes on the pitiless sky.

No woman to-day, thank Heaven, is here;
But men, old for the most part, and broken quite,
Who, finding this sad world a place of fear,
Have leapt forth hopelessly into the night,
Bankrupt of faith. without love. unfriended.

Too tired of the comedy ere 'twas ended.

But here is one younger, whose ashy face
Bears some faint shadow of former grace.
What brought him here? was it love's sharp fever?
Was she worse than dead that he bore to leave her?
Or was his young life, ere its summer came,
Burnt by Passion's whirlwinds as by a flame.

Was it Drink or Desire, or the die's sure shame,
Which led this poor wanderer to deep disgrace?
Was it hopeless misfortune, unmixed with blame,
That laid him here dead, in this dreadful place?
Ah Heaven, of these nineteen long centuries,
Is the sole fruit this thing with the sightless eyes!

Yesterday, passion and struggle and strife,
Hatreds, it may be, and anger-choked breath;
Yesterday, fear and the burden of life;
To-day, the cold ease and the calmness of death:
And that which strove and sinned and yielded there,
To-day in what hidden place of God's mysterious air?

Whatever he has been, here now he lies,
Facing the stare of unpitying eyes.
I turn from the dank and dishonoured face,
To the fair dead Christ by his altar place,
And the same thought replies to my soul, and no other—
This, too, was our brother.

“NO MORE, NO MORE.”

“No more, no more,” the autumnal shadows cry;
“No more, no more,” our failing hearts reply:
Oh! that our lives were come to that calm shore
Where change is done, and fading is no more.

But should some mightier hand completion send,
And smooth life’s stream unrippled to its end,
Our sated souls, filled with an aching pain,
Would yearn for waning days and years again.

Thrice blessèd be the salutary change
Which day by day brings thoughts and feelings strange!
Our gain is loss, we keep but what we give,
And only daily dying may we live.

THE NEW CREED.

YESTERDAY, to a girl I said—
“I take no pity for the unworthy dead,
The wicked, the unjust, the vile who die;
’Twere better thus that they should rot and lie.
The sweet, the lovable, the just
Make holy dust;
Elsewhere than on the earth
Shall come their second birth.
Until they go each to his destined place,
Whether it be to bliss or to disgrace,
’Tis well that both shall rest, and for a while be dead.”
“There is nowhere else,” she said.

“There is nowhere else.” And this was a girl’s voice,
Who, some short tale of summers gone to-day,
Would carelessly rejoice,
As life’s blithe springtide passed upon its way
And all youth’s infinite hope and bloom
Shone round her; nor might any shadow of gloom
Fall on her as she passed from flower to flower;
Love sought her, with full dower
Of happy wedlock and young lives to rear;
Nor shed her eyes a tear,
Save for some passing pity, fancy bred.
All good things were around her—riches, love,
All that the heart and mind can move,
The precious things of art, the undefiled
And innocent affection of a child.
Oh girl, who amid sunny ways dost tread,
What curse is this that blights that comely head?
For right or wrong there is no further place than here,
No sanctities of hope, no chastening fear?
“There is nowhere else,” she said.

“There is nowhere else,” and in the wintry ground
When we have laid the darlings of our love—

When we have laid the earnings of our love
The little lad with eyes of blue,
The little maid with curls of gold,
Or the beloved aged face
On which each passing year stamps a diviner grace—
That is the end of all, the narrow bound.
Why look our eyes above
To an unreal home which mortal never knew—
Fold the hands on the breast, the clay-cold fingers fold?
No waking comes there to the uncaring dead!
“There is nowhere else,” she said.

Strange; is it old or new, this deep distress?
Or do the generations, as they press
Onward for ever, onward still,
Finding no truth to fill
Their starving yearning souls, from year to year
Feign some new form of fear
To fright them, some new terror
Couched on the path of error,
Some cold and desolate word which, like a blow,
Forbids the current of their faith to flow,
Makes slow their pulse's eager beat,
And, chilling all their wonted heat,
Leaves them to darkling thoughts and dreads a prey,
Uncheered by dawning shaft or setting ray?

Ah, old it is, indeed, and nowise new.
This is the poison-growth that grew
In the old thinkers' fancy-haunted ground.
They, blinded by some keen too-vivid gleam
Of the Unseen, to which all things did seem
To shape themselves and tend,
Solved, by some Giant Force, the Mystery of Things,
And, soaring all too high on Fancy's wings,
Saw in dead matter both their Source and End.
They felt the self-same shock and pain
As I who hear these prattlings cold to-day.
Not otherwise of old the fool to his heart did say.
“There is no other place of joy or grief,
Nor wrong in doubt, nor merit in belief:
There is no God nor Lord of quick and dead.”

There is no God, nor Lord of quick and dead,
There is nowhere else," they said.

And, indeed, if any to whom life's path were rough
Should say as you, he had cause maybe at sight.
For lo, the way is steep and hard enough,
And wrong is tangled and confused with right;
And from all the world there goes a solemn sound
Of lamentations, rising from the ground,
Confused as that which shocks the wondering ear
Of one who, gliding on the still lagune,
Finds the oar's liquid splash and tune
Broken by wild cries of frenzy and of fear,
And knows the Isle of Madness drawing near;
And the scheme of things, if scheme there be indeed,
Is a book deeper than our eyes may read,
Full of wild paradox, and vain endeavour,
And hopes and faiths which find completion never.
For such a one, in seasons of dismay
And deep depression and despair,
Clouds come oftentimes to veil the face of day,
And there is no ray left of all the beams of gold,
The glow, the radiance bright, the unclouded faith of old.

But you, poor child forlorn,
Ah! better were it you were never born;
Better that you had thrown your life away
On some coarse lump of clay;
Better defeat, disgrace, childlessness, all
That can a solitary life befall,
Than to have all things and yet be
Self-bound to dark despondency,
And self-tormented, beyond reach of doubt,
By some cold word that puts all yearnings out.

"There is nowhere else," she said:
This is the outcome of their crude Belief
Who are, beyond all rescue and relief,
Being self-slain and numbered with the dead.
"There is no God but Force,
Which, working always on its destined course,
Sneeds on its way and knows no thought of change.

Within the germ the molecule fares free,
Holding the potency of what shall be;
Within the little germ lurks the heaven-reaching tree:
No break is there in all the cosmic show.
What place is there, in all the Scheme Immense,
For a remote unworking Excellence
Which may not be perceived by any sense,
Which makes no humble blade of grass to grow,
Which adds no single link to things and thoughts we know?"

"For everything that is, indeed,
Bears with it its own seed;
It cannot change or cease and be no more:
For ever all things are even as they were before
Or if, by long degrees and slow,
More complex doth the organism grow,
It makes no break in the eternal plan;
There is no gulf that yawns between the herb and man."

Poor child, what is it they have taught,
Who through deep glooms and desert wastes of thought
Have brought to such as you their dreary creed?
Have they no care, indeed,
For all the glorious gains of man's long past,
For all our higher hope of what shall be at last?
"All things are moulded in one mould;
They spring, they are, they fade by one compulsion cold—
Some dark necessity we cannot know,
Which bids them wax and grow,—
That is sufficient cause for all things, quick and dead!"
"There is no Cause else," she said.

Oh, poor indeed, and in evil case,
Who shouldst be far from sound of doubt
As a maiden in some restful place
Whose busy life, year in year out,
Is made of gentle worship, homely days
Marked by their growing sum of prayer and praise,
The church spire pointing to the longed-for sky,
The heaven that opens to the cloistered eye.
For us. for us. who mid the weary strife

And jangling discords of our life
Are day by day opprest,
'Twere little wonder were our souls distrest,
God, and the life to be, and all our early trust
Being far from us expelled and thrust;
But for you, child, who cannot know at all
To what hidden laws we stand or fall,
To what bad heights the wrong within may grow,
To what dark deeps the stream of hopeless lives may flow!

For let the doubter babble as he can,
There is no wit in man
Which can make Force rise higher still
Up to the heights of Will,—
No phase of Force which finite minds can know
Can self-determined grow,
And of itself elect what shall its essence be:
The same to all eternity,
Unchanged, unshaped, it goes upon its blinded way;
Nor can all forces nor all laws
Bring ceasing to the scheme, nor any pause,
Nor shape it to the mould in which to be—
Form from the wingèd seed the myriad-branching tree,—
Nor guide the force once sped, so that it turn
To Water-floods that quench or Fires that burn,
Or now to the electric current change,
Or draw all things by some attraction strange.
Or in the brain of man, working unseen, sublime,
Transcend the narrow bounds of Space and Time.
Whence comes the innate Power which knows to guide
The force deflected so from side to side,
That not a barren line from whence to where
It goes upon its way through the unfettered air?
What sways the prisoned atom on its fruitful course?
Ah, it was more than Force
Which gave the Universe of things its form and face!
Force moving on its path through Time and Space
Would nought enclose, but leave all barren still.
A higher Power, it was, the worlds could form and fill;
And by some pre-existent harmony
Were all things made as Fate would have them be—

Fate, the ineffable Word of an Eternal Will.

All things that are or seem,
Whether we wake who see or do but dream,
Are of that Primal Will phantasms, if no more;
He who sees these sees God, and seeing doth adore.
Joy, suffering, evil, good,
Whate'er our daily food,
Whate'er the mystery and paradox of things,
Low creeping thoughts and high imaginings.
The laughters of the world, the age-long groan,
Bring to his mind one name, one thought alone;
All beauty, right, deformity, or wrong,
Sing to his ear one high unchanging song;
And everything that is, to his rapt fancy brings
The hidden beat through space of the Eternal Wings.

Where did the Idea dwell,
At first, which was of all the germ and seed?
Which worked from Discord order, from blind Force
Sped all the Cosmos on its upward course?
Which held within the atom and the cell
The whole vast hidden Universe, sheltered well,
Till the hour came to unfold it, and the need?
What did the ever-upward growth conceive,
Which from the obedient monad formed the herb, the tree,
The animal, the man, the high growths that shall be?
Ever from simpler to more complex grown,
The long processions from a source unknown
Unfold themselves across the scene of life.
Oh blessed struggle and strife,
Fare onward to the end, since from a Source
Thou art, which doth transcend and doth determine Force!
Fare onward to the end; not from Force, dead and blind,
Thou comest, but from the depths of the Creative Mind.

Fare on to the end, but how should ending be,
If Will be in the Universe, and plan?
Some higher thing shall be, that which to-day is Man.
Undying is each cosmic force:
Undying, but transformed, it runs its endless course;

It cannot wane, or sink, or be no more.
Not even the dust and lime which clothe us round
Lose their own substance in the charnel-ground,
Or carried far upon the weltering wind;
Only with other growths combined,
In some new whole they are for ever—
They are, and perish never.
The great suns shed themselves in heat and light
Upon the unfilled interstellar air,
Till all their scattered elements unite
And are replenished as before they were.
Nothing is lost, nor can be: change alone,
Unceasing, never done,
Shapes all the forms of things, and keeps them still
Obedient to the Unknown Perfect Will.
And shall the life that is the highest that we know,
Shall this, alone, no more increase, expand and grow?

Nay, somewhere else there is, although we know not where,
Nor what new shape God gives our lives to wear.
We are content, whatever it shall be;
Content, through all eternity,
To be whatever the Spirit of the World deem best;—
Content to be at rest;
Content to work and fare through endless days;
Content to spend ourselves in endless praise:
Nay, if it be the Will Divine,
Content to be, and through long lives to pine,
Far from the light which vivifies, the fire
Which breathes upon our being and doth inspire
All soaring thoughts and hopes which light our pathway here;
Content, though with some natural thrill of fear,
To be purged through by age-long pain,
Till we resume our upward march again;
Content, if need, to take some lower form,
Some humbler herb or worm
To be awhile, if e'er the eternal plan
Go back from higher to lower, from man to less than man.
Not so, indeed, we hold, but rather this—
That all Time gone, that all that was or is,
The scarpèd cliff, the illimitable Past,

This truth alone of all truths else hold fast:—
From lower to higher, from simple to complete,
This is the pathway of the Eternal Feet;
From earth to lichen, herb to flowering tree,
From cell to creeping worm, from man to what shall be.
This is the solemn lesson of all time,
This is the teaching of the voice sublime:
Eternal are the worlds, and all that them do fill;
Eternal is the march of the Creative Will;
Eternal is the life of man, and sun, and star;
Ay, even though they fade a while, they are;
And though they pause from shining, speed for ever still.

A GREAT GULF.

IF any tender sire
Who sits girt round by loving faces
And happy childhood's thousand graces,
Through sudden crash or fire
Should 'scape from this poor life to some mysterious air,
And, dwelling solitary there,
Should feel his unfilled yearning father's heart
Pierced through by some intolerable smart;
And, sickening for the dear lost lives again,
Should through his overmastering pain
Break through the awful bounds the Eternal sets between
That which lives Here, and There, the Seen and the Unseen;

And having gained once more
The confines of the Earth, the scarce-left place
Which greets him with unchanged familiar face—
The well-remembered door,
The rose he watered blooming yet,
Nought to remember or forget,
No change in all the world except in him,
Nor there save in some sense, already dim
Before the unchanged past, so that he seem
A mortal spirit still, and what was since, a dream;

And in the well-known room
Should find the blithe remembered faces
Grown sad and blurred by recent traces
Of a new sorrow and gloom,
And when his soul to comfort them is fain
Finds his voice mute, his form unknown, unseen,
And thinks with irrepressible pain
Of all the happy days which late have been,
And feels his new life's inmost chambers stirred
If only of his own, he might be seen or heard;

Then if at length

Then it, at length,

The father's yearning and o'erburdened soul
Burst into shape and voice which scorn control
Of its despairing strength,—
Ah Heaven! ah pity for the present dread
Which strikes the old affection, dull and dead!
Ah, better were it far than this thing to remain,
Voiceless, unseen, unloved, for ever and in pain!

So when a finer mind,
Knowing its old self swept by some weird change
And the old thought deceased, or else grown strange,
Turns to those left behind,
With passionate stress and mighty yearning stirred,—
It strives to stand revealed in shape and word
In vain; or by strong travail visible grown,
Finds but a world estranged, and lives and dies alone!

ONE DAY.

ONE day, one day, our lives shall seem
Thin as a brief forgotten dream:
One day, our souls by life opprest,
Shall ask no other boon than rest.

And shall no hope nor longing come,
No memory of our former home,
No yearning for the loved, the dear
Dead lives that are no longer here?

If this be age, and age no more
Recall the hopes, the fears of yore,
The dear dead mother's accents mild,
The lisping of the little child,

Come, Death, and slay us ere the blood
Run slow, and turn our lives from good
For only in such memories we
Consent to linger and to be.

SEASONS.

THE cold winds rave on the icy river,
The leafless branches complain and shiver,
The snow clouds sweep on, to a dreary tune,—
Can these be the earth and the heavens of June?—

When the blossoming trees gleam in virginal white,
And heaven's gate opens wide in the lucid night,
And there comes no sound on the perfumed air
But the passionate brown bird, carolling fair,

And the lush grass in upland and lowland stands deep,
And the loud landrail lulls the children to sleep,
And the white still road and the thick-leaved wood
Are haunted by fanciful solitude;

And by garden and lane men and maidens walk,
Busied with trivial, loverlike talk;
And the white and the red rose, newly blown,
Open each, with a perfume and grace of its own.

The cold wind sweeps o'er the desolate hill,
The stream is bound fast and the wolds are chill;
And by the dead flats, where the cold blasts moan,
A bent body wearily plods alone.

THE PATHOS OF ART.

OFT seeing the old painters' art,
We find the tear unbidden start,
And feel our full hearts closer grow
To the far days of long ago.

Not burning faith, or godlike pain,
Can thus our careless thought enchain;
The heavenward gaze of souls sublime,
At once transcends, and conquers time.

Nor pictured form of seer or saint,
Which hands inspired delight to paint;
Art's highest aims of hand or tongue,
Age not, but are for ever young.

But some imperfect trivial scene,
Of homely life which once has been,
Of youth, so soon to pass away,
Of happy childhood's briefer day;

Or humble daily tasks portrayed—
The thrifty mistress with her maid;
The flowers, upon the casement set,
Which in our Aprils blossom yet;

The long processions, never done;
The time-worn palace, scarce begun;
The gondolier, who plies his oar
For stately sirs or dames of yore;

The girl with fair hair morning-stirred,
Who swings the casement for her bird;
The hunt; the feast; the simple mirth
Which marks the marriage or the birth;

The burly forms from side to side

The early forms, from side to side
Swift rolling on the frozen tide;
The long-haired knights; the ladies prim
The chanted madrigal or hymn;

The opera, with its stately throng;
The twilight church aisles stretching long
The spires upon the wooded wold;
The dead pathetic life of old;—

These all the musing mind can fill—
So dead, so past, so living still:
Oh dear dead lives, oh hands long gone,
Whose life, whose Art still lingers on!

IN THE STRAND.

In the midst of the busy and roaring Strand,
Dividing life's current on either hand,
A time-worn city church, sombre and grey,
Waits, while the multitude passes away.

Beside it, a strait plot of churchyard ground
Is fenced by a time-worn railing around;
And within, like a pavement, the ground is spread
With the smooth worn stones of the nameless dead.

But here and there, in the spaces between,
When the slow Spring bursts, and the fields grow green,
Every year that comes, 'mid the graves of the dead
Some large-leaved flower-stem lifts up its head.

In the Spring, though as yet the sharp East be here,
This green stem burgeons forth year by year:
Through twenty swift summers and more, have I seen
This tender shoot rise from its sheath of green.

New busy crowds pass on with hurrying feet,
The young lives grow old and the old pass away;
But unchanged, 'mid the graves, at the fated day,
The green sheath bursts upwards and grows complete.

From the grave it bursts forth, 'mid the graves it shall die,
It shall die as we die, as it lives we shall live;
And this poor flower has stronger assurance to give,
Than volumes of learning, which blunder or lie.

For out of the dust and decay of the tomb,
It springs, the sun calling, to beauty and bloom;
And amid the sad city, 'mid death and 'mid strife,
It preaches its mystical promise of life.

CÆLUM NON ANIMUM.

OH fair to be, oh sweet to be
In fancy's shallop faring free,
With silken sail and fairy mast
To float till all the world be past

Oh happy fortune, on and on
To wander far till care be gone,
Round beetling capes, to unknown seas,
Seeking the fair Hesperides!

But is there any land or sea
Where toil and trouble cease to be—
Some dim, unfound, diviner shore,
Where men may sin and mourn no more?

Ah, not the feeling, but the sky
We change, however far we fly;
How swift soe'er our bark may speed,
Faster the blessed isles recede.

Nay, let us seek at home to find
Fit harvest for the brooding mind,
And find, since thus the world grows fair,
Duty and pleasure everywhere.

Oh well-worn road, oh homely way,
Where pace our footsteps, day by day,
The homestead and the church which bound
The tranquil seasons' circling round!

Ye hold experiences which reach
Depths which no change of skies can teach,
The saintly thought, the secret strife
Which guide, which do perturb our life.

NIOBE.

ON SIPYLUS.

AH me, ah me! on this high mountain peak,
Which far above the seething Lydian plains
Takes the first dawn-shaft, and the sunset keeps
When all the fields grow dark—I, Niobe,
A mother's heart, hid in a form of stone,
Stand all day in the vengeful sun-god's eye,
Stand all night in the cold gaze of the moon,
Who both long ages since conspiring, slew
My children,—I a childless mother now
Who was most blest, a living woman still,
Bereft of all, and yet who cannot die.

Ah day, ill-fated day, which wrecked my life!
I was the happy mother of strong sons,
Brave, beautiful, all in their bloom of age:
From him my first-born, now a bearded man,
Through the fair promise of imperfect youth,
To the slim stripling who had scarcely left
The women's chambers, on whose lip scant shade
Of budding manhood showed, I loved them all;
All with their father's eyes, and that strange charm
Of rhythmic grace, and musical utterance
As when, in far-off Thebes, the enchanted wall
Rose perfect, to the music of his lyre.

Ah me, the fatal day! For at high noon
I sate within my Theban palace fair—
Deep summer-time it was—and marked the crowd
From the thronged city street, to the smooth plain,
Stream joyously: the brave youths, full of life,
Stripped for the mimic fray, the leap, the race,
The wrestling; and the princes, my strong sons,
The fair limbs I had borne beneath my zone
Grown to full stature, such as maidens love,—

The sinewy arms, the broad chests, and strong loins
Of manhood; the imperfect flower-like forms,
Eager with youths first fires; my youngest born,
My darling, doffing his ephebic robe
Which late he donned with pride, a child in heart,
In budding limbs a youth;—I see them go
Their fair young bodies glistening in the sun,
Which kissed the shining olive. As they went,
The joyous concourse winding towards the plain,
My happy eyes o'erflowed, and as I turned
And saw my daughters round me, fair grown lives
And virgin, sitting spinning the white flax,
Each with her distaff, beautiful and fit
To wed with any stately king of men
And reign a queen in Hellas, my glad heart
Broke forth in pride, and as I looked I thought,
“Oh happy, happy mother of such sons!
Oh happy, happy mother of such girls!
For whom full soon the joyous nuptial rites
Shall bring the expectant bridegroom and the bride,
And soon once more the little childish hands
Which shall renew my early wedded years,
When the king loved me first. Thrice blest indeed.
There is no queen in Hellas such as I,
Dowered with such fair-grown offspring; not a queen
Nor mother o'er all earth's plain, around which flows
The wide salt stream of the surrounding sea,
As blest as I am. Nay, in Olympus' self
What offspring were they to all-ruling Zeus
That Leto bore? Phœbus and Artemis,
A goodly pair indeed, but two alone.
Poor mother, that to such a lord as Zeus
Bare only those, no fairer than my own.
Nay, I am happier than a goddess' self;
I would not give this goodly train of mine
For that scant birth. I ask no boon of Zeus,
Nor of the Olympian Gods; for I am glad.
No fruitful mother in a peasant's hut,
Scorning the childless great, thinks scorn of me,
Being such as I. Nay, let Queen Leto's self
Know, that a mortal queen has chanced to bear
A fairer than she and more.”

AS fair as sne, and more.

Even as I spoke,
While the unholy pride flashed through my soul,
There pierced through the closed lattice one keen shaft
Of blinding sun, which on the opposite wall
Traced some mysterious sign, and on my mind
Such vague remorse and consciousness of ill,
That straightway all my pride was sunk and lost
In a great dread, nor could I longer bear
To look upon the fairness of my girls,
Who, seeing the vague trouble in my eyes,
Grew pale, and shuddered for no cause, and gazed
Chilled 'midst the blaze of sunlight.

Then I sought
To laugh my fears away, as one who feels
Some great transgression weigh on him, some load
Which will not be removed, but bears him down,
Though none else knows it, pressing on his heart.

But when the half unuttered thought grew dim
And my fear with it, suddenly a cry
Rose from the city street, and then the sound
Of measured hurrying feet, and looking forth
To where the youth had passed so late, in joy,
Came two who carried tenderly, with tears,
A boy's slight form. I had no need to look,
For all the mother rising in me knew
That 'twas my youngest born they bore; I knew
What fate befell him—'twas the vengeful sun,
And I alone was guilty, I, his mother,
Who being filled with impious pride, had brought
Death to my innocent child. I hurried down
The marble stair and met them as they came,
And laid him down, and kissed his lips and called
His name, yet knew that he was dead; and all
His brothers stood regarding us with tears,
And would have soothed me with their loving words,
Me guilty, who were guiltless, oh, my sons!
Till as I looked up from the corpse,—a cry
Of agony,—and then another fell
Struggling for life upon the earth, and then
Another, and another, till the last

Another, and another, till the last

Of all my stalwart boys, my life, my pride,
Lay dead upon the field, and the fierce sun
Frenzied my brain, and all distraught with woe
I to the palace tottered, while they bore
Slowly the comely corpses of my sons.

That day I dare not think of where they lay,
White shrouded, in the darkened palace rooms,
Like sculptured statues on a marble hearse.
How calm they looked and happy, my dear sons!
There was no look of pain within their eyes,
The dear dead eyes which I their mother closed;
Me miserable! I saw the priests approach,
And ministers of death; I saw my girls
Flung weeping on the brothers whom they loved.
I saw it all as in a dream. I know not
How often the dead night woke into day,
How often the hot day-time turned to night
I did not shudder even to see the Sun
Which slew my sons; but in the still, dead night,
When in that chill and lifeless place of death,
The cold, clear, cruel moonlight seemed to play
Upon the rangéd corpses, and to mock
My mothers heart, and throw on each a hue
Of swift corruption ere its time, I knew
Some secret terror lest the jealous gods
Might find some further dreadful vengeance still,
Taking what yet was left.

At set of sun

The sad procession to the place of graves
Went with the rites of royal sepulchre,
The high priest at its head, the nobles round
The fair white shrouded corpses, last of all
I went, the guilty one, my fair sweet girls
Clinging to me in tears; but I, I shed not
A single tear—grief dried the fount of tears,
I had shed all mine.

Only o'ermastering fear
Held me of what might come.

When they were laid,

Oh, wretched me, my dear, my well-loved sons!

Oh, wretched me, my dear, my well-loved sons:
Within the royal sepulchre, the sun
Had set, and in his stead the rising moon,
Behind some lofty mountain-peak concealed,
Filled all with ghastly twilight As we knelt,
The people all withdrawn a little space,
I and my daughters in that place of death,
I lifted up my suppliant voice, and they
With sweet girl voices pure, and soaring hymn,
To the great Powers above.

But when at last
I heard my hollow voice pleading alone
And all the others silent, then I looked,
And on the tomb the cold malignant moon,
Bursting with pale chill beams of light, revealed
My fair girls kneeling mute and motionless,
Their dead eyes turned to the un pitying orb,
Their white lips which should offer prayer no more.

Such vengeance wreaked Phœbus and Artemis
Upon a too proud mother. But on me
Who only sinned no other punishment
They took, only the innocent lives I loved—
If any punishment, indeed, were more
Than this to one who had welcomed death. I think
My children happier far in death than I
Who live to muse on these things. When my girls
Were buried, I, my lonely palace gate
Leaving without a tear, sped hither in haste
To this high rock of Sipylus where erst
My father held his court; and here, long years,
Summer and winter, stay I, day and night
Gazing towards the far-off plain of Thebes,
Wherein I was so happy of old time,
Wherein I sinned and suffered. Turned to stone
They thought me, and 'tis true the mothers heart
Which knows such grief as I knew, turns to stone,
And all her life; and pitying Zeus, indeed,
Seeing my repentance, listened to my prayer
And left me seeming stone, but still the heart
Of the mother grows not hard, and year by year
When comes the summer with its cloudless skies

WHEN COMES THE SUMMER WITH ITS CLOUDLESS SKIES,
And the high sun lights hill and plain by day,
And the moon, shining, silvers them by night,
My old grief, rising dew-like to my eyes,
Quickens my life with not unhappy tears,
And through my penitent and yearning heart
I feel once more the pulse of love and grief:
Love triumphing at last o'er Fate and Death,
Grief all divine and vindicating Love.

PICTURES—II.

A LURID sunset, red as blood,
Firing a sombre, haunted wood;
And from the shadows, dark and fell,
One hurrying with the face of Hell.

Two at a banquet board alone,
In dalliance, the feast being done.
And one behind the arras stands,
Grasping an axe with quivering hands.

A high cliff-meadow lush with Spring;
Gay butterflies upon the wing;
Beneath, beyond, unbounded, free,
The foam-flecked, blue, pervading sea.

A clustering hill-town, climbing white
From the grey olives up the height,
And on the inland summits high,
Thin waters spilt as from the sky.

A rain-swept moor at shut of day,
And by the dead unhappy way
A lonely child untended lies:
Against the West a wretch who flies.

Cold dawn, which flouts the abandoned hall
And one worn face, which loathes it all;
In his ringed hand a vial, while
The grey lips wear a ghastly smile.

Corinthian pillars fine, which stand
In moonlight on a desert sand;
Others o'erthrown, in whose dark shade
Some fire-eyed brute its lair has made.

Mountainous clouds embattled high
Around a dark blue lake of sky;
And from its clear depths, shining far,
The calm eye of the evening star.

A moonlight chequered avenue;
Above, a starlit glimpse of blue:
Amid the shadows spread between,
The grey ghost of a woman seen.

A NIGHT IN NAPLES.

THIS is the one night in all the year
When the faithful of Naples who love their priest
May find their faith and their wealth increased;
For just as the stroke of midnight is here,

Those who with faithful undoubting mind
Their "Aves" mutter, their rosaries tell,
They without doubt shall a recompence find;
Yea, their faith indeed shall profit them well.

Therefore, to-night, in the hot thronged street
By San Gennaro's, the people devout,
With banner, and relic, and thurible meet,
With some sacred image to marshal them out.

For a few days hence, the great lottery
Of the sinful city declared will be,
And it may be that Aves and Paters said
Will bring some aid from the realms of the dead.

And so to the terrible place of the tomb
They go forth, a pitiful crowd, through the gloom,
To where all the dead of the city decay,
Waiting the trump of the judgment day.

For every day of the circling year
Brings its own sum of corruption here;
Every day has its great pit, fed
With the dreadful heap of the shroudless dead.

And behind a grated rust-eaten door,
Marked each with their fated month and day,
The young and the old, who in life were poor,
Fester together and rot away.

Silence is there, the silence of death

SILENCE IS THERE, THE SILENCE OF DEATH,
And in silence those poor pilgrims wearily pace,
And the wretched throng, pitiful, holding its breath,
Comes with shuffling steps to the dreadful place.

Till before these dark portals, the silent crowd
Breaks at length into passionate suffrages loud,
Waiting the flickering vapour thin,
Bred of the dreadful corruption within.

And here is a mother who kneels, not in woe,
By the vault where her child was flung months ago;
And there is a strong man who peers with dry eyes
At the mouth of the gulph where his dead wife lies.

Till at last, to reward them, a faint blue fire,
Like the ghost of a soul, flickers here or there
At the gate of a vault, on the noisome air,
And the wretched throng has its low desire;

And with many a praise of the favouring saint,
And curses if any refuses to heed,
Full of low hopes and of sordid greed,
To the town they file backward, weary and faint.

And a few days hence, the great lottery
Of the sinful city declared will be,
And a number thus shewn to those sordid eyes,
May, the saints being willing, attain the prize.

Wherefore to Saint and Madonna be said,
All praise and laud, and the faithful dead.

* * * * *

It was long, long ago, in far-off Judæa,
That they slew Him of old, whom these slay to-day;
They slew Him of old, in far-off Judæa,—
It is long, long ago; it was far, far away!

LIFE.

LIKE to a star, or to a fire,
Which ever brighter grown, or higher,
Doth shine forth fixed, or doth aspire;

Or to a glance, or to a sigh;
Or to a low wind whispering by,
Which scarce has risen ere it die;

Or to a bird, whose rapid flight
Eludes the dazed observer's sight,
Or a stray shaft of glancing light,

That breaks upon the gathered gloom
Which veils some monumental tomb;
Or some sweet Spring flowers' fleeting bloom;—

Mixed part of reason, part belief,
Of pain and pleasure, joy and grief,
As changeful as the Spring, and brief;—

A wave, a shadow, a breath, a strife,
With change on change for ever rife:—
This is the thing we know as life.

CRADLED IN MUSIC.

A BRIGHT young mother, day by day,
I meet upon the crowded way,
Who turns her dark eyes, deep and mild,
Upon her little sleeping child.

For on the organ laid asleep,
In childish slumbers light, yet deep,
Calmly the little infant lies;
The long fair lashes veil its eyes.

There, o'er its childish slumbers sweet,
The winged hours pass with rapid feet;
Far off the music seems to cheer
The child's accustomed drowsy ear.

Hymn tune and song tune, grave and gay,
Float round him all the joyous day;
And, half remembered, faintly seem
To mingle with his happy dream.

Poor child, o'er whose head all day long
Our dull hours slip by, winged with song;
Who sleeps for half the tuneful day,
And wakes 'neath loving looks to play;

Whose innocent eyes unconscious see
Nothing but mirth in misery.
The mother smiles, the sister stands
Smiling, the tambour in her hands.

And with the time of hard-earned rest,
'Tis his to press that kindly breast;
Nor dream of all the toil, the pain,
The weary round begun again,—

The fruitless work the blow the curse

The harness work, the blow, the curse,
The hunger, the contempt, or worse;
The laws despite, the vague alarms,
Which pass not those protecting arms.

Only, as yet, 'tis his to know
The bright young faces all aglow,
As down the child-encumbered street
The music stirs the lightsome feet.

Only to crow and smile, as yet.
Soon shall come clouds, and cold, and wet;
And where the green leaves whisper now,
The mad East flinging sleet and snow.

And if to childhood he shall come—
Childhood that knows not hearth or home,—
Coarse words maybe, and looks of guile,
Shall chase away that constant smile.

Were it not better, child, than this,
The burden of full life to miss;
And now, while yet the time is May,
Amid the music pass away,

And leave these tuneless strains of wrong
For the immortal ceaseless song;
And change this vagrant life of earth
For the unchanged celestial birth;

And see, within those opened skies,
A vision of thy mother's eyes;
And hear those old strains, faint and dim,
Grown fine, within the eternal hymn?

Nay, whatsoever our thought may deem,
Not that is better which may seem;
'Twere better that thou camest to be,
If Fate so willed, in misery.

What shall be, shall be—that is all;
To one great Will we stand and fall

To the great with we stand and fall.

“The Scheme hath need”—we ask not why,
And in this faith we live and die.

ODATIS.

AN OLD LOVE-TALE.

CHARES of Mytilené, ages gone,
When the young Alexander's conquering star
Flamed on the wondering world, being indeed
The comrade of his arms, from the far East
Brought back this story of requited love.

A Prince there was of Media, next of blood
To the great King Hystaspes, fair of form
As brave of soul, who to his flower of age
Was come, but never yet had known the dart
Of Cypris, being but a soldier bold,
Too much by trenchèd camps and wars' alarms
Engrossed, to leave a thought for things of love.

Now, at this selfsame time, by Tanais
Omarthes ruled, a just and puissant king.
No son was his, only one daughter fair,
Odatis, of whose beauty and whose worth
Fame filled the furthest East. Only as yet,
Of all the suitors for her hand, came none
Who touched her maiden heart; but, fancy free,
She dwelt unwedded, lonely as a star.

Till one fair night in springtide, when the heart
Blossoms as does the earth, Cypris, the Queen,
Seeing that love is sweet for all to taste,
And pitying these loveless parted lives,
Deep in the sacred silence of the night,
From out the ivory gate sent down on them
A happy dream, so that the Prince had sight
Of fair Odatis in her diadem
And habit as she lived, and saw the charm

And treasure of her eyes, and knew her name
And country as it was; while to the maid
There came a like fair vision of the Prince
Leading to fight the embattled Median hosts,
Young, comely, brave, clad in his panoply
And pride of war, so strong, so fair, so true,
That straight, the virgin coldness of her soul
Melted beneath the vision, as the snow
In springtime at the kisses of the sun.

And when they twain awoke to common day
From that blest dream, still on their tranced eyes
The selfsame vision lingered. He a form
Lovelier than all his life had known, more pure
And precious than all words; she a strong soul
Yet tender, comely with the fire, the force
Of youthful manhood; saw both night and day
Nor ever from their mutual hearts the form
Of that celestial vision waned nor grew
Faint with the daily stress of common life,
As do our mortal phantasies, but still
He, while the fiery legions clashed and broke,
Saw one sweet face above the flash of spears;
She in high palace pomps, or household tasks,
Or 'mid the glittering courtier-crowded halls
Saw one brave ardent gaze, one manly form.

Now while in dreams of love these lovers lived
Who never met in waking hours, who knew not
Whether with unrequited love they burned, or whether
In mutual yearnings blest; the King Omartes,
Grown anxious for his only girl, and knowing
How blest it is to love, would bid her choose
Whom she would wed, and summoning the maid,
With fatherly counsels pressed on her; but she:
"Father, I am but young; I pray you, ask not
That I should wed; nay, rather let me live
My life within your house. I cannot wed.
I can love only one, who is the Prince
Of Media, but I know not if indeed
His love is his to give, or if he know

My love for him; only a heavenly vision,
Sent in the sacred silence of the night,
Revealed him to me as I know he is.
Wherefore, my father, though thy will be law,
Have pity on me; let me love my love,
If not with recompense of love, alone;
For I can love none else.”

Then the King said:

“Daughter, to me thy happiness is life,
And more; but now, I pray thee, let my words
Sink deep within thy mind. Thou canst not know
If this strange vision through the gate of truth
Came or the gate of error. Oftentimes
The gods send strong delusions to ensnare
Too credulous hearts. Thou canst not know, in sooth,
If ’twas the Prince thou saw’st, or, were it he,
If love be his to give; and if it were,
I could not bear to lose thee, for indeed
I have no son to take my place, or pour
Libations on my tomb, and shouldst thou wed
A stranger, and be exiled from thy home,
What were my life to me? Nay, daughter, dream
No more, but with some chieftain of my realm
Prepare thyself to wed. With the new moon
A solemn banquet will I make, and bid
Whate’er of high descent and generous youth
Our country holds. There shalt thou make thy choice
Of whom thou wilt, nor will I seek to bind
Thy unfettered will; only I fain would see thee
In happy wedlock bound, and feel the touch
Of childish hands again, and soothe my age
With sight of thy fair offspring round my knees.”

Then she, because she loved her sire and fain
Would do his will, left him without a word,
Obedient to his best; but day and night
The one unfading image of her dream
Filled all her longing sight, and day and night
The image of her Prince in all the pride
And bravery of battle shone on her.
Nor was there any strength in her to heal

The wound which love had made, by reasonings cold,
Or musing on the phantasies of love;
But still the fierce dart of the goddess burned
Within her soul, as when a stricken deer
O'er hill and dale escaping bears with her
The barb within her side; and oft alone
Within her secret chamber she would name
The name of him she loved, and oft by night,
When sleep had bound her fast, her pale lips formed
The syllables of his name. Through the long hours,
Waking or sleeping, were her thoughts on him;
So that the unfilled yearning long deferred
Made her heart sick, and like her heart, her form
Wasted, her fair cheek paled, and from her eyes
Looked out the silent suffering of her soul.

Now, when the day drew near which brought the feast,
One of her slaves, who loved her, chanced to hear
Her sweet voice wandering in dreams, and caught
The Prince's name; and, being full of grief
And pity for her pain, and fain to aid
The gentle girl she loved, made haste to send
A messenger to seek the Prince and tell him
How he was loved, and when the feast should be,
And how the King would have his daughter wed.
But to the Princess would she breathe no word
Of what was done, till, almost on the eve
Of the great feast, seeing her wan and pale
And all unhappy, falling at her knees,
She, with a prayer for pardon, told her all.

But when the Princess heard her, virgin shame—
Love drawing her and Pride of Maidenhood
In opposite ways till all distraught was she—
Flushed her pale cheek, and fired her tearful eyes.
Yet since she knew that loving thought alone
Prompted the deed, being soft and pitiful,
She bade her have no fear, and though at first
Unwilling, by degrees a newborn hope
Chased all her shame away, and once again
A long unwonted rose upon her cheek
Bloomed, and a light long vanished fired her eyes.

Doomed, and a right long vanished tired her eyes.

Meanwhile upon the plains in glorious war
The brave Prince led his conquering hosts; but still,
Amid the shock of battle and the crash
Of hostile spears, one vision filled his soul.
Amid the changes of the hard-fought day,
Throughout the weary watches of the night,
The dream, the happy dream, returned again.
Always the selfsame vision of a maid
Fairer than earthly, filled his eyes and took
The savour from the triumph, ay, and touched
The warriors heart with an unwonted ruth,
So that he shrank as never yet before
From every day's monotony of blood,
And saw with unaccustomed pain the sum
Of death and pain, and hopeless shattered lives,
Because a softer influence touched his soul.
Till one night, on the day before the feast
Which King Omartes destined for his peers,
While now his legions swept their conquering way
A hundred leagues or more from Tanais,
There came the message from the slave, and he
Within his tent, after the well-fought day,
Resting with that fair image in his eyes,
Woke suddenly to know that he was loved.

Then, in a moment, putting from him sleep
And well-earned rest, he bade his charioteer
Yoke to his chariot three unbroken colts
Which lately o'er the endless Scythian plain
Careered, untamed; and, through the sleeping camp,
Beneath the lucid aspect of the night,
He sped as speeds the wind. The great stars hung
Like lamps above the plain; the great stars sank
And faded in the dawn; the hot red sun
Leapt from the plain; noon faded into eve;
Again the same stars lit the lucid night;
And still, with scarce a pause, those fierce hoofs dashed
Across the curved plain onward, till he saw
Far off the well-lit palace casements gleam
Wherein his love was set

WHILEM HIS LOVE WAS SET.

Then instantly
He checked his panting team, the rapid wheels
Ceased, and his mail and royal garb he hid
Beneath a white robe such as nobles use
By Tanais; and to the lighted hall
He passed alone, afoot, giving command
To him who drove, to await him at the gate.

Now, when the Prince drew near the vestibule,
The feast long time had sped, and all the guests
Had eaten and drunk their fill; and he unseen,
Through the close throng of serving men and maids
Around the door, like some belated guest
To some obscurer station slipped, and took
The wine-cup with the rest, who marvelled not
To see him come, nor knew him; only she
Who sent the message whispered him a word:
“Have courage; she is there, and cometh soon.
Be brave; she loves thee only; watch and wait.”

Even then the King Omartes, where he sate
On high among his nobles, gave command
To summon from her maiden chamber forth
The Princess. And obedient to the call,
Robed in pure white, clothed round with maiden shame,
Full of vague hope and tender yearning love,
To the high royal throne Odatis came.

And when the Prince beheld the maid, and saw
The wonder which so long had filled his soul—
His vision of the still night clothed with life
And breathing earthly air—and marked the heave
Of her white breast, and saw the tell-tale flush
Crimson her cheek with maiden modesty,
Scarce could his longing eager arms forbear
To clasp the virgin round, so fair she seemed.
But, being set far down from where the King
Sat high upon the daïs 'midst the crowd
Of eager emulous faces looking love,
None marked his passionate gaze, or stretched-forth hands;
Till came a pause, which hushed the deep-drawn sigh

Then came a pause, which flushed the deep-drawn sign
Of admiration, as the jovial King,
Full tender of his girl, but flushed with wine,
Spake thus to her:

“Daughter, to this high feast
Are bidden all the nobles of our land.
Now, therefore, since to wed is good, and life
To the unwedded woman seems a load
Which few may bear, and none desire, I prithee,
This jewelled chalice taking, mingle wine
As well thou knowest, and the honeyed draught
Give to some noble youth of those thou seest
Along the well-ranged tables, knowing well
That him to whom thou givest, thou shalt wed.
I fetter not thy choice, girl. I grow old;
I have no son to share the weight of rule,
And fain would see thy children ere I die.”

Then, with a kiss upon her blushing cheek,
He gave the maid the cup. The cressets' light
Fell on the jewelled chalice, which gave back
A thousand answering rays. Silent she stood
A moment, half in doubt, then down the file
Of close-ranked eager faces flushed with hope,
And eyes her beauty kindled more than wine,
Passed slow, a breathing statue. Her white robe
Among the purple and barbaric gold
Showed like the snowy plumage of a dove,
As down the hall, the cup within her hands,
She, now this way regarding and now that,
Passed, with a burning blush upon her cheek;
And on each youthful noble her large eyes
Rested a moment only, icy cold,
Though many indeed were there, brave, fair to see,
Fit for a maiden's love; but never at all
The one o'er-mastering vision of her dream
Rose on her longing eyes, till hope itself
Grew faint, and, ere she gained the end, she turned
Sickening to where, along the opposite wall,
Sate other nobles young and brave as those,
But not the fated vision of her dream.

Meanwhile the Prince, who 'mid the close-set throng
Of humbler guests was hidden, saw her come
And turn ere she had marked him, and again
Down the long line of princely revellers
Pass slow as in a dream; and all his soul
Grew sick with dread lest haply, seeing not
The one expected face, and being meek
And dutiful, and reverencing her sire,
She in despair might make some sudden choice
And leave him without love. And as she went
He could not choose but gaze, as oft in sleep
Some dreadful vision chains us that we fail
To speak or move, though to be still is death.
And once he feared that she had looked on him
And passed, and once he thought he saw her pause
By some tall comely youth; and then she reached
The opposite end, and as she turned her face
And came toward him again and where the jars
Of sweet wine stood for mingling, with a bound
His heart went out to her; for now her cheek
Pale as the white moon sailing through the sky,
And the dead hope within her eyes, and pain
And hardly conquered tears, made sure his soul,
Knowing that she was his.

But she, dear heart,
Being sick indeed with love, and in despair,
Yet reverencing her duty to her sire,
Turned half-distraught to fill the fated cup
And with it mar her life.

But as she stood
Alone within the vestibule and poured
The sweet wine forth, slow, trembling, blind with tears,
A voice beside her whispered, "Love, I am here!"
And looking round her, at her side she saw
A youthful mailèd form—the festal robe
Flung backward, and the face, the mouth, the eyes
Whereof the vision filled her night and day.
Then straight, without a word, with one deep sigh,
She held the wine-cup forth. He poured forth first
Libation to the goddess, and the rest
Drained at a draught and cast his arms round her

Strained at a draught, and cast his arms round her,
And down the long-drawn sounding colonnade
Snatched her to where without, beneath the dawn,
The brave steeds waited and the charioteer.
His robe he round her threw; they saw the flare
Of torches at the gate; they heard the shouts
Of hot pursuit grow fainter; till at last,
In solitude, across the rounding plain
They flew through waking day, until they came
To Media, and were wed. And soon her sire,
Knowing their love, consented, and they lived
Long happy lives; such is the might of Love.

That is the tale the soldier from the East,
Chares of Mytilené, ages gone,
Told oftentimes at many a joyous feast
In Hellas; and he said that all the folk
In Media loved it, and their painters limned
The story in the temples of their gods,
And in the stately palaces of kings,
Because they revered the might of Love.

IN WILD WALES.

I.

AT THE EISTEDDFOD.

THE close-ranked faces rise,
With their watching, eager eyes,
And the banners and the mottoes blaze above;
And without, on either hand,
The eternal mountains stand,
And the salt sea river ebbs and flows again,
And through the thin-drawn bridge the wandering winds complain.

Here is the Congress met,
The bardic senate set,
And young hearts flutter at the voice of fate;
All the fair August day
Song echoes, harpers play,
And on the unaccustomed ear the strange
Penillion rise and fall through change and counter-change.

Oh Mona, land of song!
Oh mother of Wales! how long
From thy dear shores an exile have I been!
Still from thy lonely plains,
Ascend the old sweet strains,
And at the mine, or plough, or humble home,
The dreaming peasant hears diviner music come.

This innocent, peaceful strife,
This struggle to fuller life,
Is still the one delight of Cymric souls—
Swell, blended rhythms! still
The gay pavilions fill.
Soar, oh young voices, resonant and fair;
Still let the sheathed sword gleam above the bardic chair.

* * * * *

The Menai ebbs and flows,
And the song-tide wanes and goes,
And the singers and the harp-players are dumb;
The eternal mountains rise
Like a cloud upon the skies,
And my heart is full of joy for the songs that are still,
The deep sea and the soaring hills, and the steadfast Omnipotent Will.

II.

AT THE MEETING FIELD.

HERE is the complement of what I saw
When late I sojourned in the halls of song,
The greater stronger Force, the higher Law,
Of those which carry Cymric souls along.

No dim Cathedral's fretted aisles were there,
No gay pavilion fair, with banners hung:
The eloquent pleading voice, the deep hymns sung,
The bright sun, and the clear unfettered air,

These were the only ritual, this the fane,
A poor fane doubtless and a feeble rite
For those who find religion in dim light,
Strange vestments, incensed air, and blazoned pane.

But the rapt crowd, the reverent mute throng,
When the vast listening semi-circle round,
Rang to the old man's voice serenely strong,
Or swept along in stormy bursts of sound.

Where found we these in temples made with hands?
Where the low moan which marks the awakened soul?
Where, this rude eloquence whose strong waves roll
Deep waters, swift to bear their Lord's commands?

Where found we these? 'neath what high fretted dome?
I know not. I have knelt 'neath many, yet
Have heard few words so rapt and burning come,
Nor marked so many eyes divinely wet,

As here I knew—"What will you do, oh friends,
When life ebbs fast and the dim light is low,
When sunk in gloom the day of pleasure ends,
And the night cometh, and your being runs slow,

And nought is left you of your revelries,
Your drunken days, your wantonness, your ill—

And lo! the last dawn rises cold and chill,
And lo! the lightning of All-seeing eyes,

What will you do?" And when the low voice ceased,
And from the gathered thousands surged the hymn,
Some strong power choked my voice, my eyes grew dim,
I knew that old man eloquent, a priest.

There is a consecration not of man,
Nor given by laid-on hands nor acted rite,
A priesthood fixed since the firm earth began,
A dedication to the eye of Light,

And this is of them. What the form of creed
I care not, hardly the fair tongue I know,
But this I know that when the concourse freed
From that strong influence, went sedate and slow,

I thought when on the Galilean shore
By the Great Priest the multitudes were led,
The bread of life, miraculously more,
Sufficed for all who came, and they were fed.

SUFFRAGES.

“SURELY,” said a voice, “O Lord, Thy judgments
Are dreadful and hard to understand.
Thy laws which Thou madest, they withstand Thee,
They stand against Thee and Thy command:
Thy poor, they are with us evermore;
They suffer terrible things and sore;
They are starved, they are sick, they die,
And there is none to help or heed;
They come with a great and bitter cry
They hardly dare to whisper, as they plead;
And there is none to hear them, God or man;
And it is little indeed that all our pity can.”

What, and shall I be moved to tears,
As I sit in this still chamber here alone,
By the pity of it,—the childish lives that groan,
The miseries and the sorrows, the hopes and the fears
Of this wonderful legend of life, that is one and the same
Though it differ in weal and in happiness, honour and fame,—
Shall I turn, who am no more than a worm, to Thee,
From the pity of it—the want, the misery,
And with strong yearnings beat, and rebellions wild,
Seeing death written, and pain, in the face of a child;—
And yet art Thou unmoved!
Ah, Lord, if Thou sawest surely!—and yet Thou dost see;
And if Thou knewest indeed!—and yet all things are clear to Thee.

For, Lord, of a truth Thy great ones,
Who have not their wealth of their own desert,
Live ever equal lives and sure,
And are never vexed nor suffer hurt,
But through long untroubled years endure
Until they join Thee, and are in bliss;
Or, maybe, are carried away from Thee, and miss
Thy Face, which is too pure for them to see,
And are thenceforth in misery.

And are unmerciful in misery.

But, nevertheless, upon the earth

They come to neither sorrow nor dearth.

They are great, and they live out their lives, and Thou lettest them be;

Thou dost not punish them here, if they despise

Thy poor and pass them by with averted eyes.

They are strong and mighty, and never in danger to fall;

But Thou, Lord, art mighty and canst, and yet carest not at all.

But wherefore is it that such things are;—

That want and famine, and blood and war

Are everywhere, and do prevail?

And wherefore is it the same monotonous tale

Is ever told by the lips of men?

For there is hardly so hard a heart

In the breast of a man who has taken his part

In the world, and has little children around his knees,

But is filled with great love for them as Thou art for these,

And would give his life for their good, and is filled day and night

With fatherly thoughts of fear and yearning for right,

And grows sick, if evil come nigh them body or soul,

And yet is but a feeble thing, without strength or control.

But Thou art almighty for good; yet Thy plagues, they come,

Hunger and want and disease, in a terrible sum;

And the poor fathers waste, and are stricken with slow decay;

And the children fall sick, and are starving, day after day;

And the hospital wards are choked; and the fire and the flood

Vex men still, and the leaguered cities are bathed in blood.

Ay, yet not the less, O Lord,

I know Thou art just and art good indeed

This is it that doth perplex my thought,

So that I rest not content in any creed.

If I knew that Thou wert the Lord of Ill,

Then were I untouched still,

And, if I would, might worship at Thy shrine;

Or if my mind might prove no Will Divine

Inspired the dull mechanical reign of Law.

But now, while Thou art surely, and art good,

And wouldst Thy creatures have in happiness,

Always the sword, the plague prevail no less,

Not less — not less Thy laws are based in blood

Not less, not less Thy gifts are eases in distress.

And such deep inequalities of lot
Confuse our thought, as if Thy hand were not.
All blessings, health and wealth and honours spent
On some unworthy sordid instrument;
Thy highest gift of genius flung away
On some vile thing of meanest clay,
Who fouls the ingrate lips, touched with Thy fire,
With worse than common mire:
How should I fail alone, when all things groan,
To let my weak voice take a pleading tone!
How should I speak a comfortable word
When such things are, O Lord!

This is the cry that goes up for ever
To Heaven from weak and striving souls:
But the calm Voice makes answer to them never;
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

But another voice: O Lord of all, I bless Thee,
I bless Thee and give thanks for all.
Thou hast kept me from my childhood up,
Thou hast not let me fall.
All the fair days of my youth
Thou wast beside, me and Thy truth.
I bless Thee that Thou didst withhold
The blight of fame, the curse of gold;
Because Thou hast spared my soul as yet,
Amid the wholesome toil of each swift day,
The tumult and the fret
Which carry worldly lives from Thee away.
I thank Thee for the sorrows Thou hast sent,
Being in all things content
To see in every loss a greater gain,
A joy in every pain;
The losses I have known, since still I know
Lives, hidden with Thee, are and grow.
I do not know, I cannot tell,
How it may be, yet death and pain are well:
I know that Thou art good and mild,
Though sickness take and break the helpless child;
'Twas Thou. none else. that gav'st the mothers love.

And even her anguish came from Thee above.
I am content to be that which Thou wilt:
Tho' humble be my pathway and obscure,
Yet from all stain of guilt
Keep Thou me pure.
Or if Thy evil still awhile must find
Its seat within my mind,
Be it as Thou wilt, I am not afraid.

And for the world Thy hand has made,
Thy beautiful world, so wondrous fair:
Thy mysteries of dawn, Thy unclouded days;
Thy mountains, soaring high through Thy pure air;
Thy glittering sea, sounding perpetual praise;
Thy starlit skies whence worlds unnumbered gaze;
Thy earth, which in Thy bounteous summer-tide
Is clad in flowery robes and glorified;
Thy still primeval forests, deeply stirred
By Thy great winds as by an unknown word;
Thy fair, light-wingèd creatures, blithe and free;
Thy dear brutes living, dying, silently:
Shall I from them no voice to praise Thee find?
Thy praise is hymned by every balmy wind
That wanders o'er a wilderness of flowers;
By every happy brute which asks not why,
But rears its brood and is content to die.
From Thee has come whatever good is ours;—
The gift of love that doth exalt the race;
The gift of childhood with its nameless grace;
The gift of age which slow through ripe decay,
Like some fair fading sunset dies away;
The gift of homes happy with honest wealth,
And fair lives flowering in unbroken health,—
All these are Thine, and the good gifts of brain,
Which to heights greater than the earth can gain,
And can our little minds project to Thee,
Through Infinite Space—across Eternity.
For these I praise Thy name; but above all
The precious gifts Thy bounteous hand lets fall,
I praise Thee for the power to love the Right,
Though Wrong awhile show fairer to the sight:

The power to sin, the dreadful power to choose
The evil portion and the good refuse;
And last, when all the power of ill is spent,
The power to seek Thy face and to repent.

This is the answering cry that goes for ever
To Heaven from blest contented souls:
But the calm Voice makes answer to them never;
The undelaying chariot onward rolls.

LOOK OUT, O LOVE.

LOOK out, O Love, across the sea:
A soft breeze fans the summer night,
The low waves murmur lovingly,
And lo! the fitful beacon's light.

Some day perchance, when I am gone,
And muse by far-off tropic seas,
You may be gazing here alone,
On starlit waves and skies like these.

Or perhaps together, you and I,
Alone, enwrapt, no others by,
Shall watch again that fitful flame,
And know that we are not the same.

Or maybe we shall come no more,
But from some unreturning shore,
In dreams shall see that light again,
And hear that starlit sea complain.

SAINT CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER! There is many a name of Time
Higher than this in pride and empery;
There is a name which like a diadem
Sits on the imperial front, so that men still
Bow down to Cæsar;—deathless names enough
Of bard and sage, soldier and king, which seize
Our thought, and in one moment bear us forth
Across the immemorial centuries
To Time's first dawns—a bright band set on high,
Who watch the surging of the restless sea
Whose waves are generations. Yet not one
More strange and quaint and sweet than Christopher's,
Who bare the Christ.

In the expiring days
Of the old heathen ages lived the man
Who bore it first. The elder Pagan gods
Were paling now, and from the darkling groves
And hollow aisles of their resounding fanes
The thin shapes fled for ever. A new God
Awoke the souls of men; and yet the shrines
Of Aphrodité and of Phœbus still
Drew their own votaries. The flower of faith,
Plucked from its roots, and thrown aside to die,
Is slow to wither, keeping some thin ghost
And counterfeit of fairness, though the life
Has fled for ever, and 'twas a dead thing
To which the Pagan bowed.

In the far East
He served, a soldier. Nature, which so oft
Is grudging of her blessings—mating now
The sluggish brain and stalwart form, and now
Upon the cripple's limbs setting the crown
Of godlike wisdom—gave with generous hand
Beauty and force to this one, mighty limbs
And giant strength, joined with the choicer gift
Of thoughts which soar, and will which dares, and high

Of thoughts which soar, and will which dares, and high
Ambition which aspires and is fulfilled
In riches and in honour.

Every year
Of prosperous manhood left him greater grown
And mightier. Evermore the siren voice
Of high adventure called o'er land and sea;
The magical voice, heard but by nobler souls,
Which dulls all lower music. More than king
This great knight-errant showed; a king of men
Who still before his strong eyes day and night
Saw power shining star-like on the hills,
And set his face to gain it. Luxury
Held him nor sensual ease who was too great
For silken fetters, a strong soul and hand
Bent to a higher end than theirs, and touched
To higher issues; a fair beacon set
Upon a lordly hill above the marsh
Of common life, but all the more laid bare
To the beating of the whirlwind.

Every soul
Knows its particular weakness: so for him
This great strong soul set in its pride of place;
The charm of Power worked like a spell; high power
Unchecked, untrammelled, fixed with none to rule
Above it, this could bend the nobler soul
Which naught might conquer. Over land and sea,
Hiring his mighty arm and strength, he fared
To sovereign after sovereign, always seeking
A stronger than the last: until at length
He found a puissant prince, so high, so great,
The strong sway held him, and he lived content
A sleeping soul, not knowing good or ill,
Resting in act, and with it satisfied—
A careless striving soul who sought no more.

But midst the miry ways of this sad world,
As now he fared unmoved, the frequent sight
Of evil; the blind rage which takes and sways
The warrior after battle till he quench
His thirst in blood and torture; the great pain
Which everywhere cries heavenward every day

Which every where cries heavenward, every day
With unregarded suffrage; the foul wrongs
Which are done on earth for ever; the dark sins
Sinned and yet unrequited; the great sum
And mystery of Evil, worked on him
Not to allure, not to repel, but only
With that strange spell of power which knows to take
The strong soul captive. Here was power enough,
Mightier than mortal strength. The greatest king
Whom ever he had served compared with this
Showed puny as a child; this power which took
The mightiest in chains, now forcing them
To wrong and blood and ill, now binding them
With adamant chains within the sensual sty
Where they lay bound for ever. Here was force
To limit Heaven itself. So this strong soul
Bowed to it, taking Evil for his lord,
A voluntary thrall. Yet not to him
The smooth foul ways of sense, the paths of wrong,
Brought pleasure of themselves; only to know
The unrestrained passion surge, a beat
Of satisfied life, the glory and the glow
Of full untempered being. And so long time
He served the Lord of Evil: deeds of wrong
And anger, deeds of soft and sensual sin,
All these he knew, a careless satisfied soul,
So that for dread of him men named his name
“The unrighteous;” but he cared not: power and fame
Sufficed him long, and hid from him the fashion
Of his own life and by what perilous ways
He walked, and by what fathomless black seas,
Abysmal deeps, and treacherous gulphs of Ill.

Till one day as they wandered (so the tale)
Through a thick wood whence came no gleam of light
To break the ghostly shadows—with amaze
He saw his master the great Lord of Ill
Cower down as from a blow and hide his eyes
From some white ghostly figure. As he gazed
The old chains fell from him, and with a glance
He rose up free for ever. For his soul
Met that great symbol of all sacrifice

Which men have worshipped since; the soft sad eyes,
The agonised limbs nailed to the Tree of Death
Which is the Tree of Life; and all the past
Fell from him, and the mystery of Love
And Death and Evil; Might which gives itself
To liberate the world and dying breaks
The vanquished strength of Hell; all these transformed
His very being, and straightway the strong soul,
Spurning his ancient chain, stood fair and free
Alone, a moment with the scars of gyves
Upon his neck and limbs, and then fell down
Prostrate upon the earth, the mild eyes still
Bent on him pitiful. There he lay stretched
Through the long night of sorrow, till at last
The sun rose on his soul, and on the earth,
And the pure dawn returning brought the day.

And when he rose the ancient mastery
And thirst for power, springing anew in him,
Once more, resistless, over land and sea
Impelled him, seeking this new mightier Lord
Who broke the power of Ill. So through all lands
He passed, a passionate pilgrim, but found not
The Prince he sought, only great princes, strong
And valorous he found, who bowed them down
Before the power of Evil; but for them
He took no thought, who had seen their master blench
Before the Lord of Light; but him indeed
He saw not yet; filled with the pride of life,
A satisfied soul which bowed not down to wrong,
Touched with desire for good, since good was strong,
But loving strength alone.

So as he fared
He came upon a dark and stony land
Where smiled no flower; there, in a humble cell,
There dwelt an aged man; no other thing
Of life was there, only wan age, which dwelt
Upon the brink of death. The giant strength
Was flagging now, while on the distant hills
The sun was sinking and the gray of night
Stole upward. Through the plain beneath the cell

A broad black river raged, where was no bridge
For travellers; but a dark road stole to it
O'ergloomed by cypress, and no boat was there
Nor ferry, evermore beyond the shade
Breast-high the strong stream roared by black as death.

There sate he on the brink and saw no soul
As he gazed on the stream of death. Great misery
And weakness took him, and he laid him down
On that cold strand. Till, when his heart beat slow
And his life drooped, lo! on the further shore
The sunset, lingering for a moment, fired
A thousand palace windows and the spires
And domes of a fair city; then the night
Fell downward on them, but the unconquered soul
Within the failing body leaped and knew
That it had seen the city of the King.

Then swooned he for awhile, and when he knew
His life again he heard a reverend voice
Speak through the gloom. And all the sun had set
And all the hills were hidden.

“Son, thou com'st
To seek the Lord of Life. There is no way
But through yon cruel river. Thou wert strong;
Take rest and thought till thy strength come to thee.
Arise, the dawn is near.”

Then they twain went,
And there that sick soul rested many days.

And when the strong man's strength was come again,
His old guide led him forth to where the road
Sank in that black swift stream. The hills were dark,
There was no city to see, nought but thick cloud,
And still that black flood roaring. Then he heard
The old voice whisper, “Not of strength alone
Come they who find the Master, but cast down
And weak and wandering. Oftentimes with feet
Wayworn and weary limbs, they come and pass
The deeps and are transformed; but he who comes
Of his own strength from him long time the King

Hides him as erst from thee. Yet, because strength
Well used is a good gift, I bid thee plunge
In yon cold stream, and seek to wash from thee
The stains of life. No harm shall come to thee,
Nor in those chill dark waters shall thy feet
Slip, nor thy life be swallowed. It is thine
To bear in thy strong arms the fainting souls
Of pilgrims who press onward day and night
Seeking the Lord of Light. Thou, who so long
Didst serve the Lord of Evil, now shalt serve
A higher; and because great penances
Are fitting for great wrong, here shalt thou toil
Long time till haply thou shalt lose the stain
Of sense and of the world, then shall thy eyes
See that thou wouldst.

Go suffer and be strong.”

Then that strong soul, treading those stony ways,
Went down into the waters. Painful souls
Cried to him from the brink; sad lives, which now
Had reached their toilsome close; worn wayfarers,
Who after lifelong strivings and great pain
And bufferings had gained the perilous stream
With heaven beyond; wan age and budding youth
And childhood fallen untimely. He stooped down
With wonder mixed with pity, raising up
The weakling limbs, and bearing in his arms
The heavy burden, through the chill dark depths
Of those cold swirling waters without fear
Strode onward. Oftentimes the dreadful force
Of that resistless current, which had whelmed
A lower soul, bore on him; oftentimes
The icy cold, too great for feebler hearts,
Assailed him, yet his mighty stature still
Strode upright through the deep to the far shore,
And those poor pilgrims with reviving souls
Blessed him, and left the waters and grew white
And glorified, and in their eyes he knew
A wonder and a rapture as they saw
The palace of the King, the domes, the spires,
The shining oriels sunlit into gold,

The white forms on the brink to welcome them,
And the clear heights, and the discovered heaven.

But never on his eyes for all his toil
That bright sun broke, nor those fair palace roofs
As erst upon his weakness. Day and night
The selfsame cloud hung heavy on the hills,
Blotting the glorious vision. Day and night
He laboured unrewarded, with no gleam
Of that eternal glory, which yet shone
Upon those fainting souls, whom his strong arms
Bore upward. Day and night he laboured still,
Amid the depths of death. Ay, he would rise
At midnight, when the cry of fainting souls
Called to him on the brink, and so go down
Without one thought of fear. Yea, though the floods
Roared horribly, and deep called unto deep,
Through all those hidden depths he strode unmoved,
A strong, laborious, unrewarded soul.

Was it because the stain and blot of wrong
Were on him still uncleansed? I cannot tell.
The stain of ill eats deep, and nought can cleanse it,
Nay hardly tears of blood. But to my thought
Not thus the legend runs; rather I deem
That what of good he loved was only strength,
The pride of conscious Power—that which had led him
To strong rude wrong, the same sense, working on him,
Led him through weariness of wrong to use
His strength for goodness. Oftentimes Remorse
Comes not of hatred of the wrong, nor love
Of the good, but rather from the shame which Pride
Knows which has gone astray and spent itself
Upon unworthy ends. So this strong soul
Laboured on unfulfilled. Yet who shall trace
By what hidden processes of waste and pain
The great Will is fulfilled, and doth achieve
The victory of Good?

So the slow years
Passed, till the giant strength at times would flag
A little, yet no feebleness was there,

But still the strong limbs carried him unmoved
Through those black depths of death. Till one still night,
At midnight when the world was sunk in sleep,
The summons came, "A Pilgrim!" and he saw
With a new-born compassion, on the shore
A childish form await him; a soft smile
Was on the lips, a sweet sad glance divine
Within the eyes, as in a child's eyes oft
Knowledge not earthly, infinite weakness, strive
For mastery. As the strong man stooped and took
The weakling to his breast, through the great might
Of Pity, grown to strength, he took the deep
With that light load in his arms.

But as he went,
The strength greater than human, the strong limbs
Which bore long time unfaltering the great pain
And burden of our life; the fearless heart
Which never blenched before, though the winds beat
And all the night was blind; these failed him now,
And as by some o'erwhelming load dragged down,
His flagging footsteps tottered; the cold wave
Rose higher around him, the once mighty head
Bowed-down, the waters rising to his lip
Engulfed in the depths; the weight of all the earth
Seemed on his shoulders—all the sorrow, the sin,
The burden of the Race—and a great cry
Came from him, "Help! I sink, I faint, I die,
I perish beneath my burden! Help, O King
Of Heaven, for I am spent and can no more!
My strength is gone, the waters cover me,
I stand not of myself. Help, Lord and King!"

Then suddenly from his spent life he felt
The great load taken; through the midnight gloom
There burst the glorious vision of his dream—
The palace of the King, the domes, the spires,
The shining oriels sunlit into gold,
The heaven of heavens discovered; then a voice,
"Rise, Christopher! thou hast found thy King, and turn
Back to the earth, for I have need of thee.
Thou hast sustained the whole world, bearing me

The Lord of Earth and Heaven. Rise, turn awhile
To the old shore of Time; I am the Prince
Thou seekest; I a little child, the King
Of Earth and Heaven. I have marked thy toils,
Labours, and sorrows; I have seen thy sins,
Thy tears, and thy repentance. Rise and be
My Servant always. And if thou shalt seek
A sign of me, I give this sign to thee:
Set thou thy staff to-night upon the verge
Of these dark waters, and with early dawn
Seek it, and thou shalt find it blossomed forth
Into such sweet white blooms as year by year
The resurrection of the springtide brings
To clothe the waste of winter. This shall be
The sign of what has been.”

And that strong soul,
Vanquished at length, obeyed, and with the dawn
Where stood his staff there sprung the perfumed cup
And petals of a lily: so the tale.
Nay, but it was the rude strength of his soul
Which blossomed into purity, and sprang
Into a higher self, beneath the gaze
Of a little child! Nay, but it was the might
Of too great strength, which laid its robes of pride
Down on the ground, and stood, naked, erect,
Before its Lord, shamefast yet beautiful!
Nay, but it was the old self, stripped and purged
Of ingrained wrong, which from the stream of Death
Stood painful on the stable earth again,
And was regenerate through humility!

So for the remnant of his days he served
The Lord of Goodness; a strong staff of right
Yet humble. Till the Pagan Governor
Bade him deny the Prince who succoured him,
And he refusing, gained a martyr's crown
In cruel death, and is Saint Christopher!

Two helpless girls upon a blazing wall,
The keen flames leaping always high and higher;
But faster, faster than the hungry fire,
Brave hearts which climb to save them ere they fall.

A youthful martyr, looking to the skies
From rack and stake, from torment and disgrace;
And suddenly heaven opened to his eyes,
A beckoning hand, a tender heavenly face.

A home on a fair English hill; away
Stretch undulating plains, of gold and green,
With park and lake and glade, and homestead grey;
And crowning all, the blue sea dimly seen.

A lifeless, voiceless, world of age-long snow,
Where the long winter creeps through endless night,
And safe within a low hut's speck of light,
Strong souls alert and hopeful, by the glow.

A great ship forging slowly from the shore,
And on the broad deck weeping figures bent;
And on the gliding pierhead, sorrow-spent,
Those whom the voyagers shall see no more.

CONFESSION.

WHO is there but at times has seen,
While his past days before him stand,
In all the chances which have been,
The guidance of a hidden Hand,

Which still has ruled his growing life,
Through weal and woe, through joy and pain,
Through fancied good, through useless strife,
And empty pleasure sought in vain;

Which often has withheld the meed
He longed for once, with yearnings blind,
And given the truest prize indeed,
The harvest of a blessed mind;

And so has taken the common lot
Content, whate'er the Ruler would,
Since all that has been, or is not,
Springs from a hidden root of good?

* * * * *

Yet some there are maybe to-day,
Whose childhood at the mother's knee
Was taught to bow itself and pray,
Nor ever thirsted to be free,

Who now, 'mid warring voices loud,
Have lost the faith they held before,
Nor through the jangling of the crowd
Can hear the earlier message more.

A brute Fate vexes them, the reign
Of dumb laws, speeding onward still,
Regardless of the waste and pain,
Which all the labouring earth do fill

When all the reasoning shall be done.

They look to see the rule of Right;
They find it not, and in its stead
But slow survivals, born of Might,
And all the early Godhead dead;

They see it not, and droop and faint
And are unhappy, doubting God;
Yet every step their feet have trod
Was trodden before them by a saint.

* * * * *

Oh, doubting soul, look up, behold
The eternal heavens above thy head,
The solid earth beneath, its mould
Compacted of the unnumbered dead.

Here the eternal problems grow,
And with each day are solved and done,
When some spent life, like melting snow,
Breathes forth its essence to the sun.

As death is, life is—without end;
Wrong with right mingles, joy with pain;
Forbid two meeting streams to blend,
'Twere not more hopeless, nor more vain.

Though Death with Life, though Wrong with Right,
Are bound within the scheme of things,
Yet can our souls, on soaring wings,
Gain to a loftier purer height,

Where death is not, nor any life,
Nor right nor wrong, nor joy nor pain;
But changeless Being, lacking strife,
Doth through all change, unchanged remain.

Should wrong prevail o'er all the earth,
'Twere nought if only we discern
The one great truth which if we learn

The one great truth, which is the truth,
All else beside is little worth.

That Right, is that which must prevail,
If not here, there, if not now, then,
Is the one Truth which shall not fail,
For all the doubt and fears of men.

What if a myriad ages still
Of wrong and pain, of waste and blood,
Confuse our thought, triumphant Good
At length, at last, our souls can fill

With such assurance as the Voice
Which from the blazing mountain pealed,
And bade the kneeling hosts rejoice
That God was in His laws revealed.

Nay even might our thought conceive
The final victory of Ill,
Not so, were it folly to believe
That Right is higher, purer still.

Who knows the Eternal "Ought" knows well
That whoso loves and seeks the Right,
For him God shines with changeless light,
Ay, to the lowest deeps of Hell.

And whoso knoweth God indeed.
The fixed foundations of his creed
Know neither changing nor decay,
Though all creation pass away.

LOVE UNCHANGED.

My love, my love, if I were old,
My body bent, my blood grown cold,
With thin white hairs upon my brow,
Say wouldst thou think of me as now?
Wouldst thou cling to me still,
As down life's sloping hill
We came at last through the unresting years?
Art thou prepared for tears,
For time's sure-coming losses,
For life's despites and crosses,
 My love, my love?

Ah! brief our little, little day;
Ah! years that fleet so fast away;
Before our summer scarce begun,
Look, spring and blossom-tide are done!
When all things hasten past,
How should love only last?
How should our souls alone unchanged remain?—
Come pleasure or come pain,
In days of joy and gladness,
In years of grief and sadness,
 Love shall be love!

CLYTÆMNESTRA IN PARIS.

I SEEMED to pace the dreadful corridors
Of a still foreign prison, blank and white,
And in a bare and solitary cell
To find a lonely woman, soft of voice
And mild of eye, who never till life's end
Should pass those frowning gates. Methought I asked her
The story of her crime, and what hard fate
Left her, so gentle seeming, fettered there,
Hopeless, a murderess at whose very name
Men shuddered still. And to my questioning
Methought that dreadful soul made answer thus:

“Yes, I suppose I liked him, though I know not;
I hardly know what love may be; how should I?—
I a young girl wedded without my will,
As is our custom here, to a man old,
Not perhaps in years, but dark experiences.
What had we two in common, that worn man,
And I, an untrained girl? It was not strange
If when that shallow boy, with his bold tongue,
And his gay eyes, and curls, and budding beard,
Flattered me, I was weak. I think all women
Are weak sometimes, and overprone to love
When the man is young, and straight, and 'twas a triumph
To see the disappointed envious jades
Wince as he passed them carelessly, nor heeded
Their shallow wiles to trap him,—ay, a triumph!
And that was all; I hardly know, indeed,
If it was love that drove, or only pride
To hold what others grudged me. Vain he was,
And selfish, and a coward, as you shall hear
Handsome enough, I grant you, to betray
A stronger soul than mine. Indeed, I think,
He never cared for me nor I for him
(For there were others after him): I knew it,
Then chiefest when our comedy of life

their earnest, when our comedy of life
Was turning at the last to tragedy.

“Now that I was unfaithful, a false wife,
I value not men’s sneers at a pin’s point,
We have a right to love and to be loved;
Not the mere careless tolerance of the spouse
Who has none to give. True, if I were a nun,
Vowed to a white and cloistered life, no doubt
’Twere otherwise. They tell me there are women
Who are so rapt by thoughts of the poor, of churches,
Of public ends, of charity, of schools,
Of Heaven knows what, they live their lives untouched
By passion; but for us, who are but women,
Not bred on moonlight, perhaps of common clay,
Untrained for aught but common bourgeois life,
Life is no mystical pale procession winding
Its way from the cradle to the grave, but rather
A thing of hot swift flushes, fierce delights,
Good eating, dances, wines, and all the rest,
When the occasion comes. I never loved him,
I tell you; therefore, perhaps, I did no sin.

“But when this fellow must presume to boast,
Grow cold, have scruples for his soul and mine,
And turn to other younger lives, and pass
My door to-day with this one, then with that,
And all the gossips of the quarter sneered,
And knew I was deserted, do you think it
A wonder that my eyes, opened at last,
Saw all the folly and the wickedness
(If sweet it were, where were the wickedness?)
Which bore such bitter fruit? Think you it strange
That I should turn for aid, ay, and revenge,
To my wronged spouse—if wronged he be, indeed,
Who doth consent as he did? When I told him,
Amid my tears, he made but small pretence
Of jealousy at all; only his pride
Was perhaps a little wounded. And indeed
It took such long confessions, such grave pain
Of soul, such agony of remorse of mine
To move him but a little that I grew

To move him out a house, and I grew
So weary of it all, it almost checked
My penitence, and left me free to choose
Another for my love; but at the last,
Long labour, feigned reports, the neighbours' sneers,
These drove him at the last, good easy man,
To such a depth of hatred, that my task
Grew lighter, and my heart.

He bade me write
Loving appeals, recalling our past days
Together; and I wrote them, using all
The armoury of loving cozening words
With which craft arms us women: but in vain,
For whether some new love engrossed, or whether
He wearied of me and my love, I know not,
Only, in spite of all, no answer came.

“At length, since I could get no word from him,
My husband bade me write—or was it I
Who thought of the device? Pray you believe me,
I would speak nothing else than the whole truth,
But these sad dreadful deeds confuse the brain.
Well, perhaps 'twas I, who knew his weakness well;
I do not know, but somehow it came to pass
I wrote a crafty letter, begging of him,
By all our former kindness, former wrong,
If for the last time, recognizing well
That all was done between us evermore,
We might, for one last evening, meet and part.
And, knowing he was needy, and his greed,—
'If only he would come,' I wrote to him,
'I had some secret savings, and desired—
For what need comes there closer than a friend's?—
To help him in his trouble.’

Swift there came—
The viper!—hypocritical words of love:
Yes, he would come, for the old love still lived,
He knew it, ah, too well; not all the glamour
Of other eyes and lips could ever quench
The fire of that mad passion. He would come,
Loving as ever, longing for the day.

“Now when we had the answer, straight we three—
My husband and myself, and his weak brother,
Whose daughter to her first communion went
That very day,—and I, too, took the Host
As earnest of changed life,—we three, I say,
At a little feast we made to celebrate
The brothers reconciled (in families
There come dissensions, as you know), devised
His punishment. We hired, in a still suburb,
A cottage standing backward from the street,
Beyond an avenue of sycamores;
A lonely place, unnoticed. Day by day
We went, we three together—for I feared
Lest, if there were no third, the strength of youth
Might bear my husband down—we went to make
All needful preparations. First we spread
Over all the floor a colour like to blood,
For deep’s the stain of blood, and what shall cleanse it?
Also, my husband, from a neighbouring wood,
Had brought a boar-trap, sharp with cruel knives
And jagged teeth, to close with a snap and tear
The wild beast caught within it. But I deemed
The risk too great, the prey might slip away;
Therefore, that he might meet his punishment,
And to prevent the sound of cries and groans,
My husband fashioned for his lips a gag,
And on the mantel left it, and the means
To strike a light. And being thus prepared,
We three returned to Paris; there long time
We sate eating and drinking of the best,
As those do who have taken a resolve
Whence no escape is, save to do and die.

“Then the two men went back and left me there,
With all my part to do. It was an hour
Or more before the time when my poor dupe
Had fixed to meet me. Wandering thus alone
Through the old streets, seeing the common sights
Of every day, the innocent child-faces
Homing from school, so like my little ones,
I seemed to lose all count of time. At length.

Because it was the Ascension Feast, there came
A waft of music from the open doors
Of a near church, and, entering in, I found
The incensed air, all I remembered well—
The lights, the soaring chants, the kneeling crowds,
When I believed and knelt. They seemed to soothe
My half bewildered fancy, and I thought—
What if a woman, who mayhap had sinned
But lightly, wishing to repair her wrong,
And bound thereby to some dark daring deed
Of peril, should come here, and kneel awhile,
And ask a blessing for the deed, of her
Who is Heaven's Queen and knows our weaknesses
Being herself a woman! So I knelt
In worship, and the soaring voices clear
And the dim heights and worship-laden air
Filled me with comfort for my soul, and nerved
My failing heart, and winged time's lagging flight,
Till lo the hour was come when I should go
To meet him for the last time.

“When we left
The city far behind, the sweet May night
Was falling on the quiet village street;
There was a scent of hawthorn on the air
As we passed on with feint of loving words,—
Passed slow like lovers to the appointed place,
Passed to the place of punishment and doom

“But when we reached the darkling avenue
Of sycamores, which to the silent house
Led through a palpable gloom, I felt him shudder
With some blind vague presentiment of ill,
And he would go no further; but I clung
Around him close, laughed all his fear to scorn,
Whispered words in his ear, and step by step,
My soul on reparation being set,
Drew him reluctant to the fated door
Where lay my spouse in ambush, and swift death.

“I think I hear the dreadful noise of the key,

Turning within the disused lock, the hall
Breathing a false desertion, the loud sound
Of both our footsteps echoing through the house.
I could not choose but tremble. Yet I knew
'Twas but a foolish weakness. Then I struck
A match, and in the burst of sudden light
I saw the ruddy cheek grown ashy pale,
And as he doffed his hat, I marked the curls
On his white forehead, and the boyish grace
Which hung around him still, and almost felt
Compassion. Then the darkness came again.
And hid him, and I groped to find his hand,
Clutched it with mine, and led him to the door.

“But when within the darkling room we were
Where swift death waited him, not dalliance,
Three times my trembling fingers failed to wake
The twinkling light which scarce could pierce the gloom
Which hid my husband. Oh, to see his face
When the dark aspect and the furious eyes
Glared out on him! ‘I am lost!’ he cried, ‘I am lost!’
And then the sound of swift and desperate fight
And a death struggle. Listening, as I stood
Without, with that mean craven hound, our brother,
I heard low cries of rage, and knew despair
And youth had nerved the unarmed in such sort
As made the conflict doubtful. Then I rushed
Between them, threw my arms around him, clogged
His force and held him fast, crying the while,
‘Wretch, would you kill my husband!’—held him fast,
As coils a serpent round the escaping deer,
Until my husband, hissing forth his hate,
‘Villain, I pierce thy heart as thou hast mine,’
Stabbed through and through his heart.

“But oh, but oh
The lonely road, beneath the dreadful stars!
To the swift stream, we three—nay, nay, we four—
One on the child’s poor carriage covered o’er,
And three who drew him onward, on the road,
That dead thing, having neither eye nor ear,

Which late was full of life, and strife, and hate.
On that dumb silence, came no wayfarer,
And once the covering which concealed our load
Slipped down, and left the ghastly blood-stained thing
Open to prying eyes, but none were there;
And then the darkling river, and the sound
When, with lead coiled around it, the dead corpse
Sank with a sullen plunge within the deep,
And took with it the tokens of our crime.

“Then with a something of relief, as those
Who have passed through some great peril all unharmed,
We went and burned the blood-stained signs of death,
And left the dreadful place, and once more sped
To Paris and to sleep, till the new day,
Now risen to high noon, touched our sad dreams.

“And that day, since we could not work as yet,
We to the Picture Gallery went, and there
We took our fill of nude voluptuous limbs,
Mingled with scenes of horror bathed in blood,
Such as our painters love. So week by week,
Careless and unafraid, we spent our days,
Till when that sad night faded; swift there rose,
Bursting the weights that kept it, the pale corpse,
A damning witness from the deep, and brought
The dreadful past again, and with it doom.

“You know how we were tried, and how things went,
The cozening speeches, the brow-beating judge,
The petty crafts which make the pleader’s art,
The dolts who sit in judgment, when the one
Who knows all must be silent; but you know not
The intolerable burden of suspense,
The hard and hateful gaze of hungry eyes
Which gloat upon your suffering. When doom came
It was well to know the worst, and hear no more
The half-forgotten horrors. But I think
The sense of common peril, common wrong,
Knits us in indissoluble unity,
Closer than years of converse. When my husband,

Braving his doom, embraced me as he went:
'Wife, so thou live I care not,' all my heart
Went out to him for a moment, and I cried,
'Let me die too, my guilt is more than his.'

“Some quibble marred the sentence, and once more
The miserable tale was told afresh:
Once more I stood before those hungry eyes,
And when 'twas done we went forth slaves for life,
Both with an equal doom, and ever since
We suffer the same pains in solitude,
Slaves fettered fast, whom only death sets free.

“That is my tale told truly. Now you know,
Sir, of what fashion I am made: a woman
Gentle, you see, and mild eyed. If I sinned
Surely there was temptation, and I sought
Such reparation as I could. There are here
Tigresses, and not women, black of brow
And strong of arm, who have struck down or stabbed
Husband, or child, or lover, not as I,
But driven by rage and jealousy, and drink!
These creatures of the devil, as I pass
I see them shrink and shudder. The young priest
Of the prison, a well-favoured lad he is,
When I confessed to him bore on his brow
Cold drops of agony; the Sister grew
So pale at what I told her, that I thought
She was like to swoon away, until I soothed her.
Poor wretch, she has much to learn; and here I am,
And shall be till my hair turns grey, my eyes
Grow dim, and I have clean forgotten all
That brought me here, and all my former life
Fades like a once-heard tale. In the long nights,
As I lie alone in my cell like any nun,
I wake sometimes with a start, and seem to hear
That rusty lock turn, and those echoing feet
Down that dark passage, and I seem to see
The dreadful stare of those despairing eyes,
And then there sounds, a plunge in the deep, and I
Lie shivering till the dawn. I have no comfort

Except the holy Mass; for see you, sir,
I was devout until they scoffed at me.
And now I know there is a hell indeed,
Since this place is on earth. I do not think
I have much cause to fear death, should it come;
For whoso strives for Duty, all the Saints
And the Madonna needs must love, and I,
I have done what penitence could do; and here
What have I of reward?—my children taken
As clean from me as if they were dead indeed,
Trained to forget their mother. Sir, I see,
Beyond these shallow phantasms of life;
And this I hold, that one whose conscience shows
As clear as mine must needs be justified.
I love the holy Mass, and take the Host
As often as I may, being of good heart.
For what was it she did in Holy Writ,
The Kenite's wife of old? I do not read
That women shrunk from her because she drove
The nail through her guest's brain; nay, rather, praise
Was hers: yet was she not betrayed as I,
Nor yet repentant of her wrong and seeking
To do what good was left. But look you, sir,
If I was once repentant, that is past:
I hate those black-browed women, who turn from me,
That smooth priest and that poor fool with her cross,
And that strange pink-and-whiteness of the nun.
And sometimes when they come I let them hear
Such things as make the pious hypocrites turn
And cross themselves. And for this tigress crew,
If I might only steal to their cells at night
With a knife, I would teach them, what it is to stab;
Or even without one, that these little hands
Can strangle with the best.

Ah, you draw back,
You too are shocked forsooth. Listen, you wretch,
Who are walking free while I am prisoned here:
How many thoughts of murder have you nursed
Within your miserable heart! how many
Low, foul desires which would degrade the brute!
Do you think I do not know you men? What was it

That kept your hands unstained, but accident?—
Accident, did I say? or was it rather
Cowardice, that you feared the stripes of the law,
And did not dare to do your will or die?—
Accident! then, I pray you, where the merit
To have abstained? Or if you claim, indeed,
Such precious self-restraint as keeps your feet
From straying, where the credit? since it came
A gift as much unearned as other's ill,
Which lurked for them a little tiny speck
Hidden in the convolutions of the brain,
To grow with their growth, and wax with their years, and leave
The wretch at last in Hell. Do you deem it just,
The Potter with our clay upon His wheel
Should shape it in such form? I love not God,
Being such; I hate Him rather: I, His creature,
I do impugn His justice or His power,
I will not feign obedience—I, a woman,
Of a soft nature, who would love my love,
And my child, and nothing more; who am, instead,
A murderess, as they tell me, pining here
In hell before my time.”

Even as she spake
I seemed to be again as when I saw
The murderess of old time; and once again
Within this modern prison, blank and white,
There came the viewless trouble in the air
Which took her, and the sweep of wings unseen,
And terrible sounds which swooped on her and hushed
Her voice and seemed to occupy her soul
With horror and despair; and as I passed
The crucifix within the corridor,
“How long?” I cried, “How long?”

AT THE END.

WHEN the five gateways of the soul
Are closing one by one,
When our being's currents slowly roll
And life nigh done,
What shall our chiefest comfort be
Amid this misery?

Not to have stores heaped up on high
Of gold and precious things,
Not to have flown from sky to sky
On Fame's wide wings,—
All these things for a space do last,
And then are overpast.

Nor to have worked with patient brain
In senate or in mart,
To have gained the meed which those attain
Who have played their part,—
Effort is fair, success is sweet,
But leave life incomplete.

Nor to have said, as the fool said,
"Be merry, soul, rejoice;
"Thou hast laid up store for many days."
Oh, foolish voice!
Already at thy gate the feet
Of the corpse-bearers meet.

Nor to have heaped up precious store
Of all the gains of time,
Of long-dead sages' treasured lore,
Or deathless rhyme,—
Learning's a sweet and comely maid,
But Death makes her afraid.

Nor to have drained the cup of youth

Nor to have drained the cup of youth,
To the sweet maddening lees;
Nor, rapt by dreams of Hidden Truth,
To have spurned all these;—
Pleasure, Denial, touch not him
Whose body and mind are dim.

Not one of all these things shall I
For comfort, use, or strength,
When the sure hour, when I shall die,
Takes me at length;
One thought alone shall bring redress
For that great heaviness:—

That I have held each struggling soul
As of one kin and blood,
That one sure link doth all control
To one close brotherhood;
For who the race of men doth love,
Loves also Him above.

THREE BRETON POEMS.

I.

THE ORPHAN GIRL OF LANNION.

IN seventeen hundred and eighty-three,
To Lannion came dole and misery.

Mignon an orphan, as good as fair,
Served in the little hostelry there.

One darkling night, when the hour was late,
Two travellers rang at the outer gate.

“Quick, hostess! supper, red wine, and food;
We have money to pay, so that all be good.”

When they had drunken enough, and more,
“Here is white money to pay the score.

“And now shall your little serving-maid come,
With her lantern lighted, to guide us home.”

“Gentles, in all our wide Brittany
There is no man would harm her, so let it be.”

Forth went the maid, full of innocent pride,
Fearless and free, with her light by her side.

* * * * *

When they were far on their lonely way,
They began to whisper, and mutter, and say,

“Little maid, your face is as fair and bright
As the foam on the wave in the morning light.”

“Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not;

Gentles, I pray you, flatter me not.
It is as God made it—no other, God wot;

“And were it fairer, I tell you true—
Ay, a hundred times fairer—’twere nought to you.”

“To judge, little maid, by your sober speech,
You know all the good priests at the school can teach;

“To judge from your accents, discreet and mild,
You were bred in the convent cloister, my child.”

“No teacher had I, neither priest nor nun;
There was no one to teach me on earth, not one.

“But while by my father’s poor hearth I wrought,
God filled me with many a holy thought.”

“Set down your lantern and put out the light.
Here is gold: none can help you, ’tis dead of night.”

“Good sirs! for my brother the young priest’s sake;
If he heard such sayings his heart would break.”

* * * * *

“Oh, plunge me down fathoms deep in the sea,
Of your mercy, rather than this thing be!

“Rather than this—’twere a lighter doom—
Oh bury me quick in a living tomb!”

* * * * *

The motherly hostess, sore afraid,
Waited in vain for her little maid.

She watched by the chill hearth’s flickering light
Till the bell tolled twice through the black dead night.

Then cried, “Up, serving-men, sleep no more!
Helm! little maid Mignon lies drowned in gore.”

help:—the maid might not crown her.

* * * * *

By the cross she lay dead, in the dead cold night,
But beside her her lantern was still alight!

II.

THE FOSTER BROTHER.

OF all the noble damsels, in all our Brittany,
Gwennola was the sweetest far, a maiden fair to see.

Scarce eighteen summers shed their gold upon her shapely head,
Yet all who loved the fair girl best were numbered with the dead—

Her father and her mother, and eke her sisters dear.
Ah! Mary, pity 'twas to see her shed the bitter tear

At her casement in the castle, where a step-dame now bare sway,
Her dim eyes fixed upon the sea, which glimmered far away.

* * * * *

For three long years she watched in vain, in dole and misery,
To see her foster brother's sail spring up from over sea;

For three long years she watched in vain, hoping each
day would send The only heart which beat to hers, her lover and her
friend.

“Go, get you gone and tend the kine,” the cruel step-dame said;
“Leave brooding over long-past years: go, earn your daily bread.”

She woke her, ere the darkling dawns, while yet 'twas dead of night,
To sweep the floors and cleanse the house, and set the fires alight;

To fetch the water from the brook, again and yet again,
With heavy toil and panting breath, and young form bent in twain.

* * * * *

One darkling winter morning, before the dawning light,
With ringing hoofs, across the brook there rode a noble knight:

“Good morrow, gracious maiden, and art thou free to wed?”
And she, so young she was and meek, “I know not, sir,” she said.

“I prithee tell me, maiden, if thou art fancy-free?”

“To none, sir, have I plighted yet my maiden troth,” said she.

“Then take, fair maid, this ring of gold, and to your step-dame say,
That to-day your troth is plighted to a knight from far away;

“That at Nantes a battle fierce was fought, wherein his squire was slain,
And he himself lies stricken sore upon his bed of pain;

“But when three weeks are overpast, whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gaily, and claim thee for his bride.”

All breathless ran she homeward, when, lo, a wondrous thing!
For on her slender finger blazed her foster brother’s ring.

II.

The weeks crept onward slowly, crept slowly—one, two, three;
But never came the young knight, no never more came he.

“Come, it is time that you were wed, for I have sought for you
A bridegroom fitted to your rank, an honest man and true.”

“Nay, nay, I prithee, step-dame, there is none that I can wed,
Only my foster brother dear I love, alive or dead.

“With this ring his troth he plighted, and whatever fate betide,
He will come himself full gaily, and claim me for his bride.”

“Peace, with thy golden wedding-ring! peace, fool, or I will teach
With blows thy senseless chattering tongue to hold discreeter speech;

“To-morrow thou shalt be the bride, whether thou wilt or not,
Of Giles the neat-herd, honest man: ay, this shall be thy lot.”

“Of Giles the neat-herd, saidst thou? oh, I shall die of pain!
Oh mother, dear dead mother, that thou wert in life again!”

“Go, cry and wail without the house; go, feed on misery;
Go, take thy fill of moans and tears, for wedded thou shalt be.”

III.

Just then the ancient sexton, with the bell that tolls the dead,
Went up and down the country side, and these the words he said:—

“Pray for the soul of one who was a brave and loyal knight,
Who bare at Nantes a grievous hurt, what time they fought the fight:

“To-morrow eve, at set of sun, amid the gathering gloom,
From the white church they bear him forth, to rest within the tomb.”

IV.

“Thou art early from the wedding feast!” “Good truth, I could not stay;
I dared not see the piteous sight, and therefore turned away;

“I could not bear the pity and the horror in her eyne,
As she stood so fair, in blank despair, within the sacred shrine.

“Around the hapless maiden, all were weeping bitterly,
And the good old rector at the church, a heavy heart had he;

“Not a dry eye was around her, save the step-dame stern alone,
Who looked on with an evil smile, as from a heart of stone;

“And when the ringers rang a peal, as now they came again,
And the women whispered comfort, yet her heart seemed rent in twain.

“High in the place of honour at the marriage feast she sate,
Yet no drop of water drank she, and no crumb of bread she ate;

“And when at last, the feast being done, they would light the bride to
bed,
The ring from off her hand she flung, the wreath from off her head,

“And with wild eyes that spoke despair, and locks that streamed
behind,
Into the darkling night she fled, as swiftly as the wind.”

V.

The lights within the castle were out, and all asleep;
Only, with fever in her brain, the maid would watch and weep.

The chamber door swung open. "Who goes there?" "Do not fear, Gwen; 'tis I, your foster brother." "Oh! at last, my love, my dear!"

He raised her to the saddle, and his strong arm clasped her round,
As, through the night, his charger white flew on without a sound.

"How fast we go, my brother!" " 'Tis a hundred leagues and more."
"How happy am I, happier than in all my life before!"

"And have we far to go, brother? I would that we were come."
"Have patience, sister; hold me fast; 'tis a long way to our home."

The white owl shrieked around them, the wild things shrank in fear
As through the night a cloud of light that ghostly steed drew near.

"How swift your charger is, brother! and your armour, oh, how bright!
Ah, no more you are a boy, brother, but in troth a noble knight!"

"How beautiful you are, brother! but I would that we were come."
"Have patience, sister; hold me fast; we are not far from home."

"Your breath is icy-cold, brother, your locks are dank and wet;
Your heart, your hands are icy-cold; oh! is it further yet?"

"Have patience, sister; hold me fast; for we are nearly there.
Hist! hear you not our marriage bells ring through the midnight air?"

Even with the word, that ghostly steed neighed suddenly and shrill,
Then trembled once through every limb, and like a stone stood still.

* * * * *

And lo, within a land they were, a land of mirth and pleasure,
Where youths and maidens hand in hand danced to a joyous measure;

A verdant orchard closed them round with golden fruit bedight,
And above them, from the heaven-kissed hills, came shafts of golden
light;

Hard by, a cool spring bubbled clear, a fountain without stain,
Whereof the dead lips tasting, grew warm with life again.

There was Gwennola's mother mild, and eke her sisters dear:
Oh, land of joy and bliss and love!—oh, land without a tear!

VI.

But when the next sun on the earth, brake from the gathered gloom,
From the white church, the young maids bore, the virgin to her tomb.

III.

AZENOR.

“SEAMEN, seamen, tell me true,
Is there any of your crew
Who in Armor town has seen
Azenor the kneeling queen?”

“We have seen her oft indeed,
Kneeling in the self-same place;
Brave her heart, though pale her face,
White her soul, though dark her weed.”

I.

Of a long-past summer's day
Envoys came from far away,
Mailed in silver, clothed with gold,
On their snorting chargers bold.

When the warder spied them near,
To the King he went, and cried,
“Twelve bold knights come pricking here:
Shall I open to them wide?”

“Let the great gates opened be;
See the knights are welcomed all;
Spread the board and deck the hall
We will feast them royally.”

“By our Prince's high command,
Who one day shall be our King,
We come to ask a precious thing—
Azenor your daughter's hand.”

“Gladly will we grant your prayer:
Brave the youth, as we have heard.
Tall is she, milkwhite and fair,
Gentle as a singing bird.”

Fourteen days high feast they made,
Fourteen days of dance and song;
Till the dawn the harpers played;
Mirth and joyance all day long.

“Now, my fair spouse, it is meet
That we turn us toward our home.”
“As you will, my love, my sweet;
Where you are, there I would come.”

When his step-dame saw the bride,
Well-nigh choked with spleen was she:
“This pale-faced girl, this lump of pride—
And shall she be preferred to me?”

“New things please men best, ’tis true,
And the old are cast aside.
Natheless, what is old and tried
Serves far better than the new.”

Scarce eight months had passed away
When she to the Prince would come,
And with subtlety would say,
“Would you lose both wife and home?”

“Have a care, lest what I tell
Should befall you; so ’twere best
Have a care and guard you well,
’Ware the cuckoo in your nest.”

“Madam, if the truth you tell,
Meet reward her crime shall earn,
First the round tower’s straitest cell,
Then in nine days she shall burn.”

When the old King was aware,
Bitter tears the greybeard shed.
Tore in grief his white, white hair,
Crying, "Would God that I were dead!"

And to all the seamen said,
"Good seamen, pray you tell me true,
Is there, then, any one of you
Can tell me if my child be dead?"

"My liege, as yet alive is she,
Though burned to-morrow shall she be:
But from her prison tower, O King!
Morning and eve we hear her sing.

"Morning and eve, from her fair throat
Issues the same sweet plaintive note,
'They are deceived; I kiss Thy rod:
Have pity on them, O my God!' "

Even as a lamb who gives its life
All meekly to the cruel knife,
White-robed she went, her soft feet bare,
Self-shrouded in her golden hair.

And as she to her dreadful fate
Fared on, poor innocent, meek and mild,
“Grave crime it were,” cried small and great,
“To slay the mother and the child.”

All wept sore, both small and great;
Only the step-dame smiling sate:
“Sure ’twere no evil deed, but good,
To kill the viper with her brood.”

“Quick, good firemen, fan the fire
Till it leap forth fierce and red;
Fan it fierce as my desire:
She shall burn till she is dead.”

Vain their efforts, all in vain,
Though they fanned and fanned again;
The more they blew, the embers gray
Faded and sank and died away.

When the judge the portent saw,
Dazed and sick with fear was he:
“She is a witch, she flouts the law;
Come, let us drown her in the sea.”

What saw you on the sea? A boat
Neither by sail nor oarsman sped;
And at the helm, to watch it float,
An angel white with wings outspread;

A little boat, far out to sea,
And with her child a fair ladye,
Whom at her breast she sheltered well,
Like a white dove upon a shell.

She kissed, and clasped, and kissed again
His little back, his little feet,
Crooning a soft and tender strain,
“Da-da, my dear; da-da, my sweet.

“Ah, could your father see you, sweet,
A proud man should he be to-day;
But we on earth may never meet,
But he is lost and far away.”

VI.

In Armor town is such affright
As never castle knew before,
For at the midmost hour of night
The wicked step-dame is no more.

“I see hell open at my side:
Oh, save me, in God’s name, my son!
Your spouse was chaste; ’twas I who lied;
Oh, save me, for I am undone!”

Scarce had she checked her lying tongue,
When from her lips a snake did glide,
With threatening jaws, which hissed and stung,
And pierced her marrow till she died.

Eftsoons, to foreign realms the knight
Went forth, by land and over sea;
Seeking in vain his lost delight,
O’er all the round, round world went he.

He sought her East, he sought her West,
Next to the hot South sped he forth,
Then, after many a fruitless quest,
He sought her in the gusty North.

There by some nameless island vast,
His anchor o'er the side he cast;
When by a brooklet's fairy spray,
He spies a little lad at play.

Fair are his locks, and blue his eyes,
As his lost love's or as the sea;
The good knight looking on them, sighs,
"Fair child, who may thy father be?"

"Sir, I have none save Him in heaven:
Long years ago he went away,
Ere I was born, and I am seven;
My mother mourns him night and day."

"Who is thy mother, child, and where?"
"She cleanses linen white and fair,
In yon clear stream." "Come, child, and we
Together will thy mother see."

He took the youngling by the hand,
And, as they passed the yellow strand,
The child's swift blood in pulse and arm
Leapt to his father's and grew warm.

"Rise up and look, oh mother dear;
It is my father who is here:
My father who was lost is come—
Oh, bless God for it!—to his home."

They knelt and blessed His holy name,
Who is so good, and just, and mild,
Who joins the sire and wife and child:
And so to Brittany they came.

And may the blessed Trinity,

Protect all toilers on the sea!

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THE EPIC OF HADES.

BOOKS I. and III. and the COMPLETE WORK.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“The author’s present volumes continue the promise of his earlier work, and advance it somewhat further towards fulfilment. In one sense the idea of his Epic is not only ambitious, but audacious, for it necessarily awakens reminiscences of Dante. Not unfrequently he is charmingly pathetic, as in his Helen and Psyche. There is considerable force and no small imagination in the description of some of the tortures in the ‘Tartarus.’ There is genuine poetical feeling in the ‘Olympus.’ . . . We might invite attention to many other passages. But it is more easy to give honest general praise than to single out particular extracts.”—*Times*, February 9th, 1877.

“The various symbolismes of the ancient myths are worked out with quite as much poetical feeling as in the former part. . . . The whole of this last portion of the poem is exceedingly beautiful. . . . Nor will any, except critics of limited view, fail to recognize in the Epic a distinct addition to their store of those companions of whom we never grow tired.”—*Athenæum*, March 3rd, 1877.

“Clytemnestra is a striking dramatic study. . . . The whole passage is as tragic as it is graphic. . . . Thus the author has achieved the task he set himself of showing that the myths of classic antiquity are capable of interpretation by a modern singer. A simple, lucid style, a spontaneous power of song, and a bright, fearless fancy enable him to seize and retain the sympathies of his audience. We believe that the Epic will approve itself to students as one of the most considerable and original feats of recent English poetry.”—*Saturday Review*, March 31st, 1877.

“We notice the same thoughtfulness and penetrating sympathy which have enabled the author, without doing violence to the sweet rounded grace of the old myths, to impart an undercurrent of present-day meaning and reference which should find for them a wider audience than could be expected for anything in the character of a severely Pagan revival merely. Thought, fancy, music, and penetrating sympathy we have here, and that radiant, unnamable suggestive delicacy which enhances the attraction with each new reading.”—*British Quarterly Review*, April, 1877.

“The author most certainly possesses very great powers; but he is writing far too fast. We gladly repeat, however, that the present work is by far his greatest achievement; that the whole tone of it is noble, and that

portions, more especially the concluding lines, are excessively beautiful.”—*Westminster Review*, April, 1877.

“The work is one of which any singer might justly be proud. In fact, the Epic is in every way a remarkable poem, which to be appreciated must not only be read, but studied. It is that rarest of things, a book one would care to buy and keep.”—*Graphic*, March 10th, 1877.

“This is in our opinion, in a high and serious sense, a remarkable poem—remarkable alike for thought, for music, and for fine suggestive quality. We look forward still to being made yet more the writer’s debtors.”—*Nonconformist*, February 21st, 1877.

“All his poems have proved him appreciative, thoughtful, and scholarly. ‘The Epic of Hades’ should rank highest of his work.”—*Examiner*, February 24th, 1877.

“We do not hesitate to advance it as our opinion that ‘The Epic of Hades’ will enjoy the privilege of being classed amongst the poems in the English language which will live.”—*Civil Service Gazette*, March 17th, 1877.

“Exquisite beauty of melodious verse. . . . A remarkable poem, both in conception and execution. We sincerely wish for the author a complete literary success.”—*Literary World*, March 30th, 1877.

“The author never sinks low, but he often rises high, and thus you have poetry which pleases you as you read, which shocks no sensibility, never wearies you, and often raises you into a serener atmosphere, in which the earthiness of the earth is lost sight of, and the pure and almost the divine are found. It will be surprising if the reader does not come to the conclusion that the author is a poet of very high order.”—*Scotsman*, April 27th, 1877.

“Will live as a poem of permanent power and charm. It will receive high appreciation from all who can enter into its meaning, for its graphic and liquid pictures of external beauty, the depth and truth of its purgatorial ideas, and the ardour, tenderness, and exaltation of its spiritual life.”—*Spectator*, May 5th, 1877.

“I have lately been reading a poem which has interested me very much, a poem called ‘The Epic of Hades.’ Many of you may never have heard of it; most of you may never have seen it. It is, as I view it, another gem added to the wealth of the poetry of our language.”—*Mr. Bright’s speech on Cobden, at Bradford*, July 25th, 1877.

“I have derived from it a deep pleasure and refreshment such as I never thought modern poetry could give.”—*The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol*.

“This poem is not in the merely technical sense an epic, any more than the divine poem of Dante is a comedy. That was a comedy, as passing to a happy close; from Hell, through Purgatory, into Paradise. This is an epic, as it is concerned with one great action; for the soul of man is shown throughout it labouring towards what Mr. Tennyson has called the

One far-off divine event
To which the whole Creation moves.

In the blank verse of the ‘Epic of Hades,’ apt words are so simply arranged with unbroken melody, that if the work were printed as prose, it would remain a song, and every word would still be where the sense required it; not one is set in a wrong place through stress of need for a mechanical help to the music. The poem has its sound mind housed in a sound body.”—*Professor Morley in The XIXth Century*, February, 1878.

THE EPIC OF HADES.

ILLUSTRATED QUARTO EDITION.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“Of Mr. Chapman’s illustrations it is pleasant to be able to speak with considerable admiration, not only because they are a fortunate echo of the verse, and represent the feelings and incidents of the ‘Epic,’ but because of their intrinsic merits. There is in them a fine and high inspiration of an indefinite sort.”—*Athenæum*, March 29th, 1879.

“‘The Epic of Hades’ is certainly one of the most remarkable works of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Here is an *édition de luxe* which may possibly tempt the unthinking to search for the jewel within the casket. It is adorned with designs in photo-mezzotint by Mr. George R. Chapman, all noticeable for originality and grace, while many are gems of exquisite feeling.”—*World*, February 12th, 1879.

“We are glad to see this fine poem, on the whole finely illustrated. While some of the designs reach a very high point of beauty, none of them can be said to be absolute failures.”—*Spectator*, January 25th, 1879.

“The exquisite aërial feeling of ‘Eros and Psyche,’—by far the best of the drawings,—in which the figures seem literally to float in ether. ‘Laocoon’ is grand and dignified, and all deserve to be noticed with attention.”—*Graphic*, January 25th, 1879.

“These designs of themselves would be of the highest value, and when they are placed, as in this book, by way of illustration of a text which is full of power, their value is not easily estimated. The book ought to be one of the most cherished gifts that any lover of poetry or the pencil could desire.”—*Scotsman*, January 23rd, 1879.

“This remarkable poem now appears in a luxurious and beautiful form, illustrated by designs of considerable merit, and altogether forming a most suitable gift-book for lovers of poetry.”—*Church Times*, January 24th, 1879.

“It is doubtful whether Milton in these degenerate days would find many readers were he now to have published his mighty poems. An epic poem is indeed a trial of genius from which few can come out victorious; but lovers of the gentle muse of poetry will doubtless pass a pleasant hour and more in perusing this ‘Epic of Hades,’ and the author has been most fortunate in his illustrator. The seventeen designs are gems of drawing and conception, and the mezzotint is admirably adapted to the style of drawing and subject. This is truly a charming addition to the literary table. It is seldom one sees figure

illustrations of such graceful and powerful beauty, and so thoroughly in sympathy with the visionary subjects of the author.”—*Art Journal*, April, 1879.

“‘The Epic of Hades’ has already won a place among the immortals. The lovely and terrible figures of the Greek mythology have never received a more exquisite consecration than at the hands of the author, who, with the true divination of the poet, has known how to interpret in the modern spirit the profound and pathetic fables of antiquity without vulgarizing by modern affectations their divine simplicity. This beautiful poem appears now in an *édition de luxe*—a setting not unworthy of such gems. The seventeen designs, by George R. Chapman, only fail to satisfy us, as any representation of ideal masterpieces must fail to satisfy the reader to whose imagination the poet has lent wings. These designs are noteworthy for their tenderness of sentiment and their languid grace. The Demeter and Persephone are charming; but the charm of Demeter might perhaps be a little more august.”—*Daily News*, April 2nd, 1879.

THE ODE OF LIFE.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“The ‘Ode of Life’ ought to be the most popular of all the author’s works. People flock to hear Mr. Stopford Brooke, or Dean Stanley, or the Bishop of Manchester preach, but in this book they will hear a voice more eloquent than theirs, dealing with the most important subjects that can ever occupy the thoughts of man. We find here the same smooth style, the same happy metaphors, the same clearness of thought, and the same graceful flow of rhythm, which in his other works won for the writer so many admirers.”—*Westminster Review*, July, 1880.

“The many who have found what seemed to them of value and of use in the previous writings of the author, may confidently turn to this, his latest and, in his own view, his most mature work. It is full of beauty of thought, feeling, and language.”—*Daily News*, April 8th, 1880.

“Full of exquisite taste, tender colour, and delicate fancy, these poems will add considerably to the reputation of their author.”—*Sunday Times*, April 25th, 1880.

“The author is one of the few real poets now living. Anything at once more sympathetic and powerful it would be difficult to find in the poetry of the present day.”—*Scotsman*, May 11th, 1880.

“We have read this book with pleasure and appreciation, and regard it as worthy of a place beside the volumes which he has already given to the public, and of which we, in common with many critics, have felt constrained to speak in terms of high praise.”—*Literary World*, April 9th, 1880.

“It would be easy to point out many passages of remarkable beauty. But lovers of poetry will soon find out the beauties for themselves, for this is a poem, not to be read once and forgotten, but to be read again and again, and pondered over and loved.”—*Manchester Examiner*, April 28th, 1880.

“This is a book to be enjoyed as well as to be studied and valued. . . . No previous poem by this writer is so rich in lines that live in the memory. Would that all our modern poets taught us so high and healthy a morality as that which we find in these delightful pages!”—*Leeds Mercury*, May 12th, 1880.

“Next to the ‘Epic of Hades,’ it is his best work.”—*Cambridge Review*, May 19th, 1880.

“Here is one standing high in power and in fame who has chosen a nobler course. . . . The experiment is successful, and though we must not now discuss the laws to which the structure of an ode should conform, we rank the poem in this respect as standing far above Dryden’s celebrated composition, but below the Odes of Wordsworth on Immortality and of Milton on the Nativity, which still remain peerless and without a rival.”—*Congregationalist*, May 1st, 1880.

“That the work shows more evidence of grace than of power may be explained by the familiarity of the subject. Such trace as there is of power is manifest when the theme is highest, especially in giving expression to the strong emotional yearnings which straggle through our dim intellectual apprehension of the central spiritual force of the universe. A high devout purpose and wide human sympathy ennoble all the writer’s work, and his clear language and quiet music will retain his audience.”—*Nineteenth Century*, August, 1880.

“In all that respects technical points, certainly the most finished work we have yet had from the author’s hand, and here and there the phrasing is exquisite. For ambitious aims, and for art which so far has justified those aims, for elevation and refinement, these poems are in advance of any of the author’s former works.”—*British Quarterly Review*, July, 1880.

“Any notice of recent poetry would be inadequate without a reference to the ‘Ode of Life.’ The only fault we have to find with this really remarkable effort—a sort of expansion of Wordsworth’s famous Ode—is that it is rather too long for its ideas; but it possesses power, sweetness, occasional profundity, and unmistakable music. It is, when all is said and done, a true ‘Ode,’ sweeping the reader along as the ode should do, and

‘Growing like Atlas, stronger for its load.’

It appears to us to bring definite proof that the writer’s pretensions have not been over-stated.”—*Contemporary Review*, February, 1881.

GWEN: *A DRAMA IN MONOLOGUE.*

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

“The charm of this beautiful little poem is its perfect simplicity of utterance; its chastened and exquisite grace. There is nothing very new in the incidents or in the characters of this most touching story, except in its unconventional ending, which takes the reader by surprise. The genius of the author has closed an idyll of love and death with a strain of sweet, sad music in that minor key which belongs to remembrance and regret.”—*Daily News*, January 22nd, 1879.

“We have read this new work with the interest arising from the expectations which the author had quickened in us, and with the hope of finding those expectations confirmed. We are not disappointed, for we have here the same selectness of language, the same high, pure tone, the same delicate power of touching the deeper chords of thought and feeling, which have previously won our attention and sympathy.”—*Literary World*, January 17th, 1879.

“At the close of the tale the heart swells with pathos, and the tears all but force their way into the eyes. To turn from the most noteworthy of modern poetry to the verse in which ‘Gwen’ is written is like turning from a brilliant painting to a fine statue. We are scarcely sensible of want of colour, so refreshed are we by purity of outline. All, indeed, is graceful, good, and poetical work, as pure and limpid in flow as a brook.”—*Sunday Times*, February 2nd, 1879.

“Pretty, pensive, and pathetic are the epithets which in an alliterative mood one would feel disposed to apply to ‘Gwen.’ There are many exquisite passages, however, touching and musical, thoughtful and suggestive; and the two principal characters pour out their hearts one to another in alternate bursts of song, as bird sings to bird among the branches.”—*Illustrated News*, February 8th, 1879.

“The piece as a whole will repay very attentive perusal, while here and there in it there is a particular choice bit of work. Here, for example, is a fine lyric . . . and here a love-song of rare and exquisite beauty.”—*New York Evening Post*, February 20th, 1879.

“The book abounds with lyrics worthy, alike from their metrical sweetness and their deep tenderness and purity, to be set to music; while over the whole story we are conscious of the easy power and the

consummate mastery of his noble art, which distinguish the author. He is to be congratulated upon a genuine success in a new field, which must do much to sustain and extend his well-earned fame.”—*Leeds Mercury*, February 26th, 1879.

“Few among the later poets of our time have received such a generous welcome as the author. He has been appreciated not by critics alone, but by the general public. . . . The charm of ‘Gwen’ is to be found in the limpid clearness of the versification, in the pathetic notes which tell the old story of true love wounded and crushed. Nothing can be more artistically appropriate or more daintily melodious than the following. . . .”—*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 8th, 1879.

“Our author has a message to deliver to the age which no other can deliver so well as he.”—*Freeman*, August 15th, 1879.

“Seldom has literature been enriched by a more beautiful poem than the author’s latest work, ‘Gwen,’ which ought to extend the popularity he has gained already. It surpasses any of his former works in intensity of pathos and subtle and vivid delineation of passion.”—*Scotsman*, June 5th, 1879.

“The poem is, as a whole, tender, simple, chaste in feeling, and occasionally it rises to a lyrical loftiness of sentiment or grows compact with vigorous thought.”—*New York “Nation,”* March 27th, 1879.

“The writer has gained inspiration from themes which inspired Dante; he has sung sweet songs and musical lyrics; and whether writing in rhyme or blank verse, has proved himself a master of his instrument. He knows, like all true poets, how to transmute what may be called common into the pure gold of poetry.”—*Spectator*, July 26th, 1879.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *Songs Unsung* by Lewis Morris]